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From Sound to Satisfaction: How Perceived Music Quality and Place Shape Visitors' Intentions at Music Festivals

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Abstract

Despite the growing prominence of music festivals as experiential tourism products, limited empirical research has integrated perceived music quality and place within a unified behavioral framework, particularly in emerging economies. This study investigates how perceived music quality and place influence visitors' revisit intention, with satisfaction acting as a mediating variable. Drawing on the Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) framework, a quantitative research design was employed. Data were collected via an online questionnaire from 220 visitors who had attended large scale music festivals in Indonesia within the previous year. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to test the proposed relationships. The findings indicate that both perceived music quality and place have significant positive effects on visitor satisfaction, with place exerting a substantially stronger influence. Moreover, satisfaction significantly mediates the effects of perceived music quality and place on revisit intention. The model demonstrates moderate to strong explanatory power, highlighting satisfaction as a key psychological mechanism linking festival attributes to behavioral intentions. This study extends the application of the SOR framework to music festival tourism in a developing country context and offers practical insights for festival organizers and destination managers seeking to enhance visitor satisfaction and foster repeat visitation through strategic improvements in musical performance and place-based experiences.

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PENDAHULUAN

Music festivals have become a prominent component of contemporary cultural and tourism landscapes, attracting millions of participants worldwide and contributing significantly to local economies, community identities, and destination branding (Mair, 2019).

In recent years, music festivals have evolved from mere entertainment events into immersive experiences that engage participants through multisensory and affective dimensions (Oliva, 2023; Swarbrick et al., 2024). Perceived music quality represents visitors' subjective evaluation of the artistic, technical, and emotional aspects of musical performance during a festival, encompassing sound accuracy, creativity, performance energy, and emotional engagement (Faezha et al., 2024; Vieira et al., 2025). Recent studies demonstrate that music quality significantly influences overall event satisfaction and perceived value, with high-quality performances enhancing immersion while poor sound diminishes it, acting as a primary stimulus shaping internal states (Armbrecht, 2021; Faezha et al., 2024).

Visitors' perceptions of the physical environment or "sense of place" are equally crucial, referring to emotional and cognitive attachment to venues formed through scenic beauty, cultural significance, and personal memories (Anderton, 2024; Skandalis et al., 2024). The physical setting location, landscape, and organization influences satisfaction and loyalty via aesthetic and logistical qualities. Recent applications of Mehrabian and Russell's Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework demonstrate how venue characteristics (stimulus) evoke emotion and attachment (organism), leading to approach behaviors like loyalty and revisits (Kexin & Teo, 2023; Sengoz et al., 2024).

Visitor satisfaction, a cognitive-affective response to experiences meeting expectations, mediates these relationships, linking music quality, place, and post-event behaviors like revisitation and recommendations (Çiki et al., 2025; Pudiawan & Bangun, 2024). Influenced by utilitarian (safety, accessibility, sound systems) and hedonic (enjoyment, excitement, resonance) factors, satisfaction translates stimuli into loyalty, with empirical support showing 61.1% variance explained by music quality and place (Faezha et al., 2024; Tran-Pham et al., 2024).

Behavioral intentions (revisit, word of mouth) serve as ultimate outcomes, predicted by satisfaction and well-being, indicating festival success and sustainability (Çiki et al., 2025; Tran-Pham et al., 2024; Zhu et al., 2025). Empirical evidence confirms satisfaction mediates music quality (indirect effect 0.103, p=0.047) and place (0.535, p=0.000) to revisit

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intentions (57.8% variance explained), with flow and inspiration moderating these paths (Sengoz et al., 2024).

Despite recognition of these constructs, few studies integrate them via SOR into a unified model for music festivals, leaving mediation effects underexplored (Ding & Hung, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic heightened demand for meaningful experiences, making this research timely for post-pandemic recovery (Richards et al., 2022). Based on these considerations, this study aims to examine how perceived music quality and place influence visitors behavioral intentions at music festivals, with satisfaction serving as mediating variables.

This research practically, it provides insights for festival organizers and destination managers to enhance visitor satisfaction and loyalty by designing experiences that optimize musical performance and place attachment.

In sum, this research emphasizes that the success of a music festival extends beyond logistical excellence or headlining artists it lies in crafting a holistic experience where sound and place synergize to foster satisfaction, happiness, and sustained engagement. Through this lens, festivals can be understood not only as cultural or entertainment events but also as meaningful spaces that contribute to individual.

METODOLOGI

Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative research design grounded in the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework, in which perceived music quality and place function as environmental stimuli, satisfaction as the organismic state, and revisit intention as the behavioural response. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed because it is appropriate for prediction-oriented research, complex models with mediation, and situations where theory is still being extended in specific contexts such as music festivals. The choice of PLS-SEM also aligns with recent event and festival studies that examine latent variables such as experience quality, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions.

Sample and Data Collection

The target population comprised visitors to music festivals in Indonesia who had attended at least one large-scale music festival within the past year. A convenience sampling technique was used, focusing on recent festival attendees to ensure that their experiences and evaluations were still salient. Data were collected between June and August 2025 through an online self-administered questionnaire distributed via Google Forms, shared on social media platforms and festival-related communities.

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After data cleaning (removal of incomplete and patterned responses), a final sample of 220 valid questionnaires was obtained, exceeding the minimum rule-of-thumb for PLS-SEM (at least ten times the maximum number of structural paths pointing at a latent variable).

Measures

All constructs were measured using multi-item scales adapted from prior studies on music festivals, place attachment, and visitor behaviour, with items translated and contextually adjusted for Indonesian settings. Respondents rated each item on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree").

All factor loadings exceeded 0.60, AVE values were above 0.50, and reliability indices (Cronbach's α and CR) were above 0.70, indicating satisfactory convergent validity and internal consistency.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 4.0 following a two-stage procedure consisting of measurement model evaluation and structural model evaluation.Hasil-olah-data.docx

Measurement model: Convergent validity was assessed through outer loadings, AVE, and composite reliability; discriminant validity was examined using the Fornell–Larcker criterion (square root of AVE greater than inter-construct correlations) and cross-loadings.Hasil-olah-data.docx

Structural model: Coefficients of determination (R^2) were computed for satisfaction and revisit intention, followed by hypothesis testing using bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples (one-tailed tests, significance at $p < 0.05$). Indirect effects were examined to test the mediating role of satisfaction between perceived music quality and revisit intention, and between place and revisit intention.Hasil-olah-data.docx

To address potential common method bias, Harman's single-factor test was conducted; the variance explained by a single factor was below the critical threshold of 50%, indicating that common method bias was not a serious concern. Multicollinearity diagnostics using variance inflation factor (VIF) values showed all indicators below 5, suggesting no problematic collinearity among predictor constructs in the structural model.

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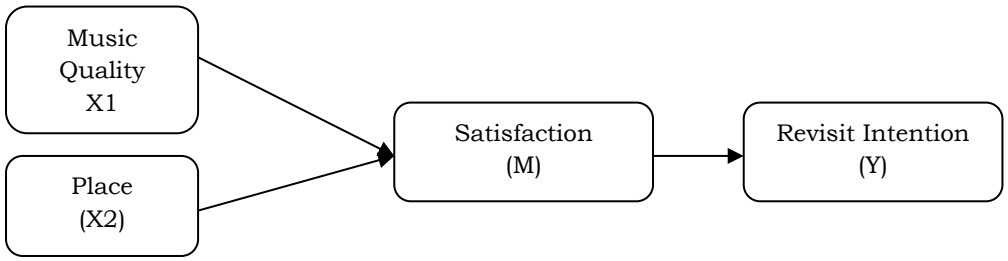

Hypothesis 1: Music quality affects Satisfaction

Hypothesis 2: Place affects Satisfaction

Hypothesis 3: Satisfaction mediates music quality to Revisit Intention

Hypothesis 4: Satisfaction mediates place to Revisit Intention

The assessment of the measurement model was conducted to ensure that the constructs of Music Quality, Place, Satisfaction, and Revisit Intention were measured accurately and consistently. Convergent validity was evaluated by observing the outer loading values, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and the Composite Reliability (CR). The analysis shows that all indicators demonstrate outer loading values of at least 0.60, confirming that each item can represent its corresponding latent variable. In addition, the AVE values for all constructs exceed the recommended minimum of 0.50, indicating that more than half of the variance of the indicators is explained by the underlying construct. Together, these results demonstrate that the model meets the required criteria for convergent validity.

Reliability was further examined through Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. The findings reveal that all constructs have Cronbach's Alpha values greater than 0.70, which indicates strong internal consistency among the indicators. Similarly, the Composite Reliability values also surpass the threshold of 0.70, providing additional confirmation that the indicators are stable and reliable in measuring their respective constructs. Overall, the results affirm that the measurement model fulfils both convergent validity and reliability requirements, ensuring that Music Quality, Place, Satisfaction, and Revisit Intention are represented with accuracy and consistency throughout the analysis. The results can be seen in Table 1:

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Tabel 1. Convergent Validity and Reliability

Variabel	Items	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Music Quality	X1.1	0.696	0.735	0.843	0.644
	X1.2	0.859			
	X1.3	0.843			
Place	X2.1	0.910	0.904	0.933	0.777
	X2.2	0.849			
	X2.3	0.883			
	X2.4	0.882			
Satisfaction	M1	0.885	0.853	0.911	0.773
	M2	0.872			
	M3	0.881			
Revisit Intention	Y1	0.855	0.833	0.900	0.750
	Y2	0.881			
	Y3	0.862			

To further assess the discriminant validity of the measurement model, the Fornell–Larcker Criterion was employed. This criterion requires that the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct be greater than the correlations between that construct and any other construct within the model. The results of the analysis demonstrate that all constructs meet this requirement, as the square root of the AVE values for Music Quality, Place, Satisfaction, and Revisit Intention consistently exceed their respective inter-construct correlations. The results can be seen in Table 2:

Tabel 2. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Music Quality (X1)	Place (X2)	Revisit Intention (Y)	Satisfaction (M)
Music Quality (X1)	**0.802**			
Place (X2)	0.515	**0.881**		
Revisit Intention (Y)	0.595	0.735	**0.866**	
Satisfaction (M)	0.497	0.773	0.760	**0.879**

This finding indicates that each construct shares more variance with its own indicators than with other constructs in the model, thereby confirming adequate discriminant validity. In other words, the latent

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variables are empirically distinct and measure theoretically different concepts. Establishing discriminant validity through the Fornell–Larcker Criterion strengthens the overall credibility of the measurement model and ensures that subsequent structural model interpretations rest on a sound psychometric foundation.

Furthermore, the data processing results showed an R-squared value, indicating that the model had adequate explanatory power. This indicates that the predictor variables were able to explain a significant portion of the variance in the endogenous construct, indicating that the structural model had adequate predictive relevance for the relationship being examined. The R-squared results are presented in Table 3:

Tabel 3. R^2

	R Square	**R Square Adjusted**
Revisit Intention _(Y)	0.578	0.576
Satisfaction_(M)	0.611	0.606

The results indicate that the construct Satisfaction (M) has an R Square value of 0.611, with an adjusted R Square of 0.606, suggesting that approximately 60.6%–61.1% of the variance in Satisfaction is explained by the exogenous variables included in the model. This value falls within the moderate to substantial range, indicating a strong level of predictive accuracy for this construct.

Similarly, the construct Revisit Intention (Y) shows an R Square of 0.578 and an adjusted R Square of 0.576, meaning that 57.6%–57.8% of its variance is accounted for by antecedent variables in the model. This also reflects a moderate level of explanatory power according to commonly accepted PLS-SEM benchmarks.

Overall, the R Square values demonstrate that the model possesses adequate predictive capability. Both Satisfaction and Revisit Intention are explained to a meaningful extent by the predictors, providing empirical support for the structural relationships proposed in the study.

Moreover, the hypothesis testing was evaluated using the minimum statistical thresholds required for significance, namely a t-statistic greater than 1.96 and a p-value below 0.05. Hypotheses that meet these criteria are considered statistically supported. Based on these requirements, the results indicate that the structural paths in the model are significant, demonstrating that the proposed hypotheses are empirically validated. The results can be seen in Table 4:

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Tabel 4. Hypotheses Test

Path	β	t-value	P-Values	Result
Music Quality_(X1) -> Satisfaction_(M)	0.135	2.050	0.041	Supported
Place_(X2) -> Satisfaction_(M)	0.704	12.784	0.000	Supported
Music Quality_(X1) -> Satisfaction_(M) -> Revisit Intention _(Y)	0.103	1.991	0.047	Supported
Place_(X2) -> Satisfaction_(M) -> Revisit Intention _(Y)	0.535	9.588	0.000	Supported

The results of the hypothesis testing provide empirical support for all four proposed hypotheses. Hypothesis 1, which states that music quality affects satisfaction, is supported by the analysis. The path from Music Quality to Satisfaction shows a significant effect, with a t-statistic of 2.050 and a p-value of 0.041, indicating that higher music quality contributes positively to participants' satisfaction. Hypothesis 2, proposing that place affects satisfaction, is also supported. The effect of Place on Satisfaction is strong and highly significant, as reflected in the t-statistic of 12.784 and the p-value of 0.000, demonstrating that the characteristics of the place substantially influence satisfaction levels.

For the mediation effects, Hypothesis 3, which states that satisfaction mediates the relationship between music quality and revisit intention, is confirmed. The indirect effect of Music Quality on Revisit Intention through Satisfaction is significant (t = 1.991; p = 0.047), showing that music quality influences revisit intention primarily through its impact on satisfaction. Lastly, Hypothesis 4, which proposes that satisfaction mediates the relationship between place and revisit intention, is also supported. The indirect pathway from Place to Revisit Intention via Satisfaction is significant, with a t-statistic of 9.588 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating that satisfaction serves as a strong mediator that channels the effect of place attributes into revisit intention.

Overall, these findings validate all four hypotheses, showing that both music quality and place directly enhance satisfaction, and satisfaction in turn plays a key mediating role in shaping revisit intention.

SIMPULAN

Key Findings Summary

The study shows that all four hypotheses (H1–H4) are supported: perceived music quality and place both significantly increase visitor satisfaction, and satisfaction in turn mediates their effects on revisit

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intention. Place has a much stronger impact on satisfaction than music quality, and satisfaction emerges as the central psychological mechanism through which festival attributes translate into loyalty related behavior.

Theoretical Contributions

The findings extend the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework to music festival tourism by demonstrating that a parsimonious model with two stimuli (music quality and place), one organism (satisfaction), and one response (revisit intention) explains a substantial share of variance in visitor behaviour. Compared with earlier work that combines multiple stimuli and mediators, the present study shows that satisfaction alone can capture a large portion of the stimulus–response chain in a non-European, Indonesian festival context, thus contributing cross-cultural evidence to SOR-based festival research.

Managerial Implications

For festival organizers and destination managers, the dominant effect of place on satisfaction suggests that venue design, layout, accessibility, and overall sense of place should be prioritized over marginal improvements in sound system quality, once a basic standard of audio performance is met. In the post-COVID era, where audiences seek meaningful and emotionally resonant collective experiences, investing in settings that foster comfort, belonging, and memorable atmosphere is critical to stimulating satisfaction and repeat attendance.

Limitations and Future Research

This study relies on cross sectional, self reported data from a convenience sample of Indonesian festival visitors, which limits causal inference and generalizability beyond similar events and contexts. Future research could employ longitudinal designs and multi-festival or multi-country comparisons, and test potential moderators such as age, prior festival experience, type of music, or festival scale to examine whether the strength of SOR relationships varies across visitor segments and event formats.

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