

To cite this article: Esxi Martia Gusma, Rahmat Ingkadijaya, Nurbaeti and Myrza Rahmanita (2024). Customer Value as a Determining Factor for Visitor Loyalty at Jakabaring Sport City Palembang. International Journal of Education, Business and Economics Research (IJEER) 4 (4): 259-270

**CUSTOMER VALUE AS A DETERMINING FACTOR FOR VISITOR LOYALTY AT
JAKABARING SPORT CITY PALEMBANG**

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<https://doi.org/10.59822/IJEER.2024.4423>

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of Customer Value in shaping visitor loyalty at Jakabaring Sport City (JSC) in Palembang. Utilizing a qualitative approach, the research involved in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with visitors, local stakeholders, and event organizers. The analysis reveals that Customer Value encompasses several dimensions: emotional, quality, price, and social. Emotional value, derived from significant events such as the Asian Games 2018, plays a crucial role in fostering visitor attachment and repeat visits. Quality value is highlighted through positive feedback on the state-of-the-art facilities, which significantly enhance the visitor experience. Price value, although secondary, is influenced by the perceived fairness and value-for-money of ticket pricing. Social value is evident in JSC's role as a community hub, where visitors appreciate the opportunity to connect with others who share similar interests. The study underscores that a holistic understanding of these dimensions can enhance visitor loyalty, suggesting that JSC should continue to invest in emotional engagement, maintain high-quality facilities, ensure competitive pricing, and foster social interactions to sustain and grow its visitor base.

KEYWORDS: - Customer Value, Visitor Loyalty, Emotional Value, Quality Value, Price Value, Social Value, Sports Events, Visitor Experience.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has long played a significant role in boosting both global and national economic growth, encompassing sectors such as transportation, accommodation, recreation, entertainment, shopping, and food services (Kyara et al., 2021; Sarpong et al., 2020; Manzoor et al., 2019). It is one of the most significant contributors to national foreign exchange earnings. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted this industry. Škare et al. (2020) stated that tourism is among the sectors most affected by the pandemic, leading to a significant downturn worldwide. Despite this, from 2000 until the pre-pandemic year of 2019, international tourism grew at an average annual rate of over 4%, with 1.468 billion arrivals in 2019, predominantly in Europe (51%), followed by Asia and the Pacific (24.5%), the Americas (15%), the Middle East (5%), and Africa (4.6%) (Deandreis et al., 2022). This sector contributed US\$8.9 trillion or 10.3% of the global GDP and supported 330 million jobs, roughly 10% of all global employment (WTTC, 2020).

Indonesia's tourism sector has experienced continuous growth, with notable increases in foreign and domestic tourist arrivals. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (2020), the number of international visitors to Indonesia has increased annually over the past five years, except in 2020, due to the pandemic. The peak was in 2019, with 16.11 million visits, dropping dramatically by 74.84% to 4.05 million in 2020. Similarly, domestic tourism has also seen growth, with significant increases in 2018.

The development of Indonesia's tourism sector has been driven by robust economic growth, increased purchasing power, and a stable security environment. One specific area of potential growth is sports tourism, which combines sports and tourism to create economic benefits and social impact (Weed & Bull, 2015). Jakabaring Sport City (JSC) in Palembang stands out as a major sports tourism destination in Indonesia. Spanning 352 hectares, JSC has hosted numerous national and international sports events, such as the 2004 PON, the 2011 SEA Games, the 2018 Asian Games, and the 2020 Palembang Triathlon.

Despite the pandemic's impact, JSC remains a key sports tourism hub, attracting both local and international visitors. Data from 2021 shows that although there were fluctuations in international visitor numbers, JSC still managed to attract many tourists. This highlights the potential for further development in the tourism sector in South Sumatra. The attractiveness of Jakabaring Sport City as a tourist destination is linked to its extensive facilities and the successful hosting of major sports events. This makes it an icon of Palembang, alongside the Ampera Bridge. The synergy between local government and private sectors has aimed to position JSC as a leading sports tourism destination, enhancing its appeal through infrastructure development and quality services.

Customer Value is a critical factor in determining visitor loyalty. Customer Value refers to the perceived benefits visitors receive relative to the cost of their visit, encompassing emotional, quality, price, and social values (Zelviean Adhari, 2021). Understanding and enhancing Customer Value is crucial for developing strategies to improve visitor satisfaction and encourage repeat visits. This study examines the role of Customer Value as a determining factor for visitor loyalty at Jakabaring Sport City. By analyzing visitor data from 2020 to 2022, the research aims to provide insights into the contributions of JSC to Palembang's tourism industry. Understanding these factors is essential for developing strategies to enhance visitor satisfaction and loyalty, ensuring the long-term success of Jakabaring Sport City as a premier sports tourism destination.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism significantly contributes to economic growth at both global and national levels, encompassing various sectors such as transportation, accommodation, recreation, entertainment, shopping, and food services. Manzoor et al. (2019) highlight that tourism is among the most significant contributors to foreign exchange in many countries. The industry's susceptibility to external shocks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, has been well-documented. Škare et al. (2020) emphasized that tourism was one of the hardest-hit sectors during the pandemic, leading to a significant downturn in global tourism activities. Despite the pandemic's impact, international tourism experienced a substantial growth rate from 2000 to 2019, with arrivals increasing by an average annual rate of over 4% (Deandreis et al., 2022). This period saw a peak of 1.468 billion arrivals in 2019, with significant contributions from Europe, Asia, the Pacific, the Americas, the Middle East, and Africa. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (2020), tourism contributed US\$8.9 trillion to the global GDP and supported approximately 330 million jobs, reflecting its importance in the global economy.

In Indonesia, tourism has shown continuous growth, which is marked by an increase in international and domestic tourists. The World Travel and Tourism Council (2020) reported a steady rise in international visitors to Indonesia over the past five years, peaking at 16.11 million in 2019 before plummeting to 4.05 million in 2020 due to the pandemic. Domestic tourism also demonstrated growth, which was particularly evident in 2018. The growth of Indonesia's tourism sector can be attributed to robust economic development, enhanced purchasing power, and a stable security environment. The sector's expansion is also linked to the development of sports tourism, which combines sports and tourism to create economic benefits and social impacts (Weed & Bull, 2015). Jakabaring Sport City (JSC) in Palembang exemplifies this trend as a major sports tourism destination. With its extensive facilities and successful hosting of numerous national and international sports events, JSC has become a significant attraction, contributing to the region's tourism development.

Customer Value is a pivotal factor influencing visitor loyalty, encompassing the perceived benefits visitors receive relative to the costs incurred during their visit. Zelviean Adhari (2021) describes Customer Value as encompassing emotional, quality, price, and social values, all playing crucial roles in visitor satisfaction. The relationship between Customer Value and visitor loyalty has been explored extensively in tourism research. Lesmana, Rosa, et al. (2020) found a significant impact of Customer Value on visitor satisfaction and loyalty, suggesting that higher perceived value leads to

increased satisfaction and repeat visits. Rajabi and Andam's (2013) satisfaction theory, as cited in studies by Lita and Ma'ruf (2015), provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating visitor satisfaction at sports destinations like Jakabaring Sport City. This framework considers various factors, including the quality of access to sports venues, destination accessibility, interaction quality, place value, process quality, and event quality. Understanding and enhancing these factors are essential for developing effective strategies to improve visitor loyalty, ensuring the long-term success of Jakabaring Sport City as a premier sports tourism destination.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design to investigate the role of Customer Value in influencing visitor loyalty at Jakabaring Sport City (JSC) in Palembang. The qualitative approach is chosen to comprehensively understand how visitors' perceptions and experiences with various aspects of Customer Value—such as emotional, quality, price, and social value affect their loyalty to this sports tourism destination. This design allows for an in-depth exploration of complex and context-specific factors that quantitative methods might not fully capture.

Data will be collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with key informants. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with selected informants who are either frequent visitors or stakeholders connected to Jakabaring Sport City. The interviews will follow a guide featuring open-ended questions designed to draw detailed insights into how these individuals perceive Customer Value and its impact on their loyalty. Each interview is anticipated to last between 45 to 60 minutes, with sessions being audio-recorded and transcribed for subsequent analysis. In addition to individual interviews, focus group discussions will be organized with groups of 6-8 participants. These discussions will facilitate interactive dialogue about Customer Value and its influence on visitor loyalty, guided by a structured moderator's guide. Focus groups are expected to last about 90 minutes and will be recorded and transcribed to capture diverse viewpoints.

Informants will be purposively selected based on their relevant experience and engagement with Jakabaring Sport City. The selection criteria include frequent visitors who have attended Jakabaring multiple times over the past year, and key stakeholders involved in the venue's management, operation, or promotion, such as event organizers, tourism professionals, and local business owners. The study aims to interview approximately 15-20 informants to ensure a range of perspectives and achieve data saturation. For the focus groups, 2-3 sessions will be conducted to gather comprehensive insights and foster robust discussions.

Data analysis will be performed using thematic analysis. This involves familiarizing oneself with the data by reading and re-reading the transcripts to understand the content. Initial coding will be conducted to identify significant Customer Value and visitor loyalty information. Codes will then be organized into potential themes and sub-themes, which will be reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represent the data and address the research questions. The final step involves defining and naming these themes and reporting the findings with illustrative quotes and narratives to substantiate the identified themes.

To ensure the study's validity and reliability, triangulation will be used by incorporating multiple data sources, such as interviews and focus groups, to cross-check and validate findings. Member checking will be employed to confirm the accuracy and relevance of preliminary findings with the informants. Additionally, peer review will be sought from colleagues or experts in qualitative research to review the data analysis process and findings. Ethical considerations will include obtaining approval from the relevant institutional review board. All informants will provide informed consent, being fully informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality will be maintained by anonymizing the informants' identities and securely storing all data. This qualitative methodology offers a nuanced understanding of how Customer Value affects visitor loyalty at Jakabaring Sport City, thereby providing valuable insights into the factors driving visitor satisfaction and repeat visits.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Findings

This section provides an in-depth exploration of the key findings from the study on Customer Value and its influence on visitor loyalty at Jakabaring Sport City (JSC) in Palembang. The analysis draws from extensive interviews and focus group discussions with diverse participants, including visitors who have experienced the facilities firsthand, local stakeholders who are integral to the operations and management of JSC, and event organizers who play a crucial role in orchestrating activities at the venue. Through these comprehensive interactions, the study uncovers the multifaceted nature of Customer Value, which encompasses a range of dimensions—emotional, quality, price, and social. These dimensions collectively shape the overall visitor experience and their loyalty to Jakabaring Sport City.



Figure 1. Jakabaring Sport City
Source: Researcher Documentation, 2024

Jakabaring Sport City, situated in the vibrant city of Palembang, is a premier sports complex renowned for its expansive and state-of-the-art facilities. Spanning an impressive area of 352 hectares, JSC is a central hub for sports and recreational activities, offering various venues catering to local and international events. The complex features multiple stadiums, including the Gelora Sriwijaya Stadium, renowned for hosting significant sporting events such as the 2018 Asian Games and national championships. Additionally, JSC houses athletic tracks, aquatic centers, and other specialized sports facilities, making it a cornerstone of sports tourism in Indonesia.

The findings from the study illustrate how these diverse facets of Customer Value interact to influence visitor loyalty. Emotional value is derived from the memorable experiences of attending high-profile events, and the personal satisfaction visitors derive from engaging with the venue. Quality value reflects the facilities' modernity and upkeep, ensuring visitors have a comfortable and enjoyable experience. Price value pertains to the perceived fairness of ticket prices and overall cost relative to the experience provided. Social value highlights the role of JSC as a community hub, where social interactions and communal activities enhance the overall appeal of the venue. Each of these dimensions plays a critical role in shaping visitors' perceptions and likelihood of returning to Jakabaring Sport City, thus underscoring the importance of a holistic approach to managing and enhancing Customer Value.

A. Emotional Value

Emotional value emerged as a predominant factor influencing visitor loyalty at Jakabaring Sport City. Many informants expressed that intense emotional experiences, including excitement, pride, and satisfaction marked their visits to JSC. The emotional resonance of attending major events such as the Asian Games 2018 and other local and international sports competitions significantly contributed to their loyalty. For instance, a visitor shared, "The Asian Games was an incredible experience; the atmosphere was electric, and it made me feel proud to be part of such a significant event." Another visitor noted, "The joy of seeing my favorite team play live at JSC is something I'll never forget, and it makes me want to return for future events."

JSC's ability to host high-profile events and provide a platform for local and international sports showcases has significantly created a solid emotional bond with visitors. This emotional connection encourages repeat visits and leads to positive word-of-mouth recommendations, which can further enhance JSC's reputation as a premier sports destination. The sense of community and belonging that visitors experience at JSC reinforces their emotional attachment to the venue.

B. Quality Value

Quality value was identified as another critical determinant of visitor satisfaction and loyalty. The study found that visitors place a high value on the quality of facilities at Jakabaring Sport City. The stadiums, athletic tracks, and other amenities are frequently praised for their modernity and maintenance. Visitors appreciate the well-kept and state-of-the-art infrastructure, which they believe enhances their overall experience. For example, a visitor commented, "The stadium is one of the best I've seen in Indonesia; it's always clean and comfortable, which makes watching the games a pleasure."

Table 1. Visitor Perceptions of Quality Value

Facility	Rating (1-5)	Comments
Main Stadium	4.8	"Well-maintained, great view from every seat."
Athletic Track	4.5	"Modern and clean, ideal for competitions."
Supporting Facilities	4.1	"High quality, adds to the overall experience."

Source: Data from in-depth interviews and focus groups, 2024

The quality of the facilities at JSC contributes significantly to the positive perception of the venue. Informants frequently highlighted the sports venues' cleanliness, functionality, and overall condition as crucial factors in their decision to return. The high standards of upkeep and modernization of the facilities play a crucial role in ensuring visitors have a positive and memorable experience, fostering loyalty, and encouraging repeat visits. By maintaining these high-quality standards, JSC meets and exceeds visitor expectations, strengthening its commitment to the venue and enhancing the likelihood of future visits.

C. Price Value

Price value was identified as an essential factor influencing visitor loyalty, encompassing both the affordability and the perceived value for money of attending events at Jakabaring Sport City (JSC). The study revealed that visitors generally perceive the pricing of tickets and associated services as reasonable, given the high-quality experiences offered at JSC. Many informants expressed that while ticket prices for major events, such as international sports competitions, can be relatively high, the overall value received is deemed justifiable. A visitor shared, "Although tickets for major events can be pricey, the experience is worth it. The facilities and organization are top-notch, so I feel I'm getting my money's worth."

This perception of fair pricing relative to the high-quality experience provided at JSC significantly shapes visitor satisfaction and loyalty. When visitors feel they are receiving substantial value for their expenditure, their likelihood of returning to the venue increases, as does their propensity to recommend it to others. The study highlights that maintaining a balance between competitive pricing and delivering exceptional experiences is crucial for fostering long-term visitor loyalty. By ensuring that ticket prices and related costs are perceived as fair concerning the quality of the events and facilities, JSC can effectively enhance visitor satisfaction and strengthen its commitment to future visits. This balance encourages repeat attendance and helps build a positive reputation that can attract new visitors to the venue.

D. Social Value

Social value emerged as a prominent and influential factor in shaping visitor loyalty at Jakabaring Sport City (JSC). The venue serves as a site for sports events and a vibrant social hub where individuals gather and connect with others who share similar interests and passions. This aspect of social engagement significantly enriches the overall visitor experience. Informants highlighted that attending events at JSC offers more than just the excitement of sports; it provides valuable opportunities to engage in community interactions, socialize with friends and fellow sports enthusiasts, and immerse oneself in a lively and dynamic environment. One visitor articulated, "Attending events at JSC is not just about watching sports; it's about connecting with people who share my passion and being part of a larger community."

The social dimension of Jakabaring Sport City enhances the venue's appeal by fostering a sense of belonging and community among its visitors. Interacting with others and being part of a communal atmosphere adds value to the overall experience and contributes to visitors' loyalty. The venue's

role in facilitating social connections and creating opportunities for community engagement is crucial in enhancing its attractiveness as a destination. JSC effectively strengthens its reputation as a premier venue and encourages repeat visits by providing a space where visitors can connect with others who share their interests. This emphasis on social value enhances the immediate visitor experience and builds a lasting sense of loyalty, as visitors are drawn to return to a place where they feel they are part of something larger than themselves.

4.2 Discussion

The study on Customer Value at Jakabaring Sport City (JSC) in Palembang reveals that a multifaceted understanding of value is crucial for fostering visitor loyalty. Analyzing emotional, quality, price, and social values highlights how these dimensions collectively influence visitors' attachment to the venue. Each dimension uniquely shapes the overall visitor experience, reinforcing the importance of a comprehensive approach to managing and enhancing customer value.

Emotional value is a dominant factor driving visitor loyalty to Jakabaring Sport City. The intense emotional connections forged during visits, particularly during significant events like the Asian Games 2018, contribute to a profound sense of pride and satisfaction among visitors. This emotional resonance enhances the immediate experience and cultivates long-term loyalty. Visitors who experience powerful emotions during their time at JSC are likelier to view the venue favorably and recommend it to others, demonstrating the profound impact of emotional value on repeat visitation and positive word-of-mouth. The ability of JSC to consistently deliver high-profile events that evoke excitement and pride is thus essential in maintaining and strengthening its position as a leading sports destination.

Quality value is another critical determinant of visitor satisfaction and loyalty. Visitors frequently cite the modern, well-maintained facilities at JSC as key contributors to their positive experiences. The high standards of infrastructure, including the cleanliness and functionality of the stadiums and athletic tracks, enhance the overall visitor experience and reinforce their decision to return. The perception of high quality is directly linked to visitors' willingness to revisit and their likelihood of recommending the venue to others. The data indicates that well-maintained and state-of-the-art facilities are integral to creating a memorable and satisfactory experience, emphasizing the importance of continued investment in facility upkeep and modernization.

Price value, encompassing affordability and perceived value for money, also significantly shapes visitor loyalty. While ticket prices for major events can be higher, the overall value perceived by visitors justifies the cost. The study reveals that when visitors believe they receive substantial value for their expenditure, their satisfaction and loyalties are positively influenced. Maintaining competitive pricing while delivering a high-quality experience is crucial for ensuring visitors feel they are worth their money. This balance between cost and value is essential for sustaining long-term visitor loyalty and enhancing the venue's reputation as a good value destination.

Social value, emerges as a significant factor in enhancing the attractiveness of Jakabaring Sport City as a destination. The venue's role in fostering social connections and providing a communal atmosphere adds considerable value to the overall experience. Visitors appreciate the opportunity to

engage with others with similar interests, creating a sense of community beyond the event itself. This social aspect of visiting JSC enhances immediate enjoyment and builds a stronger emotional connection to the venue. The ability of JSC to facilitate social interactions and community engagement contributes to its appeal and reinforces visitor loyalty, highlighting the importance of creating a welcoming and engaging environment.

Overall, the findings underscore the necessity of a holistic approach to managing customer value at Jakabaring Sport City. The venue can significantly influence visitor satisfaction and loyalty by addressing and enhancing emotional, quality, price, and social dimensions. Each dimension contributes to the overall visitor experience in unique ways, and a strategic focus on these factors can lead to improved visitor retention and a more substantial reputation. The study suggests that ongoing efforts to enhance these aspects will be crucial for maintaining and growing visitor loyalty, ensuring Jakabaring Sport City remains a leading destination for sports and community engagement.

5. CONCLUSION

The study on Customer Value at Jakabaring Sport City (JSC) in Palembang provides a comprehensive understanding of how various dimensions of value influence visitor loyalty. The analysis underscores the multifaceted nature of customer value, revealing that emotional, quality, price, and social dimensions play a pivotal role in shaping visitors' experiences and subsequent loyalty to the venue.

Emotional value is a significant driver of visitor loyalty, as the profound pride and satisfaction experienced during high-profile events create a lasting impact. Major sports events' excitement and memorable experiences foster a solid emotional connection, encouraging repeat visits and positive recommendations. This finding highlights the importance of hosting high-profile and emotionally resonant events to maintain visitor engagement.

Quality value is also crucial in ensuring visitor satisfaction and loyalty. The modern, well-maintained facilities at JSC enhance the overall experience, making the venue a preferred choice for visitors. The high standards of infrastructure contribute to positive perceptions and reinforce the decision to return, emphasizing the need for ongoing investment in facility upkeep and improvements.

Price value is crucial in shaping visitors' perceptions of value for money. While higher ticket prices for major events can be a consideration, the overall quality and experience provided justify the cost for many visitors. Ensuring competitive pricing while delivering high-value experiences is essential for maintaining visitor satisfaction and loyalty and positioning JSC as a destination that offers good value to its patrons.

Social value enhances the appeal of JSC by fostering a sense of community and providing opportunities for social interaction. The venue's role in facilitating connections among visitors adds a layer of enjoyment that extends beyond the events themselves. Creating and nurturing a vibrant

social environment at JSC strengthens visitor loyalty and reinforces the venue's attractiveness as a community hub.

In conclusion, Jakabaring Sport City's success in cultivating visitor loyalty is intricately linked to its ability to address and enhance these four dimensions of customer value. By focusing on emotional resonance, quality facilities, fair pricing, and social engagement, JSC can continue to attract and retain loyal visitors. The study highlights the importance of a comprehensive approach to managing customer value, suggesting that ongoing efforts in these areas will be crucial for sustaining and growing visitor loyalty.

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Nurbaeti, born on April 24, 1964, in Jakarta, Indonesia, is a prominent academic and current Vice Rector at Trisakti Institute of Tourism. She is married and has one child. She holds a Doctoral degree in Tourism Studies at Universitas Gadjah Mada in 2016. Her extensive experience in higher education is highlighted by her role as a permanent lecturer specializing in tourism. She has been recognized for her contributions to academia and active involvement in various research and educational initiatives. As Vice Rector, Nurbaeti plays a crucial role in overseeing academic affairs and contributing to the institute's strategic direction. Her expertise and leadership are pivotal in advancing the institution's mission of providing high-quality education in the tourism sector. She is also noted for her commitment to professional development, participating in various training programs, and achieving hospitality and event education certifications. Nurbaeti's contact information includes her email addresses at nurbaeti @ iptrisakti.ac.id and nurbaeti24 @ yahoo.com, reflecting her dedication to her professional and personal engagements.



Myrza Rahmanita, born on April 17, 1968, in Surabaya, Indonesia, is a distinguished academic and Professor at the Trisakti Institute of Tourism. She holds a Doctoral degree in Economics and is a prominent figure in tourism education. Currently serving as the Head of the Department of Tourism (Master of Tourism) at the institute, she has significantly contributed to the development and leadership of the department. With her extensive academic background and professional experience, Myrza has made notable advancements in tourism studies and continues to be a leading voice in the industry. She is also actively involved in various research projects and academic initiatives, enhancing the quality and reputation of her institution. Her contact details include her email address at myrzarahmanita_@ iptrisakti.ac.id