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Public Service Quality at a Malay Heritage Island Destination: An Exploratory SERVQUAL Analysis of Penyengat Island, Indonesia

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Abstract:
This study examines service quality on Penyengat Island, a historic Malay cultural tourism destination in Tanjungpinang, Indonesia. It reanalyses an existing descriptive qualitative case account using the five SERVQUAL dimensions, while distinguishing between reported service conditions, interpretations offered by the original authors, and management actions proposed here. The available research record identifies interviews with a traditional-costume service attendant and a representative of the municipal Tourism Office, supported by reported observation and documentation. The evidence indicates that established cultural tourism assets coexist with persistent service limitations involving sanitation, facility maintenance, access to visitor information, staffing during peak periods, and accommodation of older and first-time visitors. Although the source portrays courtesy, visitor safety, and historical explanations positively, its evidentiary scope does not justify quantitative service rankings or population-level conclusions about tourist satisfaction. Three qualitative evidence tables and three analytical diagrams organize these findings, identify plausible operational mechanisms, and outline an agenda for independent examination. The analysis emphasizes the importance of integrated facility inventories, consistent historical interpretation, inclusive service design, explicit distribution of responsibilities among relevant actors, and routine structured mechanisms for collecting visitor feedback. Its principal contribution is to connect destination-level service-quality dimensions with accountable public and community governance while transparently acknowledging the limitations of existing evidence. Further research should incorporate documented visitor interviews, systematic facility audits, and comparative observations across tourism seasons to examine whether proposed improvements produce measurable service outcomes.

Keyword: Public Service Quality, SERVQUAL, Heritage Tourism, Governance

INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage destinations occupy a complex position within contemporary tourism systems. They are sites of collective memory and historical interpretation, but they are also public environments in which visitors depend on transportation, sanitation,

orientation, safety, information, and interpersonal assistance. Consequently, the quality of a visit cannot be inferred from the uniqueness of a monument or the attractiveness of a cultural performance alone. It emerges from the interaction between the destination's heritage resources and the services that enable different people to encounter those resources safely, comfortably, and meaningfully. This distinction is particularly important for small islands, where geographical accessibility, constrained land, seasonal movement, and limited service capacity can intensify ordinary problems of destination management (Richards, 2018; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003; Timothy & Boyd, 2003).

Penyengat Island, administratively linked to Tanjungpinang City in Indonesia's Riau Islands Province, represents a historically important Malay cultural landscape associated with the Riau–Lingga polity. Its religious and historical attractions, cultural narratives, and community traditions contribute to its distinctive tourism identity. The original study identifies a waterfront arrival environment, the Malay Traditional Hall (Balai Adat Melayu), religious sites, tourism vehicles, wayfinding signs, and a cultural-costume rental service as salient elements of the destination experience. These assets create opportunities for educational visits, cultural participation, and local economic activity. At the same time, the source manuscript identifies difficulties involving public toilets, waste bins, maintenance, visitor information, staffing at busy periods, and visitor-sensitive facilities. The resulting question is not whether the island possesses cultural value, but whether its service arrangements are sufficiently coherent to make that value accessible in practice.

The Indonesian public-service framework provides a useful starting point. Law Number 25 of 2009 establishes public service as a governmental and administrative concern, whereas Law Number 10 of 2009 addresses tourism development and associated responsibilities. Cultural-heritage protection additionally operates within Law Number 11 of 2010. These legal perspectives should not be conflated. A privately operated costume-rental activity is not automatically a government service, even when it operates within a public tourism destination. Likewise, promotional events are not equivalent to sanitation, accessible infrastructure, or the provision of dependable visitor assistance. Analytically separating public facilities, destination coordination, and commercial encounters is therefore essential for an accountable assessment (Republic of Indonesia, 2009a, 2009b, 2010).

Service quality has traditionally been understood as a multidimensional construct encompassing both technical delivery and perceptions of the service encounter. Grönroos (1984) distinguished what users receive from how it is delivered, while the conceptual gap model of Parasuraman et al. (1985) drew attention to the possible divergence between expected and perceived performance. The subsequent SERVQUAL framework proposed five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Parasuraman et al., 1988, 1991). Yet its familiar measurement language requires care. A numerical SERVQUAL score presupposes appropriate instruments, respondent data, and an explicit scoring procedure. In an interview-led exploratory study, the five dimensions can instead function as sensitizing concepts for organizing observed or reported service concerns. Such a qualitative adaptation does not support a claim about statistical rankings or visitor satisfaction rates (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Parasuraman et al., 1994). Relevant regional scholarship points toward a broader institutional challenge. Suhaila and Baijuri (2024), examining religious and cultural

tourism policy on Penyengat Island, emphasized the significance of implementation capacity, organizational communication, and community awareness. In another Riau Islands case, Srinita et al. (2025) linked tourism-office performance in Lingga Regency to infrastructure, coordination, human-resource capacity, and public engagement. Fatmo et al. (2025) similarly described implementation difficulties in Tanjungpinang's coastal ecotourism governance, including fragmented institutions and constrained community participation. These studies examine policy implementation and organizational performance; the present manuscript complements that discussion by arranging the original Penyengat service observations around a destination-level service-quality framework. Their findings are comparative literature, not substitutes for the primary evidence missing from the case-study record.

Beyond the regional context, heritage-tourism research warns that visitors attach different meanings to the same place. Personal connections to heritage, motivations for visiting, and expectations about interpretation influence how sites are experienced (Poria et al., 2003; Poria et al., 2006a, 2006b). Effective heritage interpretation should therefore provide understandable narratives without sacrificing cultural integrity. Moscardo (1996) established the importance of interpretive environments that engage visitors rather than leaving them to passively consume attractions. The ICOMOS interpretation charter likewise foregrounds understanding, authenticity, inclusiveness, and sustainability. These ideas imply that information signs, trained guides, accessible routes, and responsive service are not optional embellishments: they mediate the relationship between tourists and cultural heritage (International Council on Monuments and Sites, 2008).

A further conceptual concern is the distribution of responsibility. Destination service quality is jointly produced by government agencies, community actors, transport providers, local businesses, guides, and tourists themselves. Stakeholder theory identifies these groups as legitimate participants in decision-making, while collaborative-governance literature emphasizes the institutional conditions needed for cooperative action (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Freeman, 1984; Jamal & Getz, 1995). In small heritage destinations, isolated improvements may have limited effect when facilities are installed without maintenance responsibilities, training takes place without workload planning, or digital promotion increases attention without improving on-site service. Policy coherence thus becomes part of the service-quality problem.

The research gap addressed here is both empirical and methodological. The original manuscript provides a compact, locally grounded account of service strengths and constraints, but its methods and conclusions do not fully distinguish operational perspectives from independently recorded visitor evaluations. A rigorous revision must preserve the information actually documented while testing the strength of each inference. This article therefore asks: (1) How can the documented service conditions of Penyengat Island be interpreted through the five SERVQUAL dimensions? (2) What interacting constraints are reported as shaping destination service delivery? and (3) Which improvements are defensible as governance and management recommendations, and what evidence would be needed to evaluate their effectiveness?

The contribution is a transparent analytical reconstruction of an existing qualitative case, rather than the presentation of new fieldwork. It connects a dimension-by-dimension service diagnosis with accountability boundaries and a proposed,

measurable improvement pathway. The argument is that accessible facilities, credible heritage information, timely assistance, interpersonal trust, and inclusive attention must be treated as an integrated public-service ecosystem. The remainder of the article explains the evidence base and its limitations, presents three source-grounded analytical tables and three non-numeric figures, discusses the dimensions and their institutional connections, and offers implications for policy and future evaluation.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study was originally described as descriptive qualitative research conducted at the Penyengat Island tourism destination. The source manuscript reports interviews, observation, and documentation as data-collection approaches. Its methods section names two principal informant roles: an attendant responsible for traditional-costume rental at Balai Adat Penyengat and a representative of the Tanjungpinang City Tourism Office. The results section likewise describes these two interview sources. Their exact interview dates, recording arrangements, durations, verbatim transcripts, observation schedules, and associated document inventories are not included in the material available for revision. For that reason, this article treats the supplied manuscript as the primary study record and explicitly avoids representing reconstructed interpretations as newly collected evidence.

The design is most appropriately characterized as an exploratory, single-destination qualitative case interpreted through a service-quality lens. A case study can illuminate context and mechanisms without claiming statistical representation, provided the boundary of the case and the supporting sources are transparent (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). The unit of analysis is the destination-level arrangement of visitor-facing services, not individual tourists or a representative sample of their satisfaction. The two documented informant positions provide organizational and operating perspectives; they do not independently establish aggregate tourist perceptions. This distinction is crucial because the source abstract refers broadly to visitors, while its method does not demonstrate a completed visitor interview sample or explain the questionnaire mentioned only in the English abstract.

Secondary literature was used to clarify concepts and to contextualize the case, not to replace missing field records. The three articles selected from the Indonesian Tourism Journal address Penyengat tourism policy, a tourism-office service evaluation in Lingga, and coastal ecotourism governance in Tanjungpinang (Fatmo et al., 2025; Srinita et al., 2025; Suhaila & Baijuri, 2024). Broader research on service quality, heritage interpretation, collaborative governance, qualitative inference, and accessible tourism provided theoretical comparison. Where the original manuscript referred to specific promotional events, institutional initiatives, and possible World Heritage recognition, these statements were treated cautiously unless independent official records were available. No formal UNESCO inscription status is inferred from local aspirations.

The revision applies a structured secondary thematic reading using five deductive service categories. First, claims in the findings and discussion were extracted and mapped to tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Second, each claim was assigned to its evidentiary status: reported physical or administrative condition, informant-mediated interpretation, or proposed management action. Third, cross-cutting constraints were compared across dimensions, especially maintenance,

staff capacity, communication, resource limitations, environmental behavior, and digital information. Fourth, these connections were translated into explanatory diagrams and an action matrix. This process resembles the logic of coding, data displays, and analytic memoing described by Miles et al. (2014), Saldaña (2021), and Braun and Clarke (2006, 2022). It is an interpretive reanalysis of a limited manuscript record, not a fresh coding exercise conducted on original transcripts.

A qualitative application of SERVQUAL also requires a precise terminology. Tangibles describes the physical and informational settings visitors encounter; reliability concerns consistency and accuracy of service delivery; responsiveness concerns the availability and timeliness of assistance; assurance refers to competence, confidence, and perceived safety; and empathy denotes individual consideration and accessibility. The dimensions are used as categories rather than measured latent variables. No gap scores, Likert means, percentages, confidence intervals, inter-rater agreement coefficients, or ordinal ranks are calculated. A dimensional label in this paper indicates the type of issue described, not the statistically observed performance level of that dimension (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Parasuraman et al., 1988).

Because documentation quality determines what can reasonably be concluded, the distinction between documentary description and observational verification should be explicit at each stage of reporting. Document analysis is a research process with its own requirements for source provenance, relevance, completeness, and interpretation (Bowen, 2009). A mature qualitative report would normally explain how interviews were documented, how observations were recorded, whether participants reviewed interpretations, and whether data were triangulated. Naturalistic inquiry encourages credibility through engagement with discrepant evidence and transparent links between claims and records (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2015).

There are four additional boundaries. The source does not provide the number or profile of tourists interviewed, precluding visitor-level conclusions. It does not provide interview extracts or measurement sheets, precluding evidentiary quotation and quantitative comparison. It does not identify a time series, preventing assessments of trends or effects of government programs. Finally, the observations focus on a destination and a cultural-rental encounter, making generalization to all Tanjungpinang tourist sites inappropriate. These limitations do not erase the practical significance of the reported concerns, but they require the findings to be framed as exploratory rather than definitive. A follow-up study should obtain consented tourist interviews, standardized facility audits, and comparative observations across peak and off-peak periods (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The destination-level service profile

The original case record depicts Penyengat Island as a destination where strong cultural meaning coexists with uneven supporting services. At the physical level, the reported presence of arrival infrastructure, public-facing cultural facilities, religious attractions, on-island transport, and directional signs demonstrates that visitors encounter an organized tourism setting rather than an undeveloped site. However, the same account identifies a need to improve public toilets, waste facilities, and maintenance. This juxtaposition is important: the existence of facilities is not equivalent

to their adequacy, distribution, accessibility, cleanliness, or operational reliability. A service quality interpretation must therefore distinguish provision from actual usability.

The cultural-costume rental activity illustrates another relationship between tourism products and service processes. The original authors describe it as a valued participatory activity associated with Malay cultural identity while also identifying limitations in the service area and costume-storage arrangements. Such observations suggest that visitors' encounters with cultural heritage depend partly on mundane operational conditions: space for changing, appropriate storage, directions, waiting areas, and attentive staff. The present interpretation does not assume that a particular number of visitors were satisfied or dissatisfied. Rather, it identifies a plausible service interface at which the quality of cultural participation is constrained by physical and organizational resources, consistent with servicescape theory (Bitner, 1992).

Table 1 consolidates the documented material according to SERVQUAL while retaining the boundary between what is described and what remains unmeasured. The table should be read as an evidence matrix, not as the results of a completed survey. Its purpose is to make the reasoning auditable: a reported limitation in sanitation is classified as a tangible concern; an account of reduced assistance during festivals concerns responsiveness; and the need for elderly-friendly amenities and clearer guidance maps to empathy. Claims about friendliness and security are identified as interpretations contained in the source rather than as verified population-level estimates.

Table 1. SERVQUAL evidence matrix and limits of interpretation

SERVQUAL dimension	Material described in original record	Evidence boundary / defensible reading
Tangibles	Pier, cultural hall, religious sites, transport and signs reported; toilets, bins, storage and upkeep need improvement.	Facility functionality, counts, standards and visitor ratings not recorded.
Reliability	History, locations and costume-rental procedures reportedly explained; governmental coaching mentioned.	No repeated-encounter tests or validated accuracy checks documented.
Responsiveness	Assistance described as available; capacity reportedly strained during festivals and holidays.	No staffing rosters, waiting-time observations or service logs provided.
Assurance	Courtesy, safety and cultural knowledge portrayed positively in source.	No independent visitor dataset supports rank or comparative score.
Empathy	Need for better assistance to elderly and first-time visitors reported.	Access experiences of diverse disability groups not directly examined.

Source: Author, 2026

As Table 1 makes evident, service quality is not a single favorable or unfavorable judgment. The five categories point to different intervention mechanisms. Physical repairs require inspection and budget allocation; consistent explanations require shared service protocols; crowded-period responses require staffing and coordination; competence and trust require training and safeguards; and individualized assistance requires inclusive design. It would therefore be inappropriate to summarize the record as demonstrating the "highest-scoring" dimension, because no dimension was scored. A defensible conclusion is that the original narrative describes relatively positive interpersonal interactions while also documenting material and inclusion-related concerns.



Figure 1. Qualitative classification of the five SERVQUAL
Source: Author, 2026

Figure 1 visualizes this qualitative profile without converting judgments into fictitious numerical values. The diagram positions the documented strengths, constraints, and evidence gaps side by side. Notably, the positive statements about assurance and reliability originate from the original report and are not corroborated by visitor transcripts. The dimension of empathy requires particular caution: access for older adults and first-time visitors is mentioned as a concern, but disabled travelers, caregivers, and people with sensory needs are not systematically represented in the available data. The absence of evidence about these groups should not be interpreted as evidence that their needs have been met.

2. Tangibles: physical facilities, sanitation, and the heritage servicescape

Tangibles is the most immediately observable domain of the case. The source identifies a pier, a cultural hall, worship spaces, tourism vehicles, and visitor signage. These assets give the site a recognizable visitor-service structure. Nevertheless, the concerns about toilets, litter facilities, maintenance, and the costume-rental room indicate incomplete service support. Service environments influence perceptions of comfort, functional efficiency, and safety, but the direction and magnitude of those influences must be investigated rather than assumed (Bitner, 1992). On an island, public sanitation and waste systems have implications beyond visual appearance because services share limited space with residential activity and valued cultural settings.

An analytical distinction is needed between an infrastructure deficit and a maintenance deficit. A shortage of bins could reflect insufficient supply, poor placement, irregular collection, or a combination of these; the original manuscript does not specify which mechanisms dominate. Similarly, a toilet "requiring improvement" may refer to count, cleanliness, accessibility, hours of operation, or water availability. Before capital investment is recommended, managers should document the location, functional state, responsible operator, and frequency of use of existing facilities. This is a proposed diagnostic procedure, not a claim that such an audit was previously conducted. An initial asset register would permit managers to prioritize practical, verifiable problems rather than undertaking generic destination beautification.

Heritage management adds a second reason for careful tangible-service planning. Installing signs, shelters, or waste containers near important monuments may improve usability but could damage visual integrity if insensitive to the site. Cultural interpretation must connect facilities to heritage values and remain compatible with conservation principles (International Council on Monuments and Sites, 2008; Timothy & Boyd, 2003). A practical approach would combine clear, multilingual, and legible information with reversible or context-sensitive physical interventions, subject to relevant heritage approvals. The present case record cannot establish the best design for any specific site; it can establish only the categories of need that warrant assessment.

3. Reliability: consistency of information and predictable service

The original account describes efforts to communicate the island's history, attraction locations, and traditional-costume rental procedures, alongside periodic support from the Tourism Office. These statements relate to reliability because visitors need consistent answers regardless of whom they approach. However, there is no documentary record showing whether different personnel provide matching directions, whether signs are current, or whether rental procedures remain consistent across operating hours. A qualitative interview statement about intended consistency should not be equated with independent proof of service reliability. The service-quality literature distinguishes managerial intent from experienced performance, making repeated visitor encounters an important future measurement unit (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988).

Reliability also has an institutional dimension. Public visitors may receive information from boat operators, vendors, cultural interpreters, officials, and informal guides. If working hours, service contacts, safety messages, or attraction descriptions differ across providers, destination reliability can deteriorate even when each individual actor is well-intentioned. The source describes the need for coordination without identifying a shared operating manual. It is therefore reasonable to propose a destination-wide information protocol: maintain an agreed core heritage narrative, display verified transport guidance, identify public-service contacts, and set a simple process for correcting outdated information. Implementation and resulting performance would require a separate evaluation.

The significance of reliable interpretation is especially strong for heritage sites because informational error can become cultural distortion. Visitor expectations are influenced by perceived relationships to heritage, and the presentation of historical material may shape destination credibility (Poria et al., 2003; Poria et al., 2006a). Reliability thus involves more than efficient transactions; it includes responsible

explanation of Malay history and traditions. The distinction is important when preparing training materials for rental attendants and guides who may be asked to interpret culturally significant clothing or historical sites outside their formal job duties.

4. Responsiveness: staffing, peak demand, and visitor assistance

The manuscript describes service personnel as generally willing to assist visitors but indicates that service becomes less optimal during festivals and holiday periods because personnel are limited. This is the strongest explicit connection in the source between a reported operational constraint and a service dimension. It suggests a potential mismatch between demand fluctuations and staff capacity. Nevertheless, the record contains no visitor counts, queue measurements, response-time logs, or shift rosters. The conclusion should therefore remain qualitative: responsiveness may be vulnerable during concentrated demand; the scale, timing, and frequency of such vulnerability have not been independently measured.

A response-oriented management strategy would begin with distinguishing predictable peaks from unexpected incidents. Festival calendars and holiday patterns can inform temporary staffing, an information desk, and simplified wayfinding. Conversely, lost-visitor assistance, transport disruption, first aid, and emergency coordination require protocols that are available irrespective of season. Neither response type can be evaluated through general statements of friendliness alone. Specific process indicators such as availability of help points, the proportion of staffed hours, and time to resolve recorded service requests would make future claims more transparent. This recommendation aligns with the broader view that performance is an observable process rather than merely an administrative intention (Srinita et al., 2025).

Responsiveness should also be considered at the boundary between public agencies and businesses. A tourist looking for a pier timetable or accessible transport may be redirected among multiple providers. Without clear referral responsibilities, even a courteous response can leave the actual problem unresolved. Shared contact lists and escalation arrangements could reduce this risk. Stakeholder collaboration is relevant because destination services operate as interdependent tasks; successful coordination requires explicit agreements, trust, and a practicable distribution of resources rather than rhetorical support for partnership (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Jamal & Getz, 1995).

5. Assurance: perceived safety, competence, and cultural trust

The supplied manuscript places particular emphasis on friendliness, politeness, the sense of safety, and personnel's ability to explain local history and Malay culture. Within a qualitative SERVQUAL reading, these are themes associated with assurance. However, the text provides no identifiable interview quotations from visitors or direct evidence establishing that assurance was the best-performing dimension. An improved scientific report must therefore distinguish a recurring positive portrayal in the original narrative from a measured comparative finding. The former is supported by the supplied text; the latter is not.

Assurance includes at least three mechanisms in a heritage-island setting. The first is practical confidence: visitors should know where to obtain assistance and how to navigate transport or public spaces safely. The second is interpersonal trust: personnel should communicate accurately, treat visitors respectfully, and explain procedures

without ambiguity. The third is interpretive credibility: culturally meaningful activities should be introduced competently and without misleading claims about authenticity. These mechanisms are analytically separable, although they may interact in lived experience. Their evaluation requires different forms of evidence, including site walkthroughs, verified guidance materials, staff competency records, and visitor accounts (Grönroos, 1984; Moscardo, 1996).

Training is mentioned among the government's efforts, but neither curriculum nor attendance nor measured outcomes are documented. Capacity building should not be presented as successful merely because it was scheduled or announced. A stronger managerial approach would specify training in intercultural communication, heritage interpretation, emergency referrals, and visitor-service ethics; document who attended; and evaluate whether practices changed. This connects the quality agenda to performance-oriented public management while respecting the cultural specificity of Penyengat Island. Collaboration with heritage experts and community custodians could improve interpretive consistency without displacing local knowledge (Suhaila & Baijuri, 2024).

6. Empathy: accessibility and the diversity of visitors

The source records a need for better information, additional support for first-time visitors, and more elderly-friendly facilities. These concerns indicate that service adaptation to different needs may remain incomplete. Empathy, however, should not be reduced to an individual worker's kindness. At destination level, it also concerns the design of systems that recognize mobility limitations, unfamiliarity with transport connections, differing languages, and variations in cultural knowledge. A visitor who cannot find an accessible route encounters a structural failure even when every employee is courteous. The accessibility requirements and recommendations outlined in ISO 21902:2021 provide a useful external benchmark for a future site-specific audit (International Organization for Standardization, 2021).

A responsible inclusion analysis distinguishes needs identified in the original study from other needs that remain unexamined. The manuscript explicitly mentions older visitors and first-time arrivals; it does not document access conditions for wheelchair users, blind or deaf visitors, parents with young children, or people requiring simplified language. These omissions should be recognized as evidence gaps, not automatically classified as observed discrimination. A future participatory audit involving affected visitor groups could examine the whole journey from boat boarding and arrival to interpretation, sanitation, cultural activities, and departure. Accessibility is best understood as an interconnected visitor journey, not as a single ramp or isolated sign.

Empathy also implies a culturally respectful service ethos. The attraction of traditional costume rental creates opportunities for participation, photographs, and learning, but some visitors may require explanation of etiquette, garment suitability, or the significance of particular elements. Providing sensitive and accurate guidance would support meaningful engagement. The literature on heritage visitation shows that motivations and expectations differ across audiences; uniform treatment is not necessarily equitable treatment (Poria et al., 2006b; Richards, 2018). Without direct visitor narratives, the present analysis can identify these requirements as management considerations but cannot establish their prevalence.

7. Cross-cutting constraints and their institutional mechanisms

The original study lists five principal constraints: insufficient public facilities, limited service personnel at busy times, financial limitations for maintenance and development, poor waste-related behavior among some visitors, and underuse of information technology. These issues are often treated as discrete weaknesses, but they can reinforce one another. Limited staffing may impair the monitoring of facilities; deficient information may direct visitors toward already congested places; inadequate waste facilities may discourage responsible behavior; and constrained budgets may make preventive maintenance difficult. These connections are plausible explanatory pathways rather than relationships tested quantitatively in the case.

Table 2. Reported constraints, possible mechanisms, and required verification

Reported constraint	Plausible process-level effect (interpretation)	Evidence needed for verification
Limited toilets, bins and upkeep	Reduces usability and creates maintenance pressure.	Facility inventory, functionality and cleaning logs.
Insufficient staffing in peak periods	May slow information and assistance.	Visitor volume, service requests and shift rosters.
Restricted development resources	May delay repairs and replacement.	Approved budgets, expenditures and asset plans.
Visitor waste-management behavior	May increase littering and cleaning workload.	Structured waste observations and collection records.
Underdeveloped digital information	May reduce clarity of orientation and service access.	Content audit, uptime and user feedback.

Source: Author, 2026

Table 2 distinguishes the originally stated obstacles from mechanisms inferred through service theory and from proposed evidence required to verify each explanation. Such differentiation matters because a list of problems does not establish their causes. A funding constraint, for example, may reflect insufficient total resources or a distribution issue, while weak digital information may be a consequence of connectivity, skills, update responsibility, or limited content. No evidence in the source permits choosing among those explanations. The correct next analytical step is to specify an observable mechanism and identify data that could disconfirm or corroborate it (Dredge & Jamal, 2015; Miles et al., 2014).

Figure 2 presents a conceptual pathway linking reported constraints to potentially affected service dimensions and downstream outcomes that future research may test. It does not suggest that tourist satisfaction, repeat visitation, or heritage conservation outcomes were measured. The distinction between documented inputs, theorized processes, and future outcomes prevents a common inferential error: moving from an observed toilet shortage directly to a quantified loss of loyalty. Satisfaction theory emphasizes an evaluative relationship between expectations and experience, but the

present record lacks the visitor-level data required to estimate that relationship (Oliver, 1980).

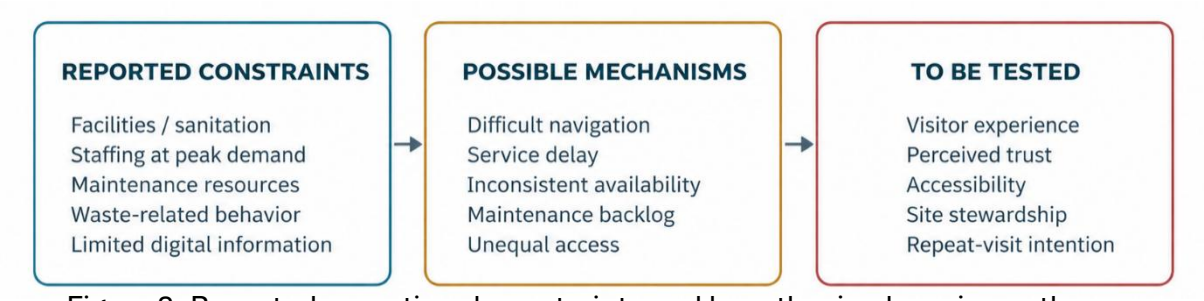


Figure 2. Reported operational constraints and hypothesized service pathways
Source: author, 2026

8. Public programs, institutional roles, and implementation gaps

The original manuscript reports efforts to train tourism actors, hold cultural events, extend digital promotion, support heritage-development initiatives, and maintain facilities incrementally. These activities should be treated as reported initiatives, not as evaluated successes. They address different policy functions: training targets human capital; cultural events attract attention and communicate identity; digital campaigns may affect market visibility; heritage initiatives concern longer-term stewardship; and maintenance addresses everyday usability. Without time-bounded program records, expenditure documents, or outcome indicators, none can be causally linked to improved service quality. The more defensible question is whether each activity aligns with an identified service bottleneck.

The distinction between destination promotion and public-service improvement is essential. Additional publicity can attract first-time visitors before sanitation, staffing, signage, and access barriers have been addressed. Such a sequence may intensify weak points during peaks. Conversely, facility improvement without communication and maintenance can fail to change visitor experience. A coherent policy approach would integrate promotion with realistic service readiness, routine monitoring, and transparent reporting. This is consistent with sustainable tourism guidance, which frames destination performance in terms of economic, environmental, and sociocultural outcomes rather than arrivals alone (World Tourism Organization, 2004; World Tourism Organization & United Nations Environment Programme, 2005).

The governance perspective is particularly relevant to islands because jurisdictional responsibility may be distributed across transport, sanitation, tourism, cultural heritage, and community-management organizations. The original study identifies the Tourism Office as a key governmental actor but does not map the authority of every operator or agency. A proposed task allocation should therefore remain provisional until verified against actual legal mandates. Local government can coordinate public standards and reporting, private and community operators can manage their own visitor encounters, and heritage custodians can advise on interpretation and site protection.

Participatory governance should also allow residents to raise concerns about waste, congestion, and the everyday use of public space (Bramwell & Lane, 2011; Fatmo et al., 2025; Ostrom, 1990). Comparison with studies of other coastal destinations

reinforces the importance of considering institutions, ecosystems, and multiple stakeholder groups together. Dimitrovski et al. (2021) analyze coastal and marine tourism sustainability through a multi-stakeholder perspective, drawing attention to differences in interests and implementation conditions.

That literature cannot demonstrate particular attitudes among Penyengat residents, but it provides a reason to examine how boat operators, heritage custodians, municipal departments, businesses, and communities may define service priorities differently. For instance, an access improvement welcomed by visitors might raise concerns about visual intrusion or crowding near cultural assets. A credible destination policy should record these tensions rather than presume that every tourism investment generates an identical benefit for all parties. A structured consultation could compare proposed measures against visitor convenience, resident use of space, recurrent maintenance costs, and cultural integrity, with the outcome of deliberations documented for later review.

9. A phased improvement agenda and evaluation logic

The policy implication of the case is not simply to build more facilities or conduct more training. The first priority is an auditable baseline. Managers should know which toilets function, where waste is collected, which signs are readable, how staff cover peak periods, and who is accountable for corrections. A compact baseline can be established using facility inspections, simple operating records, and short, consented interviews with visitors from different mobility and travel groups. This information would allow improvements to be sequenced according to urgency, feasibility, public-service responsibility, and heritage sensitivity, rather than according to visual appeal alone.

In the near term, an operational coordination mechanism could identify responsible contacts for pier information, public sanitation, visitor complaints, and emergency referrals. A shared visitor-information sheet could standardize verified directions and cultural guidance. In the medium term, teams could upgrade priority facilities, evaluate staff training, and publish dependable digital information. In the longer term, management could review satisfaction, accessibility, heritage integrity, community effects, and maintenance performance together. None of these steps requires assuming a new permanent organization; existing institutions may be able to implement them through an agreed operating protocol. The effectiveness of any arrangement, however, would need periodic assessment.

Table 3. Proposed service improvements and measurable follow-up indicators

Priority action (proposed)	Responsible parties to confirm	Monitoring indicator (proposed)
Audit toilets, waste points, signage and access routes.	Tourism office, infrastructure operators, community representatives.	Usable assets and unresolved defects by site.
Coordinate assistance and coverage for high-demand periods.	Tourism office, transport and site operators.	Staffed hours; cases resolved; peak-period coverage.

Priority action (proposed)	Responsible parties to confirm	Monitoring indicator (proposed)
Standardize verified cultural and visitor information.	Heritage custodians, guides and destination managers.	Last update, accuracy checks, readable access channels.
Improve culturally appropriate, inclusive service training.	Tourism office, local operators, trainers.	Verified participation and observed practice changes.
Review results with residents and visitors; adjust plans.	Multi-stakeholder coordination group.	Recorded feedback, maintenance closure and follow-up.

Source: Author, 2026

Table 3 presents recommended actions and proposed indicators. It deliberately avoids assigning ungrounded budget figures, completion percentages, or five-year targets. A target such as "all critical sanitation points operational" should be converted into a numeric benchmark only after managers have verified the site inventory and the applicable service standard. Similarly, visitor satisfaction should be measured through a transparent design that records sampling procedures, questionnaire items, and missing responses. Using a performance-only service instrument might be defensible in such a future survey, provided that its development and validation are reported (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Parasuraman et al., 1994).

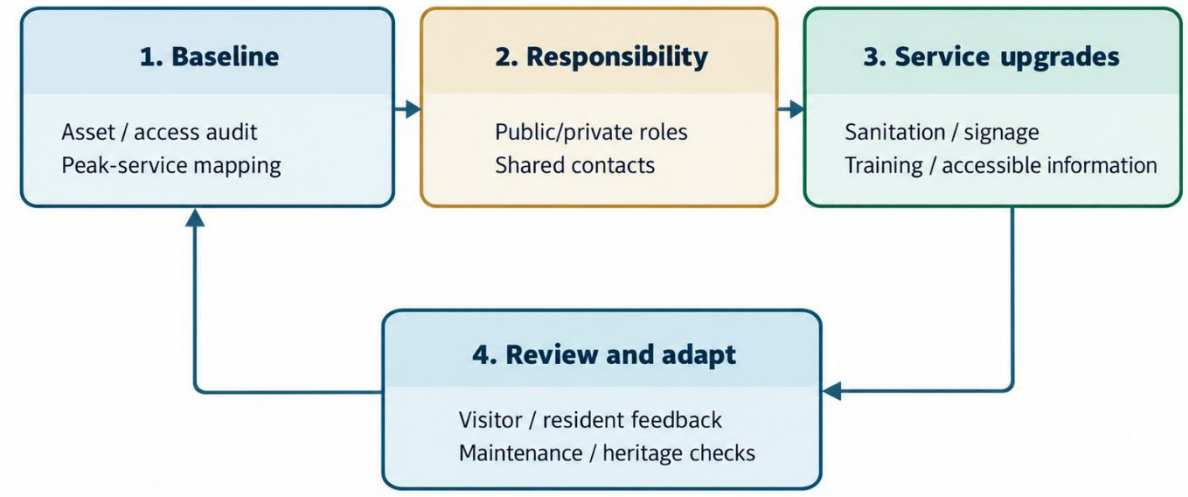


Figure 3. Proposed iterative governance and service-improvement cycle
Source: author, 2026

Figure 3 places the recommended improvement agenda into a feedback sequence from documented concerns to baseline assessment, assigned responsibilities, implementation, and publicly reviewable monitoring. Rather than implying a mechanically linear process, the feedback arrow emphasizes adaptive management: observed failures should revise earlier assumptions and allocations. Institutional learning requires both operational data and participant perspectives. For Penyengat Island, the monitoring framework should include residents and heritage

custodians because an apparently successful visitor-service change could still impose unwanted burdens on community life or alter a protected cultural setting. Effective policy evaluates whose experience improves and whose responsibilities increase (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Scheyvens, 1999).

CONCLUSION

This revised qualitative case study examines public-service quality at Penyengat Island through the five dimensions of SERVQUAL while maintaining explicit boundaries around the available evidence. The supplied record describes a culturally significant destination with a pier, Malay Traditional Hall, religious attractions, visitor transport, signs, and participatory Malay-costume activities. It also identifies sanitation and maintenance concerns, constraints in staffing during busy periods, limited tourism information, financial pressures, and unmet needs for more inclusive visitor assistance. The original account positively portrays courtesy, safety, and heritage explanations, but its documented informants do not support statistical rankings of service dimensions or general claims about tourist satisfaction.

The main analytical finding is a system of interconnected service needs rather than a numerical quality score. Physical facilities and accessibility require measurable inventories; reliability depends on consistent, historically responsible information; responsiveness requires peak-period and referral arrangements; assurance depends on competence and clarity; and empathy requires attention to diverse visitor journeys. Constraints in personnel, budget, communication, and visitor behavior may amplify one another, although the present record cannot establish causal magnitudes. A phased response should combine baseline audits, clarified organizational responsibility, targeted operational fixes, heritage-sensitive upgrades, and transparent monitoring with community participation.

The article contributes a cautious model for connecting service-quality categories with institutional accountability in a small-island heritage setting. Its principal limitation is the absence of original interview transcripts, visitor-level data, dates, sampling documentation, and systematic service measurements. The recommendations therefore remain hypotheses for practical evaluation. Future research should triangulate tourist experiences, management perspectives, accessibility audits, and observation across seasons, and should test whether improvements change both visitor access and cultural-heritage stewardship. Claims about effectiveness, causal relationships, and visitor loyalty should await that evidence.

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