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# ANALYSIS OF POTENTIAL VISITORS' PREFERENCES FOR TOURISM WEBSITE INTERFACE DESIGN: A CASE STUDY OF THE EMPAT LAWANG TOURISM OFFICE WEBSITE

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates potential visitors' preferences in tourism website interface design, focusing on the case of the Tourism Office website of Empat Lawang Regency. The research adopts a mixed-methods approach combining user surveys, heuristic evaluation, and usability testing to identify key interface elements influencing user experience. Findings reveal that visitors prioritize intuitive navigation, responsive design, and visually appealing content. Additionally, access speed, multi-device compatibility, and structured information significantly impact satisfaction. Unlike prior studies that center on developer-driven design, this research introduces a user-centered design perspective grounded in empirical user preferences. This shift underscores the importance of aligning design strategies with actual visitor expectations. The novelty of this work lies in its contextual application of UX principles in a regional tourism setting, offering localized design insights often overlooked in mainstream studies. The study contributes actionable design recommendations aimed at improving website usability, increasing tourist engagement, and enhancing the digital image of emerging tourist destinations like Empat Lawang.

**KEYWORDS** visitor preferences; user interface; tourism website; usability



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# **INTRODUCTION**

In the digital era, websites serve as vital platforms for promoting tourism and delivering destination-related information to a global audience. With the growing trend of online decision-making among travelers, a region's digital presence, especially through official tourism websites, plays a crucial role in attracting potential visitors. Globally, user-centered web design has been widely recognized

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as a critical factor in enhancing the effectiveness of tourism communication and digital branding (Darmawan et al., 2013; Elfaki et al., 2013; Rahman et al., 2018; Saifudin & Pasiama, 2022; Wibisana, 2018).

However, in the local context of Empat Lawang Regency, Indonesia, tourism websites remain underdeveloped and often fail to meet the expectations of modern users. Despite having significant natural and cultural tourism potential (Ramadhan et al., 2024), the official tourism website of Empat Lawang suffers from outdated design, limited content, and poor interface usability, which hinders its ability to attract and engage digital visitors.

Several prior studies have explored the development of tourism information systems, including research in Sindangbarang, South Cianjur using the Waterfall Paradigm, which found that tourism information systems are effective in disseminating information to the public (Suheri et al., 2023). Similarly, research in Minahasa Regency using a qualitative approach emphasized that tourism websites play a significant role but often lack sufficient content and usability(Yunice Zevanya Surentu et al., 2020). Another study by Lengkong, Sengkey, & Sugiarso (2019) highlighted the positive impact of tourism promotion through web-based systems using the Rapid Application Development (RAD) model. Despite these contributions, most of the previous work focuses on system development from a technical or developer-centric perspective rather than incorporating actual user experience evaluations.

Similar studies by Nawrot and Skublewska-Paszkowska (2022) and Araujo and Fraiz (2021) emphasize that user dissatisfaction in tourism websites often stems from lack of visual clarity, non-intuitive interfaces, and poor integration of interactive features issues that also resonate in the case of Empat Lawang.

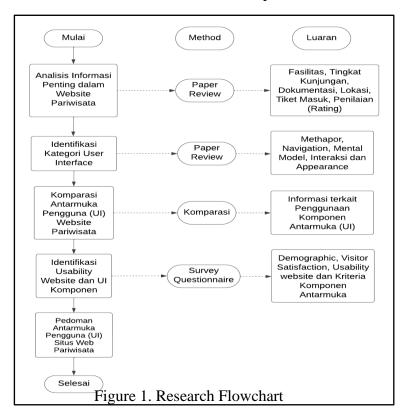
This study addresses that gap by shifting the perspective from system-centric to user-centered design evaluation. The novelty of this research lies in its empirical assessment of potential visitors' preferences toward tourism website interface design, specifically in the context of a regional government-managed website. Unlike previous research, this study emphasizes user experience (UX), usability evaluation, and heuristic analysis to uncover the interface components that genuinely influence visitor satisfaction and engagement (Dwi Farida, 2016; Ishak et al., 2020).

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze visitor preferences related to interface design elements such as navigation, visual appeal, and content structure using a descriptive quantitative approach supported by library research and survey questionnaires. The findings are expected to benefit regional tourism offices by providing actionable recommendations for improving web usability and attracting more visitors. The implications of this research extend to local government efforts in digital transformation, tourism promotion, and inclusive web development strategies tailored to real user needs.

#### RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a descriptive quantitative research design, enriched with elements of a mixed-method approach. The goal is to explore and quantify user preferences regarding tourism website interface design while also incorporating expert insights for qualitative validation.

The research was carried out in five structured phases, as outlined below:



### 1. Phase I Analysis of key information on tourism websites

A literature study was conducted to identify types of information most needed by potential visitors. This included identifying content such as facilities, visit rates, location, documentation, entrance tickets, and ratings. This stage was foundational for building the survey instrument.

### 2. Phase II Identification of User Interface Categories

This phase reviewed previous academic work to determine the key UI components relevant to tourism websites, such as metaphor, navigation, mental model, interaction, and appearance. These categories became the basis for designing the survey indicators. According to Nawrot and Skublewska-Paszkowska (2023), tourism websites that adopt universal design principles including consistent navigation, high-contrast visual cues, and device compatibility tend to score higher in usability tests and increase user satisfaction.

# 3. Phase III User Interface (UI) Comparison of Tourism Websites

Several tourism websites from different districts in Indonesia were analyzed based on their ranking by the Ministry of Tourism. The UI structure, content

relevance, and accessibility were compared. This phase helped to contextualize how Empat Lawang's website performs relative to others.

# 4. Phase IV Website Usability and UI Identification

This phase used quantitative surveys as the primary data collection instrument. The questionnaire was developed based on established UI/UX metrics and validated through expert review by practitioners in tourism digital services.

- The survey involved 300 respondents, selected using cluster random sampling from 10 sub-districts in Empat Lawang Regency.
- Demographic data (age, gender, education) and usability perceptions (ease of use, visual satisfaction, navigation quality) were collected.
- Additionally, qualitative interviews were conducted with local tourism experts and community figures to triangulate findings and provide depth.

### 5. Phase V Tourism Website User Interface (UI) Guidelines

Based on the survey and interview findings, this phase produced User-Centered Design (UCD) guidelines tailored for government-managed tourism websites. The guidelines focus on:

- clear navigation structure,
- responsive layout,
- appealing visual hierarchy,
- and functional interactivity tailored to user expectations.

### **Instrument Used**

- Survey questionnaire with closed-ended Likert-scale items (1–4 scale), developed from literature and validated via expert judgment.
- Interview guide for semi-structured interviews with tourism experts.

# **Data Analysis Techniques**

- Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentages, means) with tools like SPSS or Excel to interpret trends in visitor preferences.
- Qualitative interview data were analyzed using thematic coding to extract patterns related to usability issues and feature expectations.

# Validity and Reliability

- Content validity of the questionnaire was established via review by three tourism and UX experts.
- Reliability was tested through a pilot study involving 30 respondents using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded acceptable reliability scores ( $\alpha > 0.7$ ) for usability items.

#### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study applied a five-phase framework to analyze user preferences and usability factors related to the tourism website of the Empat Lawang Regency. The results are organized by phase, with critical insights drawn from survey data, UI evaluation, and expert interviews.

# **Analysis of Key Information on Tourism websites**

At this stage, identification of visitor information needs has been carried out, such as facilities, locations, and visual documentation on the tourism website of the 4 lawang district on the page https://dispar.empatlawangkab.go.id/ as in Figure 2 below. Literature reviews and content audits identified that visitors seek core tourism information such as facilities, visit rates, documentation, location, entrance tickets, and ratings. These findings are aligned with usability principles that emphasize visibility, accessibility, and relevance of content to support user decision-making.



Figure 2. Tourism website of Empat Lawang Regency

### **Identification of User Interface Categories**

User interface (UI) categories such as navigation, metaphor, mental model, interaction, and appearance were defined based on UCD literature(Elfaki et al., 2013). Analysis showed that the current website partially supports intuitive navigation and mobile responsiveness. However, persistent issues such as broken links (404 errors), outdated menus, and conventional design compromise the user experience and violate usability heuristics like "error prevention" and "recognition over recall" (Nielsen, 1994).(Darmawan et al., 2013; Ishak et al., 2020)

# **User Interface (UI) Comparison of Tourism Websites**

A comparative analysis of the interface of the website of the Tourism Office of Empat Lawang Regency with several other district websites has been completed, the results are as follows:

Table 1. UI Comparison of Other District Tourism Websites

<b>Mojokerto District</b>	Bangka Regency	Jember Regency	Karanganyar			
			Regency			
Has good navigation	Offers information	A more modern	Responsive and easy to			
with clear menus,	on tourist	and interactive	navigate design such as			
such as categories of	attractions, such as	design with a menu	natural to educational			
tourist destinations,	Penyusuk Beach and	divided into	tourism options.			
tourist villages,	Putri Island, as well	various categories,	Information about			

culinary,	lodging,	as	culinary	such	as na	ature	ticket	prices	and
and tickets.		specialties.	This	tourism	ı, culii	nary,	operating	times	for
		page is al	so quite	cultural	l arts,	and	tourist	destinat	tions
		informative	with	hotels.			such as K	Cemuning	Tea
		interesting p	ohotos.				Garden	and F	River
							Tubing is	very clea	ır.

A cross-district UI analysis revealed that other regional tourism websites (e.g., Mojokerto, Jember, Bangka, Karanganyar) generally offer clearer navigation, richer visuals, and more engaging interfaces. These design characteristics reflect better adherence to UCD principles particularly in aligning system functionality with user expectations. Empat Lawang's website, in contrast, lacks this alignment, signaling a gap between system design and user needs.

Table 1 presents a comparative analysis of user interface components from selected regional tourism websites, including Mojokerto, Bangka, Jember, and Karanganyar. The data was collected through direct observation and heuristic evaluation. The selection of websites was based on rankings provided by the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and regional accessibility. Each website was assessed on aspects such as navigation clarity, content richness, visual presentation, and mobile responsiveness.

# Website Usability and UI Identification

Usability testing is carried out to evaluate aspects of effectiveness, aspects of efficiency, and aspects of user satisfaction on the tourism website of Empat Lawang Regency. The results of usability testing were obtained from 300 respondents selected through the Cluster Random Sampling technique from 10 sub-districts in Empat Lawang Regency, namely Pendopo, Pendopo Barat, Lintang Kanan, Muara Pinang, Talang Padang, Tebing Tinggi, Ulu Musi, Saling, Sikap Dalam, and Pasemah Air Keruh. The indicators measured are website visitor satisfaction, website usability, interface components, assessment of important information, and interactive features expected by prospective visitors to the 4 lawang district tourist destination. The results of this survey are explained through the data table below:

Table 2. Data Demografi Responden

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Category	Sub-Category	Percentage
Gender	Men	50.7%
	Women	49.3%
Age	18-25 TH	87.3%
	26-35 TH	11.7%
	36-45 TH	1%
	>45 TH	0
Education	High School	70.3%
Category	Diploma	13.7%
•	Bachelor	14.7%
	Postgraduate	1.3%

Based on table 2, the respondents consisted of men (50.7%) and women (49.3%), with the majority being in the age range of 18-25 years (81.3%), indicating the dominance of the younger generation in this study. In terms of education, most respondents have a high school education background (70%), followed by diploma (13.7%), undergraduate (14%), and postgraduate (2.3%). This data illustrates that the main respondents are young people with secondary education, which is the main target group in this usability research.

The demographic data presented in Table 2 was obtained through a structured survey distributed to 300 respondents from 10 sub-districts in Empat Lawang Regency. The survey was conducted using a cluster random sampling method. The questionnaire, which was validated through expert review, included sections on gender, age group, and education level. Data collection was administered both online and offline to ensure inclusivity, particularly for younger residents who represent the dominant internet-using group in the region.

Table 3. Visitor satisfaction with the 4 Lawang District Tourism website

Inquiry	Very Dissatisfied	Not Satisfied (2)	Satisfied (3)	Very Satisfied (4)
	(1)			
Visual Appearance of the Website	11.3%	71.3%	17.3%	0
Completeness of Information	47.3%	37.7%	14.7%	0.3%
Ease of Use	45.7%	35%	19.3%	0

Table 3 shows that the majority of respondents were dissatisfied with all three aspects, with the highest percentage of dissatisfaction with the completeness of information (47.3% very dissatisfied) and ease of use (45.7% very dissatisfied). Although the visual appearance has a better satisfaction level than the other two aspects, most respondents still expressed dissatisfaction (71.3% dissatisfied). This data shows that the website needs significant improvement, especially in providing complete information and making user navigation easier.

**Table 4. Website Usability** 

Question	Very Dissatisfied (1)	Dissatisfied (2)	Satisfied (3)	Very Satisfied (4)
Easy to use Website Navigation	14.3%	62.7%	23%	0
Responsive Website (Mobile & Desktop)	18.3%	44.3%	37%	0.3%
Consistent Design	16%	56.3%	27.7%	0

Table 4 shows that most respondents were dissatisfied with the usability of the website, with the highest dissatisfaction in the aspects of navigation (62.7%) and design consistency (56.3%). Although responsiveness shows a better level of satisfaction (37%), there is still much room for improvement to make the website easier to use and meet user expectations. This finding supports earlier results by Nawrot & Skublewska-Paszkowska (2022), who identified that interface inconsistency and lack of structured information flow were among the primary reasons for dissatisfaction in tourism websites across Europe.

	Table 5. Interface Components					
Inquiry	Very Dissatisfied (1)	Not Satisfied (2)	Satisfied (3)	Very Satisfied (4)		
Easy Navigation	12.3%	61.3%	26%	0.3%		
Simple Mental Model	20.3%	62.3%	17.3%	0		
Attractive Visual Display	30%	61%	9%	0		
Use of Metaphors	18.3%	67%	14.7%	0		
Smooth Interaction	17.3%	56%	26.3%	0.3%		

Table 5 shows the level of user satisfaction with various interface components. The components assessed include navigation, simple mental models, visual appearance, use of metaphors, and interaction. Most respondents were "dissatisfied" with all components, with the highest percentage on the use of metaphors (67%). The component with the highest level of satisfaction was easy navigation with 26% of respondents stating that they were "satisfied". Meanwhile, only a few respondents were "very satisfied", and almost no one was "very dissatisfied" on all aspects. These results suggest there is significant room for interface improvement.

**Table 6. Critical Information Assessment** 

Inquiry	Very Incomplete (1)	Incomplete (2)	Complete (3)	Very Complete (4)
Tourist Facility Info	53%	35.3%	11.7%	0
Visit Rate Info	58.3%	30.3%	11.3%	0
Visual Documentati on	55%	32.3%	12.7%	0

Location	56.3%	32.7%	11%	0	
Information					
Ticket Info	54.7%	32.7%	12.7%	0	

Based on Table 6, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents rated the information on the website of Kab 4 Lawang as "very incomplete", with the highest percentage of information on the level of visits (58.3%). A small number of respondents stated that the information was "complete", with the highest scores on visual documentation and ticket information (12.7% each). No respondents stated that the information was "very complete". These results indicate the need to improve the completeness and quality of information to meet user needs.

Table 7. Interactive Features expected by potential visitors

Inquiry	Yes	No
Facility-related Information Features	100%	0
Visitor Statistics on tourist destinations	100%	0
Visual documentation of tourist destinations	100%	0
Interactive tourist map (location, route and directions)	100%	0
Book tickets on the website	99%	1%
Visitor reviews of the destination	99.7%	0.3%

Based on the data in Table 7, it can be concluded that all respondents (100%) want information features related to facilities, visitor statistics, visual documentation of tourist destinations, and interactive tourist maps (location, route, and directions). In addition, the majority of respondents also expect the ticket booking feature on the website (99%) and visitor reviews of tourist destinations (99.7%). Only a few respondents did not expect ticket booking (1%) or visitor reviews (0.3%). This data shows the main need of potential visitors for features that support easy access to information and interaction.

As stated by Araujo & Fraiz (2021), the integration of features such as tourist maps, reviews, and booking systems not only enhances user experience but also reinforces the strategic function of tourism websites as marketing platforms.

The data presented in Tables 3 through 7 was collected from a structured usability survey involving 300 respondents across 10 sub-districts in Empat Lawang Regency. The survey was conducted using the cluster random sampling method. The instrument was developed based on established UX and usability literature, and reviewed by academic and industry experts to ensure content validity. Questions used a 4-point Likert scale to assess aspects such as navigation, design consistency, information completeness, and expected website features. Both online and offline survey distribution methods were employed to maximize participation.

### **Qualitative Insights from Expert Interviews**

Apart from surveys, researchers also conducted interviews involving sources from figures or elders of the 4 Lawang district who could assess the usability of the

4 Lawang district tourism website. H.Thamrin Mahmud Lintang, SE is a respected figure in district 4 lawang. He explained that the navigation on the Empat Lawang Regency tourism website was considered quite intuitive, allowing users to easily find the main page and tourist destination categories. However, there are some obstacles that were conveyed, such as difficulties in finding specific information, for example ticket prices and lodging locations. In addition, navigation is considered unstructured due to the menu that redirects to the "404 Not Found" page. In terms of visual design, the interviewees considered the website's appearance to be unattractive and in need of updating with a more modern style. They also suggested adding high-quality images that can highlight the beauty of tourist destinations to attract visitors.

In terms of performance and speed, interviewees expressed complaints about slow loading times, especially when opening image galleries and pages with a lot of content. Technical errors, such as menus that redirect to a "404 Not Found" page, are also issues that need to be fixed. Nonetheless, there were users who felt that the site's performance did not have any significant issues. In addition, interviewees highlighted the need for interactive features, such as tourist maps that display locations complete with routes and directions, review columns to share experiences about tourist destinations, and ticket booking features directly on the website. These features are considered important to improve user experience and comfort in using the website.

### **Tourism Website User Interface (UI) Guidelines**

In response to these findings, UI design guidelines were created based on User-Centered Design principles, focusing on:

- Clear navigation structure (drop-downs, icons, breadcrumb trails),
- Informative layout and visual consistency,
- Compatibility across devices,
- High-quality images representing local tourism identity,
- Integration of interactive maps, review systems, and ticket booking features.

These guidelines support a task-based and goal-directed user journey, promoting learnability, satisfaction, and retention hallmarks of effective usability design (Darmawan et al., 2013; Ishak et al., 2020). This phase aims to produce practical guidelines for creating an attractive, informative and easy-to-use website interface. The guidelines focus on User-Centered Design (UCD) principles that put the user's needs and preferences first. The following are the main elements of the guidelines:

- 1. Using surveys, interviews, and observations to understand user characteristics, such as demographics, habits, and goals when using the website.
- 2. Identify challenges that users often face when searching for information.
- 3. Design initial prototypes and engage users in testing to ensure features and design meet user expectations.
- 4. Ensure navigation works optimally on mobile and desktop devices.
- 5. The colors used reflect the identity of Empat Lawang Regency, such as green for nature and blue for the beauty of the river.
- 6. The images used must be of high quality depicting the tourist attraction.

7. Add interactive maps that help users find routes to destinations and provide easy-to-use contact forms or online booking features.

To further support implementation, Table 8 provides detailed mapping between critical information indicators and the interface design components required to represent them effectively. For example, information about facilities should use dropdown menus and text links with clear font (e.g., Arial Black), while visual documentation should include camera icons, graphic elements, and one-click mental models to simplify access. Other elements such as location, entrance ticket, and ratings are also mapped to appropriate metaphors, icons (e.g., map pins, ticket icons, star ratings), and interaction principles to promote intuitive use.

Table 8. Guidelines for Tourism Web Interface (UI) based on Information Suitability and Interface Design Components.

No	Information	Interface Design	Description
	<b>Indicator</b>	Components	_
1	Facilities	Navigation	- Dropdown Menu
			- Text Link
			Arial black
		Appearance	Nil
		Methapor	Тор
2	Visit Rate	Mental Model	1 click
		Interaction	Text Link
		Navigation	Arial black
		Appearance	Graphics
		Methapor	Top &Middle
3	Documentation	Mental Model	1 click
		Interaction	- Dropdown Menu
		Navigation	- Text Link
			Arial black
			Camera
4	Location	Appearance	Top & Middle
		Methapor	1 Click
		Mental Model	Text Link
		Interaction	Arial black
		Navigation	Location Pin
5	Entrance Ticket	Appearance	Bottom
		Methapor	1 click
		Mental Model	Text Link
		Interaction	Arial black
		Navigation	Tickets
6	Rating	Appearance	Top & Middle
	-	Methapor	1 click
		Mental Model	Text Link
		Interaction	Arial black
		Navigation	Star

These guidelines are intended to support a task-based and goal-directed user journey, enhancing usability aspects such as learnability, satisfaction, and retention, which are hallmarks of effective tourism website design. These guidelines are also consistent with best practices highlighted in global research. Nawrot & Skublewska-Paszkowska (2021) recommend that tourism information platforms adopt UX-driven iterative design models, emphasizing user testing, accessibility, and clarity of content layout from the earliest design phases.

# **Implications for Broader Design Practices**

The insights from this study offer applicable recommendations for government websites, particularly in the tourism sector:

- Regional sites must move beyond static information delivery and adopt interactive, responsive, and inclusive design strategies.
- Applying evidence-based UCD can enhance public trust, digital branding, and user engagement crucial for tourism development and smart regional governance.

#### **CONCLUSION**

This study analyzed potential visitors' preferences toward the interface design of the tourism website of the Tourism Office of Empat Lawang Regency. The findings reveal critical areas that require improvement, including navigation structure, visual appearance, mental models, metaphors, and interactive features. Many users reported difficulty in finding information due to disorganized navigation and broken links, highlighting the need for a more intuitive and functional structure. The website's visual design was also perceived as outdated and not reflective of local cultural identity, indicating the importance of using high-quality images, consistent layouts, and color schemes that represent regional uniqueness.

Furthermore, interactive features such as digital tourist maps, visitor reviews, and online ticket booking systems were strongly expected by users, underscoring the website's potential not only as an information platform but also as an effective tourism marketing tool. Interface components such as metaphors, navigation, mental models, and interaction significantly influence users' decision-making and satisfaction. Therefore, to improve usability and inclusivity, the design process should adopt user-centered principles from the initial development phase. A well-designed interface can enhance usability, reduce errors, and increase engagement, while poor usability can lead to frustration and loss of interest. To bridge the gap between developer priorities and user needs, this study proposes the use of structured UI guidelines that reflect actual visitor preferences to guide future improvements in regional tourism website design. These results echo findings from international studies, where interface quality, interaction design, and user-centered structuring play a central role in defining the success and sustainability of tourism websites (Nawrot & Skublewska-Paszkowska, 2024).

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