

Destination quality and tourists' satisfaction: rural tourist destinations in Indonesia

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between destination quality towards tourist satisfaction in rural tourist destination. Most study was conducted on established tourist destination and left the rural services behind. The response towards rural destination is getting popular and it is about time that the service provider to get clear informational feedback about their customer expectations. Data were collected from 200 respondent consisted of both local and international tourists. Data was collected with the help of the selected rural destination tourist by requesting their customer to participate upon check out process. All participations were based on voluntary. It took over 2 weeks' time to gather 212 respondents. Only 200 were usable the rest was incomplete or missing data. The results show that destination quality is important towards tourist satisfaction. It seems that everything related to satisfaction must come along with meeting the expectation and standards set by the tourist. Service provider must carefully look into this area as it may help to grow the business once they managed to fulfil the customer expectations and standards.*

Keywords: *Indonesia, Rural tourism, Satisfaction, Destination quality*

I. INTRODUCTION

Recent report about Indonesia tourism indicates that there are 16 million foreign tourist come to Indonesia in the year 2019. It was also mentioned that the number of tourist increased by 1.8 percent as compared to the numbers in 2018. Indonesia recorded 15.8 million tourists in the 2018 (Soebagyo, 2018) and the increase numbers of tourist is because of the popularity of Indonesia in various type of tourism activities (Walpole & Goodwin, 2000). Most of tourist comes through airlines and only a small portion of it comes through sea and land transportation. Bali recorded the highest arrival of destination and it remains popular because of the strategic locations and the various type of activities available and offered to tourist. Statement from Tourism Minister of Indonesia recently suggested that the tourism destination to be expanded to rural tourist (Sabon, Perdana, Koropit, & Pierre, 2018). There are so much things to offer and by expanding the products Indonesia hopes to achieved 20 million arrival of tourist by the end of 2020. Rural tourism destination in Indonesia have started since the year 2012 (Hampton & Jeyacheya, 2015) however the focused on the development was slow due to lack of attention given by the operator. There is a need for tourism operator to managed the destination by servicing the customer with quality and memorable experiences. Operator in tourism industry need to focused on the tourist satisfaction to enable all of them to enjoy the benefits that may help them to sustain in the industry for long term. Based on that government with support from local community decided to increase their effort to attract more customer and gain the benefits for the rural economy development (Bouchon & Rawat, 2016). Among the popular rural destination in Indonesia are Pekram Jasri Village, Gaiyyar; Dieng Kulon, Banjarnegara; Bejiharjo Tourism Village, Gunung Kidul; Brayut Tourism Village, Sleman and Tourism Village Karangbanjar, Purbalingga. Tourism

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minister at the same time highlighted that the rural tourism is important as it will attract more tourist to visit and experienced the village lifestyle besides enjoyed the memorable and unique activities that may lead to positive customer experience (Nugroho, Pramukanto, Negara, Purnomowati, & Wulandari, 2016). High traffic of tourist will also provide ample job for the local people to works. Tourism at the same brings prosperity to the village with the support from government by building facilities and infrastructure that not only benefits the tourist but the local people as well.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Tourist satisfaction

Tourism is among the important industry in any part of the world (Taleghani & Ghafary, 2014). Tourism is capable to generate income not only to the country but helps to improve the economy of their people (Gallarza, Arteaga, & Gil-Saura, 2019). There are many factors that contribute to the growth of tourism such as environmental factors (M. F. Shamsudin, Razak, & Salem, 2018a). Environmental factors according to (Alegre & Garau, 2010) may help to attract tourist to selected areas that offer the tourist attraction destination. (Lee, Jeon, & Kim, 2011) highlighted that socio economic factors can also be the reason of the growth of tourism industry. Besides that, there are also other factors that contribute to high impact tourism such as religious (Chi & Qu, 2008), historical (Razak & Shamsudin, 2019) and cultural (Hassan & Shamsudin, 2019). On top of that, there is something that is very important which is the tourist itself. Tourism destination can only growth if there is a high traffic from tourist to visit. The concept of tourism is similar to business where there is a transaction between service provider and customer (M. F. M. F. Shamsudin, Esa, & Ali, 2019). In the contexts of tourism, customer is known as tourist and as any other business it is much important for the industry players to achieve tourist satisfaction as part of the factors for development and sustainability (Kadir & Shamsudin, 2019).

(Rajaratnam, Munikrishnan, Sharif, & Nair, 2014) stated that there is a lack of awareness from the operators to managed the customer in order to get a long term benefits. Tourist satisfaction is important as it may attract more arrival and indirectly grow the industry itself (Alegre & Garau, 2010). (Razak & Shamsudin, 2019) stated that tourist satisfaction is equally important as customer satisfaction in business organization. Satisfied tourist will have high tendency to come back to the destination. Tourist satisfaction is actually depending on the overall perceived performance of the service given as compared to customer expectations. Tourist will become satisfied should the overall experience is more than what the tourist expects it to happened. (Hassan & Shamsudin, 2019) stated that it is important for destination operators to maintain good customer services and make sure the tourist is happy with the overall positive experiences. The level of service performance should be above all as it is the major points in deciding whether tourist is satisfied or not (Murphy, Moscardo, Benckendorff, & Pearce, 2011). Recent research indicates that performance should be equal to expectation in order to provide positive customer experiences. (Agyeiwaah, Adongo, Dimache, & Wondirad, 2016) at the same time highlighted that the customer satisfaction is equal to customer loyalty and the combination will lead to better performance.

(Truong, Lenglet, & Mothe, 2018) argued that tourist get satisfaction when the service quality is high. It is also related to the destination quality where it covers many m ores that just a service quality. The fast growing of technology and the advanced of facilities today leads to a more complicated competition among the destination operators. Customer today is very knowledgeable. They have the access to information through the web site or social media. Customer that went for tour may updates and share their experience in almost real time. Satisfied customer is able to communicate to their networking or close friends about their experiences and feedback. Such thing creates a demand for the destination operators to improve the quality of their services.

2.2 Destination Quality

Past research indicates that quality in the tourism destination is related to the quality factors based that may lead to good customer experiences (Shafiq, Mostafiz, & Taniguchi, 2019). The quality parts involved the physical environments of

the tourism destination. Good physical environments will attract more customers and easy to market (M. F. Shamsudin, Razak, & Salem, 2018b). Beside the physical environments, service providers must also provide a good customer experiences in terms of service value. Customer will get satisfied if the amount of value or experiences is perceived to be more than the amount of fees paid. Recent researcher also indicates that destination quality is also referring to the overall services offered to tourist during their stay or visit to the destinations (Khan, Rahman, & Fatma, 2016; Legendre, Cartier, & Warnick, 2019; Trudeau H & Shobeiri, 2016). The service providers must put enough effort to provides reliable products that can meet customer needs and wants. Besides that, past research also stated the important of tourist safety at the tourist destination (M. F. M. F. Shamsudin et al., 2019). Service provider must put relevant effort to ensure that their customer is safe whether it is related to the geographical reasons or surrounding threats. Most of the time, service provider can measure their level of destination quality based on number of complaints from the tourist itself. According to (Smirnova, Rebiazina, & Frösén, 2018) destination quality is basically related to the perception. The interpretation of quality itself is varies among the tourist itself. It may have derived from the individual perception and difficult to measure. Service provider however need to provide the best services based on what the reasonable man thinks that the service provision is good and efficient (Herhausen, Kleinlercher, Verhoef, Emrich, & Rudolph, 2019; Mahendrawathi, Astuti, & Nastiti, 2015). The result of quality measurement will be different from one individual against another individual. As such service providers must do their best in providing services according to the basic needs of customer such as maintaining the tangible parts such as the building, cleanliness, providing comfort and security (Gerpott & Bicak, 2016; Iwashita, Shimogawa, & Nishimatsu, 2011; Mahendrawathi et al., 2015). It is also important for the service providers to improve on the service delivery process especially related to the competency and attitude. In other words, it should be professional in delivering the services. Service provider is also recommended to recruit the right employee that can serve customer better. Employee should provide positive tourist experiences especially during the customer interactions. A good customer interaction with customer will resulted to customer satisfaction. On top of that, it is also recommended that service provider to raised their marketing budget to communicate and design the tourist areas so that it creates a positive ambience to the customer. (Radu & Dobrescu, 2014; Yu & Goulden, 2006) also recommends that service providers to make a good relationship with community as they can help to support the tourist destination by keeping the area clean and involved together as a stakeholder to welcome the tourist.

Past research (Mikulić & Prebežac, 2012; Mutanga, Vengesayi, Chikuta, Muboko, & Gandiwa, 2017; Park, Bufquin, & Back, 2019) highlighted two important qualities that is highly related to the tourist destination. Technical quality is related on how the service providers can improved on the service delivery. The technical quality factors involved how the service provider display their technical solution at the destination areas (Asmelash & Kumar, 2019; Ramseook-Munhurrin, Seebaluck, & Naidoo, 2015). It is also about how the service providers implement their know-how whether it is related to the usage of machines, computerisation or digitalisation. On the other side, functional quality is about how the service provider is preparing their service mind set towards tourist. It involves on how the service providers prepare the appearance, accessibility, attitude and internal relations towards tourist. It is also about how the service provider set the policy and develop positive culture in shaping the employee behaviour toward customer or tourist (Sukiman, Omar, Muhibudin, Yussof, & Mohamed, 2013; Torres-Sovero, González, Martín-López, & Kirkby, 2012).

III. METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire was developed as the survey tools including all the constructs of the research model and the hypothesis. Question were based from the past research. Initially there are 16 items proposed for destination quality and 6 items for tourist satisfaction. Seven items under destination quality was deleted and a few combined based on the pilot test result. One item from tourist destination removed because of the low value. The questionnaire was than submitted to subject matter expert for validation and comments. There are some changes in the sentences, grammar and vocabulary used that

need to be change in order to provide ease understanding among the respondent. 200 data were collected through a voluntary basis helps by the tourism operator. Only international tourist departing to Indonesia is selected in order to get a better result as compared to local tourist. Respondents were then asked to express their degrees of agreement with each item for each construct along with a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree). Data collected was tested using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and SEM.

IV. FINDINGS

The demographics results of 200 respondents shows that 62.50% respondents were male and 37.50% are female. Of the five stages of age groups, 68% representing the age between 20 – 29 years old. The big majority of age group indicates that most of the tourist to Indonesia especially catered to rural tourism were those at the young age. The results make sense as the young is more adventurous and eager to explore new things rather than seeking for leisure or shopping based tourism. 34% from the traveller type indicates that they are on spontaneous basis. Only 10.50% claimed that they planned for the destination. 63.5% of tourist will spend their vacation for more than 7 days and majority of them at least completed their bachelor's degree. Details of respondents' profile is as per table 1 below.

Table 1: Frequency results of the demographic and situational characteristics of respondents

Descriptions	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	125	62.50%
Female	75	37.50%
	200	100.00%
What type of traveller are you?		
Ultimate tourist	4	2.00%
Expert	6	3.00%
Spontaneous	68	34.00%
Planner	21	10.50%
Bargain hunter	67	33.50%
Super chilled	34	17.00%
	200	100.00%
Age		
<20 years	28	14.00%
20 - 29 years	136	68.00%
30 - 39 years	25	12.50%
40 - 49 years	9	4.50%
50 and above	2	1.00%
	200	100.00%
Length of stay		
1-3 days	12	6.00%
4 - 6 days	49	24.50%
7 - 9 days	127	63.50%
10 and more days	12	6.00%
	200	100.00%
Education level		
Secondary school	25	12.50%

Bachelor's degree	147	73.50%
Master's degree	28	14.00%
	200	100.00%

Table 2 is the summary of questionnaire used for the survey. There are altogether 9 items used for destination quality and 5 items for tourists' satisfaction. Mean for destination quality is higher than tourists' satisfaction. Both α value are more than the minimum acceptable value (0.6).

Table 2: Summary of statistics of the questionnaire survey

Constructs	No. of items	Mean	SD	α
Destination quality	9	5.936	1.038	0.893
Tourists' satisfaction	5	5.368	1.039	0.864

Notes: SD, standard deviation; α , Cronbach's α ; overall $\alpha = 0.889$

PCA intends to explain the maximum amount of variance with the fewest number of primary components. The PCA was conducted to apprehend the fundamental association of factors data decline and to escape multicollinearity. In the PCA, cut-off point was 0.50 (absolute value less than 0.50 should be quashed), which ensures the questionnaire reliability. As suggested, through the findings of PCA, seven items of "destination quality" (DQ2, DQ3, DQ5, DQ6, DQ9, DQ10, DQ11) and one item of "tourist destination" (TS3) were eliminated due to the value less than 0.50. Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics and Cronbach's α values of the six constructs. Table 3 indicates the rotated factor loadings and their corresponding eigenvalues. The rule of thumb for Cronbach's α is 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978). In this study, the α values of each item are higher than the broadly diagnosed rule of thumb, thereby indicating a good internal consistency.

Table 3: Result of principal component analysis

No	Destination quality	Tourist satisfaction
Destination quality		
DQ1	0.854	
DQ4	0.752	
DQ7	0.822	
DQ8	0.893	
DQ12	0.754	
DQ13	0.878	
DQ14	0.865	
DQ15	0.877	
DQ16	0.787	
Tourist satisfaction		
TS1		0.920
TS2		0.903
TS4		0.864
TS5		0.845
TS6		0.814
Eigenvalue	8.527	4.117

Variance explained	35.521	17.135
(%)		

Table 4: Measurement model results

Constructs variables	Standardized loadings	t-statistics	CR	AVE
Destination quality				
DQ1	0.883	15.563**	0.88	0.61
DQ4	0.910	16.421**		
DQ7	0.710	12.227**		
DQ8	0.696	11.132**		
DQ12	0.698	11.697**		
DQ13	0.812	12.678**		
DQ14	0.863	13.674**		
DQ15	0.913	14.654**		
DQ16	0.863	13.245**		
Tourist satisfaction				
TS1	0.923	18.195**	0.96	0.72
TS2	0.924	11.368**		
TS4	0.721	19.364**		
TS5	0.832	10.687**		
TS6	0.922	17.336**		

Table 4 presents the values of AVE for constructs 0.61 to 0.72, which surpassed the threshold value 0.50, thus ensuring the convergent validity. To assess convergent validity, t-statistics related to factor loadings are also taken under consideration (Rao and Troshani, 2007).

Table 4 shows the t-statistics values of all items that are significant at the 0.01 level and established the convergent validity of the constructs. To test discriminant validity, AVE is also used (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The role of thumb is that AVE values should be higher than corresponding squared inter-construct correlation estimates (SIC) in the model (Churchill, 1979).

Table 5 presents SIC values, and the supportive evidence for discriminant validity was found. For example, (Table 5), in case of destination quality, SIC values were 0.12 and 0.06 and it indicate of discriminant validity. Therefore, all latent construct confirmed the discriminant validity

Table 5: Squared correlations between constructs

	Destination quality	Tourist satisfaction
Destination quality	0.12	
Tourist satisfaction	0.06	0.01

Table 6: Path analysis of structural model

Casual path	Hypothesis	Path coefficient	t-statistics	Results
Destination quality → Tourist satisfaction		0.315*	2.314	Supported

Note: *,**Significant at $p < 0.05$ and $p < 0.01$ levels, respectively

The result of path analysis is as per shown in table 6. Destination quality influence tourist satisfaction with $\beta = 0.315$, therefore, the hypothesis is supported.

V. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The objective of the study is to measure the relationship of destination quality towards tourist satisfaction focusing on the rural tourist attraction in Indonesia. The important of tourist satisfaction is equivalent to customer satisfaction where it may bring advantages to the tour operator. Destination at the same time is the products that offered to tourist as part of the exchange between dollar and experiences. There is no doubt that quality have been studied by many marketing scholars, but the scope of study is mostly related to the well-established areas such as airlines, restaurant and many others. Rural destination is another segment that can be considered as unique and very focused. The important of this study is to strengthen the marketing elements for the service provider in getting more customer in returns.

The findings indicate that destination is positively related to tourist satisfaction. Service provider need to ensure that they focused on all the elements of quality in order to satisfied tourist. There is no reason that the quality can be compromised because the location was ion rural areas. Business orientation and the elements of profit is important in order to survive and sustain. In order to achieve both survival and sustainability, service provider must ensure that the quality is within the standard and meet the tourist expectations. The results should be taken seriously by all the service provider in Indonesia as tourist is expecting a good quality services whether it is related to the physical or any other relevant quality dimensions in the overall quality setting. Tourist will only get satisfied once the service provider able to provide the service that meet their expectations and lead to satisfaction. In order to success in the setting up the destination quality, service provider may need to get kore feedback to get more information of tourist expectations. The promotional campaign and the destination experience promised must be align with the awareness and communication channel. Service provider should not have trapped in the over promised situation neither the under promised elements. It should be based on the actual customer experience that can be offered when they come to the destination.

Industry players should take the point of this study that there is no compromise in the quality parts and focused should be more on giving the best services to the tourist. Government, local municipal and community should involve in developing the rural tourism so that it can grow bigger and attract more tourist to the destination.

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