A MODEL FOR CREATING MEMORABLE TOURISM EXPERIENCES TO INCREASE THE INTENSITY OF TOURIST LOYALTY TO GEOPARK TOURIST DESTINATIONS IN THE PROVINCE OF WEST JAVA

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Abstract

The position of domestic tourists as an important asset for the sustainability of a tourist destination, especially in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic, which limits foreign tourist visits. The domestic market is predicted to be able to recover first because the COVID-19 pandemic is the trigger for the shift in tourist behavior to prefer domestic tourist destinations. This research aims to determine the effect of destination attributes and destination image on memorable tourist experiences and their implications for tourist loyalty intentions in Geopark Tourism Areas in West Java. This research is expected to be able to add to the repertoire of knowledge in the field of tourism marketing management and increase the loyalty of Geopark tourists and become a reference for initiating further research. The research method used is verification methods using exploratory survey methods. The population in this research were tourists who had visited the Geopark Tourism Area in West Java. The sampling technique used in this research is Probability Sampling with proportioned stratified sampling method, while the number of samples studied is 311 respondents. The verification analysis uses the structural equation model analysis method using the SmartPLS statistical application. The results of the research show that there is a direct influence given by the destination attributes and the image of the destination on an impressive tourist experience, and a memorable tourist experience

is able to mediate between the destination attributes and the image of the destination on the intention of tourist loyalty.

Keywords: Loyalty Intention, Memorable Travel Experience, Destination Attributes, Destination Image, Geopark, West Java.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic is a trigger for a shift in tourist behavior to prefer domestic or local tourist destinations, tourists tend to direct their choices to destinations that are close to their homes so that they have the potential to re-energize the region's economy [1]. This situation allowed the domestic market to recover first [2]. The shift of focus from foreign tourists to domestic tourists will trigger competition in the domestic tourism industry which is more competitive because it places tourists as important assets for the sustainability of a tourist destination [3, 4] The competitive situation in an industry makes the study of loyalty considered important to pay attention to [5-8]. Measurement of tourist loyalty is able to measure the intention of tourists to visit again and the intention of tourists to convey positive information about tourist destinations to family, colleagues and relatives [6, 7, 9].

Various studies on loyalty generally explain that there are three approaches that can be used to measure loyalty, namely a behavioral approach, an attitude approach and a combination of a behavioral approach and an attitude approach [10, 11]. The behavioral approach refers to the frequency or magnitude of the number of visits to a tourist attraction [12]). While the attitude approach refers to the psychological expression of tourists related to the intention of tourists to be loyal (Almeida-Santana & Moreno-Gil, 2018). The attitude approach states that loyalty to a destination can be measured using loyalty intentions or behavioral intentions ([5]. The results of the study reveal that the intention of loyalty, tourists are considered more consistent in estimating destination loyalty [13].

Studies on loyalty intentions have been used in various types of tourism objects including creative tourism [12, 14, 15], medical tourism [5], nature tourism [16]. cultural tourism [9, 17], museum tourism [18]heritage tourism [19, 20], tourism rural tourism [21] and urban tourism [22]. The limited research references related to loyalty intentions in geotourism encourage researchers to conduct research.

Geotourism is a form of natural area tourism that specifically focuses on geology and landscapes ([23] and encourages interest and awareness in knowledge of geological heritage and the importance of conservation activities on geological reserves and an understanding of diversified forms of sustainable tourism industry development. ([24]. One of the tourism concepts that focuses on innovation in the protection of natural and geological heritage and plays an important role in the development of geotourism is Geopark [15].

The Unesco Global Geopark Ciletuh-Palabuhanratu and the Pongkor National Geopark have a proven geological heritage and potential international value, as well as a biological and cultural heritage with their respective diverse and important values. Viewed from the aspect of cultural diversity, the geological heritage in West Java has an added value, namely that each area is very rich in cultural elements, so that this cultural dimension can be an attraction and at the same time as an effective Geopark promotion media West Java Provincial Government, Tourism and Culture, 2019.

Assessment of the performance of tourist destinations needs to be seen to measure the level of effectiveness of a tourist area and its ability to achieve the goals of establishing a Geopark as a tourist area. Figure 1 Rate of Tourist Visits to Geopark Tourism Areas in West Java Province in 2018-2020 shows a decrease in visit rates in two Geopark Tourism

Areas in West Java Province, namely Unesco Global Geopark Ciletuh-Palabuhanratu and Pongkor National Geopark.
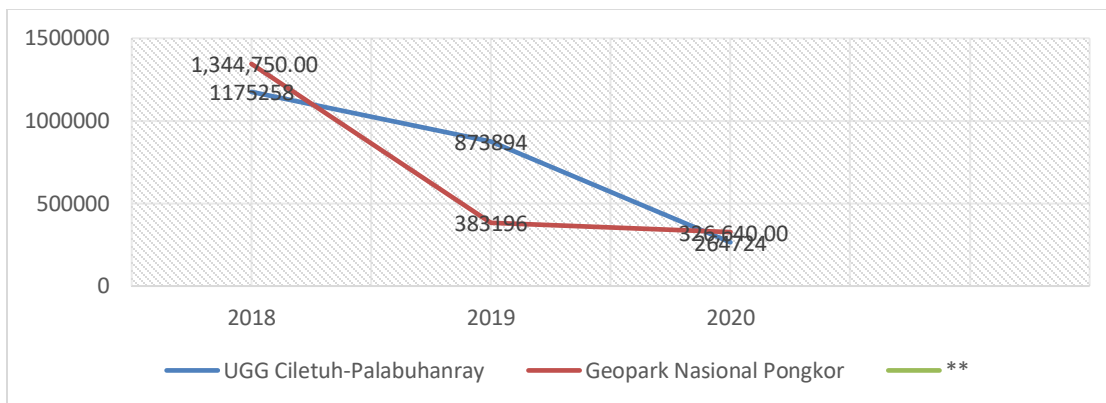

FIGURE 1
LEVEL OF TOURIST VISIT TO GEOPARK TOURISM AREA IN WEST JAVA PROVINCE 2018-2020

Source: Geopark Ciletuh-Palabuhanratu Information Center and Bappedalitbang Bogor Regency

The decrease in the number of visits occurred after the determination of the Unesco Global Geopark status in the Ciletuh-Palabuhanratu Geopark and the National Geopark in the Pongkor Area. The UNESCO Global Geopark (UGG) status which has been carried by Ciletuh–Palabuhanratu 17 April 2018 was able to encourage the visit rate of 1,175,258 tourists at the end of 2018 but decreased by 25.66% to 873,894 tourists at the end of 2019. When the COVID-19 pandemic period entered In the Indonesian region at the beginning of 2020, the return visit rate decreased by 69.71% to 264,724 tourists at the end of 2020.

The situation is not much different in the Pongkor National Geopark tourist area. The determination of the Pongkor Geopark as a National Geopark has not been able to maintain the number of visits which had originally been visited by 1,344,750 tourists at the end of 2018 which decreased by 71.50% to 383,196 tourist visits. When the Covid19 pandemic entered the Indonesian region in early 2020, the return visit rate decreased, but not too significantly, only by 14.76% to 326,640 tourists at the end of 2020.

Based on this background, it is necessary to conduct research on Geopark Tourism Areas in West Java Province considering the potential in the area which has international value in geological, biological and cultural aspects. As well as the positive image inherent as a world-class and national Geopark that should be able to provide a unique and different form of experience for tourists who visit which will have implications for loyalty intentions which are reflected in the level of tourist visits. This study will focus on measuring the attributes destination and the image of the destination for a memorable travel experience and its implications for loyalty intentions in the Geopark tourist area in West Java Province, which consists of the Unesco Global Geopark Ciletuh-Palabuhanratu and the Pongkor National Geopark.

Theoretical Background

Loyalty is formed by the experience felt by tourists after visiting a tourist destination [5, 6, 25]. This attitude depends on how strong tourists remember their past travel

experiences [26]. Tourist memory can encourage decision making to make a return visit to a destination [18, 27]. Memorable travel experiences can positively influence tourists and tourist behavior in terms of revisiting the same destination. [18, 27], and lead to the competitiveness of tourism with other tourist destinations [7]

Research results [26]which identified the impact of memorable travel experiences on loyalty intentions among 374 tourists who visited the Macau culinary festival concluded that memorable travel experiences had a positive and significant impact on tourists' intentions to revisit and tourists' intentions to recommend. Then research conducted by [28] on 400 tourists who have traveled in Taiwan found that a memorable tourist experience partially affects two main dimensions of loyalty intentions, namely tourist intentions to revisit and tourist intentions to recommend.

A memorable tourist experience will be obtained through the interaction and active involvement of tourists with all or part of the offers that exist in a destination [3]. An attraction that is able to encourage interaction and active involvement of tourists through the charm of the destination. The charm of the destination will transform into an experience component when tourists interact directly. The interactions that occur can affect the formation of the tourist experience [16, 29].

The results of research by [26] who conducted exploratory research on the relationship between the attributes destination and a memorable tourist experience. A study conducted on 400 local Taiwanese tourists found that all dimensions of a destination's the attributes can shape a memorable travel experience. Furthermore, [15] stated that the attributes destination is able to form a memorable tourist experience based on the analysis of data collected through a structured questionnaire given to 349 tourists who have visited Mulu National Park, Malaysia.

Destination image as an important construct that influences the evaluations made by tourists after a tourist visit and tourist behavior in the future [8, 29-31]. Destination image represents the emotional side that represents beliefs, feelings [32-34], expectations, impressions and perceptions of tourists related to a particular destination [30]. Destination image can condition behavior including tourist participation [23, 25, 30, 35, 36]. This is especially important for the tourism industry whose essence is experience creation [17, 37]. That's why the image of the destination is an important factor that can influence the travel experience [4].

Research by [38] found that tourist perceptions accumulated in the image of a destination affect a memorable tourist experience based on 261 tourists from South Korea who visited Huangshan City, China. The same results were found by the research of [23]who found that the image of a destination has a positive influence on a memorable travel experience according to 201 foreign tourists visiting Pakistan.

To be tested, a hypothesis must be stated quantitatively. Statistical hypothesis testing is a procedure that allows decisions to be made, which are the decision to reject or not reject the hypothesis being tested.

Research Hypothesis:

There is an influence of attributes destination and destination image on loyalty intentions mediated by memorable travel experiences.

Research Methods

This research uses a quantitative approach because in this research data in the form of numbers and data analysis using statistical methods. Based on the variables studied, this type of research is a verification research using the statistical software application tool

SmartPLS 3.0. When analyzing with SEM, it can be seen the relationship between variables and the magnitude of the influence between variables. SEM analysis can also determine whether the proposed model is in accordance with the empirical facts in the field based on the data collection that has been done.

The population in this research are tourists who have visited at least one of the two Geoparks in the West Java region, which consists of Ciletuh–Palabuhanratu UNESCO Global Geopark and Pongkor National Geopark during the New Normal period or throughout 2020 at least one visit. The number of tourists visiting the Ciletuh–Palabuhanratu UNESCO Global Geopark in 2020 was 264,724 tourists, while the number of tourists visiting the Pongkor National Geopark in 2020 was 326,640 tourists.

The number of samples used in this research was adjusted to the analytical method used, namely the Structural Equation Model (SEM). In the SEM method, the number of samples required is at least 5 times the number of indicator variables (Ferdinand, 2014). The number of indicators in this research is 62 indicators, so the minimum number of samples required is 62 x 5 or 311 samples. The sampling method in this research used probability sampling using the proportioned stratified sampling technique. Based on calculations using the Bowley proportional allocation technique, the data value of the Ciletuh–Palabuhanratu UNESCO Global Geopark sample was 139 samples and the Pongkor National Geopark was 172 samples according to the sample size of 311 respondents.

Results and Discussions

Structural model testing aims to find and see the correlation between latent constructs by looking at the estimation results of the path parameter coefficients and the level of significance [39]. The calculation of Goodness of Fit shows that the GoF value in this study has a value of 0.644 which belongs to the high category. That way, this research has good research quality and has an accurate research model in describing the hypothesis.

Table 1

GOODNESS OF FIT CALCULATION

Construct	AVE	R2
Attributes Destination	0.507	
Destination Image	0.588	
Memorable travel experience	0.610	0.670
Loyalty Intention	0.731	0.690
Average	0.609	0.680
AVE x R2	0.414	
GoF = $\sqrt{AVExR^2}$	0.644	

Source: 2021 Data Processing Results

Table 2 Values of Goodness Of Fit (R-Square and Q Square) also show that the coefficient of determination (R2) of attributes destination, destination image, and memorable travel experiences affects loyalty intentions by 0.690 or 69%, so it can also be said that attributes destination, destination image, and tourist experience together have

an effect of 69% on loyalty intentions and the rest is influenced by other variables outside the research. In addition, the predictive relevance (Q-Square) value is 0.502, this means that the predictive capability of this research model can explain the destination enchantment variable model, the image of the destination, and memorable travel experiences affect loyalty intentions.

T a b l e 2

GOODNESS OF FIT VALUE (R-SQUARE AND Q-SQUARE)

Line	B	P Values	R2	Q2
Attributes Destination+ Destination Image -> Memorable travel experience -> Loyalty Intention	0.681	0.000	0.690	0.502

Source: 2021 Data Processing Results

Hypothesis Testing: The Effect of attributes destination and destination image on loyalty intentions mediated by memorable travel experiences can explain that attributes destination and destination image have a significant effect on loyalty intentions mediated by memorable travel experiences. This is indicated by the path coefficient being positive (+) so that it can be interpreted that the relationship between

attributes destination, destination image, memorable tourist experience and loyalty intentions is one-way. When the attributes destination, the image of the destination and the memorable travel experience are improved, it will have an impact on increasing the intention of tourist loyalty, so it is sufficient to state that there is empirical evidence to reject Ho and accept H1. Statistical tests show the magnitude of the direct effect is 0.681 or 68.1%, while 0.319 or 31.9% is a factor outside the attributes destination, the image of the destination and a memorable travel experience.

The results of statistical tests on the research model show that the influence of

attributes destination and destination image on loyalty intentions mediated by memorable travel experiences has a t-count above 1.96, which is 23,279 and a p-value below 0.05, so it can be concluded that the hypothesis is accepted, the meaning attributes destination and destination image variables have a positive and significant influence on the loyalty intentions of tourists who have visited Geoparks in West Java which are mediated in advance by memorable tourist experiences.

The results of hypothesis testing also show that there is an influence of attributes destination and destination image on loyalty intentions mediated by memorable travel experiences because they have a t-count above 1.96 which is 23,279 and a p-value below 0.05 so it can be concluded that the hypothesis can be accepted, which means attributes destination and destination image have a positive and significant influence on the loyalty intentions of tourists who have visited Geopark tourist areas in West Java Province which are mediated by memorable tourist experiences. The magnitude of the influence of the charm of the destination and the image of the destination on a memorable tourist experience is 0.681, which means that the memorable tourist experience variable is directly influenced by the variable attributes destination and the image of the destination together by 68.1%.

The facts show that the intention of tourist loyalty which is reflected through the intention to visit again, the intention to recommend, and the intention to convey positive information can be formed through attributes in the attributes destination that are able to facilitate interaction and involvement of tourists so that tourists who visit tourist areas are able to get the most memorable travel experience and remembered for a long time. Tourist

participation also needs to be encouraged by the accumulation of perceptions about tourist destinations so that it becomes the expectations that tourists want to achieve when visiting. Tourists will try to meet these expectations by participating in tourism activities presented in tourist areas so that tourists are able to get the experience they expect.

These findings are supported [28] who suggests that a memorable tourist experience is the most significant determinant for the formation of tourist loyalty behavior in the future. Memorable tourist experiences are able to form destination loyalty because they have a positive impact on each of its dimensions, namely the intention to revisit and the intention to recommend. When tourists get an experience that will be remembered for a long time, it indicates a follow-up visit in the future and has a tendency to recommend it to others.

A research conducted by [18] on 314 tourists who visited zoo and museum attractions revealed that some memorable tourist experiences significantly affect tourist loyalty intentions, including hedonic, local culture, involvement and knowledge while the novelty, cultural dimensions local, refreshment, meaningfulness and negative emotional feelings were not significant. Research highlights the negative emotional feeling dimension that does not have an impact on loyalty but is temporary in nature. The selection of the negative emotional feeling dimension was used because of the occurrence of negative opinions such as disappointment, displeasure and negative views as long as it was related to tourism objects during data collection. However, the impact is because a few days after the activity takes place, tourists will return to give a positive evaluation, within a few days after the event, people will have a more positive evaluation of the event.

The positioning of memorable travel experiences as a mediating variable associated with destination enchantment can be seen [16]and destination image in [38]on the intention to revisit which is a dimension forming loyalty intentions. Both research state that travel experience is able to mediate the influence of destination enchantment and destination image on tourist intentions to visit again. Based on the results of the two research, it can be an indication of the contribution of memorable tourist experiences as a mediating variable for the formation of loyalty intentions by destination enchantment and destination image.

Conclusions

The results of statistical tests found that a memorable travel experience was able to mediate the influence contributed by the attributes destination and the image of the destination on the intention of tourist loyalty. This means that a memorable travel experience can be a connecting variable between the attributes destination and the image of the destination with the intention of loyalty. It means that to increase the intention of loyalty, tourists need to first receive a memorable travel experience that is built from the attributes destination and the image of the destination.

Based on the discussion on loyalty intentions, there are factors that need to be improved related to increasing tourist intentions to visit again. The Geopark Management Agency needs to search for tourist attractions in Geopark tourist areas that have the highest to lowest levels of visits. This is necessary to map which destinations need to be developed so that they have a balanced ability to attract the attention of tourists. The wide coverage area in each Geopark Tourism Area in West Java allows tourists not to be able to visit all tourist attractions in one visit. So the promotional program can also highlight destinations that often escape the attention of tourists, thus giving rise to reasons for returning to Geopark tourist areas.

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