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Does market attractiveness increase tourist visiting intention through destination image in rural tourism? Evidence from Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The study aims to examine the influence destination image have on tourist visiting intention in the village of Lumpur located at Gunung Raya sub-district, Kerinci Regency, Jambi Province, Indonesia. Similarly, it is also to examine how much the market attractiveness impacts the destination image of rural tourism. Additionally, it set out to also assess the extent to which the support of market attractiveness influences tourist visiting intention through the destination image of the village. This study used a survey method with descriptive and quantitative analysis, and the analytical tool employed is Smart PLS version 3.0 tools. One hundred forty respondents, comprising of both local and foreign tourists, were understudied for the analysis and observations made. The findings showed that market attractiveness has a direct effect on the interests of visitors. Similarly, market attractiveness was established to have a direct impact on tourist's image. Meanwhile, the destination image also has a direct and significant influence on tourist visiting intention. In conclusion, it was ascertained that the destination image has a substantial effect on the tourist visiting intention, although it has a smaller coefficient of direct influence.

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Introduction

The tourism industry in 2017, had a significant development at the national level and also contributed to the PDB of 4.03% or 500, IDR of 19 billion, the growing foreign exchange of 176 to 184 billion IDR, and the absorption of 12 million people into employment (12.02 million foreign and 263.68 million domestic tourists). UNWTO data shows the growth of Indonesian tourism in 2016 as 15.54%, exceeding the world average of 3.9%. In 2017, the data recorded was 14.04 million comprising of digital tourism, homestay, and air connectivity and all amounted to a growth of 21.88% (Ministry of Tourism Performance Report, 2017; World Travel & Tourism Council, 2017).

The tourism industry in Indonesia increased by infrastructure, sub-infrastructure, supporting accommodations that have been built and developed to support tourism as a prime business in overall activities, both in accessibility, amenities and attractions (Massida & Etzo, 2012), especially in rural areas that have unique characteristics to become tourist destinations (Simasima and Ariani, 2017), with the concept of attractions, accessibility, and amenities also known as 3A context (Murdianto, 2011; Cahyoputra, 2015). Figures related to the tourism industry in 2017 have been assessed in the research and methodology part of the study.

Hence, the main purpose of this study was to examine the direct influence of market attractiveness on tourists' visiting intention and the indirect influence of destination image. The scope of this study focused on rural tourism destinations in Lempur, Kerinci district, Jambi province, Indonesia.

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Literature Review

Cravens & Piercy (2013), stated that *market attractiveness can be measured by its growth rate, projections and attractiveness assessment made by the management*. Gearing et. al. (1974), Ritchie and Zins (1998), also stated that marketing attractiveness is closer to tourism by several attributes, like natural beauty, climate, socio-cultural characteristics, friendly community, infrastructure, local food, history, archaeological sites, art, heritage, festivals, and local features. Especially in this study (Lempur rural tourism), the attributes used are landscape, climate, travel (main or primary factors), tourism supply, administrative and political arrangements (secondary factors), and marketing activities in tourism organization (tertiary factors)-(Meinung, 1989).

Destination image is a cognitive representation that could be perceived or assessed by tourists (Crompton, 1977; Hunt, 1975; Pan & Li, 2011), and it contributes to the formation of brand for the tourism villages (Tasci, and Kozak's, 2006; Leisen, 2001; Chou *et al.* 2008; Brida, et al 2009; Brida, et al.2010). In this context, the authors used the attributes by Chi, Qing, and Qu (2008), namely the environment; natural extraction; entertainment and events; historical sites; infrastructure; accessibility; relaxation; outdoor activity; and price and value. Tourist visit intension is the tourist's desire which can be influenced by social factors, feelings, beliefs, benefits, and perceived consequences (Davis *et al.* 1989; Martin& Herrero, 2012). The attributes of interest in this context of tourists visit intention can be measured through transactional, referential, preferential and explorative interest indicators (Ferdinand, 2002), as found in this study.

Research and Methodology

The latest figures in rural tourism

Jambi Province is developing rural tourism in the industry with the 3A concept and this was shown by the increment in the tourists' visit intention recorded in recent years, as shown in the table 1.

Table 1: Tourist visits in Jambi province

No	Year	Total of Tourist	
		Local	International
1	2014	1.418.000	9.919
2	2015	1.520.000	10.056
3	2016	2.000.000	11.000

Source: BPS Jambi 2016, data processing.

This increasing trend made Lempur became the first rural tourism destination in the Kerinci to be inaugurated by the Jambi Government. The potential destination tourism of Lempur comprises of five natural lakes (blue, Kecik, Duo, Lingkat, and Nyalo Lake) which made up 80 percent of the Kerinci Seblat National Park area. Besides, agro, educational, and uniqueness of cultural tourism can also be found (Saputra, 2016). The community descends from the Proto Malay or Old Malay tribes who still maintain the local culture and friendly to visitors or strangers (Antara and Rameswari, 2018).

The data of tourists visit intention in Lempur rural tourism from 2015 to 2017 can be seen in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Tourist visit in Lempur rural tourism, 2015-2017

No	Year	Total of Tourist	
		Local	International
1	2015	25	35
2	2016	30	42
3	2017	39	58
Total		94	135

Source: Pencagura Team, 2017

Based on the data in Table 2, tourist visit was dominated by foreign visitors in the last three years (2015-2017). However, the number is still not at the optimal level despite the recent increments. The fundamental reason for the increase in the number of tourists in this region is due to, firstly, the ecological factors. Lempur has aesthetic features that often attract tourists, for example, the blue lakes, 'larangan' rivers and its natural geography. Secondly, there is a variety of local commodities, such as Payo rice and Cinnamon, whose cultivation and harvesting can be witnessed by the tourists having interest. Also, there is a rich social culture and custom, such as celebrating the Sko festival along with the beginning of the rice planting period (Qomariyah, 2017). These cultural festivals attract the interests of the tourists. These factors, therefore, encourage visitors on holiday to choose the destination and activities in the village. Special tour packages such as tracking, camping, cinnamon tour, and their living culture could be an opportunity to increase attractions, from a marketing perspective through tourist's visit intention on Lempur rural. Therefore it is important to effectively manage the tourism services through the attractiveness of the tourist destination, building a good image and maintaining the perceived

values starting from the individual continuum, functionality, and uniqueness (Chen & Chen, 2010; MM, 2018). The *Lempur* was chosen as the research site due to its popularity for having a large number of local and foreign tourist visits over the years. Data collection was carried out by the researcher from January to August of 2018. A sample of 140 persons was drawn from the foreign and local tourists with an age limit of 18 years and above. This research used the Partial Least Squares method and software to test the research hypotheses. PLS version 3.0 was used to assess both reflective (i.e. marketing attractiveness and destination image) and formative constructs (tourist visit intention).

Result and Discussion

Respondents profile

Table 3 shows that the vast majority of the tourists are male (61.3%), young 17-20 years ((31.3%), Senior in High School (43%), students in university (16%), and those with an average monthly income (31%). Besides, the majority of them are annual regular visitors from Indonesia and Europe. Furthermore, less than two-thirds of the local tourists visited the Lempur destination for leisure purposes (53%) together with their community/groups making (70%). Finally, almost 66.7 of them got to know about the Lempur destination through social media or the internet.

Table 3: Demographic profile

Measure	Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	92	61.3
	Female	58	38.7
Age	17-20 Years	47	31.3
	21-30 Years	40	26.7
	31 – 39 Years	35	23.3
	>40 Years	28	18.7
Education	Elementary School	9	6
	Junior Secondary School	28	19
	Senior High School	65	43
	Diploma's Degree	24	16
	Bachelor's Degree	24	16
	Master's Degree	0	0
Employment	Government Employees	18	12
	Private Employees	30	20
	Government Army	12	8
	Entrepreneur	12	8
	Student	56	37.3
	No Employment	14	9.3
	Other	8	5.4
Monthly Income	< 2.000.000	48	31
	2.000.000 – 4.000.000	45	30
	5.000.000 – 6.000.000	26	17
	7.000.000 – 8.000.000	0	0
	9.000.000 – 11.000.000	16	11
	> 11.000.000	16	11
Reason of Visiting	Leisure	80	53
	Research	45	30
	Business	15	10
	Other	10	7
Traveling in Tourism	Lonely	45	30
	Group	105	70
Information Resource	News Paper/Magazine	35	23.3
	Radio/TV	22	14.7
	Internet/Social media	93	62
	Other	0	0
Tourism Frequency	Never	18	12
	Sometime	9	6
	Often	99	66
	Always	24	16

Model test result

Before testing the hypotheses, both the reflective and formative constructs were assessed. And it was deduced that marketing attractiveness had a construct reliability of 0.89, while that of the destination image was 0.91 indicating good reliability. All eleven proposed attributes contributed significantly to forming the construct of tourist's visits intention. They are the environment, natural beauty, cultural festival, infrastructure, accessibility, relaxation, outdoor activity, price or value, primary, secondary, tertiary factors. Core marketing attractiveness had the most significant contribution towards shaping tourists visit intention, through the destination image.

Table 4: Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability and AVE value

Construct Variable	CA	CR	AVE
Destination Image	0.903	0.917	0.414
Marketing Attractiveness	0.869	0.893	0.413
Tourists Visit Intention	0.788	0.846	0.442

Source: Author

The results of the hypotheses are presented in this section. *H1* proposed that marketing attractiveness has a significant positive influence on destination image. The results supported *H1* as marketing attractiveness was found to have a significant positive effect on destination image (0.413, p 0.05). *H2* predicted that destination image has a significant positive influence on tourists' visit intentions. This hypothesis was also supported as the destination image was found to have a significant positive effect on tourists' visit intentions (0.414 p 0.05). *H3* predicted that marketing attractiveness mediates the influence of destination image on tourist's visit intention. In testing this hypothesis, the indirect effect of perceived marketing attractiveness on tourists visit intentions was significant and positive (0.442, p 0.05).

The Goodness of Fit (*GoF*) testing shows that marketing attractiveness and destination image have a significant and strong positive effect indirectly on tourist's visit intentions. However, the structural model testing shows that the result of R^2 is 0.364. Hence 36.4% of construct variable value can be measured from the marketing attractiveness and destination image forming tourist visit intention.

Discussion

The results revealed that marketing attractiveness significantly influenced tourists visiting intentions which also significantly influenced destination image indirectly. These confirm findings from previous researches (Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001; Yoon & Uysal, 2005), that the destination image plays a vital role in the relationship between market attractiveness and tourist visit intention. It was gathered from the result that tourists who developed positive destination image of the rural tourism in Lempur were those who saw the outdoor activities and natural beauty as a unique experience; hence exhibiting positive visit intentions. This study also highlights the significant role marketing attractiveness (i.e. tourist's characteristic and environment-natural beauty) plays in further explaining the relationships between destination image and tourists' visit intention. Furthermore, the results revealed that the destination image had mediator effects on tourists visiting intention. In particular, tourists who had previously visited the destinations in Lempur were seen to have a positive image than tourists visiting these destinations for the first time. For instance, international tourists who had perceived the destination image positively would be more likely to revisit and recommend the place to others.

Figure 1: Model *t*-statistic

Conclusions

This study shows that less them of tourist visit intentions were significantly influenced by marketing attractiveness through the destination image of tourists while other variables account for the remaining percentage. The findings have important implications for the marketing of rural tourism destinations, since the distinctiveness may indicate the different expectations and needs of the tourists. Conclusively, this study can be used as a reference by the local government, community, rural tourism managers, academicians, and visitors when establishing interconnectivity and synergy and when executing the developmental plans of rural tourism through social media, building transportation connectivity, and for policy support. For further research, it should be focus on community based tourism for rural tourism study with the large number of samples and covered in Sumatera Island.

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