

The Effect of Memorable Tourist Experience on Tourist Satisfaction and Its Implications on Recommendation Intention



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ABSTRACT: Tourist recommendations to others are one of the important aspects in maintaining the sustainability of a destination. This study examines the effect of memorable tourist experience on tourist satisfaction, the effect of memorable tourist experience on recommendation intention, and the effect of tourist satisfaction on recommendation intention. The study was conducted in the tourist village of Wukirsari, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. This study involved 100 domestic tourists. The analysis tool used was WarpPLS. The results showed that memorable tourist experience had a significant effect on tourist satisfaction, memorable tourist experience had a significant effect on recommendation intention, and tourist satisfaction had a significant effect on recommendation intention. These results serve as a reference for destination managers to improve the quality of the experience felt by tourists so that they are satisfied and voluntarily recommend to others.

KEYWORDS: Memorable Tourist Experience; Tourist Satisfaction; Recommendation Intention

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the sectors that continues to grow and has a significant contribution to the global economy. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) report, the tourism industry has experienced consistent growth in the last few decades, with the number of international tourists reaching billions each year. Amidst increasingly tight competition, tourist experience is one of the crucial aspects in building the competitive advantage of tourist destinations (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). A positive tourist experience not only contributes to tourist satisfaction but also influences their intention to recommend the destination to others. Therefore, understanding the dynamics of the influence of tourist experience on satisfaction and recommendation intention is very important for tourist destination managers. However, although the importance of tourist experience has been widely recognized in the literature, there are several research gaps that need to be addressed. First, most previous studies tend to focus on individual aspects of the tourist experience, such as attractions, facilities, or services, without looking at the experience holistically (Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung, 2007). Second, studies on the relationship between tourism experience, satisfaction, and recommendation intention are still limited to a specific geographic context, so the results cannot always be generalized to various destinations (Chen & Chen, 2010). Third, although many studies examine the direct relationship between tourism experience and satisfaction, few explore how specific elements of tourism experience have implications for the intention to recommend a destination to others (Ali, Hussain, & Ragavan, 2014). This study offers a significant contribution by bridging these gaps. This study not only analyzes tourism experience comprehensively but also examines how these elements influence satisfaction and recommendation intention. In this context, the novelty of this study lies in the development of a model that integrates various dimensions of tourism experience with satisfaction and recommendation intention, and testing the model in the context of tourism destinations with unique characteristics. Thus, the results of this study are expected to not only provide deeper theoretical insights but also offer practical implications for tourism destination managers in improving the competitiveness and sustainability of the tourism industry.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Experience Economy

This study is based on the theory of experience economy proposed by Pine and Gilmore (1999). This theory emphasizes that experience is the highest form of value that a business can offer to its customers. In the context of tourism, a well-designed tourism

The Effect of Memorable Tourist Experience on Tourist Satisfaction and Its Implications on Recommendation Intention

experience can create significant added value, increase tourist satisfaction, and encourage the intention to recommend a destination to others.

Tourist Experience

Tourist experience refers to tourists' perceptions of various aspects of their visit, including interactions with local culture, natural beauty, facilities, and services received. Oh, Fiore, and Jeoung (2007) developed a framework to measure this concept by referring to the elements of aesthetics, entertainment, education, and escapism. Research shows that immersive tourism experiences can enhance tourists' memories and encourage positive attitudes toward the destination (Ali, Hussain, & Ragavan, 2014).

Satisfaction

Tourist satisfaction is the result of their subjective evaluation of the tourism experience. According to Chen and Chen (2010), tourist satisfaction is not only influenced by the quality of service but also by the perceived value of the experience. This satisfaction is the main indicator of the success of a tourist destination in meeting the needs and expectations of tourists.

Recommendation Intention

Recommendation intention refers to the tendency of tourists to recommend a particular destination to others. Research by Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996) shows that this intention is often the result of high levels of satisfaction and positive experiences. In the context of tourism, recommendation intention is very important because it can increase visits through word-of-mouth.

Relationship between Memorable Tourist Experience and Tourist Satisfaction

Tourist satisfaction is the result of their subjective evaluation of the tourist experience. According to Chen and Chen (2010), tourist satisfaction is not only influenced by the quality of service but also by the perceived value of the experience. This satisfaction is the main indicator of the success of a tourist destination in meeting the needs and expectations of tourists. The relationship between tourist experience and tourist satisfaction has been widely studied in previous literature. Otto and Ritchie (1996) emphasized that the emotional elements of the tourist experience, such as awe and happiness, play an important role in increasing tourist satisfaction. In addition, Chen and Chen (2010) found that positive and high-value experiences significantly affect the level of tourist satisfaction in cultural heritage destinations. Another study by Ali, Hussain, and Ragavan (2014) showed that memorable tourist experiences, such as exceptional service and deep social interaction, have a positive impact on tourist satisfaction. These findings indicate that the quality and intensity of the tourist experience greatly determine the level of satisfaction felt by tourists. Based on this literature, the hypothesis regarding the influence of tourist experience on tourist satisfaction can be formulated strongly. Based on theoretical and empirical studies, the following hypothesis can be offered:

H1. Memorable Tourist Experience has a significant effect on Tourist Satisfaction

Relationship between Memorable Tourist Experience and Recommendation Intention

The relationship between memorable tourist experience and recommendation intention has become an important topic in tourism research. Kim, Ritchie, and McCormick (2012) introduced the concept of memorable tourist experience (MTE) which refers to experiences that are memorable in tourists' memories and have a significant emotional impact. Their study showed that high-quality MTE can increase tourists' loyalty and their desire to recommend a destination. In another study, Tsaour, Chiu, and Wang (2007) emphasized that the emotional aspects of the tourist experience, such as awe and happiness, play an important role in driving recommendation intention. Research by Sthapit and Coudounaris (2018) also showed that tourists' pleasant memories positively influenced their intention to recommend a destination to others. Based on these findings, it can be formulated that memorable tourist experiences not only increase tourists' emotional connection with the destination but also play a major role in forming recommendation intention. Based on theoretical and empirical studies, the following hypothesis can be offered:

H2. Memorable Tourist Experience has a significant influence on Recommendation Intention

Relationship between Tourist Satisfaction and Recommendation Intention

The relationship between tourist satisfaction and recommendation intention has been the focus of significant research. Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996) showed that high levels of satisfaction directly contribute to customer behavior, including the intention to recommend a product or service. In the context of tourism, tourist satisfaction reflects their evaluation of the experience gained, which can result in a positive intention to recommend a destination (Chen & Chen, 2010). Research by Yoon and Uysal (2005) confirmed that tourist satisfaction has a mediating role in the relationship between tourism experience and intention to return or recommend a destination. In addition, Prayag and Ryan (2012) showed that emotional aspects of satisfaction, such as pleasure and appreciation of the destination, have a significant influence on recommendation intention. Another study by

The Effect of Memorable Tourist Experience on Tourist Satisfaction and Its Implications on Recommendation Intention

Hosany and Prayag (2013) highlighted the importance of emotional elements in increasing tourist loyalty, including recommendation intention. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that tourist satisfaction is not only an indicator of destination success but also functions as a major driver in forming recommendation intentions, especially through emotional elements and positive evaluations of the tourism experience. Based on theoretical and empirical studies, the following hypothesis can be offered:

H3. Tourist Satisfaction has a significant effect on Recommendation Intention



Figure 1. Model Hipotesis

III. METHOD

This study uses an explanatory research type that aims to explain the causal relationship between the variables studied. Explanatory research was chosen because it is relevant to test the hypothesis that has been formulated based on the theory and results of previous studies. This study was conducted in Wukirsari Tourism Village, a tourist destination that has interesting cultural and natural potential to be studied. The respondents in this study were tourists who visited Wukirsari Tourism Village. A total of 100 tourists were selected as respondents using purposive sampling techniques. This technique was chosen because it allows researchers to determine samples based on certain criteria. Data were collected using an online questionnaire designed to measure respondents' perceptions of the research variables. The questionnaire was compiled using a Likert scale with a score of 1 to 5, where a score of 1 indicates "strongly disagree" and a score of 5 indicates "strongly agree". This method was chosen to facilitate efficient data collection and reach diverse respondents. The research instrument has been tested for validity and reliability before being used in this study. Validity testing was carried out to ensure that each item in the questionnaire was able to measure the intended variable, while reliability testing was carried out to ensure the consistency of the measurement results. The collected data were analyzed using WarpPLS, a software designed for path analysis based on Partial Least Squares (PLS). WarpPLS was chosen because of its ability to analyze structural models with non-normally distributed data and can test relationships between variables with high complexity.

IV. RESULT

Table 1 shows that most respondents are male (64%), while females are 36%. Based on the last level of education, the majority are high school graduates (80%). While based on profession, most are students (71%).

Table 1. Respondent Profile (n=100)

		%
Gender	Man	64
	Woman	36
Tingkat pendidikan terakhir	Sekolah Menengah Atas	80
	Diploma Students	6
	Undergraduate Student	12
	Postgraduate Student	2
Pekerjaan	High school students	35
	College student	36
	Businessman	7
	Government employees	7
	Private employees	10
	Others	5

The Effect of Memorable Tourist Experience on Tourist Satisfaction and Its Implications on Recommendation Intention

Hypothesis Testing

Based on the results of data processing (Table 2), it can be seen that Memorable Tourist Experience has a significant effect on Tourist Satisfaction (p-value = 0.000) so that hypothesis 1 is accepted. Memorable Tourist Experience has a significant effect on Recommendation Intention as indicated by p-value = 0.000 so that hypothesis 2 is accepted. Tourist Satisfaction has a significant effect on Recommendation Intention as indicated by p-value = 0.000 so that hypothesis 3 is also accepted.

Table 2. Hypothesis Testing Results

Path	Coefficient	p-Value	Description
Memorable Tourist Experience → Tourist Satisfaction	0.779	0.000	Accepted
Memorable Tourist Experience → Recommendation Intention	0.759	0.000	Accepted
Tourist Satisfaction → Recommendation Intention	0.873	0.000	Accepted



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Figure 2. Final Structural Model

V. DISCUSSION

The Influence of Memorable Tourist Experience on Tourist Satisfaction

The results of this study found that Memorable Tourist Experience (MTE) has a significant influence on Tourist Satisfaction (TS). This finding strengthens empirical evidence that has been revealed by various previous studies. For example, Chen and Chen (2010) stated that tourist satisfaction is not only determined by the quality of service received, but also by the value of the experience felt during the tourist visit. This experience value includes various emotional, cognitive, and social aspects that collectively shape the tourist's perception of the destination. Tourist satisfaction, as shown by the results of this study, serves as a primary indicator of the success of a tourist destination in meeting the needs and expectations of its visitors. High satisfaction not only reflects good service quality but also shows that the destination is able to create a meaningful and memorable experience for tourists. Otto and Ritchie (1996) emphasize the importance of emotional elements in the tourist experience, such as awe, happiness, and connectedness, which contribute significantly to increasing the level of tourist satisfaction. These elements create an emotional connection between tourists and the destination, which in turn strengthens tourist loyalty to the destination. Furthermore, this finding is in line with the research of Chen and Chen (2010) which underlines that positive and high-value tourism experiences significantly affect the level of tourist satisfaction, especially in cultural heritage destinations. In the context of cultural heritage destinations, experiences rich in educational, aesthetic, and spiritual values often leave a deep and lasting impression on tourists. Another study conducted by Ali, Hussain, and Ragavan (2014) also supports this result by showing that memorable tourism experiences, including exceptional service and deep social interactions, have a significant positive impact on tourist satisfaction. Excellent service includes friendliness, responsiveness, and attention to detail, while social interactions involve harmonious relationships between tourists, guides, and local communities. Thus, the results of this study provide an important contribution to the tourism literature, especially in understanding the factors that influence tourist satisfaction. The findings also have practical implications for tourism destination managers, who can use these findings to design tourism experience strategies that focus more on creating meaningful and memorable moments for tourists. This, in turn, can increase the competitiveness of destinations in the increasingly competitive tourism industry.

The Effect of Memorable Tourist Experience on Tourist Satisfaction and Its Implications on Recommendation Intention

The Influence of Memorable Tourist Experience on Recommendation Intention

The results of this study indicate that Memorable Tourist Experience (MTE) has a significant influence on Recommendation Intention. This finding supports the concept introduced by Kim, Ritchie, and McCormick (2012), who define MTE as an experience that is embedded in tourists' memories and has a deep emotional impact. MTE includes various aspects of experience, including social interaction, personal involvement, uniqueness of experience, and emotional elements that provide long-lasting positive memories. The study revealed that high-quality MTE not only creates a strong emotional connection between tourists and destinations but also increases tourists' loyalty and encourages them to recommend the destination to others. In addition, this study strengthens the findings of Tsaur, Chiu, and Wang (2007) who showed that the emotional dimensions of tourism experiences, such as awe, happiness, and deep satisfaction, play an important role in influencing recommendation intentions. The emphasis on this emotional aspect highlights how elements that trigger positive feelings can increase the attractiveness of a destination and build long-term relationships with tourists. In this context, tourism experiences that are able to create strong emotional moments become a key element in destination management strategies. The results of this study are also consistent with the study of Sthapit and Coudounaris (2018) which identified that pleasant memories generated from tourism experiences have a positive impact on tourists' intention to recommend a destination. Pleasant memories not only add value to the tourism experience itself, but also serve as an effective marketing tool through word-of-mouth. Tourists who have positive memories tend to share their stories with their social circles, thus creating a sustainable promotional effect. The managerial contribution of these findings is to provide strategic guidance for tourism destination managers to focus on developing memorable tourism experiences. By creating experiences that combine elements of uniqueness, emotional involvement, and high service quality, destination managers can strengthen tourists' relationships with the destination while increasing their intention to recommend it. This strategy can include providing authentic attractions, interactive programs that engage tourists personally, and services that support the creation of positive memories. Thus, MTE can be integrated as a core component in the design and management of tourism destinations to create sustainable competitive advantages.

The Influence of Tourist Satisfaction on Recommendation Intention

The results of the study indicate that Tourist Satisfaction has a significant influence on Recommendation Intention. This finding supports the theory put forward by Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996), which states that a high level of satisfaction directly contributes to customer behavior, including the intention to recommend a product or service to others. In this perspective, customer satisfaction is not only a cognitive evaluation of the quality of service received, but also involves an emotional dimension that can strengthen loyalty and positive behavioral intentions. In the context of tourism, tourist satisfaction reflects a comprehensive evaluation of the experience gained during a visit to a destination. This evaluation involves various aspects, such as the quality of attractions, the comfort of facilities, interactions with local residents, and the emotional experiences felt during the trip. Research conducted by Chen and Chen (2010) shows that tourists who are satisfied with their experiences are more likely to have positive intentions to recommend the destination to others. This is because satisfaction creates a strong emotional connection with the destination, thus encouraging advocacy behavior. In addition, Yoon and Uysal's (2005) study confirmed that tourist satisfaction acts as a mediator in the relationship between tourism experience and intention to return or recommend a destination. In this case, satisfaction acts as an intermediary variable that links tourists' direct experiences with loyal behavior, including intention to recommend. This finding strengthens the understanding that pleasant and satisfying experiences during a trip not only increase the likelihood of repeat visits but also encourage recommendations to other potential tourists. Prayag and Ryan (2012) also highlighted the importance of the emotional dimension in shaping tourist satisfaction. They stated that emotional elements, such as pleasure, appreciation, and a sense of connection with the destination, have a significant impact on recommendation intention. This suggests that positive emotional experiences can strengthen the bond between tourists and the destination, thereby increasing their likelihood of recommending the place. This study is also in line with the findings of Hosany and Prayag (2013), who emphasized the importance of emotional elements in increasing tourist loyalty. They stated that positive emotions felt during a tourism experience can increase tourists' intention to recommend a destination to others. Thus, emotional elements are not only complementary to the tourism experience but also become a key factor in building long-term relationships between tourists and destinations. Overall, these findings confirm that tourist satisfaction, both cognitive and emotional, is a key determinant in driving the intention to recommend a destination. The practical implication is that it is important for destination managers to not only ensure high service quality but also create emotionally memorable experiences for tourists. In this way, destinations can increase their competitiveness through positive advocacy from satisfied tourists.

The Effect of Memorable Tourist Experience on Tourist Satisfaction and Its Implications on Recommendation Intention

Research Limitation

This study has limitations in the duration of data collection, which was conducted in only two weeks. This relatively short time has the potential to affect data representation, so that the results obtained may not fully reflect the condition of the population or respondents as a whole. Therefore, it is recommended for further researchers to extend the data collection period in order to provide more comprehensive and in-depth results.

VI. CONCLUSION

The results of this study found the importance of memorable tourist experience and tourist satisfaction as the main antecedents that contribute to recommendation intention. This finding provides a theoretical contribution by enriching the literature on tourist behavior, especially related to the factors that drive the intention to recommend tourist destinations to others. Practically, the results of this study can be a reference for tourism village managers in designing strategies that are oriented towards increasing memorable tourist experiences and tourist satisfaction. Thus, managers can effectively increase the number of recommendations from tourists who have visited, which ultimately contributes to increasing the number of visits and the sustainability of tourist destinations.

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