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Sacred Site Visit, An Application of Reason Action Theory

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ABSTRACT — Sacred place visit tours have been increasingly popular. It is not new for Indonesian people who are believe in Islam Religion and order to visit Mecca at least once a live time. Visiting some sacred places in some religions have been part of its faith while in other faith it is not mandatory. In ancient era it is known as pilgrimage. In tourism industry it is one of spiritual tourism activities which receive growing attention recently from both academicians and practitioners because of its popularity and potential economic value added contribution. Based on Reason Action Theory (TRA), the study explored the relationship among Subjective Norms, Individual Attitude and Intention to visit sacred places. Survey involved 250 participants who faith in different religion such as Hindu and Muslim. Research finding indicated that subjective norms, had stronger effect than individual attitude on intention to visit sacred places. The model also included self-esteem and social susceptibility as moderator to explore their the role in relationship among attitude, subjective norms and intention to visit sacred places. Further analysis indicated that self-esteem and social susceptibility weakened the effect of subjective norms on intention to visit sacred places. The research findings contributed fruitful information to support tourism practitioners in improving their marketing strategy regarding sacred places package tour. Its implications discussed to improve marketing communication strategy in the future. In addition to its positive contributions on tourists behavior. Limitations of the study and potential developments are also presented to stimulate further development and scientific dialogue among those who are interested in the research area.

Keywords: subjective norms, attitude, self-esteem, social susceptibility, intention.

1. INTRODUCTION

More than 1 million people coming from Bali and cities located in Java visited Pura Mandara Giri Semeru Agung for devotion at 19 Juli 2016. The mobilization of people from other cities both located in Java and Bali generated economic value for local people at Lumajang, East Jawa province. Traveling related to religious site has been popular for Balinese people and experiencing a tremendous growth for last several years. In Indonesia Pura Manadara Giri Semeru Agung is one of sacred destination located in East Java. There is also Mount Bromo with Kasodo ceremony also interesting and unique. Motivations to visit sacred places has been uncovered by previous researchers. The growing popularity of sacred traveling are described by several factors such as the need to becoming closer to God, obtaining guidance, redeeming the soul, confessing sins, strengthening faith in Good, finding better world, finding inner peace, praying for various needs, giving thanks for benefaction and maintaining tradition (Drule, Alexandra M. et al, 2012). Travel with religious motives has been important because of its economic potential impact for local people. Time, health, lack of interest, fear, distance, aspects of social, physical or financial condition are reported as Travel constraints. Why people travel to site which is important or related to religion reported by Abbate and Nouvo (2012). Among others, experiences that afford individuals the potential to reconstruct meanings related to identity is reported as motivation to visit sacred places. Even there are some research conducted in Europe but as far as we know there is limited number studies which aimed at the role of social factor on intention to visit. Based on Reason Action theory, present study reported the role of subjective norms on individual behavioral intention to visit sacred places. The research findings were fruitful in improving promotion strategy sacred sites visit.
5. LIMITATION AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

The present study made positive contribution in providing information that the effect of subjective norms was stronger than individual attitude. The implication of the research findings is recommendation for practitioner when promoting the sacred site visit tour they must targeted individual who has leadership position within the group. He could be religion leader, manager or the expert for product.

Besides of its positive contribution, there is a number of limitations that should be improved in the next research. Present research was based on survey design, an experimental design would provide more confidence in the internal validity. The sample unit came from Balinese individual so that the cultural variation was limited. Recommendation for further study is developing sample group from different group such as javanese, Sundanese and Batak.

6. CONCLUSION

Individual attitude toward sacred sites and subjective norms influence individual intention to visit significantly. The effect of subjective norm in communalistic culture was stronger than individual attitude. It means that communication to market sacred visit tour would be more effective if the important others were involved in communicating or giving recommendation regarding sacred site visit. It also recommended to bring community leader in group when visiting sacred places.

REFERENCES


