The Antecedents of Culture-Based Tourism Destination Sustainability in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Awareness of tourism destination sustainability is important to protect the destination from damage and overexploitation. Studies on tourism destination sustainability are still in the early stages. Scholars have just developed the indicators and instruments that will be used to measure the destination sustainability. The purpose of this paper is to identify factors that influence culture-based tourism destination sustainability. We present regression analysis of potential antecedents of culture-based tourism destination of 5 cultural destinations in Central Java involving 200 local people. The result suggests that tourist guides' performance has the strongest effect on culture-based destination sustainability. It is complemented with resources performance and innovation. This indicates the importance of tourist guides' training and orientation in building tourists' awareness.

Keywords: tourist destination sustainability, tourism resources, destination innovation, tour guides' performance, cultural destination

1. INTRODUCTION

The tourism condition in the past few years has increased the tension in the countries that should develop their sustainable destination, including the culture-based destinations. This is because now the focus of tourism is sustainable destinations [1]–[3]. Considering this trend, the researchers modify tourism variables to comply with the sustainability aspect [4], [5]. We specifically begin to develop the concept of tourism destination sustainability [6]–[12]. Tourism destination sustainability is defined as "how vast the economic, social, and environmental impact of tourism to a destination is" [13].

As attentions to the sustainability of tourism destinations are given, it is important that the administrators consider the antecedents. Understanding the antecedents allows them to determine the right ways in encouraging tourism destination sustainability. Sustainability should support the efforts to increase local society's welfare and preserve the environment.

However, the currently available research's focus is on natural destinations instead of cultural destinations [14]–[16]. Only a small number of ongoing research aims at cultural destinations although these destinations strongly relate to local's social welfare and identity.

Resource-based view (RBV) has made resources, which are defined as "all assets, capabilities, organization process, company attributes, information, knowledge, and so forth that are controlled by companies that enable them to formulate and implement strategies to increase their efficiency and effectivity," play a role as an important antecedent of destination's sustainability [3], [11], [18]. Specifically, a rare, valuable, inimitable, and irreplaceable resource can act as a booster for the sustainable competitiveness of a destination [19].

Besides, a modern competitive climate encourages companies to come up with new ideas to prevent tourists' boredom over conservative cultural destinations. Some previous studies [3], [20] give strong evidence that innovation is important in increasing destinations' sustainability. Therefore, the innovation factor likely determines the sustainability of culture-based destinations. For the same reason, human resource is also important and need to be treated in a special place as an inimitable and irreplaceable. Tour guides are important human resources in cultural destinations. Human capital theory [21] states that human resources, including tour guides, determine the destinations' success. Therefore, we propose that the tour guide is an important antecedent in culture-based destinations' sustainability. Previous studies have revealed that tour guides' performance is an antecedent for tourists' satisfaction, destinations' loyalty, and memorable tourism experiences. They, in turn, uplift the destinations' competitiveness and sustainability [22], [23]. The same thing applies to culture-based tourism destinations' sustainability.

We try to fill in the gap in the literature of tourism destinations' sustainability by showing how destinations' managers achieve culture-based destinations' sustainability. They do it by optimizing resources, innovation, and tour guides' performance. We contribute to the literature of tourism destination sustainability – especially the culture-based tourism destination – by examining its three antecedent variables using the resource-based view theoretical framework [17]. In order to be complementary to the existing literature, this study will elaborate on the reason why resources, innovation, and tour guides' performance are factors specifically aimed at

increasing culture-based tourism destination's sustainability. We hypothesize that resources, innovation, and tour guides' performance will have significant effects on the sustainability of culture-based tourist destinations. Moreover, this research contributes to the understanding of resources forms that are vital to the sustainability of culture-based destinations.

The resource-based view (RBV) claims that sustainable competitive advantage derives from the possessed resources and the capability to manage those resources and change them into excellent business strategies [17]. RBV is commonly used as a theoretical basis in studies of sustainable tourism [24]–[26]. It is a grand theory. Some smaller theories have specifically excelled certain types of resources. Resources exchange theory [27] describes certain types of resources excel in boosting motivation for social shift based on particularism and concreteness. Knowledge-based vies (KBV) considers knowledge and innovation as the primary resources [28]. Meanwhile, the human capital theory features human resources as primary resources.

Generally, resources directly connect to their usefulness context. Thus, resources aimed at increasing tourists' visit will benefit the visit. To create a destination's sustainability, resources directly aimed at increasing sustainability, such as green innovation, environmentally friendly technology, and energy-saving promotion, should be used [28]. Nevertheless, for culture-based destinations, we believe that a direct connection to the destination's sustainability is also formed. There are three reasons for this. First, culture-destinations offer authenticity and therefore advancing preservation [31]. This leads to maintaining originality, including the local customs. It means that culture-based tourist destinations empower the local community. Local community empowerment is a form of sustainable tourism. As a consequence, resources will tie to the local community and form a direct connection. Second, culture-based destinations automatically aim at conservation, in this case, cultural conservation [32]. It is far from cultural degradation and will point to social life as well as cultural-resources utilization. It also aims at sustainable cultural-tourism building so long as it is supported by good cultural livelihood and resources [32]. This includes resources elements of sustainable cultural tourism. Third, culture-based destinations are tightly bound to creative tourism, which in turn stands on authenticity provided by local culture [33]. This will effectively be achieved if the local community is empowered because they are the ones who understand truly the cultural values of the destination. Any kinds of resources enable the local community and the surrounding environment to develop better. Thus, the destination is sustainable. Detailed elaboration of each theory and its connection to the culture-based tourist destinations are given in the following.

1.1. Resources as a potential antecedent

RBV lays a foundation to establish resources as potential antecedents of culture-based tourism destination's sustainability. Resources exchange theory [27] classifies resources based on solid theory. It states that human activities take place due to resources exchange. People call

this exchange as a reward. The theory is relevant to present studies since the resources possessed by destinations can be seen as things traded for tourists to obtain intense visits with sustainability principles.

According to resources exchange theory, resources are grouped based on the particularism and concreteness dimensions [34]. The particular resources are harder to trade than the less particular resources. The concrete resources are easier to identify than abstract resources. Based on this consideration, Foa and Foa [27] formulize six types of resources different in particularism and concreteness. They are status, information, money, goods, service, and love. Status, love, and service are particular resources while information, money, and items are less particular. Status and information are abstract resources whilst service and goods are concrete. Love and money are placed in between abstract and concrete.

All of the resources' types can be argued as important in increasing culture-based tourist destination. Goods as concrete forms of destination are reflected in the destination's quality. Service is reflected in the quality of service provided for the tourists. Love can be found in the community's friendliness towards the tourists. Money is related to the budget of a destination's operation. Information relates to the knowledge possessed as an additional value of a culture-based destination. Status connects to the destination's image in international tourism. However, it is unclear if the resources can make the destination sustainable as in providing benefits for the poor and less fortunate people, empowering the local community, smoothening tourist visits, and eliminating discrimination in the society.

Resources exchange theory suggests a direct relationship between resources and culture-based tourism destination's attractiveness, but it does not guarantee the relationship between resources and sustainability. This is because a destination's attractiveness connects to the relationship between the destination's manager and the tourists. It is different from the culture-based destination in which the community and culture are among the important assets to attract tourists [32]. Resources such as budget, information, destination's quality, destination's image, service quality, and friendliness should be in line with and affect the sustainability of a culture-based destination.

H1: Resources will significantly affect the sustainability of the culture-based destination

1.2. Innovation as a potential antecedent

Researchers have analyzed innovation and its effect on a destination's sustainability [35], [36]. Experts agree that innovation is an important variable in a destination's sustainability [37]–[40]. It also is a prominent variable of the knowledge-based view (KBV) [41]. KBV states that knowledge creation and application are the key activities behind superior performance [41].

Innovation is also a broad concept. It has been defined as "a multi-stage process in which an organization transforms ideas into products, services, or new or better processes to encourage itself to move forward, compete, and distinguish it successfully in the market" [42]. Innovation can be in a

specific feature in a certain context [43]. Innovation that is not relevant in a certain situation might turn into unnecessary waste. Relevant innovation leads to the main aspects of service to tourists. Generally, innovation in the organization method, marketing, service, product, infrastructure, and structure might play a major role in increasing visits to a destination.

A question arises later on whether these innovations can improve the sustainability of a destination such as increasing the benefit for the local society, boosting social and aid programs for the less fortunate, and minimize the impact on society. In a common destination, this might be unrelated. But, in the context of a culture-based destination, innovation has a major role in maintaining sustainability. The innovations can be carried out by empowering the local community in marketing, infrastructure maintenance, and consultation on handicraft innovation. Thus, we suspect that high innovations in culture-based destinations will create sustainability of the destinations.

H2: Innovations will significantly affect the sustainability of culture-based destinations

1.3. Tour guides' performance as a potential antecedent

Tour guides have an important role as a travel-experience creator [23]. A study by Nguyen [22] revealed that tour guides can generate tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. One of the advantages of culture-based destination's tour guides is the big role they play in encouraging tourist satisfaction in cultural tours [44] and connecting tourists' needs to the service provided by the local community [45].

The performance of culture-based tour guides can be measured from several things such as the ability in introducing the local custom and norm, the responsibility in ensuring tourists' safety, the provision of special service, and the information sharing on local history and culture. At a glance, those things seem to be unrelated to destination sustainability. However, as it has been argued earlier, culture-based destinations have the specific characteristics that can help them in connecting tour guides' performance to sustainability. As an example, tour guides can build tourists' appreciation towards the local community that makes them friendlier ignoring society's social strata. Tourists can also socially contribute to the local community by knowing the history and the value of the destination. Relying on their knowledge of local history, tourists will make efforts to minimize the impact they create on the environment for maintaining the destination's originality. Besides, interaction with the local people will help them intensively explore the local culture of the destination they visit. These cannot be found in non-culture-based destinations like in modern recreation centers or nature-based destinations. Therefore, we hypothesize:

H3: Tour guides' performance will have a positive and significant influence on culture-based destination sustainability.

2. METHOD

2.1. Participants and procedures

Our samples are local people who make a living around the five culture-based destinations in Central Java, Indonesia. The respondents of various occupations were asked to fill in the directly-distributed questionnaires. Forty questionnaires are distributed in each destination, yielding a total sample of 200 people.

2.2. Measures

a. Resources
   The questionnaire demands answers about the condition of the resources in the destination using a six-item-scale developed from resources exchange theory [34]. The example items are among other "destination image in the international tourism" and "local people's friendliness towards the tourists." The responses are made based on the 5-item Likert scale (1 = very bad; 5 = very good)

b. Innovation
   We asked the respondents to answer questions on innovation using company-level innovation scale by Hoskens et al [46] (five items). The question samples include "in the past three years, has the destination ever created a new marketing method or strategy effective in attracting tourists?" and "in the past three years, has the destination renovated the infrastructure to be better and more interesting?" The responses are made on a binary scale (1 = No, 2 = Yes).

c. Tour guides' performance
   Observation of the local society has made it possible for tour guides' performance instruments to be filled by modifying the questionnaire provided by Caber et al [47], which consists of nine items. The item samples include "tour guides in this destination generally recommend attending special events" and "tour guides in this destination commonly act as translators for the tourists in communicating with the local people." The responses are made using a 5-item Likert scale (1 = strongly agree; 5 = strongly disagree).

d. Sustainability of tourism destination
   Local community measure the sustainability of tourism destination using destination sustainability questionnaire developed by Mathew and Sreejesh [1] comprises of 22 items (the dimension includes economic sustainability, social sustainability, culture sustainability, and environmental sustainability). The item examples include "income gained by the local community from a stable destination from time to time" and "this destination develops the local community." The responses are made using a 5-item Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

e. Social desirability
   To avoid social desirability bias, which is the respondent answering the question in a seemingly acceptable way [48], we employed social desirability as

a control variable. The questionnaire measuring desirability bias uses nine-item Arnaud's questionnaire [49]. The item examples include "I sometimes feel annoyed by people asking for my help" and "I sometimes feel annoyed when I can't reach my goal." The responses are made in a binary scale (1 = True, 2 = False).

2.3. Analytical approach

We employ linear regression to test our three hypotheses. Resources, innovation, tour guides' performance, and social desirability are the free variables in this research, while destination sustainability is the bound variable. ANOVA is run to examine the difference between destination, gender, age, education, and occupation in answering the research questions.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tables 1 and 2 display the reliability coefficient and descriptive statistics. As it is seen, the construct reliability of the three variables is accepted per Nunnally recommendation, namely the minimum reliability 0.70 [49]. Innovation reliability is 0.679, which is still under the acceptable limit considering that innovation scale is a newly developed scale.

Table 1 Reliability Coefficients

Variables	Number of Items	Items Dropped	Cronbach α
Resources	6	-	0.887
Innovation	5	3	0.679
Performance	9	-	0.843
Sustainability	22	-	0.963

Table 2 Descriptive for The Major Variables

Variables	Mean	SD
Resources	4.22	0.46
Innovation	1.71	0.39
Performance	4.43	0.37
Sustainability	4.04	0.50

Table 3 shows the intercorrelation between variables. The observed correlation ranges from 0.184 to 0.476, showing the absence of multicollinearity in the research data.

Table 3 Intercorrelations of the Major Variables

Variable	Resou	Innov	Perform	Sustain
Resource	1.000			
Innovation	0.216**	1.000		
Performance	0.204**	0.184*	1.000	
Sustainability	0.304***	0.270***	0.476***	1.00

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table 4 shows the respondents' profile. The majority of them are female (56.5 percent) and the largest age proportion is 31-40 (35.5 percent) and 21-30 (33.5 percent). Around 63.5 percent of the respondents are high school graduates.

Table 4 Demographic Results

No	Profile	Description	Respondents	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	86	43,0
		Female	113	56.5
2	Age	21-30	67	33.5
		31-40	71	35.5
		41-50	52	26.0
		51-60	9	4.5
3	Education	Junior high school	62	31.0
		Senior high school	127	63.5
		Diploma	8	4.0
		Bachelor	1	0.5

The hypothesis is tested using regression analysis and the result is shown in Figure 1. The result shows that resources positively affect destination sustainability (β = 0.184, p <0.01). These results indicate that concrete and abstract resources [34] also play an important role in the sustainability of cultural-based destinations, in line with resources exchange theory. Furthermore, this confirms that the resources in the Foa and Foa classifications [27] play a role in eliminating discrimination as well as other things that distinguish aspects of the sustainability of the destination with the performance of the destination in general. This finding is in line with a number of studies focusing on the aspect of resources [35] [37].

Similar effect is also displayed by innovation (β = 0.151, p <0.05). The finding that innovation influences destination sustainability shows that the innovations made by destination are appropriate to the context [43]. This innovation is carried out by paying attention to local communities and the environment such as empowering local communities, as well as paying attention to more general matters such as infrastructure. Previous research also emphasized the importance of innovation in the sustainability of destinations [37] [40].

Tourist guides' performance has a positive connection to cultural destination sustainability (β = 0.407, p <0.001). This shows that the behavior of tour guides has helped pay attention to aspects of sustainability. In addition, these results are in line with previous studies on the context of similar destinations in other countries [22], [44], [45].

The H1-H3 of this research are fully supported. It can be seen that tourist guides' performance is the most significant predictor in cultural destination sustainability. The 0.291 R2 value indicates that 29.1 percent of cultural destination sustainability variance can be elaborated by resources, innovation, and tourist guides' performance. This coefficient is low, indicating that there are many other factors influencing cultural destination sustainability.
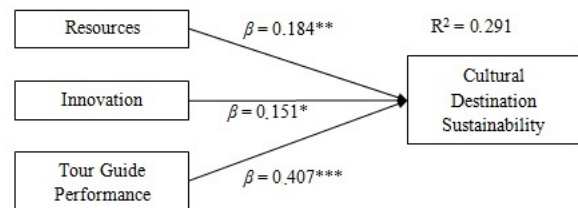
Figure 1 Results of the regression analysis

4. CONCLUSION

Culture destinations can have various sustainability levels. Resources, innovation, and tourist guides' performance play important roles in forming the sustainability. This study reveals that cultural destination sustainability is determined by resources, innovation, and tourist guides' performance. The displayed model still has low explanatory power as much as 29.1%. Tourist guides' performance is proven as the strongest factor influencing destination sustainability. It is following the guides' roles as a connector between the tourists and the society [46] and as a travel satisfaction booster [45].

Culture destinations are the tourism central components for tropical countries, as the alternatives of natural destinations that relatively are similar. Thus, culture destinations have advantages as destination icons in a country like Indonesia. Tourists are more and more interested in cross-cultural and cross-age social experience. Therefore, it is crucial to maintain those kinds of destinations. The study reveals that cultural destination sustainability is mainly affected by the tourist guides' performance. We recommend more training for the tourist guides that enables them to better convey the sustainability message to both the tourists and society. The knowledge of building principle and tourism sustainability is important and needs to be taught and trained to tourist guides.

This study carries some limitations that should be considered in generalizing the result. First, it only covers Central Java society and cannot be used to generally elaborate the cultural destinations across Indonesia. Second, it is important to control the kinds-of-destination factor in further research because culture destinations highly vary, from cultural attractions, culture villages, to historical sites. The first limitation can be overcome by conducting research in other locations in Indonesia, or even other countries. It can also be overcome by carrying out comparative studies between countries or cultures. They will better clarify the antecedents of cultural destination sustainability globally. The second limitation can be solved by broader studies or more specific studies on certain cultural destination. re also aware of the need to further develop the innovation construct since it has lower reliability than the others.

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