



# Understanding Virtual Reality Experience Quality as Drive Intention to Visit in Tourism

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**Abstract.** The presence of technology has changed the mindset and lifestyle of tourist behavior. Tourists become active in seeking information on social media through smartphones. This article aims to explore conceptual research related to virtual Reality. Virtual Reality is a new marketing tool in the tourism industry. Virtual Reality has become a more common phenomenon in destination marketing and experiences in tourist attractions. This conceptual article aims to clarify virtual experiences in tourism, discuss previous research on virtual experiences, and propose conceptual models of virtual tourism experiences—information for the tourism industry related to improving the quality of service to tourists online. The study results are expected to be used as considerations and information materials for tourist destination managers in Indonesia to overcome problems related to virtual reality experience quality as one of the determinants of intention to visit.

**Keywords:** Virtual Reality Experience Quality · Destination Image · Novelty Seeking · Intention to Visit · Tourism Behavior

## 1 Introduction

The customer's behavior in the digital age has demonstrated that they have become more reactive and interactive in the process of information acquisition. Traditional visual media is losing its appeal as a source of information among consumers, particularly in light of the proliferation of virtual reality headsets and other similar technologies [1]. Because tourists are consumers who enjoy tourist products, the knowledge that was gained about consumer behavior needs to be studied further and can be used as a strategy to understand the patterns of behavior that tourists exhibit because tourists are consumers.

The development of technology today requires several tourism managers to introduce various tourist destinations in their area. Indonesia introduces various tourist destinations through e-tourism, which contains various tourist destinations in Indonesia (Indonesia-tourism.com). However, currently, tourism marketing carried out with an approach through social media is one of the roles in the efficiency and effectiveness of promoting tourism in Indonesia and the world. Previously, tourism marketing was

enough only to utilize conventional media. However, internet penetration has changed the information distribution and communication patterns between companies and consumers in the tourism sector. This is also supported by a demographic group in Indonesia, which currently dominates the millennial generation in terms of internet and information technology use. The sheer amount of information shared on social media channels greatly influences trip planning and the final decision in making travel plans [2]. In addition, the widespread use of social media has positively and negatively influenced the travel and hospitality business and the wider industry [3]. Given the influential power and complex effects of social media channels, it is crucial to understand when and how travelers use social media at different stages of their decision-making process.

Since of advancements in digital technology, customers can now engage with companies in a variety of new ways. New ways to obtain information about products, to place orders, to make purchases, to make payments, and even to lodge complaints [4]. The existence of technology contributes to the enhancement of the quality of life of Indonesians in a number of different ways, one of which is the enhancement of the tourism industry. The development of Virtual Reality (VR) technology for use in tourism has made it possible to obtain an all-encompassing view of hotels and locations. By acquainting them with unfamiliar locations, it reduces the level of anxiety or risk that customers experience [5]. There are six essential facets of tourism that have benefited from the implementation of virtual reality: planning and management, heritage preservation, marketing, accessibility, education, and entertainment [6]. Additionally, the tourism industry has begun to use virtual reality as a tool for commercial purposes in order to communicate with customers and provide them with information regarding popular tourist destinations [7].

Nowadays, when someone travels, most flight ticket reservations to lodging use online reservations. The presence of supporting applications for online reservations provides convenience in ordering, so it is in great demand by the public in the digital era. Smartphones are the best guides for traveling. Tourists can get various information only with their smartphones, ranging from tourist attractions they want to visit, how to get there, places to eat typical of an area, to where to shop for souvenirs. The rise of social media is changing people's lifestyles. Currently, sharing or posting activities on social media is a daily habit of Indonesian people, including when traveling.

The COVID-19 pandemic presents the tourism industry with a number of issues and challenges, one of which is the transition from traditional forms and devices to digital [8]. Everyone who has a stake in the matter faces a number of challenges when it comes to implementing and making use of digital technology. It is now commonplace for households, businesses, and even tourist destinations to make use of various forms of digital technology and the internet [9]. There is no doubt that technology makes life simpler and more effective, and the enjoyment that can be derived from utilizing technology can encourage additional utilization, which, in turn, can develop into a habit.

The tourism industry has recently begun to adopt the latest developments in internet technology, and one of those developments is virtual reality. The ability of virtual reality (VR) to present complicated information in a manner that is understandable to a wide variety of people, such as tourists or internet users, in a format that is engaging and simple to grasp is the primary benefit of VR [10]. Virtual reality (VR) is a relatively new technology that is still in its early stages of research in the field of tourism marketing. As

a consequence of this, there is still room for improvement in our comprehension of the difficulties and perils connected with the application of VR in marketing [11]. Flavián et al. [12] showed that there was a lack of both experience and technological development. Virtual reality (VR) is quickly becoming the creator of new tourism experiences with the goal of being a source of information, entertainment, education, accessibility, and the preservation of heritage [13]. At the same time, the development of virtual reality (VR) technology, in all of its different contexts, provides opportunities for attractions, hospitality businesses, and goals along the entire customer journey. In light of this, conducting research on the virtual reality experience is enjoyable within the field of marketing, particularly within the field of tourism marketing.

Destination image is an umbrella term that has a complex relationship between the image, the image of the projected destination, and the perceived image of the destination. The perceived image of the destination consists of a subjective evaluation and the visitor's opinion about a destination [14]. Tourists have different points of view and understanding of this concept. Some tourists have a negative image, while others can have a positive image. In tourism studies, an image can motivate tourists to commit or not to visit tourist destinations through their perception [15]. Destination image can shape tourists' perception and can be seen from various attributes such as primary and secondary destinations. The primary destination is where tourists gain their perception from their experiences during their visit to tourist destinations. At the same time, secondary destinations are places where tourists understand primary sources of information and induce such information to appeal to their image and increase a positive image [16].

According to Gallarza et al. [15], the destination image attribute is derived from pre-visit and post-visit images. VR opportunities with destination images are used to attract the attention of potential visitors and motivate them to seek additional information needed to provide a future travel decision-making process, such as offline visit intention [7]. Based on several previous studies associated with the research to be carried out, there is a gap, namely the limited research on virtual Reality in the field of the tourism industry. The use of social media in the millennial generation is exciting to research; social media can provide virtual reality quality that impacts tourist behavior, namely offline visit intention; this is called phygital marketing. Phygital marketing seeks to blend physical and digital Reality through communication and experience. This trend has significant implications for the future of tourism, especially phygital tourism. Based on knowledge about destination images and their experience in making virtual reality visits, tourists can do novelty seeking which is a search for new information related to image destinations, and Virtual Reality to add insights related to tourist destinations.

Novelty seeking can affect the spending of tourists to be interested in exploring a place thoroughly and often prefer to avoid risks and uncertainties. Seekers of high novelty are interested in pursuing various activities and gaining diverse experiences [17]. Oliveira et al. [18] investigated experience-sharing behaviors and found that identification with groups and internalization of reference group norms positively influenced travel experience-sharing behaviors through perceived pleasure. In tourism, VR experiences generate greater possibilities for consumers who want to visit a destination [19].

It really is an important indicator of tourism loyalty, the intention to visit has garnered a lot of attention from the scientific community [20]. The quality of the virtual reality

experience, the desire to try something new, and the image of the destination can all contribute to the formation of the intention to travel there. In the context of tourism, a person's likelihood of actually traveling to a destination is proportional to how strongly they intend to go there in the first place [21]. According to Lin and Wang [22] research, it is possible to accurately predict future repurchase behavior of travelers if the factors that influence travelers' visit intentions can be adequately understood and accounted for.

The idea of a virtual reality experience inspired the development of this conceptual model so that it could be researched. How the experience of virtual reality can affect the decision to visit a location. The intention to visit can also be supported by a number of other factors, the most important of which are the destination image and the novelty seeking. This article intends to review some concepts pertaining to VR in the tourism industry, discuss some fundamental research that has been done in the past and the results of virtual experiences, and propose some conceptual models pertaining to virtual experiences in the tourism industry. Scholars and practitioners will be able to understand the macro outlook of this technology once they have a firm grasp on the perception of virtual reality (VR) in the context of tourism. They will also be able to evaluate the path that the site ought to take in order to take into consideration the pandemic and other challenges that are currently being faced by the global industry.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Virtual Reality Experience Quality

The concepts of presence and immersion are the foundation of virtual reality [23], with immersion being a construct that is objective while presence is a construct that is subjective. The idea of immersion is what differentiates non-immersive, semi-immersive, and fully-immersive virtual reality systems. Immersion describes the physical configuration of a VR system. Non-immersive, semi-immersive, and fully-immersive virtual reality When a system is less immersive, the user is better able to perceive the natural world around them from the outside. As part of smart tourism, virtual reality is currently being developed as a component to provide information about locations and attractions while also highlighting the potential for it to become a new business model [24].

Tourists who are interested in diversity [25], local culture, and lifestyle can find a wide range of experiences to partake in at a variety of tourist attractions thanks to the development of modern tourism [26]. The term "VR experience" refers to the ways in which visitors' virtual reality (VR) affects them, including their thought processes, the way they feel, and the conclusions they draw based on their VR experience [27]. According to Rauschnabel [28], virtual reality is a desirable real-world upgrade and, as a result, can be regarded as a useful marketing tool. The term "virtual reality" refers to a technology that has had a significant impact on the development of human thought. Virtual reality is also becoming increasingly popular as a trend that can help improve the quality of both performances and products. It is possible to use the VR 360 camera to create videos that can then be viewed on websites like YouTube or Facebook. By simulating a combination of sensing results (visual, aural, and tactile), the warped environment can be made to feel more like the real world, producing a more accurate representation of the virtual reality experience [29].

It is now easier for people to experience virtual tours of cities and attractions thanks to the availability of affordable virtual reality devices and an increase in the number of virtual reality content videos related to tourism [30]. According to the tourism literature that is currently available, the prerequisites for having a virtual reality experience have not been adequately defined. In order to gain a better understanding of the visitor's virtual reality experience, Pérez et al. [31] suggests that the dimensions of the VR experience include "immersion," "interaction," "usability," and "illusion." According to Pérez et al. [31], virtual reality experiences are the ones most likely to be associated with the concept of immersion. Pantelidis et al. [32] contends that a visitor's experience with virtual reality (VR) can increase a place's entanglement, which can be defined as an emotional bond between a person and a place.

## 2.2 Destination Image

Kotler and Keller [33] defines brand image as a vision and trust that consumers hold in their minds as a mirror of association that remains in their memory. Furthermore, consumer trust in the brand is an attitude. Affective, cognitive, and conative images of destinations [34]. Destinations are considered tourism products that provide tourists with an integrated experience [26]. Each person's perception of their destination differs, altering the pre-visit, post-visit, and travel phases [35]. Tourists, both international and domestic, have different perceptions of the destination's image [36]. Furthermore, recreational attractions, history, and lodging are the main draws for competitiveness and a distinct image of the destination [37].

## 2.3 Novelty Seeking

Novelty-seeking is an experience-seeking behavior that includes expectations and needs related to the activity of bringing new experiences that visitors have never had before, such as living in a different style and making new friends [38]. Novelty-seeking is a learning process when tourists will visit a destination [39]. The novelty-seeking tendency of each tourist is different, so it can change the direction of visiting tourist destinations [40]. Novelty seeking can be interpreted as the search for novelty regarding the difference in perception between previous experiences and present Reality, meaning new and foreign experiences that are different from previous experiences [41].

## 2.4 Intention to Visit

In tourism research, virtual visits to destinations increased consumers' intention to visit actual destinations [42]. Visiting intention is the subjective intention and tendency of potential travelers to visit a particular destination, stimulated by internal and external information such as the destination and social media [43]. Therefore, behavioral intentions in the tourism industry can be called intention to visit. The Theory of Planned Behavior [44] arises because there are several obstacles in predicting behavior, so behavioral control is needed so that it can be said that behavioral intentions can best be interpreted as intentions to try to perform certain behaviors. Based on this, it can be concluded

that intention is insufficient to predict future behavior but must be supported by control over tourist behavior in deciding to visit. This confirms that understanding tourist behavior is essential for predicting future behavior.

### **3 Methodology**

This article is a conceptual model built on previous research, grand theory, middle theory, and applied theory. Several previous studies have been elaborated on to determine the research instruments appropriate to the research topic. Furthermore, a grand theory is used to determine the relationship between variables so that research hypotheses can be compiled.

This research's type of data is secondary data because the type of research used is survey literature from empirical research. From empirical research, the questionnaire was arranged by the research needs, which contained closed questions and questions about visitor perceptions related to the indicators of the research variables studied.

## **4 Result and Discussion**

### **4.1 Concept Virtual Reality Experience**

In the field of consumer study results, focusing on the customer experience has been identified as one of the most promising marketing approaches [45]. This approach supplements the digitally interactive perspective by putting more of an emphasis on the journey that the customer takes rather than the valuable contribution that technology makes. It is generally agreed that virtual reality can be thought of as an environment for having virtual experiences; therefore, the significance of having prior experience with this technology should be emphasized. On the basis of this approach, Farah et al. [46] discusses how the use of virtual reality can enhance the experience that customers have while shopping in retail establishments. The user's sensory experiences are directly affected by virtual reality, which results in an enhanced overall customer experience [47]. Virtual reality platforms not only attract tourists but also help them get where they want to go by providing them with helpful information before they arrive [48].

Virtual Reality is a tourism marketing tool that has the function of promoting various tourist destinations online. Virtual Reality can create an experience using social media widely used in various parts of the world, such as Instagram. Novelty seeking is a new search for information related to tourist destinations. Information related to tourist destinations is generally obtained based on destination image, which is the image of tourist destinations to attract the attention of tourists. The quality of the virtual reality experience is used to measure behavior as a consideration related to the overall things felt when enjoying virtual Reality so that it can form an interest in visiting tourists. In addition, the interest in visiting is also dominated by destination images.

Recreational attractions, history, and accommodation are the main attractions for competitiveness and a unique destination image [37]. The image of the destination may change in the pre-visit, post-visit, and travel phases [35]. Destination image is the primary key in determining the interest in visiting. This is based on their experience when doing

a virtual tour [49]. Vera and Chang [50] conducted research related to the interest in visiting tourists and the use of social media focused on destination image for tourists who before and after visiting online. The results showed that based on the experiences felt by tourists, they could have an idea of the destination image.

Tourist travel intentions can be stimulated, resulting in actual travel behavior that affects social development and quality of life [51]. Jung et al. [52] discovered that using technology had a positive and significant effect on the intention to visit. According to Chung et al. [53], websites and augmented reality that aim to advertise and provide visitors with information attract more visitors to the museum. As a result, the virtual experience can have a significant impact on the intention to visit. Lin et al. [54] demonstrates that the destination image mediates the relationship between virtual reality and the visiting interests of tourists. Future tourists' perceptions of a destination may be influenced by virtual reality [55]. Tourists can do novelty seeking, which is a search for new information related to image destinations, and Virtual Reality to add insights related to tourist destinations, based on their knowledge about destination images and their experience in making virtual reality visits. Lee et al. [56] revealed that, in addition to the wealth of existing media, it can create searches and provide information about tourist destinations to improve the quality of the experience before making a decision to visit. Virtual tourism can result in positive outcomes such as studying and planning a trip. However, it can amplify the negative emotions elicited by dark tourism sites, resulting in a decrease in visitation intention [57].

## 4.2 Conceptual Model

The importance of travel experiences, framed as behaviors caused by intention and intention to revisit, has been extensively studied in various settings [58]. Intention to visit is the main thing that can provide decisions in the behavior of tourists, so it is crucial in the tourism industry. Intention to visit can be formed based on the experiences felt and the information obtained by tourists. Experiences can be formed based on virtual reality experience quality, destination image, and novelty seeking. Virtual Reality is a tourism marketing tool that has the function of promoting various tourist destinations online. Virtual Reality can create an experience using social media widely used worldwide, such as Instagram. Novelty seeking is a new search for information related to tourist destinations. Information related to tourist destinations is generally obtained based on destination image, which is the image of tourist destinations to attract the attention of tourists. The quality of the virtual reality experience is used to measure behavior as a consideration related to the overall things felt when enjoying virtual Reality so that it can form an interest in visiting tourists.

This research is based on previous theories and research. However, the grand theory used as the conceptual basis of this research is the theory of behavior which is a response from tourists based on existing stimuli and organisms. The stimulus in this study is a virtual reality variable, a tourism marketing tool that provides information and experiences related to tourist destinations. Based on the stimulus of virtual reality experience quality, tourists begin to do novelty seeking and destination images to find out in detail about the tourist location to be addressed until they intend to visit. Based on behavioral theory, novelty seeking is based on an optimal level of stimulation that can explain that

the organism prefers a certain level of stimulation when the stimuli in the environment do not reach the optimum level. Then the organism will be motivated to look for novelty, complexity, adventure, or other similar conditions and vice versa. Based on this, the conceptual model can be described as follows (Fig. 1):

The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT 2) theory is another theory that is used as a middle-range theory to determine whether or not society has adapted to technology, particularly social media. According to the UTAUT theory, it is composed of three moderators: age, gender, and experience. These three factors have the potential to influence consumer behavior intentions as well as the actual use of technology. On the other hand, this moderator exerts influence over the relationship between exogenous and endogenous constructs, primarily through interaction at a higher level [59]. The UTAUT2 model has proven to be an effective tool for explaining the acceptance of a wide range of innovative technologies by consumers [60]. In addition to this, several of the factors affecting UTAUT2 were validated when placed in the context of developments in hedonistic media technology [61]. As a result, this study operates under the presumption that the UTAUT 2 model ought to also be the appropriate theoretical foundation for comprehending the acceptance of technology within the context of the experience of utilizing virtual Reality.

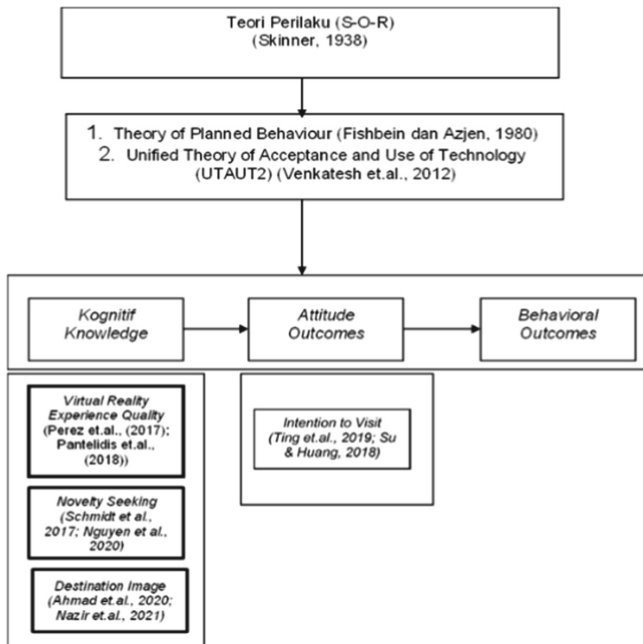


Fig. 1. Conceptual model.



## 5 Conclusion

### 5.1 Future Research Directions

The research agenda for virtual tourism should include computer-generated travel experiences that allow tourists to view, immerse, and control their surroundings [62]. Following the deception of the conceptual model of this research, several research instruments will be created to prepare the questionnaire. Several research instruments adopted from research are constrained by the research's urgency.

Virtual reality experience quality is content containing information based on images and videos tourists see online through the Instagram application. Instagram is part of non-immersive VR, so it can be described that the activities carried out by tourists can provide a virtual experience that is felt in the form of immersion, interaction, usability, and illusion [63]. Novelty seeking is the process of finding the latest information. When using the related Instagram application about virtual Reality that tourists have seen, novelty seeking is usually done compared with other tourist attractions. Novelty-seeking indicators in this study consist of increasing knowledge and income, something new [64]. Destination image in this study is an image of tourist attractions that provide information to be visited based on tourist perceptions. This study's destination image indicators consist of cognitive and affective destination images [65]. Intention to Visit is tourists' intention to visit offline after experiencing virtual Reality. The indicators used in the intention to visit variable consist of the intention to visit, definitely visiting, and going to visit [66].

### 5.2 Implications for Research and Practice

Though since virtual tourism has effectively evoked emotion and visit intention toward the real place, sites use technologies as strategic business decisions [67]. The study findings are expected to be used as considerations and information materials for tourist destination managers in Indonesia to overcome problems related to virtual reality experience quality as one of the determinants of intention to visit, as well as information for the tourism industry related to improving the quality of service to tourists online. As information for the tourism industry to pay closer attention to the most recent applications that cater to the needs of tourists. The paper advances knowledge and practice by categorizing the main factors influencing the virtual tourism experience, introducing conceptual models, discussing future research opportunities, and providing recommendations for tourism practitioners. Furthermore, the outcomes of the research can develop and add sieving models of Behavioral theory (S-O-R) [68], Theory of Planned Behavior [69], and UTAUT [59] through use of virtual reality variables like virtual reality experience quality, novelty seeking, destination image, and intention to visit.

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