



THE ROLE OF AMAZEMENT ON ON SPIRITUAL TOURISM OF THE KE'TE KESU ANCESTRAL CEMETERY

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the structural model that integrates the variables of experience quality, amazemet and behavioral intention. The variable of amazement is the development of the concept of positive emotions, and the context of spiritual tourism is a research context that has not been studied much. This research was conducted in the ancient cemetery of the ancestors of the Toraja Ke'te Kesu tribe. 300 questionnaires were collected in this study and processed using the PLS technique with the help of smart PLS. The results of this study indicate that the Quality of experience and Amazement are antecedents of behavioral intentions, and amazement plays a role in partially mediating the relationship between experience quality and behavioral intentions.

Keywords: *Spiritual tourism, quality of experience, amazement, intention to behave*

A. INTRODUCTION

Traveling is one of the activities that are mostly done to refresh themselves or escape from the saturation of daily activities. The choices in traveling are also increasingly varied; if in the past people only knew about traveling to the beach, mountains, or big cities, now there are many other types of tourism, one of which is spiritual tourism. Spiritual tourism differs from religious tourism if religious tourism is visiting places related to religious activities or worship, such as mosques, cathedrals, or monasteries. In contrast, spiritual tourism emphasizes experiences gained during the tour and objects—of travel (Cheer *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, spiritual tourism, like other types of tourism, offers tourists a different spiritual experience. According to Olsen dan Timothy (2021), spiritual tourism has more significant potential to be an option in travel after the covid-19 pandemic; this is because there is a lot of sadness and awareness of the value of life that emerged after the covid-19 pandemic. In addition, someone who does spiritual tourism tends to look for balance in life and a deeper relationship with God the Creator and nature.

One of the unique natural attractions in Indonesia is the Ke'te Kesu Ancestral Cemetery in Bonoran Village, Tikunna Malenong Village, Sanggalangi District, North Toraja, South Sulamazementsi . This tourist attraction is unique because it is the ancestral burial complex of the Tana Toraja community. It is located in a traditional area that still holds tightly to the traditions and philosophies adopted by the community today. The residential complex in Ke'te Kesu has not changed much since its inception, namely the Tongkonan traditional house, the Toraja people's traditional house founded around the 17th century. It is what makes the area in Ke'te Kesu a UNESCO World Heritage Cultural Reserve. The trademark Land of Heavenly Kings is South Sulamazementsi's nickname as a land thick with culture and exoticism of natural beauty, one of which is reflected in Ke'te Kesu.



Fig 1: Ke'te Kesu Ancestral Cemetery

Traveling in Ke'te Kesu feels complete if the traveler can follow the traditional procession of appreciation to the ancestors and the funeral of Rambu Solo, which is usually held in Ke'te Kesu' Tourism Village between June and December. Many tourists are amazed by this unique procession that only exists in the traditional village of Ke'te Kesu. It makes tourism at the Ke'te Kesu traditional burial site unique and worthy of development.

As in other types of tourism, the perceived experience is one of the most critical factors that will impact tourist loyalty to a tourist attraction (Soler dan Gemar, 2019). Therefore, the quality of the experience is essential in service marketing because the experience felt during a visit to a tourist attraction will determine the intention of tourists to behave towards the tourism object in the future.

The quality of the tourist experience felt by tourists on a tour will influence their decision to return to visit these tourist attractions in the future and recommend them to others (Prayag, 2012). The quality of experience felt when visiting a tourist attraction is very subjective, meaning it will differ for each person. It is because the quality of experience is a cultural-based construct. In contrast, according to Karatepe *et al.* (2005), a person's background and culture will affect the quality of the experience they feel; furthermore, the quality of the perceived experience will also be different in the context of different visiting activities and different tourism contexts.

The quality of experience and its relationship with behavioral intentions has often been a topic of study in several previous studies and various popular tourism contexts (Geissler dan Rucks, 2011; Aziz *et al.*, 2012; Wu *et al.*, 2018). However, the discussion about the quality of experience in spiritual tourism is still relatively small—behavioral intentions in the context of spiritual tourism.

In addition to the Quality of Experience, several factors are often studied as an antecedent of behavioral intentions, one of which is emotion. According to Mattila and Enz (2002), emotion is a factor that influences consumer decision-making when deciding whether to consume the same product or service again. In tourism, the main commodity is services and services, so consumer emotions are essential to be considered by tourism object managers. Positive and negative emotions that arise due to consumer interactions with services will impact consumers' behavioral intentions towards these services and services.

In traveling, positive emotions are the dominant ones; one of the types of positive emotions most often present in tourist trips is amazement. Coghlan *et al.* (2012) stated that amazement would arise when someone sees, interacts with, or feels something they have never seen and felt before. Visiting tourist objects that provide unique and new experiences will trigger a sense of amazement. Amazement has so far been associated with nature tourism (Pearce et al., 2017; Wang dan Lyu, 2019) and has not been widely studied in spiritual tourism. This study develops a conceptual model that integrates the constructs of experience quality, wonderment, and behavioral intention in the context of spiritual tourism, emphasizing novelty in developing the concept of amazement as part of emotion.

The formulation of the problem possible in this research is whether any influence between the quality of experience and Amazement On Behavioral Intentions at the Spiritual Tourism of the Ke'te Kesu Ancestral Cemetery, Tana Toraja Regency.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Behavioral Intentions

Ajzen (1991) argues that intention is a predictor of behavior; by knowing a person's intention, one can be predicted the behavior they will display about a particular thing or situation. Behavioral intentions are often used to see consumer behavior on a particular product or service in the future. For example, in tourism, the behavioral intention of tourists will reflect their behavior towards these attractions, whether they will visit again in the future, recommend these attractions to others and invite others to visit them (Baker dan Crompton, 2000). To have a competitive advantage and survive during competition in the tourism sector if they can attract more repeat tourists than new (Um et al, 2006).

2. Experience quality

The quality of the experience results from the interactions between tourists and the state of the tourist objects they visit. The experience they feel if it is exciting and beautiful will be positive, but if it is not pleasant, it will be a negative experience. Positive experiences will affect a person's decision-making process when choosing the object of the next visit (van Dat, 2020).

The quality of experience is a cultural-based construct, where the assessment is subjective depending on the individual who feels it. Because this construct is subjective and varies from person to person, the results will also differ in each tourism context. However, in several previous studies, the quality of experience has been shown to influence behavioral intentions through several factors such as satisfaction (Hosany dan Witham, 2010), perceived value (Chen dan Chen, 2010), and emotion (Mitas *et al.*, 2012). Based on this statement, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1 → The Quality of experience has a positive and significant effect on behavioral intentions

H2 → The Quality of experience has a positive and significant effect on Amazement

3. Amazement

Amazement is a part of positive emotion. Amazement will arise when someone sees, feels, or interacts with something unique, extraordinary, and unusual daily (Keltner dan Haidt, 2003). Amazement most often arises when traveling, when someone

visits a place that gives them a unique and different experience and interaction. Tourists who feel amazed at a tourist attraction tend to want to feel the wonder again in the future and will share the wonderment by recommending the attraction to others. Based on this statement, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H3 → Amazement has a positive and significant effect on behavioral intentions

4. The mediating effect of amazement on the relationship between experience quality and behavioral intention

The stimulus that comes from inside and outside of a person has been shown to affect a person's inner state, which will affect their behavior. For example, t Quality of experience and Amazement is a stimulus that can affect a person's inner state and ultimately affect their behavior at a tourist attraction (Bagozzi *et al*, 1999). Based on the explanation, this research formulates the mediation hypothesis as follows:

H4 → The Quality of experience has a positive and significant effect on behavioral intentions through amazement.

C. RESEARCH METHOD

1. Research Design

This study uses an explanatory research design because it aims to answer the proposed hypothesis. Therefore, this study uses the *partial least square* (PLS) method with the help of the smartPLS 3.0 analysis tool to analyze the data in this study.

This research was conducted at the Ke'te Kesu tourist attraction, one of the ancient Toraja ancestral cemetery attractions, in Tana Toraja Regency, South Sulamazementsi. The choice of research location is because of the location of ancestral burials. The tourist attraction also offers natural beauty and unique burial culture; in addition to the presence of artifacts and symbols of ancestors during their lifetime, this place has a sacred feel that can trigger a sense of spirituality in visitors.

The sample in this study was taken using a purposive sampling technique, namely by setting specific criteria in sampling (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The criteria set are that the sample must be > 17 years old and have visited the Ke'te Kesu tourist attraction.

Questionnaires were distributed through social media Facebook to reduce direct interaction. The number of questionnaires distributed was 366, but only 300 questionnaires could be used in further data processing. The remaining 66 were incomplete, so they were considered invalid. The questionnaire in this study was divided into two parts; where the first part contained the demographics of the respondents and 1 item of screening questions to filter between samples who had visited and those who had never visited. The second part of the questionnaire contains statements to measure respondents' perceptions of research variables using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

2. Respondents' Demographics

The sample in this study amounted to 300 people with the following demographic distribution based on gender; male respondents were 123 people (41%), female respondents were 177 people (59%), based on age, respondents aged 18-25 years were 155 people. (51.6%) Furthermore, those aged > 25 years as many as 145 people (48.3%) and based on income, respondents with an income of Rp. 1,000,000 to Rp.

5,000,000 as many as 115 (38%) and those with income > Rp. 5,000,000 as many as 185 people (62%).

D. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Hypothesis 1

This hypothesis proposes that the quality of experience positively and significantly affects behavioral intentions. The results of the PLS test show that values support this hypothesis ($\beta=0.162$; $t=2.761$; $\text{sig}=0.000$). Furthermore, it shows that the quality of experience positively and significantly affects behavioral intentions. The result is supported by several previous studies which state that the quality of the experience felt when visiting a tourist attraction affects the desire to return to visit, recommend the attraction to others and invite others. Visit the tourist attraction (Yu dan Fang, 2009; Hussein, 2018; van Dat, 2020). Therefore, the manager of a tourist attraction must be able to provide an exciting and unique dish to bring up an enjoyable and unforgettable experience for tourists who will bring them to return to visit the attraction in the future.

The result follows several previous studies which state that the quality of experience has a positive and significant effect on behavioral intentions (Scott, 2004; Chang dan Horng, 2010; Chen dan Chen, 2010; van Dat, 2020).

2. Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 (two) proposes a statement that the quality of experience has a positive and significant effect on amazement. The results of the PLS test show that the hypothesis is supported by a value ($\beta= 0.839$; $t = 35.502$; $\text{sig} = 0.000$). These results indicate that the quality of the experience felt when visiting a tourist attraction will amaze the tourists, thereby increasing the likelihood that tourists will return to visit the attraction in the future and recommend the attraction to others. This result is also supported by several previous studies which found that the quality of experience has a positive and significant effect on positive emotions because amazement in this study is the development of the concept of positive emotions (Shiota *et al.* 2012; Mitas *et al.*, 2012; Pearce *et al.*, 2017).

It is in line with previous studies which state that the quality of experience affects positive emotions; the better the perceived quality of the experience, the more positive emotions will appear in tourists (Shiota, Campos and Keltner, 2010; Mitas *et al.*, 2012; Haji *et al.*, 2021). In this study, amazement was developed from positive emotions. From the results of the PLS analysis, it can also be proven that the quality of experience has a positive and significant effect on amazement.

3. Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 (three) suggests that amazement positively and significantly affects behavioral intentions. The results of the PLS test support this hypothesis with values ($\beta= 0.689$; $t = 12,522$; $\text{sig} = 0.000$). This result is in line with previous research, which found that positive emotions will affect the behavioral intention of tourists, and amazement will affect the intention to return and recommend this tourist attraction to others. (Powell *et al.*, 2012; Wang dan Lyu, 2019; Su *et al.*, 2020).

This result also confirms that if tourists feel amazed at a tourist attraction, they are likely to return to visit that tourist attraction in the future and recommend the tourist

attraction to others (Keltner dan Haidt, 2003; J Pearce *et al.*, 2017; Wang dan Lyu, 2019; Yan dan Jia, 2021).

4. Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 is a hypothesis that proposes the alleged mediating effect of amazement-inspiring variables on the relationship between experience quality and behavioral intentions. PLS testing shows that the results support this hypothesis ($\beta=0.578$; $t=11.982$; $sig=0.000$) means that amazement mediates the relationship between experience quality and behavioral intention. Then to find out whether amazement is full mediation or only partial mediation, it can be tested by calculating the VAF value; if the calculation result of the VAF value is $>80\%$, then the amazement variable is said to be full mediation. If the VAF value is $20\%-80\%$ then the amazement variable is said to be partial mediation. However, if the VAF value is $<80\%$, there is no mediating effect of the astonishment variable. The following is the calculation of VAF

$$VAF = \text{indirect effect} \div \text{Total effect}$$

$$= :0.578 \div 0.74$$

$$= 0.78 \rightarrow 78\%$$

From the results above, it is found that the value of the VAF variable of amazement is 0.78 or 78%. Because it is below 80%, amazement is said to partially mediate the relationship between the quality of experience and behavioral intentions. Table 3 presents a summary of the results of hypothesis testing

Table 2. Summary of the results of the hypothesis

Path	Path Coef	T Stat	Sign
EXQ ->BI	0.162	2.761	0.000
EXQ -> EK	0.839	35.502	0.000
EK -> BI	0.689	12.522	0.000
EXQ -> EK -> BI	0.578	11.982	0.000

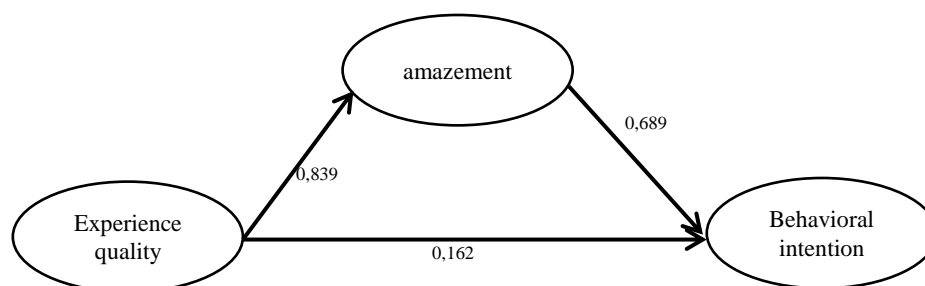


Fig 2: Structural Model Result

Hypothesis 4 (four) is a hypothesis that predicts the mediating effect of the surprising variable on the relationship between experience quality and behavioral intention. The results of the PLS analysis prove that this hypothesis is supported so that it is said that there is a mediating effect of the wonder variable on the relationship between experience quality and behavioral intention. Furthermore, these results also

prove that the model developed in this study accurately predicts the relationship between variables.

Although it was found that there was a mediating effect of the amazement-inspiring variable on the relationship between the quality of experience and behavioral intentions, the effect was only partial mediation; this is known from the results of the VAF calculation, where the results are 0.78 or 78%, which means the amazement-inspiring variable only fights as a partial mediation in the relationship between quality of experience and intention to behave

E. CONCLUSION

This study developed a new structural model to examine the relationship between experience quality, amazement, and behavioral intention variables. The results are that the Quality of experience and Amazement are antecedents of behavioral intentions, and amazement partially mediates the relationship between experience quality and behavioral intentions. It is in line with several previous studies which state that the quality of experience is an antecedent of behavioral intentions and amazement.

The quality of experience is a cultural-based construct, which means that the assessment is very subjective, but the external environment and attractions offered at tourist objects can affect the quality of the tourist experience. It is the same with amazement because amazement is part of positive emotions. Therefore, apart from being influenced by one's internal state, it is also influenced by the external environment and attractions offered by tourist objects.

Tourist attraction managers can use the results of this study to create an atmosphere and attractions that can trigger the desire to return to visit in the future, recommending these attractions to people.

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