

Borobudur Temple as Buddhist Pilgrimage Destination in Indonesia: an Analysis of Factors that Affect Visit Intention

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Abstract

Borobudur temple is the biggest Buddhist temple on earth which is located in Central Java, Indonesia. The temple which was built by King Smararatungga between 760 until 830 A.D., recently becomes cultural and historical tourism object run by Indonesian government. The temple was actually the symbol of Buddhism renaissance (resurgence) in Indonesia. This was marked by the first national Vesak celebration initiated by The Boan An (whom was later known as Ashin Jinarakkitha) in May 23rd, 1953. Until today the temple is used as the place of national Vesak celebration every year, and occasionally for several Buddhist religious events. The governor of Central Java and Minister Rizal Ramli (2015) consider that Borobudur temple can become a Buddhism Religious object comparable to Mecca for the Moslem. The amount of tourists visited Borobudur temple as a cultural and historical tourism destination increased significantly from 2009 to 2013. However, foreign tourists were outnumbered by domestic visitors. This research is aimed (1) to find out the factors that affect the visit intention of foreign tourists to Borobudur temple; (2) to find out whether there are differences in factors affecting visit intentions among Buddhist foreign visitors and non-Buddhist foreign visitors; and (3) to find out whether there are differences in factors affecting visit intentions to Borobudur temple among foreign visitors that had ever visited the temple and those who had never visited the temple.

This research uses survey method with questionnaire as the main instrument. Questionnaires were distributed to 200 respondents, and 117 returned. From these, only 98 were valid. In depth interview was carried out as additional instrument to enrich the discussion of this research.

The results of this research shows that visit intention of foreign tourists was affected by two factors, namely the sacredness and the image of

tourist destination. The sacredness of the temple of Borobudur can enhance the visit intention of Buddhist foreign visitors, meanwhile non-Buddhist visitors were not affected by this factor. For foreign visitors that had never visited the temple of Borobudur, the sacredness of the temple of Borobudur becomes a special attracting factor that enhances their intention to visit the temple. For those foreign tourists who had ever visited the temple before, the sacredness of Borobudur no longer become the main factor to revisit Borobudur. The sacredness factor of the temple of Borobudur in fact produces different images of the destination in minds of Buddhist foreign tourists and of non-Buddhist tourists. Foreign tourists view that sacredness factor increases the tourism destination image of Borobudur temple as a religious tourist destination. This tourism destination image of Borobudur temple becomes the stimulus for foreign tourists to revisit the temple. Meanwhile for those who had never visited the Borobudur temple, tourism destination image not automatically becomes the driving factor to visit the Borobudur temple. Visits to Borobudur temple are considered as pilgrimage visits for Buddhist foreign visitors. The sacredness of the temple becomes a special attracting factor that boost the intention to visit of foreign visitors. Indonesian government is advised to consider a policy that provides the discretion in the use of the temple as the center of Buddhist activities. The management of Borobudur temple should reconsider the possibility of repositioning the Borobudur temple as religious tourism destination.

Key words : Pilgrimage, Borobudur, Sacredness, Destination Image, Visit Intention.

Introduction

Almost in every religious tradition, there is always a pilgrimage journey ritual which encourages its people to visit places having relations or related to that religion. (Raj & Morpeth, 2007, p. 99). Until today, the pilgrimage tradition is still well maintained. Pilgrimage motivation has become one's strong reason to make a journey. (Vukonic, 2002). This circumstance is often capitalized by countries with pilgrimage destinations. Many countries focused on sites development (Raj & Morpeth, 2007, p. 98) to make the pilgrimage has more global reach. The existence of pilgrimage site become specific absolute advantage of a country. Therefore, the pilgrimage packaging has been changing to religious tourism.

Indonesia has many Buddhism religious sites which recently turned to be cultural tourism destinations. The sites are actually inheritance of Buddhist kingdoms that once existed in Indonesia in the past. The most monumental Buddhist site and once became one of the world's seven wonders is Borobudur temple. This biggest Buddhist temple was developed by King Smaradungga from Syailendra dynasty which was on power between 760 and 830 A.D. The Borobudur temple has become the symbol of Buddhism renaissance in Indonesia following the fall of Majapahit kingdom. This site was used as the center of first national Vesak celebration initiated by Anagarika The Boan An (whom was then known as Ashin Janarakkitha) on May 23rd, 1953. Apart of being cultural tourism destination, Borobudur temple has also been used frequently as a venue of Buddhist religious events until today.

The statistic of foreign tourism visits to Borobudur shows a significant increase since 2009 until 2013 (BAPPEDA & Badan Pusat Statistik, 2013, 2014; Statistik, 2015). However, the percentage of those visited Borobudur temple is relatively very small compared to the total foreign tourists visited Indonesia. Table 1. shows that statistic of foreign tourists visited Borobudur temple.

Table 1. Statistic on foreign tourists visits to Borobudur temple, Mendut temple, and Pawon temple, since 2009 to 2013

Year	Total Foreign Tourists ¹⁾	Mendut & Pawon Temples				Percentage ²⁾
		Borobudur Temple		Pawon Temples		
		Domestic	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign	
2009	6323730	2368196	146975	5444	49784	2.32%
2010	7002944	2261081	147372	4008	49567	2.10%
2011	7649731	1957711	228570	3133	53328	2.99%
2012	8044462	2827837	186256	2504	65147	2.32%
2013	8802129	3145800	217963	1291	82731	2.48%

Sources: (BAPPEDA & Badan Pusat Statistik, 2013, 2014; Statistik, 2015)

Keterangan:

¹⁾ Total foreign tourists entered Indonesia from various entrance gates

²⁾ Pergentase of foreign tourists visited Borobudur temple over total tourists visited Indonesia

Looking at the potential of cultural tourism destination that can be further developed of Borobudur temple, the Governor of Central Java province, Ganjar Pranowo, has shown his interest to manage Borobudur in

a super serious manner. The governor intends to make Borobudur temple becomes the annual pilgrimage object for Buddhist people. (Fimadani, 2014; Fitriana, 2015; Jawa Tengah, 2014). Borobudur temple can be developed to be world pilgrimage object for Buddhist people indicated by annual national Vesak celebration centered in Borobudur temple. Central government also shows the same serious interest. Coordinating minister, Rizal Ramli, even has a special interest to make Borobudur temple a pilgrimage destination comparable to Mecca for Moslems (Marboen, 2015; Oni, 2015). Minister Rizal Ramli interest is not only limited to make Borobudur temple a religious tourism destination from cultural tourism destination, but also allowing Buddhist people four days to use Borobudur temple for devotion and religious activities (viva.co.id, 2015).

This research is aimed (1) to find out the factors that affect the visit intention of foreign tourists to Borobudur temple; (2) to find out whether there are differences in factors affecting visit intentions among Buddhist foreign visitors and non-Buddhist foreign visitors; and (3) to find out whether there are differences in factors affecting visit intentions to Borobudur temple among foreign visitors that had ever visited the temple and those who had never visited the temple. This research is expected to provide meaningful suggestions to (1) Indonesian government in developing Borobudur temple tourism destination as a religious tourism destination; (2) Buddhist community in Indonesia for them to take active role in help-managing Borobudur temple as a worship and religious place.

The Sacredness of Pilgrimage Venue

The sacredness of pilgrimage venues is the place that deserves the devotion, reverence, where human beings are able to discover the manifestation of supernatural (God's) power felt through the feeling of connection with universe (Hughes & Swan, 1986; Jackson & Henrie, 1983). In Thailand, a sacred place is a place that can arouse the feeling of sacredness of space and time and helping laymen to feel unity with the nature. The characteristics of Thai sacred place are (1.) integrity in diversity, (2.) hierarchy of spaces, (3.) complex layers, (4.) patchwork of overlap space, (5.) blurred boundary, (6.) flexibility, (7.) a symbolism space, (8.) virtual space, (9.) experience space. Thai sacred place usually comprise these characteristics and the last but not least is the intangible aspects of spirit and feeling or "sense of place" Sense of place is the feeling or feelings that an individual experienced whenever they enter that place which are (1.) a sense of awe,

(2.) a sense of wonder, (3.) a sense of pride, (4.) a sense of serenity, (5.) a sense of belonging, (6.) a sense of connection with the past, furthermore with high level of wisdom, some people will experienced (7.) a sense of comrade to the nature, (8.) a sense of the sacred which is an appreciation and reverence for sacred things, (9.) a sense of the absolute beauty and truth that stimulate the development of a higher level of wisdom that will ultimately lead to enlightenment (Sowanee, 2010).

P1: The sacredness of Borobudur temple will increase visit intention of foreign tourists.

P2: The sacredness of Borobudur temple will increase the image of tourism destination.

Tourism Destination Image

A tourism destination place usually has certain attracting factors that may attract the potential tourist to visit the place. Tourism place image is the picture of image developed by tourists about conviction/beliefs, ideas, and visualization of a tourism destination (Crompton, 1979; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Gartner, 1994; Phelps, 1986). To position a strong tourism destination image is expected to significantly differentiate one tourism destination to another (Mykletun, Crofts, & Mykletun, 2001; Uysal, Chen, & Williams, 2000). Several research results also show that destination image increased visit intention of tourists (Fakharyan, Jalilvand, Elyasi, & Mohammadi, 2012; Lertputtarak, 2012).

H1: The better the image of tourism destination of Borobudur temple will push the visit intention of foreign tourists.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 demonstrates conceptual framework of this study

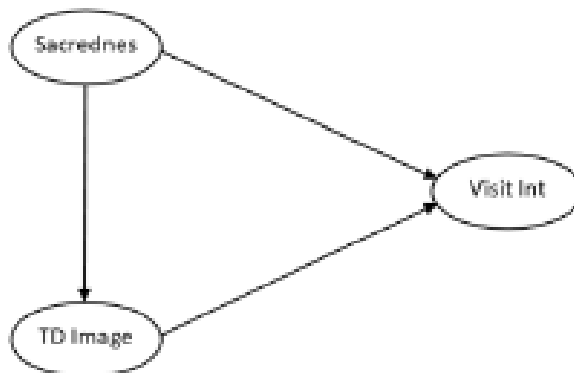


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Methods

This research used survey approach to obtain responses from tourists who have visited and those who are about to visit Borobudur temple. The questionnaires were sent through email to 200 respondents chosen using purposive sampling method. Out of these, 117 respondents returned the questionnaires. However, only from 98 respondents were valid and could be used in this research.

The sacredness of tourism destination of Borobudur temple is constructed by eight items and their points were developed from research (Sowanee, 2010) namely peacefulness, spiritual comfort, holy atmosphere, inner happiness, close to Buddha, respect to Buddha, a sense of awe, and a sense of wonder.

The measurement of tourism destination image using eight instruments adopted from research (Veasna, Wu, & Huang, 2013) i.e. reputation, accessibility of the destination, variety and quality of accommodations, cultural diversity, cultural and historical attractions, exoticness of the place, general level of service. Visit Intention was measured with five items developed from research (Wu, 2015).

This questionnaire applies 5-point Likert scale (1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree) and calibrated with summated rating scale using software SolAnd 2.1. Validity and reliability of the instrument are obtained through testing data from 30 respondents. All statement items are valid with Cronbach alpha from each of the variables are as follows: the sacredness of tourism destination = 0.856; tourism destination image = 0.786; and visit intention = 0.718. The analysis of this research applies quantitative method of Partial Least Square (PLS) using software WarpPLS 5.0.

Results

Respondents Profile and Descriptive Analysis

Men composed 63.27% of the total respondents with women 36.73%. Most of them are in range of 35-44 years of age (42.86%), unmarried (53.06%), with education at bachelor level (75.51%), Asians (29.2%), have never visited (54.08%) with Buddhism background (55.1%). Personal tourists data are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondent Information

Sample Personal Information	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	36	36.73%
Male	62	63.27%
Age		
Less than 25 years old	5	5.10%
25-34	17	17.35%
35-44	42	42.86%
45-54	23	23.47%
55 years or older	11	11.22%
Marital Status		
Single	52	53.06%
Married	26	26.53%
Widow	20	20.41%
Home Region		
Asia	59	60.20%
Europe	12	12.24%
North America	9	9.18%
South America	3	3.06%
Oceania	12	12.24%
Africa	2	2.04%
Middle East	1	1.02%
Sample Personal Information	Frequency	Percentage
Level of Education		
Lower than a Bachelor degree	2	2.04%
Bachelor degree	74	75.51%
Higher than a Bachelor degree	22	22.45%
Have you ever visited Borobudur temple		
Ever	45	45.92%
Never	53	54.08%
Are you a Buddhist		
Yes, am a Buddhist	54	55.10%
No, am not a Buddhist	44	44.90%

Average response to the questionnaire for variable destination sacredness is 4.30 (high), tourism destination image is 4.43 (high), foreign tourism visit intention is 4.36 (high). These figures show that tourism destination of Borobudur temple has the sacredness as a pilgrimage venue related to Buddhism. Foreign tourists see Borobudur temple has good image as a tourism destination. Foreign tourists show high intention to visit Borobudur temple.

PLS multi group analysis using is to support proposition 1 and proposition 2 and to attest hypothesis proposed in this research. The result of this analysis graphically is shown in Figure 2. And this result can be presented in structural equation as follows:

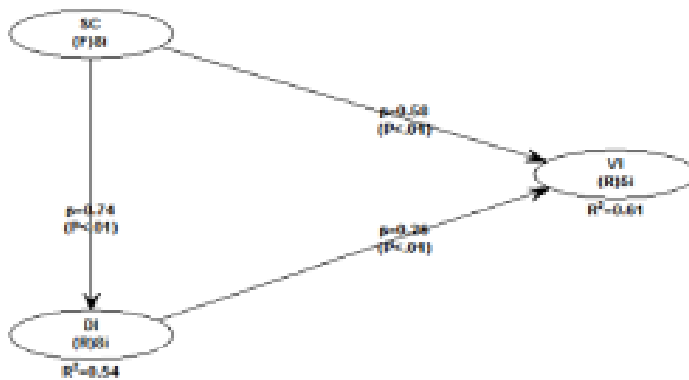


Figure 2. WarpPLS Output

$$\text{Visit Intention} = 0,58 \text{ Sacredness} + 0,26 \text{ Tourism Destination Image} + e$$

$$\text{Tourism Destination Image} = 0,74 \text{ Sacredness} + e$$

The analysis result of the whole model: Proposition 1 is supported, the sacredness of tourism destination positively significant affects foreign tourists visit intention to tourism destination of Borobudur temple. Proposition 2 is also supported, the sacredness of tourism destination positively significant affects tourism destination image of Borobudur temple. The research hypothesis are also proved. Tourism destination image positively significant affects visit intention of foreign tourists to Borobudur temple. The proving of hypothesis support the researchers conducted by Fakharyan et.al. (2012) and Lertputtarak (2012). The effect of sacredness to visit intention is greater than of tourism destination image. The sacredness of tourism destination of Borobudur temple is, therefore, magnetic to attract foreign tourists to come for pilgrimage purpose or as consumers of religious tourism.

Table 3. Conclusion of PLS multi group analysis

Path	Buddhist and Non-Buddhist	Ever and Never Visited
SC -- DI	Differs	Not Differ
SC -- VI	Differs	Differs
DI -- VI	Not Differ	Differs

The conclusion of PLS multi group analysis is shown in Table 3. Buddhist and non-Buddhist factors differs only in visit intention affected by the sacredness of tourism destination sacredness of Borobudur temple. Meanwhile for those foreign tourists who have never visited the temple, the sacredness and image of tourism destination differently affect their visit intention then to those who have ever visited Borobudur temple.



Figure 3. PLS multi group analysis between Buddhist and Non Buddhist

The sacredness has greater effect on visit intention of Buddhist foreign tourists to visit Borobudur temple compared to tourism destination image. Tourism destination image of Borobudur temple in the mind of foreign tourists is religious tourism object. For those who are non-Buddhists, tourism destination image of Borobudur temple is as cultural tourism destination. The opportunity for government to develop Borobudur temple as a religious tourism destination is huge. Visit intention of Buddhist people to Borobudur temple affected by the sacredness of the temple represents the market share of total foreign tourism market that should be given certain and proportional attention. For Buddhist Indonesians, Borobudur temple and other Buddhist temples has become pilgrimage destination since long.

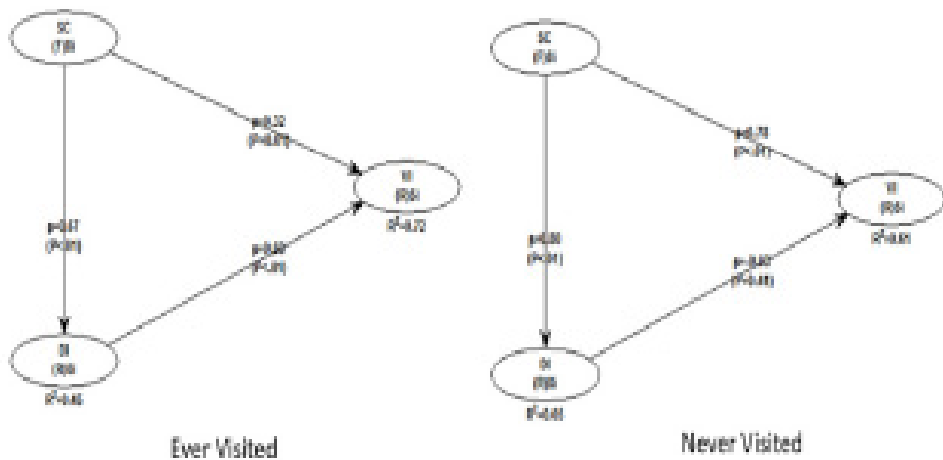


Figure 4. PLS multi group analysis between those who ever visited and those who never visited Borobudur temple

Tourists who have ever visited and those who never visited tourism destination of Borobudur temple show different patterns. For those who ever visited the tourism destination of the temple of Borobudur, tourism destination image is the main driving factor for them to revisit tourism destination Borobudur temple. Meanwhile for those who never visited the temple, the sacredness of the temple is the dominant factor affecting them to visit Borobudur temple.

Discussion

Buddhist people since the beginning have made journey to visit various Holy Buddhists sites. It was even suggested by Sakyamuni Buddha himself as is written in the book of Mahaparinibbana Sutta. Besides, the journey of King of Asokha known as Dhammayatra has inspired many people. This research provides the information that visit intention of foreign tourists to Borobudur temple is affected at least by two things, i.e. the sacredness and the image of the tourism destination. So far, Indonesian government has been focusing less on the sacredness side of the Borobudur temple. The main theme of the Borobudur temple is, therefore, cultural tourism. Marketing strategy development of tourism destination of Borobudur temple as a pilgrimage tourism destination, should be supported by other Buddha temples around the Borobudur, together they compose a more proper pilgrimage tourism package.

As a preliminary study to develop marketing strategy of tourism destination of Buddha temple, I owe the shortages of the study. One of such shortages is the sampling used is non-probabilistic, and the sample used is very small, hence the research cannot be generalized. This research is conducted only for tourism destination of Borobudur temple, therefore the conclusion applies only to that tourism destination.

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