THE ROLE OF TRUST AS A MEDIATION BETWEEN AMENITIES AND ATTRACTIVENESS TOWARD VISITING TOURISM DECISIONS

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study aims to examine and analyze trust as a mediator of amenities and attractiveness to the decision to visit East Java Park. It is important to conduct this research to contribute to creating a sustainable tourism sector. It has been confirmed by previous research that tourism is the best sector as a manifestation of the prosperity of the nation and state. Because this study uses a quantitative approach with complex population characteristics, the nonprobability purposive sampling technique was chosen. Samples that were accepted and deserved to be tested after screening the data were 253 samples. The reason for choosing the PLS method is that the model is predictive. The result of this study is that tourist trust plays an important role in intervening in tourist amenities and attractions as a real and strong influence on visiting decisions. Thus, the contribution of this research is to provide important input for academics, especially for tourism destination management as a reference in making strategic decisions on tourism management in creating competitive advantage and sustainability in the future.

Keywords: amenities, attractiveness, trust, visiting decisions, tourism

1.   INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with a wealth of natural resources and extraordinary beauty of ecosystems such as flora and fauna, a variety of languages, ethnicities, cultures, and arts that are very interesting and unique, which is a differentiating tourist attraction (Uno & Tanoesodibjo, 2021). This is an important opportunity for the growth and sustainability of the nation in utilizing the tourism sector. It is emphasized (Martins et al., 2017) that tourism brings prosperity which has long been recognized. As confirmed (Kerdpitak, 2022) due to the pandemic, attention is increasingly important to the improvement of the tourism sector because it provides enormous benefits.

However, a very significant decline in tourist visits occurred due to the impact of the pandemic. The decline in the number of tourists occurred in February 2020 (872,765 tourists) and continued to fluctuate until January 2022 (143,744 tourists) and the decline occurred again between February 2022 (33,594 tourists) and March (40,790 tourists). The increase in tourist arrivals gradually began to occur in June 2022 (345,438 tourists). However, when compared to the number of tourist visits before the pandemic, the comparison was very high, namely in January 2020 (1,290,411) (Kemenparekraf, 2022).

This reason is important evidence to conduct this research as a contribution to the sustainability of the Indonesian tourism industry. It has long been recognized from many studies that the tourism sector is an important object for further study (Anggraeni & Astini, 2020; Dogru et al., 2021; Hamdan & Yuliantini, 2021; Leopizzi et al., 2021; Widayati et al., 2020) because it is the main factor of development and a source of employment investment (Kerdpitak, 2022). Research in the context of visiting decisions is closely related to services (Katircioglu et al., 2012; Othman et al., 2020), because of its intangible nature (Oriade & Schofield, 2019). The decision to visit is reflected in the behavior of visiting a tourist destination and providing physiological values and benefits such as mental health, personal well-being, and social community (Alipour et al., 2020). Often services such as amenities (Gupta & Dixit, 2022; Martaleni et al., 2021) and attractiveness (Martaleni et al., 2021; Osman & Sentosa, 2013) are the main considerations for visiting certain tourist destinations.

However, tourist amenities and attractions do not necessarily influence the decision to visit, (Zajadacz, 2014) because the geographical location and tourist access are important in the tourism sector. In addition, no matter how attractive tourist destinations and services at tourist attractions are without a high sense of trust including a sense of security for travel needs, information on pleasant experiences, service providers who keep promises, prioritize interests and provide excellent service, of course, will ensure the decision to visit (Alves et al. al., 2019), but trust is not necessarily a guarantee for tourists to visit (Shin et al., 2022).

The previous research gap in the context of travel and tourism is an important gap as a focus of research objectives using trust as mediation in polarizing visiting decisions (Sarfraz et al., 2022). Because trust is certain to influence visiting decisions (Pop et al., 2022). Based on the discussion of the phenomenon of tourist visits and the limited

literature on trust as a mediation, it is important to conduct this research as a contribution to the ministry of tourism, developers, managers, managers, or academics as understanding in generating further knowledge. This study aims to examine and analyze the role of traveler's trust (TVT) as a mediation between amenities (AMT) and attractiveness (ATR) on the decision to visit (VDC) East Java Park.

2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

TVT & VDC

The decision to visit is a decision taken by individuals who will travel to a certain tourist spot (Pop et al., 2022). The visitor's decision to choose a tourist attraction is basically a form of decision-making (Suratman et al., 2018). In addition, tourist trust in tourist destinations refers to the willingness of tourists to rely on a sense of security in fulfilling their travel needs and resulting in positive tourist behavior to visit (Williams & Baláž, 2021). Trust is a reflection of actions to determine and plan tourist destinations based on the capabilities of various physical or non-physical facilities (Pop et al., 2022). Tourist trust will lead to pride in identifying the destination you want to go to. Tourist trust is very important in influencing the decision to visit, meaning that the high trust of tourists in tourist attractions will be largely determined by the decision to visit (Anggraeni & Astini, 2020). Confirmed by research (Pop et al., 2022) found that tourist trust has a significant positive influence on visiting decisions. Discussion of this literature raises the conjecture (see Figure 1), that:

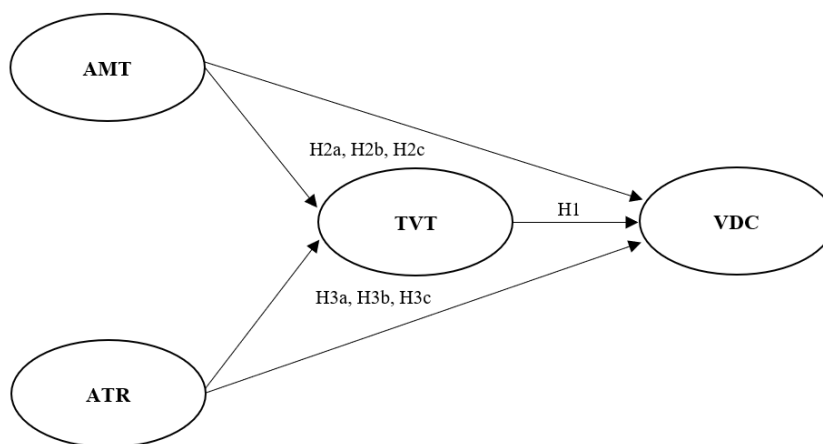H1, TVT has a significant effect on VDC.

Figure 1. Research Model

AMT, TVT & VDC

Amenity is defined as a factor in meeting the needs of tourists when they are at a tourist attraction. Amenity on a tourist object is an important thing as an attraction for tourists to visit (Gupta & Dixit, 2022). If the tourism services provided meet their performance, a visit will certainly occur (Camilleri, 2019). In addition, physical facilities include facilities and infrastructure offered to make it easier for referees to visit. Affirmed (Martaleni et al., 2021) in their research states that amenity is a series of facilities to meet the accommodation needs of tourist destinations (entertainment places, shopping places, lodging, food and beverage places), not only that, several other facilities are places of worship, souvenirs shops, parking lots, public toilets as meeting tourist needs (Reitsamer et al. (2016). Tourist trust is very dependent on the elements of facilities as a reference for selecting tourist destinations (Sarfraz et al., 2022). If trust has been attached to tourists certain destinations will certainly visit that tour. Research (Gupta & Dixit, 2022; Martaleni et al., 2021) states that amenities, and (Anggraeni & Astini, 2020) trust significantly influence the decision to visit. Confirmed by (Sarfraz et al. al., 2022) that trust provides a mediating role between the elements of the facility on the choice of tourist destinations The basis of this literature discussion provides the conjecture (see Figure 1), that:

H2a, AMT has a significant effect on VDC
H2b, AMT has a significant effect on TVT
H2c, TVT mediation between AMT and VDC significantly

ATR, TVT & VDC

Stated that tourist attraction is a force to bring in tourists (Camilleri, 2019). The tourist attraction is the main factor for individuals or groups to travel and tourism (Öztüren et al., 2021). The uniqueness and diversity of culture, customs,

or customs are important things as a tourist attraction (Casado-D'iaz et al., 2022). This is justified by (Utama, 2017) that tourist attraction is tourism that is unique, and attractive with its natural beauty such as flora and fauna, landscapes, plants, and the results of human cultivation (museums, monuments, temples, historical buildings, tourist attractions). which includes people and culture (traditional music, dance, and customs). Lee, (2020) stated that the attributes of tourist attractions include natural attractions, forests and woods nearby, beaches, lakes, and rivers nearby, rustic atmosphere, mid-climate year-round, man-made attractions, availability of sports/leisure activities, availability of sports/leisure facilities, kid-friendly environment. Meanwhile (Utama, 2017) revealed that the aspects of tourist attraction are what to see, what to do, what to buy, what to arrive, and what to stay. In addition, it has been confirmed by various similar studies that attractiveness exerts a strong influence on the decision to visit certain tourist destinations (Martaleni et al., 2021) and choose rural homestays (Dey et al., 2020). A trusted tourist attraction is an advantage in influencing tourist decisions (Osman & Sentosa, 2013). It is also important for tourism sector managers to pay attention to tourist trust in each tourist destination (Ellegaard & Ritter, 2006) because travel and tourism planning is reflected in positive beliefs and attitudes to visit (Sarfraz et al., 2022). This discussion raises the conjecture (see Figure 1), that:

H3a, ATR has a significant effect on VDC
H3b, ATR has a significant effect on TVT
H3c, TVT mediation between ATR and VDC significantly

3. METHODOLOGY

Because this study uses a quantitative approach, the reason for using PLS to assess the mediating effect is very precise in obtaining a good level of significance (Hair et al., 2014). PLS aims to connect each constructed path to generate relevant predictive models (Sarstedt et al., 2017). Respondent profiles (i.e. gender, education level, and age) were also carried out through descriptive analysis aimed at obtaining criteria according to the object of the study. The tourist population in East Java cannot be generalized with certainty, because it has different characteristics. Thus, the reason for selecting the nonprobability purposive sampling technique was chosen so that the target sample was following the research criteria (Sekaran & Bougie, 2017). From the results of data collection, 253 samples were accepted and deserved to be tested after screening the data. Samples were obtained based on the results of questionnaires distributed through social media which were distributed throughout the island of Java to ensure the right criteria for the object of research. The assessment of respondents' responses was measured using a 5-point Likert scale "1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree", so that it was easier for respondents to align their perceptions (Revilla et al., 2014). Each adapted parameter obtained from some relevant literature includes a 4-item AMT construct adapted from (Gupta & Dixit, 2022; Martaleni et al., 2021), 5-item ATR (Main, 2017), 5-item TVT (Alves et al., 2019), and 3-item VDC (Wang et al., 2021). To ensure the respondent's understanding of the adapted items using English, translation was carried out into Indonesian as the mother tongue (Brislin, 1970). Furthermore, an instrument test was conducted involving 40 respondents to ensure that the items built obtained good validity (>0.70) and reliability (Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability >0.70) (Sarstedt et al., 2017) before being widely distributed. This technique is done so that the construct items are not removed from the model to produce the model at a good test level. This method is proven based on the display of the results of the outer model (see Figure 2), which produces a satisfactory level of validity and reliability (Sarstedt et al., 2017).

4. RESULT

Respondents' Profile

The characteristics of respondents were classified by gender, age, and education level. The majority of respondents are female (54.2%), while the male (45.8%). Respondents who dominate the characteristics based on age are (36.8%) aged 21-24 years, followed by aged 25-28 years (19.8%), >35 years (16.2%), aged 29-34 years (14.2%%), and aged 17-20 years (13.0%). Furthermore, the characteristics of the respondents based on the level of education that dominate are bachelor (46.6%), postgraduate (24.9%), high school (17.0%), and doctoral (11.5%). This results in the relevance that women aged between 21-24 years with a bachelor's education level are the most dominant in considering the decision to visit East Java Park. This means that women tend to prefer travel and tourism compared to men at the aforementioned age and education levels. This data and information are important for tourism destination management as a strategic decision-making tourism management.

Outer Model

The results of the instrument tests that have been carried out have resulted in the evaluation of the outer model producing a very satisfactory convergent validity (see Figure 2). Sarstedt et al., (2017) factor loading (FL>0.70) is satisfactory but must be supported by the average variance extracted (AVE>0.50) (Table 1). After the model produces good validity, then Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability assessments are carried out (CA & CR>0.70). It is

proven that the results of the reliability of this model have met a good level of criteria (see Figure 2 and Table 1). After the evaluation of the outer model is fulfilled, then the evaluation of the inner model is carried out.
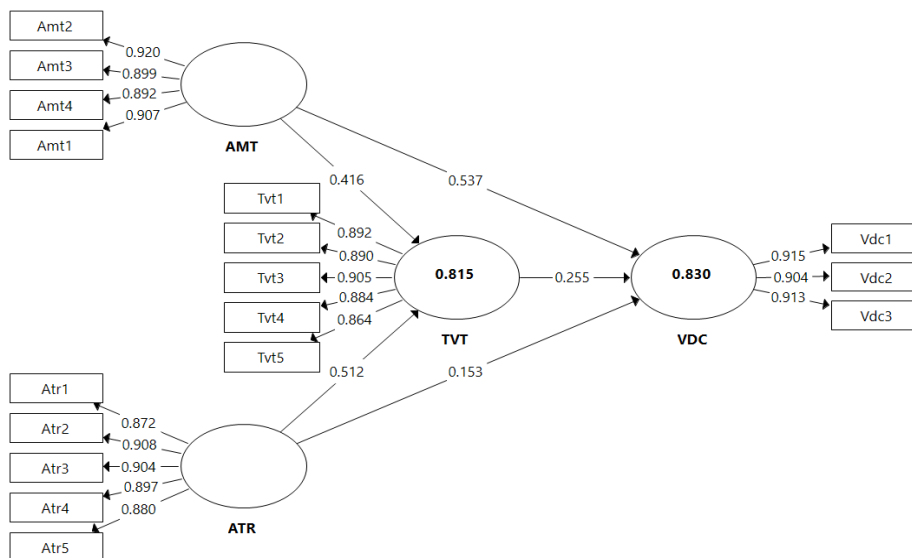

Figure 2. Validity Model Results

Table 1. Validity and Reliability Results

Constructs	Items	FL	AVE	CA	CR
AMT	Amt1, comfort, cleanliness, and tidiness of facilities	0.907	0.819	0.926	0.948
	Amt3, condition, feasibility, and function of facilities	0.920			
	Amt3, completeness of facilities and infrastructure	0.899			
	Amt4, the ease, and benefits of using the facilities	0.892			
ATR	Atr1, what to see	0.872	0.796	0.936	0.951
	Atr2, what to do	0.908			
	Atr3, what to buy	0.904			
	Atr4, what to arrived	0.897			
	Atr5, what to stay	0.880			
TVT	Tvt1, confidence, and security for all travel needs	0.892	0.787	0.932	0.949
	Tvt2, a sense of security of all travel information	0.890			
	Tvt3, a sense of security for a pleasant experience	0.905			
	Tvt4, trust service providers always keep promises	0.884			
	Tvt5, prioritize interests and provide excellent service	0.864			
VDC	Vdc1, all facilities have good performance	0.915	0.829	0.897	0.936
	Vdc2, stability to visit	0.904			
	Vdc3, decision to visit	0.913			

Inner Model

The most important evaluation of the inner model is the path coefficient analysis, which aims to see whether the constructs have a good level of significance. However, this study continues to test R^2 and Q^2 to produce relevant predictive models (Sarstedt et al., 2017). The significance assessment of the model used is if the error level is 5% then the t >1.96 or p <0.05 (Hair et al., 2014). This basis provides the results of the interpretation of the coefficient of determination, relevant model predictions, and path coefficients which are presented in the following table.

Table 2. R^2, Q^2, and f^2 Results

Constructs	R^2	Q^2	f^2
TVT	0.815	0.637	AMT (TVT=0.197, VDC=0.299)
VDC	0.830	0.680	ATR (TVT=0.299, VDC=0.022) TVT (VDC=0.071)

Table 3. Path Coefficient Results

Hypothesis	β	t	p	Supported
H1, TVT→VDC	0.255	3.930	0.000	Yes
H2a, AMT→VDC	0.537	8.482	0.000	Yes
H2b, AMT→TVT	0.416	6.498	0.000	Yes
H2c, AMT→TVT→VCD	0.106	3.207	0.001	Yes
H3a, ATR→VDC	0.153	2.266	0.024	Yes
H3b, ATR→TVT	0.512	8.045	0.000	Yes
H3c, ATR→TVT→VDC	0.131	3.598	0.000	Yes

The path coefficient results (see Table 3), TVT and VDC were significant (t=3.930, p=0.0000<0.05) "H1, supported" but the result (f^2=0.071) was small, AMT and VDC were significant (t=8.482, p= 0.000<0.05) "H2a, supported" with (f^2=0.299) moderate, AMT and TVT significant (t=6.498, p=0.0000<0.05) "H2b, supported" with (f^2=0.197) moderate, AMT, TVT and VDC significant (t=3.207, p=0.001<0.05) "H2c, supported" ATR and VDC significant (β=0.153, t=2.266, p=0.024<0.05) "H3a, supported" but (f^2=0.022) small, ATR and TVT were significant (t=8.045, p=0.0000<0.05) "H3b, supported" with (f^2=0.299) moderate, and ATR, TVT and VDC were significant (t=3.598, p=0.000<0.05) "H3c, supported".

5.   DISCUSSION

The hypothetical model (H1, TVT & VDC) that has been built has been supported based on the results of the path coefficient test, that TVT has a significant effect on VDC. This finding is supported by (Anggraeni & Astini, 2020; Pop et al., 2022) who state that tourists' trust in certain tourism will influence their decision to visit. The results of this study provide a conceptual definition of the relationship between TVT and VDC that the decision to visit is formed on a reflection of the trust that tourists have. Tourist trust is built by aspects of trust and security for all travel needs, travel information, pleasant experiences, and service providers who keep promises, prioritize interests and provide excellent service. This results in a decision to visit for tourists which are reflected in the facilities having good performance, the confidence to visit, and the decision to visit.

The next finding is (H2a, AMT & VDC) as evidenced by the statement that AMT has a significant effect on VDC. This result is justified by (Gupta & Dixit, 2022; Martaleni et al., 2021) that amenities have high power as an important element of service in increasing the need for tourists in planning and deciding tourist destinations. Researchers build a conceptual definition of these results that amenity is important as a form of excellent service to be applied effectively and efficiently in improving tourist visiting decisions. The confirmed amenity aspects are a) comfort, cleanliness, and tidiness of the facilities; b) condition, feasibility, and function of the facility; c) completeness of facilities and infrastructure; and d) the ease and benefits of using the facilities. The relevance of the findings (H2b, AMT & TVT) is significant and confirmed by research (Sarfraz et al., 2022) that amenities have a strong influence on tourist trust. These results offer a conceptual definition that the amenities built by the aforementioned aspects give tourists a high sense of trust in a particular tourist spot.

The model (H2c, AMT, TVT & VCD) is a mediator relationship which is proven based on the path coefficient results that TVT has a significant role as a mediator of AMT with VCD, but is still weak or cannot be said to be a full mediator, because f^2 "AMT to TVT" is lower than "AMT to VDC" (see Table 2), meaning that without the role of trust, amenities can have a strong influence on visiting decisions. This result is in line with research (Sarfraz et al., 2022) which states that trust plays an important role in intervening in amenities and visiting decisions. The conceptual definition of the results of this study is to reveal that tourists' trust in a tour when offered various aspects of high amenities results in a sense of security for travel needs and credible travel information and a pleasant experience giving a strong influence of confidence to visit certain tourist attractions. The hypothetical model (H3a, ATR & VDC) proved to have a significant effect and this was justified by (Martaleni 2021) stating that attractiveness has a significant influence on visiting decisions. The conceptual definition of these results provides an understanding that tourist attractions which include what to see, what to do, what to buy, what to arrive, and what to stay increase the desire of tourists to visit.

In addition (H3b, ATR & TVT) also proved significant and confirmed by (Ellegaard & Ritter, 2006; Qiu et al., 2021) that tourist attraction has a significant effect on trust. These results build an operational definition that the better the tourist attraction offered, the more tourists trust in tourist attractions as a travel and tourism plan destination. Finally, the mediator model (H3c, ATR, TVT & VDC) resulted in the role of TVT significantly intervening in ATR and VCD. These results are agreed by (Osman & Sentosa, 2013; Qiu et al., 2021) that trust has a mediating role between amenities and visiting decisions. In addition, this result is strengthened by producing a full mediator model, because f^2 "ATR to TVT" is higher than "ATR to VDC" (see Table 2), meaning that it is very important to embed trust as a conductor between attractiveness and visiting decisions. The operational definition of this result is that the trust that exists in

tourists is excellence in strengthening every aspect of the amenities contained in a tourist spot and having high performance will increase the decision to visit the tour.

6. CONCLUSION

The role of trust as a mediator gives importance to amenities and attractiveness in increasing tourists' decisions to visit certain tourist attractions. These results provide an empirical contribution, although most of the research has multidimensional nature and characteristics with various models. These results provide understanding and insight, especially the aspects in it that make a very important contribution to building the model. It is hoped that this result will contribute to academics, especially for destination management organizations as the main consideration in making strategic decisions on tourism management. Although this model is at the level of good test criteria, it is inseparable from various shortcomings and limitations in the ability of researchers to analyze this model. This deficiency will be a theoretical implication in the development of the next model. First, the criteria in the sampling technique for respondents who have never, ever, and how many times visited a particular tourist spot, it is important to make a control statement before the statement stage of each construct, because of the dynamic behavior of today's millennial generation visiting decisions needs to be an important concern. The second is how gender plays a role in the visiting decision process, the reason being that the two profiles are very different in terms of decision-making in the context of travel and tourism. Finally, is to build more specific parameters, because tourism in Indonesia has extraordinary uniqueness (i.e. differences in ethnicity, culture, customs, language, etc.) will certainly greatly influence tourists to visit.

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