

Evaluation of the Spirituality of Tourist Destination of Buddhist Spiritual Tourist Destination: An Application of Many-Facet Rasch Model (Mfrm)

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Abstract

Pilgrimage by visiting sacred places is an inseparable ritual in Buddhism practice. Transformation has taken place from religious pilgrimage object to spiritual tourist destination. Tourist destination spirituality has become a uniquely interesting aspect of a spiritual tourist destination. This research uses five Buddhist spiritual tourist destinations rated by 36 tourists using spiritual tourist destination indicators. The analysis result using Many-Facet Rasch Model (MFRM) shows that Bodhgaya Temple is the most favorite destination to visit. The item of 'Close-to-God/religious figure and Holy atmosphere' gained the most unpredictable responses.

Keywords : Tourist Destination Spirituality, Buddhist Sacred Places, Pilgrimage

Introduction

Pilgrimage is a part of religious rites of all religions. Until today, pilgrimage activities still take place as a form of spiritual journey with the goal of being closer to transcendent figures. Henderson, C. E., & Weisgrau, M. Raj Rhapsodies_ Tourism 2007 : 12). For a Buddhist, pilgrimage by visiting Buddhist Sacred Places is suggested by Buddha himself. As found in Mahaparinibbana Sutta (D.ii.72) "And whoever, Ananda, should die on such a pilgrimage with his heart established in faith, at the breaking up of the body, after death, will be reborn in a realm of heavenly happiness". Now, Buddhist sacred places, not only become main destination of visitors, but has transformed themselves as spiritual tourist destination.

Every tourist destination has its own attractiveness to attract tourists to visit. And it becomes a competitive dimension of a tourist destination, hence the two concepts are perceived as inseparable (Gârbea, R. V., 2014 :54-90)

In fact, not all tourist destinations have what perceived as the main attracting element. The competitiveness of a tourist destination can be influenced by many resources as main factors (cultural, heritage, scientific, events, recreation, etc.); upstream factors (accessibility, food and accommodation units, etc.); destination management (quality of services, development and qualification of human resources, protecting attractive resources); and qualification factors (safety/security, reputation of the

destination, the created brand image, the quality/price ratio) (Crouch, G. I., & Ritchie, J. R. B. Tourism , 1999 : 23-30). Besides, demand factors consisting of destination awareness, destination perception, and destination preferences have become indicators affecting competitiveness of a tourist destination

Spiritual or religious tourist destination has certain market segments. Therefore, the attractiveness of a spiritual tourist destination could be very specific as well. Previous research used tourist destination spirituality as antecedent variable to visit intention of foreign tourists to Borobudur Temple. The result of this research shows that the spirituality of tourist destination is one of the factors that boosts visit intention (Hermawan, B., Salim, U., Rohman, F., & Rahayu, M, 2016 : 1). Therefore, spirituality of tourist destination can be concluded as attracting factor of a tourist destination, particularly in religious spiritual tourism or even in pilgrimage tourism.

In Indonesia, there are many sites related to Buddhism. Those sites are now developed further to become tourist destinations that can be relied on gaining foreign exchange. One of the sites that has been known worldwide is Borobudur Temple. As a Buddhist spiritual destination, the world biggest temple has been proclaimed as a cultural sanctuary by UNESCO with No. Ref. 592. Borobudur Temple is one of the world's seven wonders.

To boost tourist visit to Borobudur Temple, Indonesian Government has an intention to make it as the center of Buddhist pilgrimage in the world. Even the Indonesian government believe that, as a Buddhist spiritual tourist destination, Borobudur Temple will become the venue comparable to Mecca for the Muslims (Junida, A. I. 2015 : website). To realize this, Indonesian government has allocated US\$ 1.5 billion to restore and develop supporting infrastructure (Sukendro, 2016 : 12). Spending such a massive fund indicates the seriousness of Indonesian government to develop this destination.

Objectives

This research uses indicators of previous work done by Hermawan, Salim, Rohman, & Rahayu (2016) to assess five Buddhist tourist destinations. The objective of this research is to find out the ranking of Buddhist spiritual tourist destinations from tourists' point of view, and to re-explore the indicators of tourist destination spirituality used in previous research.

Methods

This research is descriptive explorative. The researcher asks 36 Buddhist foreign tourists (R1 to R36) from several countries to rate five Buddhist tourist destinations. The tourists have relevant knowledge and have visited the rated places at least in last five years.

Indicators of tourist destination spirituality consist of eight items. Those items were used in previous work done by Hermawan, Salim, Rohman, & Rahayu(2016) adopted from Shuo, Ryan & Liu (2009). The raters are asked

to respond to each question by choosing the most appropriate answer of five choices: 1 (very bad), 2 (bad), 3 (neutral), 4 (good), and 5 (very good) (Vagias, 2006). Instruments used in this research are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Instruments to measure the construct of tourist destination spirituality

	Boudha nath	Angkor Wat	Mahabo dhi	Shweda gon	Borobud ur
F1 Peacefulness	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
F2 Spiritual comfort	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
F3 Holy atmosphere	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
F4 Inner happiness	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
F5 Escape from the 'civilized' world	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
F6 Close to God/Religious figure	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
F7 Respect to God/Religious figure	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
F8 Religious fulfillment	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

In this research, data is analyzed using Many-facet Rasch Model (MFRM) developed by Linacre (2014). Software program used in this research is FACETS version 3.71.3 from Winsteps.com (Linacre, 2014). Many Facet RaschModel using a scoring scale of $m+1$ ordered categories with a level of 0 for the lowest category and a level m for the highest is expressed as the logarithm of ratio odds (Eckes, 2015):

$$\ln \left[\frac{P_{nljk}}{P_{nljk-1}} \right] = \theta_n - \delta_l - \alpha_j - \tau_k$$

P_{nljk} : Probability of examinee n receiving a rating of k from rater j on task l,

P_{nljk-1} : Probability of examinee n receiving a rating of k – 1 from rater j on task l,

θ_n :Ability of examinee n,

δ_l :Difficulty of task l,

α_j : Severity of rater j,

τ_k : Difficulty of receiving a rating of k relative to k – 1.

Result and Discussions

FACETS Analysis

The logit measure for five Buddhist spiritual tourist destination rated by 36 tourist can be found in Table 2. From separation and strata, the destinations are, indeed, different one and another. Mahabodhi Temple is rated highest by the Buddhist tourists with the score of 1.72. Spirituality of tourist destination for Mahabodhi Temple is rated highest compared to four other Buddhist spiritual destination. The second is BoudhanathStupa followed by Borobudur Temple in third place, Shwedagon Pagoda and Angkor Wat are rated fourth and fifth respectively with the lowest logit value is -1,60.

Table 2. Spirituality of Tourist Destination Measurement Report

N Buddhist Sites	Measure	Model		Outfit		Correlation PtMea
		S.E.	MnSq	ZStd		
3 Mahabodhi Temple	1.72	.12	.92	-.8		.21
1 Boudhanath Stupa	.23	.10	.88	-1.4		.47
5 Borobudur Temple	.11	.09	.91	-1.1		.30
4 Shwedagon Pagoda	-.46	.11	1.23	2.1		.42
2 Angkor Wat Temple	-1.60	.12	1.11	.9		.43
Mean (Count: 5)	.00	.11	1.01	-.1		.37
S.D. (Population)	1.08	.01	.14	1.4		.10
S.D. (Sample)	1.20	.01	.15	1.5		.11

Model, Populn: Separation 9.93 Strata 13.57 Reliability .99
 Model, Sample: Separation 11.11 Strata 15.14 Reliability .99

The table shows that the spirituality of tourist destination of Mahabodhi Temple is difficult to rate, in other word, the spiritual value of this place is so high for the tourists who are also raters in this research. The opposite happens to Angkor Wat, tourists perceived that spiritual value of this tourist destination is low. BoudhanathStupa is in second place following Mahabodhi Temple. The spiritual value of tourist destination of Boudhanath is not too different with the one of Borobudur Temple which is in third place. This indicates that the spirituality of tourist destination of BoudhanathStupa and of Borobudur Temple is not too different. When seen from the Buddhism rituals, the numbers performed in BoudhanathStupa outperformed those in Borobudur Temple which is only known as heritage tourist destination.

Spirituality value of tourist destination of Shwedagon Pagoda is rated fourth. This is surprising since this destination is the place where continuing Buddhism rituals take place, almost uninterrupted. The value shows that it is

not too different with Borobudur Temple. Angkor Wat is rated lowest in spirituality of tourist destination far below Shwedagon Pagoda. Tourists perhaps perceive that Angkor Wat is not a Buddhist spiritual tourist destination aside from it is depicted as tourist destination and world widely known through Lara Croft: Tomb Raider film starring Angelina Jolie. However, from the tourists visit, Angkor Wat scored ten times higher than of Borobudur Temple (Sukendro, 2016 : 2). The five destinations are perceived as spiritual tourist destination, no polarization takes place. It is indicated by the correlation point measurement which shows the same direction.

If Indonesian government intend to make Borobudur Temple as the world's Buddhist spiritual tourist destination, the government should take into account the factors related to tourist destination spirituality. Logit value of Angkor Wat which is far below of Borobudur Temple with the number of tourists visiting Angkor Wat far above to Borobudur Temple shows that Angkor Wat has had its own position. There is also possibility that Angkor Wat is not promoted merely as spiritual tourist destination.

Basically, Indonesian government must be highly committed if it intends to change the theme of Borobudur Temple from a heritage tourist destination to a spiritual tourist destination. Even though there is an increasing numbers of Buddhism rituals held in Borobudur Temple, the echo of this is still limited. This suggests a more intensive communication from management side of Borobudur Temple.

From eight indicators of tourist destination spirituality, item 5 (Escape from the 'civilized' world) is the most difficult to rate by tourists with the logit score of 0.42. Indicators used in this research group themselves into three category namely difficult (item 5 and 2), medium (item 3, 6, 1, and 4), and easy (item 7 and 8). All items used apply small standard error.

Table 3. Spirituality of Tourist Destination Testing Items Measurement Report

N Items	Model		Outfit		Correlation	
	Measure	S.E.	MnSq	ZStd		PtMea
5 Escape from the 'civilized' world	.42	.13	.76	-2.1		.70
2 Spiritual comfort	.26	.13	.99	.0		.62
3 Holy atmosphere	.11	.13	1.33	2.5		.62
6 Close to God/Religious figure	.02	.13	1.32	2.4		.47
1 Peacefulness	-.02	.13	.92	-.6		.68
4 Inner happiness	-.02	.13	.84	-1.3		.58
7 Respect to God/Religious figure	-.23	.13	.77	-1.9		.52
8 Religious fulfillment	-.54	.14	.99	.0		.49
Mean (Count: 8)	.00	.13	.99	-.2		.59
S.D. (Population)	.27	.00	.21	1.7		.08
S.D. (Sample)	.29	.00	.22	1.8		.08

Model, Populn: Separation 1.80 Strata 2.73 Reliability .76
 Model, Sample: Separation 1.96 Strata 2.95 Reliability .79

Items to rate spirituality of tourist destination are valid. All items used show no polarity and to measure the same thing. Items reliability for sample of 0.79 indicates that items of tourist destination spirituality have a high consistency.

There is no single tourist rate 1 (very bad) to all items for five Buddhist spiritual tourist destination. This indicates that the spread of rating for each item is limited only to four choices. Figure 1 shows that every value chosen can differentiate one from the others.

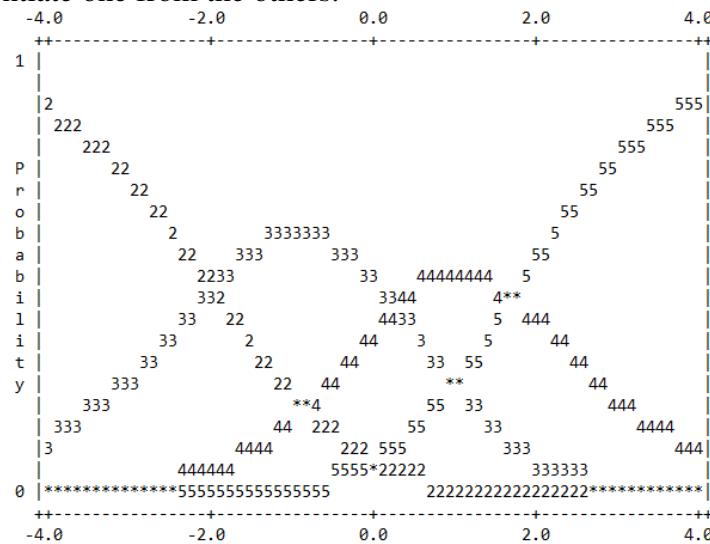


Figure 1. Probability Curves

Discussion

Basically, Buddhist spiritual tourist destination which was suggested by Buddha Himself, remains a dream of many Buddhist tourist to visit. Buddhist spiritual tourist destinations have their own attracting power. The appealing power of spiritual tourist destination is significantly different with other types of tourist destinations. Therefore, to find out the attracting power of spiritual tourist destination is interesting. Even though Holy Scripture becomes the main reference, other stimulus can make a spiritual tourist destination develop a specific attractiveness.

This research uses MFRM which produces an objective measurement. Items used in this rating are valid, showing the ability to measure what to be measured and having a good consistency. The main limitation of this work is the exclusion of other Buddhist spiritual tourist destinations, either as suggested by Buddha Himself in Mahaparinibbana Sutta or by others. Other limitation is the sample size which is too small that restrict the generalization of the conclusion.

Recommendations

1. Recommendations for Implication

The development of Buddhist spiritual tourist destinations should take into account all aspects mainly related to the perceptions of the tourists themselves. This research reveals that factors concerned by tourists of a spiritual tourist destination cannot be separated from the spirituality of the tourist destination.

2. Recommendations for Further Studies

It is suggested that further research concerning this topic may add more Buddhist spiritual tourist destinations and at least to include eight main Buddhists spiritual tourist destinations. Rating can be done using instrument item with only four choices and sample size can be increased in order to obtain a better conclusion.

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