

The Influence of Risk Perception on Destination Attachment and Voluntourism Behavior: Empirical Evidence from Indonesia

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Abstract

Alternative forms of travel have recently been delivering rewarding experiences and promising sustainable development for the tourism sector. However, it also depends on the uncertainties, consequences, and emotional connection with the destination. So far, the scholars have done limited empirical studies on volunteer tourism in Bali. Thus, this study tries to measure volunteer tourists' behavior by understanding the relationship between destination attachment, risk perception, and voluntourism behavior. Therefore, a study on the inclusivity of tourists' attachment to a particular place and perceived risks in volunteer tourism is an essential need to sustain the tourism industry. Data was analyzed using Partial Least Squares with smartPLS software. This study is based on a sample of ninety-three tourists of generation Z in Bali, Indonesia. Both outer model and inner model evaluation were conducted to ensure the robustness of the proposed model. The findings showed that destination attachment does have a direct and significant effect on voluntourism behavior. As expected, we also find that perceived risk has a significant moderating role on the relationship. Hence, greater efforts are needed to improve the image of the place by highlighting the characteristics of the locations. At the same time, it is necessary to put considerable effort to alleviate unfavorable conditions by creating safe environment surrounding the destination.

Keywords: Volunteer Tourism, Destination Attachment, Risk Perception, Voluntourism Behavior, Bali

JEL Classification Code: L83, N55, Z32

1. Introduction

Volunteer tourism is a combination of leisure travel and voluntary work, and it has mainly been studied in recent years by researchers towards international development, including the Philippines, India, and Thailand (Frazer &

Waitt, 2016; Mody et al., 2014; Kontogeorgopoulos, 2017). The upsurges in volunteer tourism have coincided with an increase in the literature that examines young tourists' responses to voluntourism. Arguably, studies of young Asian voluntourists have been mainly ignored. Given its popular tourist destination in Southeast Asia, Bali has been chosen as the case study for this research (Anggraini, 2015). Thus, it is essential to understand voluntourist behavior from the view of young travelers.

Tourism development can be correlated with the relationships between hosts and tourists (Sharma et al., 2020). A particular concern is the impact of 'home' as a sense of place that can change people's everyday life in shaping their identities because it encompasses warm feelings and fond memories (Moore, 2000). The place can be responsible for personal reasons from the memorable events in the past (Scannell & Gifford, 2016). Certain places qualify to be accountable for spending more time outdoors and protecting landscapes (Lee & Lee, 2017). An affective bond that develops between people and at least one meaningful place to which they feel emotionally connected is known as place attachment (Altman & Low, 1992). Hence, exploring

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the effect of destination attachment on volunteer tourists' behavior could be a new perspective in understanding future volunteer tourist behavior.

Simultaneously, the decision to visit or avoid a particular tourism destination is also susceptible to its perceived risks. With the advances of globalization on tourism, the need for safety and security has become the main factors to encourage or discourage tourists from traveling to a destination (Rahmiati et al., 2020; Rindrasih, 2018). Although destination attachment and risk perception are crucial in determining travel behavior and decision-making, they have been rarely examined under the same study. Therefore, it is imperative to grasp the impact of destination attachment and perceived risk on young voluntourist behavior.

To address these voids, the present study explores the influence of risk perception as a moderator between destination attachment and voluntourist behavior. In the following sections, a summary of the literature introduces each of the research variables, followed by hypothesis development. Afterward, the methods and the results are explained in the following sections. The study is concluded with a discussion of theoretical and managerial implications, limitations, and recommendations of future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Destination Attachment

Place attachment is a process in which humans form emotional bonds to various places (Yuksel et al., 2010). The applications of attachment are numerous and mainly used in different psychological and geographical disciplines (Lee et al., 2019). In other words, the feeling of being physically present at a place and the feeling of being at a "place" or "home" can be considered as signs that someone has made an emotional attachment to a location. Researchers and practitioners have used this concept to explain different holiday or tourist behaviors, such as leisure setting preferences, management preferences, and activity participation (Kyle & Graefe, 2004). Relationship between tourism and its environment shows the value of natural resources (Le et al., 2020). Some researchers define location attachment as affective bonding, an individual's emotional relationship with a particular environment (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001). Other definitions of location attachment include:

- A state of psychological well-being resulting from accessibility to a place or a state of distress after separation or "remoteness" from a place.
- Emotional investment with a place (Hummon, 1992).
- The degree to which people value and identify with specific environmental settings (Moore & Graefe, 1994).

According to Rubinstein and Parmelee (1992), personal experiences and social interactions are fundamental dimensions that make people bond with a place and make it a place as part of one's identity (Kilinc, 2006). For Moore and Graefe (1994), an individual's attachment to a particular place generally begins to develop after one or more visits, yet it is possible to create strong feelings for places that have never been visited (Lee, 1999). Halpenny (2006) argues that, even for those who are visiting for the first time, a sense of attachment to a place may have formed before their first visit to the destination. This can be based on stories about the goal from friends and family or the mass media.

2.2. Risk Perception

Tourists' perception of risk and safety is critical in their decision-making process to travel to a tourist destination (Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009). The literature reveals that tourists' risk perceptions have a significant impact on their behavioral intentions (Artuğer, 2015; Cetinsoz & Ege, 2013; Chew & Jahari, 2014). In general, tourists try to avoid traveling if they consider it risky (Cetinsoz & Ege, 2013; Chew & Jahari 2014), while many of them take risks as part of the joy of their trip (Imboden, 2012). Besides, the risks associated with travel destinations are multidimensional, in which the consequences and outcomes are uncertain (Sohn et al., 2016).

Perceived risk refers to a person's view of the different risks inherent in a particular consumer situation. In the case of volunteer tourism, it relates to an individual's belief about all the risks associated with that experience. This definition combines feelings or emotional components (e.g., uncertainty, worry, anxiety) and the possibility of failure of the plan (subjective risk assessment) (Pieniak et al., 2008). However, in this study, risk perception is defined in terms of consumers' perceptions of the uncertainty and adverse consequences of participating in volunteer tourism activities.

2.3. Hypothesis Development

In the aspect of tourism, place attachment is used interchangeably with the term destination attachment (Hwang & Lee, 2019; Suntikul & Jachna, 2016; Yuksel et al., 2010). Place attachment has a strong effect on the antecedents of behavior, and especially emotional bonding to nature is a significant predictor of behavior (Raymond et al., 2011). Place attachment had a positive relationship with volunteering and environmental conservation behavior (Kelly & Hosking, 2008). In particular, when individuals have higher levels of destination attachment, they are more likely to have more care about the environment and be concerned with issues of environmental protection (Cheng & Wu, 2014). Based on the discussion, we propose this hypothesis:

H1: Destination attachment has a positive impact on voluntourism behavior.

Perceived risk as a moderator possesses the capability to alter the strength and direction of the relationship between an antecedent (independent variable) and an outcome (Andersson & Gerbing, 1988). A previous study found that lower perceived risks may generate a higher travel intention for prospective US tourists who travel to China, Japan, and South Korea (Noh & Vogt, 2013). Tavitiyaman and Qu (2013) proposed the moderating effect of perceived risk on the relationship between overall satisfaction and behavioral intention. Their study hypothesized that at low perceived risk level, the positive influence of destination image on overall satisfaction is greater than at high perceived risk level. Hence, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: Risk perception moderates the relationship between destination attachment and voluntourism behavior.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Samples

The research sample comprises generation Z (25 years or younger) who are males (25.81%) and females (74.19%). We selected participants who had at least volunteered once and the social activities varied from teaching local communities (45.16%), organizing arts and cultural festivals (26.88%), helping local farmers in harvesting the crops (15.05%), conservation (8.60%), and building public facilities (4.30%). Furthermore, the participating respondents were originally from Singaraja (45.16%), Denpasar (40.86%), Gianyar (7.53%), Badung (3.23%), and Tabanan (3.23%).

Survey questionnaires were administered by two research assistants from July 2020 to August 2020. The survey assistants conducted a survey by approaching the respondents with their mobile phones utilizing an online questionnaire platform, which consisted of set of questions on Likert Scale measurement. After removing incomplete responses and extreme outliers, the researchers managed to get 93 valid ones of the 120 questionnaires distributed, resulting in a response rate of 77.50%. The low number of response rate can be attributed to the timing of the study, as respondents were approached while they were at local schools where the availability is limited.

3.2. Study Instrument

After capturing the respondents' sociodemographic attributes in the first part, the questionnaire items in the second part aimed to explore risk perception, destination attachment, and voluntourism behavior based on previous

literature. This study measured the items using a 5-point Likert scale from "1" strongly disagree to "5" strongly agree (Han & Hyun, 2017). Risk perception was measured empirically using a 5-point Likert scale developed by Siddique (2012). The destination attachment scale was measured using a five-item scale developed by Yuksel et al. (2010). Voluntourism behavior was measured using a five-point scale adopted from Maki and Snyder (2016).

3.3. Data Analysis

The researchers conducted the survey in two steps starting with checking the model's reliability and validity (see Table 1). Next, the hypothesized relationships predicted in the model were tested by examining the path estimates. The Structural Equation Modeling was used in the analysis of the data.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

The researchers tested the model by conducting a series of analysis of whether each variable predicted the next variable in the model. Also, we tested the expected effect via bootstrapping. As expected, destination attachment was associated with voluntourism behavior ($R^2 = 0.456$, $\beta = -0.480$, $p < 0.05$) (see Table 2).

Next, we tested whether perceived risk moderated the relationship between destination attachment and voluntourism behavior. As expected, it is very interesting to note that, with the moderation of risk perception, the strength of the path between destination attachment and voluntourism behavior decreased significantly and the beta of the moderation path became negative ($R^2 = 0.480$, $\beta = -0.480$, $p < 0.05$) (see Table 2). In other words, the higher the risk perception with regard to volunteer tourism, the less significant will be the relation between destination attachment and voluntourism behavior.

4.2. Discussion and Implications

Voluntourism behavior reflects behavior of tourists that participate in voluntary work, typically to help other people and/or benefit the environment. Thus far, little is known about voluntourism behavior and which individual factors motivate such behavior. The goal of this study sought to determine the moderating effect of risk perception on the relationship between destination attachment and voluntourism behavior of the Balinese. The analysis of the findings based on the total sample discovered that destination attachment is positively related to voluntourism behavior (confirm Hypothesis 1) and the effect of perceived risk as a

Table 1: Reliability and Validity of the Items

Constructs	Items	Loadings	Alpha	CR	AVE
BEH	BEH1	0.827	0.916	0.937	0.749
	BEH2	0.874			
	BEH3	0.860			
	BEH4	0.901			
	BEH5	0.864			
DES	DES1	0.842	0.887	0.917	0.688
	DES2	0.838			
	DES3	0.796			
	DES4	0.815			
	DES5	0.855			
RIS	RIS1	0.828	0.842	0.888	0.666
	RIS2	0.875			
	RIS3	0.764			
	RIS4	0.792			
RIS*DES	RIS1*DES1	3.894	0.982	0.983	0.739
	RIS1*DES2	3.856			
	RIS1*DES3	3.569			
	RIS1*DES4	3.856			
	RIS1*DES5	3.771			
	RIS2*DES1	3.753			
	RIS2*DES2	3.697			
	RIS2*DES3	3.868			
	RIS2*DES4	3.808			
	RIS2*DES5	3.880			
	RIS3*DES1	3.651			
	RIS3*DES2	3.703			
	RIS3*DES3	3.616			
	RIS3*DES4	3.749			
	RIS3*DES5	3.819			
	RIS4*DES1	3.723			
	RIS4*DES2	3.725			
	RIS4*DES3	3.636			
	RIS4*DES4	3.636			
	RIS4*DES5	3.791			

moderator between destination attachment and voluntourism behavior has shown significant and positive relationship (confirm Hypothesis 2).

With respect to theoretical implication, this study contributes extensively to the literature through two ways.

First, the current study fills a gap by empirically confirming the role of risk perception as moderating factor on the relationship between destination attachment and behavior in relation to volunteer tourism. Differences in behavior observed among the tourists in Bali are not only due to the

Table 2: Path Estimates

	Path Estimates	t Statistics	P Values
DES → BEH	1.664	3.327	0.001
RIS*DES → BEH	−0.480	2.453	0.015
RIS → BEH	1.467	3.305	0.001

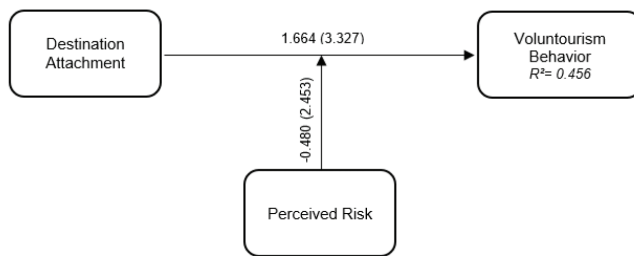


Figure 1: Research Model

perceived risk related to voluntourism but are also stemming from their bonds with the place. Second, the study broadens the literature on the tourists' behavior and applies it to the voluntourism context, especially by incorporating risk perception and destination attachment. Perhaps this study is the first of its kind to shed light on tourists' behavior in Bali in relation to volunteer tourism.

For the practical implications, the role of destination attachment on voluntourism behavior implies on that local authorities and tourism organizations can improve the image of the place by highlighting the characteristics of the locations through word-of-mouth communications. On the other hand, authorities and developers are advised to improve infrastructure elements (e.g., transportation network) which in turn will drive residents to improve their intention and behavior.

Providing better tourism offers will not be worthwhile if tourist risk perception is neglected. To survive in the competition, assessment of tourist risk perception has to be one of the main concerns to be successful in the marketplace. Tourism organizers may also be well advised to consider applying strategies in reducing the risk to build positive characteristics of the location that will in turn attract new tourists with the help of spreading positive word-of-mouth. Government and local authorities must put considerable efforts to alleviate unfavorable conditions by creating safe environment surrounding the destination.

5. Conclusion and Limitations

This study investigated the influence of destination attachment on voluntourism behavior. The study further

highlights the moderating effect of risk perception when exploring the strength of relations between destination attachment and tourist behavior in a volunteer tourism setting. From the theoretical perspective, variances in behavior observed among the tourists in Bali are not only due to the perceived risk related to voluntourism but are also from their attachment with the site. From the practical standpoint, the results of this study will help local authorities and tourism organizers to better understand the important roles of destination attachment and risk perception in discovering voluntourism behavior.

Although consistent with discoveries in other behavioral domains, some of our findings should be interpreted with caution, as a result of the following limitations. First, the sample size used in the study was not perfectly representative of voluntourism behaviors, which implies the difficulties in engaging tourists to participate in the survey. Secondly, conducting the study in a single destination at a certain period may limit the generalizability of the results. Studies in the future should extend more measures to assess destination attachment by involving additional elements. For instance, a further investigation on environmental influences as controlled variables on destination attachment using experimental studies may provide thorough influence of the research construct.

The difference between respondents who are risk seekers and risk avoiders has not been explored in this study. Risk seekers may have a higher level of risk tolerance and are attracted to risky destinations during their travels (e.g., other segments that are risk averse may be more sensitive to risky destinations and prefer to visit safer destinations) becomes an important factor in understanding the representation of volunteer tourists because it affects the way they perceive a destination.

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