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## Research Article

### THE ANALYSIS OF THE TOURIST LOYALTY DETERMINANT IN THE AREA OF TOBA LAKE

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#### ABSTRACT

This research aimed to find out the factors that affect tourists loyalty in the area of Toba Lake. This is a long-term developmental research that conducted in 3 (three) years in stages. This research was conducted at several tourist destinations in the tourist area of Toba Lake, in North Sumatera, namely Simalungun District, Toba Samosir District, Samosir District, North Tapanuli District, Humbang Hasundutan District, Karo District, and Dairi District. Data collection techniques used were observations, interviews, documentation studies, and questionnaires, whilst the factor analysis method was used in data analysis. The results of this research indicated that marketing mix factor is a dominant, affecting factor of tourists loyalty. The service quality and tourists satisfaction factor delivered a positive effect on tourists loyalty.

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#### INTRODUCTION

The opportunity to progress in the tourism sector in North Sumatera has been increased by the enactment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). It was in line with the statements submitted by several international organizations including the United Nations, World Bank and World Tourism Organization (WTO)-acknowledging that tourism is an integral part of human life, in regard to social and economic activities specifically. In order to encounter challenges and opportunities, it is necessary to change the role of the Government in the field of culture and tourism. The Government that in the past was acting as an executor of development, should now convert its role into a facilitator. This is intended that the tourism development activities undertaken by private sector might proceed more rapidly. In this case, the role of facilitator refers to a function of a conducive climate creation in which the tourism executant was able to contribute efficiently and effectively.

Moreover, the tourism sub-sector is expected to drive public economy, for it was considered as the most off-the-shelf sector in terms of facilities, means, and infrastructure compared with other business sectors. It is manifested in the community empowerment strategy by the way of *community-based tourism development*.

Toba Lake is one of the largest lakes in the world and the largest and most popular in Indonesia. There is a large island in the middle of the lake, i.e. the Samosir Island, situated at an altitude of 1000 meters above sea level. Moreover, there are also waterfalls, pine forests, and sulfur bathing place. The beauty of Toba Lake is amazing. It is surrounded by hills, the surrounding atmosphere is wonderful, the air is fresh and cool. The visitors could just enjoy its natural beauty, swimming or rent a motorboat to explore the lake. The atmosphere was quieter in the afternoon, the visitor could enjoy its tranquility and watching the sunset. There are popular natural attractions at Samosir Island, i.e. the lake over the lake (Sidihoni Lake and Aek Natonang Lake), the King Sidabutar cemetery historical attractions in Tomok Village; and the architectural tourism of Batak Toba Samosir traditional residential. From Parapat, visitors could take a ferry to reach Samosir Island, which departs every hour from Tomok Village, Samosir.

The professional and favorable tourism industry management could only reach by means of an in-depth study, one of which is the notion that tourists are the potential source of income, hence they must be served well so that they feel content and comfortable, and would extend their visit without hesitation. The tourism industry is a type of product that mostly engaged in services, every aspect related to services must be oriented to the economy accordingly.

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Sarker *et.al* (2012), in his research entitled *Investigating the Impact of Marketing Elements of Tourist Satisfaction: An Empirical Study on East Lake*, described the utilization of a marketing mix to support a company in measuring customer satisfaction, examined how it affect as a measurement technique in assessing tourist satisfaction, and denoted which of the elements of the marketing mix that might affect tourist satisfaction. This research revealed that the utilization of marketing mix has delivered a positive effect on tourist satisfaction, by which the product variable is the most influential independent variable. The variables in this study are the same as the existing variables in marketing mix, i.e. product, price, place, the promotion, people, physical evidence, and process. Muala (2012), in his research entitled *Assessing the Relationship between Marketing Mix and Loyalty through Tourist Satisfaction*, explained that marketing mix can be used in measuring tourist satisfaction and loyalty, along with the services offered to them. The results of this study indicate that the factors of product, price, people, and place delivered a significant positive effect on tourist satisfaction and loyalty, with the product variable as the most influential variable.

In the operation of service per se should also consider the marketing mix of service product of and service quality, namely:

1. **Product**, refer to everything that can be offered to the market in order to meet the demands or needs (Kotler, 2000);
2. **Price**, refer to any form of monetary cost sacrificed by the consumer to acquire, possess, and utilize any combination of goods or services along with the services of a product;
3. **Place**, is the scene at which a product of service performs an act;
4. **Promotion**, refer to a means for communicating a product to a customer;
5. **People**, refer to a notion that the service requires people who could favorably communicate with the customer, since the service product is a about the direct contact with the customer;
6. **Process**, the production or operation process is an important factor for high contact service consumers, who oftentimes served as co-producer of the services concerned as well;
7. **Physical evidence**; in considering the feature of service which is an intangible product, it is difficult for the consumer to see the existence of the services offered, hence it need to be visualized so as the consumer might discover how the service product is offered (Tjiptono, 2008).

### **The Theoretical Basis**

#### **The Definition of Tourism**

Today, tourism has become one of the basic needs of most people. Essentially, tourism denotes a process of temporary traveling executed by one or more individual to a particular place aside from their residence due to the various interests, e.g. economic, social, cultural, political, religious, health, or other interests such as to meet the curiosity, to augment their experience, or to study (Suwanto, 2004).

The term of tourism was closely linked to the notion of travel, that is the residential temporary alteration executed by one or more individual aside from their permanent residence due to several particular reasons and not to engage in a wage-earning activity. Thus, it might be said as a journey undertaken by one or more individual that aimed to get pleasure and meet the desire to know something; and due to the interest associated with healthy sports activities.

The definitions of tourism have been standardized in one legislation, viz. Act Number 10 Year 2009 concerning Tourism: what is meant by tourism is a wide range of tourism activities supported by various facilities and services provided by the community, entrepreneurs, government and local government.

Tourism is an activity that is carried out differently from the daily activities. The individual who performed the travel activities are referred to as tourists. Tourist is the important element in tourism, since a particular tourist attraction would not function without the participation of tourist.

The more tourists visited a tourist destination, the more prosperous people in the area would be. According to Marpaung (2002), tourism is a temporary migration executed by human beings, in order to escape their routine occupation and their residence.

The tourism activities are a multidimensional activity, it was not only related to technology, but also very closely related to social, religion, culture, art, splendor, culture and environment; hence tourism activities were not only need the knowledgeable human resources who constantly capable to keep up with rapid development of technology, yet also to touch the needs and preservation (Andika, 2003).

#### **The Loyalty of Consumer**

Consumer loyalty refers to a willingness to consistently carry out the repeated purchase over a particular product or service. Oliver (2002) asserted that loyalty is a willingness of the consumer to continue purchasing in a company for a long of period, to apply the product or service repeatedly, and to voluntarily recommend it to their friends or other companies. The ability of companies to retain and restrain consumers, so as they would not shift to the competitors was one of the keys to be successful to compete in the marketplace.

The consumer loyalty was one of major factors of success of the companies in gaining the sustainable competitiveness (Lee and Cunningham, 2001). The companies need to find out why consumers carried out the repurchases after using their products. The information gathered denote the foundation in setting a marketing strategy. Generally, the companies utilized consumer satisfaction measurements as a standard for monitoring consumer loyalty. Yet, consumer loyalty would not raise up by merely satisfaction without any trust (Lee and Cunningham, 2001).

Consumer loyalty is asset and play an important role in a company. According to Griffin (2005), "Loyalty is defined as the noon random purchase expressed over time by some decision making unit". Build upon this notion, loyalty refers more to the behavior of decision-making units to make a continuous purchase of goods or services of a selected

company. Thus, the conclusion is that loyalty is formed due to the experience of using a good or service.

Egan (2001), suggested that loyalty is a value derived from a long-term relationship, when a person feels benefiting from the relationship. Loyalty can be defined as an emotional tendency, which consisting of two dimensions. The first is emotional tendency toward a brand; this refers to the affective (like-dislike) aspect, fear, respect or disappointment toward a particular brand over other brands in the market. This emotional tendency is acquired by consumers through past experience over a brand or derived from information obtained from others. The second is tendency to evaluate a brand. This trend includes a positive evaluation based on criteria deemed relevant to describe the significance of a brand to the consumer. This tendency is also obtained by consumers through previous experience and from information obtained about the brand.

According to Tjiptono (2012), any company that concerns about consumer satisfaction might obtained several basic benefits; that is, the company's reputation became more positive in the consumer's and society's perception, and might encourage consumer loyalty to be possible for the company to increase profits. Hence a harmonious relationship must be created between the company and the consumers, as well as encourage everyone in the company to work with the better goals.

### **Consumer Satisfaction**

Johnson and Fornell (1991), asserted that customer satisfaction is the result of a thorough evaluation conducted by consumers on the performance of the products they consumed. Yi (1991), identified the two different consumer satisfaction concepts, i.e.: transaction-specific satisfaction and overall satisfaction. *Transaction-specific satisfaction* is a concept that refers to the assessment of customer satisfaction after they bought a particular product or brand. Whilst *overall satisfaction* is a concept that measures the satisfaction (dissatisfaction) of consumers towards a particular product or brand as a whole, based on all his experience in consuming the product or brand. Thus, overall satisfaction could be regarded as a function of all prior transaction-specific satisfaction. This research utilized the concept of the overall customer satisfaction.

Consumer satisfaction over the services provided by the company might be identified if the company carried out a measurement and examination toward the consumers. A particular service would be considered satisfactory if it could meet the consumers needs and expectations. Measuring the customer satisfaction is an important element in providing the better, more efficient and more effective service. The use of service quality dimension as a measuring instrument to find out the level of customer satisfaction. By knowing the result of the consumer satisfaction measurement, the company could set a strategy which would be applied to create consumer loyalty (Hadiyati, 2012).

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2009), consumer satisfaction is the level of consumer sentiment after comparing the performance (or outcome) that consumers perceive with their expectation. According to Hasan (2009), consumer satisfaction is a consumer sentiment as a response to the goods or services they have been consumed. In general, satisfaction

might be interpreted as a comparison between services or results received by consumers and consumer expectations, services or results received must be at least equal to the expectations of consumers, or even exceed it. Kotler (2009), reveals that satisfaction is a person's likes or dislikes over a particular product after he compares the product's achievements to their expectations. Simamora (2008), argued that consumer satisfaction is the result of experience over a particular product. This is a consumer sentiment after they compared their expectation with actual performance.

### **Service Quality**

Swastha DH (2007), defined services as: The intangible goods purchased and sold in the marketplace through a mutually satisfactory exchange transaction. Rangkuti (2003) stated: service is the delivery of a performance or invisible action from one party to another party. Kotler (2005), defined services as any essentially intangible action or performance offered by a particular party that did not result in ownership of something.

According to Kotler (2005), the services characteristics are as follows:

#### **Intangible**

Services have the nature of intangibles, since it could not be seen, felt, touched, heard or smelt before the purchase was executed. A person who requested a nasal plastic surgery would not be able to observe the results before the transaction took place. In the service business, buyers must give credence and convinced to the service providers.

#### **Inseparable**

The configuration of service might not be separated from its source, whether the source is a person or a patient. But whether the source is present or not, the intangible physical products remained.

#### **Changeable**

Essentially, the service was very volatile, it depends on who presents it, when and where it is presented. The service purchasers are well aware of this very nature, hence they firstly inquired before determining the service provider to be chosen.

#### **Endurable**

The service could not be reserved. One of the reasons why many doctors still charge a fee over their patients who could not take up the appointment; it suggested that the value of a service should not be lost simply because the patient did not arrive at the appointed time. The durability of a service will not be a problem if there were always the steady demands available, because to produce services in advance was a simple task. When demand fluctuates up and down, the difficult problem would immediately arise.

Wyckoff in Tjiptono (2008), stated that service quality is the level of excellence expected and the control over the very level of excellence to fulfil the customer desires. While Yamit (2001), stated that in general service quality could be viewed in term of the comparison between the consumer expectations and service performance. According to Gronroos in Tjiptono (2008), the total service quality consists of three components, i.e.:

1. Technical Quality;
2. Functional Quality;
3. Corporate Image

Based on the above components it was discovered that the service output and the delivery method are factors used in assessing the quality of service. Since the involvement of customers over a service process, the determination of quality becomes very complex accordingly. Tjiptono (2008), briefly said that the benefits of superior quality including:

1. The greater customer loyalty;
2. The bigger market share;
3. The higher stock prices;
4. The higher selling price;
5. The greater productivity

### **Marketing Mix**

Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler (2006), defined marketing mix as the elements that could be controlled by the organization, hence it might be used to satisfy and communicate with customers. These elements would constitute the major decision-making variables in each marketing plan. The marketing mix strategy consists of product strategy, pricing strategy, distribution strategy and promotional strategy (Kotler and Armstrong, 2009).

It might be concluded that-based on the above definition-marketing mix is the interrelated elements of marketing, that had mixed, organized and used properly, hence the companies became capable to achieve the marketing objectives effectively, as well as fulfilling the needs and desires of consumers. Marketing mix is the tools or instruments for the marketers, which consisted of various elements of the marketing program that need to be considered for the implementation of a marketing strategy, hence the established positioning would be able to functioned successfully (Lupiyoadi, 2009). McCarthy *et.al* (2009) popularized the classification of marketing mix- especially goods-which consisting of four variables (usually called 4P), i.e.: *product, price, place and promotion*.

As for the services industry in general-and the eco-tourism services, in particular-those four variable factors were considered inadequate, as of the marketing experts appended another three variable factors (Lupiyoadi, 2009), i.e.: *people, process, and customer service*.

### **The Method of Research**

This research is a long-term developmental research that conducted in 3 (three) years in stages. The stages to be traversed are the collection of information about the requirement of development, the planning of components to be developed- including defining the components to be developed, the objective formulation, determining the sequence of activities and producing the measurement scale (the research instrument). The observations, interviews, documentation studies, and questionnaires, were used as the data collection techniques. Whilst the data analysis technique used was the descriptive technique, over the qualitative and quantitative data.

### **Findings**

#### **The General Description of the Area of Toba Lake**

Toba Lake is one of the largest lakes in the world and the largest and most popular in Indonesia. The lake resembles an ocean, the approximately 100 km x 30 km of the area. There is a large island in the middle of the lake, the Samosir Island, situated at an altitude of 1000 meters above the sea level. Moreover, there are also the waterfalls, the pine forests, and sulfur bathing-place. The lake is situated at an altitude of 900 meters above the sea level and 1,145 square kilometers of an area.

The beauty of Lake Toba is amazing. It is surrounded by hills, the surrounding atmosphere is wonderful, the air is fresh and cool. The visitors could just enjoy its natural beauty, swimming or rent a motorboat to explore the lake. the atmosphere was quieter In the afternoon, visitor could enjoy its tranquility and watching the sunset. there are popular natural attractions at Samosir Island, the lake over the lake (Sidihoni Lake and Aek Natonang Lake), the King Sidabutar cemetery historical attractions in Tomok Village; and the architectural tourism of Batak Toba Samosir traditional residential. From Parapat, visitors could take a ferry to reach Samosir Island, which departs every hour from Tomok Village, Samosir.

There is the town of Parapat (also called Prapat) aside from Tomok Samosir Village, the town is a tourist destination at the bank of Toba Lake, located in Simalingun Regency, North Sumatra to be exact, of approximately 480 km from Medan City. Parapat became one of the important stopover points of the western Sumatra Highway, which connecting Medan to Padang. Whilst Tomok is a small village situated on the east coast of Samosir Island, Toba Lake, North Sumatra. To reach this village, it takes approximately 4-5 hours from Medan to Parapat by a rented-car or intercity bus, then an extra hour to go across from Ajibata to Tomok. The villagers of Tomok relied on agriculture, trade and tourism. This not-too-large village seems to quiet influenced by modernity. The locals speak English fluently, hence they are able to favorably communicate with tourists. Moreover, we could find the number of tombs, the old church, and motor-rickshaws everywhere of the village. With many of these tombs – such as the great tombs of King Sidabutar and his family, Batak Museum, Sigale-Gale Statue, Batukursi Tomok, Elephant Statue-and the megalithic artifacts and ancient relics denoted this place is one of the quite famous cultural sites of Batak. Since its situated right on the edge of the connecting pier with Parapat City, it is quite easy for tourist to reach this village.

#### **The Resulted Data of Field Survey and Interview**

The results of the preliminary survey and literature review indicated that tourists loyalty could be built through the quality of the appealing tourist attractions, an adequate media campaigns, relational marketing, a good quality service, the destination imagery, tourists satisfaction, and customer value. Thus, this research revealed the factors that affected the tourists loyalty at Toba Lake, among others are:

1. Marketing mix, consisted of product, price, promotion, location/place, person/human resources, process and physical evidence.

2. Service quality, consisted of reliability, assurance, tangible, empathy, and responsiveness
3. Destination imagery, consisted of cognitive destination image, unique destination image and affective destination image
4. Customer satisfaction in term of to the accommodation, the food and beverages, the transportation facilities, the security of the sites, the cleanliness, and the reforestation programs.

### Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was subsequent to the tabulation, to determine the factors that affected tourists loyalty in the area of Toba Lake. The first step is to calculate Keizer Meyer Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO MSA). The analysis revealed that the value of KMO MSA in the table is 0.726; in other words, the instrument is valid because the KMO MSA value was exceeded the significance limit of 0.50. Moreover, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity shows a significance value of <0.05, hence it concluded that the factor analysis was possible to be conducted.

Of the 14 variables analyzed-subsequent to the KMO MSA analysis-the 3 factors were obtained, as the results of computer extraction analysis (eigenvalue > 1 to 3 factors). Factor 1 was adequate to explain the 50.66% variation, factor 2 was adequate to explain the 62.454% variation, factor 3 was adequate to explain the 72.83% variation, the fourteen of factors as a whole were adequate to explain the 100% variation. In reference to component matrix and varimax rotated component matrix it was clear that those included in the group of factor 1 are the promotional variables, location, human resources, process, means, assurance and empathy, all with a loading factor above 0.50. Those included in the group of factor 2 are tariff, process, reliability, and empathy with all the loading factor above 0.50. And those included in the group of factor 3 are tourist attraction, tangible, satisfaction and destination imagery. In reference to the variables that made up factor 1, hence factor 1 was called the new variable of marketing mix, factor 2 was called service quality, and factor 3 was called tourist satisfaction.

Thus, the result of the factor analysis indicated that from the fourteen (14) of research variables, the marketing mix variables, the service quality and the satisfaction of tourists that affected the loyalty of tourists.

## DISCUSSION

In reference to the result of factor analysis presented in the previous sub-chapter, it revealed that the variables affected tourists loyalty at Toba Lake are marketing mix, service quality and tourist satisfaction. Below is an explanation of the linkages between these variables, i.e.:

### *The Effect of Marketing Mix on Tourist Loyalty*

The result of factor analysis indicated that the effect of marketing mix factor on tourists loyalty is 50.658%. Thus, marketing mix factor is the affecting dominant factor on tourists loyalty. It was in line with the results of research conducted by Widyawati (2006), whose research results indicated that the variable of service marketing mix significantly affected the consumer loyalty. While Setiawardi,

*et al* (2013) partially concluded that product variable, price variable, placelocation variable, promotion variable, physical facility variable and employee variable were insignificantly affected customer loyalty. Whilst the process variable significantly affected toward consumer loyalty. Al Muala *et al* (2012), concluded that product variable significantly affected tourists loyalty; whilst prices, people and processes insignificantly affected on tourist loyalty.

### *The Effect of Service Quality on Tourist Loyalty*

The result of factor analysis suggested that the influence of service quality factor over tourists loyalty is 11.796%. Thus, the service quality factor positively affected tourists loyalty. The results of this research are in line with the results of research conducted by Sviokla in Lupiyoadi (2006: 176), which suggested that the consistency of service quality provide a long-term benefits for the company, namely the formation of positive customer's perception and generate customer satisfaction and loyalty. The results of this reserach also supported the research conducted by Sugiyati and Kusnilawati (2013), asserted that service quality has a significant effect on customer loyalty. Thus, it might be concluded that a good quality service constructs customer satisfaction by means of services, hence customers are expected to be loyal to the company.

### *The Effect of Satisfaction on Tourist Loyalty*

The result of factor analysis indicated that the effect of tourist satisfaction factor on tourist loyalty is 10,373%. Thus, the factor of customer satisfaction had positively affected tourists loyalty. The results of this research are in line with the results of research conducted by Oliver (1997), which suggested that there is a firm link between satisfaction and loyalty. Another research showed that consumer satisfaction might affect consumer loyalty in more complex forms (Oliver, 2002, Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2002). Dick & Basu (1994), and Oliver (1997) argued that consumer satisfaction is one of several causes of consumer loyalty formation; Cronin, Brady, and Hult (2000), explained-on the result of their research-that consumer satisfaction might have the direct potential effect on consumer loyalty. Mohamad *et. al* (2014), concluded that tourists satisfaction positively and significantly affected tourists loyalty. The research conducted by Yuningsih *et.al* (2014), concluded that customer satisfaction affected users tourist services loyalty.

According to Widiana (2010), satisfaction delivered the significant effect on repeat-purchase, which means, the higher consumer satisfaction the higher possibility he will hold the repeat purchase; the compatibility between the satisfaction obtained by consumers might increase the repeat-purchase. The results of Suwarni and Mayasari's research (2011), Rizan and Arrasyid (2008), Semuel and Wijaya (2009), suggested the significant effect of satisfaction on loyalty, as consumer expectations are in accordance with services products provided, the consumers become loyal accordingly. The results of research conducted by Dholakia and Zhao (2010), indicated that the attribute valuation dominated satisfaction and willingness to hold the repeat-purchase. The results of research conducted by Hume and Mort (2010), suggested that willingness to hold the repeat-purchase were largely based on the satisfaction mediated by the perceived value. Semuel

(2006) stated that the customer satisfaction might be the relative variable between the application of marketing mix and the modern retail loyalty. The result of study conducted by Susanti (2009), suggested that the variable dominantly affected consumer loyalty is consumer satisfaction.

Basically, customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction over a particular service were affected the subsequence behavior pattern. If the customer was satisfied, hence the possibility for she/he to re-visit a particular tourist area would increase. The satisfied customers likewise tend to offer good references to other people about the particular tourist area.

Bowen and Chen (2001), stated that customer satisfaction is closely related to customer loyalty, the satisfied customers would become the loyal customers. The loyal customers would be the powerful marketing force who represented the company, by providing positive recommendations and information to other prospective customers.

Loyalty refers to the ability of a company to position its product in the minds of customers, to consider customers as partners by strengthening the customer conviction, continually interacting with the customers, even to develop them if necessary, to reach the mutual advancement (Kartajaya, 1999). A loyal customer is a person who undertakes product re-use of the same company, who provides references to other potential customers, and becomes a deterrent over the attacks from the competitors (Evan and Laskin, 1994). Thus, it could be said that the success of a company is determined by customer loyalty.

## CONCLUSION

The result of factor analysis presented in the previous sub-chapter indicated that the variables affected on tourists loyalty in the area of Toba Lake are marketing mix, service quality and tourist satisfaction. Below are commentaries of the interrelationships between variables:

1. The calculation of factor analysis was revealed that the effect of marketing mix factor on tourists loyalty amounted to 50.658%. Thus, marketing mix factor is the dominant factor toward affected on tourists loyalty.
2. The calculation of factor analysis was revealed that the effect of service quality factor on tourists loyalty amounted to 11.796%. Thus, service quality factor delivered a positive effect toward tourists loyalty.
3. The calculation of factor analysis suggested that the effect of tourist satisfaction factors on tourists loyalty amounted to 10.373%. Thus, the factor of customer satisfaction delivered effect on tourists loyalty.

## Suggestion

1. It is advisable to the subject in the tourism industry, in the area of Toba Lake specifically, to preserve tourist satisfaction, since it might offer the benefits, such as the reduction of marketing costs, transaction costs, customer turnover, and might increase the cross-selling, hence the share of customers become larger and more positive.
2. It is suggested to the related institutions to improve services by means of an adequate public facilities provision, so that tourists would become more loyal,

the expected number of visitors would increase accordingly.

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