# ANALYSIS OF CHINESE TOURISTS' PERCEPTION ON NORTH SULAWESI

### ANALISIS PERSEPSI WISATAWAN CHINA TERHADAP SULAWESI UTARA

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Abstract: Tourism sectors in Indonesia play an important role in national economic earning. A major problem of Indonesian tourism in the perspective of global tourism is that the competitiveness of Indonesian tourism sector was low and generally found that Manado is still perceived differently among Chinese tourists. The purpose of this research is to explore the perception of Chinese tourists on destination image North Sulawesi. The researcher used method Correspondence Analysis - Perceptual mapping as the tool for the data analysis to analyze Chinese tourists' perception on North Sulawesi, this research is conducted by distributing questionnaires to 100 respondents. The result found that China tourist perception on Manado is still not yet integrated, so the government must be able to improve the primary element of tourism such as transportation system, cultural facilities, hotels and resorts, tourist attractions, and product varieties by promoting the tourism places. Events in North Sulawesi must be made as attractive and as friendly as possible to all kinds of tourists' age categories.

Keywords: tourism, perception, Chinese tourists, correspondence analysis

Abstrak: Sektor pariwisata di Indonesia memainkan peran penting dalam pendapatan ekonomi nasional. Masalah utama pariwisata Indonesia dalam perspektif pariwisata global adalah bahwa daya saing sektor pariwisata Indonesia rendah dan secara umum ditemukan bahwa Manado masih dirasakan berbeda di kalangan wisatawan China. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengeksplorasi persepsi wisatawan China terhadap citra destinasi Sulawesi Utara. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode Correspondence Analysis - Perceptual mapping sebagai alat untuk analisis data untuk menganalisis persepsi wisatawan China di Sulawesi Utara. Penelitian dilakukan dengan menyebarkan kuesioner kepada 100 responden. Hasilnya ditemukan bahwa persepsi wisatawan China yang ke Manado masih belum terintegrasi, sehingga pemerintah harus dapat meningkatkan unsur utama pariwisata seperti sistem transportasi, fasilitas budaya, hotel dan resor, tempat wisata, dan variasi produk dengan mempromosikan tempat-tempat wisata. Event di North Sulawesi harus dibuat semenarik dan seramah mungkin untuk semua jenis kategori wisatawan.

Kata Kunci: pariwisata, persepsi, wisatawan China, correspondence analysis

# INTRODUCTION

# Research Background

Tourism has become an important global economic and leisure activity due to its growing acceptance and benefits. Therefore, countries engage in numerous marketing and promotional activities to attract more tourists and improve their satisfaction. If a destination can identify and satisfy the needs and wants of tourists, these tourists will probably make repeat visits and spread positive word of mouth publicity. The long-term sustainability of tourism rests on the ability of community leaders and tourism professionals to maximize its benefits and minimize its costs.

Depending on the set of criteria applied, tourism can be distinguished in different forms. Such criteria, among others, might involve: the purpose and the duration of visit, the nature of the trip, the distance traveled, the type of destination and the activities performed there, and the nature of tourists themselves. Regardless of its form the tourism phenomenon is quickly and consistently enlarging, increasingly regarded as a necessity rather than as a luxury and encompasses a number of diverse components such as travel agents, organizers and intermediaries, attractions, accommodations and supporting facilities, the effective cooperation of which is a prerequisite for the success of tourism.

For decades, tourism industry growth has been a major contributor to increased economic activity throughout the world. It has created jobs in both large and small communities and is a major industry in many places. It is the dominant economic activity in some communities. Yet, the impacts of tourism to a community are not widely understood, even where tourism is growing dramatically and should be of the greatest interest or concern.

Most people think of tourism in terms of economic impacts, jobs, and taxes. However, the range of impacts from tourism is broad and often influences areas beyond those commonly associated with tourism. Leaders as well as residents who understand the potential impacts of tourism can integrate this industry into their community in the most positive way.

The way in which people view a place is called tourist perception. To know how a region is perceived is especially important to be able to attract visitors to that region. Image perception is not solely a result of media tools since it develops out of a combination of several personal experiences (Horrigan, 2009). The image perception of tourists is considered a crucial dimension of general country image (Abd El Jalil, 2010). Studies in the 1990s suggest that image is an important element of destination choice for tourists (Kamenidou, Mamalis and Priporas, 2009). Perceived images of hospitality and travel enterprises create a basis for tourism development of a given area (Meliou and Maroudas, 2010).

The tourism sector is one of the potential sources of foreign exchange in the Indonesian economy. In addition, tourism is also able to enhance income tax of the country. The sector has contributed significant share of GDP and employment. International tourism arrivals have provided contribution of tourism revenue to Indonesia's GDP. A significant growth from 2000 to 2007, it has more than doubled from US\$15.5 billion in 2000 to almost US\$34 billion in 2007. During the years 2002, 2003 and 2006 when there were declines in foreign visitor arrivals there were year-on-year increases in the contribution of tourism revenue to GDP of 8.6%, 9.7% and 18.6% respectively (International Labour Organization, 2009).

One place in Indonesia that tourists will choose to travel to is North Sulawesi. North Sulawesi Province (NSP) is one of the popular tourism destinations in eastern Indonesia. Local government plays an important role in developing tourism events, establishing new vacation sites and promoting NSP as a new world's tourism destination (Whitten, Mustava, and Henderson, 1987).

The stakeholders of tourist destinations have expectations as to how well their destination image will sell to tourists. Stakeholders must understand the perception of tourists that visit North Sulawesi in order for them to achieve success. The government will not know about tourist destinations if they do not know the perception of tourists towards North Sulawesi. Stakeholders have to know what tourists are interested in exploring when visiting North Sulawesi. If stakeholders do not know the perception of tourists towards North Sulawesi, they will continue to build a destination image in a way that does not attract tourists. When stakeholders of tourist destinations know the perception of tourists, stakeholders will then know how to build their tourist destination's image. Once a destination image is built upon knowing tourists' interests, that destination will attract many tourists and even interest tourists in revisiting.

The components of destination image of a certain place will effect tourist perception. Some components of destination image included in this research are attractions, accessibility, lodging, dining, environment, shopping, events and activities. Destination image has become a popular area of investigation among tourism

researchers as it has been found to influence destination choice, satisfaction, and post-purchase behavior. Destinations are compelled to enhance their images in order to increase tourism receipts, income, employment and government revenues among other contributions of international tourism.

When each component of destination image is maximized, tourists will become more satisfied towards the destination. Satisfaction helps to create, develop, and maintain a favorable publicity and goodwill about a tourist destination or a resort. Satisfaction is a measure of how products and services supplied by a destination meet or surpass the customer expectations. Also, the customer satisfaction is considered as an important performance indicator of a successful business operation.

Nowadays, the majority of tourists that come to North Sulawesi are from China. This is because there is now a direct flight from China to Manado. Each week there are 3 direct flights from China to Manado. There are four cities in China that have a direct flight to Manado which are Shanghai, Guangzhou, Changsha and Shenzhen. Direct flights from China to Manado were available since 2016. Since then, several Chinese tourists come to Manado. Chinese tourists can be seen all over North Sulawesi. Chinese tourists can tend to visit Manado Town Square, Bunaken, Danau Linow and several other attractions that can be visited in North Sulawesi. The researcher is interested to figure out the perception of Chinese tourists in North Sulawesi because Chinese tourists are always visiting North Sulawesi during every season.

The researcher will analyze North Sulawesi as tourism destination image from Chinese tourists' point of view. It is a mystery as to how Chinese tourists perceive North Sulawesi in their point of view. The researcher is curious as to why many Chinese tourists visit North Sulawesi every time of the year.

# **Research Objective**

Derived from the background of existing research and the formulation of the problem, this conducted research aims to know the perception of Chinese tourists on destination image North Sulawesi

# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

# **Marketing**

Marketing identifies unfulfilled needs and desires. It defines measures and quantifies the size of the identified market and the profit potential. It pinpoints which segments the company is capable of serving best and it designs and promotes the appropriate products and services. (Kotler and Keller, 2012).

# **Tourist Perception**

A person can have a negative perception of a destination for many reasons, including safety, poor climate, lack of infrastructure, poor money value, inhospitable, limited attractions, or cultural differences. The generalization effect must also be taken into account when understanding the perception of tourists. This is a phenomenon where destinations will be associated with others in the region that are experiencing issues, even if they are not (Enders, Sandler, and Parise, 1992).

# **Destination Image**

Destination image consists of cognitive and affective images (Beerli and Martin, 2004). While cognitive image depicts the knowledge or beliefs that an individual has about a destination, affective image portrays the emotions or feelings that they generate about a destination (Chew and Jahari, 2014).

#### **Tourist Satisfaction**

According to Wang, et al (2009), tourists' satisfaction is a feeling that generate through the cognitive and emotional aspects of tourism activities. It is mainly based on the tourists' expectations, destination image, perceived quality, and perceived value. Vavra (1997) stated that the customer satisfaction is the key and important criterion for determining the quality delivered to the customer through the goods and services.

#### **Destination Lovalty**

Destination loyalty is tourists' intentions to revisit the destination and in their willingness to recommend it (Chen and Tsai, 2007). Newman and Werbel (1973) defined "loyal customers as those who rebuy a brand, consider only that brand, and do no brand-related information seeking." Tellis (1988) defined in "behavioral terms as repeat purchasing frequency or relative volume of same-brand purchasing."

### **Previous Research**

Rajesh (2013) who conducted the research of the impact of tourist perceptions, destination image and tourist satisfaction on destination loyalty. The objective of this research paper is to develop a destination loyalty theoretical model by using tourist perception, destination image and tourist satisfaction. The results of this study reveal that tourist perception, destination image and tourist satisfaction directly influence destination loyalty.

Tukameshaba, et al (2016) who conducted a research of the effect of tourists' perceptions of a tourism product on memorable travel experience. Results showed that both the measurement and structural models exhibited better model fit indices. Overall, tourists' perceptions of the retained four dimensions of tourism product.

Ramseook-Munhurrun, Seebaluck and Naidoo (2015) who conducted a research of examining the structural relationships of destination image, perceived value, tourist satisfaction and loyalty. The objective of this research is to investigate the relationship among destination image and perceived value and to empirically test the constructs that are likely to influence tourist satisfaction, which in turn affect tourist loyalty. Tourists' perceptions of destination image, perceived value, tourist satisfaction and loyalty are vital for successful destination marketing.

# **Conceptual Framework**

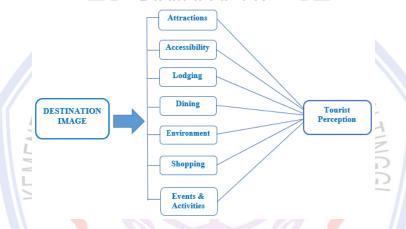


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Source: Articles and Journals (2018)

# RESEARCH METHOD

# Research Approach

This study uses an exploratory research design to explore the topic analysis of Chinese tourists' perception on north Sulawesi. Based on the type of investigation, this research is considered a correlational study. Based on the data analysis process, this research is considered a quantitative research.

### Population, Sample Method and Sample Size

Population of the research study is mainly Chinese tourists in North Sulawesi. This research will use purposive sampling technique, with samples drawn using a specific criteria specified by the researcher the sample of this research is 100 Chinese tourists in North Sulawesi.

### **Data Collection Method**

The primary data is collected by researchers to answer the research questions. Secondary data is collected from books, journals, articles, and relevant literature from the library and internet.

### **Data Analysis Method**

This research will use correspondence analysis - perceptual mapping as the tool for the data analysis. The result will then be presented in a form of perceptual map upon which a conclusion can be drawn.

### **Data Validity and Reliability**

In qualitative research, reliability is the degree of consistency in assignment of similar words, phrases or other kinds of data to the same pattern or theme by different research. Aside from the result of the CA analysis and the perceptual map, to ensure the reliability and validity of this research, it is helpful to use triangulation.

# **Correspondence Analysis**

Correspondence analysis is an interdependence technique for dimensional reduction and perceptual mapping. CA examines the relationship between categories in a contingency table, the cross-tabulation of two categorical (non-metric) variables. CA can be applied to any contingency table and portray a perceptual map relating the categories of each variable in a single perceptual map.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSSION

# **Correspondence Analysis**

**Table 1. Correspondence Table** 

Perception of Manado								
Age	Recreational Place	Sport Place	Cultural Place	Eco-tourism place	Active Margin			
15 - 20 years old	1 0	0	0	711/10	8			
21 - 30 years old	0 C	0	0	46	46			
31 - 40 years old	0 0	1	0	34	35			
> 40 years old	20 4	0	0	11 7	11			
Active Margin	Lui V	1	0	98	100			

Source: Data Processed (2018)

Table displays the two-way frequency table that is used as the input for the analysis. The numbers on the table represents the frequency of how much an attributes Perception of Manado based on the data gathered by the questionnaire form from total of 100 respondents, which are then classified by age. The data is analyzed using SPSS CA software.

**Table 2. Correspondence Summary** 

Dimension		Inertia <sup>-</sup>	Proportion	of Inertia	Confidence Singular Value		
	Singular Value		Accounted for	Cumulative	Standard Deviation	Correlation 2	
1	.065	.004	.754	.754	.024	.366	
2	.037	.001	.246	1.000	.023		
Total		.006	1.000	1.000			

Source: Data Processed (2018)

The level of association (i.e., correlation) between the row categories and columns can be estimated by taking the square root of the total inertia. The inertia is taken by dividing the total chi-square value by N (the total of the frequency counts). If the inertia value exceeds .015 then the row-column association is considered significant (Hair et al, 2009). For this study the total inertia is .006 (see Table) and the square root of that number is .077. This result shows that there is a strong dependency in the data as well as significance in the relationship between the variables. The inertia can be considered the amount of (correlation) correspondence between the data points of the variables in the analysis.

Table 3. Overview of Row Points

Age Mas		Score in Dimension		············	Contribution					
	Mass	Iass 1	2	Inertia 2	Of Point to Inertia of Dimension		Of Dimension to Inertia of Point			
					1	2	1	2	Total	
15 - 20 years old	.250	370	.167	.002	.523	.187	.896	.104	1.000	
21 - 30 years old	.250	.340	.126	.002	.441	.107	.927	.073	1.000	
31 - 40 years old	.250	051	323	.001	.010	.700	.042	.958	1.000	
> 40 years old	.250	.081	.030	.000	.025	.006	.927	.073	1.000	
Active Total	1.000			.006	1.000	1.000	•			

Symmetrical normalization Source: Data Processed (2018)

Before inspecting the perceptual map we need to establish which points are satisfactorily displayed in the two-dimensional perceptual map. First, look at the last three columns of Table (right side of table). The columns labeled 1 and 2 are the inertia values for dimensions 1 and 2. The far right column, labeled as Total, is the total of the values in the columns for dimensions 1 and 2.

The entries in the columns can be interpreted as an indication of how well a Perception of Manado (first column) is represented in the two dimensional perceptual map. A value in excess of .5 in the Total column is considered evidence that the attributes is well represented in the solution (Hair et al, 2009). In contrast, smaller numbers, particularly those below .5, indicate a particular theme is not well represented in the solution. If you calculate the square root of the inertias, it can be interpreted as a measure of the extent to which the company is correlated with the dimension under consideration (represented by a particular column). A general rule of thumb is that inertia of .5 (square root = .7) or more is a strong association, and an inertia of .4 (square root = .63) is a moderate association.

**Table 4. Overview Row Points** 

Perception of Manado		Score in Dimension		-	Contribution				
	_	1	2	Inertia	Of Point to Inertia of Dimension		Of Dimension to Inertia Point		Inertia of
	Mass				1	2	1	2	Total
Recreational Place	.250	299	.220	.002	.341	.326	.763	.237	1.000
Sport Place	.250	103	306	.001	.041	.626	.167	.833	1.000
Cultural Place	.250				•			•	
Eco-tourism place	.250	.402	.085	.003	.618	.049	.975	.025	1.000
Active Total	1.000			.006	1.000	1.000			

a. Symmetrical normalization

Source: Data Processed (2018)

A similar assessment was also made for Table 4. A value in excess .5 in the Total column (see Table) is considered evidence that the theme is well represented in the solution. In table we can also see that all the attributes are well represented in the multidimensional solution. The total values of dimension 1 and 2 for all the attributes is 1.000 thereby satisfying the overall rule of thumb of .5.

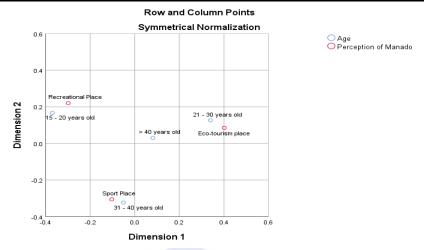


Figure 2. Perceptual Map of Age and Perception of Manado Source: Data Processed (2018)

When we look at the perceptual map (Fig.2) we can see that 15-20 years old tourists is plotted closest to Recreational Place, 21-30 years old tourists and >40 years old tourists are plotted closest to Eco-tourism Place, while 31-40 years old is plotted closest to Sport Place. Based on the position depicted in the perceptual map, it can be concluded that 15-20 years old tourists view Manado city as Recreational place, 21-30 and >40 years old tourists view Manado city Eco-tourism place while 31-40 years old tourists view Manado city Sport place.

### **Discussion**

Considering the main factors and the result of the survey, it is safe to say that Manado has not reach the point where it's tourism have sufficient attractiveness and still lacking of staggering attractions that are strong enough to arouse the tourist's curiosity and willingness to visit. Manado City may possess those cultural facilities but still lacking in terms of uniqueness and distinctiveness. The accommodation and transportation might be sufficient for the visitors but without the primary factor, still Manado will not reach its full potential. Accessibility, or in this case the transportation, holds a paramount function in providing access for the tourists to reach the cultural facilities. Unfortunately, Manado and the nearby areas have not possess decent qualities of good transportation such as adequate public transportation, good road quality, and solution towards traffic jam. The roads are defective, the public transportation are in a bad shape and almost all the drivers are not able to speak English, inattentive police officers, lacking of road signs, lacking of public tourist information, and etc. Accommodation, which explained on the above articles as an integral part of tourism, must be strongly augmented. Unfortunately, Manado City was not able to provide the demanded accommodation for the tourist which results in decreasing visitation. Therefore, the result of the survey at this particular point can be regarded accurate based on the comprehensive interpretations above. Even though Manado City is widely recognized with its fascinating foods, unfortunately that is not the reason why visitors came to Manado. One of the reason why the culinary did not play an important role in this tourism is because Manado is lacking in terms of advertisement. They might have all those extreme culinary and etc.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusion

- 1. It is generally found that Manado is still perceived differently among Chinese tourists. This is problematic for the branding of Manado, since the study found that the China tourist perception on Manado is still not yet integrated.
- 2. Manado appeals more to adult and mature people rather than young Chinese tourists. It means that adult China tourists tend to view Manado as highly attractive Eco-tourism place.
- 3. Chinese tourists have split perception about their accessibility to Manado. This suggests a lack of quality integration of quality transportation both on air and on land to visit Manado.
- 4. Manado City was not able to provide the demanded accommodation for the tourist, since only one age category of tourists that are generally have good perception of the accommodation.

- 5. General age categories of tourists tend to recognize the variety and uniqueness of its culinary.
- 6. Tourists have a split perception about the environment in Manado. Some areas are viewed as modern, while others are viewed as authentic.
- 7. Manado is still lacking in quality but already good in variety of Products in the perception of Chinese tourists.
- 8. Event and activities in Manado are perceived to be enjoyed together, especially with family. Somewhat, only adult people truly enjoy the events and young tourists perceive feel boring.

### Recommendations

- 1. In terms of attractiveness, the government must be able to improve the primary element of tourism such as the cultural facilities by promoting the tourism places in aspects with their age.
- 2. The government have to augment the transportation system both in air and land by creating more flight routes especially direct flights from Manado to cities in China and vice-versa. Also, the government must be able to create better roads, easily accessible public transportation, and more sophisticated transportation system to the tourist attractions available in Manado.
- 3. More investments on hotels and resorts from outside Indonesia must be intensified so many lodgings with wide range of varieties are provided.
- 4. Local cuisine must be massively promoted for it is one of the most favored type of tourism in Manado through advertisement and social media.
- 5. Create and intensify the program to maintain the authenticity and cleanliness of the tourist attractions both for the modern and authentic. Improvement in city's cleanliness must be uphold as well.
- 6. Wide range of product varieties and availability must be well supplied as well as government involvement in increasing local marketers in terms of goods production.
- 7. Events must be made as attractive and as friendly as possible to all kinds of tourist's age categories.
- 8. Integrate the tourist's needs based on their age with the available attractions and elevate Manado City's branding to a new set of levels.

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