

The Role of Brand Trust in Mediating Brand Image Towards Loyalty of Visitors in Lake Toba

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ABSTRACT

Lake Toba is the target of a world-class tourist destination planned by the Indonesian government. Various policies and strategies were made to achieve these targets. The focus of the study in this study emphasizes the role of brand trust in mediating brand image on visitor loyalty in Lake Toba. The target population and sample in this study were 125 visitors to Lake Toba selected by accidental sampling. The path analysis in this study was chosen to see the direct and indirect role of brand trust in mediating brand image towards loyalty. The results showed that 1) brand image directly had a positive and significant effect on the brand trust of visitors to Lake Toba. 2) brand image directly has a positive and significant effect on visitor loyalty at Lake Toba. 3) indirectly, brand trust has a role in mediating brand image towards visitor loyalty at Lake Toba.

INTRODUCTION

The development of the tourism business today has received a lot of attention, especially from the stakeholders. The role of the tourism sector is expected to be able to continue to improve the community's economy (Saragih, 2020). So that good governance in the tourism sector is needed in increasing visitor interest (Rahmadi, 2021). The uniqueness that exists in certain areas is expected to be a distinct advantage in increasing the interest of visitors (Dewi, 2020). Thus it will be a unique feature that each region can offer to increase the interest of visitors (Hidayatullah, Windhyastiti, Patalo, & Rachmawati, 2020).

Lake Toba is one of the leading tourist destinations, especially in the province of North Sumatra. The discourse of making Lake Toba one of the world destinations was proclaimed by the central government to

align Lake Toba with the island of Bali (Azhar, 2020). To realize this discourse, of course, is a very difficult job and requires cooperation by all parties (Kencana, 2019).

Launching from Bisnis.com, the number of foreign tourists visiting North Sumatra through 4 entrances, grew 10.17 percent annually in 2019. Based on data released by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) of North Sumatra Province (Sumut), the number of foreign tourists visiting North Sumatra in December 2019 reached 24,113 visits. This realization increased by 7.94 percent compared to the number of foreign tourists who came in November 2019, reaching 22,340 visits. When compared with the December 2018 period which reached 21,787, the realization in December 2019 increased by 10.68 percent. Meanwhile, the number of foreign tourist visits to North Sumatra during January-December 2019 amounted to 260,311 people. This

realization increased 10.17 percent compared to the number of foreign tourists during January-December 2018 of 236,276 people.

The loyalty of a visitor to a tourist attraction certainly has an important meaning both for the local government and for the central government (Nasution, 2020). Loyal visitors tend to recommend to their closest colleagues in providing tourist destination references (Lesmana & Nabila, 2020). Then not only to recommend to others, a loyal visitor will also visit again in the future (Tezar Arianto; Sri Mulyono; I. Putu Sugih Arta; Sabaruddin Chaniago; Nasib, 2021). This means that visitor loyalty is inseparable from the best experience. So that visitors feel confident in the beauty and uniqueness of the tourist attraction (Achsa, 2021).

A visitor's brand trust is one of the reasons why visitors want to come on vacation at a tourist attraction (Putra & Sulistyawati, 2019). A visitor will feel confident in a tourist attraction when visitors feel comfortable while in the tourist attraction (Aulia, Rachma, & Slamet, 2019). So tourist attraction managers need to continue to try to provide a sense of comfort to visitors (Susilawati & Wufron, 2018). Brand trust will also get better when the information that the end gets is by the reality in the field (Maulana, 2020). Thus the curiosity of this visitor has paid off with the beauty of a tourist attraction (Afrizal, 2020). Brand trust will also be seen when the benefits offered from tourist objects can meet visitors' expectations (Rosalina, 2019) For tourism objects that can build good brand trust, especially for visitors, this will make it an advantage and uniqueness among existing tourist objects (Imbayani, 2021). Brand trust will also be owned by a visitor with thorough knowledge of the value of benefits that exist in certain tourist objects (Daulay, 2021). Good brand trust will be able to increase a visitor's level of confidence in the excellence of a tourist attraction (Daulay, 2021).

Tourist attraction destinations will be unavoidable from the existing imagery. Where every mountain will consider well in determining which tourist attraction he will choose

Brand image suatu objek wisata merupakan faktor yang mempengaruhi seorang pengunjung dalam menentukan objek (Martin; Nasib, 2021). Brand image is a representation of the overall perception of a brand and is formed from information and past experiences with that brand. Consumers who have a positive image of a brand are more likely to make purchases (Setyowati, 2017). When a visitor has a good perception of a tourist attraction, tourist attraction, the environment of a destination is by consumer expectations, so the consumer is impressed and satisfied with the tour (Setyowati, 2017). The tendency of tourists to not just buy and use a product or service, but to seek benefits from the product or service, makes providing customer value very important (Pangestuti, 2020)

METHOD

This research approach is quantitative. Path analysis was chosen in this study to examine the role of mediating variables. Path analysis is also used to determine the direct and indirect effects of the variables that test and determine how much influence brand image has on brand trust and its impact on loyalty. Furthermore, the population and sample in this study are tourists who visit Dana Toba. While the sampling technique used accidental sampling. Where when researchers meet directly with tourists who vacation in Lake Toba can be used as samples. 125 participants were selected to be used as research samples.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is known that the t value of the brand image is $4.189 > t$ table 1.979 and the significance value (0.000) is smaller than that of 5% alpha (0.05). The alternative hypothesis of the brand image variable states that brand image has a positive and significant influence on the brand trust of visitors in Danau Toba. The results of this study are in line with the results of research conducted by (Atmaja & Menuh, 2019)(Izzati, 2019)(Wasiman, 2021)(Natanael, 2019)(Aulia et al., 2019) which states that brand image has a positive and significant effect on brand trust. Furthermore, the implications of the findings

in this study indicate that changing the perception of visitors that Lake Toba is a clean and halal tourist spot is very important. It is time for the management of the Lake Toba area to be managed properly so that the facilities and cuisine elements can be accepted by all visitors.

It is known that the t value of the brand image is $2.460 > t$ table 1.979 and the significance value (0.015) is smaller than that of 5% alpha (0.05). The alternative hypothesis which states that brand image has a positive and significant influence on loyalty is acceptable. The results of this study are in line with the results of research conducted by (Daulay, 2021)(Purba, 2020) which states that brand image affects customer loyalty. The implication of the findings in this study shows that the brand image of Lake Toba is already good, where one of the Batak community leaders stated that the provision of facilities such as toilets and prayer rooms will be managed by a start-up company. Where the existence of this international standard start-up company will be able to increase interest in re-visiting visitors to Lake Toba.

The direct effect of brand image on loyalty is by looking at the regression coefficient value of P_8 of 0.144 . The indirect effect of brand image on loyalty through brand trust is seen from the multiplication between the regression coefficient for the brand image on brand trust with the regression coefficient for brand trust on loyalty, namely $P_6 \times P_{10} = 0.342 \times 0.743 = 0.254$. So it can be concluded that the value of the indirect effect coefficient is $P_6 \times P_{10} > P_8$ ($0.254 > 0.144$). This means that brand trust has a role in mediating the brand image towards visitor loyalty in Lake Toba. The results of this study are in line with (HS, 2021)(Martin, 2021)(Subagyo, 2019) which states that brand trust has a role in mediating brand image towards loyalty. The implication of the findings in this study explains that when the brand image of Lake Toba gets better in the minds of visitors, this will increase the visitor's sense of trust in Lake Toba. Where this trust makes a pending sure to make visits in the future.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion that researchers can get is that brand trust has no role in

mediating brand image on visitor loyalty in Lake Toba. However, directly brand image and brand trust have a positive and significant impact on the brand trust of visitors to Lake Toba.

The suggestions in this study are as follows:

1. It is better if the Lake Toba Implementing Authority continues to increase its good brand image to visitors who come by providing education to the people around the Lake Toba area to be friendly and polite and willing to help if there are visitors who are confused about getting certain information.
2. The use of social media should be managed in a particular section that is responsible for the content to be conveyed to the wider community. So that the information submitted has valid data and oversees hoax news that provides negative news about Lake Toba.
3. It is better if improvements to facilities such as prayer rooms, toilets, and parking areas are managed with good management. This can be done by involving a strategic company by the statement made by one of the figures of the father who became a minister in Indonesia

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