



# A STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING APPROACH ON TOURISM MEGA EVENT OF TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE AND CUSTOMER VALUE IN BELITUNG, INDONESIA

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## ABSTRACT

*Exploitation of mega event, such as solar eclipse event, in tourism is not a new phenomenon. Many places have been exploited to attract tourists to look at natural events. By using 105 data with random sampling method, this study aims to prove that the total solar eclipse as a mega tourism event is able to provide a positive value to the value of consumer travel. The results show that there are positive effect of mega events on aesthetic experience of tourists. Moreover, the result also show that aesthetic experience is able to influence the consumer value. This result provide an impetus for the policy maker and stakeholder of tourism in Belitung to manage the tourist area as well as natural event to be able to give impression of a unique and exciting values as driving forces to shape visitor experience.*

**Key words:** Mega Event, Pop Culture, Aesthetic Experience, Consumer Traveled Value.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The World Heritage Committee (WHC) confirmed that the preservation of the world cultural heritage in many countries, will increase human civilization development, including in the aspect of tourism and economic growth (Shepherd, 2006). Hence, tourism sector targetting natural events and cultural resources becomes a source of new revenue (Rodríguez-Santos, González-Fernández, and Cervantes-Blanco, 2013). In addition, such attractions are expected to have an impact on the development of tourism on certain regions (Weber, Ali-Knight, Yu,

Wang, & Seo, 2012), that is largely supported through various media, such as television shows, movies, music, etc.. This eventually is able to attract travelers to visit these destinations (Kim, Long, & Robinson, 2009 ; Whang, Yong, & Ko, 2016 ).

Laskar Pelangi's literature which is then packed in film industry with natural culture and nature background of Belitung, quickly make Belitung as a new tourist destination. Although to date, there is limited attention conducted to prove that the popular culture developed through electronic media, and from mouth to mouth is able to affect tourist decision ( Ko & Lee, 2011; Umboh & Aryanto, 2015; Otto & Ritchie, 1996 )

Since tourism contains elements of marketing, it cannot be separated from marketing. Thus, tourism stakeholders can learn the strategies of marketing to develop tourist destinations (Lumsdon, 1997). Middleton and Hawkins (1998) state that tourism can occur due to the demand, trip, tourist destination and marketing.

The development of marketing of tourism has become debate among scientists about the success of the place destination. García, Gómez, and Molina, (2012) reveal that the destination marketing is successful not only because of the tourists want to know the historical places or authentic town, but also because of the role of community taking part in building the image (Orbasli, 2002; Hunter & Suh, 2007; Pennington & Thomsen 2010).

Moreover, the destination attributes in the context of communication has become debate. Tourism entrepreneurs want an effective communication attributes but the agency is more concerned with the creative proposition for soliciting (Lepp & Gibson, 2008 ). There are three important points in the tourism industry, namely, regulation, business environment and infrastructure, and human, cultural and natural resources (Pike & Kotsi, 2016 ). However, the motivation of travelers visiting destinations in the short term will be different from those visiting in the long term ( Mussalam & Tajeddini, 2016 ). Chen, Lai, Petrick, and Lin (2016) state that cognitive image does not directly influence tourists to visit back. Studies also prove that tourism event which is not managed well is not enough to increase the number of visitors (Frisby & Getz, 1989 ; Getz, Andersson, & Larson, 2006). This study aims to prove that the total solar eclipse as a mega tourism event is able to provide a positive value to the value of consumer travel.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Mega Event Tourism**

Event tourism becomes one of the development and marketing of tourism destination (Henderson, Foo, Lim, & Yip, 2010). The implementation of tourism events need to make arranged by professionals. This will have a lengthy impact on the assessment of tourists to come back even to recommend to others. Jago, Dwyer, Lipman, van Lill, & Vorster, (2010) state that there are many examples of mega event that failed to boost the performance of tourism specific areas. Hence, professional development of tourism event is needed to manage to attract more visitors. Getz (1989) states that mega event performance depends om tourism segmentation. In addition, mega event will likely involve not only the management of local and regional awareness, but many people who have contributed to support the success of the event (Getz, 2008 ; Johnsen, Biegert, Müller, and Elsasser, 2004). Destination image is based on the actual experience to improve the image of the tourist places ( Ingram, Grieve, Mwaura, Acquaye, and Jargal, 2013 ; Weber et al., 2012 ). Thus, tourists can manage thoughts of emotional impressions, in the form of ideas and hopes for a tourist destination based on the evaluation and assurance of supported knowledge related to its characteristics (Cherifi, Smith,

Maitland, & Stevenson, 2014 ; Fu, Ye, and Xiang, 2016 ; Golledge, 1997 ; Stylos, Vassiliadis, Bellou, & Andronikidis, 2016 ).

H1a. There are positive effect of the implementation of mega event on the aesthetic experience of tourists.

H1b. There are positive effect of the implementation of mega event on the value of consumer travel.

## **2.2. Pop Culture Tourism**

The important role of social media such as visualization, entertainment and technology (Betts & Bly, 2013 ; Hill, 2005) encourages some have to seek information about sites belonging to the pop culture. This is possible because the desire to feel involvement in pop culture is another reason important for travelers to visit certain areas (Whang et al., 2016). Popular culture is an interest for tourists to a place that has correlation with the places and events that appear on a movie or television series (Gyimóthy, Lundberg, Lindström, Lexhagen, & Larson, 2015 ; Iwashita 2008 ; Lexhagen, Larson, & Lundberg, 2013). Some studies have presented the results revealing that pop culture is heavily influenced by the media, that presents the location and condition of certain areas that attract people to be directly involved in a particular situation (Lee and Bai, 2016 ; Whang et al., 2016). Pop culture will help the image of visualization display of the tourist area (Connell, 2012).

H2a. There are positive effect of the quality of popular culture on the aesthetic experience.

H2b. There are positive effect of the quality of popular culture on the value of consumer travel.

## **2.3. Aesthetic Experience**

A subjective experience is formed because a person has visited a place with a specific purpose (Aho, 2001). Destinations should improve beautify themselves, to be able to compete with other tourist destinations (Line & Runyan, 2014). This, in turn, will open the opportunity for the region to develop and equip facilities (Butler, 1980 ). Moreover, attribute destinations will be reflected on the meaning of the journey followed by accommodation, transportation availability (Kislali, Kavaratzis, and Saren, 2016). This will form traveler perception on sites (Mussalam & Tajeddini, 2016). Alegre, Cladera, and Sard, (2013) state that tourism attribute such as the location of the airport, the access to hotel or inn from the place of destination is one of the most important consideration for tourist (Ismagilova, Safiullin, and Gafurov, 2015). Moreover, the local culture can be described from the food and beverage destination (Alonso & Liu, 2011). Tourist facilities and infrastructures for tourist attractions allows tourists to search for a very interesting experience, such as performing arts, and other cultural appointment (Knott, Fyall, & Jones, 2016).

H3. There are positive effect of the aesthetic experience of tourists on the value of consumer travel tour.

## **2.4. Value of Consumer Travel**

Marketing theory defines that customer value is not formed by the perception of others but is shaped by the consumer itself. Customer value in the form of benefit, based on comparison of a given competitor in the form of customer expectations and costs (Pechlaner, Smeral, & Matzier 2002). Customer's perception of the on-site visits and their attached are a factor formation of customer value rating (Jayanti & Ghosh, 1996 ; Oh, 1999 ; Woodruff, 1997 ). Moreover, there are two factors that can influence consumer behavior, that are the heritability and environmentality ( Lepp & Gibson, 2008 ), besides the knowledge and experience that is

felt ( Kelly, 2003 ). Thus, tourists will be looking for originality and uniqueness of the food places they visit as one of the elements of satisfaction (Björk, Kauppinen-Raisanen, Okumus, and Okumus, 2016).

**Table 1** Variable Indicators

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
Mega Event (ME)	ME1. Event management is very good
	ME2. Supporting events are very interesting
	ME3. Event location is easy to visit
	ME4. A very fantastic event
Popculture Tourism (PC)	PC1. See the shooting location location
	PC2. Feel the tinge of school building of Laskar Pelangi
	PC3. Knowing the characteristics of Malay Culture of Belitung
	PC4. Imagining remembering past events
Aesthetic Experience (AE)	AE1. The scenery around the beach is enchanting
	AE2. Neighborhood clean events
	AE3. Tourists Free of Expression at the venue
	AE4. Good city charm
Consumer's Travel Rating (CT)	CT1. The local people are friendly
	CT2. Feel safe and comfort in this tourist spot
	CT3. The price of food, drinks and accommodation is not too expensive
	CT4. facility and surrounding services are very supportive

## 2.5. Methods

The province of Belitung is chosen to be the object of research, because of popularity of the Laskar Pelangi literature translated into 30 languages all over the world. Style of good language, and the delivery of beautiful nature of Belitung as the background of this literature, has made Belitung as new destination of tourism. Belitung has designated as a potential tourist spot to be developed by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia since 2016.

This research method is conducted through face to face survey approach with 16 items of question. The questionnaires are distributed to some tourist destinations mentioned in Laskar Pelangi literature. This study used random sampling technique. The distribution of questionnaires was done to coincide with the event of the Tootal Sun Eclipse centered by the Government of Indonesia in Belitung on March 9, 2016. The moment is determined by the prediction of the number of tourists will be more than usual days.

Adopting the assumption of Hair (2010), this study used 160 distributed questionnaires. A total of 55 questionnaires were not eligible to be processed, thus provided 105 questionnaires were declared eligible to be processed in next step.

**Table 2** Demographic Profile of Respondents

Characteristics	Total
Gender	Male = 51%, Female = 49%
Age	25-35 = 25 (24%), 36-45 = 33 (31%), 46-55 = 21 (20%), 46-65 = 16 (15%), 65 and up = 10 (10%)
Marital status	Married = 55 (52%), Not Married = 26 (25%), Divorce = 24 (23%)
Have You Ever Traveled to Belitung	Never = 85 (81%), Never Never = 20 (19%)
How many times have you come to Belitung	1 = 18 (17%), 2 = 47 (45%), 3 = 31 (30%), More than 4 = 9 (%)

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

By testing validity and reliability, the testing reveal that data used in this study meet statistical requirements.

**Table 3** Validity and reliability Testing

Construct	Indicator	Significant	Cronbach's Alpha Total
		At the level 0.01 level (2-tailed) At the level 0.05 level (2-tailed)	
Mega Event	ME1	0.000	0.908
	ME2	0.000	
	ME3	0.000	
	ME4	0.000	
Popculture Tourism	PC1	0.000	
	PC2	0.000	
	PC3	0.000	
	PC4	0.000	
Aesthetic Experience	AE1	0.000	
	AE2	0.000	
	AE3	0.000	
	AE4	0.000	
Consumer's Travel Rating	CT1	0.000	
	CT2	0.000	
	CT3	0.000	
	CT4	0.000	

The result of validity and reliability testing reveals the significance value of each indicator below  $\alpha$  0.05. Therefore all items can be processed for the next analysis. A reliable test is proposed to test the reliability, in which this study used a coefficient level of 0.6. The test results in the value of reliability of 0.908. Thus all items can be declared reliable.

## 4. STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING ANALYSIS

### 4.1. Goodness of Fit

The model in Figure 1 can be tested by observing the goodness of fit. This measurement is conducted by compare the value of cut off value with the value obtained from the testing. The results show that the parameter of Chi-Square 160.185 and 0.000 probability or is above the level of significance of 0.05. Moreover, the value of GFI parameter = 0.846; TLI = 0.911 and CFI = 0.927 and RMSEA = 0.078.

### 4.2. Hypothesis testing

This research proposes five hypotheses to be tested. Based on the results od data processing with AMOS 16, the following output results is obtained.

**Table 4** Standardized Path Coefficient and t-values for the structural model

	Hypothesis			Estimate	SE	CR	P	Note
H1a	Aesthetic Experience	<---	Mega Event	.719	.186	3.858	***	Accepted
H1b	Consumer Value	<---	Mega Event	-.344	.258	-1.337	.181	Not accepted
H2a	Aesthetic Experience	<---	Pop Culture	-.016	.198	-.081	.936	Not accepted
H2b	Consumer Value	<---	Pop Culture	.270	.218	1.237	.216	Not accepted
H3	Consumer Value	<---	Aesthetic Experience	.976	.239	4.091	***	Accepted

Source: Primary Data, 2016

The results show hypothesis 1a, stating there are positive effect of mega events on aesthetic experience of tourists is supported, indicated by the significance value of 0.000 or below the significance level of 0.05. This result provide an impetus for the policy maker and stakeholder of tourism to manage the tourist area as well as natural event to be able to give impression of a unique and exciting values as driving forces to shape visitor experience (Buultjens & Cairncross, 2015 ; Presenza & Sheehan, 2013; Liu, 2015; Ilieş, Dulău, Coroş, & Coroş 2010). Similarly, the result also show that aesthetic experience is able to influence the consumer value (hypothesis 3), indicated by the value of S.E 0.239, C.R 4.091, and signifinance level 0.00 or below the level of 0.05.

However, the testing result also reveal that hypothesis 1b stating that there are positive effect of mega event on consumer value is not supported, indicated by the significance value of 0.181 or above the significance level of 0.05. Similarly, the result of hypothesis 2a reveal that the hypothesis stating popular culture has positive impact on aesthetic experience is not accepted, indicated by the value of significance of 0.936 or above the level of significance of 0.05. This is allegedly happened because some tourists involved in this study are those who came first time to come to Belitung. Furthermore, this study also was not able to prove that popular culture also has no positive effect on customer value (H2b). Overall, this study reveals that consumers will give an assessment of a tourism destination when they already feel what they experience (Chang, F. Backman, and Chih Huang, 2014; Gnoth, 1997 ; C.-K. Lee, Lee, & Lee, 2005)

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The phenomena of tourist travel is increasingly determined by some variables. This study attempts to analyse the effect of natural phenomenon of total solar eclipses that is believed to be able to attract tourists to visit to place. This study was conducted by the basis that natural events, such as total solar eclipse is only happened in some place all over the world, and only in one time in many years. This research proves that the natural phenomena is basically able to provide an aesthetic experience for visitors. This, of course, gives added value for Belitung tour to prospect or determine the right strategy.

This study urges future research to involve some indicators and variables that can influence the value of consumer travel, such as foreign tourists. Practically, future research is expected to involve more substantive tourism management by involving stakeholders of Belitung tourism.

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