

Characteristics and Behaviors of Tourists: Case of Middle East Tourists in Puncak Cianjur, Indonesia, from Tour Guides' Perspective

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Abstract—Government of Indonesia considered that Middle Eastern tourists are an important market share to develop. Thus, understanding the characteristics and behavior of tourists are needed for sustainable marketing activities since it can help in marketing and product planning and development which can increase the number of visitors to the destination. In general, we know the Middle East as an Arab nation and consider all tourists from the Arab nation to have the same behavior, there are some Middle Eastern countries that are not Arabs and are generalized to have the same characteristics and behavior from certain countries in Middle East was over generalised to all tourists. The purpose of this paper is to study the behavior of Middle Eastern tourists according to their tourism characteristics from the perspective of a tour guide. The method used in this study uses a qualitative approach, with data collection techniques using snowball semi-structured interview with nine tour guides. The interview questions cover about seven areas; interactions, knowledge, expenditure, time arrangement, respectfulness, facilities preference and appearance. The results show some differences in Arab tourists based on their significant national origin even though the equation cannot be ignored. This study would help different marketing campaigns according to different behaviour.

Keywords—tourist characteristics; tourist behaviour; middle east; tour guide; puncak cianjur.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become a global phenomenon, Indonesia as one of the tourist destinations in the Asian region has gained popularity. The number of foreign tourist arrivals to Indonesia according to data from the statistics center in 2016 has reached 11,519,275 people and is the fourth largest foreign exchange contributor. Middle Eastern tourists are foreign tourists who continue to experience an increase of 144 thousand tourists in 2012 and then increased to 292 thousand tourists in 2016. Data from the Passenger Exit Survey, the Ministry of Tourism shows the development of the average expenditure of tourists from Saudi Arabia per day in Indonesia 2006-2015 fluctuated. In 2015 the average tourist expenditure per day was US \$ 182.7. The highest expenditure average in 2008 was US \$ 230.76. Middle Eastern tourists are an important target for

Indonesia, a very important market segment. Studying tourist behavior is very important for marketers to know their market conditions according to their target's needs and desires. For the government to learn the behavior of tourists can be used as a basis for policy making and also to improve service quality. Therefore, travel behaviour plays an important role in tourism as concept, industry and economy, and demands investigation [1].

A study about how Middle East tourists behaviour has been done in Thailand [15]. Her results is three main Middle East countries which tourists come to Thailand are UAE, Kuwait and Egypt following by Saudi Arabia which is slightly different from Malaysia as a destination (starting with Saudi Arabia followed by UAE, and others). The other main different result was that, the majority of Middle East tourists in Thailand were single and they perceived nightlife, entertainment, fitness, physical and sport activities, just relaxing and doing nothing at all, spending time with friends, meeting new people and rediscovering one-self very important factors for them.

Research about destination image from an Arab perspective: the influence of culture on perceptions of and motivations for visiting the Gold Coast, Australia. She find most Arab visitors were from Arabian Gulf countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Further, the ratios show that most Arab tourists travelled with their families or in a group, whether this group consisted of friends or relatives or work colleagues. The length of stay was relatively long; with most Arab visitors tending to stay in Australia for more than 3 weeks. More over that going shopping and visiting entertainment places were the important factors that motivated Arab tourists to travel, most Arab tourists who visited the Gold Coast visited other countries on the continent of Asia, such as Malaysia and Singapore [2].

The purpose of this study is to find out whether there are differences in characteristics and tourists behaviors of Middle East based on their country of origin, this is conducted to explore segments of tourist visiting Puncak Cianjur, segmentation is a tool to compete better and effectively, so that destinations must understand their visitors and shape their products and services accordingly. Study focused on Middle

Eastern tourists who traveled in Puncak Cianjur with the intention not to generalize among all Middle Eastern countries.

A. Arab Culture, Desires and Needs of Arab Tourists

The Arab culture consists of two main components: the Arabic language and Islam, for this reason some scholars insist on calling it the Arab-Islamic culture [3]. Therefore in the Arab world, most of the traditions and customs, whether in dress, eating or social relations, emerge from the Islamic religion. Further, the clothing of Arabic women is affected by the Islamic doctrine, which recommends women wear loose clothes that cover their body and hair. The 'Hijab' is what differentiates Muslim women from other women. As a majority of women in Arab countries wear the hijab and cover their hair, they want to visit countries that are tolerant to their custom of wearing the hijab, and are looking for markets that sell this type of clothing.

While the type of tourism that appeals to Arab tourists varies, the most favoured types of tourism include entertainment, adventure and shopping. Leisure tourism is the most common among Arab tourists, where the main purpose of the holiday is entertainment and enjoyment [6]. Generally, Arab tourists are looking for destinations that offer different kinds of water entertainment resorts or wilderness opportunities where they can enjoy family, fun and entertainment. Importantly, Arabs usually travel with their family, preferring to rent private cars rather than use public transport, and stay at hotels that are equipped with interconnected rooms and/or suites or apartments [7].

B. Tourist Behaviour

Tourist behavior is the process and activities involved when people search, choose, use, evaluate, and dispose of products and services to satisfy their needs and desires [9]. Tourist behavior may be defined as the decision process and physical activity individuals engage in when evaluating, acquiring, using, or disposing of goods and services [10]. Kotler dan Keller complete that tourist behaviour is study of how individuals, groups, and organizations select, buy, use, and dispose of goods, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and wants.

In order to predict travel behaviour it is important to understand how individual characteristics of a person interact with the characteristics of the situation, therefore understanding the positive and negative evaluative factors influencing destination choices of the tourists [1]. Tourist trip characteristics focus on travel mode choice, travel destination choice, transportation choice, accommodation choice, food and beverage choice, activities choice at destination, number of visited destination, travel party size, travel party companies, travel frequency and trip duration as well as length of stay [11].

Tourist behavioural characteristics divide in to five parts as social interaction , commercial transactions, activities preference, bargaining, and knowledge of destination [12]. The last domain of tourist behaviour study is after travel behaviour including evaluation and satisfaction about price, value, travel mode, transportation, accommodation, food and beverages as

well as activities. The overall evaluation, satisfaction and repeat purchase are the other parts of the last domain.

II. METHOD

The qualitative research approach was applied in this study by semi-structured snowball interview. Respondents have been selected among Arab tour guides. The tour guides required having more than one year of experience and fortunately three of them had more than five years of experience in this job. The interviews continued until information was saturated, meaning that the interviews stopped when they did not produce any new information. The interview questions were around seven areas; interactions, knowledge, expenditure, time arrangement, respectfulness, facilities preference and appearance. Moreover, some tour guides described the differences they found among Middle Eastern tourists regarding to their appearance and accent. Information collected from interviews and observations were analyzed mainly using the qualitative procedure, following the qualitative process data were coded and constantly compared until categories and subcategories emerged with a set of propositions connecting the interrelationships between categories.

III. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

A. Trips Characteristics and Behaviour

The majority of the Middle Eastern tourists were male, In terms of age the findings reveal that most Middle Eastern tourists visitors to the Puncak Cianjur are young, with most age between 25 to 35 years. Although the nationality of the middle east tourist was varied, most Middle Eastern visitors were from Arabian Gulf countries such as the Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and Iran . The most number of visitor according to the majority of guides is tourists who are in Puncak Cianjur are from Saudi Arabia. In general, Middle East tourists are divided into 3 typologies :

1. Family, usually the main purpose is only really to fill vacation time. Their activities were also spent by walking around, visiting tourist attractions in Puncak Cianjur and its surroundings.
2. Groups, usually consisting of young children (Sabab), usually they vacation at least two to five. They are also divided into two categories. The first group usually came to Indonesia for the first time, so the activities carried out were only limited to visiting tourist areas. The second group is a group that not only wants to enjoy the beauty of nature, but they also want other tourism. They usually come to Indonesia repeatedly, so they are more aware of the environmental situation. The activities carried out tend to be activities that are only for fun. In addition to visiting tourist attractions, they usually also spend time with their friends in the villa by making parties with Arabic disco music. When partying they usually do not escape from alcohol and women.

3. Individuals, usually people who have come to Puncak many times. The purpose is for business and rest in their old age. Not a few of them are considered to be part of local residents, because they already can speak Indonesian and even Sundanese.

The main travelling purpose of Middle Eastern tourists is to relax and enjoy the cool mountain air, natural scenery and pay for sex encounter. They have understanding where heaven is a green, fertile, and flowing river under it. This makes the reason Middle Eastern tourists really like to travel at the Puncak, a place that some Middle Easterners call Jabal al-Jannah or Mount Heaven.

They know information about tourist attractions at the Puncak generally comes from friends, family, and relatives who have previously traveled to the Puncak Cianjur. As well to obtaining information from mouth to mouth, the information related to the tourist objects at the Puncak Cianjur they get information from social media and the internet. Middle Eastern tourists have a collectivity culture so it is natural that they always share information and experiences that can be used as suggestions in organizing their trips. Moreover, in collectivist culture, family security, and responsibility are some of the main ambitions which is clear in their behaviour [16].

When choosing tourist destinations for Middle Eastern tourists generally have some very clear criteria that are most often mentioned during interviews with Tour guides, Safety is a major concern for all Middle Eastern tourists, safety is seen as a direct responsibility of men for the whole family for citizens Middle East Country. Nature and weather and green scenery are things that attract Middle Eastern tourists to travel to Puncak, besides that various activities must be able to serve all family members and children in particular. The availability of amusement parks, shopping centers, restaurant choices for Middle Eastern people, and other cultural activities, is part of the criteria for selecting tourist destinations.

Arabic restaurant is the main choice of Middle Eastern tourists, generally they do not like local restaurant, no wonder around Puncak there are many restaurants that provide typical Middle Eastern cuisine. For tourists who take a long vacation they usually cook by themselves or ask local people to cook which incidentally many residents at Puncak especially in areas where there are many villas for Middle Eastern tourists who can cook Middle Eastern cuisine.

Regarding the shopping behaviour, tourist from Saudi Arabia are buy a lots of during the tour, these large expenditures are also influenced by the habits of Middle Eastern tourists who come with family groups, according to mr. Rahmat as a tour guide who has often brought guests from Saudi Arabia for five years. Although in general the highest Middle Eastern tourist expenditure compared to other foreign tourists who travel to Puncak does not mean they are not accustomed to bargaining, tourists from Oman who are famous for most are happy to bid when they want to buy something. They are buy lots of Items form of clothing, food

and traditional medicine, Middle Eastern tourists visiting Puncak are less interested in local handicrafts.

Tourists from Saudi Arabia do not care about money and expenses when it goes to enjoyment and quality of the service. They are famous of openness and generosity which refers to their culture and high expenditure behavior [15]. However, this character does not mean that they tolerate any unfair actions. Tourists from Saudi Arabia complain about different prices presenting to them comparing to other tourists from other countries. They also complain about lot of cheating which was done by service providers such as higher hotel room rates presenting to them when they bought a package while the front desk shows cheaper ones. Taxi drivers charge them unreasonable fare for short distance.

According to mr. Ihsan, one of the tour guides, Middle Eastern tourists often have some misunderstanding, especially related to the problem of vehicle rental fees for travel, they often feel overpaid with the vehicle rental rates offered by travel agency. This problems in their trip because nowadays tourists already know a lot of information from the internet or social media, even as the development of technology with online transportation such as gojek and grab these transportation tariff problems often reap problems for tourists.

In other words, there is a misunderstanding between Middle Eastern tourists and service providers regarding to prices, Middle Eastern tourists complain about the higher price of the items they receive than other tourists. They think that service providers are cheating them because they are from the Middle East. On the other hand, service providers consider Middle Eastern tourists especially Saudi tourists as the type of customers known as rich people. As a result they offer products at a higher price than the actual price.

Middle East tourist interaction according to the recognition of several tour guides, in general the interaction between them are use Arabic, only tourists from Iran who have different languages, English is used as a communication to each other. Not all Middle East tourists understand English, only tourists from Saudi Arabia are more proficient in English, and even tourists are from urban areas like Riyadh. Because most of the Middle East tourists are cannot communicate in English well, not suprisingly many people around Puncak Cianjur using Arabic to communicate with them. Middle East people are ignore to speak to each other (privacy is really important for Saudi tourists) and tend to be closed to new people, only with tourists from Iran they do not interact, according to Ihsan, as Arabic guide, he said that because of different understanding, especially related to religious beliefs.

When looking at the appearance of Middle Easterners, it is difficult to differentiate Arabs from each other like how to speak they all speak Arabic and they have almost the same appearance. According to tour guides especially those who have been interacting with Middle Eastern tourists for a long time mention that they can easily recognize them from each other, namely from their accent to speak. For Saudi women tourists generally wear 'Abaya' and they cover their faces

using a veil or burqa. Unlike the Abu Dhabi and Iran women, they do not wear Abaya and the additional for tourists from Abu Dhabi is more colorful. In addition to differences in abaya from each region or country when viewed from the models and patterns found in Abaya's clothes. In abayas made in the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, patterns and models of Abaya clothes are more modern and creative than those made by Saudi Arabia. And do not forget in Saudi Arabia abaya model is made in according to their strong religious beliefs the Islamic Shari'ah so that the models and patterns of the abaya are more loose and closed.

IV. CONCLUSION

Understanding tourist behavior is not only applied in seeing the characteristics of tourists narrowly. Rather, it is an in-depth study to reveal how tourists actually behaviour so that they can make decisions about traveling with the activities they are carrying out. Further research is suggested to be carried out on Middle Eastern tourist behavior from other dimensions; Middle East tourist behavior first timer and repeater. Whereas Middle Eastern first timers and repeaters have very clear differences, even though they are tourists. This study was just only a pre-survey of Middle Eastern tourist behavior research to ensure the possibility of different behaviors among Middle Eastern tourists even though similarities cannot be ignored.

From the results of this study, there have been known differences in behavior between Middle Eastern tourists, therefore it is hoped that the government will provide targeted policies and also help the marketers to know their market segments better in order to adjust their services according to the needs and desires of tourists. Especially now is about hotel or villa room rates as well as vehicle rental services for both bookings and prepayments. Regarding Middle Eastern tourist information seeking behavior, it seems that word of mouth information is important and because it is widely accepted, positive comments will occur by tourist satisfaction.

Language knowledge is necessary because Middle Eastern tourists generally do not speak English, but this is not enough to be a good tour guide. Tourists are different and they have diverse needs and desires. Therefore this study shows, that tour guides need to be trained in order to complete their knowledge of tourists as a result they will not make simple mistakes. Tour guides in Puncak Cianjur generally concurrently serve as drivers so that services provided are not standard between one guide and another, so they should be given training on how to provide excellent service.

Finally, it can be concluded that, the study results show some differences in Middle Eastern tourist behavior, and refer to tour guides who believe that Middle Eastern tourists are not the same, although we cannot show that there are many similarities, different treatments are needed to achieve their satisfaction regarding needs and their desires. The results of this study confirm opinions about Arabs [16]. This is very

important for destinations in establishing market segmentation.

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