An Investigation towards the Antecedent of Tourists' Happiness

Nasir Aziz, Syafruddin Chan, and Cut Aprilia

Abstract—**The study of tourists' happiness is an emerging study as many of its aspects have yet been investigated. This study aims to examine the role of Smart Tourism Technology and Perceived Valued Destination on tourists' happiness mediated by tourism experience satisfaction. The respondents of this study were tourists who have visited Aceh. Three hundred fifty respondents from three leading Aceh tourism destination, namely Banda Aceh, Sabang, and Aceh Besar filled the questionnaire. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Model (SEM). The result of this study indicates that tourism experience satisfaction creates tourists' happiness. Smart tourism technology does not play a significant role in generating tourists' happiness. Although the perceived value destination and smart tourism technology influenced tourism experience satisfaction, it does not affect tourists' happiness. This study contributes to the proliferation of tourists' happiness studies. It also benefits the Destination Management Organization (DMO) in enhancing the tourism experience.**

Index Terms—**Perceived valued destinations, smart tourism technology, tourism experience satisfaction, tourist happiness.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism researchers agree that leisure/tourism is one of the life-domains creating happiness, which can lead to the improvement of tourists' life satisfaction [1]-[6]. The effect of tourism on tourists' happiness is beyond family background or age. McCabe, Joldersma and Li [1] and Morgan, Pritchard and Sedgley [7] stated that tourism participation affects the happiness of tourists from the low-income family background. Kim, Woo and Uysal [8] described that tourism participation also have an impact on senior citizen tourists' happiness. Although the researchers have agreed on the positive effects of tourism participation in tourists' happiness, they are still arguing on how tourism affects tourists' happiness and its contributing factors [3], [9]. For example, McCabe and Johnson [2] claimed that tourism contributes to longer-term life satisfaction. While according to Nawijn [10], it can only add to short-term well-being. Other researchers also argued that tourists' happiness fluctuates according to tourists' travel stages and activities [3].

Furthermore, Uysal, Sirgy, Woo and Kim [11] conducted a review on tourist happiness study. The study found that most related studies focus on finding how tourism experience affects tourist happiness. However, the study on the

determinant factors of tourist happiness is limited [3]. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the antecedents of tourist happiness; the predictors used are smart tourism technology (Smart TT) and the perceived value of destination mediated by tourism experience satisfaction.

Smart tourism technology and the perceived value of destination are considered as the components of tourism influencing tourism experience satisfaction. Researchers argued that information communication technologies (ICT) play an important role in the tourism experience [12], [13]. Many tourists use ICT tools for various purposes, such as using a smartphone to book flight tickets, or hotels, to look for information regarding the destination on a tourism website, and to explore the destination tourism site using apps like Google Maps. Additionally, the interconnection, synchronization and concerted used of ICT tools for tourism is described with the term "smart tourism technology" [12]. The perceived value of destination is considered as the predictor of tourism satisfaction [14], [15] since tourists evaluate a destination based on the benefit they receive, and the sacrifice they must make for it.

Hence, the objective of this study is to examine the effects of smart tourism technology and the perceived value of destination on the satisfaction of tourism/travel experience and tourist's overall happiness. This study contributes to the proliferation of the tourist happiness study, particularly in understanding the role of smart tourism technology and the perceived value destination in tourist happiness. This study also benefits the Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) in improving the quality of tourism destinations to satisfy and create happiness for the tourists.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Happiness and Tourism Experience Satisfaction

Many scholars defined happiness as a measurement to evaluate an individual satisfaction on his/her life domain (e.g. economic, health, leisure, and tourism participation) and consist of positive affect, life satisfaction, and eudemonia [2]-[4], [6]. The definition of happiness shows its subjective nature, indicating that happiness depends on individual assessment toward one's life. In other words, some people may consider tourism participation crucial, while some others put more value on their economy than tourism participation. Uysal, Sirgy, Woo and Kim [11] stated that the differences in people life stage and other variables cause the differences in how people put a value on their life domain.

As a product of the tourism industry, tourism experience is characterized as a subjective component. It involves interaction between service providers, residents, and tourists.

It is also the result of the emotional and cognitive engagement with activities and the physical environment of a destination [4], [16], [17] since tourism experience is produced by the various products and services tourists encountered during their visit to a destination [18]. Therefore, the tourism experience satisfaction can be defined as the overall contentment with the services in each stage of the tourism experience process (i.e. pre-trip, on-site, and post-trip) [4].

Previous studies have confirmed the relationship between tourism experience satisfaction and tourists' happiness. For example, Kim, Woo and Uysal [8] found that tourism experience has a substantial role in influencing the Quality of Life (QOL) of elderly people. Chen, Fu, Lehto [4] reported a positive impact of tourism experience satisfaction on Chinese tourists' happiness. Schmiedeberg and Schröder [6] also found that travel service and travel experience satisfaction are important components that influence tourists' happiness.

B. Smart Tourism Technology

Gretzel, Sigala, Xiang, and Koo [19] defined smart tourism as "tourism supported by integrated efforts at a destination to collect and aggregate/harness data derived from physical infrastructure, social connections, government organizational sources and human bodies/minds in combination with the use of advanced technologies to transform that data into on-site experiences and business value-propositions with a clear focus on efficiency, sustainability and experience enrichment". The definition depicts the critical role of smart technology in tourism for both the Destination Management Organization (DMO) and tourists.

Gretzel, Sigala, Xiang, and Koo [19] stated that smart tourism technology aims to support tourists by 1) anticipating their needs and making recommendation based on tourists' consumption activities; 2) supplying information, "location-based and customized", "interactive service" that will enhance tourist experiences 3) enabling them to share experience with other tourists. Consequently, the attributes of smart tourism technology must reflect its aim. Through the support of smart tourism technology tourists gained a convenient, safe and exciting tourism experiences that contribute to their happiness [19]. Previous studies have indicated that the attributes of smart tourism technology influence tourist satisfaction concerning travel experiences [5], [19]-[21]. Subsequently, many researchers claimed that this satisfaction leads to tourist happiness [19], [22], [23]. The attributes of smart tourism technology include informativeness, accessibility, interactivity and personalization [24].

C. Perceived Value of Destination

Perceived value is considered as the important measurement of consumer behavior because of its effect on consumer decision [14], [25] and its role as a predictor of consumer satisfaction [15], [26]-[28]. Basj [15] defined the perceived value of destination as tourists' evaluation of the place based on its benefit and cost. Moreover, perceived value of destination can be characterized as (1) a form of cognitive-affective of consumer evaluation, (2) a subjective in nature, (3) the result of comparison between the benefit and the cost of one product to another, and (4) a reflection of the view of consumer experience during the consumption of

the product [15], [27]-[29].

Rasoolimanesh, Dahalan and Jaafar [30] stated that there are two components of perceived value, namely, perceived benefit and perceived cost. Further, they stated that tourists will be satisfied if the perceived benefits are higher than the perceived cost. The study of Iniesta-bonillo, Sánchez-fernández and Jiménez-castillo [31] found that the perceived value of destination has a positive relationship with satisfaction. The travel satisfaction subsequently may improve the tourists physical and mental health condition that leads to happiness. As emphasized by J.Lee, H.Lee, Chung and Koo [21] that the perceived value of destination is a primary factor influencing overall happiness. Thus, it can affect tourist happiness indirectly through tourism experience satisfaction. In measuring the perceived value of destination, this study only focuses on three values, namely functional/utilitarian, emotional/hedonic and social value.

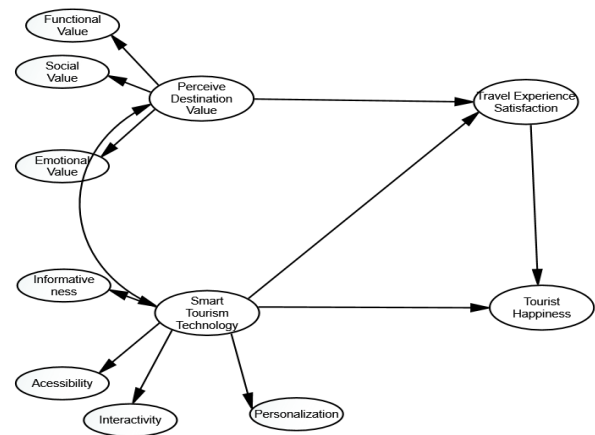Fig. 1 show the conceptual framework for this study.

Fig. 1. Conceptual framework.

Based on the literature review above, hence, the proposed hypotheses for this study are:

H_1: Smart tourism technology influences tourists' happiness

H_2: Smart tourism technology influences tourism experience satisfaction

H_3: Perceived value of destination influences tourism experience satisfaction

H_4: Tourism experience satisfaction influences tourists' happiness

H_5: Tourism experience satisfaction mediates the relationship between smart tourism technology and tourists' happiness

H_6: Tourism experience satisfaction mediates the relationship between perceived value destination and tourists' happiness

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in Aceh, one of the tourism destinations in Indonesia with tourist attraction such as marine and religious (*halal*) tourism. Most of the international tourists are from Malaysia, the United States of America, China, the United Kingdom, and Australia. Acehnese Government, through Aceh tourism Regional Institution, has provided an official tourism website and app, Facebook page, and Twitter. Thus, tourists can easily find information about Aceh and plan their activities in the province. Tourists can also access information about Aceh

from external tourism websites like Tripadvisor and personal blogs.

The sample of this study was the tourist visiting three Aceh regions, namely Banda Aceh, Sabang, and Aceh Besar. The questionnaire, comprising 36 items, was used to measure tourists' perception of smart tourism technology, the perceived valued of destination, tourism experience satisfaction, and tourists' happiness. It consisted of a seven-point Likert Scale ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). It was adapted from H. Lee, J. Lee, Chung and Koo [5] who conducted a similar study in the context of Seoul. Three hundred fifty tourists participated in the survey, and all the questionnaires distributed to the respondents were returned and deemed appropriate for data analysis.

The data collected in this study were subjected to a validity test to measure the strength of the measurement items. Subsequently, this study used Structural Equation Model (SEM) to examine the relationship between indicators and their respective variables.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Description of Respondent

The majority respondents of this study are female (53.1%), and the remaining 46.9% are male. In terms of education, the respondents are graduated from college (46%), vocational school (35.8 %) and high school (15%). Regarding their occupation, 37% are employees (37%); 32% are entrepreneur; 26% are housewives, and only 5% are students. Concerning their length of stay, 50% of the respondents have stayed more than ten days and 22% has stayed 4-5 days, and only 28% has stayed less than four days.

B. Perceptions of Respondents

This section reported the respondent's perception of the variables. The respondents have a good perception of the perceived value of destination, smart tourism technology, travel experience satisfaction, and tourist happiness, indicating by the average value that is greater than 3.40 and statistically significant at the 1% level. In particular, the travel experience satisfaction shows the highest average score of 3.86, followed by perceived value destination (3.82), tourist happiness (3.80), and smart tourism technology (3.43).
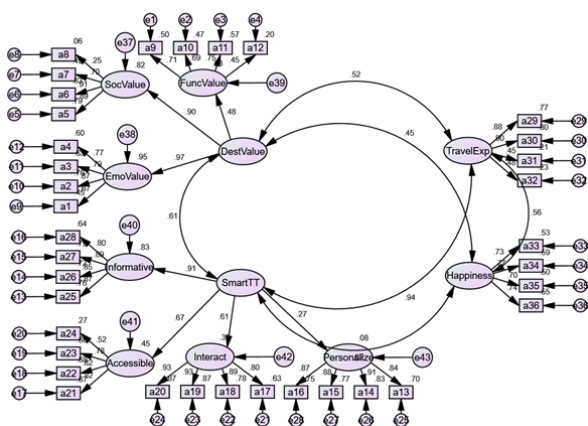
C. Measurement Model

Fig. 2. Measurement model.

This study tested the validity of indicators to ensure the accuracy and consistency of indicators in measuring the variables. Fig. 2 show the result of model measurement. It shows that out of 36 indicators measuring the four variables, only one indicator from the social value dimension was invalid because the factor loading was less than 0.50. The factor loadings for the remaining indicators were higher than 0.50, and thus they were eligible for further analysis.

Furthermore, this study evaluated the goodness of fit of the measurement model to ensure how well the model fits the data. Out of 10 indices of the goodness of fit tested, seven indices were fit, namely statistical X2 (Chi-Square), Residual Square Mean Root standard (SRMR), Goodness of Fit (GFI), Root Mean Square Error Estimation (RMSEA), Non-normed Fit Index (NNFI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), and Comparative Suitability Index (CFI). While the other three were found as marginal fit, namely Augmented Goodness of Fit (AGFI), normed Fit Index (NFI), and Relative Fit Index (RFI). The result showed that all the indices were above the cut-off value. Therefore, it can be summarized that the model had a good fit.

D. The Direct Effect of the Perceived Value of destination and Smart Tourism Technology on Tourism Experience Satisfaction

The hypotheses testing involved the values of CR and P that can be seen in Fig. 3 structural model:
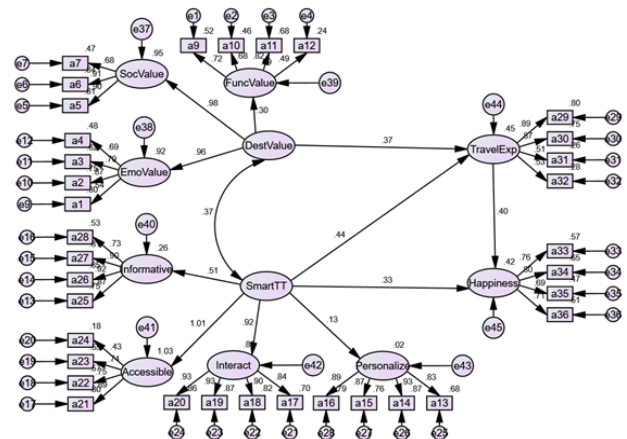
Fig. 3. Structural model.

Table I reported the main findings concerning the direct effects of the perceived value of destination and smart tourism technology on travel experience satisfaction. It also shows the direct effects of smart tourism technology and tourism experience satisfaction on tourists' happiness who visit tourism destination in Aceh, Indonesia.

TABLE I: THE RESULTS OF DIRECT INFLUENCE HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Dependent Variable		Independent Variable	Est.	SE	CR	P	Std. Coeff.
Travel_Exp	<---	Smart_TT	3,181	1,051	3,026	***	.440
Travel_Exp	<---	DestValue	1,288	.520	2,476	.013	.369
Happiness	<---	Travel_Exp	.203	.057	3,547	***	.399
Happiness	<---	Smart_TT	1214	.951	1,276	.202	.331

Based on the CR and P values showed in Table I, smart tourism technology (Smart_TT) had a significant effect on travel experience satisfaction (CR value = 3,026 and P-value

< 0.00). The magnitude of the effect was 0.440, indicating an increase of 1 unit on smart tourism technology contributes to the increased travel experience satisfaction by 0.440 units on a Likert scale. The higher the perceived level of smart tourism technology, as indicated by the informativeness, accessibility, interactivity and personalization provided in a tourist destination, the greater the tourists' travel experience satisfaction. Previous studies also showed that smart tourism technology has a significant effect on tourism experience satisfaction [5], [19]-[21].

The perceived value of destination had a significant direct effect on travel experience satisfaction (the value of CR = 2,476 and p-value = 0.013). The magnitude of the effect was 0.369, meaning that an increase of 1 unit on the perceived value of destination contributes to the increased travel experience satisfaction by 0.369 units on a Likert scale. The higher the level of the perceived value of destination, as indicated by the functional value, social value and emotional value, the greater the satisfaction of the travel experience felt by the tourists. This three-dimensional factor jointly contributed to a positive image of the perceived value of destination in Aceh tourism destination. These findings confirm the finding of previous studies reporting that all the dimensions of the perceived value of destination affect tourism experience satisfaction [5], [14], [15], [30].

E. The Direct Effect of Smart Tourism Technology and Tourism Experience Satisfaction on Tourists' Happiness

As observed in Table I, the effect of smart tourism technology on tourist happiness was not significant (the value of CR = 1.276 and P-value = 0.202). This finding supports the argument of H. Lee, J. Lee, Chung, Koo [5] in which tourists perceive smart tourism technology on a functional basis, as the provider of information about the destination, therefore it does not influence tourist happiness.

However, tourism experience satisfaction had a significant influence on tourist happiness (the value of CR = 3,547 and p-value < 0.00). The magnitude of the effect was 0.399, meaning that an increase of 1 unit on the travel experience satisfaction leads to the increased tourist happiness by 0.399 units on a Likert scale. The higher the tourism experience satisfaction, the happier the tourist will be. These findings are consistent with the results of research conducted by Chen, Fu, Lehto [4], H. Lee, J. Lee, Chung and Koo [5], as well as Kim, Woo, and Uysal [8]. In other words, the finding of this study supports the notion that tourism experience satisfaction leads to happiness.

F. The Indirect Effect of the Perceived Value of Destination and Smart Tourism Technology on Tourist Happiness through the Tourist Experience Satisfaction

Table II shows the test results of indirect effects using the standard bootstrap of 2000. There were two indirect effects tested, namely (1) the indirect effect of the perceived value of destination on tourists' happiness through travel experience (2) the indirect effect of smart tourism technology on tourists' happiness through the travel experience satisfaction. The p-values of those two hypotheses were higher than 0.05. So, it can be concluded that both hypotheses were rejected. In other words, even though the perceived value of destination and smart tourism technology have a direct influence on tourism experience satisfaction, it does not lead to the creation of tourist happiness.

TABLE II: THE INDIRECT EFFECT TEST - TWO-TAILED SIGNIFICANCE COEFFICIENT AND ESTIMATED VALUE

Estimated Coefficient Value		Indirect test - two-tailed sig. (P Bootstrapping)		
Smart TT	Dest Value	Smart TT	Dest Value	Desc.
TravelExp	0	0	0	0	Rejected
Happiness	0176	0147	0176	0147	Rejected

V. CONCLUSION

The study of tourists' happiness is originated from psychology, but it has expanded to tourism study. Although many tourism researchers agree that tourism experience contributes to tourist happiness, they still argue on how it affects tourists' happiness and the determinants factors of tourists' happiness. Smart tourism technology is the interconnection between Information Communication and Technology tools used by tourists. Whereas, the perceived value of destination is defined as a tool used by the tourists to evaluate a destination based on the benefit they receive and the cost they pay. Some researchers argued that smart tourism technology and the perceived value of destination affect tourism experience satisfaction which later leads to tourists' happiness. However, the results of the study are contradictory to other researchers. The study reveals that although the perceived value of destination and smart tourism technology have a significant role in tourism experience satisfaction, the satisfaction does not contribute to tourists' happiness. This means that tourists' memorable experiences are necessary to increase tourists' happiness because it has a higher coefficient compared to smart tourism technology. The findings of this study assist Destination Manager Organizations in designing tourism activities. Memorable experiences can be achieved by tourism activities related to personal growth development of tourists, such as volunteer tourism activities.

For further empirical findings, next researchers need to broaden the scope to cover not only Aceh province but also the other eight provinces in Sumatera, Indonesia. Other issues that require more exploration is the customization of data and information related to the demographics and unique tourists' preferences.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest in this submitted work.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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