

## Modeling of Co-Creation in the Adventure Tourism: Empowering the Role of Customer Participation to Strengthen Behavioral Intention (Best Practice: Tourism Village Nglangeran - Gunung Kidul DIY)

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### ABSTRACT

Adventure tourism is one of the sectors that undergoes a rapid growth with potential market that is estimated to provide 9% of GDP of a country. However, the great opportunity has not yet to be optimized by business doers, particularly in Indonesia, whereas invisibly Indonesia has natural resources that can be managed well to offer adventure tourism. In short, business doers particularly in tourism field are challenged to encourage the growth of adventure tourism. Therefore, this paper suggests a conceptual model of co-creation by involving customer participation to explore facts on field on how far the role of consumer involvement as co-producer in creating value (unique experience). Co-creation becomes the key success of adventure tourism that is still becoming a phenomenon and research gap that needs further evidence. Value co-creation by involving consumers to participate will encourage satisfaction and revisit intention that will impact on business sustainability. The paper proposes conceptual model developed on the basic of empirical study and can be used to conduct research in the development of tourism industry. Preliminary research (obsevation) has been conducted in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY), namely: Nglangeran Tourism Village (Gunung Kidul Regency). This tourist village represents the spectrum of integrative development of tourism and the creative economy producing attractive and creative adventure. Empirically the objective proposing this modeling can provide trigger to develop further research on value co-creation by referring to service dominant logic paradigm especially in the tourism sector.

**Keywords:** Adventure Tourism, Behaviour, Co-creation Value, Customer Participation, Experience.

## INTRODUCTION

Adventure tourism is a niche market in tourism industry which is estimated to be developing rapidly and has good opportunities to expand (Kunwar, 2021; Genc, 2021; Khatri, 2018; Williams & Souter, 2009). According to travel industry association, it is estimated that adventure tourism will grow to more than 15% and will be one of the fastest-growing segments of the global tourism industry (ATTA, 2020; World Tourism Organization, 2014). Similarly, Peacock et al., (2017) stated that adventure tourism is a sector that grows very rapidly and encourages the growth of tourism industry both locally and globally. Based on the data of World Tourism Organization (2014), in 2023, the number of international tourists who travel abroad reaches 1 billion people and can provide income for the country of destination about 9% of GDP. Considering the development of adventure tourism, the market potential of it is so great because of several things, including: 1) it can attract consumers who have a lot of money who are willing to pay for plane tickets and pay for luxury hotel cost and luxury activities, 2) it supports local economy directly, 3) it encourages environment sustainability as well as preserves local culture where the tourism object is located (Bichler & Peters, 2021; Khatri, 2018).

Adventure tourism is regarded as risky exploration and travel that might need skill and physical activity. As stated by Muller and Cleaver (2000), "adventure tourism is frequently associated with participation in risky physical activity in the outdoors". Next, Sung *et al.*, (2004) states that adventure tourism is known to have 5 important dimensions including activity, environment, motivation, risk, and performance. Other experts (Patterson & Pan, 2007; Miller, 2003) explain that adventure tourism is an activity that has low risk and requires low physical activity and going to exotic places. On the other hand, hard adventure is a high-risk activity that needs certain skills and competencies in challenging adrenaline (William & Soutar, 2009). However, Peacock (2017) criticized the opinion on travel adventure that is still traditional. In the future, the term needs to be defined more dynamically by considering the ecological aspect between human being and environment. According to Khatri (2018, p.110), there are new trends in adventure tourism that are classified into three types: a) soft adventure: bird watching, cultural activities, horse riding, fishing/whale watching, snorkeling, and educational programs 2) hard adventure: climbing, caving, and 3) mix of soft and hard adventure: cycling, hiking and walking tours.

In the adventure tourism, psychological and behavioral aspects are more prominent than economical and functional aspects (Kunwar, 2021; Bichler & Peters, 2021; Khatri, 2018). Consumer motivation is affected by two forces: pull and push factors (Robinson et al., 2011; Woodside & Martim, 2008; Bonera, 2008; Patterson 2006). Pull factor is called extrinsic motivation. Meanwhile, push factor is intangible, namely factors that drive consumer to utilize tourism service, such as gaining unique experiences, meeting new friends, socializing, building self-confidence and getting away from daily routines. The phenomenon of adventure tourism development is indicated to be influenced more by push factor. Therefore, the creation of experience (an impressive unique experiences) becomes the important factor that creates competitive advantage (Mykletun, 2018). Co-creation experience considers the role of consumer as co-creator, meaning that the consumers interact with business actors to co-create experience. The consumer can be involved in the business process so that they can co-create value and acquire experiences that are unique and different for every consumer based on their need's preferences and capacity of heterogeneity of consumers.

The success rate in co-creation is highly influenced by driving factors from the consumer side both as co-creator actor (Varleye, 2015; Payne, 2008) and as a resource integrator (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). In marketing field, Service Dominant Logic/SDL (Vargo & Lusch, 2008) is very

popular in introducing the premise “*the customer is co-creator value*”. SDL views consumers as proactive party that can be involved in creating value, where company plays a role as facilitator in co-creation process, not merely as producer that determines the value standard (Chan et al., 2010; Payne et al, 2008). Customer participation becomes dominant factor in supporting the success of service offered by the company. Customer participation is consistent with the term “presumption” defined by Xie et al., (2008) as the activity of creating value done by customer that will end up the production of product/service that will be consumed by the customer to provide consumption experience.

In adventure tourism, a tourist needs a certain experience where he/she can play a role in production and consumption. The bottom line, customer participation is required to create experience (value) that impacts on satisfaction and repurchase intention to maintain business sustainability. Previous studies (Kunwar, 2021; Fang et al., 2014; So et al., 2005) can corroborate the assumption that satisfaction influences revisit intention. It means, satisfaction perceived by a tourist is estimated to impact the will to reuse the adventure tourism services. The role of consumer as resource integrator through active participation in value co-creation process receives a lot of attention from the experts (Chan et al., 2010; Vargo & Lusch, 2008), yet it is still hard to find research on tourism. In addition, the popularity of increasingly growing adventure tourism is not balanced with research result that can be used as preferences to develop adventure tourism business. This means that there is limited research on adventure tourism especially in terms of caring for the nature and feeling of being one with nature and being participant of an activity (Kunwar, 2021; Mycletun, 2018; Khatri, 2018; Sung, 2004).

The study contributes to the growing literature on tourism theory and provides additional insight for tourism actors, government, and policy makers about the importance of creating value involving customer participation. After reviewing the literature on value creation, this study proposed theoretical model and analyzed the four propositions. We then present preliminary research in the form of best practices “tourism village Nglangeran, Gunung Kidul DIY) to support the proposed model.

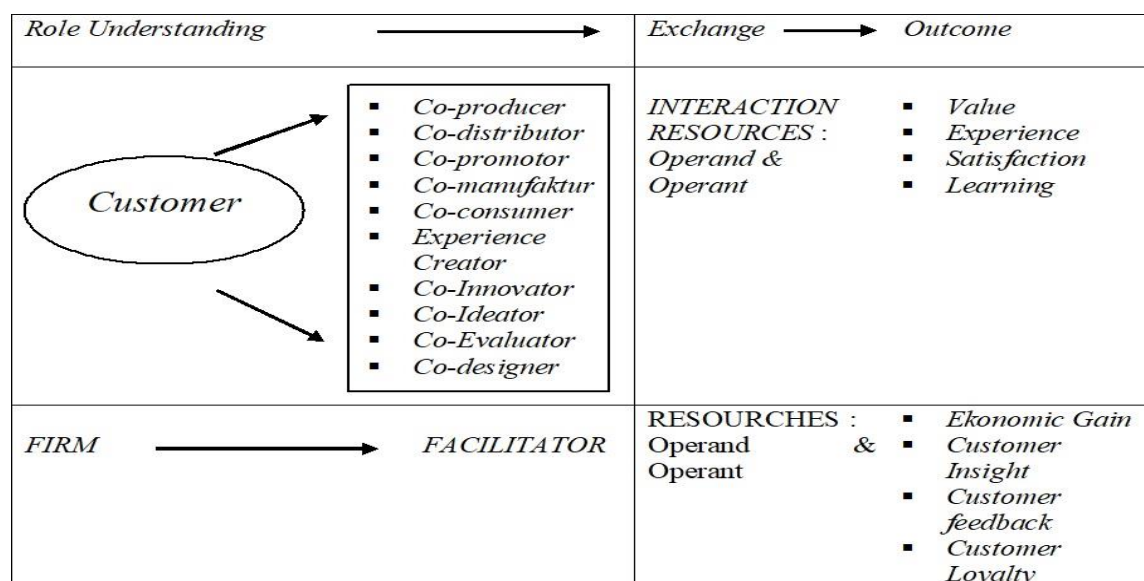
## LITERATURE REVIEW

According to SDL, consumers are considered as proactive value co-creators who do not merely passively receive value offered by a company, where company acts as a facilitator in value co-creation process (Payne, 2008). Customer participation is an effort of co-producing a product/service (Chan et al., 2010), which can strengthen the relationship between customers which leads to the profit increase (Bendapuli & Leone, 2003). In essence, customer participation is an important element in value-co-creation particularly for services that need high interaction on the consumer side and activity in the company side (Wunderlich et al., 2013). By involving consumers, the company will be able to know their need/wants that can reduce cost and energy to meet satisfaction. Organization also has to facilitate the active participation of consumers through a specific process so as to reduce investment level that must be fulfilled (Payne et al., 2008). In short, “.... *SDL suggests that all participants in the value co-creation process are viewed as dynamic operant resources. Accordingly, they should be viewed as the primary source of firm and national innovation and value creation...*” (Vargo & Lusch, 2008, p.10). Therefore, it can be said that consumers become one important resource for companies to create value.

The concept of customer participation develops rapidly, particularly regarding the emergence of study from experts (Vargo & Lusch, 2008; Gronroos, 2008) which proposes the idea of customer as active participants in the co-production of service means to co-create value. Customer participation becomes an important concept because of the development of SDL paradigm, where a service process occurred when there is interaction between a service

provider and sharing resources (knowledge and skills) to co-experience benefits. Study by Dong (2015, p.498) analyzes the participation of costumers involved in the process of value co-creation namely "*I am producing*" versus "*I am designing*". If the consumer is involved physically in creating service, then customer participation is classified as "*producer*", while if the consumer directly provides information to design a service, then the customer participation is classified as "*designer*". A concept developed with consumer in co-creating value proposed by Xie et al., (2008, p.109) states that "prosumption *implies that buyer buy products for their own consumption...*". Pro-sumption combines the meaning of producer and consumer. This term emphasizes the fact that consumers in the value creation process also act as co-producer of value when they add value to the product and use it. The role of consumer alters from just buying a service/produce becomes a pro-summer which effectively participating the process of producing value.

In term of consumer's role, however Gronroos (2008) asks "*..if customers are co-creators of value, what is the role of the firm? Are firms the main creator of value or what are they?*". He emphasizes more the concept of value in use as an important aspect of the occurrence of exchange because consumers add skill, knowledge, and process. Consumers are active players in value co-creation and can increase effectiveness and efficiency of value co-creation process. The key to co-creation is integration with consumers, which according to Agrawal and Rahman (2015), is not easy things and provides challenge to companies because of several things: heterogeneity, determining consumer tasks, consumer recruitment and selection, managing various results of co-creation from consumer. One of the important factors that has to be met by the company in order for value co-creation to run well is specific profiles and consumer data that will be involved in co-creation. Further, Agrawal and Rahman (2015) explain the process of value co-creation (see Figure 1). In the process of value co-creation, the company should determine the role of consumer correctly, whether as co-producer, co-manufacture and co-designer. The important role of company is as facilitator. In the exchange process, interaction will occur between resources owned by consumers and producers. Resources are classified into two, namely: 1) operant resources: financial capital, physical capital, social capital, technology, and culture; 2) operand resources: economy and human. Then, the optimal interaction in the exchange process will provide positive benefit both from the consumer and the company. From the consumer side, value co-creation will impact on the increase of: experience, value, satisfaction, and learning. From the company side, it will impact on several aspects, including: profit, consumer understanding and obtaining loyal customer. In short, co-creation process involves interaction, involvement, and relationship with consumers. In today's era, every business actor wants consumers to participate in product development, because it will build loyalty and faith in consumers. Co-creation is widely accepted as innovation model and satisfaction concept.



Agrawal & Rahman, (2015, p.147)

Figure 1: Value Co-Creation Process

Payne et al. (2008) affirm that customer experience and value creation are more emphasized than the product itself. According to them, value co-creation process with consumers needs to be viewed as something that is dynamic and interactive. Several experts (Gronroos, 2008 and Gummesson & Mele, 2010) also highlight that in order for co-creator value could be implemented well, several important factors are required, such as: resource integration, interaction and joint value creation. Therefore, the consumer becomes an important party whose relationship with the company must be managed. In short, the company must be able to facilitate interaction optimally so that the consumer is willing to use resources owned (knowledge, skill and time) to create value. Bharti et al. (2013) in their article suggest the driving factors so that consumers are willing to be involved in co-creating value namely: 1) dispositional factors, such as: training, role clarity, the ability to contribute, commitment, needs, empathy, knowledge and reputation; 2) situational factors: financial incentives, level of dependability, community, opinion leader, social capital and interaction. Measurement of value co-creation, among others, is proposed by Ranjan and Read (2016, p. 314) who divides into two sub-variables, namely 1) co-production consisting of 3 dimensions, knowledge, equity and interaction; 2) value in use consisting 3 dimensions, experience, personalization and relationship. Moreover, Gronroos (2008) puts forward the concept of value in use as an important aspect of the exchange as the reason consumers add skill, knowledge and process. In the context of adventure tourism, value co-creation is co-creation between consumers and business actors that can create value (a unique, dynamic, and interactive experience).

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Propositions and Proposed Model

#### *Propositions*

Based on the concept of SDL, consumers are considered as proactive party in value co-creation, where the company plays a role in facilitating the process of value co-creation (Payne et al., 2008). Customer participation shows the effort to support production activities of a service (co-producing a service) (Chan et al., 2010), this participation makes the company has a closer relationship with consumers which impacts on the increase of profit (Bendapudi & Leone, 2003 and Payne et al., 2008). Therefore, it can be stated that customer participation is an important component in value co-creation. Value co-creation is a core concept of service dominant logic and becomes the main premise of customer participation which can provide a good value for consumers themselves or the company (Dong, 2015 and Chan et al., 2010). Value that is co-created contains two values, extrinsic value (economic and relational) and intrinsic value (enjoyment). Research results from Etgar (2008) can be used as empirical evidence references which indicate the relationship between customer participation and co-creation value. It means consumer participation in adventure tourism business can encourage value creation, and in order to run optimally, the company must facilitate the value. Consumers are services co-producers, marketing review is directed to collaboration process between the company and consumers (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). This collaboration will create value that can provide opportunities for the company to design service experience. Interaction required consumer participation so that consumers are actively involved in production activity and service delivery. Consumer participation can be in the form of sharing of knowledge and skill and provide input. Thus, the company that can involve its consumers to participate actively will be able to get close to or build relationship with the customer that will encourage customer behavior (Bendapudi & Leone, 2003 and Payne et al., 2008). The result of several empirical studies can be used as bases to propose the following propositions:

#### ***Propositions 1: the success to increase value co-creation needs to be supported by customer participation***

Generally, the success of company can be identified from consumer satisfaction, which will impact on financial aspect of the company (profit) (Zeithaml, 2006). Research result by Vazquest et al. (2013) could prove that there is relationship between value co-creation and customer satisfaction from the consumer side (consumer). This research result can also prove that consumer satisfaction due to involvement in value co-creation will have a positive impact on retention and profit. Theory on consumer protection refers to confirmation-disconfirmation paradigm, it means satisfaction perceived by the consumer is a comparison between hope and reality (Oliver, 2009). Generally, the construct of consumer satisfaction is closely related to consumer behavior. If consumers involve in the development process of services, it will give the feeling that they are a part of the company that will certainly affect to satisfaction. This condition will also encourage positive behavior, namely enhancing their will to repurchase. It can be said that the consumer and business doers of adventure tourism involve together in creating experience that can encourage repurchase and give recommendation to others. It means tourists who use adventure tourism service will be satisfied and are will come again if involved in co-creation experience. On the basis of opinions and the support of prior empirical researches, the next proposition is made:

#### ***Proposition 2: Customer satisfaction in adventure tourism needs to be supported by co-creation value***

**Proposition 3: Revisit intention in adventure tourism needs to be supported by co-creation value.**

Several research studies (Kimmy et al, 2010 and Mustak et al., 2013) are able to prove the relationship between consumer participation and behavioral intention. Consumer participation is an affective respond whose intensity depends on time and important aspects related to purchase and consumption conducted by consumers (Giese & Cote, 2002). If the consumer is involved in the development process of services, it will give a feeling that they are a part of the company that will certainly impact on satisfaction. This condition will also encourage positive behavior, namely willing to repurchase. As stated, Cronin et al. (1997) repurchase intention shows a person's consideration regarding repurchasing of a product/service from the same company by taking into consideration various situations faced when purchasing. This research results could be used as references of empirical evidence that indicate the relationship between customer satisfactions and repurchase intention. It means tourists who use adventure tourism service that makes them feel satisfied will encourage them to reuse the service. On the basis of opinions and the support of prior empirical researches, the next proposition is made

**Proposition 4: Revisit intention toward adventure tourism is influenced by the efforts of the company in developing customer satisfaction**

Based on these propostions, the modeling of co-creation in the adventure tourism: empowering the role of customer participation to strengthen behavioral intention is as follow (see Figure 2).

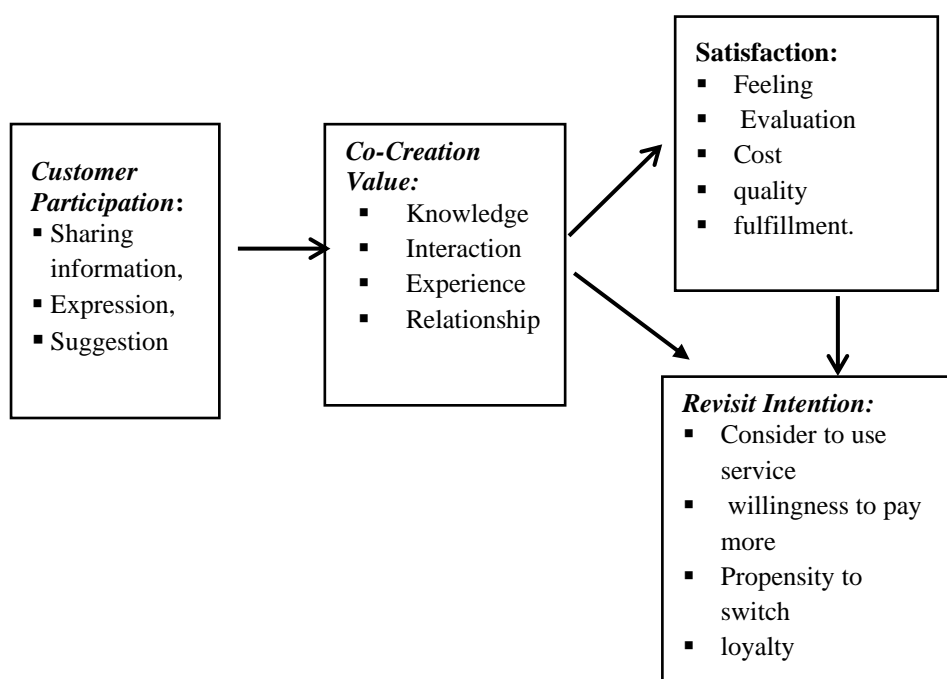


Figure 2: The Conceptual Model

(Source: Author)

**In the context of adventure tourism,** customer participation is how far the tourist is willing to share information, provide opinion, and involve in decision making towards products/service provided by service provider (Gallan et al., 2012; Chan et al., 2010). This consumer participation can be identified through sharing information, expression, and suggestion.

Results of studies by Chan et al., (2010) showed that customer participation is a strong driving force for value co-creation. In terms of value co-creation in adventure tourism, the concept of value in use (Gronroos, 2008) is better in explaining creation between customers and business actors that can create value (a unique, dynamic, and interactive experience).

## DISCUSSION

Adventure tourism is a market niche of potential market of tourism industry that keeps growing significantly because involving business doers and tourists, both locally and globally. As a country that is rich in natural resources, Indonesia has not been responsive to meet the need of new trends of tourists who acquire emotional touch (experience) and uniqueness of tourism service. Adventure tourism can become one of tourism services which can accommodate the new phenomenon of tourist needs. The need of this adventure tourism has made some business doers in tourism industry to offer various tourism objects.

The important thing in adventure tourism is that tourists want to visit adventure tourism to gain memorable experience. The modeling of this co-creation can be used as a preference to explore facts on the field towards phenomena and problems in tourism industry. The modeling of value co-creation proposed involves consumer participation in the process of tourism services. Value co-creation is the creation of value together between consumers and service providers that is dynamic and interactive (Gronroos, 2008; Gumesson & Mele, 2010; Bharti et al., 2013 and Ranjan & Read, 2016). Customer participation shows how far tourists are willing to share information/knowledge, provide opinions, interact and involve in decision making of products/services given by adventure tourism service providers (Wattanakamolchai, 2008 and Chan et al., 2010). Consumer involvement functions the role as co-producer working together with service providers to create value and plays a role in value extracting and producing. Consumers/tourists will gain benefits such as fun experience, gain knowledge and skills, socialize and gain friends, as well as to be able to meet life style.

### **PUTTING THEORIES (MODEL) INTO REAL PRACTICE: OBSERVATION LOCUS IN “DESA WISATA NGLANGERAN- GUNUNG KIDUL DIY”**

To dig deeper into the synergy between the creative economy and tourism villages, which include producing attractive and creative tourism products/services such as **adventure tourism**, observations have been made taking the research locus in the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY, namely: Nglanggeran Tourism Village (Gunung Kidul Regency), DIY. This tourist village represents the spectrum of integrative development of tourism and the creative economy.

To understand how the synergy between tourism and the creative economy is formed, an observation has been made to Nglanggeran Tourism Village by focusing on the creative tourism products/services offered, namely adventure tourism. To provide in-depth observations, there are several aspects that are explored comprehensively, namely: consumer participation, joint value creation, satisfaction and intention to visit again (regarding proposed model). Observations were carried out in August 2021 involving 2 surveyors who were tasked with conducting observations and interviews with managers and tourists visiting the tourist village.

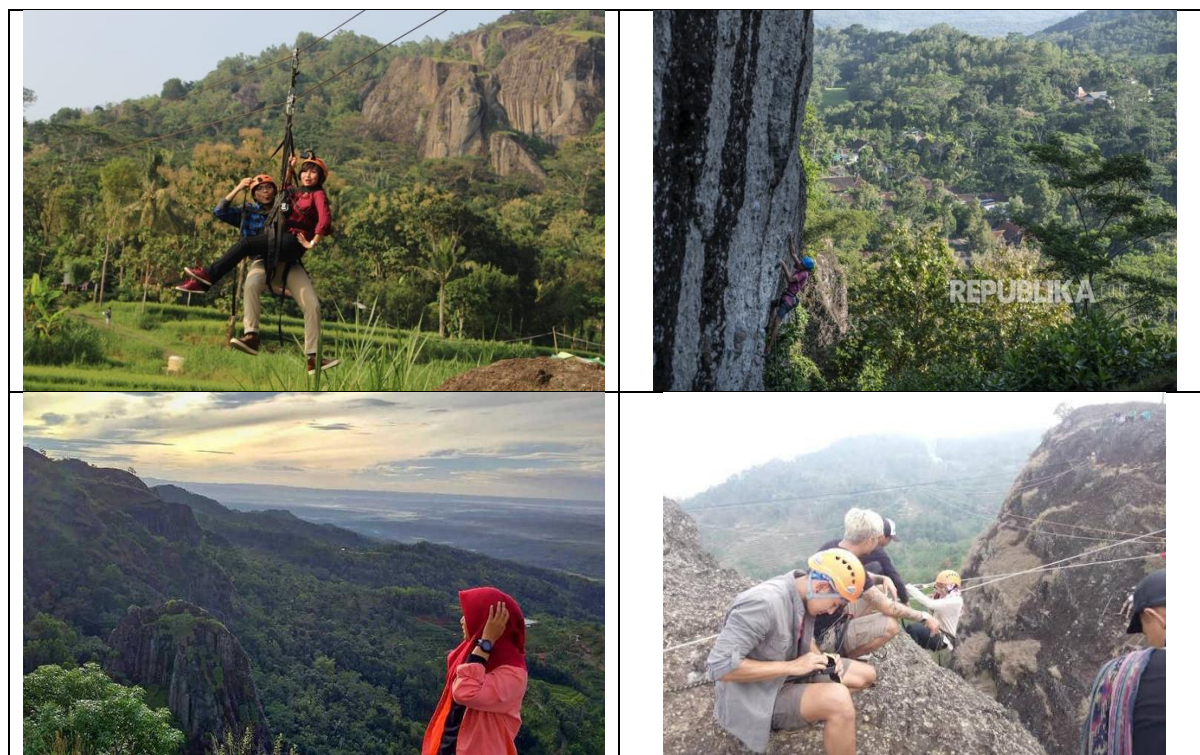




### **ADVENTURE TOURISM: UNFORGETTABLE MOMENT**

The existence of the Nglanggeran Ancient Volcano is used by managers to offer adventurous tourism activities that are in great demand by the Millennial generation. Some of the attractions provided include:

1. Trekking, enjoying the natural scenery at the top of an ancient volcano with the beauty of Nglanggeran Village and views of the city of Yogyakarta.
2. Rock Climbing, an adventure activity by climbing several cliffs with various levels of difficulty, currently there are 28 climbing routes with various levels of difficulty.
3. Flying Fox, an adventure activity by gliding over the rice fields.
4. Sunset and Sunrise Packages, enjoy the sunset and sunrise from a predetermined location point to be able to enjoy the best moment.



In the context of adventure tourism in the Nglanggeran Tourism Village, several important findings related to the proposed model were identified:

1. Customer participation: shows the extent to which information sharing, expression and suggestions have been proven to build co-creation experiences so that adventure tourists can experience 5 benefits, namely: 1) hedonic, namely getting a pleasant experience

- while traveling; 2) cognitive, namely getting impressive knowledge; 3) social, can relate to other visitors, 4) personal, provide fulfillment of needs related to lifestyle, and 5) economic, benefits in the form of compensation and financial.
2. Co-creation-value: what is created in the context of adventure tourism are: 1) getting an impressive experience 2) providing a different feel, 3) presenting attractions that increase adrenaline, 4) being able to exchange information with other visitors and tell each other different experiences. impressive, 5) there is an educational aspect, 6) feels that they exist in the community and 7) loves nature and beauty more.
  3. Satisfaction: co-creation that shows the benefits (hedonic, cognitive, social, personal and economic) felt by tourists when visiting adventure tourism has been proven to increase satisfaction, so that tourists feel an emotional and physical bond. Satisfaction is represented in the following conditions: valuable, has a positive psychological impact, has a memorable experience, pleasant, fulfills the desired expectations and feels happy.
  4. Revisit Intention: it shows the interest of tourists to return to adventure tourism objects which are represented by the following: 1) recommending to friends and family because of the impressive experience they felt; 2) strong desire to visit tourist attractions; 3) increase the intensity of visits, 4) actively seek information on tourist attraction offers.

The benefit perceived by tourists in the adventure tourism is a happy feeling to experience a memorable vacation. Customer satisfaction shows content feeling perceived by tourists when using adventure tourism services because they actively involved both physically and emotionally in co-creating experience with service providers because their needs and hopes are fulfilled from several aspects, including: feeling, evaluation, cost, quality and fulfillment (Oliver 2009). Next, valid behavioral intention perspective has proven that consumer satisfaction on repurchase intention or the intention to use the service provided by certain service providers (Cronin et al.,1997). In the context of adventure tourism, revisit intention is the possibility of a tourist to reuse adventure tourism service, being loyal to adventure tourism service, and is willing to pay for more expensive cost as well as a small chance to change services.

## **CONCLUSION**

Conceptual model proposed in this paper can be used as reference for future studies to explore more accurate facts on fields, particularly regarding consumer involvement together with service provider creating value, namely impressive and unique experience as an important factor for the success of adventure tourism. This modeling is based on the paradigm of Service Dominant Logic which in its development still shows a research gap because there are not many empirical researches generated regarding adventure tourism. This co-creation modeling is a development of previous empirical study, so that it is expected to provide scientific studies that will have a real practical impact for business doers in tourism industry. Empirically, this modeling can provide a stimulus to develop studies on co-creation through empowering customer participation which is a new paradigm in marketing that needs further scientific studies that later can be used as basis for practitioners (service provider) to develop business.

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