

# The Role of Peripheral Conference Service in Developing Revisit Intention to Host Destination

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## The Role of Peripheral Conference Service in Developing Revisit Intention to Host Destination

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### ABSTRACT

The meeting, incentive, conference, and exhibition (MICE) industry continues to grow, contributing significantly to a destination's economy. This article examines how the perceived quality of the peripheral conference service, as a supporting program for a conference, affects the loyalty of participants at the conference host destination. This perceived quality may also affect the conference participants' novelty-seeking behavior in moderating the influence of strength of satisfaction on intentions to revisit the conference host destination. The unit of analysis of this study was international conferences in Bali, Surabaya, and Jakarta. The data were collected from 214 residents via a questionnaire. Questions were answered using a 7-point Likert scale and analyzed using a partial least squares structural equation model (PLSSEM). The results showed that the perceived quality of the performance of the peripheral conference service had a positive influence on conference participants' satisfaction with the destination. A subsequent positive effect was also found for intention to revisit the conference host destination. However, novelty seeking is not proven to have an effect in moderating the influence of the power of satisfaction on the intention to revisit the conference host destination.

*Keywords:* Novelty seeking, peripheral conference services, revisit intention, satisfaction

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### INTRODUCTION

The era of globalization has increased competition in various fields, including competition among various locations

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64 around the world. The term “place” is used to describe all types of territories (e.g., city, part of a city, an area, a province, a state) (Kotler et al., 1993). Marketing a place means designing an area to meet the needs of the target market. It is said to be successful when society and businesses feel comfortable and the expectations of visitors and investors are met (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). Place, in the context of tourism, is often referred to as a destination. Cooper et al. (1998) defined a destination as a focus of various facilities and services designed to meet the needs of travelers. Traditionally, the destination is perceptible as a geographic area (e.g., state, island and city) (Buhalis, 2000). It is a place people travel to and where visitors choose to stay for some time, to gain an exciting experience with various features, attributes, and attractions owned by the destination (Leiper, 1995).

39 International tourist arrivals in 2016 based on United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) data number 1.235 billion (UNWTO, 2017). The amount has contributed to 3.1% of world gross domestic product (GDP) for a total contribution of 10.2% of world GDP (World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), 2017). In general, visitors traveling to a destination consist of two groups: business and non-business travelers (Kotler et al., 1993). Visitors who come to a place for business purposes (e.g., meeting, incentive, conference, and exhibition [MICE]) are referred to as business travelers. Those aiming for leisure or non-business activities are called leisure travelers (Buhalis, 2000). Business traveler activities are generally somewhat tied, as

they are determined by the involvement of the business traveler in the organizational agenda of the organizers of meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (Davidson, 1994). However, visitors to a destination often combine business activities with pleasure (Buhalis, 2000). Destinations that can offer a combination of efficiency and security in meetings, as well as leisure opportunities, tend to be preferred by convention participants (Buhalis, 2000).

The research into customer loyalty is widely discussed in the service marketing field. This is also discussed in the fields of tourism and destination loyalty (Barsky & Nash, 2002; Baker & Crompton, 2000; Backman & Crompton, 1991; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Hutchinson et al., 2009; Som & Badameh, 2011). Although research related to destination loyalty has been widely discussed, this study is more interested in the leisure traveler (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Hutchinson et al., 2009; Suzan, 2012; Som & Badameh, 2011). Previous research on the loyalty of conference participants has focused on the core conference program, rather than the peripheral conference service (Ro & Um, 2006; Severt et al., 2007).

To date, research is limited regarding how the role of peripheral conference service improves the loyalty of conference participants to travel to the conference destination. Hence, this research fills a gap in the literature. More specifically, this study explains a phenomenon that has not gotten much attention: how a peripheral conference service from a conference in a destination can make the conference

participant a business traveler in the first visit at a conference destination and a leisure traveler in the future.

### Literature Review and Research Framework

**Destination Loyalty.** Oliver (1997) defined loyalty as a firm commitment to repurchase or re-patronize products or services favored in the future, thereby causing repeat purchases of the same brand over and over again, although situational influences and marketing efforts had the potential to cause switching behavior. A destination can also be defined as a product. Travelers can visit or recommend the destination to friends and family (Yoon & Uysal, 2005).

The loyalty of tourists to the destination is important because the nature of the tourism product means that the destination must be selected without any chance of the consumer trying before buying (McKercher et al., 2011). The high level of risk of having an unpleasant experience is usually associated with attempting to visit a new destination. The risk becomes smaller when returning to a known destination (McKercher et al., 2011). Therefore, risk-averse behavior encourages the emergence of loyalty to a destination. Moreover, retaining existing customers costs far less than winning over new customers (Fornell & Wernerfelt, 1987). Loyal visitors can become advertising agencies through word-of-mouth (WOM) advertising if they talk about the destination to their network of friends, family, and other potential customers (Shoemaker & Lewis, 1999).

**Peripheral Conference Service.** A peripheral conference service is a component associated with the main program of the conference (Ro & Um, 2006). Few studies have been conducted in this area and none has connected the perceived quality of the performance of the peripheral conference service to the loyalty of conference participants to conference destinations (Ro & Um, 2006; Severt et al., 2007). Severt et al. (2007), in their research into the evaluation of participants on the organization of a conference, suggested three influential factors that were activities, opportunities, and education benefits. Activities and opportunities included in a conference often consist of travel and special programs for the families of participants (Mair & Thompson, 2009). The findings support the previous opinion that recreational activities contribute to participating in a conference (Witt et al., 1995).

According to Parasuraman et al. (1991), a core service is the expectation associated with a service or product. Education benefits are the core service (product) of a conference (Severt et al., 2007). The peripheral service is a service or product related to the core service (Bitner et al., 1990; Crosby & Stephens, 1987; Suprenant & Solomon, 1987). Ro and Um (2006) evaluated host conference destination attributes and revealed that three factors were considered important for conference participants: physical factors, environmental factors, and program factors. Environmental factors (e.g., landscapes, exotic climates, cultures) are closely related to peripheral

Conference services that are associated with incidental / sub-events, travel and cultural activities, and business centers (Ro & Um, 2006). Conference participants' evaluations of host-destination attributes include cultural activities, pre- and post-conference tours, recreational activities, and culinary activities (Croux & Weber, 2002; Ro & Um, 2006). The results of this study indicate that the peripheral conference service is a factor associated with the main program (education program) that can affect the tendency of participants to visit the destination.

Baker and Crompton (2000) studied festivals and assessed the quality of the performance of an event based on an assessment of festival visitors. Four dimensions are considered: (1) generic features (program characteristics), (2) specific entertainment features, (3) information sources (e.g., printed programs, street maps, program implementation information), and (4) comfort amenities (related to participants' comfort during the program). The dimensions of the festival are similar to the dimensions of the peripheral conference service proposed by Ro and Um (2006) (i.e., the linked incidental or sub-event dimensions). These include many activities (e.g., pre- and post-conference tour, entertainment, food, beverages, and other recreational activities). This dimension is similar to the generic features and specific entertainment features found in Baker and Crompton (2000). The travel and cultural information dimension refers to information about the travel and cultural program (Baker

& Crompton, 2000). A business center provides convenience facilities equal to the comfort amenities at the festival.

**Satisfaction.** Some studies have examined the antecedents that have resulted in the intention of a repeat purchase (Backman & Crompton, 1991; Cronin et al., 2000; Petrick et al., 2001). The results of the various studies show that satisfaction, quality/performance, and other variables are predictors of consumer loyalty. The greater the satisfaction that consumers feel, the greater the desire to repurchase products or services which have been consumed. This feeling also increases the desire to influence others to become customers. Satisfaction is the visitor's perception of the difference between the expectations before a travel experience and the experience after traveling (Deng & Pierskalla, 2011; Oliver, 1980, 1997). In the context of tourism, satisfaction with the experience gained contributes greatly to the emergence of loyalty to destinations (Alexandris et al., 2006; Bramwell, 1998; Oppermann, 2000; Pritchard & Howard, 1997).

Crompton and Love (1995) stated that consumer satisfaction was related to the emotional state of the consumer's mind after exposure to an opportunity (in this research, the peripheral conference service). Satisfaction can be influenced by social-psychological conditions (e.g., mood, need) and can be perceived by travelers (e.g., conference participants) at new destinations and events (e.g., climate, social interactions in groups, dinner), where such matters are outside the service provider's

control (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Crompton & Love, 1995). Therefore, hypotheses 1 and 2 in this study are:

*H1: The higher the quality of the performance of the peripheral conference service perceived by conference participants, the stronger the satisfaction felt by conference participants toward the conference destination.*

*H2: The stronger the satisfaction felt by conference participants toward the destination, the greater the intention of participants to revisit the conference destination.*

**Novelty Seeking.** Many tourists seek a new experience through their travel (Lee & Crompton, 1992). Therefore, novelty seeking is considered an important part of one's motivation to travel and influences the travel decision-making process (Crompton, 1979; Petrick, 2002). A person may be satisfied at a destination, but not necessarily return to the same destination (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Hui et al., 2007; Shoemaker & Lewis, 1999). Research has found that novelty seeking influences revisiting intentions, as compared with satisfaction (Assaker et al., 2010; Bigne et al., 2009).

In this study, novelty seeking is defined as a desire for new and different experiences (Hirschman, 1984). Novelty seeking is related to the degree of difference between current perceptions and previous experiences (Jenkins, 1969; Pearson, 1970). In the marketing context, novelty seeking is related

to variety seeking, which is the consumer's tendency to shift from ever-made choices (Ratner et al., 1999). The results of the research conducted by Hirschman (1984) on the role of novelty in the search for experiences, as cited by Lee and Crompton (1992), suggested that travelers might differ genetically in their desire to seek or gain new experiences, which could manifest as different types of tourists. Some tourists are high novelty seekers and some are low novelty seekers. Someone who has a novelty-seeking tendency rarely returns to the same tourist destination (Cohen, 1979; Lee & Crompton, 1992). Therefore, hypothesis 3 is:

*H3: The higher the novelty seeking tendency of the conference participants, the lower the effect of satisfaction on the intention to revisit the host conference destination.*

**Value Co-Creation.** The service-dominant (S-D) logic approach used in this study describes the process of the value of co-creation in the search model. S-D logic indicates that value and value creation are the core of understanding this concept (Vargo et al., 2008). In the traditional view, which uses the concept of goods-dominant (G-D) logic, the parties that create the value are the manufacturers. The nature of the value-in-exchange is a utility, based on values that are embedded in a resource, the output of a work process, and the values that are in a single entity, at a given point in time. These values can be exchanged with other entities (e.g., the amount to be paid by

the customer) (Gronroos, 2013). However, with emergence of the S-D logic concept, public opinion has shifted to a more holistic perspective that recognizes value in the context of customer experience (Heinonen et al., 2009).

Furthermore, some researchers acknowledge that the value-in-use can also be seen as value created in the context of the value-in-context (Chandler & Vargo, 2011; Vargo & Lusch, 2008). The S-D logic approach has been modified (Vargo & Lush, 2016). The changes made are based primarily on the value creation that originally moved between the producer and consumer (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). This change became known as the involved actor or the actor-to-actor (Vargo & Lush, 2016). In the context of a place, every individual who visits a region has a role in helping to create the value of the place. Various aspects of individuals are reflected in the

areas visited. In turn, the characteristics of the region can also change the concept of individual visitors themselves or in conjunction with others (George & George, 2004).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Figure 1 shows the research framework (model) of this study, which displays the antecedents of revisit intention in the conference destination. This model also exhibits first-order formative latent dimensions of the perceived quality performance of peripheral conference service (PQPPCS) and first-order reflective latent dimensions of satisfaction.

### Study Site

Three events in three destinations were chosen for this study. The first event was the World Cultural Forum (WCF) held on

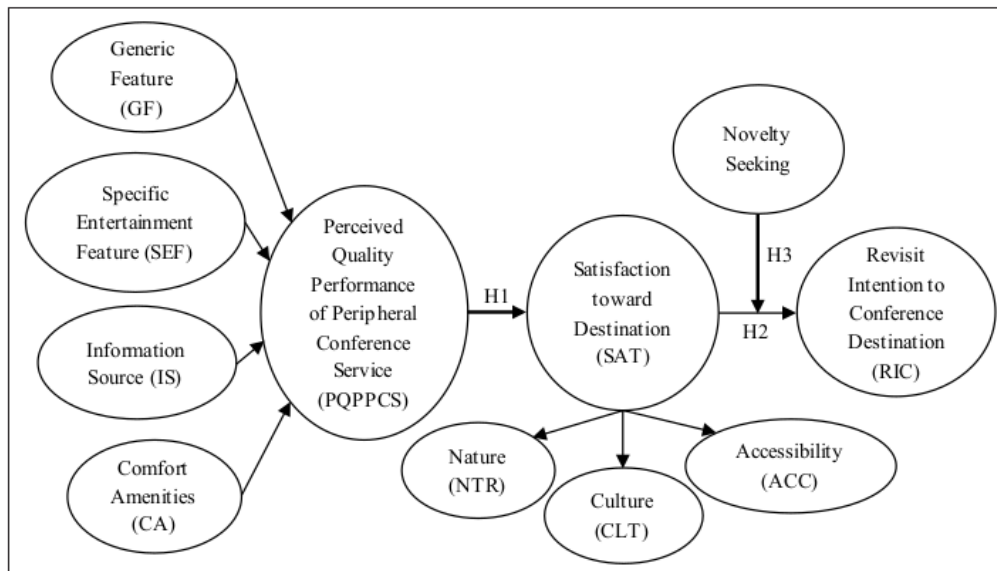


Figure 1. Research framework (model)

24-27 November 2013 in Bali, with the theme “The Power of Culture in Sustainable Development.” The peripheral conference service activities consisted of a welcome dinner at Garuda Wisnu Kencana with original Balinese food dishes and a Kecak dance performance. The performance was spectacular and involved hundreds of dancers; the participation of delegates from various countries line up and dance to the strains of the Bali gamelan. Also, a world ethnic music festival featured ethnic music from various countries, but most of the ethnic music originated in various regions of Indonesia (not just Bali). A post-conference tour involved visiting a tourist village and a subak farm on the Subak World Heritage Tour. The second event was the 5th Regional reduce, reuse, recycle (3R) Forum in Asia and the Pacific held on 25-27 February 2014 in Surabaya with the theme of “Multilayer Partnerships and Coalition as the Base for 3R’s Promotion in Asia and the Pacific.” The peripheral conference service activities consisted of a cultural performance at the opening ceremony and the welcome dinner at city hall in the evening with the mayor of Surabaya as the host, with a typical menu of East Java and other Indonesian dishes; the participants were entertained with gamelan and dance typical of East Java. Participants also visited one of the townships in Surabaya and saw how well the 3R program was implemented; the local people greeted the participants. The third event was the 41st International Federation of Asian and Western Pacific Contractors Association (IFAWPCA). The conference was conducted by the Indonesian Contractor Association

and held in Jakarta on 2-5 March 2014 under the theme “Infrastructure for a Better Future.” The peripheral conference service activities consisted of the opening ceremony on 2 March 2014 with cultural performances and, in the evening, a welcome dinner held at the Grand Hyatt Hotel Jakarta ballroom, with musical entertainment and a fashion show featuring batik from various cities in Indonesia. A gala dinner was hosted by the Jakarta government at the Ballroom Jakarta Theater. The gala dinner featured traditional Indonesian songs, with the singers wearing traditional Indonesian dress. A post-conference tour was held to visit the old city and Taman Mini Indonesia Indah and to shop in Thamrin City.

### Research Method

This research used the survey method. Data were collected using a questionnaire (Christiensen et al., 2011; Zikmund, 2003). The population of this study was participants in international conferences held in three cities in Indonesia: Jakarta, Bali, and Surabaya. The approach used to estimate the relationship between the constructs was SEMPLS. The data were processed by using SmartPLS 2.0. SEMPLS uses a variance-based approach to predict structural relationships between constructs (Hair et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2011). The multigroup analysis approach was used to test the moderating effect of novelty seeking because, like variety seeking, novelty seeking involves the same basic concept that consumers seek the optimal level of stimulation that affects their behavior in



making choices (Assaker & Hallak, 2013; Hebb & Thompson, 1954). In addition, everyone has a different level of novelty seeking tendency (Assaker & Hallak, 2013). The respondents were divided into two groups based on their tendency to seek novelty. The first group was for low novelty seekers and the second group for high novelty seekers.

## RESULTS

Data for all 214 respondents from the three conferences were evaluated by using analysis of variance (ANOVA) to examine whether significant differences existed in respondents' perceptions. The respondents were then combined as the results showed no significant difference between the total perceptions of the respondents in each conference.

The results of the validity test of indicators and constructs showed that all indicators had a standardized loading factor greater than 0.5, indicating that all indicators were valid (Hair et al., 2011). The reliability testing results illustrated that latent variables had the value of average variance extracted (AVE) > 0.5. The composite reliability variables had the values of  $\alpha \geq 0.7$  (Hair et al., 2011; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

All indicators on the latent variables were reliable or able to measure the construct. Table 1 shows the results of formative model testing of the perceived quality of performance the peripheral conference service where the four dimensions of generic feature (GF), specific entertainment feature (SEF), information source (IS), and comfort amenities (CA) significantly contribute to the formation of PQPPCS, where the T-statistic value of each dimension is > 1.96 at the significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$  and the original sample values of GF (0.393), SEF (0.268), IS (0.219), and CA (0.212).

Furthermore, in the case of SAT latent measurements, Table 2 shows that satisfaction reflected by accessibility (ACC) with an original sample value of 0.948, culture (CLT) with an original sample value of 0.903, and nature (NTR) with an original sample value of 0.916, where each dimension has a T-statistic value > 1.96 at the significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

The test results on the direct effect of the construct indicate that *H1* and *H2* are supported by the data (see Table 1).

Table 3 shows a positive influence of perceived quality performance of peripheral conference service (PQPPCS) on satisfaction (SAT). The results show

Table 1  
Formative dimensions of PQPPCS

Path	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	Standard error (STERR)	T-statistics ( O/STERR )
GF → PQPPCS	0.393	0.392	0.005	0.005	82.513
SEF → PQPPCS	0.268	0.269	0.006	0.006	43.367
IS → PQPPCS	0.219	0.219	0.005	0.005	41.426
CA → PQPPCS	0.212	0.213	0.004	0.004	54.996

Table 2  
Reflective dimensions of SAT

Path	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	Standard error (STERR)	T-statistics ( O/STERR )
SAT → ACC	0.948	0.948	0.005	0.005	206.016
SAT → CLT	0.903	0.903	0.007	0.007	120.448
SAT → NTR	0.916	0.915	0.004	0.004	211.491

Table 3  
Hypothesis testing of direct effect

Hypothesis	Coefficient	Standard error (STERR)	T-statistics ( O/STERR )	Conclusion
H1 PQPPCS → SAT	0.8812	0.0023	385.8779	Supported
H2 SAT → RCI	0.8121	0.0033	247.0351	Supported

that the path coefficient .8812, with a t-value (t-statistic) higher than t-table value of 1.960 at a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This rise means that the perceived quality of peripheral conference service (PQPPCS) has a positive and significant influence on satisfaction (SAT). The results are consistent with the hypothesis that the higher the quality of the performance of the peripheral conference service perceived by conference participants, the greater the satisfaction felt by the conference participants to the host destination. The result supports H1.

Table 1 shows that the most powerful dimension that contributes the PQPPCS is the generic feature (GF) with an original sample estimate value of 0.387 and a t-statistic value of 223.642 ( $>1.96$ ). This indicates that how the conference participants feel about the environmental atmosphere, such as natural scenery, climate, culture, food, and drink may enhance their perception toward the quality peripheral conference service. The results for the effect of satisfaction (SAT) on the intention to revisit the host city (RCI)

show that the path coefficient is 0.8121, with a value of 247.034 (Table 3). The value is higher than the t-table value of 1.960 at the significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ . This increase means that the effect of SAT on RCI is positive and significant. The results are consistent with H2, which says that the greater the satisfaction felt by conference participants during activity in the host city, the greater participants' interest in returning to the destination city of the conference. The result supports H2.

The satisfaction of participants is strongly reflected by the accessibility of the host city of the conference (ACC). The value of the original sample is 0.948. Accessibility concerns the distance of travel, direct flights, and the ease of obtaining a visa. This means that the conference participants are satisfied because the participants did not find a problem with the distance from the country of origin to the host destination city.

The results for H3 show that the novelty seeking construct had no moderating effect. The result presented in Table 4 shows that

the t-count value is 1.816 (<1.96), with a 0.05 significance level, meaning that the data do not support hypothesis 3. This means there is no difference in the influence of

satisfaction toward revisit intention among participants with high novelty seeking compared to low novelty seeking.

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#### Moderating effect of novelty seeking

Moderation	High (2)		Low (1)		t-count	Conclusion
	Original sample (O)	Standard error	Original sample (O)	Standard error		
	$\Theta_1$	Se( $\theta_1$ )	( $\theta_2$ )	(Se $\theta_2$ )		
SAT -> RCI	0.8157	0.0036	0.8065	0.0036	1.815696	Not supported

## DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study indicate that the conference participants perceived the atmosphere of the environment (e.g., local people, landscapes, climate, culture, food, and beverages) presented during the peripheral conference service (Crompton & Love, 1995) to be interesting. The participants felt that the attraction of the destination and friendliness of the local people (when participants visited one of the townships in Surabaya and saw how the well 3R program was implemented, the participants were greeted by the local people) were memorable and they had high quality perceptions toward them. This study shows that the co-creation value for the peripheral conference service program was formed through the involvement of various parties.

The results of this study confirm Foundation Premise 6 (Axiom 2) of the service-dominant logic, stating that a variety of actors creates the value. This always involves the role of the conference participants regarding the beneficiaries that

are active in the co-creation value (Vargo & Lusch, 2016). The findings also show that the participants in all three cities of conference destinations were satisfied because they did not find any problem with the distance from the country of origin to each city. Jakarta and Bali are two conference destinations with direct access from more than 30 countries. In contrast, Surabaya, with only two international direct flights (Malaysia and Singapore), has good connectivity with Bali and Jakarta.

In the perspective of the consumption process, the behaviors of travelers visiting a destination are divided into three stages: before the visit, during the visit, and after the visit (Ryan, 2002; William & Buswell, 2003). Before the visit, conference participants received an agenda of conference activities, including peripheral conference services. This developed their expectation that further influenced their evaluation toward the quality of the peripheral conference service program. The conference participants' satisfaction meant the difference between the expectations of conference participants

before attending the peripheral conference service program and the experience after attending the conference and peripheral conference service program.

The participants were satisfied with the conference city because they felt the experience during the peripheral conference service was more than they expected. This means the results of this study strengthened Oliver's (1980) expectancy-disconfirmation theory. The value felt by the conference participants increased, while finding easy access to the conference host destination and during the trip around the host conference city. Conference participants enjoyed interacting with local residents and fellow conference participants.

In the context of relationship marketing, conference participant satisfaction is often a pre-requisite for successful long-term relationship (Han et al., 2009; Terawatawong et al., 2007; Whittaker et al., 2007). This is because satisfaction is perceived as an emotional state; it is the response of the consumer experience (in this case, conference participants) in perceiving a service (Chen et al., 2008), which can cultivate trust. A visitor can subsequently develop a commitment (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Verhoef, 2003) to be loyal to the host conference destination. These results further strengthen the commitment and trust theory in relationship marketing.

The results of testing hypothesis 3 show that the novelty seeking construct has no moderation effect. The influence of conference participants' satisfaction on their intention to revisit the conference destination

is not influenced by their tendency to seek new situations (novelty seeking). This can be explained by Welker's (1961) opinion that the perception of novelty depended on the duration of the stimulus exposure. The stimulus exposure provided through the programs in the peripheral conference service is only in the short term. It is given as part of the entire conference program, prior to the conference (city tour), during the conference activities (e.g. gala dinner), and after the conference (e.g., post-conference tour). In short, this duration may cause the novelty seeking tendency of conference participants. The results reveal that it does not have an effect on the power of satisfaction to influence the participants' intentions to revisit the conference host destination.

## CONCLUSIONS

The activity of the peripheral conference service was able to develop visitor loyalty in the form of an intention to cross-buy. This means a change in the buying motivation, where the conference participants who first visit an area intend to attend the conference have the intention to revisit the conference destination for leisure purposes. The results of this study provide managerial implications. Destination marketers can encourage the selection of MICE destinations in Indonesia to host international conferences or other international MICE activities by subsidizing or fully supporting the organizing activities of the peripheral conference service (e.g., welcome ceremony, gala dinner, pre- and

post-conference tour, and cultural night) as part of the destination marketing strategy. Few studies have been conducted on this topic.

The central government, through the Ministry of Tourism and local governments, has not allocated a significant amount of its budget for promotion of destinations in the form of program support. Support for the implementation of peripheral conference services provided at this time is new in the framework of the government. It is a matter of concern and has not been used as a competitive and well-designed destination marketing strategy. In the future, Indonesia is expected to be visited by many business travelers who will be interested in revisiting Indonesia for leisure and bringing their family and friends. They are tourists who may have enough spending power, which is expected to increase the number of foreign tourist arrivals and have large economic impacts.

This study has a few limitations. The focus of the study was not concern for the difference in perception in each type of activity in the peripheral conference service, for example, whether a difference exists in the perception of conference participants at a dinner (welcome dinner, gala dinner) compared to a conference tour. If the differences can be further investigated, the results may have implications for the kind of peripheral conference service programs that might influence both the participants' satisfaction and their intention to return to the conference host destination.

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