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# The Intention to do Ecotourism in Indonesia Toward Tourism Sustainability Prospect

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## ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 lockdown around the world has imposed negative impact on world economics as well as for the tourism industry, in particular in Indonesia tourism. The Indonesian Government has developed various action plan to assist recovery of the sector. The new policy issued by the Indonesia Minister of Tourism and Creative Economics, was aimed to achieve tourism sustainability. The Indonesia government want to provide environmental friendly of tourism destinations which ecotourism was the target. Despite the high support of government for this ecotourism target, however there are limited studies about the intention to do ecotourism in Indonesia. From the marketing perspective, it is a need to understand the intention of prospect consumers as the basis to develop various promotion program as well as the related product development. The objective of this study is to create a basic model to understand the intention to practice ecotourism as an effort of country tourism turn around the tourism sector. The variables to be tested it relationship with the intention to do ecotourism are social norms and the personal norms subject to the theory of planned behaviour (TPB). This is a quantitative study based on convenience sampling survey method using five liker scale questionnaire. As many as 100 eco-tourists respondents in Indonesian were being analyzed by using Smart PLS 3. Finding of this study concludes that Personal norms in Indonesia is significant and positively has relationship with intention to do ecotourism. Based on this finding then it suggests ecotourism recommendations as one of the solution to recover country business and economic downturn.

**Keywords:** Ecotourism, Sustainability, Personal Norm, Social Norm

## 1 Introduction

Sustainable tourism refers to sustainable practices in and by the tourism industry. Sustainable tourism is defined by the UN Environment Program and UN World Tourism Organization as tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities. Indeed, the sustainability of the tourism industry had seriously major problem due to Covid-19 in which Covid-19 has also had wide-ranging impacts on destinations (Eichelberger et al, 2021; Liu, et al, 2021) which impact the global tourism activities to a halt (Nair et al., 2021)

Despite the COVID -19 new norm period in 2021 has been starting, however currently in Indonesia still face the uncertainty of this pandemic with relate to the tourism business uncertainty. Statista (2020) stated the Indonesia's tourism sector record for the international tourism receipts in the first quarter of 2020 was around 2.9 billion U.S. dollars versus 147.3 million US dollar in the fourth quarter in 2020. This decreasing value of international tourism receipts indicated the high negative impact of Covid-19. However, despite this global crisis, there is still hope a recovery in their tourism business.

One of the new habits is to always practice physical distancing by avoiding unnecessary travel and staying away from large groups of persons. Based on the physical distance enforcement at all of the countries, it will relate to the tourism object preferences. People who still need to do traveling might think to find the location which has potential of fresh air or natural environment.

Republika (2021) cited that the new policy issued by the Indonesia Minister of Tourism and Creative Economics, Sandiaga Uno was aimed to achieve tourism sustainability. The Indonesia government want to provide environmentally friendly of tourism destinations which ecotourism was the target. The shifting of tourism destination policy toward ecotourism concept stimulates this study to conduct a preliminary study about an analysis of intention to do ecotourism in Indonesia toward tourism sustainability in the new norm.

## 2 Ecotourism

Ecotourism and sustainable tourism both have a focus on the environment, nature and promoting tourism and welfare of peoples at a local level. These commonalities shine a light on the urgent need for traditional tourism to transition into a more earth- friendly, community-focused form of tourism. However, Sustainable Tourism does not refer to a specific type of tourism, rather it is an aspiration for the impacts of all forms of tourism to be sustainable for generations to come. Ecotourism is a niche segment of tourism in natural areas.

Ecotourism is an alternative tourism that provide nature tourism by helping to conserve the environment in which the tourist is received for the benefit of both visitors and the local destination community (Epler Wood, 2002). It has been known that ecological behavior and the internal or external factors can lead to new forms of tourism, such as ecotourism or nature tourism (Hultman et al. 2015, Hwang and Lee 2018). Furthermore, the ecological behavior relates to the model of value-belief-norm (VBN) which developed by Stern et al. (1999). This VBN model in a tourism sector can be used to explain consumer ecological behaviors (Choi et al. 2015). Research on eco-tourist behavior is based on the analysis of either consumption intention or consumption itself (Han 2015, Kiatkawsin and Han 2017). Hence, the intention to pay more for ecotourism is relate to the VBN model.

Earlier study found that the theory of planned behavior (TPB), explain about the individual's willingness to perform that particular behavior (de Groot and Steg 2008). During Covid – 19, pandemic until now a days, people still develop their personal norms subject to various government policy in preventing Covid – 19 transmissions. Consequently, this trend of such personal norms incorporate the TPB to determine how is the intention to undertake ecotourism.

### 2.1. Awareness of Consequences

Based on the VBN theory, the awareness-of- consequences (AC) beliefs are causally related to value orientations (Stern, 2000; Stern et al., 1999). Indeed, awareness consequences is a personal orientation. The basis for this AC is because a value orientation biases individuals to select and believe in information that is congruent with their value orientation and to deny value- incongruent information. A consideration to do ecotourism which more close to the clean environment perhaps become one of the awareness of consequences in line with social distancing effort subject to Covid-19 prevention.

### 2.2. Social Norms

Both social and personal norms might relate to eco- friendly travel choices (Doran & Larsen, 2016). Social norms are a dimension part of the subjective norms factor (Ham, et al, 2015). Moreover, subjective norms are determined by the perceived social pressure from others for an individual to behave in a certain manner and their motivation to comply with those people's views. Based on the theory of planned behaviour, the personal attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control might influence the intention to undertake a certain behaviour.

### 2.3. Personal Norms

Personal norms refer to internal standards concerning a particular behaviour rather than reflecting externally imposed rules (Kallgren et al., 2000). Doran & Larsen (2016) study was identified several studies in relationship between personal norms and willingness to engage in pro-environmental behaviour while being on vacation. As a result, from Doran & Larsen (2016) study, the found that a particular emphasis should be given to the role of personal norms in relating with eco- friendly travel choices.

### 2.4. Intention To Do Ecotourism

Many studies on ecotourism have mainly paid attention to the effects of such factors as attitudes toward ecotourism (Teeroovengadam, 2019) and environmental concern; Huang and Liu, 2017), environmental knowledge (Schaffer and Tham, 2019), ecotourism experience (Huang and Liu, 2017; Brochado, 2019), and environmental identity (Teeroovengadam, 2019) on ecotourism intention.

The intention to do ecotourism are also might influenced by the social norms and awareness of consequences. Romero et all (2019) study on cross-cultural analysis of the ecological behavior of Chilean and Spanish eco- tourists, recommend their proposed model framework to be tested in other countries as the basis for understanding the behavioral intention of ecotourism. The model of Romero et all (2019) will be used for this study in order to now the intention to do ecotourism model in Indonesia.

### 2.5. Covid – 19

This present study considers that COVID-19 might plays a role as moderating variable. This study is aimed to analyses how Covid – 19 effects the intention to do ecotourism.

### 2.6. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual research framework is illustrated in figure 1 below.

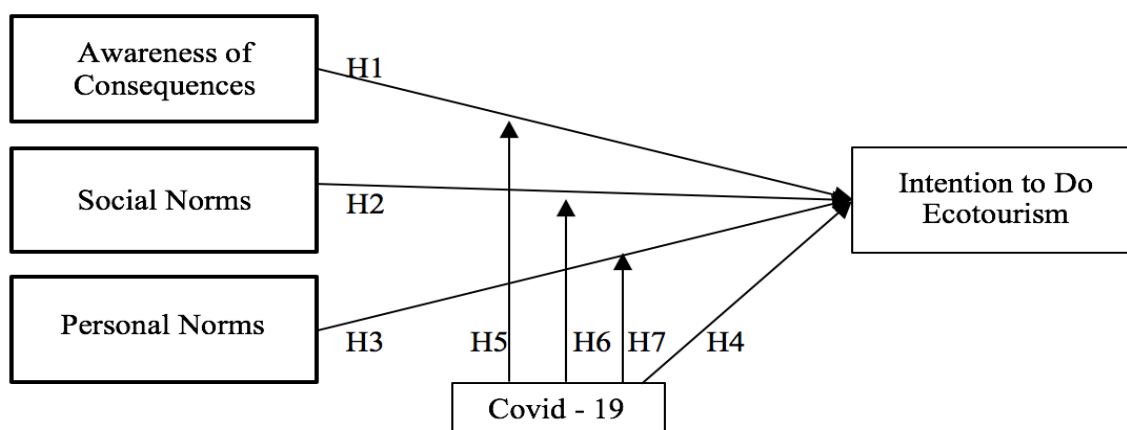


Figure 1. Conceptual Research Framework

#### The hypotheses are:

H1: There is a significant and positively relationship between Awareness of Consequences and Intention To Do Ecotourism.

H2: There is a significant and positively relationship between Social Norms and Intention To Do Ecotourism. H3: There is a significant and positively relationship between Personal Norms and Intention To Do Ecotourism.

H4: There is a significant and positively relationship between Covid – 19 and Intention To Do Ecotourism.

H5: Covid-19 moderates the relationship between Awareness of Consequences and Intention To Do Ecotourism

H6: Covid-19 moderates the relationship between Social Norms and Intention To Do Ecotourism H7: Covid-19 moderates the relationship between Personal Norms and Intention To Do Ecotourism

## 3 Methodology

This study is a quantitative study with individual as the unit analysis based on convenience sampling method. 100 eco-tourists' respondents from Indonesian trough five likert scale questionnaire were analyzed by smart PLS 3. Construct variables are intention to do ecotourism, awareness of consequences, personal norms and social norms. Moderator variable is Covid-19. All model indicators are reflective. The questionnaire Cronbach alpha was tested based on 30 respondents outside the 100 respondents. The Cronbach alpha is above 0.7.

## FINDING

### Data Validity and Reliability – Smart PLS 3

The analysis was done based on the clean data of respondent subject to straight lining and outlier data. SPSS statistic tool was used to review the data from any outliers by Mahalanobis distance. The net data was consist of 92 respondents from Indonesia. The smart PLS analysis can be summarized in table 1and table 2. Based on data

validity and reliability in table 1, all data values fulfill the threshold value of standard Smart PLSs 3, as well as for the Fornel Larcker, HTMT and Composite Reliability value.

**Table 1. Data Validity and Reliability – Smart PIs 3**

| CONSTRUCT                 | INDICATOR | FACTOR LOADING  | COMPOSITE RELIABILITY | AVE   | CRONBACH ALPHA | R <sup>2</sup> |
|---------------------------|-----------|---|-----------------------|-------|----------------|----------------|
| Awareness of Consequences |           |   | 0.862                 | 0.559 | 0.798          |                |
|                           | AC1       | 0.573 (this value was retain as AVE value was above 0.5 |                       |       |                |                |
|                           | AC 2      | 0.744   |                       |       |                |                |
|                           | AC 3      | 0.728   |                       |       |                |                |
|                           | AC 4      | 0.857   |                       |       |                |                |
|                           | AC 5      | 0.795   |                       |       |                |                |
| Social Norms              |           |   | 0.964                 | 0.900 | 0.945          |                |
|                           | SN 1      | 0.951   |                       |       |                |                |
|                           | SN 2      | 0.948   |                       |       |                |                |
|                           | SN 3      | 0.947   |                       |       |                |                |

**Table 1. Data Validity and Reliability – Smart PIs 3 (continue)**

| CONSTRUCT                  | INDICATOR | FACTOR LOADING | COMPOSITE | AVE   | CRONBACH | R <sup>2</sup> |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|-------|----------|----------------|
| Personal Norms             |           |                | 0.925     | 0.672 | 0.903    |                |
|                            | PN1       | 0.805          |           |       |          |                |
|                            | PN 2      | 0.800          |           |       |          |                |
|                            | PN 3      | 0.812          |           |       |          |                |
|                            | PN 4      | 0.829          |           |       |          |                |
|                            | PN 5      | 0.832          |           |       |          |                |
|                            | PN 6      | 0.839          |           |       |          |                |
| Intention to do ecotourism |           |                | 0.935     | 0.784 | 0.908    | 0.558          |
|                            | IE 1      | 0.837          |           |       |          |                |
|                            | IE 2      | 0.890          |           |       |          |                |
|                            | IE 3      | 0.905          |           |       |          |                |
|                            | IE 4      | 0.907          |           |       |          |                |
| Covid 19                   |           |                | 0.857     | 0.667 | 0.753    |                |
|                            | C19 1     | 0.810          |           |       |          |                |
|                            | C19 2     | 0.760          |           |       |          |                |
|                            | C19 3     | 0.876          |           |       |          |                |

**Table 2. Path Analysis Result**

| Hypotheses  | Standard $\beta$    | Standard Deviation (STDEV) | T Statistics ( O/STDEV ) | P Values            | 2.5% CC LL          | 97.5% CC UL         |
|---|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Awareness of Consequences -> Intention to do Ecotourism (H1)            | 0.058               | 0.108                      | 0.537                    | 0.591               | -0.176              | 0.230               |
| Covid 19 -> Intention to do Ecotourism (H4)                             | <b><u>0.473</u></b> | <b><u>0.061</u></b>        | <b><u>7.701</u></b>      | <b><u>0.000</u></b> | <b><u>0.343</u></b> | <b><u>0.577</u></b> |
| Covid 19 * Awareness of Consequences -> Intention to do Ecotourism (H5) | 0.257               | 0.182                      | 1.415                    | 0.158               | -0.164              | 0.586               |
| Covid 19 * Personal Norms -> Intention to do Ecotourism (H7)            | -0.220              | 0.278                      | 0.794                    | 0.427               | -0.689              | 0.331               |
| Covid 19 * Social Norms -> Intention to do Ecotourism (H6)              | -0.119              | 0.102                      | 1.163                    | 0.245               | -0.270              | 0.135               |
| Personal Norms -> Intention to do Ecotourism (H3)                       | <b><u>0.258</u></b> | <b><u>0.100</u></b>        | <b><u>2.580</u></b>      | <b><u>0.010</u></b> | <b><u>0.055</u></b> | <b><u>0.442</u></b> |
| Social Norms -> Intention to do Ecotourism (H2)                         | 0.087               | 0.094                      | 0.924                    | 0.356               | -0.072              | 0.304               |

Note: There is a significant and positive relationship between Covid-19 and Intention to do Ecotourism. Personal Norms has significant positive relationship with Intention to do Ecotourism. There is no moderation effect of Covid – 19 on Intention to do Ecotourism

#### 4 Discussion

The Covid – 19 positively has a relationship with the intention to do ecotourism. However, Covid – 19 has no moderation effect on all variables. The finding indicates a positive relationship to do ecotourism is due to physical distancing regulation as well as Covid – 19 transmission reason. Should the pandemic still in the uncertain condition then it leads people to have intention to do ecotourism in general.

The personal norm to have more fresh environment and social norms to put concern on prevention virus transmission to the community are also support the behaviour to choose ecotourism. Within the tourism framework, the growth of ecotourism as a form of alternative tourism has prompted the tourism industry to become increasingly interested prospect. In addition, consumer behavior is still focus on their personal norms as stated in the theory of plan behavior. People are more concern to prevent them self from the Covid – 19 virus infections. This indicate that people who do traveling will put high concern to have clean and fresh environment.

#### 5 Conclusion

The uncertainty of Covid -19 situation has positive relationship toward intention to do ecotourism in Indonesia. This finding indicates that Indonesia people have a tendency to more concern on the personal norms as the plan behavior toward intention to do ecotourism. Although, Covid – 19 has no role on moderation, however the results also provide ecotourism recommendations to recover from the business and economic downturn caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### 6 Implication And Recommendation

It is a need for the government to focus on building their people awareness of consequences which will support the intention to do ecotourism. The recommended model for Indonesia to gain intention to do ecotourism can be implemented based on the personal norms perspective and also during Covid -19 is represented in figure 2 below.

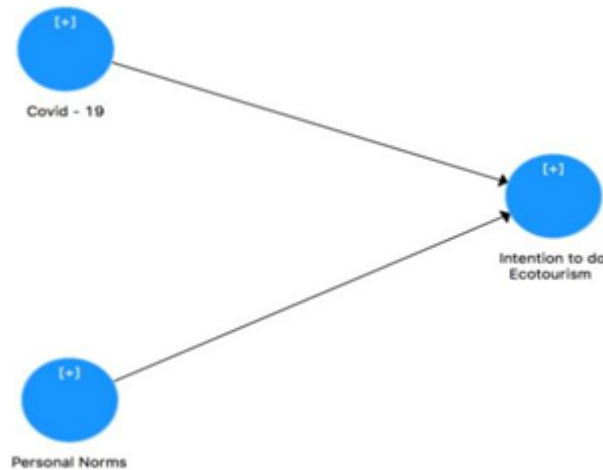


Figure 2. Recommended Mod

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