

Driving young Muslim loyalty toward Muslim-majority tourism destinations: the sense of community theory perspective

ABSTRACT

Purpose This paper aims to assess the sense-of-community role in affecting young Muslim loyalty towards Muslim-majority tourism destinations. Specifically, this research assesses the sense of community dimension in the halal tourism context and evaluates its effects on destination satisfaction, image and loyalty. **Design/methodology/approach** This research used a quantitative approach by using data from 376 young Indonesian Muslim tourists with past travel experiences to destinations where Muslims are the majority. The dimension of the sense of community was evaluated using exploratory factor analysis. The association between variables was tested using partial least square-structural equation modelling. **Findings** The finding exhibits three notable sense of community dimensions: membership, influence and need fulfilment and emotional connection. Emotional connection shapes, directly and indirectly, destination loyalty, while influence and need fulfilment affect destination loyalty by satisfaction and destination image mediating role. Lastly, membership has no impact on developing destination loyalty. **Practical implications** This study offers tourism destinations in Muslim-majority countries an opportunity to draw and create loyalty among young Muslim tourists. Besides offering superior halal services and products, Muslim-majority tourism destinations need to develop young Muslim tourists' emotional connection to the destinations. **Originality/value** To the best of the authors' knowledge, this is the first empirical examination of the sense of community's role in influencing tourist loyalty, specifically in halal tourism.