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A REVIEW ON THE CLASSICAL CONCEPT OF TOURISM ATTRACTION

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Abstract:

In most countries, tourism is seen as one of the important sectors that help in improving economic stability. There was a variety of tourism destinations that could be promoted. It is believed that each tourism destination has its attractions. Numerous studies on tourism attractions have been published since the 1970s. However, different authors have their perspectives on tourism attractions. Therefore, this article explores the relationship between the early study on tourism attraction with the current studies. This article's main objective is to explore the classical concept of tourism attraction and review the current trend in tourism study. Previous literature published in various sources of the database will be reviewed. The result shows that different concepts on tourism attractions have been outlined among the leading authors. The integration of classical studies on tourism attraction concept demonstrated that it covers four main components; Management, Human, Place, and Experience. The concepts published from the 1970s to the 1990s proved relevant to be used in recent studies. This study attempts to provide an overview of the significant influence of previous literature on the current studies.

Keywords:

Tourism Attraction, Tourist, Tourism Concept, Destination

Introduction

In 2019, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) recorded 1.5 billion international tourists, equal to 4 million arrivals per day (World Travel Organization, 2019). This amount proves that tourism is one of the most leading economic sectors globally. The influx of tourism all over the world is due to its role in economic and social development (Alexandre & Ana, 2015)

Tourism attractions are highly diverse. It has been viewed by many as central to the tourism process (Richards, 2002). Numerous studies on tourism attractions will allow tourism destinations around the world to continue to attract tourists. The destinations could keep their attraction updated to offer new tourism products according to tourist demands (Palacios et al., 2021).

With the increasing competitiveness of tourism destinations, it is crucial to consider a favourable attraction to the target tourist market. As a vital resource for a tourism destination, it is important to carefully understand the concept of tourism attractions. Thus, this study looks into the overview of tourism attraction trends based on the classical or early concept of tourism attraction. It is essential to understand the concept of tourism attraction from the fundamental theory before further tourism studies.

The outcome of this paper is expected to be useful not only to a tourist destination but also for the tourism service operators and visitors. It is also for a better understanding of visitors' preferences that is useful as a future reference, especially for the survival of post-pandemic.

The Early Concept of Tourism Attraction

The study on tourism attraction was started in the 1970s. Some prominent authors came up with tourism attraction studies. Until now, their finding on tourism attraction is still referred by others.

The study started with Gunn's theory in 1972, followed by Mac Cannell (1976) with the "Semiotic of attraction". Lew (1987) obtained the typology of tourism attraction, while Leiper (1990) improvised the Gunn and Mac Cannell Theory into Leiper's Model of "attraction system" (Richard, 2002). Many recent studies have built on the work of their studies.

Table 1 compares the tourism attraction concept according to four authors that significantly influence tourism studies. The concept demonstrates the evolution of tourist attractions in a different idea.

Table 1: The Concept Of Tourism Attraction

Gunn (1972)	Mac Cannell (1976)	Lew (1987)	Leiper (1990)
Tourism Attraction Theory	Semiotic of Tourism Attraction	Typology of Tourism Attraction	Tourism Attraction System
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nucleus • Inviolable Belt • Services Zone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourist • Sight • Marker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideographic perspective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourist • Nucleus • Marker

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization perspective • Cognitive perspective 	
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The Theory of Tourism Attraction

Gunn (1980) stated that tourism attractions have a magnetic 'pulling power'. People are pulled towards tourism attraction that encompasses the interests and preferences of the visitor and the quality of the design, development, and operation of the area (Lew, 1987; Richards, 2002). It is shown that without tourism attractions, there would be no tourists.

According to Derek (2017), Gunn's theory was initially introduced in 1972. It has been outlined three elements of tourism attraction: Nucleus, Inviolable Belt, and Zone of Closure. The Nucleus is the core element of the attraction which could be features or characteristics of a place that influenced or stimulate people to visit the area (Richards, 2002; Ngwira & Kankhuni, 2018). It is believed that Nucleus will be the main attraction to pull tourists to the destination.

The Inviolable Belt is how the visitor travels to reach the Nucleus (Derek, 2017). It is also described as a space that gives meaning and experience to the tourist. Benckendorff (2014) explained that the inviolable belt is the resource surrounding the attraction area that preserves its features and allows tourists to appreciate and experience its qualities. (Kušen, 2016) It shows that the area that provides inviolable belt will expand the experience and satisfaction of tourist because its offer attraction not only in the specific destination but also the surrounding area.

The Zone of Closure is the surrounding area of the inviolable belt and contains the service centres (Derek, 2017). The services and facilities that support the attraction, such as toilets, information centres, transport, and accommodation, will reflect the attraction's quality, management, and tourists' length of stay (Benckendorff, 2014). Tourists will be a more comfortable visiting area that offers service and facilities that can accommodate their travel.

The theory by Gunn (1972) demonstrates that tourism attraction is obtained when the three elements are connected. A complete tourism system is created when a tourist has a complete tourism cycle from one point to another (Ngwira & Kankhuni, 2018).

The Semiotic of Tourism Attraction

The Semiotic of Attraction developed by MacCannell in 1976 comprises three components of attraction: a tourist, a sight, and a marker (Lew, 1987). In this concept, a tourist is a subject that pursues an experience of another place (Kinkade, 2016). Tourists are engaging and experiencing the sight and Marker in the tourism attraction. One of the goals of the tourist is to explore the attraction to experience the authenticity of a place (MacCannell 1976).

Meanwhile, sight is an area that can be visited and attracts tourists (Kinkade, 2016). It is also described as an attraction that attracts tourists. A sight can relate similarly with the Nucleus in Gunn's Theory. Both describe the attraction provided by the area and become the main priority to stimulate visits to the area.

Richard, (2002) defined Marker as the meaningful social consumption in tourist activity. A marker provides information and an image of a specific site (Kinkade, 2016). The information given can be in a picture, plan, map or display that represent the site. It also indicates any information about a sight, including that travel books, museum guides, stories told by persons who have visited it, art history texts and lectures (Kinkade, 2016). The Marker functions as a concept or mental image, while the sight functions as an observation. Gunn (1998) adds that with the help of markers that integrate information found in the generating region, transit, and destination region.

The Typology of Tourism Attraction

Lew (1987) explained that Attraction Typologies focus on three components: Ideographic perspective, Organization perspective and Cognitive perspective. Ideographic perspective describes the uniqueness of a site that includes natural beauty and climate; culture and social characteristics; sport, recreation, educational facilities; shopping and commercial facilities; infrastructure; price levels; attitudes toward tourists; and accessibility. It allows an objective comparison of one destination with another in terms of attractions (Lew, 1987). It clearly shows that the scope of the Ideographic perspective is larger than the attraction described by Gunn and Mac Cannell. It is covered not only the features of the area but also the other needs of tourists.

On the other hand, the organizational perspective is a different perspective that focuses on their spatial, capacity, and temporal nature (Lew, 1987). Scale is one of the main attributes in the organizational perspective. As Lew (1987) mentioned, the scale can influence tourist attractions, their relationship to other attractions, and the relationship of attraction images. It is strongly related to the planning and marketing of the organization.

The Cognitive Perspective indicates that the degree to which tourists are willing and able to take such a risk is a significant indicator of the general experiences offered by different attractions (Lew, 1987). It refers to the way people perceive the risk of the attraction provided to them. In other words, the cognitive perspective of an attraction looks into the level of risk in tourism attractions and how tourists prepare to experience the risk (Yu et al., 2012).

The Tourism Attraction System

Richard (2002) explained that the idea of attractions developed by Leiper (1990) is reformulated the Mac Cannell concept of the semiotic of tourism attractions. Leiper (1990), therefore, formulates a more general model which replaces the 'sight' into 'nucleus'. It is a combination of Gunn's theory and Mac Cannel concept of tourism attraction.

Generally, Leiper develops the Tourism Attraction System mainly comprises three main components: a tourist or human element, a nucleus or central element, and a marker or informative element (Richard, 2002). In particular, Leiper (1990) described that tourist are 'pushed' towards attractions by their motivations. It is a strong relationship between tourist motivation and attraction visits and the use of markers. The type of attractions that tourists visit, and the markers that they encounter, should also depend on the types of information that tourists use, their knowledge of the destination and how they travel (Wang et al., 2020)

Leiper (1990) also defined Nucleus are the motivations that stimulate visitation. A primary nucleus is an attribute (e.g., location, sight, person, cultural element, etc.) of a place influential

in visiting a particular place. Meanwhile, a secondary nucleus is a known attribute pre-visit but not significant in creating an itinerary. A tertiary nucleus is unknown before visitation but discovered after arrival at the destination (Yusof et al., 2012).

Leiper (1990) described a marker as an item of information. Following MacCannell (1976) earlier work, Leiper (1990) noted the importance of 'markers. It is often the characteristics of the Marker which constitute the image of the attraction.

Methodology

This study reviews the related articles on tourism attraction that cited the Typology of Tourism Attraction by Lew (1987) and Tourism Attraction System by Leiper (1990) published from 2011 to 2021. It was decided to consider the articles published from all the primary databases, namely Web of Science (WOS), Scopus and Google Scholar. This method explores the relevance of the concept of tourism attraction by both authors in current studies. The data will be illustrated using a table.

Meanwhile, the articles that cited both authors (Lew and Leiper) will then be visualized using CiteSpace to discover the scope of a recent study.

Finding And Discussion

The previous literature shows how the concept evolved from the fundamental theory to the semiotic, typology and system of tourism attraction. The studies gathered from the 1970s to 1990s is based on the four prominent authors mentioned in the Literature review.

It was found that the study by Leiper improvised the Gunn and MacCannell concept. It is also subsequent to the concept (Richard, 2002). According to Hall & Page (2010), Leiper was an influential tourism scholar, and the Tourism Attraction System was one of the primary publications that still referred to in recent studies. On the other hand, the study by Lew on Typology of Tourism Attraction provides a different perspective. It is also one of the influential concepts that are significant for current tourism studies.

Since Leiper's study is continuing the Gunn's and MacCannell Theory, in this part, it is decided to review only Leiper's and Lew's study as it is the updated theory of tourism attraction concept. Thus, studies by Leiper and Lew will be explored to look into the trend in tourism studies from 2011 to 2021.

The Relationship of the Overall Classical Concept of Tourism Attraction

Figure 1 illustrates the integration of tourism attraction based on Gunn (1972), Mac Cannell (1976), Lew (1987) and Leiper (1990). The relationship of the tourism attraction can be classified into four categories which integrates all the criteria mentioned by the authors. The categories are:

- 1) Human
- 2) Place
- 3) Experience
- 4) Management

By integrating all the component, this can be the primary criteria in determining the tourism attraction concept.

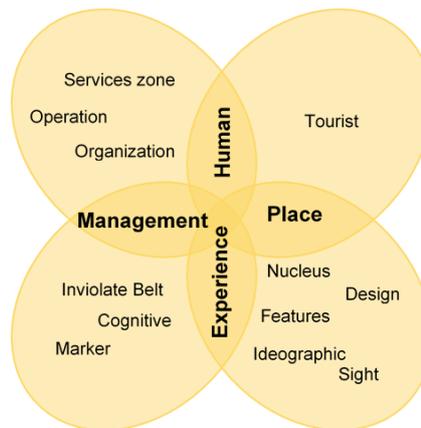


Figure 1: The Relationship of The Tourism Attraction

The overall Trend of Tourism Attraction Studies

Figure 2 shows the overall trend of citation from 1990 to current. Based on the data, both Lew (1987) and Leiper (1990) demonstrate an upward trend from 1990 to 2021. In the early publication, both articles remained minor citations with not more than ten citations. However, the citation increases tremendously started from 2008 to 2020. It is shown that the articles had a substantial influence on tourism literature.

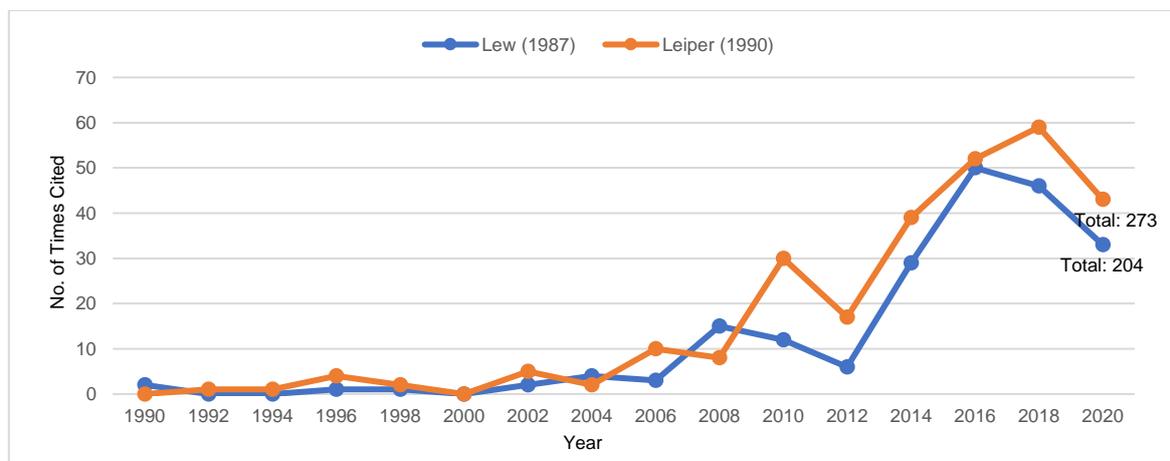


Figure 2: Overall trend of citation from 1990 to 2020

Source: Web of Science (WoS)

The Current Trend of Citation (2011-2021)

Table 2 demonstrates the number of citations gained by Lew (1987) and Leiper (1990). The article "A Framework of Tourist Attraction Research", published by Lew (1987), had described the Typology of Tourism Attraction. Based on the table, the articles have been cited 1,216 times in 3 primary databases; Web of Science (WoS), Scopus and Google Scholar.

On the other hand, the article "Tourist Attraction Systems" published by Leiper (1990) described the Tourism Attraction System as cited in 1,106 articles published in 2011 until 2021. The data was gathered from databases Web of Science (WoS), Scopus and Google Scholar. Refer to Table 1, the majority of the citation being cited through Google Scholar.

Table 2: Number of Citations from 2011 to 2021

Author	Article	Year of Publication	WoS Citation	Scopus Citation	Google Scholar Citation
Lew, A. A	A framework of Tourist Attraction Research. <i>Annals of Tourism Research</i> ,	1987	169	192	855
Leiper, N.	Tourist Attraction Systems. <i>Annals of Tourism Research</i>	1990	228	287	591

The Current Trend on Scope of Tourism Studies (2011-2021)

Figure 3 and 4 illustrates the data of all studies that have cited articles from Lew (1987) and Leiper (1990). This data only used data from the Web of Science (WoS) from 2011 to 2021. This analysis aims to look into the trend of study area among the recent publications within ten years of period.

There were 204 publications had cited article from Lew (1987), and 273 publications had cited article by Leiper (1990). A total of 477 publications were generated and visualized using CiteSpace. Based on Figure 3, 8 clusters of study areas were produced from 2011 to 2021 related to tourism studies. The main three clusters that have intensely used the concept of tourism attraction by Lew (1987) and Leiper (1990) are the study on the following area:

1. Destination Attribute
2. Destination attractiveness
3. Tourism Development

According to Figure 4, the trend of keywords used by the authors in their studies can be seen. Obviously, "Destination" and "Attraction" were the significant keywords used in related publications from 2011 to 2021.

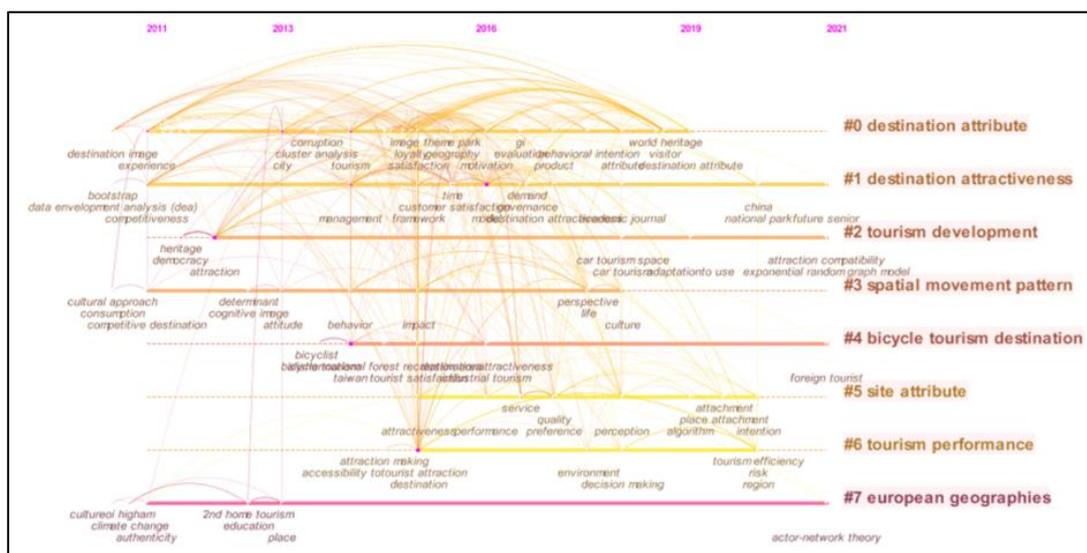


Figure 3: The Cluster of Tourism Study Area from 2011 to 2021

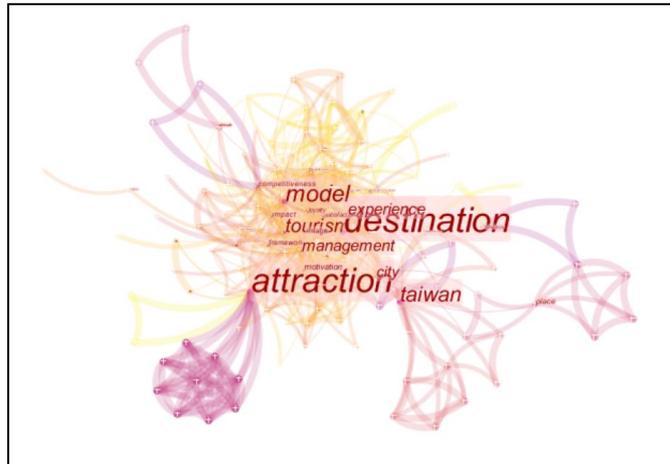


Figure 4: The Trend of Keyword on Tourism Studies from 2011 to 2021

Conclusion

Overall, tourism has a significant potential economic. Thus, it is vital to protect the tourism destination as it is an asset for each country. Studies on tourism destinations may help in sustaining the resilient of the tourism industry locally and internationally. As such, this study has identified the basis of the fundamental theory of tourism attraction concept. This can be useful as the tourism industry is facing the pandemic of Covid-19. It is crucial to re-evaluate the tourism attraction to comply with tourist demands as tourist preferences may change over time. It is believed that tourists will be more careful to choose their destination due to current economic and social conditions that are very challenging in the new norm of Covid-19. The challenge to the industry to revive and survive in the post-pandemic is started with this fundamental theory outlined by the early leading authors. It should also consider studying the attribute of a tourist attraction on various types of tourism destinations, especially for the Malaysian context.

This study presents a compilation of classical tourism attraction concepts that justify the current publications in tourism studies. The concept has been used over the decades. Unfortunately, we do not know what kind of scenario will be faced in future. Hall & Page (2010) stated a need to pursue the potential issue and new insights into the tourism attraction studies in a new context.

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