REVIEW OF THEORIES AND MODEL OF RESEARCH ON LIMINALITY IN TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

Liminality is important in the tourism field to measure the tourist experience from their satisfaction, whether the actual reality experienced meets their expectations. Conceptual research method using secondary data are used in this study. This paper reviews some selected theories and models to comprehend more on the concept of liminality with tourism. For that, the theories and models that would be examined are Five Phases Tourism Model (1966), SERVQUAL Model (1988), Liminality Tourism Structure Model (2019) and Classical and Post-modern Liminality Comparative Theory (2016). The Five Phases Tourism Model is a model used to describe the experience in various phases: expectation, away trip, tourist destination, return trip, and memories, while a SERVQUAL Model is used to measure the quality of service. The Liminality Tourism Structure Model describes the tourist experience from various elements such as physical, social, and emotional. Finally, the Classical and Post-modern Liminality Comparative Theory compares the classical liminal experience of society in ancient times and the liminal experience of post-modern society. The literature review results show that the theories and models aid in explaining tourist experience using five phases and was influenced by several aspects. Thus, the combination of all these existing models related to liminality will help to understand tourists more deeply and measure the level of tourist satisfaction that are seen from their experience, expectation, and the actual reality being experienced by them.

KEYWORDS: Theory, Model, Liminality, Tourism, Tourists Experience

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

Liminality was first introduced in the fields of anthropology and sociology by Van Gennep (1909) to describes the transitional phase of an individual. However, the development of the liminality concept has caused this concept to be applied in various fields such as geography, tourism and others to describe temporary conditions, landscapes and experiences gained.

Therefore, the uses of liminality theories and models in tourism are necessary to explain the tourist experiences based on their expectations and actual reality experienced by them. Hence, the purpose of this study is to review some selected theories and models to comprehend better the concept of liminality in tourism.

METHODOLOGY

Conceptual research was the research method that was used in this study. This conceptual research was conducted by observing and analysing information from secondary data sources that are related to the research topic. Secondary data involves using already existing data.

The data was summarised and collated to increase the overall effectiveness of the research. The data was collected from the Internet, libraries, archives and so on. It was a convenient, cost-effective, and time-saving method. Especially since a huge amount of secondary data can also be accessed from a wide variety of resources quickly and easily.

FINDINGS

The combination of all existing theories and models which are, Five Phases Tourism Model (1966), SERVQUAL Model (1988), Liminality Tourism Structure Model (2019) and Classical and Post-modern Liminality Comparative Theory (2016) related to liminality will help in understanding tourists better and to measure the level of tourist satisfaction that are seen from their experience, expectation, and the actual reality being experienced by them.

- i) The Five Phases Tourism Model (1966) emphasis the tourist experience in five phases which are:
- ii) expectation, where tourists imagine and plan their trip by reviewing guidebooks, travel review sites, Google Earth and other related resources that are needed,
- iii) away trip, which refers to the journey of tourists towards their destination by using transport such as car, bus, plane and so forth,
- iv) on-site (tourism destination), where the opportunities for experience to take place,
- v) return trip, which refers to the return journey of tourist from tourist destination to the place of their origin and
- vi) memories, where the tourist acquires good and bad memories from the tourist destination visited.

Next, the SERVQUAL Model (1988) explains that the model is divided into five dimensions, namely tangibility, reliability responsiveness, assurance and empathy that can be used in determining the satisfaction level of tourists at tourist destinations visited based on tourist experiences and the actual perception of tourists on the reality experienced.

Liminality Tourism Structure Model (2019) elucidates that the liminal experience of tourists derived from experience in terms of physical, social, social symbolism, nature and the search for sensation where the results shows that emotional arousal mediates the positive effects of:

- i) social,
- ii) socially symbolic and
- iii) natural toursapes on liminal experience while physical tourscape affect the emotional arousal but negatively.

Sensation seeking also positively influences liminal experience among tourists. Furthermore, Classical and Post-Modern Comparative Theory (2016) describes that there has been a development of advanced liminality in the post-modern age where the liminal experience is freer and more open than in the past. This post-modern theory has identified some major cultural changes in tourist experience that shows that liminality evolved in line with the post-modern theory.

At first, the classical conceptualisation of liminality by Turner emphasises that an individual is obliged to enter the liminal state. However, the post-modern theory states that tourists choose to enter the liminal state voluntarily.

CONCLUSION

The liminal experience of a tourist is not an easy thing to explain. Therefore, these liminality related theories and models will be able to describe the perceived tourist experience using five phases that are influenced by several aspects to understand tourists more deeply.

Furthermore, these theories and models will help to measure the level of satisfaction among tourists that are seen from their experience, expectation and the actual reality being experienced by them. The challenge now is applying the theory and model of liminality to tourism to measure the tourist experience that will cultivate the concept and aspects of liminality in the tourism sector.

In other contexts, most tourist experience studies still lack application of existing liminality theories and models to measure tourist experience. Therefore, it is time for innovation in measuring the tourist experience based on the theory and model of liminality in existing tourism to provide a more meaningful, holistic and complementary tourist experience.

CONTRIBUTION/PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The review of theories and models of research on liminality in tourism can contribute theoretically where this paper helps to pioneer ideas and improve existing theories and models of the tourist liminal experience in terms of their expectation and actual reality experienced by them. This will be able to improve the existing theoretical framework that are related to liminality in tourism.

Furthermore, this paper can also contribute practically to i) academics (researchers) by strengthening the knowledge and literature resources on liminality in tourism, ii) government (policymakers) by helping the government to understand the behaviour of tourists that will help them develop the tourism sector through providing tourism products and services that meet the needs and desires of tourists and iii) society (community) to make them understand the concept of liminality more deeply and clearly. Lastly, this study will be able to contribute empirically to the knowledge of geography in tourism that are related to liminality.

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