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The Impact of Memorable Halal Travel Experience

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Abstract:

The objective of this research was verifying the hypothesis that a memorable halal travel experience had an effect on future travel intention in halal tourism. This quantitative research was conducted by asking Muslim foreign tourists who were visiting Indonesia about their perceptions of halal tourism directly using a questionnaire. The results showed the structural equation modelling analysis verified that memorable halal travel experience contributed to increasing future travel intention. The practical implications of this research showed that it was important to create a unique and memorable travel experience in strengthening the attractiveness and competitiveness of halal destinations.

Keywords: future travel intention; halal destination; halal tourism; memorable travel experience; memorable halal travel experience; tourism marketing.

JEL Classification: M31; Z30; Z33.

Introduction

Halal tourism is growing rapidly and is becoming a global tourism trend, now and in the future (Mastercard - Crescent Rating, *Global Muslim Travel Index 2019*). Year on year the number of global Muslim travelers is increasing rapidly and gives impacts on tourism destinations. Competition among tourism destinations is becoming more intense in reaching Muslim tourists, either in Islamic countries, Muslim majority countries, or even non-Muslim countries (Duman 2011, Shakona et al. 2015). Tourism destinations compete to meet the specific needs of Muslim tourists (Rahman et al. 2020). Regarding halal tourism, Indonesia has a great opportunity to become a world halal tourism destination (Indonesia Minister of Tourism, 2016).

Muslim tourist has faith and norms that always underlies every tour activity (Din 1989, Vargas-Sánchez and M. Moral-Moral 2019). In line with the increased travel experience in a destination, the criteria of quality and level of desired travel experience is increasing and more specific (Uriely 2005; Cutler and Carmichael 2010; Boğan and Sarıışık 2019). Additional requirements for fulfilling the needs of being a Muslim while travelling, called 'halal tourism', will make it more difficult for destinations to attract tourists to re-visit (Boğan and Sarıışık 2019). Previous researches' records show that researchers make more efforts to understand various construct theories

that determine consumers' intention to re-buy or make recommendations (Mahdzar et al. 2015) and WOM and revisit intention (Singh and N. Mehraj 2018) to tourism destinations. Furthermore, currently research on FIT in tourism has become a strategic issue (Lee and Chuang 2010; Ritchie and Crouch 2010; Ritchie and Crouch 1999) especially on halal tourism.

Previous researches show that intention to revisit a destination in the future has closely related with memorable travel experience (Lee and Chuang 2010; Kim, Ritchie and Tung 2010; Chang, Backman and Huang 2014; Yadav and Krishnan 2017; Zhang, Wu and Buhalis 2018; Chen, feng Cheng and Kim 2020). Creating a memorable travel experience for tourists is very important in order to be successful in the highly competitive tourism market (Kim and Chen 2018). Exploration of memorable destination attributes need to be continually pursued to provide a truly memorable and unique travel experience (Kim 2014).

Many researches on tourism destinations is associated with travel experience (Uriely 2005; Cutler and Carmichael 2010; Mahdzar et al. 2015; Carlson, Rosenberger III and Rahman 2015; Sastre and P. Phakdee-Auksorn 2017). However, research on future travel intention which is connected with memorable travel experience in halal tourism destinations is still a relatively new field of research. Achieving a memorable travel experience is a solution to meet the needs of Muslim tourists (Battour and Ismail 2014; Battour and Ismail 2016). The application of unique and creative experience in harmony with the Islamic beliefs they profess provides a memorable travel experience for Muslim tourists. A deep positive impression in the hearts of Muslim tourists will create the intention to travel back to Indonesia in the future as a halal tourism destination.

The results of the research proved that the memorable halal travel experience becomes an important construct in explaining the results of post-tourist visits. Therefore, this research will make a significant contribution to the knowledge of halal tourism marketing, especially in the developing study of Muslim consumer behaviour. The objective of this research is to verify the hypothesis that a memorable halal travel experience has an effect on future travel intention in halal tourism. Therefore, the research questions are 1) What are the memorable halal travel experience and future travel intention? and 2) How does the memorable halal travel experience have an influence on future travel intention?

1. Literature Review

1.1. Memorable Halal Travel Experience (MHTE)

"The experience is memorable" (Pine II and J. H. Gilmore 1998). Experience is an economic item that can produce unforgettable memories through supportive services and programs or activities available during the consumption process. Schmitt (1999) says that experience is a complex process that can provide opportunities for the consumers to feel, think, do, and connect with the producers and brands of products consumed. Furthermore, (Bin Musa, Najmin, Thirumoorthi and Taha 2017) explains about four dimension of experience that are: entertainment, educational, escapist, and aesthetic.

The experience gained by giving a deep impression, is hard to forget, and continues to be remembered for a long period of time. It is called a memorable experience (Sotiriadis 2017). The more feelings and experiences involved, the more memorable it will be (Pine II and Gilmore 1998; Hung, Lee and Huang 2014). Experience serves to give a sense of joy, pleasure, that imprints in the memory for a long period of time (Cetin, Kizilirmak, and Balik 2017); gives a beautiful impression during a tour and tourists are voluntarily willing to spend money to get experience (Adhikari and Bhattacharya 2015). Travel experience is so important that (Mei 2014) states that it is considered more important than the tourism product itself.

Memorable tourism experience is a deep impression of a tourism destination that tourists get by always remembering it after returning to their home (Kim 2017). Memorable travel experiences are learned in order to find out the impact on memory on future behaviour (Kim, Ritchie and Tung 2010; Kim and Chen 2018; Kim 2014; Chandralal and Valenzuela 2013; Tung and Ritchie 2011). Tourists are initially interested in destination attributes related to activities and/ or trips in the destination. Destination attributes then become components that influence the formation of tourist experiences. Therefore, destination attributes are very important to give a memorable travel experience (Kim 2014). Only a small proportion of short-term memories become long-term, psychologically connected memories. These memories can be strengthened by certain moments or souvenirs as means of reminder. Memories that can be remembered for a long time, are valuable memories (Scott, Gao and Ma 2017). Kim, Ritchie, and Tung (2010) states that memorable experiences that can broaden a tourist's knowledge will become positive memories and behaviours such as revisits and recommendations to friends and family (Mahdzar et al. 2015), WOM and revisit intention (Singh and Mehraj 2018), tourist loyalty (Chen and Gursoy 2001) to halal tourism destinations (Rahman 2014), and even create competitiveness of tourism destination (Ritchie and Crouch 2010; Akkuş and Güllüce 2016).

Mahdzar *et al.* (2015), Kim (2014, 2010) states that a memorable travel experience has seven elements, they are: 1) hedonism, an experience related to the fulfilment of personal satisfaction of tourists; 2) novelty, a new experience gained by tourists in tourism destinations; 3) local culture, the experience of tourists in interacting with the local community and culture; 4) refreshment, an element of travel experience in removing boredom; 5) meaningfulness, an experience that gives impact on personal growth and self-development; 6) involvement, a form of activities that include the tourist in creating experiences during the tour; and 7) knowledge, an experience gained in the form of increased insight during the tour. These seven elements of a memorable travel experience are used in this halal tourism destination research.

The ability of halal tourism destinations in applying halal principles and Islamic values will create positive attitudes and satisfaction of Muslim tourists (Battour and Ismail 2014, 2016); Muslim tourist loyalty (Rahman 2014; Namin 2013); and revisit intention (Battour and Ismail 2014; Rahman, Zailani and Musa 2017). The ability of halal destinations in combining elements of destination products with interesting activities will give a different and unique experience compared to other tourist destinations (Vargas-Sánchez and Moral-Moral 2019; Muhammad, Aisjah and Rofiq 2018).

1.2. Future Travel Intention (FTI)

Behavioral intention started with Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) which state that the actual behavior can be predicted from the intention that is directly related to the behaviour (Singh and Mehraj 2018; Ajzen 1991). Behavioral intention explains the relation between attitudes and behavior that occurs in the individual himself (Ajzen 1991; Jang and Feng 2007) added that behavioral intention arises from the presence of beliefs, knowledge, previous information related to the behavior, and a possibility to do or not to do an action in the future. Prior consumer experience with a product or service generates information about attitudes that is closely related to consumers' desire to re-buy or make recommendations (Mahdzar *et al.* 2015).

In the context of tourism, the choice of tourism destinations to be visited in the future is closely related to the assessment of tourists about the previous travel experience which forms future travel intention (Singh and Mehraj 2018; Hung, Lee and Huang 2014; Oppermann 1999; Marschall 2012) emphasizes the influence of memories on the choice of destinations, tourists often revisit a destination due to nostalgic motives and positive memories from previous visits. The strong desire to travel back to a destination in the future is closely related to the awareness of the previous travel experience (Chi, Huang and Nguyen 2020). A memorable travel experience becomes an important factor in forming a strong memory for tourists of a destination and a positive behaviour in the future (Mahdzar *et al.* 2015; Sastre and Phakdee-Auksorn 2017). Tourists are motivated to visit destinations in accordance with their quality (Mukherjee, Adhikari, and Datta 2018) and the ability of the destinations to meet specific needs (Battour, Battor, and Bhatti 2014). Motivation variable (Sastre and Phakdee-Auksorn 2017) and tourists' value perception from previous travel experiences (Carlson, Rosenberger III and Rahman 2015) have significant roles in creating word of mouth and tourists' revisit intention (Singh and Mehraj 2018; Chang, Backman, and Huang 2014). The higher travel experience gained and positive comments accumulated, the higher tourists' revisit intention to tourism attraction (Chou 2013).

2. Methodology

This research used verificative research designed to be able to test the research hypothesis and analyzed the relation between memorable halal travel experience as an exogenous variable and future travel intention as an endogenous variable.

The main data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire to Muslim foreign tourists that visiting five Indonesia's main halal tourism destinations, *i.e.* Aceh, West Sumatera, Jakarta, West Java, and Lombok. In order to get proportional respondents in the vast research areas, the sampling technique used was cluster proportionate random sampling. Data collection was performed by directly asking Muslim foreign tourists by a survey team who helped distribute the questionnaire. The interview was conducted by using Google media format or hardcopy which was adjusted to the respondent's convenience. 476 respondents were obtained in 4 months of data collection process. Quantitative analysis technique used was Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

Based on the literature review above, the hypothesis to be verified is:

H1: Memorable halal travel experience affects future travel intention.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

The profile of Muslim foreign tourists who are respondents in this research are predominantly from Malaysia (63%) and Saudi Arabia (14,5%); dominated by millennial groups aged up to 44 years old (85,8%); the main purpose of visit is holiday, leisure, recreation (65,3%) with tourist attractions that are popular are natural attractions (44,7%); visit with family (45%) and with friends (30%) with own arrangement (64,9%); length of stay 4–6 days (44,5%); and number of visit is the second visit (39,7%). See table 1.

Table 1. Respondent profile (n=476)

Profile	%	
Gender	Female	48.1
	Male	45.2
	Prefer not to say	6.7
	Total	100.0
Age (years old)	25-34	33.4
	< 25	26.3
	35-44	26.1
	45 and above	14.2
	Total	100.0
Main purpose of visit	Holiday, leisure, recreation	65.3
	Religious tour, Islamic education	7.6
	MICE	6.5
	Business purposes	6.1
	Others	14.5
	Total	100.0
Attraction like most	Natural attraction	44.7
	Culinary and Shopping	20.2
	Cultural attraction	18.5
	Heritage	6.9
	Religious tourism	5.0
	Marine attraction	4.7
	Total	100.0
Travel companion	With Family	45.0
	With Friends	30.0
	Tour Group	15.8
	Alone	8.4
	Others	0.8
	Total	100.0
Travel arrangement	Own arrangement	64.9
	Through travel agency	32.8
	University Program	0.6
	Others	1.7
	Total	100.0
Length of stay	4 – 6 days	44.5
	7 – 9 days	21.4
	1 – 3 days	20.0
	More than 9 days	14.1
	Total	100.0
Number of visit (since 2017)	Twice	39.7
	Once	39.3
	Three Times	12.2
	More than Three Times	8.8
	Total	100.0

3.1.1. Measurement Model

CFA measurement model testing is done to build trust in the measurement model (Table 2). Evaluation of an appropriate measurement model is a prerequisite for obtaining a valid and reliable structural model (Hair *et al.* 2014).

Table 2. Measurement Model Result

Code	Indicator	Standardized Factor Loadings		CR	P	AVE
		MHTE	FTI			
X1	I really enjoy traveling in this destination and gives me an experience I need	.786				1.00
X2	I get a new experience that is different from what was obtained when traveling before	.778		18.623	***	0.99
X3	I get a deep impression when interacting with Islamic community and its local cultures	.824		20.786	***	1.13
X4	I get spiritual-physical freshness and loss of saturation due to traveling in this halal destination	.781		18.059	***	1.00
X5	Traveling in this halal destination gives a meaningful impression because of the authenticity of the destination and local experiences	.843		18.736	***	1.13
X6	I am very impressed because I can be actively involved in enjoying Muslim-friendly tourist attractions in this destination	.794		18.499	***	0.88
X7	I got a new valuable knowledge and information about Islam when traveling in this halal tourism destination	.790		16.992	***	0.84
Y1	Intention to revisit this halal destination in the future		.786			1.00
Y2	Intention to spend more time in this halal destination		.775	19.964	***	1.31
Y3	Intention to get an experience more at this halal destination		.871	19.437	***	1.33
Y4	Intention to visit other halal destinations in Indonesia		.857	17.133	***	1.12
Y5	Intention to give recommendations to others to visit this halal destination		.815	19.205	***	1.12
Y6	Intention to tell positive things about this halal destination to others		.838	17.622	***	1.22
Y7	Intention to invite relatives / friends to visit together to this halal destination		.832	18.541	***	1.26

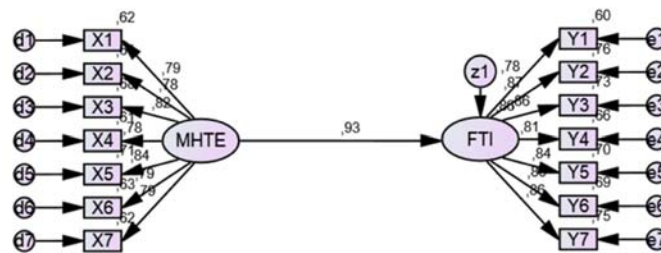
($p < 0.05$; $\lambda_i > 0.50$; $CR > 0.70$; $AVE > 0.50$)

The results of the model suitability testing state that the model is fit with the data ($RMSEA = 0.057 \leq 0.08$; $GFI = 0.942 \geq 0.90$; $AGFI = 0.920 \geq 0.90$) and can be generalized to the population. The test results for the factor weight coefficient for each indicator used are valid and reliable in measuring latent variables. Estimation of the CR coefficient and the square root of AVE indicate that the proposed measurement model has adequate reliability and discriminant validity. Therefore, the measurement model can be used to test the proposed structural model. Sample data in this research have no outlier cases (mahalanobis distance or $\chi^2 (76; 0.001) = 119.85$). None of the observation numbers have mahalanobis d-squared values greater than 119.85. The normality test results show that the c.r. value for multivariate is 62.288 which is not between ± 2.58 . On a multivariate basis, sample data are not normally distributed ($62.288 > 2.58$). Research data do not include multicollinearity and singularity. The result of determinant of sample covariance matrix calculation is 0.000, approaching zero. The conclusion on the measurement model with research data of 476 respondents is that the model obtained is a fit model. This is also substantiated by each indicator tested as a valid and significant indicator.

3.1.2. Structural Model

The results of the tests on the structural equation model on figure 1 state that the model is fit with the data ($RMSEA = 0.057 \leq 0.08$; $GFI = 0.942 \geq 0.90$; $AGFI = 0.920 \geq 0.90$). This means that the proposed structural model can be generalized to the population.

Figure 1. Parameter estimation of structural equation models



The results of the tests on the structural equation model on figure 1 state that the model is fit with the data (RMSEA = 0.057 ≤ 0.08; GFI = 0.942 ≥ 0.90; AGFI = 0.920 ≥ 0.90). This means that the proposed structural model can be generalized to the population.

The testing of the significantly proposed hypothesis ($p < 0.05$) is entirely acceptable. This means that MHTe has a significant effect on FTI. The magnitude of the effect of MHTe on FTI is 86,3%. The remaining 13,7% is effect of other latent variables that are not explained in the model.

Table 3. Structural Model Estimation and Parameter Test

Hypothesis	Estimate standardized	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result
Ho: MHTe → FTI	.851	.052	16.424	***	Ho rejected

The estimated coefficient of R^2 (table 4) shows that the proposed model is effective in explaining the phenomenon under research ($R^2 = 0.863 > 50\%$). Nevertheless, there are still other variables outside the model that need to be researched (13,7%) to explain the FTI phenomenon achieved by halal tourism destinations.

Table 4. Estimation of Structural Model Equation

Model	Structural equation	R^2
FTI	$FTI = 0.851 MHTe + z1$	0.863

3.2. Discussion

Memorable travel experience has become an increasing topic in recent years. In line with tourist behaviour trends that require active interaction with the destination visited, the quality of a memorable experience has become a benchmark for the success of destinations in reaching tourists (Mahdzar *et al.* 2015; Kim and Chen 2018). Marketing communication carried out by tourism businesses also shows that selling tourism products is selling experience. The travel experience becomes unique values of a tourism destination. Therefore, providing a memorable travel experience for tourists is a must to win the highly competitive competition (Ritchie and Crouch 2010; Ritchie and Crouch 1999; Akkuş and Güllüce 2016; Ritchie and Crouch 2003). The results of this research also confirmed this statement and also confirmed the results of previous researches which state that memorable travel experience affect future travel intentions. Muslim tourists have a tendency to return to a halal destination to get the memorable experience they have gained on previous visits. This finding strengthens the results of the previous researches (Mahdzar *et al.* 2015; Zhang and Buhalis 2018; Chen, feng Cheng and Kim 2020; Kim 2014; Kim 2010; Tukamushaba, Xiao and Ladkin 2016). As a whole or individually, all indicators are able to facilitate memorable experiences and have an impact on increasing future travel intention.

This research produces several important findings. Experience related to meeting the personal needs of Muslim tourists is the highest achievement factor. Kim and Chen (2018), Trauer and Ryan (2005) states that destination managers need to personally meet the emotional aspects of tourists in order to strengthen tourist's attachment to the destinations they visit.

The next important finding is that travelling is a means to increase knowledge. Tourism is seen as an activity that is related to improving the intellectuality of tourists themselves (Kim, Ritchie and Tung 2010). Tourists try to get new knowledge and information to broaden their insights in an atmosphere of recreation, pleasure, and excitement. Halal tourism destinations are able to provide new knowledge and information on valuable Islamic values for Muslim tourists while travelling to the destinations.

Another important finding is that local cultural components are able to create memorable experiences. Tourists really appreciate the local Islamic culture when they get a chance to interact with the community. Muslim

tourists really want to be actively involved in enjoying Muslim-friendly tourist attractions while visiting destinations. The value of authenticity of the destination and local experience makes a deep impression and is very meaningful to tourists (Vargas-Sánchez and Moral-Moral 2019; Tukamushaba, Xiao and Ladkin 2016; Cho 2012). Halal tourism destination managers need to design and develop programs and tour packages that contain local Islamic cultural content and high freedom of interaction to create the memory of a positive travel experience.

Reinforcing the fulfilment of the personal needs of Muslim tourists, increasing knowledge, while getting an interactive presentation of local Islamic culture are considered to be able to increase the desire to visit again in the future and also the desire to invite others to visit halal tourism destinations together. Islamic experience attributes can become satisfaction and loyalty intention factors of halal destinations (Rahman *et al.* 2020).

Conclusion

In tourism marketing studies, the importance of creating Memorable Travel Experience (MTE) has become a necessity. Studies of consumer behavior, products, and marketing strategies emphasize the importance of the quality of travel experience. This research is conducted to be able to reveal the components that form MTE as well as its effect on Future Travel Intention (FTI). This research significantly reveals indicators with the highest achievement in forming Memorable Travel Experience (MTE), that is the fulfilment of personal preferences, knowledge, and local cultural content in travelling. Halal tourism is an implication of a market driven in a tourism destination.

This research provides some important notes on managerial implications. First, local content that includes elements of physical and non-physical products is the main resource in developing halal tourism destination products. These elements make deep positive impressions on Muslim tourists. This research helps the management of halal tourism destinations and industries in developing halal tourism destination products. The managers need to design and to package experiential-based activities, programs, and tour packages and emphasize unique local experience. Second, the positive and memorable experience expected by Muslim tourists places the quality and hospitality factors of human resources service providers and the community very important. The quality of interaction and the value of locality that Muslim tourists want to obtain is a contribution from human resources service providers and the community. Third, the purpose of developing halal tourism destinations is to get tourists' loyalty and destination competitiveness. FTI can be used to measure the quality of relatively newly developed destination icons. In this research, the consideration of the researchers using FTI as an endogenous variable is that Indonesia as a research locus is still relatively new in starting to develop halal tourism as one of the leading iconic destinations. Therefore, in order to be able to measure its ability to reach Muslim tourists and to compete with other halal tourism destinations, it is necessary to carry out further research in the future related to the effect on the level of loyalty and competitiveness as a halal tourism destination.

Finally, related to the limitation of this research, data collection is conducted when the respondents are still doing travel activities at the destination, and is not in the form of an exit survey. This can lead to the results of the assessment given to the questions about MTE and FTI are not final. In order to minimize information bias, the researchers select the respondents who have spent several days in the destination they visit.

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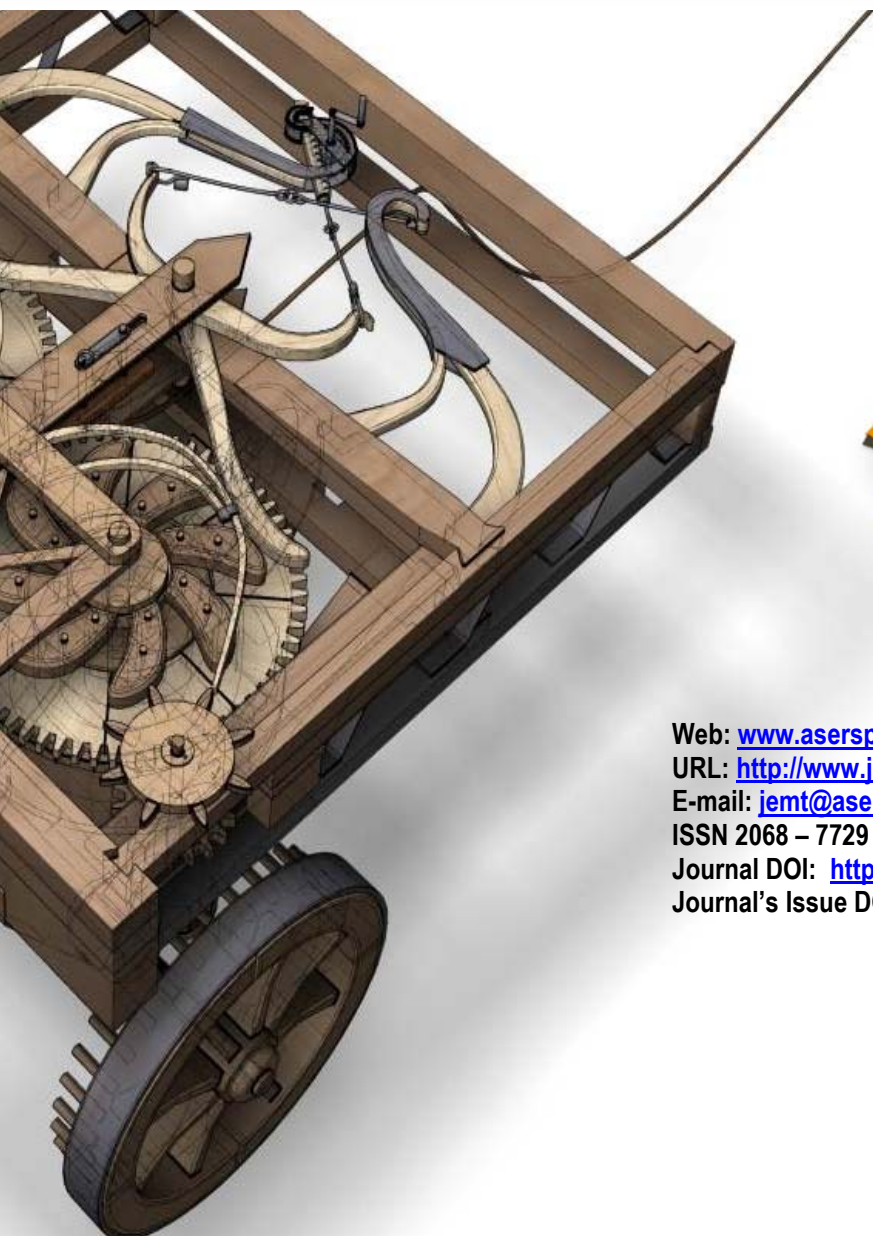
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