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Explore the Potential for Tourist Scams in Indonesia

Tarjo TARJO

Universitas Trunojoyo Madura, Indonesia
Corresponding author: tarjo@trunojoyo.ac.id

Alexander ANGGONO

Universitas Trunojoyo Madura, Indonesia
alexander.anggono@trunojoyo.ac.id

Eklamsia SAKTI

Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Kesehatan Ngudia Husada Madura, Indonesia
eklams000@gmail.com

Zakik ZAKIK

Universitas Trunojoyo Madura, Indonesia
zakik@trunojoyo.ac.id

Muh SYARIF

Universitas Trunojoyo Madura, Indonesia
syarif@trunojoyo.ac.id

Otniel SAFKAUR

Universitas Cenderawasih, Indonesia
otniel_safkaur@akt.feb.uncen.ac.id

Jamaliah SAID

Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia
jamaliah533@uitm.edu.my

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Abstract:

This study aims to explore the potential for tourist scams that have occurred in the tourism industry. This research uses a bibliometric system. The data source comes from Scopus and SINTA indexed papers. The number of documents used is 110 papers. Based on the results of the study shows that there are 28 tourist scam schemes. Of the 28 schemes, price scams are the most common schemes in 48 papers. Other methods, such as corruption (38 documents), service scams (34 articles), fake products/souvenirs (23 articles), and food scams (30 papers). Meanwhile, in Indonesia, there were 17 tourist scam schemes found.

Keywords: tourism; tourist scams; price scams; corruption; service scams; food scams.

JEL Classification: G32; H83; R11; L83; L88; Q56; Z32.

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has hit the tourism industry hard (World Bank 2021). During the Covid-19 pandemic, the tourism industry continued to experience a decline in visitors (UNWTO 2022). Based on a report from the World Tourism Barometer in January 2022, for the last three years (2019-2021), the number of tourists visiting has

decreased drastically, namely -71.7% (UNWTO 2022). Meanwhile, from a regional perspective, the Asia Pacific region experienced the most decline, namely -94.2% (UNWTO 2022). When viewed from a loss perspective, the tourism industry has experienced a decrease in profits of 74% (World Bank 2021). On the other hand, the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting crisis have increased the potential for fraud in the tourism sector (Jamil *et al.* 2021; Pan *et al.* 2021). Based on the global ACFE survey, the number of fraud cases found in the tourism sector was 41, with a median loss of \$73,000. In addition, fraud schemes that often occur in the tourism industry are tourist scams (Pearce 2011).

Based on the explanation above, this research will explore the potential for tourism scams based on findings from previous research. This research is different from previous research because the research summarizes all tourist scams that have occurred in the world in one study. This method is different from previous research, which only focused on one country (Khuong and Nguyen 2017; Dogra and Karri 2021; Malleka, Booyens, and Hoogendoorn 2022; Hlushkova and Ushakova 2019).

1. Literature Review

Tourist scams exist in many countries and are part of a long-standing area of research relating to crime against tourists. Tourist scams are part of the attention to crime against tourists. *Tourist scams* are crimes that consist of actions that are contrary to written law or applicable cases in both tourist-producing and tourist-receiving countries (Pearce 2011). Tourist scams occur because the fraudster gains financial benefits from a tourist where the targeted individual is the tourist (Pearce 2011). The scammers take advantage of interactions with tourists. For example, the initial willingness of tourists to entertain interactions and potentially seek to profit or be personally benefited from the encounter (Pearce 2011). The encounter leads the con artist to perform several tricks to drain tourists' money.

Based on the explanation above, three factors encourage tourist scams: pressure, opportunity, and rationalization (Cressey 1950). Pressure comes from the economy. Usually, countries that only use the tourism sector as the country's primary income have a terrible economy, and inflation often occurs (World Bank 2021). Opportunities for tourist scams to occur due to tourists' ignorance of the potential for fraud in tourist destinations. Tourists become victims of a scam because of language differences, vitality differences, and information difference (Li and Pearce 2016). Rationalization can take the form of a habit. Usually, tourists let tourist scams happen because that is what often happens there (Khuong and Nguyen 2017; Ly, Yi, and Fok 2022).

2. Methodology

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method. The technique used to analyze research problems using bibliometrics. Bibliometric is a type of research that utilizes literature from a specific period. This study uses the literature on the theme of "tourist scams" for the last 20 years (2002-2022).

The literature used comes from published papers indexed by Scopus and SINTA. Data sources come from various websites, such as Google Scholar, Science Direct, Emerald Insight, and others. The keywords used are "tourist scams," "tourist fraud," "tourist crime," "tourism scams," "tourism crime," "tourism fraud," "tourism corruption," "crime perspective in tourism," and "yellow tourism." While the keywords used for the Indonesian paper are "fraud in tourist attractions," "fraud in tourism," and "fraud in travel."

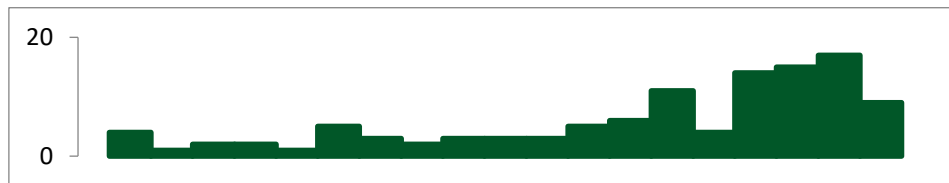
The bibliometric results will present the number of tourist scams found. This study will present two main discussions. First, the development of tourist scams research. Furthermore, tourist scams that have occurred will be combined with the phenomenon of fraud in Indonesia so that it will produce several potential tourist scams that occur in Indonesia.

3. Discussion

In this section, we will describe the mapping of bibliometric results. Based on the bibliometric results, we used 110 papers indexed by Scopus or SINTA. We will present the bibliometric results in several stages, starting from the year of research, the research area, and the tourist scams scheme. The following Figure 1 is research growth from 2002 to 2022.

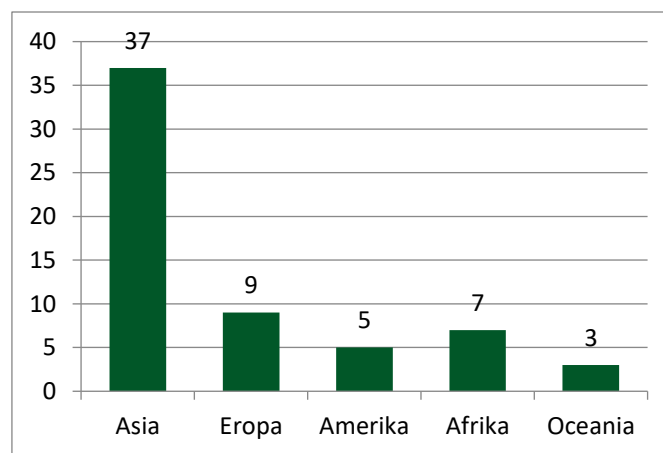
Based on Figure 1, starting from 2002-2022, the number of studies discussing tourist scams is still fluctuating. Although fluctuating, the number of research on tourist scams continues to grow from 2019-2022. The increase in the number of studies in these years was due to the Covid pandemic that hit the world (Xu *et al.* 2022). In 2019 there were 14 papers discussing tourist scam schemes, followed by 15 papers (2020), 17 papers (2021), and nine papers (2022). For 2022 it is only taken from 01 January – 30 September 2022, so there is still potential to add more at the end of the year.

Figure 1. Research Year (2002-2022)



Next, we will discuss areas that are often used as research objects. Based on Figure 2, the region most often used as an object of research is the Asian continent (37 papers). Some countries that made the most significant contribution were China, Thailand, India, and Indonesia. Furthermore, the European continent with nine papers, the African continent with seven papers, the American continent had five papers and the continent of Oceania 3 papers. Based on these results, research on tourist scams has been conducted in various countries and continents.

Figure 2. Research Area



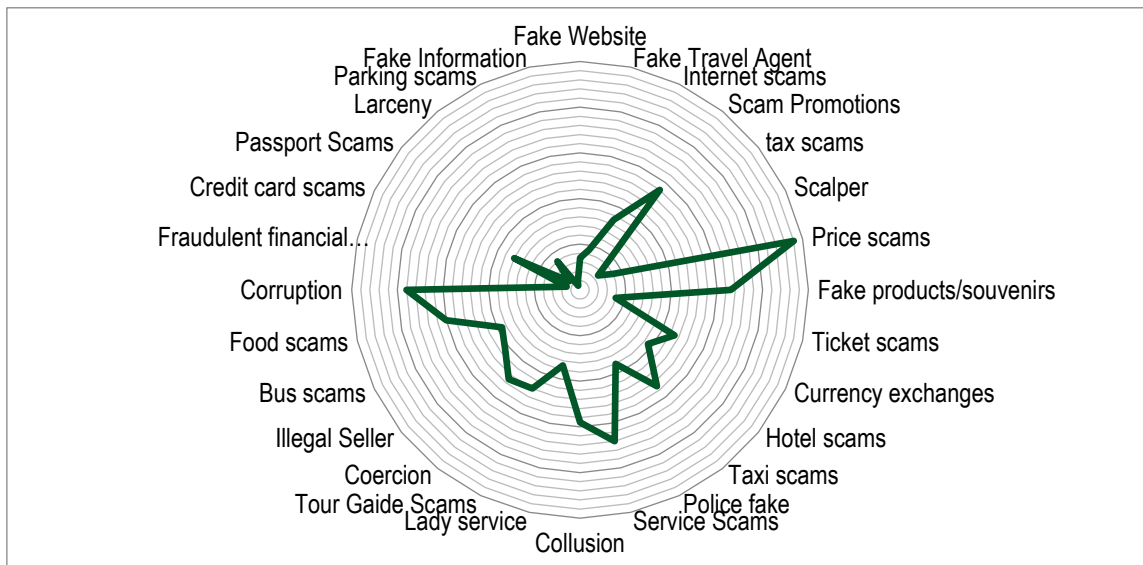
Finally, we will present a mapping of 28 tourist scam schemes that previous studies have recorded. Based on Figure 3, the most frequently found tourist schemes are price scams (48 papers). We were then followed by corruption (bribes and gratuities) with 38 papers, service scams (34 papers), fake products/souvenirs (33 papers), food scams (30 papers), collusion (29 papers), promotion scams (28 papers), taxi scams (27 papers), coercion (25 papers), tour guide scams (24 papers), currency exchange (23 papers), illegal sellers (21 papers), bus scams (19 papers), hotel scams (19 papers), police fake (18 papers), internet scams (17 papers), lady service (17 papers), credit card scams (16 papers), fake travel agents (9 papers), ticket scams (8 papers), larceny (8 papers), scalpers (8 papers), fake websites (7 papers), tax scams (5 papers), fraudulent financial statements (3 papers), passport scams (3 papers), fake information (2 papers), and parking scams (1 paper).

Based on the results of research and bibliometrics, 11 papers specifically discuss Indonesia. From these 11 papers, we found 17 tourist scams schemes that occurred in Indonesia. The following is an explanation of tourist scam cases in Indonesia:

Fake Travel Agent is a fraudulent scheme carried out by travel agents who do not have an official license or provide fake services (Dickerson 2004). Research by Kumaladewi *et al.* (2017); Othman *et al.* (2021) found cases of artificial travel agents in Indonesia, such as First Travel. First Travel company has good intentions, namely facilitating the Indonesian people to perform the Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages. The longer the number of First Travel consumers, the more. However, in 2017 many consumers failed to go for Hajj or Umrah. This case indicates that there is fraud that occurred in First Travel.

The First Travel case also promoted scams (Kumaladewi *et al.* 2017; Othman *et al.* 2021). First Travel aggressively promotes and establishes marketing networks throughout Indonesia by recruiting partnering agents, such as investment businesses, with 1,173 agents, including 835 active agents (Setiawan and Ardison 2021). This massive promotion makes the number of First Travel dependents higher for departing for Hajj or Umrah. However, as we all know, in the end, First Travel failed to dispatch consumers, so the promotions carried out by First Travel trapped consumers.

Figure 3. Tourist Scams Scheme



Price Scams is the case that most often occurs in all tourist destinations in Indonesia (Novianti, Susanto, and Widiyanti 2021). Nicely, Singh, and Zhu (2021) found many sellers selling their products at above-reasonable prices, some even asking foreign tourists to pay more. Nicely, Singh, and Zhu (2021) also found other cases, for example, a sudden price increase and a significant price drop. After giving a discount, visitors had to buy another product in its place. Price scams also occur in product weight. Sometimes the price given is more expensive than the quantity of the product (Nisak 2017). Nicely, Singh, and Zhu (2021) found many sellers selling substandard products and some counterfeit goods at very high prices. In addition, several sellers put illegal labels on their products so that tourists are interested in buying them (Paramitha and Suryaningsih 2021).

Ticket scams usually occur at parking prices above the price according to local government regulations (Barrett 2011). A similar thing happened in Indonesia, but there are also some phenomena where fees are only charged to visitors, while for the surrounding community, it is free (Dahlia, Daswat and Darwis 2020).

Agasi and Indrawati (2019) suggest that street money changers or companies that have small capital and are not yet legal entity so that they join an institution that is already a legal entity and raise capital together. Many unlicensed Money Changer companies still operate around tourist areas, for example, in the Kuta area of Bali. Related to the problem of unlicensed money changer companies has a significant effect on the image of Bali tourism in the eyes of the world, as we know that many Balinese people have their livelihood from the tourism sector. When foreign tourists no longer believe in Bali, the negative impact is extraordinary and impacts tourist visits to Bali.

Taxi scheme that often occurs is higher than the regular price (Brugulat and Coromina 2021). This scheme usually victims are tourists from within the country and abroad. In addition, complaints of high prices tourists must pay are not following the services provided (Nicely, Singh and Zhu 2021). Sometimes some tourists use taxis forcibly even though the taxis are not in good condition (Nicely, Singh and Zhu 2021).

Services in tourist destinations have high prices but have shallow service quality (Novianti, Susanto, and Widiyanti 2021). Hammons (2015) found that many people disguised themselves as caretakers or fake shamans in religious tourism areas. They disguise themselves as shamans who provide services in the form of future predictions and deceive tourists who come there (Hammons 2015). Nicely *et al.* (2021) found similar things, such as the cost of services in tourist destinations being more expensive than in other places. Nicely *et al.* (2021) also found something unique: people give visitors products and services as if they were free but then ask for payment or make other purchases. Some communities offer free services, but they charge tourists after receiving the services provided (Nicely, Singh and Zhu 2021). In addition, poor service in tourist destinations is also a severe problem for tourists (Nicely, Singh and Zhu 2021).

Collusion scheme usually involves several groups, such as managers, local communities, and traders. As happened in western Indonesia, communities and managers lead tourists to fall into their traps, such as the practice of fake shamans (Hammons 2015). Nicely, Singh, and Zhu (2021) found several examples of collusion in Indonesia, such as cooperation between parking attendants and taxi drivers and collusion between brokers, guides, and car and taxi drivers.

Weifeng (2005) found many fake tour guides in Indonesia. Other literature also finds people who pretend to be tour guides and often mislead arriving tourists (Nicely, Singh, and Zhu 2021). Besides fake tour guides, there are also many brokers in Indonesia (Weifeng 2005). Nicely, Singh and Zhu (2021) found something similar, but what was most troubling was that the touts were colluding and providing untrue information to tourists.

Sellers usually carry out coercion. Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, and Arcodia (2018) interviewed a solo traveler. He found that about ten people were blocking the exit and forcing him to buy something, or they would not let him go. In addition, food prices in tourist destinations are too high, the quantity is wrong, and the quality of food is poor (Nisak 2017).

The most common corruption scheme is bribery (Brugulat and Coromina 2021; Dahlia, Daswat, and Darwis 2020). Research by Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, and Arcodia (2018) found many cases of larceny in Indonesia. Finally, parking scheme is usually in the form of a more expensive parking fee if parking the vehicle in a tourist destination (Nicely *et al.* 2021). This scheme can also be carried out by taxi drivers who intentionally park and charge parking fees to tourists (Nicely, Singh and Zhu 2021). This information can come from touts, guides, local people, and car and taxi drivers to deceive tourists and charge fees for the information (Nicely, Singh, and Zhu 2021).

Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to explore tourist scams in Indonesia. This research uses a bibliometric approach. The number of papers used as data sources is 110 papers. Based on the bibliometric results, this study found 28 schemes, and 17 of them occurred in Indonesia.

The theoretical implication of this research is to add to the research literature on tourist scams and forensic accounting. The practical implication is to provide information to tourists who visit Indonesia to be careful with the potential for tourist scams in tourist destinations. The following implication is for managers of tourist destinations to carry out anti-fraud actions to suppress the potential for tourist scams. Finally, providing information to the Indonesian government so that the government can improve and cooperate with managers to manage tourist destinations even better and free from fraud.

Suggestions for future research are to conduct research using a qualitative approach. This method can be used to ensure the truth about tourist scams in Indonesia. Another method that can be done is to conduct surveys and empirical research.

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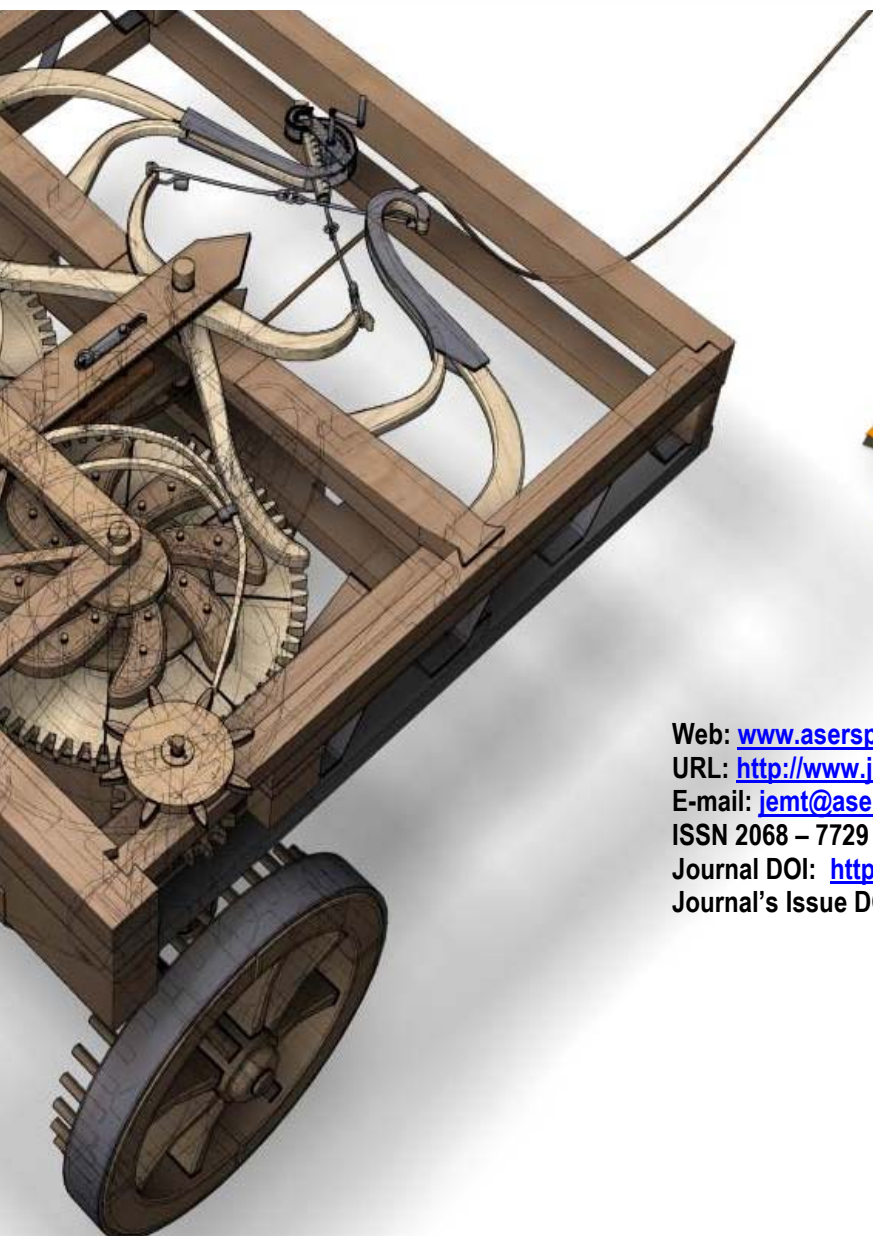
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