Examining Certification Values of Certified Employees in Indonesia's Tourism Industry

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Abstract

The study of values of certification is lacking in the tourism industry. This study is an exploratory study based on the perception of tourism workforce in tourism industry in Indonesia as a developing country. Initially, a descriptive analysis was used to provide professional's viewpoints about values of certification. Later a confirmatory factor analysis was employed to explore parameters which construct values of certification in the tourism industry. The result of the study shows that parameters of intrinsic values dominate the construct of values of certification. This finding implies that the implementation of values of certification is beyond the expectation and there is a need to enforce regulations related to values of certification in developing country.

Keywords: Values of Certification; Confirmatory Factor Analysis; Tourism Professionals.

1. Introduction

There are many factors which can influence the satisfied experience of tourists in the destination and one of them is the quality of human resources. The human resources are those who are responsible to create products and deliver service in the destination. The quality of destination relies on the ability and competence of people who managed the destination including government sector and industry as [1] contends that tourism industry truly depends on human capital. In the tourism development, [2] believe that human resources play important roles to ensure the sustainability of a destination.

Admittedly, attention to the development of workforce in tourism industry has been intensively given by several governments especially in ASEAN countries [3, 4]. This kind of strategy has advantaged the tourism industry because the target which will be achieved is the creation of service quality in accordance with international standards of tourism industry. It is expected that the result of product quality will meet the demand of market. However, generally the tourism industry is rapidly becoming host to exponentially increasing numbers of unskilled employees at a time when it is struggling to meet present and future requirements in qualifications, skills and competencies set upon it by a globalized economy and the rapid acceleration in technological development [5].

The emerging new and global economies are becoming a challenge for the hospitality and tourism industry and the demand of workforce with skills and specialty is growing fast for the development of the industry [6]. On the other hand, professional certification for workforce is also required and certification programs established by various industries have been developed to achieve the quality of the workforce. Professional certification programs have become a demand which should be taken into account by professionals, since professionals are included as an integral professional landscape of their professions [7]. It is

probable that good quality of certification programs does promote professional identity and result in better services being delivered to the customer. Furthermore, [6] argued that the development of certification programs reflects to the change of labor market and it can be adaptable a certain job. Hence, human resources are the main emphasis of the quality if they obtain values and rewards through a continuing process of career development [8].

Liberalism of ASEAN has come to this region and tourism is one of the primary sectors of service liberalism [9]. Together with other sectors including air transportation, e-ASEAN and health services, tourism sector has been agreed to be one of the initial packages in the implementation of liberalism in the area of service in ASEAN. In order to support the implementation of the liberalism in the tourism sector, ASEAN countries have established ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals (MRA-TP). It is important to view that MRA-TP is a sustainable process which has been started since the agreement set. This agreement will allow professionals to work anywhere within this region and professional certification is the passport for them. This MRA-TP can be a challenge and also opportunity to professionals. If they are certified they can compete in the labor market in this region but if they are indifferent toward certification they can be marginalized in the job market competition by both domestic and overseas certified professionals.

In terms of human resource quality, practically the Indonesian professional workforce in tourism industry is able to compete with tourism workforce of other ASEAN countries. However, there are several problems faced by the Indonesian tourism industry [9]. In order to face the liberalism, one of the important problems is the inadequacy of tourism professionals who hold authorized certification. This is because professionals may not look at the importance of certification for them to enter the international labor market. This can also provide difficulties to track down the numbers of workforce who are already certified in this sector. Furthermore, this also shows that all tourism stakeholders in

tourism industry are not aware of the administrative and competitive issues to make the most of efforts to face MRA-TP. There have been many studies of values of certification in areas which need highly required skills such as medical, nursing and accounting but there is a scarcity of studies related to tourism industry especially in developing countries. Thus, this study investigated values of certification perceived by certified professionals of tourism industry in Indonesia as one of the developing country in ASEAN region. Furthermore, this research aims to validate values of certification in the tourism industry based on the Indonesian context. Practically, this study aims to provide valuable implications which can be useful for industry, government and professional to implement values of certification in the tourism industry.

2. The Concept of Values of Certification

In [10] argue that certification is generally a voluntary process which is administered by associations or other professional organizations, and involves more qualitative standards acknowledged within a profession. This definition can lead to the terms of competency certification and professional certification. For short, competency certification can be defined as an independent verification that the set of competencies or work skills required to perform a particular job are in fact present. Competency certification is a process which can theoretically verify that all the required skills necessary to do a particular job are met with the standards. In [10] also argue that professional certification is a mechanism widely used in many professions to describe the formal recognition of professional or technical competence. Therefore, in this context of research, competency certification and professional certification can be used interchangeably.

Professional certification can be seen as a demonstration of adherence to ethical responsibilities and the importance of long-term professional goals and social roles [11]. In the process of gaining certification there are several ethical considerations which should be applied by an employee who is going to accomplish a level of qualification. The ethical responsibility includes attitudes which deal with proper moral path to perform skills and knowledge in every competency standard. Furthermore, professional certification can lead to competent behaviour which can assure that an employee has met the requirements for a job [12]. The competencies achieved will provide benefits for the employee for his professional goals and also will ensure that his/her roles in the community can be fulfilled with his professional performance. It can be said that an employee is judged competent based on evidence of skills, knowledge and behaviour which are in accordance with the ethical consideration so that the employee can be professional and responsible for his/her roles in the society.

In [13] point out that the certification of labour competencies usually involves verification of their ability to accomplish an identified task at a particular level of proficiency. In order to achieve a particular level, certain requirements should be fulfilled including degrees with the completion of formal (often academic) training and standardized licensing process, practical experience, the written examination, certain documentation (such as letters of reference, supervisory references, work samples or reports, and other licenses or certifications) as well as practical tests of abilities to be used on the job [14].

There are several motives for a person to undertake certification. The most common reasons of individuals to gain certification include salary or monetary compensation, positive feedback from superior and peers, self-esteem, self-worth, and confidence [15, 16]. A survey has proved that a certain certified professional can earn more money than non-certified ones [16]. However, there is a doubt the certification for professionals in the tourism industry in Indonesia may not provide a significant impact on financial benefits and recognition [17].

Instead of the importance of certification, several barriers also can occur to achieve the goal of professional certification. In [18] claimed that obstacles of the implementation of certification including cost issues and shortage of institutional reward and support, lack of experience and lack of personal time. However, their study shows there was a high value of certification. In this regard, owing to the increasing of accountability demand in all sectors in the community, public has become more concerned about the continuing competence [19].

3. Values of Certification in Tourism

Certifications are growing rapidly in many sectors [20], and this trend also has affected the tourism industry. The need of certification in tourism is for the sake of service quality [21]. Certification can be a preparation for hospitality professionals to deal with growing technological advances in a global economy so they can still exist in the future [22]. The increasing competition to gain overseas tourists and the lack of qualified hospitality professionals have triggered many tourism ministries in the world to discover certification programmes in order to develop the human resources [23]. All areas of tourism must provide their working standards as the whole package of certification system in the tourism industry, and therefore professional certification is required to always meet the standards set up. In other words, certification in tourism is also conducted because of intensifying global competition of destinations and also labour markets where people want to work in any place. For example, in [24] came up with a study on the hospitality industry in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and recommend that the so called "Saudization" requires certification for local employees in order to meet the international standards and improve local employee's quality and maintain local staff in the middle level position.

In the tourism and hospitality industry, stakeholders like professional associations play an important role for professional certification. A study conducted by [23] aims to review participation of associations in the hospitality sector including food service, housekeeping, hotel administration, and restaurant administration in North America. In [23] found several significant goals of certification in the industry. Firstly, certification can provide award recognition to employees who display a great level of competence and professional knowledge and skills. Secondly, certification increases standards of the profession. Thirdly, certification can augment the performance in the profession through ongoing professional development programs. Furthermore, implementing certification may face several obstructions because of internal and external factors of an employee. For example, in [23] have identified several obstructions to implement professional certification system for related tourism associations which are: divisions within the leadership group; who should be allowed certification; initial cost of programme development; member resistance; lack of support from board of directors; charges to members; and other activities of the association judged more important.

4. Elements of Values of Certification

There are a number of studies which have emphasized the values of certification for professionals. Several studies [25, 26] have assumed that values of certification tend to be the internal benefits that a certified worker will have after having the certification at work. However, other studies [27, 18, 19] have used intrinsic values and extrinsic values as indicators for measurement of professional values of certification. Several studies which employed values of certification can be seen below:

Table 1: Values of Certification Based on Several Studies

[25]	[26]
- Advanced knowledge and skills - Job advancement - Occupational growth - Special privilege within occupational norms.	- Personal sense of achievement - Technical knowledge - Confidence to do job - Knowledge to do better job - Networking Contracts - Prestige
[19]	**[27]**
- Enhances feeling of personal accomplishment - Provides personal satisfaction - Validates specialized knowledge - Indicates professional growth - Indicates attainment of a practice standard - Provides evidence of professional commitment - Provides professional challenge - Enhances professional credibility - Enhances personal confidence in clinical abilities - Indicates level of clinical competence - Provides evidence of accountability - Increases marketability - Promotes recognition from peers - Enhances professional autonomy - Promotes recognition from other professionals - Promotes recognition from employers - Increases consumer confidence - Increases salary	Intrinsic Values: - Enhances feeling of personal accomplishment - Provides personal satisfaction - Validates specialized knowledge - Indicates professional growth - Enhances professional credibility - Provides evidence of professional Commitment - Provides professional challenge - Indicates attainment of a practice standard - Enhances personal confidence in clinical abilities - Indicates level of clinical competence - Provides evidence of accountability - Enhances professional autonomy Extrinsic Values: - Increases personal marketability in job market - Promotes recognition from peers - Promotes recognition from other health professionals - Promotes recognition from employers - Increases consumer confidence - Increases salary

Most studies which seek the perceived values of certification for professionals were conducted in the area of nursing. The most representative values of certification for professionals may be provided by [19]. They have developed 18 items of values of certification in the area of nursing and the validated the items called Perceived Value of Certification Tool (PVCT). Since then, several scholars such as [27, 18] have used the PVCT for further studies in the area of nursing. Values of certification developed by [19] seem to be appropriate in the tourism context because it covers the general aspect of values which are applicable to the tourism industry, and it can also evaluate values that can be useful for a professional internally and values that can be received externally based on the tourism context.

5. Methodology

This study was conducted in South Sulawesi Province of the Republic of Indonesia. Indonesia is a developing country which has been concerned its quality of tourism workforce through certification of competence. The samples of this study consist of 360 certified professionals from different level of position (operational level, supervisory level and managerial level) from a total population of 2204 professionals based on the data issued by a professional certification board in that province. The sample size followed the table of sample size suggested by Krejcie and Morgan but the researcher decided to round up the sample size to 360 samples. All statements in the questionnaire were measured using a 5 point Likert scale.

This research has adapted the measurement developed by [27]. However, few changes were made after several discussions about values of certification with experts such as academicians, chairman of professional associations in tourism, master assessors

and a director of professional tourism board. The adapted measurement can be seen as follows.

Table 2: Construct of Values of Certification of the Research

Indicators	Code	Items for Statement
Internal Factors	VC1	Personal accomplishment
	VC2	Personal Satisfaction
	VC3	Validation of knowledge
	VC4	Professional growth
	VC5	Professional credibility
	VC6	Professional challenge
	VC7	Attainment of a practice standard
	VC8	Personal confidence
	VC9	Level of competence
	VC10	Evidence of accountability
	VC11	Professional autonomy
External Factors	VC12	Benefit difference between uncertified and certified employees.

This research applied several stages for piloting the study which included conducting validity, reliability and refinement of the measurement. The validity processes consisted of face validity and content analysis that involved language expert and academic expert and analysis of Pearson Product Moment. Relevant editorial changes were applied based on the language expert and academic expert review.

In terms of analysis, descriptive analysis was initially used to explain the perception of certified professional descriptively about the values of certification. It includes frequency, mean score and standard deviation. Next, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) or Measurement Model was used to analyse that data. This study has employed AMOS version 20 for CFA. The CFA tested indicators that form the construct of values of certification. The measurement model of values of certification construct was modified by correlating items suggested by the software in order to meet the required Fitness Indexes as recommended by [28]. The aim of the CFA for this study was to find which items cannot construct the values of certification in the context of tourism. Thus, CFA is used to answer the research problem of this study.

6. Profile of Respondents

In terms response rate, the researcher actually distributed around 400 questionnaires and 367 of the questionnaires returned. However, 8 questionnaires consisted of unusable responses and they cannot be used in the analysis. Thus, the researcher decided to get another respondent in order to achieve the number of targeted respondents. Amongst the 360 certified respondents 221 were males and 139 respondents were females. There were 31 respondents who have no high level of education, 271 have completed Diploma 3 and 45 have completed bachelor degree. Overall there were more males compared to females and most of the certified employees have completed their degree in Diploma 3. Amongst the 360 respondents, the majority of certified respondents occupied operational level of position. Most of the certified employees were working in the hospitality industry including housekeeping (36), food and beverage (34), food production (33) and front office (18). The small number of certified respondents was those who worked in the area of tour guiding (15).

7. Descriptive Analysis

This section discusses the results of descriptive analysis of values of certification. These statistics are helpful to estimate means and standard deviations of all items which can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Values of Certification

| Items	Code	Mean	SD
Personal accomplishment	VC1	3.93	0.83
Personal Satisfaction	VC2	4.27	0.57
Validation of knowledge	VC3	3.62	0.85
Professional growth	VC4	3.86	0.83
Professional credibility	VC5	3.93	1.54
Professional challenge	VC6	4.27	0.62
Attainment of a practice standard	VC7	4.18	0.67
Personal confidence	VC8	3.84	0.73
Level of competence	VC9	3.47	1.28
Evidence of accountability	VC10	4.03	0.78
Professional autonomy	VC11	4.04	0.69
Benefit Difference between uncertified and certified employees	VC12	2.59	0.87
Increase of marketability in the job market	VC13	3.68	0.78
Promotion of recognition from peers	VC14	3.34	1.33
Promotion of recognition from other tourism professionals	VC15	3.95	1.50
Promotion of recognition from employers	VC16	3.77	1.29
Increase of consumer confidence	VC17	3.74	0.74
Increase of salary	VC18	1.94	0.67

Table 3 indicates that the mean scores for values of certification ranged from 1.94 to 4.27 with standard deviation ranging from 0.57 to 1.54. Overall, the mean score of the variable of values of certification is 3.69. The highest mean score of the items of values of certification is the mean score of personal satisfaction (4.27) which is in the range between agreement and strong agreement. This mean score is supported by the score of standard deviation of 0.57 which is the lowest standard deviation meaning that the trend of responses of the respondents on this item is similar because almost 95% of them have shown their agreement on personal satisfaction.

On the other hand, there are two items with low mean score and they are in the range of disagreement. These items include increase of salary (VC18) and Benefit Difference between uncertified and certified employees (VC12). The mean score of increase of salary is the lowest which is 1.94 with standard deviation of 0.67, meaning that almost 84% of the respondents based on the frequency of the item have shown their disagreement on increase of salary. Almost 50% of the respondents have shown their disagreement on difference between being certified and uncertified. This item has a mean score of 2.59 with considerably low standard deviation (0.87). In other words, most of respondents have somewhat agreed and disagreed on this item.

8. Results and Discussion

CFA was employed to specify the measurement and structural models for both independent and dependent latent variables, to establish the convergent validity and discriminant validity of the constructs in this study. The initial process of SEM was conducted in order to test factors that established each variable of this research through CFA. CFA is used to test unidimensionality of exogenous and endogenous variables. In CFA, overall model fit indicated the degree where specified indicators represent the hypothesized constructs.

Firstly, nine out of 18 items are initially accepted because these items have met the cut-off factor loading of 0.45 [28]. However, when the measurement model of values of certification was recomputed with 9 items, the result shows that there are still two items having factor loadings less than 0.45. Thus, the two items were dropped and only seven items were accepted with the final values of factor loading more than 0.45. The result of computation can be seen in Fig. 1.
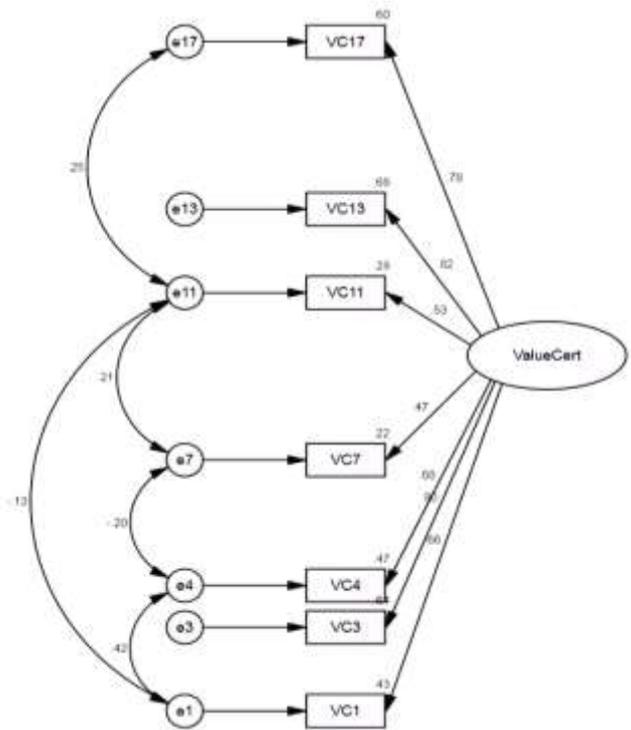
Fig. 1: Final Measurement Model (CFA) Values of Certification

The final measurement model or the result of CFA for values of certification above should be analyzed to meet unidimensionality, validity, reliability and normality in order to have measurement model which meet the required fitness of indexes of a construct. The analysis of the measurement model for values of certification can be seen in the following description.

The achievement of unidimensionality depends on the results of accepted factor loadings (≥ 0.45). The results of factor loadings of the final model of Values of Certification based on the Confirmatory Factor Analysis can be seen in the following table.

Table 4: Factor Loadings of Values of Certification

Items	Code	Factor Loadings
Personal accomplishment	VC1	0.659
Validation of knowledge	VC3	0.801
Professional growth	VC4	0.683
Attainment of a practice standard	VC7	0.474
Professional autonomy	VC11	0.526
Increase of marketability in the job market	VC13	0.824
Increase of consumer confidence	VC17	0.775

The table above shows the factor loading of measurement model for values of certification. It indicates that all items of values of certification are accepted as all items have met the required values of more than 0.45.

The construct of values of certification has achieved the requirements of convergent validity where all items in the measurement models are statistically significant as can be seen in the following table.

Table 5: Regression Weights of Values of Certification

Items	Code	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P Value
Personal accomplishment	VC1	1.000	-	-	***
Validation of knowledge	VC3	1.245	0.099	12.520	***
Professional growth	VC4	1.042	0.071	14.709	***
Attainment of a practice standard	VC7	.582	0.073	7.998	***
Professional autonomy	VC 11	.667	0.081	8.236	***
Increase of marketability in	VC 13	1.171	0.092	12.747	***

the job market					
Increase of consumer confidence	VC 17	1.046	0.086	12.222	***

The result of measurement model for values of certification has achieved the required values of the Fitness Indexes including ChiSq/df, GFI, AGFI, CFI and RMSEA, as can been seen below.

Table 6: The Assessment of Fitness for the Measurement Model of Values of Certification

Fitness Indexes	Requirements	Achievement	Interpretation
ChiSq/df	≤ 3.00	1.358	Good
GFI	> .9	0.991	Good
AGFI	> .9	0.971	Good
CFI	> .9	0.997	Good
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.032	Good

In terms of reliability of the construct, it is based on the result of internal reliability, construct reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The results of the reliability for values of certification are as follows:

The internal reliability used the Cronbach's Alpha value and the result was 0.865. It is an accepted value because it has met the requirement which is higher than 0.7. Furthermore, the construct reliability of values of certification was also calculated and the result is 0.859 which has met the requirement of CR ≥ 0.6. The AVE value was also calculated and the result can be an acceptable value which was 0.47 (close to the requirement of AVE ≥ 0.5). Finally, the normality assessment was conducted by reviewing the values of skewness and kurtosis which should be between -2 and 2 as suggested by [29]. The assessment of normality of measurement model for values of certification was conducted and the data of values of certification construct are distributed normally because the values of skewness and kurtosis are between -2 and 2 based on the result of the analysis.

All in all, the unidimensionality, validity and reliability of constructs have been achieved for measurement model required in CFA using seven items. The assessment of fitness of the construct was also achieved with good values of the fitness indexes. This means that the construct can be measured by only seven items amongst the 18 proposed items. The valid and reliable items include personal accomplishment, validation of knowledge, professional growth, attainment of a practice standard, professional autonomy, increase of marketability in the job market and increase of consumer confidence.

9. Conclusion

Consequently, this result indicates that certified professionals can only be motivated dominantly by intrinsic values of certification instead of obtaining the certification for the sake of external motivation which could not be provided by their organizations. The result also may imply that certified professional in the tourism industry cannot obtain adequate motivational factors such as recognition, appreciation and salary. The descriptive findings also confirmed that salary and benefit difference between the certified and uncertified professionals possess the lowest mean score amongst other items of the construct. Furthermore, the implementation of certification by related stakeholders is still beyond the expectation. This indicates that stakeholders need to work comprehensively in implementing the certification system in Indonesia, so that certified employees can be more motivated extrinsically and can work professionally through the values of certification. In terms of theoretical implication, this study has provided findings that not all items of values of certification can be applicable to the tourism industry especially in the context of developing country. This may be caused that the maturity of the industry to implement the professional certification is still low.

Furthermore, the finding of this study has also provided practical implication to the government, employers, employees,

professional associations and professional certification board in tourism sector. The government should enforce the rules on the implementation of certification in Indonesia so that the industry can only employ those who are already certified and the industry can provide benefits for being certified. The employers of the tourism industry should consider extra investment on providing budgets for values of certification so that the certified employees can be more productive for increasing the revenue in their respective company. For employees, they should be aware of the values of certification because they can be motivated to develop themselves through a certification program and to be professional in their work. For professional associations, they can disseminate the values of certification to their members and provide more training program to increase competency of their members so that their members can be ready to be assessed. For professional certification boards, they can strengthen the implementation of assessment process against all required standards.

In the context of Indonesia as a developing country, there are only seven items which can be accepted to construct the values of certification based on the perspective of certified professionals in the tourism industry. The accepted items are dominated by the intrinsic factors which consist of five items including personal accomplishment, validation of knowledge, professional growth, attainment of a practice standard, professional autonomy. And there are only two items which are related the construct of values of certification including increase marketability in the job market and increase customer confidence. The external factors seem to relate to the career development and awareness on customer satisfaction which can be established from their internal motivation. However, the valid external factors do not deal with external motivation which can be received from the professionals' company such as reward, recognition, appreciation and salary for being certified. Thus, only several items of the values of certification as purposed by [27] are applicable to Indonesia and not all items can be accepted to measure the values of certification based on the context of tourism industry.

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