

# The Motivation of Tour Guide in Using “*Guidemu*”: A Mobile Application-Based Tour Guide Service

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**Abstract.** The advancement of technology phenomena, particularly mobile based application, creates distinctive challenges for companies that run tour guide service business. This study focuses on the development of *Guidemu* as a mobile application tour guide service encouraged by the idea of sharing value creation from the involved actors. One of the actors who plays an important role is the tour guide who acts as a company partner as well as the customer. Therefore, this study aims to identify tour guide motivation to utilize *Guidemu* application and provides recommendation for further development. In-depth interview was conducted with several tour guides from *Guidemu* application. This study had significant implication to *Guidemu* application designer in enhancing the utility and providing positive experience to the tourists. The research finding is enabled to fill the research gaps in the field of mobile application acceptance and tour guide motivation to make use of mobile application which has not been studied further.

**Keywords:** Mobile application; tour guide; service; motivation

## 1 Introduction

In the past decades, information and communication technology have contributed obvious transformation impact to tourism industry, either from demand or supply side [1], [2]. the biggest advantage of information and communication technology is to meet the demand and supply of the tourists and economic actors [3]. Furthermore, the presence of integrated information and communication technology emerges various new tourism activities which enable to change conventional experiences, so the new ones can be created [4]. Such situation has made information and communication technology as the source of competitive advantages for tourism industry [5].

The domination of information and communication technology in tourism business is in line with tourism market trends [6]. It is reflected in the form of information and communication technology influence in modern tourism organization, such as big data analysis, efforts to create interactive relation with the consumers, market share escalation, direct selling, cost reduction, escalation of service and operational provision, enhancement of working quality and efficiency [1], [7], [8]. The population of world’s major cities preoccupied by heavy working routines surely makes them to spend the spare time or having a holiday to a different environment [3], [9]. The expectation is that they are able to rest comfortably and get better quality of life [3]. On

the other hand, tourism business players also want the same solution of information and communication technology in order to reach the ultimate consumers directly and quickly [3]. Theoretically, to create smart tourism, tourism actors need to apply modern information and communication technologies [10], one of them is mobile application in the smartphone. There are many applications related to travelling appeared in the market, so they make smartphone as the universal device for the tourists in helping them increase their traveling experiences [11]. Smartphone can be utilized as the traveling companion or tourist companion rolled as a self-guide or a tour guide [12]. Additionally, a smartphone enables the tourists to accept the 'local knowledge' in their previous days which needed more days and efforts to reach it. Thus, the tourists are given extensive information about the destination which can help them to avoid the unnecessary trip and shows more opportunities to travel [13].

Gretzel et al. [14] identified the development of mobile application as the manifestation of modern information and communication technology that could provide opportunities and challenges to effective tourism service. Utilization of mobile application by the tourists (prior, during, and after the trip) and in wide range of tourism industry is an opportunity as well as a challenge to achieve smart tourism experience [10]. Therefore, the acceleration of new technology implementation is not only talking about an opportunity but also a challenge [15], [16]. Mobile application has become an inevitability in tourism industry [10].

This study will explore *Guidemu* mobile application that provides tour guide service in Indonesia. Although it is still new, it has strong confidence and optimism to survive and be able to respond challenges as well as taking advantages of the opportunity in the midst of business competition of similar application services. Therefore, *Guidemu* can build the value that is able to shape tour guide's unique experience through the interaction with the service providers. This value creation process is later called shared value creation.

## 2 Literature Review

This study considers Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) and Extended Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT2) models, also Technology Readiness (TR) to identify the motivator of mobile application technology utilization in tour guide service. According to TAM, the intention of technology usage is influenced by two perceived values, named usefulness and ease of use [33]. Usefulness is the individual perception that presumes technology usage will improve the performance, whereas ease of use is the individual perception that desires technology usage makes him or her easily complete the activities. It is different from TAM, UTAUT model has a reasoning that the intention of technology usage is influenced by performance expectation, work result, social factor, facilitating condition, and usage behavior.

Additionally, Law et al. [31] divided the literature about consumer adoption towards mobile technology into different categories and recorded different opinions whether utilitarian motivation, hedonistic, dispositional, or environment factor were the most important acceptance predictor. Referring to Law et al. [31] view, therefore this study assumes that mobile application-based tour guide service is a fun-oriented tool, but the push factor (motivator) to adopt can be related to the performance (mainly for tour guide) that is more beneficial than hedonic.

### 3 Methods

This research was conducted on the tour guides of *Guidemu* mobile application, a relatively new application for tour guide service. *Guidemu* is a startup based in Surabaya, Indonesia in which its operational coverage is in all regions of Indonesia and in the future, it is possible to be operated throughout the world. *Guidemu* provides the platform for tour guides in selling their service adjusted to the tourist's needs. The tour guides compose their portfolio in the platform which later is reviewed by *Guidemu* management then published in *Guidemu* application. Afterwards, the tourists can choose the desired tour guide.

Data collection was carried out during October-November 2022. Eight tour guides expressed their willingness to participate as informants to be interviewed in-depth. Those eight tour guides are in different ages. Two of them are in their 20s, the other two are 30s, two tour guides are in their 40s, and the rests are 50s. The selection of the informants based on age consideration was intentional to accommodate views from research by Law et al. [31] related to dispositional factor. In the interview, tour guides were asked to respond the following research questions:

- What types of information and communication technology are currently being used to support work as tour guides?
- To what extent have tourist preferences and expectations changed in recent years?
- What experiences did the tour guides have while using *Guidemu* mobile application?
- What recommendations can be given to make *Guidemu* application better?

### 4 Results and Discussion

The first research question is related to the type of information and communication technology used by the tour guides in carrying out their current work. The acceptance and adoption level of technology were similar among those guides. All eight tour guides used smartphones in their work, and viewed smartphones as a necessity that supports the daily activities of everyone, including them.

The second question given to the tour guides concerns the extent of change for tourists' preferences and their expectations in recent years, in which interactive tour itinerary and theme were the guides' response. Younger travelers prefer visual elements, legends, and myths over historical facts. Tourists are no longer passive audiences and listeners during the tour; they tend to be active instead. The interview results also indicated a need for personalization.

The result of the third question relates to the participants' experience while using the *Guidemu* mobile application. All of the interviewees commented that this was their first time using the application during their career as tour guides, given the fact that the *Guidemu* application is a new startup product established during the Covid-19 pandemic. The eight participants also said that before using the *Guidemu* application, they were very dependent on the jobs offered by conventional travel agents. Some tour guides in this study work as permanent employees in certain travel agents while the others are freelancer.

The final question concerns recommendations that could be given to *Guidemu* application designers so that they could improve the application. Most of the participants felt there were no problems when operating the application, especially when interacting with tourists in designing tour packages. However, the guides who were in their 50s initially had difficulties since they were not used to mobile applications. Overall, based on the results of the conducted interviews,

the main motivators for tour guides to use the *Guidemu* mobile application can be categorized into several aspects as presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Motivator for Using the *Guidemu* Application from the Perspective of a Tour Guide

<b>Motivator</b>
Additional income (utilitarian: economic)
Expanding the audiences (utilitarian: business development)
Promotion of personal branding (utilitarian: business development)
Automation (utilitarian: economical)
Flexibility (utilitarian: economical)
New opportunities for creativity (hedonic: self-development)

#### 4.1 Discussion

Tourism is closely related to experience. This argument relates to the importance of human communication which can never be replaced by even the most sophisticated machines. In general, most of the tour guides believe that their role and the mobile application related to the tour can coexist with each other. In the view of tour guides, tourists will still have a need to be accompanied by tour guides as well as travel applications that help expand information. If travelers are looking for a unique experience, they can only rely on a live tour guide. Different travelers require different approaches, and currently mobile tour guides have not yet been able to provide a personalized experience.

Based on the mapping of the main motivators in Table 1, it appears that the motivation of many tour guides is utilitarian and related to economic factors such as earning additional income, business development through personal branding promotions that are easily accessible to tourists, flexibility, and the ability to provide alternative tours according to travelers' needs.

## 5 Conclusion

The *Guidemu* mobile application should continue to improve so that it can develop its services based on user preferences, include the tour guides, who have changed dynamically from time to time. This study shows that tour guides are able to sense changes in tourist behavior. The need for unusual, interactive, more personalized and intensive tours has become a trend. This is based on the fact that many tourists are from the younger generation, hence they often travel independently and in small groups. Overall, it appears that performance and design are equally important when it comes to application development and refinement.

Like most other studies, this study also has research limitations which of course can provide opportunities for other research in the future. First, only a small number of tour guides were interviewed and most of them came from the same province, namely East Java. A broader study can involve more tour guides and come from more diverse provincial areas so that it could provide a clearer picture for evaluating the performance and design of tour guide service mobile applications. Second, this study ideally could collect more data on certain behavioral and dispositional factors that are likely to influence technology acceptance among tour guides.

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