

Investigating the Influence of Word of Mouth on Interest in Visiting and Visiting Decisions of National Park

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Abstract

This study discusses the effect of word of mouth on visiting interest and its impact on visiting decisions in the national park. Analyzing the relationship between Word of Mouth Effect and Interest in Visiting. The Influence of Word of Mouth on Visiting Decisions. The Influence of Visiting Interests on Visiting Decisions. This study uses explanatory research. Purposive sampling is the sampling technique used in this study. Questionnaires are used for data collection methods. Data analysis from this study used structural equation modeling (SEM) with the SmartPLS 3.0 software tool. The questionnaire was designed using a Likert scale of 1 to 5 and distributed via social media. The results of this study indicate that Word of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on Interest in Visiting. Word of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on visiting decisions. Interest in visiting has a positive and significant effect on visiting decisions. Based on the results of this study, it is suggested that the National Park can increase tourist visits by conducting e-woms such as through social media. In addition, it also improves the quality of the facilities provided and is more innovative by creating rides that can be liked by everyone and creates a positive experience. Furthermore those who have a positive experience will recommend to others and will be able to attract interest so that it ends in a decision to visit the National Park.

Keywords: Word of Mouth, Interest in Visiting, Decision to Visit, National Park.

Introduction

In this digital era and industrial revolution, tourism is a tourism activity that is supported by services and facilities provided by the government, entrepreneurs and the community. The impact of tourism as a business is to influence the socio-economics of the surrounding community. National Park is one of the favorite tours for visitors. The year 2022 will

be marked by the emergence of more and more new artificial tours in Batu City. Among the many artificial tours, there are several artificial tours that have a high level of tourist visits. Among these man-made tours is the National Park. The National Park is an artificial tour that has an investment value of up to hundreds of billions of rupiah and the highest investment value and has a level of tourist visits that tends to increase from year to year.

The high number of visitors to the National Park comes from information that is often promoted by companies because information is one of the things that is most needed by all levels of society, including information about tourist attractions to be visited. Information can spread very quickly through communication. Communication in the world of marketing plays an important role in increasing sales. Viewed from the consumer side, communication helps in visiting intentions and determines visiting decisions.

The market potential and profit margins in the tourist attractions business are quite large, accompanied by the opening of a free market for every player or competitor to enter the market, the competition in this business is very tight. Almost all business people involved in it compete with each other to offer facilities and rides owned by tourist attractions. This makes visitors face many choices of tourist attractions to be visited so that visitors can have many choices in making visiting decisions according to their interests. One of the things that can foster interest in visiting which will have an impact on the decision to visit the National Park is the influence of people around them who communicate the quality of certain tourist attractions. Word of mouth is one of the service promotion mix tools that is believed to influence other people in determining interest in visiting and its impact on visiting decisions.

Along with increasing age which will have an impact on increasing a person's social relationships with other people and the surrounding environment, will affect a person's lifestyle, one of which will consider suggestions from people around him in choosing tourist attractions to visit. This can be strengthened by the habits of the Indonesian people who like to gather and create communities. Support from the habits of the Indonesian people who like to gather will strengthen and accelerate the creation of a word of mouth marketing strategy. Word of mouth communication is a marketing strategy that focuses on visitors' suggestions to other people who can later influence other people to be interested and will follow their suggestions. Word of mouth becomes very important when the suggested tourist attractions have a positive value or a good impression for visitors. As stated by Agustina (2014) when someone receives information about a product or service from other people such as friends or relatives, what is the experience in using these products and services, if the information conveyed is positive then someone tends to be interested and even try the product and services

and vice versa. The results showed that word of mouth communication had a significant effect on motivation to visit.

Sulistyawati, et al., (2010) stated that word of mouth is one of the factors that encourage tourists to make purchasing decisions. The influence of references given by friends is one of the variables that influence consumers in purchasing wooden sculptures. Because not a few tourists who buy wooden statues are influenced by their friends who have already visited and at the same time bought wooden statue products. Besides that, namely the product knowledge factor, product knowledge is the knowledge possessed by tourists who come to visit again before they decide to buy a wooden statue. The knowledge they have comes from friends and family.

Literature Review

Word of Mouth

According to Mowen and Minor (2002) word-of-mouth communication refers to the exchange of comments, thoughts, or ideas between two or more consumers, neither of which is a source of marketing. There are two main sources that produce word of mouth communication, namely the reference group and opinion leaders. Peter and Olson (2000) emphasized that a group consists of two or more people who interact with each other to achieve the same goals, and have the same background and are not incorporated. Important groups include family, close friends, work partners, and neighbors, and these groups can become a reference group. According to Shimp (2003) an opinion leader is someone who often influences the attitudes or behaviors that are visible from other individuals.

Visiting Interests

The theory of visiting interest is analogous to buying interest, such as research conducted by Albarq (2014) which equates that visiting tourist interest is the same as consumer buying interest. The definition of interest according to Kotler and Susanto (2000) is that interest is an encouragement, namely a strong internal stimulus that motivates action, where this encouragement is influenced by stimulus and positive feelings about the product. According to Kotler and Keller (2009) there are two external factors that influence a person's purchase intention. First, the attitude of other people, in terms of other people's attitudes that affect purchase intention depends on two things, namely the magnitude of the influence of a person's negative attitude towards the alternative that consumers are interested in, as well as the consumer's motivation to be influenced by other people related to his purchase intention. Second, situations that are not inspired, are situations that suddenly appear and can indirectly change consumer buying interest.

Visit Decision

The theory of visiting decisions is analogous to purchasing decisions, such as research conducted by Jalilvand and Samiei (2012) which equates that tourist visiting decisions are the same as consumer buying decisions. The decision to visit is a process in which a visitor conducts an assessment and chooses an alternative that is needed based on certain considerations. According to Swastha and Irawan (2005) every purchase decision has a seven-component structure, namely the structure of the brand, the seller, the method of payment, the number of products, the form of the product, the type of product and the time of purchase.

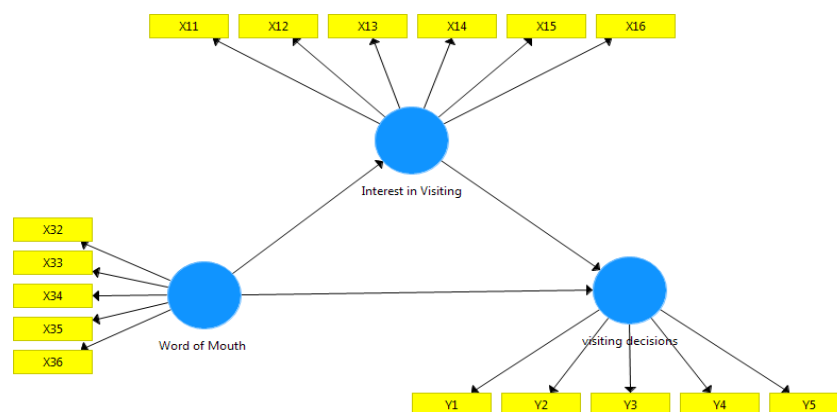
Method

National Park is a location for research. Explanatory research or explanatory research is the type of research used in this study using the questionnaire method. The population of this research is National Park visitors who have visited or have visited the National Park and enjoyed the rides and facilities that have been provided as well as visitors to tourist attractions who visit because they get information through word of mouth is the respondent in this study with a total sample of 400 respondents. Data analysis from this study used structural equation modeling (SEM) with the SmartPLS 3.0 software tool. Purposive sampling is the sampling technique used. The questionnaire was designed using a Likert scale of 1 to 5 and distributed via social media.

Result and Discussion

The hypothetical model built in this study is as follows:

Figure 1: Research model



H1 : Word of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on Interest in Visiting.

H2: Word of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on visiting decisions.

H3: Interest in visiting has a positive and significant effect on visiting decisions

The tests carried out in the analysis of variance based SEM have two stages, namely the outer model and the inner model test. The explanation of the test is as follows:

1. Test Outer Model

The convergent validity test on the outer model aims to determine whether the indicators with latent variables are valid, with a validity value above 0.70 (Purwanto et al., 2021).

Figure 2. Convergent Testing

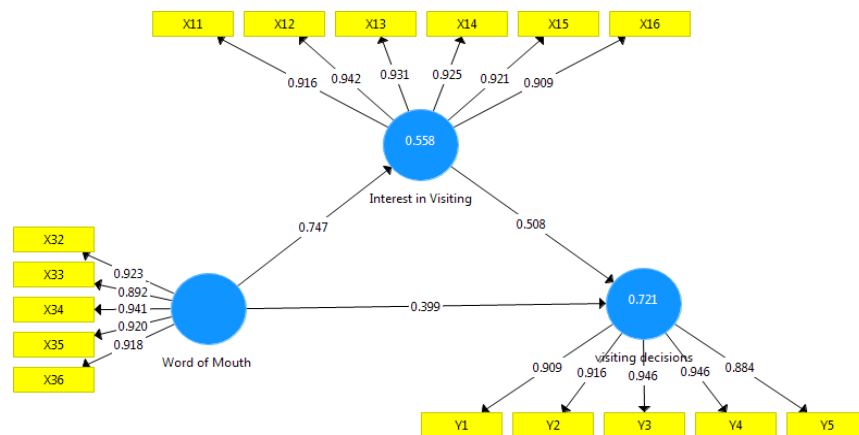


Figure 2. shows that the validity value of each indicator is above 0.7, so all research indicators are declared valid. In the outer model test in addition to convergent validity, there is also a validity reliability testing. The test aims to determine the reliability of the indicator in measuring the variable, while the variable is said to be valid if it has an AVE value above 0.5 and a Cronbach Alpha value above 0.7 (Purwanto et al., 2021), the following is a discriminant validity test in this study:

Table 1. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Word of Mouth	0.787	0.864	0.632
visiting decisions	0.731	0.834	0.635
Interest in Visiting	0.712	0.815	0.667

Table 1 shows that all Cronbach alpha and average variance extracted values exceed the minimum limit so that all variables are declared valid.

2. Inner model test

The inner model test contains an explanation of the R-Square, while the R-square value in this study is as follows:

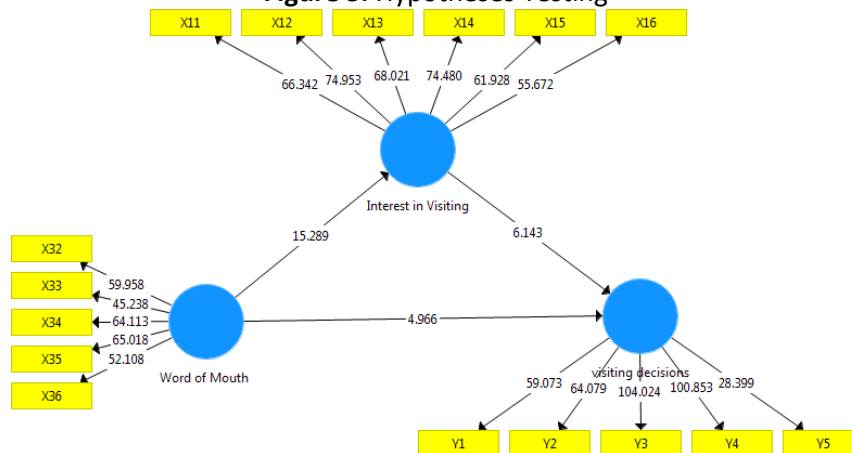
Tabel 2. R Square

Variables	R Square	R Square Adjusted
visiting decisions	0.721	0.745
Interest in Visiting	0.558	0.565

From the R square table, it can be concluded that 72.1 % of visiting decisions is influenced by Interest in Visiting and word of mouth , while the remaining 2.79 % is influenced by other variables outside the study. Interest in Visiting is 55.8% influenced by word of mouth while the remaining 44.2 % is influenced by other variables outside the study.

In addition to reliability in the inner model test there is also a hypothesis test, while the hypothesis test in this study is as follows:

Figure 3. Hypotheses Testing



	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics	P Values	Result
Word of Mouth - Interest in Visiting.	0.756	15.289	0.001	Supported
Word of Mouth - visiting decisions.	0.876	4.966	0.001	Supported
Interest in visiting - visiting decisions	0.654	6.143	0.001	Supported

From the value of the hypothesis testing table, it is known that all hypotheses in the study are accepted because they have a p-value below 0.05

f² Effect Sizes Evaluation

According to Hair (2017) explains that the guidelines for assessing **f²** are that values of 0.02 (= small), 0.15 (= moderate), and 0.35 (= large), respectively, represent small, medium, and low effects. large (Hair et al. 2020).

Table 4. f² Effect Sizes Evaluation

	Satisfaction
Word of Mouth	0.41
visiting decisions	0.31
Interest in Visiting	0.25

For the Word of Mouth variable, the **f²** value of 0.41 represents a big effect, for the Word of Mouth variable, the **f²** value of 0.31 represents a large effect, and for the visiting decisions, the **f²** value of 0.25 represents a large effect. for the Interest in Visiting variable, the **f²** value of 0.25 represents a large effect.

Q² Evaluation

Q² value is greater than 0 indicates that the model has predictive relevance for certain endogenous constructs. Conversely, values of 0 and below indicate a lack of predictive relevance (Hair et al 2017).

Table 5. Q² Evaluation

Construct	Q ²
visiting decisions	0.512
Interest in Visiting	0.601

The value of Q² for the visiting decisions variable is 0.512 > 0.000, meaning that this variable has predictive relevance. The value of Q² for the Interest in Visiting variable is 0.601 > 0.000, meaning that this variable has predictive relevance.

1. The Effect of Word of Mouth on Visiting Interests

Visitors have a deeper desire to seek information about national park through word of mouth that comes from other people such as from family, close friends, work partners, neighbors, and even through people who have in-depth knowledge about national park. Influences come from word of mouth has a positive value, so the more frequent word of mouth communication is, the more it has a significant impact on someone's interest in visiting a tourist spot. Interest in visiting someone in determining the decision to visit in choosing a tourist place to visit, one of which comes from the influence of other people who are around him in communicating positive messages or impressions from a tourist spot. This research is in line with research from Kumala (2012) which

states that there is a significant influence between word of mouth on visiting intentions. High visitor interest in visiting will encourage visitors to visit a place, conversely low visitor interest in visiting will prevent visitors from visiting a place. Word of mouth that comes from references Groups and opinion leaders can help determine someone's interest in visiting. The results of this study state that word of mouth variables have a significant effect on visiting intentions.

2. The Effect of Word of Mouth on Visiting Decisions

The word of mouth variable has a significant influence on visiting decisions. With the delivery of messages from other people around someone will be able to get more information about national park 2 and this will be input for someone before making a visit. When obtaining information from people around him, a person will know the conditions of a tourist spot, in this case, national park, both in terms of rides, ease of access, and affordability of prices provided by national park. After receiving various inputs from other people It is hoped that this will make it easier for someone to make a decision to visit, so that it will be able to reduce the error rate in making a decision to visit according to what is expected.

This supports the results of Purnomo's research (2011) which states that promotions carried out by tourism managers are generally very minimal, most promotions are carried out by word of mouth naturally which is mostly carried out between tourists who have visited. This research shows that word of mouth communication affects tourists' decisions to visit tourist attractions.

3. The Influence of Visiting Interests on Visiting Decisions

Variable interest in visiting has a significant influence on the decision to visit. Interest from within visitors to visit tourist attractions such as national parks drives visitors to make a decision to visit Jatim Park 2 or these tourist attractions. When interest arises, visitors will realize that visitors like a particular tourist spot according to their interests and want to visit it. Furthermore, when the belief in a tourist spot strengthens, it will lead to a decision to make a visit (Shrimp, 2003).

This is in line with research from Aulia et al., (2013) concerning the effect of word of mouth on visiting decisions which has a significant relationship. Someone who makes a visit to a tourist spot through prior interest will have a high desire to visit the tourist spot because he has obtained in-depth information about the tourist spot before making the visit and has chosen according to his interests.

Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that. Word of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on Interest in Visiting. Word of Mouth has a positive

and significant effect on visiting decisions. Interest in visiting has a positive and significant effect on visiting decisions. Word of mouth communication is important for the national park to increase revenue by taking advantage of current visitors. Visitors who have visited the national park are potential communicators who can spread word of mouth about the national park to others so that it is hoped that this will create an interest in visiting someone. In response to this so that word of mouth spreads positively, the national park should be able to improve by conducting e-woms such as through social media which will encourage someone to visit the national park. Competition in the world of tourism, especially in artificial tourism, is getting tighter. Bearing in mind that interest and visiting decisions are influenced by positive experiences through word of mouth, the national park should further improve the quality of the facilities provided and be more innovative by creating rides that everyone can like and create positive experiences. Furthermore those who have a positive experience will recommend to others and will be able to attract interest so that it ends in a decision to visit the national park. The results of this study are limited to word of mouth variables, visiting intentions and visiting decisions. To develop further research, other variables beyond the variables already included in this study, including the e-wom variable.

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