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**| RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## **History, Tourist Attraction and Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM) on Visiting Decisions at Jambi City Tourist Destinations**

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**| ABSTRACT**

The expansion of the tourism area is currently directed to re-introduce and raise the historical value of tourist destinations, the economic level and income of local communities in developing micro-enterprises and the creative economy around tourist areas. To promote natural, cultural, artificial and other tourist destinations in Jambi City, the Jambi City Tourism and Culture Office (DISPARBUD) uses social media and websites to inform the public about the potential of tourist destinations in Jambi City, namely through the website <https://disparbud.jambikota.go.id/sejarah/> and several Instagram accounts, namely @danau.sipin, @tp\_pkk\_danau\_sipin, @jambiparadise, @kampoengradja, then to what extent and how the contribution and role of electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) in helping the city government and local communities to increase the progress of tourist destinations in the Jambi City area. Researchers use an exploratory type of research, namely a research approach that aims to find information, data and facts about a topic or problem that is not yet fully understood by a researcher. The data used in this study are primary data that can be obtained from direct interviews and through distributing questionnaires via Google Forms. The sample selection technique is based on chance, namely, anyone who incidentally meets the researcher and is willing to become a sample if it is deemed that the person who happened to be met is suitable for the data source. The sample in this study was local people in Jambi City, totalling 114 people. The findings of the results obtained that the variables of historical value and attractiveness of tourist destinations show significant results on visiting interest, while the eWOM variable has not shown a level of significance to the visiting decision variable. Therefore, to increase interest in visiting tourist destinations, it is necessary to synchronize information and data from tourist destination managers, local governments, tour guides, and local wisdom related to historical value, accessibility, and accurate infrastructure so that when the information is conveyed through eWOM, users are no longer confused or exhausted from the information obtained. Abundant and accurate information no longer complicates the decision-making process to determine the optimal visiting decision.

**| KEYWORDS**

eWOM, Tourist Attraction, Decision to Visit

**| ARTICLE INFORMATION**

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### **1. Introduction**

One of the concrete forms in an effort to encourage the acceleration of change in the territory of Indonesia is seen in the tourism sector, which originated from the issuance of a Presidential mandate (Presidential Instruction R.I, 1969) containing Guidelines for Guiding National Tourism Development. The efforts carried out by both the government and regions in the territory of Indonesia in line with the Presidential Instruction include: a. exploring Indonesia's natural wealth and cultural diversity, b. fostering local communities to optimize local cultural wisdom as a tourism charm, c. improving infrastructure and transportation rides, facilities, and facilities improve infrastructure and transportation vehicles, facilities, entertainment and tourism services needed, including preparing human resources who have competence in the field of tourism, d. carry out marketing communications seriously at

home and abroad, e., strive to provide comfort both from land, sea and air transportation in order to create a safe and comfortable tourist trip.

Provinces in Indonesia have extraordinary advantages, especially in the tourism sector, where this sector is able to create significant economic growth and is able to bring the largest investment to the country, one of which is in Bali Province. This province has become an icon of Indonesia's tourism development, starting from the beginning of 1969 until now. This marketing icon of Bali Province utilizes Balinese nature and culture as its main attraction. However, not all tourism potential in provinces in Indonesia is growing and developing optimally, especially at this time; all countries in the world are facing a transition period from a pandemic to an endemic of the covid-19 virus outbreak. With this transition, all lines of sectors that encourage the acceleration of development will be faced with the readiness of both central and regional governments in an effort to rise from the decline in the production of goods and services, one of which is also affected by the tourism sector. This can be seen from the drastic decline in interest in visits from the world community to travel, this decline also occurred due to the issuance of regulations by the government to impose various travel restrictions in many countries, and this also happened in Indonesia.

The Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy direct all parties to be directly involved, especially regional heads, in efforts to improve the tourism sector from the impact of the covid-19 virus, and this is a major government and regional program in 2021 which must pay close attention to changes from the 3A perspective (attractions, accessibility, and amenities) in tourist destinations in addition to paying attention to the development of the 3A aspect, the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy also emphasizes the escalation of 2P, namely the promotion and participation of MSME implementers with a storynomics tourism approach in the form of narratives, creative content and living culture. (Kominfo, 2020).

Jambi City, with its appearance as the Malay City, it turns out that Jambi also has the historical value of tourist sites with a natural, artificial, cultural and religious atmosphere that almost resembles Bali, Bandung, Jogjakarta, and other big cities. As is known, under the leadership of the current Jambi Mayor, there have been significant changes to improve the city's capabilities in all fields and areas of development, one of which is the tourism sector. The expansion of the tourism area is directed at regrowing the economic level and income of the community to develop micro-enterprises and the creative economy around the tourist area.

The expansion of excellent tourist destinations in Jambi City includes Lake Sipin, Tugu Pers, Gentala Arasy Tower, Jomblo Park, Jambi Paradise, Kampoenng Radja, Tugu Keris Siginjai, Kampung Batik and Rumah Tenun. The city government, led directly by the Jambi Mayor, is also preparing a program to create a public area on the side of the river with the concept of a waterfront city. Another uniqueness that Jambi City has is the uniqueness of customs and culture that is strongly embedded in the community, namely the sight of old regional houses with community activities that can be found across the river in downtown Jambi. Local cultural wisdom is also evident, namely the motifs inherent in the typical Jambi batik motif. ([www.jambikota.go.id](http://www.jambikota.go.id)).

Based on the results of the pre-survey during the pandemic to endemic transition, the researcher conducted a pre-survey by directly interviewing several visitors who carried out tourist activities at the natural attractions of Lake Sipin and Jambi Paradise, so that it was found that some of the visitors explained the reason they visited the tourist attraction because they wanted to get information directly from the manager regarding the historical value, the attractiveness of tourist attractions in Jambi City or those sourced from eWOM, among others, through social media Instagram, Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Youtube and some gave their own reasons and attractions for visiting because they got information by word of mouth. Disparbud Jambi City acts as a service provider or provider also benefits from the sophistication of technology through the role of social media as a promotional medium; then to what extent and how does the contribution and role of historical value, attractiveness and electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) in helping the city government and local communities to increase the progress of tourist destinations in the Jambi City area.

## **2. Literature Review**

Tourism objects are inseparable from past events that became the history of the place. Historical or history is a legacy of various events that occurred in the past and is expected to be understood by the next generation as a life lesson for the future (Fuadillah & Soebijantoro, 2016). Tourism is a journey that has the aim of fulfilling one's curiosity; the trip is a manifestation of one's interest in a tourist attraction. Tourism attraction is the potential contained in tourist destinations; this potential presents information on tourism products that are very interesting to enjoy (Ramadhan, 2016). In determining the dimensions of the historical value of tourist destinations, it is important to consider the local context, regional uniqueness, and the importance of the destination on a national or international scale. In addition, the opinions of historical experts and archaeologists, as well as assessments from authorized organizations or institutions, can also be a reference in identifying the dimensions of the historical value of tourist destinations.

Simanjuntak et al. (2017: 24) define attractiveness as everything that causes someone to visit a place. Tourism attraction is the main focus of driving tourism in a destination; tourism attraction is the main driver that motivates tourists to visit a place (Ismayanti, 2009: 147).

Traditional Word of Mouth (WOM) has been shown to play a very important role in influencing the decision-making process in making choices (Heriyanti and Siek, 2011; Voyer and Ranaweera, 2015; Nugraha et al., 2015 and Jung and Cho, 2016). Communication provides information and makes potential consumers understand the availability of the products and services offered and can try to win over potential consumers to desire to enter into an information exchange relationship.

Jalilvand & Samiei (2012) interpreted the phrase word of mouth as a technique intended for users to exchange news and opinions related to products or services with others, but along with the transitions that occurred, especially in the field of technology and information, the concept of Word of Mouth developed and gave birth to a concept that was in accordance with the changes, namely Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM).

Visiting interest is analogous to buying interest, Albarq (in Aprilia, 2015). Kotler (in Aprilia, 2015) informs interest as a drive, namely a strong internal stimulus that motivates action, where this drive is influenced by desires, tastes and positive feelings about the product.

According to Samiei, Dini, Manzari, and Jalilvand (2012), visiting interest can be described as travel intention. Travel intention is an interest or plan to visit or make a visit to a country more than any country.

### 3. Methods

In this research, researchers use exploratory research, which is a research approach that aims to find information, data and facts about a topic or problem using quantitative methods to be tested statistically. Minichiello, Kottler, Minichiello, & Kottler (2014) states that exploratory research is a research approach used to examine something (of interest) that is not yet known, not yet understood, or not yet well recognized. While the data used in this study are primary data that can be obtained from the results of distributing questionnaires both online via Google form and face-to-face directly with informants, namely local visitors who have visited tourist attractions in Jambi City. The validity of the research results shows the extent to which a measuring instrument is able to measure what you want to measure. A measurement instrument is said to be valid if the instrument can measure something exactly what it is intended to measure, Muhidin and Abdurahman (2017: 30). If  $r_{count} < r_{table}$ , then the instrument is declared invalid and if  $r_{count} > r_{table}$ , then the instrument is declared valid with a significance rate of 0.05.

### 4. Results and Discussions

The questionnaire was distributed both directly face-to-face at tourist destination locations and through WhatsApp groups, acquaintances and relatives who visited tourist destinations in Jambi City during the study collected 114 informants from a predetermined target of 100 people who responded. This is understandable because, after the endemic era, the majority of people began to be busy travelling to tourist destinations outside the city of Jambi. These 114 respondents are what researchers consider worthy of further processing. The following table explains the respondent's profile. To see the extent of the results of respondents' answers, a confirmatory factor analysis was carried out to ensure the accuracy of the data (Goodness of Fit) by reducing several loading factors that did not meet the requirements. The following is a picture of the initial model of this study.

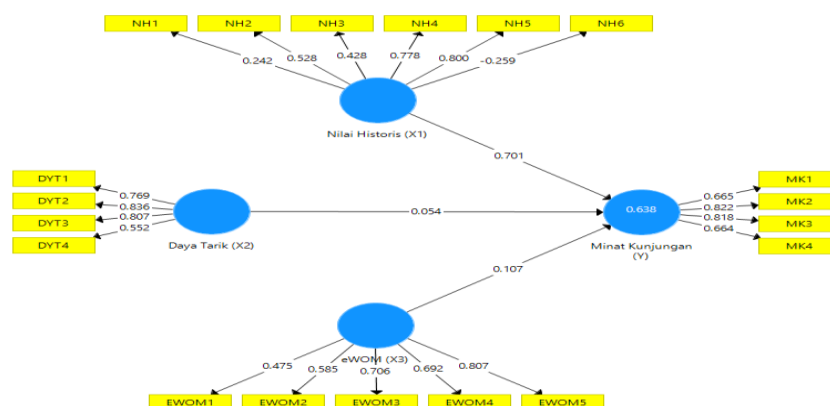


Figure 1. Preliminary Research Model

Based on the initial research model, the loading factor for each variable was found as described in the following table.

Table 1. Initial Model Loading Factor Value

|       | Attractiveness (X2) | Visit Interest (Y) | Historical Value (X1) | eWOM (X3) |
|-------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| DYT1  | 0,769               |                    |                       |           |
| DYT2  | 0,836               |                    |                       |           |
| DYT3  | 0,807               |                    |                       |           |
| DYT4  | 0,552               |                    |                       |           |
| EWOM1 |                     |                    |                       | 0,475     |
| EWOM2 |                     |                    |                       | 0,585     |
| EWOM3 |                     |                    |                       | 0,706     |
| EWOM4 |                     |                    |                       | 0,692     |
| EWOM5 |                     |                    |                       | 0,807     |
| MK1   |                     | 0,665              |                       |           |
| MK2   |                     | 0,822              |                       |           |
| MK3   |                     | 0,818              |                       |           |
| MK4   |                     | 0,664              |                       |           |
| NH1   |                     |                    | 0,242                 |           |
| NH2   |                     |                    | 0,528                 |           |
| NH3   |                     |                    | 0,428                 |           |
| NH4   |                     |                    | 0,778                 |           |
| NH5   |                     |                    | 0,800                 |           |
| NH6   |                     |                    | -0,259                |           |

Source: Data processing results, 2023

The results of the processed data above, it was found that the loading factor for indicators on the historical value variable, then the loading factor for indicators on the tourist destination attractiveness variable, the loading factor for indicators on the eWOM variable and indicators on the visiting interest variable were still found to have a loading factor value smaller than 0.7. In accordance with the rule of thumb, indicators are said to be reliable if they have a loading factor equal to or greater than 0.7, then, they are removed from the initial model, and a second model is formed. Furthermore, calculate the second model again to find out the loading factor value of the second model with the following results.

Table 2. Loading Factor Value

|       | Attractiveness (X2) | Visit Interest (Y) | Historical Value (X1) | eWOM (X3) | Description |
|-------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------|-------------|
| DYT1  | 0,782               |                    |                       |           | Valid       |
| DYT2  | 0,856               |                    |                       |           | Valid       |
| DYT3  | 0,808               |                    |                       |           | Valid       |
| EWOM3 |                     |                    |                       | 0,835     | Valid       |
| EWOM5 |                     |                    |                       | 0,858     | Valid       |
| MK2   |                     | 0,940              |                       |           | Valid       |
| MK3   |                     | 0,918              |                       |           | Valid       |
| NH5   |                     |                    | 1,000                 |           | Valid       |

Source: Data processing results, 2023

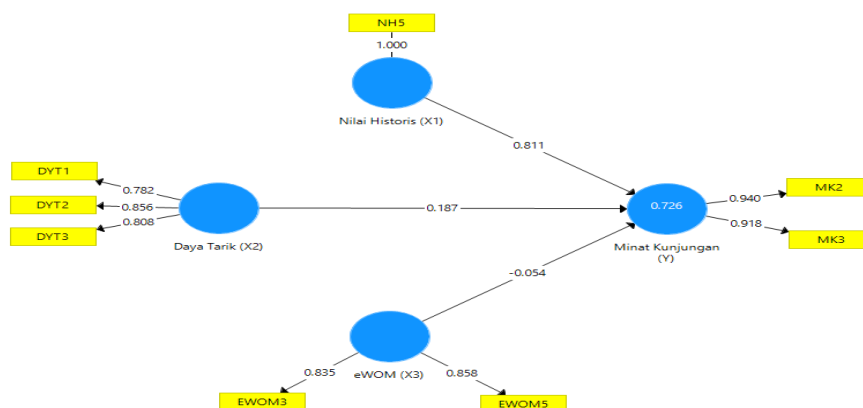


Figure 2. Calculate Model

After analyzing the second model data, it was found that the loading factor for all indicators was above 0.7, so a model for the next step of PLS analysis was obtained.

Table 3. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Value

|                       | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) | Description       |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Attractiveness (X2)   | 0,666                            | meet the criteria |
| Visit Interest (Y)    | 0,863                            | meet the criteria |
| Historical Value (X1) | 1,000                            | meet the criteria |
| eWOM (X3)             | 0,717                            | meet the criteria |

Source: Data processing results, 2023

Table 4. Cronbach's Alpha Value

|                       | Cronbach's Alpha | Description       |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Attractiveness (X2)   | 0,750            | meet the criteria |
| Visit Interest (Y)    | 0,843            | meet the criteria |
| Historical Value (X1) | 1,000            | meet the criteria |
| eWOM (X3)             | 0,605            | -                 |

Source: Data processing results, 2023

Table 5. Composite Reliability Value

|                     | Composite Reliability | Description       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Attractiveness (X2) | 0,857                 | meet the criteria |
| Visit Interest (Y)  | 0,927                 | meet the criteria |
| Nilai Historis (X1) | 1,000                 | meet the criteria |
| eWOM (X3)           | 0,835                 | meet the criteria |

Source: Data processing results, 2023

Based on the results of the table above, it can be seen that the results of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) analysis on each variable show that the score is above 0.5, where the historical value variable is 1.000, the attractiveness variable is 0.666, the eWOM variable is 0.717, and the visit interest variable is 0.863. Analysis of Cronbach's alpha value on each variable shows that several variables show a score of more than 0.7, including the historical value variable of 1.000, the attractiveness variable of 0.750, and the visit interest variable of 0.843. and the eWOM variable shows a score of less than 0.7, which is only 0.650; it is considered that the eWOM variable has not shown accuracy and reliability, and for other variables, it has shown accuracy in this study. The results of the composite reliability analysis on each variable show that the score is above 0.7, where the historical value variable is 1.000, the attractiveness variable is 0.857, the eWOM variable is 0.835, and the visit interest variable is 0.927. These results indicate that the variables as a whole are declared reliable. These results indicate that the variables as a whole are declared to meet the validity.

## **5. Conclusion**

### **5.1 The Effect of Historical Value of Tourism Destinations on Visiting Decisions**

Based on the results of testing the relationship between variables, the T statistical value is 15.988, and the P-Value is 0.000 with a significant level of 0.05 for the relationship between the influences of the historical value variable on the visiting decision variable, then the historical value variable has a significant influence on the visiting decision variable. The test results show that the higher the implementation of the historical value of tourist destinations, the decision to visit tourist destinations will increase. In this influence, the historical value variable, including accessibility, uniqueness and infrastructure, safety, recreation, and natural beauty, these dimensions partially have a positive influence on the visiting decision variable.

In this study, historical, cultural and educational authenticity has its own value for visitors to tourist destinations and provides feedback on visiting interest which is the right strategy for tourist destination managers to increase historical value and visiting interest; this is in line with (Kim, Li, and Agrusa, 2008), tourist destinations with high historical value have greater appeal to tourists. Tourists tend to have a stronger interest and motivation to visit destinations that have a rich cultural and historical heritage.

### **5.2 Effect of Tourism Destination Attractiveness on Visiting Decisions**

Based on the results of testing the relationship between variables, the T statistical value is 1.999, and the P-Value is 0.046, with a significant level of 0.05 for the relationship between the influences of the tourist destination attractiveness variable on the visiting decision variable, the attractiveness variable has a significant influence on the visiting decision variable. The test results show that the higher the implementation of the attractiveness of tourist destinations, the decision to visit tourist destinations will increase. In this influence, the attraction variable, including Attraction, Accessibilities, Amenities, and Ancillary Services, these dimensions have a positive influence on the visiting decision variable.

In this study, accessibility, infrastructure, natural beauty, and cultural heritage have their own meaning for visitors to tourist destinations for recreation and provide feedback on the interest in visiting tourist destinations again; this is the right strategy for tourist destination managers to improve and maintain attractiveness and interest in visiting, this is in line with (Chen and Tsai (2007)), tourist destinations with high attractiveness can influence visiting interest through their influence on tourist satisfaction. Destinations that have a strong appeal tend to create a satisfying experience for tourists, which in turn increases their interest in visiting again.

### **5.3 The Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) on Visiting Decisions**

Based on the results of testing the relationship between variables, the T statistical value is 0.633, and the P Value is 0.527 with a significant level of 0.05 for the relationship between the influences of the eWOM variable on the visiting decision variable, the eWOM variable has not shown a level of significance to the visiting decision variable. The test results show that some eWOM users who assess credibility, trust, preferences and expectations can have problems related to reviews, recommendations, access, and trend changes that may be unreliable or have hidden motivations. Users may be skeptical of reviews provided by people they do not know in person. Therefore, the level of trust in eWOM may vary among individuals, and this may affect its ability to influence a person's visiting decision may be influenced by other factors that are more in line with his or her preferences. An excess of available information can also lead to confusion or information fatigue for consumers. Abundant and conflicting information can complicate the decision-making process and make it difficult to determine the optimal visit decision.

The results of this study, according to theory, state that the historical value of tourist destinations is known based on consumer understanding of the authenticity of the history of the formation of tourist and cultural destinations, education obtained after visiting and knowing the sustainability and conservation of the development of tourist destinations in the future. The same thing is also seen in the attractiveness of tourist destinations which is a form of a person's feeling of natural beauty, geographical uniqueness, tourist attractions, facilities, and experiences offered to visit tourist destination locations where information can be obtained directly or using eWOM media.

The three variables above have an impact on visiting interest. Interest in visiting refers to a person's interest or desire to visit a tourist destination. This reflects the interest or intention possessed by individuals to travel to a particular tourist spot. Interest in visiting can be influenced by various factors, including internal factors (e.g., personal interest, preference, motivation) and external factors (e.g., information obtained from others, tourism promotion, and destination attractiveness).

From the results of research and discussion, it is known that not all variables show significant results, but there are several variables that show significant results. The author tries to formulate suggestions in this study, namely to increase interest in visiting tourist destinations, it is necessary to synchronize information and data related to historical value, accessibility, and

accurate infrastructure so that when the information is conveyed through eWOM, users are no longer confused or exhausted from the information obtained. Abundant and accurate information no longer complicates the decision-making process to determine the optimal visiting decision.

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