

The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth, Tourist Attraction and Price on Interest in Visiting the Natural Attractions of Lawah Cave in West Lombok

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to determine the influence of electronic word of mouth, tourist attraction and price on interest in visiting the natural attractions of Lawah Cave in West Lombok. This research employs a quantitative approach. The population in this research is an individual or someone who is interested in visiting the natural attractions of lawah cave with a sample of 100 respondents. Determination of the number of samples collected is achieved using a non probability sampling technique, specifically the purposive sampling method. Techniques for collecting data through online surveys utilizing questionnaires. The data analysis used in this research is Partial Least Square (PLS) version 4.0. The results showed that electronic word of mouth, tourist attraction and price have a positive and significant influence on interest in visiting.

Keywords: *Electronic Word of Mouth, Tourist Attraction, Price, Interest in Visiting.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry in Indonesia is currently experiencing development with the emergence of new attractions that offer uniqueness, beauty and facilities are effective in engaging tourists. The many natural tourism potentials and charms that exist in Indonesia can encourage tourist visits to travel to tourist attractions that are supported by the digital era. Currently, the ability of tourists and tourism managers to use the internet is very important because of websites and social media that convey information about tourist attractions and tourist experiences (Mustikasari & Widaningsih, 2016).

Interest can be interpreted as a source of motivation that can encourage someone to do or do something he wants (Hurlock, 2016). A person will have a feeling of interest in visiting when getting a motivating impulse to act, where the motivation is influenced by the desire to visit a place or region that attracts someone's attention (Suwarduki et al., 2016). In addition, nowadays a person's interest in planning a vacation or trip is also influenced by recommendations from friends, online recommendations and comments by third parties (Ningrum et al., 2023).

One of the tourist destinations on the island of Lombok is the natural attraction of Lawah cave which is located in Lebah Sempage village, Narmada district, West Lombok regency. Lawah cave natural tourism is a new tourist attraction that is still under development. The existence of Lawah cave has been around for a long time and was inaugurated as a tourist spot in 2023. Based on visitor book data for 2023-2024, this tourist attraction experiences fluctuations in foreign and domestic tourist visits. The phenomenon of fluctuating tourist visits is due to the lack of information dissemination and promotion carried out about the natural attractions of Lawah cave. So that makes this Lawah cave natural attraction not widely known by tourists.

Advancements in information and communication technology have transformed how individuals seek information regarding tourist destinations. Electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) represents any kind of comment, whether positive or negative communicated, where someone can easily share information, experiences, reviews and recommendations via various digital platforms, including social media, online review sites and blogs (Jalilvand, 2012). Lawah cave natural tourism has several social media including Facebook, TikTok and Instagram to introduce its attractions. According to Taryadi and Miftahuddin (2021) the presence of social media in the tourism sector is related to the habits of modern tourists who seek information about tourist attractions on social media, by looking at reviews or comments that will shape a person's perception of the information available to have an interest in visiting.

Tourist attraction is the potential that drives the presence of tourists to a tourist destination (Suwantoro, 2004). There are three components in the development of tourist attractions namely attractions, accessibility, and amenity (Yoeti,

2012). Lawah cave has an attraction in the form of beauty and uniqueness of nature that is still preserved naturally. Some of the attractions or tourist activities that become the attraction are the caves, waterfalls and rivers. The accessibility of the road to go to the Lawah cave is good and can be passed by various vehicles. In addition, this natural attraction of Lawah cave has a variety of supporting facilities for the convenience of tourists visiting such as the availability of toilets, parking lots, prayer rooms and camping ground areas.

Price is defined as a financial value or another form of measurement that is exchanged to obtain the value of ownership of the use of goods and services (Tjiptono, 2015). The price in the context of tourism includes the costs incurred by tourists to enjoy an attraction. At the natural attractions of Lawah cave, the admission fee is IDR 5.000 for domestic tourists and IDR 15.000 for foreigners, including free parking during the visit. The price set on the natural attractions of Lawah cave is quite cheap and affordable in accordance with the attraction and facilities available. Based on the explanation, this research is to determine the influence of electronic word of mouth, tourist attraction and price on interest in visiting the natural attractions of Lawah cave in West Lombok.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research is an associative type with a quantitative approach. The population in this research is an individual or someone who is interested in visiting the natural attractions of Lawah cave. The sample of 100 respondents was collected using a non-probability sampling technique, specifically employing purposive sampling. The sample criteria are active users of social media who know the information of Lawah cave attractions. Data collection techniques using google form questionnaire with likert scale 1-10. The data in this research is analyzed using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method through SmartPLS 4.0 software. Independent variables utilized in this research consist of *electronic word of mouth* (X1), *tourist attraction* (X2) and *price* (X3) with the dependent variable is *interest in visiting* (Y).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1. Results

3.1.1. Outer Model (Measurement Model)

The outer model was evaluated using validity and reliability tests through Convergent Validity testing which can be assessed based on Outer Loading or Loading Factor and Discriminant Validity which is assessed based on Cross Loading. According to the results of the validity test, all outer loading values are > 0.7 and cross loading > 0.7 so that they can be said to be valid. In addition, for the reliability test all variables have also met the requirements > 0.7 so that they can be declared reliable (Ghozali, 2016).

3.1.2. Inner Model (Structural Model)

Evaluation process for the inner model in Partial Least Squares (PLS) is carried out after completing the measurement model testing. A structural model known as the inner model, is utilized to predict the causal relationships between latent constructs. At this point, the emphasis is on metrics like R-square, Q-square, t-statistic and hypothesis testing for dependent constructs in order to assess the relevance between the constructs in the structural model.

Table 1. R-Square Value Result

Variable	R-square	R-square adjusted
Interest in Visiting	0.809	0.803

In this research, R-square is used to determine the influence that independent variables have on dependent variable. The R-square results show that interest in visiting is influenced 80.9% by its independent variables and the remaining 19.1% is attributed to other variables and factors not included in this research.

The structural model of this research has a predictive relevance Q-square value of 0.809. This indicates that 80.9% of the data variation from the research findings can be accounted for by the proposed structural model. Therefore, it can be concluded that the model used in this research possesses strong predictive capability and is considered relevant.

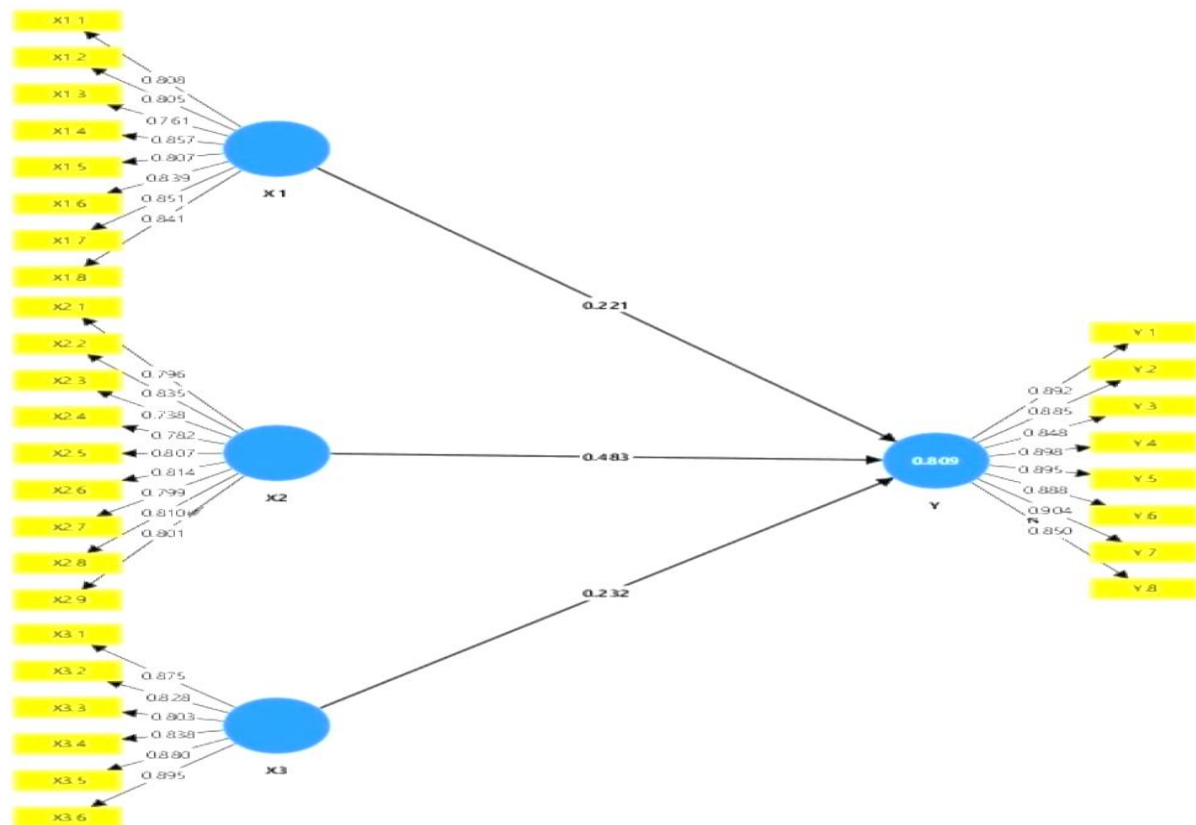


Figure 1 Structural Model

Based on the structural model above, hypothesis testing in this research uses path coefficient values to indicate the level of significance of the bootstrapping process. Significance assessment is carried out through t-statistic and p-values. This research uses a hypothesis (two-tailed), where the t-statistic > 1.96 with p-values < 0.05. The following is a table of hypothesis testing results obtained in this research.

Table 2. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Variable Influence	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Description
H1	$X1 \rightarrow Y$	0.221	2.253	0.024	Accepted
H2	$X2 \rightarrow Y$	0.483	4.529	0.000	Accepted
H3	$X3 \rightarrow Y$	0.232	2.348	0.019	Accepted

Referring to Table 2, the hypothesis is considered acceptable as the t-statistic exceeds (> 1.96) and the p-value is below (< 0.05).

3.2. Discussions

3.2.1. The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth on Interest in Visiting

The hypothesis testing results on the influence of *electronic word of mouth* on *interest in visiting* indicated a coefficient value of 0.221, with a t-statistic of 2.253 and a p-value of 0.024. Electronic word of mouth was found to positively and significantly influence tourists interest in visiting. So the first hypothesis (H1) in this research is acceptable. This shows that electronic word of mouth containing information, reviews or comments about Lawah cave on social media, plays a crucial role in influencing an individual's perception of a tourist attraction. By paying attention

to the electronic word of mouth given can build a person's trust to increase interest in visiting. That is, the better the dissemination of information and assessment about the natural attractions of Lawah cave, it will have an impact with increased interest in visiting the natural attractions of Lawah cave.

The results of this research are consistent with previous research by Delpiero and Istriani (2023) who stated in their research that interest in visiting is positively and significantly influenced by electronic word of mouth. This research is further reinforced by Adam's (2022) findings, which indicate that electronic word of mouth has a significant and positive influence on interest in visiting. This is due to the tendency of tourists to utilize internet technology for accessing tourism information and sharing their travel experiences and opinions about destinations through social media platforms.

3.2.2. The Influence of Tourist Attraction on Interest in Visiting

Based on the hypothesis testing results concerning the influence of *tourist attraction* on *interest in visiting*, showed a coefficient value of 0.483, with a t-statistic of 4.529 and a p-value of 0.000. The findings indicate that tourist attraction positively and significantly influence interest in visiting. As a result, hypothesis two (H2) is deemed acceptable in this research. This shows by optimizing the potential of attractions Lawah cave that have uniqueness and beauty supported by attractions, accessibility and amenities available can attract someone's interest in visiting, as well as building a existence within the tourism sector. This means, that if a tourist attraction has a different attraction from others, then can make someone curious and interested in visiting it. Because the more attractive the attraction in Lawah cave attractions it will increase someone's interest to visit.

The findings of this research are consistent with prior research by Ernawati (2021) which found that tourist attraction has a positive and significant influence on interest in visiting. This is further supported by Salim et al., (2022) whose research also demonstrated a significant and positive relationship between tourist attraction and the desire to visit. These results confirm that the appeal of a tourist destination can effectively generate tourists interest in visiting.

3.2.3. The Influence of Price on Interest in Visiting

Analysis of the hypothesis related to the influence of *price* on *interest in visiting*, showed a coefficient value of 0.232 with a t-statistic of 2.348 and a p-value of 0.019. The results demonstrate that price significantly and positively influences tourists interest in visiting, confirming the acceptance of the third hypothesis (H3). This shows that by ensuring information on price affordability and consumer purchasing power at Lawah cave attractions can increase someone interest in visiting by paying attention to the affordability of the prices offered. That is, information about prices is very necessary because it will make it easier for someone to know the costs that will be incurred before visiting. The price contained in the natural attractions of Lawah cave will determine a person's interest to visit. When the price becomes more accessible offered, the greater interest in visiting the natural attractions of Lawah cave.

The findings of this research align with prior research by Hafidzi (2022) which revealed that price has a significant and positive influence on interest in visiting. This result is also supported by Salina and Imam (2024) who found that the price variable positively and significantly influences tourists interest in visiting. This proves that tourist attraction usually offer different price variations depending on the segment and market demand. The difference can be in the type of accommodation, facilities, transportation and services offered.

4. CONCLUSION

The research result show that there is a positive and significant influence of variable *electronic word of mouth*, *tourist attraction* and *price* on *interest in visiting* the natural attractions of Lawah cave in West Lombok. These findings highlight the importance of tourism managers can be more active in managing social media and responding to various reviews or comments on social media to build a positive image of Lawah cave, as well as create interesting and informative tourism content. Then, optimize the tourist attraction by consistently maintaining the uniqueness and beauty of Lawah cave attractions, caring for facilities and maintaining cleanliness. By offering affordable prices, managers can facilitate online payment systems to make it easier for tourists to make payments, so that it can increase tourists interest in visiting.

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