

# The Effect of e-WOM on Travel Intention, Travel Decision, City Image, and Attitude to Visit a Tourism City

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**ABSTRACT:** Social media is one form of e-WOM that plays a critical role in the tourism industry. Sharing information via Instagram can lead to travel intentions and travel decisions. The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of e-WOM on travel intention, travel decision, city image, and attitude to visit a tourism city. This research was conducted in one of the most visited cities in Indonesia, namely Bandung. This type of research was causal research and used primary data. The sampling technique used was non-probability sampling with a Purposive Sampling type. Data processing used SEM and SPSS analysis techniques. The results of this study indicated that e-WOM had a significant effect on attitude, city image, travel intention, and travel decision. The attitude variable had a significant effect on city image and travel intention. Travel intention had a significant effect on travel decisions. Nevertheless, the City image variable had no effect on travel intention.

**Keyword:** e-WOM, City Image, Attitude, Travel Intention, Travel Decision

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The advancement of information technology in the current digitalization era makes the role of WOM has evolved to e-WOM (electronic-Word Of Mouth). WOM expressed through the internet is called e-WOM. e-WOM is a positive or negative statement made by potential consumers about a product, service, or company that can be accessed by many people via the internet (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). At the information search stage, online consumer references can be obtained from various sources such as social media networks (Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter) or search engines (such as Google, Live, and Yahoo).

The function of social media has evolved as a medium for consumers to obtain company information or products sold (Shankar in Paquette: 2013), including the decision to travel somewhere (Um & Crompton, 1990). E-WOM acts as an input to determine travel decisions to a place (Um & Crompton, 1990). Prospective tourists can more easily trust information sources that have high credibility and actual condition as in the field provided by the previous tourist's WOM (Bateineh, 2015). This proves the power of e-WOM to attract tourists.

Instagram is one of the social media that acts as a means to share photos and videos. Instagram becomes the main focus of marketers to do marketing.

Based on Instagram account data, it is known that the @explorebandung account has the highest number of followers and posts compared to the tourism cities of Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Surabaya, and Malang (exploreBandung, 2015).

Sari & Pangestuti (2018) tested the e-WOM variable, intention to visit, and the decision to visit. Sari & Pangestuti's research (2018) was conducted in the Coban Rais tourist attraction. The results of this study stated that e-WOM has a significant positive effect on travel intention and travel decisions. It was also found that travel intention has a significant positive effect on travel decisions. Doosti et al., (2016) conducted a study in pool city, Iraq, where the results showed e-WOM has a significant positive effect on travel intention, city image, and attitude toward the city. He also found city image and attitude testing on travel intention and travel decision. Referring to Doosti et al., (2016) and Sari & Pangestuti (2018), who discussed e-WOM as an antecedent variable, it is interesting to study further. The purpose of this study is to examine the effect if e-WOM (social media Instagram) on city image, attitude, travel intention, and travel decision.

### 1.1 The effect of e-WOM on attitude

E-WOM is considered as an important source of information that influences tourists' travel intentions and destination choices (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012).

According to Malhotra (2007), attitude is an evaluation summary of an object or thought. Jalilvand & Samiei (2012) found that e-WOM communication has a significant effect on the attitude of the purpose of the visit and travel intention. Jalilvand et al. (2012) also concluded that e-WOM information has a significant effect on the attitude of tourists to visit a particular destination. The hypothesis that can be formed (H1): e-WOM affects attitude.

### 1.2 *The effect of e-WOM on city image*

Lopes (2011) defined city image as objective knowledge, prejudice, imagination, and emotional thoughts of individuals and groups towards a particular location. The desire of tourists to travel causes tourists to actively involve in finding information and use specific sources of information. Luo & Zhong (2015) stated that e-WOM was chosen as a source of information that has a potential influence on the city image before visiting. E-WOM, as a source of information, provides excellent benefits compared to other sources, such as accessibility, convenience, real-time information services, interactive communication, and others. Majid (2014) proved that e-WOM influences brand image. Jalilvand (2012) also believed that e-WOM influences brand image. The hypothesis that can be formed (H2): e-WOM affects city image.

### 1.2 *The effect of e-WOM on travel intention*

Semuel & Lianto (2014) also stated that e-WOM is proven to influence purchase intention significantly. The better someone's review on the electronic media, the more it can lead to high purchase intention. Gretzel & Yoo (2008) stated that tourists use e-WOM communication to generate ideas and narrow choices in the stage of determining travel planning, namely travel intention. Semuel & Lianto (2014) also stated that e-WOM was proven to influence purchase intention significantly. The hypothesis that can be formed (H3): e-WOM influences travel intention.

### 1.3 *The effect of attitude on city image*

Lopes (2011) defined that city image is objective knowledge, prejudice, imagination and emotional thoughts of individuals and groups towards a particular location. Hultman et al. (2015) found that a positive city image can determine tourists' attitudes. Lopes (2011) also believed that the concept of city image and attitude are interrelated. The same thing was observed by Lita et al. (2014) & Han et al.

(2009) that found an attitude toward a place affects the overall city image. The hypothesis that can be built (H4): Attitude affects the city image.

### 1.5 *The effect of attitude on travel intention*

Bohner & Wanke (2002) said that attitude could be formed for any object or phenomenon, in which a person can have positive, negative, or neutral opinions and show support or supportive attitudes. Travel intention is encouragement from within self-tourists in the form of a desire to visit a place or region that attracts someone's attention. Limbu et al. (2012) expressed that consumer attitudes toward a product or brand affect the intention to buy this product or that brand. Liu et al. (2012) revealed a positive relationship between attitude and intention. Jalilvand et al. (2012) also showed that brand image and tourist attitude has a significant influence on travel intention. The hypothesis that can be built (H5): Attitude influences travel intention.

### 1.6 *The effect of city image on travel intention*

The influence of city image on travel intention was proven by Lopes (2011). Semuel & Lianto (2014) explained that brand image has a significant effect on purchase intention in a product. Consumers tend to repeat purchases on the right product brand image. Semuel & Lianto (2014) added that the high and low brand image has an impact on purchase intention. The hypothesis that can be built: (H6) city image influences travel intention.

### 1.7 *The Effect of e-WOM on Travel Decision*

Eaton (2006) stated that e-WOM is spreading information or conducting promotional activities quickly in the internet field. Purchase decisions in tourism terms can be said to be travel decisions. Purchase decision refers to purchase or choose one of the alternatives that are in accordance with the buyer's needs. Sari & Pangestuti (2018) stated that e-WOM has a significant influence on travel decisions. The same research results by Chang et al. (2010) proved that there is an influence of e-WOM on travel decisions. Themba & Monica (2013) showed that consumer involvement in communicating e-WOM towards a brand, consumer opinion, and information search has a significant positive effect on purchase decisions. The Hypothesis that can be formed (H7): e-WOM affects travel decisions.

### 1.8 The effect of travel intention on travel decision

Peter & Olson (2000) said that the travel decision is an integration process that combines knowledge to evaluate two or more alternative attitudes and choose one of them. Sari & Pangestuti (2018) found that travel intention has a significant influence on travel decisions. This is supported by Khandelwal et al. (2012) that proposed purchase intention is an important and significant factor as a precondition for determining consumer attitudes towards purchasing decisions. The hypothesis that can be formed: (H8): Travel intention influences travel decision.

## 2 RESEARCH METHODS

This research was causal and used primary data. The target population of this study was all people (minimum 15 years old) who have used social media Instagram to determine the choice of tourist destinations. Overall, respondents have a minimum education level of high school/vocational education and used Instagram for more than one year. Moreover, respondents are followers of @ExploreBandung account on Instagram and have chatted with other @ExploreBandung account followers.

Data was collected by using questionnaires. The sampling technique used in this study was non-probability sampling with the Purposive Sampling type. The variable measurement used Doosti et al., where e-WOM uses 6 items, city image uses 4 items, attitude uses 4 items, travel intention with 4 items, and travel decision uses 10 items.

This study used 150 respondents, with 58% were female and 65.3% used Instagram social media Instagram of more than 3 hours daily. The data processing used AMOS (SEM).

## 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 shows that validity and construct reliability variables are good so that it can be used to analyze the measurement and the structural model.

Table 1. AVE and Construct Reliability

Variable	AVE	CR
e-WOM	0.530	0.797
City Image	0.501	0.869
Attitude	0.543	0.893
Travel Intention	0.517	0.879
Travel Decision	0.517	0.816

Table 2 shows the results of the measurement model that is a criterion for structural testing of the

next model. Table 2 shows that some criteria are met with a good fit.

Table 2. The Results of Goodness-of-Fit Measurement Model

Item Mea.	Criteria	Result	Remarks
CMIN/DF	$\leq 3.00$	1.814	Good Fit
RMSEA	$\leq 0.08$	0.075	Good Fit
GFI	0.8 – 0.9	0.755	Marginal Fit
TLI	0.8 – 0.9	0.847	Marginal Fit
CFI	0.8 – 0.9	0.862	Marginal Fit

Based on the description in Table 3, the overall structural model has met the required relative Goodness-of-Fit, thereby, the analysis was continued by testing the hypothesis

Table 3. The Results of Structural Model Compatibility Test

Item Mea.	Criteria	Result	Remarks
CMIN/DF	$\leq 3.00$	1.838	Good Fit
RMSEA	$\leq 0.08$	0.075	Good Fit
GFI	0.8 – 0.9	0.755	Marginal Fit
TLI	0.8 – 0.9	0.848	Marginal Fit
CFI	0.8 – 0.9	0.862	Marginal Fit

Table 4 shows the test results for 8 hypotheses. One hypothesis, namely hypothesis 6 was found did not support the effect of city image on travel intention. The other 7 hypotheses proved to have a positive and significant effect, which can be seen from the value of  $p < 0.05$  and CR values above 1.96. Positive values can be seen based on the test results in table 3, which did not get any negative signs.

Table 4. The Results of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	St. Est	CR	P	Remarks
H1: $E \rightarrow A$	0.894	5.460	***	supported
H2: $E \rightarrow CI$	0.434	2.294	0.022	supported
H3: $E \rightarrow TI$	0.412	5.868	***	supported
H4: $A \rightarrow CI$	0.444	8.143	***	supported
H5: $A \rightarrow TI$	0.573	2.528	0.011	supported
H6: $CI \rightarrow TI$	-0.114	1.950	0.051	Not supported
H7: $E \rightarrow TD$	0.327	4.359	***	supported
H8: $TI \rightarrow TD$	0.506	2.887	0.004	supported

The results of hypothesis 1 showed that e-WOM on @ExploreBandung Instagram account had a positive effect on tourist attitude in the tourism city of Bandung. This is understood because of many uploads and comments about Bandung in @ExploreBandung Instagram account. Tourists' e-WOM raises a good perception for other tourists who read a review on Instagram regarding Bandung. The positive perception of tourists also leads to the

formation of a positive tourist attitude that the results of this study support Jalilvand et al. (2012).

The results of hypothesis 2 showed that e-WOM had a significant positive effect on the city image of Bandung that is in line with Majid (2014) and Jalilvand (2012). The positive electronic communication in Bandung city gives a positive impression on @ExploreBandung users. This impression arises after seeing the post or reading the comments on the @ExploreBandung Instagram account.

E-WOM Instagram social media account @ExploreBandung had a positive effect on travel intention to Bandung (H3). The existence of electronic communication on the @ExploreBandung Instagram account has contributed a strong internal motivation for @Explore Bandung followers to take action in the form of sharing information among followers and posting in the tourist destination area covered by @ExploreBandung. The results of this study support Samuel & Lianto (2014).

Hypothesis 4 states that the attitude of tourists towards the city of Bandung has a positive effect on the city image of Bandung that is in line with Lita et al. (2014) and Han et al. (2009). Many comments and uploads about the city of Bandung in the @ExploreBandung Instagram account said that Bandung is a beautiful, fun, and fantastic tourism city. This is what raises the interest of other tourists to visit Bandung.

Hypothesis 5 supports the attitude of tourists towards travel intention to Bandung. The attitude of prospective tourists to Bandung will affect the intention to visit Bandung. This is due to the perception of tourists about Bandung will affect their intention to visit Bandung. If a tourist has a positive perception of Bandung, then that will affect his intention and readiness to visit Bandung. The results of this study support Jalilvand et al (2012).

The results of Hypothesis 6 testing showed that city image had no effect on travel intention to Bandung. This is caused by the city image of Bandung is not able to influence the intention of tourists to visit Bandung directly. Although tourists know and understand the image of Bandung, tourists are not interested in traveling to Bandung. The results of this study are not in line with Samuel & Lianto (2014) and Lopes (2011). Based on short interviews with several respondents, it was found that respondents understand the city of Bandung's image as one of the most popular cities for tourists in Indonesia. However, not all respondents intend to travel to Bandung

because they feel that tourism objects tend to be the same and lacked challenges.

The results of Hypothesis 7 testing showed that e-WOM of @ExploreBandung Instagram account had a positive effect on travel decisions to Bandung. The results are in accordance with Chang et al (2010) and Sari & Pangestuti (2018) due to the information obtained by tourists through the @ExploreBandung Instagram account that encourages the behavior of potential tourists to visit Bandung. E-WOM of @ExploreBandung Instagram account is a medium for potential tourists and tourists who have visited Bandung to exchange information.

The last hypothesis of this study showed that travel intention to Bandung had a positive effect on travel decisions to Bandung. This is due to the interest in visiting that arises in the minds of prospective tourists who encourage them to make decisions in visiting the tourist city of Bandung. After prospective tourists have the intention to visit Bandung, the prospective tourist will focus on visiting the city. The results of this study support Khandelwal et al. (2012).

#### 4 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data processing results, there were 7 hypotheses supported by  $P\text{-value} \leq 0.01$ ; namely, e-WOM affects attitude; e-WOM affects city image; e-WOM affects travel intention; attitude influences city image; attitude influences travel intention; e-WOM influences travel decisions; and travel intention affects travel decision. While one hypothesis of the effect of city image on travel intention was not supported.

This study enriches the role of e-WOM as an antecedent variable for tourist destinations. The results of this study indicated that e-WOM contributes positively to form image, attitude, travel intention, and travel decision. Suggestions for future research is to use a variety of social media and test the effectiveness of social media's role in tourists' intention to visit a tourism city.

Practical recommendations show that e-WOM on Instagram social media can become an effective company's marketing tool to motivate and encourage tourists to visit a tourist area. Other forms of electronic media that can be developed for promotion are blogs, tour and travel advisors, and the traveler community.

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