

Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth on Destination Image and Their Impact on Visiting Interests and Decisions

(A Case Study on Millennial Travelers)

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Abstract—This study aims to assess several variables related tourism marketing, namely the influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) on the image of the destination, the influence of tourist destination image on interests, and influence of interest on visiting decisions. This study was conducted in Tablolong Beach of Kabupaten Kupang, focusing on the demography of millennial tourists. The introduction of destinations to motivate visitors is with the use of social media where the most users are millennials who are adept towards development of technology so as to connect between individuals and groups, forms of online communication or e-WOM. e-WOM is considered as one of the sources of information and images related to tourism services, where negative or positive statements are very potent in influencing the image building to foster interest in decision making afterwards is a re-visit and recommendation for others to visit. The analytical methods used in this study are descriptive analysis and multiple regression model analysis techniques. Based on the regression test, it is known that e-WOM positively affects destination image by 0.363, and destination image positively influenced the visiting interests by 0.637. Moreover, the visiting interests positively influenced the visiting decision by 0.776. Thus, it can be said that if the basis of e-WOM is good, it will likely result in good tourist destination image and higher interests to visit Tablolong Beach Attraction. Accordingly, e-WOM, the image of tourist destinations, interest in visiting and visiting decisions are interrelated.

Keywords: *Electronic Word of Mouth, destination image, interests, decision to visit.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Lately the world of *traveling* is getting more and more enthusiastic where the majority of the

perpetrators of this activity are young people or known as millennials. Their drive to explore the world means that millennials are diligent travelers (1). Millennial travelers have several criteria, including age, regional origin, occupation, income, connectivity, frequency of travel, travel costs, and motivation. Millennials are often also referred to as generation Y (2), one of the characteristics of millennials is a fanatical social media user so that his/her life is greatly affected by the development of technology (3). Social media serves as a means of communication that connects between individuals and groups, either through electronic means or non-electronic means.. This form of communication is known as the word of mouth. Word of mouth (WOM) has now undergone a paradigm shift. In the past, WOM communication was conducted directly face-to-face with known people, but nowadays WOM can be done online through internet media known as electronic word of mouth.

Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) is an effective way to promote goods and services (4), with e-WOM recognized to improve the image of tourist destinations. Image in the field of tourism is generally generalized into the image of the destination as a whole. Tourists will be more interested in visiting destinations that have impressions, beliefs, thoughts, perceptions, and feelings built over time to a place (5), such a positive image can influence behavior in decision making choices on destination interests and decision making afterwards to foster interest in re-visitation and recommend it (6). Travelers who have an interest in making repeated visits can be characterized by a willingness to review the destination so as to create an impression and influence the behavior and final decision that is that to visit (7).

East Nusa Tenggara Province as one of the tourist destinations that are in great demand in terms of visitors, this can be seen from the increase of tourists who visited in NTT, from 496,081 tourists in 2016, to 1,239,432 tourists in 2018 (8). NTT Province as one of the tourist destinations that has promising prospects for cultural uniqueness and natural beauty spread across 22 districts (9) NTT province has 566 islands, 246 of them already have names. Moreover, there are 5 large islands namely Flores, Sumba, Timor, Alor, and Lembata (Flores, Sumba, Timor, Alor, and Lembata) and many other small islands. Looking at the *existing* conditions of NTT Province as above, encourages the provincial government to further improve development in all sectors to realize the welfare of the community and increase regional income. The Provincial Government together with the District government in NTT seeks to develop the potentials of resources in various sectors that are real and appropriate to be managed by virtue that the results can soon be appreciated by the community. The Central Government has designated NTT Province as the new flagship area of tourism in eastern Indonesia since 2007. The determination aims to make NTT a specific Asia-Pacific gateway based on tourism, arts, and culture, with its richness and natural beauty both in diverse and rare natural resources. This however, is in contrast to the Tablolong Beach tourism object located in West Kupang District in NTT. Visitors to Tablolong Beach have shown fluctuations along a 2015 to 2018 timeframe, one which sees an overall decline (9)(10)(11)(12). Thus, it can be concluded that Tablolong Beach has not been developed to an optimal state. Therefore, the NTT government needs to improve the destination of Tablolong Beach Tourism Object in West Kupang District through millennial tourists by improving *electronic word of mouth*, destination image, interests and visiting decisions.

The introduction of tourism destinations to motivate visitors is with the use of social media where the most users are millennials who are adept towards the development of technology so that it can serve to connect between individuals and groups, particularly online through *electronic word of mouth* (e-WOM). e-WOM is considered as one of the sources of information and images related to tourism services. Negative or positive statements in e-WOM are very potent in influencing the image so that the image being built spurs interest in decision making afterwards in form of a visit and recommendation towards others. From the argument above, it can be seen the urgency of this research which can be the basis for developing subsequent studies related to tourism development. Tourism marketing can be studied in many ways and in this research there are 4

variables selected as e-WOM (X), Destination Image (Y1), Visiting Interest (Y2), and Visiting Decision (Y3)

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study focuses on the actual problems that are ongoing and becoming a trend among business people, managers of the tourism industry, especially the NTT regional government and millennial generation tourists about the role of *electronic word of mouth* in building the image of destinations to influence the interest and decision of visiting a tourist destination. The research method used is descriptive quantitative method, where the method is done through an objective research approach, includes the collection and analysis of quantitative data and uses statistical testing methods. The approach used by the authors to obtain data is done through survey. Data collection is conducted through questionnaires, namely by providing a list of questions (questionnaires) to millennial tourists who visit the tourist attraction of Tablolong Beach in West Kupang District as respondents. The questions were given using the Likert measurement scale, which is a tiered interval scale from 1 to 5 with a score from strongly disagreeing to strongly agreeing. The research questionnaire tested its validity and reliability before use. Validity test is done using product moment correlation technique and reliability test is done using *Alpha Cronbach* technique (32). The population of this study is tourists millennial who have been to the tourist attraction of Tablolong Beach in West Kupang District. Sampling is done in *nonprobability sampling* and using *purposive sampling* method (33). In this study, the criteria for the millennial respondents are those born in the 1980s to 2000s. The sample count in this study was as many as 100 millennial respondents.

The analytical methods used in this study are descriptive analysis and multiple regression model analysis techniques. Descriptive analysis concerns the result of data processing which is then described according to the respondent's answer to the research variables. The method used to perform descriptive analysis is the method of frequency distribution that is grouping data into data tabulations using data classes and associated with each frequency. Moreover, multiple linear regression analysis in this study was used to determine the effect of independent variables (X) on dependent variables (Y) using SPSS Program Version 21 (32). The linear regression formula is as follows:

$$Y_1 = \alpha_1 + \beta_1 X + e_1 \quad (1)$$

$$Y_2 = \alpha_2 + \beta_2 Y_1 + e_2 \quad (2)$$

$$Y_3 = \alpha_3 + \beta_3 Y_2 + e_3$$

where:

α : Constants

β : Variable Coefficient

X : *Electronic Word Of Mouth*

Y_1 : Destination Image

Y_2 : Visiting Interests

Y_3 : Visiting Decision

2.1 Validity Test

Validity tests are used to measure the validity of an indicator in the form of a questionnaire. Validity test is conducted with Pearson *Correlation* with the following criteria:

- If the value of r calculates > from the table r 0,195 then the questionnaire is valid.
- If the value of r counts < from the table r 0,195 then the questionnaire is invalid.

The testing of the validity of research variables is as follows:

TABLE I. TABLE OF TEST RESULTS OF VALIDITY OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

| variable | Indicators | r count | r table | information |
|------------------------------|------------|---------|---------|-------------|
| e-WOM (X) | X1.1 | 0,805 | 0,195 | Valid |
| | X1.2 | 0,825 | 0,195 | Valid |
| | X1.3 | 0,743 | 0,195 | Valid |
| Destination Image (Y_1) | Y1.1 | 0,708 | 0,195 | Valid |
| | Y1.2 | 0,848 | 0,195 | Valid |
| | Y1.3 | 0,735 | 0,195 | Valid |
| | Y1.4 | 0,756 | 0,195 | Valid |
| | Y1.5 | 0,724 | 0,195 | Valid |
| Visiting Interests (Y_2) | Y2.1 | 0,782 | 0,195 | Valid |
| | Y2.2 | 0,698 | 0,195 | Valid |
| | Y2.3 | 0,747 | 0,195 | Valid |
| Visiting Decision (Y_3) | Y3.1 | 0,870 | 0,195 | Valid |
| | Y3.2 | 0,784 | 0,195 | Valid |
| | Y3.3 | 0,805 | 0,195 | Valid |
| | Y3.4 | 0,788 | 0,195 | Valid |
| | Y3.4 | 0,744 | 0,195 | Valid |

Source : Primary data processed, 2021

Based on the table above, all indicators from e-WOM, image of tourist destinations, visiting interests and visiting decisions are valid, because it has a value of r count greater than r table.

(3) 2.2 Reliability Test

Reliability tests are used to determine the extent to which data can produce relatively no different results when re-measuring the same subjects or it can be said to indicate a similarity between something measured and the type of gauge used. In this study, reliability test uses the *cronbach alpha* formula. If the alpha value > 0.6 then the instrument used is reliable.

TABLE II. RESEARCH VARIABLE RELIABILITY TESTING

| No. | variable | Alpha Cronbach | Standard Numbers Reliabel | criterion |
|-----|-------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | e-WOM (X) | 0,698 | 0,6 | Reliabel |
| 2 | Tourism Destination Image (Y_1) | 0,807 | 0,6 | Reliabel |
| 3 | Visiting Interests (Y_2) | 0,679 | 0,6 | Reliabel |
| 4 | Visiting Decision (Y_3) | 0,856 | 0,6 | Reliabel |

Source : Primary data processed, 2021

In the reliability test above, e-WOM, the image of tourist destinations, visiting interests and visiting decisions are considered reliable because Alpha *Cronbach* > 0.6. Accordingly, it is feasible to proceed to the next test.

III. REGRESSION TESTING

This test was used to determine the effect between independent variables on dependent variables.

- The influence of e-WOM on the image of tourist destinations

TABLE III. LINEAR REGRESSION TEST I

Coefficients^a

| type | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
| | | b | Std. Error | beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 10,897 | 1,983 | | 5,496 | ,000 |
| | e-WOM | ,672 | ,174 | ,363 | 3,855 | ,000 |

a. Dependent Variable: Image of Tourist Destinations

source : Processed primary data, 2021

The influence of e-WOM on the image of tourist destinations produces a regression equation of $Y_1 = 0.363 X$. Based on this, it is concluded that e-WOM has a positive influence on the image of tourist destination with a regression coefficient value of 0.363. The higher the frequency of e-WOM, the higher the image of tourist destinations will be. Accordingly, if e-WOM is positive / good concerning millennial tourists' perception about Tablolong Beach Attraction, the image of Tablolong Beach will enhance.

2. The influence of tourist destination image on visiting interests

TABLE IV. LINEAR REGRESSION TEST II
Coefficients^a

| type | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
| | | b | Std. Error | beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 5,228 | ,754 | | 6,936 | ,000 |
| | Tourism Destination Image | ,329 | ,040 | ,637 | 8,177 | ,000 |

a. Dependent Variable: Visiting Interests

source : Processed primary data, 2021

The influence of tourist destination imagery on visiting interests resulted in a regression equation of $Y_2 = 0.637 Y_1$. Based on this, it is noted that image of tourist destination has a positive influence on the visiting interests with a regression coefficient value of 0.637. The higher the frequency of image of destination, the higher the visiting interest will be. Accordingly, if image of destination is positive / good concerning millennial tourists' perception about Tablolong Beach Attraction, the visiting intention will enhance.

TABLE V. THE INFLUENCE OF VISITING INTEREST ON VISITING DECISIONS LINEAR REGRESSION TEST III

Coefficients^a

| type | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|------|--|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|---|------|
| | | b | Std. Error | beta | | |

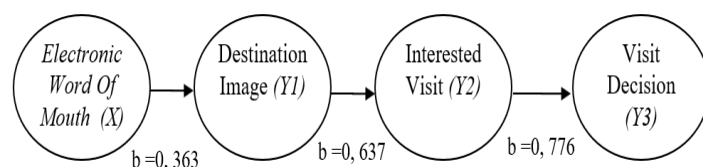
| | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|-------|-------|------|--------|------|
| 1 | (Constant) | ,076 | 1,477 | | ,052 | ,959 |
| | Visiting Interests | 1,577 | ,129 | ,776 | 12,198 | ,000 |

a. Dependent Variable: Visiting Decision

Source : Primary data processed, 2021

The influence of visiting interest on visiting decisions results in a regression equation of $Y_3 = 0.776 Y_2$. Based on the equation, it appears that visiting interest has a positive influence on visiting decisions with a regression coefficient value of 0.776. If the interest in visiting is inclined, then the decision to visit will also increase. Thus, if the millennial tourists' visiting interests increases, the more likely they will decide to visit Tablolong Beach.

Based on the results of the study, a framework can be drawn as follows:



Picture. Model Framework of Research Results

From the picture above, the model framework of the results of the study is that e-WOM positively affects the image of tourist destinations by 0.363. The image of tourist destinations positively influenced the interest in visiting by 0.637. Moreover, the visiting interests positively influenced the visiting decision by 0.776. Thus it can be said that if the basis of e-WOM is good, it will likely result in good tourist destination image and higher interests to visit Tablolong Beach Attraction. Accordingly, e-WOM, the image of tourist destinations, interest in visiting and visiting decisions are interrelated.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of data on the influence of *electronic* word of mouth on the image of tourist destinations and the impact on the interests and decisions of visiting the tourist attraction Tablolong Beach West Kupang District Kupang regency on millennial tourists can be concluded as follows:

1. Electronic WOM has a positive influence on the image of tourist destinations. Thus if electronic WOM positive / good is often done to Millennial Tourists about Tablolong Beach

Attractions, it has an impact on the increasing image of tourist destinations Tablolong Beach.

2. The image of tourist destinations has a positive influence on the interest in visiting. Thus, if the image of a good tourist destination is conveyed to Millennial Tourists about Tablolong Beach Attractions, it has an impact on the increasing interest in visiting Millennial Tourists to tablolong beach attractions
3. Interest in visiting has a positive influence on visiting decisions. Thus, if the interest in visiting Millennial Tourists is increased at Tablolong Beach Tourism Object, it has an impact on the increasing decision to visit Millennial Tourists to tablolong beach tourism object

V. SUGGESTION

Based on the results of this research, several suggestions are put forward as follows: Provincial Government NTT should encourage and improve development in the tourism sector to realize the welfare of the community and increase regional income. This can be done through the developing Tablolong Beach destination in West Kupang District. Moreover, there should be consideration on the development of construction facilities and road access, as well as the physical development of tourist attractions in Tablolong Beach itself. The results showed that Tablolong Beach has the potential to be developed because of the many potentials that are not yet known by tourists, therefore the Provincial Government of NTT through e-WOM prevalent among millennials, should enhance the image of Tablolong Beach that will be able to increase visiting interests that will have positive impacts on the visiting decision among the millennial tourists.

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