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Rural Tourism: Does Personal Motivation Play a Role as Reference Group Mediation on Tourist Word of Mouth?

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the influence of reference groups through personal motivation on word of mouth of waterpark tourists in Sumbergondo Village, Banyuwangi Regency, Indonesia. This research is descriptive-based quantitative research with a research population of visitors to the waterpark, while the sample used is 125 people using the accidental sampling method. The data source of this research is primary data obtained from respondents' answers to the questionnaire. The analytical tool used is Path Analysis and the Sobel test to determine the significance of the mediating role of the personal motivation variable. The results of this study indicate that there is a significant influence between the reference group on word of mouth. In addition, the reference group also influences personal motivation. The results of the Sobel test also show that own motivation has a perfect mediating role in the relationship between the reference group and word of mouth. This research implies that village tourism managers must pay attention to interesting information, and recruit someone who can be used as a brand ambassador for village tourism. So that this condition can be a motivation to visit tourists in the hope that tourist satisfaction can be a positive word of mouth.

Keywords: Reference Group, Personal Motivation, Word of Mouth.



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1 INTRODUCTION

There is an increase in the number of donations quite large from tourism to foreign exchange did not escape the contribution of the visit of tourists who do activities in Indonesia (Biro Komunikasi Kementerian Koordinator Bidang Kemaritiman dan Investasi, 2021), both foreign tourists and domestic tourists. The activities of these tourists can affect the profit level of the tourism sector which also has an impact on the Indonesian economy. Tourist activities involving various aspects, such as transportation, lodging, culinary, and business related to the sector of tourism can affect income accepted by the state. These activities are also influenced by the large number of tourist visits involving the tourism sector. The following is data obtained from the Central Statistics Agency National summarized in the table:

Table 1. Domestic tourists Visits and Abroad to Indonesia in 2018-2020.

Year	Number of Tourists Domestic (visit)	Number of Tourists Overseas (visit)
2018	241.831	13.797.968
2019	704.824	14.007.642
2020	664.645	15.442.309

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (updated 6 February 2021)

The number of foreign tourists visiting Indonesia is increasing from year to year. As shown in Table 1, a total of 13,797,968 visits occurred in 2018, a total of 14,007,642 visits occurred in 2019, and a total of 15,442,309 visits occurred in 2020. The foreign tourist visits were carried out by various nationalities spread across the world. In 2018 as many as 241,831 visits, in 2019 it rose by a fairly high number of 704,824.

Visits made by foreign tourists and domestic tourists also have an impact on the regional tourism sector, especially Banyuwangi Regency. The number of tourist visits to Banyuwangi Regency has increased significantly, especially from 2015 to 2020. In 2015 as many as 1,068,414 visits were made by domestic tourists and foreign tourists. In 2017 there were 1,773,527 visits.

And, in 2020 there were 5,408,676 visits. Each will be explained by the following figure:

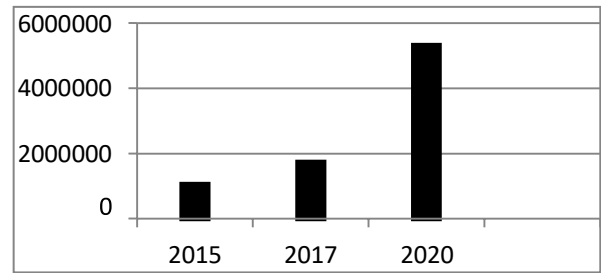


Figure 1. Domestic Tourist Visits in Banyuwangi 2015-2020

As can be seen in the figure, in 2015, there were 1,068,414 visits made by domestic tourists. In 2017 there were 1,773,527 visits. And in 2020 there were 5,408,676 visits to Banyuwangi Regency.

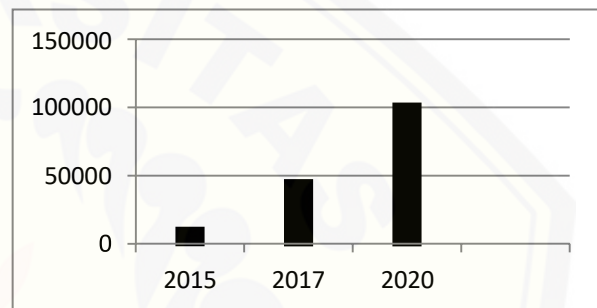


Figure 2. Foreign tourists Visits in Banyuwangi 2015-2020

As seen in the picture, in 2015 there were as many as 10,462 visits made by foreign tourists. In 2017 there were 45,569 visits. And in 2020 there were as many as 101,662 visits to Banyuwangi Regency.

One area in Banyuwangi Regency that has potential in the tourism sector is Glenmore District. Glenmore is a sub-district located in the western part of the city of Banyuwangi. The sub-district has the potential the form abundant water sources because it is located close to the mountains. One of the villages in Glenmore that has a water source is Sumbergondo Village. The water source in the village is used as irrigation for rice fields which are then used as three tourist destinations in the form of a waterpark.

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The three waterpark tours in Sumbergondo Village are called Umbul Bening, Umbul Pule, and Umbul Aga Puncak. This tour is a waterpark tour that provides services in the form of experience. Umbul Bening was built together with Umbul Pule in 2004 but has different ownership. The two banners are located in the same place with almost similar rides, services, and architecture, while the Umbul Aga Puncak was built in 2017 and is classified as a newly inaugurated tourist spot and is a little far from the two banners.

According to Utama (2017), word of mouth (WOM) is influenced by the level of visitor satisfaction. If visitors feel less or dissatisfied with the experience provided by waterpark tourism in Sumbergondo Village, then visitors will give negative reviews and are reluctant to visit again. On the other hand, if visitors are satisfied or even very satisfied, visitors will give positive reviews (Suryaningsih et al., 2019), and even recommend and invite other potential visitors (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The level of satisfaction is determined by the high and low expectations of potential visitors. This expectation is formed from some information and references obtained, one of which is a reference group (Fitriyah, 2013).

Umbul Bening, Umbul Pule, and Umbul Aga Peak are crowded with tourists even though the geographical location of the three waterparks is far from the city and closer to the mountains. When the holiday arrives, visitors from the three banners flock to visit until the land transportation route is diverted to only one route. Visitors also bring many groups when traveling. Various people certainly have something that pushes them to want to visit these tourist attractions in droves.

In this case, if people talk about the same product or service, then show similar use, that is in terms of consumption, they are influenced by other people, including in terms of travel (Duong et al., 2022; Shen, 2016).

Personal motivation arises because of the need that is present at a certain time (Mataveli & Gil, 2018). Some needs are biogenic, these needs arise from the existence of individual biological pressures, such as hunger, thirst, and comfort. Needs are also psychogenic, namely needs that arise from psychological pressure such as the need for recognition from others, appreciation, or a sense of membership in a group (Fitriyah, 2013; Hoonsopon & Puriwat, 2016). The need will become a motive if it is pushed to an adequate

level. Motivation is an important factor for potential tourists in making decisions about tourist areas to be visited (Suryaningsih et al., 2020).

One of the social factors that can trigger a person's visiting motive is the reference group (Damanik et al., 2019). Reference groups are all groups that have a direct or indirect influence on behavior (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Oliver, 2015; Tsaur et al., 2007). Reference groups (Hoonsopon & Puriwat, 2016) can require individuals to be able to follow the habits of the group so that they can influence individual choices. In the Banyuwangi community, neighbors who have certain norms and values force individuals who are in the group to follow them and become a reference for choice in individual decisions (Rajaratnam et al., 2015).

Consumers will evaluate alternatives from several reference choices which will then lead to decisions in visiting tourist destinations after getting references and having motivations related to their needs (Atilgan et al., 2003; Veale & Quester, 2009). Visitors have expectations of the references provided by reference groups in determining their tourist destination decisions. If the experience provided by a tourist place is as expected, then visitors will be satisfied, and if it exceeds expectations, they will be very satisfied (Kanwel et al., 2019).

The feeling of satisfaction or not with visitors to the experience provided by Umbul Bening, Umbul Pule, and Umbul Aga Puncak will affect the behavior of subsequent visitors (Kotler & Keller, 2016). If visitors are satisfied with the experience provided, they will tend to visit these tourist attractions again and tell good things and recommend them to groups and people around them. This can be called word of mouth (WOM). Word of mouth is word-of-mouth marketing carried out by visitors after visiting a tourist place (Wang et al., 2017).

1.1 Research Questions

1. Does the reference group have a significant effect on personal motivation for waterpark tourism in the Sumbergondo Village?
2. Does personal motivation have a significant effect on word of mouth on waterpark tourism in Sumbergondo Village?
3. Does the motivation of the reference group have a significant effect on word of mouth on waterpark tourism in Sumbergondo Village?
4. Can personal motivation mediate between the

reference group and word of mouth?

1.2 Objectives of the study

1. To determine the effect of reference group motivation on personal motivation in waterpark tourism in Sumbergondo Village.
2. To determine the effect of personal motivation on word of mouth on waterpark tourism in Sumbergondo Village.
3. To determine the influence of the reference group on word of mouth on waterpark tourism in Sumbergondo Village.
4. To find out the mediating role of personal motivation between the reference group and the world of mouth.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 The influence of reference groups on personal motivation.

Reference groups can influence individual motivation when the individual is in the decision-making process phase of the emergence of a need (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Hoonsopon & Puriwat (2016) states in the results of her research that reference groups affect individual self-brands. Mataveli & Gil (2018) also suggested that the motivation of external groups directs consumers to positive behavior as well as research by Zaitul et al., (2022) suggested that there was a positive effect of destination awareness, destination image, and destination quality on destination value in this case can be called a personal motivation by the reference group (Chaulagain et al., 2019). So, the following hypothesis can be taken:

H1: The reference group has a significant effect on personal motivation

2.2 The influence of personal motivation on word of mouth (WOM)

Motivation is a process that causes someone to behave the way they do (Solomon, 2011). In a study conducted by Yoo et al., (2018), tourist motivation influences WOM through satisfaction (Azhar et al., 2019a). So, the following hypothesis can be taken:

H2: Personal motivation has a significant effect on word of mouth.

2.3 The influence of the reference group on word of mouth

According to Kartajaya & Nirwandar, (2013), and I. G. B. R. Utama (2017), word of mouth is influenced by satisfaction, while according to Kotler & Keller,

(2016) the standard of satisfaction is consumer expectations. Consumer expectations are obtained from peers or can be said to be a reference group. In a study conducted by Azhar et al., (2019b), the reference group has a significant effect on consumer loyalty (Kim, 2018). So, the following hypothesis is drawn:

H3: The motivation of the reference group has a significant effect on word of mouth.

3 RESEARCH METHODS

This research can be categorized as explanatory research. The population in this study were all tourists from the Sumbergondo Village waterpark. Sampling using the accidental sampling method and obtained as many as 125 respondents. The variables analyzed in this study include the reference group (x) as the independent variable, personal motivation (y1) as the intervening variable, and word of mouth (y2) as the dependent variable. The analytical tool used in this study is path analysis using the SPSS application (I. Ghozali, 2016). In addition, the analytical tool used to test the mediating role of the own motivation variable is the Sobel test (Raykov, 2012).

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Normality test

Table 2. Normality Test Results

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Unstandardized Residual
N		125
Normal	Mean	.0000000
Parameters	Std Deviation	1.66907714
Most Extreme	Absolute	.054
Differences	Positive	.044
	Negative	-.054
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		.606
<u>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</u>		<u>.856</u>

Source: Data processed (2021)

It can be seen from Table 2 that the Asymp value. Sig is equal to 0.856. In this case, the value is greater than 0.05. This means that the tested data is normally distributed (Ghozali, 2011).

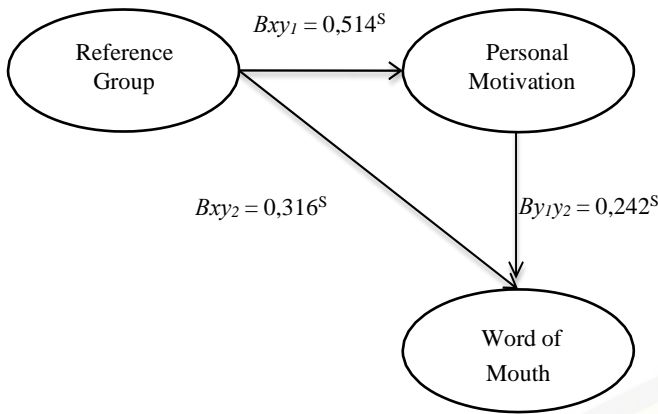


Figure 3. Path Analysis Results

Description:

- β_{xy1} = path coefficient of direct influence of Reference Group (x) on Personal Motivation (y1)
- β_{y1y2} = path coefficient of direct influence of Personal Motivation (y1) on Word of Mouth (y2)
- β_{xy2} = path coefficient of direct influence of Reference Group (x) on Word of Mouth (y2)

4.2 Partial Test (t-Test)

Table 3. Partial Test Results (t-Test)

Variable	t-Table	t-Count	p-value	Result
x to y1	1,979	6,644	0,000	H _a accepted
y1 to y2	1,979	2,620	0,010	H _a accepted
x to y2	1,979	3,427	0,001	H _a accepted

Source: Data processed (2021)

Based on the results of the t-test in Table 3, it is known that each value is as follows:

1. t-count is 6.644 > t-table which has a value of 1.979. Furthermore, the significance value is 0.000 < 0.05. It means that the reference group variable has a significant effect on the personal motivation variable, so H1 is accepted.
2. t-count is 2.620 > t-table which has a value of 1.979. Furthermore, the significance value is 0.010 < 0.05. It means that the personal motivation variable has a significant effect on the word-of-mouth variable, so H2 is accepted.
3. t count is 3,427 > t-table which has a value of 1,979. Furthermore, the significance value is 0.001 < 0.05. It means that the reference group variable has a significant effect on the word-of-mouth variable, so H3 is accepted.

4.3 Sobel Test

Input:	Test statistic:	Std. Error:	p-value:
a 0.514	Sobel test: 3.10387856	0.04007502	0.00191002
b 0.242	Aroian test: 3.10001272	0.040125	0.00193512
s _a 0.026	Goodman test: 3.10775889	0.04002498	0.00188512
s _b 0.077	Reset all	Calculate	

Figure 4. Sobel test results

Source: Data processed (2021)

Based on the results of the online Sobel test above, the Sobel Test Statistic Value is 3.10 and the P-value 0.0019 from the Sobel Test calculation above gets a calculated z value of 3.10 because the calculated z value obtained is 3.10 > 1.96 (z table) and p-value of 0.0019 < 0.05, then personal motivation is able to mediate the influence of the reference group on word of mouth.

4.4 Discussion

Reference Group on Personal Motivation.

This study found that the reference group had a significant effect on personal motivation. The results of this study support the results of research by (Mataveli & Gil, 2018) that outside groups can influence consumer behavior. Reference groups are all groups that have a direct or indirect influence on behavior (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Hoonsopon & Puriwat, 2016).

Personal Motivation on Word of Mouth.

This study finds that personal motivation has a significant effect on word of mouth. These findings strengthen the findings of (Azhar et al., 2019a) in their research, suggesting that satisfaction affects Word of Mouth (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). According to (Mataveli & Gil, 2018), personal motivation arises because of a need that is present at a certain time. The fulfillment of these needs can lead to satisfaction (Azhar et al., 2019a).

Reference Group on Word of Mouth.

This study found that the reference group had a significant effect on word of mouth (Fitriyah, 2013; Hoonsopon & Puriwat, 2016). These findings can strengthen the findings of (Hoonsopon & Puriwat, 2016) who found that reference groups affect loyalty (Gim, 2018).

Personal Motivation Mediates Reference Groups and Word of Mouth.

Sobel's calculation showed that personal motivation succeeded in mediating the reference group and word of mouth (Belarmino & Koh, 2018; Mataveli & Gil, 2018), so that personal motivation can mediate between the reference group and word of mouth (Suryaningsih et al., 2020).

5 CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- a. The reference group has a significant influence on personal motivation as evidenced by path analysis and has a positive value, meaning that the more reference groups that influence tourists, the more motivated tourists will be.
- b. Personal motivation has a significant influence on word of mouth as evidenced by path analysis and has a positive value, meaning that the more tourists are motivated to travel, the better the word of mouth carried out by tourists will be.
- c. The reference group has a significant influence on word of mouth as evidenced by path analysis and has a positive value, meaning that if more reference groups influence tourists, the word of mouth carried out by tourists will be better.
- d. Personal motivation can mediate the reference group with word of mouth, this is explained through the results of the online Sobel test with a z-count value greater than the z table, meaning that if there is no personal motivation, the reference group cannot create word of mouth.

6 RECOMMENDATION

Some suggestions based on the research results are as follows:

- a. For managers of Sumbergondo Village waterpark tourism. Managers should provide interesting information about Iwaterpark tourism in Sumbergondo Village, besides that they can also appoint a well-known traveler or tourist as the brand ambassador of the tour. This is to raise motivation to visit other tourists, as well as bring up positive conversations.
- b. For Further Researchers. If interested in researching the same object, other variables can be added to find out the updates and developments regarding the factors that can affect personal motivation and word of mouth. In addition, if the variables used are the same, you can add other indicators that have not been included in this study, to expand the existing problems and phenomena, and to complete or perfect the previous research.

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