

THE EFFECT OF DESTINATION BRANDING, ATTRACTIVENESS AND IMAGE ON THE SPEED OF TOURIST VISITING DECISIONS: THE ROLE OF ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to investigate the effect of destination branding, attractiveness, and image on the speed of tourist visiting decisions to Lombok Island, Indonesia, mediated by electronic word of mouth (e-WOM). Destination branding is a name, symbol, logo, or other things used as an explanation and also to distinguish a destination from other destinations. Destination branding has a crucial role as a characteristic of a particular tourist attraction, so destination branding must be created properly and appropriately. By utilizing online surveys for data collection due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, a total of 200 complete responses were obtained from foreign tourists. The results of this research indicate that destination branding and destination attractiveness delivered through e-WOM can accelerate tourist visiting decisions, while destination image through e-WOM has no significant effect.

Keywords: *destination branding, attractiveness, destination image, e-WOM, decision to visit*

1. BACKGROUND

Tourism is one of the trends that is currently growing quite rapidly and is considered a promising industry because tourism has many benefits for the community and the country both in terms of economy, culture, environment, science, and others. Indonesia is rich in cultural diversity and natural beauty so that nowadays many regions that have tourism potential are trying to create an image by strengthening certain symbols or markers. Each tourist area has a certain image, namely a person's mental maps of a destination which contains beliefs, impressions, and perceptions (Croes *et al.*, 2021). Positioning tourist destinations only based on their functional attributes will make them more quickly replaced (Sarvari, 2012). Therefore, Morgan *et al.*, (2003) states that the personality of a tourist destination can be used as the main tool for building a destination brand, understanding the perceptions of visitors to a destination, and creating a unique identity. In a highly competitive environment with increased product substitution and parity, branding is a powerful marketing tool that can be used by destination marketing teams (Papadopoulos, 2004).

Branding is an important asset in the industry because it is something that gives identity and character to something. Brand in a tourist destination is very necessary to face competition (Saeedi & Heidarzadeh Hanzae, 2018). One of the competitions that occurs among destinations is that one destination is sometimes not familiar compared to other destinations, even though both destinations offer similar or different products but with their own uniqueness. Brand from a tourism destination can make it easier for tourists to

distinguish one destination from another. One of the weaknesses in the Indonesian tourism industry currently does not have a strong enough brand, even though the branding to tourist destinations has been carried out on a national and international scale such as "Wonderful Indonesia" (Bawanti, 2016).

This research stems from the inconsistency of previous researches regarding the influence of branding strategies on decisions to visit. Some researchers state that there is an influence of branding strategy on decisions to visit (Fikri, 2016), but several other researchers state that there is no influence of branding on decisions to visit (Ramadhan, 2016). *et al.*, 2015; Jannah *et al.*, 2014). Balakrishnan, (2009) views that tourism is an image-based industry because the image is able to bring potential tourists to the world of symbols and meanings. Even some tourism experts say that this image plays an important role than visible tourism resources (S Kladou, 2015). From this understanding, the development of a brand image becomes important for a region that will develop itself as a major tourist destination. Jin & Weber, (2016) argue that attractiveness is one of the factors that greatly affects tourists who come to a tourist destination. The availability of tourist facilities serves to meet the needs of tourists during their temporary stay in the tourist destinations visited. Facilities are factors that significantly influence consumers to consume the products offered (Akroush *et al.*, 2016). The availability of facilities will encourage potential tourists to visit and enjoy tourist objects for a relatively long time. Rodrigues, (2018) further includes all forms of tourist attraction, all forms of convenience to facilitate travel (accessibilities), and all forms of facilities and services available in a tourist destination that can satisfy the needs and desires of tourists during their visit in the tourist destination.

Today's marketers can use the internet as a tool to offer all kinds of desired products (Herman *et al.*, 2021). Online advertising can aim to complement the marketing mix. The theory shows that promotion through the internet and social media should be carried out because it has a large enough prospect (Killian, 2015). Based on data published by We Are Social.com (2017) internet users worldwide are 3,773 million, while social media users reach 2,789 million. Active users of social media worldwide who use Facebook (1,871 million), WhatsApp (1,000 million), YouTube (1,000 million), Instagram (500 million), and Twitter (317 million). The role of internet and social media users in advancing tourist destinations on the Lombok Island is very large because the majority of tourists who want to visit use the internet and social media to find various information and share experiences. Not only that, social media also functions to make it easier for users to share and participate in providing and completing existing information. On social media itself, we can easily get information about tourist locations along with existing descriptions shared by other users. The promotion system that is carried out is running quite well, so as to be able to build strong relationships with consumers. As a result, thousands of visitors come every year.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPHOTESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Destination Attractiveness

The attractiveness of a destination reflects the feelings and opinions of visitors about the perceived ability of the destination to meet their needs. The more a destination is able to meet the needs of tourists, the more attractive it is and the more likely the destination is to be selected (Dey *et al.*, 2020). According to Jin & Weber, (2016) destination attractiveness results from a combination of the internal and external psychology of the destination. Rosli *et al.*, (2019) define attractiveness as the sum of the perceived ability of the destination to provide satisfaction and benefits to tourists. The attractiveness of tourist

destinations is the main motivation for tourists to make tourist visits (Dey *et al.*, 2020). They also classify tourist destinations into four attractions, namely:

1. Natural tourist attractions which include natural landscapes of the land, the natural landscape of ocean, beach, climate or the weather.
2. Tourist attractions in the form of building architecture which includes historical buildings and architecture, modern buildings and architecture, archeology.
3. Specially managed tourist attraction, which includes a heritage industrial area.
4. Cultural tourism attraction including theatre, museums, historical places, customs, religious places, special events such as festivals and historical dramas, and heritage such as cultural heritage.
5. Social tourism attraction is like the lifestyle of residents in tourist destinations.

Blain *et al.*, (2005) state that the tourism products that many consumers consider when deciding to travel, one of which is the decision to choose a destination from the attractiveness of the tourist destination to be visited. More according to Wu *et al.*, (2020) that the factors that influence the demand for international tourism include the choice of the attractiveness of tourist destinations and other factors from the tourism industry. The choice of tourist destination attraction is an attribute of tourism services that is often used as an indicator in determining the quality of tourism.

2.2. Relationship between destination branding and electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM)

Destination branding is a business process used to form a brand which is defined as the name of a symbol, logo, or other images which can provide a memory to tourists about the tourist experiences during a visit (N. Morgan, 2007; Shafaei & Mohamed, 2015). Destinations also have functions that can strengthen memory and also a memorable impression of a destination experience (Zhang, 2018) and can also make it easier for tour owners to introduce to target markets such as tourists and investors as well as to consumers who visit in groups (Hoppen *et al.*, 2014).

Technology and information is now growing rapidly. Now society is increasingly facilitated by various advanced technologies. The effectiveness, efficiency, and convenience of technology have earned their own place in the hearts of consumers. Technology has opened up access for consumers to access a variety of information (Scherer, 2015). Consumers can connect with various sources of information that play a role in the purchase decision process and fulfillment of needs. The development of the internet triggers the increasingly complex information needed by consumers. Studies from Hidayanti *et al.*, (2018) dan María Munar, (2011) show that people use social media to find new friends, socialize with old friends, seek and receive information, and entertain themselves. Someone can share experiences on using a product, doing review, as well as interacting with other customers through social media. This form of communication is known as word of mouth.

Word of mouth is currently experiencing a paradigm shift. Used to, word of mouth communication was done face-to-face with a known person, but nowadays word of mouth can be done online with a wider scope. Within seconds what we share can be read by millions of other people (Donthu *et al.*, 2021). Along with this paradigm shift, word of mouth through internet media is then known as e-WOM. As an Internet version of word of mouth; online reviews, new information presented from the perspective of consumers who have purchased and used the product, has become a major source of information for other potential consumers (Tapanainen *et al.*, 2021). Online reviews have critical implications for various management activities such as brand building, customer acquisition and retention, product development, and quality assurance. Destination branding of a tourist

attraction can immediately reach candidates and tourists quickly through the e-WOM (Purbadharmaja *et al.*, 2021; Tapanainen *et al.*, 2021).

H1: The better the destination branding, the faster the e-WOM

2.3. Relationship of e-WOM and Decision to Visit

Most of the potential visitors will search for information first before making a direct visit to tourist attractions. This information can be sourced from social media such as: Instagram, Facebook, Twitter or from people who have made direct visits to tourist attractions that they are planning to visit. Potential visitors who act as recipients of information will more easily trust information sources that have high credibility (Isa & Ramli, 2014; Tapanainen *et al.*, 2021). Good quality of information and having an accurate quantity according to field conditions is a strength of eWOM as the biggest attraction of a tourism destination (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016; Liu, 2015).

eWOM is a form of marketing communication that contains positive and negative statements made by potential consumers through internet media (Filiari *et al.*, 2021) This definition is in line with the opinion of Donthu *et al.*, (2021) that state eWOM is to disseminate information or carry out promotional activities quickly through internet network facilitation. Some of the social media frequently visited by potential consumers are Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Social media that is often visited by potential tourists will facilitate the acquisition of information so that it can affect the interest in visiting which will have an impact on the decision to visit the tourist destination. As stated by Jalilvand & Heidari, (2017) that eWOM has become the dominant channel influencing decisions to visit by facilitating the exchange of information and generating considerable influence in determining tourists' decisions to visit. Thus, eWOM in the modern era provides practical benefits for potential tourists. The decision to visit by tourists is analogous to consumer purchasing decisions which have stages as stated by Dey *et al.*, (2020), starting from the introduction of needs to behavior after purchase. Visitors will be interested first after that it will be followed by a decision to visit the desired tourist destination (Filiari *et al.*, 2021; Purbadharmaja *et al.*, 2021).

H2 : The better the e-WOM, the faster the decision to visit

2.4. Relationship of Destination Attractiveness Perceived on e-WOM

In the business world, word of mouth is the act of consumers providing information to other consumers from one person to another on a non-commercial basis either for brands, products, and services. Word of mouth has become the most powerful media in communicating a product or service to two or more consumers (Isa & Ramli, 2014). Word-of-mouth is a process of consumers having an experience about a product or service based on their respective opinions or views to others, either positive or negative (Rosli *et al.*, 2019). The motive of e-WoM itself is different from the motive of WoM because it is influenced by the dynamic social needs of society, the development of information technology, the development of new media, and others. (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016; Jalilvand & Heidari, 2017).

Tourism attractiveness is one of the factors that greatly affects tourists who come to a tourist destination (Jin & Weber, 2016). Attraction is the main reason for tourists to visit. The beauty of a tourist attraction provides satisfaction for tourists who travel for recreational purposes and enjoying the trip. The attractiveness of tourist objects is a major consideration for tourists to decide to visit. The more attractive a tourist attraction, the higher the interest of tourists to visit (Saeed & Shafique, 2020). Through social media, all tourist attractions can be promoted and form online communities or groups for consumers

who like everything about the services of these tourist destinations. The existence of an online community or group will allow for an electronic social interaction that will encourage the occurrence of e-WOM (Purbadharmaja *et al.*, 2021). Social networks in the form of online communities can be an important resource for the development of a tourist destination.

H3 : The higher the Destination Attractiveness, the higher the e-WOM

2.5. Destination Attractiveness Perceived on Decision to Visit

Tourist attraction is actually another word for a tourist object, but according to the Government Regulation in 2009, the word tourist object is no longer used to refer to a tourist destination, and to replace the word tourist object, the word tourist attraction is used. Tourist attraction is the main motivation for visitors to make tourist visits. So it is not surprising that currently many tourism industries continue to develop potential tourist attractions to attract tourists to visit these attractions. Tourist attractions in addition to being the main motivation for visitors to make tourist visits, tourist attractions can also be a motivation for visitors to make repeat visits (Dey *et al.*, 2020). This is in accordance with the statement Fadda & Sørensen, (2017) in their research which concluded that the quality of tourist attraction has a direct and positive relationship to the interest of visiting tourists.

A tourist destination can be viewed as a mixture of individual products and experiences that combine to form the total experience of the area visited (Rodrigues, 2018). Previous studies have shown that image of destinations have cognitive and affective components (Andrades & Dimanche, 2017). Though image of destination has been recognized to consist of affective and cognitive components, previous studies have also shown a direct relationship between *image* of tourist destinations and trends to recommend via word of mouth (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016), and also the direct relationship between image of tourist destinations and expectations (Guerreiro *et al.*, 2006). A study by Jin & Weber, (2016) demonstrates that it is necessary to create and observe a destination's personality to position and differentiate it in the tourism market. This can be done through a whole range of marketing techniques including publicity and imagery (Asseraf & Shoham, 2017).

H4 : The higher the Destination Attractiveness, the faster the decision to visit

2.6. Relationship between destination image and e-WOM

Tourist satisfaction encourages tourists to be loyal to tourist destinations by making return visits and being willing to recommend tourist destinations to others. According to Sarvari, (2012) loyalty is a deeply persistent customer commitment to re-subscribe or re-purchase a selected product or service consistently in the future, even though situational influences and marketing efforts have the potential to cause behavioral change. According to Jiang, (2017), image creation before the trip is the most crucial phase in the process of selecting a tourist destination. Meanwhile, the perceived image after a tourist visit will also affect consumer satisfaction and the intensity to make return visits in the future, depending on the ability of the tourist destination to provide experiences that are in accordance with the needs and image that tourists have about the tourist area.

Hudson, (2015) emphasized the role of the Internet to develop tourist destinations, the same opinion was also expressed by Tapanainen *et al.*, (2021) where social media contributed as a driving factor to promote the destination. Both of these arguments indicate that the tourism industry and the Internet provide spaces to make travel decisions for tourists. Therefore, it is not surprising that the internet has fundamentally changed the way in which travel information is searched and the process of determining travel destinations is made (Filiari *et al.*, 2021). The utilization of internet-based social media as a tourism

communication medium is more flexible and profitable for the use of media like this is considered easier, has a broad reach, and is cost-effective in communicating tourism what makes social media increasingly in demand as a means of communication and promotion.

H5 : The higher the destination image, the better the e-WOM

2.7. Relationship of Destination Image and Decision to Visit

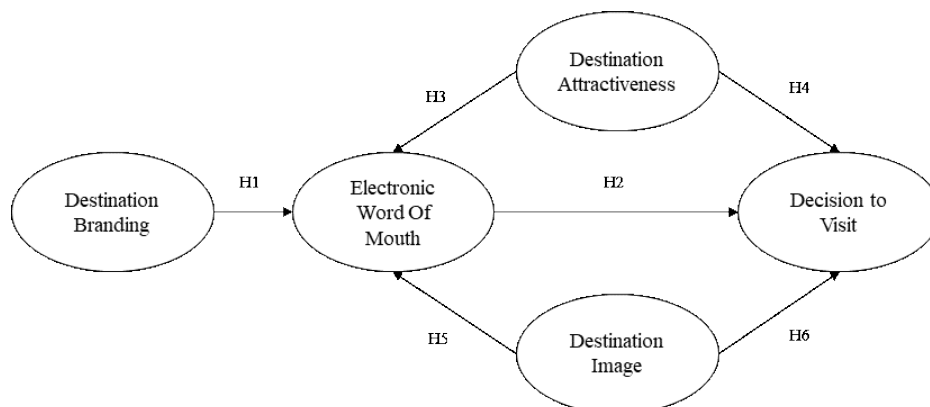
The concept of destination branding can be said to be a brand of a place (Asseraf & Shoham, 2017; Séraphin *et al.*, 2019). With brand from certain destinations can give rise to perceptions or feelings to visit. The brand is an identity that cannot be separated from a product, whether it is a service or a product (Tergrav, 2016). Brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design and its combination which are intended to identify a product or service from a single or a group of sellers and differentiate them from the competitors (Rowley, 2005). Destination branding as a management of image of a destination through strategic innovations as well as a coordination of economic, commercial, social, cultural, and government regulations (N. Morgan, 2007; Zenker, 2017).

The role of destination branding here is to create positioning and differences to introduce the potential of the region to tourists. A good destination branding must be able to change the perception of tourists from negative to positive with the support of tourist facilities that are in accordance with the needs of visitors to provide convenience and meet their needs during their visit (Dioko, 2016). Stella Kladou *et al.*, (2017) state that each location can also be branded by creating and communicating an identity for a given location.

H6 : The higher the destination image, the faster the decision to visit

Based on the developed hypotheses, with the support of the theoretical analysis and the research results above, an empirical research model can be formulated in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1. Research Empirical Model



3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1. Population and Sample

In this research, the research population were foreign tourists who have visited the tourist destination areas in Lombok Island. The sampling method used in this research was a survey method that used a portion of the population as a sample in the study. So the number of respondents in this research were 200 people. According to Hair, (2015) which states that the appropriate sample size for SEM is between 100-200 samples. With reference to Hair's opinion and based on the considerations that have been stated above, this research took 200 respondents.

3.2. Research Instruments and Measurement

The primary data collection method in this research used a survey method, which aims to collect information from respondents by using a questionnaire containing a list of closed statements to be answered by the respondents. Closed statements require respondents' feedbacks that will provide an assessment between 1-10 on a Likert scale, where a score of 1 = strongly disagree to a score of 10 = strongly agree.

In this research, validity and reliability tests were carried out aimed to test the research instrument. Data quality test is a stage that a research model must pass before arriving at the influence test or correlation test. In general, the validity of the data describes the suitability of each indicator to the variable. While the reliability of the data shows the reliability of the research data. To test the validity of SEM, it is known through the estimate value. Ghazali (2013) explains that the indicator of the variable is called valid if the Estimate value > 0.05 . Furthermore, to test the reliability of the data used indicators based on the formula Variance Extracted (AVE) and Construct Reliability (CR). Ghazali (2013) explains that the indicator of a variable is called reliable if the AVE value ≥ 0.05 and $CR \geq 0.07$.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1. Respondents Profile

Respondents in this research were 200 foreign tourists. After distributing the questionnaires to the respondents; the number of questionnaires that were returned, filled out completely, and fitted to be processed were 163 questionnaires consisting of 97 male respondents (59.51%) and 66 (40.49%) female respondents. In terms of age, 2 respondents (1.23%) were under 20 years old, 8 respondents (4.91%) were 20-30 years old, 52 respondents (31.90%) were 31-40 years old; 76 respondents (46.63%) aged 41-50 years; 19 respondents (11.66%) were over 60 years old. Regarding the type of work, 7 respondents (4.29%) were students, 38 respondents (23.31%) were private-sector employees, 41 respondents (25.15%) were civil servants, 72 respondents (44.17%) were entrepreneurs, and 5 respondents (3.07%) represented other jobs. We also recorded categories of respondents based on education level, namely 67 respondents (41.10%) with high school education or its equivalent, 95 respondents (58.28%) with undergraduate education, and 1 respondent (0.61%) with postgraduate education.

Table 2. Respondents Profile

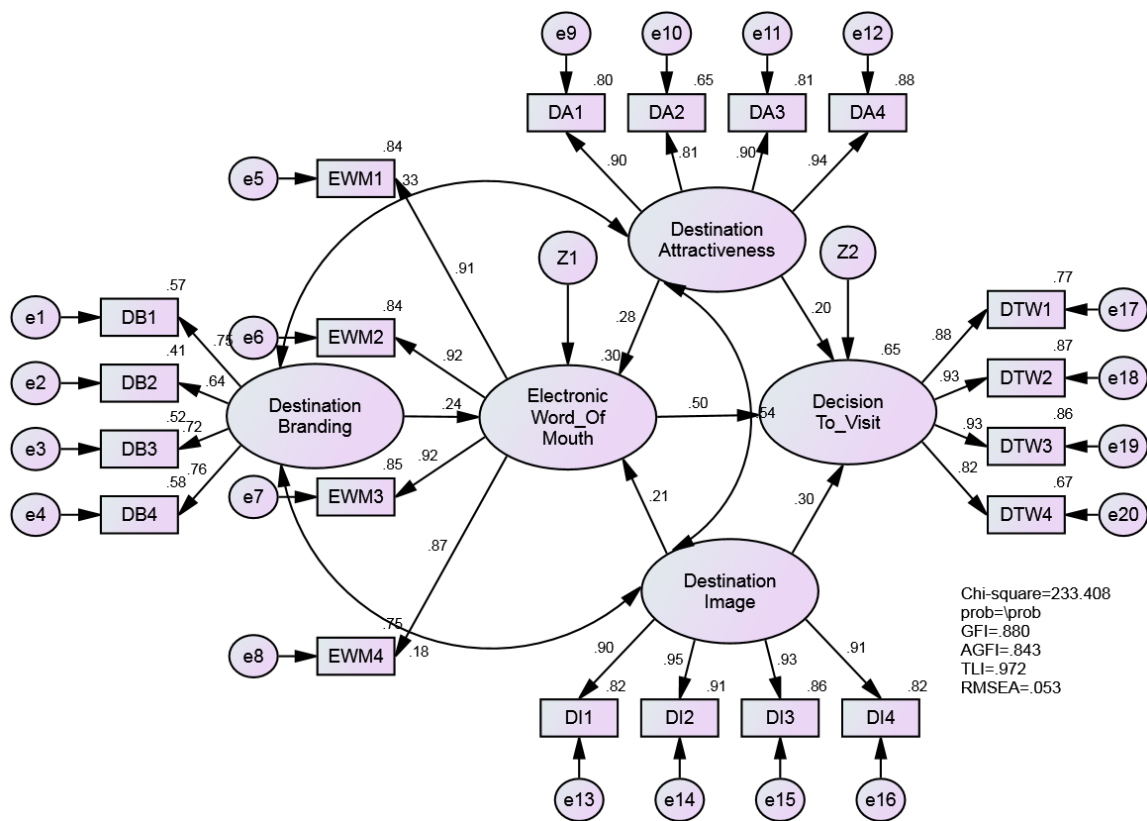
Item	Description	Frequency N=163	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	97	59.51%
	Female	66	40.49%
Age	Under 20 years	2	1.23%
	20 – 30 years	8	4.91%
	31 – 40 years	52	31.90%
	41 - 50 years	76	46.63%
	51 - 60 years	19	11.66%
	above 60 years	6	3.68%
Profession	Student	7	4.29%
	Private Employees	38	23.31%
	Civil Servant	41	25.15%

Education Level	Entrepreneur	72	44.17%
	Other	5	3.07%
	High School	67	41.10%
	Undergraduate	95	58.28%
	Post Graduate	1	0.61%

4.2. Data Analysis Results with SEM

The research data that have been collected were then analyzed using the Structural Equation Model (SEM) assisted by the AMOS 22 software. In addition, we used the maximum likelihood estimation method (MLE) in the SEM model and used the goodness of fit index to test the normality of the data with respect to the four constructs and their 16 indicator items. There was no evidence to reject the normality of the data in this research. The results of the full structural equation model analysis are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Full Structural Model



Based on the results of the model test on the full structural model analysis chart, it can be shown that the model meets the fit criteria, this can be seen by the value of the calculation results meeting the eligibility criteria of the full model. The results of the calculation of several goodness indexes to evaluate the overall goodness of the model used are GFI index (GFI) = 0.880; the adjusted GFI index (AGFI) = 0.843; Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = 0.972; and root mean square of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.053. The results of data processing show that each indicator or dimension measuring each latent variable gives good results, namely the critical ratio (CR) value above 2.58. The results of hypothesis testing are presented in table 3 namely 5 hypotheses are supported and 1 is not supported.

Table 3. Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	Hypothesis Test
H1	Electronic_Word_Of_Mouth	<--- Destination_Branding	.301	.108	2.802	Supported
H2	Electronic_Word_Of_Mouth	<--- Destination_Attractiveness	.253	.084	3.023	Supported
H3	Electronic_Word_Of_Mouth	<--- Destination_Image	.202	.083	2.431	Not Supported
H4	Decision_To_Visit	<--- Electronic_Word_Of_Mouth	.530	.073	7.290	Supported
H5	Decision_To_Visit	<--- Destination_Attractiveness	.188	.066	2.833	Supported
H6	Decision_To_Visit	<--- Destination_Image	.306	.069	4.449	Supported

5. DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this research is to empirically test the effect of destination branding, attractiveness, and destination image on the speed of tourists' decision to visit the Lombok Island mediated by e-WOM. Overall, this research empirically tested 6 research hypotheses and produced some very interesting findings. Hypothesis 1 (H₁) stated that the better the destination branding, the better the e-WOM and the result is supported in this research. This research confirms that destination branding efforts on the Lombok Island will encourage tourists to give a positive response through e-WOM. The result of this research is supported by previous studies which state that e-WOM is a positive or negative statement made by potential customers or former customers about a product or firm, aimed at many people or institutions via the internet (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004). Communication of e-WOM formed on social media allows users to share information (Chen *et al.*, 2019). Social media contribute to the delivery of development messages, including in the sector of tourism used as a promotional medium (Saeed & Shafique, 2020).

Hypothesis 2 (H₂) stated that the higher the Destination Attractiveness, the higher the e-WOM, and the test result is supported in this research. This research confirms that a tourist attractiveness is something that has an attraction to be seen and enjoyed that is worth selling to the tourist market so that the attractiveness of a tourist destination will provide recommendations from other people who have a great influence on the decision to visit a tourist destination (Dey *et al.*, 2020; Jin & Weber, 2016). Interpersonal influence and WOM especially through the internet are the main sources of information due to the nature of tourism products that are intangible difficult to evaluate before consumption (Tapanainen *et al.*, 2021). Hypothesis 3 (H₃) proposed that the higher the destination image, then the higher e-WOM, and the result of hypothesis testing is not supported in this research. This research found that destination image cannot influence other people to give comments or impressions on social media through e-WOM on tourist destinations in the Lombok Island. The result of this research is different from previous studies which state that destination image affects reviews and impressions through e-WOM (Artuğer *et al.*, 2013; Jalilvand & Heidari, 2017).

Hypothesis 4 (H₄) proposed that the higher the e-WOM, the faster the decision to visit, and the result of the research test supports this hypothesis. This research found that potential visitors who act as recipients of information will more easily trust information sources that have high credibility, good quality information, and have accurate quantity according to field conditions. (Filieri *et al.*, 2021). This is where the power of e-WOM as

the biggest attraction of tourism to speed up the tourists' decision to visit (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016; Tapanainen *et al.*, 2021). Hypothesis 5 (H₅) proposed that the higher the destination attractiveness, the faster the decision to visit, and the result of research test supports this hypothesis. This research found that the attractiveness of a tourist destination is the main motivation for tourists to visit. It can be concluded that tourist attractions play an important role not only in tourist attractions but also in influencing a person's decision to visit tourist attractions (Jin & Weber, 2016; Rosli *et al.*, 2019). Hypothesis 6 (H₆) proposed that the higher the destination image, the faster the decision to visit, and the result of the research test supports this hypothesis. This research found that Image which is a set of beliefs, ideas, and impressions of a person about a tourist attraction plays an important role in influencing the decision of tourists to visit. When a tourist will make a decision then image is a fact that is relied on in visiting a tourist attraction because tourists tend to choose a well-known product or one that has been used by many people compared to visiting a tourist attraction that they did not know before. (Martínez & Alvarez, 2010). Attitudes and actions of tourists towards a tourist attraction are strongly influenced by the image of the tourist attraction. This is supported by the research result which states that the relationship between destination image and decision to visit have positive and significant effects on the decision to visit (Isa & Ramli, 2014; Marques *et al.*, 2021).

6. CONCLUSIONS, MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATION, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

6.1. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that have been carried out, it is found that there are several conclusions that influence the research variables namely destination branding, e-WOM, destination image, and destination attractiveness on the variables of decision to visit. Branding is the most basic part of marketing activities that is very important to understand or comprehend as a whole. The association between meaning and the brand usually comes from various organizational activities in involving consumers in the brand, as well as information about this brand from various media, famous people who have used the brand, and word of mouth marketing activities will also affect the association of meaning with the brand (Balakrishnan, 2009; Herman, 2021). Destination branding of a good tourist attraction must be able to change the perception of tourists from negative to positive by creating and communicating an identity for the destination concerned. This research found the impact of destination branding and destination attractiveness in increasing e-WOM which in turn will affect the speed of tourists' decision to visit the tourist destinations. The tourism industry sector must assess the importance of implementing e-WOM as an online promotion media and see the potential benefits of e-WOM as a form of marketing communication carried out by potential tourists through social media in recommending and providing reviews about a tourist destination. The results of reviews of tourists who have visited tourist destinations have a significant influence in accelerating the decision to visit by potential tourists.

6.2. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this research can be recommended for implications for the application of destination branding and e-WOM management in an effort to accelerate the tourists' decision to visit to the Lombok Island. Branding of tourist destinations is pivotal as a promotion of a destination to tourists and potential tourists. A strong and unique brand will have a positive effect on tourism destination sustainability, while tourist destinations without a strong brand will be easily forgotten and abandoned by the public. Brand has a correlation with the products and services offered, the better the product then the tourist

destination brand will certainly be stronger. The creation of a strong brand is certainly supported by e-WOM through reviews, recommendations, and positive statements from tourists who have visited, so it is necessary to manage e-WOM and social media properly by tourism destination administrators.

6.3. LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This research has several limitations. First, the sample used here is still limited to foreign tourists visiting Gili Trawangan destinations and the airport. For further research, the sample can be expanded to tourists who are in several destination spots in the Lombok Island. Second, the variables in this research are still very limited in exploring the model of destination branding, e-WOM, and Destination Image and Attractiveness in the decision to visit. For similar research in the future, it is recommended for further researchers to include the destination attachment variable as one of the factors that accelerates the tourists' decision to visit.

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