

THE INFLUENCE OF TOURIST ATTRACTIONS AND ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH (E-WOM) ON VISITING DECISIONS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the effect of Tourism Attraction and Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) on Visiting Decisions at the Parsorminan Park and Farm lodging area in Parsorminan Village, Sipirok District, South Tapanuli Regency. The research employed a quantitative associative approach with a sample of 100 respondents selected via accidental sampling. Data collection was conducted using questionnaires and analyzed using validity testing, reliability assessment, multiple linear regression, t-tests, and F-tests in SPSS version 23. The findings indicate that Tourism Attraction has a positive and statistically significant impact on Visiting Decisions. Similarly, Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) also exerts a positive and statistically significant Influence on Visiting Decisions. Collectively, both variables significantly affect visiting decisions. These results suggest that improving tourism attractions and enhancing digital communication through E-WOM are vital strategies for increasing tourist interest and the likelihood of visiting.

Keywords: tourism attraction, electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), visiting decision.

A. INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector is an essential element of the national economy and has substantial potential to enhance public welfare. Indonesia, as an archipelagic nation rich in cultural diversity and natural splendor, has a remarkable appeal to both domestic and international visitors (Johanes et al., 2024). According to statistics published by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the volume of domestic tourist trips in November 2024 reached 80.6 million, indicating strong public interest in domestic tourism. This elevated level of tourism engagement offers a valuable opportunity for managers of tourism destinations to continually innovate and maximize their attractions. In tourism, the visit decision is the process by which an individual chooses to visit a destination, taking into account factors such as tourist attractions, facilities, costs, time, and information from the environment (Hinlayagan et al., 2023). Essentially, this decision is similar to a purchasing decision, but the target is a tourist attraction rather than a product or service (Lustono & Suryani, 2022; Mandasari, 2021). Influential factors include tourist attractions and electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) (Nguyen et al., 2025).

Tourist attractions constitute the principal factor influencing travelers' destination choices. According to Law Number 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism, a tourist attraction is defined as anything that is unique, aesthetically appealing, and valuable, encompassing natural, cultural, and man-made diversity that draws visitors. The more appealing and extensive the facilities and attractions, the higher the likelihood of tourists revisiting the destination (Nopriana et al., 2024). Inadequate tourist attractions will directly result in low visitor numbers and diminished visitor satisfaction (Meryawan et al., 2025). Furthermore, developments in digital technology and social media have transformed how tourists select destinations (Cahyani et al., 2022). This phenomenon is characterized by the emergence of the concept of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), which involves the dissemination of information regarding tourist destinations via electronic media such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and other online review platforms (Ngo et al., 2024). E-WOM exerts considerable influence on prospective tourists' perceptions and decisions by enabling rapid, widespread, and interactive sharing of experiences and reviews (Nguyen et al., 2025). Positive information shared through e-WOM can enhance potential travelers' trust and motivate them to visit, whereas negative reviews may have the opposite effect (Sudaryanto et al., 2025).

One of the prominent tourist destinations discussed in this study is the Parsorminan Park and Farm Inn, situated in the Sipirok District, South Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra. This site advocates a natural tourism concept featuring scenic mountain vistas and various amenities such as lodging, a swimming pool, a camping area, and a café. Despite providing a cool and comfortable environment, the number of visitors remains relatively modest. According to an interview with the manager of Parsorminan Park and Farm Inn, total visitors in 2024 reached 1,475, with notable monthly fluctuations (Interview with Manager of Parsorminan Park and Farm Inn, 2024). This data indicates that the management of tourist attractions and promotional efforts, including social media utilization, is not yet fully optimized.

Field observations indicate the main challenges are insufficient seating, ineffective promotion, and poor visual appeal, including inadequate photo spots. Concurrently, social media platforms like the official Instagram account @parkandfarmsipirok boast thousands of followers and numerous posts; however, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) from visitors remains insufficient to reliably attract new tourists. This poses a significant challenge for managers in devising digital promotional strategies that enhance the destination's image and increase visitor interest. This research seeks to investigate the extent to which tourist attractions and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) influence tourists' visitation decisions at Parsorminan Park and Farm. Understanding the relationship between these variables can help management develop more effective improvement strategies, including enhancing facility quality and optimizing digital marketing initiatives. The findings of this study are also anticipated to contribute academically to the advancement of tourism research, especially in the domain of consumer behavior within the digital age.

This research is grounded in consumer behavior theory, which posits that purchasing (or visiting) decisions are influenced by internal factors, such as motivation and perception, as well as external factors, such as attractiveness and marketing communications. In the era of digitalization, marketing communications extend beyond traditional media and have evolved through social networks, which play a role in shaping public opinion. Consequently, effective management of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) can be instrumental in enhancing a tourist destination's competitiveness. This research on how tourist attractions and e-WOM influence visit decisions aims to offer practical insights for Parson's Park and Farm management. It can also serve as a valuable reference for other tourist sites seeking to harness digital media to enhance their image and boost visitor numbers. Combining physical attraction development with digital communication strategies is essential for staying competitive in the evolving tourism market.

B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative approach utilizing an associative methodology. The objective was to assess the impact of tourist attractions (X_1) and electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) (X_2) on the decision to visit (Y) at the Parsorminan Park and Farm accommodation located in Parsorminan Village, Sipirok District, South Tapanuli Regency. The data employed comprised both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected via questionnaires distributed to tourists who had visited the research site, whereas secondary data were sourced from documentation, reports, and relevant literature. The sampling method employed was non-probability sampling, specifically an accidental sampling technique whereby respondents encountered by chance and willing to complete the questionnaire were selected. The sample size was calculated using the LEMESHOW formula, yielding a total of 100 respondents.

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 23, incorporating validity and reliability assessments, descriptive statistics, normality testing, classical assumption evaluations, and multiple linear regression. Hypothesis testing was performed using the t-test (partial), F-test (simultaneous), and the coefficient of determination (R^2) to ascertain the extent of influence exerted by tourist attractions and electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) on tourists' visiting decisions.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Result

This research was conducted at the Parsorminan Park and Farm, located in Parsorminan Village, Sipirok District, South Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra Province. This tourist destination offers an integrated nature-based tourism concept that combines accommodation, a park, a farm, and family recreation areas. The site encompasses 2 hectares and offers scenic mountain vistas and fresh air. Besides accommodation, the park features a swimming pool, camping area, mini-zoo, café, garden, wooden houses, and designated photo spots, all of which are major attractions for visitors. Despite its natural beauty and diverse amenities, this destination still sees relatively low tourist numbers. Management interviews reveal that in 2024, only 1,475 visitors came, with notable monthly fluctuations. Usually, visitor numbers rise in April and December, but fall in March, July, and October. This suggests that current attractions have not successfully fostered consistent tourist loyalty and interest.

This study included 100 respondents selected through nonprobability accidental sampling, specifically tourists who happened to be visiting and agreed to participate. Data were collected via a questionnaire employing a five-point Likert scale and analyzed using SPSS version 23. The validity test results demonstrated that all statement items possessed a calculated r value exceeding the r table value (0.1966), thereby qualifying all items as valid. The reliability test outcomes indicated that Cronbach's Alpha values for all variables were above 0.60, signifying a satisfactory level of internal consistency. Furthermore, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test yielded a p -value greater than 0.1, indicating that the data are typically distributed. The multicollinearity test showed Tolerance values exceeding 0.10 and VIFs below 10, indicating the absence of multicollinearity among the variables. The heteroscedasticity test also indicated a random data distribution around the zero axis, confirming the lack of heteroscedasticity. Consequently, the regression model employed was considered appropriate for subsequent analysis. The results of the multiple linear regression analysis produced the following equation:

$$Y = 5,219 + 0,312X_1 + 0,421X_2$$

Description:

Y = Visit Decision

X_1 = Tourist Attraction

X_2 = Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM)

The equation shows that the variables tourist attraction (X_1) and electronic word-of-mouth (X_2) are positively correlated with the decision to visit (Y). This indicates that any increase in either independent variable will lead to a greater propensity among tourists to visit Parsons' Park and Farm. The results of the partial t-test indicate that the tourist attraction variable has a t-value of 4.316 and a p-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.1. Similarly, the e-WOM variable exhibits a calculated t-value of 6.271 with a significance level of 0.000, also less than 0.1. These findings suggest that each variable exerts a statistically significant influence on the decision to visit.

Furthermore, the results of the simultaneous F-test show an F-value of 103.212 with a significance level of 0.000, indicating that both the tourist attraction and e-WOM variables significantly affect tourists' visitation decisions. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.684, indicating that the variables of tourist attraction and E-WOM account for 68.4% of the variation in visiting decisions. The remaining 31.6% is attributed to factors outside the model, such as price, service quality, personal experience, or recommendations from family and friends.

D. Discussion

1. The Influence of Tourist Attractions on Visiting Decisions

According to the analysis, the variable for tourist attractions positively and statistically significantly influences the decision to visit. This suggests that the more appealing and extensive the available tourist amenities are, the greater the likelihood that tourists will visit. Tourist attractions encompass natural beauty, supporting facilities, ease of access, and the distinctive experiences provided by the destination. Observations indicate that the primary appeal of Parsorminan Park and Farm Inn resides in its refreshing natural environment and scenic mountain vistas. Additionally, recreational amenities suitable for families, including parks, gardens, a mini-zoo, and designated photo areas, attract visitors, particularly young people and families. Nevertheless, several challenges persist, such as insufficient seating accommodations, inadequately maintained supporting facilities, and substandard cleanliness management. These issues may affect tourists' comfort and overall satisfaction during their visit. This finding aligns with research indicating that natural beauty, tourist facilities, and environmental comfort are crucial factors influencing tourists' destination selection (Lin, 2024; Zanchini et al., 2025).

Furthermore, well-managed tourist attractions foster positive experiences that motivate tourists to revisit and recommend the destination to others (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). Therefore, the management of Parsorminan Park and Farm must enhance the quality of its tourist attractions by developing facilities, innovating photo spots, and maintaining the cleanliness and aesthetic appeal of the environment. These enhancements will not only attract new visitors but also sustain the loyalty of current patrons.

2. The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) on Visiting Decisions

The research findings indicate that electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) positively and significantly affects tourists' decision-making processes regarding visitation. This suggests that increased dissemination of favorable information via social media is associated with a greater likelihood that individuals will visit the destination. In this context, social media assumes a strategic function as a communication conduit between destination administrators and prospective visitors. Parsorminan Park and Farm maintains an official Instagram account, @parkandfarmsipirok, which, by the end of 2024, has garnered over 3,000 followers and nearly 900 posts. Through this platform, comprehensive information on facilities, events, and visitor feedback is widely distributed and serves as a vital reference for prospective tourists. According to the theory of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), positive reviews shared by tourists via digital media can cultivate a favorable perception of a destination. Conversely, negative reviews may deter visitors. In the digital era, prospective tourists place greater trust in the authentic experiences of other users than in official promotions issued by management.

This research aligns with findings that electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) directly influences tourists' interest and visitation decisions in Yogyakarta (Ningsi & Yovita, 2025). Similarly, positive engagement on social media can enhance a destination's image and motivate increased visitation (Mutamakkinah, 2025). Therefore, managers should effectively leverage electronic word of mouth by motivating tourists to share their positive experiences through photographs, videos, or reviews on social media platforms. Additionally, managers are encouraged to actively engage with visitors by disseminating innovative promotional content and responding promptly to public commentary.

3. The Simultaneous Influence of Tourist Attractions and E-WOM on Visiting Decisions

The analysis indicates that both tourist attractions and electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) exert a significant combined influence on decision-making about visits. This suggests that the success of a tourist destination is contingent not only upon its physical characteristics and amenities but also on the perceptions and discussions it engenders within digital platforms. Tourist attractions contribute to gratifying in-person experiences, while electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) extends promotional efforts through testimonials and the recounting of past travelers' experiences. When tourists are satisfied with the destination's facilities and scenery, they are more likely to share their positive impressions on social media. This phenomenon has a dual impact: it attracts new visitors and enhances the destination's digital reputation. The findings of this study corroborate the view that integrating tourist attraction management with digital communication strategies is a crucial factor in shaping visitation decisions. Research affirms that the synergy between tourist attraction quality and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM)- based promotions can substantially elevate tourist interest and loyalty. Therefore, the management of Parsorminan Park and Farm Inn should adopt a comprehensive approach by integrating the development of tourist facilities with enhanced digital marketing strategies. Promotional efforts that leverage innovative content, visual storytelling, and visitor testimonials can be effective ways to broaden

market reach and elevate the destination's positive image. The findings of this study possess essential practical and theoretical significance. In practice, these results can serve as a reference for the management of Parsorminan Park and Farm Inn when developing destination enhancement strategies. Efforts to increase tourist attractiveness should emphasize aspects such as facility comfort, cleanliness, security, and innovative attractions.

Additionally, e-WOM strategies should be reinforced through professional, interactive management of social media platforms and collaboration with local influencers to broaden promotional outreach. This study contributes to the existing literature on tourism consumer behavior and digital marketing communications within the regional tourism context. The interplay between physical attractiveness and digital communication factors has been shown to influence tourist visitation behavior significantly. For future research, scholars should broaden the scope of variables examined by including additional factors, such as destination image, tourist satisfaction, price, and service, thereby developing a more comprehensive model to elucidate tourist behavior in the digital age.

E. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Conclusions

According to the findings, tourist attractions and Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) exert a positive, statistically significant influence on tourists' visitation decisions at Parsorminan Park and Farm Inn, both independently and concurrently. Tourist attractions, which encompass natural beauty, amenities, and comfort, are primary motivators for visitors. Additionally, E-WOM via social media significantly contributes to cultivating positive perceptions and enhancing tourist interest. Moreover, these two variables collectively account for 68.4% of the variance in visitation decisions, indicating a robust correlation between destination quality and digital communication strategies.

2. Suggestions

The management of Parsorminan Park and Farm Inn is advised to continue enhancing its appeal to tourists through ongoing facility improvements, maintaining cleanliness standards, and introducing innovative attractions in line with contemporary tourism trends. Additionally, strategies involving electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) should be bolstered by creative, interactive, and consistent social media management to attract a broader audience of tourists. Future researchers are recommended to incorporate additional variables, such as satisfaction, pricing, and destination image, to further develop an understanding of tourist decision-making behavior in the digital age.

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