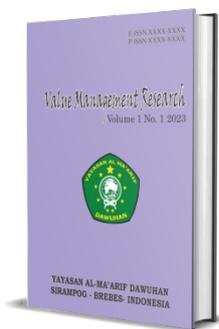




The Influence of Tourist Attractions, Destination Image, and Facilities on Visiting Decisions at the Great Mosque of Central Java Mediated by Electronic Word of Mouth

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the impact of tourist attractions, destination image, and facilities on visiting decisions at the Great Mosque of Central Java, with electronic word of mouth (eWOM) serving as a mediating variable. The study employs a quantitative approach, using questionnaires distributed to 100 respondents to collect data. The findings reveal that tourist attractions have a significant effect on visiting decisions, indicating that attractive features of the site strongly influence people's choices to visit. However, the destination image does not significantly affect visit decisions, suggesting that the public perception of the overall location may not play a crucial role in influencing visits. Similarly, facilities do not have a significant impact on visit decisions, indicating that infrastructure and amenities alone are not decisive factors for tourists. eWOM is found to significantly influence visit decisions, suggesting that online reviews and recommendations strongly affect tourists' decisions. Additionally, tourist attractions are found to significantly influence eWOM, meaning that the attractiveness of the location encourages online discussions and recommendations. On the other hand, destination image does not significantly affect eWOM, indicating that general perceptions of the destination do not directly influence online word of mouth. Facilities, however, have a significant impact on eWOM, highlighting the importance of amenities in generating online discussions. eWOM is shown to mediate the relationship between tourist attractions and visiting decisions, as well as between facilities and visit decisions. However, eWOM does not mediate the effect of destination image on visit decisions.

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Introduction

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing industries globally, significantly contributing to the economic and social fabric of nations. International organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the World Bank, and the World Tourism Organization recognize the integral role of tourism in driving economic development and facilitating social interactions. In Indonesia, tourism has become a critical sector, gaining considerable attention due to its potential to stimulate national growth. The tourism industry not only contributes to foreign exchange earnings but also plays a pivotal role in enhancing economic growth, particularly in job creation and poverty reduction. Given its strategic importance, the government continues to prioritize tourism development as a means to foster both economic and social progress.

In the context of Indonesia, Central Java Province, particularly the city of Semarang, presents significant opportunities in the tourism sector. Semarang, the sixth-largest metropolitan city in Indonesia, offers a wide range of tourism products, including religious, cultural, natural, and man-made attractions. Among the notable destinations is the Great Mosque of Central Java, a prominent religious and cultural landmark. This mosque serves not only as a place of worship but also as an educational hub and a center for religious tourism. Over the years, the Great Mosque has attracted numerous tourists, both domestic and international, who are drawn to its architectural beauty, cultural significance, and spiritual ambiance.

However, despite its potential, the number of visitors to the Great Mosque of Central Java has experienced fluctuations, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The sharp decline in tourism during the pandemic raised important questions regarding the factors that influence tourists' decisions to visit. Factors such as the attractiveness of tourist attractions, the image of the destination, and the availability of facilities may play a crucial role in shaping visitors' choices. Additionally, the role of electronic word of mouth (eWOM), or online reviews and recommendations, has become increasingly important in influencing tourism decisions in the digital age. Understanding these factors is crucial for identifying strategies to revive and sustain tourist interest in the Great Mosque of Central Java. This study seeks to analyze the impact of tourist attractions, destination image, and facilities on visiting decisions, with eWOM as a mediating variable. By examining these elements, the research aims to provide valuable insights and recommendations to enhance the attractiveness of the Great Mosque as a tourist destination and increase the number of visitors in the post-pandemic era.

Literature Review

Visiting Decision

According to Kotler and Keller, a visiting decision is a decision made by consumers to overcome all the problems they face by using or utilizing all known information and then evaluating various alternatives that can be chosen (Ristiani, 2021). According to Damanik and Weber in Hurryati (2015), there are 5 indicators of visiting decisions according to Damanik and Weber as follows: a. Destination area b. Travelling method c. Time and cost d. Travel agent e. Service source

Tourist Attraction

According to Marpaung (2002), a tourist attraction is a formation of activities and related facilities that can attract tourists or visitors to come to a certain area or place. Isdarmanto (2016) states that tourist attractions have their own strength as a component of tourism products because they can motivate tourists and attract them to travel, especially in destinations with diverse and varied attractions. According to Cooper et al. in Rindani (2016), the indicators of tourist attractions are: a. Attraction b. Accessibility c. Amenities d. Ancillary Service

Destination Image

Destination image is the decision of a journey from individual thoughts in the form of knowledge, feelings, and perceptions into the overall thought of the destination based on the level of visitor

satisfaction with the visited destination (Wibowo, 2016). Based on the opinions expressed by Hailin Qu et al. in Rommy (2020), the indicators of destination image are as follows: a. Cognitive destination image b. Unique image c. Affective destination image

Facilities

According to Tjiptono (2014), facilities are physical resources that must be present before a service is offered to consumers. Tjiptono (2014) outlines the indicators of facilities in tourism as follows: a. Completeness, cleanliness, and neatness of the offered facilities b. Condition and function of the offered facilities c. Ease of use of the offered facilities d. Completeness of the used equipment

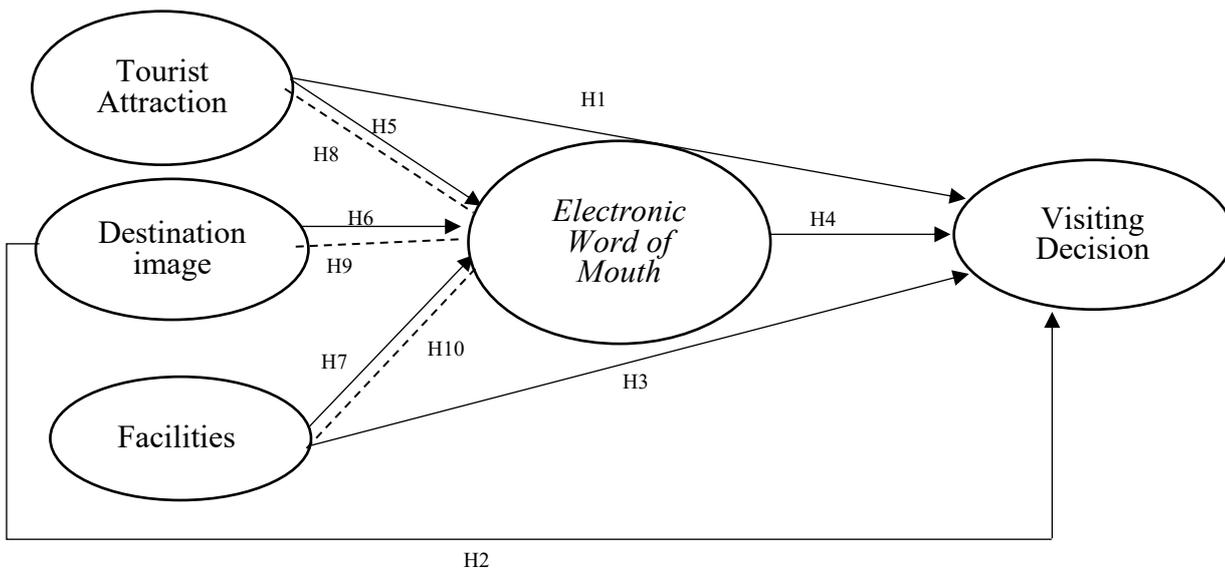
Electronic Word of Mouth

Ekawati et al. (2014) state that currently, word-of-mouth communication has undergone a paradigm shift. Previously, this interaction took place directly with known people, but now, this communication can be done online with a wider reach. In seconds, what we share can be read by millions of others. Along with this paradigm shift, word-of-mouth communication through the internet is known as electronic word of mouth. Based on the research by Hasan and Setiyaningtyas (2015), there are 5 indicators of Electronic Word of Mouth to support the analysis as follows: a. Concern for others b. Expressing positive feelings c. Economic incentives d. Helping the company e. Platform assistance

Method, Data, and Analysis

This study uses a quantitative method with a survey approach. The research population consists of visitors to the Great Mosque of Central Java, with a sample of 100 respondents selected using probability sampling techniques. Data were collected through questionnaires with a Likert scale and analyzed using Partial Least Square (PLS) with SmartPLS version 3 software. The testing model in this study includes: first, the measurement model test with validity and reliability tests; second, the structural model using R-Square; and third, hypothesis testing.

Figure 1.
Research Model



Hypotheses:

H1: The influence of tourist attractions on visiting decisions.

H2: The influence of destination image on visiting decisions.

H3: The influence of facilities on visiting decisions.

H4: The influence of electronic word of mouth on visiting decisions.

H5: The influence of tourist attractions on electronic word of mouth.

H6: The influence of destination image on electronic word of mouth.

H7: The influence of facilities on electronic word of mouth.

H8: The influence of tourist attractions on visiting decisions through electronic word of mouth.

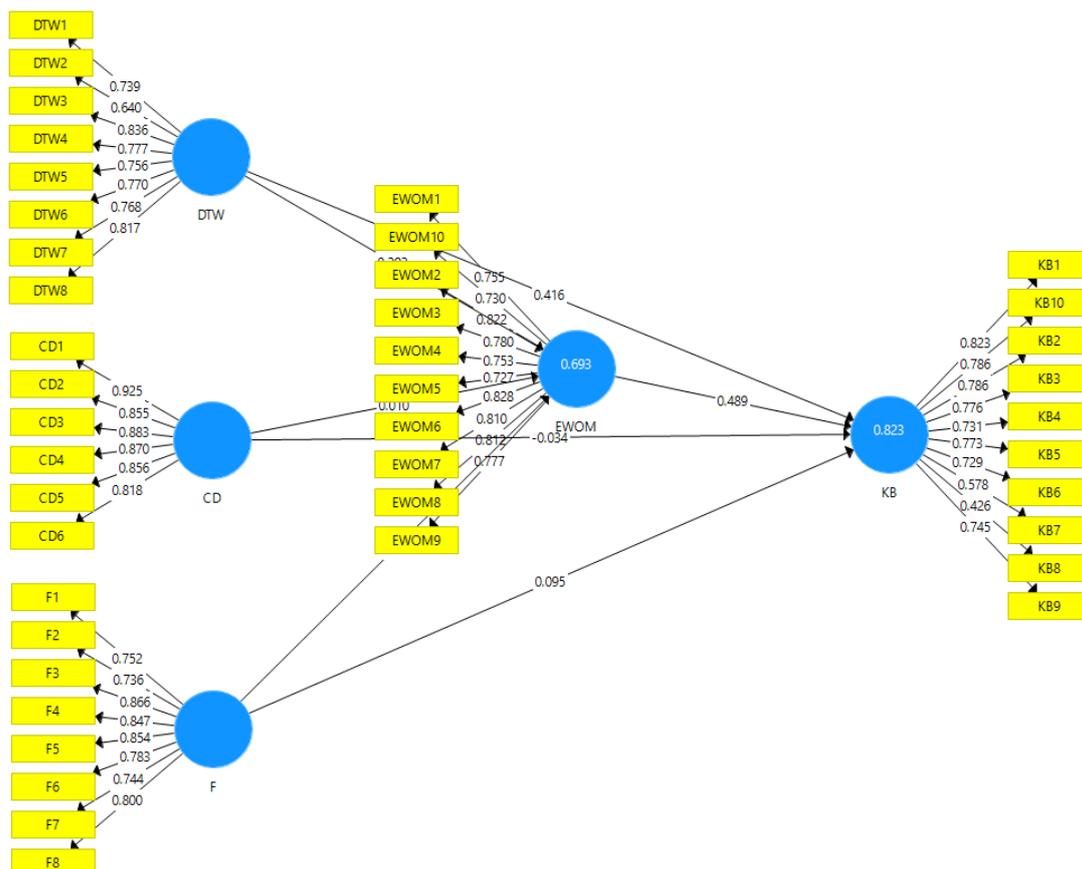
H9: The influence of destination image on visiting decisions through electronic word of mouth.

H10: The influence of facilities on visiting decisions through electronic word of mouth.

Result and Discussion

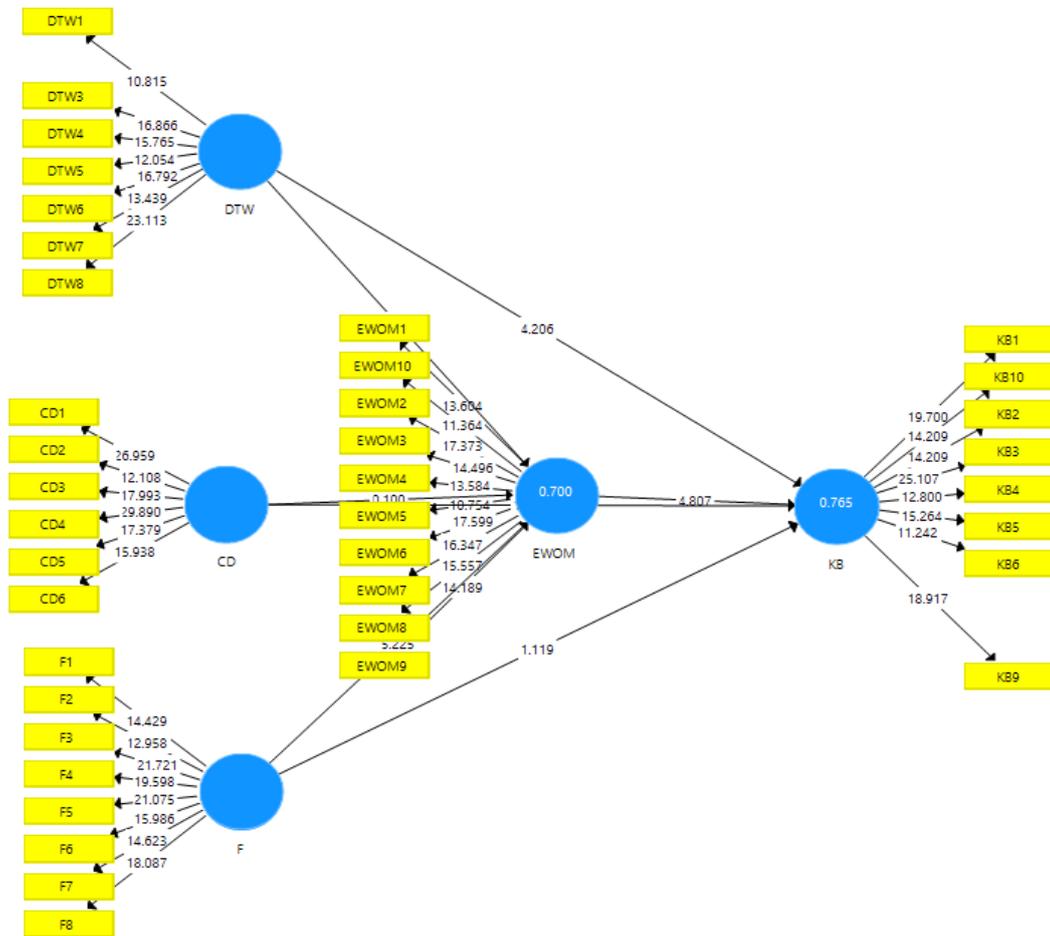
The measurement model testing is conducted to assess the feasibility of each indicator within the research variables. This test employs data analysis techniques using SmartPLS to evaluate the outer model.

Figure 2. Outer Model



In the initial stage of developing the measurement scale, the loading values are assessed. This study uses a loading factor threshold of 0.7. Figure 2 shows the results processed using SmartPLS. Some loading factor values are below 0.7, specifically DTW2, KB7, and KB8. Therefore, it is necessary to modify the model by removing indicators with loading factor values below 0.7.

Figure 3.
Outer Model Modification



Validity Test

Table 1.
Average Variance Extracted Value

Variable	Value (AVE)	Result
Tourist Attractions	0.616	Valid
Destination Image	0.754	Valid
Facilities	0.639	Valid
Electronic Word of Mouth	0.609	Valid
Visiting Decisions	0.611	Valid

Source: Processed by the author (2024)

Based on table 1, it shows that all indicators in the research variables have an AVE value greater than 0.5, meaning that the data meet the validity criteria.

Table 2.
Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Result
Tourist Attractions	0.896	Reliable
Destination Image	0.935	Reliable
Facilities	0.919	Reliable
Electronic Word of Mouth	0.928	Reliable
Visiting Decisions	0.909	Reliable

Source: Processed by the author (2024)

Based on the table above, it shows that all indicators for each research variable have Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.7, indicating that the data meet the reliability test standard requirements.

R – Square Test

Table 3.

R-Square

Variable	R-Square
Electronic Word of Mouth	0.7
Visiting Decisions	0.765

Source: Processed by the author (2024)

Based on Table 3, the R-square value for the electronic word of mouth variable is 0.7. This means that the variables of tourist attraction, destination image, and facilities explain 70% (high) of the variance in the electronic word of mouth variable. Meanwhile, the R-square value for the visit decision variable is 0.765. This indicates that the variables of tourist attraction, destination image, and facilities can explain 76.5% of the variance in the visit decision variable, which is considered high.

F – Square Test

Table 4.

F-Square

	Variable				
	Tourist Attractions	Destination Image	Facilities	Electronic Word of Mouth	Visiting Decisions
Tourist Attractions				0.177	0.194
Destination Image				0.000	0.022
Facilities				0.282	0.022
Electronic Word of Mouth					0.289
Visiting Decisions					

Source: Processed by the author (2024)

According to Table 4, tourist attractions have a moderate effect on eWOM, with an F-square value of 0.1777. Destination image, however, has a negligible impact on eWOM, reflected by an F-square value of 0.000. Facilities exert a moderate influence on eWOM, with an F-square value of 0.282. Similarly, the influence of tourist attractions on visit decisions is moderate, with an F-square value of 0.194. On the other hand, destination image and facilities both have a low impact on visit decisions, each with an F-square value of 0.022. Lastly, eWOM has a moderate influence on visit decisions, as indicated by an F-square value of 0.289.

Direct Effect Test

Table 5.

Path-Coefficients Test (Direct Effect)

Influence Between Variables	P – Value
Tourist Attractions → Visiting Decisions	0.000
Destination Image → Visiting Decisions	0.171

Facilities → Visiting Decisions	0.279
Electronic Word of Mouth → Visiting Decisions	0.000
Tourist Attractions → Electronic Word of Mouth	0.001
Destination Image → Electronic Word of Mouth	0.926
Facilities → Electronic Word of Mouth	0.000

Source: Processed by the author (2024)

Based on the table above, it shows that the tourist attraction variable has a significant effect on the visit decision, with a P-value of $0.000 < 0.05$, so the hypothesis is accepted. The destination image variable does not have a significant effect on the visit decision, with a P-value of $0.171 > 0.05$, so the hypothesis is rejected. The facilities variable does not have a significant effect on the visit decision, with a P-value of $0.279 > 0.05$, so the hypothesis is rejected. Electronic word of mouth has a significant effect on the visit decision, with a P-value of $0.000 < 0.05$, so the hypothesis is accepted. Tourist attraction has a significant effect on electronic word of mouth, with a P-value of $0.001 < 0.05$, so the hypothesis is accepted. Destination image does not have a significant effect on electronic word of mouth, with a P-value of $0.926 > 0.05$, so the hypothesis is rejected. Facilities have a significant effect on electronic word of mouth, with a P-value of $0.000 < 0.05$, so the hypothesis is accepted.

Indirect Effect Test

Table 6.

Path-Coefficients Test (Indirect Effect)

Influence Between Variables	P – Value
Tourist Attractions → Electronic Word of Mouth → Visiting Decisions	0.004
Destination Image → Electronic Word of Mouth → Visiting Decisions	0.925
Facilities → Electronic Word of Mouth → Visiting Decisions	0.002

Source: Processed by the author (2024)

Based on Table 6, it shows that eWOM mediates the effect of tourist attraction on the visit decision, as evidenced by a P-value of $0.004 < 0.05$, so the hypothesis is accepted. EWOM does not mediate the effect of destination image on the visit decision, as evidenced by a P-value of $0.925 > 0.05$, so the hypothesis is rejected. EWOM mediates the effect of facilities on the visit decision, as evidenced by a P-value of $0.002 < 0.05$, so the hypothesis is accepted.

The Effect of Tourist Attraction on Visit Decision

The results of this study show that the tourist attraction variable has an effect on the visit decision, as evidenced by a P-value of $0.000 < 0.05$, so the hypothesis is accepted. According to Marpaung (2002), tourist attraction includes activities and facilities that are able to attract tourists to a destination. The more attractive a destination is, the higher the likelihood of a tourist visit. This finding is consistent with Syahrul's (2015) study, which also states that tourist attraction significantly influences the visit decision.

The Effect of Tourist Attraction on Visit Decision

The results of this study show that the tourist attraction variable has a significant effect on the visit decision, as evidenced by a P-value of $0.000 < 0.05$, so the hypothesis is accepted. Tourist attraction, according to Marpaung (2002), includes activities and facilities that can attract tourists to a destination. The more attractive a destination is, the higher the likelihood of a tourist visit. This finding aligns with Syahrul's (2015) study, which also concluded that tourist attraction significantly influences the visit decision.

The Effect of Destination Image on Visit Decision

The results of this study show that the destination image variable does not have a significant effect on the visit decision, as evidenced by a P-value of $0.171 > 0.05$, so the hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that destination image is not necessarily the main factor influencing a person's decision to visit. This finding supports Suwarduki's (2016) study, which also concluded that destination image does not have a

significant effect on purchase decisions. However, this finding contradicts the study by Putranti and Rokhman (2024), which states that destination image positively affects the visit decision.

The Effect of Facilities on Visit Decision

The results of this study show that facilities do not have a significant effect on the visit decision, as evidenced by a P-value of $0.279 > 0.05$, so the hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that facilities are not the main factor determining a visitor's decision to travel. This finding differs from the research by Rifansyah and Sihombing (2022), which states that facilities have a positive and significant effect on the visit decision. This difference suggests that visitor expectations regarding facilities can vary, and poor facility quality may negatively impact the sustainability of a tourist destination.

The Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) on Visit Decision

The results of this study show that electronic word of mouth has a significant effect on the visit decision, as evidenced by a P-value of $0.000 < 0.05$, so the hypothesis is accepted. This means that eWOM plays an important role in influencing tourists' decisions to visit a destination. According to Arrazi and Nugraha (2021), the more frequently eWOM is received by a destination, the greater its impact on the visit decision. This finding is consistent with the research of Putranti and Rokhman (2023) and Maareta (2022), who also proved that eWOM has a positive and significant effect on visit decisions.

The Effect of Tourist Attraction on Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)

The results of this study show that tourist attraction has a significant effect on eWOM, as evidenced by a P-value of $0.001 < 0.05$, so the hypothesis is accepted. This means that the attraction of a destination can encourage tourists to share positive experiences online. According to Normalasari et al. (2023), destinations with unique attractions can trigger positive responses from tourists, which then shape eWOM behavior. Tourists are more likely to share their experiences, which, in turn, can attract new visitors. This study is consistent with the findings of Normalasari et al. (2023), which also show a significant effect of tourist attraction on eWOM.

The Effect of Destination Image on Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)

The results of this study show that destination image does not have a significant effect on eWOM, as evidenced by a P-value of $0.926 > 0.05$, so the hypothesis is rejected. While a positive destination image, such as safety and beauty, can motivate tourists to share experiences, this does not always encourage eWOM, especially if personal experiences are unsatisfactory. This finding contradicts Yulihardi and Syaiful's (2023) study, which states that destination image affects eWOM. The difference suggests that other factors, besides destination image, may have a greater influence on encouraging tourists to share experiences online.

The Effect of Facilities on Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)

The results of this study show that facilities have a significant effect on eWOM, as evidenced by a P-value of $0.000 < 0.05$, so the hypothesis is accepted. Adequate facilities, according to Kotler and Keller (2016), support consumer comfort and can enhance empathy toward the destination. Good facilities create positive experiences for tourists, which contribute to positive eWOM. Conversely, poor facilities can trigger negative reviews. Therefore, destination managers need to improve facilities to support positive eWOM and attract more visitors.

The Effect of Tourist Attraction on Visit Decision through eWOM

The results of this study show that eWOM mediates the effect of tourist attraction on the visit decision, as evidenced by a P-value of $0.004 < 0.05$, so the hypothesis is accepted. A strong tourist attraction creates positive experiences, encourages positive reviews, which influence other tourists' decisions to visit. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), attractive tourist attractions influence consumer behavior. Therefore, destination managers need to improve tourist attractions to support positive eWOM and attract more visitors.

The Effect of Destination Image on Visit Decision through eWOM

The results of this study show that eWOM does not mediate the effect of destination image on the visit decision, as evidenced by a P-value of $0.925 > 0.05$, so the hypothesis is rejected. A positive destination image is not always influenced by eWOM, as tourists may already have strong perceptions of the destination without considering online reviews. This finding contradicts Mareta et al. (2022), which shows a positive and significant effect of destination image on the visit decision through eWOM.

The Effect of Facilities on Visit Decision through eWOM

The results of this study show that eWOM mediates the effect of facilities on the visit decision, as evidenced by a P-value of $0.002 < 0.05$, so the hypothesis is accepted. Good facilities create a comfortable environment, encouraging visitors to share positive experiences through eWOM, which, in turn, influences other visitors' decisions. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), good facilities influence consumer behavior, and according to Cialdini (2001), eWOM reviews serve as social validation, increasing the confidence of potential visitors to visit.

Conclusion

Based on this study, it can be concluded that the tourist attractions and facilities have a significant impact on the decision to visit the Great Mosque of Central Java. Strong tourist attractions, such as its unique architecture and the mosque's role as a center for worship and religious tourism, along with adequate facilities, greatly affect the comfort and satisfaction of visitors. On the other hand, the destination's image did not show a significant impact, so the management should focus more on developing the attractions and facilities. Additionally, eWOM has proven to be effective in mediating the influence of attractions and facilities on the decision to visit. The management of the Great Mosque of Central Java should utilize eWOM to promote the destination and ensure a positive online reputation, in order to continuously increase the number of visitors and its contribution to the tourism sector in Central Java.

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