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The Influence Of Destination Image And Word Of Mouth Towards Visiting Decision Of Kota Lama Semarang In The New Normal Era

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ABSTRACT: During the pandemic, the tourism sector experienced a very significant impact. Many tourist destinations have experienced a decrease in visits so as to reduce income and the economy in the tourism sector. To overcome this problem, the government is preparing the tourism sector in a "new era" or what is known as the new normal. The government collaborates with various parties to encourage the tourism sector by implementing strict procedures related to Covid-19 before deciding to reopen tourist destinations.This study aims to examine how the effect of image destination and word of mouth on the viositing decision of the Kota Lama Semarang touris. The sample in this study amounted to 150 respondents. The analytical technique used is multiple regression. The results showed that the image of the destination and word of mouth had a significant effect on the decision to visit the Kota Lama Semarang tourism.

Keywords : Destination Image, Word of Mouth, Visiting Decission

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an industrial sector that is increasingly in demand by the community every year. According to Suwantoro (2004) states that tourism is a change in a person's temporary residence outside their place of residence for a reason and not to carry out activities that generate wages. The rapid development of this industry is indicated by the emergence of new tourist objects and an increase in the number of global tourists. This rapid development has made the tourism sector one of the sectors that generates high income for a country and is also the main driver in the economic development of a region.

During the pandemic, the tourism sector experienced a very significant impact. Many tourist destinations have experienced a decrease in visits so as to reduce income and the economy in the tourism sector. To overcome this problem, the government is preparing the tourism sector in a "new era" or what is known as the new normal. The government collaborates with various parties to encourage the tourism sector by implementing strict procedures related to Covid-19 before deciding to reopen tourist destinations. There are at least two prerequisites that must be followed, namely: 1) the local government must first confirm and ensure that the spread of the Corona virus in its area has been minimized; 2) Every tourist destination needs to be checked and assessed through various stages so that it can be reopened immediately. This stage begins with compiling standard procedures (SOP), conducting simulations, socialization, testing periods, and finally implementation.

The current global paradigm is characterized by mutability, and situation-based considerations. The current paradigm shift is taking place significantly and effectively, followed by a number of new protocols implemented by decision makers in order to welcome the new normal era of the revival of the tourism industry.

Before deciding to visit, tourists first try to find information related to that destination, namely the image of the destination. Destination image is one of the factors used by tourists to determine the tourist destinations to be visited. According to Tasci and Kozak (2006), destination image is an individual's perception of the characteristics of a tourist spot which can be influenced by promotional information, mass media and many other factors. In this modern era, tourists can easily get information about the characteristics and environmental conditions around the destinations they will visit. Many mass media can help tourists get accurate information related to the destinations to be visited, both from social media, the internet and so on. Babin et al (2005)) suggest that the image of a destination can influence the process of selecting and evaluating tourists in determining whether to visit a tourist spot in the future. Basically, each destination has its own image that will

attract tourists to visit it. The positive image that a destination has will give more value and it will have an impact on increasing the interest of tourists to decide to visit that destination.

Tourists will receive all information received from various sources regarding the destination to be visited, then will decide to visit that destination or not. According to Jannah (2014), basically a decision to visit is a decision taken by a person before visiting a place or region by considering several factors. The decision taken by tourists to visit a destination is based on positive information and considering various factors. According to Aprilia et al (2015), the decision to visit is a process for a visitor to make an assessment and choose an alternative from several alternative tourist destinations that will be visited later. The better the image of the destination, the more confident tourists will be in the destination they have chosen.

One of the famous tourist destinations in Semarang City is Kota Lama Semarang. This destination is also inseparable from the impact of Covid-19. At this time, the government is trying to encourage this tourism to be able to attract tourists again by implementing the Health protocol. Before the Covid -19 pandemic, the old city had a car free network (CFN) from 18.00 to 24.00. however, in order to reduce the crowd, this policy was then abolished. With the existence of the new normal era, it is hoped that the community will still have enthusiasm to come to the Kota Lama Semarang.

Based on the background that has been previously described, the formulation of research problems can be developed, namely how the influence of destination image and word of mouth in influencing the decision to visit the tourist attraction of the Kota Lama Semarang.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Destination Image

Destination image according to Lopes (2011: 307) is an expression of someone's knowledge, impression, prejudice, imagination which is formed from emotional thoughts that a consumer has from a certain place. According to Hanif et al (2016: 46), destination image is the belief that tourists have regarding the products or services that tourists buy or will buy. Tourists will be interested in visiting a destination if the destination has a positive image. Meanwhile, if tourists are able to develop a positive perception of a destination, the tourist will try to recommend the place to others and form a positive image of the destination.

Basically, images are not formed just like that without a person's perception of a particular object. In this case, the image of a destination is also not formed without one's perception of a tourist destination. Destination images are formed from the results of rational assessments or cognitive images and emotional assessments or someone's affective image of the destination itself (Hanif et al, 2016: 46). Echtner and Ritchie (2003: 46) state that the destination image consists of functional characteristics that focus on the physical evidence (tangible) and psychological characteristics that focus on the non-physical (intangible) aspect.

2.2 Word of Mouth

Word of mouth or commonly abbreviated as WOM is communication from people as a source or sender of messages to other people as recipients of messages about a product, service, or brand. According to Hasan (2010: 152), word of mouth is a compliment, recommendation and customer comments about their experience of services and products that really influence customer decisions or their buying behavior. Meanwhile, according to Kotler et. al (2002: 174), word of mouth communication is oral, written, and electronic communication between communities that is related to the superiority or experience of buying or using a product or service.

Word of mouth comes from a form that arises naturally because of the superiority of a product or service. When people already know and experience the benefits and advantages of a product or service, that person will share them with others. Communication by word of mouth or word of mouth makes the process of marketing a company's product or service easier because consumers will automatically try to recommend the product or service to others. This will make it easier for companies / managers to get new customers when other consumers like the products they consume.

2.3 Visiting Decision

Before visiting a place or region by considering several factors (Jannah, 2014). The decision taken by tourists to visit a destination is not only based on the consideration of various factors related to that destination, but also based on the positive information available. According to Aprilia et al (2015), the decision to visit is a process for a visitor to make an assessment and choose an alternative from several alternative tourist destinations that will be visited later. Thus the decision to visit is analogous to a purchase decision, as in the research of Jalilvand and Samiei (2012: 12) which states that the decision to visit tourists is the same as the consumer's purchase decision because they both spend money that is used to get the desired product or service. This is because in the context of tourism, deciding to buy tourism products is the same as making a visiting decision.

2.4 Conceptual framework

Based on the theoretical basis and previous research, it can be explained that the destination image is formed from the results of a person's assessment of a destination, so that when a destination has a positive image, it is one of the factors that causes tourists to decide to visit these tourist destinations (Hanif et al, 2016) .Anggono and Sunarti (2018) state that word of mouth is a factor that can influence tourists visiting decisions because word of mouth obtained by tourists from trusted and complete sources will cause tourists to decide to visit a destination.

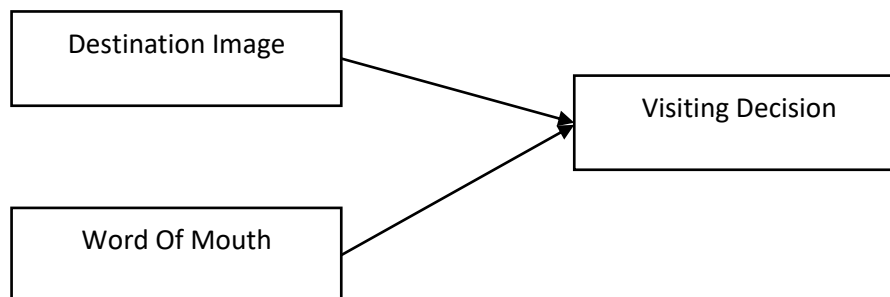The conceptual framework developed in this study is as follows:

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.5 Research hypothesis

The research hypothesis is as follows:

1. the image of the destination influences the decision to visit Semarang's old city tour in the new normal era?
2. word of mouth influences the decision to visit Semarang's old city tour in the new normal era

III.   METHOD

This research was conducted in the city of Semarang. The unit of analysis in this study is tourists who have visited tourist objects in the Kota Lama Semarang

The population in this study were all tourists in the tourist attraction of the Kota Lama Semarang. The sampling technique in this study used a non-probability with a purposive sampling technique. According to Sugiyono (2016: 80), purposive sampling is a sampling technique with certain considerations.

There are two stages of data analysis that will be carried out in this study in order to answer the objectives of this study. The first stage relates to the instrument test and data analysis test, the instrument test is carried out by testing the validity and reliability. While the data test was carried out with classical assumptions. The data analysis tool used is multiple regression with the help of SPSS.

IV.   RESULT

4.1 Instrument Test

The validity test is a test of data that can be trusted to be true. The validity test as a measuring tool in this study used Pearson's product moment correlation, using SPSS version 20 software. A variable is said to be valid, if the variable gives a significance value of ≤ 0.05. Based on the results of the validity test, all instruments have a value of <0.05, so it is said that the instrument used is valid.

After the validity test is carried out, the reliability test is carried out. Reliability test is used to test the ability of a measurement result to be relatively consistent if the measurement is repeated two or more times. Testing tool constraints in the research tool using the reliability alpha (α) method used in the Cronbach Alpha method using SPSS version 20 software. A variable is said to be reliable if the variable gives a Cronbach Alpha value> 0.60. Based on the test results, the three variables used have a Cronbach Alpha> 0.60 so that it can be said that the instrument used is reliable.

4.2 Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis testing is used to determine the significance of each independent variable on the dependent variable. The hypothesis test used in this study is the t test (partial). The t test was carried out to determine the significant effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable partially (Ghozali, 2014: 23). This test uses a significance level (α) = 0.05 or 5%, with the criteria if the sig.> 0.05 then H0 is accepted and Ha is rejected, meaning that individually the independent variable has no significant effect on the dependent variable. Predict that if the sig.≤ 0.05 then H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted, it means that individually the independent variable has a significant effect on the dependent variable.

Based on hypotesting result, we concluded that Destination Image on Visiting Decisions The results of testing the influence of the destination image variables on the visiting decision obtained a significance value of

0.000 which is smaller than the specified significance level of 0.05 so that it means that the destination image has a significant effect on the decision to visit the Kota Lama Semarang tour.

The results of testing the influence of the variable word of mouth on the decision to visit obtained a significance value of 0.000 which is smaller than the specified level of significance, namely 0.05, so it can be interpreted that word of mouth has a significant effect on the decision to visit the Kota Lama Semarang.

V. DISCUSION

5.1 The Influence of Destination Image on Visiting Decisions.

Destination image affects the decision to visit as evidenced by the results of the t test which shows the significance value obtained is smaller than the specified significance level (0.000 <0.05). The relationship shown by the regression coefficient is positive, indicating that the better the image of the destination is, the decision to visit the Kota Lama Semarang will increase. Destination image is one aspect that can influence tourists' decisions to be able to determine the tourist destinations they will visit. According to Tasci and Kozak (2006), destination image is an individual's perception of destination characteristics that can be influenced by promotional information, mass media and many other factors. A positive destination image of a destination will attract tourists to decide to visit that destination. Kota Lama Semarang is one of the famous tourist motorcycle taxis in Semarang. Another characteristic of the Kota Lama Semarang is the old city buildings from the colonial era which are still preserved as cultural heritage in the city of Semarang.

5.2 The Influence of Word of Mouth on Visiting Decisions

Word of mouth affects the decision to visit as evidenced by the results of the t test which shows the significance value obtained is smaller than the specified significance level (0.000 <0.05). The relationship shown by a positive regression coefficient indicates that the better word of mouth, the decision to visit Semarang's old city tour will increase. Word of mouth is a way of naturally conveying information about things such as products, services, service quality and so on from one person to another. According to Hasan (2010: 32), word of mouth is the act of consumers providing information to other consumers, from one person to another (interpersonal) non-commercial brands, products and services. Submission of information about a destination through word of mouth (word of mouth) from a friend, friend or family makes tourists have a high sense of trust in this information and will decide to visit the destination.

VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded as follows: Destination image influences the decision to visit Kota Lama Semarang as evidenced by the results of hypothesis testing which shows a significance value of 0.000 which is smaller than the specified level of significance, namely 0.05. The relationship shown by the regression coefficient is positive, indicating that the better the image of the Kota Lama Semarang, the decision to visit tourists will increase. Word of mouth influences the decision to visit Kota Lama Semarang as evidenced by the results of the hypoethical test which shows a significance value of 0.000 which is smaller than the specified significance level of 0.05. The relationship shown by the regression coefficient is positive, indicating that the better the word of mouth obtained by tourists about Kota Lama Semarang, the decision to visit tourists will increase.

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