



The Influence of Word of Mouth (WOM) and Price Towards The Decision for Attending College at XY School of Tourism

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted with the aim of knowing the effect of word of mouth (X1) and price (X2) on the purchase decision (Y) of students to continue their study at XY School of Tourism. This research model uses quantitative descriptive analysis with regression methods using SPSS build tools 1.0.0.1347 for MAC. It used a total sample of 83 participants with a purposive sampling technique and was measured by a questionnaire consisting of 34 statements. Its results showed that word of mouth (X1) and price (X2) affect purchasing decisions (Y) either partially or simultaneously. The results of this study found that word of mouth (X1) influences purchasing decisions (Y) by 49 percent meanwhile the price (X2) affects purchase decision (Y) for as much as 39.4 percent, and the rest is influenced by other variables.

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1. Introduction

The world tourism competitiveness index of Indonesia increased from ranking 42 in 2017 to 40 in 2019. This is based on the Competition Report on Travel and Tourism published by the WEF (World Economic Forum) in 2019. Indonesia sat on the 40th rank out of 140 countries all over the world. Indonesia's tourism competitiveness index sat in fourth place in Southeast Asia. According to the evaluation of the entire aspects of the company such as the environment, protection, health and cleanliness, human resource and occupation, environment preservation, and so on, Indonesia got a score of 4.3. The worst rank was 1 when the scale of measurement was 7 as the best scale. A score above 5 was achieved by Indonesia as it became a tourism priority. The cleanliness aspect was one of the maintenances created by Indonesia and was assessed as good. Indonesia sat in the world's 50th position in 2015. The ranking skyrocketed to the 42nd position in 2017. Meanwhile, the Indonesian government attempted to reach the world 30th position. Be seen from the foreign exchange, the tourism sector contribution tends to increase each year. In 2015, the tourism sector contributed 12.2 billion US dollars. It increased to 13.6 billion US dollars in 2016 and 15 billion USD in 2017. The number of international travelers to Indonesia in 2018 was 15.81 million. The foreign tourist arrival increased 12.58 percent since 2017. As a global business, tourism has increased since the last survey of WEF in 2017, as cited from the report of the World Economic Forum of 2019. Its contribution towards the global PDB (currently as many as 10 percent) was projected to increase 50 percent in the next decade. The development of tourism will keep increasing, as well as the increasing demands of the government towards the institution to produce professional laborers in the tourism sector.

College becomes one of the official education institutes that is formed to produce competent workers as an attempt to increase the nation's dignity, as previously cited by Wulandini and Saputra (2017), in which they elaborated the current article 1 Verse 1 of the Law on the National Education System (Undang-Undang Sisdiknas Pasal 1 Ayat 1) which stated that education is a conscious and well-planned attempt to realize the teaching and learning process atmosphere in order that the students can actively develop their potentials to have religious power, self-identification, personality, intelligence, noble morals, and skills needed for themselves, the community, and the nation. These demands led the Tourism College XY to fulfill this demand for human resources. It competes with other colleges by emphasizing its own excellences. Competitions in the field of education were said to be strict. As the Capital of Indonesia, Jakarta has many higher education/colleges either state or private universities.

The many numbers of higher education led to strict competition in attracting prospective students. Various potentials and excellences that the colleges possess will be deployed as much as possible and give positive sale value, which one of the ways is to strengthen the marketing activity as the main pillar in the process for recruiting the prospective students who will be competent tourism practitioners in the future.

Marketing is one of the attempts to introduce or promote a product either goods or services by utilizing well-planned patterns and certain activities to reach the expected sale target. In accomplishing the target, a marketing strategy that is organized based on the needs of the marketing process is required. The marketing activity has a strategy that is usually called the Marketing Mix, in which there are four indicators, one of which is Promotion.

Promotion is an important indicator since the activity is a kind of marketing communication in the form of dissemination of information which affects or increases the attempt and the products to support loyal customers, buyers, and maintain the products sold to the concerned company. Therefore, to increase the number of prospective students, good and attractive promotion is needed. Promotion can be carried out by using various techniques.

The easiest technique to carry out is the Word of Mouth (WOM) technique. WOM means a promotion activity in which communication between two persons takes place, one of which has made a purchasing decision and conveyed the experience of using the goods or the products (Wahyono, 2012). Besides telling the good experience, he/she also talks about the bad experience which can affect the marketing level in the future. WOM is aimed not only at giving information but also at being a strategic and easy marketing medium to spread information in all directions (Finanda, 2015; Andari, 2016; Rahman et. al, 2017).



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As prospective students, they tend to seek information and choose college recommended by their parents, family, and colleagues. Good recommendation of a certain college will make them more convinced to make the decision to which college they will enroll and this creates the influence of WOM in the stage of consumers' purchasing decision.

After they get information on the outer side of the college, another aspect that one will consider in deciding for enrolling in college is the economic aspect or price. Price or the educational fee is the burden that they will have to pay to get the supportive facilities that can support their education, such as tuition fee, facilities cost, etc. the offered education costs will be reviewed whether it fits their economic level and whether the offered cost is worth with the facilities given by the college.

The provided information will lead the prospective students to the stage of evaluating and sorting the college that is suitable for them according to the WOM and the price information provided by one and another college. At last, they will arrive on the stage to decide and choose to which institution they will continue their study. The aforementioned sequence is the stages of purchasing decision in which there are some indicators namely need analysis, information quest, evaluation for an alternative purchasing decision, and the post-purchase behavior.

2. Theoretical Review

2.1 Word of Mouth

Word of Mouth means the compliments, suggestions, and comments of a consumer about his/her experience of using goods and services that can influence the consumer's choice or purchasing, according to Hasan (2010). Word of mouth can create the customers' trust. In other words, Word of Mouth means the dialogue occurring spontaneously between man, according to Sernovits (2009). Word of Mouth is a genuine expression of a customer.

The official Word of Mouth Marketing Association (WOMMA) as cited in Sumardy (2011: 68) explained that "Word of Mouth Marketing is an effort by the organization to affect how customers create and distribute marketing relevant information to other customers, facility and amplify marketing relevant marketing among consumers". Word of Mouth is a corporation attempt to control the production and distribution of information about related marketing relevant between the products and the consumers. One of the good mouth marketing strategy according to Sernovitz (2009) is by paying attention to the five basic elements of the Word-of-Mouth marketing as follow:

- a. Talkers.
Talkers mean the source of the meaning creator, which means the consumers who have utilized the products or the services on sale. Consumers who have numerous followers on their social media accounts are called influencers. They are one of the Talkers who can give a big impact. In choosing influencers, we have to be able to consider that the more followers the more viewers of the products. Besides, everybody can be Talkers. Some people tend to choose a product based on their experience with the product or service. A guide or a group that suggests a good or service may also be referred to.
- b. Topics
Topics mean the meaning substance addressed by the speaker. This subject is related to attractive things that can be taken benefit from these goods, such as unique offer, discounts, new stuff, or the consumers' satisfaction. These can attract consumers to talk about the products that we sell, such as the excellence of our product that will attract others to find more information about the products.
- c. Tools.
Tools are the means used by the talkers to spread the Topics. This includes the mechanism to help transfer the subject or meaning. Tools encourage people to talk or communicate with others about the goods or services provided by them. One of the popular tools is Instagram, this is a social media which is created so that one can upload photos or videos which can be viewed by many people. Besides, Talkers can interact directly with people from all over the world.
- d. Taking Part (participation).
A message can disappear when none continues the message to others. Others' participation is necessary to continue the information of word of mouth. Here, we focus on the company itself. The company's participation can be in the form of a response towards the consumers' curiosity about a good or service. It gives a good and clear solution and tracks prospective consumers to decide the future.
- e. Tracking
When Talkers, Topics, Tools, and Taking Parts have been carried out appropriately, a Tracking of the developing Word of Mouth should be done by accepting and evaluating the advice from the consumers both positive and negative Word of Mouth. Giving fast feedback will satisfy the consumers and encourage the consumers to make a purchasing decision according to the services that we have provided.

2.2 Price

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2012), price is "Services as a signal of quality". Price is often the defining factor whether consumers will purchase a product (in this case, whether the students will choose to enroll in a certain school/college) (Djati et.al, 2003; Sari, 2016; Wulandari et.al, 2019, Lubis et.al, 2019). According to Kotler and Armstrong (2012), the product price dimension consists of:

- a. Affordability of price. This means the price aspect of goods or services determined based on the economic benchmarks of the marketing targets or consumers is suitable with the purchasing ability.
- b. The compatibility of Price with the quality of products. The accepted quality of goods will later be changed in terms of determining the price of goods and or the producers' services.
- c. Product price competitiveness. This means the agreement of price from the suppliers or sellers are vary and competitive for the category of the similar commodity of other producers.
- d. Conformity of product benefits. This means that the price that is determined by the producers/sellers is suitable for the benefits that buyers will get from the products that they have purchased.

2.3 Purchasing Decision

The consumers' decision to purchase a good or service is influenced by many factors, some of which are the price, the product image, the product quality, the promotion, the service, and many more (Tangkilian, 2014; Putra, 2017; Ningratri,



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2018). In making a purchasing decision of the consumers, Kotler and Keller (2016) elaborated six factors of purchasing decision, as follow:

- a. **Product Choice**
A consumer can decide whether to buy a product or use his/her money for another purpose. In this scenario, the business owner should focus the resource on those who are willing to purchase an alternative commodity that they have considered.
- b. **Brand Choice**
After that, the consumer can choose which brand that he/she will buy. Every brand has its own variety. The business industry should know how consumers choose the appropriate brands trusted in this situation.
- c. **Dealer Choice**
A consumer needs to choose which dealer that he/she will visit. Every consumer has different ways of giving evaluations for the suppliers. The accessible places, the low-cost budget, the maximum inventories, the shopping convenience, and the spacious places might be considered.
- d. **Purchase Amount**
Most of the time, a consumer will have to make choices of how much to be purchased. More than one commodity to be on sale. In this case, the business owner should make a plan of providing the number of goods that are appropriate to the consumers' special preferences.
- e. **Purchase Timing**
In an instance, consumers purchase every day, once a week, once in two weeks, or monthly. Every consumer's choice of time might be different.
- f. **Payment Method**
A consumer will decide the payment method to purchase a good or service. The purchasing preferences nowadays are influenced by the aspects of social, environment, family members, and the technology used in the purchase that enables the consumer to make a transaction either inside his/her house or outside his/her house.

3. Research Method

This study was conducted by employing the descriptive quantitative research method by using the correlational approach which is aimed at investigating the relationship between the influence of WOM and Price towards the purchasing decision of the students of XY School of Tourism. The unit of analysis in this study is 83 students of XY School of Tourism year of 2019. The number of the unit of analysis was collected based on the calculation by using Slovin formulation out of 478 students. The independent variables of the study were WOM and Price. Meanwhile, the dependent variable was the purchasing decision. The measurement used the nominal scale, ordinal scale, interval scale, and Likert scale.

4. Result and Discussion

The male participants who complete the questionnaire were 30 (36,1 percent) and the female participants were 53 (63,9 percent). This can be concluded that the majority of the participants were female.

In terms of age group, the participants consisted of 11 participants aged 17 years old (13.3 percent), 57 participants aged 18 years old (68.7 percent), 13 participants aged 19 years old (15.7 percent), and 2 participants aged above 19 years old (2.4 percent). This can be concluded that out of 83 participants, the majority of them were aged 18 years old with the numbers of 57.

In terms of the religious group, the Christian/Protestant participants were 19 participants (22.9 percent), Buddhist participants were 22 participants (26.5 percent), Catholic participants were 20 participants (24.1 percent), Islam participants were 21 participants (25.3 percent), Hindu participants were 1 participant (1.2 percent). It can be concluded that out of 83 participants, only one participant embraced the Hindu religion whereas the rest were quite equally divided.

In terms of the parents of the participants' income, 23 participants' parents' income was about 1.000.000 – 5.000.000 (27.7 percent), 30 participants' parents' income was about 5.000.000 – 10.000.000 (36.1 percent), 30 participants' parents' income was over 10.000.000 (36.1 percent). This can be concluded that the distribution of the participants in terms of the parents' income was prevalent.

In terms of the participants' domicile, 19 participants were from Sumatera regional (22.9 percent), 44 participants were from Java regional (53 percent), 14 participants were from Kalimantan regional (16.9 percent), 2 participants were from Sulawesi regional (2.4 percent), 2 participants were from Bali regional (2.4 percent), and 2 participants were from Papua regional (2.4 percent). It can be concluded that the majority of the participants were from Java regional as many as 44 participants out of 83 participants.

4.1 Validity Test

The value in the corrected item-total correlation column showed the number more than 0,2813. There were two statements of the corrected item-total correlation that showed the number less than 0,2813 so that the statement number 7 and number 8 were not valid. Therefore, 11 statements related to the X1 variable were valid. Valid means that the instruments that are distributed to the participants were interpretable, understandable, and observable.

The value in the corrected item-total correlation column showed the number more than 0,2813. One statement, the statement number 5, showed the corrected item-total correlation was less than 0,2813 so that the statement was not valid. Therefore, 7 statements of X2 variables were valid. Valid means that the instruments that are distributed to the participants were interpretable, understandable, and observable.

The value in the corrected item-total correlation column showed the number more than 0,2813. There were two statements, statements number 6 and number 8, whose corrected item-total correlation were less than 0,2813 so that the statement was not valid. Therefore, 11 statements of the X2 variable were valid. Valid means that the instruments that are distributed to the participants were interpretable, understandable, and observable.



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4.2 Reliability Test

The Cronbach's Alpha of the variable X1 was 0,816. Therefore, it can be concluded that 13 statements about the X1 parameters were highly reliable. Highly reliable means that the participants were able to interact consistently with the provided instruments.

The Cronbach's Alpha of the variable X2 was 0,763. Therefore, it can be concluded that 8 statements about the X2 parameters were highly reliable. Highly reliable means that the participants were able to interact consistently with the provided instruments.

The Cronbach's Alpha of the variable Y was 0,785. Therefore, it can be concluded that 11 statements about the Y parameters were highly reliable. Highly reliable means that the participants were able to interact consistently with the provided instruments.

4.3 Descriptive Statistic Analysis

The Mean value of each statement showed the tendency of the participants to respond to the available statements.

The highest Mean of the entire statement was from statement number 3 with the value of 3.47, "I got a recommendation for XY School of Tourism from the trusted ones". This means that the participants strongly agreed with the argument.

The lowest Mean of the entire statement was from statement number 10 with the value of 3,39, "asking questions to get information of XY School of Tourism". This means that the participants disagreed with the argument. Since the participant's feeling was not neutral, but the second party.

The highest Mean of the entire statement was from statement number 8 with the value of 3.47, "the cost I spent was worth the skills that I got". This means that the participants strongly agreed with the argument.

The lowest Mean of the entire statement was from statement number 1 with the value of 3.12, "Tuition Fee of XY School of Tourism is affordable". This means that the participants disagreed with the argument. Since the participant's feeling was not neutral, but the second party.

The highest Mean of the entire statement was from statement number 10 with the value of 3.12, "XY School of Tourism provided many test batches" and statement number 11 "XY School of Tourism holds tests in many cities: This means that the participants disagreed with the argument. Since the participant's feeling was not neutral, but the second party.

The lowest Mean of the entire statement was from statement number 3 with the value of 2.99, "XY School of Tourism is my first choice to enroll in a college". This means that the participants disagreed with the argument. Since the participant's feeling was not neutral, but the second party.

4.4 Interval Test

The average Mean value of the five variable indicators of Word of Mouth was 3.28 in which the interval indicator was in the interval of 3.25 – 4.00, which means Very Good and the highest indicator was the Tracking indicator. The average Mean value of the five variable indicators of Price was 3.24 in which the interval indicator was in the interval of 2.50 – 3.24 which means High and the highest indicator was the Product Compatibility. The average Mean value of the six variable indicators of Purchasing decision was 3.46 in which the interval indicator was in the interval of 3.25 – 4.00 which means Very High and the highest indicator was the Purchasing Timing.

4.5 Simple Linear Regression Test

The determination of coefficient (R²) was 0.490 that showed that the Y parameter affected 49.0% towards the X1 parameter, whereas the other factors affected 51.0%. the Consumers' Decision (y) will be 16.276 units if the Word of Mouth (X1) was static.

The regression coefficient of Word of Mouth (X1) was 0,597, and whenever it increases, the consumers' decision will also increase to 0,597 when the parameter unit of the Word of Mouth (X1) is increased. When the Word of Mouth is increased, the decision level will be higher, or otherwise, when the Word-of-Mouth decreases, the consumers' decision will also decrease.

The T-test is conducted to find out if the parameter of the Consumers' Decision (Y) was influenced by the Word-of-Mouth (X1). This t-test was conducted if the t value which is being measured is compared with the t-table value. If t count > table so that the parameter of Word of Mouth (X1) is influential towards the Consumers' Decision variable (Y). t table value was 1,291 pada $\alpha = 0,10$. This showed that the t count > t table (8,815 > 1,291) can be partially seen towards the Consumers' Decision (Y) with the parameter of Word of Mouth (X1).

The result showed that the determination coefficient (R²) was 0,394. Parameter Y was affected by the variable X2 as much as 39,4 percent and 60,6 percent by other factors. The Consumers' decision (Y) was defined if Price (X2) was static as much as 20.708 units.

The regression coefficient of Price (X2) was 0,768, which means that if one unit increases on the Price variable (X2), the Consumers' decision increases as much as 0,768. If Price is increased, the level of the Consumers' Decision will increase, or otherwise, if the Price decreases the level of Consumers' Decision will also decrease.

T test is carried out to evaluate the influence of the Price variable (X2) towards the Consumers' Decision variable (Y). this t-test is conducted if the t value which is measured is compared with the t table value. If the t count > t table, the Consumers' Decision variable (Y) can be defined. If the t table was 1,291 in which $\alpha = 0,10$. This showed that the t count > t table (7,258 > 1,291) is considered as having a partial influence of the Consumers' Decision variable (Y) towards the Price variable (X2).

4.6 Double Linear Regression Analysis

The determination coefficient (R²) was 0.565, which means that the Variable Y (56.5%) was affected simultaneously by the Variable X1 and X2 and by other variables (43.50%).

The parameter of the Word of Mouth (X1) and Price (X2) was highly affected by the consumers' purchase (Y). the influence of the result showed that the F count = 51.855 with the significance/probability 0,000 < 0,05 can be used to estimate the Consumers' decision variable by using a regression model. The parameter of Word of Mouth (X1) and Price (X2) was simultaneously affected the Consumers' purchase decision (Y) with the significance of (α) = 10 percent.



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4.7 Hypothesis Test

If the F count $>$ F table, H_0 is rejected and H_a is used so that the X_1 and the X_2 affect the Y variable simultaneously.

F count (51.855) $>$ F table (2.37) for:

- If the Price variable is static, the Word of Mouth will increase as many as 0.432 with the Consumers' purchasing interest increases as many as 0.432.
- If the Price variable increases as many as 0.410 and the Word of Mouth is static, the Consumers' purchasing decision will increase as many as 0.410.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the experiment, the Mean of the X_1 variable (Word of Mouth) was concluded to be 3.28, thus it can be categorized that the WOM at the XY School of Tourism was Very Good, and the Mean of the X_2 variable (Price) of the education provided by the XY School of Tourism was 3.24, thus it was categorized as High or Expensive. Whereas the Mean of the Y variable (the Consumers' Decision) of the XY School of Tourism was 3.46, thus it was categorized as Very High.

Word of Mouth gave 49 percent of influence towards the students' decision to choose XY School of Tourism to continue their study. Price gave 39.4 percent of influence towards the students' decision to choose XY School of Tourism to continue their study. The other variables contributed to the rest percent. Simultaneously, Word of Mouth and Price affected the purchasing decision as much as 56.5 percent. Whereas other factors affected 43.5 percent.

Based on the results of the descriptive statistical analysis, 3 points had the lowest value of each variable, such as statement number 7 saying "I got the information about XY School of Tourism from social media" had the Mean value of 2.96, and based on that result, it is suggested that the institution should pay more attention to the marketing activities and increase the use of social media.

Statement number 14 saying "the price for studying at the XY School of Tourism is affordable" had the Mean value of 3.12, so that it is suggested that the institution should pay more attention to the existing market and the targets of the marketing. The sale price should adjust the average of the income and the spending of the existing consumers.

Statement number 24 saying "XY School of Tourism becomes the first choice for me to enroll in college" had the Mean value of 2.99. This means that based on the results of the study it is suggested that the institution pay more attention to all aspects supporting the consumers' interests, start from the products on sale, the price, the service, and the facilities that we can provide to the consumers in order to increase the consumers' purchasing decision.

Further research should maintain and improve the marketing activities, especially the spreading of the Word of Mouth about the XY School of Tourism. It is suggested to maintain the image or reputation of the study object in the eyes of the consumers. Further researchers are recommended to add and study other variables which might have a relationship and other effect related to the marketing activities of the XY School of Tourism to strengthen and complete the findings of the current research. This is possible since the findings of the current research have not yet 100 percent indicated the influence of one variable on the consumers' purchasing decision.

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