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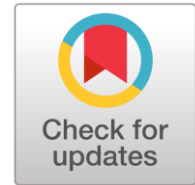


The Influence of Google Maps Reviews on Traveler Visits to Malang Raya

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ABSTRACT

Purpose - This research aims to reveal the extent to which Google Maps reviews influence traveler visits to Malang Raya.

Design/methodology/approach - This is quantitative research. The design used is a correlational research design. This is to test the relationship between the Google Maps reviews and the traveler visits to Malang Raya (variables x and y). This design focuses on examining the relationship between Google Maps reviews (such as ratings and comments) and the number of traveler visits to tourist attractions in Malang Raya.

Findings/results - The hypothesis is accepted, which shows that Google Maps reviews influence traveler visits to Malang Raya. In other words, Google Maps reviews significantly influence traveler visit intentions to Malang Raya.

Originality/value - This research can be used as initial data for further research on the development of marketing systems for the tourism world, especially in Malang Raya. This research is not only able to open up understanding from a different perspective that the implementation of a branding system by utilizing Google Maps reviews is very crucial to be applied.

Paper type - Research paper

Keywords: Google maps, Reviews, Traveler, Malang raya.

***Correspondence**



Introduction

Malang Raya, a popular city in East Java, is considered to attract frequent traveler visits year after year (Herman et al., 2024). Unlike other big cities, Malang Raya has a variety of tourist attractions that interest local and foreign travelers (Sativa & Yulianto, 2021). Not only because of its natural and artificial tourist attractions, but travelers also enjoy visiting Malang Raya to get a fresh air atmosphere. Geographically, Malang Raya is surrounded by several mountains, such as Mount Arjuno, Semeru, Kawi, and Panderman. The presence of many travelers visiting various tourist attractions in Malang Raya has succeeded in stimulating economic growth for Malang Raya residents. It can be seen from the increasing number of students who choose to continue their higher education in Malang Raya. The emergence of many hotels, boarding houses, and cafes with affordable prices adds to the attraction for travelers to visit Malang Raya.

The rise of technology has substantially improved the attractiveness of Malang Raya in attracting more travelers. Travelers can easily find information about Malang Raya through various online platforms, including websites or blogs, social media like YouTube (Rachmawati & Cahyani, 2020), and online advertisements (Tandafatu et al., 2024). As a result, comprehensive information about tourist attractions in Malang Raya is readily available online. Therefore, travelers do not need to visit the official TIC (tourist information center), as all necessary information is accessible online. This happens because many travelers like to share their experiences when visiting Malang Raya on the Internet (Muslim et al., 2021). Reviews of their experiences have proven to be able to convince potential tourists to visit Malang Raya. Reviews are crucial for marketing and promoting products and services (Xu et al., 2021). It can help a hidden thing become viral. Positive, negative, or neutral reviews can all be possible, and they frequently offer insightful information to others (Zugra et al., 2024). Reviews of travelers' experiences who have visited Malang Raya are usually in the form of photos uploaded on social media, video blogs broadcast on the YouTube platform (Budi & Eka, 2024), or written reviews on Google Maps.

Google Maps is a web application developed by Google as an online map service (Zahrah et al., 2024). Google Maps users visit websites or application services for certain objectives or requirements (Al Beruni et al., 2025). It allows users to search for areas, discover directions, identify businesses or places to explore, and examine satellite photos of areas globally. Google developed the Google Reviews feature for every address that appears on Google Maps (Al Beruni et al., 2025). Reviews on Google Maps can provide helpful insights into businesses, restaurants, landmarks, or other places on the platform (Dewi et al., 2022). Google reviews typically show up when people search for a location or after someone has been there (Haq & Rachmat, 2020). Additionally, Google Maps facilitates travel by offering real-time location data. It uses a 5-star rating system, where 1-star indicates poor quality and 5-star represents excellent quality. It gives a quick snapshot of a place's reputation. Many potential travelers rely

on these reviews to make decisions. The more reviews a place has, the more reliable the overall rating tends to be till more travelers visit (Purba & Irwansyah, 2022). Google Maps users can provide detailed feedback on the quality of service, ambiance, customer support, or other vital factors to a potential traveler in their reviews. Users often attach photos and sometimes videos to their reviews, making them even more functional as they give a visual representation of what to expect. Reviews provided by Google Maps users are a digital medium that can increase visibility, provide credibility to potential travelers, and influence the decision to visit.

The influence of reviews on certain tourism sectors has been supported by various previous research. The research done by Hussain et al., (2024) showed that user engagement is affected by factors related to content creators and provides insightful information for stakeholders in the tourist industry. They also discovered that the tourism sector greatly depends on trustworthy information to inform the choices made by tourists. Another research by Wahyuningtyas et al., (2023) mentioned the current understanding of the relationships among social media marketing, consumer reviews, and visit decisions. It offers helpful advice for promoting sustainable tourism growth in Yogyakarta's Gunung Kidul. In keeping with the findings of Wahyuningtyas et al., Pratama, (2021) investigates how transportation, internet marketing, and tourism attractions influence travelers' choices to visit Danau Gedang, Bengkulu. The findings indicate that these three factors affect travelers' choices.

According to Dewi et al., (2022) asserts that consumer behavior (traveler) is one of the crucial considerations when choosing which tourist attraction to visit. Consumer behavior is one of the elements that affect how travelers make decisions (Sudirjo et al., 2023). Based on the background above regarding traveler decision-making in determining which tourist attractions to visit in Malang Raya, this research was conducted to reveal the extent to which Google Maps reviews influence traveler visits to Malang Raya. Therefore, this research is unlike the previous research. It focuses on the influence of Google Maps reviews on traveler visits to Malang Raya.

Method

This is quantitative research. The design used is a correlational research design. This is to test the relationship between variables (x and y), where the Google Maps reviews is coded with X and the traveler visits to Malang Raya is coded with Y. Creswell (2013) claims that a correlation design is performed when two variables are related and combined in a common variance or vary together. The design can investigate the relationship between two or more variables and determine their interactions. This design focuses on examining the relationship between Google Maps reviews (such as ratings and comments) and the number of traveler visits to tourist attractions in Malang Raya. The research involves collecting data through questionnaires via Google Forms,



then examining statistical correlations between review factors (e.g., star ratings, positive/negative statements) and actual visit numbers.

The population of the research was Surabaya residents. In taking the sample, the researcher used a purposive sampling technique. It is also known as selective sampling because it has certain characteristics to determine. The research has 200 Surabaya Gen-Z (17-28 years old) as a sample because they are often described as the digitally native generation. Having grown up with smartphones as a constant presence in their lives, they are genuinely familiar with using Google Maps.

The questionnaire results were analyzed quantitatively. Data analysis in this research used validity tests, reliability tests, simple linear regression analysis, and hypothesis tests with the help of SPSS v.27 software.

Result and Discussion

A measuring instrument in testing validity and reliability will be declared valid and reliable if the calculated “R” value exceeds the table “R” value and has a Cronbach Alpha value above 0.6 (Chaniago, 2023). The results of the validity and reliability testing of the measuring instrument in this research show that the instrument has met these criteria, which indicates its reliability and validity.

Table 1. The result of the validity tests

| Variable | Item | r count | r table | Information |
|--------------------|------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Google Maps Review | X1 | .723 | .138 | Valid |
| | X2 | .688 | .138 | Valid |
| | X3 | .742 | .138 | Valid |
| | X4 | .695 | .138 | Valid |
| | X5 | .708 | .138 | Valid |
| | X6 | .671 | .138 | Valid |
| | X7 | .655 | .138 | Valid |
| Traveler visits | Y1 | .879 | .138 | Valid |
| | Y2 | .876 | .138 | Valid |
| | Y3 | .899 | .138 | Valid |

The table above shows that the validity test results of both variables are valid. In addition to the instrument being valid, the reliability of the instrument must also be measured. It is because being valid and reliable are two crucial things in research. If the instrument is not valid and reliable, then the research results cannot be trusted and can not be used to draw valid conclusions.

Table 2. The result of the reliability tests

| Variable | Cronbach's Alpha | Information |
|----------|------------------|-------------|
|----------|------------------|-------------|

| | | |
|--------------------|------|----------|
| Google Maps Review | .873 | Reliable |
| Traveler visits | .860 | |

The reliability measurement results for this research instrument are displayed in Table 2, where the Cronbach’s Alpha value exceeds 0.7. Since the Cronbach’s Alpha is greater than 0.7, the variables are deemed reliable. For variable X (Google Maps reviews), the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.873. In contrast, Y’s Cronbach’s Alpha for traveler visits to Malang Raya is 0.860. The reliability and validity of the research tools can be inferred. Consequently, basic linear regression analysis may proceed.

The correlation between the variables is considered to be linear. A predictive model is made with a single independent variable and a single dependent variable. The table below shows the regression analysis result.

Table 3. Simple linear regression analysis Result

| Model Summary | | | | |
|---------------|------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
| 1 | .722 | 0.521 | 0.519 | 3.127 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), X

The results of the simple linear regression analysis are shown in Table 3. A high positive correlation is indicated by the R value of 0.722. At the same time, the coefficient of determination, or R square, is 0.521. Consequently, approximately 52.1% of the variance in the dependent variable can be explained by the predictor variable or factors in the model. The model may not be overfitting because the R square and the adjusted R square are very close. Nonetheless, the estimate's standard error is 3.127. The model performs well with the available data, as evidenced by the relatively low standard error and the slight difference between R square and adjusted R square.

Table 4. Variable coefficient

| Coefficients ^a | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|-------|
| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (constant) | 5.217 | | | | |
| | X | 0.647 | 0.0440 | 0.722 | 14.70 | 0.000 |

From the data in Table 4, the constant value is 5.217. This indicates that without Google Maps reviews, traveler visits to Malang Raya would total 5.217. Furthermore,



note that the regression coefficient value of Google Maps reviews is 0.722, with a significance value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. This demonstrates that Google Maps reviews have a significant influence on traveler visits to Malang Raya. However, based on these findings, the regression equation can be formulated as follows:

$$Y=5,217+0,647X$$

The regression formula above shows that Google Maps reviews have a positive and significant influence on tourist visits to Malang Raya. The better the reviews on Google Maps, the higher the likelihood that tourists will visit.

The hypothesis will be accepted if the significance value in the t-test is less than 0.05, while the hypothesis will be rejected if the significance value is more than 0.05. This test assesses the extent to which the independent variable affects the dependent variable in the relationship between the two. Based on the analysis using simple linear regression, it can be concluded that the hypothesis test regarding the influence of Google Maps reviews on traveler visits to Malang Raya shows a significant value. The Google Maps reviews variable (X) is 0.647, with a significance value of 0.000, which means it is less than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the hypothesis is accepted, which shows that Google Maps reviews influence traveler visits to Malang Raya. In other words, Google Maps reviews significantly influence traveler visit intentions to Malang Raya.

Discussion

Malang Raya, located in East Java, is one of the regions in Indonesia that has a variety of tourist attractions. Certainly, a traveler who will visit Malang Raya needs a lot of time because of the variety of tourist attractions in Malang Raya (Utama et al., 2024). In addition, there are limitations in terms of cost and time in making traveler visits in Malang Raya. Based on this description, a traveler needs to sort out to determine priority destinations. Generally, travelers use online reviews to do so (Nirwana et al., 2024).

One of the online reviews that is widely used by travelers as a reference when traveling is Google Maps reviews. With its complete features, travelers can not only determine the priority of their visit. It is supported by the findings of the research, which show that Google Maps reviews influence the traveler's intention to visit Malang Raya. This finding is also supported by Ipmawati et al., (2024). Their research shows that the algorithm of Google Maps, along with the reviews left, can easily help travelers find the tourist attractions they will visit. In other words, Google Maps reviews help travelers decide which attractions to visit. Not only does it help increase traveler interest, but Google Maps reviews have also proven to be a digital promotional tool that can increase traveler visits (Walalayo et al., 2022). However, it is not uncommon for Google Maps reviews to be used for bad things, such as bringing down other people's businesses through negative reviews (Aryanto & Mardhiyyah, 2024). It all depends on how travelers

can use Google Maps reviews wisely when making travel visits (Nirwana et al., 2024), especially for the Malang Raya destination.

Conclusion

To demonstrate the extent to which reviews on Google Maps influence travelers' decisions to visit Malang Raya, this research conducts a hypothesis test using a correlation research design. The result shows that Reviews on Google Maps influenced tourists' decisions to visit Malang Raya. To put it another way, Google Maps reviews have a big impact on travelers' plans to visit Malang Raya. Travelers feel helped in finding tourist attractions in the Malang Raya area that suit their priorities very easily.

The implication of Finding

The findings produced in this research can be used as initial data for further research on the development of marketing systems for the tourism world, especially in Malang Raya. This research is not only able to open up understanding from a different perspective that the implementation of a branding system by utilizing Google Maps reviews is very crucial to be applied. Google Maps reviews are not only able to provide a clear route from the starting point to the destination, but also provide an overview and understanding through photos/videos and reviews on Google Maps.



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