

INCREASING AGROTOURISM REPUTATION THROUGH BUMDES MANAGEMENT



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Abstract

The Pandarejo Strawberry Barn is an agrotourism owned by the Raharjo Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) in Batu City. Since its establishment in 2019, one of the focuses of the Pandarejo Strawberry Barn has been on the sale of services. The offered service is in the form of educational tourism with the concept of strawberry picking. The evolution of time shows that the business's reputation is greatly determined by the success of the business unit in serving its customers. Therefore, this research aims to determine the influence of the visiting experience on agrotourism reputation through visitor satisfaction and electronic word of mouth. This study employs a quantitative approach conducted from December 2023 to January 2024. Questionnaires were directly distributed to 230 respondents, and data were analyzed using SEM-PLS assisted by the WarpPLS 8.0 application. The research involves four variables: visiting experience, visitor satisfaction, electronic word of mouth, and agrotourism reputation. The results indicate that the visiting experience has an impact on agrotourism's reputation through visitor satisfaction and electronic word of mouth.

Keywords: Agrotourism, Customer Experience, Visitor Satisfaction, E-Wom (Electronic Word of Mouth), Reputation

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry in Indonesia continues to grow, with agrotourism emerging as one of the sectors gaining increasing attention. Agrotourism combines the agricultural and tourism sectors into a unified entity, creating a type of tourism that highlights the products of farming, plantations, or livestock (Utama, 2023). Agrotourism not only provides a unique vacation experience but also has the potential to be a source of local economic income (Utama & Junaedi, 2015). In the midst of these dynamics, Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) have emerged as important instruments for local economic development (Izzah & Kolopaking, 2020). An example of BUMDes implementation in the context of agrotourism can be found in Raharjo, Batu City, where its existence serves as evidence of the increased reputation of agrotourism.

Agrotourism offers opportunities for tourists to explore the natural and cultural richness of a region. Since 2019, Raharjo Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) has gained recognition for its promising agrotourism potential, namely the Pandanrejo Strawberry Barn. As a local institution responsible for managing village resources, BUMDes Raharjo has actively engaged in efforts to enhance the reputation of this agrotourism site. These efforts include infrastructure development, tourism promotion, and collaboration with local businesses (Ramadhani, 2024).

One of the standout features of the Pandanrejo Strawberry Barn is its educational tourism offerings. The engaging experiences provided by this agrotourism site can offer visitors a new and memorable experience. After their visit, tourists are likely to recall specific aspects of the experience that appealed to them mereka (Park & Santos, 2016; Smith et al., 2012). Visitor satisfaction levels can be influenced by their overall touring experience (Pujiastuti, 2020; Serra-Cantalops et al., 2018). Positive satisfaction can motivate them to recommend and provide reviews on social media (Oktaviani et al., 2019; Pamungkas, 2017). Positive online reviews from satisfied tourists can contribute to the formation of a positive reputation, highlighting the excellence of their experiences (Serra-Cantalops et al., 2018; Wijaya & Yulita, 2020).

The significance of BUMDes in agrotourism development takes center stage in this research. The focus on BUMDes Raharjo as a case study provides in-depth insights into how this institution has successfully enhanced agrotourism reputation at the local level and may serve as inspiration for other areas considering a similar model. Ultimately, a better understanding of the role of BUMDes in enhancing agrotourism reputation can provide a foundation for effective management to optimize tourism potential at the village level (Wardani & Ikhsan, 2023).

This research aims to analyze the strategies implemented by BUMDes Raharjo in enhancing agrotourism reputation. By detailing best practices and challenges faced, it is hoped that the findings of this research will positively contribute to the development of the agrotourism sector in other villages in Indonesia and potentially in countries with similar contexts.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research focuses on the Pandanrejo Strawberry Barn, an agrotourism site owned by the Raharjo Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes). The research approach utilized is quantitative with a Non-Probability Sampling method, specifically employing purposive sampling. Sample selection criteria include visitors who have visited the Pandanrejo Strawberry Barn at least once, ensuring the accuracy of information provided by respondents. A total of 230 respondents were sampled, and the minimum size was determined based on the Cohen table (Hair et al., 2021).

Primary data collection was conducted through the direct distribution of questionnaires at the Pandanrejo Strawberry Barn location. The questionnaire was designed to evaluate visitors' perceptions of agrotourism and the effectiveness of BUMDes efforts in enhancing its reputation. To strengthen primary data, observations and previous research were also included.

The main analytical tool in this research is Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Squares (SEM PLS). This statistical analysis will be used to identify and test the proposed conceptual model. The data analysis process will be carried out using the WarpPLS 8.0 application. The entire research adheres to research ethics principles, including obtaining consent and maintaining respondent information confidentiality. This study employs four latent variables consisting of a total of 23 indicators.

Table 1.
Research Indicator

Variable	Indicator
Customer experience (PB)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Uniqueness of experience. 2. Acquiring new knowledge. 3. Immersion in the offered offerings. 4. Feeling secure. 5. Friendly service. 6. Quality staff. 7. Feeling relaxed.
Visitor Satisfaction (KP)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enjoying the visited destination. 2. Making the destination a top choice. 3. Having positive feelings after the visit. 4. Meeting expectations. 5. Fulfilling visitor needs. 6. Considering this destination the right choice.
Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I want to help other travelers discover good agrotourism through social media. 2. I want to provide positive opinions about agrotourism. 3. I want to assist in offering visiting experience options for other potential tourists. 4. I hope the posts will continue in the future. 5. I have recommended this agrotourism without any bias. 6. I intend to continue posting reviews online rather than stopping the postings.
Agrotourism Reputation (RA)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Credibility of the tourist destination. 2. Quality of products and services provided. 3. Reliability of agrotourism. 4. Social responsibility.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

Based on the results of data collection through questionnaire distribution, it is evident that the majority of respondents are aged 17-25, totaling 135 individuals (58.7%). This finding indicates that the majority of agrotourism visitors in Batu City fall into the adolescent age category. More than half of the respondents are female, amounting to 120 individuals (52.2%). Consistently, research findings suggest that females tend to require more refreshing experiences compared to males, possibly due to a higher vulnerability to depression and anxiety, as previously revealed in research (Suanrueang et al., 2022).

The Pandanrejo Strawberry Barn is predominantly visited by tourists from outside Batu City, totaling 202 individuals (87.8%). This success may be attributed to people's inclination to prefer tourism outside their residential areas. It is possible that the majority of tourists are already familiar with the atmosphere and culture in Batu City, leading them to choose destinations outside the city, as indicated by previous research (Grilli et al., 2021). The study also indicates that the majority of visitors have an upper-middle income, totaling 138 individuals (60%). Most respondents have an academic/university education level, reaching 60.4%, aligning with the presence of numerous higher education institutions around Batu City.

Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

Table 2.
Combined Loading and Cross Loadings Value

	PB	KP	EWOM	RA	Type	P-Value
PB1	(0.937)	0.024	0.013	-0.025	Reflective	<0.001
PB2	(0.955)	0.007	-0.005	-0.006	Reflective	<0.001
PB3	(0.946)	-0.028	0.013	-0.003	Reflective	<0.001
PB4	(0.948)	-0.022	0.014	0.010	Reflective	<0.001
PB5	(0.937)	0.008	-0.012	0.009	Reflective	<0.001
PB6	(0.941)	0.025	-0.024	0.000	Reflective	<0.001

PB7	(0.947)	-0.014	0.000	0.015	Reflective	<0.001
KP1	0.016	(0.928)	0.006	0.009	Reflective	<0.001
KP2	0.008	(0.915)	-0.050	0.000	Reflective	<0.001
KP3	-0.033	(0.854)	0.016	-0.031	Reflective	<0.001
KP4	0.032	(0.919)	0.012	0.006	Reflective	<0.001
KP5	-0.001	(0.918)	-0.026	0.029	Reflective	<0.001
KP6	-0.026	(0.873)	0.045	-0.017	Reflective	<0.001
EWOM1	0.015	0.013	(0.938)	-0.020	Reflective	<0.001
EWOM2	-0.023	0.023	(0.877)	-0.035	Reflective	<0.001
EWOM3	0.036	0.002	(0.930)	-0.009	Reflective	<0.001
EWOM4	0.000	-0.048	(0.915)	0.069	Reflective	<0.001
EWOM5	0.019	0.000	(0.937)	0.008	Reflective	<0.001
EWOM6	-0.053	0.011	(0.856)	-0.015	Reflective	<0.001
RA1	-0.032	-0.040	-0.052	(0.887)	Reflective	<0.001
RA2	0.005	0.014	0.037	(0.897)	Reflective	<0.001
RA3	-0.002	-0.015	-0.007	(0.908)	Reflective	<0.001
RA4	0.027	0.040	0.021	(0.931)	Reflective	<0.001

Source: Processed Primary Data

Based on Hair et al. (2021), loading factor values are required to be above 0.7 for the study to be considered acceptable. The table above shows that all loading factor values are in the range of 0.856 to 0.955. This result can be concluded that all loading factor values have met the minimum criteria for convergent validity, indicating that the convergence of indicators is valid and acceptable.

Composite reliability, Cronbach's alpha, and AVE are used to assess the reliability of the research instrument. The criteria for using composite reliability require these values to be greater than 0.7, AVE greater than 0.5, while the Cronbach's alpha value must exceed 0.6. When these values exceed the specified criteria, it can be stated that all variables in this study have met the criteria (Hair et al., 2021; Solimun et al., 2017).

Table 3.
Discriminant Validity and Reliability

Variabel	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach Alpha
PB	0.892	0.983	0.980
KP	0.813	0.963	0.958
EWOM	0.827	0.966	0.954
RA	0.820	0.948	0.927

Source: Processed Primary Data

Based on Table 3, the AVE values for all variables have shown values above 0.50, indicating that all constructs have good convergent validity. Table 3 demonstrates composite reliability values for all variables are above 0.7, and Cronbach's alpha values for all variables are above 0.5. This indicates that each variable can be relied upon as a research instrument and has been consistent in measuring its construct since each variable meets the established criteria.

Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

R-Square

Table 4.
R-Square

Variable	R-Square
KP	0.495
EWOM	0.561
RA	0.548

Source: Processed Primary Data

Based on Table 4, the R2 value for visitor satisfaction is 0.495, meaning that visitor satisfaction influenced by the visiting experience is 49.5%. Meanwhile, the R2 value for e-WOM is 0.561, indicating that online recommendations are influenced by the visiting experience and visitor satisfaction by 56.1%. Lastly, agrotourism reputation is influenced by the visiting experience, visitor satisfaction, and e-WOM by 54.8%.

Path Coefficient and Significant

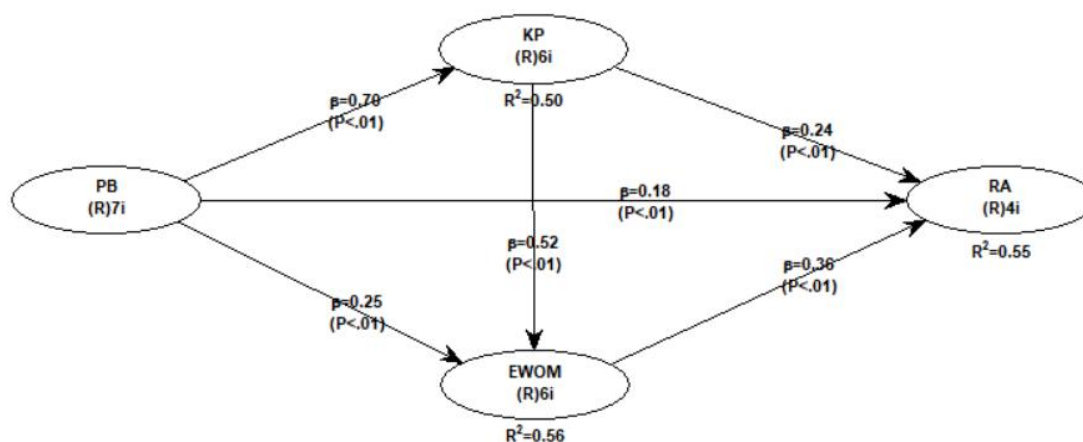


Figure 1.

Path Diagram and Significance

Hypothesis testing through the inner model depicts the level of significance of a model. Evaluation of path coefficient is used to determine whether the relationships between variables have a positive or negative impact. If the path coefficient value is closer to 0, the relationship is weaker. A variable's relationship can be considered significant if the p-value is < 0.05 (Hair et al., 2021). The following are the results of all hypothesis tests in this study based on Figure 1.

Table 5.
Hypothesis Testing Results

	Variable	Path Coefficient	P-value	Test Result
H1	PB → KP	0.70	<0.01	Significant
H2	PB → EWOM	0.25	<0.01	Significant
H3	PB → RA	0.18	<0.01	Significant
H4	KP → EWOM	0.52	<0.01	Significant
H5	KP → RA	0.24	<0.01	Significant
H6	EWOM → RA	0.36	<0.01	Significant
H7	PB → KP → EWOM → RA	0.13	<0.01	Significant

Source: Processed Primary Data

Customer Experience on Visitor Satisfaction

Based on the data in Table 5, the relationship between visiting experience and visitor satisfaction is found to have a p-value of < 0.01 and a path coefficient of 0.70. This indicates that the visiting experience has a positive and significant impact on visitor satisfaction. This aligns with the research by Serra-Cantalops et al. (2018), stating that customer experience has a significant influence on customer satisfaction. A positive visiting experience received by tourists can enhance their satisfaction. Tourists tend to feel satisfied when their visiting experience to a destination aligns with their needs and expectations (Çetinkaya & Öter, 2016).

Customer Experience and Visitor Satisfaction on Electronic Word of Mouth

Table 5 indicates that visiting experience and visitor satisfaction have a positive and significant influence on e-WOM. This is evidenced by the path coefficient and p-value for H2 (0.25, < 0.01) and H3 (0.18, < 0.01). In line with the study by Serra-Cantalops et al. (2018), customer experience and customer satisfaction influence the occurrence of e-WOM. Customer experience and satisfaction play a highly significant role in shaping and motivating the occurrence of e-WOM, which involves the spread of information or reviews through digital platforms. Positive experiences often serve as a primary trigger for customers to share their experiences online (Sridhar & Harish, 2014). When customers are satisfied with a product or service, they are more likely to willingly share their positive experiences with others through various platforms, such as social media, online reviews, or discussion forums.

Customer Experience, Visitor Satisfaction & Electronic Word of Mouth on Agrotourism Reputation

The results of this study indicate that visiting experience, visitor satisfaction, and e-WOM towards agrotourism reputation have p-values < 0.01 for H3, H5, and H6. Path coefficients were also found for all three hypotheses: H3 (0.18), H5 (0.24), and H6 (0.36). This indicates that visiting experience, visitor satisfaction, and e-WOM have a positive and significant impact on agrotourism reputation. Consistent with the study by Serra-Cantalops

et al. (2018), customer experience, customer satisfaction, and e-WOM have a direct influence on reputation.

Positive visiting experiences and high levels of visitor satisfaction directly contribute to building a strong reputation for a business (Wijaya & Yulita, 2020). Satisfied customers are likely to share their experiences through e-WOM, whether via social media, online review platforms, or direct communication with friends and family. With the growing influence of e-WOM, agrotourism reputation can either thrive or be affected. Positive reviews and recommendations from satisfied customers can enhance the business's positive image, attract potential customers, and increase consumer trust (Nisar et al., 2020). Conversely, negative customer experiences can harm agrotourism reputation if widely disseminated.

Customer Experience on Agrotourism Reputation Through Visitor Satisfaction & Electronic Word of Mouth

The results of this study indicate a relationship between visitor experience and agrotourism reputation mediated by visitor satisfaction and e-WOM. Table 5 shows that this relationship (H7) has a p-value < 0.01 and a path coefficient of 0.13. This result states that visiting experience has a positive and significant impact on agrotourism reputation, mediated by visitor satisfaction and e-WOM.

Customer experience can be a primary driver in shaping agrotourism reputation, especially when connected through two stages: visitor satisfaction and e-WOM. A positive visiting experience directly forms satisfaction for tourists after their visit. Satisfied customers tend to have a positive perception of the destination. Generally, satisfied customers are motivated to recommend their visit to others through social media (Borghi et al., 2023). E-WOM becomes an effective communication channel to spread customer impressions (Sari et al., 2017). Positive customer experiences, mediated by satisfaction, are often expressed through reviews, recommendations, or online discussions. Positive e-WOM activities create a positive image among potential visitors, expand the visibility of agrotourism, and strengthen its reputation. The abundance of positive e-WOM or online reviews can shape agrotourism reputation in a positive direction.

CONCLUSION

This study explores the relationship between visitor experience and agrotourism reputation through the mediators of visitor satisfaction and e-WOM. The results indicate that the visiting experience significantly and positively influences agrotourism reputation through two stages: visitor satisfaction and e-WOM. This research provides in-depth insights into how positive visitor experiences can stimulate recommendations and positive conversations through e-WOM, ultimately impacting agrotourism reputation.

Overall, this study reinforces the understanding that the visitor experience plays a crucial role in building visitor satisfaction, encouraging e-WOM, and, in turn, shaping agrotourism reputation. These conclusions provide a crucial foundation for tourism industry practitioners to comprehend how enhancing visitor experiences can be a strategy to strengthen the image and reputation of their destinations.

Therefore, it is recommended for BUMDes Raharjo or similar tourism industry practitioners to pay special attention to customer experience, customer satisfaction, and e-WOM to enhance agrotourism reputation. It is essential for stakeholders to understand how improving visitor experiences is a primary strategy and to leverage the potential of the local area to strengthen agrotourism reputation.

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