

The Influence of Word of Mouth and Service on Tourist Interest in Visiting Ujong Seuke Beach in Bireuen Regency

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ABSTRACT

The analysis of the influence of Word of Mouth and service quality on tourist interest in visiting Ujong Seuke Beach, Bireuen Regency, has important relevance in the development of regional tourism destinations. Increased interest in visiting is not only determined by the physical attractiveness of the destination, but also by information disseminated among tourists and the quality of service directly experienced. Word of Mouth acts as a source of information that is considered more credible because it comes from real experiences, while service quality reflects the interaction of tourists with the management and available facilities. A quantitative approach with a survey method was used to measure the relationship between variables numerically by distributing questionnaires to 100 respondents. The data obtained were analyzed using multiple linear regression to test the partial and simultaneous effects of the variables studied. The results of the analysis indicate that Word of Mouth has a positive and significant effect on tourist interest in visiting, evidenced by the calculated t-value of 2.956 which is greater than the t-table of 1.984 and a significance value of 0.004. Service quality also has a positive and significant effect with a more dominant influence, indicated by the calculated t-value of 9.580 which exceeds the t-table of 1.984 and a significance value of 0.000. Simultaneously, Word of Mouth and service quality explain 56.6% of the variation in tourist visit interest, while the remaining 43.4% is influenced by other factors outside the model. This finding confirms that strengthening communication between tourists and improving service quality are key strategies in increasing visit interest in coastal tourist destinations.

Keywords: Word of Mouth, Service, Tourist Visit Interest, Ujong Seuke Beach

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INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry plays a crucial role in supporting a country's economic growth. Over the past few decades, this sector has developed into a major contributor to national income, employment, and a driver of development in various regions. Beyond its economic contribution, tourism also plays a role in promoting local culture, expanding social interaction, and promoting environmental conservation through sustainably managed tourism activities (Rahmavati & Pujiastuti, 2024).

Indonesia's tourism potential is currently showing rapid growth and development, becoming a major source of revenue for the national economy. This growth is accompanied by improved human resource capacity, enabling more professional management of tourist destinations and significant contributions to regional economic growth. Along with this development, the need for supporting tourism facilities and infrastructure to enhance tourist comfort and experience is also increasing (Nengsih, Ghani, & Mubarak, 2023).

One of the factors supporting tourism development is the availability of facilities. Facilities play a crucial role in encouraging word of mouth by increasing customer satisfaction. This leads to tourists being more likely to return (Denny, F., & Dinda, F., 2025).

Word of mouth (WOM) in the tourism context is a form of informal communication where tourists share experiences, recommendations, or information about a destination through face-to-face conversations or online platforms. Strong WOM can shape potential tourists' positive perceptions of a destination and is a key factor influencing their decision to visit (Utami et al., 2024).

Service quality is the overall perception of tourists regarding the services provided by destination management, including the suitability of the service to expectations, the staff's ability to respond to needs, friendliness, and the availability of supporting facilities. Good service not only creates satisfaction but also encourages positive recommendations through word-of-mouth (WOM), thus increasing tourists' interest in returning (Purba & Simarmata, 2018).

Visit intention refers to a person's tendency or intention to choose a future travel destination after evaluating information, previous experiences, and recommendations from others. Visit intention is considered an important indicator of consumer behavior in tourism because it is related to the actual decision to travel (Karini & Azziz, 2024).

Word of mouth is a form of informal communication that has a powerful influence on shaping potential tourists' perceptions of a destination. Research shows that word of mouth and service quality significantly influence destination trust and revisit intentions, ultimately driving return visits to specific attractions such as coastal areas and other tourist islands (Qadri, 2022).

Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) plays a strategic role in destination marketing because it can indirectly influence the perceptions and decisions of potential visitors. The spread of electronic word of mouth through social media has a positive impact because individuals with access to digital technology can easily share information, experiences, and recommendations (Fitria et al., 2025).

Previous research also found that electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) plays a significant role in shaping revisit intentions at coastal tourist attractions. Research at Krakal Beach, Gunung Kidul, showed that e-WOM not only significantly influenced revisit intentions directly but also increased tourist satisfaction (Aitarra et al., 2020).

Other findings show that service quality also plays a central role in shaping visitors' positive perceptions of tourist destinations, where good service quality including staff friendliness, cleanliness, comfort of facilities, and accessibility, not only increases the level of visitor satisfaction but also contributes to their intention to return to tourist attractions (Agustina & Maulany, 2025).

Friendly, responsive, and consistent service quality has also been shown to increase satisfaction and encourage repeat visits. Good service is not only seen as an obligation of tourism managers, but also a key factor in shaping positive tourist experiences during interactions with facilities and staff at tourist attractions (Fitriana et al., 2025).

The level of tourist attention is inextricably linked to the quality of service provided by tourism management. Service quality is the totality of the characteristics of goods and services that demonstrate their ability to satisfy customer needs, both apparent and hidden (Denny, F., & Rahma, I., 2022).

Service quality at a tourist destination plays a crucial role in shaping the overall visitor experience, as the services provided by the destination's managers or staff can enhance comfort, satisfaction, and a positive image of the destination in the eyes of tourists. Responsive, friendly, and professional

service not only encourages tourists to feel cared for during their visit but can also strengthen repeat visits and recommendations, making service quality a key factor in the success of tourist destination management (Silalahi & Hutama, 2023).

Although various studies have confirmed the relationship between word of mouth, service quality, and visitor interest, research specifically examining the relationship between these three variables at coastal tourist attractions is still limited. This includes Ujong Seuke Beach in Bireuen Regency. At Ujong Seuke Beach, several local reports and social media posts indicate service complaints and incidents that went viral, potentially damaging the destination's reputation. Despite its impressive natural beauty, these incidents have disappointed tourists and led some visitors to be reluctant to return.

A post on the TikTok account @infobireuen about the Rp100,000 cottage rental fee sparked a negative public response and potentially undermined tourist confidence. This unpleasant experience fueled negative word of mouth, leading to a decline in visitor numbers. Tourists also complained about suboptimal service quality, such as a lack of attention from management and inconsistent service delivery.

Negative word of mouth and poor service quality directly impact tourist interest. This suggests that the decision to visit is heavily influenced by pre-visit information and the service experience at the destination. This study analyzes the influence of word of mouth and service quality on tourist interest in visiting Ujong Seuke Beach and determines the most dominant variables. The primary focus of the study is negative word of mouth based on social media and direct service experiences at the beach destination, as well as their impact on interest in visiting. The research findings are expected to enrich empirical studies on tourism destination management.

METHOD

Study participants

The respondents in this study were tourists who had visited Ujong Seuke Beach, Bireuen Regency, with a sample size of 100 people. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, which is the selection of respondents based on certain criteria deemed relevant to the research objectives. Respondent criteria included tourists from various backgrounds and age groups, both teenagers and adults, who had visited Ujong Seuke Beach and expressed their willingness to complete the research questionnaire.

Study organization

This study used a survey method with a questionnaire instrument as a data collection technique. Data were analyzed using an associative quantitative approach to examine the relationship and influence between two or more variables, which were measured objectively through mathematical and statistical analysis of the numerical data of the research variables (Marwan et al., 2025). The study was conducted at the Ujong Seuke Beach tourist attraction, Bireuen Regency, with respondents from tourists who had visited the location. The research instrument was a structured questionnaire with a five-level Likert scale. The research variables consisted of Word of Mouth (X1), Service Quality (X2), and Tourist Visit Intention (Y). Data collection was conducted online through Google Forms, where the questionnaire link was distributed through social media to tourists who met the research respondent criteria.

Statistical analysis

Data analysis in this study was conducted through several statistical stages. The initial stage included validity and reliability tests to ensure the feasibility of the measurement instruments. Next, classical assumption tests, including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests, were conducted to ensure that the regression model met the statistical assumptions. Hypothesis testing was

conducted using multiple linear regression analysis to determine the effect of Word of Mouth and Service Quality on Tourist Visit Intention. Partial and simultaneous testing of model parameters was conducted using t-tests and F-tests, while the ability of the independent variables to explain the dependent variable was

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Results of Respondent Characteristic Descriptions

The results of a survey of 100 respondents visiting Ujong Seuke Beach show that the majority of respondents were aged 17–25 (63%) and were predominantly students (57%). In terms of visit frequency, first-time visitors constituted the largest group (37%), followed by those who had visited 2–3 times (35%) and more than 3 times (28%). The purpose of the visit was predominantly for recreation/vacation (38%), followed by family (36%) and friends (26%). The most common source of information was family/friends (57%), followed by recommendations from others (28%), social media (14%), and the internet/websites (1%).

These findings indicate that word of mouth plays an important role in spreading information about destinations, while the dominance of young tourists and the frequency of first visits indicate opportunities to increase repeat visits by improving services at tourist sites.

Validity and Reliability Test

This study used a questionnaire as a data collection instrument, so validity and reliability tests were first conducted to ensure that the instrument was appropriate and usable.

Table 1. Validity Test Results

Variable	Indicator	Calculated R	R table	Description
Word of Mouth (X1)	Frequency of sharing experiences	0.632	0.196	Valid
	Nature/direction	0.601	0.196	Valid
Service Quality (X2)	Information quality	0.707	0.196	Valid
	Confidence level	0.778	0.196	Valid
	Facility Completeness	0.739	0.196	Valid
	Environmental Cleanliness	0.833	0.196	Valid
	Staff professionalism	0.836	0.196	Valid
	Safety and comfort	0.829	0.196	Valid
	Ease of information/assistance	0.685	0.196	Valid
Interest in visiting (Y)	Destination image	0.781	0.196	Valid
	Natural/cultural attractions	0.634	0.196	Valid
	Destination quality	0.724	0.196	Valid
	Tourist satisfaction	0.717	0.196	Valid

Next, a reliability test was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha. Data is considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value is > 0.60 (Ghozali, 2021). The results of the reliability test for all research variables are presented in the following table.

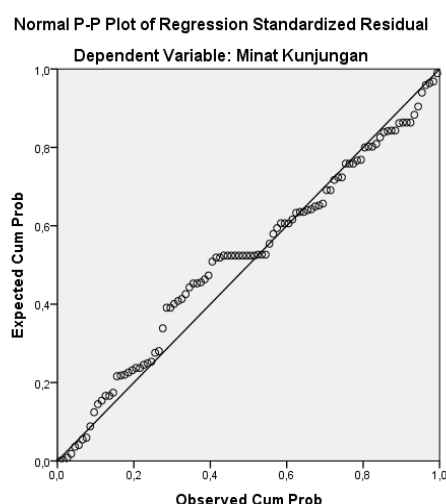
Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach Alpha Value	Criteria	Description
Word of Mouth (X1)	0.612	0.60	Reliable
Service Quality (X2)	0.845	0.60	Reliable
Interest in Visiting (Y)	0.677	0.60	Reliable

The test results show that all indicator items in the Word of Mouth (X1), Service (X2), and Interest in Visiting (Y) variables have met the validity test criteria. The calculated r-value for each item is higher than the table r-value (0.196) with a range of 0.601–0.778, so all items are declared valid. Furthermore, the reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha produced values above 0.60 for each variable, namely Word of Mouth (0.612), Service (0.845), and Interest in Visiting (0.677), indicating that the research instrument has good internal consistency and can be trusted for further measurement.

Classical Assumption Test

Classical assumption testing was conducted to ensure that the regression model used met the necessary requirements. This testing included three main tests, namely normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity.

Table 3. Normality Test Results

Normality testing was performed on the regression residuals using a Normal P–P Plot. Based on the graph, the residual points show a tendency to follow the diagonal line, although there are still slight deviations. However, in general, the residual distribution pattern points to a distribution that is close to normal. In addition, the sample size used in this study is relatively large, so based on the Central Limit Theorem, the regression model can still be used. Therefore, it can be concluded that the assumption of residual normality is still acceptable.

Table 4. Multicollinearity Test Results

		Collinearity Statistics	
Model		Tolerance	VIF
1	Word of mouth	.921	1,085
	Service	.921	1,085

a. Dependent Variable: Interest in Visiting

The results of the multicollinearity test show that the independent variables in this study have a tolerance value of 0.921 and a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value of 1.085. A tolerance value greater than 0.10 and a VIF value less than 10 indicate that there is no high correlation between the independent variables. Thus, it can be concluded that the regression model in this study does not exhibit multicollinearity and is suitable for further analysis.

Table 5. Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.689	.781		2,164	,033
	Word of mouth	-,074	,049	-,157	-1,503	,136
	Services	,032	,032	,102	,977	,331

a. Dependent Variable: ABS_RES

Heteroscedasticity testing in this study was conducted using the Glejser test by looking at the significance value (Sig.) of the independent variables. Based on the test results, the Word of Mouth variable (X1) has a Sig. value of 0.136 and the Service variable (X2) has a Sig. value of 0.331, both of which are greater than 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that the research data does not exhibit heteroscedasticity, so the regression model meets the classical assumptions.

Multiple linear regression analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was applied to measure the level of contribution of independent variables to dependent variables. Data processing was carried out using SPSS software version 22, resulting in the analysis presented in the following output:

Table 6. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.113	1.168		2,664	,009
	Word of mouth	,218	,074	,206	2,956	,004
	Services	,465	,049	,668	9,580	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Interest in Visiting

Based on the results of multiple linear regression analysis, the following regression equation was obtained:

$$Y = 3.113 + 0.218X_1 + 0.465X_2$$

The equation shows that the constant of 3.113 represents the value of Tourist Interest when Word of Mouth and Service are zero. The Word of Mouth regression coefficient of 0.218 indicates that each one-unit increase in Word of Mouth will increase Tourist Interest by 0.218, assuming other variables remain constant. The Service regression coefficient of 0.465 indicates that every one-unit increase in Service will increase Tourist Visit Interest by 0.465.

Persial Test (t-test)

The t-test (partial) is used to analyze the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable separately. Based on the analysis conducted using SPSS for Windows version 22, the results are shown in the following table:

Table 7. Partial Test Results (t-test)

Model		t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2,664	,009
	Word of mouth	2,956	,004
	Service	9,580	,000

Based on the results of the t-test analysis, the Word of Mouth variable (X1) shows a t-value of 2.956 with a Sig. value of 0.004. Since the Sig. value is < 0.05 , it can be concluded that Word of Mouth has a significant effect on Tourist Interest in Visiting (Y). Furthermore, the Service variable (X2) has a t-value of 9.580 with a Sig. value of 0.000, which is also less than 0.05, so Service is proven to have a significant effect on Tourist Visit Interest.

Simultaneous Test (F Test)

This test aims to determine the extent to which Word of Mouth (X1) and Service (X2) simultaneously explain the dependent variable, Tourist Visit Interest (Y), and to determine whether the regression model used is appropriate or not.

Table 8. Results of the F Test (Simultaneous)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	306.695	2	153,347	63,163	,000 ^b
	Residual	235,495	97	2,428		
	Total	542,190	99			

a. Dependent Variable: Interest in Visiting

b. Predictors: (Constant), Service, Word of mouth

Based on the regression analysis results, the calculated F value = 63.163 with significance (F sig.) = 0.000, where $F \text{ sig. } 0.000 < 0.05$, so H_0 is rejected. This shows that simultaneously, Word of Mouth and Service have a significant effect on Tourist Visit Interest. In other words, these two independent variables simultaneously explain 56.6% of the variation in Tourist Visit Interest, while the remaining 43.4% is explained by other variables not examined in this study.

Coefficient of Determination

The coefficient of determination (RI) was used to measure the extent to which the variables freely influence the dependent variable.

Table 9. Determination Test Results

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	.752 ^a	.566	.557	1.558

a. Predictors: (Constant), Service, Word of mouth

b. Dependent Variable: Interest in Visiting

Based on the results of multiple linear regression analysis, the coefficient of determination (RI) value obtained was 0.566. This shows that 56.6% of the variation in tourist visit interest can be explained by the variables Word of Mouth (X1) and Service (X2), while the remaining 43.4% is influenced by other factors not included in this research model.

Discussion

Word of Mouth Affects Tourist Interest in Visiting

The results of the partial analysis in this study indicate that Word of Mouth (X1) has a positive and significant effect on Tourist Interest in Visiting (Y). Based on the SPSS coefficient output, the calculated $t = 2.956$ and $\text{Sig.} = 0.004$ ($p < 0.05$), which means that the stronger or more positive the Word of Mouth information received by tourists, whether through direct recommendations from friends/family or indirect information through the experiences of other tourists, the higher the interest of tourists in visiting Ujong Seuke Beach.

Service Affects Tourist Interest in Visiting

Partial analysis also revealed that Service (X2) had a positive and significant effect on Tourist Interest in Visiting (Y). This is evidenced by a t -value of 9.580 and $\text{Sig.} = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$), which shows that the quality of service at tourist sites, such as the friendliness of staff, available facilities, cleanliness, and comfort, significantly increases tourists' interest in visiting or returning to Ujong Seuke Beach. Good service creates a pleasant experience and leaves a deep positive impression, so that tourists feel satisfied and are encouraged to develop a higher interest in visiting.

Word of Mouth and Service Simultaneously Influence Tourist Interest in Visiting

The results of the simultaneous test (F test) in this study indicate that Word of Mouth (X1) and Service (X2) together have a significant effect on Tourist Visit Interest (Y). The calculated F value = 63.163 with significance ($F \text{ sig.} = 0.000$) ($p < 0.05$) indicates that both independent variables simultaneously explain the variation in tourist visit interest significantly. This means that when Word of Mouth and Service Quality are improved simultaneously, tourist visit interest in Ujong Seuke Beach will also increase significantly.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis results show that Word of Mouth (X1) has a positive and significant effect on Tourist Interest ($t = 2.956$; $p = 0.004$), meaning that the more positive the recommendations from others, the higher the interest in visiting. Similarly, Service (X2) has a positive and significant effect ($t = 9.580$; $p = 0.000$), meaning that the better the quality of service, the higher the tourist interest. Simultaneously, both variables have a significant effect on Tourist Interest in Visiting ($F = 63.163$; $p = 0.000$), with a contribution of 56.6% ($RI = 0.566$), while 43.4% is influenced by other factors outside the scope of this study.

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