



## The influence of aesthetical experiential quality and perceived value on word-of-mouth marketing mediated by tourist satisfaction in Dewi Mangrove ecotourism, Brebes Regency

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### Abstract

The presence of the Dewi Mangrove as a new tourist destination will benefit the local community. Unfortunately, the existence of the Dewi Mangrove as an ecotourism destination does not seem to be widely known by the public. One reason why the existence of Dewi Mangroves is not known by tourists is the lack of word-of-mouth marketing from Dewi Mangroves tourists. This study aims to examine the effect of aesthetical experiential quality and perceived value on word of mouth marketing mediated by tourist satisfaction. The research was conducted using a quantitative method with aesthetical experiential quality and perceived value as independent variables, word of mouth marketing as the dependent variable, and tourist satisfaction as a mediating variable. The data used in this study is primary data obtained from questionnaires. The respondent in this study were 100 Dewi Mangrove Ecotourism tourists who were selected by accidental sampling technique. The data was collected from 22 December 2022 to 8 January 2023. The collected data were analyzed using the partial least squares (PLS) technique. The results showed that aesthetical experiential quality and perceived value did not directly affect word of mouth marketing, but tourist satisfaction was able to mediate the relationship between aesthetical experiential quality and perceived value on word of mouth marketing. The results of this study indicate the importance of Dewi Mangrove Ecotourism management to pay attention to tourist satisfaction, because it has been proven to be able to encourage word of mouth marketing both directly and as a mediation for aesthetical experiential quality and perceived value felt by tourists.

**Keywords:** word of mouth marketing, tourism satisfaction, aesthetical experiential quality, perceived value, ecotourism

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### Introduction

Dewi Mangrove is one of the ecotourism located in Brebes Regency. The development of the Dewi Mangrove originated from the efforts of the surrounding community to tackle the severe abrasion that occurred in the Kaliwlingi Village area. Abrasion in this area occurred from 1963 to 2009 and eroded an area of 812 Ha. Mangrove planting is believed to be able to reduce the rate of abrasion, even as a barrier to tsunami waves and hurricanes (Joandani, Pribadi, & Suryono, 2019) <sup>[10]</sup>. The development of mangrove forests was then continued by the community to become an ecotourism destination named Dewi Mangrove since 2015.

The presence of the Dewi Mangrove as a new tourist destination will benefit the local community. In addition, the use of mangrove areas as ecotourism destinations is an alternative to the utilization of natural resources in coastal areas that can provide economic benefits and environmental services without exploiting mangroves (Mahifa, Maulany, & Barkey, 2018) <sup>[15]</sup>. Unfortunately, the Dewi Mangrove is currently experiencing a decline in the number of tourists. The decline in the number of tourists to the Dewi Mangrove was allegedly caused by a lack of information regarding the existence of the mangrove goddess as a tourist destination in Brebes Regency.

Information about tourist objects is usually obtained by tourists from stories about the experiences of other tourists who have visited them before. Marketing with this model is known as word-of-mouth marketing. Word-of-mouth marketing tends to be more effective in bringing in tourists because information is spread to people who know each other, so there is a sense of trust in the information obtained, compared to when information is obtained from other unknown sources.

Word of mouth marketing is oral or written communication related to the benefits or experience of buying or using a product or service (Kotler & Keller, 2016) [12]. If the power of word-of-mouth marketing is done right, it can market any product or service for a long time. Word-of-mouth marketing has the power to create strong images and influence individual minds (Khanna & Kukreti, 2020) [11]. Word-of-mouth marketing is closely related to consumer satisfaction. When consumer satisfaction is high, it can positively influence word of mouth that customers convey to colleagues, friends or other people (Laksana & Ekawati, 2020) [13].

Consumer satisfaction is a reaction that arises from the consumer's pleasure or disappointment towards a product or service in meeting consumer needs, by comparing the perceived performance of the product received and expected (Yudiantoro, Astuti, & Respati, 2018) [20]. When consumers are satisfied, the company can retain more customers and is also able to increase its market share (Tani, Saldanha, & Barreto, 2021) [18]. The influence of customer satisfaction on word-of-mouth marketing is useful as a significant form of communication for service providers, and for maintaining a long-term customer base (Zainol, Rozali, Mahat, Akhir, & Nordin, 2016) [21]. Consumer satisfaction with natural tourism objects has different characteristics from consumer satisfaction with regard to other products or services. Consumer satisfaction in the natural tourism sector is influenced by perceived value and aesthetic experiential qualities.

Aesthetic experiential qualities are the perception and appreciation of the beauty that tourist visitors have felt through their five senses (Husna & Novita, 2020) [8]. Experiences are personal events that occur in response to several types of stimuli that consumers experience before and after purchasing a product or service (Aristiawan, Buana, & Sudiarta, 2019) [2]. The experience of nature provides an

opportunity to discover, express, and understand aspects of reality that are at the root of existence and make life worthwhile, joyful, and sometimes painful (Breiby & Slåtten, 2018) [4].

Another variable that influences consumer satisfaction is perceived value. Perceived value is the amount of value given by customers to benefit from having or using products/services (Cuong, 2020) [5]. Perceived Value provides insight into why the concept of value is so important to marketing researchers. The concept of consumer value has developed from the development of two important dimensions of consumer behavior, namely economic and psychological values (Ibama, OnajiteLolia, & Gibson, 2022) [9].

This study aims to examine the effect of aesthetical experiential quality and perceived value on word of mouth marketing. This study also examines the ability of customer satisfaction to mediate the relationship between aesthetical experiential quality and perceived value to word of mouth marketing. Based on the background and objectives of the research, the hypothesis formulated in this study is:

**Hypothesis 1:** Aesthetical experiential quality influences word of mouth marketing

**Hypothesis 2:** Perceived value influences word of mouth marketing

**Hypothesis 3:** Consumer satisfaction mediates the influence between aesthetical experiential quality and word of mouth marketing

**Hypothesis 4:** Consumer satisfaction mediates the influence between perceived value and word of mouth marketing

## Methodology

### Location and Time of Research

This research was conducted at the Dewi Mangrove Ecotourism located in Kaliwlingi Village, Brebes Regency. Data collection was carried out from 22 December 2022 to 8 January 2023.

### Types and Data Collection Methods

This research is a quantitative research with a causal comparative method. The variables used in this study are aesthetical experiential quality and perceived value as the independent variables, word of mouth as the dependent variable, and consumer satisfaction as the mediating variable. The operational of each variable can be seen in table 1.

**Table 1:** Variables Operationalization

No	Variables	Dimension	Scale
1	<i>Aesthetical Quality Experience (X1)</i> (Breiby, 2014) [3]	Scenery, Cleanliness, Harmony, Art/Architecture, Genuineness	Ordinal
2	<i>Perceived Value (X2)</i> (Wang, Lu, & Xia, 2012)	Enjoyment Value, Convenience Value, Service Value, Perceived price	Ordinal
3	<i>Tourist Satisfaction (Z)</i> (Formell, Johnson, Anderson, Cha, & Bryant, 1996)	Overall satisfaction, Disconfirmation of expectations, Performance versus customer idealism	Ordinal
4	<i>Word of Mouth Marketing (Y)</i> (Laroche, Babin, Lee, Kim, & Griffin, 2005)	Review, Recommend, Encourage	Ordinal

The sample used in this study was Dewi Mangrove tourists. The sample selection used accidental sampling technique with a total of 100 respondents. This study uses primary data obtained through questionnaires.

### Data Analysis Method

The data will be processed using the partial least squares (PLS) technique. PLS analysis consists of testing the inner model and outer model. The inner model determines the

relationship between unobserved variables or latent variables, while the outer model determines the relationship between latent variables and observed.

## Results

### Coefficient of Determination Test

The coefficient of determination shows the magnitude of the influence of exogenous latent variables on endogenous latent variables. Table 2 shows the coefficient of determination of

each endogenous variable. The Consumer Satisfaction Variable has a coefficient of determination of 59.1% while

the WOM Marketing variable has a coefficient of determination of 18.9%.

**Table 2:** Result of Statistics Test

	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
AestheticExp -> CustSat	9.855	0.00	Influence positively
AestheticExp -> WOMmarket	1.001	0.32	No influence
CustSat -> WOMmarket	2.121	0.03	Influence positively
PerceivedVal -> CustSat	3.663	0.00	Influence positively
PerceivedVal -> WOMmarket	0.114	0.91	No influence
Adj R Square CustSat = 0.591			
Adj R Square WOMmarket = 0.189			

**Direct Effect Test**

In table 2 it can be seen that in the first equation the variable Quality of Aesthetic Experience has a positive effect on Tourist Satisfaction with a t value of 9.855 and a significance of 0.00. The variable perceived value also has a positive effect on customer satisfaction with a t value of 3.663 and a significance of 0.00. Persamaan 2.

Meanwhile, in the second equation, the Quality of Aesthetic Experience variable has no effect on WOM Marketing with a t value of 1.001 and a significance of 0.32, in other words, Hypothesis 1 is rejected. The variable perceived value also has no effect on WOM Marketing with a t value of 0.114 and a significance of 0.91 or it can be concluded that Hypothesis 2 is rejected. The Tourist Satisfaction variable has a positive effect on WOM Marketing with a t value of 2.121 and a significance of 0.03 or Hypothesis 3 is accepted.

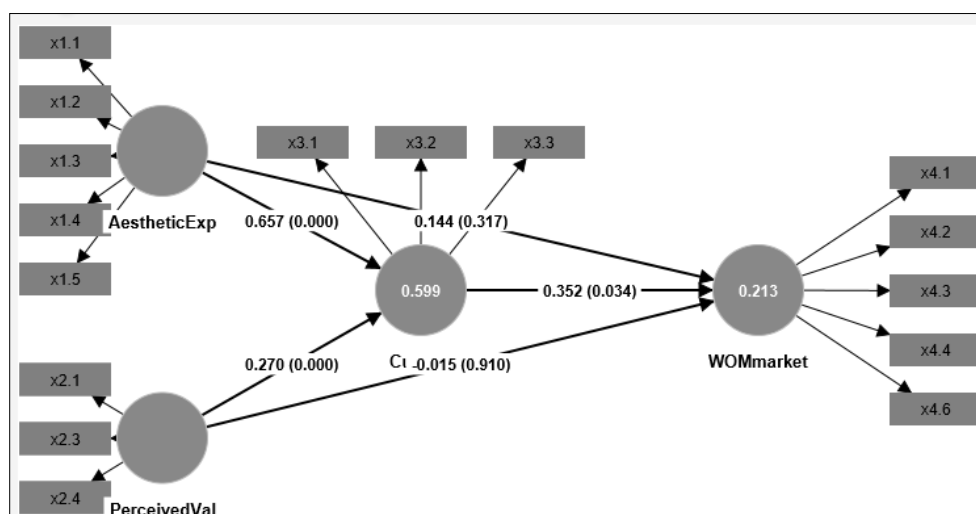
**Indirect Effect Test**

Hypotheses 4 and 5 aim to test the ability of Tourist Satisfaction in mediating the variables of Quality and Aesthetic Experience and Perceived Value of WOM Marketing. Testing the indirect effect of the dependent variable on the independent variable can be done by comparing the coefficient of influence of the independent variable on the dependent with the multiplication of the coefficient of influence of the independent variable on the mediator variable and the coefficient of influence of the

mediator variable on the dependent variable. If the multiplication result has greater value than the direct effect coefficient, then the mediator variable succeeds in mediating the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Based on Figure 1, it can be seen that the effect of Quality and Aesthetic Experience on WOM Marketing has a coefficient of 0.144. If this value is compared with the multiplication result between the coefficient of influence of the variable Quality and Aesthetic Experience on Tourist Satisfaction and the coefficient of influence of Tourist Satisfaction on WOM Marketing, namely  $0.657 \times 0.352 = 0.231$ , it can be seen that the variable Tourist Satisfaction succeeds in mediating the variable Quality and Aesthetic Experience on WOM Marketing or by other words Hypothesis 4 is accepted.

Furthermore, the effect of perceived value on WOM Marketing has a coefficient of -0.015. If this value is compared with the multiplication result between the coefficient of influence of the variable Perceived Value on Tourist Satisfaction and the coefficient of influence of Tourist Satisfaction on WOM Marketing, namely  $0.270 \times 0.352 = 0.095$  it can be seen that the variable Tourist Satisfaction succeeds in mediating the variable Perceived Value of WOM Marketing or in other words Hypothesis 5 is also accepted.



**Fig 1:** Path Analysis

**Discussion**

Based on the results of the direct effect test, it can be seen that the Quality of Aesthetic Experience is not able to

influence WOM Marketing. The results of testing the direct effect of Perceived Value on WOM Marketing also have no effect. This shows that the quality of the aesthetic experience

and the value perceived by tourists has not been able to make them invite other potential tourists to visit Dewi mangrove Ecotourism. One reason is because the spread of word-of-mouth marketing tends to be slow, because it requires a meeting between the informant and the recipient of the information (Huete-Alcocer, 2017) <sup>[7]</sup>. In addition, satisfied consumers do not always generate positive WOM about services, while dissatisfied consumers have a strong tendency to share their anger with others and even exaggerate their bad experiences (Susilowati & Yasri, 2019) <sup>[17]</sup>.

Testing the effect of tourist satisfaction on WOM marketing directly shows that tourist satisfaction has a positive effect on WOM marketing. This shows that the satisfaction experienced by tourists is what makes tourists report the good things that exist in Dewi Mangrove Ecotourism and perhaps invite them to visit there. As revealed by Ahmadinejad (2019) <sup>[1]</sup> and Samuel & Audrey (2020) <sup>[16]</sup> that customer satisfaction; customer feelings in using a product or service have a positive impact on customer repurchase and WOM behavior. These results also indicate that the variable Tourist Satisfaction deserves to be a mediator for the variable Quality of Aesthetic Experience and Perceived Value, because at the same time the variable Quality of Aesthetic Experience and Perceived Value also influences Tourist Satisfaction.

The results of the indirect effect test indicate that the variable Tourist Satisfaction is able to mediate the relationship between the Quality of Aesthetic Experience and the Expected Value of WOM Marketing. This means that the quality and aesthetic experience and value perceived by tourists can grow WOM marketing as long as these two things provide satisfaction for tourists.

### Conclusion

Based on testing of the data, it can be concluded that the Quality of Aesthetic Experience and Perceived Value does not directly affect WOM Marketing. The Quality of Aesthetic Experience and Perceived Value can influence WOM Marketing if it is through Tourist Satisfaction.

Based on the conclusions above, recommendations can be given for tourism object managers, especially Dewi Mangrove Ecotourism, to try to increase tourist satisfaction, because tourist satisfaction will be able to deliver quality from the customer's aesthetic experience and the value that has been perceived by customers towards word of mouth marketing.

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