

# The effect of e-WOM, health awareness, and perceived risks on visiting decisions in the era of the Covid-19 Pandemic

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## 1 The Effect of E-WOM, Health Awareness, and Perceived Risks on Visiting Decisions in the Era of the Covid-19 Pandemic

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### Abstract

10 The decision to visit is a purchase decision, many factors influence the decision to visit. This study aims to determine the effect of Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM), Health Awareness, and Perceived Risk on the decision to visit the natural tourist area of Mount Rinjani National Park during the Covid-19 pandemic. The sample in this study was 100 (one hundred) respondents obtained by adapting the Snowball Sampling technique with the target respondents being visitors to the Mount Rinjani National Park. The results of this study indicate that Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM), Health Awareness, and Perceived Risk have a positive effect on the decision to visit the natural tourist area of Mount Rinjani National Park during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, each variable has a different effect. Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) and Health Awareness variables have a positive effect on visiting decisions, while Perceived Risk has no effect on visiting decisions.

**Keywords:** *Decision to Visit; E-WOM; Health Awareness; Perceived Risk; Pandemic Covid-19*

### Introduction

The purchase decision is the final choice made by consumers in fulfilling their wants or needs (Kotler and Keller, 2009). Purchase decisions are not only limited to the purchase of goods but also include the purchase of tourism products or service products. The decision to purchase tourism products is influenced by word of mouth (WOM) marketing or what is now known as E-WOM (Utomo, 2020). E-WOM is very influential on the decision to visit (berkunjung (Muyati et al., 2018; Kumalasari et al., 2018; Harmony, 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic affects all aspects of life, one of which is the world of tourism. UNWTO (UN World Tourism Organization) predicts international tourist arrivals to decline by 20%-30% during 2020. Richards and Morill (2020) stated that 80% of tourism entrepreneurs suffered losses due to Covid-19. Athar et al. (2020) suggests that business needs to understand the changes that are occurring under the current situation in order to survive. The drastic restrictions on mobility that were initially decreed by the governments of most countries which have paralysed a large part of productive and service activity, as

well as transportation and movements between territories, and which have cancelled the movement of tourists around the world (Rodríguez et al., 2020). In addition, Skare et al. (2020) in their research predict that the COVID-19 pandemic crisis will affect the tourism business in the long term and have a negative effect.

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This research is based on the results of different previous studies regarding consumer decisions to travel in nature during the Covid-19 pandemic, whether affected by the Covid-19 virus or choosing to stay at home as research conducted by Nordin and Jamal (2021) who stated that hiking tourism during the Covid-19 pandemic was very beneficial physiologically and psychologically and had a positive effect on mental health by reducing anxiety and stress but it was necessary to pay attention to the risk of transmission of the corona virus 19.

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In addition, the research conducted by Ngajow et al. (2021), stated that the Covid-19 pandemic and perceived risk did not moderate the effect of destination attractiveness on tourist interest in visiting. This means that tourists still want to visit even in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. Likewise, research conducted by Azman (2021), revealed that the perception of affective and cognitive risk did not significantly influence the decision to visit during the Covid-19 pandemic after the enactment of the new normal (new normal era).

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Research with different results was put forward by Sraphin (2020) that in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic, the accommodation and hotel sectors were greatly affected, but the mountain and rural tourism sectors brought an exodus of urban residents to rural and mountainous tourist areas. In addition, Chang et al. (2021) revealed that to reduce psychological depression and panic due to the Covid-19 pandemic, people can choose the health tourism. So departing from the results of previous studies on consumer decisions to travel during the Covid-19 pandemic, further research is needed regarding the decision to visit for mountainous nature tours. In addition, this research is based on the fact that there is no research on decision making to visit a mountain tourist destination that combines the influence of e-WOM variables, Health Awareness and Perceived Risk during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Literature Review

### 1 Decision to Visit During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Schiffman and Kanuk (2008) stated that consumer behavior is the behavior shown by consumers both in searching, buying, using, evaluating and disposing of goods and services that they expect will satisfy their needs. According to Kotler and Keller (2009), purchasing decisions are defined as a process that comes from all their experiences in learning, choosing, using, and even getting rid of a product. Meanwhile, according to Tjiptono (2008), purchasing decisions are individual actions that are directly or indirectly involved in the effort to obtain and use a product or service that is needed.

Based on the above understanding, the notion of decision-making to visit mountainous natural attractions, especially to visit Mount Rinjani National Park tourism objects of East Lombok Regency in this study is real action in the form of final decisions made by consumers in order to visit or travel to natural attractions of Mount Rinjani National Park with the aim of increasing the body's immune system to stay in shape, improve the sense of mood and visits were made during the Covid-19 pandemic.

### 2 Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM)

According to Kotler and Keller (2009), Word of Mouth is an attempt to market a product or service through an intermediary from one person to another, either orally, in writing, or by electronic means of communication related to the experience of purchasing the product or the experience of using

the service. Zaenab et al (2019) concluded that e-WOM is an online based communication which contains messages made by potential or former customers of a product or service.

According to Hennig-Thurau et al (2004), Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) are positive and negative statements made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or a company that are made available to many people and institutions via the internet. According to Goyette et al (2010), the dimensions of e-WOM include the feasibility of consumers in providing information, interactions, and opinions between consumers on social networking sites (Intensity), consumer interest in a product by buying a product based on the opinions and recommendations of other consumers (Valence of Opinion) and information on the quality, price, comfort, cleanliness, and hotel services that consumers will buy (Content). In the context of this research, the notion of e-WOM is word of mouth marketing that is preceded by the process of seeking information and promoting tourism through online media such as Facebook, Instagram or Youtube.

### Health Awareness

According to Yang (2014), health awareness is an attitude in which people realize the importance of health in their diet and lifestyle. Meanwhile, according to Michaelidou and Hassan (2008), health awareness is a concern and concern to become better and motivated to maintain and maintain health and improve quality of life by implementing a healthy lifestyle. According to Atkinson (2005) the word awareness is often used as a term that includes the understanding, perception, thoughts, feelings, and memories of someone at a certain time. Meanwhile, a healthy life is reflected in the actions or behavior of a person which is called healthy behavior. Lestari (2010) suggests that someone who is aware of healthy living has perceptions or information about various aspects of healthy living that support it, and that awareness increases in line with the more information that is absorbed.

Thus, it can be concluded that health awareness is a condition in which a person will be consciously aware of his thoughts and feelings in maintaining and maintaining his condition in a healthy and fit situation by trying to increase his knowledge to carry out a healthy lifestyle, behave by maintaining health and practicing healthy lifestyles by traveling to the mountains.

### Perceived Risk

Schiffman and Kanuk (2008) define perceived risk as an uncertainty faced by consumers if they cannot predict or predict the consequences of their purchase decisions. The term perceived risk taken from psychology for consumer behavior research was put forward by Bauer (1967) that consumer behavior involves risk in the sense that every consumer action will produce consequences that cannot be anticipated with anything close to certainty, and some of them tend to be unpleasant. The dimensions of perceived risk according to Liao Xio (in Yusnidar, 2014) are financial risk, social risk, performance risk, time and convenience risk, physical risk, and psychological risk.

As for financial risk, namely losses related to finance after the purchase of the product. Then social risk, namely related to consumer concerns on what people think about when purchasing a product. Performance risk is the risk associated with consumer concerns about the performance of a product. Time and convenience risk, namely the risk associated with fear of wasted time due to the purchase of a product purchases. Physical risk, namely risks associated with concerns about product safety and the potential harm to self or others as a result of using a product. And psychological risk, which is the risk associated with concerns about possible loss of self-image due to the purchase or use of a product due to the incompatibility of the product with the consumer's personality or with how consumers perceive themselves (Liao Xio in Yusnidar, 2014).



Perceived risk in the context of nature tourism of Mount Rinjani National Park is the uncertainty experienced by consumers in the context of visiting Mount Rinjani National Park due to financial risks, time risks, physical risks and psychological risks.

### The Effect of e-WOM on Visiting Decisions

According to Ali (2010), Word of Mouth is an attempt to provide reasons for people to talk about brands, products and services and to make ongoing conversations easier. For example, awareness of the importance of maintaining health and fear of the risk of decreasing their immune system so that people can exercise and engage in outdoor activities such as camping or hiking are influenced by information and stories from social media known as e-WOM (Electronic Word of Mouth).

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) is a very influential variable on visiting decisions (Widianto et al., 2017). In a different study conducted by Maulidi and Pangestuti (2019), it was found that using the e-WOM dimension (Intensity, Valence of Opinion and Content) had an effect on the variables of visiting decisions. Research conducted by Mulyati et al. (2018) and Sindunata et al. (2018) shows that e-WOM has an effect on visiting decisions. In addition, research by Mustikasari and Widyaningsih (2017) found that e-WOM had a positive and significant effect on the decision to visit the city of Bandung.

Based on some of these previous studies, the following hypotheses can be formulated:

*H<sub>1</sub>: Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) influences the decision to visit the natural tourist area of Mount Rinjani National Park, East Lombok*

### The Effect of Health Awareness on Visiting Decisions

Health Awareness is an attitude where people realize the importance of health by adjusting their diet and lifestyle (Yang, 2014). One of the activities to increase immunity is to do a nature-based activities in mountain tourism areas. According to Fandeli (2001), a tourism by exercising in the open has a distinguished sensation if the challenge can end in success. Exercising in the open today is one of the tourism commodities that can make tourists feel at home in tourist destinations. This is due to natural conditions that are still beautiful and fresh, in addition to being supported by adequate infrastructure.

Utami (2017) found that there was a significant effect on purchase intention caused by health awareness. Kutresnaningdian and Albari (2020) revealed that health awareness and attention to food safety have a positive effect on consumer attitudes. In addition, Nordin and Jamal (2021) stated that hiking-tourism during the Covid-19 pandemic is very beneficial physiologically and psychologically and has a positive effect on mental health by reducing anxiety and stress. Nevertheless visitors still need to pay attention to the risk of covid-19.

Based on some of these previous studies, the following hypotheses can be formulated:

*H<sub>2</sub>: Health Awareness influences the decision to visit the natural tourist area of Mount Rinjani National Park, East Lombok*

### The Effect of Perceived Risk on Visiting Decisions

Perceived risk is an uncertainty faced by consumers if they cannot predict or predict the consequences of their purchasing decisions (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2008). Yusnidar (2014) revealed that the dimensions of perceived risk consist of financial risk, social risk, performance risk, time and convenience risk, physical risk, psychological risk. Dickson (2004) revealed that the desired level of risk is the optimal level of risk perception for each individual. Providing the desired optimal level of risk will maximize the demand for the adventure tourism, in which the desired optimal level of risk is assumed to

vary from individual to individual. It is further explained that the desired level of consumer risk can be greater or less than the perceived risk (Maciejewski, 2012).

Mason, Gos, and Moretti (2016) in their research reveal that statistically there is a significant relationship between the level of perceived risk and motivation to travel, especially adventure tourism such as mountain climbing and hiking. Cañizares et al. (2020) in their research found that 50% of respondents still intend to travel even in the midst of the risk of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, Haider and Dabrowska (2016) found that perceptions of risk in the form of climate change in the Alps did not affect tourist choices. In line with that, Utomo (2020) in his research explains that there is no direct influence between the perception of risk on the intention to travel.

Based on some of these previous studies, the following hypotheses can be formulated:

*H<sub>3</sub>: Perceived risk influence the decision to visit the natural tourist area of Mount Rinjani National Park, East Lombok*

From the hypotheses above, a conceptual framework can be made as follows:

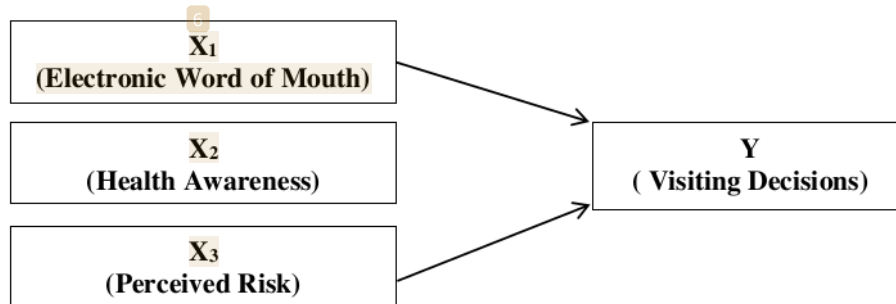


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

### Research Methods

The research type used in this study is correlation (associative) research. The population of this research is tourists who have visited the area of Mount Rinjani during the Covid-19 pandemic. The sampling technique used is snowball sampling technique. The sampling criteria is tourists who have visited and stayed at the area of Mount Rinjani, East Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara during the Covid-19 pandemic with the sample criteria described in table 1.

According to Hair et al. (1998) preferably the sample size should be 100 or larger. In this study, the number of samples used was 100 visitors. The data collection technique used in this study was a questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed through the google form application by first conducting a questionnaire validity and reliability test. Data analysis in this study used multiple linear regression techniques through the SPSS version 23.0 for windows application. Prior to that, the classical assumption test was also carried out which included normality test, heteroscedasticity test, multicollinearity test, and autocorrelation test.

### Characteristics of Respondents

Respondents in this study were 100 respondents. By sending questionnaire respondents through a google form in the form of an online questionnaire, all questions can be set to be mandatory, so that respondents are willing to answer all the questions asked. Characteristics of respondents vary widely.

Among them, there were 75 male and 25 female, most of whom (59%) were between 17 and 27 years old. Respondents who dominate are students (45%) and entrepreneurs/freelance (35%). Complete data can be seen in the following table.

**Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents**

Variable	Description	Sum	%
Gender	Male	75	75
	Female	25	25
Age of respondents	17-27 year	59	59
	28-38 year	32	32
	39-49 year	8	8
	50-55	1	2
Work	Student	45	45
	Private Employees/Honorees	16	16
	Entrepreneur/Freelancer	35	35
	CIVILS /BUMN Employees	2	2
	Army/Police officer	2	2

**Results and Discussion**

According to Ghozali (2018), reliability test is a tool used to measure a questionnaire which is an indicator of a variable or construct. To assess the reliability scale, the Cronbach Alpha value was used and the results are shown in Table 2 below. While the value of validity is seen from the calculated r value compared to the r table value. The results of measuring the validity of the questionnaire can be seen in Table 3. The measurement of reliability in this study used the One Shot measurement, namely the variable is said to be reliable if it gives Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha \geq 0.70$  (value greater than or equal to 0.70)). Based on the following table, the questionnaire in this study is said to be reliable. In addition, it can also be seen from the table that the average Health Awareness is a top priority for consumers

**Table 2. Reliability Test Result**

Variable	Mean	Cronbach's Alpha (29 items)
E-WOM (9 items)	4.178	0.867
Health Awarenesss (5 items)	4.197	
Perceived Risk (8 items)	2.194	
Visiting Decisions (7 items)	4.093	

In term of the scales' validity, it was evaluated by item-total correlation analyses (r count). The result is displayed on Table 3 where all item-total correlation coefficients (r count) surpassed the critical value of .2565 and statistically significant at  $p \leq 0.05$ . The scales were therefore reliable and valid. Moreover, the method used to detect the presence of multicollinearity is to use the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value and the tolerance value, if the VIF value of each independent variable is less than 10 and the tolerance value is greater than 0.10, it can be concluded that there is no symptoms of multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2013). In this study, the tolerance value is between 1.013 to 1.666 and less than 10. Therefore, the authors believe in the regression results obtained.

Table 3. Summary of Item-total correlation

Variables	Statement	Items	Item Total Correlations
E-WOM	I talk about Mount Rinjani tourism more often than other tours on social media	EW1	0.523
	I tell many people about Mount Rinjani's tour on social media	EW2	0.543
	I recommend Mount Rinjani tours to others	EW3	0.453
	I talk about the advantages of Mount Rinjani Tour to other people	EW4	0.382
	I am proud to tell about Mount Rinjani tourism to others	EW5	0.321
	I praise the natural beauty of Mount Rinjani	EW6	0.374
	I talk about the ease of traveling to Rinjani on social media	EW7	0.588
	I discuss the costs incurred for traveling to Rinjani on social media	EW8	0.555
	I discuss the convenience of traveling to Mount Rinjani on social media	EW9	0.433
Health Awareness	I am a person who always thinks about my health so I am looking for information about the benefits of Mount Rinjani tourism	HA1	0.457
	I am a person who is always aware of changes in my health so I look for information about Mount Rinjani tourism	HA2	0.592
	I realized the importance of maintaining health so I learned the benefits of Mount Rinjani tourism for health	HA3	0.609
	I am a person who is responsible for my health so I study Mount Rinjani tourism	HA4	0.551
	I realized the importance of maintaining health when traveling, so I studied Mount Rinjani's natural tourism	HA5	0.513
Perceived Risk	I am worried that the price of admission to Mount Rinjani tourism will increase	PR1	0.340
	I am worried that there will be unforeseen expenses when I visit Rinjani	PR2	0.302
	I'm worried that traveling to Rinjani will take up my time	PR3	0.374
	I'm worried that traveling to Rinjani will take longer than regular trips	PR4	0.416
	I'm worried that if I travel to Rinjani during the covid-19 pandemic, other people will have negative opinions about me	PR5	0.486
	I'm worried that when traveling to Rinjani it will seem like a classy tour	PR6	0.529
	I'm worried about contracting the Covid-19 disease while traveling to Rinjani	PR7	0.510



Visiting Decisions	I'm worried that the Rinjani manager doesn't implement the health protocol	PR8	0.528
	My visit to Rinjani is my final decision	KB1	0.581
	I get a lot of information about the nature tourism of Mount Rinjani	KB2	0.523
	The availability of transportation to Mount Rinjani's natural attractions is adequate	KB3	0.511
	The convenience of transportation to Mount Rinjani's natural attractions is adequate	KB4	0.506
	I visited Rinjani during the covid-19 pandemic	KB5	0.424
	Entrance ticket to Rinjani nature tour is affordable	KB6	0.443
	Mount Rinjani nature tourism offers complete tourism services	KB7	0.504

For the purpose of analysis and hypothesis testing, the authors used regression analysis by utilising SPSS 23.0. As a result, a regression model was developed and displayed on table 4. The table demonstrates that e-WOM and Health Awareness has a significant effect on decisions to visit Mount Rinjani National Park in this pandemic era. On the other hand, perceived risk doesn't have effect on visiting decisions.

Table 4. Regression Analysis on The Effect of E-WOM, Health Awareness, and Perceived Risk on Visiting Decisions

Variable	$\beta$	t-value	t-table	Sig	Conclusion
e-WOM	0.343	3.644	1.985	0.000	H1 (supported)
Health Awareness	0.348	2.358	1.985	0.020	H2 (supported)
Perceived Risk	0.041	0.769	1.985	0.444	H3 (not supported)

$F = 16.833; p = .000; R = .587; R^2 = .345; Std\ error\ of\ the\ estimate = 3.860$

This study uses Standardized Coefficients because the purpose of this study is to determine how much influence the independent variables (e-WOM, Health Awareness and Perceived Risk) have on the dependent variable (decision to visit). Based on information above, it can also be seen that the value of R Square (R2) is 0.345 or 34.5%. This means that the visiting decision variable is influenced by the e-WOM, Health Awareness and Perceived Risk variables by 34.5%, while the remaining 65.5% is influenced by other variables not discussed in this study. In addition, it is obtained that f count is greater than f table (f count 16.833 > f table 3.091 with a p significance value of 0.000 which is smaller than 0.05 so that it is said that the research model with variables X<sub>1</sub> (E-WOM), X<sub>2</sub> (Health Awareness) and X<sub>3</sub> (Perceived can or is feasible to use to predict the decision to visit Mount Rinjani National Park (Y).

### The Effect of e-WOM on Visiting Decisions

The research data shows that the t-count value of e-WOM variable is 3.644 (greater than t table 1.985 with a significance of 0.000 (less than 0.05). This result means that e-WOM variable has a significant influence on visiting decisions. This can also mean that if e-WOM variable increase, it will have significant effect on tourists' decisions to visit. Therefore, in this study it can be said that the E-WOM variable (X<sub>1</sub>) has a positive effect on the decision to visit the natural tourist area of Mount Rinjani National Park.

In the content dimension, with the indicator that respondents often talk about the beauty of natural tourism in the Mount Rinjani National Park, the average value is the largest, which is 4,624 on a Likert scale. This is due to changes in consumer behavior due to the Covid-19 pandemic where the use of online media is very massive and social media is increasingly used as a result so information about nature tourism is often discussed on social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Whats App or Youtube (Leo, 2020).

The results of this study support the research of Goyette et al. (2010), Kumalasari, Gutama and Pratiwi (2018) who found that Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) has an influence on tourist visiting decisions. It also supports the research conducted by Hapsari et al. (2014), Sindunata et al (2018) and Maulidi and Pangestuti (2019) which stated that e-WOM with dimensions of intensity, opinion valence, and content are variables that influence the decision to visit tourist destinations.

### **The Effect of Health Awareness on Visiting Decisions**

Based on the results of research conducted, health awareness has a significant influence on decisions to visit. This is indicated by the t value of the health awareness variable, which is 2.358 (greater than t table 1,985 with a significance of 0.020 (less than 0.05). This means that when the health awareness variable increases, it will affect the visiting decisions of the tourists.

Indicators of the Health Awareness variable in this study were 5 (five) indicators and the average value of the indicators was above 4 on the Likert scale which was a very good category. The Covid-19 pandemic has made people realize the importance of maintaining health. Health Awareness is not just an attitude but is followed by concrete actions to do so (Jayanti and Burns, 1998). So from the results of knowledge and attitudes how to maintain health, these healthy lifestyles are also applied. One of the applications of healthy living is by exercising and camping in mountainous areas.

The results of this study are in line with research conducted by Nordin and Jamal (2021) who stated that hiking during the Covid-19 pandemic was very beneficial physiologically and psychologically and had a positive effect on mental health by reducing anxiety and stress. In addition, Utami (2017) also found that there was a significant effect on purchase intention caused by health awareness. Where the intention to buy here is analogous to a decision to visit. In addition, this research also supports research conducted by Cheng, Fang and Yin (2021), which stated that health tourism is very much needed by the community after experiencing the Covid-19 crisis.

### **The Effect of Perceived Risk on Visiting Decisions**

Based on the results of research conducted, perceived risk has no effect on visiting decisions. This is indicated by the t value of the perceived risk variable, which is 0.769 (less than t table 1,985 with a significance of 0.444 (greater than 0.05). This means that although the perceived risk variable increases, it does not affect the decisions of tourists to visit tourism destination during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Perceide Risk variable in this study uses 4 (four) dimensions, namely the dimensions of financial risk, time risk, social psychological risk and health risk. The indicators on the Perceived Risk variable get an average value from the respondents of 2,914 on a Likert scale, which means it is sufficient. The relationship between Perceived Risk and the decision to visit is mutually influencing, but in this study the Perceived Risk variable has a different influence on the decision to visit.

The findings of this study are in line with research conducted by Utama (2020) and Solichin et al (2021) which stated that there was no direct influence between risk perceptions on travel intentions or respondents' decisions to visit tourist attractions. In addition, Canizares et al. (2010) revealed that 50% of respondents still intend to travel even in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, which means that even if there is a risk of contracting the Covid-19 virus, tourists still travel.

## Conclusions

Based on the analysis carried out, it can be concluded that: (1) Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) with dimensions of intensity, valence of opinion and content has a positive and significant effect on the decision to visit the natural tourist area of Mount Rinjani National Park; (2) Health awareness has a significant and positive effect on the decision to visit the natural tourism area of Mount Rinjani National Park; (3) The perceived risk with dimensions of financial risk, time risk, social psychological risk, health risk does not affect the decision variable to visit the natural tourist area of Mount Rinjani National Park; (4) The variables of e-WOM, Health Awareness and Perceived Risk simultaneously influence the decision to visit the natural tourist area of Mount Rinjani National Park during the Covid-19 pandemic.

## Managerial Implications

This study provides a managerial impact on improving the quality of customer service who will visit the natural tourist area of Mount Rinjani National Park. The manager of the Mount Rinjani National Park is expected to be more active in social media and collaborate with local residents in terms of increasing the ability to digitize promotions and improve supporting facilities. For the government, a policy support in the development of mountain adventure-based tourism is expected.

## Suggestions for Further Research

From the results of the t-test, the study proves that of the 3 independent variables, namely e-WOM, Health Awareness and Perceived Risk, that the Perceived Risk variable is the lowest and does not affect the visiting decision variable, the influence is not too big and not significant compared to other independent variables. Weaknesses in the Perceived Risk variable can be seen in the indicators related to social psychological risks and health risks. The average respondent is not worried about social risks and health risks, so that in the next research it is necessary to explain in detail to visitors about social psychological risks and health risks, and it is necessary to add indicators of physical risk and risk factors for changes in natural conditions.

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