

THE EFFECT OF WORD OF MOUTH AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ON CUSTOMER RETENTION WITH CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AS AN INTERVENING VARIABLE AT BUANA TRIP BOGOR

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Background: The tourism industry in Bogor Regency continues to grow and drives the increasing demand for travel services, one of which is Buana Trip Bogor. However, despite the increasing number of new customers, data shows that the rate of returning customers (Customer Retention) remains low. This is influenced by suboptimal Customer Experience, such as slow service response, inadequate cleanliness, and a mismatch between the atmosphere and promotions, which impacts low Customer Satisfaction. In addition, Word of Mouth from customers is also still weak, indicated by the lack of recommendations and interactions on the company's social media. In fact, Word of Mouth and Customer Experience have an important role in shaping satisfaction and encouraging customer loyalty. Therefore, this study was conducted to analyze the influence of Word of Mouth and Customer Experience on Customer Retention with Customer Satisfaction as an intervening variable at Buana Trip Bogor.

Purpose: This study aims to analyze the influence of Word of Mouth and Customer Experience on Customer Retention with Customer Satisfaction as an intervening variable at Buana Trip Bogor.

Methodology: Buana Trip customers, taken using a non-probability sampling technique with a purposive sampling method with the criteria of male and female customers aged >17 years and customers who have used Buana Trip services at least once.

Finding: Based on initial observations, Buana Trip's internal data, and a preliminary customer survey, it was found that Buana Trip's Customer Retention rate is still relatively low. This is indicated by the decreasing number of repeat customers from year to year. Furthermore, Customer Satisfaction has not been achieved optimally, with most customers stating that the travel experience they received did not meet their expectations. Word of Mouth is also still low, as evidenced by the lack of recommendations and customer interaction on the company's official social media. This condition is caused by Customer Experience that has not consistently provided a positive impression, such as slow organizer responses, poor location cleanliness, and a mismatch between the atmosphere and promotional materials. These findings indicate that Customer Experience and Customer Satisfaction play a significant role in influencing Word of Mouth and Customer Retention at Buana Trip.

Limitation: This study has several limitations that need to be considered. First, the study was conducted on only one object, namely Buana Trip Bogor, so the results of this study cannot be directly generalized to all travel service companies. Second, the study sample only included customers who had used the service at least once, so the perceptions of potential customers and customers who did not return were not accommodated. Third, the study only focused on the variables of Word of Mouth and Customer Experience as factors influencing Customer Retention, while other variables such as Brand Trust, Price Perception, and Service Quality were not included in the research model. Furthermore, the approach used was quantitative, so it does not describe the depth of customer experience qualitatively.

Originality: The originality of this research lies in the context and model of the variable relationships used. This study examines the influence of Word of Mouth and Customer Experience on Customer Retention with Customer Satisfaction as an intervening variable at Buana Trip Bogor, a local adventure tourism service provider that has

not been the object of research in previous studies. This research model also offers a different approach compared to previous studies, because it specifically places Customer Satisfaction as an intermediary variable in explaining the causal relationship between these variables. In addition, this research is based on the actual phenomenon of declining customer retention that occurs in the field, so it has practical relevance and contribution to the development of strategies to increase customer loyalty in the adventure tourism industry.

Keywords: Word Of Mouth, Customer Experience, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Retention