



Impact Analysis of Webqual, Price, and e-WOM on Return Stay Intention of Hotel Guests

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ABSTRACT

For decades, information technology has played a crucial role in transforming and developing the hospitality and tourism industries. The emergence of e-commerce websites has created new, potentially powerful communication and distribution channels for hotels, narrowing the gap between hotels and consumers. While the internet and the hospitality industry are widely recognized, hotels need to understand the importance of website quality in shaping customer behavior. In the hospitality context, repurchase intention refers to a guest's intention to stay at the same hotel again in the future. Repurchase intention is crucial for hotels, and is shaped by website quality, price, and e-WOM.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of WebQual, price, and e-WOM on repurchase intentions. This study is a survey, a quantitative study using structured or systematic questions to respondents. All answers are then recorded, processed, and analyzed. Respondents in this study were 200 guests of star-rated hotels who had stayed at at least one of the star-rated hotels in Batu City, Malang.

The results showed that WebQual, price, and e-WOM significantly influenced repurchase intention. WebQual was the most influential factor in repurchase intention. Practical recommendations include improving website quality, adopting competitive pricing policies, managing eWOM reviews and government support to support the hospitality industry in enhancing the tourist appeal of the area.

Keywords: E-WOM, Price, Repurchase Intention, Website Quality

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia boasts numerous tourist destinations spread across various provinces, and these destinations are a key driver of the hotel industry's growth. According to 2023 data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) East Java is among the provinces with the highest concentration of accommodation businesses, with Batu City emerging as the leading tourism hub and accommodation provider within the region.

Information technology has been essential to the growth and transformation of the hospitality and tourism sector for many years (Wang et al., 2021). In particular, the internet has transformed corporate operations as a potent marketing and operational tool by offering enormous prospects for both service providers and industry customers (Amaro and Duarte, 2015). Historically, hotels have sold hotel goods and disseminated information through middlemen like travel agencies. However, the rise of e-commerce websites has narrowed the distance between hotels and customers by providing them with new and potentially effective avenues for distribution and communication (Ponte et al., 2015).

Star-rated hotels have recognized this, launching their own websites that guests can use without having to go through intermediaries.

For users of electronic-based services and consumers of electronic-based retail, before making a decision to repurchase, consumers are first driven by feelings of satisfaction influenced by the quality of the website (WebQual) itself. On the hotel website there are various facilities offered at certain prices. In addition to paying attention to the price offered by the hotel, hotel guests can also see reviews from other guests who have stayed at the hotel. This review can be a powerful promotional tool for hotels which in this study is called electronic word of mouth or e-WOM. All of these factors (WebQual, price and e-WOM) based on previous studies influence customer satisfaction in this study are guests of star-rated hotels in Batu city which then encourages hotel guests to stay again in Batu City, Malang.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer Behavior

Grand Theory Consumer behavior serves as the foundation for this study. While Mowen and Minor (2002) define consumer behavior as the study of units (buying units) and exchange processes involving the acquisition, consumption of goods and services, experiences, and ideas, Peter and Olson (2002) define it as "the dynamics of interaction between influence and awareness, behavior and the environment in which humans exchange aspects of life." Consumer behavior is defined by Schiffman and Kanuk (2007) as the actions taken by customers to look for, buy, use, assess, and discard goods and services that are supposed to meet requirements.

Assael (1998) adopted the S - O - R paradigm written by Belk (1975). Based on research conducted by Belk (1975), it is stated that situational factors influence consumer purchasing behavior towards certain product categories. A situation is a comparison of time and place completed by one or more people in identifying a situation with potential interests. Assael explains that the situation and product are not distinguished as two stimuli (separate stimuli) but interact to influence consumers and consumer reactions. A transient state or setting that takes place in the environment at a particular moment and location is known as situational influence (Assael, 1998). Marketers in developing their strategies must strive to understand the origins of situational factors that influence purchasing decisions. The model can be seen below.

A Model Of Situational Factors Influencing Purchasing Decisions

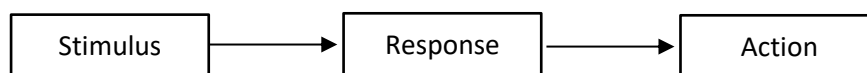


Figure 1. SRA Model. Source: Assael, 2005

Intention to Stay Again

In the world of hospitality, the theory of repurchase intention is used as an explanation of the intention to stay again. Repurchase intention refers to a consumer's decision to buy a product or not (Kotler, 2015). (Kotler 2015) asserts that during the purchasing process,

consumers' intentions to repurchase a specific product are tightly linked to their reasons for doing so.

According to (Keller, 2012), repurchase intention is measured through several indicators. Transactional intention, or the desire to repurchase a thing that one has already used, is the first indicator. Referential intention, which characterizes a person who frequently suggests a product they have bought to others, is the second indicator. Preferential intention, which characterizes the actions of an individual who consistently has a preferred choice for the product they have ingested, is the third sign. The conduct of someone who will look for information about a product they plan to buy in order to bolster their confidence in the product they have subscribed to is described by the fourth indication, explorative intention. The hypothesis of repurchase intention is employed in the hospitality industry to describe the desire to return.

Website Quality

Website Quality (WebQual) WebQual is a technique to gauge the quality of a website by looking at how end users (the general public) perceive it. ServQual (Zeithaml et al., 1990), which was previously widely used to measure service quality, is the basis for this approach (Diana, 2012). According to a number of characteristics, WebQual is a website's capacity to satisfy users' and owners' expectations (Morales-Vargas et al., 2020). WebQual plays a crucial role in attracting user interest, retaining user presence, and increasing user satisfaction with the services provided. Thus, it is crucial to research and enhance user satisfaction with website quality.

Barnes and Vidgen (2002) suggested that WebQual 4.0 comprise three dimensions: Interaction Quality, Information Quality, and Usability. Usability refers to the aspects of a website's design, such as appearance, usability, navigation, and the pictures that are displayed to users. The quality of the content on the website, including its correctness, format, and relevance, determines whether it is suitable for the user's needs. The level of service interactions that consumers encounter while delving deeper into the website is known as interaction quality, and it shows up as trust and empathy. Examples of these interactions include concerns about transaction and information security, product delivery, personalization, and communication with the site owner.

Price

Price is a factor that must be managed harmoniously and in alignment with the goals of each business (Kotler, 2009). Essentially, a rate or price is an offer to buyers or the market. Whether the market accepts or rejects it is up to the buyers and the market to determine. Conversely, if the market rejects it, the company must re-evaluate its pricing.

Kotler and Keller (2008) define price as the sum of money a consumer must pay for a product, whereas Kotler and Armstrong (2019) define price as the sum of money a consumer must pay to acquire a good or service or the value a consumer exchanges for the advantages of possessing or utilizing the good or service.

Price affordability, where customers can afford the price set by the business; suitability of price with quality, where the price is set by the business and adjusted to the quality of the product that customers can obtain; and suitability of price with benefits, where customers choose to purchase a product if they believe the benefits outweigh the cost, are the four indicators that Kotler and Armstrong (2018) identify. Last but not least, price appropriateness in connection to competitiveness and ability, where customers regularly compare a product's pricing to that of competing items. Customers will presume that a product is pricey and be reluctant to make another buy if they feel that the benefits outweigh the cost. In this case, consumers carefully weigh the cost of a product before making a purchase.

E-WOM

Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), according to Hennig-Thurau and Gwinner et al. (2004), is a form of marketing communication that is available to a large number of individuals or organizations via the internet and consists of remarks—positive or negative—made about a product or business by present or potential customers.

Goyette et al. (2010) state that the intensity, valence, and substance of e-WOM can be used to evaluate its quality. Goyette et al. (2010) define intensity as the ability of users to share information, engage with one another, and share opinions on social networking sites. According to Adeliyasi et al. (2014), there are three indications that may be used to gauge the intensity of e-WOM: the number of reviews published by social network users, the frequency of information access on social networks, and the frequency of user interaction. Goyette et al. (2010) define valence as a consumer's interest in a product based on the suggestions and views of other customers. Positive remarks from social network users and customer referrals from social networks are indicators of valence of opinion, according to Adeliyasi et al. (2010). According to Goyette et al. (2010), content is information about the hotel's quality, cost, comfort, cleanliness, and service that customers will purchase. According to Adeliyasi et al. (2010), content indicators based on information include details about hotel quality on social networking sites, pricing information available on social networking sites, and details about comfort, cleanliness, and hotel services on social networking sites.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework explains the relationship between WebQual, Price, and Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) as independent variables and Return Stay Intention as the dependent variable. The framework is based on the assumption that consumers evaluate information and experiences before deciding whether to repurchase or stay at the same hotel again.

WebQual (X₁) represents the quality of the hotel website, which consists of usability, information quality, and service interaction quality. A website that is easy to use, provides complete and relevant information, and offers reliable interactions can create a positive experience for hotel guests and encourage them to stay again.

Price (X₂) represents guests' perceptions of the hotel's pricing, including price affordability, price suitability to quality, price suitability to benefits, and price

competitiveness. When guests perceive that the price is reasonable and consistent with the quality and benefits received, their willingness to return is expected to increase.

e-WOM (X_3) represents electronic word-of-mouth information obtained from other consumers through online platforms. It is measured through intensity, valence/opinion value, and content. Positive reviews and recommendations from previous hotel guests can provide information that reduces uncertainty and strengthens guests' intention to return.

Meanwhile, Return Stay Intention (Y) refers to guests' intention to stay at the same hotel again in the future. It is reflected through transactional, referential, preferential, and exploratory intentions.

The proposed relationships are:

H1: WebQual has a positive and significant effect on Return Stay Intention.

H2: Price has a positive and significant effect on Return Stay Intention.

H3: e-WOM has a positive and significant effect on Return Stay Intention.

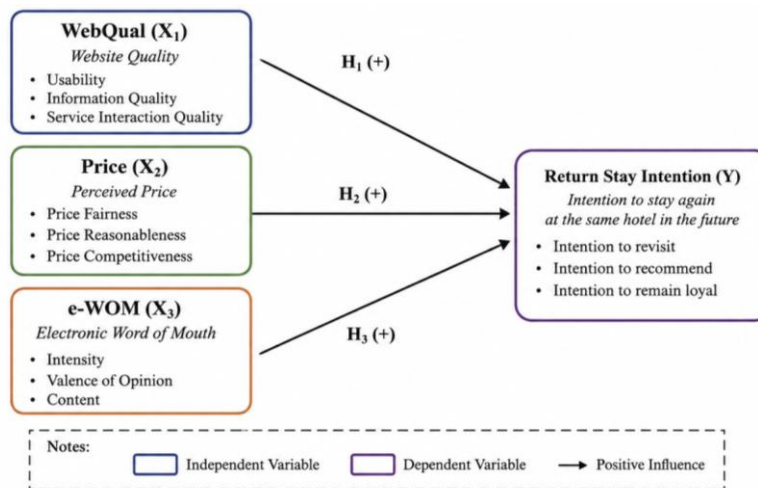


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

Hypotheses Of The Research

A website serves as a well defined information system. The quality of electronic services that allow users to operate independently and carry out different online transactions is referred to as information system quality. As a result, website quality—referred to as WebQual in this study—must be taken into consideration. A website will provide new experiences for consumers as they explore each feature within the website. When consumers find a website easy to operate, it will foster an intention to transact again through that website because it has quality that meets their needs and desires. Razak (2016) demonstrated that WebQual influences repurchase intention. In addition to WebQual, repurchase intention is also influenced by price, as evidenced by research by Josua et al. (2017), Mirsya and Nasution (2017), Kencana (2018), and Wantara et al. (2019).

Furthermore, online reviews viewed by hotel guests can also trigger intention to stay again at that hotel. This is evidenced by research by Arima et al. (2020) and Arif (2019).

The researcher developed the following theory in light of the description:

The intents of guests to return to star-rated hotels are positively and significantly impacted by WebQual, price, and e-WOM.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The method used in the research is quantitative. Creswell (2016) claims that quantitative research is a technique for evaluating specific hypotheses by looking at the correlations between the study's variables.

Population and Sample

The sampling technique used purposive sampling, and the research demographics consisted of visitors who had stayed at star-rated hotels in Batu City. Guests who had visited a star-rated hotel in Batu City at least once in the preceding six months served as the study's sample.

Data Analysis Techniques

This writing approach employs the following analysis:

1. Descriptive analysis.
Descriptive analysis was used by researchers to provide information regarding the characteristics of research variables, including: WebQual variable data, price, e-WOM and intention to re-stay using the median ranking measure.
2. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Analysis.
The analysis used is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis.

4. RESULTS

Of the 58 items tested, all had a calculated r greater than the critical r and a probability smaller than $\alpha = 5\%$, meaning that all items were valid and could be used to measure the variables to be measured. Reliability testing on each variable is said to be reliable because it is known that all Cronbach's Alpha values are greater than 0.6.

Overall, the average WebQual variable was 3.72, which means that respondents agreed that WebQual can be measured by usability, information quality, and service interaction quality. The largest contribution to WebQual is the information quality indicator, which provides the required information.

Overall, the average price variable was 3.65, indicating that respondents agreed that price can be measured by affordability, expectations, benefits, and capabilities, as well as competitiveness. The indicator that "capacity and competitiveness" contributed the most to price, as the price offered was lower than other hotels in its class.

Overall average variable e-WOM of 3.59, which means that respondents agree that price can be measured from intensity, opinion value, and content. The biggest contribution that forms e-WOM is an indicator of opinion value from recommendations from guests who have stayed at star-rated hotels.

Overall, the average guest satisfaction variable was 3.73, indicating that respondents agreed that guest satisfaction can be measured by meeting expectations, ease of access, and satisfaction with overall service. The largest contributor to guest satisfaction was the expectation-matching indicator, which measured the price offered as expected, as the price was commensurate with the service provided.

Overall, the average guest satisfaction variable was 3.75, indicating that respondents agreed that return intention can be measured by transactional intention, referential intention, preferential intention, and exploratory intention. The largest contributor to return intention is the referential intention indicator, which provides an impression of the hotel's quality to others.

The results of Multivariate Normality processing obtained a multivariate CR value of 2.046 which was in the range of -2.58 to 2.58, thus the multivariate normality required by SEM analysis was fulfilled.

The test results with Mahalanobis Distance Squared show that of the 17 indicators used there are no outliers, where the Mahalanobis value is less than 40.79. The correlation output results between WebQual and price are 0.771 and the correlation results between Price and e-WOM are 0.731 then the correlation results between WebQual and e-WOM are 0.754 so that it can be seen that the correlation results between exogenous variables are smaller than 0.9 (high correlation) so it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity (Ghozali, 2006:170).

The analysis used in this study utilized Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) techniques. The results of the overall model's goodness of fit test align with the SEM analysis. The impact of WebQual, price, and e-WOM on re-stay intentions can be seen in the table below.

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Table 1. Impact Of Webqual, Price, And E-WOM On Re-Stay Intentions

Variables	Standardized Regression Weights	Estimate	SE	CR	p-value	Results
Website Quality	0.159	0.181	0.088	2.06	0.039	Positive, Significant
Price	0.136	0.134	0.055	2,451	0.014	Positive, Significant
E-Wom	0.145	0.14	0.058	2,411	0.016	Positive, Significant

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2025

The influence of WebQual on the intention to stay in Bali resulted in a Cr value of 2.06 with a p-value of 0.039. The p-value is smaller than statistical significance at $\alpha = 5\%$, so it can be said that WebQual has a positive and significant impact on the intention to stay again. These results indicate that the higher the quality of the hotel's website, the greater the intention to stay again.

The effect of price on re-stay intention yielded a Cr value of 2.451 with a p-value of 0.014. The p-value is less than statistically significant at $\alpha = 5\%$, indicating that price has a positive and significant impact on re-stay intention. These results indicate that the more affordable the price, the greater the re-stay intention.

The effect of e-WOM on re-stay intention yields a Cr value of 2.411 with a p-value of 0.016. The p-value is smaller than statistical significance at $\alpha = 5\%$, so it can be said that e-WOM has a positive and significant impact on re-stay intention. These results indicate that the more positive e-WOM, the higher the re-stay intention.

Although WebQual has the highest Standardized Regression Weight (0.159), it is actually the least statistically significant of the three (though still significant at $p < 0.05$). This is because user perception of website quality (WebQual) is highly subjective. One group of respondents may rate your website as excellent, while another group may rate it as average or poor, so this high variance in the data increases statistical power, so that even though the impact is large on average, the statistics assess the ratings as less "certain" or consistent than the other two variables.

Based on the test results, it can be seen that the WebQual, price, and e-WOM variables have a positive and significant impact on re-stay intention. Therefore, the second hypothesis, which states that WebQual, price, and e-WOM have a positive and significant impact on re-stay intention, is accepted.

5. DISCUSSION

According to Schiffman and Kanuk's (2007) Theory of Consumer Behavior, the repurchase decision-making process is influenced by external information search, alternative evaluation, and post-purchase experiences, which shape consumer attitudes. WebQual and e-WOM serve as crucial instruments in the external information search stage, where consumers gather digital evidence to minimize risk before rebooking. Furthermore, price plays a crucial role in the alternative evaluation stage, where consumers compare the hotel's value proposition with its competitors. When the integration of reliable WebQual, competitive pricing, and positive e-WOM meets or exceeds expectations from previous post-purchase experiences, this will foster favorable consumer attitudes in the form of loyalty and high trust, which directly trigger a strong drive to return stay intention.

Website quality is crucial in shaping guest behavior, particularly in the context of online transactions, as it influences the intention to return to the hotel. Return intention is characterized by preferential intentions, such as returning despite relatively similar prices and returning due to positive reviews from previous guests. WebQual is characterized by the quality of information provided. Generally, the information required from a hotel website includes general hotel information (photo gallery, facilities, contact information, reviews, current promotions or attractive packages), room information (room type, room amenities, room rates, room availability), booking information (online booking system, payment methods, booking confirmation), and additional information such as information about tourist attractions or other activities around the hotel, information about transportation access to and from the hotel, including the nearest airport or train station, and hotel policies related to check-in/check-out, cancellations, restrictions, and so

on. Complete information. Fulfilled information needs on a hotel website provide a positive experience for hotel guests and increase their intention to return to the hotel in the future.

Returning intention is also determined by price. According to Kotler (2009), price is one factor that must be managed harmoniously and in line with the goals of each business actor. Prices can be managed as harmoniously as possible by offering prices equivalent to the room type offered. Hotels offer special benefits on certain room types at certain prices, thus creating a preferential intention for guests to return to the hotel even if there are relatively similar prices at other hotels.

E-WOM also impacts the intention to stay again. E-WOM is described through content, namely reviews of the offered price. The intention to stay again is described through preferential intentions, namely staying again even though there are relatively similar prices and staying again because of positive reviews from previous guests. Customers generally seek product information to help make purchasing decisions. Currently, a wealth of product information is available to customers through advertisements, promotions, and so on; however, customers generally consider and trust information from friends or other customers more than information from retailers (Dellarocas et al., 2007; Liu, 2006). Information from reviews or comments from other hotel guests who have stayed at a hotel about comparable prices with the facilities and services provided by the hotel makes guests intend to stay again in the future even though the price is relatively similar.

The availability of the required information on the website and prices that are equivalent to the type of room offered as well as reviews from other guests who have stayed at the hotel about the prices offered will make guests intend to stay again in the future even though there are relatively similar prices offered by other hotels.

The results of this study demonstrate that WebQual, price, and e-WOM impact repeat stay intentions of guests at star-rated hotels in Batu City. This finding is supported by previous research conducted by Razak et al., 2016; Tandon et al., 2020; Hardiyanto and Firdaus, 2021, which found that WebQual influences repurchase intentions, and research by Mahendrayanti and Wardana, 2021; Hadi, 2021; Werdiastuti and Agustiono (2022) found that price influences revisit intention, while research by Arif (2019); Arima et al. (2020); Surya and Setiawan (2024); Putra et al. (2024); and Thadani (2012) found that e-WOM influences revisit intention.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of data analysis and discussions that have been described in the previous chapters, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. *WebQual* formed by usability, information quality, and service interaction quality. The biggest contribution to *WebQual* formation is information quality, which provides the required information. Price is formed by affordability, according to quality, according to benefits, according to capabilities, and competitiveness. The biggest contribution to price formation is according to capabilities and competitiveness, namely the price offered is more attractive compared to hotels in the same class. E-WOM is formed by intensity, opinion value, and content. The biggest contribution to e-WOM formation is opinion value, namely recommendations from guests who have stayed at star-rated hotels. Guest satisfaction is formed by meeting expectations, ease of obtaining, and

satisfaction with the overall service. The biggest contribution to guest satisfaction is meeting expectations, namely the price offered meets expectations because the price is commensurate with the service provided. Restay intention is formed by transactional intention, referential intention, preferential intention, and exploratory intention. The biggest contribution to restay intention is referential intention, namely providing an overview of the hotel's quality to others.

2. *WebQual*, price and e-WOM have a positive and significant impact on the intention to stay again. Availability of the required information on the website and the price controlled as harmoniously as possible by offering prices equivalent to the type of room offered where the hotel offers special benefits on certain types of rooms at certain prices, as well as reviews or reviews from other guests have an impact on the preferential intention of guests to return to stay at the hotel even though there are relatively similar prices at other hotels. The better the quality of the website, the more attractive the prices offered and the better e-WOM has an impact on the increasing intention of guests of star-rated hotels in Batu City to stay again in the future.

Based on the research results and conclusions that have been put forward, the suggestions put forward in this research are as follows:

1. Theoretically
In discussing the concept of consumer behavior for the attitude of repurchase intention, we develop a response to the SRA (Stimulus, Response, Action) concept with consumer satisfaction.
2. In Practical Terms
 - a. For business people, especially in the hotel industry, it is recommended to pay attention to several key aspects as an effort to increase hotel competitiveness, such as website quality which is the highest determining factor in encouraging hotel guests' intention to stay again, as well as increasing e-WOM through the website by providing a QR code at the reception desk as a means for hotel guests to provide reviews based on their experience of staying at the hotel.
 - b. The Batu City Government (Pemkot) is advised to strengthen an integrated digital tourism ecosystem, establish price transparency regulations, and facilitate online reputation management for star-rated hotels. As a tourist city, the Batu City Government acts as a regulator and facilitator to ensure these three factors encourage tourist return (return stay intention).
 - c. For the Batu City Government to prepare a Juanda airport shuttle service through a fleet owned by the Batu City Government to increase the attractiveness of visits to Batu City so as to provide a positive contribution to regional economic growth through increased income, job creation, and increased other economic activities around the hotel.
 - d. For further researchers, they can develop this research model for different types of businesses that use websites.

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