Electronic Word of Mouth Communication Analysis on Visitation Decision Making Process Using Aisas Model On Instagram Users: Study on Visit Decision to Japan

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Abstract
This research aimed to identify the role of eWOM and reference group on the decision-making stages of the AISAS model on the tourist who have visited Japan, as well as the reason of sharing experiences on Instagram. Based on the obtained and analyzed data, eWOM and reference group have roles as the trigger of interest and information source to visit or do activities on certain places in Japan, as well as to share experience on Instagram. It was also noted that informants decided to share their vacation on Instagram as a way to show their lifestyle, as well as to create and maintain their image as traveler. Relatives and friends with similar interests (who belong to the main membership group), as well as bloggers (who could be categorized as opinion leader) are the most influencing people regarding tourists’ decisions regarding their holiday in Japan.

Keywords: AISAS, Electronic Word of Mouth, Instagram, Reference Group, Social Media

Introduction
Traveling, both domestic and overseas, is an activity with growing interest from Indonesians. For overseas travel, data from World Tourism Organization showed a 3% increase in the number of Indonesian tourists traveling abroad in 2015 than in 2014, or as many as 6.31 millions tourists recorded (Bisniswisata, 2016). Among countries in the world, Japan has become one of the most popular destinations for Indonesian tourists. Throughout 2015, the number of Indonesian citizens who visited Japan has reportedly reached 205,083. It was a 29.2% increase compared to the previous year (JPNN, 2016).

In this information technology era, information on the internet is crucial to facilitate and support the development of tourism world. The Internet has become an important part of people’s life all over the world, including Indonesia as the fourth most populated country in the world. According to data from We Are Social, the number of active internet users in Indonesia has reached 88.1 million by January 2016, with 79 million active social media users reported.

Another study about Indonesian Internet User Profile by Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia (APJII) with Pusat Kajian Komunikasi Universitas Indonesia (PUSKAKOM) in 2014, reported that the most frequent activity done by Indonesians when accessing the internet is using social networking site (social media), which is 87.4%. The second place is occupied by information searching or browsing with 68.7%. The research also stated that cellular phone (mobile phone) is the most commonly used device for Indonesians to access internet (85% respondents).

With mobile phones now usually equipped with camera features, users can easily update their status, as well as post pictures and videos about activities they do on social
One of the experiences and activities that are often shared in the form of photos and videos by social media users is traveling, both domestic and overseas travel.

Instagram is a social media platform with 22 million monthly active users in Indonesia. It becomes one of the most popular social media platform to share travel experience. According to the survey conducted by JakPat, Instagram users in Indonesia use the platform to search for online shops’ product information, memes, and to upload holiday and travel photos (Daily Social, March 2016). A study conducted by TNS (a research institute from the UK) also showed that Instagram users in Indonesia use Instagram to seek for inspiration, share experiences while traveling, and search for the latest information and trends.

Tourists often share information about their holiday via the internet and social media. The stories could also trigger people’s interest to visit to a country or a travel destination. Conversation about a product or service on the internet, which is then disseminated, and can attract attention and build others’ decisions to engage in it is an example of Word of Mouth (WOM) communication that occurs in the cyberspace.

WOM usually spread from person to person, or person to small group in a social environment. However, now the internet has enabled communication to many people through social media channels such as social networking sites, discussion forums, review sites and blogs. When compared to face-to-face communication, communication in the cyberspace is often not personal. Such communication can even occur among people who do not know each other. Therefore, traditional WOM has different definitions with online WOM, or are often referred to as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM).

The exchange of information and experiences within online communities, namely in the form of eWOM, is extremely importance in tourism. Because of their nature, tourism products and services are seen as high involvement and often considered to be expensive. Visitors have a tendency to gather and review related information in the early stages of their travel decision making process in order to avoid as possible taking a wrong decisions (Jeng and Fesenmaier, 2002; Leung et al., 2013, in Kavoura & Stavrianeas, 2015). Among all available information sources, word-of-mouth is recognized as one of the most significant sources in tourism because of its credibility (Murphy et al., 2007; Leung et al., 2013, in Kavoura & Stavrianeas, 2015). WOM recommendations, are not considered by visitors as to be driven by commercial interests, and therefore, they are perceived as more trustworthy and are more influential to visitors. (Casaló et al., 2011; Litvin et al., 2008, in Kavoura & Stavrianeas, 2015).

According to Kotler and Keller (2014), there are several factors influencing consumers behaviours, namely cultural factor, social factor and personal factor. On social factor, there is reference group, or a person’s reference groups are all the groups that have a direct (face-to-face) or indirect influence on their attitudes or behavior. Groups having a direct influence are called membership groups. Some of these are primary groups with whom the person interacts fairly continuously and informally, such as family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers. People also belong to secondary groups, such as religious, professional, and trade-union groups, which tend to be more formal and require less continuous interaction.

People are also influenced by groups to which they do not belong. Aspirational groups are those a person hopes to join; dissociative groups are those whose values or
behavior an individual rejects. An opinion leader is the person who offers informal advice or information about a specific product or product category, such as which of several brands is best or how a particular product may be used. Opinion leaders are often highly confident, socially active, and frequent users of the category.

For modern consumers, eWOM can also influence purchasing behavior as well as the steps consumers take during the buying process. It can be seen in the AISAS model by Dentsu Inc, which was introduced to replace the AIDMA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Memory, Action) model. AISAS model aims to explain the changes in consumer behavior in the information technology era (Sugiyama and Andree, 2010). AISAS model has several stages on buying process, which started from Attention, Interest, Search, Action and ended with Share.

These days, the Search and Share stages are often facilitated by the internet. With the internet, consumers can quickly and easily search and share information. The Internet also allows the stages of Attention and Interest to occur due the influence of other parties that disseminate information in the form of eWOM. In recent years, WOM communications have also shown increasing influence. Many brands have achieved increased sales by spreading WOM communications.

From the research background and the formulation of the problem described above, the research question posed is as follows: What is the role of eWOM and reference groups on the stages of the AISAS model that Instagram users go through regarding the decision-making process to visit Japan and share their experiences? And what is their reason to share their experiences on social media?

Previous studies regarding eWOM and purchase decision have been done by several researchers, such as Rica Sharma in a thesis titled The Influence Analysis of Electronic Word-of-Mouth and Brand Image Towards Purchase Intention (Study on Choosing High-scope Preschool), Putro Mas Gunawan Suro Negoro in a thesis titled Purchasing Decision Making Process Analysis Through Social Media (Case Study: Micro Blogging Site, Twitter), Aaron Tham, Glen Croy, and Judith Mair in a research paper titled Social Media in Destination Choice: Distinctive Electronic Word-of-Mouth Dimensions and Signe Tegtmeier Pedersen, Liana Razmerita, dan Elanor Colleoni in a research paper titled Electronic Word-of-Mouth communication and consumer behaviour: an exploratory study of Danish social media communication influence.

Seen from previous studies, there has never been any specific research on how eWOM can play a role in the decision-making stages of the AISAS model on Instagram social media users, on decision-making processes for overseas visits, and sharing their experiences. Therefore, this study is expected to be a reference for subsequent research on different segments.

**Literature Review**

**eWOM**

The study of Word of Mouth (WOM) has been done since the mid-20th century. One widely accepted definition of WOM is expressed by Arndt (1967), which is a verbal communication, from person to person, between recipient and sender, in which the recipient...
receives a non-commercial message related to the product or service from the sender. (Erkan, 2016).

Differences in the nature of communication in the cyberspace makes Tradional WOM has a different definition with WOM online or eWOM. Unlike traditional WOM, eWOM communication has an unprecedented speed, and is more accessible (Cheung & Thadani, 2010). Furthermore, eWOM is not restricted to contacts like friends and family, and may occur between geographically dispersed strangers (Chu & Kim, 2011).

Kietzmann and Canhoto (2013) completed the eWOM definition of Hennig-Thurau et.al (2004) and refer eWOM as: any statement based on positive, neutral, or negative experiences made by potential, actual, or former consumers about a product, service, brand, or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via internet (through web sites, social networks, instant messages, news feeds.)

Cheung dan Thadani (2010) mentioned several types of social media such as weblogs, discussion forums, review websites, e-bulletin board systems, newsgroup, dan social networking sites as a channel for consumers to disseminate eWOM. In eWOM communication, consumers can also express their message in the form of visual information. Findings of Pew Internet and the American Life Project (2010) also mentioned that 46% of users upload photos so they can share with others online (Lin, Lu and Wu, 2012).

In their study, Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, dan Gremler (2004) indentify eight types of motivations for people to engage in eWOM communication, namely:

1. Platform assistance
The existence of a platform can facilitate consumers (especially when they previously had difficulty contacting companies to report unsatisfactory experiences) to share experiences and file complaints. Furthermore, consumer opinion is expected to help platform operators to convey their problems to the company.

2. Venting of negative feelings
When consumers have an unsatisfactory experience, they express their negative feelings by retelling their experience on the consumer opinion platform. It can reduce the frustration, anxiety and negative emotions associated with the event.

3. Concern for other consumers
This motivation is closely linked to the concept of altruism (or prosocial behavior), or voluntary action taken to help others without expecting anything in return.

4. Extraversion/positive self-enhancement
Self-enhancement motive is driven by one’s desire to gain positive recognition from others. In the context of a web-based opinion platform, it can be either a person’s acknowledgment as an expert or as a smart shopper by other consumers. It relates to the need to attain a certain social status, which is important to one’s self-concept.

5. Social Benefits
One characteristic of eWOM’s behavior is that consumers become part of a virtual community through the opinions they express. Affiliation with virtual communities can represent social benefits to consumers for reasons of social identification and inte-
gration. Therefore, it can be expected that consumers are involved in eWOM communication to participate and become part of the online community.

6. Economic Incentives

In some cases, the person providing eWOM information may receive a reward from the platform operator. According to Ryu and Feick (2007, in Kulmala et al., 2012), professional marketers have recognized the need to drive eWOM among consumers (consumer-to-consumer or C2C eWOM) by providing rewards such as free products and services, as well as vouchers, and discounts.

7. Helping the company

Consumer satisfaction with a product gives them the motivation to help the company in return for their good experience. With the motive to help the company, consumers also hope that the company will continue to succeed.

8. Advice seeking

In the context of a web-based opinion platform, individuals read product reviews and comments written by others, which can also motivate them to comment. Writing and collecting information on an online consumer platform allows contributors to get more specific and useful feedback, rather than simply reading anonymously.

Reference Group

According to Kotler and Keller (2011), consumer behavior adalah a study on how individuals, groups and organizations choose, buy, use and dispose goods, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and wants.

Consumer behavior influenced by several factors, such as:

1. Cultural factor, consisted of:
   • Culture
   • Subculture
   • Social Class

2. Social factor, consisted of:
   • Reference groups
   • Family
   • Role and status

3. Personal Factors, consisted of:
   • Age and stage in the life cycle
   • Occupation and economic circumstances
   • Personality and self-concept
   • Lifestyle and values

Reference groups influence members in at least three ways. They expose an individual to new behaviors and lifestyles, they influence attitudes and self-concept,
and they create pressures for conformity that may affect product and brand choices. Reference groups are also divided into several categories, namely:

1. Membership groups, which consisted of:
   - Primary groups, with whom the person interacts fairly continuously and informally, such as family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers.
   - Secondary groups, such as religious, professional, and trade-union groups, which tend to be more formal and require less continuous interaction.
   - The aspirational group is the people, where one desires to relate and join them. Individuals try to imitate the attitudes and behaviors of the aspirational group members. For example politicians, athletes, people from the entertainment world.

2. Dissociative groups, those whose values or behavior an individual rejects. Most people usually want to do activities or buy things, which is the opposite of what the members of the dissociative group buy and do.

3. An opinion leader is the person who offers informal advice or information about a specific product or product category, such as which of several brands is best or how a particular product may be used. Opinion leaders are often highly confident, socially active, and frequent users of the category.

Purchase Decision with AISAS model

Japanese-based agency Dentsu Inc. introduced the AISAS (Attention, Interest, Search, Action, Shares) model in 2004 to explain changes in consumer behavior in the information technology era. This model is used to replace the AIDMA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Memory, Action) model which already exist since 1920s and still used until now. AISAS model emerged from the changes that occur in the multimedia and online communication world, and was created to anticipate various behaviors of modern consumers.

![AIDMA and AISAS model](image)

According to the AISAS model, consumers who see the product, service or advertisement (attention) and have an interest in it, will collect information (search) about the
item on the internet or ask family or friends who have used the product. The consumer will then evaluate the information. If the information can convince the consumer, then he will decide to make a purchase (action). After making a purchase, consumers will be spreading word of mouth by talking to others or by posting comments and opinions on the internet (share).

According to the AISAS model, WOM communication is generated through a cycle that appears between search and share elements. In recent years WOM communications have shown increasing influence. Many brands have achieved increased sales by spreading WOM communications.

These days, the search and share stages are facilitated by technological developments. With the internet, consumers can quickly and easily search and share information they need. The Internet also allows the stages of attention and interest to occur due the influence of other parties that disseminate in the form of eWOM.

**Social Media**

Social media was defined by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content (USG).

**Instagram**

In late 2010, Instagram was created by Kevin Systrom in an effort to create technology that combined his love of photography with the location and sharing elements of social media (Bertoni, 2012, in Anderson, 2016).

The appeal of Instagram is its simplicity: create a photo or a video, edit and share. The options for doing this are not overwhelming, and the app is user-friendly. As a social network, Instagram shares many of the features, options and settings that are familiar to users of other social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook; followers, sharing, liking and commenting. Once content is selected or created, it can be edited using filters and tools. It is these filters that gained Instagram its early fame, providing users with easy ways to manipulate their photos in artistic ways with very little effort.

Social media with their user-generated content are important sources of information, available to all; they are considered to be credible and trustworthy and influence the way visitors plan for, buy and consume tourist products (Del Chiappa, 2013, in Kavoura & Aikaterini, 2015). Since social media offer a platform for visitors to share their experiences and opinions online in the form of text, photographs and videos through consumer review sites, social networking sites, blogs, and media sharing sites, among others; these are increasingly becoming a major source of travel information for many visitors (Ayeh et al., 2013, in Kavoura & Aikaterini, 2015).

It also applies in Indonesia. Data from the JakPat survey (Daily Social, March 2016) and TNS research (Beritagar, January 2016) state that Instagram users in Indonesia use this social media to upload vacation photos and to share their travel experiences.

**Conceptual framework**

In this study, researchers wanted to find out how eWOM and reference groups can trigger the desire and build the decision of social media users to conduct consump-
tion activities, which they then decide to share experiences when visiting, or in other words to also spread eWOM.

Research Methodology
Research Paradigm
This study uses post-positivist paradigm. Different from positivist paradigm that tend to be rigid with the method, post-positivist researchers use various methods on their study, while continue to emphasize on discovery and theory verification (Poerwandari, 2007). Although researchers take an objective position, they realize that the interaction of researchers and participants will affect the data. Thus, this study will use post-positivist paradigms to understand the consumer experience and see their reason in making consumption decisions with the AISAS model, and how those processes are influenced by related concepts such as eWOM and reference groups.

Research Approach
The qualitative approach is used because based on the previous explanation, it is known that an individual goes through several stages to arrive at a decision to make a high involvement product (ie, make a trip to Japan), and then perform post-consumption activities by sharing their holiday experiences. In particular, researcher want to see in de-
tails how the role of eWOM made by the reference group in the stages and processes to consumers who also an Instagram users. To be able to see and understand in detail and in more depth, the researcher feel need to use qualitative approach for this research.

**Research Strategy**

This research uses single case study strategy. Single case study allows researchers to conduct in-depth and specific exploration of a particular event or event of a phenomenon, focusing on a small number of in-depth investigated events. This strategy is chosen because researcher wants to focus on specific case, which is the process that consumers, in this case the tourists who are also Instagram users, going through when they make decision regarding their vacation in Japan.

**Research Type**

The type of the research is descriptive. Descriptive research presents a specific description of a situation or condition, complete with social settings and shared relationships within it. In general, departing from a well-crafted or well-planned study, therefore it is expected to find the exact description of what to find in a study (Neuman, 2006).

The result of descriptive research is a detailed description of a phenomenon. Descriptive research begins with well-defined subjects and conducts research to accurately describe the research. The focus of descriptive research is through the question “how”, to explain why a phenomenon occurs. It then goes on to “why”, as it tries to explain the research question to achieve the goal. (Neuman, 2006).

Researchers chose descriptive nature of research to thoroughly analyze how eWOM and reference groups can play a role in how tourists Instagram users decide to visit a country.

**Research Analysis Unit**

Qualitative research has a purposive sample, meaning that samples are drawn or taken based on research objectives (Daymon & Holloway, 2008). The procedures in determining the subject and data sources in qualitative research generally display these characteristics (Sarantakos 1993, in Poerwandari, 2007):

1. Not using at large sample quantities, but in typical cases according to the specificity of the research problem.
2. Not rigidly determined from the beginning, but may change both in terms of number and characteristics of the sample, in accordance with the conceptual understanding developed in the study.
3. Not directed as representation in terms of numbers or random events, but on contextual match.

The unit of analysis in this study is the tourists who use social media platform Instagram and decided to visit Japan after exposure by eWOM made by reference groups.
The informants chosen for the study are also those who share their holiday experience in social media to know their motivations.

**Data collection technique**

In-depth interview facilitated flexibility and deeper exploration, which resulted in richer anecdotal data (Seidman, 2005; Creswell, 2013). This study is conducted by collecting data or information directly from individuals through face-to-face in-depth interviews. Based on the objectives to be achieved, this research uses semi-structured interview method with general guidance. Informants were invited to public places, such as restaurants. The interviews lasted from 20-30 minutes and were audio-recorded with the interviewee’s permission and later transcribed. The semi-structured interview method with general guidance is chosen by researcher to dig the insight of the consumer in a deep way. Interview guidelines is used as a reference topic that should be asked to informants in order to get a comprehensive knowledge.

**Data analysis**

This study used three general approaches for data analysis on qualitative research according to Cresswell (2015), namely:

1. Data preparation and organization.
2. Coding process.
3. Data presentation in the form of charts, tables, or discussions.

**Results**

**Informants Descriptions**

To address research questions, informants were chosen based on their activity as tourist and Instagram users. All of them had already went to Japan for approximately 3-4 times in the last 2-3 years. They also been users of Instagram for several years, which is from around 2012-2014 until today. They are active social media users, who log in to Instagram daily to check their timelines. Informants usually more active in posting especially during holidays. Aside from the country’s tourism, informants are also fans of Japanese music, celebrities, pop culture and foods.

**eWOM and Reference Group on the Attention and Interest stages of AISAS Model**

On this research, the Attention stage refers to the Instagram user experience when viewing and noticing post about other users’ holidays in Japan. Based on the information gathered from the informants as a loyal user of Instagram, they admit to often seeing posts about other people’s vacation in Japan. They will see the photos carefully if they look interesting, or if the post has tips and recommendations that considered new and useful to them.

Continued from the Attention stage above, the informants who had seen and observed the post about Japanese tourism then felt interested to know further. They even feel inspired to visit the place they see on the Instagram post.

“I often see posts from my friend who had visited or currently travel to Japan. I certainly pay close attention to the posts, especially if I never visit
the place, or perhaps my friend has a tips or recommendation about new places to eat or destinations that I never explore before.”

On the Attention stage, which continue to Interest stage, several informants noted that they often see post about Japan tourism uploaded by relatives of close friends. Aside from relatives of close friends, Informan 2 also likes to see content uploaded by travel bloggers who lives in Japan.

“For me, I usually will pay close attention to the post, if it was posted by relatives or people that I know well. I usually pay close attention to where they went (on the posts).”

“I also like to follow Japanese travel bloggers who lives there, because they like to show the off the beaten path journey, not the common ones. So, I just like to see them when they travel.”

Groups that played roles in making informants pay attention to online content on Instagram, and automatically show their interest were the main membership group (friends and relatives) and opinion leaders, in this case is the travel bloggers. Travel bloggers often present something unique on their social media accounts, which could trigger interest in Japanese tourism.

“There are some bloggers who posted their vacation photos in Japan during the spring holidays. That makes me want to feel the spring holiday in Japan too.”

From interviews result with informants, it was known that for them the stage of Attention and Interest can not be separated. In other words, the informants were automatically attracted to the contents about the Japanese tourisms they saw and noticed on Instagram. No informants disliked or hate the contents. This could be attributed to informants’ statements about Instagram as a visual social media platform, in which users enjoy sharing and seeing beautiful pictures, as told by informant 3 and 4.

“I certainly become interested to visit because Instagram post usually has been filtered, therefore it looks beautiful and makes us want to go there to enjoy or experience the things that shown in our friends’ posts.”

“I usually look for beautiful pictures on Instagram.”

eWOM and Reference Group on the Search Stage of AISAS Model

At the Search stage, informants who were interested in the post that they friends uploaded then asks them about the details of the trip. If the previous stages occurred passively on the informant, on the Search stage began two-way communication mediated by Instagram. Just like what informan 2 said.

“For asking question, I usually only do it to friends who are currently vacationing in Japan. If I am curious about the post that s/he uploaded, I
usually ask, “Where is it?”. For example when my friend posted about a pancake in Kobe. I ask him/her, “Where did you buy it? Which store? On which area in Kobe? How much is it? Something like that.”

In addition to asking directly to other account owners by writing in the comments section, informant 1 also uses the Search feature in Instagram to seek information about tourism.

“We can just search on Instagram. For example, when I want to visit a city, I just type it on Instagram. I just look for the Place option, and then I can see posts about the city. Are the photos good or not, the city interesting or not. I often do that actually.”

In terms of finding information about Japanese tourism on Instagram, informants usually only ask questions to friends (main membership group) that they have personally known. They claimed to have never ask strangers, in this case other Instagram users that they have never personally known before.

“Ah yes, I did once asked my friends (about traveling to Japan) before, but never to a stranger on Instagram.”

eWOM and Reference Group on the Action Stage of AISAS Model

The informants acknowledged that the photo or video posted by other users on Instagram became one of the factors influencing them in determining travel plans in Japan. But for them, post about Japan on Instagram actually did not specifically influence their decision to visit Japan, but more influential to trigger them to visit some place or try a certain activity in Japan.

Informants said that they usually already have several reasons when they decide to visit Japan, such as watching concert or going to festival. After planning their main activities, then they usually look for tourist destinations or other activities to do in Japan, and incorporate them into their travel plans.

“Hm, perhaps not entirely influenced by the post on Instagram. But, there will be one or two. Like, usually when I see my friends visiting a place, (I become interested and) perhaps I will try to incorporate the place on my itinerary, if it matches my schedule.”

Post uploaded by friends or relatives on Instagram is also able to trigger the interest of Instagram users to visit a place, although they actually do not entirely like the circumstances described there. Just like informant 2 said, eventhough she admitted to not liking places with cold weather, but she became intrigued and finally decided to visit Hakone (a mountain area in the western area of Tokyo, near Mount Fuji) because she saw a post uploaded by a friend (main membership group) in Instagram.

“Like a while ago, because I saw my friend posting about Hakone, I went to Hakone on my last trip because of the post. Well, although I actually do
not like cold weather, but I was curious because of my friend’s post. So, then I decided to took a time to visit Hakone.”

**eWOM and Reference Group on the Share Stage of AISAS Model**

In sharing their vacation experiences in Japan, some informants said that they usually only upload photos and videos with relatively short captions. They feel that on Instagram, sharing experiences through images and videos visually, is more important than lengthy words and sentences, as people who follow them on Instagram prefer to see the post that way.

“Reviews on Instagram usually just a short one, not a detail one such as how to go there, what do you do there. Because for me, people prefer to see some visuals and short caption on Instagram. No need to write lengthy details.”

In sharing her holiday experience in social media, informant 3 mentioned that she always makes posts about her travel experience and other details because she often gets questions from her friends. Being seen as a person who has experience in traveling, he felt obliged to provide information about the journey.

“I always share my travel experience on social media, especially Instagram and Facebook, because people usually asked me about that. Did I ever wrote any review on my vacation? Yes, I often did. At any rate, I always tell others about my vacation. How much it cost, how much money should we take, how to save money during the trip, I usually write about that.”

Not only inspired to travel, but reference groups could also influence Instagram users to upload content related to their previous travel experiences. Informant 2 recalled that she was triggered to upload a photo from her previous Japanese vacation, because one of her relatives who is currently in Japan often upload photos of his vacation.

“My cousin is currently vacationing in Japan, so he continually post pictures from his trip. Then it came to my mind, is there any picture from my last trip that I have not post? The good picture that I want to post. Yes, it become some kind of throwback post.”

**Discussion**

At the Attention and Interest stages, the informants acknowledged that the content they saw on Instagram could provoke an interest in Japanese tourism. However, the content does not necessarily trigger their decision to visit Japan itself. The post actually further influences their decision to go to a specific place or try a particular activity Japan.

As fans of Japanese music, celebrities, and pop culture, the informants interviewed in this study usually have already some main activities they want to do when deciding to go to Japan, such as watching concert or going to festival. The informants
then usually look for tourist destinations or other activities they can do in Japan, and then incorporate them into their travel plans.

In other words, for them eWOM is more influential for micro destination, not macro. The same thing was found in research on social media users and the selection of tourist destinations by Tham, Croy and Mair (2013). It is said that social media disseminates multiple perspectives of a destination, potentially enhancing visibility of destination images, and arguably further influencing micro-destination choices.

Viewed from the research findings, the groups that plays a role in making the informants gives their attention to an online content in Instagram, and automatically shows interest is the main membership group (friends and relatives) and opinion leader, in this case the travel blogger.

Friends and relatives, especially those with similar interests to informants, often show interesting content on their social media accounts and eventually spark informants’ interest in Japanese tourism. The similarity of interest, as well as the closeness between the informants with their friends and relatives are important, because consumers tend to think of them as source of reference before they decide on consumption activity.

Not only in the pre-consumption stage (Attention, Interest and Search), but the reference group can also affect the post-consumption stage, namely the Share stage in the AISAS model. Informants’ action when sharing their experiences can also be triggered by other users who upload pictures when they traveled to Japan. The example can be found on informant 2, who shared her old vacation photos to keep up with others as she wanted to maintain her image as an “expert” in Japanese tourism.

In connection with the last stage of AISAS model (Share), researcher try to linked to the reasons why the informants share their holiday experiences in Instagram with the motivations that make people decide to do eWOM communication from Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, and Gremler (2004). Those motivations are:

1. Platform assistance
2. Venting of negative feelings
3. Concern for other consumers
4. Extraversion/positive self-enhancement
5. Social Benefits
6. Economic Incentives
7. Helping the company
8. Advice seeking
If linked to the reasons why the informants share their holiday experiences in Instagram, it can be seen as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informant 1: Want to show the pictures she takes to others</td>
<td>Extraversion/positive self-enhancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 2: Want to show her existence, want to show people her travel experience</td>
<td>Extraversion/positive self-enhancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 3: Showing good image, Having positioning as traveler</td>
<td>Extraversion/positive self-enhancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant 4: Want to show off her travel activity</td>
<td>Extraversion/positive self-enhancement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 Reason to share travel experience

Extraversion or positive self-enhancement became the sole motive shared by the informants. This positive self-enhancement was driven by one’s desire to gain positive recognition from others. In the context of a web-based opinion platform, it can be either a person’s acknowledgment as an expert or as a smart shopper by other consumers. It relates to the need to attain a certain social status, where it is important to one’s self-concept (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, dan Gremler, 2004).

This is in accordance with the informants who claimed to upload post about their holidays with reasons to want to show their existence, want to showcase their vacation activities, and even want to strengthen the image of self-image as a traveler.

Conclusions
Electronic word of mouth and reference groups are identified to have role as trigger of interest and source of information on the stages Instagram users go through regarding their decisions to visit Japan and share their experiences in the country.

It was also found that the reasons for informants to share their holiday experiences are related to extraversion or positive self-enhancement motive. Informants post about their vacations because they want to show their existence, want to showcase their travel experience, and even want to strengthen their self-image as a traveler. In other words, they decided to share their holiday experiences on social media to positively boost their self-image. It relates to the need for self to achieve certain social status, where it is important to one’s self concept.

References


Online reference:


