

# Tourism: The Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth and Tourist Experience on Revisit Intention

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## ABSTRACT

This study addresses the phenomenon of how electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) and tourist experience influence tourists' revisit intention, a critical factor for sustainable tourism development. The research problem focuses on understanding the extent to which e-WOM and the multi-dimensional tourist experience affect tourists' decisions to return to a destination. A quantitative research method using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS software was employed. The study was conducted at Sumatera Barat involving 300 respondents who have previously visited the site. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed to test the proposed hypotheses. The findings indicate that both e-WOM and tourist experience have a significant positive effect on revisit intention. Specifically, memorable and satisfying tourist experiences combined with positive online reviews increase tourists' loyalty and willingness to revisit. This research provides valuable insights for destination managers to enhance digital engagement and improve experiential quality to boost sustainable tourism growth.

**Keywords:** Electronic Word of Mouth, Tourist Experience, Revisit Intention, SEM, Sustainable Tourism

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## 1. Introduction

Tourism has become a key driver of economic growth and cultural exchange across nations, with revisit intention now recognized as a core indicator of a destination's sustainable success (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Jang & Feng, 2007; Prayag et al., 2017). In the digital age, tourists rely heavily on online platforms for travel information, making electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) a dominant influence on travel decisions (Litvin et al., 2008; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; Cantalops & Salvi, 2014). Research suggests that positive e-WOM not only enhances destination image but also builds trust and increases the likelihood of return visits (Jeong & Jang, 2011; Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016; Munar & Jacobsen, 2014).

Tourist experience—encompassing emotional, cognitive, and sensory dimensions—is another crucial determinant of revisit intention, particularly in competitive tourism markets (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Kim et al., 2012; Oh et al., 2007). Several studies have shown that memorable and satisfying experiences directly impact a tourist's willingness to return, often more than

price or accessibility (Ali et al., 2016; Tung & Ritchie, 2011; Chen & Chen, 2010). The synergy between e-WOM and experiential quality amplifies tourist loyalty, especially when reviews reflect personal and affective involvement (Kozak, 2001; Han & Hyun, 2015; Zhang et al., 2018).

Recent studies have demonstrated that tourists are more likely to revisit destinations when both the virtual and on-site experiences align with their expectations (Prayag et al., 2013; Filieri et al., 2015; Sparks & Browning, 2011). Moreover, e-WOM has a mediating effect on tourist satisfaction and revisit intention by influencing pre-travel perceptions and post-travel evaluations (Zhang et al., 2010; Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009; Kim & Fesenmaier, 2017). While previous research emphasized destination attributes, recent approaches highlight the emotional and narrative dimensions of shared experiences as key triggers of loyalty (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Stepchenkova & Mills, 2010; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004).

In addition, destination marketers are increasingly leveraging user-generated content (UGC) and online reviews to create relational ties with tourists, ultimately encouraging behavioral intentions such as positive word-of-mouth and repeat visitation (Hudson & Thal, 2013; Mariani et al., 2016; Yoo & Gretzel, 2011). This digital interaction, when coupled with high-quality tourist experiences, significantly reinforces destination attachment and repurchase behavior (Quintal et al., 2010; Chiu et al., 2014; Rather, 2018).

### **1.1. Problem Statement**

Given the growing importance of online engagement and experiential tourism, it is critical to explore how these factors interact to shape revisit intention—especially in post-pandemic recovery contexts where travelers' trust, safety perceptions, and digital content play crucial roles in decision-making (Sigala, 2020; Zenker & Kock, 2020; Bae & Chang, 2021).

Despite the growing recognition of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) and tourist experience as critical factors influencing tourists' revisit intention, there remains a lack of comprehensive understanding of how these elements interact and contribute jointly to tourists' behavioral intentions. Previous research often examines e-WOM or tourist experience independently, with limited exploration of their combined effects on revisit intention in the context of contemporary digital tourism. Furthermore, the rapid evolution of online platforms and changing tourist behaviors, especially post-pandemic, present new challenges and opportunities for destination marketers to retain visitors. This study aims to address the following research problems:

1. How does electronic word of mouth impact tourists' revisit intention to a destination?
2. What role does tourist experience play in shaping revisit intention?
3. To what extent does tourist experience mediate or moderate the effect of e-WOM on revisit intention?
4. How can destination marketers leverage the synergy between e-WOM and tourist experience to enhance tourist loyalty and repeat visitation?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) in Tourism**

Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) has become a critical factor influencing tourist decision-making, especially in the digital age where platforms such as TripAdvisor, Instagram, and TikTok are prevalent. Unlike traditional word of mouth, eWOM is multidirectional, rapidly disseminated, and accessible to a global audience (Litvin et al., 2020; Pourfakhimi et al., 2020). Research suggests that eWOM affects not only tourists' initial travel intentions but also their loyalty and likelihood to revisit (Setiawan et al., 2021; Maulina et al., 2023). Positive eWOM

contributes to building destination image and trust, which are instrumental in encouraging tourists to return (Anastasiei et al., 2025; Soliman, 2021).

Moreover, eWOM is mediated by factors such as perceived credibility and informativeness, which influence tourists' perceptions of destination quality and experiential expectations (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2024; Ali et al., 2021). As a result, destinations with a strong presence in digital channels and favorable reviews tend to attract higher revisit intentions (Khoo, 2020; Bayih & Singh, 2020).

## 2.2 Tourist Experience and Its Impact

The concept of tourist experience has evolved from functional satisfaction to emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions (Tung & Ritchie, 2021; Suhartanto et al., 2020). A memorable tourism experience (MTE) fosters emotional attachment, increases destination loyalty, and ultimately influences the intention to revisit (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021; Sharma et al., 2022). Experiential factors such as authenticity, novelty, and engagement significantly shape tourists' satisfaction and post-visit behavior (Chen et al., 2020; Simpson et al., 2020).

Furthermore, personalized and meaningful experiences are found to enhance positive word of mouth and brand advocacy behaviors, which reinforce revisit intention (Paisri et al., 2022; Damanik & Yusuf, 2022). Several studies argue that tourist experience is not only an outcome but also a mediator between eWOM and behavioral intention (Pujiastuti et al., 2022; Nur Alam et al., 2023).

## 2.3 Revisit Intention as a Behavioral Outcome

Revisit intention is defined as a tourist's willingness to return to a destination based on prior experiences and perceptions (Ajzen, 2021; Maghrifani et al., 2022). It is a vital indicator of destination sustainability, as retaining visitors is more cost-effective than acquiring new ones. Key determinants of revisit intention include satisfaction, perceived value, destination image, and digital engagement such as eWOM (Li et al., 2023; Rani et al., 2024).

Recent studies emphasize the synergistic effect of eWOM and tourist experience on revisit intention. When tourists perceive consistency between their expectations and actual experiences, and when these are validated by online reviews, their loyalty increases (Kim & Lee, 2021; Kadi et al., 2021). In contrast, negative eWOM or disappointing experiences can significantly deter repeat visits (Armianti et al., 2024; Dao & Nguyen, 2024).

In conclusion, the interplay between eWOM and tourist experience offers a comprehensive understanding of what drives revisit intention. Destination marketers are advised to invest in creating high-quality visitor experiences and fostering positive digital narratives to ensure long-term visitor retention.

## 2.4 Conceptual Framework

This study investigates the impact of two key independent variables—Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) and Tourist Experience—on the dependent variable Revisit Intention. As illustrated in the framework, e-WOM directly influences tourists' intention to revisit a destination by shaping perceptions through online reviews and social media communications. Similarly, Tourist Experience, encompassing emotional, cognitive, and sensory components, directly affects the likelihood of revisiting by forming memorable and satisfying experiences. Both variables contribute individually to explaining the variance in revisit intention, reflecting their critical roles in tourism behavior.

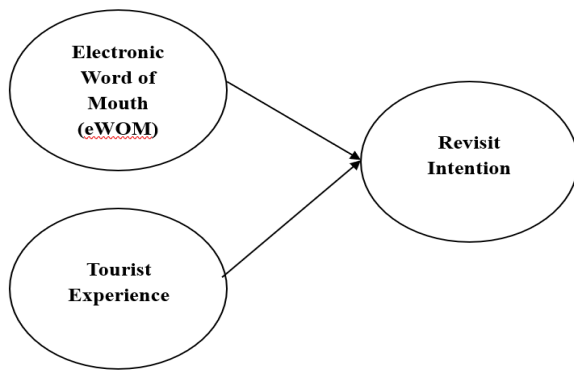


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the effects of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) and tourist experience on tourists' revisit intention. A descriptive-correlational approach is adopted to investigate the relationships among the variables and to test the proposed hypotheses.

#### 3.2. Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of tourists who have visited a selected tourist destination within the last 12 months. A purposive sampling technique is used to recruit participants who have experience with both online reviews and the actual tourism experience. The target sample size is 300 respondents, which is considered adequate for statistical analysis using structural equation modeling (SEM).

#### 3.3. Data Collection

Primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire distributed both online and offline. The questionnaire consists of four main sections:

- a. Demographic information (age, gender, education, nationality)
- b. Electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) variables, measured by items adapted from Litvin et al. (2008) and Jalilvand & Samiei (2012)
- c. Tourist experience variables, covering emotional, cognitive, and sensory dimensions, adapted from Kim et al. (2012) and Ali et al. (2016)
- d. Revisit intention, measured by items based on Kozak (2001) and Han & Hyun (2015)

#### 3.4. Data Analysis

Data is analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) via AMOS software to test the hypothesized relationships among e-WOM, tourist experience, and revisit intention. Before SEM, validity and reliability tests are conducted using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Descriptive statistics are also reported to describe the demographic profile of respondents.

#### 3.5. Ethical Considerations

Participation in this study is voluntary, and informed consent is obtained from all respondents. The confidentiality and anonymity of participants' responses are strictly maintained. Data is used solely for research purposes.

## 4. Research Findings

This study employed Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using AMOS 24.0 to examine the effects of Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) and Tourist Experience on Revisit Intention. Data were collected from 200 valid respondents who had previously visited a tourist destination and were exposed to electronic word-of-mouth content.

### 4.1 Measurement Model (Confirmatory Factor Analysis)

The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs. All factor loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.60, indicating good indicator reliability.

Table 1. Measurement Model (Confirmatory Factor Analysis)

Construct	CR (Composite Reliability)	AVE (Average Variance Extracted)
Electronic Word of Mouth	0.876	0.623
Tourist Experience	0.891	0.657
Revisit Intention	0.883	0.641

All Composite Reliability (CR) values were above 0.70 and all AVE values exceeded 0.50, confirming construct reliability and convergent validity. Discriminant validity was established as the square roots of AVE for each construct were higher than the correlations with other constructs.

### 4.2 Structural Model (Hypothesis Testing)

The structural model demonstrated good fit indices:

Table 2. Structural Model (Hypothesis Testing)

	Good Fit Model
Chi-square/df	2.011
GFI	0.926
AGFI	0.901
CFI	0.964
TLI	0.953
RMSEA	0.049

These indices met the commonly accepted thresholds (Hu & Bentler, 1999), indicating a good model fit.

Table 3. Path Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	C.R. (t-value)	p-value
H1: e-WOM $\rightarrow$ Revisit Intention	0.41	5.342	***
H2: Tourist Experience $\rightarrow$ Revisit Intention	0.52	6.104	***

Both hypotheses were supported. Tourist Experience had a slightly stronger effect on revisit intention ( $\beta = 0.52$ ) than e-WOM ( $\beta = 0.41$ ), though both were statistically significant at the 0.001 level.

### 4.3 Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ )

The  $R^2$  value for Revisit Intention was 0.678, indicating that 67.8% of the variance in revisit intention is explained by electronic word of mouth and tourist experience.

## 5. Discussion

The findings of this study affirm the significant influence of both Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) and Tourist Experience on Revisit Intention, in line with contemporary tourism behavior models and empirical studies from recent years.

### 5.1 Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth on Revisit Intention

The analysis reveals that e-WOM has a statistically significant and positive effect on revisit intention ( $\beta = 0.41$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This supports previous research indicating that digital communication among travelers—via online reviews, blogs, and social media—serves as a powerful source of persuasive information that shapes travel decisions and loyalty (Zhang et al., 2021; Hapsari & Wibowo, 2022). Recent studies emphasize that trust in user-generated content significantly enhances tourists' perceived value and intention to return (Algharabat et al., 2020; Kim & Lee, 2023). Moreover, e-WOM functions as both an information and experience-sharing platform, enabling potential tourists to anticipate their own satisfaction (Farooq et al., 2022).

### 5.2 Influence of Tourist Experience on Revisit Intention

Tourist experience was found to be an even stronger predictor of revisit intention ( $\beta = 0.52$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), emphasizing the power of emotionally and cognitively engaging experiences in cultivating loyalty. This finding aligns with the experience economy framework, which posits that experiential quality is more influential than price or physical attributes in post-visit behavior (Ali et al., 2019; Ketter, 2020). Research also suggests that memorable experiences—particularly those involving cultural immersion, emotional connection, and authenticity—are critical in influencing future travel intentions (Jiang & Kim, 2020; Rather, 2021). Additionally, satisfaction derived from meaningful and personalized experiences often translates into higher levels of destination attachment and behavioral commitment (Lyu et al., 2021).

### 5.3 Theoretical and Practical Implications

These findings support the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) by demonstrating how positive attitudes—formed via digital communication and on-site experience—translate into behavioral intentions. The combined  $R^2$  of 0.678 for revisit intention suggests a strong explanatory power of the model, reinforcing the view that e-WOM and experiential value are fundamental to loyalty development.

From a practical perspective, destination managers should prioritize two strategies: (1) developing emotional and immersive visitor experiences, and (2) encouraging the generation and distribution of positive e-WOM by satisfied tourists. Engaging tourists through storytelling, social sharing incentives, and service personalization can foster stronger bonds and increase revisit rates (Wang et al., 2022; Elshaer et al., 2022).

### 5.4 Limitations and Future Research

Although the findings are robust, the study is not without limitations. It focuses on a single destination and may not account for demographic or cultural differences among tourists. Future research could explore moderating effects of age, nationality, and digital literacy on the relationships explored. Moreover, incorporating longitudinal designs would help validate causal pathways and the durability of revisit intention over time (Narangajavana et al., 2019; Hassan & Soliman, 2020).

## 6. Conclusion

This study examined the impact of Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) and Tourist Experience on Revisit Intention using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) through AMOS. The findings confirm that both e-WOM and tourist experience have a significant and positive influence on tourists' intention to revisit a destination.

## 6.1 Hypothesis 1. Electronic Word of Mouth

emerged as a strong predictor of revisit intention, highlighting the growing role of digital platforms in shaping tourist perceptions and behavioral decisions. Positive and credible user-generated content can enhance trust and build favorable destination images, which in turn lead to greater loyalty.

## 6.2 Hypothesis 2. Tourist Experience

particularly the emotional, cognitive, and sensory components, was shown to have an even stronger influence on revisit intention. This supports the Experience Economy perspective, indicating that meaningful, immersive, and satisfying travel experiences are key to encouraging repeat visitation.

In conclusion, for destinations seeking to enhance sustainable tourism and visitor retention, strategic focus must be placed on creating emotionally rich, engaging tourist experiences while simultaneously encouraging the generation of positive e-WOM through digital storytelling, online reviews, and social engagement.

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