

EFFECTIVENESS OF INFLUENCER MARKETING AND DESTINATION IMAGE ON REVISIT INTENTION THROUGH ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH

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Abstract

This study analyzes the influence of Influencer Marketing and Destination Image on tourists' Revisit Intention through Electronic Word-of-Mouth as a mediating variable at the Sagara View Kebumen tourist destination. Primary data were collected through a questionnaire survey of 220 tourists selected using a non-probability sampling technique. Data were analyzed using PLS-SEM with the assistance of SmartPLS to evaluate the measurement model and structural model. The results indicate that Influencer Marketing and Destination Image have a positive and significant effect on e-WOM, and together with e-WOM also have a positive and significant effect on Revisit Intention. The mediation path analysis confirms that e-WOM significantly and partially-complementarily mediates the influence of both Influencer Marketing and Destination Image on Revisit Intention. These findings provide empirical reinforcement for Source Credibility Theory, Stimulus-Organism-Response Theory, the Elaboration Likelihood Model, the Theory of Planned Behavior, the Information Adoption Model, the Two-Step Flow of Communication Theory, and Social Learning Theory within the context of digital tourism. Destination managers are advised to select interactive content creators and maintain the quality of physical facilities in order to encourage positive digital conversation capable of sustainably stimulating Revisit Intention.

Keywords: *influencer marketing, destination image, electronic word-of-mouth, revisit intention*



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1. Introduction

The tourism industry has undergone a major transformation alongside the development of digital technology and the increasing use of the internet and social media in daily life. Young generations, particularly late millennials, Generation Z, and Generation Alpha born after the 2010s, have a close relationship with technology and tend to seek and share travel information through digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Google. As many as 45% of Generation Z consumers are recorded as being almost constantly online and strongly favor visual platforms, so the presence of digital influencers has a strong influence on shaping their travel decisions (Barbe & Neuburger, 2021). This phenomenon has driven tourism industry players to comprehensively adapt their marketing strategies through the use of digital marketing as the main means of reaching prospective tourists broadly, quickly, and efficiently.

One rapidly growing online marketing trend is Influencer Marketing, namely a strategy for promoting products or services through individuals perceived to have strong influence over an audience. Unlike conventional celebrity endorsement, these individuals generally hold micro-celebrity status, building popularity through the consistent cultivation of an online audience on social media. The authenticity and closeness offered by influencers have proven to be more trusted by consumers than traditional advertising (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017), and their application in the digital world makes a significant contribution to attracting tourist interest while also serving as a foundation for digital tourism marketing (Iswanto et al., 2024).

However, the effectiveness of Influencer Marketing on tourists' Revisit Intention still leaves a real empirical gap among previous researchers. Kavatina et al. (2023) found that influencer-based social media marketing had no significant effect on visiting interest, while Poluan et al. (2022) instead confirmed that digital marketing affects tourists' Revisit Intention. This disparity in findings demands re-examination in different destination contexts.

The success of influencers in building tourists' visiting interest cannot be separated from the formation of Destination Image, namely tourists' perception of a place based on the information, experiences, and symbols attached to that destination (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). A strong and positive destination image can enhance perceptions of safety, uniqueness, comfort, and the desire to visit. Nevertheless, empirical testing of this variable also shows differing views: Shatnawi et al. (2023) found no significant relationship between Destination Image and Revisit Intention, whereas Anugrah et al., (2024) and Fathin et al. (2024) reported a positive and significant effect.

The presence of digital platforms has made the spread of opinions about a tourist destination extremely massive through the mechanism of Electronic Word-of-Mouth, namely positive or negative statements made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or destination that are made available to many parties via the internet (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Online reviews and social media comments have become

important sources of information for prospective tourists in determining their choice of destination (Litvin et al., 2008). The dynamics of e-WOM have also sparked scholarly debate: Wilopo & Nuralam (2025) found no significant effect of e-WOM on tourist satisfaction, whereas Adam et al. (2023) proved that e-WOM contributes positively and significantly to Revisit Intention.

Empirical phenomena in the field reinforce the urgency of this research. Sagara View Kebumen, as a new natural tourist destination in the Karangbolong area, has a fairly large official social media follower base, around 27,500 followers each on Instagram and TikTok yet a relatively low level of audience engagement. Official management data from November 2025 recorded that only 22 of 226 Instagram posts received more than 1,000 likes, while of 655 YouTube videos, the average number of viewers per video was below 1,000. This disparity between the size of the follower base and the low engagement is consistent with fluctuations in physical visitation recorded during the 2023–2025 period: after recording a surge of up to 401,068 visitors in 2024 due to the novelty effect, the number of visits dropped sharply in 2025 to 268,270 visitors through October, with a sharp decline in nearly every month compared to the previous year.

The focus of previous research, which is mostly centered on large, established destinations such as Bali, Yogyakarta, or Bandung, also creates a contextual gap for developing regional tourist destinations such as Sagara View Kebumen. The limited number of research models that simultaneously test Influencer Marketing, Destination Image, e-WOM, and Revisit Intention within one integrated framework is also an important basis for this study.

The scientific contribution of this study is threefold. First, whereas prior studies have generally examined Influencer Marketing and Destination Image as separate, competing predictors of tourists' behavioral intention, this study positions e-WOM as the single bridging mechanism that connects both a public-figure-driven stimulus and a place-based stimulus to Revisit Intention within one structural model, an integration that has not been explicitly tested in the destinations examined by previous research. Second, this study directly addresses the empirical inconsistency identified in the studies of Kavatina et al. (2023), Poluan et al. (2022), Shatnawi et al. (2023), Anugrah et al. (2024), Fathin et al. (2024), Wilopo & Nuralam, (2025), and Adam et al. (2023) by simultaneously testing the direct and e-WOM-mediated paths in a single model, so that the conditions under which each variable does or does not significantly predict Revisit Intention can be distinguished. Third, this study extends the empirical context of Influencer Marketing and Destination Image research, which has so far been dominated by well-established destinations such as Bali, Yogyakarta, and Bandung, to a newly developing regional destination, Sagara View Kebumen, thereby testing whether the same theoretical mechanisms hold in a destination with a large social media following but comparatively low audience engagement. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of Influencer Marketing and Destination Image on the Revisit Intention of

Sagara View Kebumen tourists, by examining the role of e-WOM as an intervening variable that bridges digital marketing strategy with visitation loyalty.

2. Literature Review

Revisit Intention is a behavioral construct describing tourists' intention to return to a destination they have previously visited, and is commonly used as an indicator of a tourist destination's long-term success (Abubakar et al., 2017). This intention to revisit is formed from the complex interaction of satisfaction, trust, and perceived service quality of the destination (Kim et al., 2009). Meanwhile, Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) is defined as positive or negative statements made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product, service, or destination, made available to many parties and institutions via the internet (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Online reviews, social media comments, and travel discussion forums are important sources of information for prospective tourists in considering their destination choices, where positive e-WOM can increase revisit interest while negative e-WOM can hinder it (Litvin et al., 2008). Measurement instruments for e-WOM in the context of digital services have been comprehensively developed by Goyette et al. (2010) through the dimensions of intensity, opinion valence, and content.

This study is anchored on Source Credibility Theory (Hovland et al., 1953) and the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework Mehrabian & Russell (1974) as the two grand theories that explain how the two exogenous stimuli examined in this study, namely a communicator-based stimulus and a place-based stimulus, are processed by tourists into the organism-level response of generating e-WOM. The remaining five theories are positioned as supporting frameworks that each explain one specific link in the model rather than the model as a whole: the Elaboration Likelihood Model Petty & Cacioppo (1986) explains the peripheral-route processing underlying the direct path from Influencer Marketing to Revisit Intention; the Theory of Planned Behavior Ajzen (1991) is drawn on only for the attitude-formation component of the path from Destination Image to Revisit Intention; the Information Adoption Model Sussman & Siegal (2003) explains the direct path from e-WOM to Revisit Intention; and the Two-Step Flow of Communication Theory Katz & Lazarsfeld (1955) and Social Learning Theory Bandura (1977) explain, respectively, the mediating mechanism of e-WOM between Influencer Marketing and Revisit Intention (H6) and between Destination Image and Revisit Intention (H7). This hierarchy keeps the conceptual framework focused on the two grand theories while allowing each hypothesized path to be interpreted through the theory most directly relevant to it.

Influencer Marketing is a marketing strategy that leverages individuals with strong influence on social media, generally holding micro-celebrity status, to promote products or destinations authentically and relatably (Barbe & Neuburger, 2021). The authenticity and closeness offered by influencers have proven more trusted by consumers than

conventional advertising (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017), and the narrative strategies used by influencers play an important role in fostering the effectiveness of influence-based marketing (Zhou et al., 2021). Destination Image, meanwhile, refers to tourists' perception of a place based on the information, experiences, and symbols attached to the destination, formed from functional and psychological dimensions (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). Tasci & Gartner (2007) affirm that Destination Image has a complex functional relationship with tourist behavior, while Sirgy & Su (2000) show that the congruence between a tourist's self-image and the destination's image also shapes their travel behavior.

The relationship between Influencer Marketing and e-WOM is explained through public figures' ability to trigger active audience participation in the digital space. Lou & Yuan (2018) proved that Influencer Marketing strategies can encourage consumer engagement, which in turn generates organic conversation, while Zhou et al. (2021) affirmed that applying the right influencer narrative strategy also fosters the effectiveness of marketing communication through social media.

Destination Image also plays a role as a stimulus that triggers tourists to share their visiting experiences online. Baber & Baber (2022), through a Stimulus-Organism-Response approach, showed that a destination's reputation and image affect the intention to share travel experiences on social media, a finding also confirmed by Khaki et al. (2023), who proved that Destination Image significantly affects e-WOM.

The direct influence of Influencer Marketing on Revisit Intention has been tested in various tourism contexts with mixed results. (Poluan et al., 2022) found that digital marketing affects tourists' Revisit Intention, while Fitri Annisa & Hariyanti (2024) proved that exposure to digital-figure-based advertising on Instagram affects tourists' visiting interest. These findings contrast with Kavatina et al. (2023), who found no significant effect of influencer-based social media marketing on visiting interest; the discrepancy is plausibly explained by differences in audience segment, since Kavatina et al. (2023) examined a general audience exposed to broad social media marketing, whereas Poluan et al. (2022) and Fitri Annisa & Hariyanti (2024) examined audiences already engaged with figure-based, visually driven content, a condition closer to the digitally literate, Instagram- and TikTok-oriented tourist segment of Sagara View Kebumen.

A positive Destination Image is believed to be a strong predictor of the formation of revisit intention. Anugrah et al. (2024) and Fathin et al. (2024) found that Destination Image has a positive and significant effect on visiting interest, while Wijaya & Aksari (2024) and Novianti & Ernawadi (2024) affirmed the central role of destination image in building tourists' Revisit Intention. This is not, however, a uniform finding: Shatnawi et al. (2023) found no significant relationship between Destination Image and Revisit Intention at a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Petra, Jordan. A plausible explanation for this divergence is that at an already internationally established heritage destination, Destination Image may be a necessary but no longer a differentiating factor for revisit

decisions, whereas at a newly developing destination such as Sagara View Kebumen, Destination Image is still being actively formed and is therefore more likely to exert a direct, discriminating effect on Revisit Intention.

As a credible social reference source, e-WOM is believed to be able to encourage tourists to realize their revisit intention. Adam et al. (2023) proved that e-WOM contributes positively and significantly to Revisit Intention, in line with the findings of Chrisnardani & Arief (2022) and Hossain et al. (2023) in different tourist destination contexts. This is contradicted by Wilopo & Nuralam (2025), who found no significant effect of e-WOM on tourist satisfaction among Indonesian international tourists. Because satisfaction and Revisit Intention are conceptually distinct outcomes, this contrast suggests that e-WOM's influence may be stronger on prospective behavioral intention, which is shaped by anticipatory social validation before a visit, than on post-visit satisfaction, which is shaped more heavily by the tourist's own direct experience.

The mediating role of e-WOM in bridging digital marketing strategy and revisit intention has also received empirical support. Pertiwi et al. (2024) found that the usefulness of e-WOM and social media activity play an important role in driving Revisit Intention through Destination Image, while Anggraini & Dzulkarnain (2025) proved that e-WOM plays a significant role in linking social media marketing activity with tourists' visiting interest. Both studies, notably, examined social media marketing in general rather than influencer-specific stimuli, so the extent to which e-WOM mediates the narrower, personality-driven mechanism of Influencer Marketing specifically remains comparatively untested and is one gap this study addresses through H6.

Salman et al. (2025) found that the relationship between the marketing mix, Destination Image, and Revisit Intention is mediated by e-WOM and tourist satisfaction, while Absharina & Karmilasari (2022) and Aditya & Piartrini (2023) also confirmed the mediating role of e-WOM in bridging Destination Image with revisit intention. Taken together, these three studies converge on a partial-mediation pattern rather than full mediation, which is theoretically consistent with H4's expectation that Destination Image also retains a direct effect on Revisit Intention alongside its indirect, e-WOM-mediated path.

Conceptually, the seven relationships above can be synthesized into a single stimulus-organism-response chain rather than treated as isolated bivariate links. Influencer Marketing and Destination Image function as two parallel stimuli: the former is a communicator-based stimulus whose credibility and attractiveness are cognitively processed by tourists, while the latter is a place-based stimulus that is affectively evaluated through tourists' perception of the destination's physical and symbolic attributes. Both processing routes converge on the same organism-level outcome, namely the tourist's motivation to convert a favorable impression into a publicly shared opinion, which manifests behaviorally as e-WOM. e-WOM in turn functions as a socially validated response that reduces the perceived risk of a future visit, so that it is theoretically

positioned to transmit part of the effect of both exogenous stimuli onto Revisit Intention rather than merely correlating with it. This mechanism-level argument, rather than the direction of the relationship alone, is the basis for formulating H1, H2, H6, and H7 as an integrated pathway, while H3, H4, and H5 test whether each stimulus and the e-WOM response also retain a direct, unmediated effect on Revisit Intention.

Based on the literature review above, the direct and indirect influence of Influencer Marketing and Destination Image on Revisit Intention, both partially and through the mediating role of e-WOM, needs to be proven empirically in the context of the Sagara View Kebumen tourist destination. Therefore, the following research hypotheses are formulated:

H1: Influencer Marketing has positive effect on e-WOM.

H2: Destination Image has positive effect on e-WOM.

H3: Influencer Marketing has positive effect on Revisit Intention.

H4: Destination Image has positive effect on Revisit Intention.

H5: e-WOM has a positive effect on Revisit Intention.

H6: e-WOM mediates the effect of Influencer Marketing on the Revisit Intention.

H7: e-WOM mediates the effect of Destination Image on the Revisit Intention.

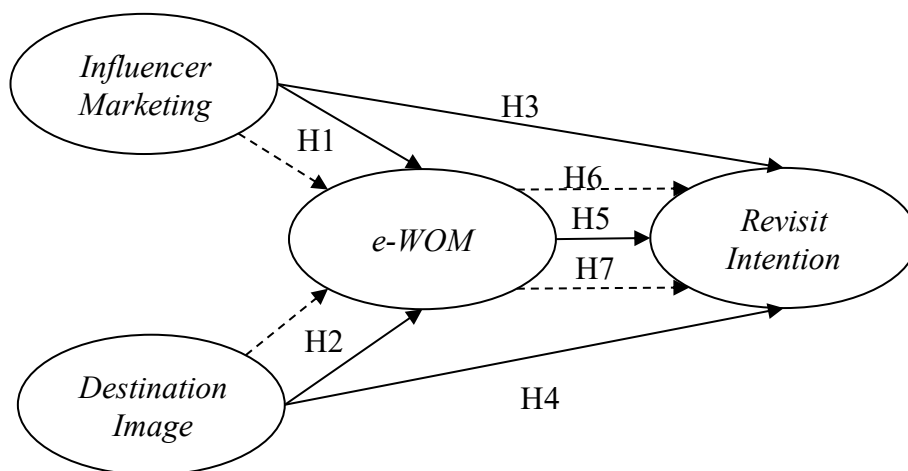


Figure 1 Conceptual Model

3. Research Method

This study uses a quantitative explanatory research design, intended to test the causal-associative relationships and mediation effects hypothesized between Influencer Marketing, Destination Image, e-WOM, and Revisit Intention through inferential analysis using PLS-SEM, with the Sagara View Kebumen tourist destination, located in the Karangbolong area, Kebumen Regency, Central Java, as its research object. The research subjects are tourists who have visited the destination. Primary data were collected through a closed questionnaire survey using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) strongly

disagree to (5) strongly agree (Likert, 1932).

The determination of sample size follows the minimum sample size guidelines for PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2019). A post-hoc minimum sample size analysis of the estimated model shows that, for the weakest structural path, a minimum of 190 respondents is required at a 5% significance level and 80% statistical power. This study used 220 respondents, which exceeds this requirement and also falls within the 150–400 range commonly cited for SEM (Santoso, 2018), thereby providing an adequate margin for the complexity of the seven-path structural model tested. The 220 respondents were obtained through a non-probability, purposive sampling technique (Sugiyono, 2022), based on the following criteria: (1) had visited Sagara View Kebumen at least once, and (2) were active social media users (e.g., Instagram or TikTok) who had been exposed to influencer-based promotional content.

The research variables consist of two exogenous variables, namely Influencer Marketing, measured through five indicators adapted from Barbe & Neuburger (2021) and Djafarova & Rushworth (2017), covering the dimensions of influencer credibility, attractiveness, and content authenticity; and Destination Image, measured through nine indicators adapted from Echtner & Ritchie (1991) and Tasci & Gartner (2007), covering functional and psychological attributes of the destination; one intervening variable, namely e-WOM, measured through four indicators adapted from Goyette et al. (2010) covering the dimensions of intensity, positive valence, and content; and one endogenous variable, namely Revisit Intention, measured through four indicators adapted from (Abubakar et al., 2017). The indicators were contextually adjusted to refer explicitly to Sagara View Kebumen.

The data analysis technique uses the PLS-SEM method with the assistance of SmartPLS software. PLS-SEM was chosen for its ability to predict causal relationships between latent variables without requiring specific data distribution assumptions (Mustofa & Wijaya, 2013). Model evaluation was conducted in two stages: (1) evaluation of the measurement model, which includes convergent validity testing through loading factor values (>0.70) and AVE (>0.50), discriminant validity testing through the Fornell-Larcker criterion ($HTMT < 0.90$), and reliability testing through Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha (>0.70); and (2) evaluation of the structural model, which includes the coefficient of determination (R^2) and hypothesis testing through a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples. A hypothesis is declared accepted if the T-statistic value exceeds 1.96 at a significance level of 5% and the P-value is below 0.05.

The research instrument was distributed to tourists who had visited Sagara View Kebumen until 220 questionnaires deemed suitable for analysis were obtained. The demographic profile shows a dominance of female respondents at 122 people (55.45%) compared to male respondents at 98 people (44.55%). By age, the majority of respondents were in the 20–28 age range (115 people or 52.27%), followed by the 29–44 age range (82 people or 37.27%) and the 45–60 age range (23 people or 10.45%). In terms of

income, half of the respondents earned Rp2,000,000–Rp4,000,000 per month (110 people or 50.00%), followed by the group earning below Rp2,000,000 (75 people or 34.09%) and above Rp4,000,000 (35 people or 15.91%). This profile shows that the majority of respondents are productive young tourists who are active on social media, making them suitable to represent the study's target population.

4. Results and Discussion

The convergent validity evaluation shows that all indicators from the 22 questionnaire items have loading factor values ranging from 0.921 to 0.960, well above the 0.70 threshold. The AVE value for all four latent variables also exceeds the minimum threshold of 0.50, with details of 0.908 for Influencer Marketing, 0.867 for Destination Image, 0.900 for e-WOM, and 0.887 for Revisit Intention. Construct reliability is also confirmed by Composite Reliability values between 0.969–0.983 and Cronbach's Alpha between 0.958–0.981, all of which are well above the critical threshold of 0.70. Because the uniformly high loadings (0.921–0.960) could also indicate item redundancy rather than construct strength, the outer VIF values were examined: they range from 4.85 to 8.14, above the conventional threshold of 5 for most indicators. Since all four constructs are measured reflectively, where items are expected to be highly inter-correlated and interchangeable, this does not invalidate the measurement model, but it does suggest some overlap among items within each construct, and shorter scales could be considered in future research.

Table 1. Data Quality Test

Variable	Indicator	Loading	A	CR	AVE
<i>Influencer Marketing</i>	IM1	0.955	0.975	0.980	0.908
	IM2	0.950			
	IM3	0.952			
	IM4	0.949			
	IM5	0.960			
<i>Destination Image</i>	DI1	0.927	0.981	0.983	0.867
	DI2	0.926			
	DI3	0.931			
	DI4	0.921			
	DI5	0.931			
	DI6	0.933			
	DI7	0.934			
	DI8	0.930			
	DI9	0.946			
<i>Electronic Word of Mouth</i>	WO1	0.949	0.963	0.973	0.900
	WO2	0.951			
	WO3	0.951			
	WO4	0.944			
<i>Revisit Intention</i>	RI1	0.947	0.958	0.969	0.887
	RI2	0.940			
	RI3	0.941			
	RI4	0.940			

Source: primary data processed, 2026.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

Construct	DI	e-WOM	IM	RI
<i>Destination Image</i>	0.931			
<i>e-WOM</i>	0.684	0.949		
<i>Influencer Marketing</i>	0.480	0.645	0.953	
<i>Revisit Intention</i>	0.683	0.770	0.613	0.942

Source: primary data processed, 2026.

Table 3. HTMT Values

Construct	DI	e-WOM	IM	RI
<i>Destination Image</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>e-WOM</i>	0.704	-	-	-
<i>Influencer Marketing</i>	0.490	0.665	-	-
<i>Revisit Intention</i>	0.705	0.802	0.634	-

Source: primary data processed, 2026.

Discriminant validity testing based on the Fornell-Larcker criterion indicates that the square root of the AVE of each construct is higher than the correlation values with other constructs, reinforced by HTMT values that consistently fall below the conservative threshold of 0.90. This result indicates that the four latent constructs in the research model are statistically unique and distinct from one another.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates the extent to which exogenous variables can explain the variation in endogenous variables. Referring to the classification of Hair et al. (2019), R^2 values of 0.25, 0.50, and 0.75 indicate weak, moderate, and strong influence, respectively. The analysis results show that the e-WOM variable is explained by 59.9% by Influencer Marketing and Destination Image ($R^2=0.599$), which falls into the moderate-to-strong category, while the remaining 40.1% is influenced by other variables outside the model. Meanwhile, the Revisit Intention variable is explained by 65.8% simultaneously by Influencer Marketing, Destination Image, and e-WOM ($R^2=0.658$), which falls into the strong category, with the remaining 34.2% explained by other external factors. These findings indicate that the research model has adequate explanatory power for the variation in Sagara View Kebumen tourists' Revisit Intention.

Table 4. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Variable	R-square	Adjusted R-square
<i>Electronic Word of Mouth</i>	0.599	0.595
<i>Revisit Intention</i>	0.658	0.654

Source: primary data processed, 2026.

Beyond the coefficient of determination, the structural model was also evaluated for effect size (f^2) and predictive relevance (Q^2), obtained through the blindfolding procedure in SmartPLS, to show not only the significance but also the magnitude and

predictive contribution of each relationship (Hair et al., 2019). Table 5 presents these values.

Table 5. Effect Size (f^2) and Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Path / Construct	f^2	Category	Q^2
$IM \rightarrow e\text{-}WOM$	0.324	Medium	-
$DI \rightarrow e\text{-}WOM$	0.455	Large	-
$IM \rightarrow RI$	0.056	Small	-
$DI \rightarrow RI$	0.122	Small	-
$e\text{-}WOM \rightarrow RI$	0.251	Medium	-
Electronic Word of Mouth	-	-	0.530
Revisit Intention	-	-	0.578

Source: primary data processed, 2026.

Following Cohen's (1988) guidelines (f^2 of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicating small, medium, and large effects), Destination Image has a large effect size on e-WOM ($f^2=0.455$), the largest among the five structural paths, followed by Influencer Marketing on e-WOM ($f^2=0.324$) and e-WOM on Revisit Intention ($f^2=0.251$), both medium. The direct contributions of Destination Image ($f^2=0.122$) and Influencer Marketing ($f^2=0.056$) to Revisit Intention are small. The Q^2 values for e-WOM (0.530) and Revisit Intention (0.578) are both well above zero, indicating that the model has adequate predictive relevance for both endogenous constructs.

Hypothesis testing was carried out through a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples. The direct effect test results show that Influencer Marketing has a positive and significant effect on e-WOM ($\beta=0.411$; $T=7.822$; $p=0.000$) and on Revisit Intention ($\beta=0.181$; $T=3.138$; $p=0.002$). Destination Image also has a positive and significant effect on e-WOM ($\beta=0.487$; $T=10.664$; $p=0.000$) and on Revisit Intention ($\beta=0.281$; $T=4.481$; $p=0.000$). Furthermore, e-WOM was also found to have a positive and significant effect on Revisit Intention ($\beta=0.462$; $T=6.990$; $p=0.000$). All direct-effect hypotheses (H1–H5) are declared accepted because the T-statistic value exceeds 1.96 and the P-value is below 0.05.

The indirect effect test shows that e-WOM significantly mediates the effect of Influencer Marketing on Revisit Intention ($\beta=0.190$; $T=5.421$; $p=0.000$) as well as the effect of Destination Image on Revisit Intention ($\beta=0.225$; $T=5.425$; $p=0.000$). Both mediation hypotheses (H6 and H7) are declared accepted, with e-WOM acting as a complementary partial mediator, namely a variable that simultaneously strengthens both the direct and indirect effects of the exogenous variables on Revisit Intention.

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hyp.	Path	β	T-statistic	P-value	Remark
H1	$IM \rightarrow e-WOM$	0.411	7.822	0.000	Accepted
H2	$DI \rightarrow e-WOM$	0.487	10.664	0.000	Accepted
H3	$IM \rightarrow RI$	0.181	3.138	0.002	Accepted
H4	$DI \rightarrow RI$	0.281	4.481	0.000	Accepted
H5	$e-WOM \rightarrow RI$	0.462	6.990	0.000	Accepted
H6	$IM \rightarrow e-WOM \rightarrow RI$	0.190	5.421	0.000	Accepted
H7	$DI \rightarrow e-WOM \rightarrow RI$	0.225	5.425	0.000	Accepted

Source: primary data processed, 2026.

The test results show that Influencer Marketing has a positive and significant effect on e-WOM (H1, $\beta=0.411$; $T=7.822$; $p=0.000$), meaning that the more massive the Influencer Marketing strategy applied, the higher the intensity of tourists in creating e-WOM. This finding confirms Source Credibility Theory (Hovland et al., 1953), which explains that a communicator's credibility, expertise, and attractiveness play a crucial role in stimulating the audience to accept and re-share messages into organic conversation in the digital space. H1 is in line with the findings of Lou & Yuan (2018) and Zhou et al. (2021), who state that Influencer Marketing strategies can trigger active audience participation. In the context of Sagara View Kebumen, which is dominated by digitally literate Generation Z tourists, promotional content about the Mega Slide and Glass Bridge attractions delivered by influencer figures appears to stimulate audience curiosity, encouraging them to share content, tag peers in the comments section, and ultimately create widespread e-WOM.

Furthermore, Destination Image is shown to have a positive and significant effect on e-WOM, with the highest path coefficient among all the structural relationships tested (H2, $\beta=0.487$; $T=10.664$; $p=0.000$). The more positive the Destination Image built, the higher the intensity of tourists sharing e-WOM. This finding provides conceptual support for the Stimulus-Organism-Response Theory (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), which explains that a destination's physical and visual environment acts as a stimulus that affects tourists' affective evaluation, thereby triggering the behavioral response of sharing experiences online. H2 is consistent with the studies of Baber & Baber (2022) and Khaki et al. (2023), which conclude that Destination Image is a fundamental predictor of e-WOM formation. The Indian Ocean coastal cliff landscape and modern tourism infrastructure at Sagara View Kebumen serve as a visual attraction that motivates tourists particularly the women who dominate visitor numbers, to capture and share their holiday moments as a form of digital-identity-based e-WOM. This result carries a theoretical implication worth developing further: Destination Image ($\beta=0.487$) outperforms Influencer Marketing ($\beta=0.411$) as a predictor of e-WOM, even though both paths are significant. A plausible explanation is that an influencer's content is an externally sourced,

ultimately promotional stimulus, so tourists tend to process it more cautiously; whereas a favorable Destination Image is formed from the destination's own tangible attributes and, once internalized, reduces the perceived risk of being seen as insincere when the tourist shares it as e-WOM. In other words, at a developing destination such as Sagara View Kebumen, the destination's own perceived quality functions as a stronger and more self-owned trigger for organic digital conversation than externally sourced promotional stimuli, which is the study's main contribution to the theoretical understanding of e-WOM formation among tourists at emerging regional destinations.

On the other hand, Influencer Marketing was also found to have a positive and significant effect on Revisit Intention ($H3$, $\beta=0.181$; $T=3.138$; $p=0.002$), meaning that the more optimal the application of Influencer Marketing, the higher the level of tourists' Revisit Intention. This finding can be analyzed through the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), which explains that tourists process visual information from social media through the peripheral route, in which the attractiveness of the content creator acts as an emotional cue that shapes tourists' positive attitudes. $H3$ is also confirmed by the findings of Poluan et al. (2022) and Fitri Annisa & Hariyanti (2024), who highlight the effectiveness of digital-figure-based promotion in sustaining tourists' visiting interest. Consistent interaction between influencers and their followers regarding Sagara View Kebumen, for example, through updated content about exclusive glamping facilities has proven able to reduce tourist boredom with the destination and sustain their Revisit Intention on an ongoing basis.

In line with this, Destination Image has a positive and significant effect on Revisit Intention ($H4$, $\beta=0.281$; $T=4.481$; $p=0.000$), where an improvement in the quality of Destination Image is directly proportional to a higher level of tourists' Revisit Intention. This empirical result can be interpreted through the attitude-formation component of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991): a positive Destination Image contributes to a favorable attitude toward the destination, which is one of the three antecedents of behavioral intention in the theory. It is important to note that this study measures only this attitudinal pathway; the subjective norm and perceived behavioral control components of TPB were not operationalized in the research model, so the finding should not be read as a full test of the theory. $H4$ is in line with the findings of (Wijaya & Aksari (2024) and Fathin et al. (2024), who agree that a reputation for safety, comfort, and complete facilities is a key factor in visitor retention. The availability of supporting infrastructure at Sagara View Kebumen, such as paved road access, the Sagara Resto area, and clean public facilities, instills positive cognitive memories that effectively foster tourists' confidence in realizing future revisits.

e-WOM is shown to have a positive and significant effect on Revisit Intention ($H5$, $\beta=0.462$; $T=6.990$; $p=0.000$), making it the second-strongest direct predictor in the research model after the effect of Destination Image on e-WOM. The wider the spread of e-WOM, the higher tourists' Revisit Intention. This finding reinforces the Information

Adoption Model (Sussman & Siegal, 2003), which explains that individuals will adopt digital information as a basis for behavior if the reference is deemed credible, relevant, and able to reduce the risk of decision-making error. H5 is consistent with research by Adam et al. (2023), Chrismardani & Arief (2022), and Hossain et al. (2023), which affirm the role of e-WOM as a guarantee of trustworthy social reference. The middle-class tourist group at Sagara View Kebumen, who are accustomed to cross-checking through Google or TikTok before planning their trip, treat positive e-WOM content about the sunrise views and ride experiences as psychological validation that strengthens their Revisit Intention.

Furthermore, the mediation path analysis indicates that e-WOM significantly mediates the effect of Influencer Marketing on Revisit Intention in a complementary partial manner (H6, $\beta=0.190$; $T=5.421$; $p=0.000$). This positive coefficient indicates that e-WOM acts as a catalyst that strengthens the impact of Influencer Marketing on Revisit Intention. This finding extends the application of the Two-Step Flow of Communication Theory (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955), which explains that messages from social media authority figures require a filter in the form of grassroots-level conversation among consumers before they can fully convince the audience. H6 is in line with the studies of Pertiwi et al. (2024) and Anggraini & Dzulquarnain (2025), who emphasize that Influencer Marketing functions as an opening stage for tourism brand awareness, while the actual realization of Revisit Intention only forms when influencer content succeeds in sparking massive e-WOM in the comments section. Promotional videos about the Sagara View Glass Bridge, for example, do not always directly lead to a repeat visit, but instead require derivative content from netizens as objective confirmation of the destination's quality.

Finally, the mediation test also indicates that e-WOM plays a significant role as a complementary partial mediator in linking Destination Image with Revisit Intention (H7, $\beta=0.225$; $T=5.425$; $p=0.000$). This statistical certainty provides justification for Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), which explains that future human behavioral intentions depend on continuous observation of responses from one's social environment, not merely on internal memory alone. H7 is consistent with the studies of Absharina & Karmilasari (2022), Aditya & Piartrini (2023), and Salman et al. (2025), which confirm that a place's Destination Image requires ongoing attention from e-WOM to remain relevant in tourists' minds. Visual memories of the beauty of Puncak Jengger at Sagara View Kebumen are prone to being replaced by memories of competing destinations over time, so the presence of a social media algorithm that consistently displays e-WOM functions as a reminder system that converts that cognitive memory into actual Revisit Intention.

Comparing the seven paths systematically, Destination Image has the largest total effect on Revisit Intention ($0.281 + 0.225 = 0.506$) and the largest effect on e-WOM ($\beta=0.487$), followed by e-WOM's direct effect on Revisit Intention ($\beta=0.462$, the largest

single direct path to Revisit Intention) and Influencer Marketing's total effect ($0.181 + 0.190 = 0.371$). This ordering indicates that, in the specific characteristics of Sagara View Kebumen tourists, who are dominated by young, digitally active Generation Z and millennial visitors, the destination's own physical and experiential attributes carry more weight in driving both online conversation and repeat visitation than a public figure's promotional voice. This pattern differs from tourism contexts where Influencer Marketing has been found to be the dominant driver (e.g., Poluan et al., 2022), suggesting that the relative strength of digital-marketing versus place-based stimuli in shaping Revisit Intention is contingent on how established a destination's image already is: an emerging destination such as Sagara View Kebumen appears to still be in a phase where consolidating destination quality has more explanatory power than amplifying promotional voice.

5. Conclusion

This study shows that Influencer Marketing and Destination Image each have a positive and significant effect on e-WOM, and together with e-WOM also have a positive and significant effect on the Revisit Intention of Sagara View Kebumen tourists. The mediation analysis indicates that e-WOM acts as a complementary partial mediator that strengthens the effect of both Influencer Marketing and Destination Image on Revisit Intention, with Destination Image emerging as the strongest overall driver, largest effect on e-WOM and largest total effect on Revisit Intention ahead of Influencer Marketing, while e-WOM has the largest direct effect on Revisit Intention. Taken together, these findings indicate that the formation of tourists' revisit intention is not driven by a single stimulus of digital marketing strategy or the destination's physical image alone, but is associated with layered social validation through e-WOM.

Beyond confirming these relationships, the specific finding that this study extends is the ordering of the two exogenous stimuli: in an emerging regional destination context, a place-based stimulus is a stronger predictor of e-WOM than a communicator-based stimulus, which nuances Source Credibility Theory (Hovland et al., 1953) and Stimulus-Organism-Response Theory (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) by suggesting that their relative explanatory power for e-WOM formation is contingent on how established the destination's image already is. The findings also enrich the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and the attitude-formation component of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) in explaining Revisit Intention, and extend the applicability of the Two-Step Flow of Communication Theory (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955), Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), and the Information Adoption Model (Sussman & Siegal, 2003) to the context of digital tourism at a newly developing destination, a context in which these theories had not previously been jointly tested.

This study has a number of limitations that should be of concern for future research. Because data were collected through non-probability purposive sampling rather

than random sampling, the reported paths should be interpreted as associative relationships within a structural model consistent with theory, rather than as proof of causation in the strict experimental sense, and the findings should be generalized to the broader population of Sagara View Kebumen visitors with appropriate caution. The cross-sectional nature of the data collection further limits the ability to observe fluctuations in Revisit Intention over the long term or across holiday seasons. The research model also focuses only on two exogenous variables without considering other factors such as ticket prices, staff service quality, or public transportation accessibility, while the dominance of young respondents in the sample also limits the generalization of findings to the behavior of elderly tourists. Future research is advised to expand the scope of external variables, apply a longitudinal design, and reach more diverse demographic segments to strengthen the external validity of this integrative model. The study's geographic scope, still limited to a single destination, also opens opportunities for replicating the model at other developing regional tourist destinations so that these findings can be more broadly generalized.

Two practical recommendations follow directly from the empirical results of this study: Sagara View Kebumen's management should select Influencer Marketing partners based on two-way engagement metrics in the comments section rather than follower count alone, since Influencer Marketing significantly drives e-WOM, and two-way engagement is a plausible indicator of this e-WOM-generating capacity (engagement metrics themselves were not measured in this model); and management should prioritize maintaining the quality of physical facilities at strategic points such as the Glass Bridge and glamping area, since Destination Image was found to be the strongest driver of e-WOM and has the largest total effect on Revisit Intention. Beyond these evidence-based recommendations, incentive programs for tourists who post original reviews on platforms such as Google Maps or TikTok, the periodic launch of new attractions or themed tour packages, and stronger customer-service responsiveness to complaints on social media are additional managerial suggestions consistent with the study's findings, but were not variables tested directly in the model and should therefore be treated as conceptual extensions for management's consideration rather than as empirically validated conclusions.

Overall, these findings confirm that tourists' Revisit Intention in the digital era is the result of a layered interaction between public-figure marketing stimuli, the quality of the destination's physical image, and social validation through e-WOM. These three elements complement one another and form a sustainable cycle of digital trust, so that managers of developing regional tourist destinations need to view Influencer Marketing strategy, Destination Image management, and e-WOM maintenance not as separate, standalone efforts, but as a single, unified digital marketing ecosystem that sustains long-term tourist visitation.

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