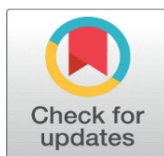


THE MEDIATING ROLE OF E-WORD OF MOUTH INTENTION IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PLACE ATTACHMENT AND REVISIT INTENTION IN NOSTALGIA TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study explores the relationships between place attachment, nostalgia tourism, and revisit intentions among international tourists visiting their ancestral hometowns, with a specific emphasis on the mediating role of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM).

Methodology: A descriptive-causal research design was employed, and data were collected using convenience sampling from international tourists in regions with high Non-Resident Indian (NRI) populations, including Punjab, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, and Chandigarh. A total of 430 valid responses were obtained and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to assess both the measurement and structural models.

Findings: The results indicate that both place identity and place dependence have a positive influence on e-WOM intentions and revisit intentions. Furthermore, e-WOM intentions were found to mediate the relationship between place attachment and revisit intentions.

Implications: The study underscores the significant role of emotional and social connections to a place in shaping tourist behavior.

Value These insights are particularly useful for tourism marketers and policymakers seeking to foster destination loyalty by leveraging the impact of place attachment and e-WOM.

Keywords: Place Attachment, Nostalgia Tourism, Revisit Intentions, E-WOM Intentions Etc

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has significantly contributing to global GDP and employment opportunities [1]. In India, the tourism and hospitality sector plays a pivotal role in economic development, backed by its rich cultural heritage, ecological diversity, and natural beauty [2]. It is also a major source of foreign exchange earnings. Domestic tourism also remained a key growth driver, with 1,731.01 million domestic tourist visits reported across the country in 2022 (Indian Tourism Statistics, 2023). Additionally, FTAs surged from 1.52 million in 2021 to 6.44 million in 2022—a growth of 321.54% and

a 58.9% recovery compared to pre-pandemic 2019 levels [3]. Non-resident Indian (NRI) arrivals increased by 43.9% during the same period, while international tourist arrivals rose by 104.4% [3]

Table 1

Table 1 Trends in Non-Resident Indian (NRI)		
Years	NRIs arrival in India (in million)	% change
2014	5.43	---
2015	5.74	5.7
2016	6.22	8.4
2017	6.77	8.8
2018	6.87	1.5
2019	6.98	1.6
2020	3.59	-48.6
2021	5.48	52.6
2022	7.89	43.9

From 2014 to 2019, NRI arrivals in India showed steady growth, peaking at 6.98 million in 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 caused a sharp 48.6% decline in arrivals. A strong recovery began in 2021, with arrivals surging by 52.6%, followed by a 43.9% increase in 2022, reaching a record 7.89 million. This trend reflects the resilience of NRI travel demand and the easing of pandemic-related restrictions.

Table 2

Table 2 Month-Wise Break-up of Non-Residents Indians (NRIs) Arrivals 2020-2022					
Months	2020	2021	2022	Growth (2021/2020)	Growth (2022/2021)
January	611702	486338	515913	-20.49	6.08
February	495109	431118	491070	-12.92	13.91
March	287681	479317	655944	66.61	36.85
April	233	413089	731513	177191.42	77.08
May	25760	204898	673082	695.41	228.5
June	180956	217473	773219	20.18	255.55
July	284643	339026	868551	19.11	156.19
August	270669	364833	575853	34.79	57.84
September	274391	435194	495649	58.6	13.89
October	332214	653771	628809	96.79	-3.82
November	406941	683658	659424	68	-3.54
December	422057	773806	823183	83.34	6.38
Total	3592356	5482521	7892210	52.62	43.95

Source: Bureau of Immigration, Govt. of India

The monthly data on NRI arrivals in India from 2020 to 2022 highlights the dramatic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent recovery. In 2020, the pandemic caused a severe drop in travel, with monthly arrivals at record lows and a total of 3.59 million arrivals for the year. As travel restrictions eased in 2021, NRI arrivals began to rebound sharply. Months like April and May, which saw minimal arrivals in 2020, recorded extraordinary growth rates of 177,191.42% and 695.41%, respectively, in 2021. This marked an overall annual increase of 52.62%, bringing the total for 2021 to approximately 5.48 million arrivals. The recovery strengthened in 2022, with further increases in arrival numbers, particularly from March to July, when growth rates were notably high. June and July recorded increases of 255.55% and 156.19%, respectively, compared to the same months in 2021. By the end of 2022, total arrivals reached 7.89 million, reflecting a 43.95% rise over 2021.

Factors such as location, event planning, pricing, popularity amenities, service standards, and entertainment options influence vacation destination decisions[4,5]. Additionally, other research has highlighted the significance of factors like a favorable destination image[6] and influence[7] in shaping destination selection [8].The primary objective of this study is to examine the mediating role of e-WOM intention in the relationship between place attachment—specifically, the dimensions of place identity and place dependence—and revisit intention. This study aims to understand how emotional and functional connections to a place influence visitors' likelihood to share their experiences online and how this, in turn, impacts their intention to revisit. By investigating this mediating role, the study seeks to provide insights into how tourism destinations can leverage e-WOM to strengthen visitor loyalty and encourage repeat visits.

Tourism plays a vital role in the global service industry, driving economic growth, job creation, and cultural exchange. India exemplifies this trend, with a strong post-pandemic recovery marked by rising foreign tourist and NRI arrivals. This study explores how e-WOM intentions mediates place attachment and revisit intention, highlighting the importance of emotional and functional connections in shaping tourist behavior. By fostering meaningful experiences and encouraging online sharing, tourism stakeholders can enhance destination image, boost repeat visits, and strengthen long-term competitiveness. These findings offer practical guidance for policymakers and marketers focused on digital engagement and visitor loyalty.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. NOSTALGIA

Nostalgia is a “wistful” pleasure, noting that the feeling of nostalgia varied between individuals[9]. It was found that when people recalled memories that made them feel nostalgic, they revisited personally meaningful life events often shared with loved ones. These memories were primarily associated with positive emotions like warmth, joy, elation, tenderness, and gratitude, although they were sometimes linked to negative emotions such as sadness, irritation, and fear. Studies by[10] and increased global migration posed new questions about the significance of an “ancestral home,” influencing migrants' daily lives and affecting their connections to places of origin[11]. According to [12], immigrants in a new country often felt a need to visit their ancestral homeland or culturally significant destinations to explore family history or reconnect with their roots, and It was observed that research on migrants' sense of place[13] and attachment tended to focus on more recent generations[14], who were found to maintain strong physical and emotional ties to these places[15].The term “ancestral tourism” to describe visits motivated by a desire to connect with one’s ancestral past[16]. Ancestral tourism is an activity focused on discovering[17] and engaging with the heritage of a distant homeland[18], often anchored in deeply personal narratives that can even take on a mythic quality[19]. This type of tourism evoked powerful emotions, such as nostalgia[20] and a sense of belonging[21].

2.2. PLACE ATTACHMENT

Place attachment was first described as exploring the emotional impact of a place on individuals, emphasizing how people become attracted to it through emotional and cultural bonds[22]. This attachment influences how people perceive[23] and relate to the places they occupy. It involves affective bonds to places across multiple geographic scales, with various temporal qualities and social actors contributing to these connections[24]. It significantly influencing one's subjective well-being[25]. Place attachment occurs when a location is connected to personally significant experiences, such as milestones, personal growth, and career achievements[26]. A direct relationship between the level of attachment to a place and the individual's interest in it—when someone forms an attachment, they are more likely to care about that place[27]. Migration, whether voluntary or forced, away from a cherished home can create a longing to stay connected to the place, often through cultural practices, oral histories, or storytelling that evoke memories and images of the distant location[28].

2.3. E-WOM INTENTIONS

The e-WOM influences brand image and purchase intention[30], particularly regarding the adoption of online opinions. e-WOM evaluations, and experiences through online platforms like [31]. It encompasses both positive and negative consumer comments about a product, brand, or service[32]. These online interactions, which often spread quickly, play a significant role in shaping the purchasing decisions of potential customers[33]. Research has shown that

an increasing number of consumers consult online reviews before making major purchasing decisions[34]. In fact, e-WOM is regarded as one of the most influential factors in consumer behavior, as it provides valuable insights[35] and trust signals that aid in decision-making[36]. It can be argued that word of mouth communication is one of the most valuable assets for marketers[37], as the influence of a trusted friend or family member plays a significant role in individual decision-making[38]. Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) has emerged as a vital source of information that influences tourists' perceptions and opinions about travel destinations. It serves as a critical link between travelers' destination perceptions and their intention to visit[39]. The growing importance of e-WOM in shaping tourist attitudes and travel decisions has drawn considerable attention in the tourism industry[40]. e-WOM encompasses online reviews, ratings, and comments shared by past or current travelers, significantly influencing how individuals evaluate and choose their travel destinations[41]. In today's digital landscape, understanding the dynamics of e-WOM is essential for effectively engaging potential tourists and enhancing their travel experiences[42]. Moreover, the influence of social media extends across both digital and physical spheres[43]. Sharing travel experiences with friends, family, and even unknown audiences on social platforms has become a widespread practice[44]. Travelers increasingly rely on social networking sites not only to gather information and connect with fellow travelers but also to offer recommendations [45]

2.4. REVISIT INTENTIONS

Numerous studies have examined the factors influencing revisit intentions in tourism, emphasizing the key roles of satisfaction, destination image, and travel experience. The tourists' motivations and experiences, shaped by their attitudes toward ecotourism, positively influence revisit intentions, with eco-destination image enhancing these effects [46]. Similarly, the destination brand engagement significantly impacts revisit intentions [47]. The importance of satisfaction in fostering revisit intentions [48], while the service quality, behavioral price, and monetary price significantly influence these intentions [49]. Furthermore, the exploration of one's own cultural heritage tends to lead tourists to process their experiences in relation to their self-identity [50]. This deeper engagement results in greater absorption in the activities and a stronger emotional connection to the destination, ultimately increasing the likelihood [51]. Together, these studies illustrate the complex interplay of satisfaction, cultural connection, and service quality in shaping revisit intentions in tourism. Revisit intention refers to a form of behavioral intention or a customer's desire to return, share positive word of mouth, and choose ecotourism again for a future trip [52]. The image of a destination enhances its attractiveness by combining various elements such as products, attractions, locations, safety, and related attributes [53]. In the context of ecotourism, destination image reflects tourists' emotional responses or feelings toward the landscape [54]. Destination image has a positive impact on revisit intention. One of the key factors influencing revisit intention is the tourism experience. A memorable tourism experience refers to a visitor's lasting impression of a tourist attraction, which continues to evoke memories after the visit [55]. This lasting impact means the experience remains emotionally significant, contributing to what is known as a memorable tourism experience.

2.5. GAP IN LITERATURE

Based on the findings from the literature review, several gaps have emerged. prior research has predominantly focused on nostalgia as a highly social emotion that fosters a sense of social connectedness but has not thoroughly examined its influence on revisit intentions, particularly in the case of ancestral hometowns. Despite nostalgia tourism becoming an increasingly popular niche under globalization, its manifestation in India, particularly in the context of ancestral hometowns, has received limited attention. There is no known research that integrates nostalgia tourism with place attachment and revisit intentions, particularly through the lens of e-WOM intention. This study, therefore, aims to bridge these gaps by investigating the mediating role of e-WOM intention.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive-causal research design to examine the relationships between place attachments, nostalgia tourism, and revisit intentions among international tourists visiting their ancestral hometowns. The descriptive part of the design is concerned with understanding tourists' feelings, and behaviors, whilst the causal side explores how place attachment drives revisit intention, with a focus on the mediating role of the so-called e-word of

mouth (e-WOM). For data collection, This study employed a convenient sampling technique, a type of non-probability sampling, to collect data from international tourists, particularly Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), visiting their ancestral hometowns in India. Convenient sampling was chosen due to the accessibility and availability of respondents in popular tourist hotspots. The target locations included Delhi, Punjab, Chandigarh, and Himachal Pradesh, regions known for having a higher concentration of NRI visits due to cultural, familial, and historical connections.

The study will focus on areas such as Delhi, Punjab, Chandigarh, and Himachal Pradesh known for their more population of NRIs. The tourists were distributed structured questionnaires at these areas to collect information. Total 480 surveys were sent out, 120 of which were dispersed to each region. 430 valid replies were received to be suitable for analysis during the data gathering process.

4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This part provides a thorough examination of the suggested model's validity, fit, and reliability. It includes assessments of the model's overall fit, construct relationships, and convergent and discriminant validity.

4.1. MEASUREMENT MODEL

The measurement model in structural equation modeling (SEM) performs the important task of mapping latent variables, or constructs that cannot be directly observed, to the measured variables that represent them. Measurement models can be divided into two types, namely formative and reflective.

Figure 1

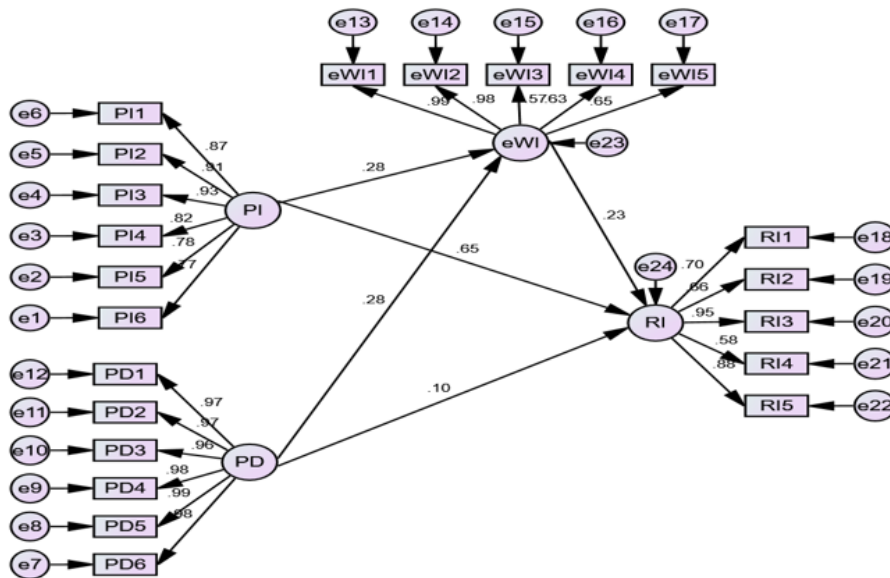


Figure 1 Measurement Model

The validity and reliability are important evaluations in SEM measurement models. Hair et al (2022) stated that Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) is commonly used to assess reliability; values larger than 0.70 are regarded as satisfactory. The AVE should be more than 0.50 to be considered convergent, meaning that the latent variable accounts for at least half of the variance in its indicators (Fornell&Larcker, 1981). Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt (2015) described that acceptable discriminant validity is indicated by HTMT values less than 0.85.

Table 3

Table 3 Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity Measures for Study Variables (PI, PD, e-WOM, RI)			
Factor	AVE	CR	Cronbach's alpha
PI (Place Identity)	0.719	0.939	0.813
PD (Place Dependence)	0.947	0.991	0.753

e-WOM (e-WOM Intentions)	0.617	0.884	0.862
RI (Revisit Intentions)	0.591	0.876	0.778

Place Identity (PI) showed good convergent validity with an AVE of 0.719 which was significantly higher than the threshold of 0.5, meaning the items are well aligned in measuring this construct. CR value of 0.939 confirmed the high reliability of the data from the Place Identity items. In the same manner, Place Dependence (PD) was found to be highly reliable and valid, with exceptionally high CR and AVE at 0.991 and 0.947, respectively. This suggests that the items were closely related and accurately measured the concept of Place Dependence. There was convergent validity for each construct; given AVE was 0.617 for the e-WOM Intentions, above the lowest acceptable level. It confirmed high reliability with an internal consistency of 0.884. The sufficient convergent validity was established for Revisit Intentions (RI) with an AVE value of 0.591 and CR value of 0.876 confirmed reliable measurements. Overall, all factors exceeded the AVE threshold of 0.5, verifying their convergent validity, and the CR values above 0.7 further confirmed strong internal reliability for each factor.

Table 4

Table 4 Fornell-Larcker Criterion for Discriminant validity for Study Variables (PI, PD, e-WOM, RI)

	Place Identity	Place Dependence	e-Worm Intentions	Revisit Intentions
Place Identity (PI)	0.848	0.007	0.351	0.637
Place Dependence (PD)	0.007	0.973	0.23	0.187
e-WOM Intentions (e-WOM)	0.351	0.23	0.786	0.514
Revisit Intentions (RI)	0.637	0.187	0.514	0.769

In Table 3, the Fornell-Larcker criterion was applied by comparing the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct to its correlations with other constructs. The diagonal values in the table (0.848 for PI, 0.973 for PD, 0.786 for e-WOM, and 0.769 for RI) represent the square roots of the AVE and should be greater than the off-diagonal correlations in the same row and column to confirm discriminant validity.

Table 5

Table 5 HTMT ratios for discriminant validity of constructs (PI, PD, e-WOM, RI)

Constructs	Place Identity (PI)	Place Dependence (PD)	e-Worm Intentions (e-WOM)
Place Dependence (PD)	0.671		
e-WOM Intentions (e-WOM)	0.196	0.277	
Revisit Intentions (RI)	0.61	0.117	0.580

The HTMT ratios, an alternative approach to assessing discriminant validity, where values below 0.85 generally confirm that constructs are distinguishable from one another. The HTMT ratios below the threshold of 0.90, further supporting discriminant validity.

Table 6

Table 6 Structural Model Results (Direct effect) Showing Path Coefficients, p-Values, and Hypothesis Support for Relationships Among PI, PD, e-WOM, and RI

Hypothesis	Path	β Coefficient	p-Value	Supported/Not Supported
H1	PI → e-WOM	0.28	0.004	Supported
H2	PI → RI	0.646	0.004	Supported
H3	PD → e-WOM	0.277	0.004	Supported
H4	PD → RI	0.103	0.033	Supported
H5	e-WOM → RI	0.234	0.004	Supported

Table 5 reports the direct effects between various constructs, examining the hypotheses regarding the influence of Place Identity (PI) and Place Dependence (PD) on e-WOM Intentions (e-WOM) and Revisit Intentions (RI). Each hypothesis is tested using the β coefficient (standardized path coefficient).

H1: Place Identity has positive significant influence on e-WOM intention.

Place Identity \rightarrow e-WOM Intentions (PI \rightarrow e-WOM)

Hypothesis 1 proposed that Place Identity shows a significant influence on e-WOM Intentions. β is 0.280 & p-statistics (0.004), which was well below the 0.05 threshold. This finding supported the hypothesis, indicating that higher Place Identity is associated with greater e-WOM Intentions.

H2: Place Identity has positive significant influence on Revisit intention.

Place Identity \rightarrow Revisit Intentions (PI \rightarrow RI)

Hypothesis 2 suggested that Place Identity positively influences Revisit Intentions with β (0.646), and the p-statistics 0.004. This means that as Place Identity increases, so does the likelihood of Revisit Intentions, providing strong support for H2.

H3: Place Dependence has positive significant influence on e-WOM intention.

Place Dependence \rightarrow e-WOM Intentions (PD \rightarrow e-WOM)

Hypothesis 3 posited that Place Dependence positively influences e-WOM Intentions. The path coefficient (0.277), with a p-statistics (0.004), showing a significant result. Thus, Place Dependence are more likely to engage in e-WOM activities.

H4: Place Dependence has positive significant influence on Revisit intention.

Place Dependence \rightarrow Revisit Intentions (PD \rightarrow RI)

Hypothesis 4 suggested that Place Dependence has a positive effect on Revisit Intentions. The β (0.103), and the p-statistics (0.033), slightly above the commonly used 0.05 threshold for significance but still indicative of a positive influence. This provides support for the hypothesis, though the effect is relatively weaker compared to other paths.

H5: e-WOM intention has positive significant influence on Revisit intention.

e-WOM Intentions \rightarrow Revisit Intentions (e-WOM \rightarrow RI)

Hypothesis 5 proposed that e-WOM Intentions positively influence Revisit Intentions. The β coefficient (0.234) & p-statistics of 0.004, indicating individuals with more e-WOM Intentions are more likely to have Revisit Intentions.

Table 7

Table 7 Structural Model Results (Indirect effect) Showing Path Coefficients, p-Values, and Hypothesis Support for Relationships Among PI, PD, e-WOM, and RI

Hypothesis	Path	β Coefficient	p-Value	Supported/Not Supported
H6	PI \rightarrow e-WOM \rightarrow RI	0.066	0.004	Supported
H7	PD \rightarrow e-WOM \rightarrow RI	0.065	0.004	Supported

H6: Place Identity has significant positive influence on Revisit Intention through electronic WOM Intentions.

Place Identity \rightarrow e-WOM Intentions \rightarrow Revisit Intentions (PI \rightarrow e-WOM \rightarrow RI)

Hypothesis 6 proposed indirect effect of Revisit Intentions through e-WOM Intentions. The β coefficient for this indirect effect is 0.066, p-value (0.004), showing statistically significant effect. Thus, Place Identity positively influences Revisit Intentions indirectly via e-WOM Intentions, supporting H6.

H7: Place Identity has significant positive influence on Revisit Intention through electronic WOM Intentions.

Place Dependence \rightarrow e-WOM Intentions \rightarrow Revisit Intentions (PD \rightarrow e-WOM \rightarrow RI)

Hypothesis 7 proposed that Place Dependence positively influences Revisit Intentions indirectly through e-WOM Intentions. The β value (0.065), & p-statistics (0.004), showing an indirect effect . Place Dependence has a meaningful indirect influence on Revisit Intentions through e-WOM Intentions.

Table 8**Table 8 Structural Model Results (Total effect) Showing Path Coefficients, p-Values, and Hypothesis Support for Relationships Among PI, PD, e-WOM, and RI**

Hypothesis	Path	β Coefficient	P-Value	Supported/Not Supported
H8	PI \rightarrow e-WOM	0.28	0.001	Supported
H9	PI \rightarrow RI	0.712	0.002	Supported
H10	PD \rightarrow e-WOM	0.277	0.004	Supported
H11	PD \rightarrow RI	0.167	0.002	Supported
H12	e-WOM \rightarrow RI	0.234	0.004	Supported

H8: Place Identity has positive significant total effect on e-WOM intention.Place Identity \rightarrow e-WOM Intentions (PI \rightarrow e-WOM)

Hypothesis 8 posited that Place Identity shows a total effect on e-WOM Intentions. β value is 0.280, & p-statistics is 0.001. It represents Place Identity positively influences e-WOM Intentions, suggesting that individuals with a strong sense of Place Identity are more likely to engage in electronic word-of-mouth activities.

H9: Place Identity has positive significant total effect influence on Revisit intention.Place Identity \rightarrow Revisit Intentions (PI \rightarrow RI)

Hypothesis 9 proposed that Place Identity shows a positive total effect on Revisit Intentions. β value is 0.712, with p-statistics of 0.002, which was statistically confirming total effect. This high total effect suggests that Place Identity strongly influences Revisit Intentions, both directly and through mediating factors.

H10: Place Dependence has positive significant total effect influence on e-WOM intention.Place Dependence \rightarrow e-WOM Intentions (PD \rightarrow e-WOM)

Hypothesis 10 suggested that Place Dependence shows a positive total effect on e-WOM Intentions. β coefficient (0.277) & p-statistics of 0.004. It is confirming a strong dependence on a place are more likely to participate in e-WOM.

H11: Place Dependence has positive significant total effect influence on Revisit intention.Place Dependence \rightarrow Revisit Intentions (PD \rightarrow RI)

Hypothesis 11 proposed that Place Dependence positively influences Revisit Intentions. The β (0.167), & p-statistic, 0.002, which indicates a statistically significant total effect. Place Dependence has a meaningful influence on Revisit Intentions, both directly and indirectly through mediating variables like e-WOM Intentions.

H12: e-WOM intention has positive significant total effect influence on Revisit intention.e-WOM Intentions \rightarrow Revisit Intentions (e-WOM \rightarrow RI)

Hypothesis 12 posited that e-WOM Intentions positively influence Revisit Intentions. The β coefficient (.234) with a p-statistics of 0.004, confirming individuals with high e-WOM Intentions are more likely to have strong Revisit Intentions.

5. STRUCTURAL MODEL

The structural model in (SEM) specifies theoretical framework that outlines how constructs are interrelated. It aims to verify hypotheses that presume the causal pathways over the constructs as determined by the model proposed. By utilising the structural model, the researchers can determine direct and indirect effects between variables and examine the significance, direction and strength of these relations. This is a key component as it assesses how well it explains the data (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2022). The structural model qualitatively and quantitatively indicates the strength and significance of the proposed causal relationships (Sarstedt, Ringle, & Hair, 2021), providing researchers insights about the main drivers of the constructs.

Figure 2

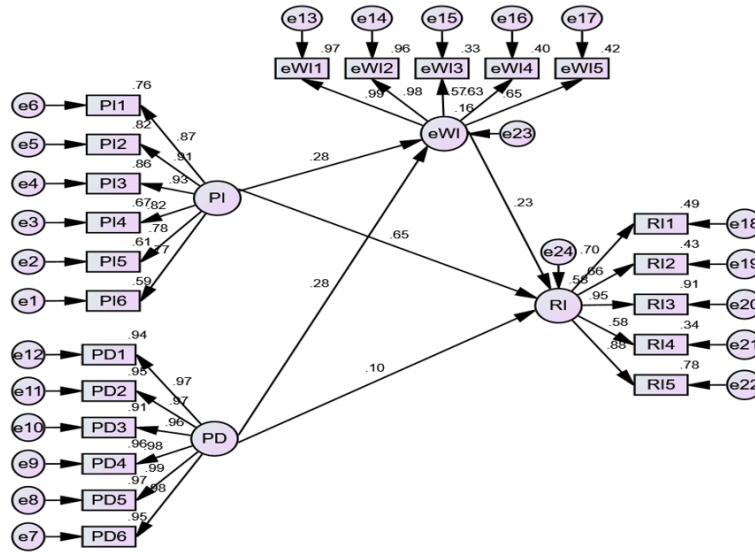


Figure 2 Structural Model

The structural model displays the path coefficients, outer loadings and weights. The path coefficients indicate the direction and strength of relationships between constructs. Loadings represent the strength of association between indicators and their latent construct, whereas outer weights represent their contribution to latent variables.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results show that Place Identity, which reflects a person's emotional attachment and sense of self with their ancestral hometown, greatly improves the likelihood that they will return and their readiness to share experiences through electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). Similar to Place Identity, Place Dependence—which stands for the functional attachment and reliance on the place—also has a beneficial effect on e-WOM and revisit intentions, though not as much. The findings indicate Place Identity is a significant contributor for increasing return propensity, as well as willingness to engage in e-WOM (electronic word-of-mouth). Place Dependence, representative of functional bond and the rely upon the place also has a positive effect but less on e-WOM and revisit intention. Based on the findings, the second dimension—place identity which is more affective and personal—plays a significant role in predicting subsequent tourist-related behaviors, like conducting online activities and the intention to re-visit their ancestral city. In addition the analysis shows how the e-WOM intentions mediate the revisits intentions. It suggests that if tourists share their ancestral tourism experiences online, they initiate a circle of place loyalty and emotional engagement that makes it more likely they will return. These findings point to the significance of tourism stakeholders in developing place attachment by accentuating interests that resonate with travelers' cultural, historical, and personal desires. In addition, through e-WOM platforms, positive experiences can be multiplied and attract return visitors and promote ancestral tourism places. Encouragement of e-WOM between tourists is more likely to boost particular location loyalty and attracts both potential first-time customers who are significantly influenced by web-based suggestions.

7. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Based on the above study, the results of this study provide practical insights and can be applied to tourism marketing strategies, destination management, and visitor engagement. One major takeaway is the significance of location attachment in fostering revisiting intentions and driving e-WOM. So tourism marketers should focus on creating emotionally moving experiences that build the connection between the traveler and the destination. This might involve pointing out the historical and cultural and familial value of a place, particularly for those with roots there or sentimental attachments.

The importance of e-WOM in influencing traveler behaviour was highlighted as e-WOM was found to be a mediator of the relationship according to the study. Building a community around the location can greatly influence e-WOM and

social influence. Establishing forums, social media groups, or events that allow visitors to connect with others who have shared cultural or nostalgic ties to the land, can amplify positive word-of-mouth. These communities play a key role in making the destination attractive and maintaining positive social influence to entice travelers to come back and share their experiences in their own networks.

8. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

First, its conclusions may not be relevant to other areas or cultures, because it focused on a specific demographic and geographical setting. For greater generalizability, future studies could study location attachment and e-WOM across different cultural settings. Future research might benefit from behavioral metrics, such as actual revisiting behaviors or social media posts, as self-reported data might also come with biases. Moreover, while place attachment was the primary focus in this study, e-WOM and revisit intentions can also be affected by other variables such as destination image and satisfaction. Future work could build more complete models that incorporate these additional factors. The destination focus and small sample size of this study limit the extent of its findings.

The reliability of the results can be enhanced by using bigger and more varied samples from a range of locations. Lastly, future studies must focus on the role of digital media and its influence on the traveller's behaviour in terms of influencer marketing and use of new social media channels. Researchers could also explore the influence and impact of digital platforms based on attributes like social media interaction in increasing e-WOM and cultivating place attachment. Furthermore, incorporation of various psychographic and demographic variables like gender, age and past experience in the study may lead to change in behaviour and attachment among various tourist groups. The influence of initiatives by stakeholders such as local community involvement and personalised travel experiences could affect place attachment, which can yield an game changer strategies for professionals in successful marketing of ancestral tourism locations.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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