

Research Article

The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction in the Influence of Customer Experience and E-WOM on the Decision to Visit DTW Tanah Lot

I Wayan Sudiana¹, Pande Ketut Ribek², Made Ika Prastyadewi^{3*}

¹ Master's Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar, Denpasar, Indonesia; e-mail: iwayansudiana@gmail.com

² Master's Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar, Denpasar, Indonesia; e-mail: pandeketutribek@unmas.ac.id

³ Master's Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar, Denpasar, Indonesia; e-mail: ika.prastyadewi@unmas.ac.id

* Corresponding Author: ika.prastyadewi@unmas.ac.id

Abstract. Tanah Lot Tourist Attraction is a prominent tourism destination in Bali, attracting visitors for recreation and leisure. However, visiting decisions may be influenced by tourists' experiences, E-WOM, and satisfaction with the destination. This study aims to examine the effects of customer experience, E-WOM on visiting decisions and analyze the mediating role of customer satisfaction in these relationships at the Tanah Lot Tourist Attraction. This study employed an approach using questionnaires, interviews, and documentation for data collection. The population comprised visitors to the Tanah Lot Tourist Attraction, with 140 respondents selected based on Hair's sampling guideline. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings demonstrate that customer experience and E-WOM have positive and significant effects on visiting decisions. Customer satisfaction also positively and significantly affects visiting decisions, while customer experience, E-WOM significantly influence customer satisfaction. Furthermore, customer satisfaction significantly mediates the effects of customer experience and E-WOM on visiting decisions. These findings highlight that improving visitor experiences, strengthening positive E-WOM, and enhancing satisfaction are strategies for encouraging tourists to visit Tanah Lot.

Keywords: Customer Experience; Customer Satisfaction; E-WOM; Tourism Destination; Visiting Decision.

1. Introduction

Bali is one of Indonesia's leading tourism destinations, renowned for its natural beauty, cultural heritage, spiritual values, and hospitality. One of its prominent destinations is Tanah Lot Tourist Attraction (DTW Tanah Lot), which is recognized for its distinctive temple located on a large offshore rock, scenic coastal landscape, and iconic sunset views. These characteristics make Tanah Lot an important destination for domestic and international tourists. However, the increasing number of tourism destinations has intensified competition among tourism businesses, requiring destination managers to understand the factors that influence tourists' visiting decisions. Visiting decisions refer to consumer decisions formed through the processing of various types of information before determining whether to visit a particular tourism destination (Alma, 2021). Therefore, maintaining and increasing visiting decisions is important for strengthening the competitiveness and performance of DTW Tanah Lot.

The performance of DTW Tanah Lot indicates that visiting decisions have not consistently reached their optimal potential. Data for 2020–2024 show total revenue of IDR 232,870,072,510 against a target of IDR 258,000,000,000, resulting in an overall realization of 90.26%. The highest realization was recorded in 2023 at 93.10%, while the lowest occurred in 2021 at 74.95%. Although revenue increased substantially after 2021, the annual realization remained below the established target. This condition indicates that the potential of DTW Tanah Lot has not been fully achieved and that efforts are still required to encourage tourists to choose the destination. One factor considered relevant is customer experience, which

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represents tourists' overall perceptions resulting from direct and indirect interactions with a destination throughout their journey (Chen & Lin, 2022) explain that customer experience involves cognitive recognition and perception that can enhance the value of products and services, while (Sihombing, 2025) emphasizes that consumer interactions can influence evaluations of a company or service.

Customer experience has been examined in previous studies as a factor influencing visiting decisions. (Setiawan & Keni, 2023) found that customer experience has a positive and significant effect on visiting decisions, supported by (Al-Hussein et al., 2024; González Jiménez, 2013; Sheykhfard et al., 2025; Sihombing, 2025). The strength of this approach is its ability to directly explain how tourists' experiences translate into behavioral decisions. However, contradictory findings have also been reported by (Almeida & Costa, 2024; Kasman & Tahir, 2025) who found that customer experience does not significantly affect visiting decisions. At DTW Tanah Lot, several conditions may affect tourists' experiences, including visitor density, long queues, limited parking, cleanliness issues, and interactions with staff and vendors. These conditions suggest that destination attractiveness alone may not guarantee a positive experience or directly lead to a visiting decision.

Another important factor is E-WOM, which refers to positive or negative consumer statements communicated through digital media regarding products, services, or brands. E-WOM is considered an important source of information because information from other consumers may be perceived as more credible and less commercially biased than information directly provided by companies (Chen & Lin, 2022). (Cheung & Thadani, 2022) explain that consumer reviews and information exchanges can influence perceptions of the value of products and services. In tourism, positive reviews and recommendations may increase prospective tourists' confidence in selecting a destination, whereas negative reviews may discourage visitation. At DTW Tanah Lot, negative online reviews concerning transportation, additional costs, overcrowding, facilities, and service quality indicate that E-WOM may influence prospective visitors' perceptions and decisions.

Previous studies concerning E-WOM and visiting decisions have also produced inconsistent results. (Lee et al., 2025; Ribek & Wiguna, 2025) found that E-WOM has a positive and significant effect on visiting decisions, supported by (Rahman & Hossain, 2024; Rosyid, 2023). Conversely, (Khan & Ali, 2024; Peterson et al., 2024; Zhang & Xu, 2024) found that E-WOM does not significantly affect visiting decisions. The advantage of E-WOM lies in its ability to provide information based on consumers' experiences and opinions, while its weakness is that its influence may depend on the credibility, content, and interpretation of information shared online. These contradictory findings indicate that the effects of customer experience, E-WOM on visiting decisions may involve other variables that explain how tourists form their final decisions.

Customer satisfaction is proposed as a potential mediating variable to explain these relationships. Customer satisfaction reflects the extent to which consumers' needs, expectations, and desires are fulfilled by the performance of a product or service (Brown, 2022). In tourism, satisfaction is shaped by tourists' evaluations of service quality, facilities, cleanliness, comfort, accessibility, and overall experiences. (Wijaya & Lestari, 2024) indicate that higher tourist satisfaction increases the likelihood of visiting or revisiting a destination. At DTW Tanah Lot, however, visitor reviews indicate dissatisfaction related to toilet cleanliness, limited water availability, unpleasant odors, additional facility charges, overcrowding, commercial activities, and service quality. These conditions demonstrate that customer satisfaction remains an important issue in determining tourists' evaluations of the destination.

Previous studies provide evidence that customer satisfaction may connect customer experience and E-WOM with visiting decisions. (Wang & Li, 2024; Zendrato, 2024) found that customer satisfaction positively affects visiting decisions. Customer experience has been found to positively influence customer satisfaction (Cho & Kim, 2024; Suharto & Hoti, 2023), although contradictory findings have also been reported (Bhuiyan, 2024). Similarly, E-WOM has been shown to positively affect customer satisfaction (Fitrianingsih et al., 2025; Park & Lee, 2024), while (Prabowo et al., 2024) found no significant effect. These inconsistent findings indicate a research gap and support the need to examine customer satisfaction as a mediating variable.

Based on the identified phenomena and research gaps, this study proposes a mediation model to examine the role of customer satisfaction in the effects of customer experience, E-WOM on visiting decisions at DTW Tanah Lot. The study employs a quantitative approach and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine the direct effects of customer experience, E-WOM on visiting decisions, the effects of customer

experience and E-WOM on customer satisfaction, the effect of customer satisfaction on visiting decisions, and the mediating effects of customer satisfaction. The study contributes to the tourism marketing literature by integrating these four variables within a single empirical model in the context of DTW Tanah Lot. Practically, the findings are expected to provide destination managers with insights into improving visitor experiences, managing positive digital word-of-mouth, and strengthening customer satisfaction as strategies to encourage visiting decisions and enhance destination competitiveness.

2. Preliminaries or Related Work or Literature Review

Customer Experience

Customer experience refers to the internal and subjective responses of consumers formed through direct and indirect interactions with a company, product, or service. Such experiences may involve rational, emotional, sensory, physical, and social dimensions that subsequently shape consumers' perceptions of a product or service. In the tourism context, customer experience is reflected in the overall experience of tourists when interacting with a destination, ranging from obtaining information and receiving services to using facilities and enjoying tourist attractions. Therefore, customer experience represents consumers' overall perceptions formed through various interactions with a product, service, or company (Meyer & Schwager, 2022).

Electronic Word-of-Mouth (E-WOM)

E-WOM refers to positive or negative statements expressed by customers about a product or service through internet-based media. E-WOM enables consumers to share their experiences, opinions, information, and recommendations with other consumers online. Such information can serve as a consideration for prospective consumers because it is based on the experiences of other consumers and is generally perceived as more credible than information provided directly by companies. In the tourism context, E-WOM may take the form of reviews, comments, ratings, and recommendations from tourists regarding a destination, which can shape the perceptions of prospective tourists (Chen & Lin, 2022).

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction refers to a condition in which customers' needs, desires, and expectations are fulfilled through the products or services received. Satisfaction is formed through a comparison between consumers' expectations and the performance or experience perceived after receiving a product or service. When the performance received meets or exceeds expectations, consumers tend to experience satisfaction, whereas a discrepancy between expectations and actual performance may result in dissatisfaction. In the tourism context, customer satisfaction reflects tourists' evaluation of the experiences they obtain while visiting a destination (Brown, 2022).

Visiting Decision

A visiting decision is part of consumer behavior involving the process of processing information and evaluating alternatives before making a choice. In the tourism context, a visiting decision refers to tourists' actions in selecting a destination to visit after considering various available information and alternatives. This process involves recognizing needs, seeking information, evaluating available options, and selecting a destination that is considered consistent with tourists' needs and preferences. Therefore, a visiting decision can be understood as a consumer response in determining whether to visit a particular tourism destination (Brown, 2022).

3. Materials and Method

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative explanatory research design to examine the effects of E-WOM on visiting decisions, with customer satisfaction serving as a mediating variable at DTW Tanah Lot. The explanatory approach was used to examine the relationships among the research variables and test the proposed hypotheses. The research model consisted of two exogenous variables, namely customer experience (X1), E-WOM (X2), one mediating variable, namely customer satisfaction (M), and one endogenous variable, namely visiting decision (Y). The study focused on marketing management, particularly the relationships among customer experience, E-WOM, customer satisfaction, and visiting decisions. The collected data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to evaluate the measurement and structural models and examine the proposed direct and mediation effects.

Population and Sample

The population of this study comprised all visitors to the Tanah Lot Tourist Attraction, located at Jl. Tanah Lot, Beraban, Kediri District, Tabanan Regency, Bali, Indonesia. Because the exact population size of visitors was not known, the sample size was determined using Hair's guideline, which recommends a minimum sample size of five to ten times the number of indicators. The research model consisted of 14 indicators, resulting in a sample size of 140 respondents based on the upper multiplier of ten. Thus, the study involved 140 visitors to DTW Tanah Lot as respondents.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected using questionnaires, interviews, and documentation. The questionnaire was developed based on theoretical and empirical studies as well as preliminary research findings and was used to obtain primary data related to customer experience, E-WOM, customer satisfaction, and visiting decisions. Before distribution, the questionnaire was reviewed in terms of face validity, content validity, wording, and question structure, followed by a try-out to assess the validity and reliability of the research instrument. The questionnaire was administered directly to the targeted respondents using a measurement scale appropriate to the research variables. Interviews were conducted to obtain additional information and strengthen the understanding of the research context, while documentation was used to obtain relevant documents concerning DTW Tanah Lot. The collected data were subsequently checked, tabulated, screened, and prepared for statistical analysis.

Measurement of Variables

All variables in this study were operationalized as latent constructs and measured using reflective indicators. Customer experience was measured using four indicators: sense, feel, think, and relate, adapted from Schmitt (2021). E-WOM was measured using three indicators: electronic word-of-mouth quality, electronic word-of-mouth quantity, and sender's expertise, based on Lin et al. (2022). Customer satisfaction was measured using three indicators: expectation conformity, revisit intention, and willingness to recommend, based on Indrasari (2022). Visiting decision was measured using four indicators: visit motivation, destination attractiveness, accessibility, and facilities and services, based on Hsu and Chang (2021). Thus, the study employed 14 indicators across the four research variables.

Table 1. Operationalization of Variables.

Variable	Operational Definition	Indicators	Scale
Customer Experience (X1)	The internal and subjective response of customers resulting from direct and indirect interactions with a company, product, service, or destination.	<i>Sense; Feel; Think; Relate</i>	5-point Likert
E-WOM (X2)	Positive or negative statements communicated by customers regarding a product or service through internet-based media.	E-WOM Quality; E-WOM Quantity; Sender's Expertise	5-point Likert
Customer Satisfaction (M)	The result of customers' evaluation by comparing the performance received with their expectations.	Expectation conformity; Revisit intention; Willingness to recommend	5-point Likert
Visiting Decision (Y)	A consumer's response in processing information and determining whether to visit a particular tourism destination.	Visit motivation; Destination attractiveness; Accessibility; Facilities and services	5-point Likert

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive analysis was used to describe respondent characteristics and the distribution of responses for customer experience, E-WOM, customer satisfaction, and visiting decisions. Inferential analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which was selected because the research model involves latent variables measured through multiple indicators and includes mediation relationships. The PLS-SEM analysis consisted of evaluating the measurement model (outer model) and structural model (inner model). The measurement model was assessed through convergent validity and discriminant validity, while construct reliability was evaluated to ensure the consistency of the measurement instruments. The structural model was evaluated using R^2 and Q^2 predictive relevance. Hypothesis testing was conducted using bootstrapping, with a significance level of 5% and a p-value ≤ 0.05 indicating a significant relationship. The mediation effect of customer satisfaction was examined to determine whether it significantly mediates the

relationships between customer experience and visiting decisions and between E-WOM and visiting decisions.

4. Results and Discussion

Because the indicators forming the latent variables are reflective, the measurement model is evaluated based on: (a) convergent validity, (b) discriminant validity, and (c) reliability.

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity assesses the validity of reflective indicators. An indicator is considered valid when its outer loading exceeds 0.70. The outer model results are presented in Table.

Table 2. Outer Loading Test Results.

Indicator	Construct	Outer Loading	P-value
X1.1	Customer Experience	0.886	0.000
X1.2	Customer Experience	0.889	0.000
X1.3	Customer Experience	0.859	0.000
X1.4	Customer Experience	0.876	0.000
X2.1	E-WOM	0.914	0.000
X2.2	E-WOM	0.866	0.000
X2.3	E-WOM	0.925	0.000
M1	Customer Satisfaction	0.816	0.000
M2	Customer Satisfaction	0.888	0.000
M3	Customer Satisfaction	0.874	0.000
Y1	Visiting Decision	0.835	0.000
Y2	Visiting Decision	0.858	0.000
Y3	Visiting Decision	0.853	0.000
Y4	Visiting Decision	0.866	0.000

Based on Table 2, all indicators of Customer Experience, E-WOM, Customer Satisfaction, and Visiting Decision have outer loading values greater than 0.70. These results indicate that all indicators meet the criteria for convergent validity and are valid in measuring their respective latent constructs.

Discriminant Validity

Reflective indicators should also be evaluated for discriminant validity using cross-loading. An indicator is considered valid if its highest factor loading is on its intended construct compared with its loadings on other constructs. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity Test Results

Construct	Customer Experience	Customer Satisfaction	E-WOM	Visiting Decision
Customer Experience	0.878			
Customer Satisfaction	0.634	0.860		
E-WOM	0.684	0.620	0.902	
Visiting Decision	0.660	0.700	0.715	0.853

Based on Table 3, each construct has the highest loading on its respective construct, indicating that all constructs meet the criteria for discriminant validity.

Reliability

A measurement is considered reliable if the composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values are greater than 0.70. Composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha measure the reliability of the indicator blocks in the research model. The results, processed using SmartPLS 3.0, are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Reliability Test Results.

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Remark
Customer Experience	0.901	0.904	Reliable
E-WOM	0.885	0.885	Reliable
Customer Satisfaction	0.824	0.839	Reliable
Visiting Decision	0.876	0.882	Reliable

Based on Table 4, all constructs, namely *Customer Experience*, *E-WOM*, *Customer Satisfaction*, and *Visiting Decision*, have *Cronbach's alpha* and *composite reliability* values greater than 0.70. Thus, all constructs meet the reliability criteria

Structural Model Evaluation Using R-Square (R²)

R-Square (R²) indicates the strength of the influence of independent variables on dependent variables and the explanatory power of the research model. According to Ghazali & Lathan (2022:80), R² values of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 indicate strong, moderate, and weak models, respectively.

Table 5. R-Square (R²) Test Results.

Construct	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Customer Satisfaction	0.467	0.459
Visiting Decision	0.634	0.626

Based on Table 5, Customer Satisfaction has an R² value of 0.467, indicating that 46.7% is explained by Customer Experience and E-WOM, while the remaining 53.3% is explained by other factors. Meanwhile, Visiting Decision has an R² value of 0.634, indicating that 63.4% is explained by Customer Experience, E-WOM, and Customer Satisfaction, with the remaining 36.6% explained by other factors. Both values indicate a moderate model.

Structural Model Evaluation Using Q-Square Predictive Relevance (Q²)

Q-Square Predictive Relevance (Q²) measures the predictive relevance of the research model. Values range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating better predictive relevance. According to Ghazali & Lathan (2022:80), Q² values of 0.35, 0.15, and 0.02 indicate strong, moderate, and weak models, respectively. The Q² calculation formula is as follows:

Table 6. Q-Square Test Results.

Construct	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Customer Satisfaction	0.467	0.459
Visiting Decision	0.634	0.626

$$\begin{aligned}
 Q^2 &= 1 - (1 - R_1^2)(1 - R_2^2) \\
 &= 1 - (1 - 0.467)(1 - 0.634) \\
 &= 1 - (0.533)(0.366) \\
 &= 1 - 0.195078 \\
 &= 0.804922 \approx 0.805
 \end{aligned}$$

The Q² value of 0.805 indicates that 80.5% of the model's predictive relevance is explained by the relationships among *Customer Experience*, *E-WOM*, *Customer Satisfaction*, and *Visiting Decision*, while the remaining 19.5% is explained by other factors. Based on the Q² criteria, the model is categorized as strong.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing in this study includes direct and indirect effects. Based on data processing using SmartPLS 3.0, the relationships among variables are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Results of Variable Relationship Testing.

Effect	Relationship	Original Sample (O)	T-Statistics	P-Values	Decision
Direct Effect	Customer Experience → Visiting Decision	0.182	2.519	0.012	Accepted
	E-WOM → Visiting Decision	0.370	5.256	0.000	Accepted
	Customer Satisfaction → Visiting Decision	0.355	5.277	0.000	Accepted
	Customer Experience → Customer Satisfaction	0.394	4.365	0.000	Accepted
	E-WOM → Customer Satisfaction	0.351	3.919	0.000	Accepted
Indirect Effect	Customer Experience → Customer Satisfaction → Visiting Decision	0.140	3.152	0.002	Partial Mediation
	E-WOM → Customer Satisfaction → Visiting Decision	0.125	3.104	0.002	Partial Mediation

Based on Table 7, the relationships among the variables can be described as follows:

- H1 – Customer Experience → Visiting Decision: Path coefficient = 0.182, t-statistic = 2.519, p = 0.012 < 0.05. Positive and significant. H1 accepted.
- H2 – E-WOM → Visiting Decision: Path coefficient = 0.370, t-statistic = 5.256, p = 0.000 < 0.05. Positive and significant. H2 accepted.
- H3 – Customer Satisfaction → Visiting Decision: Path coefficient = 0.335, t-statistic = 5.277, p = 0.000 < 0.05. Positive and significant. H3 accepted.

- d. H4 – Customer Experience → Customer Satisfaction: Path coefficient = 0.394, t-statistic = 4.365, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$. Positive and significant. H4 accepted.
- e. H5 – E-WOM → Customer Satisfaction: Path coefficient = 0.351, t-statistic = 3.919, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$. Positive and significant. H5 accepted.
- f. H6 – Customer Experience → Visiting Decision through Customer Satisfaction: Path coefficient = 0.140, t-statistic = 3.152, $p = 0.002 < 0.05$. Positive and significant; partial mediation. H6 accepted.
- g. H7 – E-WOM → Visiting Decision through Customer Satisfaction: Path coefficient = 0.125, t-statistic = 3.104, $p = 0.002 < 0.05$. Positive and significant; partial mediation. H7 accepted.

The Effect of Customer Experience on Visiting Decision

The results demonstrate that customer experience has a positive and significant effect on visiting decisions at DTW Tanah Lot, indicating that better experiences are associated with stronger decisions to visit. Customer experience is formed through tourists' cognitive, emotional, sensory, physical, and social interactions with a destination, including the quality of services, environmental comfort, facilities, and accessibility. Positive experiences can create favorable perceptions and impressions of a destination, thereby encouraging tourists to choose it as a place to visit. This finding is consistent with the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which suggests that positive experiences can shape favorable attitudes that subsequently strengthen behavioral intentions. The result is also consistent with (Setiawan & Keni, 2023; Sheykhfard et al., 2025; Sihombing, 2025) who found that customer experience has a positive and significant effect on visiting decisions.

The Effect of E-WOM on Visiting Decision

The results show that E-WOM has a positive and significant effect on visiting decisions at DTW Tanah Lot, meaning that more positive and credible online information increases tourists' likelihood of choosing the destination. E-WOM provides prospective tourists with information derived from the experiences, opinions, reviews, and recommendations of other consumers, which may be perceived as more credible because it is less influenced by commercial motives. In accordance with the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), positive, informative, and credible E-WOM can shape favorable attitudes and beliefs toward a destination, which subsequently strengthen the intention to visit. This finding is consistent with (Angelina & Widaningsih, 2025; Rosyid, 2023), who reported a positive and significant relationship between E-WOM and visiting decisions.

The Effect of Customer Satisfaction on Visiting Decision

The results indicate that customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on visiting decisions at DTW Tanah Lot. This finding suggests that tourists who perceive the destination as satisfying are more likely to develop favorable evaluations and make decisions to visit or revisit the destination. Customer satisfaction reflects the comparison between tourists' expectations and the actual performance or experiences received, including service quality, facilities, cleanliness, comfort, and destination accessibility. From the perspective of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), high satisfaction can generate positive attitudes toward the destination and strengthen tourists' behavioral intentions. The finding is consistent with (Hui, 2025; Nafei et al., 2025; Zandrato, 2024), who found that customer satisfaction positively influences visiting decisions.

The Effect of Customer Experience on Customer Satisfaction

The results demonstrate that customer experience has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction at DTW Tanah Lot, indicating that more favorable tourist experiences lead to higher levels of satisfaction. Tourists' experiences are formed through interactions with services, facilities, the tourism environment, and accessibility throughout their visit. Positive experiences create favorable evaluations because tourists perceive that the destination is capable of fulfilling their expectations. Consistent with the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), positive experiences contribute to favorable attitudes and evaluations, which subsequently generate satisfaction when the perceived performance meets or exceeds expectations. This finding is consistent with (Halim, 2023; Saputra et al., 2023; Suharto & Hoti, 2023), who found that customer experience positively affects customer satisfaction.

The Effect of E-WOM on Customer Satisfaction

The results indicate that E-WOM has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction at DTW Tanah Lot. This finding means that positive, informative, and credible information obtained through online reviews, comments, and recommendations can contribute to tourists' satisfaction with their destination experience. E-WOM helps prospective tourists form expectations regarding destination quality before visiting, while the consistency between the information received and the actual experience can strengthen

satisfaction. In accordance with the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), positive E-WOM can shape favorable perceptions and expectations, reduce uncertainty, and strengthen tourists' evaluations of destination quality. The finding is consistent with (Fitrianingsih et al., 2025), who found that E-WOM positively influences customer satisfaction.

The Mediating Effect of Customer Satisfaction on the Relationship between Customer Experience and Visiting Decision

The results show that customer experience has a positive and significant effect on visiting decisions through customer satisfaction, indicating that customer satisfaction partially mediates this relationship. Thus, customer experience contributes to visiting decisions both directly and indirectly by increasing tourists' satisfaction with DTW Tanah Lot. Positive experiences involving service quality, facilities, and environmental comfort, accessibility, and destination attractions can fulfill tourists' expectations and generate satisfaction, which subsequently strengthens their intention to visit. This relationship is consistent with the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), whereby positive experiences shape favorable attitudes, while satisfaction strengthens tourists' confidence in their behavioral decisions. The finding is supported by (Agustin & Badiyah, 2025; Priyanto et al., 2025), who reported that customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between customer experience and visiting decisions.

The Mediating Effect of Customer Satisfaction on the Relationship between E-WOM and Visiting Decision

The results demonstrate that E-WOM has a positive and significant effect on visiting decisions through customer satisfaction, indicating that customer satisfaction partially mediates the relationship. Positive reviews, comments, recommendations, and other forms of digital information can shape tourists' perceptions and expectations before visiting DTW Tanah Lot. When the actual experience corresponds to or exceeds the positive information received through E-WOM, tourists are more likely to experience satisfaction, which subsequently strengthens their visiting decisions. In accordance with the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), E-WOM represents social information that can shape attitudes and beliefs, while satisfaction reinforces positive evaluations and behavioral intentions. This finding is consistent with (Duong, 2025; Indriyani et al., 2025), who found that customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between E-WOM and visiting decisions.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that customer experience and E-WOM have positive and significant effects on visiting decisions at DTW Tanah Lot. Customer satisfaction also has a positive and significant effect on visiting decisions, while customer experience and E-WOM significantly influence customer satisfaction. Furthermore, customer satisfaction partially mediates the effects of both customer experience and E-WOM on visiting decisions, indicating that these two variables influence visiting decisions both directly and indirectly through customer satisfaction. These findings are consistent with the research objectives and support the proposed hypotheses, confirming that positive experiences and favorable electronic word-of-mouth can strengthen tourists' satisfaction and subsequently encourage their decisions to visit DTW Tanah Lot. The findings contribute to tourism marketing research by demonstrating the importance of integrating customer experience, E-WOM, and customer satisfaction in explaining tourists' visiting decisions. From a practical perspective, DTW Tanah Lot management should strengthen tourists' social engagement and overall experience, particularly by improving the relate dimension through cultural activities, artistic performances, festivals, and interactive attractions. Management should also encourage greater E-WOM quantity by facilitating visitor reviews and increasing engaging and informative digital content. In addition, improving service quality, cleanliness, facilities, and visitor comfort is important to strengthen tourists' willingness to recommend the destination.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. The research employed a cross-sectional design, involved 140 respondents, and focused specifically on visitors to DTW Tanah Lot; therefore, the findings may not fully represent tourists' behavior across other tourism destinations or different periods. Future studies are recommended to examine additional variables that may influence visiting decisions, such as social media marketing, perceived price, and trust. Researchers may also consider using larger samples and expanding the research context to several tourism destinations to enable comparative analysis and improve the generalizability of the findings. In addition, longitudinal research is recommended to examine changes in tourists' perceptions, satisfaction, and visiting decisions over time, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamic relationships among customer experience, E-WOM, customer satisfaction, and visiting decisions.

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