



The Impact of EWOM on The Intention to Choose Green Tourist Destinations for Vietnamese Tourists

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Article Information:

Received: January 28, 2023, Accepted: April 11, 2022, Published: April 17, 2023

Abstract

This study aims to evaluate how EWOM influences Vietnamese visitors' inclinations to travel to environmentally friendly areas. (Which investigates the theories of source EWOM (EW), Environmental Concern (EC), Travel Motivation (TM), Destination Image (DI), Attitude (ATD), and Subjective Norm (SN) and constructs highly accurate structural models (SEM). Design/methodology/approach – An online survey investigated the influence of EWOM and related parameters on the intention of Vietnamese tourists to pick a green tourist location. Using Google Forms, the minimal sample size for this study will be 197 (n=197). CFA and SEM will be run on the data for testing hypotheses. Reliability statistics of the scale will be conducted by using Cronbach's Alpha, EFA. Findings – The findings of this study will help tourism organizations and marketers in Vietnam recognize that the use of eWOM by travelers in selecting a green travel destination is becoming a significant trend.

Keywords: Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM), Green Tourist, Vietnamese Tourist, Tourism Destination

JEL Classification: M31, O13, Q56

How to cite:

Tan, T. L., Thanh, N. D. Tan, D. N., Tai, N. V., Cong, N. V. Nam, T. C. (2023). The Impact Of Ewom On The Intention To Choose Green Tourist Destinations For Vietnamese Tourists. *Journal of Business & Management*, 1(2). 104 – 120. DOI. <https://doi.org/10.47747/jbm.v1i2.1061>

1. Introduction

A product, business, or service may receive favorable or negative online word of mouth (eWOM) from potential, current, or former customers (Litvin, Goldsmith and Pan, 2008). In addition to the evolution of traditional word-of-mouth marketing, which is increasingly losing effectiveness, the electronic word-of-



mouth method has blossomed on social platforms and been appraised. 88% of Southeast Asian users still rely on suggestions and guidance from friends and family (Balaban, Mucundorfeanu and Naderer, 2022).

Perception can have a range of implications on attitudes, perceptions, and action. Stakeholder-friendly method (Su and Swanson, 2017). Destination social responsibility has a substantial impact on the enhancement of a destination's reputation and the confidence of domestic tourists in tourism locations. A destination's perceived social responsibility will inspire tourist confidence that its activities and services will be delivered in an honest and trustworthy manner (Hassan and Soliman, 2021). Destination marketing's ultimate objective is to build a strong bond between consumers and companies, and the foundation of this relationship is trust. Trust is an efficient means of mitigating the perception of risk and uncertainty. Destinations perceived as trustworthy are more likely to attract visitors (Han and Hyun, 2015). Consequently, destination trust might influence the willingness of tourists to visit a particular location.

This study investigates the effect of eWOM on green tourism customer behavior. Typically, the product in the tourism industry is intangible and cannot be appraised until it has been utilized. When making a purchase decision, tourism products may also be regarded as high-risk items (Mok, 1998). Therefore, word-of-mouth plays a crucial role in determining when to utilize the service. Tourism is a potentially increasing business, however the majority of eWom's past studies have concentrated on studying purchase decision behavior on tangible things, whereas research on intangible product behavior images is scarce and has received little consideration. Recognizing this deficiency, the author investigated how eWOM influences customer behavior in green tourism.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Concept of green tourism destination

It is easier to use the term "green product" than to define it. Green tourism refers to environmentally conscious travel, but the term has other connotations and ramifications. These assertions usually employ words with no accepted or established definitions or extravagant rhetoric to conceal their hollowness. Green tourism, or another word relating to environmental concerns, is commonly used to describe nature vacations as occurring in exotic locales (Furqan, Mat Som and Hussin, 2010). These phrases have two purposes: first, to inform clients that their vacation destination is attractive and undeveloped. Green tourism claims can be used to show that local tourism firms do not negatively impact the environment. A commodity or service is considered "green" when it provides benefits to both the producer and the consumer without damaging the environment. When a stakeholder attempts to quantify the environmental damage caused by their actions, complications occur. Even in circumstances when measurement appears to be feasible, the next obstacle is reaching a consensus on the criteria to be considered and the threshold levels of unacceptable impacts. Tourism has generally been viewed as a relatively green business, with the exception of its effects on transportation and land development; as a result, it has only recently been a subject of concern (Font and Tribe, 2001).

2.2 Tourist intention in the selection of destinations.

Everything in a green tourist location must be natural and untamed, with minimal manmade components. Choose a period that corresponds with the climate at your destination for the most verdant trip experience. It is still considered a normal and effective method of green tourism to travel while aiding the local people or preserving the environment. Here, the places to visit are lonely, distant, and abandoned tourist destinations that have lost their original attractiveness (Jopp, Mair, DeLacy, Fluker, 2015).

2.3 Factors affecting the intention to choose a green tourist destination and hypothesis.



1. Electronic word of mouth

User-generated content (UGC) or electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) refers to the content that is produced on social media platforms (Burgess, Sellitto, Cox, Buultjens., 2011; Ayeh, Au and Law, 2013). eWOM is defined as positive or negative comments made by prospective, current, or former travelers about tourism-related products or services that are accessible to other travelers over the internet (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004; Cheung, Lee and Rabjohn, 2008). It is a significant source of information for travellers seeking destination information and assists them in making selections regarding online purchases of tourism-related products or services (Litvin, Goldsmith and Pan, 2008).

Hanlan and Kelly (2005) provide additional evidence for the significance of information sources in the creation of destination images. The results indicate that WOM, autonomous, and independent information sources create the majority of the destination image. In addition, Morgan, Pritchard and Piggott (2003) discovered that negative WOM has a substantial effect on the image of a place because dissatisfied tourists communicate negative thoughts about their experiences. Similarly, scientific research reveals that WOM can affect the perception of a destination (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991; Morgan, Pritchard and Piggott, 2003; Tasci and Gartner, 2007). This eWOM acts as an example and benchmark for other locations. According to Baloglu and McCleary (1999), eWOM recommendations from friends and family were the most influential factor in forming tourism impressions. Beerli and Martín (2004) concurred that eWOM was the most credible and authentic communication medium and had a substantial impact on the image of the destination.

H1: EWOM has a positive effect on destination image.

According to Grewal, Cline and Davies (2003); Chen, Chen and Chung (2007); Söderlund and Rosengren (2007), eWOM is an essential information source that influences tourists' travel intentions and destination selections. Vermeulen and Seegers (2009) ran an experiment with 168 participants to investigate the effect of online hotel reviews on the attitudes of travelers toward hotels. They found that exposure to online reviews boosted hotel awareness and improved passengers' sentiments toward hotels.

H2: EWOM has a positive effect on attitude.

According to Ajzen (1991), the subjective norm is the impression of social pressure to perform or refrain from performing a particular activity. According to Bearden and Etzel (1982), the perceived opinions of influential people influence a person's impression of a situation. Social influences are widely recognised to influence consumer behavior, they continued. In addition, Park (2000) asserted that when an individual constructs his or her own perspective, he or she employs significant others as a reference group, such as parents, relatives, siblings, romantic partners, or close friends. Furthermore, the greater the intensity and frequency of a person's relationships with those who are important to him or her, the more likely that person is to embrace the beliefs and ideas of his or her reference group (Leenders, 2002). According to Reza Jalilvand and Samiei (2012), eWOM has a good effect on perceived behavioral control. According to Cheng, Lam and Hsu (2006), unfavorable eWOM is positively correlated with perceived behavioral control. In addition, it is shown that resource-based conditions can affect the perception of behavioral control in mobile eWOM.

H3: EWOM has a positive effect on subjective norms.

According to Lam (2011), eWOM is considered as a free introduction or a more traditional kind of promotion when individuals are motivated to share information and experiences about the places they have been. eWOM is an influential and valuable source of information when visitors decide to visit a location or form opinions about the planned destination (Litvin, Goldsmith and Pan, 2008; Cox, Burgess, Sellitto, Buultjens., 2009). Understandably, tourists rely on recommendations from friends and family, as well as reviews on multi-channel platforms such as Facebook and TikTok, when searching for



previously unseen travel experiences (Chi and Qu, 2008; Cox, Burgess, Sellitto, Buultjens., 2009). According to Litvin, Goldsmith and Pan (2008), consumers are typically more influenced by eWOM recommendations. In the context of tourism, research has showed that negative eWOM can have a negative impact on tourist willingness to purchase (Coombs, 2007). In response, research demonstrates that an active lady not only draws more prospective guests, but also demonstrates a commitment to maintain a positive relationship with a particular destination (Liu, Li and Kim, 2015). Moreover, Albarq's (2013) online travel study found that eWOM influences travelers' destination selection intentions and attitudes.

H12: EWOM has a positive effect on the intention to choose a green tourism destination.

2. Environmental concern

Environmental awareness demonstrates a strong commitment to preserve the environment (Crosby, Gill, and Taylor, 1981). Hartmann and Apaolaza-Ibáñez (2012) confirmed that environmental concerns influence consumers' attitudes regarding the acquisition of environmentally beneficial products or services. Additionally, prior research has demonstrated that consumers with a greater concern for the environment are more inclined to purchase environmentally beneficial products or services (Han, Hsu and Lee, 2009; Harun, 2012). Therefore, users who lack environmental concerns may not actively intend to use the service.

Environmental concerns are a significant predictor of customer attitudes toward green services (Tang, Wang and Lu, 2014). In their study of Chinese customers, they discovered that environmental concerns were a prominent element that considerably influenced consumers' views toward eco-friendly products and services. In a similar vein, Ma, Rau and Guo (2018) observed a direct correlation between environmental concerns and willingness to use green services, suggesting that consumers with strong environmental concerns would be interested in using services that reflect this concern.

H4: Environmental concern has a positive effect on attitude.

Wang, Li, Sun, Wu. (2020) found that consumers' environmental concerns had a substantial positive effect on their subjective norms. Wang, Lin and Li (2018) shown that if customers perceive a highly subjective standard, their likelihood of visiting green hotels increases.

H5: Environmental concern has a positive effect on subjective norms.

3. Travel motivation

Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which includes physiological, safety, belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization, is deeply embedded in travel motivation (Chon, 1989). In addition to Maslow's hierarchical requirements, aesthetic and knowledge-based desires also motivate tourists to travel. Tension-relieving necessities comprise the first three (physiological, safety, and belonging). The remaining four are known as inductive arousal-seeking motivations: self-esteem, self-actualization, aesthetics, and knowledge (Gayle, 1993). Travel motivation is defined by Wu (2015) as a person's desire to relieve stress, enjoy the natural environment, see beautiful vistas, and learn, which pushes a person to travel for pleasure.

Baloglu and McCleary (1999) found that excitement (pull factor) and personal factors (push factor) positively affected destination image. However, when it comes to sensory elements, a number of studies have shown that the variety and type of information has a significant effect on the perception of a tourist destination (Beerli and Martín, 2004; Reza Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012). In addition, San Martín and Rodríguez del Bosque (2008) discovered significant differences in this relationship, which was refined by Balceti and Dunning (2006), who concluded after a series of experimental studies that in an environment of uncertainty and ambiguity, individuals form a perception that positively influences their motivation. Simply said, folks who have never visited a specific destination build an impression of that location based



on their desire to travel there. We can conclude, based on the findings of the preceding studies, that travel motivation affects the tourist's view of the destination.

H6: Travel motivation has a positive effect on destination image.

Personality, psychographic features, and external social/cultural forces are believed to influence tourist motivation (Goodrich, 1994; Madrigal, 1995; Huang and Hsu, 2005). Consequently, numerous classes of travel motivation are identified. Despite increased interest in comprehending travel motivation, few studies have examined the connection between tourist motivation and attitude (Huang and Hsu, 2005). According to Baloglu and McCleary (1999), travel motivation is one of the variables that influence a person's intention to visit a location. Lam and Hsu (2004) argued that travelers' attitudes are determined by their views about motivational variables. According to Hsu, Cai, and Mimi Li (2010), the motivation of tourists directly affects their attitude toward visiting the location. According to Baloglu and McCleary (1999), the motive to travel is a predictor of the will to return. Hsu and Huang (2012) created the TPB model to analyze the impact of travel incentives on the place selection behavior of visitors. Four core factors, including information, relaxation, novelty, and purchase, as well as 19 measuring items, are used to evaluate travel motivation. According to Hsu and Huang (2012), motivation has a direct effect on both the attitude and desire to visit a location. In addition, Mohaidin, Wei and Ali Murshid (2017) demonstrated that travel motivation is a factor that motivates individuals to travel or revisit an area (Soliman, 2021).

H7: Travel motivation has a positive effect on the intention to choose a green tourism destination.

4. Destination image

A destination image is an individual's mental representation of knowledge (beliefs), emotions, and general view of a particular location (Fakeye and Crompton, 1991).

The majority of the destination image is shaped by the environmental characteristics of the tour site, but it is also influenced by travel marketing that convey certain characteristics about the destination to the intended audience (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). The word "destination image" refers to a collection of ideas and impressions generated through time as a result of the processing of information from numerous sources, culminating in a mental image of the desired characteristics and benefits of a destination (Gartner, 1994). Consequently, the destination's image has a substantial impact on the choosing of tourism destinations (Chiu, Lee and Chen, 2014).

H8: Destination image has a positive effect on attitude

Destination image is vital when deciding where to vacation. It influences destination-related decisions as well as post-decisional behaviors such as participation, evaluation, and future behavioral intentions (Chen and Tsai, 2007). When a tourist has a favorable image of a site, the likelihood of their visiting that area increases. Existing empirical research demonstrates that destination image positively affects travel intent (Chen and Tsai, 2007; Liu, Li and Kim, 2015). In conclusion, if an eco-destination appears appealing to visitors, the likelihood of their visiting improves.

H9: Destination image has a positive effect on the intention to choose a green tourism destination.

5. Attitude.

Attitude, a component of the belief-attitude-intention paradigm proposed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), is described as a taught propensity to respond positively or negatively toward an object.

Researchers use attitude primarily to predict or explain the diverse consumer behaviors, including the intention to participate in an online travel community (Casaló, Flavián and Guinalú, 2010), the intention



to attend festivals, and the intention to follow online travel community advice (Casaló, Flavián and Guinalú, 2011).

H10: Attitude has a positive effect on the intention to choose a green tourism destination.

6. Subjective norm

Subjective norms are the result of people's readings of others' referent interpretations in terms of action and inspiration to present opinions in accordance with their concepts and expectations (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977). Subjective norms are well-known in marketing and tourism literature as a motivator of behavioral intentions (Quintal, Thomas and Phau, 2015; Hasan, Ray and Neela, 2021)

It has been scientifically demonstrated in tourism-related literature by Nicoletta and Servidio (2012) that the opinions of tourists regarding the approval or disapproval of the specific holiday spot by influential others influence destination selection.

H11: Subjective norm has a positive effect on the intention to choose a green tourism destination.

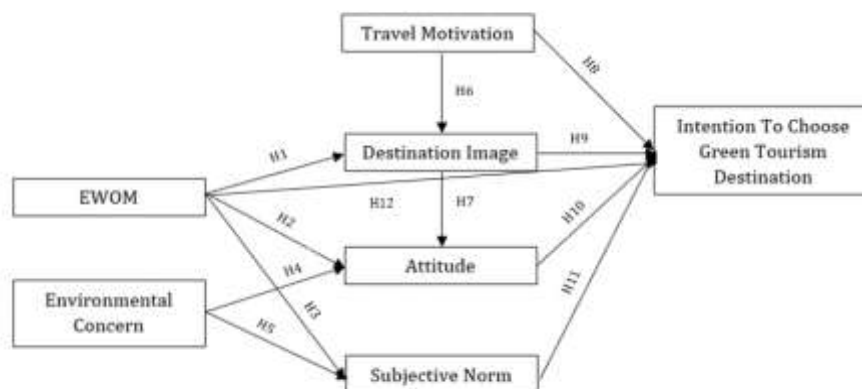


Figure 1: Research Model Proposed (Source: Authors)

3. Research Method

3.1 Qualitative research

A survey questionnaire on the factors affecting the intention to choose a green tourist destination was carried out through Google Form. The items were then adjusted to measure destination choice intention. To ensure an appropriate level of authenticity and reliability before conducting the survey, the team relied on scales from other studies and inherited them. After the data collection process, there were adjustments and finalization of the official research model.

3.2 Quantitative research

In a quantitative data-based inquiry, a survey questionnaire was used as a data collection instrument. This study's objectives have been properly incorporated into the questionnaire. Throughout the study, the respondents' level of agreement was measured using a 5-point Likert Scale.

3.3 Sampling



This study's respondents are frequent travelers and those who want to travel. Through travel groups on social networks such as Facebook or Telegram, the surveys will be distributed immediately via the Internet to the study participants.

Using the formula of Cochran (1977): $n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2} = \frac{(1.96)^2 (.5)(.5)}{(.07)^2} = 197$

Where:

Determine the sample size using n.

The value of the Z table is Z.

e represents the required level of accuracy (i.e. the margin of error),

p is the (estimated) proportion of the population with the questioned attribute, and q is 1 - p.

The minimal number of participants for this study will be 197.

4. Results & Discussion

4.1 Assessing the Scale's Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)

Table 4. Cronbach's alpha for measuring reliability of scales

No	Scale		Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's α if Item Deleted	Cronbach's Alpha
1	EWOM	EW1	0.683	0.815	0.846
		EW3	0.699	0.798	
		EW2	0.758	0.742	
2	Environmental concern	EC1	0.421	0.747	0.756
		EC5	0.543	0.716	
		EC3	0.515	0.716	
		EC2	0.578	0.696	
		EC4	0.609	0.679	
3	Travel motivation	TM5	0.565	0.799	0.821
		TM2	0.593	0.791	
		TM4	0.622	0.784	
		TM3	0.625	0.782	
		TM1	0.662	0.770	
4	Destination image	DI4	0.489	0.831	0.835
		DI5	0.577	0.815	
		DI3	0.603	0.809	
		DI6	0.624	0.805	
		DI2	0.648	0.800	
		DI1	0.711	0.787	
5	Attitude	ATD5	0.583	0.814	0.833
		ATD4	0.626	0.802	
		ATD3	0.636	0.799	
		ATD2	0.650	0.794	
		ATD1	0.671	0.789	



6	Subjective norm	SN2	0.523	0.637	0.712
		SN1	0.527	0.628	
		SN3	0.547	0.601	

The results of the test indicate that the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient for all variables is greater than 0.60, and the total correlation coefficient is greater than 0.30. Therefore, the scale is validity for run EFA.

4.2 Concept Testing Scales With EFA

The variables' EFA results satisfy the following conditions: KMO = 0.784 > 0.5 and sig Bartlett's Test = 0.000 0.05. With a loading factor of 0.5, seven components with Eigenvalue > 1 and a cumulative total variance of 62.642% were retrieved.

Table 5. The findings of the EFA analysis

No	Observed variables	Factor 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	DI1	0.820						
2	DI2	0.779						
3	DI6	0.761						
4	DI3	0.738						
5	DI5	0.706						
6	DI4	0.618						
7	ATD1		0.794					
8	ATD2		0.792					
9	ATD3		0.777					
10	ATD4		0.768					
11	ATD5		0.729					
12	TM1			0.797				
13	TM3			0.769				
14	TM4			0.766				
15	TM2			0.747				
16	TM5			0.724				
17	EC4				0.772			
18	EC2				0.740			
19	EC3				0.707			
20	EC5				0.678			
21	EC1				0.616			
22	EW2					0.830		
23	EW3					0.786		
24	EW1					0.772		
25	IC1						0.779	
26	IC2						0.777	
27	IC3						0.713	
28	SN3							0.795
29	SN2							0.743



30	SN1							0.647
Eigenvalues		4.882	3.532	3.047	2.860	2.088	1.227	1.156
Cronbach's α		0.835	0.833	0.821	0.756	0.846	0.807	0.712
Average variance extracted		62.642%						
KMO		0.784						
Barlett's Test		Sig. = 0.000						

Result of EFA include 7 factors group (6 independent variables groups, 1 dependent variables group)

4.4 Concept Testing Scales with CFA

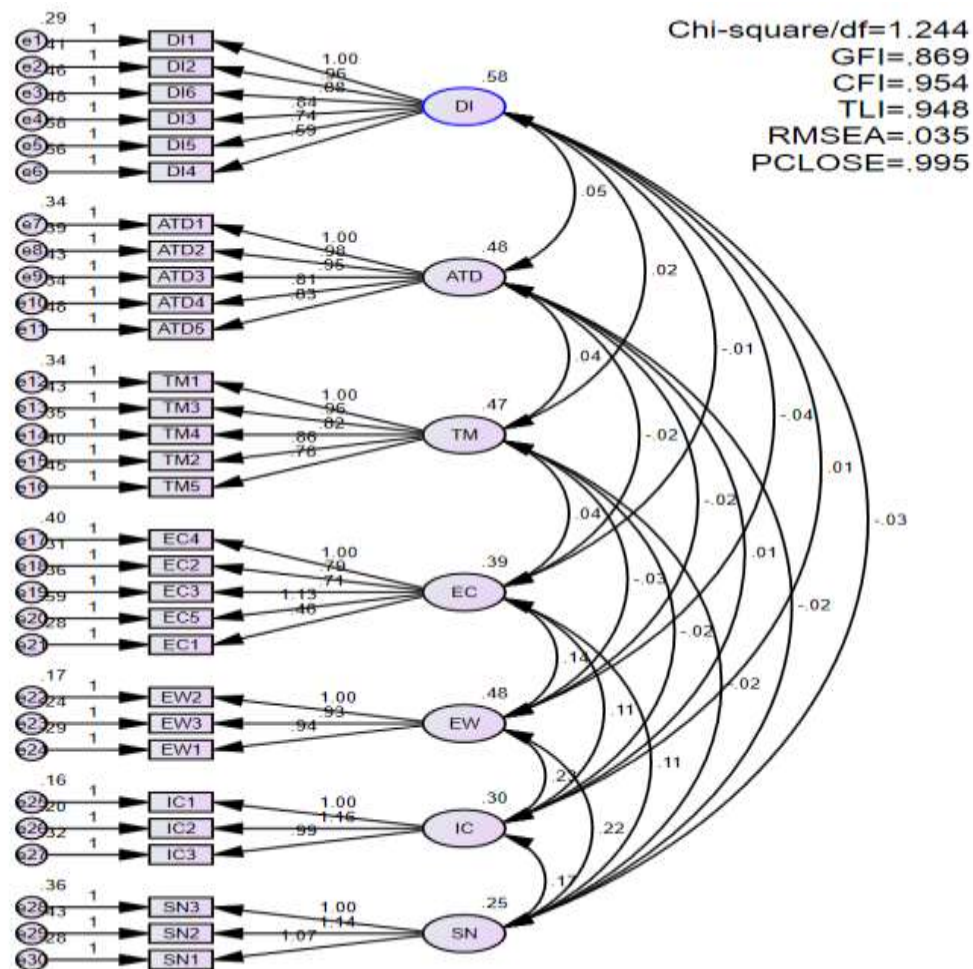


Figure 3. CFA Model

Chi-square/df = 1.244 3; CFI = 0.954 > 0.9; TLI = 0.948 > 0.9; RMSEA = 0.035 0.06; PCLOSE = 0.995 > 0.05; these values fulfill the Model Fit evaluation indices of Hu and Bentler (1999). However, GFI = 0.869 is less than 0.9. According to Baumgartner and Homburg (1996), GFI is highly dependent on the number of scales, the number of observed variables, and the sample size, thus when this index is less than 0.9, 0.8 is still an acceptable value.

4.5 Research Model Validation Using SEM Analysis



All assessment criteria are met (Chi-square/df = 1.179; CFI = 0.966; GFI = 0.877; TLI = 0.990; RMSEA = 0.030; PCLOSE = 1.000), so this model is appropriate for the data set.

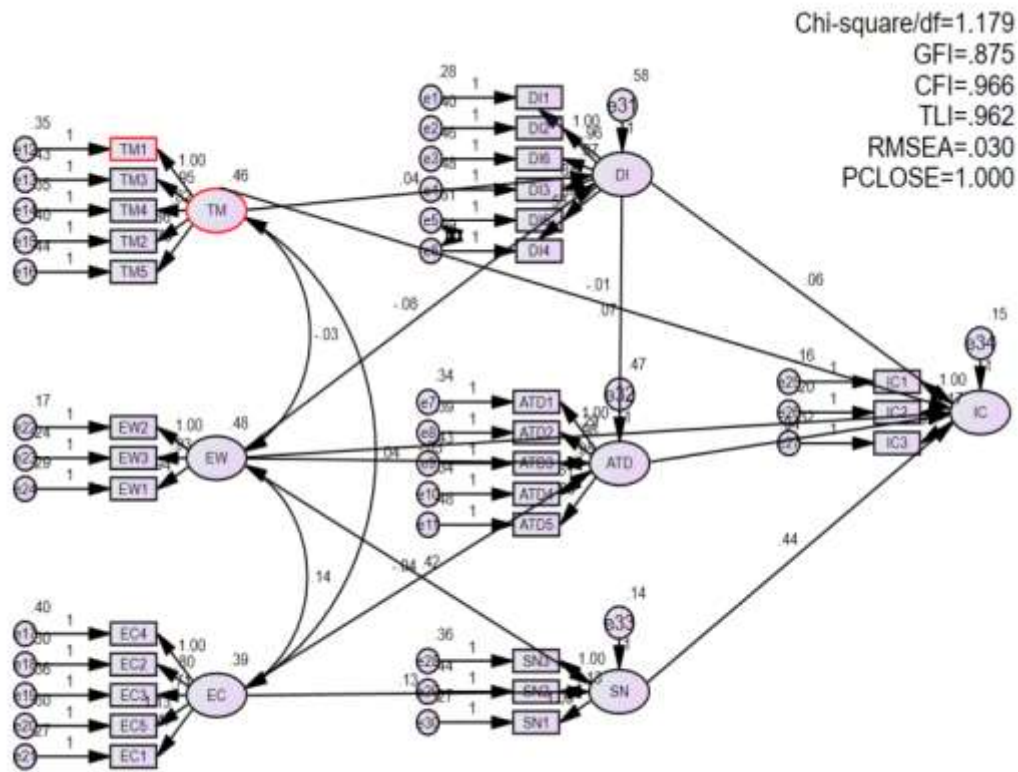


Figure 4. SEM Model

Table 6. Regression weight

Relationships	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
DI ← TM	0.036	0.095	0.383	0.702
DI ← EW	-0.077	0.092	-0.837	0.402
ATD ← DI	0.074	0.076	0.974	0.330
ATD ← EW	-0.031	0.091	-0.338	0.735
SN ← EW	0.420	0.075	5.614	***
ATD ← EC	-0.040	0.105	-0.384	0.701
SN ← EC	0.132	0.072	1.818	0.069
IC ← DI	0.058	0.049	1.174	0.241
IC ← ATD	0.045	0.055	0.812	0.417
IC ← SN	0.436	0.130	3.354	***
IC ← EW	0.289	0.085	3.409	***
IC ← TM	-0.013	0.056	-0.233	0.815

Testing the influence of factors on the intention to pick a green tourist destination revealed the following:



H1 describes the influencing relationship between EWOM and destination image. The results show that $P = 0.402 > 0.05$; thus, Hypothesis H1 is rejected.

H2 describes the influencing relationship between EWOM and attitude. The results show that $P = 0.735 > 0.05$; thus, Hypothesis H2 is rejected.

H3 describes the influencing relationship between EWOM and subjective norm. H3 is assumed with the estimate result 0.420; $SE = 0.075$; $P = ***$ (infinitesimal) < 0.05 .

H4 describes the influencing relationship between environmental concern and attitude. The results show that $P = 0.701 > 0.05$; thus, Hypothesis H4 is rejected.

H5 describes the influencing relationship between environmental concern and subjective norm. The results show that $P = 0.069 > 0.05$; thus, Hypothesis H5 is rejected.

H6 describes the influencing relationship between travel motivation and destination image. The results show that $P = 0.702 > 0.05$; thus, Hypothesis H6 is rejected.

H7 describes the influencing relationship between destination image and attitude. The results show that $P = 0.330 > 0.05$; thus, Hypothesis H7 is rejected.

H8 describes the influencing relationship between travel motivation and intention to choose destination. The results show that $P = 0.815 > 0.05$; thus, Hypothesis H8 is rejected.

H9 describes the influencing relationship between destination image and intention to choose destination. The results show that $P = 0.241 > 0.05$; thus, Hypothesis H9 is rejected.

H10 describes the influencing relationship between attitude and intention to choose destination. The results show that $P = 0.417 > 0.05$; thus, Hypothesis H10 is rejected.

H11 describes the influencing relationship between subjective norm and intention to choose destination. H11 is assumed with the estimate result 0.436; $SE = 0.130$; $P = ***$ (infinitesimal) < 0.05 .

H12 describes the influencing relationship between EWOM and intention to choose destination. H11 is assumed with the estimate result 0.289; $SE = 0.085$; $P = ***$ (infinitesimal) < 0.05 .

5. Conclusion

The recommended theoretical model is shown in Figure 5 below.

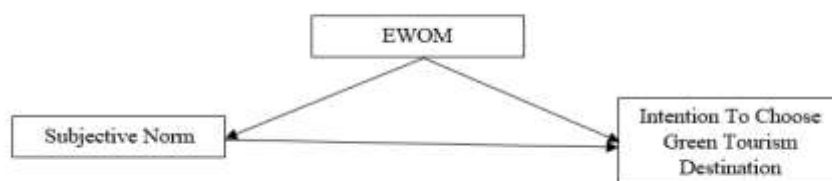


Figure 5: Model of constituent element impacts

According to research by Vu (2010), Vietnamese customers are easily affected by the "herd effect" because the information has not been fully and accurately captured, so they frequently learn by observing the behavior of those around them and To attract customers in the future, tourist organizations must be adaptable in their use of communication media. Bringing together groups of subjective standards to



effectively engage the audience (opinion of experts, experienced consultants). In addition, developing a positive brand image and providing high-quality services are always benefits of subjective norms.

In the present setting, the reputation of a brand has a direct impact on the functioning of the business. eWOM has a significant impact on electronic communication, as there are currently 6.64 billion smartphone users worldwide. If unfavorable information about the firm is not prevented in a timely manner, it can lead to business slowdown, which would negatively impact the company's revenue. eWOM has a significant impact on tourism destinations in Vietnam and around the world. If businesses are able to leverage eWOM to build their own brands on social networks, they will attract a huge number of tourists.

As smartphones grow more popular among client segments, eWom in the service industries becomes increasingly crucial on the 4.0 technological platform. Consequently, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) has a direct impact on the subjective criteria of each individual's judgment of the image and service quality of various green tourist locations. Customers frequently learn and feel more confident by studying the conduct of those around them and by reading comments and watching video evaluations on social networks. When a company's eWOM is built to be positive, it will generate positive reviews, which clients can use to decide whether to use that company's services.

Vietnamese businesses doing business in green tourist destinations should implement word-of-mouth campaigns on social networks such as Facebook, tiktok, Instagram, zalo etc.. Strengthening contests on raising awareness of tourists visitors towards environmental protection, raising charity funds from environmental protection activities to spread the tourists' sense of using green tourism services, the views from people who have traveled Tourism will affect tourists' attitudes in considering the choice of green tourism destinations

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