



The Effect Of Digital Content Marketing, E-Wom And Viral Marketing On The Interest Of Domestic Tourist Visits With Virtual Emotional Engagement As An Intervening Variable

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How to Cite :

Nursabilla, R., Ramadania, R., Pebrianti, W. (2025). The Effect Of Digital Content Marketing, E-WOM And Viral Marketing On The Interest Of Domestic Tourist Visits With Virtual Emotional Engagement As An Intervening Variable. EKOMBIS REVIEW: Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi Dan Bisnis, 13(3). doi: <https://doi.org/10.37676/ekombis.v13i3>

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received [08 January 2025]

Revised [20 Juny 2025]

Accepted [25 Juny 2025]

KEYWORDS

Digital Content Marketing, E-WOM, Viral Marketing, Virtual Emotional Engagement, Interest in Domestic Tourism.

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effect of Digital Content Marketing, electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), and Viral Marketing on the interest of domestic tourist visits in Indonesia with Virtual Emotional Engagement as an intervening variable. The research method uses quantitative approach with SEM-PLS analysis. The Data was collected from 200 active respondents of Tiktok users. The results showed that Digital Content Marketing, E-WOM, and Viral Marketing had a positive and significant effect on Virtual Emotional Engagement, which in turn also significantly influenced the interest of domestic tourist visits. However, the direct influence of E-WOM on the interest of domestic tourist visits is not significant, but E-WOM is more effective in creating emotional engagement, which can ultimately increase the interest of domestic tourist visits indirectly. This finding confirms the importance of social media-based digital marketing strategies to increase the attractiveness of domestic tourist destinations in the digital age. In addition, this study makes a theoretical contribution to understanding the role of emotional engagement in virtual environments as a link between marketing strategies and tourist behavior.

INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector in Indonesia has shown significant growth, with domestic tourism being a major contributor to the post-pandemic national economy. This is supported by tourism's contribution to GDP of 3.8% and job creation for more than 24 million people in the creative economy sector. The ever-increasing travel trend, with the majority of millennials and Z dominating domestic tourists, coupled with tourism potential such as natural, culinary, and cultural tourism destinations, shows the great potential of Indonesia's tourism to continue to grow.

The past few years have seen significant changes in tourist behavior, especially in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. The way people plan and choose tourist destinations is influenced by a number of factors, including changing tastes of travelers, the use of social media, and the improvement of technology. Santus and Nandita (2023) claim that social media is often used for travel-related activities. When planning a trip, social media is the most popular source of information, followed by recommendations from others. Generally, traveling activities will be used as content on tourists' social media accounts to show what they have done (Ratnasari et al., 2020; Ramadania and Yahya, 2021).

The development of social media in the digital era requires marketers to better understand the trends and driving forces of tourists to make travel more interesting and satisfying. Digital content marketing allows audiences to actively share and follow information through emotions, information, and entertainment. It is not just about promoting destinations but as a way to attract audiences using content (Yi Bua et al., 2020). In addition, the purpose of Digital Content Marketing is to convey the value of Marketing Communications and convey a specific purpose, which is impressive to tourists and will help them in decision-making visit (Ramadania, et al., 2023). According to Souza and Júnior (2023), digital content marketing in the tourism industry has proven to be beneficial and increase loyalty to tourist destinations and travel intentions through the value of information and entertainment.

The tourism industry makes E-WOM or electronic word of mouth the main source of information from which tourists choose the destination they want to visit. Research shows that E-WOM greatly increases visitor interest positively by 55.5% (Suhartapa and Rafida, 2024). E-WOM also shows that successful online promotions can increase the number of tourists (Sulfindarnarko, et al., 2024). In addition, viral marketing is a strategy to increase marketing reach quickly and extensively through social media and engaging content. In today's state of the industry, viral marketing is an effective and successful strategy for communicating a destination. This entails developing campaigns related to attractive and aesthetic tourist destinations through the use of internet-based communication. Understanding the role of viral marketing is essential for the shift from conventional to modern marketing strategies, especially in the tourism industry in the digital age (Fjelldal, et al, 2022).

Tourists' bond with tourist destinations can be strengthened through emotional engagement, which in turn can increase interest in visiting. According to research by Loureiro et al. (2019) shows that emotional engagement in a virtual environment can increase the perception of value, satisfaction, and intention to visit. In the context of tourism, this is particularly relevant, where emotions play an important role in influencing the choice of tourist destinations. Khairani and Fachira (2022) also stated that cognitive involvement has the greatest impact on trip planning behavior. Emotions are at a peak when making decisions, especially in the tourism industry where memories and experiences are essential.

Social media, especially Tiktok, has become an important platform in promoting tourist destinations by utilizing digital content marketing, electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), and viral marketing. However, despite the growing relevance of digital marketing strategies, in-depth research on their impact on domestic traveller behaviour, particularly through virtual emotional engagement, is still limited. The increase in the number of Tiktok users in Indonesia is inseparable from several key factors. First, the rapid growth of social media among Indonesia's young generation has created a potential market through social media platforms, especially in promoting domestic tourist destinations. Second, the high creativity and expressiveness of the Indonesian people is also an important factor in the popularity of Tiktok, where many creators use this platform to present digital content about tourism, such as destination recommendations, travel experiences, and travel tips. This makes Tiktok a strategic social media for creators to show their creativity while attracting the attention of a wider audience, as well as increasing interest in domestic tourist visits.

The changing behavior of modern travelers who rely more on digital recommendations, creative content, and emotional engagement raises the need for a deeper understanding of the role of social media in influencing interest in tourist visits. Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the influence of digital content marketing, E-WOM, and viral marketing on the interest of domestic tourism visits in Indonesia, with virtual emotional engagement as an intervening variable. The focus of this research is how social media-based digital marketing strategies can increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of domestic tourism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital Content Marketing

The Content Marketing Institute defines content marketing as a marketing approach centered on producing and disseminating valuable, timely, and consistent information to attract audiences and grow business profits. *In addition, the purpose of Digital Content Marketing is to convey the value of Marketing Communications and convey a specific purpose, which is impressive to tourists and will help them in decision-making visit (Ramadania, et al., 2023).* With the aim of generating profitable tourist activities, digital content marketing uses marketing strategies to produce and disseminate valuable materials that are relevant to the target audience to attract, engage, and acquire them (Aisyah, et al., 2023). Koiso-Kanttila first proposed the idea of digital content marketing in 2004. According to this theory, the marketing of products, businesses, and their goods is delivered digitally, and this kind of digital information plays an important role in the commercial environment (Mathew and Soliman, 2020). Tourist services, destination recognition, destination authority, tourist trust, and tourist loyalty can all be improved with digital content marketing.

Digital content marketing is considered a strategy to attract tourists, visit tourist destinations, and interact with the target audience to add value and create successful partnerships. The tourism industry can achieve various commercial goals by utilizing digital content marketing effectively, including increasing the number of visitors and strengthening the reputation of tourism locations. According to Tran et al. (2023), the tourist experience and loyalty to tourist destinations are positively influenced by the perceived value of digital content marketing, which includes its informative and entertaining components.

E-WOM

Elektronik word of mouth (E-WOM) is a form of informal communication carried out online by tourists regarding experiences, opinions, or information related to destinations or services. In the context of the tourism industry, E-WOM has a great influence in shaping the perception and decisions of tourists. Compared to traditional forms of communication, E-WOM has been proven to have a significant impact on tourism (Ferdiansyah, 2023). E-WOM is a social media marketing communication that is carried out online and includes statements from tourists, namely positive and negative statements.

Building and maintaining an active online community, as well as providing space for traveler reviews, is a key step in maximizing the impact of E-WOM on the tourism industry. Proactively managing your online reputation and responding to both positive and negative reviews also plays an important role in maintaining the image of the destination. This overall strategy aims to build trust, increase loyalty, and expand the reach of promotions through E-WOM.

Viral Marketing

Viral marketing is a marketing strategy that utilizes social networks to spread messages quickly and widely through digital platforms, such as social media and the internet. This concept is often seen as an evolution of traditional word of mouth, but with greater effect due to the

speed and scale of dissemination obtained through online platforms. Viral marketing has a significant influence on tourist behavior, especially through social media which is able to disseminate information widely and quickly. Research shows that viral marketing increases tourist visit intentions because viral content on social media creates attraction to a destination.

According to Fauzia and Adlina (2024), viral marketing through platforms such as TikTok can influence tourists' decisions to visit tourist destinations. Another study by Hong et al. (2022) found that tourists' trust in information on social media and their satisfaction after visiting a viral destination also mediated the intention of visiting behavior. In addition, Daif and Elsayed (2019) revealed that viral marketing helps tourists in choosing tourism and hospitality services, as well as influencing their behavior through online content that is more accessible and trusted than offline promotion. In addition, Firdaus et al. (2022) emphasized that the positive image of destinations disseminated through viral marketing increases tourist visit intentions. Recommendations to other tourists and comments on tourists' social media are the basis of viral marketing (Aisyah, et al., 2023). They will establish relationships with potential tourists who will visit a tourist destination and refer them to other tourists.

Virtual Emotional Engagement

Virtual emotional engagement is emotional engagement created through interactions in a digital or virtual environment, such as social media, websites, or other digital platforms. This engagement involves feelings, emotional reactions, and connections built between users and the content or destination in their interactions on social media. According to Vargo and Lusch (2004) in the theory of Service Dominant Logic, tourists are co-creators of value, including in creating emotional experiences. Virtual emotional engagement has a significant impact on tourist behavior, including interest in visiting, loyalty to the destination, and tourist satisfaction level.

The 4p marketing mix strategy of Product, Price, Place, Promotion has evolved into 4P+E, where E (Emotion) combines emotional experiences that aim to be enhanced through digital materials that influence travelers' decisions (Velentza and Metaxas, 2023). This shows how important the use of digital media in tourism marketing, tourist relationships and emotional content are becoming more significant than traditional marketing strategies. Harrison and Barthel (2021) stated that virtual emotional engagement is very important to understand consumer behavior in the online environment, because it affects the decision-making process and their overall satisfaction with the tourist destination.

The emotional connection fostered in a virtual environment significantly increases destination loyalty among travelers (Kim and Lee, 2020). Schneider and Klocke (2022) add that the effect of virtual emotional engagement on traveler satisfaction is profound, highlighting the importance of emotional connection in virtual experiences. Motivations, experiences, and feelings associated with goals form the emotional component. These emotions affect how travelers remember their experiences and how they plan to return in the future. When it comes to the traveler's experience at a specific location and time, virtual emotional engagement has different significance and impact. This is very important in the tourism sector.

Emotional experiences have a profound impact on domestic tourist interest, highlighting the importance of fostering positive emotions in tourism (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2020). The concept of engagement is very important and meaningful in the marketing environment, including social media (Khairani and Fachira, 2022). The whole feeling of a customer, whether direct or long-term, is measured by their level of happiness and enjoyment, known as emotional engagement. To increase interest in domestic tourist visits, a marketing strategy that focuses on the emotional engagement of tourists is essential.

Interest in Domestic Tourism Visits

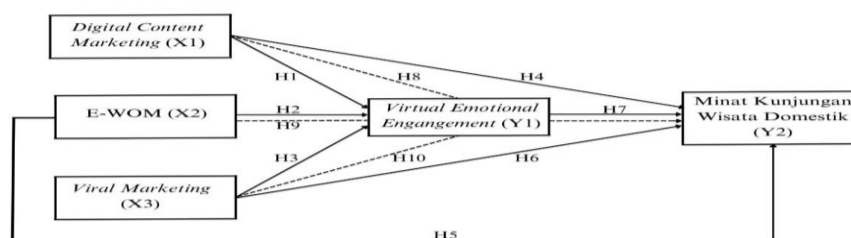
Rosenda (2023) in his research, the theory of visit interest is comparable to the theory of buying interest. Visitor interest refers to how tourists behave towards a particular destination,

which shapes their mindset and desire to visit a particular destination. Domestic tourist interest is a person's tendency or interest to visit tourist destinations in the country. This interest arises due to driving factors such as promotions, previous experiences, information from social media, and recommendations from others.

According to Anwar's research (2020), a positive perception of the safety and cleanliness of domestic destinations is an important factor in increasing the interest of local tourists. Interest in tourist visits can also be influenced by the perception of destination quality, destination image, as well as psychological factors and emotional involvement. According to Yandi et al. (2022), the desire to travel can be seen as a mental state of a person that indicates a plan to take many actions within a certain period of time. This interest in tourist visits is often considered an early stage in tourist behavior, which includes the decision-making process to visit a particular destination.

The theory that can be applied is AIDA, namely Awareness, Interest, Desire, and Action. Domestic tourist interest is a reflection of tourists' behavior towards a destination, which is influenced by various factors such as promotions, experiences, information from social media, emotional involvement and recommendations from others. This interest is formed through a mental process similar to buying interest, which is described by the AIDA (Awareness, Interest, Desire, Action) theory. The AIDA model explains that awareness of a destination results from its attractiveness, which then triggers interest, creates a desire to visit, and ultimately leads to concrete actions, such as booking tickets or planning a trip.

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the Research



Information :

X1 : Independent Variables *Digital Content Marketing*

X2 : Independent Variables *E-WOM*

X3 : Independent Variables *Viral Marketing*

Y1 : Intervening Variables *Virtual Emotional Engagement*

Y2 : Dependent Variables *Minat Kunjungan Wisata Domestik*

METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach to analyze the influence of Digital Content Marketing, electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), and Viral Marketing on Domestic Tourism Visit Interest with Virtual Emotional Engagement as an intervening variable. The data was collected through a survey using a questionnaire distributed to 200 respondents, who are active users of Tiktok. Respondents were selected using the purposive sampling method based on criteria, namely those who have been directly connected to domestic tourism content on Tiktok. Data analysis was carried out using the Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method. This model consists of two parts, namely the measurement model (outer model) to test the validity and reliability of the instrument, and the structural model (inner model) to test the relationship between research variables. The variables analyzed include Digital Content Marketing, E-WOM, Viral Marketing, Virtual Emotional Engagement, and Interest in Domestic Tourism Visits. This study measures the direct and indirect influence of the three digital

marketing strategies on the interest of domestic tourist visits through virtual emotional engagement. This research method is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of social media, especially Tiktok, as an effective promotional tool in influencing the behavior of domestic tourists

RESULTS

The results of this study were obtained from the data collection process carried out through a survey of 200 respondents, the data collection process was carried out for 1 month using an online questionnaire distributed through DM on Tiktok. The respondents in this study are individuals who are active users of Tiktok, both in West Kalimantan and outside West Kalimantan, so the data obtained reflects the respondents' actual experience in consuming domestic tourism content in the digital era. This study aims to analyze the influence of Digital Content Marketing, E-WOM, and Viral Marketing on Domestic Tourism Interest, with Virtual Emotional Engagement as an intervening variable.

SEM-PLS Analysis

SEM-PLS analysis in this study was carried out using Smart PLS 4.0 application. The analysis was carried out in two stages, namely the evaluation of the Measurement Model (Outer Model) and the evaluation of the Structural Model (Inner Model).

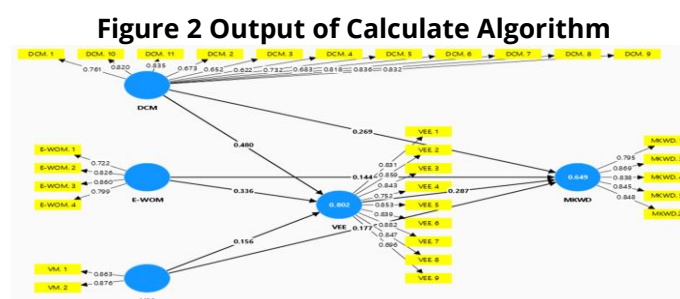
Measurement Model (Outer Model)

The evaluation of the measurement model in this study was carried out to see the results of the value validity test of Convergent Validity and Discriminant Validity, and the value reliability test of Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability.

a. Validity Test

Convergent Validity

The validity of the construct of the measurement model with reflective indicators can be measured by the loading score and using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Convergent Validity parameters. The Convergent Validity value is the loading factor value on the latent variable with its indicators, where the expected value is > 0.7 and the AVE value > 0.5 . The results of the convergent validity test in this study can be seen in the following figure 2:



Based on the results of the figure, there are five instrument items that do not meet the criteria for convergent validity where each value is the DCM loading factor. 2, DCM.3, DCM.4, DCM.6 and VEE.9 are below 0.7 so they must be excluded from the research instrument. After removing the five items, a re-convergence validity test is carried out with the results that can be seen in the table below.

Table 1 Outer Loading Re-Results

Research Variables	Indicator Items	Loading Factor	Information
Digital Content Marketing (X1)	DCM. 1	0,761	Valid
	DCM. 5	0,732	Valid
	DCM. 7	0,818	Valid
	DCM. 8	0,836	Valid
	DCM. 9	0,832	Valid
	DCM. 10	0,82	Valid
	DCM. 11	0,835	Valid
E-WOM (X2)	E-WOM. 1	0,722	Valid
	E-WOM. 2	0,826	Valid
	E-WOM. 3	0,86	Valid
	E-WOM. 4	0,799	Valid
Viral Marketing (X3)	VM. 1	0,863	Valid
	VM. 2	0,876	Valid
Virtual Emotional Engagement (Y1)	VEE. 1	0.831	Valid
	VEE. 2	0.859	Valid
	VEE. 3	0.843	Valid
	VEE. 4	0.752	Valid
	VEE. 5	0.853	Valid
	VEE. 6	0.839	Valid
	VEE. 7	0.882	Valid
	VEE. 8	0.847	Valid
Minat Kunjungan Wisata Domestik (Y2)	MKWD. 1	0,795	Valid
	MKWD. 2	0,848	Valid
	MKWD. 3	0,869	Valid
	MKWD. 4	0,838	Valid
	MKWD. 5	0,845	Valid

Source: Primary data processed (2024)

Based on the results from Table 2, the results of the convergence validity retest show that all instrument items have a loading factor value greater than 0.7. Therefore, it can be concluded that all instrument items meet the criteria of convergent validity and can be said to be reliable in measuring the variables in this study. In addition to measuring the loading factor, the validity of convergence can also be evaluated by considering the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value. The results of the AVE score in this study can be seen in the following table 3:

Table 3 Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Value

Research Variables	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
<i>Digital Content Marketing</i>	0.676
E-WOM	0.645
<i>Viral Marketing</i>	0.756
<i>Virtual Emotional Engagement</i>	0.710
Minat Kunjungan Wisata Domestik	0.705

Source: Primary data processed (2024)

The results of the analysis in table 3 show the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of each variable that meets the good criteria because the AVE value > 0.5. This means that the latent variable is able to explain more than 50% of the variations in the associated indicators.

Thus, it can be concluded that the data of this study meets the validity requirements based on Outer Loading and AVE values.

Discriminant Validity

The validity of discrimination can be measured by looking at the Fornell Larcker Criterion and Cross Loading measurements with its construct. The validity of discrimination is achieved if the square root value of the AVE of a construct is greater than its correlation with other constructs. The results of the AVE score in this study can be seen in the following table 4:

Table 4 Fornell Larcker Criterion Value

	DCM	E-WOM	MKWD	VEE	VM
DCM	0.822				
E-WOM	0.758	0.803			
MKWD	0.751	0.710	0.839		
VEE	0.843	0.807	0.764	0.842	
VM	0.721	0.706	0.695	0.744	0.870

Source: Primary data processed (2024)

Based on the results from Table 4, it shows that the AVE value of each construct is greater than the correlation between one construct and another. In addition, the validity of discrimination can also be evaluated by considering the Cross Loading value with each variable must be more than 0.7. The results of the validity test of discrimination in this study can be seen in the following table 5:

Table 5 Cross Loading Value

Indicator Item Codes	Digital Content Marketing (DCM)	E-WOM	Viral Marketing (VM)	Virtual Emotional Engagement (VEE)	Minat Kunjungan Wisata Domestik (MKWD)
DCM.1	0.774	0.509	0.476	0.619	0.572
DCM.5	0.738	0.526	0.517	0.587	0.518
DCM.7	0.827	0.645	0.586	0.720	0.624
DCM.8	0.851	0.636	0.605	0.730	0.620
DCM.9	0.859	0.618	0.628	0.715	0.657
DCM.10	0.845	0.690	0.666	0.720	0.648
DCM.11	0.855	0.713	0.653	0.744	0.670
E-WOM.1	0.629	0.725	0.595	0.631	0.511
E-WOM.2	0.556	0.825	0.513	0.610	0.546
E-WOM.3	0.683	0.861	0.635	0.726	0.661
E-WOM.4	0.557	0.796	0.516	0.617	0.548
VM.1	0.609	0.600	0.864	0.608	0.621
VM.2	0.644	0.627	0.875	0.685	0.588
VEE.1	0.747	0.686	0.678	0.841	0.696
VEE.2	0.739	0.691	0.619	0.862	0.611
VEE.3	0.758	0.678	0.599	0.857	0.670
VEE.4	0.585	0.610	0.523	0.755	0.522
VEE.5	0.698	0.691	0.610	0.857	0.636
VEE.6	0.760	0.737	0.691	0.842	0.686
VEE.7	0.714	0.700	0.641	0.879	0.684
VEE.8	0.658	0.636	0.638	0.841	0.623
MKWD.1	0.611	0.579	0.553	0.636	0.796
MKWD.2	0.665	0.554	0.575	0.651	0.849
MKWD.3	0.648	0.596	0.569	0.655	0.869

MKWD.4	0.599	0.572	0.591	0.607	0.837
MKWD.5	0.627	0.675	0.625	0.656	0.845

Source: Primary data processed (2024)

From table 5, it can be concluded that each indicator that forms the variable in this study has met the criteria for the validity of discrimination, with a Cross Loading value that exceeds 0.7. Therefore, it can be concluded that all the constructs in the model that have been estimated meet the requirements for the validity test of discrimination.

Reliability Test

Reliability tests were conducted to see the extent to which the indicators in the measurement model provide consistent results in measuring latent constructs (Hair, et al., 2022). The parameter measured is Cronbach's Alpha, which assesses the internal consistency of the indicators that measure the construct. Cronbach's Alpha value ≥ 0.7 is generally considered to indicate good reliability. Meanwhile, Composite Reliability is also considered adequate if the CR value ≥ 0.7 , which shows that the indicators are quite consistent in measuring latent constructs. The results of Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability in this study can be seen in the following table 6:

Table 6 Reliability Test Results

Research Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
<i>Digital Content Marketing</i>	0.920	0.936
E-WOM	0.815	0.879
<i>Viral Marketing</i>	0.678	0.861
<i>Virtual Emotional Engagement</i>	0.941	0.951
Minat Kunjungan Wisata Domestik	0.895	0.923

Source: Primary data processed (2024)

The results of the reliability test show that most of the variables have good internal consistency, with Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values above 0.7. Digital Content Marketing, E-WOM, Virtual Emotional Engagement, and Domestic Tourism Interest show high reliability, while Viral Marketing has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.678 which is below the standard, but the Composite Reliability value shows 0.861, meaning that overall the measurement model can be considered reliable.

Structural Model (Inner Model)

The evaluation of the structural model (inner model) is carried out to analyze the direct and indirect influence between variables. In the evaluation of the structural model using SEM-PLS, R-Square is a measure used to assess how much variation of endogenous constructs can be explained by exogenous constructs. An R-Square value of 0.75 is considered substantial, 0.50 moderate, and 0.25 weak. The results of the R-Square Path Coefficient in this study can be seen in the following table 7:

Table 7 R-Square Value Results

Research Variables	R-square	R-square adjusted
<i>Virtual Emotional Engagement</i>	0.790	0.787
Minat Kunjungan Wisata Domestik	0.651	0.643

Source: Primary data processed (2024)

The results of the R-Square value in table 4.23, show that the results of the R-Square analysis on this model are able to explain the variance in the dependent variable well. The Virtual

Emotional Engagement (VEE) variable has an R-Square value of 0.790, which indicates that 79% of the variance can be explained by exogenous constructs, with substantial influence. Meanwhile, Domestic Tourism Visit Interest (MKWD) has an R-Square value of 0.651, which means that 65.1% of the variance can be explained by the model, with moderate influence.

Hypothesis Test

The hypothesis test used in this study is a t-test by performing bootstrapping using path coefficient on SEM-PLS. By conducting Direct Effect analysis and Indirect Effect analysis to test the hypothesis of the indirect influence of independent variables on dependent variables through intervening variables. Then for the probability value or significance value, it can be seen with the provision that the Statistical T value > 1.96 and the P-Value < 0.05, then the hypothesis is accepted. The results of the hypothesis test can be seen in figure 2 and table 8 below:

Figure 2 Bootstraopping Output Smart-PLS

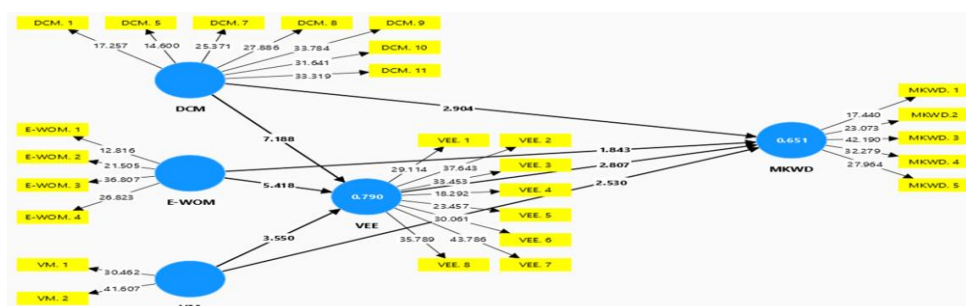


Figure 2 is the result of the bootstrapping analysis used to test the hypothesis on the Smart-PLS software, so that the path coefficient results are obtained which show the Statistical T and P-Value values simplified in the following table.

Table 8 Hypothesis Test Results

Relationship Between Variables	T statistik	P values	Information
DCM > VEE	7188	0.000	H1 Diterima
E-WOM > VEE	5418	0.000	H2 Diterima
VM > VEE	3550	0.000	H3 Diterima
DCM > MKWD	2904	0.004	H4 Diterima
E-WOM > MKWD	1843	0.065	H5 Ditolak
VM > MKWD	2530	0.011	H6 Diterima
VEE > MKWD	2807	0.005	H7 Diterima
DCM > VEE > MKWD	2800	0.005	H8 Diterima
E-WOM > VEE > MKWD	2252	0.024	H9 Diterima
VM > VEE > MKWD	2089	0.037	H10 Diterima

Source: Primary data processed (2024)

DISCUSSION

1. The Relationship Between Digital Content Marketing and Virtual Emotional Engagement.

Based on the results of the hypothesis test, the relationship between the Digital Content Marketing variable and Virtual Emotional Engagement was obtained with a statistical T value of 7.188 greater than 1.96, and a P-Value of 0.000 smaller than 0.05. This means that the relationship between Digital Content Marketing variables and Virtual Emotional Engagement has a positive and significant effect, and the first hypothesis is accepted. This shows that digital content marketing plays an important role in driving virtual emotional engagement by providing emotionally resonant content that connects with users on a deeper level, thus

influencing travelers' behavior and decision-making processes. Content-driven emotional engagement such as videos, images, and interactive elements, strengthens the connection between travelers and digital platforms, making them more likely to form positive emotional responses and act on them.

The results of this study are supported by the results of research conducted by Franks (2022) that digital content marketing significantly increases emotional engagement in tourism, leading to a higher level of user interaction with travel related content. And Odoom's (2023) research that well-implemented digital content marketing, combined with emotionally appealing content from influencers, has a positive impact on destination engagement and emotional relationships with tourists.

2. The Relationship Between E-WOM and Virtual Emotional Engagement.

Based on the results of the hypothesis test of the relationship between the E-WOM variable and Virtual Emotional Engagement, a statistical T-value of 5.418 is greater than 1.96, and a P-Value of 0.000 is smaller than 0.05. This means that the relationship between the E-WOM variable and Virtual Emotional Engagement has a positive and significant effect, and the second hypothesis is accepted. This shows that electronic word of mouth or E-WOM and virtual emotional engagement are closely intertwined, especially in online communities and digital marketing. E-WOM plays a crucial role in shaping travelers' perceptions and emotional responses to destinations, influencing how users emotionally engage with destinations in a virtual environment by building user trust and emotional engagement through online reviews and recommendations through social media.

The results of this study are supported by the results of research conducted by Sun and Miskon (2024) that E-WOM encourages user segmentation and creates stronger tourist relationships with destinations, increasing emotional engagement in digital platforms. In addition, Rodríguez et al. (2024) also stated that, E-WOM has a significant impact on emotional purchase decisions and emotional responses are influenced by online reviews and discussions. Therefore, the emotional engagement generated by virtual interactions is often driven by the trust and credibility built through E-WOM, which directly affects how travelers connect and emotionally engage with destinations online.

3. The Relationship Between Viral Marketing and Virtual Emotional Engagement.

Based on the results of the hypothesis test of the relationship between the Viral Marketing variable and Virtual Emotional Engagement, a statistical T value of 3.550 was obtained greater than 1.96, and a P-Value of 0.000 was smaller than 0.05. This means that the relationship between Virtual Marketing variables and Virtual Emotional Engagement has a positive and significant effect, and the third hypothesis is accepted. This shows that viral marketing and virtual emotional engagement are two things that are very closely related, because the emotional response caused by viral content can significantly increase tourist engagement in the virtual space. Viral marketing leverages emotionally charged content to spread quickly across digital platforms, engaging users through shared experiences.

The results of this study are supported by the results of research conducted by Susilo (2023) that the transmission of emotions plays an important role in the effectiveness of viral marketing. In addition, Bacic and Gilstrap (2023) also stated that, emotional engagement is driven by the audience's physiological responses, such as facial expressions and excitement, during watching viral content, showing how emotional resonance predicts virality and audience interaction. The findings underscore that, emotional resonance, both positive and negative, plays an important role in driving deeper virtual emotional engagement, which encourages users to interact more actively with viral marketing campaigns.

4. The Relationship Between Digital Content Marketing and Domestic Tourism Visitor Interest.

Based on the results of the hypothesis test of the relationship between the Digital Content Marketing variable and Domestic Tourism Visit Interest, a statistical T value of 2.904 was greater than 1.96, and a P-Value of 0.004 was smaller than 0.05. This means that the

relationship between the variables of Digital Content Marketing to Domestic Tourism Visit Interest has a positive and significant effect, and the fourth hypothesis is accepted. This shows that digital content marketing plays an important role in shaping the interest of domestic tourists by influencing potential tourists through online platforms. Digital content marketing leverages visually appealing and informative content to increase destination loyalty and increase tourist visits.

The results of this study are supported by the results of research conducted by Souza and Júnior (2023) that the value of information and entertainment in digital content greatly affects tourist loyalty to tourist destinations, which ultimately encourages interest in tourist visits. In addition, Chamboko-Mpotaringa and Tichaawa (2023) also said that the quality of digital marketing platforms and tools such as system quality and service quality significantly affect tourists' desire to engage with these platforms, which further drives tourist interest. The study underscores that clear, engaging, and well-designed digital content not only increases travelers' satisfaction but also strengthens their intention to visit domestic tourist destinations.

5. The relationship between e-WOM and interest in domestic tourist visits.

Based on the results of the hypothesis test of the relationship between the variable E-WOM variable and the Interest in Domestic Tourism Visits, a statistical T value of 1.843 was obtained less than 1.96, and a P-Value of 0.065 was greater than 0.05. That is, the relationship between the E-WOM variable and Domestic Tourism Visit Interest is not significant, and the fifth hypothesis is rejected.

E-WOM is not really the main factor in influencing respondents' decision to travel domestically in this study. The low level of respondents' involvement in the E-WOM variable was influenced by other variables compared to E-WOM. Where, Digital Content Marketing has a stronger influence in encouraging interest in domestic tourist visits, with a t-statistical value of 2.904 and a P-Value value of 0.004. In addition, Viral Marketing also showed a significant influence on the increase in interest in domestic tourist visits, with a t-statistical value of 2.807 and a P-Value value of 0.005. Viral content has great potential to reach a wide audience and influence their perception or decision to travel.

The results of this study can also be seen from the data on the characteristics of respondents based on the main sources of information about tourism, where the source of Photo/Video Content Shared by Other Users on Tiktok is the most chosen source of information about tourism, with a total of 107 people (54%), followed by Videos or Viral Content on Tiktok 98 people (49%). The results of this study show that information based on real experiences from other users has higher appeal than Recommendations from Friends or Family on TikTok 72 people (36%), and Reviews and Ratings on Tiktok 30 people (15%). In addition, the results of this study also show that respondents rarely recommend and evaluate comprehensive information about domestic tourism content before making a decision to visit.

The results of this study are different from the results of previous studies, where most of the studies show a significant influence between E-WOM and interest in tourist visits. Although the hypothesis in this study is not significant, these results provide insight that the influence of E-WOM is contextual and can vary, depending on factors such as destination appeal and marketing strategies used and the results may vary if applied to other contexts especially through Tiktok social media.

6. The relationship between viral marketing and interest in domestic tourist visits.

Based on the results of the hypothesis test of the relationship between the Viral Marketing variable and Domestic Tourism Visit Interest, a statistical T value of 2.530 was obtained greater than 1.96, and a P-Value of 0.011 was smaller than 0.05. This means that the relationship between the Viral Marketing variable and Domestic Tourism Visit Interest has a positive and significant effect, and the sixth hypothesis is accepted. Viral marketing influences the interest of domestic tourists by utilizing content that is very interesting and liked by a

wide audience. The results of this study are supported by the results of research conducted by Firdaus et al. (2022) that, viral marketing through social media, can increase the attractiveness of tourist destinations and increase the desire of tourists to visit. In addition, Hong et al. (2022) also stated that trust in social media content plays an important role in influencing tourists' interest, especially if tourists feel satisfied after visiting viral tourist attractions.

7. The Relationship Between Virtual Emotional Engagement and Interest in Domestic Tourism Visits.

Based on the results of the hypothesis test of the relationship between the Virtual Emotional Engagement variable and the Interest in Domestic Tourism Visits, a statistical T value of 2.807 was obtained greater than 1.96, and a P-Value of 0.005 was smaller than 0.05. This means that the relationship between the Virtual Emotional Engagement variable and Domestic Tourism Visit Interest has a positive and significant effect, and the seventh hypothesis is accepted. This shows that virtual emotional engagement plays an important role in influencing the intention of domestic tourists by creating an emotionally resonant experience in the digital space that inspires tourists to visit tourist destinations.

Virtual emotional engagement helps bridge the gap between online experiences and real-world actions, as emotionally engaged users are more likely to translate their virtual interactions into actual itineraries. Although specific studies focusing on virtual emotional engagement and domestic tourism are still rare, the results of this study prove that the principle of emotional engagement in digital marketing is very supportive in increasing the interest and intention of tourists to visit domestic tourist destinations.

8. The relationship between digital content marketing on interest in domestic tourism visits and virtual emotional engagement as an intervening variable.

Based on the results of the hypothesis test of the relationship between the Digital Content Marketing variable and Domestic Tourism Visit Interest through Virtual Emotional Engagement, a statistical T value of 2.800 is greater than 1.96, and a P-Value of 0.005 is smaller than 0.05. This means that the relationship between the variables of Digital Content Marketing on Domestic Tourism Visit Interest through Virtual Emotional Engagement has a positive and significant effect, and the eighth hypothesis is accepted. These results show that digital content marketing can significantly affect the interest in domestic tourist visits, with virtual emotional engagement acting as a strong mediating variable.

The results of this study are supported by the results of research conducted by Franks (2022) that digital content marketing increases emotional engagement, which in turn strengthens the cognitive response and interest of tourists to travel. In addition, Jaya and Jaw (2023) also stated that, virtual reality significantly increases travel interest by increasing nostalgia and imagery, which are the main emotional triggers. Combining digital content marketing with virtual emotional engagement through virtual platforms helps form a stronger emotional connection with the destination, increasing the likelihood of turning virtual interests into real-world journeys.

9. The relationship between e-WOM on interest in domestic tourism visits and virtual emotional engagement as an intervening variable.

Based on the results of the hypothesis test of the relationship between the E-WOM variable and the Interest in Domestic Tourism Visits through Virtual Emotional Engagement, a statistical T value of 2.252 was obtained greater than 1.96, and a P-Value of 0.024 was smaller than 0.05. This means that the relationship between the E-WOM variable on Domestic Tourism Visit Interest through Virtual Emotional Engagement has a positive and significant effect, and the ninth hypothesis is accepted. These results show that E-WOM has a significant influence on Domestic Tourism Interest, especially when virtual emotional engagement acts as an intervening variable. E-WOM is spreading rapidly across social media platforms, affecting the emotional connection that may be formed between tourists and tourist

destinations. When users engage with content whether videos or images, as well as online travel reviews, emotional responses play an important role in translating the virtual experience into real-world travel visit intent.

The results of this study are supported by the results of research conducted by Silalahi et al. (2022) that entertainment-driven E-WOM content on social media platforms encourages strong emotional engagement, which directly affects the interest in tourist visits and sharing E-WOM through social media. In addition, Baber et al. (2022) also stated that, the emotional and social value obtained from E-WOM encourages travelers' intention to visit through reinforced emotional connections, emphasizing that virtual emotional engagement mediates the path from E-WOM to tourist visit intent.

10. The relationship between viral marketing on interest in domestic tourist visits and virtual emotional engagement as an intervening variable.

Based on the results of the hypothesis test of the relationship between the Viral Marketing variable and the Interest in Domestic Tourism Visits through Virtual Emotional Engagement, a statistical T value of 2,800 was obtained greater than 1.96, and a P-Value of 0.005 was smaller than 0.05. This means that the relationship between the Viral Marketing variable and Domestic Tourism Visit Interest through Virtual Emotional Engagement has a positive and significant effect, and the tenth hypothesis is accepted. These results show that viral marketing significantly affects domestic tourist interest, especially when it elicits a strong emotional response through virtual platforms, with virtual emotional engagement in creating a deeper emotional connection that increases interest in domestic tourist visits.

The results of this study are supported by the results of research conducted by Cheng et al. (2020) that, viral travel vlogs on social media platforms engage users emotionally, increasing the spread of word-of-mouth (WOM) information and tourist interest. These findings underscore the importance of creating emotion-charged viral content to bridge the gap between virtual experiences and real-world tourism behavior.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and findings in this study, Digital Content Marketing, E-WOM, and Viral Marketing are proven to have an influence on Domestic Tourism Visit Interest with Virtual Emotional Engagement as an intervening variable. Digital Content Marketing has been proven to have a positive and significant influence on Virtual Emotional Engagement and Domestic Tourism Interest, which indicates the importance of engaging, informative, and emotional digital content in building virtual tourist engagement. E-WOM has a positive and significant effect on Virtual Emotional Engagement, although its effect on Domestic Tourism Interest is not significant, but E-WOM is more effective in creating emotional engagement which can further increase interest in domestic tourism visits. Viral Marketing has a significant influence on Virtual Emotional Engagement and Domestic Tourism Interest, where emotional and engaging viral content is able to reach a wide audience and drive travel decisions. Virtual Emotional Engagement proved to be a significant intervening variable, and strengthened the influence of Digital Content Marketing, E-WOM, and Viral Marketing on Domestic Tourism Interest. This research model was able to explain 79% of the variance in Virtual Emotional Engagement and 65.1% of the variance in Domestic Tourism Interest, showing a substantial influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables. The findings of this study also underscore the important role of Tiktok as a social media platform that is able to integrate Digital Content Marketing, E-WOM, and Viral Marketing strategies. Through innovative and emotional content, Tiktok has proven to be effective in promoting domestic tourist destinations in Indonesia. This research also shows that social media-based digital marketing can be a strategic tool to develop domestic tourism, as well as the importance of creative and emotional digital marketing strategies in increasing interest in domestic tourist visits in the digital era.

SUGGESTION

Researchers can then involve other social media users, such as Instagram, Youtube, or Facebook, to gain broader insights into the influence of tourism marketing in the digital era, add research variables, use qualitative or mixed methods to dig deeper into the motivation and perception of tourists towards digital content that affects their interest in traveling, and explore the use of new technologies. such as artificial intelligence (AI). For tourism actors, it is recommended to make more use of Digital Content Marketing through social media platforms such as Tiktok by displaying creative, emotional, and informative content. Collaboration with influencers or content creators also needs to be strengthened to increase the attractiveness of domestic tourist destinations, especially for the younger generation who are the main target audience. For the government, tourism marketing strategies need to be directed to digitalization that is relevant to today's tourist behavior trends. The government can initiate a digital marketing training program for MSME actors in the tourism sector, as well as encourage the promotion of local destinations through social media platforms with targeted and inclusive campaigns.

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