Modeling Gastronomy Tourists' Behavioural Intention Using eWOM, Food Authenticity, Customer Perceived Value, and Destination Image

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Abstract

Understanding tourists' behavioural intention is essential for developing competitive and sustainable gastronomy tourism destinations. This study develops and validates an integrated Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) framework to examine the effects of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), food authenticity, customer perceived value, and destination image on gastronomy tourists' behavioural intention. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted among 424 domestic gastronomy tourists in Bandung, Indonesia, and the data were analyzed using SEM. The results show that eWOM significantly influences customer perceived value and destination image but has no direct effect on behavioural intention. In contrast, food authenticity significantly enhances customer perceived value, destination image, and behavioral intention, while customer perceived value and destination image significantly mediate the effects of eWOM and food authenticity. The proposed model explains 47.5% of the variance in behavioural intention, demonstrating moderate explanatory capability. These findings extend Customer Behavior Theory, Customer Perceived Value Theory, Destination Image Formation Theory, and Food Tourism Theory by demonstrating that tourists' behavioural intention is primarily shaped through sequential cognitive evaluations rather than direct exposure to digital information. From an applied data science perspective, the study demonstrates the usefulness of SEM as a predictive modeling framework for transforming behavioural data into evidence-based decision support for sustainable gastronomy tourism management

Keywords: Behavioural Intention, Customer Perceived Value, Destination Image, Electronic Word-Of-Mouth, Food Authenticity, Gastronomy Tourism, Structural Equation Modeling

1. Introduction

Gastronomy tourism is among the fastest-growing tourism sectors, driven by tourists' growing demand for authentic culinary experiences that reflect local identity, cultural heritage, and traditional knowledge. Beyond consumption, gastronomy serves as a strategic tourism resource that strengthens destination competitiveness, preserves cultural heritage, and supports sustainable regional development. Understanding the determinants of tourists' behavioural intention is therefore essential for researchers and destination managers seeking to enhance destination performance and long-term sustainability [1], [2].

The rapid expansion of digital platforms has transformed tourists' decision-making processes, making electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) a major source of pre-visit information. However, previous studies report inconsistent findings regarding its influence on behavioural intention, particularly in gastronomy tourism, where sensory, cultural, and emotional experiences cannot be fully conveyed through digital media [3], [4], [5], [6].

Food authenticity is increasingly recognized as a distinctive feature of gastronomy tourism, as authentic cuisine, traditional methods, indigenous ingredients, and culinary heritage create unique experiences that enhance destination attractiveness and differentiation. However, previous studies have mainly examined its direct effects on satisfaction or behavioural intention, leaving the cognitive mechanisms underlying tourists' decisions insufficiently explained [7], [8]. Similarly, Customer Perceived Value (CPV) and Destination Image are established determinants of behavioural intention but are often examined separately rather than within an integrated framework [9],[11]. This gap highlights

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the need for an integrated model linking eWOM, food authenticity, CPV, and destination image, with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) providing an appropriate approach to examine their interrelated effects and support evidence-based decision-making [12]. Accordingly, this study develops an integrated Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) framework linking eWOM, food authenticity, customer perceived value, and destination image to gastronomy tourists' behavioural intention. The model extends previous research by examining customer perceived value and destination image as complementary mediators and assessing the explanatory power of these relationships. The study contributes theoretically by integrating four behavioural theories into a unified framework and practically by providing evidence-based insights for sustainable gastronomy tourism strategies.

2. 2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1. Behavioural Intention in Gastronomy Tourism

Behavioral intention refers to an individual's willingness to perform future behavior and is a key predictor of actual behavior in tourism [12], [13]. In gastronomy tourism, it encompasses intentions to visit, revisit, recommend, or share culinary experiences and is shaped by destination attributes, experiential quality, perceived value, and other psychological factors [14], [15]. Accordingly, this study positions behavioral intention as the primary outcome of eWOM, food authenticity, customer-perceived value, and destination image.

2.2. Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM)

Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) refers to consumer information and experiences shared through digital platforms, including social media, online reviews, travel blogs, and online communities [16]. By providing information that reduces uncertainty and supports destination evaluation, eWOM can influence tourists' perceptions and travel decisions [16], [17]. However, its direct effect on behavioural intention may vary because digital information cannot fully convey the sensory and experiential attributes of gastronomy tourism. Therefore:

H1: Electronic word-of-mouth positively influences gastronomy tourists' behavioural intention.

eWOM can also shape Customer Perceived Value by informing tourists about the expected quality, authenticity, benefits, and costs of gastronomic experiences, enabling them to assess whether the expected benefits justify the resources involved. Therefore:

H2: Electronic word-of-mouth positively influences Customer Perceived Value.

Furthermore, information shared by other tourists can shape Destination Image by influencing perceptions of destination attractiveness, uniqueness, and culinary characteristics, particularly through online reviews, photographs, and personal narratives [17], [18]. Therefore:

H3: Electronic word-of-mouth positively influences Destination Image.

H5: Electronic word-of-mouth positively influences destination image.

2.3. Food Authenticity

Food authenticity refers to the extent to which culinary products and practices represent local culture, traditional preparation methods, indigenous ingredients, and culinary heritage [19], [20]. Authenticity is particularly important in gastronomy tourism because tourists often seek distinctive culinary experiences that provide connections with local identity and culture. Previous studies show that authentic culinary experiences can enhance tourists' evaluations of food experiences and destinations and contribute to satisfaction and future behavioural responses [21], [22], [23]. Authentic food can therefore provide both experiential and cultural benefits that strengthen perceived value.

H6: Food authenticity positively influences customer perceived value.

Because culinary traditions also represent destination identity, authentic food may strengthen tourists' perceptions of destination attractiveness, uniqueness, and cultural richness [22], [24].

H8: Food authenticity positively influences destination image.

Authentic culinary experiences may further create memorable and meaningful experiences that encourage tourists to revisit or recommend a destination. Therefore:

H10: Food authenticity positively influences gastronomy tourists' behavioural intention.

2.4. Customer Perceived Value

Customer perceived value (CPV) reflects tourists' evaluation of benefits relative to costs during a tourism experience [25], [26]. In gastronomy tourism, it encompasses food quality, authenticity, service, cultural experience, destination atmosphere, and local culinary uniqueness [27]. Higher perceived value is associated with stronger behavioural intentions, including revisit and recommendation intentions [28], [29]. Thus, CPV serves as a key cognitive mechanism linking gastronomic experience evaluations to subsequent behavioural responses.

H12: Customer perceived value positively influences gastronomy tourists' behavioural intention.

2.5. Destination Image

Destination image refers to tourists' overall perceptions, beliefs, and impressions of a destination formed through information, experiences, and cognitive and affective evaluations [30], [31]. In gastronomy tourism, destination image may also incorporate perceptions of local food, culinary traditions, and gastronomic uniqueness [32]. A favorable destination image can strengthen tourists' expectations of destination quality and attractiveness and consequently influence their evaluation of the tourism experience. Previous studies have found positive relationships between destination image, perceived value, and behavioural intention [33], [34].

H11: Destination image positively influences customer perceived value.

A favorable destination image may also increase tourists' confidence and reduce perceived risk, thereby encouraging intentions to revisit and recommend the destination [35].

H13: Destination image positively influences gastronomy tourists' behavioural intention.

2.6. Destination Image and Customer Perceived Value

Destination Image Formation Theory suggests that tourists form perceptions of destination attributes from information and prior experiences before evaluating the benefits of the tourism experience [31], [36]. A favorable image enhances perceptions of destination quality, attractiveness, and uniqueness, which can strengthen perceived value. In gastronomy tourism, attractive and culturally distinctive destinations offering authentic culinary experiences are more likely to be perceived as worthwhile [34], [37] Thus, destination image is positioned as an antecedent of CPV and a potential mechanism linking eWOM and food authenticity to behavioural intention.

2.7. Mediation Hypothesis

Based on the preceding theoretical arguments, the study proposes nine direct-effect hypotheses and four mediation hypotheses. Customer perceived value and destination image serve as mediating mechanisms because they reflect tourists' cognitive evaluations of the value and attractiveness of the gastronomy tourism experience.

H3: Electronic word-of-mouth positively influences behavioural intention through customer perceived value.

H4: Electronic word-of-mouth positively influences behavioural intention through destination image.

H7: Food authenticity positively influences behavioural intention through customer perceived value.

H9: Food authenticity positively influences behavioural intention through destination image.

The conceptual research models show at figure 1.

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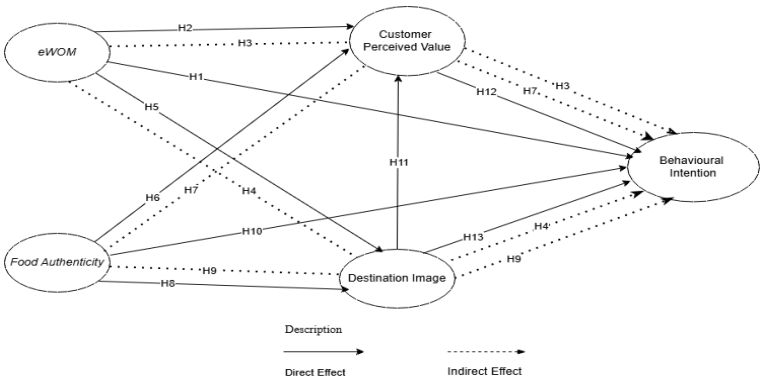


Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Research Model

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey design. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to examine the relationships among electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), food authenticity, customer perceived value, destination image, and behavioural intention in gastronomy tourism.

3.2. Population and Sample

The target population comprised domestic gastronomy tourists in Bandung. Purposive sampling was used because no official sampling frame was available. Of the 500 questionnaires distributed to eligible respondents, 424 valid responses were retained after data screening, yielding a usable response rate of 84.8%. The final sample was considered adequate for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis [38], [39].

3.3. Data Collection

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed offline. Experts reviewed the instrument and pilot-tested it before the main survey. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and respondent confidentiality was ensured throughout the study.

3.4. Measurement of Variables

The questionnaire comprised five constructs: eWOM, food authenticity, customer perceived value, destination image, and behavioural intention. We adapted measurement items from validated tourism and marketing scales and contextualized them for gastronomy tourism. The initial instrument included five eWOM, three food authenticity, eight CPV, six destination image, and four behavioural intention items. We then conducted CFA, considering indicator deletion based on standardized factor loadings and conceptual relevance to preserve content validity. The final model retained Ewom2–Ewom4, FA2–FA3, CPV6 and CPV8, DI2–DI3, and BI2–BI3. Table 1 presents the retained indicators and their sources.

Table 1. Indicator Screening and Final Retention

Construct	Initial indicators	Removed indicators	Retained indicators
eWOM	Ewom1–Ewom5	Ewom1, Ewom5	Ewom2–Ewom4
Food Authenticity	FA1–FA3	FA1	FA2–FA3
Customer Perceived Value	CPV1–CPV8	CPV1–CPV5, CPV7	CPV6, CPV8
Destination Image	DI1–DI6	DI1, DI4–DI6	DI2–DI3
Behavioural Intention	BI1–BI4	BI1, BI4	BI2–BI3

Table 2 presents the measurement items for each construct, including their respective codes and sources. The table summarizes the indicators used to measure eWOM, food authenticity, customer perceived value, destination image, and behavioural intention.

Table 2. Measurement Item

Construct	Code	Measurement Item	Source
Ewom	Ewom1	I often read online reviews from other users on social networking sites to find out which gastronomic destinations have made a good impression on them.	[40], [41]
	Ewom2	Reviews on social networking sites influence my choice of gastronomic destinations.	
	Ewom3	I often gather information from other users' online opinions on social networking sites before visiting a particular gastronomic destination.	
	Ewom4	If I don't read online reviews from other users on social networking sites before visiting a particular gastronomic destination, I feel anxious about my decision.	
	Ewom5	I often read and view online opinions through photos and videos shared by other users on social networking sites to find out which gastronomic destinations to visit.	
Food Authenticity	FA1	The ingredients used in the dishes come from fresh, high-quality local sources.	[42]
	FA2	The presentation of the food served at this restaurant is attractive and reflects the local culinary culture.	
	FA3	Food cooked in the traditional way has an authentic and distinctive taste.	
Customer Perceived Value	CPV1	I had a wonderful time enjoying a gastronomic culinary tour in Bandung.	[42], [43], [44], [45]
	CPV2	The travel time for the gastronomic culinary tour in Bandung was well worth it.	
	CPV3	My expenses during the gastronomic culinary tour in Bandung were still within a reasonable range.	
	CPV4	The prices of food at Bandung's gourmet restaurants are quite reasonable.	
	CPV5	Accommodation, food, and shopping activities during my culinary tour in Bandung provided convenience and value commensurate with the costs I incurred.	
	CPV6	My experience at Bandung's gourmet restaurants was worth the money I spent	
	CPV7	Gourmet restaurants in Bandung leave a better impression than similar establishments elsewhere.	
	CPV8	I believe the gastronomic culinary restaurant in Bandung represents the local culinary culture well.	
Destination Image	DI1	Bandung is difficult for tourists to explore	[46]
	DI2	The cityscape and natural scenery of Bandung are beautiful and attractive.	
	DI3	Bandung has many choices of authentic local cuisine.	
	DI4	Bandung is a great destination to visit with your family.	
	DI5	Bandung is a classy and insightful destination.	
	DI6	Bandung offers a luxurious and memorable travel experience.	
Behavioural Intention	BI1	I intend to visit the gastronomic tourist destinations that will be offered in the future.	[47], [48], [49], [50]
	BI2	I will recommend gastronomic tourist destinations to my friends or relatives.	
	BI3	I want to share my positive experiences about the food I tried at gastronomic tourist destinations with others.	
	BI4	I intend to visit restaurants that serve local/traditional food in the future.	

3.5. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics and AMOS Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). SPSS was used for data screening, whereas AMOS was employed to perform Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to evaluate the measurement model, test the proposed hypotheses, and assess overall model fit.

4. Results and Discussion

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics and AMOS Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). SPSS was used for data screening, whereas AMOS was employed to perform Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to assess the measurement model and test the proposed hypotheses.

4.1. Respondent Profile

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in table 2 A total of 424 valid questionnaires were included in the final analysis. Male respondents accounted for 58.7% (n = 249), while female respondents represented 41.3% (n = 175. The age distribution indicates that 193 respondents (45.5%) were aged 17–27 years, followed by 111 respondents (26.2%) aged 39–49 years, 91 respondents (21.5%) aged 28–38 years, and 29 respondents (6.8%) aged above 50 years. Thus, although the sample includes respondents from all defined age categories, the youngest cohort is the largest. Consider this demographic concentration when interpreting the generalizability of the findings. Table 3 presents respondent characteristics in this research.

Table 3. Respondent Characteristics

Variable	Item	N (424)	%
Gender	Men	249	58,7

	Women	175	41,3
Age	17 - 27 years old	193	45, 5
	28 - 38 years old	91	21, 5
	39 - 49 years old	111	25, 2
	Over 50 years old	29	6, 8
Platform Media	Instagram	265	62,50
	TikTok	191	45,05
	YouTube	151	35,61
	Google Review	114	26,89
	Facebook	56	13,21
	Blog/Website	40	9,43
Gastronomic Location	Gedong Sate Historeat	236	55,66
	Tamasarasa Djimanda	58	13,67
	Cihapit Walkcat Tour	86	20,28
	Bandros Tour	77	18,16
	Flavoursome of Alkateri	65	15,33
	Gourmet Calorie and Cimenyan Journey	106	25,00

Regarding digital information sources, Instagram was the most frequently used platform (62.50%), followed by TikTok (45.05%), YouTube (35.61%), Google Reviews (26.89%), Facebook (13.21%), and blogs or websites (9.43%). Concerning gastronomy destinations, Gedong Sate Historeat was the most frequently visited location (55.66%), followed by Gourmet Calorie and Cimenyan Journey (25.00%), Cihapit Walkcat Tour (20.28%), Bandros Tour (18.16%), Flavorsome of Alkateri (15.33%), and Tamasarasa Djimanda (13.67%).

4.2. Common Methods Bias

We assessed common method bias (CMB) using Harman's single-factor test as an initial diagnostic procedure. The first unrotated factor accounted for 34.027% of the total variance, which is below the commonly used 50% criterion. This suggests that a single factor does not account for most of the variance. However, because Harman's single-factor test has limited sensitivity, it cannot rule out residual common method variance. Therefore, interpret this result as an initial diagnostic rather than definitive evidence that common method bias is absent.

4.3. Discriminant Validity and Collinearity Assessment

The Fornell–Larcker criterion assessed discriminant validity among the study constructs by comparing the square root of the AVE for each construct with its correlations with other constructs. Table 4 presents the results.

Table 4. Fornell–Larcker Criterion for Discriminant Validity

Construct	eWOM	Food Authenticity	Destination Image	Customer Perceived Value	Behavioural Intention
eWOM	**0.75**				
Food Authenticity	0.48	**0.79**			
Destination Image	0.61	0.75	**0.81**		
Customer Perceived Value	0.59	0.57	0.68	**0.74**	
Behavioural Intention	0.43	0.66	0.71	0.69	**0.84**

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the HTMT ratio. The square roots of AVE exceeded the corresponding inter-construct correlations, providing initial evidence of discriminant validity. The Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio further assessed discriminant validity among the study constructs. Table 5 presents the HTMT results.

Table 5. Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) Ratio

Construct	eWOM	Food Authenticity	Destination Image	Customer Perceived Value	Behavioural Intention
eWOM	…	0.581	0.469	0.662	0.490
Food Authenticity		…	0.487	0.562	0.562
Destination Image			…	0.575	0.549
Customer Perceived Value				…	0.592

Behavioural Intention …

The HTMT values ranged from 0.469 to 0.662, with the highest value observed between eWOM and Customer Perceived Value (HTMT = 0.662). All values were below 0.85. Multicollinearity was assessed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) to determine whether excessive correlations among the predictor variables could affect the reliability of the structural model estimates. Table 6 presents the VIF results.

Table 6. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

Endogenous Construct	Predictor	VIF
Destination Image	eWOM	1.260
Destination Image	Food Authenticity	1.260
Customer Perceived Value	eWOM	1.328
Customer Perceived Value	Food Authenticity	1.340
Customer Perceived Value	Destination Image	1.213
Behavioural Intention	eWOM	1.488
Behavioural Intention	Food Authenticity	1.392
Behavioural Intention	Customer Perceived Value	1.497
Behavioural Intention	Destination Image	1.291

The VIF values ranged from 1.213 to 1.497, indicating that severe collinearity was not evident among the structural predictors. The Fornell–Larcker criterion and HTMT results supported discriminant validity, while VIF was used to assess collinearity.

4.4. Measurement Model Assessment

The initial measurement model comprised 23 indicators across five constructs: eWOM, Food Authenticity, Customer Perceived Value, Destination Image, and Behavioural Intention. We conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) iteratively to assess the adequacy of the measurement indicators. Indicators with standardized factor loadings below 0.60 were considered for removal, while the overall measurement performance and conceptual representation of each construct were also considered during model refinement. The measurement model was assessed based on the initial indicator loadings, as shown in table 7.

Table 7. CFA Indicator Screening

Construct	Initial Indicator	Initial Loading	Decision	Final Loading
eWOM	Ewom1	0.608	Removed	-
	Ewom2	0.754	Retained	0.731
	Ewom3	0.864	Retained	0.871
	Ewom4	0.636	Retained	0.642
	Ewom5	0.663	Removed	-
Food Authenticity	FA1	0.545	Removed	-
	FA2	0.814	Retained	0.792
	FA3	0.765	Retained	0.804
Customer Perceived Value	CPV1	0.013	Removed	-
	CPV2	0.618	Removed	-
	CPV3	0.701	Removed	-
	CPV4	0.775	Removed	-
	CPV5	0.808	Removed	-
	CPV6	0.738	Retained	0.706
	CPV7	0.704	Removed	-
	CPV8	0.705	Retained	0.774
Destination Image	DI1	0.394	Removed	-
	DI2	0.613	Retained	0.810
	DI3	0.669	Retained	0.694
	DI4	0.793	Removed	-
	DI5	0.674	Removed	-
	DI6	0.714	Removed	-
Behavioural Intention	BI1	0.590	Removed	-
	BI2	0.786	Retained	0.789
	BI3	0.869	Retained	0.895

	BI4	0.754	Removed	-

The initial factor loadings ranged from 0.013 to 0.869. Particularly weak indicators were CPV1 (0.013), DI1 (0.394), FA1 (0.545), and BI1 (0.590), which were removed during the CFA refinement. The final measurement model retained 11 indicators: Ewom2–Ewom4, FA2–FA3, CPV6 and CPV8, DI2–DI3, and BI2–BI3. The retained indicators showed standardized factor loadings ranging from 0.642 to 0.895. The complete indicator screening process is presented in table 8.

Table 8. Measurement Model Assessment

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Construct Reliability (CR)	Cronbach's Alpha
eWOM	Ewom2	0.731	0.568	0.795	0.769
	Ewom3	0.871			0.754
	Ewom4	0.642			0.810
Food Authenticity	FA2	0.792	0.637	0.778	0.610
	FA3	0.804			0.619
Customer Perceived Value	CPV6	0.706	0.549	0.708	0.787
	CPV8	0.774			0.791
Destination Image	DI2	0.810	0.569	0.724	0.783
	DI3	0.694			0.770
Behavioural Intention	BI2	0.789	0.712	0.831	0.750
	BI3	0.895			0.722

The AVE values ranged from 0.549 to 0.712, while the CR and Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from 0.708 to 0.831 and 0.610 to 0.810, respectively. These results satisfy the recommended criteria for convergent validity and reliability, confirming the adequacy of the measurement model for subsequent structural analysis. The structural model was subsequently evaluated in terms of its explanatory power using the R^2 values presented in table 9.

Table 9. Explanatory Capability of the Structural Model (R^2)

Construct	R^2 (SMC)	Variance Explained
Destination Image (Z)	0.552	55.2%
Customer Perceived Value (Y1)	0.498	49.8%
Behavioural Intention (Y2)	0.475	47.5%

The model's explanatory power was assessed using Squared Multiple Correlations (R^2), which explained 55.2% of Destination Image, 49.8% of Customer Perceived Value, and 47.5% of Behavioural Intention, indicating moderate explanatory capability rather than out-of-sample variance explained.

4.5. Structural Model Evaluation

The structural model fit the observed data well, with $\chi^2 = 43.164$, df = 34, CMIN/DF = 1.270, GFI = 0.982, TLI = 0.991, CFI = 0.995, IFI = 0.995, RMSEA = 0.025, and RMR = 0.041. These indices indicate that the proposed model fits the observed data. However, model fit alone does not establish the correctness or causal validity of the underlying theoretical relationships. Therefore, the hypotheses were evaluated separately based on the estimated structural paths and their statistical significance. The structural model fit was subsequently evaluated using several goodness-of-fit indices, as presented in table 10.

Table 10. Goodness-of-Fit Indices

Goodness-of-Fit Index	Recommended Cut-off	Obtained Value	Model Fit
Chi-Square (χ^2)	Expected to be small	43.164	Good Fit
Probability (p-value)	≥ 0.05	0.135	Good Fit
CMIN/DF	≤ 2.00	1.270	Good Fit
PNFI	≥ 0.50	0.603	Good Fit
GFI	≥ 0.90	0.982	Good Fit
TLI	≥ 0.90	0.991	Good Fit
CFI	≥ 0.90	0.995	Good Fit
IFI	≥ 0.90	0.995	Good Fit
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.025	Good Fit

RMR	≤ 0.08	0.041	Good Fit

The fit indices indicate an acceptable empirical representation of the observed covariance structure. Hypothesis testing was therefore based on the individual structural coefficients rather than on model fit alone.

4.6. Hypothesis Testing

The structural relationships among the latent variables were examined using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Table 11 summarizes the results. Eight of the nine direct hypotheses were supported. eWOM significantly affected customer-perceived value and destination image, but not behavioural intention. Food authenticity significantly influenced customer perceived value and behavioural intention, while destination image significantly affected customer perceived value and behavioural intention. These findings indicate that behavioural intention is more strongly associated with tourists' cognitive and experiential evaluations than with eWOM alone.

Table 11. Results of Direct Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path			Estimate	C.R.	p-value	Decision
H1	eWOM	→	BI	0.069	1.004	0.315	Not supported
H2	eWOM	→	CPV	0.427	5.798	<0.001	Supported
H5	eWOM	→	DI	0.228	2.921	0.003	Supported
H6	FA	→	CPV	0.169	2.263	0.024	Supported
H8	FA	→	DI	0.360	4.259	<0.001	Supported
H10	FA	→	BI	0.208	3.220	0.001	Supported
H11	DI	→	CPV	0.296	4.090	<0.001	Supported
H12	CPV	→	BI	0.223	2.569	0.010	Supported
H13	DI	→	BI	0.315	3.526	<0.001	Supported

Figure 2 presents the validated structural model, illustrating the standardized path coefficients and corresponding p-values for the hypothesized relationships among eWOM, Food Authenticity, Customer Perceived Value, Destination Image, and Behavioural Intention. The figure summarizes the direct effects obtained from the structural model analysis.

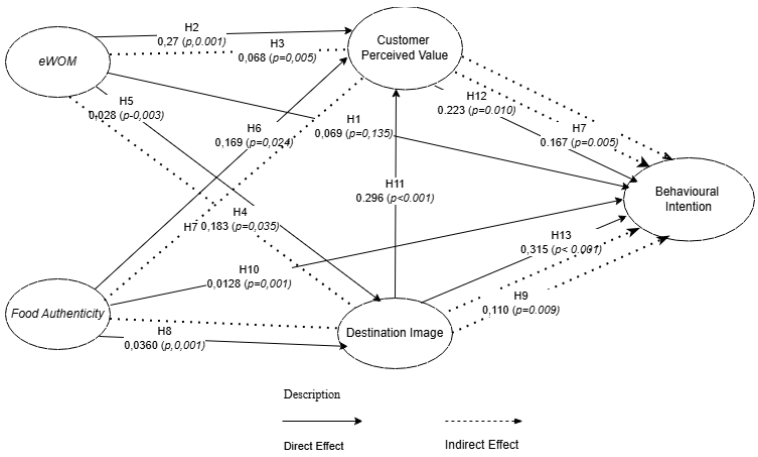


Figure 2. Validated Structural Model

4.7. Mediation Analysis

We assessed mediation using bootstrap estimation with 2,000 resamples. We used a 95% confidence interval to assess uncertainty in the indirect significant effect when the interval did not include zero. We examined the indirect effects of eWOM and Food Authenticity on Behavioural Intention through Customer Perceived Value and Destination Image. decision-making. The mediation effects were assessed using bootstrapping with 2,000 resamples, with the results presented in table 12.

Table 12. Results of Mediation Analysis

Hypothesis	Mediation Path	Indirect Effect (β)	p-value	Direct Effect	Mediation Type
H3	eWOM → CPV → BI	0.068	0.005	0.069 (p = 0.315)	Full Mediation

H4	eWOM	→	DI	→	BI	0.183	0.035	0.069 (p = 0.315)	Full Mediation
H7	FA	→	CPV	→	BI	0.110	0.005	0.208 (p = 0.001)	Partial Mediation
H9	FA	→	DI	→	BI	0.167	0.009	0.208 (p = 0.001)	Partial Mediation

The results indicate that Customer Perceived Value and Destination Image mediate the relationships between eWOM, Food Authenticity, and Behavioural Intention. eWOM had no significant direct effect on Behavioural Intention (β = 0.069, p = 0.315), while its indirect effects through both mediators were significant, indicating indirect-only mediation. In contrast, Food Authenticity significantly affected Behavioural Intention directly (β = 0.208, p = 0.001) and indirectly through both mediators, indicating partial mediation. These mediation patterns should be confirmed using bootstrap confidence intervals.

The findings show that eWOM significantly influences Customer Perceived Value and Destination Image but not Behavioural Intention directly, suggesting that digital information shapes tourists' perceptions without necessarily translating into behavioural intention. In contrast, Food Authenticity significantly influences Customer Perceived Value, Destination Image, and Behavioural Intention, highlighting its broader perceptual and behavioural role. These findings reinforce the importance of digital information, authenticity, and destination evaluations in gastronomy tourism [23], [51], [52]. Destination Image strongly influences both Customer Perceived Value and Behavioural Intention, while Customer Perceived Value also substantially contributes to Behavioural Intention. These outcomes indicate that tourists' perceptions of destination characteristics and the value of their gastronomic experiences are important explanatory factors of behavioural intention, consistent with previous tourism research [22], [33], [34]. The results also support the theoretical positioning of Destination Image as an antecedent of Customer Perceived Value.

The mediation results further show that Customer Perceived Value and Destination Image provide significant indirect pathways linking eWOM and Food Authenticity to Behavioural Intention. The non-significant direct effect of eWOM together with significant indirect effects is consistent with an indirect-only mediation pattern, whereas the significant direct and indirect effects of Food Authenticity indicate partial mediation. These findings show the complementary roles of destination perceptions and perceived value in translating informational and experience-based factors into behavioural intentions [11], [51]. However, these results represent separate mediation pathways and should not be interpreted as evidence of serial mediation, as the pathway Destination Image → Customer Perceived Value → Behavioural Intention was not formally tested. A dedicated serial mediation analysis is therefore recommended for future research.

The model explains 55.2% of the variance in Destination Image, 49.8% in Customer Perceived Value, and 47.5% in Behavioural Intention, indicating meaningful in-sample explanatory power. These values should not be interpreted as out-of-sample predictive performance because the study did not use a holdout sample or cross-validation. Future studies should therefore evaluate the model using independent samples or cross-validation procedures.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, purposive sampling and the Bandung-specific context limit the findings' generalizability. Second, the cross-sectional design does not establish temporal causality, while the use of self-reported Behavioural Intention does not confirm actual visits, revisits, recommendations, bookings, or transactions. Subsequent research should incorporate long-term studies and objective behavioural measures. Finally, measurement purification left several constructs represented by only two indicators. Although the retained indicators met the reported validity and composite reliability criteria, this may limit construct coverage; notably, Food Authenticity showed a Cronbach's alpha of 0.610. Future studies should use broader item pools, independent samples, stronger common-method diagnostics, and out-of-sample validation to assess the robustness and generalizability of the proposed model.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that eWOM significantly influences Customer Perceived Value and Destination Image but not Behavioural Intention directly, whereas Food Authenticity significantly influences all three constructs. Destination Image and Customer Perceived Value also significantly contribute to Behavioural Intention and mediate the relationships between eWOM, Food Authenticity, and Behavioural Intention. These findings highlight the complementary roles of digital information, culinary authenticity, destination perceptions, and perceived value in explaining gastronomy tourists' behavioural intentions. The model demonstrates moderate in-sample explanatory

power, but this should not be interpreted as evidence of out-of-sample predictive performance or causal effects. Given the purposive sampling, Bandung-specific context, cross-sectional design, self-reported intentions, and measurement purification, future research should use more diverse and longitudinal samples, objective behavioural measures, and independent-sample validation to strengthen model robustness and generalizability.

6. Declarations

6.1. Author Contributions

Conceptualization: I.G., M.R., and S.F.W.; Methodology: I.G.; Software: S.F.W.; Validation: I.G., M.R., and S.F.W.; Formal Analysis: I.G., M.R., and S.F.W.; Investigation: I.G.; Resources: M.R.; Data Curation: I.G., S.F.W; Writing Original Draft Preparation: I.G., M.R., and S.F.W.; Writing Review and Editing: I.G., M.R., and S.F.W.; Visualization: I.G.; All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

6.2. Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

6.3. Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

6.4. Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

6.5. Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

6.6. Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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