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GEN Z Tourists' Intentions To Visit Sustainable Tourism Destinations

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the influence of *Attitude, Subjective Norm, Perceived Behavioral Control*, *Electronic Word of Mouth* (E-WOM) and *Moral Reflectiveness* on Gen Z tourists' intentions to visit sustainable tourism destinations, especially Mokey Forest Ubud. This research adopts *Theory of Planned Behavior* (*Attitude, Subjective Norm,* and *Perceived Behavioral Control*) which is expanded by including the variables *Electronic Word of Mouth* (E-WOM) and *Moral Reflectiveness*. The research approach used was quantitative with a purposive sampling technique, while data collection was carried out through a Google Forms questionnaire for 106 respondents. Data processing and analysis using *Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling* (PLS-SEM) via the SmartPLS 3.0 application. The results of this research found that subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and E-WOM had a positive effect on Gen Z tourists' intentions to visit sustainable tourism destinations in the Ubud Monkey Forest. This research also resulted in the finding that *Moral Reflectiveness* did not show a significant influence on Gen Z's intention to visit. Practically, the results of this research provide a basis for destination managers and the government in formulating strategies to increase visits, including through the use of *Electronic Word of Mouth* (E-WOM) via online platforms, providing more adequate facilities, and strengthening education regarding the principles of sustainable tourism.
Keywords: *Theory of Planned Behavior*, *Electronic Word of Mouth*, *Moral Reflectiveness*

A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia places the tourism sector as one of the pillars of the national economy. Almost every region has the potential for various tourist attractions [1], and this sector plays an important role in regional development through empowering local communities [2]. At a macro level, tourism also makes a significant contribution to state income, with foreign exchange reaching 14 billion US dollars in 2023 [3]. This large contribution encourages the government and business actors to continue to innovate and introduce various new destinations. This trend is reflected in the increasing number of tourist attractions in 2023 which grew 32.72% compared to the previous year [4]. Massive growth without careful planning has the potential to pose a threat to the sustainability of the tourism sector itself [5]. Uncontrolled tourism expansion can trigger environmental degradation, changes in local culture, and social pressure for local communities [6], [7]. To reduce these risks, the concept of sustainable tourism is seen as a strategic approach that maintains a balance between economic, social, environmental and cultural interests [8]. This principle is also in line with Law no. 10 of 2009, especially article 5(d) which emphasizes the obligation to preserve tourism resources [9]. Furthermore, sustainable tourism practices contribute to the achievement of all sustainable development goals (17 SDGs) [10], [11].

Efforts to strengthen the implementation of sustainable tourism in various Indonesian destinations require an in-depth understanding of tourist behavior. This is important because the application of sustainability principles influences social and demographic dynamics involving tourists as the main actor [12]. One relevant approach to understanding this behavior is the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) which emphasizes the influence of attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control on individual intentions [13]. In the context of changes in global tourist behavior, the younger generation plays a strategic role [14]. In Indonesia, Generation Z is a very influential group in encouraging sustainable tourism [15]. The dominance of the Gen Z population which reaches 71,509,082 people or 26.46 percent of the total national population [16] makes them important actors in shaping the direction of tourism development. As digital natives, Gen Z is accustomed to living in intense digital connectivity [17], [18]. One characteristic is the tendency to actively search for and share travel reviews via online platforms [19]. These reviews play an important role in shaping the perceptions and behavior of other tourists [20] and are the essence of *electronic word of mouth* (e-WOM) [18].

In addition, Gen Z is known to have high social sensitivity and concern for environmental issues [21]. Their digital activism often promotes environmentally friendly practices, including sustainable tourism [22]. This involvement cannot be separated from the process of moral reflection or *moral reflectiveness* , namely the individual's tendency to consider moral values when making decisions [23], [24]. This moral reflection then becomes the basis for more consistent sustainable behavior [25]. The empirical phenomenon related to Gen Z's behavior in choosing sustainable tourism destinations encourages the importance of conducting this

research. This study also adapted the factors identified by Nguyen et al. (2023) and Soliman (2021) regarding the determinants of selecting sustainable destinations. To obtain a more comprehensive understanding, the TPB framework is enriched with two additional variables, namely e-WOM and *Moral Reflectiveness*, so that it can explain tourist intentions in more depth. Bali was chosen as a research location because of its reputation as one of the best cultural tourism destinations in the world [26]. The Bali Provincial Government has long demonstrated a strong commitment to environmental and cultural preservation through various regional regulations regarding conservation since 1973 and 1991 [27]. Apart from regulations, local governments are also active in providing education to tourism industry players, entrepreneurs and tourists to increase awareness of sustainable practices [28].

Ubud Monkey Forest is a clear example of the success of implementing sustainable tourism principles. This conservation area integrates nature conservation, animal protection and spiritual values through the presence of a temple complex within it. This practice shows how the concept of sustainability can be implemented in harmony and provide added value for tourists and local communities. Even though sustainable tourism in Bali has been developing for a long time, research on the factors that influence Gen Z's intentions in choosing sustainable tourism destinations is still limited, especially in the context of the Ubud Monkey Forest as an ecotourism icon. Based on this gap, this research uses the TPB framework which includes *Attitude, Subjective Norm*, and *Perceived Behavioral Control*, and adds the variables e-WOM and *Moral Reflectiveness*, to provide a more holistic understanding of the behavior of Gen Z tourists in choosing sustainable destinations II.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

TPB (*Theory of Planned Behavior*)

Entering the 1990s, researchers began to conduct research on balancing growth with environmental conservation [29]. Global development issues, including tourism, must pay attention to the welfare of local communities, cultural preservation and inclusive development [30]. The scope of sustainable tourism is increasingly expanding into aspects of inclusiveness, resilience and the use of digital innovation [31]. Choosing a sustainable tourism destination is an individual's moral awareness. Awareness is an important element of personality that influences behavior, called moral reflection or *Moral Reflectiveness* [32]. Ajzen (1991) developed TPB as a theory that explains human behavioral intentions in various contexts including tourism. TPB emphasizes that individual behavioral intentions are influenced by three main factors, namely attitude *(Attitude*), subjective norms (*Subjective Norm*), and perceived behavioral control (*Perceived Behavior Control*). The approach using TPB is considered effective in predicting behavioral intentions [33]. This theory is often used to understand the factors that encourage or hinder tourists from traveling [34], including travel decision making, sustainable tourism and ecotourism [35].

Attitude

Attitude is an individual's assessment of a behavior based on previous experience. This means that the information obtained influences attitudes towards sustainable understanding [36], [37]. Measurement *Sustainable Tourism Attitude Scale* developed by Obradović et al. (2021) attitude is used as a measuring instrument. The results show that a positive attitude is closely related to increasing sustainability awareness. Therefore, researchers included attitude variables to determine the influence of attitudes on the importance of sustainable tourism.

H1: *Attitude* has a positive effect on Gen Z tourists' intentions to visit sustainable tourism destinations

Subjective Norm

Subjective norms describe social norms, which individuals do and should do. This has a significant role in shaping tourist behavior [8]. Social norms play a role in strengthening or weakening behavior that is in accordance with the values of expectations that apply in society [38], [39].

H2: *Subjective Norm* has a positive effect on Gen Z tourists' intentions to visit sustainable tourism destinations

***Perceived behavior control* (PBC)**

Perceived behavior control (PBC) basically refers to an individual's perception of the level of difficulty in carrying out a behavior. Every individual has confidence in their ability to complete an action, that individual will tend to do it [40]. Thus, PBC describes the level of an individual's ability to control the factors that influence his actions. Carrying out an action is greatly influenced by aspects of PBC such as personal abilities, time and supporting facilities at their disposal [12].

H3: *Perceived behavior control* has a positive effect on Gen Z tourists' intentions to visit sustainable tourism destinations

e-WOM (*Electronic Word of Mouth*)

Advances in digital technology provide great opportunities in promoting sustainable tourism [8]. Various technologies, such as social media and online platforms, can help tourists find environmentally friendly tourist destinations [32]. The use of technology directly influences individual behavior in encouraging sustainable tourism [41]. This is because the use of technology can improve the experience of tourists [42], [43]. Shared VR (*Virtual Reality*) experiences have been proven to strengthen travel intentions [44]. In addition, travel content and reviews from fellow tourists can shape the image of a destination [45]. Reviews on digital content, travel blogs can influence perceptions and encourage tourist behavior to choose tourist attractions that are environmentally conscious [20], [46], [47]. Content and reviews published via online platforms are part of e-WOM

(*Electronic Word of Mouth*). There is empirical evidence that shows e-WOM is proven to increase tourist intentions in sustainable tourism [48]. E-WOM is seen as credible because it originates from real experience [49]. In addition, e-WOM is the main reference for Gen Z in making travel decisions [50]. This is because e-WOM can shape emotional perceptions that influence Gen Z's intentions [51]. The use of e-WOM variables in this research is based on existing phenomena and is based on empirical evidence that e-WOM variables have a significant influence on tourists' intentions to visit sustainable tourism destinations [19], [52].

H4: e-WOM has a positive effect on Gen Z tourists' intentions to visit sustainable tourism destinations

The use of *Moral Reflectiveness* as a variable in this research is based on the phenomenon of Gen Z, as well as the limited studies on sustainable tourism. Implementing environmentally friendly behavior is formed from moral awareness. The higher the level of individual reflection on environmental issues, the more likely they are to implement environmentally friendly behavior [8]. Individual moral perceptions play an important role in the decision-making process. Individual decisions are often influenced by the moral values that have been embedded and believed in themselves [12]. Meanwhile, perceptions shape ethical actions in various contexts [15], including everyday behavior [52]. Gen Z is often described as a group that has high social sensitivity on online platforms.

*Moral Reflectiveness i*s relevant to be used to explain the tendency of sustainable behavior in the tourism context. Individual moral and ethical values can increase commitment to environmentally friendly behavior [53]. This is in line with the ethical drive to maintain the welfare of the planet, sustainability across generations, and environmental cleanliness [15]. Based on the considerations above, researchers included *Moral Reflectiveness* to identify its influence on Gen Z's intention to visit sustainable tourism destinations. The selection of this variable is strengthened by the research results of Verma & Chandra (2018) which show that *Moral Reflectiveness* has a positive influence on tourists' intention to visit *green hotels.*

H5: *Moral Reflectiveness* has a positive effect on Gen Z tourists' intentions to visit sustainable tourism destinations

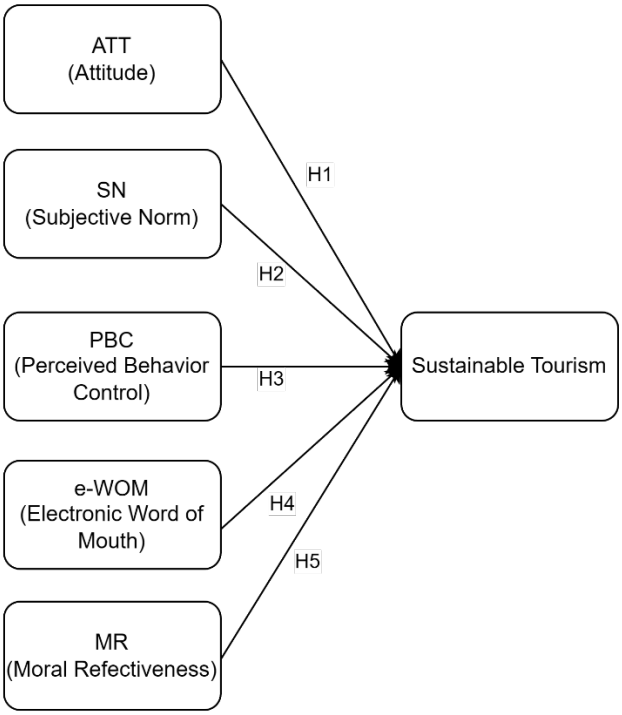
This research has urgency, considering that there are still limited studies that specifically examine the influence of Gen Z's intention to visit sustainable tourist destinations by considering the influence of *Attitude, Subjective Norm, Perceived Behavior Control, E-Wom,* and *Moral Reflectiveness* in one integrated analytical framework. To fill this gap, this research aims to: 1) Analyze the influence of *Attitude* on Gen Z tourists' intentions to visit sustainable tourism destinations. 2) Analyze the influence of *Subjective Norm* on Gen Z tourists' intentions to visit

sustainable tourism destinations. 3) Analyze the influence of *Perceived Behavior Control* on Gen Z tourists' intentions to visit sustainable tourism destinations. 4) Analyze the influence of E-WOM on Gen Z tourists' intentions to visit sustainable tourism destinations. 5) Analyze the influence of *Moral Reflectiveness* on Gen Z tourists' intentions to visit sustainable tourism destinations.

C. METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

This research applies a quantitative approach to analyze the factors that influence Gen Z tourists' intentions to visit sustainable tourism destinations. The conceptual framework of this research was adapted from previous empirical studies, namely Nguyen et al. (2023) and Soliman (2021) the variables used include *Theory of Planned Behavior* (*Attitude, Subjective Norm, Perceived Behavior Control*), *Electronic Word of Word* (e-WOM), and *Moral Reflectiveness.*

Figure 1. Research Framework



Data collection was carried out using a purposive sampling technique, namely selecting respondents based on certain criteria that were considered relevant to the research objectives. The criteria for respondents are individuals from Gen Z with a minimum age of 17 years (1997-2008). All question items in the questionnaire were adapted from research by Nguyen et al. (2003) and Soliman (2021). This research instrument uses a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Before distributing the questionnaire widely, a pre-test was carried out on 30 respondents to assess the reliability and

validity of each item. Questionnaires were distributed en masse during the May to June period via various social media platforms, such as WhatsApp, Telegram and Instagram. From this process, 106 respondents were obtained who met the criteria for this research. The collected data was then analyzed using PLS-SEM to test the relationship between variables. This method allows the integration of factor analysis and multiple regression without requiring a normal distribution of data.

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

During the period May to June, researchers received 106 respondents with the following details:

Table 1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Presentation
Gender	Man	47	44%
	Woman	59	56%
Domicile	DKI Jakarta	34	32%
	West Java	28	26%
	Central Java	22	21%
	Banten	6	6%
	East Java	4	4%
	Other	12	11%
Work	Private employees	41	39%
	Student	24	23%
	Businessman	15	14%
	BUMN employees	10	9%
	Civil servants	7	7%
	Other	9	8%
Monthly Income	< IDR 1,000,000	22	21%
	Rp. 1,000,001 – IDR 3,000,000	15	14%
	Rp. 3,000,001 – IDR 5,000,000	29	27%
	Rp. 5,000,001 – IDR 7,000,000	20	19%
	>Rp 7,000,000	20	19%
Frequency of Tourist Visits Per Year	1-2 Times	49	46%
	3-4 Times	51	48%
	>5 Times	6	6%

Source: Processed by Researchers (2025)

The results showed that of the total 106 respondents, the proportion of male respondents (44%) was slightly less than female (56%). Respondents' jobs are quite diverse, but the majority work as private employees (39%). Based on income level, the largest group was in the range of IDR 3,000,001–IDR 5,000,000, namely 29 respondents (27%). Apart from that, the data shows that the majority of respondents, namely 51 people, travel 3-4 times a year.

Tabel 2 *Descriptive* Statistik

Variable	Items	Mean	$(\bar{x})$Mean

ATT	ATT1	4,22	4,24
	ATT2	4,21	
	ATT3	4,28	
S.N	SN1	3,97	3,94
	SN2	3,96	
	SN3	3,88	
PBC	PBC1	4,25	4,14
	PBC2	4,37	
	PBC3	3,97	
	PBC4	3,98	
E-WOM	E-WOM 1	4,25	4,25
	E-WOM 2	4,24	
	E-WOM 3	4,30	
	E-WOM 4	4,19	
MR	MR1	4,31	4,33
	MR2	4,40	
	MR3	4,29	
ST	ST1	4,05	4,07
	ST2	3,92	
	ST3	4,14	
	ST4	4,17	

Source: Processed by Researchers (2025)

In the Attitude Variable (ATT) the overall average value is 4.24. The mean value for each item is ATT1 of 4.22; ATT2 of 4.21; ATT3 is 4.28. The Subjective Norm (SN) variable overall average value is 3.94. The mean value for each item is SN1 of 3.97; SN2 of 3.96; SN3 is 3.88. The overall average value of the Perceived Behavior Control (PBC) variable is 4.14. The mean value for each item is PBC1 of 4.25; PBC2 of 4.37; PBC3 of 3.97; and PBC4 of 3.98. For the Moral Reflectiveness (MR) variable, the overall average value is 4.33, making it the variable with the highest mean in this study. The mean of each item consists of MR1 of 4.31; MR2 of 4.40; and MR3 of 4.29. The Sustainable Tourism (ST) variable overall average value is 4.07. The mean value for each item is ST1 of 4.05; ST2 of 3.92; ST3 of 4.14; and ST4 of 4.17. In general, the results of the descriptive analysis show that all variables are in the high category, which indicates that respondents tend to give positive assessments of all the constructs measured in this research.

Table 3 Validity and Reliability Results

Variable	Items	OuterLoading	AVE	Cronbach Alpha	CR
ATT	ATT1	0,715	0,560	*0,600*	0,791
	ATT2	0,666			
	ATT3	0,852			
S.N	SN1	0,804	0,635	*0.711*	0,839
	SN2	0,741			
	SN3	0,842			
PBC	PBC1	*0,627*	0,592	*0,765*	0,851
	PBC2	*0,837*			
	PBC3	*0,791*			
	PBC4	*0.805*			
e-WOM	e-WOM 1	0,745	0,596	0,774	0,855

	e-WOM 2	0,831			
	e-WOM 3	0,723			
	e-WOM 4	0,786			
MR	MR1	0,771	0,563	0,626	0,793
	MR2	0,821			
	MR3	0,650			
ST	ST1	0,745	0,573	0,749	0,842
	ST2	0,796			
	ST3	0,813			
	ST4	0,664			

Source: Processed by Researchers (2025)

Researchers evaluated reliability with a measurement model using two coefficients, namely Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). The construct was declared reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value exceeded 0.6 [56] and the Composite Reliability (CR) value was above 0.7 [57]. All variables in this study met these criteria, with Cronbach's Alpha values ranging from 0.600 to 0.774, while Composite Reliability values were in the range 0.791 to 0.855. To test convergent validity, outer loading and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) indicators were used in this research. An indicator is declared valid if it has an outer loading value above 0.5 and an AVE greater than 0.5 [56]. The results of the analysis show that all variables have an AVE value above 0.5, so it can be concluded that convergent validity is met. All items also have an outer loading value that exceeds the minimum limit of 0.5, so no items are eliminated. The results of this analysis show that each item is able to represent the construct accurately in the measurement model.

Table 4 Fornell-Larcker Criterion Results

	ATT	e-WOM	PBC	S.N	ST	MR
ATT	0.748	-	-	-	-	-
e-WOM	0.392	0.772	-	-	-	-
PBC	0.325	0.540	0.769	-	-	-
S.N	0.264	0.402	0.449	0.797	-	-
ST	0.519	0.624	0.673	0.164	0.757	-
MR	0.533	0.532	0.287	0.320	0.431	0.751

Source: Processed by Researchers (2025)

Discriminant validity is used to assess the extent to which a construct can be differentiated empirically from other constructs. In this research, testing was carried out using the Fornell–Larcker criteria, namely by comparing the AVE of each construct with the correlation value between latent variables. Discriminant validity is declared fulfilled if the square root value of AVE on the diagonal is higher than the correlation coefficient between variables [58]. The results of the analysis show that all constructs meet these criteria, so that the research model is declared to have adequate and acceptable discriminant validity

Table 5 Inner VIF Results

	ATT	e-WOM	PBC	S.N	ST	MR
ATT	-	-	-	-	1.468	-
e-WOM	-	-	-	-	1.838	-
PBC	-	-	-	-	1.588	-
S.N	-	-	-	-	1.341	-
ST	-	-	-	-	-	-
MR	-	-	-	-	1.718	-

Source: Processed by Researchers (2025)

The multicollinearity test is used in this research to ensure that the relationships between variables in the model do not overlap excessively. High multicollinearity can interfere with parameter estimates and reduce the level of model accuracy, so checking this is an important step in structural analysis. The evaluation was carried out using the inner Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), in accordance with the recommendations of (Hair et al. (2019), which states that a VIF value exceeding 3.3 indicates the potential for multicollinearity. The test results show that all variables in the model have inner VIF values below this threshold. These findings indicate that there is no excessive correlation between latent variables, so that each construct can be considered independent conceptually and empirically. Thus, the structural model in this research can be declared free from multicollinearity issues and can be interpreted further without concerns regarding distortion of the relationships between variables.

Table 6 R-Square Results

Variable	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square
STI	0,680	0,664

Source: Processed by Researchers (2025)

The coefficient of determination (R-square) is used to assess the level of model accuracy by showing the proportion of variation in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variable. The analysis results show an R-Square value of 0.664. This indicates that the model accuracy level is in the moderate category [58].

Table 7 Results of Research Hypothesis

	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T-Statistics	P-Value
ATT→ ST	0.248	0.247	0.084	2.954	0.003
e-WOM → ST	0.232	0.238	0.119	1.961	0.050
PBC → ST	0.332	0.325	0.112	2.967	0.003
SN → ST	0.313	0.310	0.087	3.593	0.000
MR → ST	-0.021	-0.019	0.091	0.227	0.821

Source: Processed by Researchers (2025)

Based on testing the five hypotheses proposed, four hypotheses were declared accepted and one hypothesis was rejected. Variable Attitude, Subjective Norm, Perceived Behavior Control, E-WOM are proven to have a positive influence on Gen Z tourists' intentions to visit sustainable tourism destinations. This is indicated by

a p-value that is equal to or smaller than 0.05, so that the four variables are statistically significant. The Moral Reflectiveness variable does not show a significant influence on Gen Z tourists' intentions to visit sustainable tourism destinations, indicated by a p-value exceeding 0.05

D. CONCLUSIONS

This research aims to analyze the influence of Attitude, Subjective Norm, Perceived Behavior Control, e-WOM, and Moral Reflectiveness on the intensity of Gen Z tourists visiting sustainable tourism destinations. The research results show that Attitude, Subjective Norm, Perceived Behavior Control, and e-WOM have a significant influence on the intensity of Gen Z visiting sustainable tourism destinations. These results are also in accordance with previous research conducted by Nugroho & Suwaryono (2024) and Nguyen et al. (2023) that the variables Attitude, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioral Control have a positive effect on sustainable tourism. The significant influence of E-WOM in this research is in accordance with the research results of Soliman (2021). The research results of Anggraini & Lupita (2021) found that E-WOM increased the intensity of tourist visits in Batam City. This finding is also supported by research by Zulfida & Suhud (2024) which shows that E-WOM has a significant effect on intention to return to Dusun Bambu Theme Park. Reviews, testimonials and bold recommendations distributed through social media and travel platforms act as credible sources of information and are able to influence Gen Z's perceptions. These findings confirm that digital communication management is a strategic element in the promotion of sustainable tourist destinations to strengthen Gen Z tourists' intention to visit. Meanwhile, Moral reflectiveness does not show Gen Z's intention to visit sustainable tourism destinations. These results are in accordance with research conducted by Hermansyah & Pratomo (2025) which states that moral reflectiveness has no influence on sustainable tourism intention.

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