International Journal of Economics, Business and Innovation Research
https://e-journal.citakonsultindo.or.id/index.php/IJEBIR
E-ISSN : 2964-0865
IJEBIR

From Digital Tourism Marketing To Travel Intention: The Mediating Role Of Flow Experience In Agritourism

Sjendry Loindong[1], Michael Raintung[2], Raymond Kawet[3]

[1,2,3]Universitas Sam Ratulangi

Corresponding author: Sjendry Loindong, loindong18s@unsrat.ac.id

Abstract

Purpose: This study examines how Digital Tourism Marketing is associated with prospective tourists' Travel Intention in Modoinding Agritourism and tests Flow Experience as the psychological mechanism linking digital destination communication with travel-related intention.

Design/methodology/approach: A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted with 150 prospective tourists familiar with Modoinding Agritourism, Indonesia. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling. The measurement and structural models were assessed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), with hypothesis significance evaluated through 5,000 bootstrap resamples.

Findings: Digital Tourism Marketing was positively associated with Flow Experience ($\beta = 0.662$, $t = 6.615$, $p < .001$), and Flow Experience was positively associated with Travel Intention ($\beta = 0.489$, $t = 3.718$, $p < .001$). The direct Digital Tourism Marketing–Travel Intention relationship was not statistically supported ($\beta = 0.073$, $t = 0.487$, $p = .619$), whereas the indirect effect through Flow Experience was significant ($\beta = 0.324$, $t = 3.242$, $p = .001$).

Research limitations/implications: Because the study uses cross-sectional, self-reported data and purposive sampling, the findings should be interpreted as evidence of relationships within the proposed model rather than definitive temporal causality or population-wide behavioral generalization. The outcome is Travel Intention and should not be equated with actual visitation.

Practical implications: Destination managers should evaluate digital tourism marketing not only through reach and visibility metrics but also through its capacity to sustain attention, involvement, and psychological immersion that can strengthen travel consideration.

Originality/value: The study refines the Stimulus–Organism–Response explanation of digital destination marketing by specifying Flow Experience as the organismic

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

mechanism connecting Digital Tourism Marketing with Travel Intention in a pre-visit agritourism context. It thereby distinguishes digital exposure from the internal experiential process through which exposure becomes behaviorally relevant.

Keywords: Digital Tourism Marketing; Flow Experience; Travel Intention; Stimulus–Organism–Response; agritourism; destination marketing

INTRODUCTION

The rapid transformation of tourism marketing through digital media has fundamentally changed how prospective tourists discover, evaluate, and imagine destination experiences. Short-form video, social media, and other forms of digitally mediated communication allow destinations to enter prospective tourists' information environments long before an actual trip occurs. However, the effectiveness of digital communication cannot be assessed solely by visibility or online attention. A more fundamental question is how exposure to destination-related digital content is translated into psychological engagement and, subsequently, into travel-related intention. Recent tourism studies indicate that social-media and short-video stimuli can influence behavioral intentions through intervening experiential or psychological states rather than through exposure alone (Liu et al., 2024; Huang et al., 2025).

This issue is particularly relevant in agritourism because the attractiveness of an agritourism destination extends beyond scenic imagery to the experience of agricultural landscapes, local activities, and place-based rural life. In Modoinding, agritourism has been recognized as a development opportunity linked to the area's horticultural resources, while recent local research has also explored digital and virtual-reality media as tools for introducing the destination to wider audiences (Pangemanan et al., 2024; Pinasang et al., 2025). Digital Tourism Marketing in this setting should therefore be understood not only as a promotional channel but also as a pre-visit interface through which prospective tourists begin to imagine the destination experience.

Within this context, Modoinding Agritourism in South Minahasa Regency provides a relevant empirical setting. Local research identifies Modoinding as an agritourism area with extensive agricultural potential and notes the use of the Modoinding Potato Festival as part of destination promotion, while also highlighting limitations in tourism information and destination management (Pangemanan et al., 2024). These conditions make Modoinding a useful setting for examining whether destination-related digital communication is translated into stronger psychological engagement and Travel Intention.

The contextual tourism-arrival series used in this study also shows marked month-to-month variation in South Minahasa during 2025, with the recorded monthly figures

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

ranging from 82,140 to 131,293. These fluctuations are treated only as contextual background for the research problem. They are not used as an individual-level measure of Travel Intention and are not interpreted as evidence that digital marketing caused changes in realized tourist arrivals.

The phenomenon underlying this study can therefore be described as an apparent discrepancy between the digital visibility of Modoinding Agritourism and the sustainability of tourism momentum. In this study, the term 'Post-Viral Slump' is used descriptively to characterize the possibility that increased digital attention may not necessarily be followed by sustained tourism momentum. The term is not intended to establish a causal explanation for fluctuations in tourist arrivals, nor does the present cross-sectional study empirically test actual post-viral visitation decline. Instead, the phenomenon serves as a practical framing for a broader theoretical question: why does Digital Tourism Marketing not always translate directly into Travel Intention?

Addressing this question requires shifting the evaluation of Digital Tourism Marketing from simple measures of visibility toward prospective tourists' internal psychological responses. Existing digital-tourism research demonstrates that destination content can generate flow-related states and behavioral intentions, suggesting that the route from media exposure to intention is psychologically mediated (An et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2024). Accordingly, this study focuses on Flow Experience as the internal mechanism through which Digital Tourism Marketing may become behaviorally relevant.

The theoretical foundation of this relationship is provided by the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework. S–O–R proposes that environmental stimuli shape internal organismic states, which subsequently influence behavioral responses (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Tourism studies have applied this framework to technology-mediated and social-media environments, demonstrating that external digital stimuli may influence visit or revisit intentions through intervening experiential, image, or affective mechanisms (An et al., 2021; Baber & Baber, 2023; Huang et al., 2025). In the present study, Digital Tourism Marketing represents the stimulus, Flow Experience represents the organismic state, and Travel Intention represents the response.

At the middle-range theoretical level, Flow Theory provides a more specific explanation of this internal process. Flow describes an optimal experiential state characterized by deep concentration and absorption in an activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). In digitally mediated tourism settings, flow has been operationalized through states such as focused attention, telepresence, and temporal distortion, and has been linked to subsequent behavioral intention (An et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2024). The present study therefore focuses specifically on Flow Experience generated while prospective tourists interact with digital representations of Modoinding before an actual visit occurs.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

This distinction produces an important theoretical and empirical gap. Experiencing a destination through digital content is different from physically experiencing agricultural activities at the destination. Digital Tourism Marketing may attract attention, communicate information, and stimulate interest; however, its behavioral relevance may depend on whether the digital experience is sufficiently absorbing to create Flow Experience. From an S–O–R perspective, this suggests that Digital Tourism Marketing should not be conceptualized only as a direct predictor of Travel Intention but also as a stimulus whose influence may operate through an internal psychological state.

Accordingly, the present study develops a parsimonious model in which Digital Tourism Marketing is related to Travel Intention both directly and indirectly through Flow Experience. The model addresses two related questions: whether effective Digital Tourism Marketing is associated with stronger Flow Experience among prospective tourists, and whether Flow Experience is subsequently associated with stronger Travel Intention. By testing the direct and mediated pathways simultaneously, the study moves beyond a visibility-based interpretation of destination marketing and examines the psychological mechanism through which digital communication may become behaviorally meaningful.

Social media is particularly relevant to this process because contemporary destination marketing increasingly occurs through interactive platforms and short-video environments. Research shows that influencer-based destination marketing and TikTok content can shape travel-related perceptions, self-efficacy, and visit intention through mechanisms that extend beyond simple exposure (Fong et al., 2025; Ong et al., 2024). These developments reinforce the need to understand how prospective tourists process destination-related digital communication before they form a travel intention.

Flow Experience provides the psychological mechanism through which such digital exposure may become more consequential. The concept of flow was originally developed to describe deep absorption in an activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). In tourism-related digital environments, flow has been examined as an experiential state involving focused attention, telepresence, and altered time perception, and empirical studies have shown that these states can link digital destination stimuli with subsequent behavioral responses (An et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2024).

Travel Intention represents the behavioral outcome of this process. In tourism research, travel intention reflects an individual's willingness, likelihood, or plan to visit a destination in the future. Although behavioral intention is conceptually related to subsequent travel behavior, it should not be equated with actual visitation. The present research therefore examines Travel Intention as an individual-level psychological outcome rather than claiming to explain realized tourist arrivals.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Economics, Business and Innovation Research
https://e-journal.citakonsultindo.or.id/index.php/IJEBIR
E-ISSN : 2964-0865
IJEBIR

Taken together, the proposed framework positions Digital Tourism Marketing as an external destination-related stimulus, Flow Experience as the internal psychological state generated through digital interaction, and Travel Intention as the resulting behavioral tendency. The study contributes to digital agritourism marketing literature by clarifying how digital marketing may become associated with prospective tourists' travel intentions rather than merely testing whether a direct relationship exists. Because the research uses a cross-sectional survey and measures behavioral intention rather than actual travel behavior, its conclusions are restricted to relationships among the examined constructs and should not be interpreted as direct causal evidence explaining fluctuations in actual tourist arrivals.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationships among Digital Tourism Marketing, Flow Experience, and Travel Intention in the context of Modoinding Agritourism.

The structural model examined three direct relationships: Digital Tourism Marketing → Flow Experience; Flow Experience → Travel Intention; and Digital Tourism Marketing → Travel Intention. The study also examined the indirect effect of Digital Tourism Marketing → Flow Experience → Travel Intention to determine whether Flow Experience mediates the relationship between Digital Tourism Marketing and Travel Intention.

The target population comprised prospective tourists who were familiar with Modoinding Agritourism. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling, whereby participation was restricted to individuals who satisfied the eligibility criteria established for the study. A total of 150 valid respondents were included in the analysis.

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire measured on a five-point Likert scale. Secondary information was obtained from relevant literature and supporting documentation. The empirical model was evaluated using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), following established reporting guidance for variance-based structural equation modeling (Hair et al., 2019, 2022).

The measurement model assessment included indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Convergent validity was evaluated using indicator loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), whereas discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability. HTMT was interpreted in line with the discriminant-validity guidance proposed by Henseler et al. (2015).

The structural model assessment included the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2 predict), and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF),

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Economics, Business and Innovation Research
https://e-journal.citakonsultindo.or.id/index.php/IJEBIR
E-ISSN : 2964-0865
IJEBIR

consistent with established PLS-SEM reporting guidance (Hair et al., 2019, 2022). Full-collinearity VIF values were also inspected as a diagnostic indicator of potential common method bias (Kock, 2015); these values were interpreted cautiously and not as definitive proof that common method variance was absent. Model fit was additionally assessed using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). Finally, hypothesis significance was evaluated using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples.

RESULTS

Measurement Model Assessment

Table 1. Measurement Model Results

Construct / Item	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability	Loading	AVE
Flow Experience	0.877	0.911		0.672
FE1			0.865	
FE2			0.800	
FE3			0.797	
FE4			0.786	
FE5			0.847	
Digital Tourism Marketing	0.873	0.908		0.664
DTM1			0.758	
DTM2			0.808	
DTM3			0.787	
DTM4			0.849	
DTM5			0.796	
DTM6			0.776	
Travel Intention	0.886	0.916		0.686
TI1			0.825	
TI2			0.812	
TI3			0.824	
TI4			0.835	
TI5			0.843	

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Economics, Business and Innovation Research
https://e-journal.citakonsultindo.or.id/index.php/IJEBIR
E-ISSN : 2964-0865
IJEBIR

All indicator loadings exceeded 0.70, ranging from 0.758 to 0.865, indicating adequate indicator reliability. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.873 to 0.886, while Composite Reliability values ranged from 0.908 to 0..
The AVE values were 0.672 for Flow Experience, 0.664 for Digital Tourism Marketing, and 0.686 for Travel Intention. Because all AVE values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.50, the three constructs demonstrated sat.

Discriminant Validity

Table 2. Fornell–Larcker Criterion

Construct	Flow Experience	Digital Tourism Marketing	Travel Intention
Flow Experience	0.820		
Digital Tourism Marketing	0.662	0.796	
Travel Intention	0.537	0.397	0.828

Table 3. HTMT Ratios

Construct Relationship	HTMT
Digital Tourism Marketing – Flow Experience	0.750
Flow Experience – Travel Intention	0.606
Digital Tourism Marketing – Travel Intention	0.447

The square root of the AVE for each construct exceeded its correlations with the other constructs, satisfying the Fornell–Larcker criterion. Furthermore, all HTMT values were below 0.90, ranging from 0.447 to 0.750. Because HTMT was developed as a more sensitive criterion for discriminant-validity assessment in variance-based SEM, these results provide additional evidence that Digital Tourism Marketing, Flow Experience, and Travel Intention are empirically distinguishable constructs (Henseler et al., 2015).

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Economics, Business and Innovation Research
https://e-journal.citakonsultindo.or.id/index.php/IJEBIR
E-ISSN : 2964-0865
IJEBIR

Structural Model Assessment

Table 4. Structural Model Evaluation

Structural Relationship / Endogenous Construct	f^2	VIF	R^2	Q^2 predict
Digital Tourism Marketing → Flow Experience	0.779	1.000		
Flow Experience → Travel Intention	0.190	1.779		
Digital Tourism Marketing → Travel Intention	0.004	1.779		
Flow Experience			0.434	0.372
Travel Intention			0.282	0.104

The structural model revealed substantial differences in the contribution of the predictors. Digital Tourism Marketing had a large effect on Flow Experience ($f^2 = 0.779$), whereas Flow Experience exerted a meaningful effect on Travel Intention ($f^2 = 0.190$). In contrast, the direct effect size of Digital Tourism Marketing on Travel Intention was negligible ($f^2 = 0.004$).

The VIF values remained below 3.0, indicating no problematic multicollinearity among the predictor constructs. In addition, the full-collinearity diagnostic did not indicate substantial collinearity-related common method concerns under the procedure discussed by Kock (2015); however, this diagnostic is not interpreted as absolute proof of the absence of common method variance.

Digital Tourism Marketing explained 43.4% of the variance in Flow Experience ($R^2 = 0.434$). Meanwhile, Digital Tourism Marketing and Flow Experience jointly explained 28.2% of the variance in Travel Intention ($R^2 = 0.282$). Thus, the proposed model accounts for a meaningful proportion of variance in both endogenous constructs while also indicating that additional factors outside the model contribute to Travel Intention.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Economics, Business and Innovation Research
https://e-journal.citakonsultindo.or.id/index.php/IJEBIR
E-ISSN : 2964-0865
IJEBIR

Both endogenous constructs showed positive Q^2 predict values. Flow Experience yielded a Q^2 predict value of 0.372, while Travel Intention yielded a value of 0.104. These positive values indicate predictive relevance under the predictive assessment reported in this study, while avoiding stronger out-of-sample claims beyond the procedure actually conducted (Hair et al., 2019).

Model Fit

Table 5. SRMR

Fit Index	Value	Recommended Threshold
SRMR	0.056	< 0.08

The SRMR value of 0.056 was below the commonly used 0.08 benchmark, indicating acceptable approximate model fit. This statistic is treated as a diagnostic rather than as evidence of perfect global fit (Hair et al., 2019).

Hypothesis Testing

Table 6. Structural Path and Indirect Effect Results

Relationship	β	t-statistic	p-value	Decision
Flow Experience → Travel Intention	0.489	3.718	< .001	Supported
Digital Tourism Marketing → Flow Experience	0.662	6.615	< .001	Supported
Digital Tourism Marketing → Travel Intention	0.073	0.487	.619	Not Supported
Digital Tourism Marketing → Flow Experience → Travel Intention	0.324	3.242	.001	Supported

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

The results indicate that Digital Tourism Marketing had a positive and statistically significant effect on Flow Experience (β = 0.662, t = 6.615, p < .001). Thus, stronger perceptions of Digital Tourism Marketing were associated with higher levels of Flow Experience among prospective tourists.

Flow Experience, in turn, had a positive and statistically significant effect on Travel Intention (β = 0.489, t = 3.718, p < .001). This finding indicates that prospective tourists who experienced greater psychological absorption and engagement while interacting with destination-related digital content reported stronger intentions to visit Modoinding Agritourism.

By contrast, the direct effect of Digital Tourism Marketing on Travel Intention was not statistically significant (β = 0.073, t = 0.487, p = .619). This result suggests that exposure to or positive perceptions of digital tourism marketing alone may not be sufficient to generate Travel Intention.

More importantly, the indirect effect of Digital Tourism Marketing on Travel Intention through Flow Experience was positive and statistically significant (β = 0.324, t = 3.242, p = .001). Taken together, these findings indicate that the influence of Digital Tourism Marketing on Travel Intention operates primarily through Flow Experience rather than through a direct pathway.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings reveal that the relationship between Digital Tourism Marketing and Travel Intention is better understood as a psychologically mediated process than as a simple direct stimulus–response relationship. Digital Tourism Marketing was positively associated with Flow Experience, Flow Experience was positively associated with Travel Intention, and the indirect effect through Flow Experience was statistically supported. In contrast, the direct relationship between Digital Tourism Marketing and Travel Intention was not statistically supported. Taken together, this pattern suggests that digital tourism communication acquires behavioral relevance when it succeeds in generating a sufficiently immersive psychological state among prospective tourists.

Digital Tourism Marketing and Flow Experience

The positive relationship between Digital Tourism Marketing and Flow Experience indicates that destination-related digital communication can extend beyond information provision and generate a deeper psychological response. In the Modoinding Agritourism context, digital content appears to become more consequential when it attracts sustained attention, encourages involvement, and enables prospective tourists to become absorbed in the destination representation. This interpretation is consistent with the

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

conceptualization of Flow Experience in the present study as an internal state involving concentration, involvement, enjoyment, and psychological immersion.

This result is supported by previous international evidence. An et al. (2021) examined virtual destination marketing through an S-O-R and Flow Theory framework and reported that sense-related and information-quality attributes of virtual travel positively influenced dimensions of flow experience, including telepresence, focused attention, and temporal distortion. Their study demonstrates that technology-mediated destination representations can induce psychological immersion before an actual visit takes place.

A similar pattern was reported by Liu et al. (2024), who examined tourism-related TikTok content and showed that technological and content characteristics, including perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, entertainment, interactivity, and informativeness, contributed to different dimensions of Flow Experience. Their study positioned flow as the organism linking short-video stimuli to subsequent behavioral intention, closely paralleling the theoretical logic adopted in the present study.

More recent evidence strengthens this interpretation. Lee et al. (2026) found that destination-promotion content and virtual-influencer attributes contributed to Flow Experience, which subsequently enhanced destination visit intention. Esmaili and Ferdowsi (2026) similarly showed that deep involvement with social-media-influencer content can generate vicarious flow in prospective nature-based tourism settings.

From a theoretical perspective, the finding strengthens the positioning of Flow Experience as an organismic mechanism. Digital Tourism Marketing should therefore not be evaluated merely in terms of reach, frequency, or visibility. Its theoretical importance lies in whether it changes the internal experiential state of prospective tourists. A digital campaign that is widely viewed but fails to produce attention, absorption, or involvement may generate visibility without generating the psychological conditions associated with subsequent behavioral intention.

Flow Experience and Travel Intention

The positive relationship between Flow Experience and Travel Intention suggests that psychological immersion plays an important role in translating digital engagement into a willingness to consider an actual visit. Prospective tourists who become more focused, involved, and absorbed while engaging with digital representations of Modoinding are more likely to develop stronger intentions to experience the destination physically. This does not imply that flow automatically results in actual travel, but rather that flow is associated with a stronger pre-behavioral orientation toward visitation.

This finding is consistent with Liu et al. (2024), who reported that dimensions of flow—particularly focused attention and time distortion—were significantly related to

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

tourism behavioral intention in the context of TikTok. The finding also aligns with Lee et al. (2026), whose study demonstrated that Flow Experience significantly enhanced destination visit intention in virtual-influencer destination promotion, supporting the proposition that psychological immersion is not merely an experiential outcome but also a persuasive mechanism. Esmaili and Ferdowsi (2026) similarly found indirect effects from influencer involvement to behavioral intention through Flow Experience among prospective nature-based tourists.

The present finding therefore contributes to the literature by reinforcing the relevance of Flow Experience during the pre-visit phase. Earlier research established the importance of flow in virtual travel, while more recent studies have extended flow to short-video, influencer, and AI-mediated contexts. The present study adds evidence from agritourism, suggesting that psychological immersion is not limited to technologically intensive virtual environments but can also arise from broader Digital Tourism Marketing activities.

Digital Tourism Marketing and Travel Intention

The absence of statistical support for the direct relationship between Digital Tourism Marketing and Travel Intention is one of the most theoretically informative results of the study. Rather than indicating that Digital Tourism Marketing is ineffective, this finding suggests that digital marketing exposure by itself may not be sufficient to transform attention into a meaningful intention to travel.

This finding introduces a useful distinction between digital visibility and behavioral conversion. Viewing tourism content requires relatively little psychological or behavioral commitment. Prospective tourists may watch destination videos, browse social-media posts, or access digital information without immediately developing concrete travel plans. Travel Intention represents a more consequential stage because it requires individuals to begin considering the possibility of allocating time, money, and effort to a future journey. Hence, the transition from exposure to intention may depend on an internal mechanism rather than occurring automatically.

This pattern is not without precedent in the tourism literature. Baber and Baber (2023), applying the S-O-R framework, found that destination image mediated the relationship between social media marketing efforts and visit intention. Although their mediator differs from the present study, the structural logic is related: external digital stimulation may require an internal psychological transformation before becoming behaviorally meaningful.

Hu et al. (2026) provide further evidence that direct effects from digital content characteristics to visit intention are not necessarily uniform. Their findings showed that only selected digital gratifications were directly associated with visit intention, whereas

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

the examined gratification dimensions also influenced visit intention indirectly through Flow Experience. This suggests that a digital stimulus can remain behaviorally relevant even when its direct effect is weak or absent, provided that it activates a meaningful psychological mechanism.

At the same time, the present finding differs from studies reporting significant direct relationships between social media marketing and visit intention. Gaffar et al. (2022), for example, reported a positive role of social media marketing in strengthening visit intention in a nature-based tourism setting. This difference indicates that the direct influence of digital tourism communication may be context-dependent rather than universal.

Several theoretically plausible factors may explain such differences, including destination familiarity, the type of digital stimulus, content format, degree of immersion, and model specification. VR environments, influencer content, short videos, and broader destination marketing do not necessarily generate identical psychological responses. Therefore, the nonsignificant direct path in the present study should not be interpreted as contradicting digital tourism marketing literature as a whole. Instead, it indicates that, in the Modoinding Agritourism context, the pathway toward Travel Intention is more strongly explained through internal psychological engagement.

This interpretation also provides a more defensible way to connect the empirical result with the study's broader Post-Viral Slump framing. The finding is consistent with the proposition that digital visibility does not automatically imply behavioral conversion. However, because the study measures Travel Intention rather than actual tourist arrivals, it cannot establish that the absence of a direct DTM–TI relationship explains fluctuations in realized visitation. The Post-Viral Slump should therefore remain a contextual framing rather than a causal conclusion.

The Mediating Role of Flow Experience

The significant indirect relationship between Digital Tourism Marketing and Travel Intention through Flow Experience represents the central explanatory mechanism of the study. The findings indicate that Digital Tourism Marketing is associated with stronger Flow Experience and that Flow Experience, in turn, is associated with stronger Travel Intention, whereas the direct Digital Tourism Marketing–Travel Intention relationship is not statistically supported. This empirical configuration suggests that Digital Tourism Marketing acquires behavioral relevance primarily when it produces psychological immersion.

Substantively, the mechanism can be represented as Digital Tourism Marketing → Psychological Immersion → Travel Intention, or, in the constructs tested empirically, Digital Tourism Marketing → Flow Experience → Travel Intention. This finding is highly consistent with the original logic of S-O-R. The framework does not require external

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

stimuli to produce responses directly; rather, environmental stimuli influence internal organismic states that subsequently shape behavioral responses. In the present study, Digital Tourism Marketing operates as the stimulus, Flow Experience as the organism, and Travel Intention as the response.

Strong external support exists for this mechanism. An et al. (2021) demonstrated that virtual-travel attributes generated flow states that subsequently contributed to satisfaction and visit intention. Liu et al. (2024) similarly showed that TikTok's technological and content attributes generated flow dimensions that subsequently influenced behavioral intention.

More recent studies provide additional evidence. Esmaili and Ferdowsi (2026) found that Flow Experience mediated the relationship between involvement with tourism influencers and behavioral intention. Lee et al. (2026) likewise identified Flow Experience as a persuasive mechanism through which destination-promotion content and virtual-influencer attributes enhanced visit intention. Hu et al. (2026) found that Flow Experience mediated the effects of short-video gratifications on destination visit intention.

These findings collectively indicate that Flow Experience is emerging as a meaningful explanatory mechanism in digitally mediated tourism decision making. The present study contributes to this literature by showing that a similar process operates in the setting of Modoinding Agritourism, where prospective tourists encounter the destination through digital marketing before actual visitation.

The significance of the mediation result goes beyond simply demonstrating the presence of an indirect effect. It clarifies why Digital Tourism Marketing may fail to show a significant direct association with Travel Intention while still remaining strategically important. Digital marketing creates the opportunity for influence, but Flow Experience converts this external stimulation into an internal experience with greater behavioral relevance. This distinction is central to the theoretical contribution of the study.

Accordingly, the findings caution against evaluating digital tourism marketing effectiveness solely through direct-response logic. A campaign may not immediately generate Travel Intention, yet still play an important role if it successfully creates immersive engagement that contributes to behavioral consideration. Focusing only on the direct Digital Tourism Marketing → Travel Intention pathway would therefore obscure the more informative psychological mechanism revealed by the mediation model.

Overall Theoretical Interpretation and Implications

Taken together, the findings refine the application of S-O-R in digital tourism research. The contribution is not simply that the results “support S-O-R.” More specifically, the study demonstrates that Flow Experience provides the organismic

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

mechanism through which Digital Tourism Marketing becomes associated with Travel Intention in a pre-visit agritourism context.

The empirical story can be summarized as follows: digital visibility alone is insufficient; digital visibility must become psychological immersion before it acquires stronger behavioral relevance. This interpretation is consistent with an emerging body of international evidence on flow in virtual destination marketing, tourism-related short-video environments, influencer-mediated tourism, and destination-oriented short-video consumption (An et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2024; Esmaili & Ferdowsi, 2026; Hu et al., 2026).

The present study differs from these works in one important respect. Rather than focusing exclusively on virtual reality, influencers, or a specific short-video format, it examines Digital Tourism Marketing as a broader destination-marketing stimulus within an emerging agritourism context. This broadens the theoretical applicability of flow beyond particular technologies and complements recent evidence that digitally mediated destination stimuli can influence intention through internal experiential mechanisms (Huang et al., 2025; Lee et al., 2026).

A second theoretical contribution concerns the distinction between stimulus exposure and stimulus effectiveness. A digital stimulus should not be considered behaviorally effective merely because it reaches a prospective tourist. Its effectiveness depends on whether it generates an internal experiential state capable of moving the individual toward a behavioral response. This provides a more precise interpretation of the organism component of S-O-R and helps explain why direct stimulus–response relationships may sometimes appear weak or nonsignificant.

From a practical perspective, this means that Modoinding destination managers should not assess Digital Tourism Marketing exclusively through metrics such as impressions, views, likes, or reach. Such indicators measure exposure, but they do not necessarily capture the psychological process associated with Travel Intention. More relevant digital strategies are those capable of maintaining attention, encouraging deeper exploration, presenting experiential destination narratives, and creating a stronger sense of involvement with Modoinding before the actual trip occurs.

The overall implication is therefore not that “more digital marketing automatically creates more tourists,” but rather that the quality of the psychological experience generated by digital tourism communication matters. In the model examined here, Flow Experience explains how a destination moves from being merely visible on a screen to becoming a destination that prospective tourists begin to consider visiting.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how Digital Tourism Marketing is associated with Travel Intention among prospective tourists familiar with Modoinding Agritourism and tested

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Flow Experience as the mechanism linking digital destination communication with travel-related intention. The empirical pattern is clear: Digital Tourism Marketing was strongly associated with Flow Experience, Flow Experience was positively associated with Travel Intention, and the indirect Digital Tourism Marketing → Flow Experience → Travel Intention pathway was statistically supported. By contrast, the direct relationship between Digital Tourism Marketing and Travel Intention was not statistically supported. The findings therefore indicate that digital destination communication becomes more behaviorally relevant when it is accompanied by a deeper state of psychological immersion rather than through exposure alone.

Theoretically, the study refines the application of the Stimulus–Organism–Response framework in digital tourism by specifying Flow Experience as the organismic mechanism connecting the marketing stimulus with the behavioral-intention response during the pre-visit stage. The significant indirect pathway, together with the unsupported direct pathway, clarifies an important distinction between stimulus exposure and stimulus effectiveness: a destination can be visible in digital environments without that visibility translating directly into Travel Intention. Within the present cross-sectional model, Flow Experience provides a more precise explanation of how digital communication may be transformed into travel consideration, although the findings should not be interpreted as definitive evidence of temporal causality.

From a practical standpoint, Modoinding destination managers should move beyond evaluating Digital Tourism Marketing solely through reach, views, or other exposure metrics. Digital content should also be designed to sustain attention, encourage deeper involvement, and help prospective tourists imagine the destination experience in ways that facilitate Flow Experience. Because the dependent variable is Travel Intention, the study's conclusions concern prospective behavioral intention rather than actual tourist arrivals. Overall, the study suggests that the strategic value of digital destination marketing lies less in visibility alone than in its capacity to convert digital exposure into an immersive psychological experience that strengthens travel consideration.

REFERENCES

An, S., Choi, Y., & Lee, C.-K. (2021). Virtual travel experience and destination marketing: Effects of sense and information quality on flow and visit intention. Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 19, 100492. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2020.100492

Baber, R., & Baber, P. (2023). Influence of social media marketing efforts, e-reputation and destination image on intention to visit among tourists: Application of S-O-R model. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights, 6(5), 2298–2316. https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTI-06-2022-0270

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). Flow: The psychology of optimal experience. Harper & Row.

Esmaili, S., & Ferdowsi, S. (2026). Psychological pathways of flow experience and destination image in nature-based tourism: The role of social media influencers. Acta Psychologica, 262, 106177. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.106177

Fong, S. F., Ong, Y. X., Ating, R., & Besa, M. S. (2025). Exploring the intermediary effects of TikTok on Generation Z's visit intention. Journal of Vacation Marketing, 31(3), 736–752. https://doi.org/10.1177/13567667241229449

Gaffar, V., Tjahjono, B., Abdullah, T., & Sukmayadi, V. (2022). Like, tag and share: Bolstering social media marketing to improve intention to visit a nature-based tourism destination. Tourism Review, 77(2), 451–470. https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-05-2020-0215

Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2022). A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) (3rd ed.). SAGE.

Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. European Business Review, 31(1), 2–24. https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-11-2018-0203

Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015). A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 43, 115–135. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-014-0403-8

Hu, X. (Simon), Hu, C. (Aiway), & Cheng, P. (2026). Converting viewers to tourists: Gratifications from food-hunting short videos and their impacts on destination visit intentions. Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 40, 101086. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2026.101086

Huang, Y., Wang, Y., & Chen, J. (2025). The impacts of social media, gaming and non-gaming memorable tourism experiences on temporal destination revisit intention. SAGE Open, 15(4), 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440251395795

Kock, N. (2015). Common method bias in PLS-SEM: A full collinearity assessment approach. International Journal of e-Collaboration, 11(4), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.4018/ijec.2015100101

Lee, Y., Park, E. (O.), Lee, M., & Park, S. (2026). Virtual influencers in destination marketing: The role of flow experience in shaping visit intention. Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1177/10963480261491264

Liu, C., Jiang, M., & Muhammad, Z. A. (2024). The impact of TikTok short video factors on tourists' behavioral intention among Generation Z and Millennials: The role of flow experience. PLOS ONE, 19(12), e0315140. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0315140

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Mehrabian, A., & Russell, J. A. (1974). An approach to environmental psychology. MIT Press.

Ong, Y. X., Sun, T., & Ito, N. (2024). Understanding followers' processing and perceptions of social media influencer destination marketing: Differences between #Millennials and #GenZs. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 60, 194–207. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2024.07.003

Pangemanan, F. N., Londa, V. Y., Pangemanan, S. E., & Londa, J. W. (2024). Partisipasi masyarakat lokal dalam pelaksanaan program argowisata di Kabupaten Minahasa Selatan. Dinamika Governance: Jurnal Ilmu Administrasi Negara, 13(4), 368–374. https://doi.org/10.33005/jdg.v13i4.4329

Pinasang, L., Kainde, H. V. F., & Rindengan, Y. D. Y. (2025). Virtual Reality Agritourism di Kecamatan Modoinding [Virtual Reality Agritourism in Modoinding District]. Jurnal Teknik Informatika, 20(1), 51–58.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.