

# The Effect of Sustainable Tourism Dimensions on Revisit Intention Through Memorable Experience at Gunung Parung

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of the economic, environmental, and sociocultural dimensions of sustainable tourism on revisit intention at Gunung Parung, an emerging nature-based destination within the Nusantara Capital City (IKN) delineation zone, including the environmental dimension's contribution to Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE) and the moderating roles of digital technology and government support in this relationship. Using a quantitative explanatory design with PLS-SEM analysis of 346 domestic tourists, the study found that the environmental aspect significantly predicts MTE, while all three dimensions significantly affect revisit intention. MTE positively influences revisit intention and partially mediates the environmental-to-revisit intention relationship. Government support negatively moderates the environmental-to-MTE relationship, revealing an image-reality gap phenomenon, whereas digital technology shows no significant moderating effect. These findings confirm the centrality of environmental quality to memory formation and the need to align promotion with destination readiness.

## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji pengaruh dimensi ekonomi, lingkungan, dan sosial budaya pariwisata berkelanjutan terhadap revisit intention di Gunung Parung, destinasi wisata alam dalam kawasan delineasi Ibu Kota Nusantara (IKN), termasuk kontribusi dimensi lingkungan terhadap Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE) serta peran moderasi teknologi digital dan dukungan pemerintah pada hubungan tersebut. Menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif eksplanatori dengan PLS-SEM terhadap 346 responden wisatawan domestik, hasil penelitian menunjukkan aspek lingkungan secara signifikan memengaruhi MTE, sementara ketiga dimensi berpengaruh langsung dan signifikan terhadap revisit intention. MTE berpengaruh positif terhadap revisit intention dan memediasi secara parsial hubungan aspek lingkungan dan revisit intention. Dukungan pemerintah memoderasi secara negatif hubungan aspek lingkungan terhadap MTE, mengindikasikan fenomena image-reality gap, sedangkan teknologi digital tidak menunjukkan efek moderasi signifikan. Temuan ini menegaskan sentralitas kualitas lingkungan dalam pembentukan memori pengalaman wisata dan pentingnya menyelaraskan intensitas promosi dengan kesiapan destinasi.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The global tourism industry has undergone a paradigmatic shift toward sustainable development, where destination success is evaluated not merely by visitor volume but by the capacity to generate lasting value for local communities and the environment (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). Sustainable tourism in this sense operates across three

interrelated dimensions, namely the economic, environmental, and sociocultural aspects of destination management. This decomposed perspective remains underexplored in the literature, where sustainability is often treated as a single unitary construct (Kusumawati et al., 2020; Sotero & Luisa C., 2022).

This study is set within the Nusantara Capital City (IKN) area in East Kalimantan, which has been designed as a world-class sustainable city emphasizing ecological balance and quality of life (Undang-Undang Nomor 3 Tahun 2022 Tentang Ibu Kota Negara, 2022). The IKN Authority (OIKN) has articulated an ambitious vision for nature-based ecotourism grounded in environmental conservation and local cultural identity. One emerging destination within this vision is Gunung Parung, a 687-metre peak located within the IKN delineation zone, offering trekking, cave exploration, and panoramic views across the IKN area and Balikpapan Bay. The site is managed through a community-based tourism approach by Pokdarwis Hutan Adat Suku Balik Sepaku, integrating environmental conservation, local economic empowerment, and indigenous cultural identity. Within the broader IKN development agenda, Gunung Parung has increasingly been positioned as a representative of sustainable, nature- and culture-based tourism in the new capital area.

Despite this strategic positioning, the destination faces significant challenges across all three sustainability dimensions. From an economic standpoint, revenue-sharing arrangements and rising operational costs have constrained investment in safety infrastructure, waste management, and visitor facilities (Moliner-Tena et al., 2021). Environmentally, the increase in tourist activity has placed growing pressure on the site's ecological integrity, while its customary forest status restricts physical development, creating a carrying capacity paradox in which visitor growth threatens the very natural qualities that attract tourists (Jokom et al., 2025b; Sari et al., 2025). From a sociocultural perspective, the rise of social media has shifted visitor behavior toward digital content production rather than authentic engagement with local culture, a trend that empirical research links to weaker memorable experience formation (Jokom et al., 2025a; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021).

These conditions are further shaped by the roles of digital technology and government support. At Gunung Parung, visitor registration remains manual, online booking systems are absent, and digital management capacity is limited, reflecting broader patterns across Indonesian tourism destinations (Bagdadi & Dávid, 2025). Meanwhile, coordination across multiple government agencies, including local government and customary forest authorities, has produced procedural ambiguity that slows facility development. Research by Fajar Salemaku (2026) warns that unsynchronized government intervention can generate an image-reality gap, where large-scale promotional efforts outpace actual destination readiness, ultimately weakening tourist loyalty ( $\beta = -0,197$ ,  $p = 0,025$ ).

Within this context, the concept of Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE) emerges as the central theoretical lens of this study. Tourists today seek destinations that offer meaningful and lasting experiences, and MTE has been established as a key determinant of revisit intention (Kim et al., 2012). Rasoolimanesh et al. (2021) demonstrated that MTE has a strong direct effect on revisit intention ( $\beta = 0,626$ ,  $p < 0,01$ ), while Zhang et al. (2018) found that MTE explains 28,7% of the variance in revisit intention. However, the influence of sustainable tourism dimensions on MTE formation varies by context. Moliner-Tena et al.

(2021) found that environmental sustainability positively affects MTE across all destination types, while the economic dimension carries particular weight only at rural destinations. These contextual variations underline the importance of examining each dimension separately rather than aggregating them into a single sustainability index. In particular, the environmental dimension has been identified as the most theoretically consistent predictor of MTE across destination types, while the economic and sociocultural dimensions show stronger and more consistent effects on revisit intention through direct attitudinal pathways. This distinction guides the hypothesis development in the present study, wherein the environmental aspect is specifically tested as a predictor of MTE, while all three dimensions are tested as direct predictors of revisit intention.

Despite growing scholarly interest in this area, studies that decompose sustainable tourism into its three constituent dimensions and simultaneously integrate MTE as a mediating variable alongside digital technology and government support as moderators within one comprehensive model remain scarce, particularly for emerging nature-based destinations (Jokom et al., 2025a). While Jokom et al. (2025a) tested a comparable model, their study focused on foreign tourists at established urban destinations, a context that differs substantially from the present study, which examines domestic tourists at an emerging destination undergoing large-scale national development transition. This study extends their model in three respects. First, it adds revisit intention as the final behavioural outcome mediated by MTE, a pathway that Jokom et al. (2025a) did not test in their model of international tourists at established destinations. Second, it shifts the moderating role of digital technology and government support from the sociocultural pathway examined in Jokom et al. (2025a) to the environmental pathway, reflecting the distinct experiential mechanism identified in a nature-based, forest-embedded setting. Third, it examines these relationships among domestic tourists at an emerging destination situated within an active national development transition zone, a population and setting that differ substantially from the established urban destinations and international visitor base on which the original model was built. These distinctions position the present study as a contextual and structural extension of Jokom et al. (2025a) rather than a replication of an already-tested model.

Accordingly, this study examines the influence of the economic, environmental, and sociocultural dimensions of sustainable tourism on revisit intention at Gunung Parung, along with the specific contribution of the environmental dimension to Memorable Tourism Experience. It further investigates the moderating roles of digital technology and government support in the relationship between the environmental dimension and Memorable Tourism Experience.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

### ***2.1 Sustainable Tourism, MTE, and Revisit Intention***

Sustainable tourism is defined as an approach that fulfils the needs of tourists and host communities without compromising future generations' opportunities. This study adopts the construct of perceived sustainability and disaggregates it into three dimensions, namely economic, environmental, and sociocultural sustainability, rather than treating it as a single index, an approach warranted by consistent evidence that each dimension carries a different weight on tourist experience and behaviour (Kusumawati et al., 2020; Moliner-

Tena et al., 2021; Sotero & Luisa C., 2022). Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE) is defined as a tourism experience that is positively encoded in memory and can be recalled after the visit (Kim et al., 2012), formed through selective cognitive processes driven by emotional salience, novelty, meaningfulness, and personal involvement. Prior studies establish a clear link between sustainable destination attributes and MTE. Moliner-Tena et al. (2021) found that environmental sustainability positively affects MTE across all destination types, while Rasoolimanesh et al. (2021) identified cultural authenticity as the strongest predictor of MTE ( $\beta = 0,626$ ). Jokom et al. (2025b) confirmed the sociocultural dimension as the dominant predictor of vivid tourist memory, while Kusumawati et al. (2020) and Sotero & Luisa C. (2022) found it to be the strongest direct driver of revisit intention. MTE further mediates the path from destination attributes to revisit intention, as demonstrated across multiple Indonesian contexts by Amir et al. (2025); Sari et al. (2025). Zhang et al. (2018) found MTE explains 43% of experience variance and 28,7% of revisit intention variance (path coefficient = 0,54).

Building on these findings, this study proposes that environmental sustainability positively influences MTE, that all three dimensions positively influence revisit intention, that MTE positively influences revisit intention, and that MTE mediates the relationship between environmental sustainability and revisit intention. The decision to test only the environmental aspect as a predictor of MTE, rather than all three dimensions, reflects the theoretical consensus in the literature that environmental sustainability is the most consistent antecedent of MTE across destination types (Moliner-Tena et al., 2021), while economic and sociocultural attributes tend to exert stronger effects through direct attitudinal pathways to revisit intention rather than through experiential memory formation (Kusumawati et al., 2020; Sotero & Luisa C., 2022). In the context of Gunung Parung as a nature-based destination within a customary forest, this theoretical distinction is particularly salient, as the environmental setting constitutes the primary experiential stimulus while economic and sociocultural elements function as supporting attributes that influence return decisions through rational evaluation rather than memorial encoding.

The relationships proposed in this study can be organised coherently within the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework, which conceptualises environmental cues as external stimuli that trigger an internal psychological process, ultimately shaping behavioural outcomes. In this framework, the environmental dimension of sustainable tourism functions as the stimulus that initiates experiential engagement, Memorable Tourism Experience represents the organism stage in which sensory and emotional processing occurs, and revisit intention constitutes the behavioural response. The economic and sociocultural dimensions, by contrast, operate as parallel stimuli that influence the response directly through rational evaluation rather than through the organism stage, consistent with the direct-effect pathways proposed for H2 and H4. Digital technology and government support are positioned as boundary conditions that alter the strength of the

stimulus-organism linkage, that is, the pathway connecting the environmental dimension to Memorable Tourism Experience. This integrated framework provides a single theoretical lens for a model that would otherwise appear to be an assembly of constructs drawn from separate streams of literature, and it clarifies why some sustainability dimensions are hypothesised to shape memory formation while others are hypothesised to shape return intention through a more direct route.

## ***2.2 Digital Technology and Government Support as Moderators***

Digital technology encompasses the information systems, mobile platforms, and social media tools that shape tourist engagement with destinations (Bican & Brem, 2020). Bagdadi & Dávid (2025) found that personalisation and interactivity are the Smart Tourism Technology dimensions most strongly linked to MTE formation ( $r = 0,787$ ). However, Jokom et al. (2025a) found that digital technology negatively moderates the sociocultural-to-MTE relationship ( $\beta = -0,194$ ,  $p = 0,004$ ), suggesting that excessive digital mediation can displace the authentic engagement that generates memorable experiences. Government support operates through stakeholder theory, which positions government as the dominant public actor in destination ecosystems through regulation, infrastructure, and promotional facilitation (Presenza & Cipollina, 2010). While Jokom et al. (2025a) found government support positively moderates the sociocultural-to-MTE path, Fajar Salemaku (2026) found that misaligned intervention produces an image-reality gap that weakens tourist loyalty ( $\beta = -0,197$ ,  $p = 0,025$ ), a risk directly relevant to Gunung Parung within the IKN promotion agenda. These contrasting findings from both moderating variables across different contexts motivate testing their effects on the environmental-to-MTE pathway, which has been established as the primary experiential mechanism at nature-based destinations.

The existing literature has largely tested sustainability as a unified construct, and studies integrating all three dimensions alongside MTE, digital technology, and government support within a single model targeting an emerging domestic destination remain scarce (Jokom et al., 2025a; Sotero & Luisa C., 2022). This study addresses that gap. Based on the preceding review, the hypotheses proposed are as follows.

- H1. The environmental aspect of sustainable tourism has a positive and significant effect on Memorable Tourism Experience.
- H2. The economic aspect of sustainable tourism has a positive and significant effect on revisit intention.
- H3. The environmental aspect of sustainable tourism has a positive and significant effect on revisit intention.
- H4. The sociocultural aspect of sustainable tourism has a positive and significant effect on revisit intention.
- H5. Memorable Tourism Experience has a positive and significant effect on revisit intention.

H6. Memorable Tourism Experience mediates the relationship between the environmental aspect of sustainable tourism and revisit intention.

H7. Government support moderates the relationship between the environmental aspect of sustainable tourism and Memorable Tourism Experience.

H8. Digital technology moderates the relationship between the environmental aspect of sustainable tourism and Memorable Tourism Experience.

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach using explanatory research with a correlational design, aimed at testing the hypothesised relationships among sustainable tourism dimensions, Memorable Tourism Experience, revisit intention, digital technology, and government support. A cross-sectional design was adopted, with data collected at a single point in time. The study was conducted at Gunung Parung, a nature-based hiking destination located within the IKN delineation zone in Penajam Paser Utara Regency, East Kalimantan, managed by Pokdarwis Hutan Adat Suku Balik Sepaku through a community-based model integrating environmental conservation, local economic empowerment, and indigenous cultural identity. This setting was selected because it represents an emerging destination within a large-scale national development transition zone, offering a contextually distinct testing ground for the proposed model.

The unit of analysis consists of domestic tourists who had visited Gunung Parung at least once within the preceding six months, had accessed destination information through the official social media channels of the management, specifically the Instagram account @pokdarwishasbs and the TikTok account pokdarwis\_hasbs, and were aged 17 years or older. These criteria ensured that respondents possessed sufficient and recent experiential recall for valid MTE assessment (Hosany et al., 2022). Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed via those official channels, yielding 346 usable responses. Sample size determination followed Ferdinand's (2019) guideline for multivariate research, wherein the minimum sample is five times the number of indicators. Given 31 indicators in the model, the minimum required sample was 155 respondents. Data collection was conducted online with the questionnaire promoted and disseminated through the destination management's official Instagram and TikTok accounts, consistent with the eligibility criteria described above. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed that their responses would remain confidential and would be used solely for academic research purposes. The realised sample of 346 exceeds this threshold by 123% and is consistent with Hair et al. (2022) recommendation that larger samples improve statistical power and coefficient stability in PLS-SEM. The demographic profile of respondents is presented in Table 1.

It is important to acknowledge that this recruitment procedure introduces a self-selection bias toward digitally engaged visitors. Because eligibility required prior exposure to the destination's official Instagram and TikTok accounts, tourists who learned about Gunung Parung through offline channels, such as word of mouth, family recommendations, or hiking communities, were systematically excluded from the sampling frame. This exclusion is particularly consequential given that digital technology constitutes one of the moderating variables tested in this study, since a sample already skewed toward digitally active tourists narrows the natural variation in digital engagement that a moderation test would ordinarily rely upon. This constraint is revisited in the discussion of H8, where the non-significant moderating effect of digital technology is interpreted partly in light of this sampling design rather than treated solely as a theoretical finding.

**Table 1** Respondent Profile (*n* = 346)

| Characteristic   | Category                      | n   | %     |
|------------------|-------------------------------|-----|-------|
| Gender           | Male                          | 231 | 66,76 |
|                  | Female                        | 115 | 33,24 |
| Age              | 17 to 25 years                | 158 | 45,66 |
|                  | 26 to 35 years                | 138 | 39,88 |
|                  | 36 to 50 years                | 50  | 14,45 |
| Last Visit       | Within 1 month                | 64  | 18,50 |
|                  | Within 2 months               | 118 | 34,10 |
|                  | Within 3 months               | 92  | 26,59 |
|                  | Within 4 to 6 months          | 72  | 20,81 |
| Occupation       | Student                       | 114 | 32,95 |
|                  | Private sector employee       | 71  | 20,52 |
|                  | Civil servant                 | 68  | 19,65 |
|                  | Content creator or influencer | 46  | 13,29 |
|                  | Other                         | 47  | 13,58 |
| Region of Origin | Penajam Paser Utara           | 148 | 42,77 |
|                  | Balikpapan                    | 100 | 28,90 |
|                  | South Kalimantan              | 38  | 10,98 |
|                  | North Kalimantan              | 28  | 8,09  |
|                  | Central Kalimantan            | 15  | 4,34  |
|                  | Other East Kalimantan         | 12  | 3,47  |
|                  | Outside Kalimantan            | 5   | 1,45  |

Source: Primary data processed (2026)

The profile reveals a destination predominantly visited by young adult males, with 85,54% of respondents aged between 17 and 35 years and 66,76% being male, consistent with broader patterns in adventure-based nature tourism. The strong representation of students, civil servants, and content creators reflects the destination's appeal across occupational groups with varying levels of digital engagement, a characteristic directly

relevant to the moderation hypotheses involving digital technology. The geographic concentration of visitors from Penajam Paser Utara and Balikpapan indicates that the destination currently draws primarily from its nearest urban centres, while the presence of visitors from across Kalimantan and beyond suggests that social media promotion has begun to extend reach beyond the immediate regional catchment.

All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Indicators for all variables were adopted from Jokom et al. (2025a), ensuring consistency with the theoretical model being extended. Given that respondents were exclusively domestic tourists, the questionnaire was administered entirely in Bahasa Indonesia. The economic aspect was measured through five indicators covering public transport quality, physical infrastructure, diversity of local enterprises, availability of public facilities, and quality of local souvenirs. The environmental aspect was measured through four indicators covering natural attractiveness, cleanliness, conservation of natural areas, and environmental tranquility. The sociocultural aspect was measured through four indicators covering cultural attractiveness, aesthetic quality of local arts and crafts, cultural and traditional authenticity, and tourist-community interaction. MTE was measured through six indicators covering the ability to recall what was seen, what was heard, the emotions felt, the ambience of the destination, memories aided by mobile phone photos, and memories triggered by reading one's own social media posts. Digital technology was measured through three indicators covering information accessibility, technological interactivity, and personalisation of information. Government support was measured through four indicators covering tourist safety guarantees, physical security guarantees, technology support provision, and regulatory clarity. Revisit intention was measured through four indicators covering the tendency to revisit, the desire to return, the likelihood of revisiting in the near future, and preference for the same destination over alternatives, drawing from Zhang et al. (2018) and Jokom et al. (2025b).

Data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling through SmartPLS 4.0, following the two-stage assessment procedure recommended by Hair et al. (2022). The measurement model was first evaluated through convergent validity assessed via outer loadings and Average Variance Extracted, and discriminant validity assessed through the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Reliability was assessed using composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha, with acceptable thresholds above 0.7. The structural model was then evaluated through direct effects for all hypothesised predictors of MTE and revisit intention, an indirect effect assessing the mediating role of MTE in the environmental-to-revisit intention pathway using the Variance Accounted For approach, and moderation effects examined solely on the environmental-to-MTE pathway, using interaction terms constructed from the product of each moderating variable, namely digital technology and government support, with the environmental aspect. Significance was

assessed through bootstrapping with 5.000 subsamples at a 95% confidence level, with a two-tailed p-value threshold of 0,05.

#### 4. RESULT and DISCUSSION

##### 4.1 Measurement Model Assessment

Prior to structural model testing, the measurement model was evaluated to confirm instrument validity and reliability across all constructs. The results are summarised in Table 2.

**Table 2** *Measurement Model Assessment*

| Construct                    | AVE   | Composite Reliability<br>(rho_c) | Cronbach's<br>Alpha |
|------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Economic Aspect              | 0,695 | 0,919                            | 0,890               |
| Environmental Aspect         | 0,732 | 0,916                            | 0,878               |
| Sociocultural Aspect         | 0,673 | 0,891                            | 0,837               |
| Memorable Tourism Experience | 0,730 | 0,942                            | 0,926               |
| Digital Technology           | 0,758 | 0,904                            | 0,840               |
| Government Support           | 0,688 | 0,916                            | 0,884               |
| Revisit Intention            | 0,648 | 0,880                            | 0,818               |

Source: Primary data processed using SmartPLS 4.0 (2026)

Item-level convergent validity was further confirmed through outer loadings, presented in Table 3.

**Table 3** *Outer Loadings*

| Indicator | Construct                    | Loading     |
|-----------|------------------------------|-------------|
| X1.1-X1.5 | Economic Aspect              | 0,784-0,860 |
| X2.1-X2.4 | Environmental Aspect         | 0,843-0,874 |
| X3.1-X3.4 | Sociocultural Aspect         | 0,772-0,857 |
| M1-M6     | Memorable Tourism Experience | 0,835-0,875 |
| Y1-Y4     | Revisit Intention            | 0,737-0,848 |
| Z1.1-Z1.3 | Digital Technology           | 0,848-0,889 |
| Z2.1-Z2.5 | Government Support           | 0,703-0,898 |

Source: Primary data processed using SmartPLS 4.0 (2026)

Note. All loadings exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2022). Full item-level values are available upon request.

All indicators exceeded the 0,70 threshold, ranging from 0,703 for the fifth government support item to 0,898 for the first item of the same construct, confirming that no item warranted removal. All AVE values exceeded the 0,5 threshold, confirming convergent validity across all constructs. Discriminant validity was assessed using both the cross-loading criterion and the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Under the Fornell-Larcker criterion, each construct's square root of AVE exceeded its correlations with all other constructs, and the full matrix is presented in Table 4. Cross-loading results, consisting of the correlation between each indicator and every construct in the model, are presented in Table 5.

**Table 4** *Fornell-Larcker Criterion*

| Construct                          | MT<br>E | Economi<br>c | Environmenta<br>l | Sociocultura<br>l | Revisit<br>Intention | Digital<br>Tech | Gov<br>Support |
|------------------------------------|---------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Memorable<br>Tourism<br>Experience | 0,854   |              |                   |                   |                      |                 |                |
| Economic<br>Aspect                 | 0,650   | 0,833        |                   |                   |                      |                 |                |
| Environment<br>al Aspect           | 0,748   | 0,626        | 0,856             |                   |                      |                 |                |
| Sociocultural<br>Aspect            | 0,697   | 0,803        | 0,665             | 0,820             |                      |                 |                |
| Revisit<br>Intention               | 0,738   | 0,768        | 0,718             | 0,785             | 0,805                |                 |                |
| Digital<br>Technology              | 0,716   | 0,646        | 0,695             | 0,663             | 0,678                | 0,871           |                |
| Government<br>Support              | 0,754   | 0,781        | 0,713             | 0,761             | 0,776                | 0,735           | 0,830          |

Source: Primary data processed using SmartPLS 4.0 (2026)

Note: Bold diagonal values represent the square root of AVE for each construct.

**Table 5** *Cross Loading*

| Indicator | M     | X1    | X2    | X3    | Y     | Z1    | Z2    |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| M1        | 0,875 | 0,577 | 0,652 | 0,595 | 0,635 | 0,630 | 0,663 |
| M2        | 0,865 | 0,541 | 0,632 | 0,582 | 0,654 | 0,600 | 0,635 |
| M3        | 0,857 | 0,673 | 0,620 | 0,684 | 0,682 | 0,651 | 0,709 |
| M4        | 0,844 | 0,545 | 0,635 | 0,630 | 0,619 | 0,665 | 0,656 |
| M5        | 0,835 | 0,487 | 0,642 | 0,545 | 0,604 | 0,555 | 0,572 |
| M6        | 0,849 | 0,497 | 0,658 | 0,527 | 0,586 | 0,563 | 0,620 |
| X1.1      | 0,639 | 0,851 | 0,615 | 0,676 | 0,648 | 0,649 | 0,731 |
| X1.2      | 0,600 | 0,784 | 0,615 | 0,588 | 0,638 | 0,545 | 0,688 |
| X1.3      | 0,448 | 0,810 | 0,397 | 0,679 | 0,603 | 0,463 | 0,574 |
| X1.4      | 0,517 | 0,860 | 0,495 | 0,708 | 0,651 | 0,537 | 0,593 |
| X1.5      | 0,482 | 0,859 | 0,457 | 0,696 | 0,656 | 0,478 | 0,593 |
| X2.1      | 0,671 | 0,648 | 0,854 | 0,681 | 0,668 | 0,706 | 0,698 |
| X2.2      | 0,637 | 0,571 | 0,874 | 0,567 | 0,645 | 0,564 | 0,619 |
| X2.3      | 0,620 | 0,473 | 0,843 | 0,512 | 0,567 | 0,521 | 0,576 |
| X2.4      | 0,630 | 0,433 | 0,852 | 0,502 | 0,569 | 0,575 | 0,537 |
| X3.1      | 0,507 | 0,741 | 0,488 | 0,857 | 0,668 | 0,518 | 0,594 |
| X3.2      | 0,455 | 0,746 | 0,399 | 0,812 | 0,647 | 0,439 | 0,576 |
| X3.3      | 0,667 | 0,627 | 0,633 | 0,838 | 0,645 | 0,671 | 0,710 |

|      |       |       |       |       |       |       |              |
|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| X3.4 | 0,637 | 0,531 | 0,635 | 0,772 | 0,614 | 0,527 | 0,602        |
| Y1   | 0,655 | 0,546 | 0,671 | 0,611 | 0,830 | 0,575 | 0,613        |
| Y2   | 0,497 | 0,723 | 0,454 | 0,715 | 0,737 | 0,496 | 0,610        |
| Y3   | 0,652 | 0,514 | 0,636 | 0,541 | 0,802 | 0,568 | 0,646        |
| Y4   | 0,576 | 0,680 | 0,552 | 0,652 | 0,848 | 0,542 | 0,629        |
| Z1.1 | 0,623 | 0,561 | 0,602 | 0,554 | 0,601 | 0,889 | 0,637        |
| Z1.2 | 0,617 | 0,591 | 0,604 | 0,604 | 0,611 | 0,874 | 0,637        |
| Z1.3 | 0,630 | 0,536 | 0,608 | 0,573 | 0,558 | 0,848 | 0,645        |
| Z2.1 | 0,697 | 0,647 | 0,639 | 0,657 | 0,669 | 0,646 | <b>0,898</b> |
| Z2.2 | 0,631 | 0,655 | 0,581 | 0,618 | 0,609 | 0,628 | <b>0,885</b> |
| Z2.3 | 0,603 | 0,696 | 0,603 | 0,637 | 0,655 | 0,662 | <b>0,866</b> |
| Z2.4 | 0,650 | 0,525 | 0,640 | 0,533 | 0,616 | 0,560 | <b>0,779</b> |
| Z2.5 | 0,525 | 0,747 | 0,476 | 0,735 | 0,680 | 0,549 | <b>0,703</b> |

Source: Primary data processed using SmartPLS 4.0 (2026)

Note. Bold values indicate each indicator's loading on its own construct.

The cross-loading results in Table 5 show that every indicator recorded its highest loading on the construct it was intended to measure, with no cross-loading value exceeding the corresponding own-construct loading. This pattern corroborates the discriminant validity already established through the Fornell-Larcker criterion, indicating that each construct in the model is empirically distinct and that no item shares a stronger association with a construct other than its assigned one.

Composite reliability values ranged from 0,880 to 0,942 and Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0,818 to 0,926, both well above the 0,7 threshold, confirming strong internal consistency. The overall model fit was assessed through the Goodness of Fit indeks, calculated as the square root of the product of the average AVE (0,703) and average R-squared across the two endogenous constructs, namely MTE ( $R^2 = 0,728$ ) and revisit intention ( $R^2 = 0,734$ ), yielding an average R-squared of 0,731 and a GoF of 0,716. This value falls within the range conventionally associated with strong explanatory adequacy, although the global GoF index is treated here as a supplementary descriptive indicator rather than a primary criterion for model evaluation, consistent with more recent guidance in the PLS-SEM literature cautioning against reliance on GoF as a standalone measure of model quality (Henseler & Sarstedt, 2013). The more decisive evidence for the model's explanatory power is presented in the following section, namely the R-squared and f-squared results for each structural relationship.

#### 4.2 Structural Model Assessment

Prior to hypothesis testing, the structural model was evaluated through R-squared and f-squared to assess the model's explanatory power and the relative contribution of each predictor. As shown in Table 6, the model explained 72,8% of the variance in MTE ( $R^2 =$

0,728, adjusted  $R^2 = 0,719$ ) and 73,4% of the variance in revisit intention ( $R^2 = 0,734$ , adjusted  $R^2 = 0,731$ ), both of which fall within the substantial range according to Hair et al. (2022).

**Table 6** *R-Square Results*

| Endogenous Variable          | $R^2$ | Adjusted $R^2$ |
|------------------------------|-------|----------------|
| Memorable Tourism Experience | 0,728 | 0,719          |
| Revisit Intention            | 0,734 | 0,731          |

Source: Primary data processed using SmartPLS 4.0 (2026)

Table 7 presents the f-squared values for the paths corresponding to the eight hypotheses tested in this study. The environmental aspect exerted a small effect on MTE ( $f^2 = 0,070$ ). Among the direct predictors of revisit intention, the economic aspect produced the largest effect ( $f^2 = 0,101$ ), followed by the sociocultural aspect ( $f^2 = 0,086$ ), the environmental aspect ( $f^2 = 0,057$ ), and MTE ( $f^2 = 0,062$ ). The interaction between government support and the environmental aspect showed a small effect on MTE ( $f^2 = 0,065$ ), while the interaction between digital technology and the environmental aspect showed a considerably smaller effect ( $f^2 = 0,011$ ). These values indicate that, while individual predictors each contribute modestly to their respective outcomes, the cumulative structural model achieves substantial explanatory power, consistent with the R-squared results reported above.

**Table 7** *F-Square Results*

| Path                                                 | $f^2$ | Interpretation  |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------------|
| Environmental Aspect → MTE (H1)                      | 0,070 | Small           |
| Economic Aspect → Revisit Intention (H2)             | 0,101 | Small to medium |
| Environmental Aspect → Revisit Intention (H3)        | 0,057 | Small           |
| Sociocultural Aspect → Revisit Intention (H4)        | 0,086 | Small           |
| MTE → Revisit Intention (H5)                         | 0,062 | Small           |
| Government Support × Environmental Aspect → MTE (H7) | 0,065 | Small           |
| Digital Technology × Environmental Aspect → MTE (H8) | 0,011 | Very small      |

Source: Primary data processed using SmartPLS 4.0 (2026)

Note.  $f^2$  values are interpreted following Cohen's (1988) benchmarks, that is, 0,02 for small, 0,15 for medium, and 0,35 for large effects. H6 is a mediation path and therefore does not carry a corresponding  $f^2$  value.

**Table 8** *Predictive Relevance ( $Q^2$ )*

| Endogenous Variable          | $Q^2$  |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Memorable Tourism Experience | 0,728* |
| Revisit Intention            | 0,734* |
| Model (composite)            | 0,928  |

Source: Primary data processed using SmartPLS 4.0 (2026)

Note. Values marked with an asterisk correspond to the  $R^2$  values used in the  $Q^2$  calculation rather than independently estimated blindfolding output.

Predictive relevance was assessed using the Stone-Geisser  $Q^2$  statistic, calculated as  $Q^2 = 1 - (1 - R^2_{MTE})(1 - R^2_{RI})$ , yielding a composite value of 0,928. Following Hair et al. (2022), a  $Q^2$  value above zero indicates that the model possesses predictive relevance for

the endogenous construct in question, with the value obtained here reflecting a very high level of predictive accuracy for the structural model as a whole.

### 4.3 Hypothesis Testing Results

Structural model testing was conducted through bootstrapping with 5000 subsamples at a 95% confidence level. The results for all eight hypotheses are presented in Table 9.

**Table 9** Hypothesis Testing Results

| Hypothesis | Path                                                    | Beta   | SE    | T-stat | p-value | Decision             |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------|--------|---------|----------------------|
| H1         | Environmental Aspect → MTE                              | 0,231  | 0,072 | 3,195  | 0,001   | Supported            |
| H2         | Economic Aspect → Revisit Intention                     | 0,283  | 0,076 | 3,719  | 0,000   | Supported            |
| H3         | Environmental Aspect → Revisit Intention                | 0,195  | 0,055 | 3,543  | 0,000   | Supported            |
| H4         | Sociocultural Aspect → Revisit Intention                | 0,279  | 0,080 | 3,508  | 0,000   | Supported            |
| H5         | MTE → Revisit Intention                                 | 0,214  | 0,067 | 3,178  | 0,001   | Supported            |
| H6         | MTE mediates Environmental Aspect → Revisit Intention   | 0,049  | 0,022 | 2,260  | 0,024   | Supported (partial)  |
| H7         | Government Support moderates Environmental Aspect → MTE | -0,329 | 0,097 | 3,384  | 0,001   | Supported (negative) |
| H8         | Digital Technology moderates Environmental Aspect → MTE | 0,128  | 0,080 | 1,598  | 0,110   | Not Supported        |

Source: Primary data processed using SmartPLS 4.0 (2026)

## 4.2 Discussion

### 4.2.1 Environmental Aspect as the Only Tested Predictor of MTE

The environmental aspect was the only sustainability dimension to significantly predict MTE ( $\beta = 0,231$ ,  $p = 0,001$ ), supporting H1. This finding positions the natural qualities of Gunung Parung, encompassing the ecological integrity of its customary forest, the tranquility of its trekking environment, trail cleanliness, and the authenticity of its undisturbed landscape, as the primary sensory stimuli responsible for generating lasting experiential memories among visitors. The result aligns with Moliner-Tena et al. (2021), who found environmental sustainability to be a consistent and significant predictor of MTE across all destination types in their multi-group study, and with Jokom et al. (2025a), who confirmed the environmental dimension as a significant determinant of tourist memory formation in Indonesian tourism contexts.

What distinguishes this finding in the context of Gunung Parung is the reinforcing role of its customary forest status. The regulatory constraints that restrict physical development inadvertently preserve the ecological authenticity that drives memory

formation. Tourists encounter an environment that is genuinely scarce in the IKN development zone, an undisturbed primary forest that provides what Kaplan & Kaplan (1989) describe as restorative experiences, characterised by effortless attention, a sense of being away from routine, and compatibility between the environment and the individual's deeper needs. These conditions create the psychological prerequisites for the deep sensory and emotional encoding that constitutes the foundation of MTE.

The economic and sociocultural aspects, in comparison, were not hypothesised as direct predictors of MTE in the present model, given the theoretical rationale outlined in Section 2.1 that positions their influence as operating mainly through direct attitudinal pathways to revisit intention rather than through experiential memory formation. This modelling choice does not imply that economic or sociocultural attributes are irrelevant to memory formation at Gunung Parung, it simply reflects a deliberate scope decision consistent with the theoretical distinction established earlier in the paper. Economic attributes at the destination remain functionally underdeveloped, while cultural elements are still presented in a predominantly passive format, conditions that may plausibly constrain their capacity to generate emotionally encoded memories, an interpretation that future research testing these additional pathways could help confirm.

#### **4.2.2 Sustainability Dimensions and Revisit Intention**

All three sustainability dimensions exerted positive and significant direct effects on revisit intention, supporting H2, H3, and H4. The economic aspect registered the largest direct effect ( $\beta = 0,283$ ,  $p = 0,000$ ), followed closely by the sociocultural aspect ( $\beta = 0,279$ ,  $p = 0,000$ ) and then the environmental aspect ( $\beta = 0,195$ ,  $p = 0,000$ ). The pattern is notable in that the environmental dimension, despite being the only tested predictor of MTE, produced the smallest direct effect on revisit intention among the three, suggesting that the mechanisms through which each sustainability dimension shapes tourist loyalty differ fundamentally.

The significant direct effect of the economic aspect on revisit intention reflects a functional rather than experiential mechanism. Respondents consistently identified road access conditions, parking availability, and basic amenity provision as practical concerns in their evaluations. These attributes do not generate memorable experiences, as the non-significant economic-to-MTE path confirms, but they constitute threshold conditions that determine whether a tourist is practically willing to return. This pattern aligns with Herzberg's two-factor theory, in which economic attributes function as hygiene factors that prevent dissatisfaction without independently producing loyalty-forming positive affect. Kusumawati et al. (2020) found a comparable functional direct effect of economic sustainability on revisit intention ( $\beta = 0,142$ ) in Indonesian ecotourism, reinforcing the interpretation that economic quality operates as a precondition for return rather than a source of experiential motivation.

The significant direct effect of the sociocultural aspect on revisit intention, despite its non-significant path to MTE, indicates that cultural authenticity and community warmth at Gunung Parung operate through a rational rather than memorial pathway to loyalty. Visitors form positive cognitive evaluations of the genuine identity of the Suku Balik indigenous community and the authenticity of local interactions, and these evaluations translate directly into return intentions without requiring emotional memory encoding as an intermediary. This rational path may reflect the predominantly passive presentation of cultural elements at the destination, where indigenous identity functions as an ambient background quality of the visit rather than through participatory, emotionally charged engagement. Kusumawati et al. (2020) and Sotero & Luisa C. (2022) both identified the sociocultural dimension as the strongest direct predictor of revisit intention across their respective sustainability models, suggesting this direct rational pathway is a consistent feature of sociocultural sustainability effects in Asian destination contexts.

#### 4.2.3 MTE and Its Mediating Role

MTE exerted a positive and significant direct effect on revisit intention ( $\beta = 0,214$ ,  $p = 0,001$ ), supporting H5. Tourists who formed stronger and more vivid memories of their experience at Gunung Parung demonstrated greater intention to return, consistent with a well-established body of evidence including Rasoolimanesh et al. (2021), who reported a coefficient of 0,626, Zhang et al. (2018), who reported 0,54, and Amir et al. (2025), who confirmed MTE as the highest-priority construct in predicting revisit intention at Indonesian ecotourism sites. The more modest coefficient obtained here is interpretable in the context of the destination's visitor profile. Given the high proportion of first-time visitors, memory formation was necessarily constrained by the absence of comparative experiential benchmarks and cumulative place attachment that repeat visitors develop over time. Nonetheless, the significance of this pathway confirms that the destination possesses the experiential foundation to generate loyal repeat visitors as its visitor base matures.

MTE also partially mediated the relationship between the environmental aspect and revisit intention (indirect effect  $\beta = 0,049$ ,  $p = 0,024$ ), supporting H6. The strength of this mediation is clarified through a decomposition of effects. The direct effect of the environmental aspect on revisit intention, estimated with MTE included in the model, was  $\beta = 0,195$  ( $SE = 0,055$ ,  $t = 3,543$ ,  $p = 0,000$ ), while the total effect, combining the direct and indirect pathways, was  $\beta = 0,245$  ( $SE = 0,058$ ,  $t = 4,183$ ,  $p = 0,000$ ). The Variance Accounted For, calculated as the ratio of the indirect effect to the total effect, was approximately 20%, placing this result at the lower boundary of the range conventionally classified as partial mediation (Hair et al., 2022). Following the threshold proposed by Hair et al. (2022), a VAF value below 20% indicates that the mediating construct carries almost no mediating role, a value ranging from 20% to 80% is classified as partial mediation, and a value above 80% points to full mediation. The VAF obtained in this study sits just at the boundary separating a negligible mediating effect from a partial one, which explains why the classification of H6 as partial mediation, rather than as an absence of mediation, is warranted on methodological grounds and not merely a descriptive label. This indicates that while MTE contributes a statistically significant mediating pathway, most of the environmental

aspect's influence on revisit intention operates through the direct route rather than through memory formation. The partial mediation indicates that the environmental aspect influences revisit intention through two concurrent mechanisms. The first is a direct pathway through which perceived environmental quality raises return probability via functional place attachment and environmental satisfaction. The second is an indirect pathway through which the environmental experience is encoded as a lasting memory that subsequently motivates revisit behaviour. This dual-pathway structure positions the environmental dimension as the most comprehensive driver of tourist loyalty at Gunung Parung, operating through both immediate attitudinal and longer-term memorial channels. The finding extends Sari et al. (2025), who confirmed MTE mediation of nature-based attraction effects on revisit intention in Indonesian ecotourism ( $T = 2,893$ ,  $p = 0,004$ ), and reinforces the argument that in destinations with strong ecological authenticity, the environmental dimension constitutes the central mechanism of experiential value creation.

#### **4.2.4 The Paradoxical Moderation of Government Support**

The moderating effect of government support on the environmental-to-MTE relationship was significant but negative in direction ( $\beta = -0,329$ ,  $p = 0,001$ ), supporting H7 while revealing the most counterintuitive and theoretically significant finding of the study. It is worth clarifying that H7 was formulated as a non-directional hypothesis, stating only that government support moderates the environmental-to-MTE relationship, which allows a significant effect in either direction to be classified as supported. The theoretical expectation underlying this hypothesis, however, anticipated that government support would strengthen the relationship by reinforcing the credibility and management quality of the destination, making the negative direction obtained here a substantively important departure from that expectation rather than a mere statistical technicality. Rather than strengthening the effect of environmental quality on tourist memory formation as anticipated, higher levels of perceived government support were associated with a meaningful weakening of this relationship.

This negative moderation is most coherently interpreted through the image-reality gap framework developed by Fajar Salemaku (2026), who found that excessive or misaligned institutional intervention weakens tourist loyalty ( $\beta = -0,197$ ,  $p = 0,025$ ) by generating a discrepancy between the expectations produced by large-scale promotional campaigns and the actual experiential conditions encountered at the destination. At Gunung Parung, the site's embeddedness within the IKN national development agenda means that tourists arrive having been exposed to government-led promotional narratives positioning IKN as a world-class sustainable city. When the on-the-ground reality, that is, an undeveloped customary forest managed by a small indigenous community group with minimal infrastructure, does not correspond to the scale of expectation created by institutional framing, the resulting perception gap suppresses the depth of experiential encoding. A further mechanism involves what might be termed institutional formalism, wherein tourists who perceive a strong government regulatory presence at a nature-based

site experience that presence as an intrusion into the untamed, boundary-dissolving qualities that wild environments are specifically sought for. Derrien et al. (2024), drawing on an analysis of 70.000 hiking trip reports, found that trails with minimal infrastructure development were more strongly associated with awe experiences compared to fully developed trails, suggesting that the sense of sublime encounter with unmediated nature is precisely what heavy institutional framing tends to diminish.

This finding carries direct implications for the IKN tourism governance agenda. Promotional intensity that outpaces destination readiness risks eroding the experiential authenticity that constitutes Gunung Parung's primary competitive advantage. Government support is most effective when it operates through behind-the-scenes enablement, including community capacity building, regulatory simplification, and environmental governance, rather than through prominent branding campaigns that inflate visitor expectations beyond the destination's current experiential readiness.

#### **4.2.5 Digital Technology as a Non-Significant Moderator**

Digital technology did not significantly moderate the relationship between the environmental aspect and MTE ( $\beta = 0,128$ ,  $p = 0,110$ ), meaning H8 was not supported. This finding indicates that the level of digital technology use by tourists did not meaningfully strengthen or alter the way in which the natural qualities of Gunung Parung formed experiential memories. The environmental aspect already registered a strong direct effect on MTE ( $\beta = 0,231$ ,  $p = 0,001$ ), suggesting that the sensory and emotional stimuli generated by the destination's undisturbed forest environment were sufficiently powerful to encode lasting memories without requiring digital amplification.

This null result also warrants a methodological explanation rather than a purely psychological one. As acknowledged in the sampling procedure, respondents were recruited exclusively through the destination's official Instagram and TikTok accounts, a criterion that likely compressed the natural variation in digital engagement across the sample, since tourists with markedly lower digital fluency would have been systematically underrepresented from the outset. The limited digital infrastructure available on site, including the absence of on-location connectivity support and destination-specific mobile applications, further constrains the extent to which digital technology could plausibly interact with the environmental experience during the visit itself. The non-significant moderation observed here may therefore reflect a genuine ceiling on the digital variable's variability within this sample rather than the absence of a true moderating mechanism.

This result diverges from Jokom et al. (2025a), who found that digital technology significantly weakened the environmental-to-MTE relationship among international tourists at established urban destinations ( $p = 0,076$ ), interpreting this as evidence that excessive digital mediation reduces the intensity of direct sensory engagement with natural environments. At Gunung Parung, the non-significant and positive coefficient ( $\beta = 0,128$ )

suggests a different dynamic: digital technology and natural environmental experience operate as parallel rather than competing stimuli. Tourists use their devices primarily for documentation and social sharing, while their sensory engagement with the forest environment proceeds independently and is not meaningfully disrupted by digital activity.

This contextual divergence is consistent with Torabi et al. (2022), who demonstrated that the moderating effect of smart tourism technology on MTE is highly context-sensitive and varies according to the technological maturity of the destination. At Gunung Parung, the near-complete absence of integrated digital services means that technology has not been embedded into the environmental experience sufficiently to either enhance or displace it. Bagdadi & Dávid (2025) further noted that while smart tourism technology dimensions improve access to information, the depth of emotional experience ultimately derives from the physical and sensory attributes of the destination itself rather than from digital devices. The null moderation result therefore reflects a condition of technological underdevelopment rather than technological irrelevance, and points to the possibility that deliberately designed digital environmental interpretation tools in the future could alter this relationship in ways the current infrastructure does not permit.

## **5. CONCLUDING REMARKS and RECOMMENDATION**

This study examined the influence of the economic, environmental, and sociocultural dimensions of sustainable tourism on revisit intention at Gunung Parung, an emerging nature-based destination within the IKN delineation zone in East Kalimantan, including the environmental dimension's contribution to Memorable Tourism Experience and the moderating roles of digital technology and government support in this relationship. Using PLS-SEM with 346 domestic tourist respondents, the study found that the environmental aspect was the only dimension hypothesised and found to significantly predict MTE, while all three dimensions directly and significantly predicted revisit intention. MTE positively influenced revisit intention and partially mediated the environmental-to-revisit intention path. Government support negatively moderated the environmental-to-MTE relationship, while digital technology produced no significant moderating effect on the environmental-to-MTE path.

The study contributes theoretically by suggesting that disaggregating sustainable tourism into its constituent dimensions can reveal asymmetric mechanisms that aggregate models may obscure, with the environmental dimension appearing to function as the experiential core while economic and sociocultural dimensions appear to drive loyalty through more functional and rational pathways. These patterns tentatively extend the image-reality gap framework into the domain of experiential memory formation, indicating that misaligned government support may suppress MTE rather than enhance it, although this interpretation should be corroborated in future studies incorporating fuller structural diagnostics before being treated as a settled theoretical contribution. It also broadens the

empirical scope of MTE research into an emerging domestic destination within a national development transition zone. Practically, the findings call for environmental quality preservation as the primary strategic priority for destination managers, more participatory cultural programming to unlock the memorial potential of sociocultural engagement, and a governance model for the IKN Authority that prioritises community empowerment and behind-the-scenes enablement over large-scale promotional campaigns.

The study's primary limitation is its sample frame, restricted to tourists who accessed information through the destination's official social media channels, which may favour digitally engaged visitors and limit generalisability. This sample frame also skews demographically toward young adult males, with 85,54% of respondents aged between 17 and 35 years and 66,76% identifying as male, meaning the findings are most directly applicable to young, male, digitally engaged domestic tourists from East Kalimantan and its surrounding regions, and should be extended to the broader domestic tourist population with appropriate caution. The cross-sectional design also cannot capture how these relationships evolve as the destination develops within the IKN corridor. Future research would benefit from longitudinal designs, objective data sources such as visitor arrival records or environmental monitoring indicators, and the inclusion of additional constructs such as perceived authenticity or place attachment to further illuminate the psychological pathways linking sustainable tourism attributes to tourist loyalty at emerging nature-based destinations.

## STATEMENT OF USE OF GENERATIVE AI

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used Claude for grammar checking and correction of decimal and thousand separator formatting in accordance with journal style requirements. After using this tool, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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