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# An Extended TPB Model of eWOM in Night-Time Tourism

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**Abstract**
This study aims to explore and analyze the factors that influence tourists' electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) intentions in the context of night tourism - an increasingly emerging tourism activity in Can Tho City, Vietnam. Drawing on an extended Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) framework, the research incorporates not only the three core constructs of TPB (attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control) but also three additional variables: destination image, memorable tourism experience, and tourist satisfaction. Data were obtained from 246 domestic and international tourists through a structured questionnaire, using a combination of convenience and snowball sampling techniques to ensure diversity in demographic and travel characteristics. The study employs Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) and analyzes the data using SmartPLS 4.0. The findings reveal that all six examined factors have significant positive effects on tourists' intentions to share eWOM about night tourism. Among the examined constructs, Subjective norms emerged as the strongest predictor of eWOM ($\beta = 0.243$), followed by perceived behavioural control ($\beta = 0.242$). Additionally, memorable tourism experience and tourist satisfaction play an important mediating role in these relationships, suggesting that enhancing the overall quality of the tourism experience can amplify positive digital word-of-mouth behaviors. These results provide both theoretical and practical contributions. They extend the application of TPB to the underexplored context of night tourism and offer actionable insights for destination managers and insist on designing marketing strategies, improving service quality, and leveraging digital platforms to promote sustainable growth of night tourism in Can Tho City.

**Key Words:** eWOM; night-time tourism; extended TPB; destination image; memorable tourism experience; tourist satisfaction; PLS-SEM.

**JEL Classification:** L8, M31, M37

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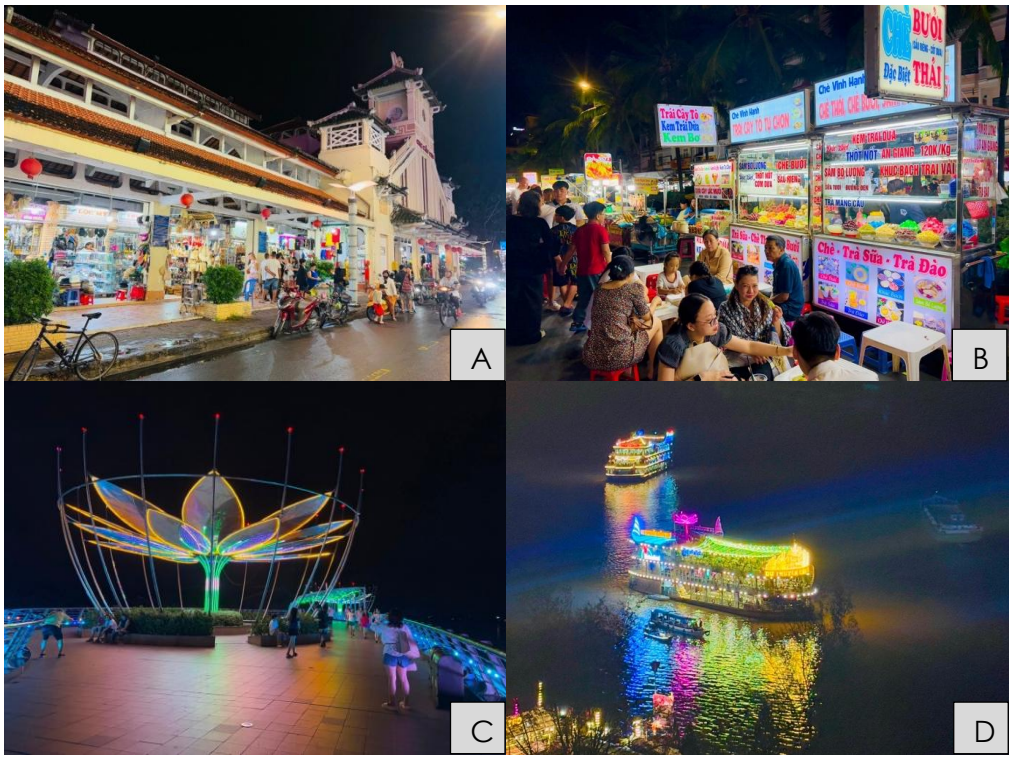
## 1. Introduction

Tourism has long been recognized as a key economic sector in many countries due to its significant contribution to socio-economic growth. According to the (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2024), the tourism industry contributed 9.1% of global GDP (equivalent to USD 9.90 trillion) and created 27 million new jobs in 2023, reflecting respective increases of 23.2% and 9.1% compared to 2022. These figures underscore the growing role of tourism in the modern economy. In addition to daytime tourism activities, the night-time economy is emerging as an essential component of urban economies, contributing significantly to the GDP of many major cities (Truong et al., 2023). Several countries have prioritized the development of the night-time economy through models such as night markets, night-time heritage tours, performing arts, and street food. In Vietnam, attention to the night-time economy has been evident through Decision No. 1129/QD-TTg and the "Pilot Models for Developing Night

Tourism Products" project issued by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism in July 2023 (Goverment of Vietnam, 2020).

Can Tho — the commercial and administrative centre of the Mekong Delta and one of Vietnam's six centrally governed cities — has recently initiated a pilot programme to develop the night-time economy in Ninh Kiều District. The programme aims to diversify tourism products, lengthen visitor stays and increase tourist expenditure by building on the city's existing strengths in river-based and ecological tourism; yet despite these ambitions, the experiential quality of night tourism remains poorly understood from the tourist's perspective. As a riverine metropolis, Can Tho's nocturnal offer blends markets, riverside dining and local cultural performances (Figure 1), a configuration that closely resembles the small-scale, culturally intensive nightscapes emerging in secondary Asian cities such as Chiang Rai (Thailand), Melaka (Malaysia) and Yogyakarta (Indonesia). These destinations share two important features: growing digital connectivity that facilitates immediate sharing, and governance efforts (safety, sanitation, informal market regulation) that shape both access and experience. Comparative work across Asia indicates that river- or heritage-linked night economies frequently depend on community-led participation, high levels of social visibility and digital storytelling — conditions that amplify the role of social norms and online advocacy in shaping post-visit behaviour (Jo et al., 2022). Taken together, Can Tho represents a timely and internationally relevant case for investigating how nocturnal experience design and contextual governance interact to produce electronic word-of-mouth.

Figure 1. **Some scenes of night tourism activities in Can Tho City: A. Night shopping at the Ancient Market; B. Night-time street food experiences; C. Pedestrian street and Love Bridge; D. Night river cruise**




Source: Author

Furthermore, Can Tho's approach to governing night tourism reflects broader regional patterns across emerging urban destinations. Similar to China, the city of Can Tho seeks to balance cultural authenticity with investments in digital infrastructure, inclusive mobility, and lighting-based placemaking

strategies (Xiong et al., 2024). This convergence positions Can Tho not as an outlier but as a representative case of the evolving Asian night-time economy, where cultural consumption, digital engagement, and community-based marketplaces intersect. Hence, the empirical findings from Can Tho contribute to international debates on how social, attitudinal, and behavioral-control mechanisms operate in hedonic night-time service environments across culturally diverse urban contexts.

In intangible service sectors such as tourism, customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth communication play a particularly important role. As tourists cannot try out services in advance, they often rely on recommendations from family, friends, or online communities to make decisions. According to Sun and Qu (2011) and Wang et al. (2017), word-of-mouth is considered a valuable source of information that helps tourists evaluate service quality and shapes their behavioral intentions. Nguyen and Romaniuk (2014) also emphasized that word-of-mouth has a stronger persuasive effect than traditional advertising. While word-of-mouth in the past mostly occurred through face-to-face interactions, the development of technology and digital transformation has shifted tourist behavior toward eWOM. According to the International Telecommunication Union (2023), the global internet penetration rate increased from 16% in 2005 to 67% in 2023, equivalent to 5.36 billion users. This digital context has made it easier for tourists to share their experiences, emotions, and destination reviews via social media platforms, review apps, blogs, and digital channels.

A review of the domestic and international literature reveals that both night tourism and eWOM have received increasing academic attention. Numerous studies have been conducted in diverse contexts - ranging from China, South Korea, the UK, Spain, and several African nations to Vietnam - under both normal and pandemic conditions, utilizing various methodological approaches. Some of these studies have made strong theoretical contributions by applying models such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), or integrated models. However, based on a systematic literature review and the authors' observations, several research gaps remain. In particular, no empirical study to date has investigated tourists' eWOM intention in the Mekong Delta's tourism center (Can Tho City) - especially within the specific context of night tourism, an emerging yet underexplored segment. Furthermore, few studies have simultaneously considered the perspectives of both domestic and international tourists. This study, therefore, aims to fill these gaps.

Building upon the TPB proposed by Ajzen (1991), this research expands the model by incorporating three additional constructs: destination image (DI), memorable tourism experience (MTE), and tourist satisfaction (TS). The study aims to clarify the relationships between tourists' cognitive perceptions and their eWOM behavior in the context of urban night tourism. From a practical perspective, the study offers useful insights for policymakers and tourism stakeholders to better understand tourists' sharing behavior in night tourism, supporting strategy development and service enhancement. Theoretically, it extends the TPB framework to the under-researched context of night tourism in developing countries like Vietnam.

The remainder of the article is organised as follows. Section 2 reviews the literature and develops hypotheses based on an extended TPB. Section 3 outlines the methodology, including sampling, measures, and PLS-SEM procedures. Section 4 presents the empirical results. Section 5 discusses the findings in light of international evidence and theoretical implications. Section 6 concludes with contributions, limitations, and directions for future research

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Night-time economy: International evidence

Globally, the night-time economy has evolved from a peripheral topic into a central field of inquiry that integrates perspectives on urban regeneration, cultural consumption, and tourist experience.

Recent measurement-oriented research has developed multi-dimensional vitality indices of the night-time economy (Lin et al., 2021), while Chinese spatial-analytic studies show how infrastructure and resource distribution underpin night tourism (Zhang et al., 2023). In the European/Asia-Pacific context, comparative analyses of nightlife recovery further illustrate how nocturnal tourism experience is increasingly central to destination strategy. In advanced European destinations such as the United Kingdom and Spain, the night-time economy is conceptualized as a multi-sensory and affective space, where lighting, sound, and atmosphere collectively construct memorable visitor experiences (Christou et al., 2022). These cities have institutionalized night-time governance through lighting masterplans, cultural programming, and public safety initiatives, transforming nocturnal landscapes into intentionally curated environments that evoke emotions and deepen tourist engagement.

In East Asia, the night-time economy serves simultaneously as an economic driver and a cultural policy instrument. Evidence from South Korea—particularly the heritage night tour at Gyeongbok Palace—demonstrates that affective arousal and sensory immersion exert a strong influence on MTEs, which in turn enhance revisit and eWOM intentions (Kong et al., 2024). This finding illustrates that the emotional staging of experiences through lighting design, storytelling, and performance can be directly transformed into post-visit advocacy behaviors. The Korean model thus positions MTE as a mediating mechanism linking aesthetic stimulation to behavioral outcomes, reflecting an experience-dominant logic in tourism consumption.

Conversely, research in China approaches the night-time economy from a spatial–policy perspective, emphasizing infrastructure, spatial distribution, and governance as critical foundations. Multi-city analyses reveal that the suitability of night-time resources, transportation accessibility, safety, and digital infrastructure collectively determine the spatial configuration and sustainability of night tourism (Xiong et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2023). Empirical results indicate that infrastructural and policy factors exert strong direct effects on visitor flows and expenditure, whereas affective experiences play a mediating role, influencing satisfaction and eWOM. Accordingly, the Chinese model manifests two parallel causal pathways: infrastructure → accessibility → participation and experience → satisfaction → eWOM.

In Southeast Asia, night tourism remains in its formative stage. Studies from Indonesia (Awaloedin et al., 2023) and Sa Pa, Vietnam (Thi et al., 2023) identify safety, cultural authenticity, and policy support as foundational enablers. In these emerging contexts, institutional capacity continues to shape visitor evaluations more strongly than experience design. For Can Tho City, these comparative insights suggest that sustainable night-tourism development requires a synergistic integration of structural and experiential dimensions: robust infrastructure and governance akin to China's model to ensure operational viability, coupled with affective and culturally embedded experience designsimilar to South Korea's approach to foster MTE and eWOM. Within this framework, the night-time economy can be conceptualized as a hybrid construct—functioning both as a contextual antecedent (e.g., destination image, infrastructure, landscape) and as an experiential mediator (MTE, satisfaction) that ultimately shapes tourists' eWOM intentions (Figure 2).

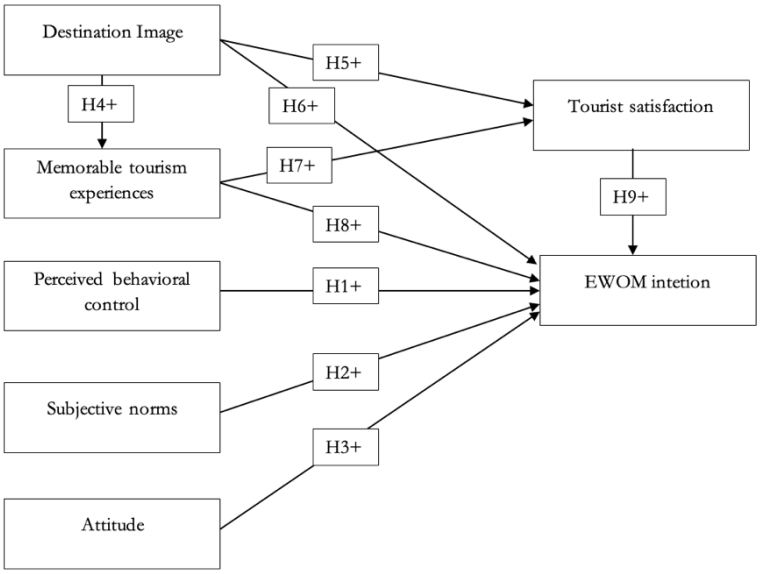
The following field-specific evidence on night-time economy and nocturnal behaviours therefore complements the above international review and directly motivates the operationalisation of DI, perceived behavioral control (PBC) and MTE in our extended TPB model. Field-specific evidence indicates that the night-time economy must be treated as a distinct research domain because its spatial, governance and sensory attributes shape visitor behaviour in ways that differ from daytime tourism (Christou et al., 2022). Empirical work using urban mobility and mobile-phone data demonstrates that post-dark activity patterns, programming density and illumination interventions materially alter tourist flows and opportunity structures for social signalling online (Santiago-Iglesias et al., 2024).

City-level studies from China further reveal that infrastructure, safety and digital connectivity are primary antecedents that determine both participation rates and the conditions under which tourists can easily produce and disseminate eWOM (e.g., via high-visibility check-ins) (Litvin et al., 2008).

Where direct night-time economy–eWOM studies are sparse, research on community-based night tourism shows how local governance, market formats and perceived safety co-shape experience quality and sharing propensity—making community approval a plausible pathway into subjective norms in TPB models (Thi et al., 2023).

Finally, recent investigations into online sharing behaviour emphasise that eWOM antecedents differ by context: platform affordances, audience visibility and situational arousal moderate whether memorable nocturnal experiences translate into digital advocacy (Meenakshy et al., 2024).

Figure 2. **Research model**




Source: The authors synthesized insights from the TPB and previous empirical studies, 2025

## 2.2 Theoretical background: An extended TPB model

The Theory of Planned Behavior posits that behavioural intention is the immediate precursor to actual behaviour and is determined by three core constructs: attitude (AT) toward the behaviour, subjective norms (SN), and PBC (Ajzen, 1991). Recent bibliometric research illustrates that TPB continues to be the most widely applied behavioural model across tourism and consumption contexts, with over 14000 articles published between 1985 and 2024 (Naskar & Lindahl, 2025). Empirical applications in tourism settings confirm that AT, SN and PBC significantly predict intention to act, though explanatory power varies by context (Esfandiar & Hadinejad, 2025). For example, in travel-intention studies, SN often exerts stronger influence than PBC in collectivist societies, while PBC gains weight under high-control conditions (Rozenkowska, 2023). However, critical reviews suggest that TPB may insufficiently account for affective, situational and sensory dimensions prominent in tourism settings (Esfandiar & Hadinejad, 2025). Thus, while TPB offers a robust foundational framework, its extension with emotive and contextual constructs is necessary for fully explaining tourist behavioural intentions in complex environments.

In calibrating the hypotheses narrative to the extended TPB, each added construct is explicitly tethered to the pathways of the TPB framework. First, DI is positioned as an antecedent that shapes AT, SN and PBC by influencing cognitive and affective evaluations of the destination environment (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). We therefore assert that DI leads into the TPB component system rather than acting in isolation. Second, MTE and TS are cast as mediators. Specifically, DI influences MTE, which then fosters TS, and both mediators influence eWOM intention. We expect complementary

mediation, in which MTE and TS jointly transmit the effect of DI into eWOM, but may also allow for partial competitive effects—i.e., MTE could affect eWOM directly and via TS, so the total effect of DI on eWOM comprises direct, indirect (via MTE), and sequential indirect (DI → MTE → TS → eWOM) components. For hypothesis testing in PLS-SEM we predict that the indirect effects through MTE → TS will be stronger in night-time tourism contexts where affective and experiential drivers are heightened, while direct TPB pathways (AT, SN, PBC → eWOM) may be comparatively attenuated by environmental constraints (mobility, lighting, safety). This calibration ensures each hypothesis is mapped to a clear TPB pathway (antecedent, mediator, outcome) and anticipates decomposition of effects (total vs. specific indirect) in the structural model.

### 2.3 The relationships between perceived behavioral control, subjective norm, attitude, and eWOM intention

Ajzen (1991) developed the TPB, not merely as a predictive tool, but as a framework to better understand human behavior. This theory proposes that behavioral intention is influenced by three key components: AT toward the behavior, SN, and PBC. A review of online academic databases reveals a substantial number of studies in the social sciences that have adopted the TPB model, with most empirical findings supporting the significant influence of these three components on behavioral intentions (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). Furthermore, a study by Ajina (2019) conducted in Saudi Arabia demonstrated that AT, SN, and PBC positively affect eWOM intention. Similarly, the findings of Fu et al. (2015) provided further empirical support for these relationships. Notably, several recent studies published in the journals you mentioned (and related outlets) have confirmed that the core components of the TPB—PBC, SN, and AT—serve as critical antecedents of eWOM intention. For instance, Phan et al. (2020) demonstrated that both AT and SN significantly enhance eWOM intention in social commerce environments. Similarly, Matiukaite et al. (2024) examined the drivers of eWOM and found that trust, perceived ease of sharing (a dimension of PBC), and social signaling strongly influence individuals' willingness to share information online.

While prior research across general tourism and online marketing contexts consistently supports the positive effects of AT, SN, and PBC on eWOM (Ajina, 2019; Matiukaite et al., 2024; Phan et al., 2020), existing evidence remains largely confined to daytime or conventional tourism settings. In night-time tourism, where mobility, lighting, and safety concerns may amplify tourists' sense of control, it is unclear whether SN continue to dominate behavioral intentions or whether PBC exerts a stronger influence. This comparative uncertainty justifies re-examining the relative strength of TPB components in night-time environments such as Can Tho City. Based on the TPB framework and the results of prior studies, the following three hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Perceived behavioral control positively influences tourists' eWOM intention regarding night tourism.

H2: Subjective norms positively influence tourists' eWOM intention regarding night tourism.

H3: Attitude positively influences tourists' eWOM intention regarding night tourism.

### 2.4 The relationships between destination image, memorable tourism experience, tourist satisfaction, and eWOM intention

Destination image DI plays a crucial role in tourism marketing strategies, as it not only communicates the value of tourism services but also contributes to brand positioning and enhances the competitiveness of destinations (Al-Ansi & Han, 2019). The destination image reflects various elements, including natural landscapes, service quality, social environment, and the attitudes of local residents (Al-Ansi & Han, 2019), as well as infrastructure, transportation, and tourist amenities (Tinsley & Lynch, 2001). Numerous studies have demonstrated the relationship between DI and tourists' experiences. Kim

and Ritchie (2014) confirmed that specific attributes of DI significantly influence the formation of MTE. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2018), Rasoolimanesh et al. (2021) and Lojo et al. (2020) found that a positive destination image increases the likelihood of deep and meaningful tourist experiences. In particular, contemporary research has demonstrated that DI plays a pivotal role in shaping tourists' MTEs (Rahmawati et al., 2024). According to the systematic review conducted by Shariffuddin et al. (2023), the synergistic relationship among DI, tourism experience, and loyalty constitutes a source of sustainable competitive advantage for tourism destinations.

Moreover, a favorable image helps shape tourists' expectations, which in turn affects satisfaction levels depending on whether the actual experience meets or exceeds those expectations (Goyal & Taneja, 2025; Khuong & Ha, 2014; Sanz-Blas & Buzova, 2016). Besides, a meta-analytic study on culinary tourism identified DI, satisfaction, and quality as central themes in contemporary tourism research (Shekhar, 2022). This finding reinforces the argument that DI not only exerts indirect effects through experiential pathways but also has a direct influence on TS.

In addition, in the context of digital transformation, the rise of electronic media—particularly eWOM—has fundamentally altered tourist behaviour (Nusair et al., 2019). DI is understood to influence tourists' evaluations and behavioural intentions (Alrawadieh et al., 2019). Particularly, an attractive and well-perceived DI can encourage tourists to engage in positive eWOM behaviors (Hervas-Cortina et al., 2024), a relationship that has been validated in recent empirical studies (Goyal & Taneja, 2025; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021).

Although international research has firmly established that a positive destination image enhances memorable experiences, satisfaction, and eWOM intentions (Rahmawati et al., 2024; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021; Shariffuddin et al., 2023), these relationships have been examined primarily in daytime or leisure-based tourism. What remains underexplored is whether night-time destinations—characterized by artificial lighting, ambient soundscapes, and perceived safety dynamics—intensify or weaken these relationships. Consequently, testing the DI–MTE–TS–eWOM nexus in nocturnal contexts contributes to clarifying the affective and cognitive boundaries of destination image effects. We therefore hypothesise:

H4: Destination image positively influences tourists' memorable tourism experiences regarding night tourism.

H5: Destination image positively influences tourists' satisfaction regarding night tourism.

H6: Destination image positively influences tourists' eWOM intention regarding night tourism.

### 2.5 The interrelationship between memorable tourism experience, tourist satisfaction, and eWOM intention

Tourist experience has long been considered a core element in determining the success of a destination and remains central to many academic investigations in the field of tourism (Bravo et al., 2019; Christou & Farmaki, 2019; Lee et al., 2019). However, not all experiences are retained in memory; only a few are categorized as MTEs. Kim et al. (2012) defined MTEs as tourism events that are selectively remembered, positively recalled, and actively retained after the trip. Various factors shape memorable experiences, including hygiene and safety conditions (Alrawadieh et al., 2019; Vikrant & Srivastava, 2021), service quality (Suhartanto et al., 2020), price fairness (Pappas, 2019), and social interactions (Zatori et al., 2018). In the tourism literature, satisfaction is often used as an indicator reflecting the quality of the experience (Abubakar & Mavondo, 2014; Su, 2004). Numerous studies have confirmed the positive relationship between MTEs and TS (Almohaimmeed, 2020; Nasution et al., 2023; Özmen & Ögel, 2020), with Kankhuni and Ngwira (2022) specifically emphasizing the influence of MTEs on overall destination satisfaction. Furthermore, in the digital era, the role of electronic communication—particularly eWOM has become increasingly vital in the tourism industry (Nusair et al., 2019). Beyond satisfaction, memorable experiences have also been shown to influence sharing behavior, particularly eWOM. Studies by Adongo

et al. (2015), Kim and Ritchie (2014), and Tsai (2016) indicate that emotionally rich, personalized experiences can strongly motivate tourists to share positive content on social media. Semrad and Rivera (2018) further confirmed that tourists who have memorable experiences tend to recommend destinations through digital platforms. Drawing upon the tourism consumption system theory, Rasoolimanesh et al. (2021) provided empirical evidence for the relationship between MTEs and eWOM intention.

Previous studies have confirmed the positive effects of memorable experiences on satisfaction and eWOM across various tourism domains (Kim & Ritchie, 2014; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021; Tsai, 2016). However, most evidence derives from heritage, resort, or festival contexts that emphasize daytime or fully lit environments. The extent to which emotional arousal and sensory immersion at night—involving lighting, crowd dynamics, and safety perception—enhance satisfaction and eWOM remains empirically uncertain. Hence, investigating these relationships in night tourism may reveal unique experiential pathways distinct from traditional settings. Based on this theoretical foundation, the final hypothesis is proposed:

H7: Memorable tourism experiences positively influence tourists' satisfaction regarding night tourism in Can Tho.

H8: Memorable tourism experiences positively influence tourists' eWOM intention regarding night tourism in Can Tho.

### 2.6 The relationship between Tourist Satisfaction and eWOM intention

Customer satisfaction results from the comparison between customers' expectations and their actual experiences (Wang et al., 2017). According to Phi et al. (2022), customer satisfaction is defined as the extent to which customers feel pleased with a provider's ability to meet their needs and expectations. In the tourism industry, tourist satisfaction plays a vital role not only as a marketing tool to attract new visitors but also as a basis for planning which products and services should be offered in the tourism market (Hau & Omar, 2014). Today, satisfied customers do not solely engage in traditional word-of-mouth through face-to-face communication; with the growing popularity of social media, they increasingly engage in eWOM by posting and sharing their consumption experiences, as well as by seeking information about new or unfamiliar products and services. Yang (2017) suggested that satisfaction serves as a key antecedent of the intention to engage in positive eWOM on digital platforms. The more satisfied customers are with a product or service, the more likely they are to become credible and proactive sources of positive information on platforms such as social media or the Internet (Lii & Lee, 2012; Young & Hyunjoo, 2012). The findings of Virglerová et al. (2022) indicate that satisfied tourists are more likely to post positive reviews, share experiential photos, and engage in or support digital interactions more actively. Previous empirical studies have confirmed that TS significantly influences their eWOM intention (Ahn et al., 2020).

Extant research in mainstream tourism consistently confirms that satisfied visitors are more likely to engage in positive eWOM (Ahn et al., 2020; Goyal & Taneja, 2025; Yang, 2017). Yet, the strength and stability of this relationship under night-time tourism conditions—where service accessibility, lighting comfort, and perceived crowd safety vary considerably—remain untested. Understanding whether satisfaction translates equally into digital advocacy in nocturnal settings is therefore essential for refining service strategies and eWOM models specific to urban night tourism. Based on this reasoning, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H9: Tourist satisfaction positively influences tourists' eWOM intention regarding night tourism.

### 2.7 The mediating role of memorable tourism experience and tourist satisfaction

Destination image is not only a visual and emotional representation of a place, but also serves as a cognitive–affective antecedent that shapes tourists' readiness to explore and their openness to engage,

thereby influencing overall satisfaction (Kim et al., 2012; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). When tourists perceive a destination positively, they are more likely to evaluate their tourism experience favorably and report greater satisfaction with the trip (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Lee et al., 2005). Hosany and Gilbert (2010) further emphasized that DI leads to satisfaction only when it stimulates emotionally rich and memorable experiences. The mediating role of MTE in this relationship has been confirmed in several studies (Chen & Rahman, 2018; Kuppelwieser et al., 2022). Previous studies have also revealed that a well-communicated destination image shapes both the quality and the memorability of tourists' experiences, thereby enhancing their satisfaction and word-of-mouth intentions (Phan et al., 2020; Virglerová et al., 2022). In addition, a positive DI reflected in elements such as safety, vibrant night-time atmosphere, and distinctive local culture - can serve as a catalyst for emotionally intense and long-lasting experiences, which in turn increase tourists' likelihood of sharing via digital platforms (Chen & Rahman, 2018; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). Satisfaction also plays a key mediating role between DI and eWOM behavior (Goyal & Taneja, 2025; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; Prayag, 2009). Finally, MTE are not only emotional outcomes but also strong motivators for sharing behavior (Kim et al., 2012). Studies have shown that emotionally rich experiences enhance satisfaction, which in turn promotes eWOM behavior (Nasution et al., 2023; Özmen & Ögel, 2020; Salah et al., 2023).

Extant research has consistently confirmed the mediating roles of MTE and TS between DI and behavioral outcomes such as revisit or eWOM intentions (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021; Salah et al., 2023). These findings, however, derive largely from daytime leisure or resort contexts, where tourists' sensory and emotional engagement occurs in open, brightly lit environments. In night-time tourism, by contrast, the dominance of artificial lighting, dynamic social atmospheres, and fluctuating safety perceptions may reshape how destination image translates into emotional experiences and satisfaction. It remains unclear whether MTE and TS operate as sequential mediators in the same manner under nocturnal conditions, where cognitive control and affective immersion interact differently. Testing these pathways in urban night tourism therefore helps bridge an important theoretical gap and contextualizes how affective mechanisms reinforce digital word-of-mouth behavior after dark. Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

H10: Destination image indirectly influences tourist satisfaction through memorable tourism experiences.

H11: Destination image influences eWOM intention through memorable tourism experiences.

H12: Destination image influences eWOM intention through tourist satisfaction.

H13: Memorable tourism experiences influence eWOM intention through tourist satisfaction.

## 3. Methods

This study employed a structured questionnaire to collect data from tourists, designed based on validated measurement scales from previous studies and adapted to the specific context of night tourism in Can Tho City. The three constructs from the TPB: PBC, SN, and AT were adopted from Fu et al. (2015). The construct of MTE was measured using four items adapted from Kong et al. (2024); DI was assessed using nine items from Millar et al. (2017); TS included three items from Chen et al. (2020) and two items from Hussain et al. (2023); and eWOM intention was measured using three items from Lai et al. (2021) and one item from Zhang et al. (2021).

Following the development of the initial questionnaire draft, the research team conducted expert interviews with seven specialists to evaluate content validity. A pilot survey was then conducted with 50 tourists to assess preliminary reliability. The final questionnaire was refined and designed as a bilingual version (Vietnamese - English), utilizing a five-point Likert scale. To ensure linguistic accuracy and conceptual equivalence, translation and back-translation were performed by two bilingual experts. The questionnaire was subsequently reviewed by a TESOL (Teaching Speakers of Other Languages)

lecturer to verify clarity, cultural appropriateness, and cross-linguistic consistency before its formal administration (Table 1).

Table 1. **Constructs and variables in this study**

| Constructs | Variables | Source |
|---|---|---|
| **Perceived behavioral control (PBC)** | **PBC1:** Posting my experiences about night tourism in Can Tho on social media is entirely under my control. | Fu et al. (2015) |
| | **PBC2:** I am capable of posting online comments about night tourism in Can Tho on social media effectively. | |
| | **PBC3:** I have sufficient resources, knowledge, and ability to post online comments about night tourism in Can Tho on social media. | |
| **Subjective norms (SN)** | **SN1:** People who are important to me support my posting of night tourism experiences in Can Tho on social media. | Fu et al. (2015) |
| | **SN2:** Individuals who influence my behavior want me to post my night tourism experiences in Can Tho on social media. | |
| | **SN3:** People whose opinions I value would like me to share my night tourism experiences in Can Tho on social media. | |
| **Attitude (AT)** | **AT1:** Not sharing my night tourism experiences on social media is bad – good. | Fu et al. (2015) |
| | **AT2:** Posting my night tourism experiences on social media is harmful – beneficial. | |
| | **AT3:** Posting negative information about night tourism products or services is appropriate – inappropriate. | |
| | **AT4:** Writing negative comments about my night tourism experiences is pleasant – unpleasant. | |
| **Destination image (DI)** | **DI1:** The night-time cuisine in Can Tho is appealing. | Millar et al. (2017) |
| | **DI2:** The night-time cultural attractions in Can Tho (e.g., night markets, walking streets) are interesting. | |
| | **DI3:** The climate at night-time tourist sites in Can Tho is pleasant. | |
| | **DI4:** The infrastructure supporting night tourism in Can Tho is adequate. | |
| | **DI5:** Local residents in Can Tho are friendly. | |
| | **DI6:** Night tourism in Can Tho ensures personal safety for visitors. | |
| | **DI7:** The costs incurred by tourists are reasonable compared to the value they receive from night tourism experiences in Can Tho. | |
| | **DI8:** The night-time tourism environment in Can Tho is hygienic and clean. | |
| | **DI9:** Nightlife and entertainment in Can Tho are excellent. | |
| **Memorable tourism experience (MTE)** | **MTE1:** I experienced many new things during my night tourism in Can Tho. | Kong et al. (2024) |
| | **MTE2:** Night tourism in Can Tho provided me with a meaningful experience. | |
| | **MTE3:** I felt energized after participating in night tourism in Can Tho. | |
| | **MTE4:** I genuinely enjoyed the activities during my night tourism experience in Can Tho. | |
| | **TS1:** I truly enjoyed my night tourism trip in Can Tho. | |

| Constructs | Variables | Source |
|---|---|---|
| Tourist satisfaction (TS) | **TS2:** Night tourism in Can Tho was an enjoyable experience. | Hussain et al. (2023) |
| | **TS3:** Overall, I felt delighted when participating in night tourism in Can Tho. | Chen et al. (2020) |
| | **TS4:** Overall, I am satisfied with the night tourism experience in Can Tho. | |
| | **TS5:** I believe that taking part in night tourism in Can Tho was a wise decision. | |
| Electronic word of mouth intention (EWOM) | **EWOM1:** I will share my night tourism experience in Can Tho on social media. | Lai et al. (2021) |
| | **EWOM2:** I will share my night tourism experience in Can Tho on social media if requested or advised by friends. | |
| | **EWOM3:** I will post my comments about night tourism in Can Tho on social media during and after my trip. | |
| | **EWOM4:** I will encourage my friends to visit night tourism attractions in Can Tho through social media. | Zhang et al. (2021) |

Source: Compiled by the author

A combination of convenience sampling and snowball sampling techniques was used to administer the survey at night tourism sites in Ninh Kieu and Cai Rang districts between March 10 and April 20, 2025. The data collection was conducted by trained student collaborators who received standardized instruction on survey administration and research ethics. All participants responded voluntarily, were informed of the study's purpose, and provided written informed consent; they were also free to withdraw at any point. Personal identifiers were not recorded, and raw data were anonymized and stored on a secure, password-protected server to preserve confidentiality and comply with institutional data-management policies.

A total of 250 questionnaires were collected. After data screening, four responses were excluded due to missing essential information; therefore, 246 valid responses were retained for analysis, representing a response rate of 98.4%, which meets the minimum sample size recommended by Hoyle (1995) for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

A total of 250 questionnaires were collected. Following data screening, four responses were removed due to missing essential information, resulting in 246 valid responses (response rate = 98.4%), exceeding the minimum threshold for PLS-SEM recommended by Hoyle (1995). Responses were examined for inattentive patterns (straight-lining, time < 1/3 median) and multivariate outliers via Mahalanobis distance ($p < 0.001$), ensuring data quality (Hair et al., 2017). Missing data (< 2%) were imputed using the expectation–maximization method (Little & Rubin, 2019). Procedural remedies were implemented to minimize common method variance, including randomized item ordering, neutral wording, and anonymity (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Statistical assessment using full collinearity VIFs in SmartPLS 4.0 revealed all values < 3.3, indicating the absence of common method bias (Kock, 2021). A marker variable technique was also applied using an unrelated construct ("digital information usefulness"), confirming non-significant shared variance with endogenous constructs (Lindell & Whitney, 2001). Finally, PLS-SEM was employed using SmartPLS 4.0 to analyze the data, as it is appropriate for models with exploratory and predictive objectives.

Table 2 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the 246 respondents. Female tourists accounted for the majority (64.2%), while males represented 35.8%. Most participants were between 18 and 29 years old (41.5%), followed by those aged 30–41 (33.3%). The majority had attained higher education, with 27.2% holding college degrees and 26.8% university degrees. In terms of occupation, business and trade workers (30.5%) and employees or laborers (30.1%) were the most common groups,

followed by government officers (14.6%) and students (13.8%). Overall, the sample comprised predominantly young, well-educated tourists with diverse occupational backgrounds, reflecting the active and economically dynamic visitor profile of the study area.

Table 2. **Demographic characteristics of tourists (n = 246)**

| Demographic characteristics | | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Male | 88 | 35.8 |
| | Female | 158 | 64.2 |
| **Age** | From 18 to 29 | 102 | 41.5 |
| | From 30 to 41 | 82 | 33.3 |
| | From 42 to 53 | 48 | 19.5 |
| | Above 53 | 14 | 5.7 |
| **Education** | High school or below | 37 | 15.0 |
| | Vocational diploma | 45 | 18.3 |
| | College | 67 | 27.2 |
| | University | 66 | 26.8 |
| | Postgraduate | 31 | 12.6 |
| **Occupation** | Students | 34 | 13.8 |
| | Government officers | 36 | 14.6 |
| | Employees or laborers | 74 | 30.1 |
| | Business and trade workers | 75 | 30.5 |
| | Others | 27 | 11.0 |

Source: Results of data analysis, 2025

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Measurement model assessment

Based on the results presented in Table 3, according to Hair et al. (2017), the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is considered acceptable when it falls within the range of 0.60 to 0.90., most of the Cronbach's Alpha values for each construct exceed the threshold of 0.7, with the lowest value being 0.844. This indicates that the internal consistency reliability of the constructs is satisfactory according to established theoretical standards. Additionally, in this study, the authors employed composite reliability (CR) to assess internal consistency more rigorously. The results show that all constructs have CR values greater than 0.8, indicating a high level of internal consistency reliability. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct should exceed 0.5 to demonstrate acceptable convergent validity. As shown in Table 3, all constructs have AVE values above 0.5, thus confirming that the constructs exhibit good convergent validity.

Table 3. **Interpretation of observed variables in the research model**

| Constructs | Variables | Outer Loading | CA | CR | AVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Perceived behavioral control (PBC)** | **PBC1** | 0.899 | 0.877 | 0.924 | 0.802 |
| | **PBC2** | 0.906 | | | |
| | **PBC3** | 0.882 | | | |
| **Subjective norms (SN)** | **SN1** | 0.899 | 0.900 | 0.938 | 0.834 |
| | **SN2** | 0.916 | | | |

| Constructs | Variables | Outer Loading | CA | CR | AVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **SN3** | 0.924 | | | |
| **Attitude (AT)** | **AT1** | 0.941 | 0.913 | 0.939 | 0.795 |
| | **AT2** | 0.879 | | | |
| | **AT3** | 0.875 | | | |
| | **AT4** | 0.868 | | | |
| **Destination image (DI)** | **DI1** | 0.828 | 0.921 | 0.935 | 0.615 |
| | **DI2** | 0.827 | | | |
| | **DI3** | 0.787 | | | |
| | **DI4** | 0.828 | | | |
| | **DI5** | 0.793 | | | |
| | **DI6** | 0.716 | | | |
| | **DI7** | 0.785 | | | |
| | **DI8** | 0.768 | | | |
| | **DI9** | 0.713 | | | |
| **Memorable tourism experience (MTE)** | **MTE1** | 0.901 | 0.928 | 0.949 | 0.823 |
| | **MTE2** | 0.874 | | | |
| | **MTE3** | 0.932 | | | |
| | **MTE4** | 0.920 | | | |
| **Tourist satisfaction (TS)** | **TS1** | 0.810 | 0.896 | 0.924 | 0.710 |
| | **TS2** | 0.843 | | | |
| | **TS3** | 0.856 | | | |
| | **TS4** | 0.757 | | | |
| | **TS5** | 0.938 | | | |
| **Electronic word of mouth intention (eWOM)** | **eWOM1** | 0.848 | 0.844 | 0.895 | 0.681 |
| | **eWOM2** | 0.862 | | | |
| | **eWOM3** | 0.838 | | | |
| | **eWOM4** | 0.748 | | | |

Source: Results of data analysis, 2025

Table 4. **Discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion)**

| | AT | DI | eWOM | MTE | PBC | SN | TS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AT** | **0.891** | | | | | | |
| **DI** | 0.176 | **0.784** | | | | | |
| **eWOM** | 0.458 | 0.430 | **0.825** | | | | |
| **MTE** | 0.284 | 0.199 | 0.505 | **0.907** | | | |
| **PBC** | 0.282 | 0.300 | 0.404 | 0.176 | **0.896** | | |
| **SN** | 0.350 | 0.188 | 0.557 | 0.502 | 0.208 | **0.913** | |
| **TS** | 0.386 | 0.467 | 0.599 | 0.351 | 0.368 | 0.417 | 0.843 |

Source: Results of data analysis, 2025

Next, the author assessed the discriminant validity of the measurement scales prior to testing the structural model relationships. Discriminant validity refers to the extent to which a construct is truly distinct from other constructs within the same model. Ringle et al. (2015) suggested that both the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio method should be employed to verify discriminant validity among latent variables. Based on the results presented in Table 4, the discriminant

validity of the constructs was confirmed, as the square roots of the AVEs (values on the diagonal in bold) were greater than the correlations between constructs (off-diagonal values).

### 4.2 Structural model assessment

Prior to hypothesis testing and estimation of path coefficients, we evaluated multicollinearity. Consistent with Hair et al. (2017), variance inflation factor (VIF) values above 0.20 and below 5 indicate acceptable levels; all constructs satisfied this condition (see Table 5), so multicollinearity was not an issue. Examination of the structural model showed that the $R^2$ for eWOM was 0.577, meaning that PBC, SN, AT, DI MTE and TS explain 57.7% of the variance in eWOM; the $R^2$ for TS was 0.287, indicating that DI and MTE together account for 28.7% of the variance in TS; and the $R^2$ for MTE was 0.040, indicating that DI together account for 4.0% of the variance in MTE.

Effect size ($f^2$) estimates indicated small effects: AT → eWOM ($f^2 = 0.045$), DI → eWOM ($f^2 = 0.048$), DI → MTE ($f^2 = 0.041$), MTE → eWOM ($f^2 = 0.066$), MTE → TS ($f^2 = 0.097$), PBC → eWOM ($f^2 = 0.036$), SN → eWOM ($f^2 = 0.092$), and TS → eWOM ($f^2 = 0.083$), while NC → EC produced a medium effect ($f^2 = 0.230$), in line with thresholds suggested by Hair et al. (2017). Finally, predictive relevance ($Q^2$) values for EWOM (0.383), TS (0.199) and MTE (0.032) were greater than zero, supporting the model's out-of-sample predictive capability (Hair et al., 2017).

The study employed the bootstrapping technique with 5,000 resamples and a 95% confidence interval to estimate the path coefficients and test the hypotheses in the proposed research model. The path estimation results and hypothesis testing outcomes are presented in Table 5. The results reveal that all proposed hypotheses are supported by the data at the 1% and 5% significance levels. Specifically, hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 - which examine the relationships among the three TPB components and behavioral intention - are supported. The findings indicate that PBC ($\beta = 0.137$, $p = 0.008$, 97.5% CI [0.038; 0.237]), SN ($\beta = 0.243$, $p = 0.000$, 97.5% CI [0.127, 0.358]), and AT ($\beta = 0.156$, $p = 0.010$, 97.5% CI [0.041, 0.280]) positively influence tourists' eWOM intentions regarding night tourism. This comparison suggests that normative social pressure plays a more decisive role than attitudinal or control factors in shaping tourists' electronic word-of-mouth behavior regarding night tourism.

For hypothesis H4 (DI → MTE), a significant positive relationship is observed ($\beta = 0.199$, $p = 0.003$, 97.5% CI [0.066, 0.331]), while H5 (DI → TS) shows the strongest direct effect among the destination image–related paths ($\beta = 0.413$, $p = 0.000$, 97.5% CI [0.297, 0.524]). Hypothesis H6a (DI → eWOM) is also supported ($\beta = 0.163$, $p = 0.006$, 97.5% CI [0.046, 0.276]), although its impact is weaker compared to its influence on MTE and TS.

Moreover, both H7 (MTE → TS, $\beta = 0.269$, $p = 0.000$, 97.5% CI [0.149, 0.389]) and H8 (MTE → eWOM, $\beta = 0.198$, $p = 0.002$, 97.5% CI [0.076, 0.326]) are statistically significant, indicating that memorable experiences enhance both satisfaction and online sharing intentions. Finally, the direct effect hypothesized in H9 (TS → eWOM) is confirmed ($\beta = 0.242$, $p = 0.000$, 97.5% CI [0.141, 0.341]), representing a relatively strong predictor of eWOM intention, second only to subjective norm.

Table 5. **Structural model results**

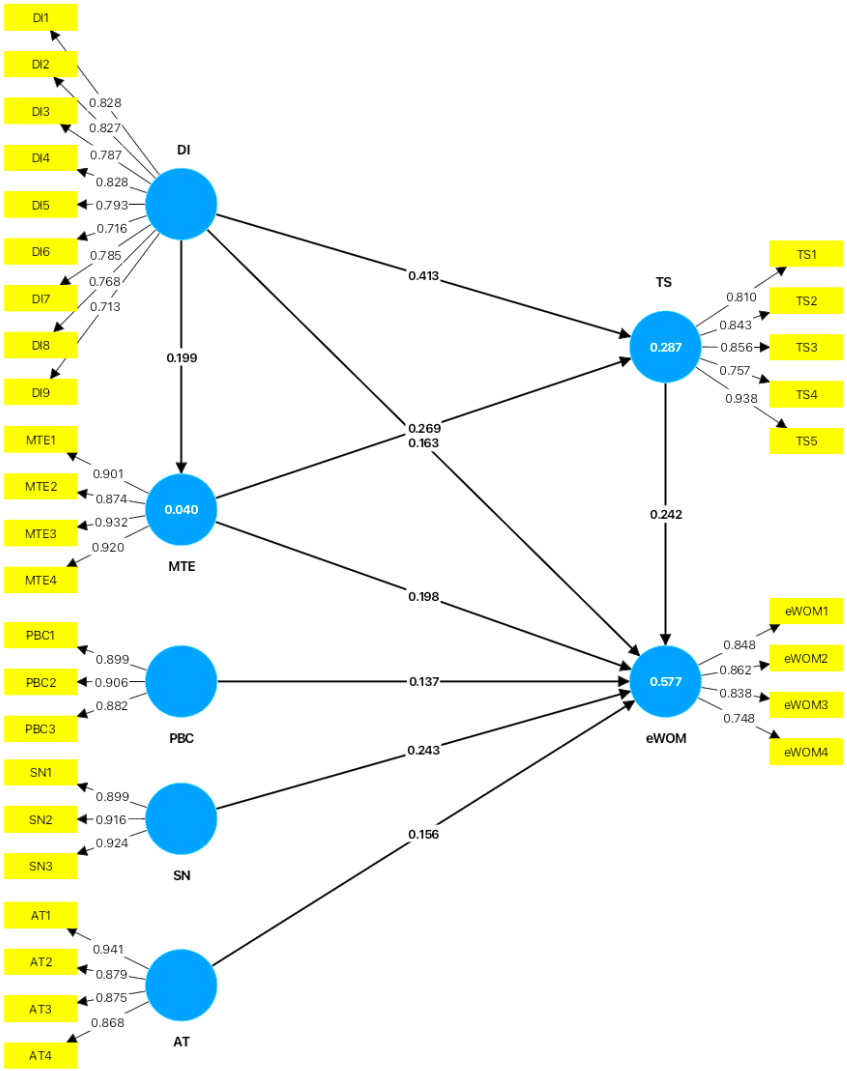
| Hypothesis | Relationship | β | P- values | VIF | Conclusion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H1 | PBC -> eWOM | 0.137 | 0.008** | 1.220 | **Supported** |
| H2 | SN -> eWOM | 0.243 | 0.000*** | 1.513 | **Supported** |
| H3 | AT -> eWOM | 0.156 | 0.010* | 1.278 | **Supported** |
| H4 | DI -> MTE | 0.199 | 0.003** | 1.000 | **Supported** |
| H5 | DI -> TS | 0.413 | 0.000*** | 1.041 | **Supported** |
| H6 | DI -> eWOM | 0.163 | 0.006** | 1.315 | **Supported** |
| H7 | MTE -> TS | 0.269 | 0.000*** | 1.041 | **Supported** |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H8 | MTE -> eWOM | 0.198 | 0.002** | 1.396 | **Supported** |
| H9 | TS -> eWOM | 0.242 | 0.000*** | 1.678 | **Supported** |

*(*p<0.05; **p<0.01, ***<0.001)*
Source: Results of data analysis, 2025

In addition, the analysis of the mediating hypotheses H10, H11, H12, and H13 indicates that all hypotheses are supported and accepted at the 1% and 5% significance levels (Table 6). Specifically, MTE is confirmed as a mediating variable in the positive relationships between DI and TS (H10; β = 0.054; p = 0.033), and between DI and eWOM intention (H11; β = 0.039; p = 0.039). Meanwhile, TS is also verified as a mediator in the relationships between DI and eWOM (H12; β = 0.100; p = 0.000), and between MTE and eWOM (H13; β = 0.065; p = 0.001). These results not only confirm the mediating effects of MTE and TS in the relationships influencing tourists' eWOM intention about night tourism, but also highlight the pivotal roles of these factors within the extended TPB framework.

Figure 3. **Structural model results**




Source: Results of data analysis, 2025

Table 6. **Structural model results: indirect relationships (mediation analysis)**

| Hypothesis | Relationship | β | P- values | Conclusion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| H10 | DI -> MTE ->TS | 0.054 | 0.033* | **Supported** |
| H11 | DI -> MTE ->eWOM | 0.039 | 0.039* | **Supported** |
| H12 | DI -> TS ->eWOM | 0.100 | 0.000*** | **Supported** |
| H13 | MTE -> TS ->eWOM | 0.065 | 0.001** | **Supported** |

*(*p<0.05; **p<0.01, ***<0.001)*
Source: Results of data analysis, 2025

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Interpretation of hypothesis testing results

The research findings indicate that PBC, SN, and AT all exert a positive influence on tourists' eWOM intention regarding night tourism, thereby reinforcing the validity of Ajzen (1991) TPB within the specific context of night tourism in Can Tho City. This result aligns with previous studies by Fu et al. (2015) and Ajina (2019). Notably, SN emerged as the most influential factor, highlighting the guiding role of social media, personal networks, and digital tourism communities in shaping sharing behavior. This result contrasts with numerous international studies in which attitudinal or experiential predictors (e.g., satisfaction, positive affective experience) typically dominate the generation of eWOM, as evidenced in meta-analyses and hospitality service research. Meta-analytic syntheses further indicate that the relative importance of these antecedents varies across national contexts and social media platforms (Ismagilova et al., 2020). However, a closer examination of geographically and culturally comparable settings may reconcile these discrepancies. Research on night tourism and emotion-based eWOM in South Korea highlights the importance of experiential and affective constructs while also acknowledging the substantial role of social influence in East Asian collectivist contexts (Chen et al., 2020; Kong et al., 2024). Similarly, hospitality studies in Spain emphasize that positive emotional experiences and satisfaction, rather than normative pressure, are the primary drivers of eWOM generation (Serra-Cantallops et al., 2018). The predominance of SN in Vietnam compared with other settings may stem from cultural factors that elevate the importance of normative pressure. Cross-cultural indices suggest that Vietnam aligns more closely with collectivist societies than with individualist ones like the United Kingdom; in collectivist cultures, perceptions of "what significant others think" strongly influence public sharing behavior. This interpretation aligns with findings from broader East Asian contexts. Furthermore, platform ecology amplifies social signaling, as different social media environments foster likes, comments, and sharing behaviors in distinct ways. When platforms afford greater public visibility and social rewards, normative pressure to share or endorse experiences tends to intensify (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Kietzmann et al., 2011). In addition, the structure of the night-time economy and advanced digital infrastructure in Vietnam reduce friction for instantaneous sharing. Policies promoting the night-time economy and the country's high accessibility to mobile networks and social applications lower interaction costs—thereby strengthening the link between social pressureand eWOM behavior.

Synthesizing findings from H4 to H9, it can be concluded that DI, MTE, and TS are core drivers of tourists' eWOM intention. First, destination image serves as an antecedent factor, positively influencing both memorable experiences (H4) and satisfaction (H5), which is consistent with previous research by Kim and Ritchie (2014), Rasoolimanesh et al. (2021), Sanz-Blas and Buzova (2016), and Goyal and Taneja (2025) . In the context of night tourism, a highly emotional and visually stimulating form of tourism, the DIplays a critical role in shaping tourist expectations and emotional engagement before and during the trip. Furthermore, H6 confirms that destination image directly influences eWOM,

in line with findings from Rasoolimanesh et al. (2021), Goyal and Taneja (2025) , and Hervas-Cortina et al. (2024), indicating that a strong and appealing destination image not only creates a favorable first impression but also inspires post-consumption sharing behaviors.

In parallel, the results of hypotheses H7 and H8 reveal that MTE not only enhance TS but also promote eWOM intention, aligning with previous studies by Serra-Cantallops et al. (2018), Almohaimmeed (2020), Özmen and Ögel (2020), Kankhuni and Ngwira (2022), Nasution et al. (2023), and Rasoolimanesh et al. (2021). Personalized and emotionally rich experiences, such as night cruises, cultural night markets, and local performances, stimulate tourists' desire to share and contribute to the construction of destination identity. Moreover, H9 further confirms the pivotal role of satisfaction in driving eWOM behavior, consistent with findings from Ahn et al. (2020) and Goyal and Taneja (2025). Taken together, the chain of hypotheses H4–H9 elucidates the interconnectedness between destination perception, emotional experiences, and sharing behaviors in the context of digital tourism environments.

In addition, the results of hypotheses H10, H11, H12, and H13 highlight the mediating role of MTE and TS. Firstly, MTE serves as a bridge between destination image DI and TS (H10), in line with findings by Chen and Rahman (2018), and Kuppelwieser et al. (2022). A positive perception of the destination - in terms of safety, scenery, cultural richness, and service quality - lays the foundation for memorable experiences, which in turn elevate tourists' post-visit satisfaction. Thus, MTE acts as a psychological mechanism through which DI effectively influences satisfaction. Secondly, hypotheses H11 and H12 confirm that DI indirectly influences eWOM intention through two mediating pathways: memorable experiences and satisfaction. This reinforces the findings of Rasoolimanesh et al. (2021), who identified MTE as a crucial linkage between DI and eWOM, as well as Goyal and Taneja (2025) , who emphasized the mediating role of satisfaction in the relationship between DI and sharing behavior. These two mediating channels underscore the importance of enhancing the quality of the tourist experience to maximize the amplifying effect of tourist-generated content.

Finally, H13 confirms the mediating role of tourist satisfaction in the relationship between MTE and eWOM. When tourists have positive and emotionally rich experiences, they tend to feel more satisfied and motivated to share, either as a way of expressing gratitude for the services received or as a means of affirming personal value. This finding is consistent with prior research by Özmen and Ögel (2020), Nasution et al. (2023), and Salah et al. (2023). It also opens strategic avenues for destinations to design emotionally engaging experiences that foster lasting memories and encourage sharing behaviors.

In summary, this study not only confirms the applicability of the TPB in the context of night tourism, but also extends the theoretical framework by integrating three critical factors: destination image, memorable tourism experiences, and tourist satisfaction. Notably, the successful validation of the mediating roles of MTE and satisfaction illustrates the transformation mechanism from cognitive perception to behavioral intention in the digital tourism environment. This research is also pioneering in applying TPB to explain eWOM behavior in the context of night tourism at an emerging destination such as Can Tho, thereby contributing to the theoretical development of eWOM in Southeast Asian tourism and other developing countries.

### 5.2 Benchmarking against international evidence

In both East Asian and European city-night economies, PBC (H1) remains a significant predictor of eWOM, particularly where platform usability and infrastructural connectivity reduce friction in sharing (Xiong et al., 2024). However, its relative influence varies: studies from South Korea find strong direct effects in tech-enabled contexts, whereas in the UK and Spain, PBC is often secondary to social and attitudinal cues when civic campaigns dominate sharing motivations (Ruan et al., 2023; Santiago-Iglesias et al., 2024).

By contrast, SN (H2) emerge as the strongest determinant of eWOM in collectivist or community-oriented contexts. Cross-national studies show that East Asian societies—characterized by higher conformity and digital collectivism—demonstrate stronger SN effects, whereas in Western European cities, attitudinal evaluation and satisfaction dominate (Christou et al., 2022; Pitt et al., 2020). Municipal night-time economy policies in Seoul and Barcelona alike illustrate how visibility, lighting, and crowd participation intensify social signalling, magnifying SN's influence on online advocacy.

Consistent with H3, positive AT toward night-tourism experiences reliably predict eWOM across markets. Spanish and Korean studies confirm that affective appraisals of curated nightscapes and entertainment events lead to favorable online recommendations (Kong et al., 2024; Moliner-Velázquez et al., 2023). However, Western contexts often exhibit weaker attitudinal paths when social approval or satisfaction mediate posting intentions (Sampériz et al., 2025).

Regarding H4–H6, the influence of destination image on MTE, satisfaction, and eWOM reflects an internationally stable pattern. Research from Korea's "Cultural Heritage Night" and Spain's "city-lighting" projects shows that branded night imagery enhances sensory engagement and recall (Chen et al., 2020; Torres-Delgado et al., 2023). Yet, like in Can Tho, DI's direct effect on eWOM is often moderate; most influence operates indirectly via MTE and TS (Marine-Roig, 2021). European urban-night analyses corroborate that light-based district branding and event programming raise perceived novelty and satisfaction, mediating image–advocacy linkages (Cambrubí et al., 2023).

For H7–H9, the pathways from MTE and TS to eWOM appear universally valid. Both Asian and European datasets confirm that emotionally rich, sensorial night experiences enhance satisfaction, and satisfied tourists are more active online advocates (Meenakshy et al., 2024; Zhao et al., 2024). In UK and Spanish city contexts, municipal efforts to improve safety, ambiance, and lighting are shown to raise satisfaction and stimulate social-media engagement (Eldridge & Jovic, 2022).

The mediations H10–H13 reinforce the experiential logic underlying night tourism. The indirect effects of DI → MTE → TS → eWOM observed in Vietnam parallel findings from Korea and Spain, where image-driven staging evokes affective experiences that heighten satisfaction and stimulate advocacy (Chen et al., 2020; María et al., 2024). European urban-night research further shows that photogenic nightscapes and multisensory atmospheres translate satisfaction into shareable digital narratives (Osorio-Andrade et al., 2025). Across cultures, stronger indirect than direct effects indicate that emotional and evaluative mediators are the true conduits of image and experience toward digital word-of-mouth.

Collectively, these benchmarks confirm that while the structure of behavioral pathways in night tourism is globally consistent, their relative magnitudes reflect contextual drivers—cultural orientation, digital infrastructure, and local night-time policies. Thus, Can Tho's results extend international understanding by evidencing how Southeast Asia's collectivist digital culture and rapid platform diffusion amplify normative and experiential mediations in the generation of positive eWOM.

## 6. Conclusion

This study provides empirical evidence supporting the applicability of the TPB in explaining tourists' eWOM intentions in the emerging context of night tourism in Can Tho City, Vietnam. The results confirm that the three core TPB components: PBC, SN, and AT positively influence eWOM intentions. Among these, SN emerged as the most influential driver, emphasizing the pivotal role of social networks, peer influence, and digital tourism communities in shaping tourists' sharing behaviors.

By integrating DI, MTE, and TS into the TPB framework, this study extends the theoretical understanding of eWOM. DI was found to be a critical antecedent that directly and indirectly influences eWOM through MTE and TS, underscoring its role in forming expectations, emotional engagement, and

post-visit behaviors. MTE not only enhances satisfaction but also acts as a direct catalyst for eWOM, while TS reinforces the translation of positive experiences into sharing intentions.

The confirmed mediating effects of MTE and TS highlight a transformation pathway from cognitive perception to behavioral intention, where positive destination perceptions generate memorable experiences, which in turn foster satisfaction and stimulate sharing.

Overall, these findings contribute to both theory and practice by demonstrating how destination perception, emotional engagement, and satisfaction collectively shape eWOM behaviors in digital tourism environments. For destination managers, especially in emerging night tourism markets, the results suggest that fostering emotionally rich, authentic, and satisfying experiences - while leveraging social influence - can significantly enhance positive eWOM, strengthen destination branding, and promote sustainable tourism growth.

### 6.1 Theoretical implications

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings of this study contribute to refining and extending the TPB) within hedonic night-time service contexts—a domain characterized by high affective arousal, social visibility, and sensory engagement. The traditional TPB framework posits that AT, SN, and PBC jointly predict behavioral intentions. However, our results indicate a context-dependent reconfiguration of these relationships in night-tourism environments, where SN emerges as the dominant predictor of eWOM, followed by AT and PBC.

This dominance of subjective norms extends TPB by demonstrating that social signalling motives can outweigh internal evaluations (attitudes) and perceived control when activities occur in highly public, digitally networked, and emotionally charged night settings. In such contexts, individuals' behavioral intentions are not purely self-referential but are shaped by anticipated social validation and observational learning through online audiences. This aligns with social identity extensions of TPB, which posit that collective visibility and peer norms moderate the relative salience of TPB predictors (Meenakshy et al., 2024).

The relative attenuation of attitude in predicting eWOM suggests that under hedonic, experience-driven consumption, affective immediacy and collective emotion may replace cognitive evaluation as the principal driver of sharing intentions. This pattern complements dual-process and affective-cognitive integration models, implying that in sensory-rich night settings, emotionally embedded evaluations—rather than stable attitudes—shape communication behavior.

Moreover, the mediating roles of MTE and TS refine TPB's explanatory power by embedding hedonic experiential processes between cognitive antecedents and behavioral intentions. These findings echo recent extensions to TPB in experiential services, where emotional fulfilment and sensory engagement act as mediators linking belief structures to behavioral outcomes (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021; Ruan et al., 2023).

### 6.2 Managerial implications

The research findings offer several practical implications for the management and development of night tourism in Can Tho City.

1. Destination management organisations (DMOs) and city authorities should prioritise investments that enhance the night-time landscape and ambience. This includes improving street lighting systems, cleanliness, pedestrian walkways, and public safety infrastructure to create an environment that is both functional and emotionally engaging. Well-designed lighting and aesthetic planning not only improve visual comfort but also contribute to tourists' sense of security and memorability.

2. Policy makers overseeing the night-time economy should integrate urban design and transport planning within broader economic development frameworks. Establishing designated night-tourism zones, improving late-night transport options, and providing incentives for cultural and entertainment operators can strengthen the ecosystem of the night economy. Strategic zoning and infrastructure planning are also essential to balance economic growth with community well-being and noise management.
3. Tour operators and attraction managers should focus on designing immersive experiences that encourage tourists to share their emotions and stories after the visit. Interactive installations, curated lighting experiences, and storytelling-based tours can enhance memorability, while gentle digital reminders (e.g., QR-code feedback or hashtags) promote post-visit engagement.
4. Finally, digital marketing teams should implement community-based social media campaigns on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. Offering incentives for user-generated content, promoting review challenges, and highlighting local night-time narratives can expand online visibility and strengthen eWOM networks. Collectively, these strategies reduce barriers to sharing, amplify social signals, and transform memorable night experiences into digital advocacy.

### 6.3 Research limitations and future studies

Despite its valuable contributions, this study has several limitations that open pathways for future research. First, the analysis was confined to Can Tho City—specifically the Ninh Kieu and Cai Rang districts—potentially limiting generalizability. Future comparative designs should extend across urban versus coastal or island destinations, as well as emerging versus mature night-tourism economies, to reveal contextual contingencies in eWOM antecedents and mechanisms.

Second, this study's cross-sectional design limits causal inference. Adopting longitudinal approaches would allow examination of how tourists' attitudes, satisfaction, and eWOM behaviors evolve before, during, and after their trips. Moreover, incorporating moderating variables such as visitor type (repeat and first-time), age, cultural orientation, and perceived safety could clarify for whom and under what conditions the TPB relationships hold most strongly in night-time contexts.

Third, while this study used self-reported behavioral intentions, future research should move beyond intentions to actual behaviors by linking survey data to observed engagement metrics (e.g., posting frequency, likes, or sentiment from Facebook, Instagram, or TripAdvisor). Platform-specific analyses could identify whether social influence mechanisms (e.g., peer visibility, algorithmic amplification) differ across visual and textual platforms.

Finally, future studies may employ experimental or field A/B designs—for instance, testing how interventions such as public Wi-Fi prompts, check-in zones, or on-site digital signage affect real-time sharing behavior. These approaches would improve the causal validity of findings and help establish evidence-based strategies for stimulating authentic eWOM in night-tourism destinations.

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