



Assessing the Role of Marketing Communication in Shaping Tourist Intentions to Morotai Island

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ABSTRACT

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The tourism industry is a key pillar in driving global economic growth, facilitating rich cultural exchanges, and driving community development. This study aims to measure the impact of marketing communication on visit intentions to Morotai Island, a tourist destination that captivates with its World War II historical heritage and cultural richness. This study used a quantitative method with a sample size of 210 respondents. Primary data was obtained from the research questionnaire and analyzed using LISREL-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The findings show that there is a varying influence between marketing communication or promotion mix on the intention to visit tourist attractions. Advertising and sales promotion have no significant impact, while sponsorship and public relations significantly influence visit intention. The practical implications of this research underscore the wise allocation of marketing resources. Given the lack of effectiveness of advertising and sales promotion, the focus of investment needs to be emphasized on sponsorship and public relations strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has been a significant driver of economic growth, cultural exchange, and community development for many regions around the world. In recent years, the travel and tourism industry has shown substantial growth and transformation, not only that, the tourism sector is the largest and strongest industry in financing the global economy [1-4]. The tourism industry is proving immune from the global crisis. In Indonesia, for example, when the global economy is slumped, Indonesia's tourism growth continued to grow, even exceeding the national economic growth rate. The growth of the tourism industry in Indonesia in 2019 reached 4.8 percent higher than the previous year [5].

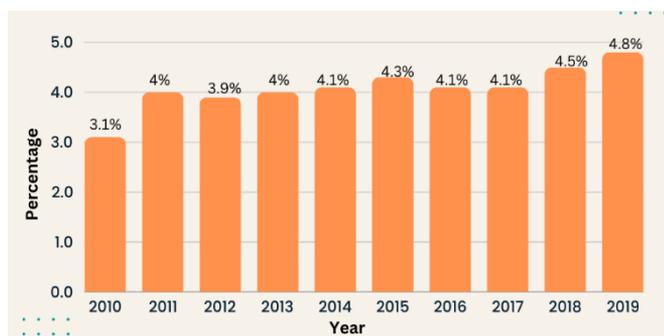


Figure 1. Tourism contribution to GDP, 2010-2019
Source: [5]

It should be acknowledged that this is the result of factors such as globalization, technological advances, and changes in consumer preferences; besides that, the increase in tourism contribution to GDP as shown in Figure 1, is also driven by the increasing number of foreign tourists, domestic tourists, and investment [5]. Amidst this dynamic landscape, effective marketing communications play an important role in shaping travelers' intentions and influencing their choice of destination [6]. One of the potential tourist destinations in Indonesia today is the charming island of Morotai which is a unique tourist destination for travelers.

The appeal of Morotai Island as a tourist destination has grown steadily in recent times, attracting the attention of domestic and international tourists. Located in the eastern part of Indonesia, Morotai Island has pristine beaches, diverse marine life, historical values such as World War II relics, and a rich cultural heritage [7, 8]. However, although the island has inherent natural and cultural assets, its tourism potential is still relatively untapped. Harnessing the power of marketing communications can unlock the latent potential of Morotai Island, attract more tourists and thus drive economic growth for the local community. Effective marketing communications have the potential to shape perceptions, evoke emotions, and guide the decision-making process among potential travelers [9-12]. Messages conveyed through various marketing channels, such as advertising, social media, travel blogs, and word of mouth, can significantly influence travelers' perceptions of a destination [13, 14]. By strategically creating and spreading compelling narratives about Morotai Island,

marketers can influence tourists' intent to visit the island and experience its uniqueness firsthand.

In this context, it is important to consider the role of marketing communications in shaping traveler intentions towards Morotai Island. Understanding how marketing strategies and various communication channels can influence traveler perceptions and decisions has significant value for destination marketers, policymakers, and local stakeholders [9, 15]. In addition, effective integration of marketing communications can increase return visit intentions, creating a positive impact on the economy and image [16]. In other words, marketing communication has a great influence on the intention to visit a destination [16-19]. However, Bob et al. [20] research states that advertising and sales promotion, as part of the promotion mix in marketing communications, do not significantly influence the intention to visit. This shows that there is a research gap between previous findings [16-19] and the results of Bob et al. [20] research on the effect of marketing communication on visit intention. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap and make a valuable contribution by explaining the relationship between marketing communications and traveler intentions in the specific context of Morotai Island. The findings from this study can also help in resource allocation, budget decision-making, and collaboration among stakeholders to jointly explore the tourism potential of Morotai Island.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Marketing communications

Marketing communication in the current era is increasingly customer-focused, serving as a crucial process in generating and delivering messages to promote products or services to target audiences [21]. This concept theoretically aligns with Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), which emerged in the 1990s by Schultz [22]. According to Schultz [22], IMC is a concept of marketing communication planning that introduces the added value of a comprehensive plan and evaluates the strategic roles of various communication disciplines such as advertising, direct selling, sales promotion, and public relations [22]. Consequently, the natural evolution in marketing communication is reflected in the promotional mix, a concept arising from drastic changes in three main aspects: markets, media and communication, and consumer behavior. Therefore, this study focuses on the concept of the promotional mix as a representation of marketing communication. In this regard, the promotional mix involves marketing communication aimed at informing, reminding, and persuading individuals or companies to accept, repurchase, recommend, or use products, services, or ideas [23, 24]. Thus, companies can leverage various promotional tools to convey value to consumers and build strong customer relationships [25]. Promotion here encompasses activities that function to educate and alter consumer perceptions of core products while maintaining substantial relationships with company activities [26]. Consequently, the essence of this process is effectively transferring information to consumers [27]. As the basis of marketing communication integration, the promotional mix summarizes four fundamental elements: advertising, sponsorship, sales promotion, and public relations [28]. These four elements can be utilized by organizations to communicate customer value and build customer relationships persuasively. Thus, this study adopts the promotional mix from Kotler and

Armstrong [28] as the foundational concept of research variables due to its conceptual clarity, operational succinctness, and contextual relevance.

2.2 Advertising

Advertising is a form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services paid for by an identified sponsor, as stated Kotler and Armstrong [28]. As an integral component in the promotional mix, advertising has the ability to capture customer attention and evoke an emotional response. That said, keep in mind that advertising can be a significant cost as well as annoying for audiences [29, 30]. Further, advertising serves as a means often used by many marketers to generate awareness of the products and services they offer, with the ultimate goal of persuading consumers to make purchasing decisions [31, 32]. It is important to recognize that advertising has a substantial influence in increasing consumer desire to buy a particular product or service. However, its effectiveness is heavily influenced by a number of factors, including the size of the budget allocated and the type of message delivered to the audience.

2.3 Sponsor

Sponsorship refers to a form of investment, either in cash or in kind, in a specific activity. This is done in exchange for gaining access to the commercial potential associated with the activity [33, 34]. Sponsorship-related marketing is the process of planning and implementing various marketing activities aimed at building and conveying associations with sponsors to audiences [35]. Sponsorship is an activity that is intertwined within the framework of trade, able to optimize value for both parties involved in sponsorship [34]. It involves a conceptual exchange between the sponsor and the sponsored, where the sponsor makes a financial contribution, and in return, the sponsor gains the right to associate themselves with the sponsor's activity [36, 37]. When compared to other promotional elements, sponsorship generally requires substantial investment.

2.4 Sales promotion

Sales promotion refers to a variety of incentive suites, mostly short-term in nature, designed to stimulate larger and faster purchases among target customers [28]. These elements in the promotional mix are generally activated when the marketing organization intends to immediately grab the customer's attention and trigger impulse purchases [38, 39]. As a promotional tool, sales promotion has the goal of motivating consumers to take action, diverting them from prospect status to actual customers [40, 41]. Therefore, sales promotion becomes a crucial component in the promotion mix that significantly influences consumer decisions. Nevertheless, the effects of sales promotion are very diverse. For example, the effect of a sales promotion can differ between monetary (such as price discounts, coupons) and non-monetary (such as gifts, free samples) incentives on purchasing decisions. In addition, the impact on the intention to return to shopping also depends on factors such as the level of customer loyalty and the type of sales promotion used, for example, promotions related to building consumer franchises (CFB) and non-CFB promotions [39, 42].

2.5 Public relations

Public relations refers to the management function that identifies, establishes, and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the public that determine its success or failure [43, 44]. In an effort to build positive relationships with various public segments of a marketing organization, this aspect includes efforts to gain favorable exposure, build a positive corporate image, and manage and dampen negative issues such as rumors, narratives, and events that may be detrimental [28]. Public Relations (PR) can therefore be viewed from two perspectives: the conventional view as a form of communication and the modern view as a form of relationship management [39, 45]. In many cases, public relations is considered an important element of a highly effective promotional mix. It can be activated and leveraged to build mutually beneficial relationships between the organization, its target customers, and, more broadly, its entire public. This concept speaks to the nature of exchange, interaction, and stakeholders in marketing theory [46].

2.6 Intention to visit

Intention refers to the likelihood that the individual will engage in a particular behavior and his motivation to utilize the effort to perform that behavior [47, 48]. In the context of tourism, the concept of intention to visit refers to a person's intention or desire to visit a tourist destination. This is the first stage in a traveler's decision-making process to travel. Intention to visit is basically influenced by several factors, such as internal factors of visitors, as well as external factors such as culture, advertising, and promotion [49, 50]. This concept is important in tourism planning because it can help related parties identify the preferences and interests of potential tourists and design effective marketing strategies to attract and influence them to actually visit the desired destination [51]. In measuring the intention to visit tourist attractions, it can be seen from various factors, including the authenticity of the destination, awareness, image, quality, and natural and cultural attractions that exist in tourist attractions [52-54].

2.7 Relationship between marketing communication and intention to visit

The relationship between marketing communication and the intention to visit a tourist attraction has a significant impact on the decision of tourists to visit. Related studies have revealed relevant findings in this regard; for example, research conducted at the Way Lalaan Waterfall Tourism Object in Tanggamus Regency, Lampung Province, indicates that the integrated marketing communication mix has a positive effect on tourists' intention to visit [55]. Likewise, another study exploring the role of tourism marketing communication through e-tourism marketing showed that marketing communication strategies were able to increase tourists' intention to visit [56]. A study conducted in Sidoarjo Regency also noted that marketing communication efforts related to Kusuma Tirta Minapolitan tourism had a positive impact on increasing marine tourism visits in the region [57]. Based on a series of findings aligned with Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) as the theoretical foundation in this research, it can be concluded that marketing communication

plays a significant role in shaping the intention to visit tourist destinations. Building upon this foundation, the following hypotheses are proposed.

- H₁ : Advertising as an element of the promotion mix or marketing communication affects the intention to visit.
- H₂ : Sponsorship as an element of the promotion mix or marketing communication affects the intention to visit.
- H₃ : Sales promotion as an element of the promotion mix or marketing communication has an effect on the intention to visit.
- H₄ : Public relations as an element of the promotional mix or marketing communication has an effect on the intention to visit.

The proposed set of hypotheses explains the inherent relationship between the elements of the promotional mix and the intention to visit, which is further illustrated in Figure 2 of the following research design.

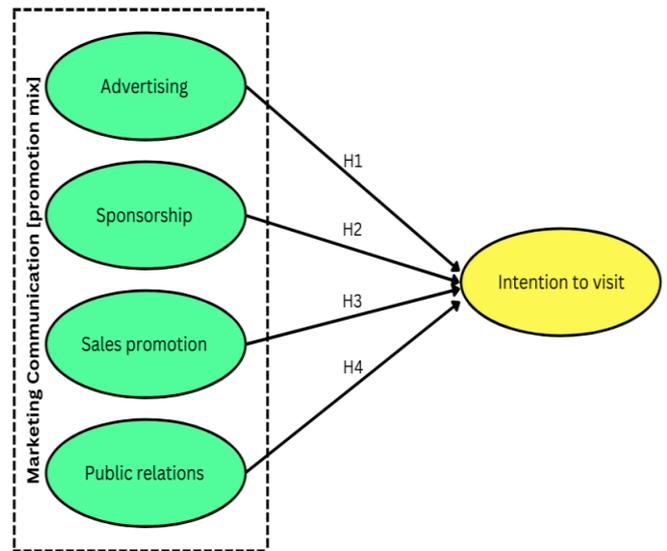


Figure 2. Conceptual framework

The framework shows the causal relationship between marketing communication or elements of the promotional mix, namely advertising, sponsorship, sales promotion, and public relations, as antecedents of intention to visit in tourism.

3. METHOD

This research uses quantitative methods based on the Structural Equation Model (SEM) as a research approach. Quantitative methods are research approaches rooted in the philosophy of positivism, which is very useful for studying certain populations or samples. Related samples, Hair et al. [58] suggested that in analyzing using the Structural Equation Model (SEM), the number of samples is calculated by the formula ten times the number of indicators. Given that there are twenty-one indicators in this study, the minimum sample for SEM analysis is $21 \times 10 = 210$ respondents. Therefore, in this study, a minimum sample size of 210 respondents was utilized, outlined as follows.

Table 1. Respondent profile details

Demographic	Category	Respondent	Percentage
Gender	Male	81	38.6
	Female	129	61.4
	Total	210	100
Age	Below 20	11	5.2
	20-29	72	34.3
	30-39	94	44.8
	40-49	20	9.5
	50 and above	13	6.2
	Total	210	100
Marital status	Single	123.3	58.7
	Married	86.7	41.3
	Total	210	100
Religion	Islam	150	71.5
	Buddhism	11	5.3
	Hinduism	17	8.2
	Christianity	25	12
	Others	6	3
	Total	210	100
Level of Education	Senior High School	18	8.5
	Certificate/Diploma	53	25.2
	Bachelor's degree	100	47.8
	Master's degree	22	10.5
	PhD	1	0.6
	Others	16	7.4
	Total	210	100

The sample data mentioned in Table 1 above comprises respondents who answered the questionnaire for this study. Sangadji [59] defined a questionnaire as a written data collection method involving respondents in answering a series of questions or statements. Data collection was conducted through a survey using a questionnaire consisting of twenty-one items describing the research variables, including: Advertising, which encompasses tourists' awareness of tourism advertisements, the effectiveness of tourism advertisements in attracting potential tourists, the alignment of advertisements with the image and uniqueness of tourist destinations, and tourists' engagement with these tourism advertisements; Sponsorship, which covers visitors' perceptions of brands or companies sponsoring events or tourism activities, interest in visiting tourist destinations based on event or activity sponsorship, tourists' exposure to event or activity sponsors, and tourists' attitudes toward sponsors in the development and promotion of tourism in Morotai Island; Sales Promotion, which includes tourists' satisfaction with the sales promotions offered, perceptions of the value of sales promotions offered, tourists' awareness of ongoing sales promotions, and tourists' participation in sales promotions related to tourism in Morotai Island; Public Relations, which encompasses tourists' trust in information conveyed through PR activities, tourists' perceptions of the image and reputation of Morotai Island built through PR activities, tourists' attitudes toward communication programs aimed at promoting Morotai Island, tourists' exposure to PR activities related to tourism in Morotai Island; and endogenous variables namely Intention to Visit, which includes tourists' interest in visiting Morotai Island within a specified time frame, the uniqueness of the destination as a reason for tourists' intention to visit Morotai Island, tourists' perceptions of the value of the tourism

experience that can be obtained in Morotai Island, tourists' readiness to plan and execute trips to Morotai Island, and tourists' certainty in realizing the intention to visit Morotai Island within a specified time frame. The Likert scale was employed as the measurement tool in this instrument. The Likert scale is a series of systematic statements that measure respondents' attitudes toward an object or phenomenon [60]. This scale ranges from five (5) to one (1) and reflects respondents' attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of the variables under investigation [61-63].

For data analysis, this research employs the Structural Equation Model (SEM), as advocated by Joreskog and Sorbom [64]. The Structural Equation Model serves as a statistical tool facilitating concurrent solutions for multilevel models that are not readily solvable through linear regression equations. While previous studies favored PLS-based SEM due to its perceived simplicity, this study opts for Lisrel (Linear Structural RELations) version 8.80. This choice is grounded in the belief that Lisrel-based SEM analysis surpasses PLS-based SEM in terms of data distribution capabilities, model estimation accuracy, and handling model complexity [65]. In constructing the research model, four elements of the promotion mix—namely advertising, sponsorship, sales promotion, and public relations—are treated as exogenous variables, collectively representing marketing communications. Contrary to previous approaches focusing on public relations, publicity, and word-of-mouth, this research model adopts a different approach to marketing communications development. Thus, the divergence between this study and earlier research lies in the approach to marketing communication utilized.

4. RESULT

4.1 Validity test

The validity test in this study was carried out through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using a structural equation model (SEM) using the LISREL device. This approach involves a series of meticulous steps to evaluate the extent to which the measuring instrument, including the question or variable used in the study, truly reflects the concept intended. Validity in this context refers to the ability of a measuring instrument to accurately reflect an observed concept. Through the application of CFA, researchers can investigate construct (factorial) and predictive validity. The results of the validity test in this study are as follows.

According to Hair et al. [66], validity test criteria through confirmatory factor analysis can be assessed from two main things, namely the magnitude of the factor loading value and the sample size used. If the sample size is in the range of 200 to 249, then the loading value is expected to exceed 0.40 to meet the validity standard. In other words, if the loading factor value of an item is lower than 0.40, then the instrument item used is considered invalid. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis in Figure 3 show that items C20 and C21 in the variable intention to visit are considered invalid because the loading factor values are only 0.06 and 0.04, both of which are lower than the threshold of 0.40. However, on the contrary, other items are considered valid because the loading factor value exceeds 0.40. Because two items in the latent variable Intention to Visit are declared invalid, they are not used in subsequent tests and measurements.

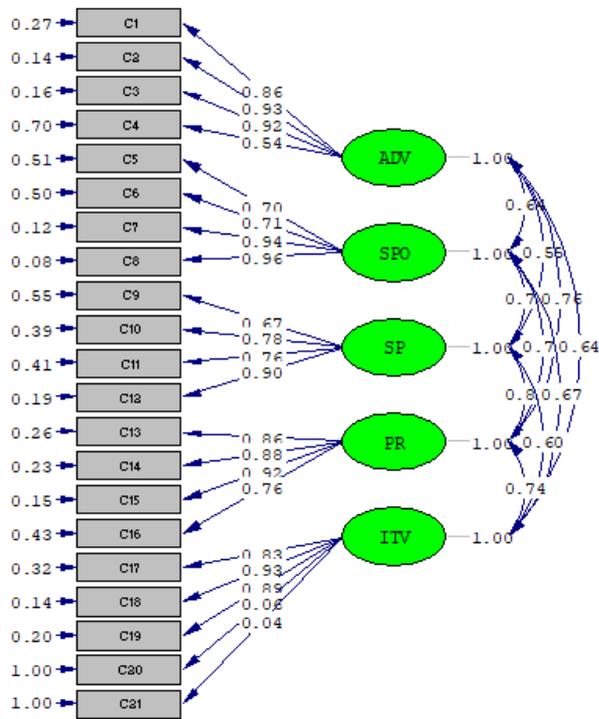


Figure 3. Confirmatory factor analysis output

4.2 Reliability test

According to Joreskog and Sorbom [64], in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis using LISREL software, reliability testing involves using Cronbach's alpha (α) or Construct Reliability (CR) values to measure the internal consistency of the measured construct. This approach helps assess the extent to which latent variables or constructs in the model have good reliability. In addition, LISREL can also enable reliability measurement through a factor parameter in the SEM model called factor loading. Factor loading shows how well the observation variable (in factor analysis) or indicator (in SEM) measures the latent variable in truth. A high loading factor value indicates that the indicator or observation

variable has a strong relationship with the latent variable. Thus, in the context of SEM analysis with LISREL, reliability testing involves using Cronbach's alpha or Construct Reliability values to measure internal consistency, as well as factor loading evaluation to measure the extent to which indicators or observational variables measure latent variables well.

Based on the reliability calculations shown in Table 2, the Construct Reliability (CR) for each latent variable is 0.893, 0.901, 0.863, 0.916, and 0.914, while the Variance Extracted (VE) for each variable was 0.683, 0.698, 0.614, 0.733, and 0.780. These results indicate that the scale used for latent variables has a strong degree of reliability. According to the view of Hair et al. [66], an instrument is considered to have good reliability when Construct Reliability (CR) ≥ 0.70 and Variance Extracted (VE) ≥ 0.40 .

4.3 Model conformity test

Model fit testing in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis using software such as LISREL is the process of evaluating the extent to which a model that has been proposed conforms to existing data. The purpose of a model fit test is to measure the extent to which the proposed model conforms to the empirical data that has been collected. The results of the model fit test in this study are as follows.

Based on the model fit test results in Table 3, it was found that the minimum fit function chi-square (χ^2) value was lower than 0.05, the RMSEA value of 0.048 was less than 0.08, the Root Mean Square Residual (RMR) of 0.12 exceeded the threshold of 0.10, as well as the Standardized RMR which reached 0.12, beyond the value of 0.10. In addition, GFI, which was 0.71, was below 0.90, while AGFI, which reached 0.82, although exceeding 0.80, was still below 0.90. However, the values of NFI, NNFI, CFI, IFI, and RFI were 0.93, 0.93, 0.94, 0.94, and 0.91, respectively, all exceeding the 0.90 threshold. Only PNFI reached 0.77, exceeding the threshold of 0. Thus, it can be concluded that as many as eight fit indices meet the fit criteria, while only four indices do not meet. This shows that the theoretical model as a whole corresponds to empirical data (Fit).

Table 2. Results of construct reliability and variance extracted analysis

Latent Variables	Manifest Variables	Loading Factor	Construct Reliability	Remark
Advertising	C1 $\leftarrow\xi_1$	0.86	$CR = \frac{(3.25)^2}{(3.25)^2 + 1.27} = 0.893$	Reliable
	C2 $\leftarrow\xi_1$	0.93		
	C3 $\leftarrow\xi_1$	0.92		
	C4 $\leftarrow\xi_1$	0.54		
Sponsorship	C5 $\leftarrow\xi_2$	0.70	$CR = \frac{(3.31)^2}{(3.31)^2 + 1.21} = 0.901$	Reliable
	C6 $\leftarrow\xi_2$	0.71		
	C7 $\leftarrow\xi_2$	0.94		
	C8 $\leftarrow\xi_2$	0.96		
Sales Promotion	C9 $\leftarrow\xi_3$	0.67	$CR = \frac{(3.11)^2}{(3.11)^2 + 1.54} = 0.863$	Reliable
	C10 $\leftarrow\xi_3$	0.78		
	C11 $\leftarrow\xi_3$	0.76		
	C12 $\leftarrow\xi_3$	0.90		
Public Relations	C13 $\leftarrow\xi_4$	0.86	$CR = \frac{(3.42)^2}{(3.42)^2 + 1.07} = 0.916$	Reliable
	C14 $\leftarrow\xi_4$	0.88		
	C15 $\leftarrow\xi_4$	0.92		
	C16 $\leftarrow\xi_4$	0.76		
Intention to Visit	C17 $\leftarrow\eta$	0.83	$CR = \frac{(2.65)^2}{(2.65)^2 + 0.66} = 0.914$	Reliable
	C18 $\leftarrow\eta$	0.93		
	C19 $\leftarrow\eta$	0.89		

Table 3. The goodness of fit statistics

Index Fit	Value	Standard Value	Remark
Minimum fit function chi-square (χ^2)	791.77 (P = 0.0)	p > 0.05	Not fit
RMSEA	0.048	< 0.08	Good Fit
Root Mean Square Residual (RMR)	0.12	≤ 0.10	Not fit
Standardized RMR	0.12	≤ 0.10	Not fit
GFI	0.71	≥ 0.90	Not fit
AGFI	0.82	0.80 ≤ AGFI < 0.9	Marginal Fit
NFI	0.93	≥ 0.90	Good Fit
NNFI	0.93	≥ 0.90	Good Fit
CFI	0.94	≥ 0.90	Good Fit
IFI	0.94	≥ 0.90	Good Fit
RFI	0.91	≥ 0.90	Good Fit
PNFI	0.77	0: no fit, the larger the fit	Good Fit

Note: standard cut-off sourced from Daire et al. [67] and Schermelleh-Engel et al. [68]

4.4 Structural model measurement

Structural equations in SEM analysis are mathematical representations of relationships between variables in conceptual models. Thus, the measurement of structural equations aims to describe how these variables affect each other. The results of measuring structural equations in this study are as follows.

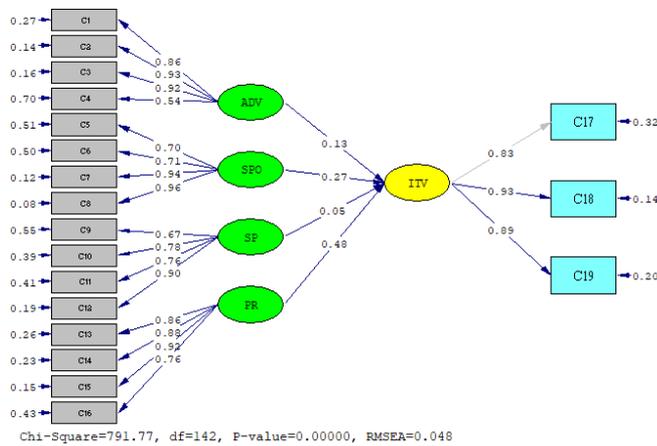


Figure 4. Structural diagram standardized solution

The research results illustrated in Figure 4 yield the structural equation: $\eta = 0.13*\xi_1 + 0.27*\xi_2 + 0.05*\xi_3 + 0.48*\xi_4$, $R^2 = 0.58$. This equation shows that the value R^2 is 58%; this means that the variation of intention to visit (η) can be explained by advertising (ξ_1), sponsorship (ξ_2), sales promotion (ξ_3), and public relation (ξ_4) by 58 percent. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of a structural equation indicates the number of variances in an endogenous latent variable that can be described simultaneously by independent latent variables. The higher the R^2 value, the greater the independent variables can explain endogenous variables, so the better the structural equation.

The results of the structural analysis in the diagram above indicate several important things regarding the influence of elements of the promotional mix or marketing communications on the intention to visit tourist attractions. In this context, the advertising variable (X1) has a t-value of 1.40 (see Figure 5), which is smaller than the critical threshold of 1.96. This indicates that advertising variables do not have a significant influence on the intention of visiting tourist attractions. On the other hand, the sponsorship variable (X2)

has a t-value of 2.94 (see Figure 5), greater than 1.96. Therefore, it can be concluded that sponsorship variables have a significant influence on the intention of visits to tourist attractions. Meanwhile, the sales promotion variable (X3) has a t-value of 0.46 (see Figure 5), or less than 1.96, indicating that sales promotion does not have a significant influence on visit intent. Conversely, the public relations variable (X4) has a t-value of 3.27 (see Figure 5), greater than 1.96, indicating that public relations has a significant influence on the intention of visiting tourist attractions. Overall, the elements of the promotion mix or marketing communication that have a significant influence on the intention to visit tourist attractions are sponsorship and public relations.

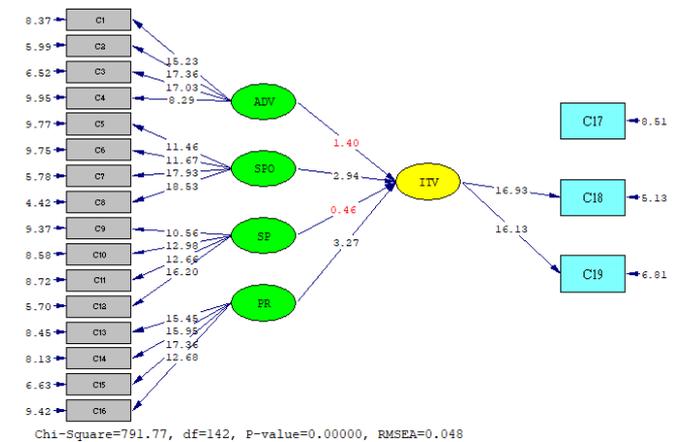


Figure 5. Diagram structural t-value

4.5 Discussion

In the context of marketing and promoting tourist destinations, the promotional mix constitutes a collection of various tools or elements utilized to communicate value and attract potential visitors [69, 70]. The elements within the promotional mix include advertising, sales promotion, sponsorship, and public relations. While each element plays a crucial role in influencing the intention to visit a tourist attraction, their impact can vary based on various factors, including target audience, conveyed message, and promotional context. Consistent with the research conducted by Ginaldho et al. [55], Haryono and Albetris [56], and Ningrum [57], the findings of this study indicate that marketing communication influences the intention to visit tourist destinations, although two elements of the promotional

mix, namely advertising and sales promotion, are known to have insignificant effects on the intention to visit tourist destinations. Nevertheless, this study remains consistent with the IMC Theory, serving as the theoretical foundation, which asserts that effectively utilizing crucial aspects of IMC including advertising, sales promotion, sponsorship, and public relations can enhance awareness, build a positive image, convey information, instill trust, and create a positive experience for tourists.

Advertising is an element that is often used in the promotion of tourist attractions through advertisements aired in mass media such as television, radio, print, and digital media. However, the effects of advertising can be limited due to shifting consumer trends in avoiding overly dominant or excessive advertising. In addition, many people tend to be skeptical of advertising and choose to seek information from more independent sources. Sales promotions, such as discount offers or special pricing plans, can provide a brief boost to visiting decisions. While it can create temporary interest, the impact is often short-term and limited. People may feel that this kind of promotion does not reflect the true value of the tourist attractions and question the quality of the experience they will get.

On the other hand, sponsorship and public relations have a more significant influence on the intention to visit tourist attractions. Sponsorship involves the involvement of a tourist attraction in a relevant event or activity, which can provide positive associations with the brand of the tourist attraction. This creates a stronger and more authentic image in the minds of consumers as they connect tourist attractions with real experiences and diverse situations. Public relations also have a strong impact on influencing the intention to visit tourist attractions. Through public relations efforts, tourist attractions can build deeper relationships with the media, society, and other stakeholders. This helps create a positive image and high trust, as information is conveyed through more reliable sources than paid advertising. Success in creating strong relationships through public relations can produce long-term effects, where tourist attractions become better known and desired by many people.

Furthermore, public relations tends to have a greater influence than other elements because of its focus on interaction with various parties. In the context of tourist attractions, good relationships with the media, travel bloggers, local communities, and potential customers can create a broad viral effect. Positive information and recommendations that come from independent sources such as media or communities can have a greater impact on visiting intent than paid advertising.

Thus, elements of sponsorship and public relations have a greater impact on the intention to visit tourist attractions compared to elements of advertising and sales promotion. This is because they both create stronger positive associations and create a deeper and more authentic connection with the audience. While advertising and sales promotion still has a role to play in influencing visiting decisions, it's important to recognize shifts in consumer behavior and the importance of approaching them through more trusted and in-depth means such as sponsorship and public relations.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the influence of marketing communications or elements of the

promotion mix on the intention to visit tourist attractions varies. While advertising and sales promotion show no significant impact on visiting intentions, sponsorship and public relations emerge as influential factors. This suggests a shift in consumer behavior, indicating that factors beyond traditional advertising play a pivotal role in decision-making processes related to tourist attraction visits. Consequently, efforts to cultivate strong community relations and provide sponsorship support can substantially influence potential tourists' perceptions and interest in visiting these attractions. Therefore, destination marketers should prioritize sponsorship and public relations strategies to enhance tourist interest and visits. The practical implication of this research underscores the importance of resource allocation, with a focus on strategies that yield higher returns, such as sponsorship and public relations initiatives. Additionally, building strong partnerships and fostering positive community interactions are crucial for enhancing the destination's image and attractiveness to tourists.

The findings of this study extend beyond individual destinations, offering valuable insights into broader marketing implications within the tourism industry. Given the limited effectiveness of advertising and sales promotion in influencing visitation intentions, marketers must reassess their strategies and redirect efforts towards sponsorship and public relations endeavors, which have proven to be more impactful. This highlights the necessity for adapting marketing approaches to align with evolving consumer behaviors and preferences, ultimately optimizing outcomes in the competitive tourism landscape.

6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS

This research has several limitations that need to be considered. Firstly, this study only conducted an analysis of the direct effects of marketing communication factors such as advertising, sponsorship, sales promotion, and public relations on the intention to visit a place or destination. Therefore, it is expected that future research can include variables that mediate the relationship between these variables, especially the mediation between advertising and sales promotion variables and intention to visit because both of these variables did not significantly influence the endogenous variable. Secondly, in a constantly changing context with the development of technology and evolving consumer behavior, this study did not adequately consider the impact of the increasingly dominant digital marketing strategies. Hence, future research can delve deeper into considering the combined influence of marketing communication factors and exploring the effects of digital marketing on the intention to visit destinations. Furthermore, the research can take into account moderator variables such as perceived value or customer loyalty to better understand the relationship between marketing communication and the intention to visit destinations, which could open up new opportunities for understanding consumer behavior dynamics in the continuously evolving tourism context.

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