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ROLE OF EWOM USEFULNESS SCALE IN ADVENTURE TOURISM ON THE INTENTION TO VISIT AND RECOMMEND

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Abstract

Adventure travel is becoming popular as individuals search for novel, engaging, and distinctive experiences. This paper aims to validate an integrated EWOM usefulness scale for the adventure tourism context. To further examine it, the Stimuli-Organism-Response (SOR) theoretical framework was used to conceptualise the model for this study. Importantly, this research explores the mediators, such as trust, satisfaction, and destination awareness. With 220 valid respondents to test the hypotheses, we conducted an online survey. The results were analysed using the PLS-SEM method, which conclusively established that EWOM usefulness positively influences destination trust, awareness, and satisfaction. While destination trust impacts the intention to visit and is recommended by adventure tourists, destination awareness positively impacts the visit intention. However, destination awareness does not positively affect the intention to recommend. Finally, satisfaction positively influences the intention to recommend but does not positively affect the intention to visit.

Keywords: *Adventure Tourism, EWOM Usefulness Scale, Tourist Satisfaction, Destination Awareness, Tourist Trust, Intention to Recommend, Intention to Visit*

Introduction

Adventure tourism has been growing rapidly in recent years, with a projected CAGR of 15.2% from 2022 to 2030; it is expected to have an estimated market size of $282.1 billion (Janowski et al., 2021). Adventure tourism is known for providing high levels of sensory stimulation and experiential elements (Pop et al., 2023) and often involves outdoor activities that rely on physical terrain features and require specialist tools. It's a tourist activity that involves physical exertion and requires extensive preparation (Deb et al., 2023).

Tourists use travel-related information to shape their expectations and influence their travel intentions and choices (Kim & Brown, 2012; Tham et al., 2020). While tourists consider Electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM) an important source of information, it allows them to access and evaluate the experiences of other consumers and understand what prompts them to talk and share information online (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016). To comprehend the influence of EWOM on adventure tourism, this study aims to fill the research gap identified by Verma et al. (2021) by investigating and validating the effectiveness of the EWOM usefulness scale. This EWOM usefulness scale is vital to examine the impact of these four constructs relative to each other on the endogenous behavioural constructs like intention to recommend and visit a destination (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; Teng et al., 2014). Further, this EWOM usefulness scale is essential for online travel portals catering to the tourism segment, as most travellers rely extensively on the online content provided to arrive at their travel decisions Verma et al. (2021). An EWOM usefulness scale can be very useful on social media, where user-generated content significantly influences traveller intentions (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; Verma et al., 2021).

This study incorporates four critical EWOM dimensions – volume; valence; source credibility; and argument quality–essential for validating an integrated EWOM usefulness scale that can influence travellers' adventure tourism-seeking propensity (Verma et al., 2021). This EWOM usefulness scale will be a more comprehensive concept for describing the impact of the four dimensions on travellers' behaviour and intention toward travel (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). The study relies on the Stimuli-Organism-Response (SOR) theory to explain the relationship between EWOM stimuli and online adventure tourist behaviour (Janowski et al., 2021). SOR theory is well suited for understanding the mediating roles of constructs such as trust and satisfaction (Su et al., 2021). EWOM can create trust in online

respondents who engage with tourism service providers, and destination trust plays a crucial mediating role (Kumar & Kaushik, 2018; Lam & Hsu, 2006). Adventure tourism seekers highly value destinations that promote a positive and encouraging experience (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016; Nicoletta & Servidio, 2012). Destination awareness is a crucial variable influencing travel behaviour and the intention to visit a destination among tourists seeking new experiences (Raggiotto & Scarpi, 2021; Verma et al., 2021). It also significantly impacts the intention to recommend a destination (Lai & Vinh, 2013). The intention to recommend a destination has implications for adventure tourists and outdoor activity lovers (Eid et al., 2019). Similarly, the intention to visit a destination is a potent and impactful output variable for understanding the impact of mediators like trust and satisfaction (Kumar & Kaushik, 2018).

This study aims to examine the impact of the usefulness of electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM) on the behavioural intention of tourists to visit and recommend adventure tourism destinations. Additionally, the study aims to investigate the mediating effects of trust, satisfaction, and destination awareness on this relationship. It contributes to the empirical research for establishing a relationship between the EWOM usefulness scale items and the intention to recommend and visit adventure tourists.

Literature Review

Adventure tourism is a unique area within the field of tourism that focuses on leisure activities. These activities generally involve some physical activity, and hazards often occur in natural environments. This kind of travel is becoming increasingly popular because it encourages self-challenge and the drive to do it (Franco et al., 2022). Prior studies indicated that positive Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM) about a tourist destination could be communicated among travellers because of their satisfying experiences with the amenities, products, and other services (Wang, 2015). Recommendations provided after visits might be considered reliable sources of information for potential travellers (Hasan & Neela, 2022). Online user reviews play a crucial role in providing information for travellers interested in tourism (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012).

Recently, Verma et al. (2021) evaluated some important components of electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM), such as volume; valence; argument quality; and source credibility, in order to create a scale for evaluating the usefulness of EWOM. The efficiency of reviews is thought to be the key factor in determining the strength of an argument (Cheung & Thadani,

2012). Travellers are more likely to have a positive opinion of a place if they have access to reliable information on social media platforms while making decisions. Furthermore, López and Sicilia (2014) stressed that expertise and trustworthiness are often employed to assess source credibility. The concept of EWOM usefulness has significance for building trust, satisfaction, and awareness of a destination, which in turn affects visitors' inclinations to visit and their recommendations to others. Therefore, the current study aims to validate the Verma et al. (2021) EWOM usefulness scale, specifically in the context of adventure tourism. There is an absence of research examining this scale in relation to adventure travel.

Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR)

Within the framework of SOR, the organism's emotion and cognition mediate in tourism, turning the stimuli into responses (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). The idea behind the organism is that it is a psychological and emotional state that stands between inputs and reactions and is influenced by factors including satisfaction, destination awareness, and trust (Hsu et al., 2021). The tourists' behaviour towards a destination determines the final result (Bigne et al., 2020).

Previous academic researches has found that user-generated content on both authorised and unauthorised social media networks is used for advertising and promoting destinations (Pourfakhimi et al., 2020). Tourists can verbally express powerful emotions in online reviews of travel-related experiences (Zhang et al., 2014). The stimulus (S) module in the S-O-R theory's framework can be viewed explicitly as the direct impact of online content on the emotional and valence intensity of tourists' choices. Additionally, a component of (O) is the tourists' destination trust, awareness, and satisfaction leading from the stimulus stage, and the final (R) module is their trip intention and recommendation willingness. An electronic review triggers this trust as per Filieri (2016). It was observed that an integrated model based on the theoretical architecture of online reviews could be developed using the S-O-R framework, which is advantageous and relevant in this study's context.

EWOM Usefulness and Trust

According to Moorman et al. (1993), trust can be defined as the willingness of individuals to rely on others based on those people's perceived dependability and trustworthiness. Prior studies highlight the need to adopt modern technology that provides secured and trustworthy online services,

indicating that trust is key in boosting customer satisfaction (Lai & Vinh, 2013). The current study demonstrates that using the EWOM usefulness scale can significantly enhance trust among travellers during social interactions. To further explain it, we proposed the below hypothesis:

H1: EWOM usefulness positively influences destination trust.

EWOM Usefulness and Destination Awareness

As to the research conducted by Gómez and Consuegra (2010), information sources play a vital role in creating destination awareness by enabling individuals to be aware of their environment. Knowledge of something's presence is what is meant by the term "awareness" (Niekerk & Saayman, 2013). It is crucial for potential visitors to be aware of a destination›s attractions. EWOM as a whole construct influences destination awareness. Here, the proposed hypothesis is as follows:

H2: EWOM usefulness positively influences destination awareness.

EWOM Usefulness and Satisfaction

It was observed that EWOM on social media was primarily employed for searching for travel information in the initial phases of vacation planning (Cox et al., 2009). According to the literature, satisfied visitors are more likely to recommend a location or product, share their experience with others, and return to the same place (Crompton, 1992). It is recommended that tourist attractions and companies encourage visitors to share positive customer service experiences on Internet review platforms (Lai & Vinh, 2013). We arrive at the following hypothesis:

H3:EWOM usefulness positively influences satisfaction.

Trust to Travel Intention and Recommendation

Using the S-O-R paradigm, it has been shown that visitors are less willing to visit a place if they read unfavourable online travel reviews (Filieri et al., 2019). This happens because the individuals have less faith in the location and perceive it as less trustworthy. Adversely, travellers who read favourable internet reviews are likely to have trust in the tourist destination. Trust has been shown to effectively lessen perceptions of risk and uncertainty (Han,

2013). A destination's service offerings must be honest and transparent for tourists to trust them. Evidence from Terry et al. (2009) supports the idea that trust is a need for repeat trips. A tourist is directly influenced by their own image (Whang et al., 2016). As per Kuo et al. (2009), satisfaction positively influences and significantly impacts repeat visitation intentions. Therefore, we hypothesise the following:

H4: Trust positively influences and significantly impacts the intention to recommend in the adventure tourism context.

H5: Trust positively influences the intention to visit in the adventure tourism context.

Destination Awareness and Intention to Recommend

Destination awareness is "what someone knows or thinks they know about a destination" (Konecnik, 2006). A thriving tourist destination must be well-known and famous for attracting potential visitors (Jenkins, 1999). Online user-generated content is crucial for increasing destination awareness (Sigala, 2018). Consequently, we hypothesised that:

H6: Destination awareness positively and significantly affects the intention to recommend.

Destination Awareness and Visit Intention

According to Tsaur et al. (2016), creating destination awareness is essential to creating a location's brand identity. Potential tourists must be informed about a destination's attractions and amenities. Adding a new resource or attraction can be a catalyst or a driving factor in increasing traveller awareness of a place. Hence, the proposed hypothesis is as follows:

H7: Destination awareness positively and significantly affects the intention to visit.

Satisfaction and Intention to Recommend

A significant consideration for the travel industry is destination satisfaction (Jenkins, 1999). When visitors are satisfied and delighted with their experience, they share their opinions and urge others to travel to the location (Lee et al., 2014). The following hypothesis is as follows:

H8: Satisfaction positively and significantly affects the intention to recommend.

Satisfaction and Visit Intention

Visitors are satisfied when the experiences meet or surpass their expectations (Chen & Chen, 2010). Therefore, research in the tourist industry shows that visitors' satisfaction of visitors proves to be a good indicator of return/revisit intentions and recommend the area to others (Correia et al., 2013). Travellers' online information sharing is significantly correlated with their level of happiness, so if they have a positive experience at a specific location, they will promote it to others (Lai & Vinh, 2013). We arrive at the following hypothesis:

H9: Satisfaction positively and significantly affects the intention to visit.

Given the earlier hypotheses, we propose the conceptual research model in Fig. 1.

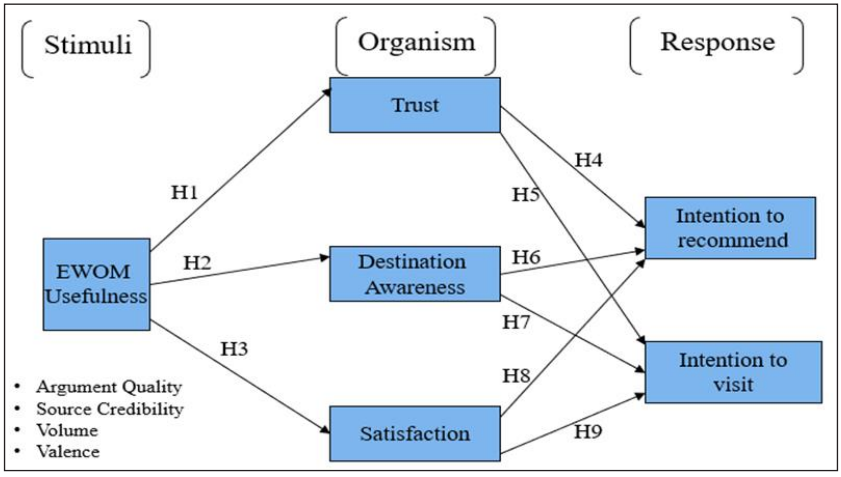

Fig. 1: Conceptual Research Model

Research Methodology

Survey Instruments

The study adopted a survey method for collecting data online, considering the ease of access and reach for generating responses Verma et al. (2021).

Theoretically, activity-based tourism has many aspects, and adventure tourism is a vital outlet for outgoing tourists (Janowski et al., 2021). Consequently, this study administered an online survey of college students, working professionals, and self-employed urban workers in Indian cities, addressing urban and semi-urban areas. A seven-point Likert scale was used to capture the respondent data, distributed between ′1=strongly disagree′ and ′7=strongly agree. At the beginning of the survey, two screening questions were included to ensure that only those respondents who have had some form of adventure tourism experience before were captured. The survey form had 42 questions for measuring the nine constructs identified in the research model. The survey was written in English, considering the intended audience.

Measures

Established scale items that identified and measured EWOM for tourists who indulge in outdoor activities were used and adapted for this study, such as source credibility; volume; valence; and argument quality Verma et al. (2021). Argument quality was measured using five items (Wixom & Todd, 2005), and source credibility was captured using three items according to López and Sicilia (2014). EWOM volume was captured using three items adapted from Teng et al. (2014), while valence was captured using five items adapted from Baur and Nyström (2017). Trust, an important mediator, was captured using a seven-item scale adapted from Kumar and Kaushik (2018), and satisfaction was measured using a six-item scale adapted from Albaity and Melhem (2017). Destination awareness was the other important mediator used in the research model and was measured in three items adapted from Lai and Vinh (2013). Finally, the dependent variables were measured using well-established scale items adapted from frequently cited journals. Intention to recommend was captured using four items adapted from Eid et al. (2019), while the intention to visit was measured using a six items scale adapted from Jalilvand and Samiei (2012) and Lam and Hsu (2006). All the constructs and their measurement items adopted from multiple sources are highlighted in Appendix 1.

Sampling

With an increase in the urbanisation and digitalisation of the market, urban consumers have been increasingly seeking adventure tourism experiences that relate closely to their cultural and natural values (Janowski et al., 2021). Theoretically, activity-based tourism has many aspects, and adventure

tourism is a vital outlet for outgoing tourists (Janowski et al., 2021). Due to this, the intended target for this online survey for this study was administered to college students, working professionals, and city-based urban workers who are self-employed in India. This study captured data from primarily tier-1 and tier-2 cities in India. The data collection took around one month to complete. At the beginning of the survey, a brief overview of the study was given about the background and aspects of the research being studied. Once the screening questions were administered, the respondents were asked to respond to the entire questionnaire on the Google Forms platform. The survey form was administered to more than 1100 respondents. Finally, 236 responses were received, out of which 220 valid responses were used for the final analysis.

Data Analysis

Analysis was done at two levels, i.e., measurement model and structural model, to find and analyse the descriptive statistics, as understanding demographic data like age and gender was found to be very important by other researchers in the tourism domain (Cater, 2017). The empirical response data collected from the survey forms were analysed using the partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) method (Hair et al., 2019). For this analysis, SmartPLS 4.0 software was used to conduct statistical testing and data validation. This method was found to be robust as no prior data assumption was needed while working on a relatively small sample size (220 responses) (Tapar et al., 2017). Additionally, this statistical method was found to be highly useful in the context of those data sets with higher covariance and minimum unexplained variance (Hair et al., 2013). It has also been observed that SEM is a reliable and trustworthy technique for drawing out inferences from relatively complex data, which is of the second-order construct and has multiple mediating relationships (Hair et al., 2019; Sarstedt et al., 2014). A bootstrapping procedure was also carried out for 5,000 iterations to understand the significance of the loadings, path coefficients, and weights assigned.

Results

Respondents' Profile

The identifier characteristic of the quantitative data sample was observed and verified by finding out the descriptive statistics and demographic target audience-related data. Table 1 presents the demographic findings from the sample data of 220 valid responses.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Characteristics		Percentage
Gender	Male	46.8
	Female	53.2
Age	Between 18-25 years	25.9
	Between 26-40 years	67.7
	Between 41-55 years	5.5
	55 and above	0.9

Assessment of the Measurement Model

Discriminant validity and reliability are essential parameters for assessing the reflective and formative constructs, which are part of the analysis of the measurement model (Hair et al., 2011). Researchers have observed that the first-order reflective constructs' previous convergent validity, indicator reliability, and discriminant validity as essential when using the PLS-SEM technique (Hair et al., 2012). In Table 2, we can see the Cronbach's Alpha values of all the constructs. As per the literature, all values above 0.70 are considered acceptable for indicator reliability (Sarstedt et al., 2014). All the values except for volume were found to be above 0.70 and hence considered acceptable. Volume was found to be acceptable as the values for Composite Reliability (CR) and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were above the acceptable figures.

In contrast, the values for convergent validity were measured using the CR, factor loadings, and AVE (Fornell & Larcker, 2016). The item loadings (Fig. 2) were observed to be above 0.6 and hence considered acceptable, while the CR values were consistently above 0.70 (Table 2). Therefore, all the constructs were considered valid (Hair et al., 2011). Based on this assessment, the PLS-SEM results supported the convergent validity of the model.

Next, we analysed the discriminant validity by adopting the Fornell-Larcker (F&L) criterion and the heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) criteria parameters (Henseler et al., 2015; Fornell & Larcker, 2016). In Table 2, we observe that the HTMT correlation values of all the first-order constructs were found to be below 0.90, thereby indicating apparent discriminant validity among the proposed model constructs (Henseler et al., 2015). As given in Table 3, the F&L criterion figures were satisfactory as the square root calculated for the AVE of every construct was higher than its corresponding correlation value with other constructs, providing evidence for discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 2016).

Table 2: Measurement Statistics of the Constructs (Construct Reliability and Validity) and HTMT Ratios

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	HTMT Values									
				Argument Quality	Destination Awareness	EWOM Usefulness_	Intention to Recommend	Intention to Visit	Satisfaction	Source Credibility	Trust	Valence	Volume
AQ	0.805	0.865	0.563										
DA	0.727	0.846	0.648	0.658									
EWOM Usefulness	0.903	0.916	0.408	0.967	0.789								
IR	0.796	0.867	0.62	0.663	0.712	0.82							
IV	0.85	0.888	0.57	0.517	0.679	0.587	0.844						
Satisfaction	0.883	0.911	0.632	0.563	0.857	0.789	0.893	0.605					
SC	0.752	0.858	0.669	0.747	0.665	0.988	0.693	0.454	0.747				
Trust	0.872	0.901	0.566	0.672	0.848	0.842	0.872	0.64	0.826	0.712			
Valence	0.809	0.868	0.571	0.662	0.768	0.997	0.807	0.548	0.78	0.737	0.842		
Volume	0.678	0.824	0.61	0.707	0.733	1.042	0.786	0.585	0.79	0.903	0.794	0.872	

Table 3: Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Argument Quality	Destination Awareness	EWOM Usefulness_	Intention to Recommend	Intention to Visit	Satisfaction	Source Credibility	Trust	Valence	Volume
Argument Quality	0.751									
Destination Awareness	0.501	0.805								
EWOM Usefulness_	0.807	0.640	0.639							
Intention to Recommend	0.531	0.543	0.699	0.788						
Intention to Visit	0.433	0.538	0.525	0.704	0.755					
Satisfaction	0.475	0.687	0.713	0.752	0.539	0.795				
Source Credibility	0.583	0.493	0.816	0.538	0.375	0.611	0.818			
Trust	0.568	0.674	0.755	0.731	0.566	0.728	0.582	0.753		
Valence	0.536	0.588	0.865	0.647	0.462	0.663	0.577	0.710	0.755	
Volume	0.525	0.515	0.819	0.579	0.457	0.613	0.644	0.614	0.648	0.781

Evaluation of the Structural Model

Next, we looked at the proposed relationships between the variables given in the structural model. The coefficient of determination R2 was seen for measuring the predictive accuracy of the structural model, and the Q2 value was calculated to determine the predictive relevance of the model (Table 4). As seen in Table 4, all the R2 values of endogenous latent variables are above 0.1, thereby establishing the predictive accuracy of the model (Falk & Miller,

1992). All the Q2 values were noted to be higher than 0, thereby also indicating that the endogenous constructs in the research model had predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2019). We also note that path coefficients are vital parameters in Table 5A for examining the relationships between the constructs identified in the research model (Sarstedt et al., 2014). The structural model results were looked at in Table 5A, and all the other direct relationships were significant (P<0.05) except for the relationship between "Destination Awareness and Intention to Recommend" and "Satisfaction and Intention to Visit" in the research model. We also looked at the mediation effect of trust, satisfaction, and destination awareness by looking at the specific indirect effect of the mediating variables between the independent and dependent variables with the help of the bootstrap method (n=5000). As given in Table 5B, in case the specific indirect effect was significant (P<0.05), the mediation effect could be reported within a confidence interval of 95% (Zhao et al., 2010).

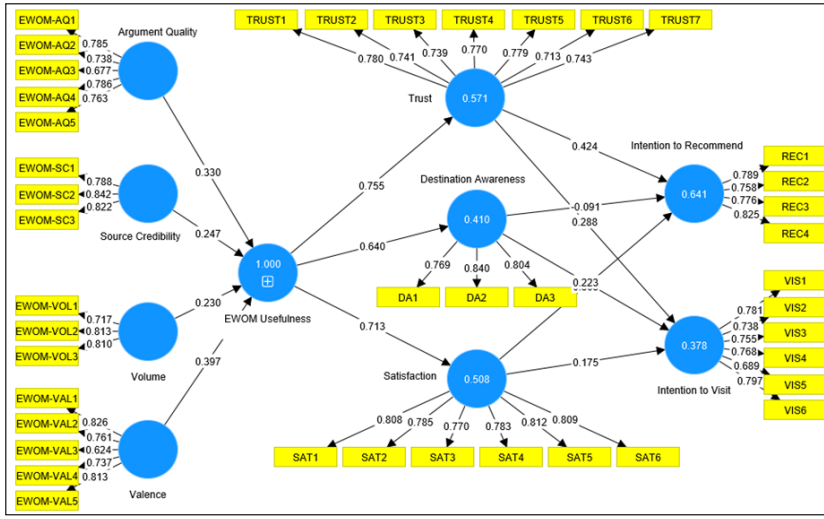

Fig. 2: PLS-SEM Output

Table 4: R^2 and Q^2 Values

	R^2	Q^2
Destination Awareness	0.410	0.400
EWOM Usefulness_	1.000	1.000
Intention to Recommend	0.641	0.475
Intention to Visit	0.378	0.259
Satisfaction	0.508	0.500
Trust	0.571	0.564

Table 5A: Results of the Structural Model

Path flow of direct relationships	Beta (Path Coefficient)	Standard deviation	P values
EWOM Usefulness_ -> Destination Awareness	0.640	0.082	0.000
EWOM Usefulness_ -> Satisfaction	0.713	0.068	0.000
EWOM Usefulness_ -> Trust	0.755	0.061	0.000
Destination Awareness -> Intention to Recommend	-0.091	0.094	*0.336*
Destination Awareness -> Intention to Visit	0.223	0.097	0.021
Satisfaction -> Intention to Recommend	0.505	0.071	0.000
Satisfaction -> Intention to Visit	0.175	0.121	*0.148*
Trust -> Intention to Recommend	0.424	0.067	0.000
Trust -> Intention to Visit	0.288	0.110	0.009

P<0.05 for significance of the relationship

Table 5B: Specific Indirect Effects for Complementary Mediation

Path flow in the model	Beta (Path Coefficient)	Standard deviation	Lower Limit (CI) 2.5%	Upper Limit (CI) 97.5%	P values
EWOM Usefulness_ -> Destination Awareness -> Intention to Visit	0.143	0.068	0.024	0.292	0.035
EWOM Usefulness_ -> Satisfaction -> Intention to Recommend	0.360	0.061	0.233	0.474	0.000
EWOM Usefulness -> Satisfaction -> Intention to Visit	0.125	0.087	-0.054	0.288	*0.150*
EWOM Usefulness_ -> Destination Awareness -> Intention to Recommend	-0.058	0.058	-0.155	0.073	*0.315*
EWOM Usefulness -> Trust -> Intention to Recommend	0.321	0.063	0.197	0.443	0.000
EWOM Usefulness -> Trust -> Intention to Visit	0.217	0.090	0.048	0.396	0.016

P<0.05 for significance of the relationship

The results of the proposed hypotheses (Table 6) suggest that the relationship between destination awareness and intention to recommend (H6) and the relationship between satisfaction and intention to visit (H9) are not supported, thereby not establishing the mediating roles played by the two constructs for these relationships. The non-significance of H6 could be because until someone visits a site, they may not be able to recommend it to others (Lai & Vinh, 2013). Similarly, the non-significance of H9 could be due to the lack of satisfaction among tourists, which may reduce their intention to visit a site (Hsu et al., 2021).

Table 6: Hypotheses Results

Hypotheses	Supported
H1: The usefulness of EWOM positively influences destination trust.	Yes
H2: The usefulness of EWOM positively influences destination awareness.	Yes
H3: The usefulness of EWOM positively influences satisfaction.	Yes
H4: Trust has a significant impact on the intention to recommend in the adventure tourism context.	Yes
H5: Trust has a significant impact on the intention to visit in the adventure tourism context.	Yes
H6: Destination awareness positively and significantly affects the intention to recommend.	No
H7: Destination awareness positively and significantly affects the intention to visit.	Yes
H8: Satisfaction positively and significantly affects the intention to recommend.	Yes
H9: Satisfaction positively and significantly affects the intention to visit.	No

Discussion and Findings

This study draws heavily from the integrated EWOM usefulness scale proposed by (Verma et al., 2021) and other related studies (Tapar et al., 2017; Williams & Soutar, 2009). This study presumed that satisfaction, trust, and awareness lead to the intention to recommend and visit among adventure tourism seekers. EWOM usefulness is a critical variable that determines the level of trust, satisfaction, and destination awareness amongst adventure tourism seekers. Moreover, it aligns with previous researchers' finding (Hsu et al., 2021; Kumar & Kaushik, 2018; Abubakar, 2016). Tourists depend heavily on online-mediated content to arrive at their decisions these days. Hence, an integrated EWOM usefulness scale adapted from Verma et al. (2021) was used to test a research model that looks at the SOR theory through the lens of adventure tourism seekers (Hsu et al., 2021). The findings of this study suggest that while EWOM usefulness is an essential index for measuring destination awareness, satisfaction, and trust among adventure tourism seekers, the final intention to recommend and visit a destination may not always be related to the mediating variables in this research model, i.e., destination awareness and satisfaction.

Next, we see a significant contribution to validating the EWOM scale in the context of adventure tourism, which may not have been there earlier. Also, the authors try to introduce the SOR theory within this scenario to explain the stimuli that can lead to a particular type of tourist behaviour in the adventure tourism industry. This study also tries to introduce destination awareness as a mediator in the context of adventure tourism. While destination

awareness impacted the intention to visit, it could not clearly be associated with the intention to recommend. The next important understanding of this study comes from the relationship between trust and intention to visit and recommend. Trust comes out to be another important mediating variable in this relationship, while satisfaction was found to have an effect on the intention to recommend as well.

Companies providing adventure tourism activities to their customers should focus more on building and increasing the level of trust with their guests and prospective visitors. Also, this study establishes a clear antecedent between EWOM volume; valence; source credibility; and argument credibility with the trust, satisfaction, and destination awareness in the minds of adventure tourism seekers. This study also helps empirically establish that EWOM plays a clear and determinant role in augmenting the average adventure tourism seeker's final intention to visit and recommend a site.

Practical Implications

The EWOM usefulness scale used in this study can effectively measure EWOM, an important variable in adventure tourism. The scale is based on four first-order constructs – volume; valence; source credibility; and argument quality by Verma et al. (2021). This study found that EWOM usefulness positively influences trust, destination awareness, and satisfaction in adventure tourists, which is significant for managers to consider in their online and social media campaigns.

Additionally, trust significantly affected the intention to recommend and visit, highlighting its importance for managers targeting adventure tourists. Managers should also consider the importance of destination awareness and satisfaction in their outreach and marketing campaigns. These findings have practical implications for the adventure tourism industry, making it highly useful for managers.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite the researchers' best efforts, this study had some limitations. The limitations of this study include the sample being limited to a specific geographic location and demographic group, potentially limiting generalizability to other regions and populations. Future research could replicate the model presented in this study for activity-specific adventure tourism events such as quad biking, water rafting, and trekking/hiking.

Future researchers may also investigate the role of destination image as a mediator to understand its implications on the model in adventure tourism or other tourism scenarios. Future researchers could also explore the effect of the intention to revisit as another research direction to capture repeat tourists. The study can be replicated in multiple scenarios and contexts to understand the practical implications of the integrated EWOM usefulness scale in different tourism settings.

Declaration of Conflicting Interest

The authors have no competing interest to declare for this manuscript.

Appendix 1: Constructs and Their Measurement Items Adopted from Source (N = 220)

Argument Quality: adopted from (Wixom & Todd, 2005)	
AQ1	For the adventure tourism destination of my choice, the online information provided is of high quality.
AQ2	For the adventure tourism destination of my choice, In terms of system quality, I would rate highly the website content.
AQ3	For the adventure tourism destination of my choice, I would term the information provided by rating to be of high quality.
AQ4	For the adventure tourism destination of my choice, the website in general, provides me with high-quality information.
AQ5	For the adventure tourism destination of my choice, overall, I would give the information provided by a high rating in terms of quality.
Source Credibility: adopted from López and Sicilia(2014) Zhang et al., 2014)	
SC1	For the adventure tourism destination of my choice, I feel that they were trustworthy
SC2	For the adventure tourism destination of my choice, I feel that they were telling the truth
SC3	For the adventure tourism destination of my choice, I feel that they were being honest
Volume: adopted from (Teng et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2014)	

VOL1	For the adventure tourism destination of my choice, many people had posted online reviews.
VOL2	For the adventure tourism destination of my choice, there were many online reviews available.
VOL3	For the adventure tourism destination of my choice, popularity on social media was high.
Valence: adopted from (Baur & Nyström, 2017; Teng et al., 2014)	
VAL1	For the adventure tourism destination of my choice, when reading reviews online, it is important to read both positive and negative reviews
VAL2	For the adventure tourism destination of my choice, when evaluating online reviews, it is important to check the number of online reviews.
VAL3	For the adventure tourism destination of my choice, when evaluating online reviews, a positive review is more preferred.
VAL4	For the adventure tourism destination of my choice, when evaluating online reviews, a positive or negative review makes it more likely to select the option given.
VAL5	For the adventure tourism destination of my choice, when evaluating online reviews, the perception changes if there are only positive or negative reviews.
Trust: adopted from (Kumar and Kaushik, 2018)	
TRUST 1	I feel confident that this destination is a good tourist destination.
TRUST 2	I feel that this destination meets my expectations.
TRUST 3	I feel that this destination guarantees tourist satisfaction.
TRUST 4	I feel that this destination would compensate me in some ways for the problems with the trip.
TRUST 5	I feel that this destination would make any effort to satisfy tourists.
TRUST 6	I feel that I could rely on this destination to solve any problems with the trip.
TRUST 7	I feel that this destination would be honest and sincere in addressing my concerns.
Satisfaction: adopted from (Albaity & Melhem, 2017)	
SAT1	The experience at the adventure tourism destination of my choice was enjoyable.
SAT2	The experience at the adventure tourism destination of my choice gave me positive feelings about my decision
SAT3	The experience at the adventure tourism destination of my choice was preferable over other destinations.
SAT4	The experience at the adventure tourism destination of my choice was exactly what I needed.
SAT5	The experience at the adventure tourism destination of my choice was pleasant.
SAT6	The experience at the adventure tourism destination of my choice was a fully satisfactory decision.
Destination Awareness: adopted from (Lai & Vinh, 2013)	
DA1	My choice of destination was familiar to me and I was aware about it.
DA2	My choice of destination was very visible and famous.
DA3	My choice of destination comes first thing to my mind when thinking about adventure tourism.
Intention to recommend: adopted from (Eid et al., 2019)	
REC1	I will recommend the adventure tourism destination to others
REC2	I will say positive things about the adventure tourism destination to others
REC3	I will recommend the adventure tourism destination as favourable to others
REC4	I will encourage friends and relatives to visit the adventure tourism destination
Intention to visit: adopted from (Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012; Lam Hsu, 2006)	

VIS1	For the destination of my choice, I predict I will visit it in the future
VIS2	For the destination of my choice, I would visit it rather than any other adventure tourism destination
VIS3	For the destination of my choice, there is a likelihood of a visit in the next 12 months.
VIS4	For the destination of my choice, there is an intention to visit in the next 12 months.
VIS5	For the destination of my choice, I want to visit immediately.
VIS6	For the destination of my choice, If everything goes as I think, I will plan to visit it again in the future.

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