HOW GREEN DIGITAL MARKETING SHAPES TOURISTS' VISIT DECISIONS IN COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF GREEN AWARENESS

NGUYEN NGUYEN PHUONG[1], HOANG CHI CUONG[2*]
[1] *Faculty of Commerce and Tourism, Industrial University of Ho Chi Minh City*
[2] *Faculty of Commerce, Van Lang University*
** Corresponding author: cuong.hc@vlu.edu.vn*

Abstract. This study examines how green digital marketing influences tourists' visit decisions for community-based tourism services through the mediating role of green awareness. Drawing on the Value-Attitude-Behavior framework, the Value-Belief-Norm theory, and the Norm Activation Model, the study develops a model linking green advertising, green social media communication, green content and local storytelling, and online eco-labeling/certification to green awareness and visit decision. Data were collected from 468 tourists who had interacted with green digital marketing and were analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling. The findings show that all four green digital marketing dimensions significantly enhance green awareness, with online eco-labeling/certification having the strongest effect. Green awareness, in turn, strongly predicts visit decisions and fully mediates the relationships between green digital marketing dimensions and visit decisions. The study contributes to sustainable tourism marketing by highlighting awareness-building, credible certification, and green trust as key mechanisms through which digital green communication can be translated into tourists' sustainable visit decisions in community-based tourism.

Keywords. community-based tourism, eco-labeling, green awareness, green digital marketing, visit decision, sustainable tourism

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of tourism has intensified the need for marketing strategies that support sustainable development rather than merely stimulate demand. Community-based tourism (CBT) is especially relevant to this agenda because it links tourist experiences with local culture, community participation, environmental conservation, and local economic benefits [1]. In this setting, marketing communication is not only a promotional tool but also a mechanism through which tourists learn about sustainability, evaluate the credibility of tourism providers, and decide whether to support responsible tourism services.

Green digital marketing refers to the use of digital channels to communicate environmentally responsible values, practices, and offerings [2], [3]. In tourism, digital platforms such as websites, social media, online advertising, short videos, and electronic certification displays enable service providers to reach tourists before travel decisions are made. Prior studies show that green marketing messages can improve consumer attitudes and intentions toward sustainable products and services [4], [5]. However, the effectiveness of green messages depends on whether they increase tourists' environmental understanding and perceived responsibility [6], [7].

Although the relationship between green marketing and green consumption has been widely studied, fewer studies examine how different green digital marketing components operate in the specific context of CBT services. In such contexts, digital green communication may not work merely as promotional persuasion. Instead, it must help tourists understand community-based sustainability values and reduce uncertainty about whether the destination's green claims are authentic. Therefore, examining green digital marketing in CBT requires attention to both awareness formation and trust-based decision-making. Besides, existing research also tends to treat green marketing as a general construct, while the digital environment contains different signals with different levels of credibility, including promotional advertising, social media communication, storytelling, and online eco-labeling. This distinction is important because tourists may respond differently to persuasive messages and verifiable certification cues.

This study addresses this gap by investigating the effects of four green digital marketing dimensions - green advertising, green social media communication, green content and local community storytelling, and online eco-labeling/certification - on tourists' visit decisions for CBT services. The study further examines

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green awareness as the mediating mechanism through which digital green communication is translated into visit decisions. The findings provide both theoretical insights for sustainable consumer behavior research and practical implications for CBT providers seeking to design more effective digital communication strategies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Community-based tourism and green digital marketing

CBT emphasizes active community participation in tourism activities, authentic local experiences, environmental conservation, and the sustainable use of local resources. It differs from conventional tourism because the welfare of local communities and the conservation of local cultural and environmental assets are central to the value proposition [1]. As tourists become more environmentally conscious, CBT providers need communication strategies that make sustainability visible, credible, and personally meaningful.

Digital marketing has become a dominant interface between tourism suppliers and potential travelers. Tourists increasingly rely on online content, social media interactions, peer reviews, and visual storytelling when forming travel preferences. Green digital marketing integrates these digital tools with sustainability-oriented messages, thereby promoting environmentally friendly services and encouraging responsible choices [2]. In CBT, this integration can communicate both environmental benefits and social value, such as local empowerment, cultural preservation, and conservation outcomes.

Green awareness refers to tourists' knowledge of environmental issues, understanding of sustainability practices, and recognition of the environmental consequences of their choices. In sustainable tourism, awareness is a crucial cognitive condition because tourists must first understand the value and consequences of their choices before they can prefer green alternatives [6], [7] Therefore, this study positions green awareness as a key mediator between green digital marketing and visit decisions.

Green trust refers to tourists' confidence in the credibility, reliability, and authenticity of a destination's environmental claims and sustainability practices. In the context of CBT, tourists may not be able to directly verify whether a destination is genuinely sustainable before visiting. As a result, they often rely on online certifications, eco-labels, transparent digital information, and credible community-based stories to evaluate the destination's green commitment. When green trust is high, tourists are more likely to believe that their visit can contribute to environmental protection, cultural preservation, and local community benefits [8], [9]. Thus, green trust is expected to strengthen the extent to which green awareness is translated into visit decisions.

Tourists' visit decisions refer to tourists' intention and willingness to choose, visit, or recommend CBT destinations with green attributes [10]. Unlike general visit decisions, visit decisions in CBT involve not only service consumption but also tourists' evaluation of environmental responsibility, local community value, and destination credibility. In this study, tourists' visit decisions are considered the final behavioural outcome shaped by green awareness and strengthened by green trust.

2.2. Theoretical foundation

The theoretical framework combines the Value-Attitude-Behavior (VAB) model, the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory, and the Norm Activation Model (NAM). The VAB model suggests that tourists' values shape attitudes, which subsequently guide behavior [11]. Green digital marketing can activate environmental values by presenting CBT services as choices that align with ecological and social responsibility.

The VBN theory extends this reasoning by emphasizing that values influence environmental beliefs and personal norms [12]. In the CBT context, digital green communication can strengthen tourists' beliefs about the benefits of sustainable tourism and the consequences of unsustainable practices. NAM further suggests that awareness of consequences and ascription of responsibility activate moral obligations to act pro-environmentally [13]. Thus, green awareness becomes the cognitive and moral mechanism through which digital messages influence visit decisions.

2.3. Hypothesis development and research model

Green advertising and customer green awareness: Green advertising refers to promotional communication that emphasizes the environmental benefits of products, services or corporate practices, with the intention

of shaping positive consumer perceptions and encouraging sustainable purchasing behavior [14]. Green advertising communicates the environmental benefits of tourism services and helps tourists identify sustainable options. When advertising messages are transparent and credible, they can increase tourists' understanding of green value, especially how their visit supports local livelihoods, cultural preservation, and improve awareness of environmental issues [10], [15]. Therefore, H1 is proposed:

H1: Green advertising positively influences customers' green awareness.

Green social media communication and customer green awareness: Green social media communication refers to the strategic use of social media platforms by businesses to convey their environmental initiatives and sustainability efforts [16]. Social media can spread green information, build communities, and reinforce trust in sustainable practices [17]. In the context of CBT, social media communication is particularly important because it allows CBT providers to share information about local community participation, cultural preservation, conservation activities, and responsible travel practices. Therefore, H2 is proposed:

H2: Green social media communication positively influences customers' green awareness.

Green content and local community storytelling and customer green awareness: Green content and local community storytelling are intertwined in the effort to promote sustainable practices and empower local communities. Storytelling serves as a powerful tool to convey cultural values, environmental conservation efforts, and community empowerment, often through digital platforms [18]. This approach not only enhances the branding of geo-tourism destinations but also fosters social transformation and ecological responsibility [19]. The integration of local narratives with digital media and participatory communication strategies is crucial in amplifying the voices of local communities and promoting sustainable development, connecting tourists with community identity, cultural heritage, and place-based conservation values, which helps tourists understand why CBT matters and how their choices affect local destinations [20]. Therefore, H3 is proposed:

H3: Green content and local community storytelling positively influence customers' green awareness.

Online eco-labeling/ certification and customer green awareness: Online eco-labeling and certification provide credible signals about environmental performance. These labels serve as indicators of a product's adherence to environmental standards, influencing consumer trust and perception of value [9]. Unlike general advertising, certification offers more verifiable information and can reduce consumer uncertainty in digital environments [21]. In CBT, where many destinations are small-scale and less familiar to tourists, online eco-labelling/certification can act as an external credibility signal that helps tourists recognize whether a destination follows sustainable practices. Therefore, H4 is proposed:

H4: Online eco-labeling/certification positively influences customer green awareness.

Customer Green awareness and Tourists' visit decisions: Customers with higher green awareness are more likely to prefer tourism services that align with environmental and community values. Research indicates that tourists' environmental awareness significantly impacts their intention to visit and revisit green accommodations, as well as their willingness to pay a premium for sustainable tourism experiences. This awareness is often intertwined with perceived value, personal norms, and trust in green practices, which collectively shape tourists' decisions [22], [23]. Therefore, H5 is proposed:

H5: Customer green awareness positively influences visit decisions for community-based tourism services.

The mediating role of tourists' green awareness: Tourists' green awareness is expected to mediate the relationship between green digital marketing factors and visit decisions toward community-based tourism services. Green marketing communication can influence consumers' purchase intention by shaping their environmental knowledge, attitudes, trust, and perception of green value. Prior studies also show that environmental awareness is an important psychological mechanism that strengthens green purchase behaviour and sustainable consumption decisions [7], [23]. Therefore, green advertising, green social media communication, green content and local community storytelling, and online eco-labelling/certification may not directly lead to visit decisions; rather, they first enhance customers' green awareness, which subsequently increases their likelihood of choosing community-based tourism services. Hence, this study also proposes a mediation hypothesis as follows:

H6a. Customers' green awareness mediates the relationship between green advertising and visit decisions of community-based tourism services.

H6b. Customers' green awareness mediates the relationship between green social media communication and visit decisions of community-based tourism services.

H6c. Customers' green awareness mediates the relationship between green content and local community storytelling and visit decisions of community-based tourism services.

H6d. Customers' green awareness mediates the relationship between eco-labelling/certification online and visit decisions of community-based tourism services.

The moderating role of green trust: Green trust refers to tourists' confidence in the credibility, reliability, and authenticity of a destination's environmental claims and sustainability practices. Prior studies define green trust as consumers' confidence in a product, service, brand, or organization based on its perceived environmental performance, credibility, and ability to fulfil green promises [24]. In this study, green trust is conceptualized as a moderator rather than as a direct outcome of the green digital marketing dimensions. This is because green advertising, green social media communication, green content and local community storytelling, and online eco-labelling/certification mainly function as information cues that enhance tourists' green awareness, whereas green trust reflects tourists' broader evaluative confidence that the destination's green claims are credible, authentic, and free from greenwashing concerns. This distinction is particularly important in community-based tourism, where destinations are often small-scale, locally managed, and less standardized than mass tourism providers. Although customers' green awareness can encourage responsible tourism decisions, awareness alone may not always lead to actual visit decisions. Tourists may understand the importance of sustainable tourism but still hesitate if they do not trust the destination's green claims [25]. If green claims are perceived as credible and authentic, green awareness is more likely to be translated into visit decisions. In contrast, when green trust is low, tourists may suspect greenwashing or doubt whether their visit can create environment and community value. Therefore, green trust is expected to serve as a moderator that strengthens the positive relationship between customers' green awareness and tourists' visit decisions. This moderator logic is consistent with prior studies that position green trust as a boundary condition strengthening the effects of green-related perceptions, values, or knowledge on green purchase intention and green purchase behavior [26], [27].

H7. Green trust positively moderates the relationship between customers' green awareness and tourists' visit decisions, such that the relationship is stronger when green trust is high.

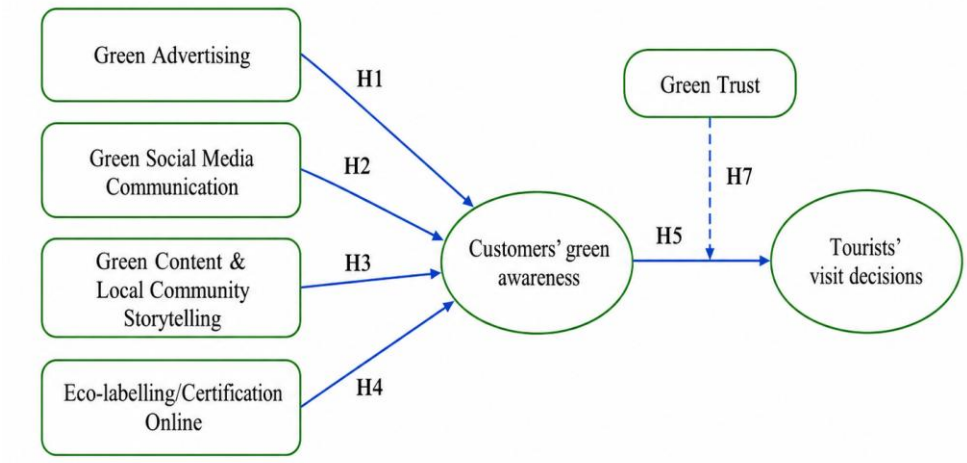


Figure 1: Proposed research model.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Research design:

This study adopted a mixed-methods design with two sequential phases. The qualitative phase was used to refine the research constructs and measurement items in the context of green digital marketing and community-based tourism. Expert feedback helped ensure the clarity and contextual relevance of the scales

measuring green advertising, green social media communication, green content and local community storytelling, eco-labelling/certification online, customers' green awareness, and tourists' visit decisions. The quantitative phase was conducted through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. The collected data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), which is appropriate for prediction-oriented research and mediation analysis [28]. The analysis included assessment of the measurement model for reliability and validity, followed by structural model testing through path coefficients, R-square, effect size, and bootstrapping results.

3.2. Measurement instrument

The questionnaire was developed by adapting established measurement scales from previous studies on green marketing, consumer behaviour, and sustainable tourism. The measurement model consists of seven constructs: green advertising (GAD), green social media communication (GSMC), green content and local community storytelling (GCST), eco-labelling/certification online (ELCO), customers' green awareness (GAW), tourists' visit decisions (TVD), and green trust (GT). All measurement items were assessed using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Before conducting the main survey, the questionnaire was refined through a qualitative review stage. This stage involved experts in digital marketing and sustainable tourism, as well as tourists who had experience searching for or considering community-based tourism services through digital platforms. Their feedback was used to improve the clarity, wording, contextual relevance, and content validity of the measurement items. The refined questionnaire was then used for the quantitative survey and subsequent PLS-SEM analysis.

Table 1. Construct development

Code	Construct	Items	Measurement focus	Main sources
GAD	Green advertising	5	Online ads emphasizing green or environmentally friendly aspects of CBT destinations	[9], [10], [29]
GSMC	Green social media communication	5	Interaction with, following, and sharing posts about green tourism	[5], [29]
GCST	Green content and local storytelling	5	Stories and content about local culture, conservation, and community value	[20], [29], [30]
ELCO	Eco-labeling/certification online	5	Trust, recognition, and perceived assurance from online green certifications	[21]
GAW	Green awareness	5	Understanding environmental protection and consequences in tourism	[5], [31]
TVD	Visit decisions	5	Intention, willingness to pay, consideration, recommendation, and satisfaction	[10], [23]
GT	Green trust	4	Confidence in the credibility, reliability, authenticity, and environmental commitment of CBT destinations' green claims	[25]

Source: Authors' synthesis based on prior studies.

3.3. Data collection and analysis

The target respondents were tourists aged 18 years or older who had previously interacted with green digital marketing messages related to CBT services and had considered or made decisions to visit CBT-related destinations. The survey was distributed online using convenience sampling. After screening incomplete and invalid questionnaires, 468 valid responses were retained for analysis.

The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with Smart-PLS 3. The analysis followed two steps. First, the measurement model was assessed using outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT). Second, the structural model was evaluated using variance inflation factor (VIF), coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), and bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples for hypothesis testing. These procedures follow common PLS-SEM guidelines for exploratory and prediction-oriented models [28].

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Descriptive statistics of Respondent

Table 2: Respondent characteristics

Demographic variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	199	42.5
	Female	269	57.5
Age group	Under 25 years	126	26.9
	25–34 years	171	36.5
	35–44 years	103	22
	45 years and above	68	14.5
Education level	High school or below	54	11.5
	College	88	18.8
	University	253	54.1
	Postgraduate	73	15.6
Monthly income	Below 5 million VND	96	20.5
	5–10 million VND	158	33.8
	10–20 million VND	147	31.4
	Above 20 million VND	67	14.3
Travel frequency	Once a year or less	92	19.7
	2–3 times per year	213	45.5
	4–5 times per year	104	22.2
	More than 5 times per year	59	12.6
Main digital information source for tourism	Social media	211	45.1
	Travel websites/blogs	96	20.5
	Online travel agencies	87	18.6
	Friends'/influencers' online reviews	74	15.8

Source: Survey data

As shown in Table 2, the final sample consisted of 468 valid respondents. Female respondents accounted for 57.5%, while male respondents represented 42.5%. Most respondents were aged between 25 and 34 years old (36.5%), followed by those aged 18- 24 years old (26.9%). Regarding education, the majority held a university degree (54.1%). In terms of income, the largest group reported a monthly income of 5-10 million VND (33.8%), followed by 10 - 20 million VND (31.4%). Most respondents travelled two to three times per year (45.5%). Social media was the most common digital information source for CBT services, accounting for 45.1% of the sample. These characteristics indicate that the respondents were suitable for examining how green digital marketing influences customers' green awareness and tourists' visit decisions toward CBT destinations.

4.2. Measurement model assessment

The detailed results of the measurement model assessment are reported in Table 3, which summarizes the indicator loadings, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and collinearity statistics of the constructs.

Table 3: Measurement model assessment

Construct	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	VIF
ELCO	ELCO1–ELCO5	0.811–0.867	0.893	0.921	0.701	2.149–2.786
GAD	GAD1–GAD5	0.648–0.841	0.813	0.871	0.576	1.451–2.147

GAW	GAW1–GAW5	0.672–0.847	0.809	0.868	0.570	1.436–2.195
GCST	GCST1–GCST5	0.705–0.813	0.819	0.874	0.581	1.445–1.883
GSMC	GSMC1–GSMC5	0.661–0.823	0.796	0.860	0.552	1.457–1.840
GT	GT1–GT4	0.866–0.890	0.905	0.934	0.779	2.418–2.761
TVD	TVD1–TVD5	0.819–0.867	0.896	0.923	0.707	2.060–2.541

Note: ELCO = Eco-labelling/Certification online; GAD = Green advertising; GAW = Customers' green awareness; GCST = Green content and local community storytelling; GSMC = Green social media communication; GT = Green trust; TVD = Tourists' visit decisions.

Source: Authors' compilation from PLS-SEM analysis.

As presented in Table 3, the measurement model was assessed to ensure reliability and validity before testing the structural relationships. Most measurement items had outer loadings above the recommended threshold of 0.70. However, several indicators, including GAD1, GAD5, GAW1, GAW5, and GSMC5, showed loadings slightly below 0.70. These items were retained because their respective constructs still satisfied the required levels of composite reliability and average variance extracted, and because the items remained conceptually relevant to the measurement of the constructs.

The reliability results show that all Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values exceeded 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. Convergent validity was also confirmed, as the AVE values of all constructs were above 0.50. In addition, the VIF values were below the recommended threshold of 3.3, suggesting that multicollinearity was not a serious concern.

Discriminant validity was further examined using the Heterotrait–Monotrait ratio.

Table 4: Discriminant Validity Assessment

	ELCO	**GAD**	**GAW**	**GAW x GT**	**GCST**	**GSMC**	**GT**	**TVD**
ELCO								
GAD	0.671							
GAW	0.915	0.66						
GAW x GT	0.391	0.29	0.507					
GCST	0.88	0.584	0.823	0.362				
GSMC	0.757	0.622	0.727	0.332	0.623			
GT	0.805	0.556	0.894	0.395	0.691	0.611		
TVD	0.84	0.626	0.872	0.442	0.717	0.64	0.809	

Source: Authors' compilation from PLS-SEM analysis

As shown in Table 4, most HTMT values were below the recommended threshold of 0.90, indicating acceptable discriminant validity among the constructs. Although the HTMT value between ELCO and GAW was 0.915, slightly exceeding the conservative threshold of 0.90, it remained below the more liberal threshold of 0.95. This result was treated with caution because ELCO and GAW are theoretically close but conceptually distinct. ELCO captures tourists' perceptions of online eco-labelling and certification cues, whereas GAW reflects tourists' broader awareness of environmental responsibility and sustainable tourism consequences. In addition, the cross-loading results showed that all indicators loaded highest on their intended constructs. Specifically, ELCO indicators loaded highest on ELCO, ranging from 0.811 to 0.867, while GAW indicators loaded highest on GAW, ranging from 0.672 to 0.847. Similarly, GT indicators loaded highest on GT, ranging from 0.866 to 0.890, and TVD indicators loaded highest on TVD, ranging from 0.819 to 0.867. These results support item-level discriminant validity. Since all constructs achieved satisfactory reliability and convergent validity, the measurement model was considered suitable for subsequent structural model assessment.

Robustness check using the reduced-item GAW model: Because the HTMT value between ELCO and GAW was relatively high, an additional robustness check was conducted to examine whether the main findings were sensitive to the measurement specification of customers' green awareness. Specifically, a reduced-item model was estimated by removing the two lower-loading indicators, GAW1 and GAW5, while retaining GAW2, GAW3, and GAW4. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Robustness check using the reduced-item GAW model

Criterion	Proposed model	Reduced-item model
GAW indicators	GAW1–GAW5	GAW2–GAW4
Cronbach's alpha of GAW	0.809	0.785
Composite reliability of GAW	0.868	0.875
AVE of GAW	0.57	0.7
Fornell–Larcker: √AVE of GAW	0.755	0.837
Fornell–Larcker: ELCO–GAW correlation	0.784	0.772
HTMT ELCO–GAW	0.915	0.919
R^2 for GAW	0.648	0.625
Adjusted R^2 for GAW	0.645	0.622
Q^2 for GAW	0.363	0.429
R^2 for TVD	0.621	0.606
Adjusted R^2 for TVD	0.619	0.604
Q^2 for TVD	0.431	0.421
H4: ELCO → GAW	0.519	0.529
H5: GAW → TVD	0.416	0.361
H6d: ELCO → GAW → TVD	0.216	0.191
H7: GAW × GT → TVD	0.102	0.104

Source: Authors' compilation from PLS-SEM robustness analysis.

As shown from table 5, the reduced-item model improved the convergent validity of GAW. Specifically, the AVE of GAW increased from 0.570 to 0.700, while the square root of AVE increased from 0.755 to 0.837. The Fornell–Larcker result also improved, as the correlation between ELCO and GAW decreased from 0.784 to 0.772 and remained below the square roots of AVE for both constructs. Although the HTMT value between ELCO and GAW remained high and increased slightly from 0.915 to 0.919, it was still below the more liberal threshold of 0.95. Importantly, the main structural results remained stable. ELCO continued to positively influence GAW, GAW continued to positively influence TVD, the indirect effect of ELCO on TVD through GAW remained significant, and the moderating effect of green trust on the GAW–TVD relationship remained significant. The explanatory power and predictive relevance of the reduced-item model also remained satisfactory, with R^2 values of 0.625 for GAW and 0.606 for TVD, and Q^2 values of 0.429 for GAW and 0.421 for TVD. Therefore, although ELCO and GAW were strongly associated, the robustness check supports the stability of the proposed model. The original model was retained because GAW1 and GAW5 contributed to the content validity of green awareness in the CBT context.

4.3 Structural model assessment

4.3.1 Model fit and explanatory power

After confirming the reliability and validity of the measurement model, the structural model was assessed to test the proposed hypotheses. The assessment included model fit, explanatory power, effect size, direct effects, indirect effects, and the moderating effect of green trust. Bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples was used to examine the statistical significance of the hypothesized relationships.

Table 6. Model fit assessment

Fit index	**Saturated model**	**Estimated model**
SRMR	0.046	0.058
d_ULS	1.239	1.975
d_G	0.488	0.545
Chi-square	1331.758	1417.063
NFI	0.863	0.855

Source: Authors' compilation from PLS-SEM analysis

As presented in Table 6, the structural model demonstrated an acceptable level of model fit. The SRMR value of the estimated model was 0.058, which is below the recommended threshold of 0.08, indicating an acceptable model fit. The NFI value of the estimated model was 0.855, suggesting a moderate but acceptable level of model fit. Additional fit indices, including d_ULS, d_G, and Chi-square, are also reported to provide a more complete assessment of the model fit.

Table 7. Explanatory power and predictive relevance

Endogenous construct	**R^2**	**Adjusted R^2**	**Q^2**
Customers' green awareness (GAW)	0.648	0.645	0.363
Tourists' visit decisions (TVD)	0.621	0.619	0.431

Source: Authors' compilation from PLS-SEM analysis

As shown in Table 7, the model also demonstrated satisfactory explanatory power and predictive relevance. The four green digital marketing factors explained 64.8% of the variance in customers' green awareness, with an adjusted R^2 value of 0.645. In addition, customers' green awareness, green trust, and the interaction term explained 62.1% of the variance in tourists' visit decisions, with an adjusted R^2 value of 0.619. Predictive relevance was assessed using the blindfolding procedure. The Q^2 values for customers' green awareness and tourists' visit decisions were 0.363 and 0.431, respectively, both greater than zero. These results indicate that the proposed model has satisfactory explanatory power and predictive relevance for examining tourists' visit decisions in the context of community-based tourism.

In addition to modeling fit and explanatory power, effect size was assessed using the f-square value to determine the practical contribution of each predictor construct. The results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Effect size assessment

Relationship	**f^2**
ELCO → GAW	0.243
GAD → GAW	0.016
GCST → GAW	0.037
GSMC → GAW	0.024
GAW → TVD	0.173
GT → TVD	0.153
GAW × GT → TVD	0.016

Source: Authors' compilation from PLS-SEM analysis

As shown in Table 8, eco-labelling/certification online had a medium effect on customers' green awareness ($f^2 = 0.243$), indicating that credible online certification signals made the strongest practical contribution to the formation of green awareness. Green content and local community storytelling ($f^2 = 0.037$) and green social media communication ($f^2 = 0.024$) showed small effects, while green advertising had a very small effect ($f^2 = 0.016$). Regarding tourists' visit decisions, customers' green awareness ($f^2 = 0.173$) and green trust ($f^2 = 0.153$) both showed medium effects. The interaction term between customers' green awareness and green trust had a very small effect ($f^2 = 0.016$), which is common in moderation analysis. Although the moderating effect was small, its bootstrapping result was statistically significant, indicating that green trust still plays a meaningful role in strengthening the relationship between green awareness and tourists' visit decisions.

4.3.2 Hypothesis testing results

The hypotheses were tested using the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples. The results of the direct effects, indirect effects, and moderating effects are presented in Table 10.

Table 9: Hypothesis testing results

Hypothesis	**Relationship**	**Standardized Beta (β)**	**95% CI**	**t-value**	**p-value**	**Conclusion**
Direct Effects						
H1	GAD → GAW	0.095	[0.031, 0.158]	2.893	0.004	Supported
H2	GSMC → GAW	0.122	[0.052, 0.189]	3.413	0.001	Supported
H3	GCST → GAW	0.175	[0.079, 0.275]	3.503	< 0.001	Supported

H4	ELCO → GAW	0.519	[0.429, 0.609]	11.057	< 0.001	Supported
H5	GAW → TVD	0.416	[0.319, 0.506]	8.658	< 0.001	Supported
Indirect Effects						
H6a	GAD → GAW → TVD	0.040	[0.013, 0.071]	2.664	0.008	Supported
H6b	GSMC → GAW → TVD	0.051	[0.022, 0.084]	3.172	0.002	Supported
H6c	GCST → GAW → TVD	0.073	[0.034, 0.120]	3.311	0.001	Supported
H6d	ELCO → GAW → TVD	0.216	[0.157, 0.284]	6.558	< 0.001	Supported
Moderating Effect						
H7	GAW × GT → TVD	0.102	[0.024, 0.181]	2.456	0.014	Supported

Notes: ELCO = Eco-labelling/Certification online; GAD = Green advertising; GAW = Customers' green awareness; GCST = Green content and local community storytelling; GSMC = Green social media communication; GT = Green trust; TVD = Tourists' visit decisions.

Source: Authors' compilation from PLS-SEM bootstrapping analysis.

As shown in Table 9, all direct hypotheses were supported. Green advertising had a positive and significant effect on customers' green awareness ($\beta = 0.095$, $t = 2.893$, $p = 0.004$), supporting H1. Green social media communication also positively influenced customers' green awareness ($\beta = 0.122$, $t = 3.413$, $p = 0.001$), supporting H2. Similarly, green content and local community storytelling significantly enhanced customers' green awareness ($\beta = 0.175$, $t = 3.503$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H3. Among the four antecedents, eco-labelling/certification online showed the strongest effect on customers' green awareness ($\beta = 0.519$, $t = 11.057$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H4. This result suggests that credible certification signals play a particularly important role in shaping tourists' awareness of green tourism. The results also show that customers' green awareness had a positive and significant effect on tourists' visit decisions ($\beta = 0.416$, $t = 8.658$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H5. In addition, the interaction term between customers' green awareness and green trust had a positive and significant effect on tourists' visit decisions ($\beta = 0.102$, $t = 2.456$, $p = 0.014$), supporting H7. This indicates that green trust strengthens the relationship between customers' green awareness and tourists' visit decisions. In other words, when tourists have higher trust in the green claims and sustainability commitment of CBT destinations, their green awareness is more likely to be translated into actual visit decisions.

All indirect effects were positive and statistically significant. Specifically, customers' green awareness significantly mediated the relationships between green advertising and tourists' visit decisions ($\beta = 0.040$, $t = 2.664$, $p = 0.008$), green social media communication and tourists' visit decisions ($\beta = 0.051$, $t = 3.172$, $p = 0.002$), green content and local community storytelling and tourists' visit decisions ($\beta = 0.073$, $t = 3.311$, $p = 0.001$), and eco-labelling/certification online and tourists' visit decisions ($\beta = 0.216$, $t = 6.558$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, H6a, H6b, H6c, and H6d were supported. Among the indirect paths, eco-labelling/certification online showed the strongest indirect effect, indicating that credible online certification signals are particularly effective in enhancing tourists' visit decisions through customers' green awareness.

The moderating effect of green trust was also statistically significant ($\beta = 0.102$, $t = 2.456$, $p = 0.014$), supporting H7. This finding indicates that green trust strengthens the positive relationship between customers' green awareness and tourists' visit decisions. In other words, when tourists have stronger trust in the green claims and sustainability commitment of CBT destinations, their green awareness is more likely to be translated into actual visit decisions.

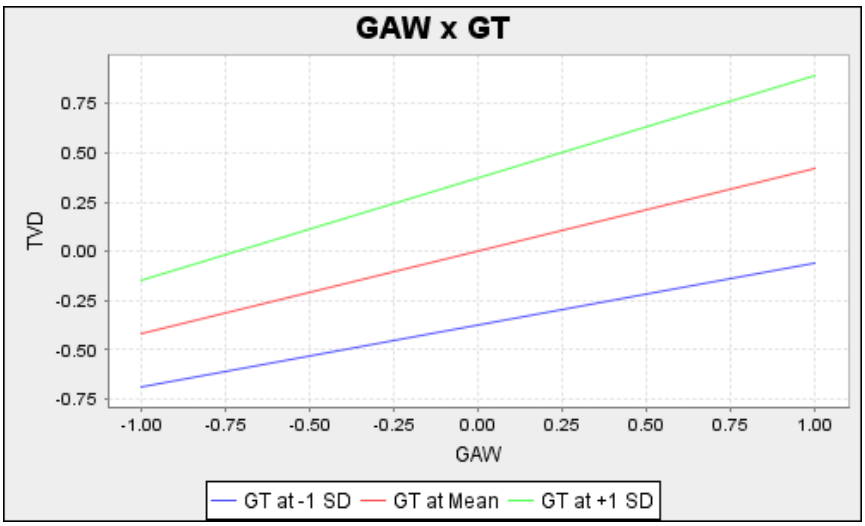


Figure 3. Moderating effect of green trust on the relationship between customers' green awareness and tourists' visit decisions *(Source: Smart-PLS analysis)*

Figure 2 presents the final PLS-SEM results, including the structural paths and indicator loadings of the proposed model.

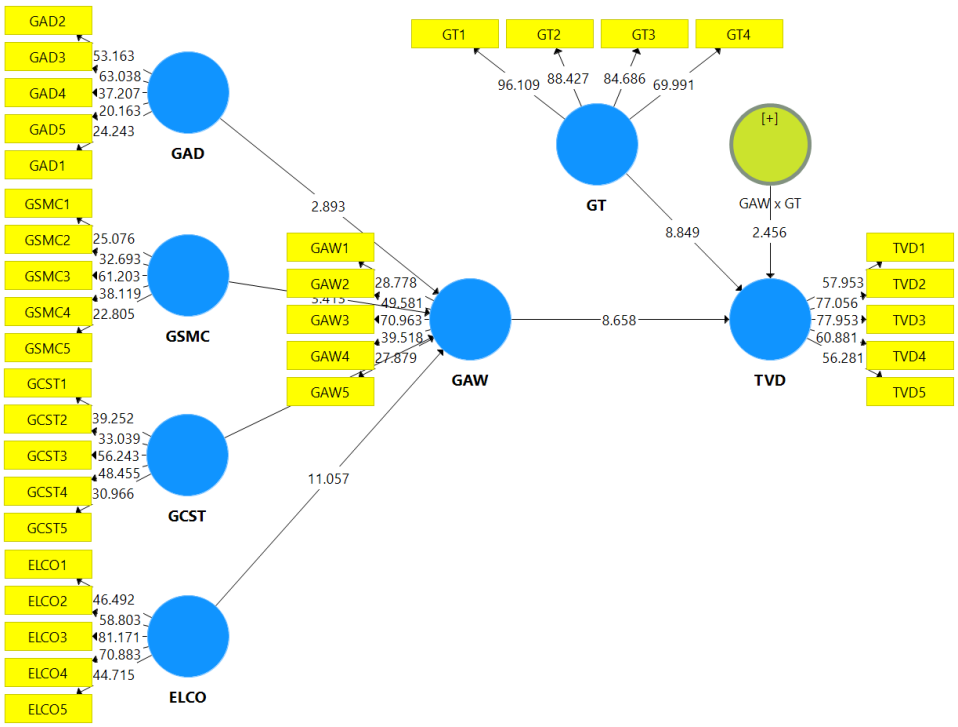


Figure 2. PLS-SEM bootstrapping results *(Source: Smart-PLS analysis)*

5. DISCUSSION

This study examined how green digital marketing influences tourists' visit decisions toward community-based tourism destinations through customers' green awareness and the moderating role of green trust. The findings provide strong empirical support for the proposed model. The results show that all four green digital marketing factors positively influence customers' green awareness. Among them, eco-labelling/certification online has the strongest effect, followed by green content and local community storytelling, green social media communication, and green advertising. This indicates that tourists are more

likely to develop green awareness when they are exposed to credible and verifiable sustainability signals rather than general promotional messages.

The strong effect of eco-labelling/certification online suggests that trust-based information plays a central role in green tourism communication. In the context of community-based tourism, unlike standardized hotels or mass tourism products, CBT destinations are often small-scale, community-managed, and less familiar to tourists. Hence, tourists may not easily verify whether a destination genuinely follows sustainable practices. Therefore, online certifications and eco-labels serve as more credible and influential signals than general advertising that reduce uncertainty and strengthen customers' awareness of environmental responsibility before visiting. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that eco-labels and green certifications help consumers identify environmentally responsible products and enhance green purchase-related decisions [32], [33]. It also explains why green advertising had the weakest, although still significant, effect on customers' green awareness. General green advertising may attract attention, but without credible evidence, its ability to build deep awareness can be limited.

The findings also confirm that customers' green awareness significantly increases tourists' visit decisions. This result supports the view that awareness is an important psychological mechanism in sustainable consumption. When tourists understand the environmental and community value of CBT services, they are more likely to translate this awareness into actual visit decisions. This is consistent with prior research emphasizing that environmental awareness and green knowledge positively shape green purchase behaviour and sustainable consumption intention [7], [23]. In the CBT context, green awareness does not only refer to environmental concern but also includes tourists' recognition of how their travel choices can support local communities, cultural preservation, and environmental protection.

The mediation results further show that customers' green awareness significantly mediates the relationships between all green digital marketing factors and tourists' visit decisions. This confirms that green digital marketing does not influence visit decisions only through direct persuasion. Rather, its influence is transmitted through the formation of green awareness. Among the indirect effects, the pathway from eco-labelling/certification online to tourists' visit decisions through customers' green awareness was the strongest. This finding highlights that credible green information is particularly effective when it first enhances tourists' awareness and then guides their decision-making. Green content and local community storytelling, green social media communication, and green advertising also contribute to visit decisions indirectly, but their effects are weaker than that of eco-labelling/certification online.

Another important finding is the moderating role of green trust. The interaction effect between customers' green awareness and green trust was positive and statistically significant. This means that green trust strengthens the relationship between customers' green awareness and tourists' visit decisions. In other words, tourists with high green awareness are more likely to decide to visit CBT destinations when they also trust the destination's green claims and sustainability commitment. This finding is theoretically meaningful because awareness alone may not be sufficient to generate behavioural decisions. If tourists suspect greenwashing or doubt the authenticity of sustainability claims, their awareness may not be fully converted into visit decisions. Therefore, green trust acts as a facilitating condition that helps transform green awareness into actual tourism behaviour.

The findings offer several theoretical implications. First, the study extends green marketing and sustainable tourism literature by demonstrating that customers' green awareness is a key mediating mechanism linking green digital marketing to tourists' visit decisions. Second, the study contributes to the CBT literature by showing that digital green communication can support visit decisions when it is credible, informative, and awareness oriented. Third, by introducing green trust as a moderator, this study highlights that the awareness - decision relationship depends on tourists' confidence in the authenticity and reliability of green claims. This provides a more nuanced understanding of how green digital marketing works in the context of community-based tourism.

The findings also provide practical implications for CBT destination managers, tourism businesses, and digital marketers. First, CBT destinations should prioritize credible sustainability signals, such as eco-labels, certifications, and transparent environmental information, because these elements have the strongest effect on green awareness. Second, green advertising should move beyond general environmental claims and include concrete evidence of sustainable practices. Third, social media communication should be used not only for promotion but also for education, interaction, and trust building. Fourth, storytelling should be

used to explain how tourists' visits support local livelihoods, cultural preservation, and conservation activities and tourists' contribution to sustainable development. Finally, CBT destinations must actively build green trust by ensuring consistency between their digital messages and actual sustainability practices. Without trust, green awareness may not be fully translated into visit decisions.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This study investigated the influence of green digital marketing on tourists' visit decisions toward community-based tourism (CBT) destinations through customers' green awareness and the moderating role of green trust. Drawing on the perspectives of sustainable consumption and green tourism marketing, the study examined four green digital marketing factors, namely green advertising, green social media communication, green content and local community storytelling, and eco-labelling/certification online. The empirical results provide support for the proposed research model.

The findings show that all four green digital marketing factors significantly enhance customers' green awareness. Among these factors, eco-labelling/certification online has the strongest effect, indicating that tourists place high value on credible and verifiable sustainability signals. Green content and local community storytelling, green social media communication, and green advertising also contribute positively to green awareness, although their effects are weaker. These results suggest that green digital marketing is more effective when it provides reliable information, meaningful stories, and clear evidence of sustainability rather than relying only on general promotional messages.

The study also confirms that customers' green awareness significantly influences tourists' visit decisions. In addition, customers' green awareness mediates the relationship between green digital marketing factors and tourists' visit decisions. This finding highlights that green digital marketing does not automatically lead to visit decisions; rather, its effect operates through the formation of tourists' awareness of environmental responsibility, local community benefits, and sustainable tourism values. Furthermore, green trust significantly moderates the relationship between customers' green awareness and tourists' visit decisions. This means that tourists are more likely to translate their green awareness into actual visit decisions when they trust the destination's green claims and sustainability commitment.

The study contributes to the literature on sustainable tourism marketing by demonstrating the mediating role of customers' green awareness and the moderating role of green trust in the CBT context. It also provides practical implications for CBT destinations, tourism businesses, and digital marketers. CBT providers should prioritize credible green information, especially online eco-labels and certifications, while also strengthening storytelling, social media communication, and transparent evidence of sustainability. Building green trust is particularly important because awareness alone may not be sufficient to motivate visit decisions if tourists doubt the authenticity of green claims.

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the data were collected using convenience sampling, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Second, the study relied on self-reported survey data, which may be affected by respondents' subjective perceptions. Third, the cross-sectional research design limits the ability to make strong causal claims. Future studies could use longitudinal or experimental designs to examine how tourists' green awareness and green trust change over time. Future research may also compare different groups of tourists, destinations, or digital platforms to better understand how green digital marketing works across different CBT contexts. In addition, future studies could examine other moderating variables, such as green skepticism, perceived authenticity, environmental concern, or digital literacy, to provide a more comprehensive explanation of tourists' sustainable visit decisions.

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