



From Scroll to Stroll: The Role of FOMO and Climate Advocacy in Shaping Gen Z's Travel Intentions for Sustainable Tourism Destination

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ABSTRACT

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travel FOMO, shared traveler experiences, tourist visit intention, sustainable tourism, climate advocacy, Gen Z tourists

The rapid growth of social media has transformed how travel inspiration and destination choices are formed, particularly among digital-native generations. For Generation Z, online travel content not only correlates with curiosity but also evokes emotional responses such as the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), influencing their travel-related decision-making. This study aims to investigate how shared traveler experiences on social media influence Travel FOMO among Gen Z tourists and how this emotional trigger shapes their intention to visit destinations and support sustainable tourism, with climate advocacy as a moderating factor. A quantitative survey of 600 Gen Z tourists across North Sumatra, Indonesia, was conducted from early June to August 2025 and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The results reveal that shared traveler experiences significantly increase Travel FOMO ($\beta = 0.676$, $p < 0.001$), which positively affects both tourist visit intention ($\beta = 0.178$) and perceptions of sustainable tourism destinations ($\beta = 0.376$). The model demonstrates substantial explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.523$) and good fit (SRMR = 0.070). These findings highlight that emotionally engaging and sustainability-oriented digital experiences can effectively foster responsible travel behavior among Gen Z and strengthen engagement with sustainable tourism development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Increasing awareness of environmental and social impacts is driving the urgency of developing sustainable tourism destinations [1]. One of the main challenges in this sector is how to attract the interest of young tourists, especially Generation Z, who have very different consumption patterns and preferences than previous generations [2, 3]. As pioneers of digital natives, Gen Z is heavily influenced by social media content, digital trends, and experiences shared by others online [3]. In this context, the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) phenomenon is a strong driving force in decision making, including in choosing tourist destinations [4].

FOMO, which refers to the fear of missing out on a perceived valuable experience or popular trend, has been shown to influence Gen Z consumption behavior across multiple sectors [5], including tourism [6]. They are not only looking for functional information, but also the emotional and social boost that comes from seeing others share their experiences [7]. Recommendations and travel stories from fellow travelers on social media encourage Gen Z to participate so they don't feel left out. Therefore, a FOMO-based marketing approach is considered potential in increasing interest in tourism visits, creating digital engagement, and encouraging greater involvement in sustainable tourism destinations [8].

However, in reality, many tourist destinations in Indonesia have not yet optimally integrated FOMO-based digital marketing strategies [9, 10]. Digital content that is generic and informative may not necessarily create a sense of urgency or emotional desire to visit immediately [11]. In fact, travel experiences shared by other users (shared traveler experiences) have a significant influence on the formation of FOMO and, ultimately, the decision to visit a particular destination [4, 8, 12]. An approach that combines social influences and intrinsic motivations such as the need to be connected, recognized, and competent can be an effective strategy for shaping more focused and responsible tourism consumption behavior [4, 8].

In the context of sustainable tourism, attention to environmental and climate issues is becoming increasingly important [13]. Awareness of climate change and climate advocacy are beginning to shape consumer values and preferences, especially among young travelers [14]. For some Gen Zers, it's not just the FOMO that matters, but also whether the destination aligns with their values of sustainability, authenticity and social responsibility [8]. In other words, an individual's level of climate advocacy can influence how much their FOMO toward a tourist destination can actually translate into visit intentions or support for sustainable tourism [15].

Tan et al. [16] stated that effective FOMO-based destination marketing strategies can also be linked to broader social and

economic impacts. By increasing visits to sustainable destinations, job opportunities in the tourism and creative economy sectors also increase [17]. This directly contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), goal 9 (Innovation and Infrastructure), and goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) [18-20]. In this context, North Sumatra Province, which consists of several cities, was chosen as the research location because it has great tourism potential, a digitally active Gen Z community, but still faces challenges in optimizing sustainable tourism marketing strategies [21, 22].

This research not only contributes to formulating a new conceptual model that connects shared traveler experiences, travel FOMO, and sustainable tourism destinations, but also takes into account the role of mediation and moderation in the dynamics of Gen Z's travel behavior. In addition to offering theoretical contributions by combining the theories of social influence, self-determination, and technology acceptance models, this study also provides practical implications in designing more effective and responsible digital communication strategies. This research can serve as a strategic reference for destination managers, industry players, and policymakers in shaping tourism that aligns with sustainable values and the aspirations of future generations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Travel sharing influence and travel FOMO

Social media is a very effective tool for integrating into the world, from social life to economics [23]. Several studies describe social media as networking sites or platforms, which allow participants to create and share their experiences [11, 24]. The role of social media can increase the capacity of individuals and groups to share their experiences more widely [17], as well as strengthen collaboration through more open and real-time interactions [25] states that social media is a dynamic platform that allows for the exchange of ideas, discussions, and collaboration across geographical boundaries, thus creating an inclusive and participatory communication ecosystem. In the tourism industry, the use of social media such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, etc. is often used by tourists as a tool in searching for destinations [26, 27]. As said by Sivakumar et al. [27] that the presence of social media today has changed the way people look at seeking information, especially in determining travel plans and making travel decisions.

In addition, social media is also a tool for promoting ecotourism information and strengthening tourism sustainability [28]. The influence of social media has become a force that shapes tourist behavior, especially when the FOMO phenomenon emerges [29]. The FOMO phenomenon is a psychological condition where someone feels afraid of missing out on an experience they consider important [16]. When they see friends or influencers sharing amazing vacation moments or experiences on social media, they tend to feel left out, which leads them to want a similar trip [7, 30]. Engaging visual content and engaging experiential narratives create a powerful emotional appeal, where the desire to participate becomes the primary motivation [2]. This suggests that social media is not only a tool for sharing experiences, but also

triggers a person's desire to travel for social existence and emotional satisfaction. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H1. *Shared traveler experiences have a positive effect on travel FOMO.*

2.2 Travel FOMO, tourist visit intention, and sustainable tourism destination

Dependence on social media has changed modern lifestyles, where individuals can actively seek out information about other people's lives shared online [31]. In the context of tourism, uploading photos, videos, and travel stories on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube can make people feel emotional pressure to not miss out on the exciting experiences that others have had [32]. Kim et al. [7] stated that someone who experiences FOMO will experience psychological anxiety that arises when seeing others doing something fun, useful, or interesting. In the context of tourism, this feeling arises when someone sees friends or influencers sharing their vacation moments on social media [6]. Travel content that is frequently shared on social media can often trigger feelings of FOMO in viewers, thus encouraging individuals to plan or have the desire to travel to pursue similar experiences at the destination [4, 6]. This can ultimately give rise to an intention to make a visit that has the potential to increase tourists' visit intentions through an emotional aspect to participate in experiences that are considered valuable and worth sharing.

H2. *Travel FOMO has a positive effect on tourist visit intention.*

In the context of tourism, the FOMO phenomenon triggered by social media not only has an impact on increasing a person's intention, but can also be used to support the promotion of sustainable tourism destinations [12]. For example, travel content that focuses on natural beauty and cultural preservation that is shared massively can potentially create a sense of FOMO among its viewers [6, 12, 33]. Furthermore, travel FOMO can act as a driving force for destinations that integrate sustainability principles, thereby increasing the attractiveness of sustainable tourism destinations [4]. In today's digital era, the FOMO phenomenon has a powerful role in predicting tourists' decisions to visit a destination [3]. Therefore, tourism destination managers need to carefully capture and capitalize on this phenomenon as a strategic opportunity. FOMO can be leveraged to maintain a destination's existence by creating unique, authentic, and shareable experiences on social media. This will foster and spread positive perceptions of the destination, ultimately driving visitor interest and opening up opportunities to implement sustainability principles in its management [6]. Furthermore, to maintain the sustainability of a destination, the active role of management is crucial. Tourist satisfaction with a destination must be balanced with efforts to preserve the environment and local culture to ensure the destination's long-term sustainability [4]. When travelers are satisfied, they tend to actively share their vacation moments on digital platforms. This content then creates a FOMO effect for others who see it. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3. *Travel FOMO has a positive impact on sustainable tourism destinations.*

2.3 Tourist visit intention and sustainable tourism destination

The positive influence between tourists' visiting intentions and the sustainability of tourism destinations can be explained through the Theory of Planned Behavior approach, which states that intentions are the main predictor of actual behavior [34, 35]. In the context of younger travelers who actively use social media, travel intentions are not only reflected in personal travel decisions but are also reinforced by exposure and interactions on digital platforms. Social media has become a crucial channel for travelers in shaping destination perceptions, sharing experiences, and amplifying sustainability values through the content they consume and share [36, 37]. When tourists have a high intention to visit a destination they see appealing on social media—especially one that showcases eco-friendly practices, cultural authenticity, and local community involvement—they are more likely to support and choose destinations that implement sustainability principles. Conversely, destinations that go viral or gain high exposure through social media are also motivated to maintain their reputation by adopting sustainable management approaches [38]. Thus, travel intentions influenced by social media experiences and representations can contribute significantly to the growth of sustainability-oriented tourism destinations.

H4. Tourist Visit Intention has a positive influence on Sustainable Tourism Destinations.

2.4 The mediating role of travel FOMO

In the context of modern tourism influenced by the development of social media, shared traveler experiences play a crucial role in shaping the perceptions and interests of potential travelers [8]. When these experiences are widely shared through digital platforms, the exposed audience can experience the FOMO phenomenon, a feeling of worry about missing out on the shared enjoyable experience. Consequently, the mediating role of FOMO in the relationship between shared traveler experiences and visit intention and destination sustainability can be established. Traveler experiences shared on social media have a strong influence on shaping the perceptions and interests of potential travelers. This psychological boost can increase potential travelers' intentions to visit a particular destination [39]. Furthermore, if managed strategically by stakeholders, the influence of FOMO can also be directed to support the sustainability goals of destinations by encouraging more conscious, responsible, and long-term-oriented tourist behavior so that it can be directed

to support sustainable tourism practices [1]. Thus, the hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H5. Travel FOMO mediates the relationship between shared traveler experiences and tourist visit intention.

H6. Travel FOMO mediates the relationship between shared traveler experiences and sustainable tourism destinations.

2.5 The moderating role of climate advocacy

Climate advocacy, as stated by Zaman [8], emphasizes active involvement by individuals and groups in supporting environmental sustainability. In the context of tourism, climate advocacy is a factor that can increase environmental awareness. Having a climate advocacy attitude can strengthen visit intentions and encourage commitment to destination sustainability [40]. When tourists show concern for environmental and social issues, it not only increases their propensity to visit destinations that align with eco-friendly values but also strengthens support for sustainable tourism practices [41]. The role of climate advocacy in the relationship between travel FOMO and visit intention and destination sustainability is an important element that can strengthen the intention to visit in a more responsible and sustainable direction [8].

Travel FOMO often creates an emotional urge to visit a trendy destination, without considering the environmental or social impact. However, when someone has a heightened awareness and concern for climate change issues, this urge increases, impacting visit intention [42]. Besides that, Mase et al. [43] stated that most existing research shows that tourists' attention to environmentally friendly practices is getting attention from tourists, especially on sustainability issues, especially those related to environmental sustainability [44, 45]. Therefore, FOMO behavior, which encourages tourists to immediately visit popular destinations without considering environmental capacity and carrying capacity, has the potential to put pressure on the destination's sustainability. Furthermore, high levels of climate advocacy can moderate the influence of FOMO on destination sustainability, as tourists' awareness and concern for environmental issues can dampen the impulsive urge to visit without considering the ecological impact [14, 15]. Thus, the hypothesis is proposed as follows:

H7. Climate advocacy moderates the relationship between travel FOMO and tourist visit intention.

H8. Climate advocacy mediates the relationship between travel FOMO and sustainable tourism destinations.

The research model used in this study is presented in Figure 1.

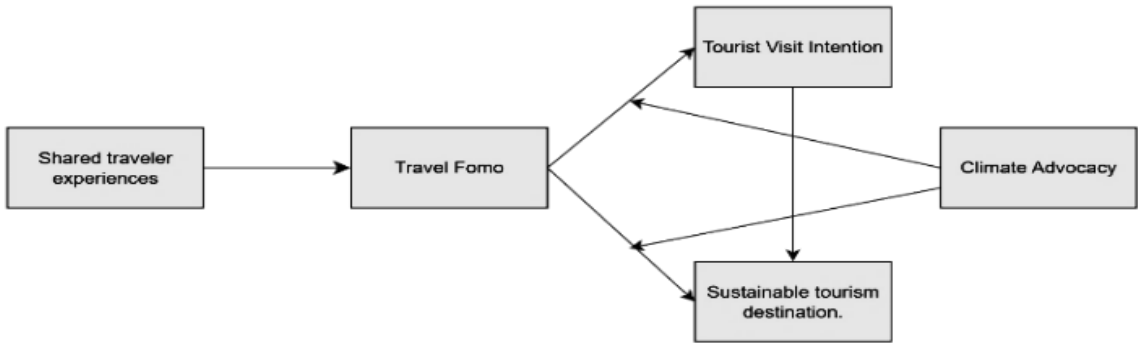


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a quantitative approach using a survey as the primary data collection tool to analyze the relationships among variables. The quantitative approach allows for accurate and reliable statistical measurement and analysis [46]. The study aims to examine the influence of shared traveler experiences on Travel FOMO and its subsequent impact on tourist visit intention and sustainable tourism destinations, while also testing the mediating role of Travel FOMO and the moderating effect of climate advocacy.

The research was conducted among tourists, particularly Gen Z, in various cities across North Sumatra Province. Respondents were selected based on their active use of social media as one of their main sources of travel information, inspiration, and motivation. The study employed a random sampling technique within a defined sampling frame comprising Gen Z individuals (aged 18-28) residing in or visiting North Sumatra, which were obtained from local tourism community databases and social media travel groups. A simple randomization procedure was applied using random number generation to ensure equal selection probability. Out of 750 distributed questionnaires, 600 valid responses were obtained, which yields an 80% response rate. A non-response bias test was conducted by comparing early and late respondents across key variables using independent sample t-tests, and no significant differences were found ($p > 0.05$), which indicates minimal non-response bias.

Data were collected through a survey conducted from June to August 2025 and analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) approach. To enhance representativeness, post-stratification weighting was applied based on gender and city distribution according to the official demographic profile of Gen Z in North Sumatra.

3.1 Variable measurement

The survey instrument and items in this study were adapted from previous research. This study used twenty-eight indicators consisting of variables such as shared traveler experiences, travel FOMO, tourist visit intention, sustainable tourism destination, and climate advocacy. Shared travel experiences were measured by six items adopted from previous research [2]. Travel FOMO is measured by ten items adopted from research [6]. Tourist visit intention is measured by three items adopted from research [34, 35]. Then, sustainable tourism destinations are measured by four items adopted from research [1, 39]. Then, sustainable tourism destinations are measured by four items adopted from research [42, 43].

All instruments were originally developed in English and subsequently translated into Bahasa Indonesia following the standard translation and back-translation procedure to ensure conceptual and linguistic equivalence. Two bilingual experts independently translated the questionnaire into Bahasa Indonesia, after which a separate expert performed the back-translation into English, which covers face validity. Discrepancies were discussed and resolved collaboratively to maintain semantic accuracy and cultural appropriateness.

A pre-test involving 30 Gen Z respondents from Medan and Parapat was conducted to assess item clarity, readability, and cultural relevance. Feedback from the pre-test led to minor revisions in wording and local expression to improve comprehension. The pilot test confirmed the internal

consistency of the instrument (Cronbach's α values > 0.70 for all constructs), indicating satisfactory reliability before the main data collection phase.

4. RESULT ANALYSIS

Table 1 presents demographic information about respondents, including gender, education, and age. It also includes the intensity of social media use and the most frequently used social media platforms. The findings indicate that the majority of respondents in this study were female (58%), with the largest age group being in the 20-25 age range (61%), reflecting the typical characteristics of Gen Z. Most respondents had a bachelor's degree (55%), indicating a relatively high level of education. The findings further indicate that 40% of respondents came from Medan, reflecting the high level of social media activity and digital access in the urban center of North Sumatra. Buffer cities like Binjai and Pematang Siantar also showed significant participation, while other cities provided representation that enriched the regional perspective.

Table 1. Respondent demographic

N: 600	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	348	58
Male	252	42
Education		
High School	204	34
Bachelor's Degree	330	55
Master's Degree	54	9
Doctorate	12	2
Age		
20-25 years	366	61
26-31 years	186	31
Above 31 years	48	8
City of Origin		
Medan	240	40
Binjai	90	15
Pematang Siantar	75	12.5
Tanjung Balai	60	10
Tebing Tinggi	48	8
Padang Sidempuan	36	6
Sibolga	30	5
Gunung Sitoli	21	3.5
Intensity of using social media to search for destination information		
Rarely		
Often	42	7
Very often	240	40
	318	53
Frequently used social media:		
YouTube	432	72
Facebook	180	30
Instagram	486	81
Tiktok	510	85

In terms of the intensity of social media use for finding travel destinations, the majority of respondents reported using it very frequently (53%), indicating this generation's strong reliance on digital platforms when planning trips. Among the social media platforms used, TikTok (85%) and Instagram (81%) were the most popular, followed by YouTube (72%) and Facebook (30%). The percentages for social media platforms may exceed 100% because respondents were allowed to select more than one platform they frequently use

(multiple responses), resulting in a cumulative total that surpasses the number of respondents.

Furthermore, the results of the study also show that all constructs in this research model exhibit excellent convergent validity and reliability (Table 2). The loading factor values of all indicators are above 0.70 (except for some that approach the minimum threshold of 0.70), indicating a significant contribution of each indicator to the construct. Cronbach's Alpha (α) values range from 0.800 to 0.919, and Composite Reliability (CR) values range from 0.883 to 0.933, all exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.70, indicating consistent internal reliability. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs are above 0.50, confirming that each construct has met the requirements for convergent validity. Thus, all constructs in this model are suitable for further analysis.

Table 2. Result of convergent validity and reliability

Construct	Indicator	Loading Factor	α	C.R	AVE
Climate Advocacy	CA1	0.702	0.881	0.914	0.682
	CA2	0.877			
	CA3	0.878			
	CA4	0.845			
	CA5	0.815			
Shared Traveler Experience	STE1	0.725	0.869	0.901	0.606
	STE2	0.701			
	STE3	0.724			
	STE4	0.791			
	STE5	0.898			
	STE6	0.813			
Sustainable Tourism Destination	STD1	0.865	0.896	0.914	0.682
	STD2	0.905			
	STD3	0.880			
	STD4	0.843			
Tourist Visit Intention	TVI1	0.712	0.800	0.883	0.718
	TVI2	0.907			
	TVI3	0.908			
	TF1	0.795			
Travel FOMO	TF2	0.878	0.919	0.933	0.581
	TF3	0.750			
	TF4	0.777			
	TF5	0.739			
	TF6	0.798			
	TF7	0.701			
	TF8	0.719			
	TF9	0.713			

Table 3. Result of discriminant validity with Fornell Larcker & HTMT ratio

Fornell Larcker Criterion					
	CA	STE	STD	TVI	TF
CA	0.826				
STE	0.372	0.778			
STD	0.548	0.401	0.874		
TVI	0.593	0.309	0.615	0.847	
TF	0.494	0.676	0.570	0.388	0.762
HTMT Ratio					
	CA	STE	STD	TVI	TF
CA					
STE	0.422				
STD	0.615	0.446			
TVI	0.692	0.377	0.717		
TF	0.553	0.740	0.620	0.462	

The results of the discriminant validity test (Table 3) using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion show that the square root of the AVE value (diagonal value) for each construct is higher than the correlation between other constructs (values below the diagonal), indicating that discriminant validity has been met. For example, the square root of the AVE value for Climate Advocacy (0.826) is greater than its correlation with other constructs such as Tourist Visit Intention (0.593) and Travel FOMO (0.494). In addition, the HTMT Ratio results for all pairs of constructs are below the threshold of 0.85, indicating that each construct is truly distinct from each other conceptually. Thus, both Fornell-Larcker and HTMT confirm that the model has strong discriminant validity.

The results of the discriminant validity test using the cross-loading (Table 4) method show that each indicator has the highest loading on its original construct compared to its loading on other constructs, indicating that these indicators better represent the construct being measured. For example, the CA2 indicator has the highest loading on the Climate Advocacy construct (0.877) compared to its loading on other constructs such as Travel FOMO (0.442) or Tourist Visit Intention (0.445). The same is seen for indicator STE5 (0.898), which most strongly measures Shared Traveler Experience. Thus, discriminant validity has been met. The cross-loading method has advantages compared to the Fornell-Larcker Criterion and HTMT ratio, especially in providing information at the indicator level. This allows researchers to identify whether certain indicators have an unnaturally high loading on other constructs, so they can be immediately revised or removed. In contrast, Fornell-Larcker and HTMT work at the construct level, making them more suitable for overall model validation. Therefore, cross-loading becomes an important complement to more detailed and granular discriminant validity analysis.

Table 4. Cross-loading discriminant validity test

	CA	STD	STE	TF	TVI
CA1	0.702	0.440	0.320	0.390	0.429
CA2	0.877	0.456	0.274	0.442	0.445
CA3	0.878	0.448	0.323	0.470	0.447
CA4	0.845	0.476	0.363	0.400	0.534
CA5	0.815	0.437	0.254	0.344	0.570
STD1	0.413	0.865	0.363	0.463	0.532
STD2	0.525	0.905	0.388	0.561	0.559
STD3	0.478	0.880	0.282	0.407	0.585
STD4	0.495	0.843	0.364	0.553	0.472
STE1	0.224	0.193	0.725	0.446	0.133
STE2	0.240	0.363	0.701	0.465	0.237
STE3	0.297	0.298	0.724	0.408	0.321
STE4	0.295	0.244	0.791	0.522	0.180
STE5	0.338	0.326	0.898	0.593	0.228
STE6	0.329	0.417	0.813	0.659	0.336
TF1	0.379	0.506	0.596	0.795	0.333
TF2	0.378	0.478	0.589	0.878	0.259
TF3	0.401	0.386	0.519	0.750	0.208
TF4	0.412	0.526	0.498	0.777	0.330
TF5	0.405	0.316	0.556	0.739	0.172
TF6	0.387	0.434	0.641	0.798	0.288
TF7	0.290	0.428	0.394	0.701	0.303
TF8	0.333	0.453	0.422	0.719	0.339
TF9	0.420	0.448	0.378	0.713	0.479
TF10	0.362	0.328	0.530	0.738	0.228
TVI1	0.371	0.390	0.288	0.379	0.712
TVI2	0.575	0.560	0.288	0.349	0.907
TVI3	0.536	0.589	0.226	0.282	0.908

The results of the multicollinearity and common method bias tests in Table 5 show that all VIF values are below the threshold of 3.3, with a range between 1,000 and 1,789. This indicates the absence of multicollinearity problems among the independent variables in the model. Furthermore, because no VIF value exceeds 3.3, the assumption of freedom from common method bias is also met. Thus, the data in this study can be said to be free from the influence of common method bias and does not experience symptoms of multicollinearity that could interfere with model estimation.

Table 5. Multicollinearity test & common method bias

	CA	STE	STD	TVI	TF
CA			1.789	1.389	
STE					1.000
STD					
TVI			1.609		
TF			1.553	1.502	

To strengthen the results of the common method bias analysis, Harman's single-factor test was conducted using all measurement items through an unrotated exploratory factor analysis in SPSS. The results, as shown in Table 6, indicate that the first factor accounts for 40.245% of the total variance, which is well below the recommended threshold of 50%. This suggests that no single factor dominates the variance structure of the dataset, thereby providing strong evidence that common method variance is not a significant concern in this study. The variance is distributed across multiple factors, confirming that the relationships observed among the constructs are not substantially affected by common method bias and that the data are suitable for further structural analysis.

Table 6. Harman's single factor test

Component	Total Eigenvalue	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	11.269	40.245	40.245
2	3.257	11.632	51.877
3	1.843	6.583	58.460
4	1.567	5.595	64.055
5	1.172	4.187	68.242

Table 7. Coefficient of determination (R^2)

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Sustainable Tourism Destination	0.523	0.520
Tourist Visit Intention	0.378	0.375
Travel FOMO	0.457	0.456

Table 7 indicates that the model demonstrates strong explanatory power for the endogenous variables. The highest R^2 value is observed for Sustainable Tourism Destination (0.523), followed by Travel FOMO (0.457) and Tourist Visit Intention (0.378), suggesting that the combination of digital experiences, emotional aspects, and sustainability values substantially explains Gen Z's travel behavior. The effect size analysis in Table 8 further reveals that Shared Traveler Experiences have a very large effect on Travel FOMO ($f^2 = 0.843$), emphasizing the dominant role of social media experiences in shaping emotional responses. Additionally, Climate Advocacy shows a large effect on Sustainable Tourism Destination ($f^2 = 0.431$) and a moderate effect on Tourist Visit Intention ($f^2 = 0.288$), while Travel FOMO has a moderate effect on both ($f^2 = 0.191$ and 0.312). These findings

highlight that the interaction of social, emotional, and sustainability-related factors serves as a key determinant in fostering responsible digital travel behavior among Gen Z tourists.

Table 8. Effect size (f^2)

	CA	STE	STD	TVI	TF
CA			0.431	0.288	
STE					0.843
STD					
TVI			0.191		
TF			0.191	0.312	

The results of the predictive relevance (Q^2) test in Table 9 show that all endogenous constructs in the model have positive Q^2 values, namely 0.393 for Sustainable Tourism Destination, 0.262 for Tourist Visit Intention, and 0.262 for Travel FOMO. A Q^2 value greater than 0 indicates that the model has good predictive ability for these variables. Specifically, Sustainable Tourism Destination has the highest Q^2 value, indicating that the model is most capable of predicting this variable. Thus, this research model has adequate predictive relevance and is suitable for use in hypothesis testing.

Table 9. Predictive relevance (Q^2)

	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (= 1 - SSE/SSO)$
Climate Advocacy	3000.000	3000.000	
Shared Traveler Experience	3600.000	3600.000	
Sustainable Tourism Destination	2400.000	1457.864	0.393
Tourist Visit Intention	1800.000	1328.437	0.262
Travel FOMO	6000.000	4425.516	0.262

Table 10. Model fit PLS-SRMR

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.070	0.076

Table 11. Path coefficient test

	β	STDEV	T Statistics	P Values
STE→TF (H1)	0.676	0.029	22.960	0.000
TF→TVI (H2)	0.178	0.040	4.486	0.000
TF→STD (H3)	0.376	0.051	7.330	0.000
TVI→STD (H4)	0.383	0.048	8.024	0.000
STE→TF→TVI (H5)	0.120	0.028	4.344	0.000
STE→TF→STD (H6)	0.255	0.037	6.833	0.000
TF × CAtoTVI→TVI (H7)	0.100	0.028	3.577	0.000
TF × CAto STD→STD (H8)	0.056	0.028	1.980	0.048

The results of the model fit assessment using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) in Table 10 indicate that both the saturated model (SRMR = 0.070) and the estimated model (SRMR = 0.076) meet the acceptable threshold of ≤ 0.08 , suggesting a good model fit. This implies that the discrepancy between the observed and predicted correlations among constructs is minimal, demonstrating that the structural model accurately represents the empirical data. The slightly lower SRMR value in the saturated model compared to the estimated model reflects that the model's specified relationships are consistent with the underlying data structure, without significant model misspecification. Overall, these results confirm that the proposed SEM-PLS model is well-fitting and theoretically sound, supporting the adequacy

of the hypothesized relationships between digital experiences, emotional triggers, and sustainability-oriented behaviors among Gen Z tourists.

The results of the path coefficient test in Table 11 and Figure 2 show that all relationships between variables are significant with a p-value < 0.05. The direct effect of Shared Traveler Experience (STE) on Travel FOMO (TF) has the highest coefficient ($\beta = 0.676$), indicating that shared travel experiences strongly encourage the emergence of FOMO in the travel context. Among the mediation pathways, the indirect effect of STE on Sustainable Tourism Destination (STD)

through TF ($\beta = 0.255$) is greater than the mediation pathway to Tourist Visit Intention (TVI) ($\beta = 0.120$), which means FOMO plays a greater role in encouraging perceptions of sustainable destinations than simply visiting intentions. For the moderation pathway, the interaction of TF and Climate Advocacy on TVI ($\beta = 0.100$) is higher than its effect on STD ($\beta = 0.056$). Meanwhile, the direct relationship of TVI to STD ($\beta = 0.383$) is also quite strong and significant. Overall, the direct path from STE to TF is the most dominant in this model, followed by the influence of TVI on STD, as well as the mediation of STE→TF→STD.

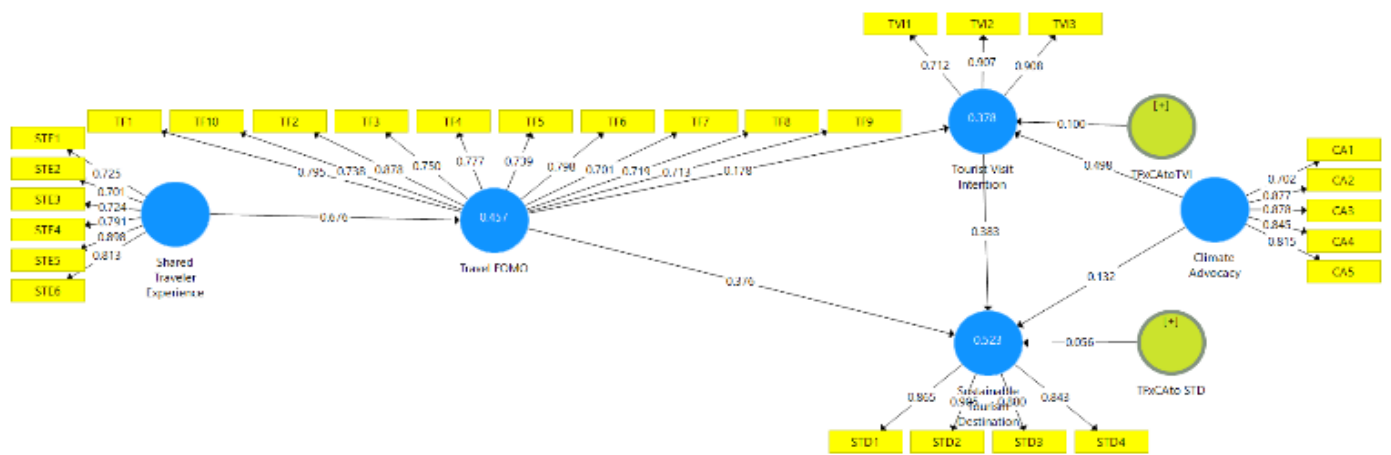


Figure 2. Outer model

5. DISCUSSION

Drawing from responses collected across eight major cities in North Sumatera Province, particularly dominated by Medan, a regional digital hub, this study highlights the pivotal role of Gen Z in shaping digital tourism behavior. As a digitally native generation, Gen Z in urban and semi-urban contexts demonstrates strong reliance on online platforms to discover, evaluate, and choose travel destinations. This finding is consistent with prior studies emphasizing the power of social media in generating shared traveler experiences and triggering Travel FOMO among young travelers.

The path analysis confirms that shared traveler experiences significantly influence Travel FOMO (H1: $\beta = 0.676$, $p < 0.001$), reinforcing the idea that exposure to travel-related content on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook creates emotional and social pressure among viewers. When individuals encounter visually appealing travel stories or destination highlights, they often develop a strong urge to participate in similar experiences associated by the fear of being left out of popular trends. This aligns with the social comparison theory, where emotionally engaging content can intensify the desire to emulate others' behaviors in pursuit of belonging or self-enhancement.

In turn, Travel FOMO significantly boosts both tourist visit intention (H2: $\beta = 0.178$) and support for sustainable tourism destinations (H3: $\beta = 0.376$). These results echo prior research suggesting that heightened FOMO not only generates psychological discomfort but also encourages proactive behavioral responses, such as planning trips or engaging in related conversations. Interestingly, the study expands the scope of FOMO by linking it to sustainability-related

outcomes. As Harahap et al. [4, 12] have suggested, FOMO can serve as an opportunity to embed sustainability values into tourism choices, especially when those values are embedded in the content being consumed.

Furthermore, the results suggest that visit intention also has a significant effect on sustainability support (H4: $\beta = 0.383$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that the intention to visit a destination is closely tied to one's willingness to support sustainable practices there. This suggests that destinations that attract high visit interest also have the opportunity to convert that interest into long-term sustainable engagement.

Moreover, the mediating role of FOMO is confirmed in two indirect pathways. First, FOMO mediates the effect of shared traveler experiences on visit intention (H5: $\beta = 0.120$, $p < 0.001$). Second, and more notably, FOMO mediates the link between digital exposure and support for sustainability (H6: $\beta = 0.255$, $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that emotional triggers evoked by digital travel narratives can convert passive viewers into active, socially conscious tourists. When people feel compelled to replicate others' travel experiences, that desire, when channeled through sustainability messages can strengthen both travel intention and environmental awareness.

The analysis also reveals the moderating role of climate advocacy. Specifically, climate advocacy strengthens the relationship between FOMO and tourist visit intention (H7: $\beta = 0.100$, $p < 0.001$) as well as the link between FOMO and support for sustainability (H8: $\beta = 0.056$, $p = 0.048$), though with a relatively modest effect size. This suggests that Gen Z's travel decisions are not solely linked by emotional impulses, but also shaped by their environmental values and social responsibility. As climate awareness grows, Gen Z travelers appear increasingly responsive to content that is emotionally

engaging, personally relevant, and environmentally aligned.

In sum, this study underscores the dual function of Travel FOMO: not only as a psychological predictor of tourism behavior, but also as a potential vehicle for promoting climate-conscious travel. For destination marketers and tourism authorities, a digital strategy that leverages emotionally resonant storytelling, which is anchored in real traveler experiences and paired with narratives of sustainability and advocacy, can foster both immediate behavioral responses and long-term environmental commitment. Managing digital content effectively should therefore be regarded as a key lever for guiding Gen Z tourists toward more socially and ecologically responsible travel behavior.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This study highlights the central role of Travel FOMO as a psychological mechanism linking digital exposure to both visit intention and support for sustainable tourism among Gen Z tourists. By integrating shared traveler experiences, emotional responses, and climate advocacy in a single framework, the research provides a holistic view of how digital behavior translates into meaningful travel-related actions. The findings emphasize that in today's social media-saturated environment, travel content functions not only as inspiration but also as a predictor of responsible tourism engagement. Beyond confirming the influence of social stimuli and internal values on tourism behavior, the study positions Gen Z as a key segment for sustainability-oriented travel strategies, with their responsiveness to emotionally engaging and value-driven narratives offering significant opportunities for destination marketers, tourism stakeholders, and sustainability advocates to create impactful interventions rooted in digital influence and climate awareness.

However, this study is limited by its geographic scope, focusing solely on major cities in North Sumatera, which may affect the generalizability of findings to other regions or cultural contexts. Additionally, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to establish causality over time. Future research could expand to diverse geographic areas, employ longitudinal or experimental designs, and explore other psychological factors such as digital trust or virtual community engagement that may interact with FOMO and climate advocacy to influence sustainable tourism behavior.

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