

Consequences of the Tourist Experience at Mount Papandayan: A Perspective from Stimulus Organism Response Theory

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the sense, feel, think, act, and relate dimensions in relation to revisit intention through destination engagement among tourists visiting Mount Papandayan. This study employs a quantitative approach using a survey method involving Mount Papandayan tourists as the study population. Data were analyzed using partial least squares (PLS) structural equation modeling via SmartPLS software version 3.0. The results of this study indicate that destination engagement plays a mediating role in the influence of tourist experience comprising the dimensions of sense, feel, think, act, and relate on revisit intention for Mount Papandayan. These findings are expected to assist Mount Papandayan's management in enhancing the quality of the tourist experience by strengthening the sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and social relationship aspects of tourists, thereby increasing tourists' attachment to the destination and encouraging their intention to revisit. Future research is recommended to develop a research model by adding other variables that may potentially influence revisit intention at natural tourist destinations.

INTRODUCTION

A hectic daily routine often leaves people feeling bored and exhausted (Palupi et al., 2023). Enjoying a vacation, such as visiting a tourist destination, can relieve fatigue and restore both physical and mental well-being (Ernawadi, 2025). Garut Regency boasts a diverse range of tourist destinations, ranging from nature-based tourism and cultural tourism to man made attractions that are continuously being developed by the local government (Herawati et al., 2021). Nature-based tourist destinations are among the most popular types of visits for tourists (Wahyutiani, 2023). One form of nature-based tourism is forest areas (Ferbida & Wirakusumah, 2021). Mount Papandayan is known as a natural tourist destination with an elevation of 2,655 meters above sea level, offering views of an active crater, a dead forest, and expanses of edelweiss flowers that attract tourists (Asmoro, 1989). According to data released by the Garut Regency Tourism and Culture Office, the number of tourists visiting Mount Papandayan in 2022 increased to a total of 342,790 visitors. However, in 2023, the number dropped by approximately 49.2% to 171,186 visitors and declined again in 2024 by about 7% to 161,875 visitors. These findings indicate that the revisit intention among nature tourists at Mount Papandayan is on the decline, necessitating greater attention from the Mount Papandayan tourism destination managers to enhance tourists' revisit intention.

To fulfill the research objectives, the stimulus organism response (SOR) theory was used as the underpinning theory, explaining that human behavior is the result of cognitive and emotional processing of environmental stimuli. This means that a person does not react directly to a stimulus (S) but first processes it internally (O) through emotions and thoughts before producing a response

(R). A stimulus (S) is any form of external input received by an individual from their environment. The organism (O) represents the individual's internal state both cognitive and emotional in response to the stimulus. A response (R) is the reaction exhibited by the individual as a result of these internal processes (Mehrabian & Russel, 1974). The assumption is that changes in stimuli can influence existing thoughts and feelings, which in turn affect behavior. Over the past five years, the S-O-R model has been used primarily by experts in educational psychology research, including a study conducted by Abidin (2021).

In the field of marketing, the SOR theory has been used as an underpinning theory by Wibisono & Batara (2021) in the area of online influencer marketing; by Sartika & Fransyah (2022) in the area of consumer behavior on the Shopee e-commerce platform; and by Aini & Yuana (2023) in the area of digital service marketing for the Grab Food e-commerce platform. The SOR theory is also used in studies with similar research subjects, such as the study by Nurfa et al. (2022) on the Ciseeng tourist attraction and the study by Wusko & Auliyah (2024) on Taman Safari Jatim II. This study demonstrates the conceptual model proposed by Wusko & Auliyah (2024) in deducing SOR at the empirical level. This relates to the similarity in the characteristics of the evaluated objectsnamely, nature-based tourism with S-O-R serving as the underpinning theory. The findings of Wusko & Auliyah (2024) demonstrate that destination image does not have a positive effect on satisfaction or revisit intention, while customer experience has a positive effect on satisfaction but not on revisit intention, and satisfaction has a positive effect on revisit intention. On the other hand, nature tourism is heavily influenced by the direct experiences tourists have ranging from what they see, feel, think, and do, to how they interact with the destination's environment. In this context, the satisfaction variable is deemed insufficient to explain how tourism experiences shape tourists' emotional engagement and attachment to the destination, which ultimately drives repeat visits. Based on these limitations, this study proposes a novel approach by incorporating five dimensions of tourist experience sense, feel, think, act, and relate as forms of tourist experience that function as stimuli within the SOR framework. This study also proposes destination engagement as an organism component, as it is deemed better able to represent tourists emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement with the destination. Furthermore, these five dimensions of experience are positioned as external factors hypothesized to influence destination engagement. To test the relevance of the proposed conceptual model, this study selected Mount Papandayan as the object of evaluation.

This study also proposes destination engagement as an organismic component, as it is considered better able to represent tourists emotional, cognitive, and behavioral engagement with a destination. In the context of nature tourism, tourist experience is defined as a personal travel experience that is strong enough to be stored in the traveler's long-term memory (Larsen, 2007). According to Schmitt (1999), there are five dimensions: sense, which refers to experiences involving the five senses to create pleasant sensory impressions; feel, which refers to tourists' emotional responses such as feelings of joy, comfort, or being moved during their trip think, which refers to experiences that stimulate tourists' thinking and cognitive processes, encouraging reflection, creativity, and learning; act, which refers to tourists' behaviors and physical actions, including the lifestyle and activities they engage in at the destination and relate, which refers to

experiences that connect tourists with others or a community, fostering a sense of togetherness. In this study, internal processes the ways in which individuals process stimuli through cognitive and affective aspects before forming specific responses are explained through destination

engagement as a form of visitors' evaluation of and attachment to their travel experiences. However, to date, no study has directly examined the influence of sense, feel, think, act, and relate on destination engagement in the context of nature tourism at Mount Papandayan. Therefore, it is hypothesized that sense, feel, think, act, and relate have a positive influence on destination engagement at Mount Papandayan. This explanation forms the basis for establishing the following hypothesis:

H1: Sense has a positive effect on destination engagement

H2: Feel has a positive effect on destination engagement

H3: Think has a positive effect on destination engagement H4: Act has a positive effect on destination engagement

H5: Relate has a positive effect on destination engagement

Furthermore, the SOR theory explains that individuals do not respond to a stimulus (S) directly but first process it through internal mechanisms or the organism (O), which involves perception, before finally producing a response (R). This postulate is empirically deduced as the variable "destination engagement." According to Zhou & Yu (2022), destination engagement refers to tourists' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral attachment to a destination, formed through travel experiences. A study by Novianti and Ernawadi (2024) demonstrated that tourist engagement has a positive effect on revisit intention at the Cikole Lembang Orchid Forest tourist attraction. In this study, destination engagement is positioned as an internal factor that emerges when tourists process the experiences they receive in a tourism environment, thereby illustrating how stimuli are received and personally interpreted before driving the formation of the intention to revisit. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that destination engagement has a positive effect on revisit intention as follows:

H6: Destination engagement has a positive effect on revisit intention

Based on the theoretical framework outlined above, using the SOR model developed by Mehrabian & Russel (1974), this study explains that environmental stimuli influence an individual's internal state through cognitive, affective, and organismic processes, which are then reflected in behavioral responses. At the stimulus stage, external stimuli serve as the initial trigger that shapes an individual's perceptions and emotions. The organism stage describes the internal processes through which an individual cognitively and affectively evaluates and experiences these stimuli. Subsequently, a response emerges as a behavioral action or intention resulting from the internal meaning that has been formed. Based on a combination of these postulates, the relationship stage was deduced, and the findings of the study by Novianti and Ernawadi (2024) indicate that tourist engagement has a positive effect on revisit intention at the Cikole Lembang Orchid Forest tourist destination. However, to date, no study has examined the influence of sense, feel, think, act, relate which are hypothesized to affect revisit intention mediated by destination engagement. Thus, destination engagement is viewed as a mediating mechanism that explains how various stimuli received by

tourists influence the formation of revisit intention. Based on this discussion, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

H7: Sense mediates the effect of destination engagement on revisit intention

H8: Feel mediates the effect of destination engagement on revisit intention

H9: Think mediates the effect of destination engagement on revisit intention H10: Act mediates the effect of destination engagement on revisit intention

H11: Relate mediates the effect of destination engagement on revisit intention

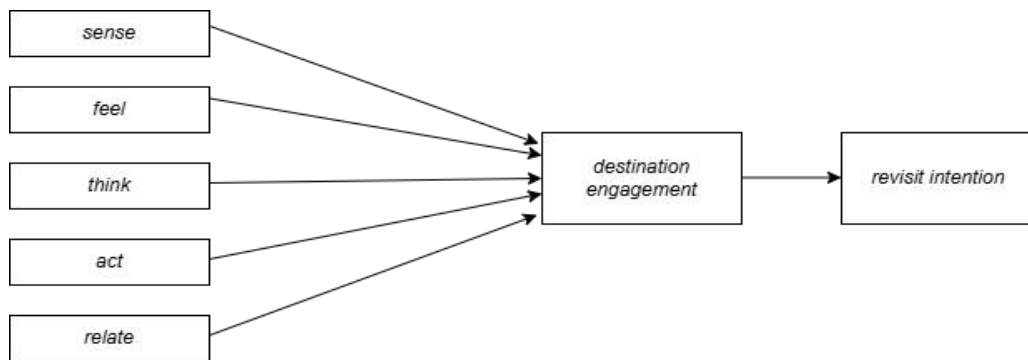


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method, defined as a research method that collects data from a sample using a questionnaire to test causal relationships and research hypotheses. The questionnaire used in this study was found to be both valid and reliable based on semantic and outer model tests. The population for this study consists of tourists who have visited Mount Papandayan, and the sample comprises those who have visited at least once in the past year, are at least 17 years old, and reside in West Java or outside West Java. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling a non-probability sampling technique and data were collected through an online questionnaire. This study employed a cross-sectional design, meaning data were collected at a single point in time to assess respondents' perceptions of the variables under study. Based on the data obtained, there were 108 respondents, predominantly women (63.90%), aged 17–25 (54.60%), residing in West Java (72.20%), and students (44.40%), as presented in Table 1 in the appendix.

The research data were analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with the aid of SmartPLS software, version 3.0. According to Hair et al. (2019), PLS-SEM is a variance-based analytical technique used to test causal relationships among latent variables and to predict the research model. The measurement model (outer model) was evaluated through tests of convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability to ensure the validity and reliability of the research constructs. The evaluation results showed that all indicators met the criteria for convergent validity with factor loadings ≥ 0.7 and composite reliability values ≥ 0.7 , as shown in Table 2 in the appendix. Subsequently, discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion to ensure that each construct measures a concept distinct from the others. According to Hair et al. (2019), discriminant validity is considered met if the root-mean-square average variance

extracted (AVE) for each construct is greater than the correlation coefficient between that construct and the other constructs. Based on the test results, all constructs met these criteria, as presented in Table 3 in the appendix. Next, the structural model (inner model) was evaluated using the AVE and AVE root square tests, in which all constructs in this study met the criteria for convergent validity and discriminant validity, as presented in Table 4 of the appendix. The structural model (inner model) was also evaluated using the F-square test, the goodness-of-fit test, and hypothesis testing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The initial stage of the analysis involved evaluating the model's fit using the Goodness of Fit (GoF) to assess the overall model fit based on Wetzels (2009) criteria; a GoF value of 0.10 indicates a poor fit, 0.25 a moderate fit, and 0.36 a good fit. The results of the GoF test are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. *Goodness of Fit*

Variable	AVE	R-squared
Sense	.766	
Feel	.866	
Think	.858	
Act	.880	
Relate	.828	.815
Destination Engagement	.877	.707
Revisit Intention	.786	
Average	.837	.761

Source: SEM-PLS Version 3.0 Output (Primary Data, 2026)

GOF Value = $\sqrt{\text{Average AVE} \times \text{Average R-squared}}$ GOF Value = $\sqrt{0.837 \times 0.761}$
GOF value = 0.798

Based on the calculation results, a Goodness of Fit (GoF) value of 0.798 was obtained, which falls into the high GoF category. This indicates that the research model has a good level of fit and is therefore suitable for hypothesis testing using SmartPLS 3.0. Next, an effect size (f^2) analysis was conducted to determine the magnitude of the influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable. According to Hardisman (2021), an f^2 value < 0.02 indicates no effect, 0.02–0.15 indicates a small effect, 0.15–0.35 indicates a moderate effect, and > 0.35 indicates a large effect.

Table 6. F Square

Variable	Destination Engagement	Revisit Intention
Sense (SEN)	.031	
Feel (FEL)	.095	
Think (THI)	.106	
Act (ACT)	.038	
Relate (REL)	.003	
Destination Engagement (DE)		2.415

Revisit Intention (RI)

Source: SEM-PLS Version 3.0 Output (Primary Data, 2026)

The effect size (f^2) calculations in Table 6 show that the effect of sense on destination engagement has an f^2 value of 0.031, feel on destination engagement is 0.095, think on destination engagement is 0.106, and act on destination engagement is 0.038. Based on the criteria established by Hair et al. (2022), these four relationships fall into the “small effect” category. Meanwhile, the effect of “relate” on destination engagement has an f^2 value of 0.003, which is below the 0.02 threshold, indicating a very small effect or no significant influence on destination engagement. Nevertheless, if hypothesis testing results indicate that the relationship is significant, the construct still contributes to explaining the influenced variable.

Furthermore, the effect of destination engagement on revisit intention has an f^2 value of 2.415, which falls into the large effect category because the value far exceeds the threshold of 0.35. This indicates that destination engagement makes a very strong contribution to increasing visitors'

revisit intention. Thus, most dimensions exert a small effect on destination engagement, whereas destination engagement has a very large effect on revisit intention. Next, an analysis of the hypothesis test results was conducted to determine the significance of each relationship between variables in the research model.

Table 7. Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis Description	Path Coefficient	T-	Statistics
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P-Values

Notes

H1	SEN → DE	.197	1.306	.096	Not Supported
H2	FEL → DE	.267	2,441	.008	Supported
H3	THI → DE	.291	2.325	.008	Supported
H4	ACT → DE	.167	1,654	.049	Backed
H5	REL → DE	.053	.472	.319	Not supported
H6	DE → RI	.841	22,958	.000	Supported
H7	SEN → DE → RI	.166	1,313	.095	Not supported
H8	FEL → DE → RI	.244	2,140	.008	Supported
H9	THI → DE → RI	.254	2,355	.010	Supported
H10	ACT → DE → RI	.140	1,649	.050	Supported
H11	REL → DE → RI	.045	.475	.318	Not supported

Source: SEM-PLS Version 3.0 Output (Primary Data, 2026)

Hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure with the aid of SmartPLS 3.0 to evaluate the significance of the relationships among constructs in the structural model. Following Hair et al. (2022), the testing criteria were set based on t-statistics > 1.658 and p-values < 0.05 at a 5% significance level. These criteria were used to determine whether the relationships between variables in the research model were statistically significant. Based on the analysis results in Table 7, most of the hypotheses in this study were supported by the empirical data. This is indicated by t-statistics exceeding 1.658 and p-values less than 0.05 for most relationships between variables. However, there were several hypotheses that were not supported because they did not meet the significance criteria.

The test results show that sense does not have a significant effect on destination engagement, with a path coefficient of 0.197, a t-statistic of 1.306, and a p-value of 0.096; therefore, hypothesis H1 is not supported. Furthermore, feel has a positive and significant effect on destination engagement, with a path coefficient of 0.267, a t-statistic of 2.441, and a p-value of 0.008; thus, H2 is supported. "Think" also has a positive and significant effect on destination engagement, with a path coefficient of 0.291, a t-statistic of 2.325, and a p-value of 0.008; therefore, H3 is supported. Furthermore, act has a positive and significant effect on destination engagement with a path coefficient of 0.167, a t-statistic of 1.654, and a p-value of 0.049, thus supporting H4 in accordance with the criteria used in this study. Meanwhile, relate does not have a significant effect on destination engagement, with a path coefficient of 0.053, a t-statistic of 0.472, and a p-value of 0.319; thus, H5 is not supported. The test results also show that destination engagement has a positive and significant effect on revisit intention, with a path coefficient of 0.841, a t-statistic of 22.958, and a p-value of 0.000; thus, H6 is supported. The high path coefficient and t-statistic values indicate that destination engagement is a very strong factor in increasing tourists revisit intention.

In the mediation analysis, destination engagement failed to mediate the effect of sense on revisit intention, with a path coefficient of 0.166, a t-statistic of 1.313, and a p-value of 0.095; thus, H7 is not supported. Conversely, destination engagement was able to mediate the effect of feel on revisit intention, with a path coefficient of 0.244, a t-statistic of 2.140, and a p-value of 0.008; thus, H8 is supported. Furthermore, destination engagement also mediates the effect of think on revisit intention with a path coefficient of 0.254, a t-statistic of 2.355, and a p-value of 0.010; thus, H9 is supported. Additionally, destination engagement mediates the effect of act on revisit intention with a path coefficient of 0.140, a t-statistic of 1.649, and a p-value of 0.050; thus, H10 is supported

based on the criteria used in this study. Meanwhile, destination engagement does not mediate the effect of relate on revisit intention, with a path coefficient of 0.045, a t-statistic of 0.475, and a p-value of 0.318; thus, H11 is not supported.

Overall, the research findings indicate that feel, think, and act are able to increase destination engagement, whereas sense and relate have not yet shown a significant influence on destination engagement. Furthermore, destination engagement was found to have a very strong influence on revisit intention and to mediate the effects of feel, think, and act on revisit intention; however, it does not yet mediate the effects of sense and relate. These findings support the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) theory proposed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), in which a stimulus in the form of a travel experience influences the traveler's internal state (destination engagement), which in turn generates a behavioral response in the form of revisit intention.

CONCLUSION

by positioning the five dimensions of tourist experience namely, sense, feel, think, act, and relate as stimuli, destination engagement as the organism, and revisit intention as the response. The results demonstrate that destination engagement mediates the effects of feel, think, and act on revisit intention but does not mediate the effects of sense and relate on revisit intention. What distinguishes this study from previous research is the modification of the conceptual model which shares the same object characteristics,

namely nature tourism by using the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) theory as its underpinning theory. Previous research has shown that customer experience alone cannot directly explain the formation of revisit intention; therefore, this study developed a model rves as a mechanism capable of explaining how specific tourism experiences encourage tourists to return.

The purpose of this study is to assist the managers of Mount Papandayan in identifying factors that can increase tourists' revisit intention. The results show that feel, think, and act have a positive effect on destination engagement, whereas sense and relate do not have a positive effect on destination engagement. Furthermore, destination engagement has a positive effect on revisit intention. In the mediation analysis, destination engagement mediates the effects of feel, think, and act on revisit intention, whereas sense and relate do not exhibit a mediating effect. These findings suggest that emotional experiences, learning experiences, and experiences that encourage tourist involvement in various activities play a greater role in fostering attachment to the destination, thereby increasing tourists' desire to return. Conversely, the sensory and social experiences perceived by tourists have not yet been able to foster destination engagement strong enough to drive revisit intention.

Therefore, the managers of Mount Papandayan need to develop programs focused on improving the quality of the tourist experience. **First**, regarding the sense aspect, managers need to maintain the quality of the destination's environment by ensuring the cleanliness of the area, preserving the beauty of the panoramic views, maintaining the freshness of the air, and safeguarding nature so that tourists' sensory experiences remain intact, even though this has not yet been proven to significantly increase destination engagement. **Second**, regarding the feel aspect, managers need to develop programs capable of fostering enjoyable emotional experiences, such as organizing themed tourist activities, providing friendly service, creating a comfortable atmosphere, and offering activities that generate positive memories during the visit. **Third**, regarding the think aspect, managers can enrich tourists learning experiences by providing more informative interpretive signs

about the flora, fauna, geology, and history of Mount Papandayan, as well as interactive educational media, so that tourists gain a more meaningful experience. **Fourth**, regarding the act aspect, managers need to expand the variety of tourism activities, such as themed hiking trails, camping, trekking, conservation education, and other outdoor activities that encourage active tourist participation. **Fifth**, regarding the relate aspect, managers can enhance social interaction by organizing community activities, gatherings, group events, and collaborative activities to strengthen a sense of togetherness among tourists. Although the sense and relate dimensions do not show a mediating effect on revisit intention, both dimensions still need to be maintained as part of the overall quality of the tourism experience. By optimizing emotional experiences, learning experiences, and activity experiences supported by strong destination engagement, the managers of Mount Papandayan are expected to be able to increase tourists' revisit intention and strengthen the competitiveness of this natural tourism destination.

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APPENDIX

Table 1. Respondent Profile

DESCRIPTION	NUMBER	
	PERSONS	PERCENTAGE
Gender		
Male	39	30.10%
Female	69	63.90%
Age		
17–25 years	59	54.60%
25–35 years	33	30.60%
> 35 years old	16	14.80%
Place of Residence		
West Java	78	72.20%
Outside West Java	30	27.80%
Employment		
Students	4	3.70%
College Student	48	44.40%
Employees	38	35.20%
Civil Servants	14	13.00%
Other	4	3.70%

Source: Google Forms Output (Primary Data, 2026)

Table 2 Factor Loadings and Composite Reliability Values

Statement	Factor Loadings	Composite Reliability
Sense		.942
I saw the beauty of nature along the hiking trail up Mount	.869	

Papandayan		
I enjoyed the cool air while I was on Mount Papandayan	.925	
I enjoyed the fresh air while I was on Mount Papandayan	.883	
I felt comfortable seeing how clean Mount Papandayan was	.857	
I found the sounds of the wildlife soothing	.841	
Feel		.928
I felt the excitement while doing activities on Mount Papandayan	.936	
I felt a sense of warmth with my loved ones while at Mount Papandayan	.925	
Think		.924
The information signs about the flora broadened my knowledge	.918	
The information about the flora is presented in full on the information	.935	
boards		
Act		.936
I'm actively involved in trying out various trails on Mount hiking Papandayan	.932	
I participated in a <i>camping</i> trip on Mount Papandayan	.944	
Related		.906
I felt a sense of camaraderie with other tourists while doing activities on Mount Papandayan	.896	
I shared stories and experiences with other tourists while at Mount Papandayan.	.923	
Destination Engagement		.934
I'm interested in everything related to tourist attractions at Mount Papandayan	.939	
I feel excited when visiting tourist attractions at Mount Papandayan	.934	
Intention to revisit		.917
I would like to visit Mount Papandayan again	.886	
I consider Mount Papandayan to be a top destination for travel	.884	
It is very likely that I will visit Mount Papandayan again	.889	

Source: SEM-PLS Version 3.0 Output (Primary Data, 2026)

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker criterion

Symbol Size	ACT	DE	FEL	REI	RI	SEN	THI
Act	0.938						
Destination Engagement	0.809	0.936					
Feel	0.770	0.837	0.930				
Relate	0.828	0.804	0.761	0.910			
ntention to Return	0.818	0.841	0.769	0.821	0.887		
Sense	0.818	0.849	0.846	0.873	0.827	0.875	
Think	0.796	0.847	0.804	0.817	0.767	0.836	0.926

Source: SEM-PLS Version 3.0 Output (Primary Data, 2026)

Table 4 AVE Values and AVE Square Roots

Variable	AVE	Square Root of AVE
Sense	.766	.875
Feel	.866	.930
Think	.858	.926
Act	.880	.938
Relate	.828	.910
Destination Engagement	.877	.936
Revisit Intention	.786	.887

Source: SEM-PLS Version 3.0 Output (Primary Data, 2026)