Memorable Tourist Experience, Perceived Value, and Storytelling in Elopement Weddings at Tibumana Waterfall

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Abstract

This study investigates the effect of memorable tourist experiences on storytelling behavior in elopement weddings at Tibumana Waterfall, with perceived value examined as a mediating variable. The research aims to test the hypotheses that memorable tourist experiences positively influence storytelling behavior and that perceived value enhances this relationship. A purposive sampling technique was applied to 140 respondents consisting of couples who had conducted elopement weddings at the destination. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with a two-stage approach. The findings reveal that memorable tourist experiences significantly and positively affect storytelling behavior, while perceived value functions as a complementary mediator, strengthening this relationship. These results highlight the importance of designing wedding experiences that maximize perceived value to stimulate post-visit storytelling. The study contributes to the theoretical development of memorable tourist experience research and offers practical implications for destination branding and marketing strategies, particularly in promoting elopement weddings through authentic visitor storytelling.

INTRODUCTION

Bali has long been recognized as one of the world's leading tourism destinations, not only for leisure travel but also for destination weddings. In recent years, elopement weddings have emerged as a growing niche market, appealing particularly to couples seeking intimacy, flexibility, and personalization in contrast to traditional large-scale ceremonies. Elopement weddings are characterized by their simplicity and private nature, often attended solely by the couple or a few close companions (Alwan & Catya, 2023). The island's diverse landscapes ranging from beaches and cliffs to mountains and waterfalls provide distinctive backdrops for such ceremonies, positioning Bali as a highly competitive arena for global wedding tourism. Among these, waterfalls have become one of the most preferred settings due to their natural aesthetics, sense of seclusion, and symbolic connection with purity and romance. Within this category, Tibumana Waterfall in Bangli has been promoted as a unique elopement venue offering visual beauty and tranquil village surroundings. Yet, despite these advantages, Tibumana's market performance remains weak compared to its competitors such as GitGit, Tukad Cepung, and Sekumpul. Between 2021 and mid-2025, Tibumana consistently accounted for less than 8% of all waterfall-based elopement weddings, reflecting both limited competitiveness and challenges in positioning within this niche segment.

The relatively low uptake of Tibumana as an elopement destination has been associated with weaknesses in storytelling and destination marketing. In digital tourism, storytelling has become an indispensable communication strategy for conveying experiential value and building

emotional resonance with potential visitors (Koo et al., 2020 ; Nadiastuti et al., 2025) . When narratives fail to articulate uniqueness, intimacy, or authenticity, destinations risk being overlooked in favor of competitors with stronger promotional strategies (Alwan & Catya, 2023). Storytelling behavior, particularly through visitor-generated content on platforms such as Instagram, Google Reviews, and wedding blogs, plays a vital role in shaping the perceived attractiveness of elopement wedding venues. Research has shown that compelling narratives not only increase emotional engagement but also stimulate electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), enhancing destination visibility and competitiveness (Cater et al., 2020). The absence of effective storytelling thus contributes to Tibumana's limited market penetration despite its natural potential.

Beyond communication strategies, the concept of memorable tourist experiences (MTEs) has gained prominence as a key determinant of visitor behavior and destination success. Memorable experiences are those that are emotionally engaging, personally significant, and capable of being recalled and shared long after the visit (H. Kim & Chen, 2019). Scholars argue that MTEs play a decisive role in shaping perceived value, satisfaction, and loyalty, as well as in driving visitors to share their stories with others (Zhong et al., 2017). In wedding tourism contexts, where symbolic meaning and emotional resonance are heightened, the creation of memorable experiences is especially critical. Prior studies confirm that MTEs significantly influence tourists' perceived value and subsequently their willingness to recommend or return (Maharaniputri et al., 2021) . Moreover, Sharma et al., (2022) demonstrate that MTEs can directly and indirectly affect behavioral outcomes such as storytelling, underscoring the importance of perceived value as an intermediary mechanism.

Despite these findings, there remains a limited understanding of how perceived value mediates the relationship between memorable tourist experiences and storytelling behavior, particularly in the context of elopement weddings. Most previous studies have concentrated on broader aspects of destination loyalty, satisfaction, or revisit intention, often neglecting the role of storytelling as a behavioral outcome. Furthermore, research on elopement weddings in Bali has been largely descriptive, focusing on market potential and destination attributes rather than empirical testing of experiential and behavioral constructs. Given that storytelling has become central to digital tourism promotion, understanding the pathways that stimulate storytelling behavior especially in niche, experience-driven contexts like elopement weddings represents a critical theoretical and managerial challenge.

To fill this gap, the present study investigates the mediating role of perceived value in the relationship between memorable tourist experiences and storytelling behavior at Tibumana Waterfall. Specifically, it seeks to answer the research question: How does perceived value mediate the influence of memorable tourist experiences on storytelling behavior in the context of elopement weddings? The objectives are twofold: first, to test the direct effect of memorable experiences on storytelling behavior, and second, to assess the mediating role of perceived value in this relationship. The novelty of this research lies in its integration of memorable tourist experiences, perceived value, and storytelling behavior within the specialized context of elopement weddings. By focusing on Tibumana Waterfall a venue with strong natural appeal but weak market performance this study not only extends theoretical understanding of experience-driven tourism but also provides practical insights for destination branding and digital marketing strategies. Ultimately, the findings are expected to inform tourism managers, wedding organizers, and policymakers in designing wedding experiences that optimize perceived value and stimulate storytelling, thereby enhancing Bali's competitiveness in the global elopement wedding market.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research design using a survey approach to examine the relationship between memorable tourist experiences, perceived value, and storytelling behavior in the context of elopement weddings at Tibumana Waterfall. The design was considered appropriate to address the research objectives, as it allowed for testing direct and indirect effects among variables using a structural equation modeling framework (Hair et al., 2021). The population of the study consisted of couples who had organized or experienced elopement weddings at Tibumana Waterfall. A purposive sampling technique was applied to ensure that respondents had direct relevance to the research objectives. A total of 140 valid responses were collected, which is deemed adequate to meet the minimum sample size requirements for structural equation modeling using Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS).

Respondents represented diverse demographics, including international and domestic couples, different income levels, and various age groups, reflecting the heterogeneity of the elopement wedding market segment. Data were gathered through structured questionnaires distributed both online and offline with the assistance of wedding organizers affiliated with Tibumana Waterfall. The questionnaire was developed based on established measurement scales from previous studies, with slight adaptations to fit the research context. Memorable tourist experience items were adapted from Aroeira et al., (2016), perceived value constructs were drawn from Monfort et al., (2025) and storytelling behavior indicators were adjusted from Zhong et al., (2017). All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Prior to distribution, the questionnaire was reviewed by two academic experts in tourism studies and piloted with a small group of 20 respondents to ensure clarity, content validity, and reliability. Minor modifications were made based on feedback before final deployment. The research procedure followed ethical guidelines, with respondents assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation. Data collection was conducted over a three-month period in early 2025. All completed questionnaires were screened to eliminate incomplete or inconsistent responses. For data analysis, the study employed the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) approach using SmartPLS software. The two-stage approach was applied, beginning with the evaluation of the measurement model to assess construct reliability, validity, and convergent validity, followed by the evaluation of the structural model to test hypothesized relationships. Model fit indices, path coefficients, and mediation tests were conducted to verify the proposed hypotheses. Bootstrapping procedures with 5,000 resamples were used to assess the significance of path coefficients and indirect effects. This analytical approach was chosen because of its suitability for complex models with mediating variables and relatively small to medium sample sizes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Characteristics of Respondents

The 140 respondents in this study represent a diverse yet distinctive profile of couples who conducted elopement weddings at Tibumana Waterfall, with complete demographic data recorded to support valid analysis. In terms of age, the largest group fell within 41–50 years (45.7%), followed by 31–40 years (26.4%), while younger couples aged 18–30 years accounted for only 10.7%, indicating that elopement weddings at Tibumana are more favored by middle-

aged couples who are often in stable phases of life both financially and socially. Educational background further highlights that the majority of respondents were well-educated, with 62.9% holding a bachelor's degree and 15% a graduate degree, suggesting that higher education may shape preferences for intimate weddings that emphasize authenticity and symbolic meaning rather than extravagant ceremonies. In terms of occupation, corporate employees dominated (57.1%), reflecting the appeal of elopement weddings among individuals in formal work structures with stable incomes, while entrepreneurs (23.6%) and professionals (19.3%) also formed significant groups, indicating flexibility and a strong inclination toward personalized experiences. The income distribution shows that 42.1% of respondents earned between US$5,000–9,999 annually, and a further 26.4% earned US$10,000 or more, revealing that nearly seven out of ten participants belonged to the middle-to-high income category. Collectively, these characteristics portray Tibumana's elopement market as being largely composed of financially capable, educated, and career-stable couples particularly those in their middle adulthood who deliberately choose intimate wedding experiences that balance exclusivity, aesthetics, and emotional value over conventional large-scale celebrations.
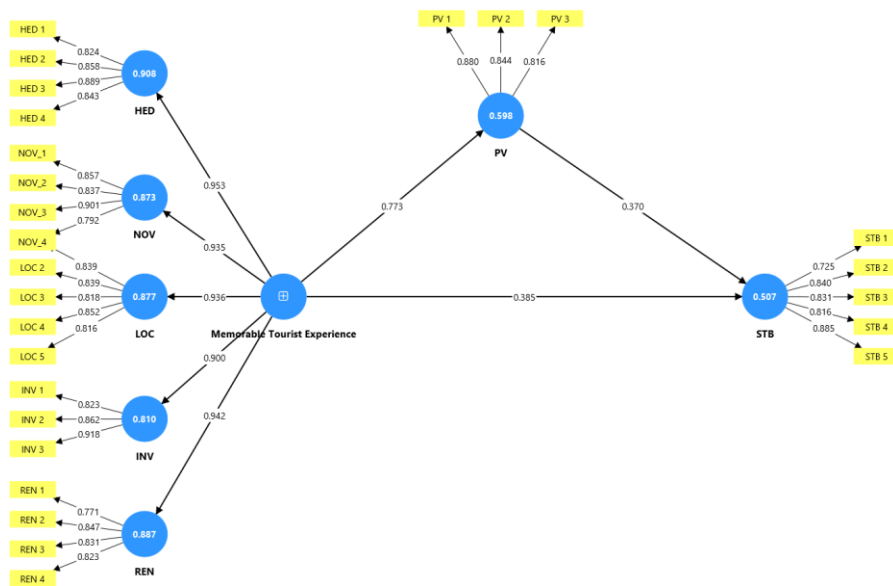
Measurement Model (Outer Model)

Figure 1 Outer Model
Source: Processed primary data (2025)

Based on the Measurement Model (Outer Model) shown in the figure above, all latent constructs demonstrate strong indicator loadings above the 0.70 threshold, confirming their validity in reflecting their respective variables (Hair et al., 2021). The construct Memorable Tourist Experience consists of the dimensions Hedonism, Novelty, Local Culture, Involvement, and Renewal, all of which show robust factor loadings (≥0.771). The construct Perceived Value is measured by three indicators with high loadings ranging from 0.814 to 0.916, while Storytelling Behavior consists of five indicators with loadings between 0.725 and 0.885, which remain acceptable. The relationships among constructs indicate that Memorable Tourist Experience exerts a strong influence on Perceived Value (β = 0.773) and also significantly impacts Storytelling Behavior both directly (β = 0.383) and indirectly through Perceived Value (β = 0.372). These findings confirm that the measurement model demonstrates good validity and reliability,

reinforcing the conclusion that memorable tourist experiences at Tibumana Waterfall.

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was tested to assess whether the indicators effectively represented their respective latent constructs. This was examined through the outer loading values of each indicator and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct. According to Ghozali (2018), indicator loadings above 0.70 and AVE values above 0.50 are considered acceptable and indicate good convergent validity. The results are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Convergent Validity (Outer Loadings & AVE)

Construct	Outer Loading Range	AVE
Hedonism	0.824 – 0.889	0.728
Involvement	0.823 – 0.918	0.754
Local Culture & Knowledge	0.816 – 0.852	0.694
Novelty	0.792 – 0.901	0.718
Renewal	0.771 – 0.847	0.670
Perceived Value	0.816 – 0.880	0.718
Storytelling Behavior	0.725 – 0.885	0.674

Source: Processed primary data (2025)

The results indicate that all constructs achieved satisfactory convergent validity, with outer loading values exceeding 0.70 and AVE values surpassing 0.50. The strongest loading was observed in Involvement (0.918), while the lowest was in Storytelling Behavior (0.725), which still meets the minimum threshold. These findings confirm that all constructs were adequately represented by their indicators and thus valid for further structural analysis.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed to ensure that each construct in the model was empirically distinct and measured different concepts. This was evaluated using the Fornell–Larcker criterion, which compares the square root of the AVE with inter-construct correlations, and the Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. According to Henseler et al., (2016) discriminant validity is confirmed when the square root of AVE exceeds the correlations with other constructs and when HTMT values remain below 0.90. The results are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity (Fornell–Larcker & HTMT)

Constructs Compared	Fornell–Larcker √AVE	HTMT
Memorable Tourist Experience ↔ Perceived Value	0.934 vs 0.847	0.870
Memorable Tourist Experience ↔ Storytelling Behavior	0.934 vs 0.821	0.721
Perceived Value ↔ Storytelling Behavior	0.847 vs 0.821	0.786

Source: Processed primary data (2025)

The results demonstrate that all constructs meet the criteria for discriminant validity. The square roots of AVE for each construct were greater than their correlations with other constructs, and all HTMT values were below the 0.90 threshold. This confirms that each construct is unique and does not overlap with others, thereby validating the distinctiveness of the constructs in the measurement model.

Reliability Test

Reliability testing was conducted to measure the internal consistency of the indicators in representing their latent constructs. Two criteria were used: Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). According to Ghozali (2013) both values should exceed 0.70 to indicate that the

constructs are reliable. The results of the reliability test are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Reliability Test

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Hedonism	0.875	0.915
Involvement	0.836	0.902
Novelty	0.868	0.911
Renewal	0.835	0.890
Perceived Value	0.804	0.884
Storytelling Behavior	0.878	0.911
Memorable Tourist Experience (Second Order)	0.963	0.971

Source: Processed primary data (2025)

The findings show that all constructs exceeded the reliability threshold, with Cronbach's Alpha values ranging from 0.804 to 0.963 and Composite Reliability values between 0.884 and 0.971. The highest reliability was recorded for Memorable Tourist Experience (CR = 0.971), reflecting very strong consistency, while the lowest was for Perceived Value (CR = 0.884), which still indicates a high level of reliability. These results confirm that the measurement model is highly reliable and suitable for structural testing.

Structural Model (Inner Model)

R-Square

The R-Square (R^2) value was used to evaluate the explanatory power of exogenous constructs on endogenous constructs. Higher R^2 values indicate stronger predictive ability of the model in explaining variance in the dependent variables. According to Hair et al., (2021) R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 can be classified as substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively. The results of the R^2 analysis are shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4. R-Square Results

Endogenous Construct	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Perceived Value	0.598	0.595
Storytelling Behavior	0.506	0.499

Source: Processed primary data (2025)

The results reveal that Memorable Tourist Experience explains 59.8% of the variance in Perceived Value (R^2 = 0.598), while Memorable Tourist Experience and Perceived Value together explain 50.6% of the variance in Storytelling Behavior (R^2 = 0.506). Both values fall into the moderate category, suggesting that the model has sufficient explanatory power and is capable of capturing the majority of the variance in the dependent variables.

Predictive Relevance (Q^2) and Goodness of Fit (GoF)

Predictive relevance (Q^2) was tested to determine the predictive capability of the model for endogenous variables. A Q^2 value greater than zero indicates predictive relevance, while values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 are considered weak, moderate, and strong, respectively (Hair et al., 2021). Goodness of Fit (GoF) was also assessed to evaluate the overall quality of the measurement and structural models, with thresholds of 0.10 (small), 0.25 (medium), and 0.36 (large). The results are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Predictive Relevance (Q^2) and Goodness of Fit (GoF)

Test	Value	Threshold	Interpretation

Q² Predictive Relevance	0.801	> 0.35	Strong predictive relevance
GoF	0.620	> 0.36	High model fit
SRMR	0.062	< 0.08	Good fit
NFI	0.883	> 0.80	Acceptable fit

Source: Processed primary data (2025)

The Q² value of 0.801 confirms that the model has strong predictive power, explaining approximately 80% of the variance in the observed data. The GoF index of 0.620 indicates that the model achieves a high level of fit, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.36. Additional indices support this conclusion: SRMR (0.062) was below 0.08, reflecting minimal residuals, while NFI (0.883) exceeded the 0.80 cutoff, suggesting a satisfactory overall model fit. Collectively, these findings affirm that the model not only explains the variance well but also fits the data robustly.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was carried out to examine both the direct and indirect effects between variables. The significance of each path was evaluated using bootstrapping, with criteria of t-statistic > 1.96 and p-value < 0.05. The results are summarized in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Hypothesis Testing (Direct and Indirect Effects)

Path	β	t-Statistic	p-Value	Result
Memorable Tourist Experience → Storytelling Behavior (Direct)	0.383	4.117	0.000	Significant
Memorable Tourist Experience → Perceived Value (Direct)	0.773	15.128	0.000	Significant
Perceived Value → Storytelling Behavior (Direct)	0.372	3.117	0.002	Significant
Memorable Tourist Experience → Perceived Value → Storytelling Behavior (Indirect)	0.288	3.121	0.002	Significant

Source: Processed primary data (2025)

Based on the results of the PLS analysis, the direction and influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable showed positive and significant relationships. The effect of Memorable Tourist Experience on Storytelling Behavior was recorded at 0.383 with a t-statistic of 4.117 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating that an increase in memorable tourist experiences enhances storytelling behavior by 0.383; thus, the first hypothesis was accepted. Furthermore, Memorable Tourist Experience also had a significant effect on Perceived Value with a coefficient of 0.773, a t-statistic of 15.128, and a p-value of 0.000, confirming that the higher the memorable experience perceived by tourists, the greater their perceived value, thereby supporting the second hypothesis. In addition, Perceived Value had a positive effect on Storytelling Behavior with a coefficient of 0.372, a t-statistic of 3.117, and a p-value of 0.002, demonstrating that an increase in perceived value leads to an increase in storytelling behavior by 0.372, so the third hypothesis was accepted. The analysis of the indirect path also showed that Memorable Tourist Experience positively influenced Storytelling Behavior through Perceived Value with a coefficient of 0.288, a t-statistic of 3.121, and a p-value of 0.002, thereby confirming the fourth hypothesis.

Upsilon Test (υ)

The Upsilon (υ) test was used to further quantify the strength of the mediation effect by calculating the proportion of indirect effects in the overall model. This provides an additional measure of how strongly the mediator contributes to the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The result is shown in Table 8 below.

Table 8. Uji Upsilon (υ) for Mediation Path

Mediation Path	X → M	M → Y	Upsilon (υ)	Category
Memorable Tourist Experience → Perceived Value → Storytelling Behavior	0.773	0.372	0.0825	High

Source: Processed primary data (2025)

The Upsilon (υ) value of 0.0825 indicates that the mediation effect of Perceived Value is classified as high. This finding reinforces the conclusion that perceived value substantially strengthens the influence of memorable tourist experiences on storytelling behavior, highlighting the crucial role of perceived value as a complementary mediator in the model.

DISCUSSION

The Effect of Memorable Tourist Experience on Storytelling Behavior

The first hypothesis, which stated that Memorable Tourist Experience (MTE) has a positive and significant effect on Storytelling Behavior in elopement weddings at Tibumana Waterfall, is accepted. Results of the PLS Bootstrapping analysis indicate that the path coefficient is 0.383 with a t-statistic of 4.117 (> 1.96) and a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05), thereby confirming the significant influence. This finding highlights that the more memorable and emotionally engaging the wedding experience, the stronger the couples' motivation to narrate and share their stories with others. Storytelling here functions not only as a personal recollection but also as a powerful form of word-of-mouth communication that can extend the reach and attractiveness of Tibumana as a destination.

This result is consistent with Maharaniputri et al., (2021) and Zhong et al., (2017) who argued that memorable experiences are critical antecedents of storytelling behavior. According to A. Kim & Brown, (2012), memorable tourist experiences are formed through selective evaluations of enjoyable and meaningful moments at a destination, which are later consolidated into long-term memories and expressed through narratives. Similarly, Sari et al., (2024) demonstrated that memorable experiences significantly enhance visitors' willingness to engage in narrative sharing, either through interpersonal communication or via digital platforms. In Tibumana's context, couples who perceive their wedding as deeply emotional and intimate surrounded by the natural beauty of the waterfall and the symbolic significance of marriage are more likely to generate narratives that they share with family, friends, and social media audiences.

In practice, Tibumana Waterfall has strong potential to improve in this area. Incorporating Balinese cultural elements such as symbolic rituals, melukat ceremonies, gamelan performances, or community-led culinary experiences could enhance the authenticity and distinctiveness of the elopement packages offered. Such cultural enrichment would not only differentiate Tibumana from other waterfall destinations but also provide couples with unique narratives that combine natural beauty, romantic intimacy, and cultural symbolism. As Suhartapa et al., (2025) observed, participatory involvement in cultural activities fosters stronger emotional bonds with destinations and creates a sense of ownership over the experience, which ultimately encourages couples to tell richer, more compelling stories.

Furthermore, strengthening local culture and involvement dimensions aligns with the broader framework of sustainable and experiential tourism. Integrating community participation ensures that local residents benefit economically and socially from tourism activities, while simultaneously providing visitors with authentic and meaningful experiences. Utami & Hardianti (2024) noted that when natural attractions are combined with cultural narratives, the resulting stories are not only more memorable but also more marketable through social media channels. In this sense, storytelling acts as organic promotion that enhances the brand identity of Tibumana, positioning it as not just a scenic backdrop for weddings but as a holistic cultural and emotional journey.

The Effect of Memorable Tourist Experience on Perceived Value

The second hypothesis, which stated that Memorable Tourist Experience (MTE) has a positive and significant effect on Perceived Value in elopement weddings at Tibumana Waterfall, is accepted. Results of the PLS Bootstrapping analysis show that the path coefficient is 0.773 with a t-statistic of 15.128 (> 1.96) and a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05). This indicates a strong and significant influence, confirming that the more memorable the wedding experience is, the higher the value perceived by couples. In other words, couples who enjoy unique, enjoyable, and meaningful experiences at Tibumana Waterfall are likely to associate greater value with the destination, thereby validating the second hypothesis.

This result is consistent with Cornelisse (2023) who emphasized that memorable tourist experiences are essential drivers of value creation at destinations, and with Maharaniputri et al., (2021) who found that MTE significantly enhances perceived value across various tourism settings. Similarly, Pujiastuti et al., (2022) demonstrated that MTE plays a critical role in shaping perceived value, which in turn influences tourists' future behavioral intentions, including loyalty and positive word-of-mouth. In the context of elopement weddings at Tibumana, MTE encompasses not only the visual beauty of the waterfall but also the emotional intimacy of the wedding ceremony, the symbolic meaning of marriage in a natural setting, and the possibility of cultural enrichment, all of which contribute to shaping couples' perceived value.

However, the study also found that the local culture and knowledge and involvement dimensions were relatively underdeveloped in shaping MTE at Tibumana. This indicates that, while couples perceive the destination as visually and emotionally appealing, they may not be fully immersed in authentic Balinese cultural values or engaged in participatory experiences that could further enrich their perception of value. According to Sweeney & Soutar (2001) perceived value is multidimensional, encompassing emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions that go beyond financial considerations. Thus, enhancing cultural experiences and active involvement would add both authentic value and social value, making couples feel that Tibumana offers a deeper, more holistic experience.

Practical strategies to strengthen these dimensions include integrating Balinese cultural rituals such as simple ceremonial processions, acoustic gamelan performances, or melukat purification rites into elopement wedding packages. These elements would not only provide unique photo opportunities but also create deeper symbolic meaning, thereby enhancing perceived authenticity. Additionally, participatory activities, such as preparing offerings (canang sari), engaging with local artists, or enjoying traditional meals prepared by the community, could increase couples' sense of involvement. As Eckardt et al., (2024) observed, experiences enriched by cultural interaction foster stronger emotional bonds and elevate perceived value, even when certain physical conditions (e.g., crowded settings or environmental imperfections) may fall short

of expectations.

The Effect of Perceived Value on Storytelling Behavior

The third hypothesis, which stated that Perceived Value has a positive and significant effect on Storytelling Behavior in elopement weddings at Tibumana Waterfall, is accepted. Results of the PLS Bootstrapping analysis show that the path coefficient is 0.372 with a t-statistic of 3.117 (> 1.96) and a p-value of 0.002 (< 0.05), thereby confirming a significant relationship. This implies that the greater the value perceived by couples from their wedding experience, the stronger their motivation to narrate and share their stories with others. Storytelling in this context serves not only as a reflection of personal satisfaction but also as an essential form of organic promotion that strengthens Tibumana's identity as an elopement destination.

This finding aligns with Pujiastuti et al., (2022), who showed that perceived value significantly influences tourists' willingness to engage in storytelling, and Pujiastuti et al., (2022), who emphasized storytelling as an effective form of destination brand communication. Similarly, Yoon & Lee, (2023) confirmed that positive value perception enhances the likelihood of electronic word-of-mouth, especially through social media platforms. In the context of Tibumana, couples who perceive high monetary, emotional, and uniqueness value in their wedding experience are more likely to share enthusiastic narratives through visual and textual storytelling, whether in digital or face-to-face interactions.

At Tibumana, perceived value is primarily derived from two critical factors: monetary value and uniqueness value. Couples evaluate whether the costs incurred are justified by the quality, exclusivity, and distinctiveness of the experience. When these elements are well delivered, couples perceive higher value and are motivated to share their stories with pride. However, the study also uncovered gaps between expectation and reality such as crowded environments, limited privacy, and water quality issues that diminished perceived value for some couples. These findings resonate with Andesta et al., (2025) , who observed that perceived value is closely tied to both the quality of the environment and the extent to which experiences meet or exceed expectations.

Nevertheless, the role of perceived value is not limited to monetary considerations. As Yoon & Lee, (2023) highlight, perceived value also encompasses emotional and social dimensions. In Tibumana's case, emotional value may come from the romantic and symbolic nature of the ceremony, while social value emerges from the prestige of hosting a unique and exotic wedding that can be shared with one's social circle. When these dimensions are present, storytelling becomes more than a simple narrative; it evolves into a tool for identity expression and social connection, amplifying Tibumana's visibility and appeal.

Interviews with couples further underscored the importance of these improvements. While many valued Tibumana for its exotic natural setting, some felt that the lack of exclusivity and inconsistent environmental conditions diminished their satisfaction. Yet, respondents also acknowledged that cultural and symbolic enhancements such as Balinese rituals, personalized themes, and community involvement could significantly elevate their perception of value. This reflects the concept of relative value judgment, where couples compare Tibumana's offerings with alternative destinations such as GitGit or Tukad Cepung. If Tibumana fails to deliver unique and exclusive experiences, its perceived value and the resulting storytelling behavior may fall short.

To strengthen perceived value and its effect on storytelling, destination managers must address both the functional and symbolic aspects of the experience. From a functional

perspective, ensuring exclusivity such as allocating private time slots for elopement weddings would minimize disturbances from regular visitors and enhance the sense of intimacy. Improving environmental management, particularly water quality and landscape aesthetics, would also reinforce value for money. From a symbolic perspective, offering premium packages with Balinese cultural decorations, professional documentation services, and authentic rituals would elevate the uniqueness of the experience, thereby amplifying the perceived value.

The Mediating Role of Perceived Value

The fourth hypothesis, which stated that Perceived Value mediates the relationship between Memorable Tourist Experience (MTE) and Storytelling Behavior, is accepted. Results of the PLS Bootstrapping analysis indicate an indirect path coefficient of 0.288, with a t-statistic of 3.121 (> 1.96) and a p-value of 0.002 (< 0.05). In addition, the Upsilon (υ) value of 0.0825 classifies the mediation as high, confirming that Perceived Value serves as a complementary mediator. This means that both the direct and indirect paths contribute simultaneously to enhancing storytelling behavior, thereby reinforcing the importance of perceived value in strengthening the impact of memorable experiences on narrative sharing.

These findings are consistent with Pujiastuti et al., (2023) who demonstrated that memorable experiences significantly influence storytelling behavior when mediated by perceived value. Similarly, Cater et al., (2020) emphasized that extraordinary tourist experiences are more likely to be shared when visitors perceive them as valuable, as value acts as a filter that transforms experiences into compelling narratives. In Tibumana's context, couples who derive not only enjoyment and novelty but also emotional and symbolic value from their wedding experience are more motivated to retell their stories, thus contributing to the destination's organic promotion.

However, the mediation pathway also highlights limitations in the local culture and involvement dimensions of MTE. While couples value Tibumana's natural aesthetics and emotional atmosphere, the absence of strong cultural immersion and participatory activities limits the depth of perceived value. As a result, while hedonic and renewal aspects drive couples to share their stories, the lack of cultural uniqueness risks making Tibumana's narratives less distinctive compared to competitors such as GitGit or Tukad Cepung. Diya & Setiyorini, (2017) argued that cultural differentiation is essential for creating sustainable added value in tourism experiences. Without integrating cultural authenticity, Tibumana risks being perceived as visually appealing but culturally shallow.

To strengthen the mediating role of perceived value, Tibumana must therefore enrich its elopement wedding offerings with authentic Balinese cultural and participatory elements. Incorporating simple rituals, symbolic blessings, or community-led performances can add layers of meaning that enhance both emotional and social value. Involvement activities, such as inviting couples to create offerings, participate in local culinary traditions, or engage with Balinese musicians and artists, would foster a sense of ownership over the experience. Suhartapa et al. (2025) observed that such involvement creates emotional bonds and a feeling of personal connection, which in turn strengthens the desire to share experiences through storytelling.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

This study investigated the effect of Memorable Tourist Experience (MTE) on Storytelling Behavior in elopement weddings at Tibumana Waterfall, with Perceived Value tested as a mediating variable. The findings confirm that MTE significantly enhances both perceived value and storytelling behavior, while perceived value itself positively influences storytelling behavior

and mediates the relationship between MTE and storytelling. Hedonism and renewal emerged as the most dominant dimensions of MTE, whereas local culture and involvement were relatively weak, suggesting the need for greater integration of cultural authenticity and participatory activities. These results advance the body of knowledge by highlighting the role of perceived value as a complementary mediator in the context of elopement wedding tourism, thereby expanding the theoretical framework of MTE and storytelling beyond conventional leisure tourism.

Nonetheless, the study has limitations that should be acknowledged. The sample size, though adequate, was limited to 140 respondents who had specific experiences at Tibumana Waterfall, restricting the generalizability of findings to other contexts or destinations. In addition, the reliance on self-reported survey data introduces potential biases related to memory recall and subjective perceptions. Despite these limitations, the study provides critical insights into how destination managers can leverage memorable experiences and perceived value to foster storytelling as a form of organic promotion.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Based on the findings, several recommendations can be offered. For destination managers at Tibumana Waterfall, enhancing local cultural integration and active involvement in elopement wedding packages is essential. Incorporating symbolic Balinese rituals, community-led activities, and participatory experiences would enrich authenticity, thereby raising perceived value and stimulating richer storytelling. Improving exclusivity through private time slots and better environmental management can also strengthen value for money and encourage positive narratives.

For future research, scholars are encouraged to expand the scope by examining similar models across multiple destinations in Bali or other cultural tourism settings to test generalizability. Longitudinal studies would also be valuable to assess how storytelling behavior evolves over time, particularly through digital platforms. Further, qualitative approaches such as in-depth interviews or netnography could provide deeper insights into how couples construct and communicate their narratives. By addressing these areas, future research can refine the understanding of how memorable experiences and perceived value jointly shape storytelling behavior, offering both theoretical enrichment and practical strategies for sustainable destination development.

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