

Encouraging Visits to Geoparks through Sustainable Marketing: A Conceptual Study on Geopark Dieng

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Abstract

Geopark tourism plays a crucial role in sustainable tourism by promoting visitor attractions while emphasizing the conservation of geological heritage, public education, and the empowerment of local communities. However, scholarly focus on the factors influencing visit intentions in geopark contexts, particularly from a sustainable marketing perspective, is limited. This conceptual paper presents a theoretical framework illustrating how publicity, destination attributes, and word of mouth (WOM) contribute to the formation of destination awareness, destination image, and destination preference, ultimately shaping visit intentions. Drawing from tourism marketing literature and consumer behavior theories, the study proposes twelve research propositions. Destination awareness and destination image serve as key psychological mechanisms that mediate the effects of external factors on destination preference and visit intention. Publicity enhances awareness and strengthens image through credible exposure, while destination attributes, such as accessibility, attractiveness, and amenities, impact both preference and image. Additionally, WOM lends authenticity and trust, further reinforcing awareness and perception. The model highlights destination preference as the vital link between perceptions and tourists' intentions to visit. Theoretically, this paper enriches the sustainable tourism literature by extending destination marketing concepts to geopark tourism. Practically, it provides insights for geopark managers to develop sustainable marketing strategies through credible publicity, effective management of sustainable attributes, and WOM-based experiential promotion. Although conceptual, this framework paves the way for empirical research, including tests across various forms of special interest tourism and the incorporation of cultural distance or behavioral theories to connect revisit intentions with actual behavior.

Keywords

Consumer behavior, Sustainable marketing, Visit intention, Tourism marketing, Geopark

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Introduction

Geopark tourism, an essential component of geotourism and geoheritage conservation, plays a strategic role in achieving sustainable tourism. A geopark is an area of significant geological value recognized by UNESCO, serving not only as a site for conservation but also as a platform for education and local economic development through community engagement (Molokáč et al., 2024). By integrating preservation, education, and empowerment, geoparks tackle contemporary tourism challenges that require a balance between economic growth, environmental sustainability, and the reinforcement of socio-cultural values (Malatyinszki et al., 2025).

Previous studies in tourism marketing have primarily concentrated on classical variables such as destination image, tourist satisfaction, and visit intention as key determinants of tourist loyalty, particularly in well-known areas like tourism cities and coastal destinations (Jimenez-García et al., 2025; Z. Zhang et al., 2024). For instance, effective destination advertising has been demonstrated to enhance destination awareness and reinforce its image (Z. Zhang et al., 2024). Additionally, research indicates that tourist happiness and perceived brand value significantly impact preferences and visit intentions (Jimenez-García et al., 2025).

However, in the context of geoparks, marketing strategies have largely remained limited to general promotion and conservation messaging, with few efforts aimed at the comprehensive integration of sustainable marketing strategies. A study by Suhud et al. (2025) on the Ijen Geopark highlights the significance of perceived destination sustainability and geological credibility in shaping tourist image and visit intention. Their findings indicate that tourists are more inclined to intend to visit when they perceive the geopark as an authentic, sustainable, and trustworthy destination. Conversely, El Hamidy and Errami's (2025) research on the Safi Geopark illustrates that involving local communities in the development of geotourism products enhances the destination's value and fosters a sense of place, an essential component of the sustainable tourism experience.

From a sustainable marketing perspective, promotional efforts that emphasize educational and conservation values, such as environmental awareness campaigns, popular scientific publications, and traditional media, effectively enhance awareness and cultivate positive perceptions of a destination (Costa-Font & Vilaplana-Prieto, 2022; Hermawan et al., 2025). Furthermore, word-of-mouth (WOM) communication, whether through tourists' personal experiences or informal recommendations, significantly influences tourist preferences and decision-making, particularly among visitors who are conscious of sustainability issues (Mulyanto, 2023).

Unfortunately, a limited body of research explicitly integrates the role of WOM and publicity as sustainable promotional tools within a strategic marketing framework for geoparks. Moreover, distinctive destination attributes of geoparks, such as geological attractiveness (e.g., unique natural formations), accessibility (often characterized by physical or logistical challenges), and amenities developed by local communities, have yet to be thoroughly examined as comprehensive factors shaping destination image and preference. This is despite the fact that, in the literature on sustainable destination marketing, such attributes are considered crucial in influencing tourist perceptions and visit intentions, especially among those with strong environmental and cultural value orientations (Garanti et al., 2024).

In light of this research gap, the present study aims to propose a conceptual framework that integrates key elements of sustainable marketing strategy, namely, publicity, WOM, and destination attributes (3A: attractiveness, accessibility, and amenities), to elucidate how these factors influence

destination awareness, image, and preference, ultimately driving visit intention to geoparks. Theoretically, this study expands the scope of tourism marketing research into the geopark domain by incorporating variables that are both relevant and context-specific. Practically, the proposed framework is expected to serve as a reference for geopark managers in designing promotional strategies that are sustainable, effective, and aligned with conservation goals as well as the interests of local communities.

Theoretical Background

Sustainable Marketing in Tourism

Sustainable marketing in tourism goes beyond merely achieving economic goals, such as attracting visitors and boosting revenue; it also considers socio-cultural and environmental impacts, the well-being of local communities, and the conservation of natural resources (Font & McCabe, 2017; Moreno-Gené et al., 2020). The UNWTO defines sustainable tourism as an approach that fully accounts for its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts while addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities (Moreno-Gené et al., 2020). Font and McCabe (2017) emphasizes that for tourism marketing to be genuinely "sustainable," it must incorporate responsible practices such as destination branding, ethical promotion, and transparent communication about sustainability initiatives.

The significance of sustainable marketing in tourism has grown due to global pressures such as climate change, environmental degradation, and an increasing awareness among travelers of the negative effects of tourism on local environments and cultures (Palacios et al., 2021). Today's tourists often prefer destinations that demonstrate environmental and social responsibility over those that offer only aesthetic appeal or modern amenities (Kusumaningrum et al., 2024). Consequently, destination marketing strategies must integrate sustainability not as a superficial label but as a fundamental aspect of communication, cross-functional destination management, and tourism experiences that embody social, cultural, and ecological values.

The Construct of Visit Intention in Geopark Tourism

Visit intention refers to the likelihood that potential tourists will choose to visit a specific destination, influenced by cognitive (knowledge, perception), affective (emotions, feelings), and conative (behavioral intention) components (Agapito et al., 2023; Sabiote-Ortiz et al., 2024). Research by H. Zhang et al. (2020) revealed that cognitive and affective images significantly impact conative images, thereby influencing visit intention. Furthermore, affective responses mediate the relationship between cognitive knowledge and the intention to visit (Yang et al., 2024).

Many previous studies have explored the factors influencing visit intention at popular destinations, including cultural sites, beaches, heritage areas, and tourism cities. For instance, Ran et al. (2021) identified destination image, perceived value, and online attention as strong predictors of travel intention. Similarly, Sabiote Ortiz et al. (2024) found that cognitive and affective images, along with various tourist motivations (e.g., intellectual, social, and stimulus avoidance), shape visit intention during the destination evaluation phase. However, there remains a notable research gap regarding the impact of variables such as *publicity* and *destination-specific* attributes, like geological uniqueness, accessibility, and local amenities, on visit intention in the context of geoparks, particularly concerning the educational and conservation elements fundamental to the geopark experience.

Publicity

Publicity encompasses the exposure of a destination through media, public campaigns, and news coverage that highlight the educational, cultural, and sustainability values of geoparks. As an external stimulus, publicity plays a critical role in shaping *destination awareness* and enhancing *destination image*. For example, the study by Suhud et al. (2025) demonstrates that publicity directly influences *destination preference* and *destination image*, which subsequently affects visit intention.

Destination Attributes

Destination attributes, such as natural beauty, geological uniqueness, community-supported facilities, and accessibility, are key factors in forming both destination awareness and image. A study by Xanthakis et al. (2024) found that effective geopark websites promoting the digital attributes of alternative destinations help increase both awareness and the perceived image of the geopark. Another study in Spain by Parris and Guzmán (2023) showed that both "hardware" attributes (infrastructure, accessibility, physical facilities) and "humanware" attributes (service quality, local hospitality) positively influence *destination image*, which in turn affects tourist loyalty, visit intention, and word-of-mouth (WOM) behavior.

Word of Mouth (WOM)

WOM refers to recommendations or testimonials from previous tourists and is generally perceived as more credible than formal advertising. In the context of geoparks, WOM can involve sharing authentic experiences, such as natural beauty, interactions with local communities, or geological education. Numerous studies have shown that WOM enhances *destination awareness* and strengthens *destination image*, thereby contributing to visit intention. Similarly, Tan and Wu (2016) found that WOM enhances *brand trust*, which in turn impacts visit intention.

Destination Awareness

Destination awareness refers to the degree to which tourists recognize and are familiar with a destination, including its key features. Awareness is primarily shaped by publicity and WOM. A study by Mauladi et al. (2023) on Ciletuh Palabuhanratu Geopark found that social media significantly boosts awareness, which then contributes to shaping *destination image* and stimulates interest in visiting.

Destination Image

Destination image includes both *cognitive perceptions* (knowledge of the destination's characteristics and quality) and *affective perceptions* (emotional responses and appeal). Within the cognitive-affective-conative (CAC) model, the *cognitive image* influences the *affective image*, which subsequently shapes the *conative image*, closely tied to visit intention (Agapito et al., 2023; Sabiote-Ortiz et al., 2024). Additionally, Nazir et al. (2021) found that *destination image* mediates the effects of perceived risk and travel constraints on international tourists' behavioral intentions (Nazir et al., 2021).

Destination Preference

Destination preference refers to a tourist's inclination to choose one destination over others, based on awareness, image, destination attributes, and WOM. Preference often functions as a mediating variable between awareness/image and visit intention. A study by Suhud (2023) on geoparks

revealed that destination reputation, personality, and trust influence *destination preference*, which in turn reflects tourists' intention to visit (Suhud et al., 2023a).

Conceptual Model and Propositions Development

The Role of Publicity in Shaping Destination Awareness and Destination Image

In tourism marketing, *publicity* serves as a strategic communication tool that disseminates information about destinations through various channels, including mass media, official publications, and non-commercial coverage. Unlike paid advertising, which relies on explicit persuasion, publicity is generally perceived as more credible and informative (Kim & Richardson, 2003). Thus, publicity functions not only as a promotional tool but also as an educational medium and a shaper of broader destination perceptions.

The role of publicity in enhancing *destination awareness* can be explained by the *agenda-setting theory* proposed by McCombs and Shaw (1972). This theory suggests that media influences what audiences deem important; thus, consistent media exposure of a destination can heighten public awareness of its existence. In essence, the more frequently a destination is featured in news reports or publications, the more likely potential tourists are to recognize and consider it in their travel planning.

Additionally, publicity plays a crucial role in forming a *destination image*. According to Baloglu and Baloglu dan McCleary (1999), destination image is shaped by a blend of external stimuli, such as media, and the personal characteristics of tourists. Positive, informative, and engaging media representations directly affect both the *cognitive* and *affective* perceptions that tourists develop about a destination. This implies that the portrayal of a destination in the media can create lasting first impressions among potential visitors.

Empirical studies reinforce the significance of publicity in influencing destination awareness and image. For example, Wang and Han (2022) found that destination promotional videos distributed through social media and official government channels significantly impact both destination image and public support for the tourism sector. This indicates that well-crafted visual content can enhance public understanding of a destination's value and appeal, thereby strengthening its positive image.

Moreover, Pourazad et al. (2025) examined the influence of public figures on destination choices and discovered that informative and persuasive content shared by influencers effectively increases *destination awareness*. Additionally, the information provided by influencers shapes tourist attitudes toward the highlighted destination, ultimately enhancing both destination image and tourist preference.

Interestingly, Jebbouri et al. (2022) found that media exposure that is educational and narrative in nature, such as documentaries or popular scientific research on destinations, can boost tourists' trust in the destination. This underscores the importance of the *quality* of information conveyed through publicity in shaping positive perceptions, which are essential for building a strong and credible *destination image*.

Based on the theoretical discussion and empirical evidence presented, two key propositions can be formulated in the context of geopark destination development:

PROPOSITION 1: *Publicity positively influences Destination Awareness.*

PROPOSITION 2: *Publicity positively influences memengaruhi Destination Image.*

The Role of Destination Attributes in Shaping Destination Awareness, Preference, and Image

Destination attributes are crucial in influencing tourist perceptions and behaviors. These attributes are typically categorized into three main components known as the 3A: *attractiveness* (appeal), *accessibility* (ease of access), and *amenities* (supporting facilities). In the context of geoparks, these attributes are enhanced by geological uniqueness (*geoheritage*), authentic local cultural experiences, and a commitment to ecological sustainability. Strong and distinctive attributes not only boost tourist interest but also reinforce the destination's identity as a unique and sustainable tourism area.

Recent studies emphasize the significant role of destination attributes in enhancing *destination awareness*. For instance, Wang and Lin (2024) conducted research on sustainable urban waterfronts and found that attributes such as aesthetic quality, availability of green recreational spaces, and the comfort of public facilities, often highlighted in online reviews, greatly affect tourists' evaluations. This indicates that exposure to strong destination attributes can elevate awareness of a destination's existence and competitive advantages Wang and Lin (2024).

In addition to awareness, destination attributes play a vital role in shaping *destination preference*. Tourists are more inclined to select destinations that are attractive, easily accessible, and well-equipped. Kovačić and Šagovnović (2023) discovered that destination attributes, when combined with destination personality and image, significantly influence tourist activity preferences. Their research highlighted that perceptions of attraction quality and the authenticity of experiences offered are key drivers of tourist preferences.

Moreover, the impact of destination attributes on forming *destination image* has been a longstanding focus of scholarly research. Destination image is influenced not only by promotional activities or word-of-mouth but also by the quality of attributes experienced by tourists. Chahal and Devi (2016) demonstrated that destination attributes directly affect image formation, although tourists' risk perception can moderate this relationship. This implies that even exceptional destination attributes may have a diminished impact on image if tourists perceive high levels of risk or insecurity (Chahal & Devi, 2015). Similarly, Beerli and Martín (2004) developed a theoretical framework that emphasizes the role of both physical and social destination attributes in shaping tourists' cognitive and affective perceptions, ultimately contributing to a comprehensive destination image.

Further research by Styliadis et al. (2017) supports the notion that destination attributes directly contribute to the construction of destination image. Their study highlighted that tourists' interactions with tangible aspects of a destination, such as facilities, accessibility, and local attractions, form the foundation of their cognitive and affective perceptions. Consequently, a positive destination image is built on tourists' real experiences with the attributes they encounter during their visit.

Based on this discussion, three conceptual propositions can be formulated regarding the relationship between destination attributes and the variables of awareness, preference, and image:

PROPOSITION 3: *Destination Attributes positively influence Destination Awareness.*

PROPOSITION 4: *Destination Attributes positively influence Destination Preference.*

PROPOSITION 5: *Destination Attributes positively influence Destination Image.*

The Role of Word of Mouth (WOM) in Shaping Destination Awareness and Destination Image

Word of Mouth (WOM) is one of the most influential sources of information in tourists' decision-making processes. Unlike formal advertising, which is often perceived as commercial and promotional, WOM is considered more credible because it stems from the direct experiences of travelers who have already visited a destination. Recommendations, personal stories, and testimonials from previous tourists often serve as key references for prospective visitors, helping them become aware of a destination's existence and shaping their initial expectations (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016). Thus, WOM not only enhances *destination awareness* but also provides a foundational layer for building a destination's image.

Tourism literature affirms that WOM significantly impacts the development of destination awareness. A study by Jalilvand and Samiei (2012) demonstrated that WOM communication strongly influences tourists' perceptions, both cognitively (in terms of knowledge and destination attributes) and affectively (in terms of emotions and appeal). This indicates that authentic narratives of personal experiences enrich potential tourists' mental representations of destinations, making WOM a more powerful source of awareness than conventional advertising.

Beyond awareness, word-of-mouth (WOM) plays a crucial role in shaping *destination image*. Jebbouri et al. (2022) demonstrated that destination image and WOM mutually influence each other: a positive destination image encourages tourists to share recommendations, while strong WOM further strengthens perceptions of the destination among prospective travelers. This creates a positive feedback loop in which WOM serves as a long-term enhancer of destination image.

WOM is also relevant in the context of sustainable and alternative tourism destinations. A study by Suhud et al. (2024) on coffee plantation tourism revealed that both publicity and WOM (including traditional WOM) increased tourist awareness and preference. Although this study did not specifically address geoparks, its findings support the notion that WOM consistently influences tourists' intentions to visit destinations with unique characteristics and educational value.

Furthermore, Abubakar (2016) found that WOM from previous visitors directly contributes to the formation of a positive destination image among prospective tourists, especially in international contexts. The trust placed in WOM sources makes it a more effective communication tool for shaping perceptions than traditional promotional methods. This underscores WOM's role as a mediator between actual experiences and perceived destination image in the minds of future visitors.

Thus, WOM not only affects the cognitive aspect of initial destination knowledge (awareness) but also enhances the emotional and evaluative dimensions that shape the overall *destination image*. In the context of geoparks, WOM is particularly significant, as these destinations depend on authentic experiences, community interaction, and geological education, all of which create compelling stories that travelers are eager to share.

Based on the literature and empirical evidence presented, the following conceptual proposition can be formulated:

PROPOSITION 6: *Word of Mouth positively influences Destination Awareness.*

PROPOSITION 7: *Word of Mouth positively influences Destination Image.*

The Role of Destination Awareness and Destination Image in Shaping Destination Preference

Destination awareness is the initial stage in the tourist decision-making process, enabling potential travelers to recognize a destination's existence, understand its key characteristics, and consider it a viable option among their travel choices. Without awareness, tourists cannot develop deeper perceptions, such as destination image or preference (Gartner, 1994).

Once awareness is established, tourists begin to form a *destination* image. This image arises from a combination of *cognitive* dimensions, knowledge and information about the destination's attributes and *affective* dimensions, emotions and perceived aesthetic appeal. Destination image is crucial as it provides an evaluative framework that influences tourist attitudes. A positive image creates a strong emotional and rational foundation for tourists to compare destinations and make their final choice (Chi & Qu, 2008).

Numerous studies have highlighted the relationship between awareness, image, and preference. For instance, Roostika and Yumna (2023) examined the impact of destination awareness and image on perceived quality and tourist preference among TikTok users in Indonesia. Their findings revealed that higher awareness and a more favorable image enhance tourist preference for the destination, ultimately increasing the intention to visit. This supports the notion that awareness and image are essential prerequisites for forming destination preference.

Additionally, Chahal and Devi (2016) studied volatile tourism destinations and found that destination attributes influence image formation, which, in turn, affects both tourist preference and trust. This indicates that while preference is often linked to actual experiences, the destination image established early in the decision-making process can significantly impact the likelihood of a tourist selecting a specific destination.

Further evidence from Styliadis et al. (2017) reinforces the idea that destination image, among both tourists and local residents, affects preference evaluation and behavior. Thus, a positive image not only shapes perceptions but also strengthens destination preference. Similarly, Agapito, Pinto, and Mendes (2013) confirmed that the cognitive and affective dimensions of image significantly contribute to assessing destination preference. Lastly, Chi and Qu (2008) found that destination image directly influences both destination loyalty and tourist preference, increasing the likelihood of revisit intentions.

In summary, the interplay between awareness, image, and *preference* forms a coherent chain: *awareness* serves as the entry point, *image* enhances both cognitive and emotional perceptions, and together they directly contribute to the formation of *destination* preference.

Based on the literature and empirical evidence presented, the following conceptual proposition can be formulated:

PROPOSITION 8: *Destination Awareness positively influences Destination Preference.*

PROPOSITION 9: *Destination Image positively influences Destination Preference.*

The Role of Destination Awareness, Preference, and Image in Shaping Visit Intention

Visit intention is a crucial outcome in tourist behavior models and is often regarded as a dependent variable in destination marketing research. It is conceptually developed through a progression of cognitive, affective, and *conative* stages. *Destination awareness* provides the cognitive foundation through initial knowledge of the destination, *destination image* offers emotional and rational evaluations, while *destination preference* reflects tourists' inclinations based on the integration of that knowledge and perception (Lam & Hsu, 2006).

Awareness is vital as the starting point in forming visit intention. Without awareness, tourists have no basis for considering a destination as a viable option. A study by Roostika and Yumna (2023) found that destination awareness significantly enhances perceived quality and drives visit intention among TikTok users, highlighting the importance of this initial stage in prompting conative behavior.

Additionally, *destination image* plays a key role in reinforcing visit intention. A positive image, characterized by cognitive (e.g., attributes and information) and affective components (e.g., emotions and aesthetic appeal), boosts tourists' confidence in a destination's appeal. Stylos et al. (2016) found that destination image significantly influences visit intention in cultural tourism contexts, even in the face of environmental uncertainty. Similarly, Chi & Qu (2008) confirmed that destination image directly contributes to both *destination loyalty* and *visit intention*.

Meanwhile, *destination preference* acts as a bridge linking awareness and image to visit intention. Tourists who are aware of a destination and have a favorable image of it are more likely to develop a strong preference, increasing the likelihood of translating that preference into action. Research by Prayag (2012) confirmed that tourist preference mediates the relationship between destination image and loyalty, reinforcing the idea that preference also influences visit intention.

Finally, a recent study Rather (2020) emphasized that the interaction between awareness, image, and preference can enhance a destination's *brand equity*, which directly impacts visit intention. This suggests that these three variables not only function independently but also interactively reinforce one another in shaping tourists' intent to visit.

Based on this synthesis of the literature, the following three key propositions can be formulated:

PROPOSITION 10: *Destination Awareness positively influences Visit Intention.*

PROPOSITION 11: *Destination Preference positively influences Visit Intention.*

PROPOSITION 12: *Destination Image positively influences Visit Intention.*

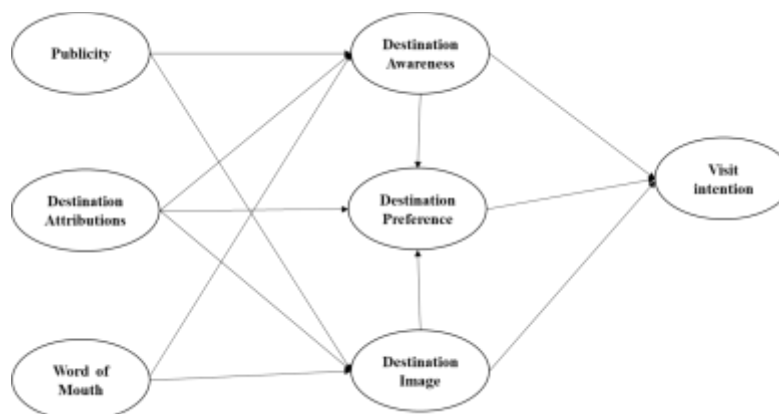


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

Conclusion

The theoretical framework proposed in this study draws on existing literature regarding destination marketing, sustainable tourism, and sustainable marketing. The developed conceptual model emphasizes the direct relationships between core variables, including *Publicity*, *Destination Attributes*, *Word of Mouth (WOM)*, *Destination Awareness*, *Destination Image*, *Destination*

Preference, and ultimately, *Visit Intention*. Based on this framework, twelve research propositions have been formulated to elucidate the factors influencing tourists' intentions to visit geoparks.

In this framework, *Destination Awareness* and *Destination Image* serve as key psychological mechanisms that mediate the effects of external influences on *Destination Preference* and *Visit Intention*. Awareness acts as the initial entry point, enabling tourists to recognize the existence and characteristics of a geopark. Prior research indicates that robust awareness increases the likelihood of a destination being considered during the decision-making process. Conversely, *Destination Image* introduces an evaluative dimension, both cognitive and affective, that shapes tourists' attitudes. Osti and Nava (2020) noted that a positive destination image significantly affects both preference and loyalty, subsequently enhancing visit intention.

Additionally, factors such as *Publicity*, *Destination Attributes*, and *WOM* play vital roles in shaping tourist perceptions. Publicity, conveyed through mass media, public campaigns, and official publications, has been shown to boost tourist awareness and strengthen destination image (Suhud et al., 2024b). Destination attributes, including accessibility, attractions, and amenities, directly impact awareness, image, and tourist preference (Suhud et al., 2023b). WOM, whether in the form of verbal recommendations or online reviews, carries high credibility and effectively builds tourist trust while reinforcing the authenticity of the destination experience.

Furthermore, *Destination Preference* serves as a link between perception-based factors (awareness and image) and *Visit Intention*. Tourists with high awareness and a positive image of a destination are more likely to develop strong preferences, thereby increasing the likelihood of actual visit intention. emphasized that the interplay of awareness, image, and preference is crucial in predicting visit intention. In the context of geoparks, this underscores the necessity for sustainable marketing strategies that prioritize positive publicity, environmentally responsible destination management, and experience-based WOM promotion.

This study makes a significant conceptual contribution by underscoring the importance of integrating communication factors (*Publicity* and *WOM*) with destination factors (*Attributes*, *Awareness*, and *Image*) to explain *Visit Intention* in geopark tourism. By positioning *Destination Awareness* and *Destination Image* as central psychological mechanisms, the model presents a new framework that can be empirically tested in future research. This contribution enhances the literature on sustainable marketing in nature and culture-based tourism contexts and offers practical implications for geopark management focused on conservation, education, and community empowerment.

Despite its theoretical significance and practical implications for destination management, this conceptual study has several limitations that must be acknowledged.

First, the study is entirely conceptual and does not empirically test the proposed theoretical framework. This limitation aligns with critiques from Nunkoo et al. (2017), who emphasize the need for empirical validation to assess the framework's applicability to real-world tourist behavior. Future research should, therefore, gather field data to empirically evaluate the validity of this framework across various destination contexts. Second, the current framework does not adequately address the dimension of *Revisit Intention*. While the model prioritizes *Visit Intention* as the primary outcome, it fails to sufficiently connect initial visit intention with actual repeat behavior. Third, the generalizability of the proposed conceptual framework is limited. Given its focus on geopark destinations centered on conservation and education, the model may require adjustment when applied to other forms of tourism, such as medical tourism, wellness tourism, or gastronomy. As noted by Smith and Puczkó (2014), various types of *Special Interest Tourism* are driven by

distinct motivations and behavior patterns. Thus, the flexibility of this framework should be tested in other destination contexts with differing characteristics to evaluate its broader applicability.

From a business perspective, this framework highlights several actionable insights for tourism organizations, destination managers, and geopark-related enterprises. Strengthening publicity efforts and enhancing destination attributes can directly increase visitor awareness and improve the overall image, which in turn elevates Visit Intention. Businesses that invest in authentic experiences capable of generating positive WOM, both offline and online, can benefit from increased credibility and organic promotion. Moreover, by understanding how awareness and image translate into preference and intention, tourism businesses can strategically allocate resources to marketing activities that maximize visitor acquisition, foster brand differentiation, and support sustainable competitive advantage. In the context of geoparks, this model suggests that businesses aligned with conservation, education, and community engagement can leverage these psychological mechanisms to attract environmentally conscious visitors and strengthen long-term market positioning.

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