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**IMPACT OF MEMORABLE TOURISM EXPERIENCES ON REVISITING
INTENTION**

An empirical study on Santa Claus's official hometown

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ABSTRACT

Humans develop various experiences throughout their lives. During a trip, a tourist encountered a number of experiences. Some experiences are positive, and some are negative. It's becoming harder for destination management organisations and firms to suppress the negative aspects and provide a memorable tourism experience for guests. This research explores the association between memorable tourism experiences and revisiting intention and furthermore explores the association of memorable tourism experiences with tourists' satisfaction, destination image, electronic word-of-mouth, and destination safety. For this, a structured questionnaire was developed, and 136 responses were collected from international tourists visiting Rovaniemi. Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling statistical techniques were applied to analyse structural relationships using SmartPLS software to analyse the collected data. According to the empirical findings, memorable tourism experiences do not positively impact visitors' intention to revisit Santa Claus's official hometown. However, they do positively affect destination image, overall satisfaction, and electronic word-of-mouth. In contrast, overall satisfaction and revisiting intention do not have a positive association. Although electronic word-of-mouth is positively influenced by destination safety, revisiting intention is positively influenced by destination image. Nevertheless, destination safety as a moderator does not impact memorable tourism experiences and revisiting intention, as well as memorable tourism experiences and electronic word-of-mouth relationships. The study results indicate that there might be some missing links between tourist satisfaction and loyalty. Thus, a relationship marketing programme might effectively encourage tourists to revisit Rovaniemi and further improve the destination's image and sustainability.

Keywords: MTEs, Revisiting Intention, Santa Claus, eWOM, Destination Safety, Destination Image, Satisfaction.

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Rovaniemi, March 2024

Md Shahed Mahmud

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CB-SEM	Covariance-Based Structural Equation Modelling
CR	Composite Reliability
DI	Destination Image
DMOs	Destination Management Organisations
DS	Destination Safety
eWOM	Electronic Word-of-Mouth
HTMT	Heterotrait-monotrait ratio
MTEs	Memorable Tourism Experiences
MTEs	Memorable Tourism Experience Scale
OS	Overall Satisfaction
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling
RI	Revisiting Intention
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
TMCS	Tourism Memory Characteristics Scale
VIFs	Variance Inflation Factors
WOM	Word-of-Mouth

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Travel has fascinated humans since ancient times, although the current forms of travel are different from the past (Nair & Raju, 2017). In ancient times, travel was done mostly for trade and commerce purposes, although some other forms of travel, i.e., in search of knowledge, pilgrimage, health-related issues, etc., were there for centuries (Connell, 2013; García Romero, 2013; Nair & Raju, 2017). Due to the enhancement of economic standards, ease of transportation, and technological advancement, people worldwide travel to different parts of the world to take vacations from their regular work (Buhalis, 2000; Nair & Raju, 2017; Xiang et al., 2021).

While visiting a place, tourists experience many aspects that are closely associated with the tour. Both positive and negative experiences impact a tourist's mind from different perspectives, which ultimately shape their future behaviour (Pai et al., 2021; Su et al., 2018; Um et al., 2006). Over the decades, studies on tourism experience have been one of the most critical aspects for researchers and practitioners (Bigne et al., 2020; deMatos et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2012; Lehto et al., 2004; Prentice et al., 1998; Wong et al., 2020). Carefully designed tourism destinations and firms providing services closely identify the tourists' touchpoints and relentlessly work to deliver better experiences to tourists (Blain et al., 2005; Elbe et al., 2009). For this, Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) have been taking a wide variety of initiatives to connect all the stakeholders and provide a memorable tourism experience to tourists (Elbe et al., 2009; Pearce & Schänzel, 2013). However, Pearce and Schänzel (2013) urged for a boundary between effective management and over-management of the DMOs and suggested some form of freedom to the participating organisations in a destination.

Like the other branches of marketing, creating value for the customer and developing a long-term relationship with the customer are essential aspects for the service-providing entities (Grönroos, 2017; Monteiro et al., 2023; Najdić et al., 2016; Viio & Grönroos, 2016). Pine II and Gilmore (1998)'s concept of experience economy inspired the base for developing Memorable Tourism Experiences (MTEs) analysis, which is one of the most prominent topics considering tourists' experiences and their views about a destination (Jiang et al., 2022). In transferring consumers' focus from the functional benefits of commodities, products, and

services to their subjective and psychological effects, the experience economy perspective emphasises the significance of memories and experiences in generating economic value (Lee & Lee, 2021; Rašan et al., 2022). Researchers and practitioners consistently focus on creating an unforgettable (memorable) tourism experience for tourists to promote revisiting, Word-of-Mouth (WOM) communication and sustainability in a broader sense (Kusumawati et al., 2020; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021; Tiwari et al., 2023; Zeng & Yi Man Li, 2021; Zhang et al., 2018). By providing a memorable tourism experience and providing satisfied customer service, the tourist may revisit that place again to explore that destination more profoundly next time, share the experiences with their friends and families, and become the promoter of that place (Servidio & Ruffolo, 2016; Wong et al., 2020). Nevertheless, tourism experiences have been considered as one of the main predictors for future travel, anticipation, and expectations (Park & Santos, 2017). In addition, from the perspective of market competitiveness, the need to create memorable experiences for tourists has become crucial because tourists' have a lot of options in their hands, and social media has changed the whole landscape in recent years (Hosseini et al., 2023).

With the rise of the internet and the widespread use of different social media platforms, tourists are now sharing more and more of their personal experiences on the internet and influencing other tourists to make decisions for their travel plans (Coudounaris & Sthapit, 2017; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). Various forms of user-generated content (blogs, pictures, vlogs, etc.) and narrations from fellow travellers have become influential sources of information gathering and making final decisions for potential tourists to a destination (Bigne et al., 2020; Chandralal et al., 2015; Servidio & Ruffolo, 2016). Besides, influencers on social media platforms are now playing a significant part in generating demand and promoting potential destinations to individuals interested in travelling there (Femenia-Serra & Gretzel, 2020; Han & Chen, 2022; Kilipiri et al., 2023; Zhu et al., 2023).

Defining the tourism industry is quite challenging since it encompasses various activities and stakeholders, including transportation, accommodation, attractions, and tourist companies, rather than representing a single commodity (Rašan et al., 2022). Besides, each tourist's experiences vary based on their own histories, values, attitudes, and beliefs (Chen & Rahman, 2018). Thus, creating a positive image of a destination is critical, and the analysis of tourists' way of portraying a destination is also vital (Wang et al., 2023). Travellers are highly impacted by the pleasant memories they have encountered, which generate a favourable mood, a sense

of happiness, and can impact a large part of their lives (Rašan et al., 2022). Due to the unpredictable nature of tourism, anything may also happen at any moment during a trip, i.e., injuries, sicknesses, loss of belongings, or even winning a contest (Kim, 2016). Surprising, frustrating, uncomfortable, satisfaction, etc., occurrences might happen out of the blue, which can shape tourists' positive or negative experiences (Kim, 2016). Hence, the destination image and safety aspects must be considered while considering tourism experiences. Different researchers have identified these two issues as essential elements in the process of forming tourism experiences (Kim, 2018; Sharma & Nayak, 2019; Zou & Mawby, 2021). According to Gartner (1994), destination image has affective, cognitive, and conative components. Thus, while considering crafting a favourable destination image, those three components have to be carefully considered to minimise the gap between the projected image and the perceived image of tourism experiences (Bramwell & Rawding, 1996; Wang et al., 2023).

Again, tourists' safety and risk are other aspects to be considered as those impact tourists' decision to visit or revisit a destination (Hasan et al., 2017; Zou & Mawby, 2021). Tourists' perceptions of safety and risks might vary based on geographical, cultural, and psychological aspects and impact their travel experiences differently (Hasan et al., 2017; Zou & Mawby, 2021). From crime to extreme weather conditions, all can be considered from a safety and risks perspective (Hasan et al., 2017; Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2012). Despite being widely recognised as a significant factor influencing visitors' decisions to visit or revisit, but a handful of research has been found in this area (Hasan et al., 2017; Zou & Mawby, 2021). Destination success largely depends on stakeholders' social identity; for this reason, tourism stakeholders relentlessly work to create a safe destination (Yen et al., 2021).

According to UN Tourism (2024), tourism destinations are places where visitors can stay overnight. Besides, it is a co-location of goods, services, events, and encounters along the tourist value chain and has been considered a fundamental building block of tourism analysis (UN Tourism, 2024). In other words, tourist destinations are places where travellers may have various travel experiences where a number of stakeholders, i.e., tourists, locals, the government, travel agents, and other vendors, have been involved (McIntosh et al., 1995). For this study, Rovaniemi has been selected as the tourism destination. Rovaniemi is also known as Santa Claus's official hometown, and tourism plays a vital role here. A number of stakeholders are involved in delivering memorable tourism experiences to the tourists visiting Rovaniemi. Many tourists visit Rovaniemi and Lapland regions every year, and because of this, the whole region's

economy largely depends on the tourism industry (Grenier, 2007; Tervo-Kankare et al., 2013). According to a statistics of Visit Finland (2023a), in the year 2023, the Lapland region generated 248.4€ million in revenue by accommodating 3.3 million tourists overnights, where more than half of the tourists were foreigners. Although Rovaniemi is popular worldwide because of the biggest brand “Santa Claus,” and winter tourism activities, but natural based tourism is another aspect that tourists also prefer (García-Rosell & Mäkinen, 2013; Grenier, 2007; Sthapit & Björk, 2019; Tervo-Kankare et al., 2013). The present study explores the association between MTEs with the Revisiting Intention (RI) and other aspects in the context of Santa Claus’s official hometown, Rovaniemi. For this, an integrated MTEs scale has been adopted from Kim (2018) and Sharma and Nayak (2019). Besides, this study also employs Destination Image (DI), Overall Satisfaction (OS), electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM), and Destination Safety (DS) to develop the research model and hypotheses.

1.2 Research gap

Studying in the field of tourism experience is quite common, and this has got momentum with Pine II and Gilmore (1998)’s concept of experience economy. A number of studies have been carried out based on this concept. Among them, the concept of MTEs by Kim et al. (2012) has become one of the most researched topics during the last couple of years. In association with the Kim et al. (2012)’s MTEs scale and other scales, a number of research have been carried out in different contexts of the world (Chandralal et al., 2015; Chen & Rahman, 2018; Cornelisse, 2018; Hosany et al., 2022; Sthapit & Björk, 2019; Sthapit & Coudounaris, 2018; Sthapit et al., 2020). Kim (2024) himself applied his MTEs scale in various contexts and kept on upgrading it.

In this context, this study adopted a research model based on the previous research carried out by Kim (2018) and Sharma and Nayak (2019). From the extensive literature search, it has been found that a handful of studies have measured the relationship between DS and MTEs (Hasan et al., 2017; Zou & Mawby, 2021). In addition, to the best of our knowledge, no research has been carried out considering DS and MTEs, where DS has been considered a moderator. In moderation, the relationship between two constructs depends on a third variable, which may change the strength or direction of model construct relationships (Hair et al., 2022, p. 243). DS involves not only physical security but also health, well-being, and emotional comfort too. Creating safe and enjoyable travel environments is crucial for fostering memorable experiences,

increasing intention to revisit, and promoting positive eWOM (Goyal & Taneja, 2023). Thus, this study considered DS as a moderator. In addition, due to the widespread use of the internet and various social media platforms, eWOM has become a prominent factor in the context of MTEs. Although previous studies showed the association of WOM with MTEs and RI (Kim, 2018; Kusumawati et al., 2020; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2022), but a handful of literature have been found in the context of Santa Claus's official hometown. From that perspective, eWOM as a variable is also taken into consideration for this research.

Santa Claus's official hometown, Rovaniemi, has been selected for this study setting because of its versatility and acceptance among international tourists as a destination (Christou et al., 2023; García-Rosell & Mäkinen, 2013; Visit Lapland, 2020). Tourists visit Rovaniemi to experience the magic of Christmas, meet the poster boy "Santa Claus", see the dances of northern lights or do other winter and nature-based tourism activities (Christou et al., 2023). A number of research have been carried out applying MTEs scales in the context of Rovaniemi (Sthapit & Björk, 2019; Sthapit & Coudounaris, 2018), but to the best of our knowledge, no research has been carried out considering DS as a moderator in the context of Rovaniemi. Based on all these aspects, this research modifies and extends the identical model applied by Kim (2018) and Sharma and Nayak (2019) with DS and eWOM variables in this study context.

1.3 Research questions and objectives

Given the background of this study and the indicated research gaps, the subsequent research questions came into the limelight:

- i. Do memorable tourism experiences have an association with destination image, overall satisfaction, revisiting intention, and electronic word-of-mouth?
- ii. Does destination safety moderate memorable tourism experiences, revisiting intention, and electronic word-of-mouth?

Upon analysing the background of the study, research gap and also the research questions, the following objectives can be developed for this study:

- i. To know the association between memorable tourism experiences, destination image, overall satisfaction, revisiting intention, and electronic word-of-mouth.
- ii. To know the association between destination safety and electronic word-of-mouth.

- iii. To know the moderating effect of destination safety on memorable tourism experiences, revisiting intention, and electronic word-of-mouth.

1.4 The structure of the study

This research aims to explore memorable tourism experiences with other associated variables based on previous studies with some empirical analysis. For this, the report has been divided into several chapters. In the first chapter, the background of the study has been described. Several research papers have been gone through to develop the background of the study, and based on this, the research gap has been identified. This study's research questions and objectives have been developed in line with the background and research gap. In the second chapter, the theoretical framework has been described. In addition to the theoretical framework, an in-depth discussion of the previous research works has been explained to understand the flow of the current research. In the third chapter, the research model and hypotheses for this study have been described. The third chapter also illustrates the graphical model of the hypotheses, which gives the readers a clear picture of the empirical model and hypotheses.

The methodology applied in this research has been described in detail in the fourth chapter. The total process, from the research planning to the analysis and interpretation of the results, can be found in this chapter. For this research, a survey was conducted among international tourists visiting Rovaniemi to address this study's research questions and objectives. In the fifth chapter, the analysis of the collected data has been presented. The quantitative approach to data analysis and the results extracted from the analysis are listed here. A detailed discussion of the analysis and results has been explained in chapter six. This chapter also highlights the study's findings and tries to link those findings with previous research done in this field. Finally, this study's conclusion, implications, and limitations are presented in the seventh chapter. Nevertheless, the list of references and appendices have been incorporated in the later part of the report. The appendices include the questionnaire and the QR code used for data collection. Besides the list of constructs and items used for collecting and analysing data for this study, a graphical representation of the measurement and structural models, as well as the comments/ observations of the respondents, are also presented in the report appendices.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Research paradigm

Among different research paradigms, positivism/ post-positivism has been considered one of the most popular and widely used research paradigms in the research community. The physical sciences serve as the foundation for positivism, where it is assumed that reality is highly ordered, structured, and governed by norms that simultaneously direct the behaviour of the natural and social worlds (Jennings, 2010). Positivism is a philosophical approach that emphasises the importance of objective observation, quantifiable facts, and objectivity to determine general laws or patterns present within a specific occurrence. A wide range of research related to positivism has been carried out. Some of the previous researchers relate positivism to the hypothetico-deductive model of science (Park et al., 2020), meaning there must be a base theory guiding the research. Based on the theory, some testable hypotheses can be formed, which will finally be analysed using quantitative methods (Jennings, 2010). Statistical calculations are mainly used to perform the analysis, after which the unit of study is represented numerically (Jennings, 2010; Rodger et al., 2015).

For this research, a model has been developed based on a theory and previous research works. The research model comprises several hypotheses, and to test the hypotheses, a statistical technique has been applied. Based on the assumption and prerequisite of the positivism/ post-positivism, this empirical research can fall under the positivism/ post-positivism paradigm.

2.2 Theory of Reasoned Action

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) is a widely accepted social cognition theory that has gained significant traction as a prominent conceptual framework in the field of behavioural research (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Lyong Ha, 1998). The reasoned action theory postulates that an individual's behavioural intention, which acts as a direct precursor to their actual activity, is shaped by their attitude towards the behaviour and subjective norm (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011; Han, 2021). Moreover, a positive correlation exists between attitudes, subjective norms and behavioural intentions, suggesting that persons who hold more favourable views and possess stronger subjective standards are more likely to participate in the specified action (Ajzen, 2015). TRA clearly explains the direct connection between individuals' attitudes and their intention to

engage in certain behaviours. As a result, it serves as a foundation for examining the association between perceived value and the intention to revisit a certain entity or experience (Ting & Thurasamy, 2016). In this study context, the tourists visiting Rovaniemi have been involved in various kinds of tourism activities and have also gone through several experiences, making the trip a memorable one (positive or negative), and there is a behavioural intention. This memorable tourism experience was formed with the support of all the stakeholders providing the services to the tourists. Based on tourists' experiences, their perception of Santa Claus's official hometown has been formed, ultimately directing them towards taking their future movement for the destination. Against this backdrop, TRA can be taken into consideration for describing the phenomenon and research hypotheses of this study as tourists visiting Rovaniemi have gone through numerous tourism experiences, and after having this experience, they have some behavioural intentions.

2.3 Previous studies on this topic

2.3.1 Evolution of memorable tourism experiences

Human experience is very diverse and has become one of the most researched topics in recent decades (Hosany et al., 2022). Research conducted in consumer behaviour looks at this experience from different points of view. For example, researchers like Brakus et al. (2009) took the initiative to measure brand experiences, and Oh et al. (2007) developed a measurement instrument to measure tourists' experience. In line with this, researchers in the field of tourism also dive deep into the experience and explore these aspects from different angles. In the realm of tourism, while considering the dynamic aspect, the role of memory becomes crucial in comprehending how individuals remember tourism experiences that hold personal significance (Kim et al., 2022). While exploring this aspect, MTEs has popped up, and researchers explored this MTEs from various point of view. While visiting a place, tourists go through multiple experiences, creating memories in their minds (Kim et al., 2022). Kim (2022) further pointed out that, although not vividly, individuals could somehow connect their emotional experiences associated with a trip after returning from a trip to the home. These emotional memories encompass both positive and negative affective states of the human mind (Kim, 2022).

Scholars from different fields of study, i.e., psychology, anthropology, phenomenology, consumer behaviour, and sociology, investigate the fundamental nature and categorisation of

the tourist experience (Zhang et al., 2018; Zhou et al., 2023). The notion of experience is subject to ongoing evolution, with interdisciplinary investigations being conducted in this domain. The research conducted in the domain of marketing has undergone a transition, wherein the focus has switched from customer satisfaction to loyalty and experience, specifically emphasising the creation of memorable experiences (Zhang et al., 2018). Memorable travel experiences have been produced via the direction of the concept of maximising benefits (Zhou et al., 2023). MTEs refer to the specific aspects of a tourism experience that are actively retained and recollected by visitors after completing their tourism activities (Zhang et al., 2018). The notions of tourist experiences and MTEs are closely connected; however, they possess distinct connotations and scopes. The concept of tourist experience refers to the individual's subjective psychological state experienced during a service contact (Zhou et al., 2023). Kim and Ritchie (2014) emphasise the importance of recognising and comprehending the specific aspects of tourism experiences that significantly impact individuals. The elements of tourism experiences that evoke memories of travel and elicit emotional responses are of particular importance. Not all tourism encounters may be readily converted into MTEs. Moreover, MTEs refers to specific encounters intentionally crafted from various tourist activities that may be recollected and reminisced over following a journey. MTEs hold greater significance as they exclusively shape the future decision-making of tourists (Zhang et al., 2018; Zhou et al., 2023).

According to Pine II and Gilmore (1998), there has been a significant transformation in the global economy, shifting from a service-oriented model to one that is centred around experiences. Based on this, a wide range of research has been conducted, and a need for the development of a scale for measuring experience has emerged. Addressing this issue, Kim et al. (2012) developed and validated a Memorable Tourism Experience Scale (MTES). The scale includes seven domains, namely, "hedonism, refreshment, local culture, meaningfulness, knowledge, involvement, and novelty". For describing the antecedents of MTEs, Kim (2014) pointed out a ten-dimensional construct. According to Kim (2014), MTEs encompass many factors, such as infrastructure, accessibility, local culture/ history, physiography, activities & events, destination management, quality of service, hospitality, place attachment, and superstructure. Kim and Ritchie (2014) further validated the MTES in cross-cultural settings. As the initially developed scale by Kim et al. (2012) only applied to the American setting, thus, using a sample of Taiwanese respondents, MTES was further applied in a cross-cultural setting. The data provided empirical support for the established seven dimensions of the MTES in the sample of Taiwanese participants. Therefore, the results of the study indicate that the utilisation

of MTES can be generally employed for the evaluation of people's MTEs in cross-cultural contexts. Again, Kim et al. (2022) developed and validated a new scale called the "Tourism Memory Characteristics Scale" (TMCS), which is related to the recall of tourism experiences. Based on autobiographical memories of the tourists, this scale was developed and validated. The seven-dimensional scale encompasses accessibility, trip specifics, vividness, valence, sensory details, emotional intensity, and sharing, all of which exert a substantial impact on RI and engagement in WOM. Most of the scales measuring MTEs measure the positive memory of the tourists. Thus, based on this assumption, Kim (2022) further developed and validated destination attributes affecting negative memory as both positive and negative memory simultaneously impacted tourists' mindsets. In some cases, negative memories/ experiences can be better remembered than positive ones (Kensinger & Corkin, 2003).

2.3.2 Some applications of the memorable tourism experiences scales and outcomes

The application of MTEs has been seen in different contexts. Destination loyalty is a significant aspect that is associated with MTEs. In line with this, a study undertaken by Chen and Rahman (2018) focused on the topics of tourist engagement, cultural interaction, MTEs, and destination loyalty within the context of cultural tourism. The presence of engaged visitors has a favourable impact on cultural contact, which in turn has a beneficial effect on MTEs. Furthermore, the implementation of MTEs showed substantial positive effects in terms of customer loyalty. Additionally, it has been found that cultural contact serves as a full mediator in the association between tourist engagement and MTEs.

Again, Stavrianea and Kamenidou (2022) conducted an empirical investigation on a conceptual model that examines the interconnections among MTEs, satisfaction, DI, and loyalty. The study's findings indicate that the presence of MTEs directly impacts destination loyalty and indirectly through the mediating factor of satisfaction. Similarly, DI also has a direct effect on loyalty, both directly and indirectly.

By taking a different dimension, Kahraman and Cifci (2023) developed a theoretical framework based on social identity theory to examine self-identification's impact on overall satisfaction and loyalty. They also considered the potential mediating influence of MTEs on the relationship. The results of the study indicate that self-identification has a positive effect on memorable travel experiences, overall satisfaction, and destination loyalty. The results

additionally validate the indirect impacts of self-identification on overall happiness and destination loyalty through the mediating influence of MTEs.

Behavioural intention is another important aspect closely related to a MTEs. A number of researchers pointed out these aspects in different research settings. For example, Rasoolimanesh et al. (2022) examines how satisfaction plays a mediating role in the interaction of MTEs aspects in influencing the behavioural intentions of heritage tourists. The findings demonstrated that visitors' behavioural intentions toward a site are highly influenced directly or indirectly by local culture, engagement, and knowledge of the MTEs. However, hedonism and novelty have a greater impact on satisfaction and RI and WOM intentions.

Similarly, Sthapit et al. (2020) examine the causal factors and associations among satisfaction, MTEs, co-creative tourism experiences, and memorability. The researchers also seek to investigate the mediating role of memorability in influencing tourists' behavioural intentions. The study found a positive association among the dimensions with the MTEs.

Again, Zhou et al. (2023) examine the impact of cultural heritage rejuvenation experience quality on tourists' RI in the context of cultural heritage tourism. The study's findings revealed a notable and favourable influence of the quality of the cultural heritage renewal experience on the creation of MTEs. There is a positive correlation between the perception of a DI, the occurrence of MTEs, and the subsequent intention of visitors to revisit this destination. The relationship between the quality of cultural heritage renewal experiences and the intention to repeat is partially mediated by DI and MTEs.

While conducting a similar kind of research, Gohary et al. (2020) also found a positive association between the MTEs and RI. Furthermore, Tiwari et al. (2023) investigates the validity and reliability of the measurement model used to evaluate novelty. Additionally, it intends to examine the associations between novelty, MTEs in visitors and their desire to revisit. Study results reveal a positive association among the aspects.

Due to the upsurge of social media in recent decades, the aspects of MTEs have gained special momentum. Kim et al. (2021) identified the significance of mobility applications in enabling memorable travel experiences. The findings demonstrate that perceived behavioural control, based on mobility app quality, which consists of utility, trustworthiness, and interaction,

favourably improves memorable travel experiences and mobility app reuse intention by lowering mobility-related stress. Thus, by making visitors feel in charge of their local mobility, mobility applications can lower visitors' stress levels and improve memorable travel experiences. Tourists intend to reuse mobility apps as those good impacts start to manifest.

Again, Wong et al. (2020) investigate the correlation between the act of sharing memorable ethnic minority tourist experiences on mobile social media platforms and individuals' inclinations to visit other ethnic places. The findings suggest that tourists' sharing behaviour is influenced by three memorable ethnic minority tourist experience dimensions, namely, scenery, entertainment, and interaction. Furthermore, it was observed that sharing behaviour during trips acts as a mediator between the impact of during-trip experiences (specifically scenery and interaction) and tourists' intentions to visit other destinations after the trip. Besides, Tham et al. (2013) worked on a conceptual article examining eWOM's credibility profiles and their impact on destination image and decision.

Besides, Bigne et al. (2020) conducted a research to distinguish between MTEs and ordinary tourism experiences based on user-generated content from social media sites. The research reveals that the contents shared by the tourists are more relevant to the MTEs scales, indicating the reliability of the MTEs scale rather than ordinary tourism experiences.

This proposed research has been conducted in the context of Santa Claus's official home town, Rovaniemi. Rovaniemi is famous for promoting various tourism-related activities and instilling positive memories into the mindset of tourists (Pretes, 1995). Although Rovaniemi is renowned for the biggest brand, Santa Claus, the possibility to watch northern lights, various winter and nature-based tourism activities are some other aspects for which tourists use to travel Rovaniemi and take a sweet memories with them (García-Rosell & Mäkinen, 2013). Some research has already been done using the MTEs scale in the context of Rovaniemi. Sthapit and Coudoumaris (2018) examined the associations between characteristics of MTEs and subjective well-being. The study revealed that the subjective well-being of visitors is impacted by both hedonism and meaningfulness. The impact of gender, age, and country as moderating variables on the relationship between several antecedent determinants of MTEs and subjective well-being is found to be statistically significant.

Again, Sthapit and Björk (2019) applied a grounded theory methodology to investigate the core components of souvenirs that facilitate travellers in recollecting their travel experiences and fostering their aspirations to revisit a destination. This research presents findings that challenge the existing studies that suggest that visitors are attracted to inauthenticity when purchasing souvenirs and that they tend to acquire “genuine counterfeit products” on their holiday owing to their comparatively lowered pricing.

3. RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESES FOR THE STUDY

3.1 Research model

Previous researchers identified several associations with MTEs. Although Kim et al. (2012), and Kim (2022) identified positive and negative scales for MTEs, this research adopted an integrated MTEs scale as a variable along with DI, OS and RI (Kim, 2018; Sharma & Nayak, 2019). With the rise of the internet and an increasing amount of user-generated content in social media, the possibility of eWOM has been seen in tourism experiences (Bigne et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2021). Thus, the model also adopts eWOM as a variable; besides, DS has been considered as one of the key elements in developing MTEs and RI (Kim, 2022; Zou & Mawby, 2021). Thus, DS is also considered a variable in the model. The following model has been proposed for this study purpose, and each hypothesis is described here.

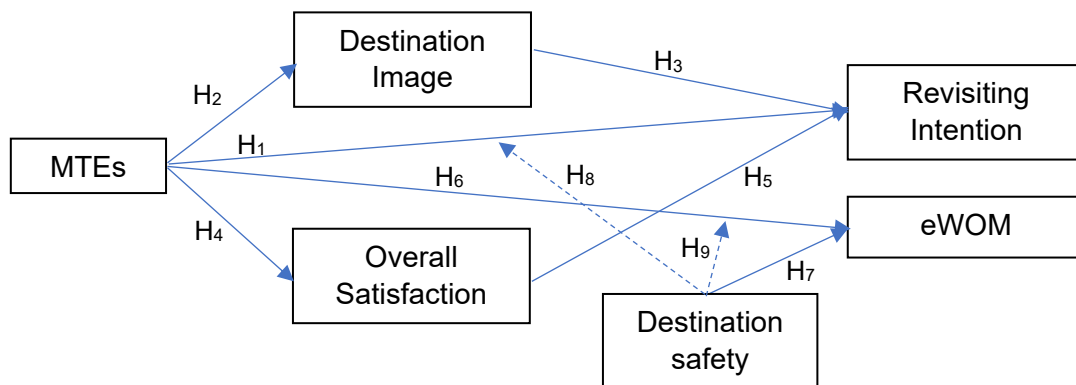


Figure 1. Research Model.

3.2 Research hypotheses

Based on the research questions and the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses have been developed. The first hypothesis is that MTEs have a positive association with tourists' intention to revisit. Tourism destinations and firms worldwide compete to attract new visitors and retain existing ones. For that, pointing out the tourists' touchpoints and developing and offering services accordingly is vital for the DMOs and the firms. Marketing literature has shown that consumer behaviour is influenced by memory and relationships, which affects their decisions to return (Grönroos, 2017; Tung & Ritchie, 2011). Besides, customers who have prior experience using a product, invest relatively less time and effort while reusing/ repurchasing that category product later (Johnson & Russo, 1984). Tourists with pleasant and memorable

experiences are more inclined to revisit the same place (Luo et al., 2021; Pai et al., 2021; Su et al., 2018; Um et al., 2006). Several positive and negative factors shape tourists' memorable experiences. Still, the intention of tourists to revisit largely depends on how the destination affects their long-term memory and vivid positive cues over the negative ones (Kim, 2022). A study conducted by Chen and Rahman (2018) pointed out that MTEs positively influence tourists' intention to revisit in the context of cultural tourism. Similar results have also been reported by Tung and Ritchie (2011). Based on these aspects, the following hypothesis can be formed:

H₁: Memorable tourism experiences have a positive association with tourists' revisiting intention.

In line with the first hypothesis, the second hypothesis, which is MTEs have a positive relationship with DI can be formed. Tourists' knowledge, beliefs, ideas, and impressions of a destination make up its image (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). It is generally agreed that the image of the destination is the most important factor in determining the post-consumption behaviour of travellers (Tasci & Gartner, 2007). When visitors have a positive impression of a destination, they will have a favourable impression of the quality of their experiences there (Wu & Li, 2017). The tourism experience's intensity also has a greater impact on forming a destination image (Beerli & Martín, 2004). Research findings also indicate a positive correlation between a favourable image of a destination and increased tendencies for revisit and eWOM (Zhang et al., 2018). Because MTEs strongly impact the tourism experience, they are likely to influence tourists' destination perceptions, too (Kim, 2018). Based on these assumptions, the following hypothesis can be formed:

H₂: Memorable tourism experiences have a positive relationship with destination image.

Similarly, the third hypothesis can be developed in association with DI and tourists' RI. DI directly influences travellers to take a positive or negative decision for a destination. A positive DI influences tourists to think of revisiting the destination and also encourages other fellow travellers to visit the place (Kim, 2018; Tasci & Gartner, 2007). The negative image has a vice-versa association. Similarly, Papadimitriou et al. (2015) also confirms that tourists with a positive image of an urban destination are likely to revisit the place and recommend others to visit that destination. Based on these assumptions, the following hypothesis can be formed:

H₃: Destination image has a positive association with tourists' revisiting intention.

Again, a hypothesis can be formed between the association of MTEs and OS. Tourist satisfaction consists of psychological states resulting from tourist experiences (Sharma & Nayak, 2019). Previous researchers like, Sie et al. (2018), Cho et al. (2021), Kim (2018), and Azis et al. (2020) confirm that there is a positive association exists between MTEs and OS. Having a positive association between tourism experience and satisfaction leads tourists towards loyalty behaviour (Chen & Rahman, 2018; Ng et al., 2022). Thus, the following hypothesis can be formed:

H₄: Memorable tourism experiences have a positive association with overall satisfaction.

The fifth hypothesis can be formed considering OS and RI. From the marketing point of view, although it is hard to say that all the satisfied customers are loyal, but it is generally presumed that, satisfaction is the prerequisite for loyalty (Oliver, 1999). Similar relations have also been found in the field of tourism research (Kim, 2018; Sharma & Nayak, 2019). Visitors who are satisfied with their trip are more motivated to return whereas, low satisfaction reduces the likelihood of a return to the same destination (Zhang et al., 2014). In different research settings, researchers like, Kim et al. (2010), Chi and Qu (2008), and Sharma and Nayak (2018) identified that overall satisfaction influences tourists' to revisit the destination. Thus, based on the assumptions, the following hypothesis can be formed:

H₅: Overall satisfaction has a positive relationship with tourists' revisiting intention.

The term 'eWOM' describes the dissemination of suggestions, ideas, and personal experiences of a good, service, or destination via online review sites, social media platforms, and travel forum posts. With the rise of the internet and social media platforms, tourists tend to share their personal experiences online thus, positivity or negativity of a destination influence the other travelers to take a decision. Bigne et al. (2020) identified that tourists are now giving more value to the user-generated content by fellow travellers. However, some aspects of credibility and authenticity remain about the information social media influencers provide (Han & Chen, 2022). Furthermore, Adongo et al. (2015) identified positive association between MTEs and

WOM communication. Thus, based on the assumptions, the sixth hypothesis can be formed between the association of MTEs and eWOM, which can be:

H₆: Memorable tourism experiences have a positive association with electronic word-of-mouth.

The next hypothesis can be considered based on the association between DS and eWOM. DS is one of the significant aspects of analysing MTEs (Kim, 2022). The dimension of DS varies from country to country (Zou & Mawby, 2021). The general conception of safety and perceived risk to a destination influence tourist to make a visit or revisit decision (Hasan et al., 2017; Huang et al., 2020; Mawby et al., 2020). Fear of crime, terrorism, or extreme weather condition influences a tourist's decision-making process (Hasan et al., 2017; Rantala & Valkonen, 2011). Besides, tourist-resident relationships and the attitude of residents towards tourists are also essential aspects that tourists consider while planning a visit to a destination (Lai et al., 2018). eWOM is notably influenced by travellers' perceptions of safety, as those who feel secure are more likely to share their experiences on digital platforms (Lai et al., 2018). Thus, positive posts or reviews on various webpages or from friends and families, who have already visited a destination, helps travellers to make a positive visit or revisit decision and vice-versa. Based on this assumption, the following hypothesis can be formed:

H₇: Destination safety has a positive association with electronic word-of-mouth.

The last two hypotheses can be formed considering DS as a moderator. In the analysis of MTEs, several studies have been conducted to describe the relationship between RI and WOM communication (Hosany et al., 2022; Hosseini et al., 2023). From the previous literature, it has been found that RI and eWOM/ WOM largely depend on so many factors (Kim, 2022). Both positive and negative aspects impacted tourists' future travel intentions. As discussed earlier (H₇), DS has the power to influence tourists' behavioural intentions thus, based on this assumption, the following hypotheses can be formed:

H₈: Destination safety has a moderating association between memorable tourism experiences and revisiting intention.

H₉: Destination safety has a moderating association between memorable tourism experiences and electronic word-of-mouth.

In this study context, with hypotheses eight and nine, it is assumed that DS as a moderator influences tourists to decide their future behavioural intention in the form of RI and/ or eWOM, meaning, with or without the presence of destination safety, the direct relationship between MTEs and RI, and MTEs and eWOM significantly differs.

4. METHODOLOGY

The research objective of this study guides the researcher in employing the necessary methods to come to a conclusion. This methodological chapter describes the study design, procedure, sample, data collection, and analysis-related aspects in detail.

4.1 Measurement items

This study mainly focuses on tourists' MTEs, their intention to revisit, and the associated aspects of a destination. MTEs are associated with various elements, and RI is another aspect related to a wide range of issues that must be considered. Although measuring these aspects is so complex because every human is different, and their behavioural choice is also different. Based on the previous studies in this field and the theory underpinning this study, along with MTEs and RI, some other related variables have also been chosen for this study. The final measurement constructs and items adopted for this study are presented in Appendix 3.

4.2 Rovaniemi as a destination and study design

For this study, the official hometown of Santa Claus (Rovaniemi) has been selected as a destination. A significant number of international tourists visit Rovaniemi every year, and the growth of international tourists is increasing every year (Finavia, 2023; Xinhua News Agency, 2020). For example, in 2023 (January to December), 1.2 million bed nights were recorded in paid accommodation in Rovaniemi, which is 29.3% higher than in 2022, and in this time, the average stay was 2.3 days for international tourists (Visitory, 2024). Only in January 2024 was a total of 188,000 bed nights recorded in paid accommodation, which is 22.5% higher than January 2023 (Visitory, 2024). Although the winter season is the main attraction for tourists, but in summer, quite a significant number of tourists also visit Rovaniemi (Grenier, 2007). Normally, the summer season lasts from June to mid-August and in the year 2023, 197,000 bed nights were recorded in summer, which is 14% higher than the previous year (Visitory, 2024). The actual number of visitors is more than these figures because a number of tourists do not stay at night, and the statistics did not count less than 20-bed accommodation hotels and motels, Airbnb, and caravans (Grenier, 2007; Visitory, 2024). Because of the apprehension of global warming and long-term sustainability, the concerned authorities are promoting year-round tourism in Rovaniemi by designing and offering various experiences, i.e., legend-based

experiences, silence tourism to the tourists (Christou et al., 2023; Grenier, 2007; Tervo-Kankare et al., 2013).

Although meeting with Santa Claus is the main motivation for tourists to visit Rovaniemi, a number of other activities, including hunting northern lights, downhill and cross-country skiing, snowmobile safaris, dog and reindeer sleigh rides, ice fishing, hiking and a river cruise, etc. are some other activities, which attracts a wide number of tourists in Rovaniemi (Grenier, 2007). Besides experiencing night less nights, knowing the history and culture of the Sámi people and also experiencing the colour of summer, a considerable number of domestic as well as international tourists visit Rovaniemi at other times (Grenier, 2007).

This study follows the quantitative approach for hypothesis testing. Based on TRA theory and previous studies, a structured questionnaire has been developed for the quantitative data collection. The constructs and items were identified after thoroughly going through previous research, and necessary modifications have been made based on the present study context (Chen & Ye, 2023, p. 09) and finalised for data collection. In the last part of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to express their comments/ observations about their visit to Rovaniemi. The comments of the respondents are listed in the Appendix 8.

4.3 Sampling technique and sample size

This study mainly concentrated on the tourist's MTEs and RI and associated aspects described in the hypotheses development section for a specific destination, i.e., Rovaniemi. For this reason, only international tourists visiting Rovaniemi were targeted for the purpose of this study. For this study purpose, Rovaniemi and only international tourists have been selected because Rovaniemi is an international and versatile tourism destination, and tourists marked this destination as a winter wonderland (Linnea, 2018; Sthapit & Björk, 2019). For many international tourists, visiting Rovaniemi is a lifetime experience, and some of them visit Rovaniemi to meet Santa, see the Aurora Borealis, and experience the traditional Finnish sauna (Linnea, 2018). Thus, the tourism experience of international tourists is definitely different from that of Finnish local travellers. And in recent years, after the Covid-19 pandemic, the growth of international tourists increased exponentially in Rovaniemi (Visit Finland, 2023b; Visit Rovaniemi, 2024; Visitory, 2024).

For this study, a non-probability sampling technique was employed to collect responses. The use of non-probability sampling is utilised in a significant number of social science research despite the fact that probability sampling is often regarded as the ideal method for research (Rowley, 2014). Non-probability sampling is a method that includes selecting individuals based on purpose, chance, or expert opinion without knowing their likelihood of being chosen (Pramudita et al., 2023). This study employed purposive and convenience sampling techniques to gather data from the international tourists visiting Rovaniemi (Pramudita et al., 2023).

As this study employs nine different hypotheses that were tested through the Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) statistical technique, determining the minimum sample size is vital for going further. According to Hair et al. (2022), among the different techniques for determining minimum sample size, the “10 times rule” and G*Power analysis can be taken into consideration. Although the “10 times rule” and G*Power analysis determine only the minimum sample size, a higher sample size is always desirable (Hair et al., 2022). For the purpose of this study, G*Power analysis was employed to determine the minimum sample size requirement (Faul et al., 2009). Based on the research model if the independent variable (number of predictors) considered for this research (MTEs), the latest version of the G*Power software (version 3.1.9.7) identified that at least 89 responses (samples) should be collected to run this model using PLS-SEM (Faul et al., 2009; Faul et al., 2007; Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf, 2024; Maheta, 2023). The detailed calculation and screenshot of the G*Power software can be seen in Appendix 4, which indicates the minimum sample size. For this G*Power calculation, a YouTube training series conducted by Maheta (2023) has been considered.

4.4 Data collection procedure

For the purpose of this study, a structured questionnaire has been developed, which can be seen in Appendix 1. The questionnaire has mainly three parts. The first part contains the study’s background and the demographic part. All the questions in this part mainly consist of close-ended questions. In the second part of the questionnaire, the measurement items were incorporated. The measurement items corresponding to the latent variables were measured by using the five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). As mentioned by Bouranta et al. (2009), the choice for using the five-point scale over a seven or nine-point Likert scale is that it is less confusing (Babakus & Mangold, 1992) and more appropriate for

collecting survey data in a European context (Prentice et al., 1998). In the last part of the questionnaire (third part), an open-ended part was incorporated so that the respondents could express their comments or observations about Rovaniemi as a tourism destination.

For the data collection, both online and offline survey questionnaires were developed. The Webropol survey platform was used for the online survey—access to the Webropol survey platform was obtained from the University of Lapland, Finland. For the offline survey, the questionnaire was printed to serve the respondents. Moreover, a QR code link (see Appendix 2) was generated for this study. The idea behind distributing QR codes is to reach a wide range of respondents and provide greater flexibility to the respondents, as most modern smartphones can read the QR code links (Endres et al., 2023; Perez-Alba et al., 2020).

For the data collection, mainly Rovaniemi airport, Rovaniemi city bus station, and Rovaniemi railway station were selected because, after visiting Rovaniemi, these are the places from where most of the international tourist either went back to their home country or go to some other destinations. As international tourists are the sample for this study, an initial conversation took place between the data collector and the respondents. If the data collector gets the confirmation that the potential respondent was an international tourist, only then the potential respondents were requested to participate in the survey. The survey was conducted from 24 December 2023 to 10 February 2024. In this time period, 350 printed QR codes were distributed to the potential respondents for this study. Moreover, other than these 350 QR codes, more than 100 potential respondents were requested to participate in the survey. Besides, some other channels, like some Airbnb guest houses, were contacted to collect the data.

Finally, 136 responses were collected from the potential respondents, most of whom were from the Rovaniemi airport. In recent times, there has been a surge of Chinese tourists in Rovaniemi (Sthapit & Björk, 2019), which is why a considerable number of Chinese tourists have been requested to participate in the survey, but a handful of responses were obtained from them. Tourists from around the world waiting in the airport lounge were asked to participate in the survey. For the timing of the data collection, the international flight schedule from Finavia (2024)'s webpage was considered.

As seen in Table 1, most of the survey participants were from Europe. Thus, it is presumed that there might be some possibility of bias in the dataset. For this study, extensive data collection

efforts have been made to collect responses from the potential respondents. The data collector visited Rovaniemi railway and bus station several times a day and spent several hours in a week at the airport. A total of 136 responses were finally collected from the international tourists visiting Rovaniemi. Among the 136 responses, 48 were collected through printed versions of the questionnaire, and the rest of the responses were collected through the Webropol survey platform. Responses were gathered from the printed version, then inputted into the Webropol survey platform for better management of the data. For the data analysis, 134 responses were finally taken into consideration. 02 responses were dropped from the analysis because they participated in the survey and reported that they mostly visited outside of Rovaniemi and spent relatively less time in Rovaniemi.

4.5 Data analysis and software

For the data analysis, two different software were employed to analyse different parts of the questionnaire. For the first part of the questionnaire, where the respondents answered their demographic information, IBM SPSS software was used to analyse those data. Almost all the questions in this section were made compulsory to get enough background information about the respondents participating in the study.

The SmartPLS 4.1.0.0 version software has been employed to measure the relationship among the constructs and test the hypotheses of this study. The responses collected from the second part of the questionnaire are used for the analysis. To avoid the risk of missing data (Hair et al., 2022), this section of the questionnaire was made compulsory for the respondents. This study used the PLS-SEM statistical approach to test the hypotheses because it is able to evaluate theoretically supported nonlinear and additive causal models (Başol et al., 2023). PLS-SEM is a method of multivariate data analysis with a second generation that has been extensively employed in social science research in recent years (Başol et al., 2023; Hair et al., 2022).

PLS-SEM have been used for this study for several reasons. First of all, although this study passes through minimum sample size criteria (the minimum sample size for this study is 89 using G*Power analysis) (Faul et al., 2007), it is still a relatively small sample size to come to a conclusion and generalisation of the result (Chin & Newsted, 1999). The flexibility of using the PLS-SEM technique, in comparison to Covariance-based Structural Equation Modelling (CB-SEM), is that it can handle small sample sizes and also non-normal data (Awang et al.,

2015; Başol et al., 2023; Chin & Newsted, 1999; Guenther et al., 2023; Hair et al., 2022). Secondly, and more importantly, the results from CB-based SEM and PLS-based SEM have not differed significantly (Dash & Paul, 2021). Both approaches are similarly effective for establishing and assessing structural relationships, with CB-SEM requiring more stringent data requirements compared to PLS-SEM (Dash & Paul, 2021). For all these reasons, PLS-based SEM became the first choice for this study to analyse the structural relationship.

The last part of the questionnaire (third part), where the respondents expressed their comments/ observations about their trip to Rovaniemi, is listed in Appendix 8. The comments/ observations are being listed according to positive and negative aspects pointed out by the respondents. This part of the questionnaire was not mandatory for the respondents; thus, those who were interested in commenting just put their observations in the open-ended section. The reason behind including this section is that if the respondents feel anything important that might not be covered in this survey, they can point this out. Moreover, this section gives some pathways for future researchers to address those issues in future research.

4.6 Research ethics

In this study, several ethical concerns were prioritised to ensure that the integrity and respect of the participants were maintained throughout the entire research process. A survey was conducted for the purpose of the study, and in the questionnaire, the respondents gave their consent to participate. The Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK's guidelines have been followed throughout the research process. Concerning the respondents' personal data sensitivity, the survey was conducted anonymously. Besides, the Webropol survey platform was used to collect responses from the respondents. The secured Webropol survey platform was provided by the University of Lapland, Finland.

5. EMPIRICAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected for this study. A structured questionnaire was developed for this study, and data was collected from the international tourists visiting the official hometown of Santa Claus. For the purpose of analysis, the researcher classifies the whole analysis section into two parts. The first part mainly describes the respondents' demographic information/ characteristics. This section helps better understand the research setup and interpret the results obtained from different software. The second part describes the analysis of the model developed for testing the hypotheses. The structural relationship has been demonstrated here by applying the PLS-SEM statistical technique.

5.1 Descriptive statistics

In the data collection process, this research mainly targeted the international tourists visiting Rovaniemi. The tourist locations of residents are presented in Table 1. From Table 1, it can be seen that the majority of the participants are from Europe and Asia. As discussed earlier in Chapter 4, because most of the participants were from Europe and Asia, there might be some possibility of biases in the data. Although data from the Visit Finland (2023b) and Visitory (2024) shows that most of the visitors visiting Rovaniemi are from Europe, but still due to the small sample size, this aspect has to be considered while interpreting the results.

Among the respondents, 45.5% were male, and the remaining 54.5% were female, representing a pretty balanced result based on gender. Considering the age range of the respondents, 21-30 and 31-40 years of people comprise most of the responses (73.90%), and the remaining 26.1% of respondents were aged 17 or younger, 18-20, 41-50, and 51-60 age group. 86.60% of respondents reported that this visit was their maiden visit to Rovaniemi, which means they have a completely fresh view of Rovaniemi. Besides, 13.40% of respondents reported that they had visited this destination before, and some of them visited more than once, meaning they have an in-depth understanding of Rovaniemi and can point out the loopholes in this destination.

Table 1. Background information of the respondents.

Characteristics and its category (n=134)	Percentage of the participants	
Respondents' residing continent	Europe	64.20
	North America	3.70
	South America	0.70
	Asia	26.90
	Oceania / Australia	4.50
Gender	Male	45.50
	Female	54.50
Age range	17 or younger	3.00
	18-20	9.70
	21-30	46.30
	31-40	27.60
	41-50	11.20
	51-60	2.20
Visited Rovaniemi before	Yes	13.40
	No	86.60
If yes, then how many times have you visited before	1 time	8.21
	2-3 times	2.99
	4-5 times	0.75
	More than 5 times	1.49
Days spent in Rovaniemi this time	1 day	9.70
	2-3 days	33.58
	4-5 days	38.06
	6-7 days	15.67
	More than 7 days	2.99
Expenditure while visiting Rovaniemi (including travel, accommodation, food, etc)	Less than 1000€	32.80
	1000€-2000€	39.60
	2001€-3000€	17.90
	3001€-4000€	6.00
	4001€-5000€	1.50
Number of people travelling at this time	More than 5000€	2.20
	Travelling alone	10.45
	2-3 persons	64.92
	4-5 persons	11.94
	6-7 persons	5.22
	more than 7 persons	6.72
Missing value	0.75	

Source: Author's calculation using IBM SPSS.

While reporting about the number of days spent in Rovaniemi, this time, 90.30% of respondents reported that they stayed more than one night in Rovaniemi, meaning a wide variety of entertainment and recreational options have to be provided to the tourists visiting Rovaniemi. Considering the expenditure, the research questionnaire asked about the tourists' approximate spending, including travel, accommodation, and food. From the frequency table, it can be seen that most of the tourists spent less than 1000€ to 2000€, which comprises 72.4% of the responses.

The last question about the demographic information was the number of people travelling with the respondents during the trip to Rovaniemi. Table 1 illustrates that 76.86% of the respondents represent small-group travellers (2-5 persons). Besides, a considerable number of solo travellers visit Rovaniemi. So, the DMOs must consider these solo and small-group travellers when designing tourism products according to their needs.

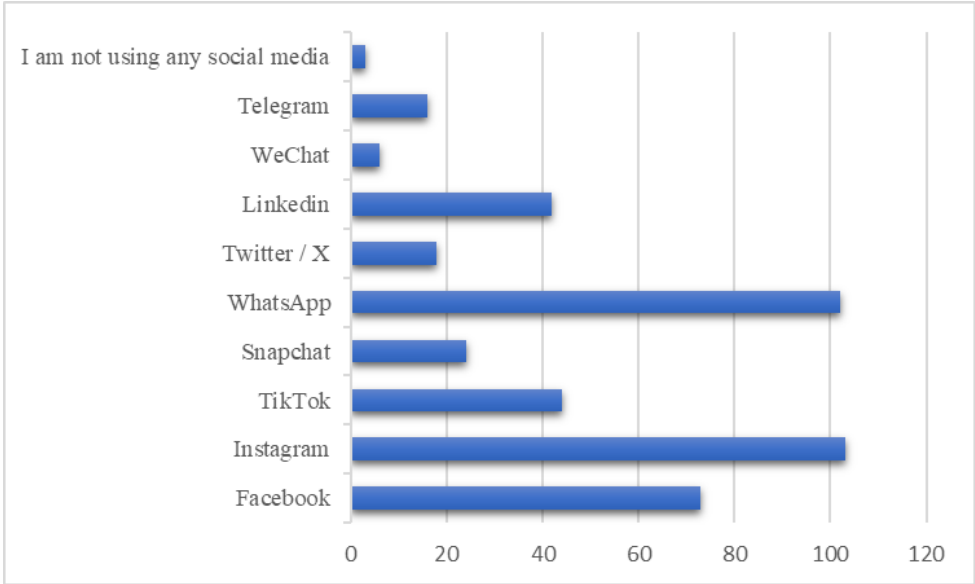


Figure 2. Usage of social media by the respondents.

In the demographic section of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked about the social media platforms they are using. From Figure 2, it can be seen that most of the respondents are using Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook. Usages of other social media platforms are relatively low in comparison to these three platforms, meaning a large portion of the social media users are using Meta's platform. Thus, firms that want to run digital marketing campaigns can consider Meta's social media platforms. This also indicates that Meta has a relatively strong influence on consumers' decision-making process and also in eWOM.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the measurement items.

Sl. No.	Constructs	Codes	Measurement items	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.	Memorable Tourism Experiences	MTE1	I enjoyed this tourism experience (e.g., meeting Santa Claus, northern lights, winter tourism activities, etc.)	4.52	0.67
		MTE2	I feel refreshed and revitalized through this visit	4.30	0.66
		MTE3	I am able to explore something about myself from this tour	3.76	0.81
		MTE4	I have learned the local culture from this tour	3.96	0.94
		MTE5	I experienced something new (e.g., food, activity, etc.) during this tourism experience	4.46	0.66
2.	Destination Image	DI1	I think, Rovaniemi has a pleasant environment.	4.51	0.54
		DI2	I have an exotic image of Rovaniemi in my mind.	3.78	1.05
		DI3	The city of Rovaniemi offered a variety of accommodation.	3.78	0.87
		DI4	I think, Rovaniemi has variety of entertainment options.	3.87	0.80
		DI5	Rovaniemi as a destination offered good quality of service.	4.15	0.64
		DI6	In my viewpoint, the local transportation of Rovaniemi is adequate.	3.09	1.06
		DI7	I like the architectural view of Rovaniemi	3.54	0.97
3.	Overall Satisfaction	OS1	I feel pleasant about this travel experience.	4.50	0.53
		OS2	I feel enjoyable about this travel experience.	4.51	0.50
		OS3	I am satisfied with this travel experience.	4.60	0.54
4.	Revisiting Intention	RI1	I would like to revisit Rovaniemi in a year	3.05	1.10
		RI2	I am planning to revisit Rovaniemi soon with my other family members.	3.13	1.08
		RI3	I will try to revisit Rovaniemi as soon as I manage time.	3.31	1.12

		RI4	I want to revisit Rovaniemi in summertime (e.g., to experience night less night, spend time in nature).	3.28	1.07
5.	Electronic Word-of-Mouth	eWOM1	I would like to chat with friends about my tourism experience on social media during this trip.	4.10	0.81
		eWOM2	I will encourage friends and relatives to visit Rovaniemi through social media.	4.02	0.82
		eWOM3	I would like to create posts (e.g., story, reels) about my tourism experience on social media.	4.04	0.95
		eWOM4	I will say positive aspects about Rovaniemi to other people.	4.53	0.53
		eWOM5	I will recommend Rovaniemi, as a destination to other people.	4.54	0.63
6.	Destination Safety	DS1	I think that, Rovaniemi as a destination, is a safe place to visit	4.75	0.44
		DS2	I did not feel anxiety or nervousness during my trip to Rovaniemi.	4.43	0.80
		DS3	I did not face any suspicious people (e.g., street gangs/ drunk persons) during my trip, which feels me unsafe.	4.60	0.69
		DS4	The public security was good enough.	4.56	0.58
		DS5	The road traffic system was safe and not chaotic	4.41	0.79
		DS6	I feel safe in my accommodation.	4.63	0.53
		DS7	I felt safe with the food that I had eaten during this trip.	4.53	0.68
		DS8	I have not faced challenges with the ice and snow on the road.	3.81	1.02

Source: Author's calculation using IBM SPSS.

Descriptive statistics provide a summary of information on the features and distribution of values in one or more datasets (Lee, 2020). Researchers are able to get a brief glimpse of the central tendency and the degree of dispersion of values in datasets by using traditional descriptive statistics (Lee, 2020). Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics with the mean and standard deviation values. A standard deviation near to zero suggests data points are close to the mean value, whereas a bigger standard deviation shows data points are spread more widely. From Table 2, it can be seen that most of the measurement items of the constructs have relatively larger standard deviations.

5.2 Analysis and result of the model

This study applies PLS-SEM to analyse the proposed model. In the process of PLS-SEM analysis, a two-step guided framework has been applied in this study as suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). In this two-step process, the measurement model must first be analysed before analysing the structural relationship (Dash & Paul, 2021). These variables cannot be directly measured; hence, several observable variables are first computed, and latent variables or constructs are then formed from these indicators. Observed variables are used to measure each latent variable and are assessed for reliability and validity (Dash & Paul, 2021). If the measurement model passes through the indicators, then the second step, structural model analysis, can be performed. For the test of the hypotheses and research model developed for this study, SmartPLS 4.1.0.0 software has been used (Ali et al., 2018).

5.2.1 Analysis of measurement model

At the beginning of the process of measuring the reflective constructs, the verification of the reliability and validity of the constructs have been tested using outer loadings, Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs), Cronbach's alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) and Fornell Larcker criterion analysis (Hair et al., 2022). All the test results are being discussed next.

The measurement model first identifies the outer loadings. According to Hair et al. (2022, p. 318) outer loadings are the bivariate correlations between a construct and the items. It is recommended that the outer loading of each item of the constructs have to be greater than 0.70 (Hair et al., 2022, p. 117). But Hair et al. (2022, p. 118) further added that, in the context of social science research, the lower bound of the outer loading can be 0.40. They also suggested that the weak outer loading must be deleted to achieve for getting a good structural relationship (Hair et al., 2022, p. 118). In this study, after running the PLS-SEM algorithm, it has been seen that several items of the construct's outer loading do not meet the criteria of the 0.40 threshold. Thus, according to the guidelines of Bagozzi et al. (1991), and Hair et al. (2022, p. 118), the weak outer loading items have been removed for further analysis. Appendix 5 illustrates the complete picture of the constructs and items for analysis purposes. It can be seen from Appendix 5 that four items of the questionnaire, coded as DI6, and DI7 of the destination image construct, RI4 of the revisiting intention construct, and DS8 of the destination safety construct, have been

deleted for further analysis as their outer loadings were less than 0.40 (Hair et al., 2022, p. 118). Although those items seem relevant to this study, but due to the “Content Validity” issue, those items had to be removed for further analysis (Hair et al., 2022, p. 117). This situation might have happened due to a relatively small sample size.

After deleting the weak items as per the recommendation of Hair et al. (2022, pp. 117-118), the PLS-SEM algorithm ran one more time, and finally, it has been seen in the Table 3, that all the retained items now passed through the minimum criteria for outer loadings (Abbasi et al., 2024; Abbasi et al., 2019; Hair et al., 2022). Meaning, now the items can represent absolute contribution to concerned constructs (Hair et al., 2022, p. 318). The graphical representation of the outer loadings and R^2 values is presented in Appendix 6.

The second step of the validity assessment is to check the VIFs of the items. VIF measures the extent of collinearity between the variables in a formative measurement model. The optimal VIF value is below 5, according to Ali et al. (2018). The VIF values in this study vary from 1.10 to 2.72, falling within the acceptable range shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Outer loadings, Variance Inflation Factors of each item of the constructs.

Constructs	Items	Outer loadings	VIFs
Destination Image	DI1	0.66	1.21
	DI2	0.63	1.19
	DI3	0.60	1.23
	DI4	0.60	1.19
	DI5	0.62	1.15
Destination Safety	DS1	0.76	1.53
	DS2	0.51	1.31
	DS3	0.67	1.27
	DS4	0.66	1.46
	DS5	0.64	1.50
	DS6	0.78	1.75
	DS7	0.56	1.30
Memorable Tourism Experiences	MTE1	0.67	1.18
	MTE2	0.65	1.32
	MTE3	0.55	1.27
	MTE4	0.42	1.10
	MTE5	0.70	1.18
Overall Satisfaction	OS1	0.88	2.29
	OS2	0.91	2.72
	OS3	0.80	1.60
Revisiting Intention	RI1	0.77	1.58
	RI2	0.83	1.51
	RI3	0.84	1.48
Electronic Word-of-Mouth	eWOM1	0.55	1.94
	eWOM2	0.66	2.31
	eWOM3	0.44	1.41
	eWOM4	0.85	1.98
	eWOM5	0.86	1.98

Note: VIFs= Variance inflation factors.

Source: Output from SmartPLS 4.1.0.0.

Other than outer loading and VIF analysis, assessing Cronbach's Alpha, CR, and AVE are also important elements for PLS-SEM analysis. Hair et al. (2022, p. 119) mentioned that, in terms of reliability, Cronbach's Alpha and the CR both have values that range from 0 to 1, with greater values suggesting better degrees of reliability. To be more specific, scores ranging from 0.60 to 0.70 are considered acceptable in exploratory research, and values ranging from 0.70 to 0.90 can be considered satisfactory in more advanced phases of research. It can be seen from Table 4 that almost all (only Cronbach's Alpha of MTEs is less than 0.60) the constructs pass through this criterion of Cronbach's Alpha and the CR.

AVE is another criterion for assessing the convergent validity of the constructs. Hair et al. (2022, p. 120) identified the AVE as a typical statistic that is used to establish convergent validity based on the construct level. It is the grand mean value of the squared loadings of the indicators that are connected with the construct that is described as this criterion. In other words, it is the sum of the squared loadings divided by the total number of indicators. When compared to the commonality of a construct, the AVE is hence comparable. The standard threshold for AVE is 0.50 (Ali et al., 2018; Hair et al., 2022). From Table 4, it can be seen that most of the results of AVE in this study are below the 0.50 threshold.

Even though AVEs of this study do not meet the requirements but Malhotra (2020) has a different argument. In his book, Malhotra (2020, p. 702) mentioned that, compared to CR, AVE is a more strict metric. Even though error accounts for more than half of the variance, the researcher may still have sufficient confidence in the construct's convergent validity based on CR only. From this perspective, as all the CR values (both rho_a, and rho_c) of this study, pass through minimum criteria, the validity assessment of this research is acceptable for doing the structural analysis. All the values of Cronbach's Alphas, CR, and AVE are listed in Table 4.

Table 4. Cronbach's alphas, composite reliabilities, and average variance extracted of the constructs.

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	CR (rho_a)	CR (rho_c)	AVE
Destination Image	0.60	0.60	0.76	0.39
Destination Safety	0.79	0.82	0.84	0.44
Memorable Tourism Experiences	0.58	0.60	0.74	0.37
Overall Satisfaction	0.83	0.84	0.90	0.75
Revisiting Intention	0.76	0.78	0.86	0.67
Electronic Word-of-Mouth	0.77	0.88	0.81	0.48

Note: CR= Composite Reliability, AVE= Average Variance Extracted.

Source: Output from SmartPLS 4.1.0.0.

Table 5. Fornell Larcker criterion for analysing discriminant validity.

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	6
Destination Safety	0.66					
Destination Image	0.31	0.62				
Electronic Word-of-mouth	0.38	0.57	0.69			
Memorable Tourism Experiences	0.37	0.52	0.45	0.61		
Overall Satisfaction	0.31	0.44	0.40	0.49	0.87	
Revisiting Intention	0.14	0.38	0.24	0.25	0.27	0.82

Note: Values on the diagonal (Bold) are the square root of the AVE, while the off diagonals are correlations.

Source: Output from SmartPLS 4.1.0.0.

In the measurement model assessment process, exploring discriminant validity is another important aspect to consider (Ali et al., 2018). For the assessment of discriminant validity, the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) can be evaluated (Bharti et al., 2023). The Fornell-Larcker criterion supports discriminant validity when the square root of AVE exceeds the correlation values between the latent variables (Bharti et al., 2023; Hair et

al., 2022). As indicated in bold in Table 5, it is evident that the Fornell-Larcker criteria for this analysis meet the requirement to do the structural analysis.

Table 6. Heterotrait-monotrait ratio for analysing discriminant validity.

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	6
Destination Safety						
Destination Image	0.48					
Electronic Word-of-mouth	0.37	0.76				
Memorable Tourism Experiences	0.48	0.85	0.56			
Overall Satisfaction	0.32	0.61	0.44	0.67		
Revisiting Intention	0.18	0.54	0.32	0.44	0.33	

Source: Output from SmartPLS 4.1.0.0.

Table 6 provides a detailed description of the HTMT ratio values. HTMT is the ratio of the inter-trait correlations to the intra-trait correlations. HTMT is the average correlation between indicators measuring different constructs compared to the average correlation between indicators measuring the same construct (Hair et al., 2022, p. 122; Henseler et al., 2015). The recommended value of HTMT should be below 0.90 (Ringle et al., 2024). From Table 6, it can be seen that the HTMT ratio values for this study are all below 0.90, indicating that each component inside the construct is distinctive and statistically significant, which gives a positive sign to do the structural analysis (Ali et al., 2018; Henseler et al., 2015; Ringle et al., 2024).

5.2.2 Analysis of structural model

A path model involves the simultaneous estimation of several regression models. It can involve mediation, moderation, and interaction relationships between variables (Dash & Paul, 2021). Table 7 contains findings pertaining to the hypotheses developed for this study. For the purpose of this research, the statistical significance of the path coefficient has been determined through the use of bootstrapping testing with 5,000 subsamples (Mahmud et al., 2021). On the basis of p-value, H₂, H₃, H₄, H₆ and H₇ accepted and other than these five hypotheses, H₁, H₅, H₈, and H₉ are rejected. The details of the structural model are presented in Table 7, and the graphical representation of the model is presented in Appendix 7.

The statistical significance of the structural model indicates several findings. Some of them show similar results to the previous research findings, and some of them differ from the previous research findings. In most of the previous research findings, it has been noted that MTEs has a positive association with RI (Gohary et al., 2020; Kim, 2018; Sharma & Nayak, 2019), but from Table 7, it can be seen that the p-value is 0.825, so the first hypothesis of this study was rejected. This means that MTEs do not positively influence RI in this study context. The second hypothesis is that MTEs have a positive association with DI. The p-value of the second hypothesis is significant, which means that the assumed hypothesis has been proved in this study context. The third hypothesis, which is related to DI and RI, is also accepted statistically in this study context. This means that destination image influences tourists to revisit a destination, which is also aligned with the previous research findings (Kim, 2018; Sharma & Nayak, 2019). The fourth hypothesis is associated with MTEs and OS, and this study result found a significant positive association between them, meaning the tourists have a memorable tourism experience and are satisfied with the current state of the service delivery by different stakeholders in the context of Santa Claus's official hometown, Rovaniemi.

The next hypothesis, which is overall satisfaction and revisiting intention, has been rejected in this study context. It's an interesting study result that, in this study context, the tourists reported that the official hometown of Santa makes a distinct memory in their mindset, which forms the MTEs and the overall service qualities and facilities provided at the destination, satisfied them, but they are not willing to revisit this destination. This might be caused by missing connections among tourists, firms and the DMOs providing tourism services. The sixth and seventh hypotheses are related to MTEs, DS, and eWOM. Both hypotheses have statistical significance and have been accepted. The result of these two hypotheses portrays that, in the study context of Santa Claus's official hometown, eWOM has a great influence. The tourists reported that having a memorable experience motivates them to share the experience on various social media platforms. Besides, DS, one of the new dimensions added to this model, has a significant effect on spreading positive or negative experiences through social media platforms via eWOM. The last two hypotheses are related to the moderating effect of DS on MTEs and RI, as well as MTEs and eWOM. In both cases, it has been seen that destination safety does not have a moderating effect on memorable tourism experiences and revisiting intention, and memorable tourism experiences and electronic word-of-mouth relationships.

Table 7. Results of the structural model.

Hypotheses	Paths	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	t-statistics	p-value
H ₁	Memorable Tourism Experiences -> Revisiting Intention	0.027	0.023	0.121	0.221	0.825
H ₂	Memorable Tourism Experiences -> Destination Image	0.522	0.541	0.055	9.409	0.000**
H ₃	Destination Image -> Revisiting Intention	0.306	0.322	0.126	2.418	0.016*
H ₄	Memorable Tourism Experiences -> Overall Satisfaction	0.485	0.498	0.077	6.308	0.000**
H ₅	Overall Satisfaction -> Revisiting Intention	0.127	0.125	0.100	1.267	0.205
H ₆	Memorable Tourism Experiences -> Electronic Word-of-mouth	0.360	0.369	0.083	4.325	0.000**
H ₇	Destination Safety -> Electronic Word-of-mouth	0.215	0.245	0.098	2.192	0.028*
H ₈	Destination Safety x Memorable Tourism Experiences -> Revisiting Intention	0.066	0.065	0.094	0.701	0.483
H ₉	Destination Safety x Memorable Tourism Experiences -> Electronic Word-of-mouth	-0.098	-0.085	0.074	1.335	0.182

Note: Original sample, Sample mean, Standard deviation, t-statistics, and p-values are computed through the bootstrapping procedure with 134 cases and 5,000 subsamples and *p-value < 0.05 and **p-value < 0.001.

Source: Output from SmartPLS 4.1.0.0.

6. DISCUSSION OF THE EMPIRICAL RESULTS

The hypotheses developed for this study were tested with the PLS-SEM statistical technique. Five hypotheses were accepted among the nine hypotheses from the statistical results and considering the p-values, and the remaining four were rejected.

The first hypothesis, that is, memorable tourism experiences have a positive association with tourists' revisiting intention, has been rejected in the context of this study. The statistical result of this study significantly differs from that of other previous research works. Researchers like, Chen and Rahman (2018), Gohary et al. (2020), Kim (2018), Zhang et al. (2018), Cho et al. (2021), and Sharma and Nayak (2019) identified a positive relationship between memorable tourism experiences and revisiting or behavioural intention. Although the statistical results identified that Santa Claus's official hometown, as a tourism destination, has a distinct place in tourists' minds, but they are not willing to revisit the same place. This might be the most surprising result of this study. In addition, several respondents identified several negative issues about Rovaniemi as a destination which can be seen in Appendix 8. These aspects may also have some effect on rejecting the hypothesis. In addition, the respondents might have some effect of social desirability biases, meaning the respondents have a different feeling in their mindset after visiting Santa Claus's official hometown, Rovaniemi, but due to the widespread positive aspects of this destination in both online and offline platforms, they tend to report that they are positively overwhelmed with the travel experiences (actually not) here, which is why they might not think this destination for revisiting (Chung & Monroe, 2003; Dolnicar, 2018). Furthermore, a significant number of tourists consider the experience of visiting Rovaniemi to be a 'once in a lifetime experience', which might have some form of effect on not thinking of further revisiting (Linnea, 2018).

The second hypothesis is that memorable tourism experiences have a positive relationship with destination image. From Table 7, it can be seen that this hypothesis has been accepted with a significant statistical value. From the perspective of Rovaniemi, the tourism experiences that the tourists have created a positive destination image. This hypothesis result also aligned with the other previous research results like Kim (2018), and Sharma and Nayak (2019). Moreover, the third hypothesis for this study is that destination image has a positive association with tourists' revisiting intention. This hypothesis has also been accepted, meaning that having a positive destination image impacts tourists' decision to revisit the same destination. The third

hypothesis also illustrates similar results with Kim (2018), and Sharma and Nayak (2019)'s previous research findings.

Again, the fourth hypothesis, which is that memorable tourism experiences have a positive association with overall satisfaction, has been accepted with a significant p-value. This means that memorable tourism experiences are directly connected with the overall satisfaction level of the tourists. From Appendix 8, it can be seen that, several respondents also mentioned this issue of satisfaction, which further strengthened the result. However, the fifth hypothesis, that is, overall satisfaction has a positive relationship with tourists' revisiting intention, has been rejected. Although the assumption developed in light of the previous research works (Kim, 2018; Sharma & Nayak, 2019), but in the context of Santa Claus's official hometown, this hypothesis cannot be established. According to the marketing literature, satisfaction is the antecedent of loyalty behaviour, but not all satisfaction levels can be translated into loyalty behaviour (Oliver, 1999) however, satisfaction strengthens loyalty (Chandrashekar et al., 2007). From the study result, it is seen that the tourists visiting Rovaniemi are somehow satisfied with the services or the tourism experiences; thus, building a strong bond with the tourists through relationship marketing is essential now for retaining the current visitors and gaining market competitiveness too (Grönroos, 1996, 2017; Mostafavi Shirazi & Mat Som, 2013; Shirazi & Som, 2011).

The sixth hypothesis is memorable tourism experiences have a positive association with electronic word-of-mouth. The hypothesis has been accepted with a statistically significant p-value, meaning that, in the context of Rovaniemi, the tourists have been interested in sharing their tourism experiences on various social media platforms. It paves the way for developing long-term relationships and working on the loyalty behaviour of the tourists visiting Rovaniemi (Almeida-Santana & Moreno-Gil, 2017). Although electronic word-of-mouth is a new dimension modified for this study, but the result is pretty similar to the previous research like, Chen and Rahman (2018), Kim (2018), and Sharma and Nayak (2019). Besides, as for this study, destination safety as a construct is incorporated. The seventh hypothesis is that destination safety positively affects electronic word-of-mouth, which is also accepted in this study context. Because of extreme weather conditions, tourists always have safety-related concerns, which are also echoed in some of the comments of the respondents listed in Appendix 8. The acceptance of this hypothesis and the positive words from the tourists regarding

destination safety ultimately promote electronic word-of-mouth and influence other fellow tourists to visit Santa Claus's official hometown.

Lastly, in this study, hypotheses eight and nine test the moderating effect of destination safety between memorable tourism experiences and revisiting intention, and memorable tourism experiences and electronic word-of-mouth relationships. Both hypotheses are being rejected statistically, meaning that there is no moderating effect of destination safety between memorable tourism experiences and revisiting intention, and memorable tourism experiences and electronic word-of-mouth relationships. As the first hypothesis of this study is already being rejected, it is assumed that Santa Claus's official hometown, as a tourism destination, might not promote revisiting but rather attract new tourists. On the other hand, hypothesis nine has been rejected, and hypothesis six was accepted, meaning that memorable tourism experiences significantly promote electronic word-of-mouth, which is a positive sign for Santa Claus's official hometown as a destination.

7. CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

7.1 Conclusion and implications

This study investigates the association of memorable tourism experiences with revisiting intentions, destination image, overall satisfaction, destination safety, and electronic word-of-mouth. To face the competition with other tourist destinations, there is no other way but to provide a memorable tourism experience to the tourists. Which ultimately promotes the revisiting intention of the tourists and also recommendation behaviour. Revisiting intentions and behaviours towards a particular place provides several benefits for the travel industry, similar to the general consumer behaviour of recurrent purchases. These benefits include lowering the costs of marketing and running and insulating against the effects of competition (Tsai et al., 2022). According to Haywood (1989), the cost of obtaining a new customer is estimated to be at least five times higher than that of maintaining an existing customer. This emphasises the significance of repeat visits in the tourism sector. Besides, the operating cost can also be reduced if the tourists revisit the place. Reduced operational costs can provide advantages not just for businesses but also for the sustainability of the environment, as they entail the utilisation of fewer resources and a reduction in resource mismanagement (Tsai et al., 2022). For all these reasons, tour operators always emphasise tourists' revisit.

From the study findings, it is evident that, in the case of Santa Claus's official hometown, the tourists are getting a pleasant and memorable experience, and they are somehow satisfied with the services provided by the firms; in line with this, the tourist is also referring other potential tourists to visit Rovaniemi through different online channels but the connection between the satisfaction and loyalty (revisiting intention) somehow missing here. In addition, destination safety was incorporated into this model, and the empirical results indicated that tourists feel safe and secure in Rovaniemi and that there is a positive association between destination safety and electronic word-of-mouth. However, the moderating effects hypothesised are not effective in this study context.

The empirical results and interpretation clearly show that to translate satisfied tourists into loyal tourists; concerned authorities and the firms involved in providing tourism experiences in Rovaniemi should concentrate on relationship marketing. Creating a strong bond with the

customer and offering several extra benefits to the revisited customers might encourage tourists to revisit and enhance the tourists' loyalty, which further sustains the tourism of Santa Claus's official hometown. Furthermore, the firms offering tourism services should also concentrate on developing new tourism products and promoting those products through online platforms where customer endorsement should be given priority. In addition, the firms might think of the possibility of the power of social media influencers to promote revisit (Pop et al., 2022; Pradhan et al., 2023). Besides, based on tourist segmentation, customised tourism products can be offered to various tourists, too.

The study has twofold implications. Theoretically, adding and testing destination safety and electronic word-of-mouth into the model further strengthens the applicability of the theory of reasoned action. Practically, academicians and practitioners in the field of tourism in Rovaniemi can get an idea with this research and develop their tourism products accordingly.

7.2 Limitations of the study and future research directions

This study has several limitations in generalisation of the results. First of all, relatively small sample size. Although this study passes through the minimum sample size requirements, the number of samples should be increased to get good and statistically significant results. Besides, although a huge number of Chinese and Portuguese tourists visit Santa Claus's official hometown, because of the language barrier and unwillingness to participate in this kind of public survey, there might be some kind of bias in the data. Moreover, if the timing of the data collection expanded throughout the year (especially in the summertime), there might be some possibility of getting different results. In addition, funding and a relatively long time are needed to get a comprehensive survey result. This survey does not get any funding support, so the situation is a little bit critical to some extent. Future research can address these limitations and extend this study further. Moreover, by considering destination safety, future research might also consider doing a mediation analysis, which can further explore the tourism of Santa Claus's official hometown.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. Questionnaire for data collection.

Impact of Memorable Tourism Experience on Revisiting Intention: An Empirical Study on Santa Claus's Official Hometown

Dear respondents,

This questionnaire is a part of a Master's thesis carried out by Md Shahed Mahmud under the supervision of Professor Markku Vieru from the University of Lapland, Finland. The thesis aims to know about the tourists' memorable experiences and their revisiting intentions to Rovaniemi.

By answering this questionnaire, you will be a part of this research, and your opinion will be analyzed statistically, where your response can not be identified separately. It may be worth noting that your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It will take approximately 5-8 minutes to fill out the questionnaire.

This questionnaire will not ask you any questions that can identify you, and the data collected for this research will be saved by following The Finnish National Board on Research Integrity's (TENK) guidelines.

If you have any queries regarding this research, don't hesitate to get in touch with me at the following contact number and/or email. I am happy to share the information with you. If you want to receive a summary of the research result, you can put your email ID in the "Comment/ Observation" section of the questionnaire (the last part of the questionnaire and it is not mandatory).

Thank you so much for your co-operation.

Md Shahed Mahmud

Email: mmahmud@ulapland.fi

Phone: +358415730889 (WhatsApp).

I am willingly participating in this research and give consent to analyze my opinion about this research.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No			
I am from the following continent of the world.					
<input type="checkbox"/> Europe <input type="checkbox"/> North America <input type="checkbox"/> South America <input type="checkbox"/> Asia <input type="checkbox"/> Africa <input type="checkbox"/> Oceania/ Australia <input type="checkbox"/> Antarctica					
Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Other					
Age range: <input type="checkbox"/> 17 or younger <input type="checkbox"/> 18-20 <input type="checkbox"/> 21-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 31-40 <input type="checkbox"/> 41-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 51-60 <input type="checkbox"/> 61-70 <input type="checkbox"/> 71 or older					
Have you visited Rovaniemi before? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					
If yes, then how many times have you visited Rovaniemi before?					
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 times <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 times <input type="checkbox"/> 4-5 times <input type="checkbox"/> More than 5 times					
How many days did you stay in Rovaniemi this time?					
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 day <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 days <input type="checkbox"/> 4-5 days <input type="checkbox"/> 6-7 days <input type="checkbox"/> more than 7 days					
What is your total expenditure for visiting Rovaniemi this time (including travel, accommodation, food, etc)?					
<input type="checkbox"/> Less than €1000 <input type="checkbox"/> €1000-€2000 <input type="checkbox"/> €2001-€3000 <input type="checkbox"/> €3001-€4000 <input type="checkbox"/> €4001-€5000 <input type="checkbox"/> more than €5000					
How many people is travelling with you this time?					
<input type="checkbox"/> I am travelling alone. <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 persons <input type="checkbox"/> 4-5 persons <input type="checkbox"/> 6-7 persons <input type="checkbox"/> more than 7 persons					
Which social media platforms do you use frequently?					
<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook <input type="checkbox"/> Instagram <input type="checkbox"/> TikTok <input type="checkbox"/> Snapchat <input type="checkbox"/> WhatsApp <input type="checkbox"/> Twitter / X <input type="checkbox"/> LinkedIn <input type="checkbox"/> WeChat <input type="checkbox"/> Telegram <input type="checkbox"/> I am not using social media platforms					
Please read the following statements and mark your opinion using the "X" sign.					
Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I enjoyed the tourism experience in Rovaniemi (e.g., meeting Santa Claus, Northern Lights, winter tourism activities, etc.)					
I feel refreshed and revitalized through this visit.					
I am able to explore something about myself from this tour.					
I have learned about local culture from this tour.					
I experienced something new (e.g., food, activity, etc) during this tourism experience.					
I think Rovaniemi has a pleasant environment.					

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have an exotic image of Rovaniemi in my mind.					
The city of Rovaniemi offered a variety of accommodation.					
I think, Rovaniemi has variety of entertainment options.					
Rovaniemi as a destination offered good quality of service.					
In my viewpoint, the local transportation of Rovaniemi is adequate.					
I like the architectural view of Rovaniemi.					
I feel pleasant about this travel experience.					
I feel enjoyable about this travel experience.					
I am satisfied with this travel experience.					
I want to revisit Rovaniemi in a year.					
I am planning to revisit Rovaniemi soon with my other family members.					
I will try to revisit Rovaniemi as soon as I manage time.					
I want to revisit Rovaniemi in summertime (e.g., to experience night less night, spend time in nature).					
I would like to chat with friends about my tourism experience on social media during this trip.					
I will encourage friends and relatives to visit Rovaniemi through social media.					
I would like to create posts (e.g., story, reels) about my tourism experience on social media.					
I will say positive aspects about Rovaniemi to other people.					
I will recommend Rovaniemi, as a destination to other people.					
I think that, Rovaniemi as a destination, is a safe place to visit					
I did not feel anxiety or nervousness during my trip to Rovaniemi.					
I did not face any suspicious people (e.g., street gangs/ drunk persons) during my trip, which feels me unsafe.					
The public security was good enough.					
The road traffic system was safe and not chaotic.					
I felt safe in my accommodation.					
I felt safe with the food that I had eaten during this trip.					
I have not faced challenges with the ice and snow on the road.					

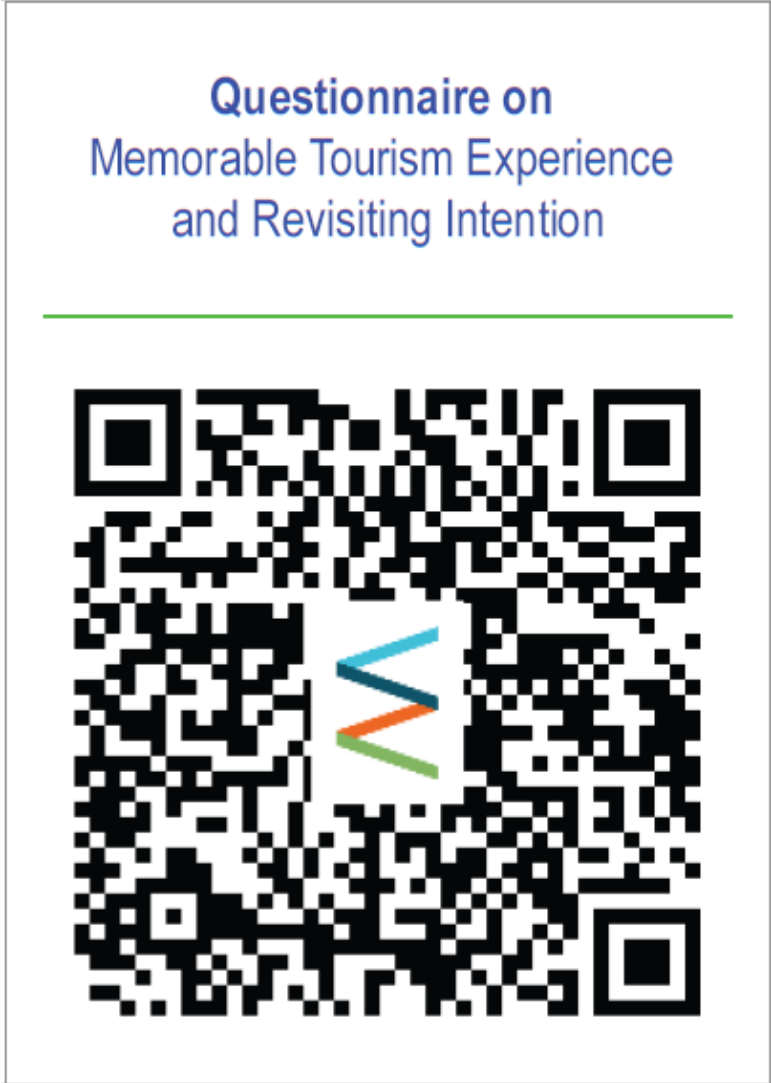
Any Comment/ Observation regarding your trip to Rovaniemi

.....

.....

... Thank you so much for your cooperation ...

APPENDIX 2. QR code used for data collection.



APPENDIX 3. Measurement items for the study and the sources.

Sl. No.	Constructs	Modified items	Adopted from
1	Memorable Tourism Experiences	<p>I enjoyed this tourism experience (e.g., meeting Santa Claus, Northern Lights, winter tourism activities, etc.)</p> <p>I feel refreshed and revitalised through this visit.</p> <p>I am able to explore something about myself from this tour.</p> <p>I have learned the local culture from this tour.</p> <p>I experienced something new (e.g., food, activity, etc) during this tourism experience.</p>	Kim et al. (2012), Kim (2018), Sharma and Nayak (2019)
2	Destination Image	<p>I think, Rovaniemi has a pleasant environment.</p> <p>I have an exotic image of Rovaniemi in my mind.</p> <p>The city of Rovaniemi offered a variety of accommodation.</p> <p>I think, Rovaniemi has variety of entertainment options.</p> <p>Rovaniemi as a destination offered good quality of service.</p> <p>In my viewpoint, the local transportation of Rovaniemi is adequate.</p> <p>I like the architectural view of Rovaniemi.</p>	Kim (2018), Sharma and Nayak (2019)
3	Overall Satisfaction	<p>I feel pleasant about this travel experience.</p> <p>I feel enjoyable about this travel experience.</p> <p>I am satisfied with this travel experience.</p>	Kim (2018), Sharma and Nayak (2019)
4	Revisiting Intention	<p>I would like to revisit Rovaniemi in a year</p> <p>I am planning to revisit Rovaniemi soon with my other family members.</p> <p>I will try to revisit Rovaniemi as soon as I manage time.</p> <p>I want to revisit Rovaniemi in summertime (e.g., to experience night less night, spend time in nature).</p>	Kim (2018), Sharma and Nayak (2019)
5	Electronic Word-of-Mouth	<p>I would like to chat with friends about my tourism experience on social media during this trip.</p> <p>I will encourage friends and relatives to visit Rovaniemi through social media.</p> <p>I would like to create posts (e.g., story, reels) about my tourism experience on social media.</p>	Kim (2018), Sharma and Nayak (2019), (Wong et al., 2020)

I will say positive aspects about Rovaniemi to other people.
I will recommend Rovaniemi, as a destination to other people.

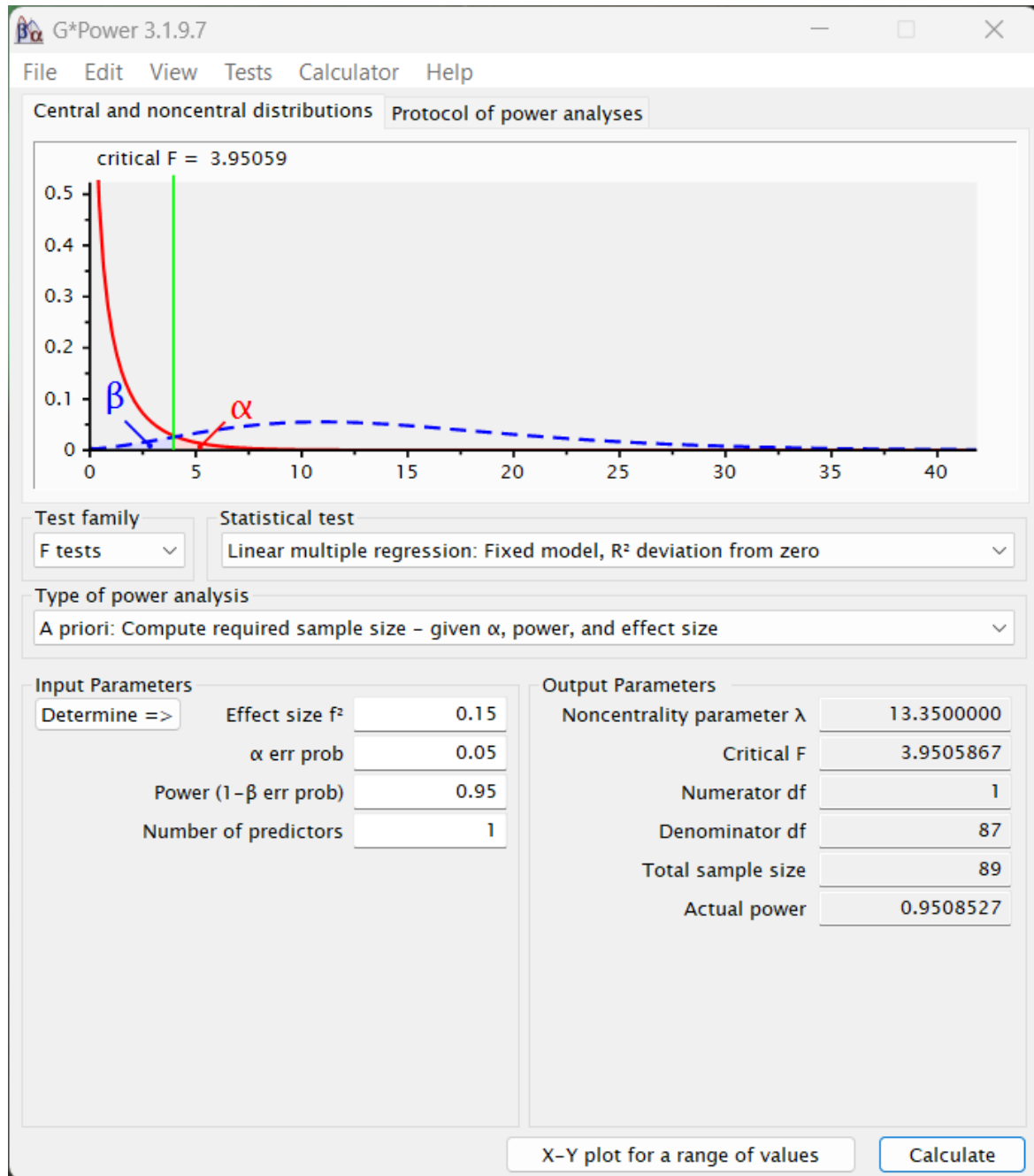
6

Destination
Safety

I think that, Rovaniemi as a destination, is a safe place to visit
I did not feel anxiety or nervousness during my trip to Rovaniemi.
I did not face any suspicious people (e.g., street gangs/ drunk persons) during my trip, which feels me unsafe.
The public security was good enough.
The road traffic system was safe and not chaotic.
I feel safe in my accommodation.
I felt safe with the food that I had eaten during this trip.
I have not faced challenges with the ice and snow on the road.

Kim (2022), Zou and Mawby (2021)

APPENDIX 4. Determining the minimum sample size using G*Power software.



Source: YouTube video lecture series by Maheta (2023).

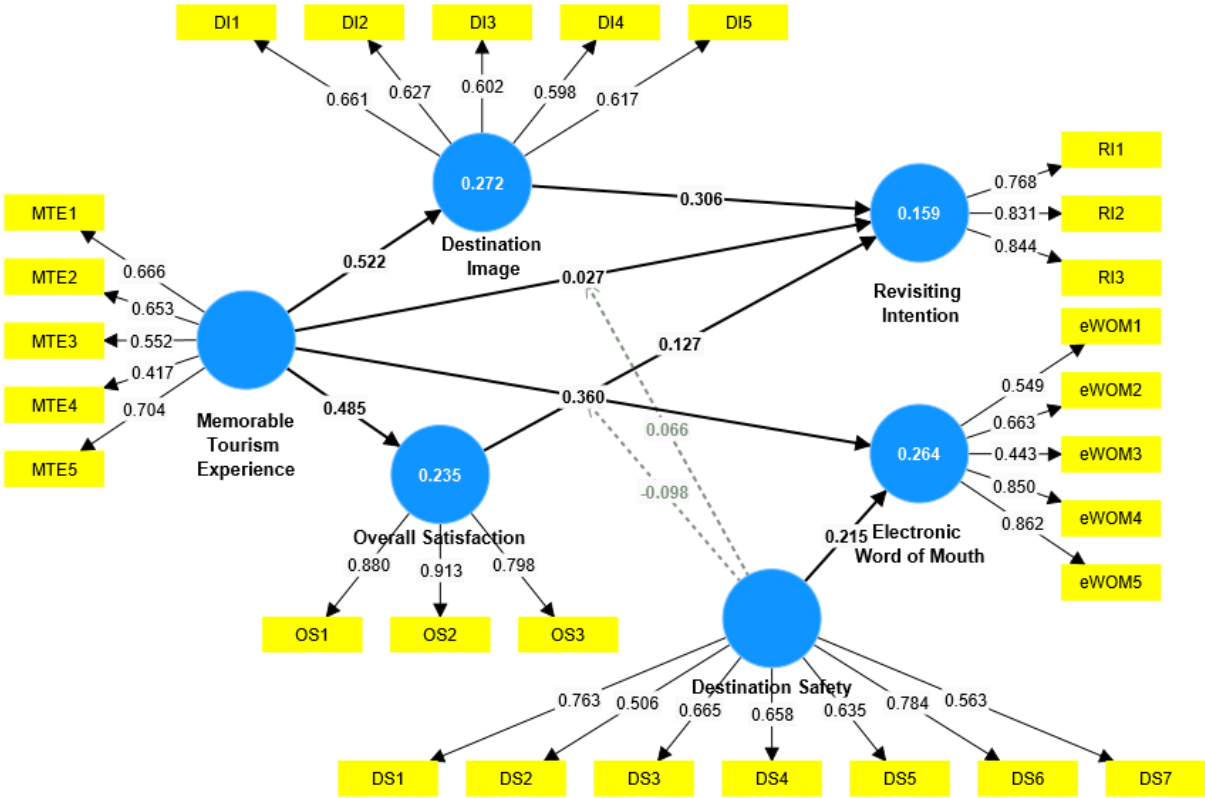
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gp0jxj5e0aE>

APPENDIX 5. Model constructs, items, codes and their status for PLS-SEM analysis.

Sl. No.	Constructs	Modified items	Code	Status for PLS-SEM analysis
1	Memorable Tourism Experiences	I enjoyed this tourism experience (e.g., meeting Santa Claus, northern lights, winter tourism activities, etc.)	MTE1	Retained
		I feel refreshed and revitalized through this visit	MTE2	Retained
		I am able to explore something about myself from this tour	MTE3	Retained
		I have learned the local culture from this tour	MTE4	Retained
		I experienced something new (e.g., food, activity, etc.) during this tourism experience	MTE5	Retained
2	Destination Image	I think, Rovaniemi has a pleasant environment.	DI1	Retained
		I have an exotic image of Rovaniemi in my mind.	DI2	Retained
		The city of Rovaniemi offered a variety of accommodation.	DI3	Retained
		I think, Rovaniemi has variety of entertainment options.	DI4	Retained
		Rovaniemi as a destination offered good quality of service.	DI5	Retained
		In my viewpoint, the local transportation of Rovaniemi is adequate.	DI6	Deleted
		I like the architectural view of Rovaniemi	DI7	Deleted
3	Overall Satisfaction	I feel pleasant about this travel experience.	OS1	Retained
		I feel enjoyable about this travel experience.	OS2	Retained
		I am satisfied with this travel experience.	OS3	Retained
4	Revisiting Intention	I would like to revisit Rovaniemi in a year	RI1	Retained
		I am planning to revisit Rovaniemi soon with my other family members.	RI2	Retained

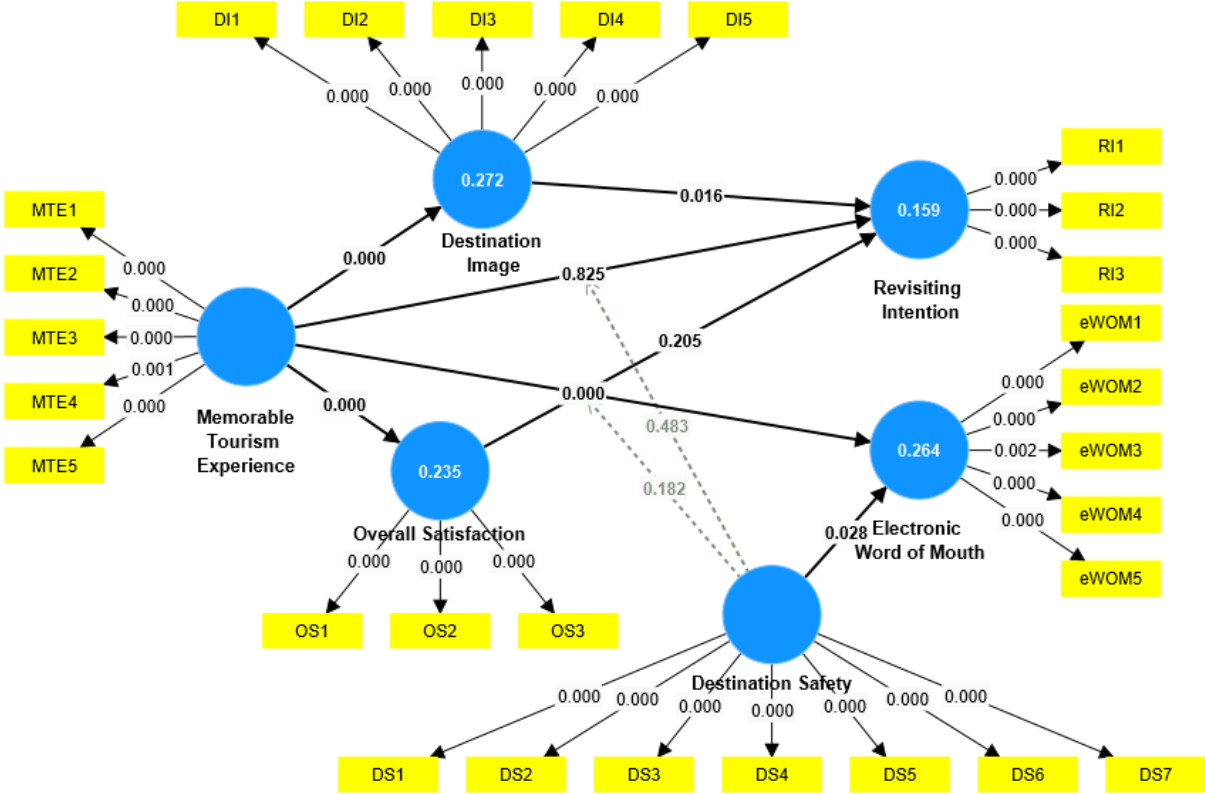
		I will try to revisit Rovaniemi as soon as I manage time.	RI3	Retained
		I want to revisit Rovaniemi in summertime (e.g., to experience night less night, spend time in nature).	RI4	Deleted
		I would like to chat with friends about my tourism experience on social media during this trip.	eWOM1	Retained
	Electronic	I will encourage friends and relatives to visit Rovaniemi through social media.	eWOM2	Retained
5	Word-of-Mouth	I would like to create posts (e.g., story, reels) about my tourism experience on social media.	eWOM3	Retained
		I will say positive aspects about Rovaniemi to other people.	eWOM4	Retained
		I will recommend Rovaniemi, as a destination to other people.	eWOM5	Retained
		I think that, Rovaniemi as a destination, is a safe place to visit	DS1	Retained
		I did not feel anxiety or nervousness during my trip to Rovaniemi.	DS2	Retained
		I did not face any suspicious people (e.g., street gangs/ drunk persons) during my trip, which feels me unsafe.	DS3	Retained
6	Destination Safety	The public security was good enough.	DS4	Retained
		The road traffic system was safe and not chaotic	DS5	Retained
		I feel safe in my accommodation.	DS6	Retained
		I felt safe with the food that I had eaten during this trip.	DS7	Retained
		I have not faced challenges with the ice and snow on the road.	DS8	Deleted

APPENDIX 6. Graphical representation of the model's validity assessment (outer loadings and R² value).



Source: Output from SmartPLS 4.1.0.0.

APPENDIX 7. Graphical representation of the model's structural relationships (p-value and R²).



Source: Output from SmartPLS 4.1.0.0.

APPENDIX 8. Comments/ observations of the respondents.

In the last part of the questionnaire, the respondents pointed out their observations about the trip to Rovaniemi. Based on the observations by the international tourists visiting Rovaniemi, the comments/ observations have been classified into two broad themes. The following sections describe tourists' comments in terms of the positive and negative aspects.

Positive aspects

For some tourists, Rovaniemi is a winter wonderland; visiting here is a lifetime experience (Linnea, 2018). From the comments of the tourists, some of the positive aspects of their trip to Rovaniemi are presented here according to the respondent's numbers.

Visited Rovaniemi during some very cold days but enjoyed most of the outdoor activities anyway. (Respondent 19)

All the restaurants we were in Rovaniemi were excellent. (Respondent 27)

Enjoyed the cold and nature here although it was a new experience for me. (Respondent 33)

Rovaniemi, situated in the heart of the Arctic Circle, is a genuine winter wonderland. Its unique location guarantees an unforgettable experience, showcasing a picturesque landscape that enchants those in search of the mesmerizing dance of the Northern Lights. (Respondent 54)

J'ai détesté l'aspect commercial sur le père Noël, et la découverte de la culture sami. En revanche j'ai adoré les randonnées en raquettes à travers le parc naturel dans le parc naturel pyhä-lousto. Les laavu et kota mis à disposition donne un charme incroyable au randonné. (Respondent 60)

I was a bit anxious and nervous at the beginning because I was worried about the road situation and snow storms, since a lot of roads seem abandoned, but I had a very good experience with driving around and with the road signs. (Respondent 63)

I enjoyed Rovaniemi and did a lot of posts during my stay here. I'm such a huge fan of Rovaniemi! Usually I'm not that person who is going to travel to another city more than once but I changed my mind because I will definitely revisit Rovaniemi ! (Respondent 77)

It was a very nice trip and I would recommend it to other people. (Respondent 80)

I will try to visit next time but during summertime for a change of scenery. (Respondent 96)

Close to nature, unspoiled. Great experience. (Respondent 98)

I love the place and I prefer to come here on summertime. I was amazed when I saw the Northern Lights. (Respondent 122)

Rovaniemi is a decent place to visit with Family, especially it is nice for kids to meet Santa and Reindeer. (Respondent 131)

Negative aspects

Unlike the positive aspects, the tourists also pointed out some of the negative aspects of the Rovaniemi. The negative aspects are classified as transportation-related and other aspects based on the prominence. The observations are presented according to the respondent's number.

- Negative aspects of transportation

The public transportation needs to be developed and improved with also names on map of the different bus station with the time of departure and also at the airport after 6pm people need bus transportation because taxi is expensive. (Respondent 24)

I had to wait in the freezing cold for the bus. The bus stop needs heating facility. (Respondent 25)

There's a pressing need to enhance the local transportation infrastructure to empower tourists for seamless navigation. Sustaining without a personal vehicle can be challenging. (Respondent 54)

My only complaint is about public transportation, stations are so far between each other, so, you have to walk a lot to get your destination or going back to the hotel. (Respondent 64)

Improvement needed in public transport organization; unclear timetables and bus numbers caused confusion, and misguidance from Google Maps led to a frustrating experience, with the designated bus stop being bypassed without stopping. (Respondent 74)

Our hotel was south of Rovaniemi and we wanted to visit the city on Sunday which was not possible because of the poor bus connection (taxi would be possible but is very expensive). (Respondent 80)

The frequency of buses or public transportation needs to be increased e.g. from Ranua there are only one bus running a day which is not adequate I believe. (Respondent 118)

- Other negative aspects

The vacation was a little bit pricey but not sure if it is Finland in general or only Rovaniemi. (Respondent 19)

In Rovaniemi it is more touristic and sometimes more like a tourist trap (for instance Santa Claus Village that is really expensive) Rovaniemi is a very nice city, not really on an architectural plan. (Respondent 27)

Better coordination and communication would greatly enhance the visitor experience. (Respondent 74)