

# **An E-Marketplace for Rural Tourism: An Approach To Dynamic Sustainability In The Fast-Paced Market**

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## **Abstract**

The business climate fluctuates. Do tour operators prefer to thrive by doing nothing or by employing innovative strategies? Defend or Attack? These are the questions that tour operators ponder when recalling their fate in this industry. The primary purpose of the present study is to examine the effect of rural tourism e-marketplace behavior on rural tourism's dynamic sustainability. Additionally, this study seeks to confirm that the factors of product, price, and time savings serve as the benchmarks for behavior in rural tourism's e-marketplace. The covid-19 outbreak has begun to disrupt the tourism industry as more customers have started to develop loyalty and retention through online mechanisms in higher numbers given the limited circumstances. Although certain rural tourism destinations and attractions found it challenging to integrate into the e-marketplace ecosystem, this domain has emerged as a strategic focus that has impacted the dynamic sustainability of rural tourism in Indonesia. A detailed pathway for the development of the dynamic sustainability of rural tourism model has been created employing advanced quantitative analysis using structural equation modelling (SEM). This research has produced an integrated model that accelerates the region's recovery agenda by promoting local ecosystems through rural tourism e-marketplace behavior.

**Keywords:** Rural Tourism, Dynamic Sustainability, E-Marketplace Behavior, Structural Equation Modeling

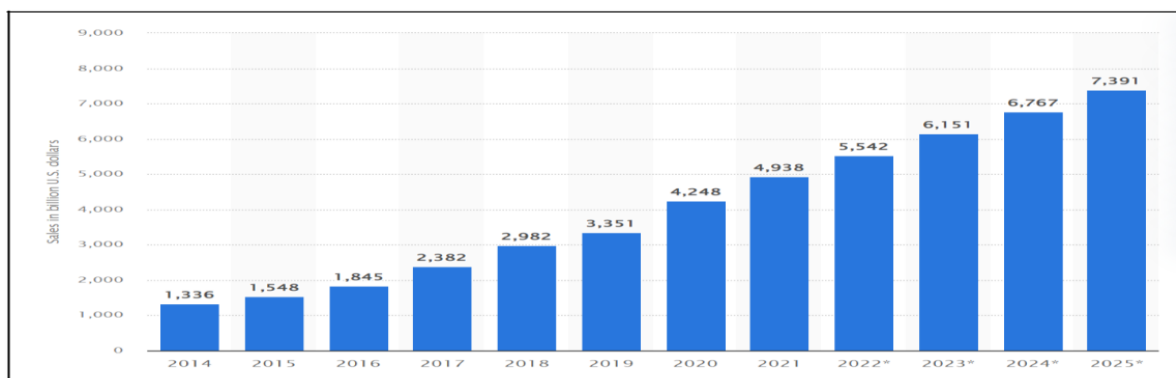
## **Introduction**

After two years of mobility restrictions due to a pandemic, business activity in Indonesia have resumed in full flow for a number of months. The COVID-19 tsunami had a huge impact on the evolution of the digital economy in Southeast Asia. Since the reopening of borders, demand has been high, but the rising cost of raw materials, global economic uncertainty, and most urgently, labour shortage have hurt businesses, particularly the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises (Lee, 2022). The business owners, including rural tourist providers, would consider making expenditures to meet customer demand in order to recapture the market. However, in the context of the current business environment, capital expenditures are rarely considered (Crecente, Sarabia & Del Val, 2021). The prolonged epidemic has aggravated the constrained cash flow situations of a large number of enterprises. As a result, the current study has emphasised the strategic direction of additional post-COVID-19 work through the

digitalization strategy of supply chain models for rural tourism in Indonesia. The

development of a dynamic sustainability model for small and medium-sized businesses that are involved in rural tourism in Indonesia is the primary emphasis of this project. Historically, the dynamic sustainability framework (DSF) was developed by Chambers, Glasgow, and Stange (2013). This framework requires constant learning and problem solving, continuing adaptation of initiatives with a large emphasis on appropriateness between initiatives and inter-settings, and ideas for continuous improvements as opposed to dramatically reduced consequences over the course of time. Whereas Klinga et al. (2016) stated that the requirement for ongoing review and decision-making, as well as the objective of achieving continuous improvement. In addition to this, it emphasises the ever-present nature of change as well as the objective of continuously improving the alignment of multicomponent interventions with their respective environments.

Correspondingly, digitalization is the process of transforming a business model through the use of digital technologies in order to create new revenue and value-creating opportunities (Sentosa et al., 2021). This strategic direction supported by the practices of digital economy is a rapidly expanding sector with the potential to influence the whole economy through the application of digital technologies. Digital developments are transforming businesses and industries across the whole economy, influencing both the public and private sectors. The pervasive effects of digital disruption can be evident, for instance, in the banking and insurance industries, where online engagement has replaced in-person transactions and advice (Roomi, Saiz-Alvarez & Coduras, 2021). Another industry that has moved from local, dispersed activities to remote, autonomous operations enabled by sensing and analytics technologies is the industrial goods sector. Similarly, the retail industry has transitioned from physical locations to online stores and from in-store consultations to consumer evaluations (MCM, 2018).



**Figure 1:** Retail E-commerce Sales Worldwide From 2014 to 2025 (Source: Statista, 2022)

It should come as no surprise that e-proportion commerce's of total retail sales has been climbing steadily over the past few years, given the ever-increasing market share of online shopping. As illustrated in Figure 1, global retail e-commerce sales in 2021 are expected to be around \$4,9 quadrillion USD. It is expected that this number will grow by 50% over the next

four years, reaching almost \$7.4 trillion by 2025. Therefore, rural tourism should adapt the same strategy to ensure its competitiveness in the sector. The creation of an e-marketplace for rural tourism, which is a form of electronic commerce that permits the online purchase and sale of physical goods and services (Sarango-Lalangui, 2022). In the rural tourism e-marketplace, information and communication technology (ICT) is utilised to transport funds, money, data, and information.

This study validated how the coupling of structural equation modelling with these two

megatrends (digitalization and dynamic sustainability) would show favourable interdependencies in the process of converting to a digitalization during post-pandemic recovery. Nonetheless, the adaptation of an e-marketplace for rural tourism in Indonesia necessitates a reaction from tourists or customers to ensure the proper execution of this dynamic movement. The primary purpose of the present study is to examine the effect of rural tourism e-marketplace behaviour on rural tourism's dynamic sustainability. Rural tourism e-marketplace shopping behavior refers to an individual's overall view and evaluation of a product or service during rural tourism e-marketplace shopping, which may result in a negative or positive manner. Earlier research has established that behavior is a multidimensional construct that has been conceptualized in several ways (Li & Zhang, 2002). Numerous academics evaluate the consumer's behavior through various dimensions. The first dimension, according to Gozukara et al. (2014), is the consumer's attitude toward a utilitarian motivation (convenience, variety seeking, and the quality of merchandise, cost benefit, and time effectiveness). The second dimension is hedonic motivation (happiness, fantasy, escapism, awakening, sensuality, and enjoyment), while the third dimension is perceived ease of use and usefulness, according to Baber et al. (2014). Another factor that determines consumer behavior toward internet shopping is risk perception. Furthermore, according to Li & Zhang (2002), there are two distinct categories of perceived risk that influence consumer behavior during the online purchase process. It is further explained as the first category of perceived risk associated with online product and service, namely financial risk, time risk, and product risk, while the other category of perceived risk associated with e-transactions, namely privacy and security, is also described (Li & Zhang, 2002). Numerous researchers (Subhalakshami & Ravi, 2015; Samadi & Yaghoob-Nejadi, 2009; Hassan et al., 2006) contend that perceived risk, such as financial risk, product risk, non-delivery risk, time risk, privacy risk, information risk, social risk, and personal risk, has a negative and significant impact on consumers' rural tourism e-marketplace shopping behavior.

The research hypothesis investigates the relationship between two or more variables, but it requires more than a hunch (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Typically, the hypothesis begins with a query that is subsequently investigated via background research. At this point, only then do researchers start to create a testable hypothesis. Although the hypothesis predicts what the researchers expect to find, the purpose of the study is to establish whether or not this prediction is accurate. When performing an experiment, researchers may examine a variety of variables to see which ones may influence the final result. Following are the three hypotheses developed for the study:

## **Product Factors**

Most consumers will view a store as trustworthy if it provides sufficient and specific product information. Trust and confidence in the online marketplace are the primary determinants of consumer behaviour. Customers who are aware of their unique characteristics, such as their clothing size, are more likely to purchase a product online (Menoe & Barnard, 2020). Moreover, online buying allows them to compare product characteristics or services given by

the brand itself (Haig, 2011). E-commerce has made transactions easier than ever before, and online retailers provide consumers with a greater selection of products and services from which to pick (Prasad & Aryasri, 2009; Lim & Dubinsky, 2004;). The product could be anything such as a good, service, person, location, idea, piece of information, or organisation that seeks consumer attention and attempts to fulfil their needs, wants, or desires (Kotler &

Keller, 2016). Consumers can locate things from all around the world that are exclusive to the internet. Whether or whether they have a physical storefront, the vast majority of businesses have their own websites to sell goods and services online. As a cost-saving measure or to provide clients with a wider selection of sizes, colours, or features, a number of traditional stores sell products that are only accessible online.

*H1. The product factor is confirmed as a measurement of rural tourism e-marketplace behavior.*

## **Price Factor**

Because online shoppers are frequently offered better deals, they can purchase identical products at a lesser price than in stores (Rox, 2007). As a result of the range of products and services offered by online retailers, buyers have more opportunities to compare prices from various websites and find things at lower costs than when shopping at traditional brick-and-mortar stores (Lim & Dubinsky, 2004). Consumers can also compare discounts or coupons offered by the store using their cellphones or other mobile devices from any location they choose. Some websites, such as eBay, provide clients with the auction or best offer option so that they can negotiate a good price for their product. In addition, it makes shopping a genuine game of chance and treasure hunt, as well as enjoyable and entertaining (Prasad & Aryasri, 2009). The perception of price explains product information and provides consumers with profound meaning (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Consequently, pricing is a significant element in purchasing decisions, particularly for regularly purchased items, and consequently impacts which store, product, and brand to patronise (Faith & Agwu, 2014).

*H2. The price factor is confirmed as a measurement of rural tourism e-marketplace behavior.*

## **Time Saving Factor**

Using the rural tourism e-marketplace, consumers may now shop anywhere and at any time. Even on their busiest days, e-commerce makes shopping more convenient for consumers. Online shopping makes consumers' lives easier because they do not have to deal with traffic, find a parking spot, wait in checkout lines, or shop in a crowded store (Childers et al., 2001). It's confirmed by Jusoh and Ling (2012) that time savings, better buyer decisions, better product selection, and the chance to purchase at any time and from a variety of geographically distant locations are among the advantage of e-marketplace usage. This is crucial since it meets the needs of the buyer during the purchasing process and reduces buyer's regret. Compared to traditional brick-and-mortar establishments, shopping on the rural tourist e-marketplace offers convenience and time savings to consumers. As a result of this epidemic, rural tourist e-marketplace shopping is increasing at a quick rate. With these new regulations, online purchasing facilitates transactions between consumers and businesses. Changing consumer lives and hectic schedules may make it more difficult for consumers to purchase in-person. With the press of a button, customer can leave the purchasing website or applications easily. According to Celik (2011), the perceived utility of the e-marketplace platform is influenced by the purchasing process' increasing efficiency and efficacy. It is crucial to take into account the technology-oriented orientation, which emphasises user-friendly designs, according to Zhou et al. (2007). Once more, it brought the customer's focus to the positive buying experience (Menoe & Barnard, 2020).

***H3. The time saving factor is confirmed as a measurement of rural tourism e-marketplace behavior.***

***Rural Tourism's Dynamic Sustainability***

In industrialised countries like Northern Europe and Japan, for example, the sustainability of supply chain management is fairly advanced (Sharin et al., 2022). It won't be easy to bring order to the market. It must be derived from vibrant attributes and used in tandem with an entrepreneurial attitude to support business success (Klofsten et al., 2020). In order to create the most up-to-date framework for corporate strategy, academics and industry professionals are paying close attention to arguments surrounding business performance in order to meet these objectives. Consider business-based, Cooper et al. (2005) suggested that small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) have become a microeconomic vulnerability due to their inability to control supply and demand in the current economic environment. Certain multinational firms have recognized this and are fostering networking to attain the economic scale. However, this relationship was unable to continue a long-term basis and its significance appears to have diminished. Given the importance of rural tourism development to rural community development, it is essential to do thorough research. To ensure the survival of the rural tourism industry, it is necessary to establish a programme of rehabilitation. Business models had to change to fit digitalization (Hassan, Ahmad, & Ramayah, 2020). It is crucial for the government to support and provide information on the present state of the economy (Rieznik & Lee, 2018). Rural Tourism activities in Indonesia are supported by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy (MOCTE), which has the role of assisting in the growth of tourism and creative product businesses in Indonesia (MOCTE, 2022). This ministry also responsible to develop strategies for the establishment of a varied innovation ecosystem, notably the SME sector in tourism industry, capable of competing on the global market, and to encourage the development of the entrepreneurs. The government support aims to strengthen the capabilities of local entrepreneurs, particularly in the SME sector in this industry, and to increase the number of competent, viable, and resilient firms. The integrated model proposed by Sharin, Sentosa, and Perumal (2022) contributes to support the idea that the internal and external forces of rural tourism through digitization and the influence of technology usage interact in a complicated way to define the drivers of economic success. It demonstrates that, whether rural tourism's stakeholders likes it or not, it must change.

***H4. There is a direct positive influence of rural tourism e-marketplace behaviour towards rural tourism's dynamic sustainability.***

## **Conceptual Development**

This research utilized two major theories, namely the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Theory of Diffusion of Innovation (DOI), to develop a conceptual model for this study. The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) is a cognitive theory proposed by Azjen (1985) that asserts a person's decision to engage in a certain behaviour, such as gambling or quitting gambling, may be predicted by their intention to engage in that conduct. It is considered that intentions capture the motivational variables that drive an action; they indicate how hard people are willing to try and how much work they intend to exert in order to do the behavior. As a general rule, the more the purpose to engage in an action, the greater the likelihood that it will be carried out (Ajzen, 1991). Historically, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) began in 1980 as the

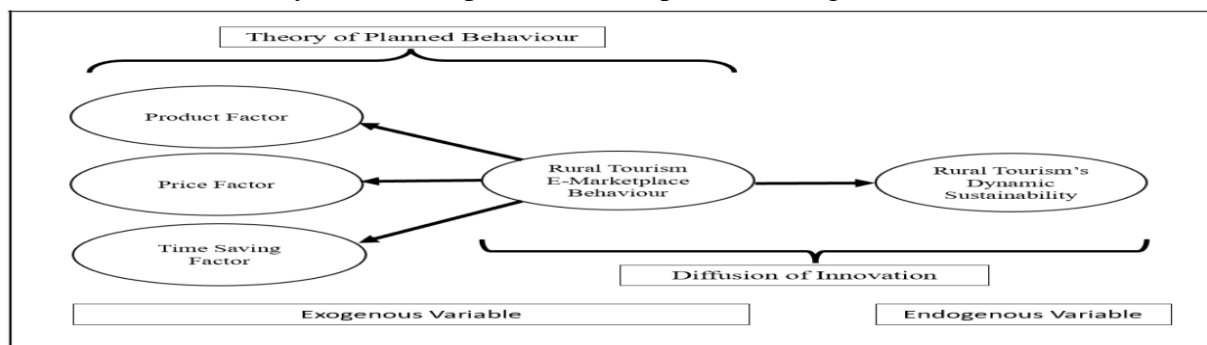
Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) to forecast a person's intention to engage in a behavior at a specific time and place. According to this TRA model, the motivational elements



that influence an individual's intention to undertake a behavior. Nevertheless, the behavioral aim will only be successful if the behavior is under voluntary control. On the other hand, the TPB model provides a better description of a behavioral model that depends jointly on an individual's intention to do a certain behavior and the individual's real control over the behavior. In order to anticipate behavioral intents, subjective norm, attitude toward behavior, and perceived behavioral control are utilized. In this study, it was demonstrated that these variables had a considerable impact on a person's attitude and behavior regarding online purchase intention. The researchers fully employ this theory to investigate the elements that influence tourists' decisions to purchase rural tourism products through digital platforms or electronic marketplaces (Zahari, Hanafiah, Akbar, & Zain, 2020)

The second theory called as Diffusion of Innovations (DOI) theory, which was created by Rogers (1995) from the standpoint of innovation and technology direction to explain how inventions can be communicated across a large number of people over time and through a variety of channels. Rogers' theory serves as a foundation for many studies on a wide range of topics. The claim made by Rogers has received widespread support from the theoretical foundations of the disciplines of technology adoption and innovation dissemination. Utilizing Rogers' innovation growth theory, it may be possible to better understand the technological orientation of small and medium-sized businesses and perceptual ecosystems (Li & Asim, 2019). According to Price, Stoica, and Boncella (2013), small and medium-sized enterprises' primary drivers of sustainability, strategic edge, and performance are the adoption of new technology and non-technology innovation. Innovation research is essential, especially in the field of small and medium-sized businesses, due to the originality of the processes and activities carried out by businesses and their need to innovate (Jia, Tang, & Kan, 2020), which promotes sustainability, economic success, and inclusive growth (Sharin, Sentosa & Perumal, 2022). To preserve the dynamic sustainability, it is crucial for rural tourism operators to adopt an innovation strategy to protect themselves in this dynamic business climate and to implement a digitization approach. However, innovation dispersion requires the development of innovation culture capabilities that increase the effectiveness of innovation competitive advantage and foster the long-term growth of small and medium-sized firms (Nimfa, Latiff & Wahab, 2021). In the end, it contributes indirectly to the fulfilment of economic responsibilities in accordance with Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations (Francke & Alexander, 2019).

Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between the endogenous variable (DV) and the exogenous variables (IV). The rural tourism e-marketplace behavior is viewed as an exogenous variable, whereas the product factor, the price factor, and the time saving factor are characterized as its dimensions whose influence on the rural tourism's dynamic sustainability, which is an endogenous variable. This framework will serve as a foundation for this research and will aid in the analysis and interpretation of empirical findings.



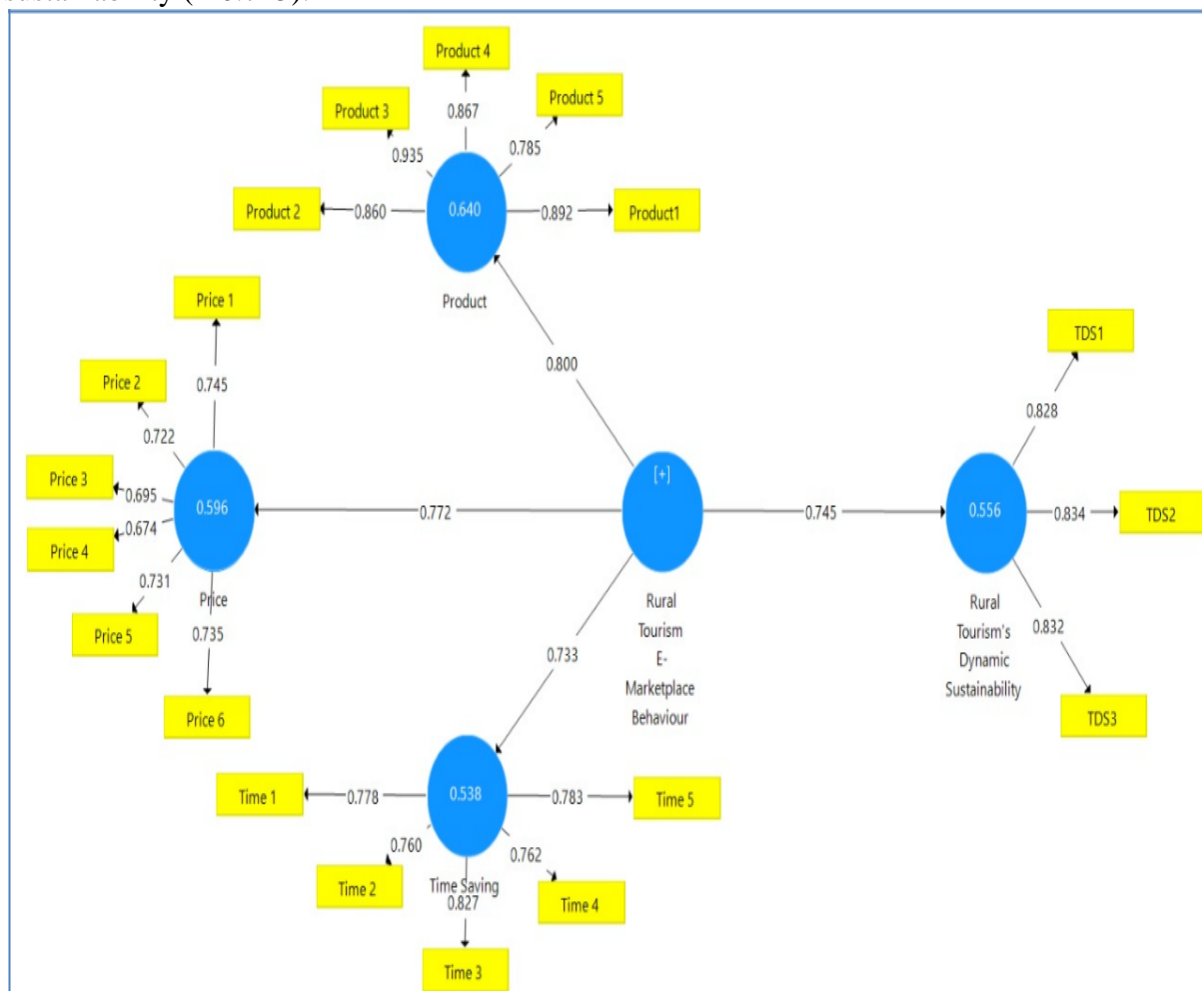
**Figure 2:** Conceptual Framework

## Research Methodology

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using SmartPLS has configured a causal effect relationship on the rural tourism's dynamic sustainability model establishment. This research hypothesised rural tourism e-marketplace behaviour as exogenous variable with 2nd order construct of product, price and time saving factors. Figure 3 also identified rural tourism e-marketplace behaviour as predictor of rural tourism's dynamic behaviour, and its stated on the hypothetical development of direct positive significant influence of independent to dependent variable. There were 304 respondents gathered using proportionate stratified random sampling and data screening on the reliability and validity of samples and measurements also conducted using SPSS application.

## Findings and Discussions

2nd order confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of rural tourism e-marketplace behaviour confirms product factor ( $\alpha = 0.800$ ), price factor ( $\alpha = 0.722$ ) and time saving factor ( $\alpha = 0.733$ ) as measurement and its significantly contributed to the construction of latent variable of structural model (Figure 3). There are 5 validated items of product factor, 6 items of price factor and 5 items of time saving factor which confirmed a standardised regressions weight of loading fulfilled valid criteria (Factor Loading  $> 0.5$ ). As hypothesised, there is a direct positive significant influence of rural tourism e-marketplace behaviour on the rural tourism' dynamic sustainability ( $\beta = 0.745$ ).



**Figure 3.** ReSpecified Model of Rural Tourism's Dynamic Sustainability

**Table 1.** *Measurement of Rural Tourism's Dynamic Sustainability*

Items	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha & Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
<b>Rural Tourism's Dynamic Sustainability</b>			
Constant learning and problem solving (TDS1)	0.828	0.776 (0.870)	0.691
Continuing adaptation of initiatives with a large emphasis on appropriateness between initiatives and inter-settings (TDS2)	0.834		
Ideas for continuous improvements as opposed to dramatically reduced consequences over the course of time (TDS3)	0.832		
<b>Rural Tourism E-Marketplace Behaviour</b>			
<b>Product Factor</b>			
Product quality can affect my buying decision (Product 1).	0.892	0.918 (0.939)	0.756
I focus on the variety of products in choosing the most preferred online rural tourism shopping platform (Product 2).	0.860		
I would buy product that has good features (Product 3).	0.935		
I would buy product that aesthetics for me (Product 4).	0.867		
Rural Tourism product description is important for me (Product 5).	0.785		
8			
<b>Price Factor</b>			
<b>Discounts and vouchers influence my purchasing behaviour (Price 1).</b>	<b>0.745</b>	<b>0.811</b>	<b>0.614</b>
I do not mind about the price (Price 2).	0.722	(0.864)	
Online shopping rural tourism platforms offers more affordable price (Price 3).	0.695		
I always make price comparison between shops before purchase it (Price 4).	0.674		
I likely do online rural tourism shopping during promotions only (Price 5).	0.731		
Rural Tourism online shopping saves money compared to physical store (Price 6).	0.735		
<b>Time Saving Factor</b>			
Delivery time can influence my rural tourism e-marketplace shopping behaviour (Time 1).	0.778	0.842 (0.887)	0.612
Fast transaction influence me to purchase rural tourism product online (Time 2).	0.760		
I can save time when purchase online shopping rather than traditional shopping. (Time 3).	0.827		
Online shopping offers the availability to shop anytime (Time 4).	0.762		
I like to spend more time on the rural tourism e-marketplace shopping than in physical store (Time 5).	0.783		



## Conclusions and Recommendations

The present study has established, examined and validated rural tourism's dynamic sustainability model which fundamentally contributed as a main guideline for practitioners, entrepreneurs and policy stakeholders in their daily. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with application of SmartPLS has identified detail pathway and factor loading for each measurement as hypothesised and validated. This study also configured rural tourism e-marketplace behaviour as predictor with 2nd order construct of product, price and time saving factors. Based on Figure 3, its confirmed rural tourism e-marketplace behaviour as exogenous variable of rural tourism's dynamic behaviour, and pathway analysis also concluded a direct positive significant influence of independent to rural tourism's dynamic sustainability as dependent variable. Further study may replicate current validated model on the different research and empirical setting as well as possibilities to include other dynamic variable on the business journey of rural tourism.

This research concludes with a variety of empirically based findings for academics and practitioners. It presents empirical evidence on a number of critical areas of two megatrend issues, namely digitalization and dynamic sustainability, including the nature of behavior measurement chosen in rural tourist sectors and a knowledge of the current status of e-marketplace implementation. Based on the findings, this research is able to conclude that the

rural tourism e-marketplace shopping behavior of potential rural tourists can be measured by the factors of product, price, and time savings. In addition, the research indicated that rural tourism e-marketplace behavior has a substantial impact on the dynamic sustainability of rural tourism in Indonesia. It gives proof of the impact of establishing a rural tourism e-marketplace as a strategic objective, thereby assisting the rural tourism operators in identifying their strategies for obtaining competitive advantage. The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy, Indonesia, as well as the Ministry of Village, Development of Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration of Republic of Indonesia, will both benefit from the proposed dynamic sustainability of rural tourism model (Figure 2), which will assist both ministries in their strategies regarding investment and marketing for rural development. To create as much room as possible for marketing rural tourism sites to both domestic and international tourist, digital channels like blogs, landing pages, social media accounts, and mobile applications should be expanded. The strategies to promote smart tourism that developed by Indonesia's neighbor, Malaysia can become a guidance as well. Several strategies can be applied such as maximizing the use of e-marketing through increased government and industry player collaboration to advance digitalization; embracing the knowledge sharing economy to innovate the informal tourism sector and rural tourism; utilizing big data analytics as supporting information for decision-making and long-term planning; and increasing the use of big data analytics (MOTAC, 2020).

Due to the small sample size, generalizability was a crucial point that needed to be made clear. Since the researchers provided the link to each person and collected the data using a Google form, it is not difficult to determine that the information was obtained from the sources. Additionally, there is insufficient precise data when the convenience sampling strategy is used. This is because certain subjects, who might be shown in a less favorable light, might not reply to the most accurate response for themselves. The sample size can be increased, or alternative types of geographic areas can be used, to provide more precise data for the recommendation. If there is a chance, doing face-to-face interviews as part of a survey will be beneficial for enhancing the accuracy of the data in upcoming research. Due to the fact that all respondents

to this study were from outside, we were only able to narrow the age range to 18 to 47 years old. However, there may have been additional adults who utilized internet shopping who were older than that. Last but not least, since the questionnaire has a limited range of responses and the questions pertinent to a particular variable might not have been sufficiently specific to yield a good response, the reliability of the questionnaire can also be seen as a limitation.

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