

# The Connection between Electronic Word-of-Mouth Communication, Destination Image, and Revisit Intention in Cruise Tourism

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## ABSTRACT

Understanding tourists' word-of-mouth communication, destination preferences, and revisit intentions is important in the rapidly growing cruise tourism industry. Focusing on Amasra, an emerging cruise destination on the Black Sea coast of Türkiye, this study examines the connection between electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), destination image (DI) and tourists' revisit intentions (RI). Structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis of data collected from 235 tourists. The analysis results proved that eWOM has an influence on DI and RI, DI has an influence on RI, and there is a mediating role between eWOM and RI. These findings highlight the potential for developing destinations such as Amasra to promote the natural beauty, old texture and ethnic richness of the region to a wider audience and to create long-term loyalty by strengthening tourists' emotional attachment to the destination. The research highlights the role of relevant factors in the sustainable success of cruise destinations. Focusing on these factors can increase tourists' intention to revisit the destination through strategic marketing, public relations, and destination management efforts. This can support both economic gains and the long-term competitiveness of the destination.

## KEYWORDS

Communication, Tourism communication, Electronic Word-of-Mouth, Destination Image, Revisit Intention, Cruise Tourism

## ARTICLE HISTORY

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## 1. Introduction

The tourism sector has shown significant growth globally, increasing its impact on national economies. This growth has deepened its interaction with various sectors, such as public relations, marketing, and promotional activities. The growth of the tourism sector has brought significant revenues, numerous employment opportunities, and diversification, thus affecting the standard of living of many people around the world (Hung & Khoa, 2022). Tourism is a geographically diverse activity that attracts diverse travellers with unique preferences, leading to the emergence of specialized market segments (Sousa et al., 2019). There are many types of tourism that attract tourists within the sector. At this point, cruise tourism includes many different opportunities based on sea travel and offers a fun and social experience by visiting different destinations.

Cruise tourism involves holidaying on a sizable passenger vessel, which usually follows a set itinerary that includes multiple stops. These cruises provide a range of amenities and activities, such as dining options, entertainment, and recreational facilities. The destinations that cruise ships explore can vary significantly, encompassing everything from wonderful beach locales to historical cities and cultural sites (Islam et al., 2024). In 2023, a total of 1,542,522 passengers visited Türkiye's 19 ports by cruise ships, with the majority of these tourists coming to the ports of Kusadasi and Istanbul. Among the 5 ports in the Black Sea region, which is especially preferred by Russian tourists due to its geopolitical location, the port of Amasra (14,962 passengers) was preferred by the majority of cruise passengers (Directorate General for Maritime Affairs, 2024). In 2024, 26 cruise ships docked at Amasra Port and a total of 25,116 passengers visited with an increase of approximately 60% compared to the previous year (Directorate General for Maritime Affairs, 2025). Amasra, where the first cruise ship departed from the Russian port of Sochi in 2022, has become the new favourite of cruise tourism (Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, 2022).

According to the 2024 global cruise industry status report, cruise passenger numbers in 2023 reached 31.7 million passengers, 107% of 2019 levels. Millennials are emerging as the most enthusiastic future cruise travellers, with Gen Z also emerging as a significant potential market. The cruise industry has generated a global economic impact of \$138 billion, with 1.2 million jobs and \$43 billion in wages worldwide. In this context, the cruise industry has shown steady growth and is emerging as a niche form of tourism, although it represents only 2% of the travel and tourism sectors (Cruise Lines International Association – CLIA, 2024).

As cruise tourism becomes a growing industry worldwide, it has become important to identify the destination characteristics that make a difference in satisfying cruise ship passengers through eWOM communication about their satisfaction and experiences, and to understand the factors that influence their intention to visit again (Brida et al., 2012; Ozturk & Gogtas, 2015). eWOM is when individuals share their experiences about products and services with other individuals (Lee & Youn, 2009; Rossmann et al., 2016). In tourism, eWOM has become even more effective, especially through the internet and social networking sites (Luo & Zhong, 2015). DI means the general idea that tourists have of a tourist destination (Quynh et al., 2021; Udden Babar et al., 2025). RI is a concept that refers to the desire of an individual to return to a particular place or space in the future (Siregar et al., 2021; Gangadhari et al., 2025). Understanding the influence of these concepts on each other is key for destination marketers and policymakers to properly manage and promote tourist destinations.

In the literature review conducted within the scope of the study, it has been indicated that much academic research has been carried out on eWOM, DI, and RI (Aviana & Alversia, 2019; Al-Htibat & Garanti, 2019; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021; Amaro et al., 2021; Maulina et al., 2023; Pahrudin et al., 2023; Chaieb & Chaieb, 2023; Nazarian et al., 2024). On the other hand, among the academic studies on the subject, Phillips et al. (2011) investigated word-of-mouth communication and revisited the intentions of tourists toward rural tourism destinations in North Dakota, USA. Jalilvand et al. (2013) examined the connection between tourists' attitudes towards Islamic destinations, eWOM, and travel intentions in Iran. Zhang et al. (2021) investigated Chinese tourists' travel contentment, revisit intention, and eWOM in the frame of cultural intelligence. Ran et al. (2021) examined the impact of eWOM and DI on US tourists' intention to travel to China. Saad et al. (2022) investigated the travel experiences of tourists from Europe and Oceania to Malaysia. Nguyen and Hsu (2022) investigated the connections between eWOM, destination image, and intention to revisit India among Southeast Asian female tourists.

This study addresses a critical gap in the existing tourism literature by examining the complex interplay between eWOM, DI, and RI within the specific context of cruise tourism, an area that has witnessed substantial growth yet remains relatively under-researched in this regard. Focusing on Amasra, an emerging cruise destination on the Black Sea coast of Türkiye, this study aims to reveal the connection between eWOM, DI, and RI, and to provide valuable insights for both academia and the tourism industry. By doing so, this study will not only contribute to the theoretical understanding of tourist behaviour but also offer practical implications for tourism communication strategies, public relations, destination marketers and policymakers seeking to enhance destination attractiveness, develop effective marketing strategies, and foster long-term tourist loyalty.

## 2. Conceptual Framework

### 2.1 Electronic Word-of-Mouth

With the rise and expansion of the Internet, eWOM became one of the most effective informal communication channels as an evolution of traditional word-of-mouth (WOM) (Huete-Alcocer, 2017). eWOM has been found to have a stronger impact on factors such as attitude, destination image, and travel intention than face-to-face WOM (Jalilvand & Heidari, 2017). The increasing use of eWOM has attracted many fields, especially tourism (Mukhopadhyay et al., 2022). Utilising eWOM data, especially in marketing strategies, offers a new perspective (Nessel et al., 2021). In addition, eWOM is also utilised in the experience of AI-enabled services (Alam et al., 2023). An important factor in eWOM is to understand how one person's sharing can influence and potentially trigger other people's sharing (Ke et al., 2024). Because user comments can be a driver of behaviour change and have a big impact on preferences (Gellerstedt & Arvemo, 2019). With omnipresent smartphones and the active use of media platforms, eWOM has become even more important as tourists can more easily share and interact with their travel experiences. With eWOM, tourists can exchange information about destinations, accommodations, and activities and overcome geographical barriers by digitizing traditional communication methods. As a result, eWOM has an important role to play both in framing the image of a destination and in determining tourists' return intentions.

### 2.2 Destination Image

Destination image is a multifaceted concept that encompasses potential visitors' perceptions of a destination. These perceptions can be based on both tangible attributes (prices, transport, accommodation) and intangible attributes (safety, hospitality, atmosphere). Destination image encompasses how individuals perceive specific attributes and how the overall destination appears (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). The components of the destination image are the knowledge and credence collected through various sources of information, like word of mouth and personal experience (Farrukh et al., 2022). Destination image is widely recognized as a significant element in successful tourism growth and destination marketing. It affects both the supply and demand sides of marketing (Tasci & Gartner, 2007). It is a key element that influences tourists' choice of a holiday destination, their intention to visit a particular place, their loyalty towards the destination, and their likelihood to recommend it to others (Chon, 1990; Benslimane & Semaoune, 2021). Therefore, it is of great importance for destination marketers to create a strong and positive destination image. Especially in the digital age, the synergy between eWOM and destination image is becoming increasingly important in shaping tourists' destination perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours. The experiences, comments, and recommendations tourists share on online platforms can drastically change potential visitors' image of the destination and revisit intentions, which in turn can directly affect destination success.

### 2.3 Revisit Intention

Tourists' intention to come back to a destination is crucial to the success and sustainability of the destination. Among the factors affecting this intention, tourist satisfaction comes first (Rahman et al., 2022).

Revisit intention is seen as an extension of satisfaction rather than a trigger for the commitment to do so (Um et al., 2006). Content tourists are more potential repeat visitors to the destination. This increases the total number of visitors and tourism revenues of the destination (Cheng et al., 2019). Moreover, tourists' intention to revisit varies according to which values they attach importance to. While functional and emotional values are at the forefront for international tourists, social values may be more decisive for local tourists (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2023). For example, providing memorable tourism experiences that appeal to emotions can significantly affect tourists' revisit intentions (Tiwari et al., 2023). However, people's preferences and needs are constantly changing and diversifying from various perspectives. Therefore, a complete comprehension of the behaviour of tourists and the ability to predict their intentions to return to a destination subsequently are needed (Chang et al., 2014). Destinations must, therefore, be aware that different tourist segments have different expectations and needs. By sharing their experiences and providing positive feedback, tourists can help influence the decisions of other potential visitors and increase the likelihood of returning to the destination.

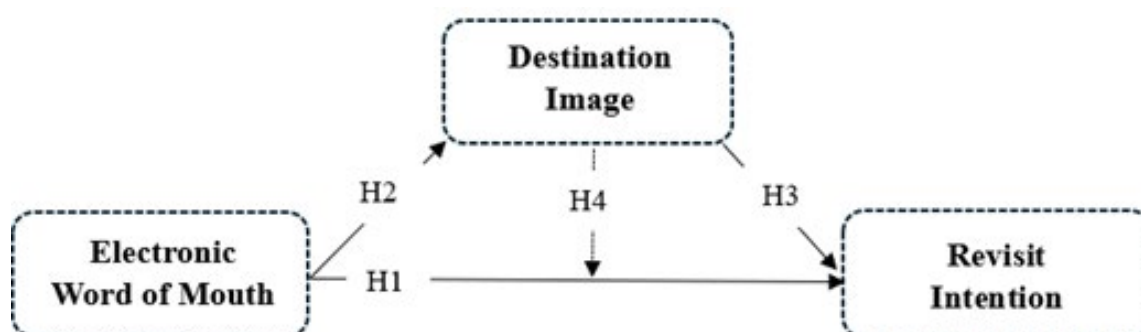
### 3. Methodology

The aim of this study is to explore the effect of eWOM on RI and DI, the effect of DI on RI, and the mediating role between eWOM and RI. Accordingly, the quantitative research method was adopted to test the structural equation model created in the research. The questionnaire method was applied as the data collection instrument. The questionnaire used in the study has three parts. The first part includes questions about the demographic features of the participants, the second part contains questions about the travel behaviour of the participants, and the last part contains scales related to the dependent and independent variables.

Within the scope of the research, a 6-item scale developed by Bambauer-Sachse and Mangold (2011) on brand equity and later adapted by Jalilvand et al. (2012) for international tourists was used to evaluate the participants' eWOM. The 5-item scale developed by Lee and Lockshin (2011) was used to measure destination image, and the 3-item scale used by Jalilvand et al. (2012) was used to assess revisit intention. The statements adjusted for Türkiye were evaluated with a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree).

The participants of the study are tourists visiting Türkiye. The sample of the study consists of tourists who visit the destination of Amasra within the framework of cruise tourism. Purposive and convenience sampling methods were used together in the study. Thus, face-to-face surveys were collected by the researchers from tourists coming to Amasra destination within the scope of cruise tourism in October 2023 and February 2024. A total of 250 surveys were collected, 15 surveys were eliminated after the examinations, and 235 surveys were deemed valid. To test the model developed in the study, in the first step, the measurement model was put to the test using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and the outcome regarding the validity and reliability of the scales was obtained. In the second stage, the hypotheses of the study were tested using structural equation modelling (SEM).

**Figure 1.** Research Model



## Hypotheses

- H1.** eWOM has a statistically positive and significant effect on RI.  
**H2.** eWOM has a statistically positive and significant effect on DI.  
**H3.** DI has a statistically positive and significant effect on RI.  
**H4.** DI has a mediating role in the effect of eWOM on RI.

## 4. Results

Information on the participants' demographic features is shown in Table 1. An analysis of the demographic information of the participants was that 59.1% were female, 50.7% were single and 48.5% were university graduates. In addition, 73.6% of the participants in the study were Russian tourists, and 43.4% of them were born after 1999.

**Table 1.** Information on Demographic Features of the Participants

Demographic Features	Category	Frequency (n=235)	Percentage (%100)
Gender	Female	139	59.1
	Male	96	40.9
Marital Status	Married	99	42.1
	Single	119	50.7
	Other	17	7.2
Education	Primary	28	11.9
	Secondary	38	16.2
	University	114	48.5
	Postgraduate	55	23.4
Birth Interval	Born in 1999 and later	102	43.4
	Born between 1981-1998	91	38.7
	Born between 1965-1980	34	14.5
	Born between 1946-1964	8	3.4
Nationality	Russia	173	73.6
	Kazakhstan	35	14.9
	Uzbekistan	7	2.9
	Germany	2	0.9
	Other	18	7.7

Source: Own Elaboration

The results of the participants' travel behaviour are presented in Table 2. Almost half of the participants stated that their purpose for visiting Türkiye was travel and entertainment. It is seen that 37.9% of the respondents travelled to Türkiye for the first time. It was also indicated that 68.9% of the participants did not have any difficulty communicating with local people during their visits to Türkiye. It was found that almost all of the participants had positive attitudes towards local people during their travels.

**Table 2.** Findings on Participants' Travel Behaviours

Variables		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Purpose of your visit	Travel and leisure	115	48.9
	Visiting relatives and friends	36	15.3
	Cultural activities	43	18.4
	Other	41	17.4
Frequency of visit	First time	89	37.9
	I have been to Turkiye once again	86	36.6
	Three and above	60	25.5
Communication with local people during your visit to Turkiye	It was hard to communicate	73	31.1
	I had no difficulty	162	68.9
The attitude of the local people towards you during your visit to Turkiye	They showed a negative attitude	22	9.4
	They showed a positive attitude	213	90.6

Source: Own Elaboration

The results for the first association that comes to mind when participants think of Turkiye are presented in Table 3. In order to get an overview of the findings, the results are divided into 11 thematic categories. It can be seen that 27.7% of the participants have the highest participation in the category of food and beverages, followed by 27.2% in the category of places and tourism. Historical and cultural references (13.7%) and symbols and icons (10.2%) are other prominent findings.

**Table 3.** Findings on Participants' Most Common Associations with Turkiye

Category	Item	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Food and Beverages	Baklava	27	11.5
	Tea	10	4.3
	Doner	8	3.4
	Kebab	6	2.5
	Turkish Food	5	2.1
	Turkish Delight	3	1.3
	Turkish Coffee	3	1.3
	Hot Simit/Ice Cream/Fish	3	1.3
Places and Tourism	Istanbul	19	8.0
	Sea	13	5.5
	Nice Place	8	3.4
	Tourism/Holiday	6	2.5
	Rest/Entertainment/Recreation	4	1.7
	Amasra	4	1.7
	Antalya	3	1.3
	Izmir	2	0.9
	Sister City	2	0.9
	All-inclusive	2	0.9
	Aegean	1	0.4

Historical and Cultural References	Atatürk	12	5.1
	Historical	5	2.1
	Culture	4	1.7
	Roksalana/Hurrem Sultan	4	1.7
	Ottoman Empire	3	1.3
	Sultan Suleiman	2	0.9
	Museums/Old Buildings	2	0.9
Nature and Climate	Sun	6	2.5
	Nature	4	1.7
	Wonderful	2	0.9
People and Hospitality	Nice People/Good People	14	5.9
	Kindness	3	1.3
	Family	1	0.4
Symbols and Icons	Flag	11	4.7
	Mosques/Sultanahmet Mosque	6	2.5
	Cats	4	1.7
	Muslims/Religion/Islam	3	1.3
Entertainment and Media	Turkish TV Series	6	2.5
	Galatasaray	3	1.3
	Turkish Sports Teams	2	0.9
	Besiktas	1	0.4
	Singer Tarkan	1	0.4
Miscellaneous	University/Studies	3	1.3
	Public Bazaar	3	1.3
	Clothes	1	0.4

Source: Own Elaboration

Cronbach's alpha values for scale reliability were discovered to be 0.92 for eWOM, 0.89 for DI, and 0.79 for RI. These values indicate that the scales are at an acceptable level (Murphy & Davidshofer, 1988). In addition, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to assess the validity of the scales used. In this context, the one-factor structure of the eWOM, DI, and RI scales was tested (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Confirmatory Factor Analysis for the Measurement Model

Scales / Dimensions	Scale Items	Average	Standard deviation	Standardised Factor Loadings	t-value	p-value	AVE	CR	CA
Electronic word-of-mouth							0.66	0.92	0.92
	eWOM1	3.319	1.175	0.740	*fixed	***			
	eWOM2	3.485	1.174	0.816	12.634	***			
	eWOM3	3.514	1.095	0.833	12.915	***			
	eWOM4	3.587	1.122	0.844	13.106	***			
	eWOM5	3.446	1.132	0.802	12.402	***			
	eWOM6	3.570	1.127	0.840	13.040	***			



Destination image						0.64	0.90	0.89
DI1	3.719	1.069	0.688	*fixed	***			
DI2	3.957	0.994	0.875	12.240	***			
DI3	4.034	0.982	0.919	12.728	***			
DI4	4.051	1.011	0.778	11.026	***			
DI5	3.787	1.044	0.731	10.405	***			
Revisit intention						0.56	0.79	0.79
RI1	3.978	0.921	0.720	*fixed	***			
RI2	3.927	0.841	0.785	9.928	***			
RI3	4.000	0.847	0.747	9.526	***			

(\*) The indicator is fixed at 1. (\*\*\*)  $p < 0.001$

AVE: Average Variance Extracted; CR: Composite Reliability; CA: Cronbach's Alpha  
 $\chi^2$ : 194.393 df: 74  $\chi^2$ /df: 2.627 CFI= 0.943 NFI= 0.912 TLI= 0.930 RMSEA= 0.083

Source: Own Elaboration

Standardised factor loadings for the constructs measured are expected to be at least 0.50 and ideally higher than 0.70. Loading values of this magnitude or higher indicate that the indicators are tightly related to their respective constructs as evidence of construct validity (Hair et al., 2010). When social and behavioural sciences are examined, it is seen that a value of 0.30 is common (Merenda, 1997). As seen in Table 4, the standardised factor loadings for each variable of the scales in the measurement model vary between 0.688 (DI 1) and 0.919 (DI 3), and the  $t$  values of the variables are at an acceptable level and significant (\*\*\*:  $p < 0.001$ ) ( $\geq 2.58$ ) (Byrne, 2016; Kline, 2016; Hair et al., 2017).

Discriminant validity was examined after it was determined that the convergent validity of the measurement model was met. The Fornell-Larcker criteria were used to test the discriminant validity of the measurement model. The corresponding results are presented in Table 5. According to the Fornell-Larcker criteria, the square root of the AVE calculated for each factor should be higher than the correlation of the factors to which they are related (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). This is all to say that the square root of the average variance explained by each factor must have the highest value in the row and column. When analysing Table 5, it can be seen that this criterion is met. Therefore, it can be said that each of the dimensions in the measurement model created in the research measures different elements and differs from each other (Table 5).

**Table 5.** Fornell-Larcker Discriminant Validity Criteria

Factors	CR	AVE	MSV	eWOM	DI	RI
eWOM	0.92	0.66	0.38	0.813		
DI	0.90	0.64	0.38	0.622***	0.803	
RI	0.79	0.56	0.30	0.287***	0.548***	0.751

(\*\*\*)  $p < 0.001$

CR: Composite reliability; AVE: Average variance extracted; MSV: Maximum shared variance; eWOM: Electronic word-of-mouth; DI: Destination image; RI: Revisit intention

Source: Own Elaboration

In Table 6, the simple effect model is constructed to test the effect of eWOM on RI. The goodness-of-fit values of the model are within the limits of good fit and acceptable fit ( $\chi^2 = 77,924$  df=26,  $\chi^2$ /df=2.997; CFI=.957, NFI=.937; TLI=.940; RMSEA=.092) According to Table 6, it is found that eWOM affects the RI ( $\beta = 0.209$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Therefore, this means that the path coefficient between eWOM and RI without a mediating variable is 0.209, and a one-unit rise in eWOM will cause an increase of 0.209 in RI. This relationship is a one-way structural relationship. Accordingly, it is possible to say that hypothesis H1 is confirmed, that is, eWOM has a positive and significant effect on RI (H1 accepted). Similarly, this study is in line with



findings that eWOM strengthens RI (Sparks & Browning, 2011; Filieri & McLeay, 2014). For example, tourists contribute positively to the promotion of the destination by sharing information about their tourism experiences in the destination through eWOM. Therefore, it mobilises tourists' desire to visit again (Paisri et al., 2022). Furthermore, in previous studies (Abubakar et al., 2017; Sharipudin et al., 2023; Seow et al., 2024), it is possible to find studies where eWOM is accepted as the main factor influencing RI.

**Table 6.** Direct and Indirect Effect Results

Outcome Variables				Decision	
Destination Image		Revisit Intention			
	$\beta$	SE	$\beta$	SE	
eWOM			0.209***	0.056	Supported
R <sup>2</sup>			0.082		
eWOM	0.483***	0.59			Supported
R <sup>2</sup>	0.387				
eWOM			-0.057	0.058	
Destination Image			0.500***	0.089	Supported
R <sup>2</sup>			0.305		
Direct Effect			0.241*** (0.125-0.380)		Mediation

(\*\*\*)  $p < 0.001$

Source: Own Elaboration

After the validation of the simple effect model, the other hypotheses of the study were tested by including the mediating variable DI in the structural model. According to this model, a positive path coefficient was obtained between eWOM and DI ( $\beta=0.483$ ;  $p<0.001$ ) and between DI and RI ( $\beta=0.500$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). The indirect effect between eWOM and RI was 0.241, and the 95% bootstrap confidence interval was 0.125-0.380. Since this interval does not include the value 0, the indirect effect was found to be statistically significant. Within the framework of the results obtained, hypotheses H2, H3, and H4 are accepted. In the literature, it is possible to find studies (Setiawan et al., 2014; Lestari, 2023; Yang et al., 2024) in which eWOM has a significant and direct effect on DI. Among the findings obtained within the scope of this study, it is noteworthy that DI influences the effect of eWOM on RI as a mediating variable. Previous studies (Kim et al., 2012; Carballo et al., 2022; Chi & Pham, 2024) have found that DI is used as a mediating variable by examining its relationship with a number of variables. For example, Chew and Jahari (2014) found that DI mediates the effect of perceived risk on RI. Therefore, the findings of this research are supported by empirical findings that are similar to the literature.

## 5. Discussion

Consistent with former research, this study revealed that eWOM and DI have an important influence on RI (Jalilvand et al., 2012; Rizky et al., 2017; Ruhamak et al., 2021; Soliman, 2021; Hung & Khoa, 2022; Azhar et al., 2022). These findings support previous studies that investigated the impact of eWOM on DI and demonstrated that DI has a mediating role in the connection between eWOM and RI (Andriani et al., 2019; Harahap & Dwita, 2020; Chrisnardani & Arief, 2022; Wijaya et al., 2022). There are also studies examining the mediating role of eWOM in the effect of DI on RI (Kanwel et al., 2019; Adam et al., 2022). The study outcome conveys the connection between eWOM, DI, and RI and their impact on cruise tourism, which is a niche area for tourists. These findings indicate that eWOM and DI are critical for the sustainable success of destinations. By effectively managing eWOM and strengthening their image, destinations can increase tourists' RI. This provides valuable insights for destination marketers and tourism policies for specific regions.

Amasra, the main tourist centre of Bartın Province, has considerable potential for the development of cruise tourism. The docking of cruise ships at Amasra Port enables tourists to undertake a brief excursion. The cooperation of local administrations, relevant institutions and tourism stakeholders is important for the evaluation of Amasra in terms of cruise tourism (Karakas & Findik, 2023). Amasra, with its historical structure dating back to B.C., its cultural richness and its natural beauty integrated with the sea, can be positioned as an attractive cruise destination for Russian tourists. More Russian tourists can be attracted to the region through targeted marketing campaigns that highlight Amasra's unique features and appeal to the interests of Russian tourists. In a report prepared by the Western Black Sea Development Agency (2023) on cruise tourism in Amasra, it was noted that both local people and tourists visiting Amasra were satisfied with the activities of Amasra Port and would like to visit Amasra again. However, in order to improve cruise tourism at Amasra Port in the medium/long term, it is important to create new attractions in the region, enrich the tourist experience and adopt an integrated tourism approach. For example, based on tourists' first impressions of Türkiye during their cruise visits, opportunities can be provided to facilitate their access to prominent elements (especially culinary delights). In addition, by closely monitoring the experiences and comments of Russian tourists on online platforms, valuable information can be obtained to strengthen the image of Amasra as a destination and increase the intention to return. Therefore, destination managers in particular should pay more attention to social media and online comments in order to strengthen and develop a positive destination image in tourists' memories (Casaló et al., 2015; Llodra-Riera et al., 2015). In addition, understanding how local people also perceive the tourism environment will provide valuable insights that can be applied in various fields, including research, business and local public institutions for future tourism development and management (Roberts et al., 2022).

## 6. Conclusion

The factors that determine tourists' destination preferences and revisit intentions should be understood, given the rapid growth of cruise tourism. As well as helping to develop marketing and public relations strategies specific to cruise tourism, the results of this research have important indications for the sustainable success of destinations. All of the hypotheses formulated within the scope of the research were accepted. When demographic characteristics are analysed, it is determined that the tourists are predominantly female university graduates and Russian citizens. On the other hand, when the findings obtained regarding the travel behaviour of tourists are examined, it is noteworthy that tourists visit Türkiye for travel and entertainment purposes. It was found that most tourists did not find it difficult to communicate with the locals while travelling. It is notable that positive perceptions of Turkish people and their hospitality are widespread. The country's appeal can be seen to encompass a number of different factors, including historical interest, natural beauty and modern entertainment. Türkiye's cuisine, in particular the dessert baklava, appears to be the aspect of the country that is most strongly associated with it.

Enhanced comprehension of the effects of eWOM and DI on intention to revisit can enable businesses and local public institutions to develop more effective and targeted marketing and public relations campaigns that focus on these factors. In this way, they can not only increase the number of tourists but also build long-term loyalty by strengthening the emotional bond that tourists have with the destination. Furthermore, by identifying the mediating role of DI in the connection between eWOM and RI, destinations can make more strategic efforts to enhance their image. This could encompass a range of initiatives, including the enrichment of cultural experiences, the fostering of interaction with local communities, and the enhancement of physical infrastructure, along with the establishment of a distinctive destination identity.

The results of this research are particularly important for Amasra, which is one of the most well-known destinations for cruise tourists in the Black Sea region of Türkiye. Amasra's natural beauty, historical structure and cultural richness can be promoted to a wider audience through eWOM, strengthening the destination image of the region and increasing tourists' intention to visit again. In this way, Amasra can become an important destination not only for regional cruise tourism but also for international cruise tourism.

The study concludes that eWOM, DI, and RI are critical to the sustainable success of cruise destinations. Strategic marketing, tourism communication, public relations and destination management efforts that

focus on these factors will support both economic gains and long-term destination competitiveness by increasing tourists' revisit intentions.

This study is based on the responses of cruise ship tourists who visited a specific region of Türkiye within a specific time frame. Therefore, more research can be done in different geographical and cultural contexts and compared with the relevant research findings. For example, the study could be extended to include tourists visiting other cruise ports in the Black Sea or adapted to include the views of tourists from different regions, such as ports on the Mediterranean and Aegean coasts of Türkiye. Especially considering that Istanbul is an important representative in the minds of tourists, this finding can be evaluated in other studies. Also, as this research focuses mainly on Russian tourists, future research could investigate the relationship between eWOM and the image of the destination and re-examine the intentions of tourists from different countries. This could provide a broader understanding of how tourists from different cultures perceive destinations and how this influences their revisit intentions. In addition, future research could investigate other potential variables that influence the relationship between eWOM, destination image and revisit intentions. For example, factors influencing revisit intention may include tourists' demographic characteristics, travel motivations and previous experiences with the destination. Future research can provide a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics that influence tourist behaviour and preferences by taking these factors into account.

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