

THE ROLE OF WORD OF MOUTH IN SHAPING GENERATION Z'S REVISIT INTENTION AT BLOK M, JAKARTA

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ABSTRACT

The development of Blok M, Jakarta, as an urban tourism area offering culinary, recreational, entertainment, and social experiences has made it increasingly relevant to Generation Z. In selecting and evaluating destinations, Generation Z obtains information not only through digital media but also through interpersonal communication in the form of word of mouth (WOM). This study aims to explore the role of WOM in shaping Generation Z's revisit intention at Blok M, Jakarta. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed with 30 Generation Z informants aged 21–27 who had previously visited Blok M. Data were collected through Google Forms using open-ended questions and analyzed thematically. The findings show that friends or personal relations were the dominant sources of interpersonal WOM, particularly regarding culinary destinations, hangout places, the area's atmosphere, and youth-oriented activities. Source credibility, the recommender's experience, relationship closeness, and supporting information from social media influenced how informants evaluated WOM. Actual experiences subsequently confirmed or corrected expectations formed through recommendations. Twenty-five of the 30 informants expressed an intention to revisit, mainly due to the variety of culinary and recreational options, a youth-oriented atmosphere, accessibility, and the presence of many places that had not yet been explored. However, discrepancies between recommendations and actual experiences could weaken the desire to return. The findings indicate that WOM functions as both an information source and an expectation-forming mechanism that, together with actual experiences, contributes to the formation of Generation Z's revisit intention at Blok M, Jakarta.

Keywords: Word of Mouth; Revisit Intention; Generation Z; Urban Tourism; Tourist Experience; Blok M Jakarta.

INTRODUCTION

The development of urban tourism reflects changes in how tourists select, experience, and make sense of destinations. Urban areas are no longer viewed merely as centers of trade and economic activity, but have also evolved into spaces

for culinary experiences, entertainment, recreation, social interaction, and lifestyle activities. These changes make tourist experience an important aspect of tourist behavior, particularly among young travelers, who have distinctive characteristics in obtaining information, choosing places to visit, and sharing experiences after their visits. In this context, communication about tourist experiences has become an inseparable part of the process through which tourists form perceptions of and make decisions about destinations.

Generation Z is an important tourist segment in the development of urban tourism. This generation has grown up in an environment closely connected to digital technology, the internet, and social media, and is therefore accustomed to obtaining and sharing information through various communication channels. Setiawan et al. (2018), in a study of digital tourists among Generation Z in South Jakarta, found that this group exhibits travel behavior closely associated with the use of digital devices and the internet for information search and travel decision-making. Although that study was conducted in 2018, its findings remain relevant as an initial basis for understanding Generation Z's characteristics in the Jakarta context. More recent research has also shown that e-WOM is a form of information associated with Generation Z's tourist behavior and revisit intention (Rondonuwu et al., 2026). Thus, experience, information, and social communication are important aspects to consider when examining Generation Z's travel behavior.

This phenomenon can be observed in the development of Blok M, Jakarta, which in recent years has become increasingly known as an area for culinary experiences, recreation, entertainment, and social gathering among young people. The development of the area means that Blok M functions not only as a commercial and transportation district but also as an urban tourism space offering experiences based on culinary activities, lifestyle, social interaction, and recreation. Recent research on Blok M indicates that the area has become relevant to Generation Z's culinary and lifestyle practices. Febriani and Budiasa (2026), for example, through qualitative research involving Generation Z visitors to Blok M, found that culinary practices in the area are associated with the construction of Generation Z's lifestyle. This condition indicates that visits to Blok M are related not only to consumption activities but also to social experiences and lifestyle.

The experiences obtained by Generation Z while visiting Blok M may generate various forms of communication within their social environment. Tourists may share experiences regarding restaurants, the area's atmosphere, prices, service, accessibility, activities, or particular places they find interesting. These stories and recommendations may then be received by friends, family members, and other social groups and become sources of information for prospective visitors as well as those who have previously visited the area. This process of communication among consumers concerning experiences, evaluations, and recommendations is known as

word of mouth (WOM). In tourism, WOM is important because the information conveyed is based on tourists' experiences rather than solely on promotional communication designed by destination managers.

Word of mouth can be understood as an informal communication process in which consumers convey experiences, opinions, evaluations, or recommendations regarding a product, service, or destination to other people. In tourism, WOM may occur before a visit, when a person receives recommendations from others, as well as after a visit, when tourists share their experiences with others. Therefore, WOM is not merely concerned with information dissemination but also with how tourist experiences are translated into stories and recommendations that are subsequently interpreted by information recipients. Research on e-WOM has also shown that consumer-to-consumer communication is associated with tourist behavior and revisit intention (Sulkaisi et al., 2025; Rondonuwu et al., 2026).

Previous studies on communication in tourism marketing have also been conducted by Setiawan et al. (2023). Their research examined Integrated Marketing Communication in relation to visitor value and intention to revisit tourist villages. The findings indicate that communication in a tourism context may be associated with tourists' perceived value and post-visit behavior. However, Integrated Marketing Communication represents a broader form of communication and encompasses various marketing communication activities designed by organizations or destination managers. The present study adopts a different focus by positioning word of mouth as communication arising from consumer experiences and interactions.

Tourism communication has also been increasingly influenced by technological advances. Setiawan (2024) discusses the use of Artificial Intelligence-based Augmented Reality as part of Integrated Marketing Communication in tourism villages. The use of such technology indicates that destination communication is increasingly developing toward interactive and experience-based forms. Nevertheless, the development of technology-mediated communication does not eliminate the importance of consumer-to-consumer communication. Tourists' experiences can still generate stories, recommendations, and conversations within their social environments. Therefore, understanding direct tourist communication remains important, particularly when research seeks to examine tourists' experiences and meanings in depth.

In addition to marketing communication, information is also an important part of the tourist experience. Hidayat et al. (2026) show that ease of access, information, and tourist orientation contribute to improving services in tourist areas. The availability of information helps tourists understand an area and determine the activities they will undertake. In practice, such information is not always obtained from official destination sources but may also be obtained through informal

communication with people who have previously visited. Thus, WOM can serve as a form of information exchange that helps tourists understand a destination based on other people's experiences.

Communication about tourist experiences is also related to the formation of destination image and identity. Setiawan et al. (2025) explain that the development of Metahuman and Artificial Intelligence can be utilized in destination branding to build representations and identities of tourism destinations. This perspective indicates that the way a destination is communicated can contribute to how it is perceived by tourists. However, destination image is not formed solely through official communication by destination managers. Tourists' stories, experiences, evaluations, and recommendations can also become part of the process through which perceptions of a place are formed. Therefore, WOM should be understood not only as a channel for disseminating information but also as part of a social process that can shape tourists' meanings and perceptions of a destination.

In the context of Blok M, tourist experiences communicated through WOM are increasingly relevant because the area has a character closely associated with Generation Z's social activities. Experiences of enjoying culinary offerings, discovering new places, gathering with friends, enjoying the area's atmosphere, or engaging in particular activities may encourage tourists to share those experiences with their social circles. Febriani and Budiasa (2026) show that culinary experiences in Blok M are associated with the construction of Generation Z's lifestyle. This provides a basis for understanding that experiences in Blok M are not merely individual but can also become part of social interaction and group identity formation.

On the other hand, research on Generation Z's revisit intention at Blok M has begun to develop. Rizki and Yudhiasta (2026) examined the relationship between TikTok content and the revisit intention of Generation Z tourists in the Blok M area of Jakarta. Their study indicates that TikTok content is an important context for understanding Generation Z's tourist behavior in Blok M. Other research on Blok M has also begun to examine factors associated with young tourists' interest and behavior, including social media exposure, destination image, and food quality (Multazam et al., 2026). These studies demonstrate that Blok M has become a relevant object of research on Generation Z tourist behavior.

However, there is a fundamental difference between these previous studies and the focus of the present research. Research on TikTok in Blok M places digital content at the center of analysis and uses a quantitative approach to examine relationships between variables. Meanwhile, research on Generation Z's culinary practices in Blok M has used a qualitative approach, but its primary focus is lifestyle construction through culinary practices rather than how communication arising from tourist experiences contributes to revisit intention. In addition, studies of e-WOM

and revisit intention among Generation Z more broadly have generally employed quantitative approaches to test relationships or effects between variables (Rondonuwu et al., 2026; Sulkaisi et al., 2025). Therefore, there remains room to understand this phenomenon qualitatively through tourists' experiences and meanings.

The research gap in this study lies in the limited research specifically exploring how interpersonal word of mouth is experienced, understood, and interpreted by Generation Z in relation to their intention to revisit Blok M, Jakarta.

Previous studies have provided insights into Generation Z's digital behavior, TikTok content, e-WOM, destination image, culinary experiences, and various factors related to revisit intention. However, research that deeply explores the process through which experiences of visiting Blok M are transformed into stories, recommendations, or social conversations, and how such communication is considered by Generation Z when deciding whether to return, remains limited.

The novelty of this study lies in the use of a descriptive qualitative approach to understand the role of interpersonal word of mouth in shaping Generation Z's revisit intention in the urban tourism context of Blok M, Jakarta. This study does not seek to statistically test whether WOM influences revisit intention; rather, it explores tourists' experiences and perspectives regarding how WOM emerges, the forms of communication that occur, the reasons tourists trust or consider recommendations from others, and how these experiences and communications contribute to their desire to return. Thus, this study offers a perspective that differs from previous research, which has predominantly examined social media, e-WOM, digital content, or destination-related factors using quantitative approaches.

Based on the phenomenon, previous studies, research gap, and novelty described above, this study aims to explore and analyze the role of word of mouth in shaping Generation Z's revisit intention at Blok M, Jakarta. Specifically, the study seeks to understand Generation Z's experiences when visiting Blok M, the forms of word of mouth that emerge from those experiences, how Generation Z receives and interprets recommendations from their social environment, and how such communication contributes to their desire to revisit. The findings are expected to enrich the literature on tourist behavior, word of mouth, and urban tourism, while also providing input for businesses and stakeholders in Blok M to create tourist experiences capable of generating positive communication and encouraging repeat visits.

METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach. This approach was selected because the research focuses on understanding informants' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of WOM and revisit intention rather than testing

statistical hypotheses. Thematic analysis is considered appropriate for systematically identifying patterns and themes in qualitative responses (Fuchs, 2023).

The study involved 30 Generation Z informants aged 21–27 who had visited Blok M, Jakarta. Data were obtained from responses to a Google Form containing open-ended and structured questions. All informants stated that they had received recommendations or information about Blok M before visiting. Informants were selected purposively based on their direct experience with the research object.

The instrument consisted of questions concerning participant profiles, frequency and purpose of visits, sources of recommendations, recommendation content, the influence of recommendations, reasons for trusting information, the fit between recommendations and actual experiences, changes in perceptions, intention to revisit, and subsequent recommendation behavior. Data were analyzed through the stages of familiarization, coding, category grouping, theme identification, and interpretation of findings (Fuchs, 2023).

The validity of the interpretation was strengthened by comparing response patterns across informants and using the same questions for all informants. The analysis was directed at identifying consistent patterns while retaining divergent cases so that the findings would not merely reflect positive responses.

Because the data source used in this revision consisted of Google Form responses from 30 informants, the term informants is used rather than a statistical sample. Informant quotations are presented using the codes R01–R30 to maintain anonymity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study involved 30 Generation Z informants aged 21–27. The informants consisted of 19 women (63.3%) and 11 men (36.7%). All informants had visited Blok M, and all reported having received recommendations or information about the area.

Number of Informants	30 People
Age	21-27 Years
Female	19 People (63.3%)
Male	11 People (36.7%)
Have Received WOM	30 People (100%)
Intend to revisit	25 People (83.3%)
May revisit	3 People (10.0%)
Unlikely/not to revisit	2 People (6.7%)

Figure 1. Composition of informants by gender. Source: Research data, 2026.

Sources of Word of Mouth and Information Content

The findings show that WOM was a common experience among all informants. Interpersonal sources were the most dominant. Twenty informants mentioned friends or personal relations as one of their information sources; 11 mentioned TikTok; and 10 mentioned Instagram.

Because one informant could mention more than one source, these figures represent frequencies of occurrence and therefore do not add up to 30.

Relatives	20	66.7%
Tiktok	11	36.7%
Instagram	10	33.3%
General social media	1	3.3%

Figure 2. Sources of Word of Mouth mentioned by informants. Note: Responses were multiple-response. Source: Research data, 2026.

The recommendation content most frequently concerned culinary destinations, hangout places, the evening atmosphere, new places, and areas considered suitable for young people. For example, R01 mentioned recommendations for restaurants, coffee shops, and an atmosphere suitable for young people. R07 received information about nighttime hangout places and a lively atmosphere. This pattern indicates that WOM conveys not only functional information but also constructs an emotional and social image of Blok M.

This finding is consistent with Widaningsih and Putranto (2025), who show that user-generated information forms part of tourism communication among Generation Z. However, the dominance of friends or personal relations in the present data indicates that interpersonal WOM remains important even though informants also use social media.

Credibility and Degree of Influence of Recommendations

All informants assessed the recommendations as having a moderate to very strong influence. Thirteen informants stated that the influence was very strong, while 10 stated that it was strong. Thus, 23 informants, or 76.7%, rated recommendations as having a strong or very strong influence.

Very Strong	13	43.3%
Strong	10	33.3%
Fairy Strong	4	13.3%
Moderate	3	10.0%

Trust was primarily associated with the recommender's direct experience, relationship closeness, the number of user reviews or videos available, and consistency of information across multiple sources. R01 stated that they trusted the recommendation because their friend had already tried the place. R09 mentioned that both friends and online reviews were positive. R30 stated that their friend's recommendation was reinforced by online reviews. In contrast, R10 stated that online reviews were helpful but were not immediately trusted. This pattern indicates that credibility depends not only on the availability of information but also on who provides it and whether the information is supported by other sources.

This finding reinforces Saragih and Said (2024), who found that WOM plays a role in the formation of attraction image and revisit intention. Among Generation Z, source credibility is also relevant because digital information is available in large quantities, requiring informants to determine which information is trustworthy (Widaningsih & Putranto, 2025).

Alignment Between Expectations and Actual Experiences

Actual experiences generally confirmed the recommendations, although they did not always match them completely. Sixteen informants stated that their experiences matched the recommendations, eight considered them fairly consistent, and one considered them mostly consistent; the remaining informants reported that their experiences were not fully consistent, completely inconsistent, or inconsistent. Thus, the majority of informants experienced confirmation of the information received beforehand, although meaningful variations in experience were also identified.

Consistent	16	53.3%
Fairy Consistent	8	26.7%
Mostly Consistent	1	3.3%
Not Entirely Consistent	3	10.0%
Inconsistent sepenuhnya	1	3.3%

Case R05 showed that a place that appeared spacious in a video felt more crowded when visited. R12 considered some foods to be ordinary compared with what had been shown in previous videos. R20 stated that the food they tried did not match their expectations based on the video. These findings are important because they show that WOM can form expectations that are subsequently tested through actual experience.

Wang et al. (2025) emphasize the importance of the relationship between expectations, experiences, and satisfaction in shaping revisit intention. In the context of this study, WOM can be understood as a mechanism for forming initial expectations, while actual experience serves as a mechanism for confirmation or correction. When information and experience are aligned, trust in the recommendation may be strengthened; when they are misaligned, the intention to return may weaken.

Tourist Experience as a Reinforcement of Revisit Intention

Twenty-five informants (83.3%) stated that they wanted to revisit, three informants (10.0%) stated that they might return, while two informants responded that they were not very likely or did not want to return. The most common reasons for returning were the wide range of culinary choices, places that had not yet been tried, ease of access, a youth-oriented atmosphere, and the emergence of new places.

R02 stated that there were still many places they had not tried, while R19 considered the wide range of choices to make the area attractive for repeat visits. R13 mentioned that the atmosphere was suitable for young people. These reasons indicate that revisit intention does not arise solely from a single attraction but because Blok M is perceived as offering a range of experiences that may differ from one visit to another.

These findings are consistent with Wang et al. (2025), who position experience and evaluation as components in the formation of revisit intention. Rizki and Yudhiasta (2026) also found a positive relationship between TikTok content and Generation Z's revisit intention at Blok M. The present study complements these findings by showing that revisit intention may emerge from a combination of interpersonal information, digital content, and direct experience.

Mixed and Negative Cases

The study did not identify only positive responses. R10 stated that they might return because some places were too crowded for conversation and they would consider more comfortable alternatives. R12 was not very interested in returning because the prices and quality of some places did not meet expectations. R20 did not want to return because the dining experience was considered ordinary and the journey felt relatively far. R15 also stated that they might return if they found a new place of interest. These cases indicate that WOM does not automatically generate revisit intention.

These differences in experience are important because they demonstrate that WOM functions as an initial trigger rather than the sole determinant. Positive information may attract a first visit, but actual experience determines whether

expectations are confirmed. If the experience does not match expectations, informants may withhold their intention to return even when the initial information was attractive. Seow et al. (2024) show that experience and e-WOM can play roles in the process leading to revisit intention, indicating that experience quality remains an important component.

From WOM Recipient to WOM Disseminator

After visiting, 25 informants (83.3%) stated that they had shared their experiences or recommended Blok M to other people. WOM recipients may become WOM disseminators after gaining their own experience. R01 recommended places to eat and the hangout atmosphere, R17 shared information about affordable and tasty food, while R27 described good food at relatively affordable prices.

This cycle demonstrates that WOM in tourism is dynamic: information from others encourages a visit, experience generates an evaluation, and that experience can then be shared again. Among Generation Z, this cycle may occur through both interpersonal conversations and social media. This finding reinforces the relevance of e-WOM and tourist experience in the digital tourism literature (Widaningsih & Putranto, 2025; Seow et al., 2024).

Synthesis of Findings

Main sources	20 mentioned friends/personal relations; 11 TikTok; 10 Instagram	Interpersonal and digital WOM operated simultaneously
WOM Exposure	30/30 had received recommendations	WOM was a common initial source of information
Primary Sources	20 mentioned friends/acquaintances; 11 TikTok; 10 Instagram	Interpersonal and digital WOM operated concurrently

Experience Consistency	25 rated their experience as consistent/fairly consistent/mostly	Most expectations were confirmed
Revisit Intention	25 stated yes; 3 stated maybe	Positive experiences and activity choices supported revisit intention
WOM after the visit	25 had recommended Blok M to others	Visitors could become subsequent WOM sources

Based on this synthesis, the role of WOM in this study can be understood as a process: information from others forms expectations → credibility determines how strongly the information is accepted → actual experience confirms or corrects expectations → experience evaluation influences revisit intention → the experience can be shared again with others. This sequence represents a thematic interpretation of data from 30 informants rather than a statistical causal relationship.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that word of mouth plays an important role in the process through which Generation Z's revisit intention at Blok M, Jakarta, is formed. All 30 informants received information or recommendations about Blok M before visiting, with friends or personal relations being the most frequently mentioned source, followed by TikTok and Instagram. Most informants considered the recommendations to have a strong or very strong influence on their interest.

WOM primarily functions as an information source and an expectation-forming mechanism. After visiting, the majority of informants considered their experiences to be consistent or fairly consistent with the information received beforehand. This consistency strengthened positive perceptions and supported revisit intention. Twenty-five of the 30 informants stated that they wanted to return, mainly because of the wide range of culinary and activity options, the youth-oriented atmosphere, accessibility, and the many places that remained unexplored.

However, the findings also show that WOM does not automatically generate revisit intention. Several informants experienced discrepancies between the information received and actual conditions, including crowding, food quality, prices, comfort, and distance. Therefore, the role of WOM in encouraging revisit intention depends on the credibility of the information and the confirmation provided by actual experience. After gaining their own experience, most informants also shared recommendations with others, creating a continuing WOM cycle.

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