

When impulse buying supports loyalty intentions: Food authenticity, night tourscape, and the S-O-R psychology of Thai night market visitors

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ABSTRACT

Thai night markets combine food culture, nocturnal atmosphere, and wholesale commerce, yet how these stimuli shape loyalty intentions remains underexplored. Using the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework, this study examines how food authenticity, night tourscape, wholesale accessibility, and price fairness shape hedonic and utilitarian value, with perceived crowding tested as a moderator of hedonic value's link to revisit intention. Survey data from 393 domestic Thai night market visitors were analysed using PLS-SEM. Food authenticity was the strongest driver of hedonic value; price fairness contributed more than wholesale accessibility to utilitarian value. Hedonic value reached revisit intention and word-of-mouth only through impulse buying, while utilitarian value showed stronger direct and indirect effects; crowding was non-significant. These findings extend S-O-R theory by repositioning impulse buying as a mid-chain mechanism, showing that hedonic value reaches loyalty outcomes only through impulse buying while utilitarian value reaches them both directly and through impulse buying, and demonstrating that crowding's null effect may reflect a boundary condition worth testing directly in future research. Practically, the results point to vendor and market-design interventions supporting rapid value recognition and purchase encounters structured for memory consolidation.

1. Introduction

Thai night markets offer an experience that shopping malls cannot easily reproduce. The smells, the noise, and the steady movement of people between stalls create a form of consumption that feels distinctly different from ordinary retail, and this difference is central to their appeal (Hsieh & Chang, 2006; Ruan et al., 2023). Their economic significance is also substantial. Pratunam, Asiatique, and Chatuchak in Bangkok alone attract millions of visitors each year, including both local residents and tourists, who are drawn by street food, night-time atmosphere, and wholesale merchandise at competitive prices. Before the pandemic, tourism contributed around 12% of Thailand's GDP, and since 2022 domestic travellers have played an important role in the sector's recovery, with urban market visits remaining among the more popular leisure activities (WTTC, 2023). In this context, night markets function not only as places to eat and shop, but also as recurring cultural and social spaces in everyday urban life.

Despite their popularity, Thai night markets face an important

consumer-behaviour challenge: sustaining repeat engagement while preserving both experiential appeal and practical shopping value. This challenge cannot be explained by food authenticity alone because visitors experience night markets as hybrid consumption settings that combine culinary tradition, nocturnal atmosphere, wholesale shopping, price evaluation, and crowd density. Food authenticity differentiates the market from generic commercial food retail by providing culturally meaningful sensory experience (Kala, 2020; Li et al., 2023), while night tourscape shapes emotional responses through lighting, ambience, crowd movement, and night-time atmosphere (Li et al., 2022; Ruan et al., 2023). Wholesale accessibility is included because the present study examines Thai night markets not only as leisure spaces, but also as practical shopping environments where visitors evaluate the ease of accessing discounted or wholesale-oriented merchandise; more broadly, night market research shows that product variety, reasonable pricing, and bargaining opportunities are central to night market shopping (Hsieh & Chang, 2006). Price fairness is necessary because inexpensive or wholesale-oriented goods may not create utilitarian value if prices are

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perceived as unclear, unfair, or disproportionate to what visitors receive (Muskat et al., 2019; Xia et al., 2004). Perceived crowding further complicates the experience because density may contribute to liveliness but may also create discomfort when movement becomes difficult (Eroglu et al., 2005; Machleit et al., 2000). The central issue, therefore, is to explain how these affective and cognitive market cues jointly shape value states, impulse buying, and stated intentions after the visit.

Existing research on night market visitor behaviour provides useful but fragmented insights. Hsieh and Chang (2006) showed that access to wholesale-priced goods is a core practical pull for night market visitors, while Liang et al. (2021) found that impulse purchases are a normal feature of night market consumption rather than an exceptional deviation. In Thailand, Kalnaovakul and Promsivapallop (2021) found that market experience and food experience are central to visitor satisfaction, with food repeatedly emerging as a defining component of the night market experience. Studies on night tourism further show that lighting, atmosphere, cultural elements, and spatial character can generate arousal, pleasure, and memorable experiences (Li et al., 2022). However, these studies tend to examine food, atmosphere, shopping value, impulse buying, and crowding as separate issues. What remains underdeveloped is a focused explanation of how these cues work together as affective and cognitive stimuli that shape internal value states and subsequent intention-based responses. None of these studies, individually or collectively, has tested a single model in which affective and cognitive-evaluative night market stimuli jointly predict dual value states that are then enacted through impulse buying and bounded by situational crowding; the present study is therefore not a re-application of S-O-R to a new sample, but the first integrative test of this specific psychological sequence in a night market setting.

Taken together, prior research suggests that food authenticity, nocturnal atmosphere, shopping utility, and crowding each matter for night market experience (Badu-Baiden et al., 2024; Kala, 2020; Li et al., 2023; Miah et al., 2025; Papadopoulou et al., 2023). However, these elements have not been sufficiently examined as part of one psychological sequence. It remains unclear how affective cues such as food authenticity and night tourscape, and cognitive-evaluative cues such as wholesale accessibility and price fairness, are translated into value states, impulse buying, and stated post-visit intentions.

The overarching research gap addressed by this study is the absence of a single integrated framework that jointly models how affective and cognitive-evaluative night market stimuli, dual value states, impulse buying, and situational crowding combine to shape post-visit behavioural intentions. Three specific gaps follow from this unresolved issue. First, the environmental and commercial stimuli that define Thai night markets, namely food authenticity, night tourscape, wholesale accessibility, and price fairness, have rarely been examined together within a single S-O-R model. This matters because visitors do not experience night markets as separate food, retail, and tourism spaces; they process culinary authenticity, nocturnal ambience, shopping access, and price fairness simultaneously. Second, existing research often treats impulse buying as a short-term or terminal purchase outcome, whereas its possible role as a behavioural enactment linking hedonic and utilitarian values to revisit intention and word-of-mouth remains insufficiently developed. Such a reconceptualisation departs from prior S-O-R applications of impulse buying, such as Chang et al. (2011) and Huo et al. (2023), where impulse buying is modelled as the terminal response of the stimulus-organism-response chain rather than as a mechanism carrying organism-level value states forward to a further downstream behavioural intention. This is important because an unplanned purchase may turn a pleasurable or useful visit into a more memorable and communicable experience. Reconceptualising impulse buying in this way is a theoretical move rather than a contextual one: it repositions a construct conventionally modelled as a terminal outcome of value states into a relational mechanism connecting internal value states to post-visit behavioural intentions, extending the explanatory structure of S-O-R beyond its typical stimulus-to-outcome logic. Third, although perceived

crowding is a common feature of night markets, its role as a boundary condition between hedonic value and revisit intention remains unclear, especially among domestic visitors who may be familiar with dense urban market environments. These gaps motivate the present study's integrated model, which examines how Thai night market stimuli are processed through affective and cognitive value states, expressed through impulse buying, and associated with self-reported revisit intention and word-of-mouth intentions.

To address these gaps, this study proposes and tests an integrated S-O-R model of Thai night market consumption. The model links stimulus-level market cues to affective and cognitive value states, then examines how these value states relate to impulse buying, revisit intention, and word-of-mouth intention. Perceived crowding is included as a potential boundary condition in the relationship between hedonic value and revisit intention. Data were collected from domestic Thai night market visitors through an online survey and analysed using PLS-SEM. Table 1 summarises the operational meaning and S-O-R role of each construct in the present study.

The contribution of this study is primarily psychological rather than managerial. It applies the S-O-R framework to a night market tourism context to explain how environmental and commercial cues are processed into affective and cognitive value states, and how those states are then expressed through impulse buying and intention-based outcomes. In this model, food authenticity and night tourscape function mainly as affective stimuli that shape hedonic value, whereas wholesale accessibility and price fairness function as cognitive-evaluative cues that shape utilitarian value. Impulse buying is treated as the behavioural mechanism through which these internal states become consequential for revisit intention and word-of-mouth intention. Accordingly, the theoretical contribution of this study lies not in testing S-O-R in a new setting alone, but in two specific repositionings: treating impulse buying as a relational mediating mechanism rather than a terminal purchase outcome, and demonstrating that affective stimuli (food authenticity and night tourscape) and cognitive-evaluative stimuli (wholesale accessibility and price fairness) operate through distinct, simultaneously modelled pathways within a single S-O-R structure rather than being studied in isolation. Together, these repositionings extend the explanatory logic of S-O-R beyond a single new empirical context. Section 6.2 subsequently translates these psychological mechanisms into applied implications, offered as a secondary, practice-facing contribution rather than as the study's central claim. The novelty of this repositioning is best understood against prior S-O-R applications of impulse buying. In Chang et al. (2011), impulse buying is the terminal response of a stimulus-organism-response chain following consumers' positive emotional responses, and in Huo et al. (2023), it is likewise the terminal response following consumers' flow experience, with no further loyalty-type construct modelled downstream in either study. The present study departs from this convention by placing impulse buying mid-chain rather than at its endpoint.

Three research questions organise the study. They correspond directly, in the same sequence, to the three gaps identified above.

RQ1. How do food authenticity, night tourscape, wholesale accessibility, and price fairness shape hedonic value and utilitarian value among Thai night market visitors?

RQ2. Does impulse buying mediate the effects of hedonic value and utilitarian value on revisit intention and word-of-mouth?

RQ3. Does perceived crowding moderate the relationship between hedonic value and revisit intention?

Table 1
Operational Definitions and S-O-R Roles of Constructs

Constructs	Abbreviation	S-O-R Roles	Operational Definition
Food Authenticity	FA	Stimulus	The degree to which visitors perceive the food offered at the night market as genuinely reflecting Thai culinary traditions, using locally sourced ingredients, traditional recipes, and preparation methods representative of local culture.
Night Tourscape	NT	Stimulus	The overall nocturnal environment of the night market as perceived by visitors, encompassing visual aesthetics (lighting, layout), ambient atmosphere, cultural displays, and the collective sensory landscape that characterises the market experience after dark.
Wholesale Accessibility	WA	Stimulus	The degree to which visitors perceive that wholesale-priced merchandise is readily accessible at the night market, including the ease of obtaining discounted pricing, the low minimum purchase threshold, and the availability of a wide variety of products at below-retail prices.
Price Fairness	PF	Stimulus	The extent to which visitors perceive the prices charged at the night market as reasonable, justified, and equitable relative to the quality of goods and food received, consistent with what they expected to pay.
Hedonic Value	HV	Organism	The affective and pleasure-based value derived from the night market visit, reflecting the degree to which visitors experience enjoyment, fun, and sensory excitement during their market experience, beyond the mere completion of a purchase task.
Utilitarian Value	UV	Organism	The cognitive and functional value derived from the night market visit, reflecting the degree to which visitors feel that the visit was productive, efficient, and effective in helping them accomplish their intended shopping or dining goals.
Perceived Crowding	PC	Moderator	The subjective psychological evaluation of the density of people at the night market, reflecting the degree to which visitors feel that the number of people and the available space exceeds what is personally comfortable or desirable during their visit.
Impulse Buying	IB	Behavioural response / sequential mechanism	The unplanned, spontaneous purchasing behaviour that occurs during the night market visit, driven by an immediate urge to buy upon encountering products, without prior intention to purchase those specific items before entering the market.
Revisit Intention	RI	Intention-based response	The degree to which a visitor expresses a willingness and intention to return to the night market in the future, reflecting a forward-looking behavioural commitment based on their current visit experience.
Word-of-mouth	WOM	Intention-based response	The likelihood that a visitor will voluntarily communicate positive information about the night market to others, including recommending the market to friends and family and sharing their experience through both interpersonal and electronic channels such as social media.

2. Literature review

2.1. Theoretical framework: S-O-R and supporting psychological explanations

This study is grounded in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, which explains how external stimuli influence behaviour through internal affective and cognitive states (Bai & Lai, 2025; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). In this paradigm, stimuli do not shape behaviour on their own. They pass through an internal organism state, an affective and cognitive appraisal process, before any response follows. This is why two visitors can face the same market cues and come away with different reactions: what matters is how each person interprets and feels about what they encounter. The present study follows this logic by treating value states as the psychological link between market stimuli and the behavioural intentions that follow. S-O-R is preferred over alternative frameworks because the present study examines how external market cues are psychologically processed into value states and then expressed through impulse buying and intention-based outcomes. The Expectancy Disconfirmation Model is more suited to explaining satisfaction through expectation–performance comparison (Oliver, 1980), while the Theory of Reasoned Action and Theory of Planned Behaviour focus primarily on planned intention formation through attitudes, norms, and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977). Similarly, impulse buying tendency perspectives explain stable individual predispositions toward impulsive purchasing, whereas this study examines situation-induced impulse buying triggered by market stimuli (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Iyer et al., 2020; Rook & Fisher, 1995). S-O-R therefore provides a coherent structure for linking night market stimuli, affective and cognitive value states, spontaneous purchasing, and stated post-visit intentions.

Experiential consumption theory explains why visitors respond to night markets not only as shopping sites but as sensory and symbolic consumption environments. Holbrook and Hirschman's (1982) view of consumption as an experiential process highlights the role of fantasies, feelings, fun, and sensory pleasure in consumer responses. This logic is

especially relevant to night markets, where visitors do not simply evaluate products functionally but also interpret the smells, sounds, lighting, food preparation, crowds, and cultural displays as part of the consumption experience. Within this perspective, hedonic value captures the affective pleasure generated by the experience, while utilitarian value captures the cognitive appraisal that the visit was useful, efficient, and worthwhile (Babin et al., 1994).

Authenticity perception theory also helps explain why food authenticity is expected to shape hedonic value, while acknowledging that authenticity can also carry functional meanings. Authenticity may reassure visitors when food is perceived as genuine, culturally grounded, and trustworthy. Wang (1999) links authenticity to the recognition of originals, while Cohen and Cohen (2012) define authentication as the process through which something is confirmed as original, genuine, real, or trustworthy. In this study, however, food authenticity is expected to become hedonic when it is directly experienced through visible, sensory, and performative cues. In Thai night markets, open cooking, local ingredients, traditional recipes, aromas, textures, and recognisable preparation methods make authenticity observable and embodied. Under these conditions, authenticity moves beyond an informational cue and becomes an experiential stimulus that supports sensory pleasure, cultural immersion, and emotional enjoyment (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Kala, 2020; Li et al., 2023). Food authenticity is therefore theorised as an affective stimulus because it transforms eating from a functional act into an emotionally resonant experience.

Environmental psychology and servicescape theory explain the role of night tourscape. Mehrabian and Russell (1974) argued that environmental cues shape affective states such as pleasure and arousal, while Bitner's (1992) servicescape framework shows that ambient, spatial, and symbolic features influence consumer evaluations and behavioural responses. Night tourscape should therefore be understood as more than background atmosphere. Lighting, spatial arrangement, cultural displays, music, crowd movement, and the sensory character of the market after dark can intensify attention, arousal, and emotional engagement. In this sense, night tourscape functions as an environmental stimulus that shapes hedonic value by altering how visitors feel within the market setting.

The commercial stimuli in the model are grounded in cognitive appraisal and evaluative judgment. Wholesale accessibility reflects whether the market helps visitors accomplish practical shopping goals efficiently, while price fairness reflects whether the exchange feels reasonable and justified. These cues are expected to shape utilitarian value because they lead visitors to assess usefulness, effort, price reasonableness, and goal fulfilment. This follows [Babin et al.'s \(1994\)](#) view of utilitarian value as something built through rational, task-focused evaluation rather than feeling. Visitors form utilitarian value when they judge a shopping trip as efficient and worthwhile, without unnecessary cost or hassle. In Thai night markets, wholesale accessibility and price fairness are what visitors are most likely to weigh when making that judgment, since both speak directly to whether the practical side of the visit paid off.

Perceived crowding is treated as a boundary condition because it refers not to objective crowd density alone, but to visitors' subjective evaluation of whether the number of people, available space, and ease of movement exceed their comfort threshold ([Eroglu et al., 2005](#); [Machleit et al., 2000](#)). In night markets, density can sometimes be interpreted positively when it contributes to liveliness, popularity, and festive atmosphere, which are important elements of night tourism experience ([Li et al., 2022](#); [Ruan et al., 2023](#)). However, when density is experienced as discomfort, fatigue, reduced control, or movement difficulty, it may weaken the extent to which hedonic value is translated into revisit intention ([Eroglu et al., 2005](#); [Machleit et al., 2000](#); [Miah et al., 2025](#); [Papadopoulou et al., 2023](#)). Perceived crowding is therefore conceptualised in this study as a psychological appraisal of density rather than a simple count of people in the market.

Taken together, S-O-R provides the structural logic of the model, while experiential consumption theory, authenticity perception theory, environmental psychology, and cognitive value appraisal explain why specific night market cues are expected to produce affective and cognitive organism states. Food authenticity and night tourscape are therefore positioned as affective stimuli that shape hedonic value, while wholesale accessibility and price fairness are positioned as cognitive-evaluative stimuli that shape utilitarian value. Impulse buying, as used throughout this study, refers to unplanned, spontaneous purchasing driven by an immediate urge upon encountering a product, without prior intention to buy that specific item before entering the market. Impulse buying is then conceptualised as a behavioural enactment

through which these internal value states may become more salient for subsequent revisit intention and word-of-mouth intention. These theoretical strands are not just background; they map onto specific paths in [Fig. 1](#). [H1a](#) and [H1b](#) test the affective route from stimuli to hedonic value, [H2a](#) and [H2b](#) test the cognitive-evaluative route to utilitarian value, and [H3a-c](#), [H4a-c](#), and [H6a-b](#) test how these value states and impulse buying carry through to revisit intention and word-of-mouth. [H5](#) captures crowding as a boundary condition on the hedonic-to-revisit-intention path, while [H7a-b](#) and [H8a-b](#) test impulse buying's mediating role for both value states. Each theoretical claim made above, in other words, is tied to a hypothesis that is directly tested.

2.2. Literature gaps and hypothesis logic

Although S-O-R provides the overall structure of the model, the present study is also grounded in consumer behaviour and value literature, impulse buying literature, literature on revisit intention and word-of-mouth intention, and perceived crowding research. Prior research has examined night market consumption, food tourism, night tourism, shopping value, crowding, and impulse buying, but these streams have rarely been brought together in a single explanatory framework.

First, food authenticity and night tourscape are usually studied separately, even though visitors experience culinary authenticity and nocturnal atmosphere simultaneously in night markets ([Li et al., 2022](#); [Li et al., 2023](#); [Ruan et al., 2023](#)). Food authenticity may provide cultural meaning and perceived genuineness, while nocturnal atmosphere may intensify sensory pleasure and emotional engagement. Together, these cues may shape hedonic value as part of an experiential consumption process ([Babin et al., 1994](#); [Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982](#); [Wang, 1999](#)). The proposed model therefore treats food authenticity and night tourscape as affective stimuli that jointly shape hedonic value.

Second, tourism shopping and night market studies show that product variety, shopping convenience, price evaluation, and bargaining opportunities influence visitor responses, yet these features are less often theorised as cognitive-evaluative cues that form utilitarian value ([Babin et al., 1994](#); [Badu-Baiden et al., 2024](#); [Hsieh & Chang, 2006](#)). Visitors do not evaluate night markets only by whether products are cheap or accessible; they also assess whether the visit is useful, efficient, worth the effort, and fair in exchange value ([Muskat et al., 2019](#); [Xia](#)

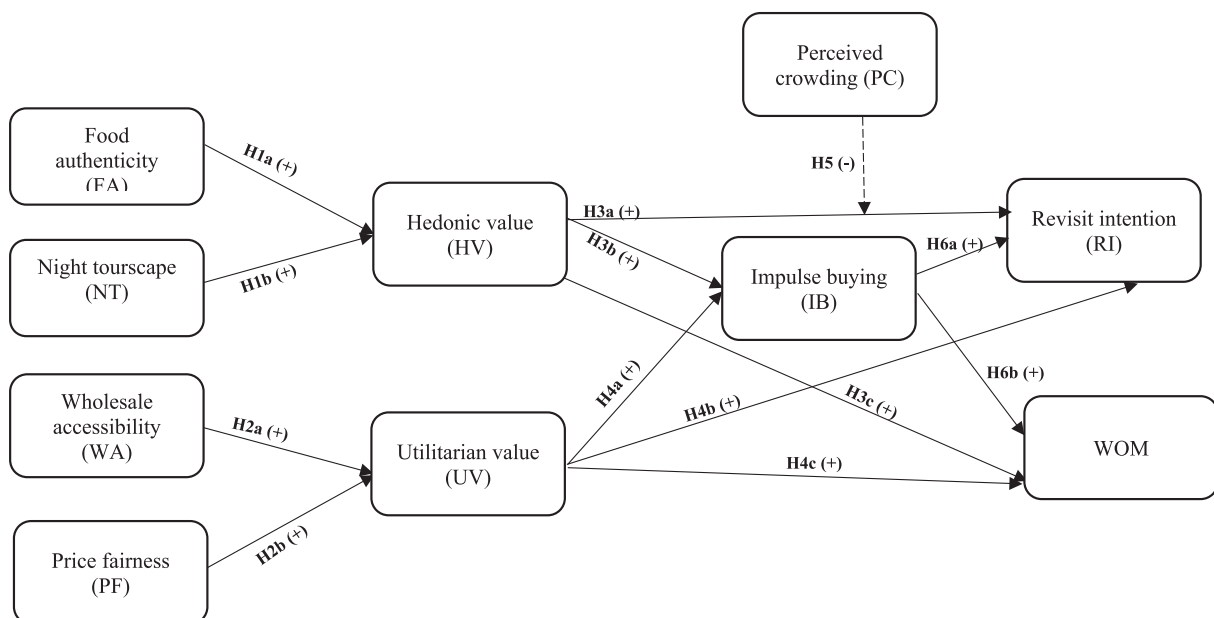


Fig. 1. Research Framework.

et al., 2004). The proposed model therefore links wholesale accessibility and price fairness to utilitarian value as cognitive-evaluative commercial cues.

Third, impulse buying literature shows that spontaneous purchases may arise through both affective and cognitive routes (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Iyer et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2022; Rook & Fisher, 1995). However, impulse buying is often treated as a direct or terminal purchase response, while its possible role in linking value states to post-visit intentions remains underdeveloped. In a consumption-dense setting such as a Thai night market, unplanned purchasing may create a memory, possession, or story that makes the visit more salient after it ends. This suggests that impulse buying should be viewed not only as an outcome of hedonic and utilitarian value, but also as a behavioural enactment that may connect these value states to stated revisit intention and word-of-mouth intention.

Finally, revisit intention and word-of-mouth intention are widely used in tourism and consumer behaviour research as post-visit behavioural intention outcomes, but they should be distinguished from observed loyalty behaviour (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Chen & Tsai, 2007; de Oliveira Santini et al., 2018; Ha & Jang, 2010a; Zeithaml et al., 1996). In this study, revisit intention refers to a visitor's expressed willingness to return to the night market in the future, while word-of-mouth intention refers to a visitor's willingness to voluntarily recommend the market or share positive experiences of it with others. Perceived crowding is also included because night markets are dense social environments where crowding may shape comfort, perceived control, movement difficulty, and density tolerance (Eroglu et al., 2005; Machleit et al., 2000). Tourism research similarly shows that perceived overcrowding can influence satisfaction and loyalty responses, although these effects may depend on visitor familiarity and context (Miah et al., 2025; Papadopoulou et al., 2023). Accordingly, the hypotheses below examine four related mechanisms: affective processing through hedonic value, cognitive-evaluative processing through utilitarian value, behavioural enactment through impulse buying, and the boundary role of perceived crowding in the hedonic value-to-revisit intention relationship.

2.3. Hypothesis development

2.3.1. Food authenticity on hedonic value

Food authenticity refers to the extent to which visitors perceive night market food as genuinely reflecting Thai culinary heritage through its ingredients, preparation methods, recipes, and cultural recognisability (Kala, 2020; Li et al., 2023). Authenticity carries both functional and hedonic meaning. Functionally, it reassures visitors about quality, trustworthiness, and cultural legitimacy; hedonically, it becomes pleasurable when experienced directly through sensory and performative cues such as open cooking, local ingredients, traditional techniques, and culturally familiar practices (Cohen & Cohen, 2012; Wang, 1999). In Thai night markets, authenticity is encountered through sight, smell, sound, and taste rather than abstract claims, making it part of the experiential consumption process through which sensory

pleasure, cultural immersion, and emotional engagement shape the visitor experience (Babin et al., 1994; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982), which is consistent with food tourism research linking authenticity and sensory appeal to positive affect and enjoyment (Kala, 2020; Li et al., 2023). Food authenticity is therefore expected to increase hedonic value.

H1a. Food authenticity positively influences hedonic value.

2.3.2. Night Tourscape on hedonic value

Night tourscape refers to the nocturnal market environment as experienced by visitors, including lighting, spatial layout, cultural displays, ambience, and the broader sensory atmosphere after dark (Ruan et al., 2023). Environmental psychology suggests that such ambient

cues shape consumer affect by influencing arousal, pleasure, attention, and perceived immersion (Bitner, 1992; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), a dynamic especially pronounced in night markets, where darkness, illuminated stalls, crowd movement, music, food aromas, and cultural decorations combine into an experience distinct from daytime retail. Prior night tourism research shows that lighting, atmosphere, cultural elements, and spatial character generate arousal and pleasure and contribute to memorable, emotionally engaging night experiences (Li et al., 2022; Ruan et al., 2023). Night tourscape is therefore expected to increase hedonic value in Thai night markets by heightening sensory engagement and making the visit feel lively and distinctive.

H1b. Night tourscape positively influences hedonic value.

2.3.3. Wholesale accessibility on utilitarian value

Wholesale accessibility refers to the ease with which visitors can obtain wholesale-priced merchandise at the night market, including discounted prices, low minimum purchase requirements, and a wide product range below retail price (Hsieh & Chang, 2006). It supports utilitarian value by closing the gap between a visitor's shopping goal and the ability to achieve it: products that can be bought in small quantities, without business registration or negotiation, make the market a more efficient venue for practical purchasing, consistent with utilitarian value's focus on whether visitors accomplished what they came to do (Babin et al., 1994). Since many night market visitors arrive with specific items or budget goals in mind, accessible wholesale pricing should make the market feel useful and worth the effort, whereas high minimum quantities, unclear pricing, or limited variety should weaken that perception. Wholesale accessibility is therefore expected to positively influence utilitarian value.

H2a. Wholesale accessibility positively influences utilitarian value.

2.3.4. Price fairness on utilitarian value

Price fairness refers to the extent to which visitors perceive night market prices as

reasonable, justified, and consistent with what they expected to pay relative

to the quality received (Xia et al., 2004). Its link to utilitarian value depends less on simple affordability than on whether the transaction feels fair. Fairness evaluation is fundamentally a cognitive judgment about whether an exchange conforms to acceptable norms (Xia et al., 2004), consistent with Oliver's (1997) view that utilitarian value is strongest when outcomes match what visitors intended to achieve. Evidence from tourist dining supports this logic, as Muskat et al. (2019) found that price fairness predicted satisfaction independently of food quality. In Thai night markets, where prices are often unmarked and bargaining is common, perceiving a transaction as fair becomes part of what makes the visit feel practically worthwhile. Price fairness is therefore expected to positively influence utilitarian value.

H2b. Price fairness positively influences utilitarian value.

2.3.5. Hedonic value on revisit intention

The relationship between hedonic value and revisit intention operates largely through memory. What tends to remain after a visit is not a detailed record of each decision, but the emotional impression left by moments of delight, sensory excitement, and cultural pleasure, which can draw visitors back to places associated with enjoyable experiences when future leisure choices are considered (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Ha & Jang, 2010a), since hedonic value is an important driver of revisit intention precisely because it reflects the emotional quality of an experience rather than its functional performance. de Oliveira Santini et al. (2018) further suggest that hedonic value operates through emotional resonance, whereas utilitarian value operates through cognitive confirmation that the visit was worthwhile. Hedonic value is therefore expected to foster revisit intention in Thai night markets by

creating an experience visitors remember positively and wish to encounter again. This is consistent with [Seow et al. \(2024\)](#), who found that emotional travel experience, more than general satisfaction alone, was the stronger driver of revisit intention in a wellness tourism setting.

H3a. Hedonic value positively influences revisit intention.

2.3.6. Hedonic value on impulse buying

Hedonic value is expected to increase impulse buying because pleasurable shopping experiences reduce resistance to unplanned purchases. Visitors who feel enjoyment, excitement, and sensory engagement become more receptive to products encountered while browsing and less constrained by prior purchase plans ([Beatty & Ferrell, 1998](#); [Iyer et al., 2020](#)), since positive affect in retail settings makes immediate action feel more acceptable and less cognitively costly ([Liu et al., 2022](#)). In Thai night markets, food, atmosphere, and sensory variety can raise this affective state across the visit, making visitors more likely to act on unexpected purchase opportunities as they move through stalls in an already enjoyable environment. Hedonic value is therefore expected to positively influence impulse buying.

H3b. Hedonic value positively influences impulse buying.

2.3.7. Hedonic value on word-of-mouth

Hedonic value is expected to strengthen word-of-mouth because emotionally satisfying experiences are more likely to be shared. When a visit exceeds affective expectations, visitors often feel motivated to communicate not only what they

found but how the experience felt, since positive affect creates enthusiasm

that extends beyond private satisfaction into social sharing ([Ha & Jang, 2010a](#); [Zeithaml et al., 1996](#)). Prior hospitality research supports this pattern, showing that hedonic value drives recommendation behaviour when an experience is memorable and emotionally rewarding, and [Sukhu and Bilgihan \(2021\)](#) similarly found across two independent studies that higher hedonic value directly produces stronger positive

word-of-mouth in a dining context. This mechanism is particularly plausible in

Thai night markets, where lighting, food, open cooking, and crowd atmosphere

create rich, shareable sensory material, so hedonic value is expected to

positively influence word-of-mouth intention.

H3c. Hedonic value positively influences word-of-mouth.

2.3.8. Utilitarian value on impulse buying

The relationship between utilitarian value and impulse buying becomes clearer once impulse buying is understood as more than a purely emotional act. Prior research distinguishes affective impulse buying, driven by pleasure and excitement, from cognitive impulse buying, which arises when consumers suddenly recognise a product's functional usefulness ([Beatty & Ferrell, 1998](#); [Iyer et al., 2020](#)), a distinction especially relevant to utilitarian value. When a market is perceived as useful, efficient, and practically worthwhile, visitors remain attentive to products

that satisfy needs they had not planned to act on, so an unplanned purchase may

result from rapid functional evaluation rather than loss of control. In Thai night markets, accessible prices, broad product variety, and low shopping friction may place visitors in an active evaluative mode that makes cognitive impulse purchasing more likely, so utilitarian value is expected to positively influence impulse buying.

H4a. Utilitarian value positively influences impulse buying.

2.3.9. Utilitarian value on revisit intention

Utilitarian value reflects visitors' cognitive appraisal that a market visit was useful,

efficient, and worth the time and effort invested, an appraisal that can strengthen revisit intention because people are more likely to return to places that reliably help them achieve practical goals ([Baker & Crompton, 2000](#); [Ha & Jang, 2010a](#)), consistent with prior research showing that convenience, accessibility, product range, and perceived value provide a rational basis for repeating the experience ([de Oliveira Santini et al., 2018](#); [Ha & Jang, 2010a](#)). Cross-cultural evidence lends qualified support. [Hu et al. \(2023\)](#) found that utilitarian factors such as convenience and ease of use shaped repurchase-related outcomes, though the effect's strength varied by market context, suggesting this link depends on how central practical considerations are within a given shopping culture. In Thai night markets, where visitors often assess whether wholesale pricing is accessible, product variety is sufficient, and the shopping process is efficient, meeting these functional expectations should make the market seem a dependable place for future dining or shopping, so utilitarian value is

expected to positively influence revisit intention.

H4b. Utilitarian value positively influences revisit intention.

2.3.10. Utilitarian value on word-of-mouth

Utilitarian value may also strengthen word-of-mouth intention because visitors often

recommend places that are useful, reliable, and worth the effort, not only places that are enjoyable. A night market perceived as offering accessible wholesale pricing, sufficient product variety, efficient shopping, and good practical value should make visitors more inclined to recommend it to others with similar needs, consistent with research showing that positive word-of-mouth is shaped by both affective and functional evaluations, with functional value providing a concrete and credible basis for recommendation ([Ha & Jang, 2010a](#); [Zeithaml et al., 1996](#)). [Hu et al. \(2023\)](#) similarly found that utilitarian factors predicted electronic word-of-mouth in one of their two national samples but not the other, indicating that this link is real but culturally contingent rather than automatic. In the Thai night market context, visitors who see the market as practically worthwhile may recommend it to friends, family, resellers, or budget-conscious shoppers, so utilitarian value is expected to positively influence word-of-mouth.

H4c. Utilitarian value positively influences word-of-mouth.

2.3.11. Perceived crowding moderating hedonic value on revisit intention

Perceived crowding refers to visitors' subjective judgment that the number of people, available space, and ease of movement in a setting exceed what they consider comfortable or manageable ([Eroglu et al., 2005](#); [Machleit et al., 2000](#)), and should therefore be distinguished from objective crowd density, since a night market may be busy without necessarily being perceived as overcrowded, especially when visitors interpret density as part of the expected atmosphere. The effect of perceived crowding likely depends on context. In hedonic leisure settings, moderate density may enhance excitement by signalling popularity, social energy, and liveliness, which is especially

relevant to Thai night markets, where crowds can form part of the sensory and social appeal of the visit. When density is experienced as excessive, however, it may reduce comfort, restrict movement, increase fatigue, and weaken perceived control, consistent with retail research showing that perceived crowding reduces shopping satisfaction and value when an environment becomes difficult to manage ([Eroglu et al., 2005](#); [Machleit et al., 2000](#)) and tourism research linking perceived overcrowding to weaker satisfaction, destination evaluation, and loyalty responses ([Miah et al., 2025](#); [Papadopoulou et al., 2023](#)). In the present study, perceived crowding is expected to

weaken the relationship between hedonic value and revisit intention, not because all crowds are negative, but because enjoyable food,

atmosphere, lighting, and sensory stimulation may be less likely to support return intention when the same setting is experienced as overly crowded, tiring, or difficult to navigate.

H5. Perceived crowding negatively moderates the relationship between hedonic value and revisit intention.

2.3.12. *Impulse buying on revisit intention*

Impulse buying refers to unplanned and spontaneous purchasing during the visit, triggered by an immediate urge to buy products the visitor had not intended to purchase beforehand (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Rook & Fisher, 1995). Its relationship with revisit intention may be explained through the memory of unexpected positive outcomes, since a satisfying impulse purchase can leave a stronger impression than a planned purchase of similar value by adding surprise and discovery to the visit

experience (Beikverdi et al., 2024), making the market more memorable and reinforcing the perception that it is a place where worthwhile discoveries can occur. There is also a behavioural element to this relationship. By purchasing spontaneously, visitors may signal to themselves that the market is worth engaging with, an impression that can persist after the visit and lead a place that once produced an unexpected but satisfying outcome to be seen as worth returning to in the hope of similar discoveries. Impulse buying is therefore expected to positively influence revisit intention.

H6a. Impulse buying positively influences revisit intention.

2.3.13. *Impulse buying on word-of-mouth*

Impulse buying is also expected to strengthen word-of-mouth because unplanned purchases create experiences that are easier to remember and share than planned purchases, which usually reflect prior intention and carry less communicative value; an impulse purchase instead involves surprise, immediate decision, and a tangible outcome that make the experience more narratable (Beikverdi et al., 2024). This mechanism is especially plausible in Thai night markets, where open stalls and a browsable layout make spontaneous purchases part of a vivid, easily describable setting, so a successful impulse purchase may create a credible, shareable story visitors are inclined to pass on, and impulse buying is therefore expected to positively influence word-of-mouth intention.

H6b. Impulse buying positively influences word-of-mouth.

2.3.14. *Mediating role of impulse buying between hedonic value and loyalty intentions*

Hedonic value may not directly lead to revisit intention or word-of-mouth intention because enjoyment can remain affective and short-lived unless tied to a concrete behavioural episode, which impulse buying can provide in consumption-dense settings by intensifying pleasure and lowering resistance to unplanned acquisition (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Iyer et al., 2020). Once a spontaneous purchase occurs, it may extend the effect of hedonic value by turning enjoyment into a tangible outcome, discovery memory, or story linked to the visit, a mechanism particularly relevant in Thai night markets, where food, atmosphere, browsing, and purchasing are closely intertwined. A successful impulse purchase may therefore strengthen revisit intention by reinforcing the market as a place where unexpected worthwhile discoveries can occur, and strengthen word-of-mouth intention by giving visitors narratable content to share with others (Litvin et al., 2008).

H7a. Impulse buying mediates the relationship between hedonic value and revisit intention.

H7b. Impulse buying mediates the relationship between hedonic value and word-of-mouth intention.

2.3.15. *Mediating role of impulse buying between utilitarian value and loyalty intentions*

Utilitarian value may influence revisit intention and word-of-mouth intention through impulse buying because practical value can make spontaneous purchasing feel justified rather than irrational. Visitors who perceive a market as useful, efficient, fairly priced, and worth the effort may remain cognitively alert to unexpected purchase opportunities, consistent with research showing that impulse buying can arise not only from affective arousal but also from rapid recognition of functional value and purchase opportunity (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Iyer et al., 2020). In Thai night markets, an unplanned purchase later judged as useful or fairly priced can confirm that the visit delivered practical value, strengthening revisit intention by reinforcing the market as a dependable place worth returning to, and strengthening word-of-mouth intention by giving visitors concrete, credible reasons to recommend it to others with similar practical needs (Ha & Jang, 2010a).

H8a. Impulse buying mediates the relationship between utilitarian value and revisit intention.

H8b. Impulse buying mediates the relationship between utilitarian value and word-of-mouth intention.

All Hypotheses are presented in Fig. 1.

3. Methodology

3.1. *Research design*

This study applies a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to examine how food authenticity, night tourscape, wholesale accessibility, and price fairness shape visitor value states, impulse buying, and post-visit behavioural intentions at Thai night markets. Cross-sectional measurement is appropriate here because the research objective is to capture visitor perceptions at a single point in time, consistent with established practice in S-O-R consumer behaviour research (Hair et al., 2022). PLS-SEM executed in SmartPLS 4.1.1.2 (Ringle et al., 2022) was selected as the primary analysis technique. PLS-SEM was appropriate for three reasons. First, the model includes both mediation and moderation paths, which are handled flexibly in this approach. Second, the study has both explanatory and predictive aims. Third, PLS-SEM does not require multivariate normality in the data (Hair et al., 2022; Sarstedt & Cheah, 2019).

3.2. *Sampling and data collection*

A convenience sampling approach was adopted, targeting domestic Thai night market visitors, defined as Thai residents who were at least 18 years old and had visited at least one Thai night market in the previous six months. These inclusion criteria ensured that the sample consisted of Thai residents with recent night market experience, rather than international tourists or respondents without recent exposure to the study context. The minimum age criterion was applied because respondents aged 18 and above can provide informed consent independently and are more likely to make their own food, shopping, and spending decisions in the night market context. The six-month visit criterion was used to ensure that respondents had recent and relevant experience of Thai night markets, while still allowing the sample to include both frequent and less frequent visitors. This period helped mitigate recall bias and ensured that respondents could meaningfully evaluate food authenticity, night tourscape, wholesale accessibility, price fairness, perceived crowding, impulse buying, revisit intention, and word-of-mouth intention.

A screener question was placed before the substantive items so that ineligible respondents were directed immediately to a thank-you page, ensuring that all valid responses reflected genuine recent experience. The survey was built in Google Forms and circulated via social media

platforms, including Facebook, WhatsApp, Line, and Instagram, through a Thai university lecturer's professional network, comprising a mix of students, colleagues, and other personal contacts. Students within this network were also explicitly invited to forward the survey link to others in their own social circles, introducing a snowball element to the convenience sampling approach. The survey link was accompanied by a short cover message explaining the study's purpose, assuring respondents of confidentiality, and indicating the expected completion time of approximately 8 min, based on timing observed during the pilot study, to encourage genuine and informed participation. Participation was entirely voluntary, with no monetary or non-monetary incentive offered, and the link was distributed once through each channel without follow-up reminders. Social media distribution was methodologically appropriate because the target respondents were digitally active and geographically dispersed across urban Thailand (Kalnaovakul & Promsivapallop, 2021). A target of 300–350 valid responses was set, satisfying Hair et al.'s (2022) ten-times rule for the present model, where the maximum number of arrows pointing at any single construct is six, yielding a minimum threshold of 60. The survey was conducted over 1.5 months, from 5 January to 24 February 2026. A total of 430 responses were received during the collection period, of which 393 were valid and retained for analysis following the screening and data-cleaning procedures reported in Section 4.1, corresponding to a valid-response retention rate of 91.4%.

3.3. Operationalisation and measurement items

All ten constructs were specified as reflective and captured through multi-item scales drawn from validated instruments across tourism, consumer behaviour, and marketing research. For each construct, one or more sources anchored the item wording and dimensionality, with one construct's items developed by the researchers in the absence of a validated scale. Where multiple sources were used, their specific roles, including contextual adaptation, item-level wording refinement, theoretical or conceptual grounding, or contemporary empirical corroboration, are detailed in Table 2 and, for constructs requiring further explanation, in the paragraphs below. Food authenticity was measured with four items drawing on two sources. Item 3 corresponds to Kala's (2020) item "Restaurants used only quality local ingredients in food preparation. Item 2 (...prepared using traditional Thai cooking methods) corresponds to Kala's (2020) item "The use of traditional equipment in some of the local food truly portrayed a local culture." Kala's (2020) remaining two items, on the availability of local dishes and on flavour's regional distinctiveness, were not retained. Items 1 and 4 follow the general perceived-authenticity item format used by Li et al. (2023) (e.g., "I perceived the taste of tourism destination food as authentic"), applied here to the food experience as a whole rather than to individual attributes. Items from both sources were retained because they represent complementary facets of a single perceived-authenticity construct: ingredient- and preparation-level authenticity cues (Kala, 2020) and a holistic, experience-level authenticity judgment (Li et al., 2023).

Night tourscape was measured with four items drawing on two sources. Li et al.'s (2022) 14-item night tourism atmosphere scale — spanning spatial layout, employee elements, design, and ambience — was directly adopted from Liu and Jang's (2009) dining atmospherics instrument, with restaurant-specific content re-worded for the night tourism context. Item 1 merges Li et al.'s (2022) "The lighting is just right" (ambience) and "The overall design is attractive" (design), corresponding to Liu and Jang's (2009) "Lighting" and "Overall interior design." Item 3 merges Li et al.'s (2022) "The decorations have local characteristics" (design) and "The music is comfortable" (ambience), corresponding to Liu and Jang's (2009) "Chinese-style furnishing" and "Music." Items 2 and 4 follow the general perceived-atmosphere item format used in night tourscape research (Li et al., 2022; Ruan et al., 2023) rather than adapting a specific individual item.

Table 2
Measurement Items

Constructs	Measurement Items	Source
Food Authenticity	1. The food at the night market reflects genuine Thai culinary traditions. 2. The food at the night market is prepared using traditional Thai cooking methods. 3. The ingredients used in the food are locally sourced and authentic. 4. Eating at a Thai night market gives me a sense of experiencing real Thai food culture.	Item 3: Kala (2020) – item on ingredient quality; Item 2: Kala (2020) – item on traditional preparation/equipment; Items 1, 4: Li et al. (2023) – general perceived-authenticity format
Night Tourscape	1. The lighting and visual environment of the night market creates an appealing atmosphere. 2. The overall ambience of the night market at night is enjoyable and immersive. 3. The cultural elements displayed at the night market (e.g., decorations, music) enrich my experience. 4. The nighttime atmosphere of the night market makes it a unique and memorable place to visit.	Li et al. (2022), adapted from Liu & Jang (2009)
Wholesale Accessibility	1. It is easy to purchase clothing and merchandise at wholesale prices at the night market. 2. The minimum quantity required to obtain wholesale pricing at the night market is reasonable. 3. The night market offers a wide variety of products available at wholesale prices. 4. The wholesale pricing available at the night market makes it an attractive shopping destination.	Researchers-developed; Hsieh & Chang (2006) - contextual grounding only
Price Fairness	1. The prices at the night market are fair given the quality of both food and products offered. 2. The prices at the night market are reasonable compared to what I expected to pay. 3. The prices charged at the night market are justified given what is offered. 4. The prices at the night market are acceptable compared to other street markets or outdoor markets I have visited.	Xia & Roggeveen (2022) - primary; Xia et al. (2004) - conceptual definition only, not a measurement source (informs Item 4)
Hedonic Value	1. Visiting the night market was genuinely enjoyable. 2. I had a fun time at the night market, beyond simply buying things. 3. The experience at the night market gave me a sense of excitement and pleasure. 4. I felt a real sense of delight while exploring the night market.	Babin et al. (1994) - primary; Mano & Oliver (1993) - supplementary (Item 3 wording); Picot-Coupey et al. (2021) - supplementary (empirical corroboration for item retention)
Utilitarian Value	1. I accomplished what I came to the night market to do. 2. Shopping at the night market was an efficient use of	Babin et al. (1994) - primary; Oliver (1997) - supplementary (Item 4 conceptual distinction); Picot-Coupey et al. (2021) -

(continued on next page)

Table 2 (continued)

Constructs	Measurement Items	Source
Perceived Crowding	my time and money.	supplementary (empirical corroboration for item retention)
	3. The night market allowed me to find the products I was looking for.	
	4. Overall, the night market delivered the practical outcomes I came to achieve.	
	1. The night market feels very crowded.	
Impulse Buying	2. There are too many people at the night market for my comfort.	Machleit et al. (2000) - primary; Eroglu et al. (2022) - supplementary (empirical revalidation); Sanz-Blas et al. (2024) - supplementary (theoretical grounding)
	3. I feel physically cramped due to the number of visitors at the night market.	
	4. The number of people at the night market is higher than I would prefer.	
	1. I bought things at the night market that I had not planned to purchase.	
Revisit Intention	2. I could not resist buying items I came across unexpectedly at the night market.	Beatty & Ferrell (1998) - primary; Rook (1987, as cited in Beatty & Ferrell, 1998) - conceptual definition only, not a measurement source (informs Item 2)
	3. I made unplanned purchases at the night market on impulse.	
	4. Encountering products at the night market triggered an immediate urge to purchase them.	
	1. I intend to revisit the night market in the future.	
Word-of-Mouth	2. The probability that I will come back to this night market is high	Baker & Crompton (2000) - primary; Abdou et al. (2022) - supplementary (Item 1 adaptation source); Chen & Tsai (2007) - supplementary
	3. The night market is a place I plan to include in my future leisure outings	
	4. I would make a special effort to revisit the night market.	
	1. I would recommend the night market to my friends and family.	
	2. I would say positive things about the night market to other people.	Zeithaml et al. (1996) - primary; Litvin et al. (2008) - supplementary; Abdou et al. (2022) - supplementary (Item 1 wording consistency)
	3. I would encourage others to visit the night market.	
	4. I would share my positive experience of the night market on social media.	

Note: The specific role of each source is indicated in the table above. Convergent validity (AVE ≥ 0.561) and reliability (CR ≥ 0.836) for every resulting scale are reported in Table 4.

Wholesale accessibility items were researcher-developed, as no validated scale for this construct exists in the tourism or retail literature. Item generation was informed by the contextual account of night market pricing dynamics provided by Hsieh and Chang (2006), who describe reasonable, negotiable pricing as a defining characteristic of Taiwanese tourist night markets. To establish content validity, the four items were reviewed by a panel of five experts (three tourism marketing academics and two night market vendors), who evaluated each item for relevance, clarity, and wording. The panel reached consensus that all four items were relevant and clearly worded, and no revisions were made. The construct's empirical adequacy was subsequently confirmed in the measurement model, with standardized loadings ranging from 0.707 to 0.851, composite reliability of 0.873, and average variance extracted of 0.634, all exceeding the recommended thresholds (Hair et al., 2019) and supporting the reliability and convergent validity of the researcher-

developed scale.

Price fairness was anchored in Xia and Roggeveen's (2022) empirically validated three-item scale (fair, reasonable, and acceptable), which operationalises the construct Xia et al. (2004) define as a consumer's assessment of whether a price is reasonable, acceptable, or justifiable. The original items were reworded from a generic transaction referent ("the price you paid") to an explicit night market referent, and a fourth item was added, adapting the "justifiable" criterion from Xia et al.'s (2004) definition and introducing an explicit comparative referent to other street or outdoor markets, consistent with Xia et al.'s (2004) discussion of comparative price fairness judgments.

Hedonic and utilitarian values were anchored in Babin et al.'s (1994) personal shopping value scale, which remains the most widely cited instrument for this two-dimensional construct (Picot-Coupey et al., 2021). For hedonic value, items 1, 2, and 4 paraphrase Babin et al.'s (1994) enjoyment, own-sake, and escape/adventure items (e.g., "I enjoyed this shopping trip for its own sake, not just for the items I may have purchased"), reworded from a generic shopping referent to an explicit night market referent. Item 3 was additionally informed by Mano and Oliver's (1993) finding that hedonic product evaluation is distinctively associated with two dimensions of affect, pleasantness and arousal, whereas utilitarian evaluation showed no positive relationship with arousal; the item was worded to jointly capture both dimensions. For utilitarian value, items 1 and 3 closely follow Babin et al.'s (1994) accomplishment and goal-fulfilment items (e.g., "I accomplished just what I wanted to on this shopping trip"). Item 2 draws directly on Babin et al.'s (1994) own characterisation of utilitarian shopping as typically completed "in a deliberant and efficient manner," extended here to the explicit time- and budget-conscious framing of wholesale night market shopping. Item 4 was deliberately worded around outcome achievement rather than satisfaction, consistent with Oliver's (1997) treatment of satisfaction as conceptually distinct from evaluative value judgment; the original Babin item wording risked drifting toward a satisfaction-like appraisal rather than a purely utilitarian one. Consistent with Babin et al.'s (1994) own caution that adapting the scale "to other consumption contexts is questionable", and following Picot-Coupey et al.'s (2021) large-sample corroboration showing that the reverse-worded hedonic item ("this shopping trip was not a very nice time out") was dropped across all three contemporary contexts they tested (store, online, and mobile app), both value scales here retained only positively worded items. Across both value dimensions, items from supplementary sources were retained only where they operationalised the same underlying evaluative judgment (affective pleasure for hedonic value; goal-directed efficiency for utilitarian value) as the anchor items, so each resulting scale reflects a single construct rather than a composite of conceptually distinct measures.

Perceived crowding was anchored in Machleit et al.'s (2000) four-item human crowding scale, empirically revalidated by Eroglu et al. (2022) in a retail replication study, with Sanz-Blas et al. (2024) providing contemporary theoretical grounding for treating crowding as a subjective, context-dependent construct rather than an objective density measure. The original store-referent items were reworded to a night market referent (Items 1, 2, and 4), and Item 4 was rephrased from a descriptive to an evaluative form to capture visitors' subjective density threshold. Unlike Sanz-Blas et al. (2024), who separate human and spatial crowding into distinct dimensions, this study retains one physical-restriction item (Item 3) within a single, unidimensional crowding construct, since night markets are open-air and spatially unbounded, making the sense of being cramped a function of human density rather than a fixed architectural layout.

Impulse buying was anchored in Beatty and Ferrell's (1998) felt-urge-to-buy-impulsively scale (e.g., "I experienced a number of sudden urges to buy things I had not planned to purchase on this trip"; "On this trip, I felt a sudden urge to buy something"), with Rook's (1987), as cited in Beatty & Ferrell, 1998) definition of impulse buying as a sudden, often powerful and persistent urge providing the theoretical basis for the

resistance criterion captured in Item 2. Items were reworded from urge-level phrasing anchored to a generic “trip” referent into explicit behavioural statements anchored in the night market context (e.g., “I bought things at the night market that I had not planned to purchase”), and a “could not resist” item was added to capture the resistance-failure quality central to Rook's (1987) original conceptualization, which is implicit but not directly operationalised in Beatty and Ferrell's (1998) urge-focused items.

Revisit intention was measured with four items adapted from established behavioural-intention scales in the tourism literature. The scale draws on Baker and Crompton's (2000) loyalty subscale, which operationalizes revisit loyalty using a likelihood-based response format rather than a simple agree/disagree judgment. Item 2 retains this likelihood-based framing. Item 4 extends the conceptual emphasis on committed, effortful loyalty underlying Baker and Crompton's (2000) subscale into an explicit “effort to revisit” item suited to a recurring-visit context. Item 1 was adapted from the conditional revisit item used by Abdou et al. (2022) and reworded into a direct intention statement, consistent with the single-item revisit measure used by Chen and Tsai (2007). Item 3 was newly developed for the night market context, reframing the single-destination revisit judgment common to trip-level scales (Chen & Tsai, 2007) into a recurring leisure-activity statement, better capturing the routinized, low-commitment revisit pattern characteristic of night market patronage relative to a one-time discretionary trip. Items from all three sources converge on the same underlying behavioural-intention construct, differing only in response framing (likelihood-based versus direct intention) rather than in the construct measured, supporting their combination within one scale.

Word-of-mouth was measured with four items, primarily anchored in Zeithaml et al.'s (1996) loyalty subscale, which conceptualizes favourable word-of-mouth as saying positive things about a company, recommending it, and encouraging others toward it. Item 2 follows their “say positive things” item with only the referent changed from the company to the night market. Item 1 adapts their recommend item, removing its original “to someone who seeks your advice” condition and substituting a friends-and-family referent, consistent with the unconditional recommendation wording used by Abdou et al. (2022). Item 3 generalizes their “encourage friends and relatives” item, broadening the referent to “others” and the verb from “do business with” to “visit,” better suited to the more anonymous, high-footfall nature of night market patronage. Item 4 extends the traditional interpersonal word-of-mouth construct into an eWOM item, informed by Litvin et al.'s (2008) conceptualization of eWOM as the digital analogue of traditional WOM through social and online platforms, reflecting the contemporary reality that positive night market experiences are increasingly shared online rather than solely face-to-face. Because all three sources operationalise the same underlying construct of favourable interpersonal or digital communication about the destination, differing only in referent or channel, their combination reflects contextual extension rather than the merging of conceptually distinct measures.

Several constructs draw on scales originally published more than two decades ago, including Babin et al. (1994) for hedonic and utilitarian value, Machleit et al. (2000) for perceived crowding, Beatty and Ferrell (1998) for impulse buying, Zeithaml et al. (1996) for word-of-mouth, and Baker and Crompton (2000) for revisit intention. These scales were retained, rather than replaced by more recently published alternatives, because each continues to define its construct in terms that remain foundational to the consumer behaviour and tourism literature and have not been superseded by an alternative validated instrument. For most of these constructs, continued relevance is additionally supported by contemporary sources reported in Table 2: Picot-Coupey et al.'s (2021) large-sample study corroborates the item-retention decisions made for both value scales; Eroglu et al. (2022) and Sanz-Blas et al. (2024) provide, respectively, empirical revalidation and updated theoretical grounding for the crowding construct; and Abdou et al. (2022) demonstrates the continued applicability of loyalty-based

revisit and word-of-mouth item wording in a contemporary tourism setting. Items were reworded where necessary to reflect the Thai night market context, particularly for price fairness, revisit intention, and wholesale accessibility, and were rated on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). The questionnaire was rendered into Thai using a translation-back-translation procedure to confirm semantic equivalence between language versions. A pilot study of 30 local Thai respondents was then conducted to verify item clarity, face validity, and appropriate completion time before full distribution. Table 2 presents the complete measurement items and source references for all constructs.

3.4. Common method bias

Both procedural and statistical controls were applied to address the threat of common method bias inherent in single-source, self-reported data (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Procedurally, respondents were assured of anonymity, informed there were no correct answers, and stimulus and response items were placed in separate questionnaire sections to introduce psychological separation between predictor and criterion measures. Statistically, full collinearity variance inflation factor (VIF) assessment was conducted for all latent constructs in SmartPLS 4.1.1.2. Values below 3.3 indicate that common method variance is unlikely to pose a substantive threat to the validity of the findings (Kock, 2017).

3.5. Analysis technique

Following Hair et al.'s (2022) two-stage assessment protocol, the measurement model was evaluated before the structural model. This involved assessing indicator reliability through outer loadings (≥ 0.70), internal consistency through composite reliability (≥ 0.70), convergent validity through AVE (≥ 0.50), and discriminant validity through both the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the HTMT ratio (< 0.85) as the primary criterion. Values between 0.85 and 0.90 were treated as tolerable when a construct pair was linked by a direct hypothesised path in the structural model or shared a strong theoretical rationale for elevated correlation (Gold et al., 2001). A cross-loading matrix was also inspected to confirm that all indicators loaded more strongly on their respective constructs than on any other construct (Henseler et al., 2015). After the measurement model was confirmed, hypothesis testing was conducted using bootstrapping with 5000 subsamples and percentile bootstrap confidence intervals. The interaction between perceived crowding and hedonic value, and its effect on revisit intention, was estimated using the product-indicator approach in SmartPLS 4.1.1.2.

4. Results

4.1. Sample demographics

Following data screening, 393 responses were valid and retained for analysis. Female respondents accounted for 67.18% of the sample. In terms of age, the 26–35 group was the largest (34.35%), followed by the 18–25 group (25.70%) and the 36–45 group (24.68%). This skew toward younger age groups mirrors the visitor profile reported in prior Thai night market studies (Kalnaovakul & Promsivapallop, 2021). Educational attainment was distributed across several levels, with the largest groups being high school graduates or equivalent (33.59%), bachelor's degree holders (32.32%), and master's degree holders (22.39%). In terms of occupation, private-sector employees formed the largest group (33.84%), followed by students (29.26%) and government officers (26.97%).

Regarding monthly income, more than half of the respondents reported earnings in the THB 15,001–30,000 range (49.87%), while a further 26.72% earned between THB 30,001 and THB 50,000. This predominantly middle-income profile implies that perceptions of value and price equity are particularly salient considerations for this group. In

terms of familiarity with Thai night markets, 52.67% of respondents had made more than 12 visits in the six months preceding the survey, and a further 29.52% reported 7 to 12 visits over the same period. Only 2.80% were first-time visitors. Such repeated engagement strengthens the appropriateness of revisit intention as a key outcome variable in this study. Table 3 presents the sample demographics.

4.2. Validity and reliability

Using SmartPLS 4.1.1.2, the measurement model was assessed following Hair et al. (2022). Two indicators were removed prior to final model estimation for failing to meet the 0.70 outer-loading threshold specified in Section 3.5: PF1 (Price Fairness) and UV3 (Utilitarian Value). Following removal, all retained outer loadings exceeded 0.70, while AVE values were above 0.50 and CA and CR values exceeded 0.70. These results indicate adequate indicator reliability, convergent validity, and internal consistency reliability, as reported in Table 4. These figures are relevant for constructs whose items were adapted from more than one source (Table 2): outer loadings ranged from 0.704 to 0.895, CA from 0.725 to 0.808, CR from 0.836 to 0.874, and AVE from 0.561 to 0.700 across all ten constructs, indicating that each item set converged empirically as a single, internally consistent factor regardless of the number of sources informing its adaptation.

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, HTMT ratios, and cross-loadings. As shown in Table 5, the Fornell-Larcker results generally supported construct distinction, although the correlation between food authenticity and utilitarian value slightly exceeded the square root of AVE for food authenticity reported in Table 4. Of the 45 construct pairs in Table 5, five exceeded the 0.85 threshold: perceived crowding and word-of-mouth (0.887), utilitarian value and price fairness (0.865), utilitarian value and revisit intention (0.864), perceived crowding and impulse buying (0.859), and utilitarian value and impulse buying (0.857). All five remained below 0.90. Three of these pairs connect constructs joined by a direct hypothesised path in the structural model (price fairness to utilitarian value, and utilitarian

Table 3
Sample Demographics

Measure	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	129	32.82%
	Female	264	67.18%
Age Group	18-25 years old	101	25.70%
	26-35 years old	135	34.35%
	36-45 years old	97	24.68%
	>45 years old	60	15.27%
Educational Background	High school and equivalent	132	33.59%
	Bachelor's degree	127	32.32%
	Master's degree	88	22.39%
	Doctoral degree	46	11.70%
Occupation	Private sector worker	133	33.84%
	Businessman	28	7.12%
	Government officer	106	26.97%
	Students	115	29.26%
	Other	11	2.80%
	<= THB 15,000	50	12.72%
Monthly Income	THB 15,001- THB 30,000	196	49.87%
	THB 30,001- THB 50,000	105	26.72%
	> THB 50,000	42	10.69%
	1 time	11	2.80%
Frequency of visiting Thai night market (s) in the past 6 months	2-3 times	24	6.11%
	4-6 times	35	8.91%
	7-12 times	116	29.52%
	More than 12 times	207	52.67%

Table 4
Convergent Validity and Reliability

Constructs	Items	FL	CA	CR	AVE
Food Authenticity (FA)	FA1	0.758	0.767	0.850	0.586
	FA2	0.839			
	FA3	0.730			
	FA4	0.731			
Hedonic Value (HV)	HV1	0.724	0.800	0.870	0.627
	HV2	0.874			
	HV3	0.829			
	HV4	0.729			
Impulse Buying (IB)	IB1	0.777	0.738	0.836	0.561
	IB2	0.704			
	IB3	0.704			
	IB4	0.805			
Night Tourscape (NT)	NT1	0.784	0.730	0.847	0.650
	NT2	0.852			
	NT3	0.780			
	PC1	0.712			
Perceived Crowding (PC)	PC2	0.801	0.750	0.841	0.570
	PC3	0.733			
	PC4	0.771			
	PF2	0.839			
Price Fairness (PF)	PF3	0.895	0.785	0.874	0.700
	PF4	0.771			
	RI1	0.735			
	RI2	0.727			
Revisit Intention (RI)	RI3	0.740	0.744	0.839	0.566
	RI4	0.804			
	UV1	0.767			
	UV2	0.852			
Utilitarian Value (UV)	UV4	0.784	0.725	0.844	0.643
	WA1	0.851			
	WA2	0.835			
	WA3	0.707			
Wholesale Accessibility (WA)	WA4	0.784	0.808	0.873	0.634
	WOM1	0.760			
	WOM2	0.751			
	WOM3	0.779			
Word-of-Mouth (WOM)	WOM4	0.803	0.776	0.856	0.598

value to impulse buying and revisit intention), where a strong substantive relationship is expected to elevate HTMT independently of item quality. The remaining two both involve perceived crowding, which was not hypothesised to correlate strongly with either construct; given that 82.19% of respondents had visited the market more than six times in the preceding six months, this pattern is consistent with the sample's predominantly frequent-visitor composition, discussed further in relation to the non-significant moderating effect reported in Section 4.4. No single item was implicated across the five elevated pairs. Cross-loadings in Table 6 further showed that all indicators loaded highest on their intended constructs. Overall, discriminant validity was acceptable, although closely related constructs were interpreted with appropriate caution.

4.3. Model robustness testing

Before hypothesis testing, the structural model was evaluated through robustness checks. Inner VIF values ranged from 1.048 to 3.135, all below the 3.3 threshold suggested by Hair et al. (2022), indicating no multicollinearity concern.

The R^2 values showed meaningful explanatory power across all five endogenous constructs. Hedonic value had the highest R^2 (0.653), indicating that food authenticity and night tourscape jointly explained roughly two-thirds of the variance in visitors' hedonic experience. Utilitarian value reached 0.497, while impulse buying, revisit intention, and word-of-mouth intention recorded values of 0.437, 0.646, and 0.518, respectively, all above the 0.10 minimum suggested by Falk and Miller (1992).

Effect sizes were assessed using Cohen's (1988) f^2 . The food authenticity $\rightarrow$ hedonic value path (0.362) and the impulse buying $\rightarrow$

Table 5
Fornell-Larcker Criterion and HTMT

Constructs	FA	HV	IB	NT	PC	PF	RI	UV	WA	WOM
Food Authenticity (FA)	0.766									
Hedonic Value (HV)	0.761 (0.843)	0.792								
Impulse Buying (IB)	0.596 (0.779)	0.590 (0.752)	0.749							
Night Tourscape (NT)	0.698 (0.826)	0.726 (0.839)	0.595 (0.805)	0.806						
Perceived Crowding (PC)	0.646 (0.837)	0.611 (0.770)	0.793 (0.859)	0.596 (0.802)	0.755					
Price Fairness (PF)	0.651 (0.825)	0.631 (0.782)	0.560 (0.726)	0.697 (0.825)	0.569 (0.724)	0.837				
Revisit Intention (RI)	0.516 (0.672)	0.574 (0.727)	0.751 (0.806)	0.507 (0.681)	0.749 (0.846)	0.502 (0.642)	0.752			
Utilitarian Value (UV)	0.798 (0.847)	0.742 (0.817)	0.637 (0.857)	0.657 (0.796)	0.698 (0.826)	0.663 (0.865)	0.651 (0.864)	0.802		
Wholesale Accessibility (WA)	0.614 (0.755)	0.629 (0.765)	0.535 (0.675)	0.560 (0.705)	0.553 (0.691)	0.668 (0.807)	0.527 (0.673)	0.620 (0.785)	0.796	
Word-of-Mouth (WOM)	0.492 (0.630)	0.525 (0.652)	0.690 (0.804)	0.449 (0.590)	0.687 (0.887)	0.483 (0.606)	0.739 (0.836)	0.596 (0.779)	0.494 (0.622)	0.744

Notes: a. Parentheses show HTMT values. Values below 0.85 meet the conservative threshold; five values (bolded) fall between 0.85 and 0.90 and are discussed in Section 4.2. All five remained below the 0.90 liberal threshold. b. Bold values are the square root of AVE. c. Other values indicate construct intercorrelations for the Fornell-Larcker criterion.

Table 6
Cross Loadings

	FA	HV	IB	NT	PC	PF	RI	UV	WA	WOM
FA1	0.758	0.649	0.438	0.531	0.478	0.507	0.331	0.563	0.439	0.305
FA2	0.839	0.669	0.534	0.592	0.571	0.582	0.506	0.697	0.598	0.500
FA3	0.730	0.485	0.415	0.529	0.448	0.441	0.383	0.540	0.405	0.351
FA4	0.731	0.487	0.427	0.479	0.471	0.440	0.352	0.644	0.411	0.337
HV1	0.539	0.724	0.491	0.615	0.423	0.537	0.382	0.542	0.422	0.387
HV2	0.664	0.874	0.569	0.650	0.586	0.598	0.588	0.688	0.619	0.547
HV3	0.599	0.829	0.420	0.555	0.477	0.452	0.445	0.564	0.478	0.377
HV4	0.606	0.729	0.361	0.458	0.428	0.385	0.368	0.537	0.447	0.313
IB1	0.410	0.447	0.777	0.472	0.605	0.420	0.544	0.480	0.362	0.494
IB2	0.519	0.450	0.704	0.450	0.656	0.465	0.612	0.552	0.490	0.546
IB3	0.379	0.374	0.704	0.362	0.525	0.366	0.483	0.388	0.299	0.461
IB4	0.459	0.485	0.805	0.486	0.576	0.414	0.593	0.470	0.428	0.553
NT1	0.512	0.527	0.486	0.784	0.448	0.554	0.359	0.455	0.368	0.311
NT2	0.612	0.634	0.524	0.852	0.535	0.614	0.480	0.584	0.576	0.444
NT3	0.558	0.586	0.429	0.780	0.453	0.515	0.377	0.540	0.394	0.320
PC1	0.446	0.456	0.601	0.464	0.712	0.402	0.510	0.507	0.334	0.475
PC2	0.588	0.566	0.632	0.484	0.801	0.542	0.678	0.635	0.522	0.635
PC3	0.455	0.354	0.555	0.413	0.733	0.378	0.508	0.454	0.336	0.464
PC4	0.440	0.444	0.605	0.437	0.771	0.370	0.539	0.489	0.450	0.475
PF2	0.553	0.511	0.437	0.564	0.422	0.839	0.346	0.521	0.624	0.403
PF3	0.596	0.592	0.535	0.593	0.553	0.895	0.533	0.639	0.628	0.509
PF4	0.476	0.471	0.422	0.600	0.440	0.771	0.359	0.490	0.409	0.276
RI1	0.496	0.490	0.533	0.427	0.625	0.451	0.735	0.576	0.494	0.593
RI2	0.301	0.389	0.522	0.353	0.505	0.313	0.727	0.410	0.280	0.571
RI3	0.314	0.368	0.594	0.352	0.517	0.352	0.740	0.447	0.376	0.556
RI4	0.426	0.471	0.609	0.387	0.595	0.386	0.804	0.513	0.419	0.651
UV1	0.639	0.560	0.497	0.513	0.509	0.523	0.431	0.767	0.446	0.403
UV2	0.683	0.633	0.563	0.562	0.647	0.598	0.639	0.852	0.595	0.586
UV4	0.595	0.591	0.464	0.503	0.506	0.463	0.469	0.784	0.430	0.420
WA1	0.534	0.559	0.477	0.500	0.486	0.633	0.435	0.554	0.851	0.404
WA2	0.559	0.541	0.468	0.510	0.462	0.643	0.440	0.540	0.835	0.406
WA3	0.349	0.404	0.344	0.297	0.355	0.318	0.392	0.371	0.707	0.356
WA4	0.481	0.480	0.398	0.440	0.445	0.474	0.413	0.484	0.784	0.407
WOM1	0.356	0.366	0.566	0.335	0.517	0.390	0.589	0.456	0.374	0.760
WOM2	0.410	0.417	0.546	0.369	0.569	0.386	0.650	0.474	0.401	0.751
WOM3	0.362	0.396	0.528	0.363	0.503	0.341	0.581	0.422	0.339	0.779
WOM4	0.391	0.445	0.489	0.320	0.534	0.374	0.618	0.490	0.411	0.803

word-of-mouth intention path (0.307) were large. Medium effects were found for night tourscape → hedonic value (0.213), price fairness → utilitarian value (0.222), utilitarian value → impulse buying (0.156), and impulse buying → revisit intention (0.142). The wholesale accessibility → utilitarian value path (0.113) was small to medium, whereas utilitarian value → word-of-mouth intention (0.044) and utilitarian

value → revisit intention (0.028) were smaller. The non-significant paths each showed negligible f^2 values of 0.002.

Model fit was acceptable, with an SRMR of 0.076. Predictive relevance was also supported: all $Q^2_{predict}$ values were positive, indicating predictive performance above a naive mean-based benchmark and suggesting that the model extends meaningfully beyond the estimation

sample (Shmueli et al., 2019).

4.4. Hypothesis testing

Bootstrapping based on 5000 resamples and two-tailed 97.5% confidence intervals were used to test all hypotheses. Table 7 presents the detailed results, and Fig. 2 summarises the hypothesis testing outcomes. Ten of the thirteen direct hypotheses were supported, while all four mediation hypotheses were supported.

H1a and H1b were both supported, indicating that food authenticity ($\beta = 0.495$, t -value = 10.018) and night tourscape ($\beta = 0.380$, t -value = 7.540) are positive antecedents of hedonic value. H2a and H2b were also supported, showing that wholesale accessibility ($\beta = 0.320$, t -value = 6.060) and price fairness ($\beta = 0.449$, t -value = 8.728) are significant predictors of utilitarian value. Notably, price fairness proved more influential than wholesale accessibility, suggesting that in a bargaining-oriented marketplace, perceived transactional fairness holds greater practical value than merely having access to low-priced goods.

The hedonic value paths showed a meaningful split. H3b was supported, confirming that hedonic value predicts impulse buying ($\beta = 0.262$, t -value = 4.229). However, H3a and H3c, the direct paths from hedonic value to revisit intention and word-of-mouth intention, were not supported, suggesting that enjoyment alone did not directly predict loyalty intentions unless it was channelled through a purchasing act. Utilitarian value showed more consistent direct effects: H4a confirmed a strong positive effect on impulse buying ($\beta = 0.443$, t -value = 7.516), H4b showed a weaker but significant effect on revisit intention ($\beta = 0.167$, t -value = 2.710), and H4c showed a significant effect on word-of-mouth intention ($\beta = 0.234$, t -value = 3.700). This pattern suggests that utilitarian value was most strongly associated with spontaneous purchasing, while its direct influence on post-visit intentions remained positive but comparatively weaker.

H5, which proposed that perceived crowding would moderate the relationship between hedonic value and revisit intention, was not supported ($\beta = 0.022$ n.s., t -value = 0.804). This indicates that perceived crowding did not significantly weaken the translation of hedonic value into revisit intention among Thai night market visitors. One plausible explanation is that frequent visitors may have come to regard market density as a normal part of the night market experience rather than as a stressor. In addition, limited variation in crowding perceptions among habituated urban visitors may have reduced the likelihood of detecting a significant interaction effect. Both H6a ($\beta = 0.380$, t -value = 6.621) and H6b ($\beta = 0.512$, t -value = 8.899) were supported, indicating that impulse buying is significantly associated with self-reported revisit intention and word-of-mouth intention.

The mediating effects were then examined using the specific indirect effects reported in Table 8. All four mediation hypotheses were supported. H7a showed that impulse buying mediated the relationship

between hedonic value and revisit intention ($\beta = 0.100$, t -value = 3.667), while H7b confirmed the mediating effect between hedonic value and word-of-mouth intention ($\beta = 0.134$, t -value = 4.191). H8a showed that impulse buying mediated the relationship between utilitarian value and revisit intention ($\beta = 0.168$, t -value = 4.654), while H8b confirmed the mediating effect between utilitarian value and word-of-mouth intention ($\beta = 0.227$, t -value = 5.151). These results support the view that impulse buying functions as a behavioural mechanism linking value states to loyalty intentions.

A full summary of hypothesis outcomes is provided in Tables 7–8 and Fig. 2.

5. Discussion

This section interprets the structural results theoretically, while applied implications are developed separately in Section 6.2. Food authenticity was the strongest predictor of hedonic value, supporting H1a. This result does not imply that authenticity is purely hedonic. Authentic food experiences can also provide functional assurance by signalling quality, trustworthiness, and cultural legitimacy. However, in Thai night markets, authenticity appears to become hedonic because it is visibly and sensorially enacted. Open cooking, local ingredients, traditional preparation methods, aromas, and vendor practices make authenticity something visitors can directly observe and feel, rather than only infer. This interpretation is consistent with authenticity perception theory, which treats authenticity as a perceived connection between experience, meaning, and place (Cohen & Cohen, 2012; Wang, 1999), and with food tourism research showing that authenticity and sensory appeal can strengthen positive affect and enjoyment (Kala, 2020; Li et al., 2023). The strong effect of food authenticity suggests that, in this setting, culinary authenticity generates hedonic value when it becomes part of an immersive and emotionally engaging food experience.

Night tourscape also exerted a meaningful effect on hedonic value, supporting H1b. Its continued significance alongside the dominant effect of food authenticity indicates that hedonic experience in this setting is built through several reinforcing stimuli rather than through a single dominant cue. What distinguishes nocturnal atmosphere from standard retail ambience is the role of darkness as a perceptual amplifier. The contrast between surrounding darkness and illuminated stalls sharpens the visual salience of market elements in a way that daylight conditions cannot easily reproduce. Li et al. (2022) reported this arousal enhancing role, and the present findings show that nocturnal atmosphere is converted into hedonic value within a model involving multiple constructs. Combined, food authenticity and night tourscape explain most of the variance in hedonic experience, indicating that these two stimuli strongly define what Thai night markets feel like.

Both price fairness and wholesale accessibility significantly predicted utilitarian value, supporting H2a and H2b. However, the stronger

Table 7
Summary of Hypothesis Testing (Direct Effects)

Hypothesis	β	T-Value	Bootstrapping 97.5% CI (N = 5000)		Decision
			Min	Max	
H1a (+) Food Authenticity → Hedonic Value	0.495***	10.018	0.402	0.593	Supported
H1b (+) Night Tourscape → Hedonic Value	0.380***	7.540	0.278	0.475	Supported
H2a (+) Wholesale Accessibility → Utilitarian Value	0.320***	6.060	0.218	0.425	Supported
H2b (+) Price Fairness → Utilitarian Value	0.449***	8.728	0.344	0.549	Supported
H3a (+) Hedonic Value → Revisit Intention	0.044n.s.	0.701	−0.073	0.170	Not Supported
H3b (+) Hedonic Value → Impulse Buying	0.262***	4.229	0.140	0.382	Supported
H3c (+) Hedonic Value → WOM	0.049n.s.	0.770	−0.070	0.179	Not Supported
H4a (+) Utilitarian Value → Impulse Buying	0.443***	7.516	0.324	0.557	Supported
H4b (+) Utilitarian Value → Revisit Intention	0.167**	2.710	0.045	0.286	Supported
H4c (+) Utilitarian Value → WOM	0.234***	3.700	0.106	0.352	Supported
H5 (−) Perceived Crowding × Hedonic Value → Revisit Intention	0.022n.s.	0.804	−0.029	0.076	Not Supported
H6a (+) Impulse Buying → Revisit Intention	0.380***	6.621	0.270	0.495	Supported
H6b (+) Impulse Buying → WOM	0.512***	8.899	0.396	0.626	Supported

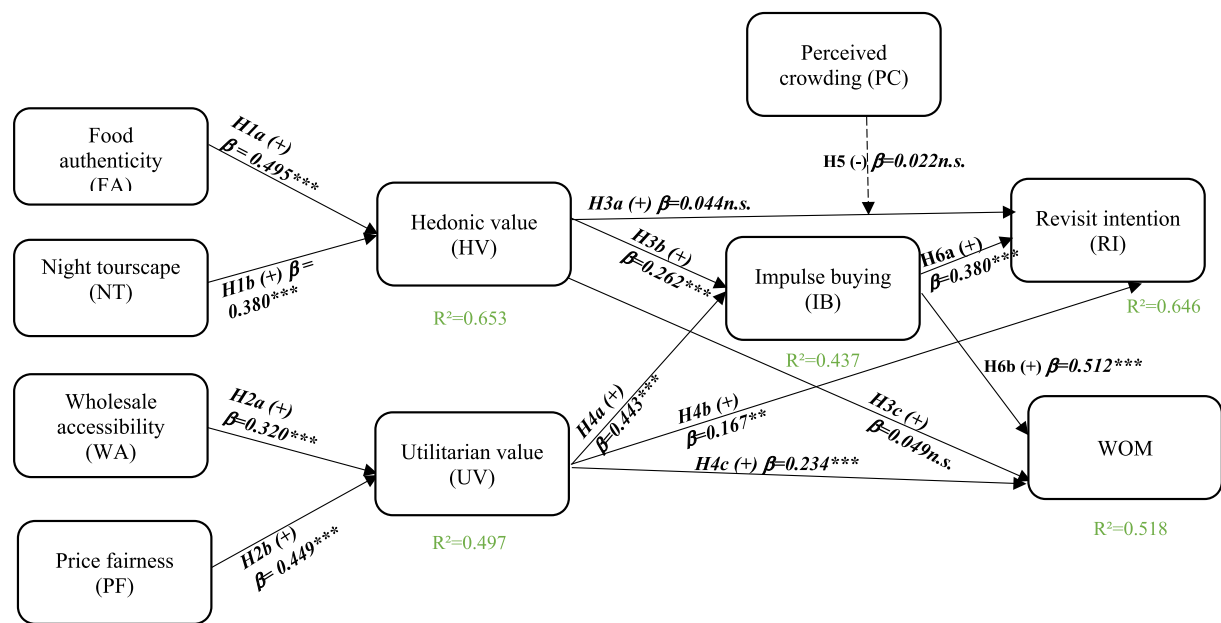


Fig. 2. Hypothesis Testing Summary.

Table 8
Summary of Hypothesis Testing (Mediating Effects)

Hypothesis	β	T-Value	Bootstrapping 97.5% CI (N=5000)		Decision
			Min	Max	
H7a(+) Hedonic value→Impulse buying→Revisit intention	0.100***	3.667	0.050	0.157	Supported
H7b(+) Hedonic value→Impulse buying→Word-of-mouth intention	0.134***	4.191	0.073	0.198	Supported
H8a(+) Utilitarian value→Impulse buying→Revisit intention	0.168***	4.654	0.104	0.245	Supported
H8b(+) Utilitarian value→Impulse buying→Word-of-mouth intention	0.227***	5.151	0.147	0.318	Supported

effect of price fairness is theoretically noteworthy. Thai night markets are closely associated with wholesale pricing, and most visitors arrive expecting prices below standard retail levels. The fact that a subjective fairness judgment outweighs this concrete structural feature aligns with the cognitive equity framework of Xia et al. (2004), which suggests that functional satisfaction depends on whether the exchange feels proportionate, not merely on whether it is objectively cheap. In an environment where prices are often unmarked and bargaining is common, each completed transaction carries a fairness evaluation. When that evaluation is resolved positively, it contributes to utilitarian satisfaction independently of how much wholesale access the market technically offers. Muskat et al. (2019) found a similar pattern in tourist dining, where price fairness predicted satisfaction beyond food quality. The present findings extend that insight to a market context where bargaining is common, suggesting that functional consumer value in Thai night markets is partly a relational achievement, not only a structural one. This study offers one of the first empirical tests of wholesale accessibility as a direct antecedent of utilitarian value, with the structural results confirming a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.320$, $t = 6.060$ as seen in Table 7).

The finding that both hedonic value and utilitarian value predicted impulse buying, supporting H3b and H4a, is theoretically important because utilitarian value exerted the stronger effect. This contrasts with the common tendency to interpret impulse buying primarily as hedonic, affective, or driven by reduced deliberation (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Iyer et al., 2020; Rook & Fisher, 1995). In Thai night markets, however, utilitarian value may not operate as a slow rational evaluation but as rapid practical recognition. Visitors who perceive the market as useful, affordable, convenient, fairly priced, and practically worthwhile may remain attentive to unexpected purchase opportunities while browsing. Contextual cues such as accessible prices, visible product variety, convenient stall access, and, for food purchases, observable preparation or freshness cues may reduce hesitation and make spontaneous purchases feel immediately justified. This reading should be considered alongside the sample's composition, since frequent visitors, who made up more than half of respondents, are the group most likely to have built the kind of well-rehearsed value recognition described here through repeated exposure to the market (see Limitations).

This pattern can be read through dual-process theories of cognition (Chaiken, 1980; Kahneman, 2011), which distinguish System 1 processing, fast, automatic, and heuristic-based, from System 2 processing, slow, effortful, and rule-based. Utilitarian evaluation is conventionally treated as System 2 reasoning, yet a well-learned value criterion, such as recognising a fair price or an obviously good deal, can become heuristic once the diagnostic cues are salient and unambiguous, allowing System 1 to execute what is nominally a rational judgment almost instantly. Night markets place additional pressure on this shift: the sensory density, crowd movement, bargaining, and simultaneous exposure to competing stalls impose a cognitive load that leaves little capacity for item-by-item deliberation. Under this load, visitors may substitute effortful reasoning with a simple decision heuristic, such as buying when the price looks fair and the item is useful, rather than working through an extended cost-benefit comparison. This is consistent with recent dual-process accounts of impulse buying showing that time pressure and high-stimulation environments favour heuristic over systematic processing, whereas calmer, asynchronous settings support more deliberative evaluation (Xilai et al., 2026). Utilitarian value may therefore drive impulse buying in Thai night markets not because visitors abandon rational criteria, but because those criteria are applied through fast, low-effort heuristics rather than extended System 2 deliberation. This aligns

with dual route views of impulse buying, which recognise that spontaneous purchases can arise from both affective enjoyment and functional evaluation (Iyer et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2022).

The stronger path from utilitarian value to impulse buying therefore suggests a value justified form of impulse buying, where practical appraisal lowers the psychological cost of acting spontaneously. This distinction can be sharpened through Strack et al.'s (2006) Reflective-Impulsive Model, which understands buying behaviour as the joint product of a reflective system that draws on stored facts, rules, and values, and an impulsive system that triggers behaviour through associative, affect-laden activation with little evaluative content. Affective impulse buying sits closer to the impulsive system operating largely on its own, cued directly by sensory pleasure or emotional arousal. Value-justified impulse buying still draws on the reflective system's content, criteria such as fairness, usefulness, or price, but executes that content so quickly and automatically that it behaves like an impulsive response rather than a deliberate one. The two routes may therefore differ less in whether an evaluative judgment occurs than in what kind of content that judgment carries and how compressed the process has become through repeated exposure to similar cues. This study collected no physiological or imaging data and cannot speak to brain mechanisms directly, but existing consumer neuroscience offers a relevant, and complicating, reference point: Motoki et al. (2019) found that the explicit value of hedonic and utilitarian goods is commonly represented in the ventral striatum, suggesting that affective and functional value may converge on a shared valuation signal rather than being processed by entirely separate neural systems. If this generalises to impulse buying, the difference between the two routes may lie less in categorically distinct brain regions and more in the speed and pathway by which a common value signal is generated, cued directly through affective association in one case and computed rapidly from practical criteria in the other. Testing this directly would require psychophysiological or neuroimaging methods beyond the scope of the present survey-based design, and is noted here as a direction for future research.

Impulse buying also positively predicted revisit intention and word-of-mouth intention, supporting H6a and H6b. This result differs from research that associates impulse buying with regret, guilt, or dissatisfaction when purchases conflict with self-control goals or are later judged as wasteful (Beikverdi et al., 2024; Rook & Fisher, 1995). Rather than contradicting this literature, the present results suggest that the consequences of impulse buying depend on context and after purchase meaning. In Thai night markets, spontaneous purchases are often low in risk, rich in sensory cues, socially embedded, and connected to food, browsing, discovery, affordability, and bargain recognition. When an unplanned purchase is remembered as enjoyable, useful, fair, culturally embedded, or surprising, it may become part of the positive memory structure of the visit rather than a source of regret.

Cognitive dissonance reduction offers a complementary explanation for this pattern. Festinger's (1957) dissonance theory holds that an unplanned purchase can create tension between a person's self-concept as a reasoned decision-maker and the spontaneity of the act itself, and that this tension is commonly resolved through post-purchase self-justification, in which the decision, and by extension the setting in which it occurred, is reinterpreted in more favourable terms to restore consistency. Recent evidence supports this mechanism directly: You and Jeong (2026) found that consumers with a stronger impulse-buying tendency reported substantially higher post-purchase self-justification than less impulsive consumers, with a large effect size, indicating that rationalisation intensifies rather than merely accompanies impulsive purchasing. Applied to the present findings, dissonance reduction would suggest that visitors do not simply remember an unplanned purchase positively because the experience was inherently pleasant; they may actively construct that positive interpretation, and extend it to the market as a whole, in order to justify having deviated from planned or rational shopping behaviour. This account is not incompatible with the positive-memory explanation offered above; dissonance reduction may

be one specific psychological route through which an unplanned purchase becomes woven into a favourable evaluation of the visit. The present cross-sectional survey design cannot separate genuine positive experience from retrospective rationalisation, since both would manifest identically in self-reported revisit intention and word-of-mouth. Distinguishing between these accounts would require experimental manipulation of purchase planning or a direct measure of post-purchase dissonance, which we leave for future work to pursue.

This pattern points to a process through which impulse buying connects hedonic value with loyalty intentions. Hedonic value becomes more consequential for stated revisit and word-of-mouth intentions when it is converted into a concrete purchasing episode. The non-significant direct effects of hedonic value on revisit intention and word-of-mouth intention suggest that enjoyment alone may be too diffuse to produce loyalty intentions in a setting where eating, browsing, bargaining, and purchasing occur simultaneously. Impulse buying appears to give that enjoyment a behavioural anchor. For revisit intention, a successful spontaneous purchase may create discovery satisfaction, where visitors remember the market as a place that can produce unexpected but worthwhile finds. For word-of-mouth intention, the same purchase may become a narrative anchor because visitors can share what they unexpectedly found, bought, tasted, or discovered. This interpretation is consistent with customer experience research showing that experiences become more consequential when consolidated through concrete actions (Verhoef et al., 2009), and with word-of-mouth research showing that memorable and narratable experiences are more likely to be shared socially (Litvin et al., 2008). Thus, impulse buying should not be read as evidence of behavioural loyalty. Rather, in this authentic and consumption intensive market setting, it appears to provide a behavioural bridge through which hedonic value becomes more salient for reported revisit and word-of-mouth intentions.

The direct path from utilitarian value to revisit intention, supporting H4b, was significant but considerably weaker than the impulse buying path to revisit intention, supporting H6a. The cognitive case for returning, in which the market works and delivers practical value, exists but on its own is a weaker pull than the behavioural route created through impulse buying. Interestingly, utilitarian value predicted word-of-mouth intention, supporting H4c, more strongly than revisit intention. This points to an asymmetry between the social and personal dimensions of functional satisfaction: visitors may be more willing to share a credible, targeted recommendation with someone who has similar practical needs than to personally commit to returning based on a cognitively satisfying but emotionally unremarkable trip. A similar asymmetry was reported by Zeqiri et al. (2023), who found that perceived value exerted a stronger effect on electronic word-of-mouth than on repurchase intention among online shoppers, suggesting that functionally grounded value may translate more readily into a communicable recommendation than into a personal commitment to return.

H5 was not supported, as perceived crowding did not moderate the relationship between hedonic value and revisit intention. This result should not be treated simply as a failed hypothesis. Perceived crowding reflects visitors' subjective appraisal of density rather than objective crowd size (Eroglu et al., 2005; Machleit et al., 2000). In Thai night markets, density may sometimes signal liveliness, popularity, and social atmosphere, which are central to positive night tourism experiences (Li et al., 2022; Ruan et al., 2023). One plausible, though untested, explanation is visitor habituation. Many respondents were frequent domestic night market visitors, so they may have normalised crowding as part of the expected market atmosphere rather than interpreting it as a barrier to returning. Viewed alongside the stronger path from utilitarian value to impulse buying, this finding suggests that familiar visitors may remain cognitively oriented toward price fairness, product usefulness, and practical purchase opportunities even in dense settings. Thus, crowding may not weaken return intention when density is expected, while utilitarian cues continue to support spontaneous purchasing

through rapid value recognition (Iyer et al., 2020). Crowding may be more disruptive for first time, international, or less frequent visitors (Miah et al., 2025; Papadopoulou et al., 2023). This habituation explanation is consistent with Papadopoulou et al.'s (2023) finding that visitors with high tolerance for social density assessed crowding more positively and reported higher satisfaction than those with low tolerance, indicating that the present sample's frequent-visitor composition may similarly explain why crowding did not weaken the hedonic value-to-revisit-intention link.

This familiarity-based account also invites a further question of whether crowding perceptions, as distinct from objective density, vary systematically across different night markets or visit occasions, rather than reflecting a single stable relationship between density and discomfort. Perceived crowding is shaped by site-specific and temporal context, not only by visitor disposition: spatially restricted layouts intensify crowding perceptions even when objective density is moderate, whereas open, dispersed layouts can mitigate crowding perceptions despite high visitor volumes, and these effects vary systematically with a destination's spatial constraints, environmental predictability, and typology (Chvirova et al., 2026). Thai night markets plausibly differ in comparable ways: a market with narrow aisles and densely packed stalls may generate stronger crowding perceptions at a given visitor count than a more spacious market with wider walkways, and the same market may be perceived quite differently on a weekday evening than during a weekend peak, when both objective density and visitors' expectations for busyness differ. Because the present sample pooled visitors reporting on markets and visit occasions in general, rather than a single controlled market and time, such spatial or temporal heterogeneity in the density-to-crowding relationship could not be examined here and may have been averaged out in the null moderation result. Comparing crowding's moderating role across markets that differ in physical layout, or across visit times that differ in expected busyness, would be a natural extension of the familiarity-based account offered above.

The present model tested crowding as a moderator of a single path, hedonic value's translation into revisit intention, but this was a scope decision rather than a claim that crowding is irrelevant elsewhere in the model. The strongest candidate for an untested interaction is the utilitarian-value-to-impulse-buying path, which was also the strongest path in the model overall. That path was interpreted above through a dual-process lens, in which crowded, sensorially dense surroundings impose a cognitive load that favours fast, heuristic recognition of value over slower deliberation (Chaiken, 1980; Kahneman, 2011). Because crowding itself is a further source of cognitive load, it plausibly does not simply weaken this path but could amplify it: denser conditions may leave visitors with even less capacity for extended cost-benefit reasoning, strengthening their reliance on rapid value heuristics such as "the price looks fair, so buy it now" (Iyer et al., 2020; Machleit et al., 2000). A parallel case can be made for hedonic value's path to impulse buying, where crowding could interact with arousal rather than with deliberation, either intensifying excitement in a lively, well-tolerated market or tipping into discomfort in a poorly tolerated one (Eroglu et al., 2022). Because the present model specified crowding as a moderator only for hedonic value's link to revisit intention, these alternative interactions could not be tested here, and the null result reported for H5 should not be read as evidence that crowding is inert elsewhere in the model. Testing crowding as a moderator of the value-to-impulse-buying paths is a direct and testable extension of the present design.

The null result may also reflect a curvilinear rather than a linear relationship between crowding and hedonic value. Rather than a uniformly negative effect, moderate crowding may enhance hedonic value by signalling liveliness and social energy, while excessive crowding erodes it once density interferes with movement and comfort. This pattern has direct precedent in festival tourism research: Cheng et al. (2021) found that perceived human crowding related to festival experience in an inverted-U shape, improving experience at moderate levels

before declining at high levels, whereas perceived spatial crowding, reflecting restricted movement rather than the presence of people, related to experience negatively throughout. This distinction is relevant to the present null finding. The crowding measure used here, following Machleit et al. (2000), does not separate human crowding from spatial crowding; if these two facets pull hedonic value in different directions at different points along the density continuum, they could partially offset one another within a single aggregate score. Compounding this, the present model tested crowding's moderating role using a linear interaction term, which is not designed to detect a curvilinear relationship: a genuine inverted-U effect could register as a weak or null linear interaction even where crowding's influence on hedonic value is systematic. Explicitly modelling a quadratic crowding term, or separating human from spatial crowding as Cheng et al. (2021) did, would be a natural next step for testing this possibility in Thai night markets.

The supported paths from H7a to H8b clarify that impulse buying plays two different mediating roles in the model. For hedonic value, the significant indirect effects on revisit intention and word-of-mouth intention indicate an indirect only mechanism: enjoyment did not directly generate loyalty intentions, but became consequential when converted into a concrete purchasing episode. This suggests that in Thai night markets, affective value may remain psychologically salient yet behaviourally diffuse unless it is anchored in an unplanned purchase that leaves a memory, possession, or story. This differs from dining and hospitality contexts where hedonic value has been found to directly support revisit and recommendation intentions (Ha & Jang, 2010b; Ryu et al., 2010). For utilitarian value, the stronger indirect effects indicate a broader mechanism. Because utilitarian value also had direct effects on revisit and word-of-mouth intention, impulse buying functioned as an additional behavioural route through which practical value became more vivid, memorable, and communicable. This extends prior evidence that both hedonic and utilitarian motives can trigger impulse buying (Iyer et al., 2020), by showing that in a consumption intensive night market setting, functionally justified spontaneous purchases generate especially strong downstream intention effects.

A few theoretical implications follow from these results. Impulse buying, in this model, functions less as an endpoint and more as the behavioural link between value states and loyalty-related intentions, which informs how S-O-R may be applied in market tourism going forward. Food authenticity and night tourscape also seem to work as a pair here, jointly building hedonic value rather than each doing so on its own. For utilitarian value, fairness carries more weight than access: visitors seem to care less about whether wholesale pricing exists and more about whether the deal feels fair. The crowding result is worth flagging too, since it pushes back against treating density as an automatic negative; how much it matters appears to depend on how familiar and tolerant visitors already are. These implications map onto the three gaps set out in the Introduction: the stimulus-integration gap is addressed by showing that all four stimuli, food authenticity, night tourscape, wholesale accessibility, and price fairness, operate together within one model rather than in isolation; the impulse-buying gap is addressed by its role as a behavioural mechanism rather than a terminal outcome; and the crowding gap is addressed by showing that crowding's effect may not be uniform, with familiarity as a plausible but untested boundary condition warranting direct examination. Section 6.1 elaborates these points further, along with the different paths hedonic and utilitarian value take toward post-visit outcomes.

6. Implications

6.1. Theoretical implications

This study contributes to consumer psychology and tourism behaviour research in six interconnected ways. These contributions are best understood as contextually bounded refinements rather than broad claims of theoretical reconfiguration. The emphasis is on how visitors

process market stimuli affectively and cognitively, and how these internal states are translated into impulse buying and stated post-visit intentions.

First, the study refines the application of the S-O-R framework to market tourism by positioning impulse buying as a sequential behavioural mechanism between organism level value states and loyalty related intentions. Prior S-O-R applications in tourism and retail often treat impulse buying as a final behavioural outcome. The present findings suggest that, in Thai night markets, impulse buying may also function as a bridge between value experience and post-visit behavioural intentions. This does not change the general logic of S-O-R theory. Rather, it shows that in tourism settings where consumption is central to the experience, behavioural responses may unfold in sequence, with one response helping shape later intentions.

Second, the study enriches the night tourscape literature by locating atmospheric nocturnal cues within a dual value organism structure. Prior night tourscape research has established that nocturnal atmosphere can generate positive affective responses (Li et al., 2022; Ruan et al., 2023). The present model extends this understanding by showing that night tourscape operates alongside food authenticity as a complementary antecedent of hedonic value. This indicates that night market atmosphere should not be treated as an isolated environmental feature. Its experiential value emerges as part of a broader stimulus system in which culinary authenticity and nocturnal ambience jointly shape visitors' affective evaluations.

Third, the findings refine understanding of the relationship between hedonic value and loyalty related intentions in market tourism. The non-significant direct effects of hedonic value on revisit intention and word-of-mouth intention suggest that enjoyment alone may not always be sufficient to support revisit and word-of-mouth intentions in settings where purchasing is central to the visitor experience. This does not mean that prior hedonic value and loyalty intention models are incorrect. Instead, the findings suggest that such models may be under specified in tourism contexts centred on consumption if they omit impulse buying as a possible intervening mechanism. In Thai night markets, hedonic value appears to create the conditions for impulse buying, while impulse buying may provide a behavioural anchor through which enjoyment becomes more memorable and communicable at the level of stated revisit and word-of-mouth intentions.

Fourth, the study contributes to utilitarian value theory by showing that price fairness exerts a stronger influence on utilitarian value than wholesale accessibility. This finding is theoretically meaningful because Thai night markets are strongly associated with low prices and wholesale shopping. Yet visitors' functional evaluations depended more strongly on whether prices felt fair than on the mere availability of wholesale priced goods. The result supports a relational interpretation of utilitarian value. Consumers evaluate not only whether a market provides practical access to products, but also whether the exchange feels justified, proportionate, and fair.

Fifth, the null crowding moderation finding refines understanding of the boundary conditions of perceived crowding in market tourism. Prior research has often treated crowding as a factor that weakens tourist satisfaction, destination evaluation, and loyalty (Miah et al., 2025; Papadopoulou et al., 2023). The present findings suggest a more context specific interpretation. Perceived crowding did not weaken the relationship between hedonic value and revisit intention among domestic Thai night market visitors, indicating that crowdedness may not automatically prevent enjoyable experiences from becoming intentions to return. This may be because many respondents were frequent visitors who had normalised market density as part of the expected night market atmosphere. Consistent with retail crowding research, the effect of crowding may depend on visitors' tolerance, expectations, and shopping motivations (Eroglu et al., 2005; Machleit et al., 2000). Theoretically, this suggests that crowding should not be modelled as a universally negative moderator. Its effect may be more visible among first-time visitors, international tourists, or less frequent domestic visitors for

whom dense market environments are less familiar and potentially more disruptive.

Sixth, the mediation findings reveal two theoretically meaningful asymmetries that refine impulse buying theory in tourism contexts. The indirect mechanism of hedonic value contrasts with the complementary mechanism of utilitarian value, indicating that affective and cognitive value states reach loyalty related outcomes through structurally different psychological processes. Hedonic value required behavioural enactment through impulse buying to produce consequences at the intention level, whereas utilitarian value retained direct predictive power alongside the impulse buying route because a positively resolved functional appraisal already carries a cognitive rationale for return and recommendation. In addition, the indirect effects on word-of-mouth intention were larger than those on revisit intention across both value routes, suggesting that impulse buying may be more consequential for social communication than for personal return commitment. This pattern was especially pronounced for utilitarian value. Together, these asymmetries indicate that hedonic and utilitarian value differ not only as antecedents of impulse buying, but also in the downstream consequences of the purchases they help generate. This distinction deserves closer attention in mediation models of tourism settings where consumption is central to the visitor experience.

6.2. Applied psychological implications

The findings offer applied psychological implications for tourism destination managers, food vendors, market operators, and cultural policymakers. These implications are best understood as strategies for shaping visitors' perceptions, emotions, cognitive appraisals, and memory formation, rather than as broad destination management prescriptions. Consistent with the core theoretical contribution described in the Introduction, the recommendations below translate the psychological mechanisms identified in Sections 4 and 5 into applied guidance, presented here as a secondary, practice-facing contribution rather than as the study's central claim. The recommendations also differ in their type of support. Where a recommendation follows directly from a significant path in the tested model (e.g., food authenticity's role in hedonic value, or utilitarian value's role in impulse buying), it reflects an empirically demonstrated relationship. Where a recommendation draws on external theory or evidence not measured in this study, such as processing fluency, cognitive availability, EEG-based layout research, or memory consolidation mechanisms, it is offered as a theory-informed suggestion for future testing, not a direct implication of the present findings.

First, tourism destination managers and market operators should manage authenticity as a visible and sensory experience, not only as a branding claim. Since food authenticity was the strongest driver of hedonic value, markets should make culinary tradition directly observable through open cooking, recognisable preparation methods, locally meaningful ingredients, and vendor storytelling. Authenticity cues can be integrated into stall design, signage, and visitor routes so that visitors can see, smell, and understand the cultural basis of the food experience. This is important because authenticity becomes emotionally powerful when visitors perceive it as embodied and culturally grounded, rather than merely advertised.

Second, food vendors should design purchase encounters that reduce both affective and cognitive friction. The findings show that impulse buying is shaped by both hedonic value and utilitarian value, with utilitarian value exerting the stronger effect. Vendors can therefore encourage low-risk spontaneous purchases through small tasting portions, clear product displays, visible freshness cues, transparent prices, and simple explanations of product value. These strategies make impulse purchases feel enjoyable and justifiable at the same time. In Thai night markets, impulse buying should not be treated as a purely emotional reaction, but as a response that emerges when pleasure, usefulness, freshness, affordability, and fairness converge at the point of encounter.

These recommendations can be sharpened, in theory, using processing fluency and cognitive availability as design principles drawn from cognitive psychology rather than tested in the present data. Because value-justified impulse buying operates through rapid heuristic recognition rather than deliberate calculation (see Section 5), vendors benefit from making the value judgment itself easy to process at a glance: round, easily computed prices (for example, 100 THB rather than 97 THB), high figure-ground contrast on price tags so they are legible from browsing distance, and consistent signage formats across stalls all increase processing fluency, and fluently processed information is judged as more trustworthy and higher in value almost automatically (Reber et al., 2004). Cognitive availability can be used in a similar way: a simple reference point, such as a crossed-out original price beside a discounted one, or bundled pricing (for example, “3 for 100” rather than unit pricing), makes the fairness judgment immediately available without requiring the visitor to calculate or compare it themselves (Tversky & Kahneman, 1973). Because these cues pre-compute the value judgment for the visitor rather than requiring them to work it out, they shorten the path from noticing a product to acting on it, which is precisely the mechanism through which utilitarian value was found to drive impulse buying.

Third, municipal authorities and tourism boards should manage crowd atmosphere as a psychological experience rather than only a spatial problem. The non-significant moderation effect of perceived crowding suggests that frequent domestic visitors may normalise market density as part of the expected atmosphere. However, this does not mean that crowding is irrelevant. Authorities should preserve the lively and festive atmosphere that makes night markets attractive, while preventing density from becoming tiring or restrictive for movement. Practical measures include clearer walking routes, queue zones, stall spacing guidelines, visible rest points, and monitoring visitor comfort across peak and less busy periods. The objective is not to remove crowds, but to maintain a level of social energy that feels lively rather than stressful. Market design itself can be tuned to favour automatic or deliberate processing, and this choice should be made intentionally rather than left to chance. Layout complexity is a plausible further lever, though untested here: EEG-based evidence from other retail contexts shows that more visually complex layouts increase cognitive workload in spatial-processing brain regions and reduce product recall, even when shoppers do not consciously notice the added complexity (Kalandari et al., 2023). A market with a single, legible central walkway and clearly grouped stalls reduces the cognitive effort visitors spend on navigation, but this reduction does not necessarily translate into more deliberate purchase evaluation; freed cognitive capacity in a sensorially rich environment may simply be redirected toward faster, automatic recognition of value cues, consistent with the dual-process account developed in Section 5. Conversely, a maze-like layout with dense, disorganised stall clustering consumes cognitive resources through wayfinding alone, leaving even less capacity for deliberation and further tilting behaviour toward heuristic, automatic purchasing. Market designers seeking a lively but navigable atmosphere should therefore aim for legible circulation routes combined with sensorially dense, closely spaced stalls within each route segment, a layout that is easy to move through but rich to encounter, rather than one that is either chaotic or sparsely arranged. This mirrors the inverted-U logic discussed for crowding above, applied here to spatial design rather than visitor density.

Fourth, cultural policymakers should protect the cultural distinctiveness of night markets while avoiding excessive standardisation. As markets become more commercialised, there is a risk that food authenticity and nocturnal ambience become diluted into generic tourist products. Policy support could include vendor training on local culinary heritage, incentives for traditional preparation methods, recognition schemes for culturally grounded vendors, and guidelines that preserve local food narratives without turning the market into a staged heritage display. This would help maintain the psychological value of authenticity as something visitors experience directly, rather than as a

superficial marketing label.

Fifth, tourism communicators and digital content creators should design experiential marketing around memory and narrative. Since impulse buying was strongly associated with stated revisit and word-of-mouth intentions, communication strategies should invite visitors to share unexpected finds, spontaneous purchases, surprising food discoveries, and memorable sensory moments. Campaigns should not only promote attractions, prices, or locations, but also encourage visitors to narrate what they felt, noticed, bought, tasted, and remembered. Such strategies can make word-of-mouth more psychologically authentic because they foreground the visitor's own discovery experience rather than relying only on generic promotional messages.

Sixth, the mediation findings suggest that purchase encounters in Thai night markets should be designed to strengthen experiential anchoring and narrative communicability. Because impulse buying translates value into revisit and word-of-mouth intentions through distinct psychological routes, interventions should target both affective engagement and cognitive justification at the point of purchase. For the hedonic route, enjoyment that does not culminate in a purchasing act may remain psychologically vivid but behaviourally incomplete. Vendors should therefore create conditions in which affective engagement and accessible purchase opportunities coincide, for example by placing approachable, low-involvement items within sensory rich or culturally distinctive areas of the market. For the utilitarian route, the larger indirect effect on word-of-mouth intention suggests that spontaneous purchases become more socially transmissible when their practical value is easy to articulate. Transparent pricing, visible value indicators, and credible quality signals can help visitors explain why an unplanned purchase was worthwhile, thereby increasing the likelihood that the purchase becomes a basis for recommendation rather than merely a private positive experience.

The following consolidation-based recommendations extend beyond the model's tested paths and are offered as directions for future intervention research. Memory consolidation offers a more precise lever than a general appeal to memorable experiences, resting on three dissociable parameters rather than overall pleasantness. First, consolidation strength depends on arousal timing: noradrenergic arousal strengthens memory when it occurs at or shortly after encoding, becoming ineffective once several hours have elapsed, so ambient atmosphere diffused across a visit fails to tag any single purchase (McGaugh, 2000). A bounded arousal cue at the moment of exchange, such as a performative flourish at handover, concentrates that signal where encoding occurs and should outperform ambient intensity alone. Second, encoding strength depends on an item's contrast with co-encoded items, not its absolute salience (Hunt, 1995): similar adjacent stalls reduce any purchase's relative distinctiveness regardless of its own presentation, while sequencing stalls to vary category, modality, or visual profile increases this contrast and strengthens encoding without altering the purchase itself. Third, consolidation continues through post-encoding reactivation (McGaugh, 2000): a purchase with no retrievable trace decays along its natural forgetting curve, whereas a physical retrieval cue, a distinctive wrapping or stamped card, raises the odds of spontaneous reactivation, each instance adding further consolidation. This yields a testable prediction: purchases anchored to a retained physical object should show a stronger relationship with word-of-mouth than purchases without one.

7. Conclusions

This study shows that Thai night market visitors' post-visit intentions are shaped by both value experience and purchasing action. Food authenticity is the strongest driver of hedonic value, while price fairness contributes more strongly than wholesale accessibility to utilitarian value. These results directly answer RQ1: food authenticity and night tourscape shape hedonic value, while wholesale accessibility and price fairness shape utilitarian value, confirming that affective and cognitive-

evaluative stimuli operate through distinct pathways. Hedonic value does not directly predict revisit intention or word-of-mouth intention, but influences both outcomes through impulse buying. Utilitarian value, by contrast, affects these outcomes both directly and indirectly through impulse buying, with stronger indirect effects than the hedonic route. These findings indicate that impulse buying functions as a behavioural mechanism through which value states become more memorable and consequential for loyalty intentions. These results answer [RQ2](#): impulse buying mediates the effects of both value states on revisit intention and word-of-mouth, though more consequentially through the utilitarian pathway. Perceived crowding does not moderate the relationship between hedonic value and revisit intention, suggesting that frequent domestic visitors may interpret crowding as part of the expected night market atmosphere rather than as a barrier to returning. This finding directly answers [RQ3](#): perceived crowding does not moderate the hedonic value-to-revisit-intention relationship in this domestic visitor sample. Overall, the study offers a contextually bounded psychological account of how affective value, cognitive value, and spontaneous purchasing jointly shape post-visit intentions in Thai night markets.

8. Limitations and future research

First, impulse buying was measured as a single aggregate construct, although it may involve affective and cognitive subtypes. The stronger path from utilitarian value to impulse buying suggests that cognitive impulse buying may be especially relevant in Thai night markets, where visitors actively evaluate products, prices, and practical value while browsing. Future studies should separate affective and cognitive impulse buying and examine whether spontaneous purchases produce satisfaction, regret, guilt, or memory attachment depending on whether they are later evaluated as useful, fair, enjoyable, or low-risk. Because the sample mainly consisted of repeated domestic visitors, the proposed sequential role of impulse buying should be tested further across other tourism markets, visitor types, and cultural settings.

Second, the non-significant moderating effect of perceived crowding should be interpreted in light of the sample composition. More than half of the respondents had visited Thai night markets more than twelve times in the previous six months, meaning the data largely captured visitors who were already familiar with dense market environments. For these visitors, crowding may have been normalised as part of the market atmosphere, which may explain why it did not weaken the relationship between hedonic value and revisit intention. Future research should compare first-time visitors, international tourists, infrequent domestic visitors, and habitual visitors within the same market settings and time periods. This would clarify whether crowding becomes a stronger barrier to revisit intention when density is less familiar or when visitor tolerance is lower.

Third, the downstream outcomes in this study are self-reported revisit intention and word-of-mouth intention, measured through a single cross-sectional survey. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as evidence of associations among stated intentions rather than actual behavioural loyalty. Although the results suggest that impulse buying may help connect value experiences to stated post-visit intentions, they do not demonstrate that impulse buying produces repeat visitation or actual recommendation behaviour over time. Future research should combine survey responses with longitudinal tracking, behavioural revisit data, transaction records, or observed online word-of-mouth to examine whether the pathways identified here translate into actual loyalty behaviour.

Fourth, several constructs ([Table 2](#)) were operationalised using items adapted from more than one established source rather than a single validated instrument. Although convergent validity and reliability results ([Table 4](#)) indicate that each resulting item set converged as one coherent factor, adapting scales from more than one source remains a limitation relative to using a single validated instrument throughout, and cannot fully rule out subtle conceptual differences between the

source studies. Future research should, where possible, replicate this model using single-source scales validated specifically within night market or similar retail-tourism settings to further confirm the conceptual consistency of the present findings.

Fifth, social desirability bias is distinct from the cross-sectional limitation above: it concerns response distortion, not causal inference, and likely affects constructs asymmetrically. Impulse buying and word-of-mouth intention carry more self-presentation content than the antecedent value constructs, since both require characterising one's own conduct rather than rating an external stimulus. Direction cannot be signed with confidence: impulse buying may be under-reported where spontaneity signals poor self-control, or over-reported where it is normatively valued; word-of-mouth intention skews toward inflation regardless, since expressing willingness to recommend costs the respondent nothing. This is not resolved by the common method bias diagnostics in Section 3.4, which test variance shared uniformly across constructs and would miss inflation concentrated on these two, which occupy mediating and outcome positions central to the model. Future research should include a validated social desirability covariate or indirect elicitation methods for the most exposed items.

Sixth, the sample's skew toward frequent visitors (52.67% with more than twelve visits in six months) limits generalizability beyond the crowding-specific point already noted. The dual-process account offered for the utilitarian-value-to-impulse-buying path assumes a well-learned value criterion that permits rapid heuristic recognition; this criterion is itself a product of repeated exposure. First-time or infrequent visitors, lacking this accumulated reference, may evaluate wholesale accessibility and price fairness through slower, more deliberative processing, weakening or restructuring the strongest path in the model rather than merely altering the null crowding effect. The present design cannot distinguish a stable population effect from an artifact of visit-frequency composition. Future research should stratify by visit frequency directly, testing whether the heuristic mechanism proposed here is conditional on prior market experience rather than a general feature of utilitarian valuation. This qualification is not confined to the strongest structural path: because impulse buying is the mediating mechanism connecting value states to revisit intention and word-of-mouth intention throughout the model, the mediation results in [Table 8](#) carry the same composition-dependent caveat.

Finally, the sample's skew toward female respondents (67.18%) raises a distinct generalizability question. Consumer research reports recurring, if mixed, gender differences in the relative weighting of hedonic and utilitarian shopping motives. If such differences hold here, the stronger utilitarian-to-impulse-buying path, the study's most consequential result, may partly reflect sample composition rather than a general feature of value-driven impulse buying. Gender was not modelled as a moderator, so the present design cannot separate a population-level effect from a composition artifact. Future research should test gender directly as a moderator of the hedonic and utilitarian pathways to establish whether the observed asymmetry holds across a more balanced sample. Because this pathway anchors the study's central claim that impulse buying mediates value states and loyalty intentions, confirming its stability across a more balanced sample is a necessary step before the reconceptualisation proposed here can be generalised beyond the present, predominantly female sample.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Adi Prasetyo Tedjakusuma: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Conceptualization. **Waiphot Kulachai:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Validation, Supervision, Software, Resources, Methodology, Formal analysis, Data curation.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

During the preparation of this work, the author(s) used ChatGPT and Grammarly to improve the language and identify recurring grammatical errors in the manuscript. After using these tools, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the published article.

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Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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Interpersonal synchrony, empathy, musical interaction, children, social development, music

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Human Behavior, Consumer and Tourists Psychology and Behavior, Pro-environmental Behavior, Sustainability, Waste Behavior, Tourism & Hospitality, Management, Business Marketing, Behavioral Change, Organization Behavior

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Psychopathology, psychopharmacology, neurobiology of major affective disorders and suicidal behavior, neuroimaging, Early interventions in Psychiatry

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Social Cognition and Social Reasoning, Moral Development, Child Care, Pre-K, and School Readiness

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Children extend minds and internal states to inanimate nature and technologies, such as rocks and robots -- and the consequences of doing so. How does their conception of others' minds inform their learning for example, determining who might be a good source of knowledge and their moral judgments for example, determining whether one has moral standing or can be held morally accountable.

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The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China

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Neuropsychology, Special Educational Needs, Cognitive Function

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Social-cognitive development

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Educational Research, Leadership, Higher Education, Education Demography, Physical Education

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Social psychology, pedagogy, education, psychotherapy

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Leadership, Team, Multilevel Study, Longitudinal Study, Emotion, People Analytics

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media use, media effects, social media, entertainment

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