

# How Halal Destination Attribute and Social Media Drive Tourists' Revisit Intention?

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## Abstract

*This study examines the influence of halal destination attributes (HDA) and social media marketing (SMM) on tourists' revisit intention (REV), with trust (TRU) acting as a mediating variable. Set in the context of domestic Muslim tourism, the study examines how travelers' perceptions of halal-compliant services and their digital engagement shape their behavioral intentions. A quantitative survey was conducted involving 200 domestic tourists who visited halal tourism destinations and relied on social media for recommendations. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Findings indicate that both HDA and SMM play important roles in building trust, which in turn strengthens tourists' intention to revisit. The results suggest that trust functions as a key link between destination experience and future travel behavior. Halal-friendly services—such as clear halal certification, prayer facilities, and gender-appropriate amenities—combined with engaging social media content, help build confidence and loyalty among Muslim travelers. This research offers practical implications for destination managers, particularly in Muslim-majority regions. To encourage repeat visits, they must ensure that each touchpoint not only meets halal standards but also effectively communicates value on social media. The study contributes to the growing literature on halal tourism by highlighting trust as a central mechanism that connects destination quality and marketing efforts with sustained tourist engagement.*

**Keywords:** Halal Destination Attribute, Social Media Marketing, Trust, Revisit Intention.

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become a vital engine for global economic development, with increasing emphasis placed on destination sustainability and long-term visitor engagement. One key indicator of a destination's resilience is tourists' intention to revisit, which reflects satisfaction, loyalty, and sustained interest (Sharpley, 2020; Akgün et al., 2020). Among Muslim travelers, revisit intention is shaped not only by service quality but also by the alignment of tourism experiences with Islamic values, including halal compliance, modesty, and spiritual fulfillment (Kandampully et al., 2022; Mursid, 2023).

The halal tourism sector has expanded rapidly in response to growing demand for destinations offering Muslim-friendly facilities, such as halal-certified food, prayer spaces, gender-sensitive services, and Sharia-compliant accommodations. Previous studies show that the emotional value generated by such facilities significantly affects revisit intention, whereas functional value alone may not suffice (Mursid, 2023; Hasan, 2024). This highlights the need for destinations to cultivate a sense of trust, comfort, and cultural affinity.

At the same time, social media platforms have revolutionized how tourists make decisions, particularly among younger generations such as Gen Z. Tourists now rely heavily on user-generated content, influencers, and online reviews when evaluating a destination. Social Media Marketing (SMM) thus emerges as a crucial channel for building destination trust, which has been identified as a key mediator linking destination image, service quality, and satisfaction to behavioral outcomes such as revisit intention (Ibrahim et al., 2021; Siregar et al., 2021).

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Despite growing interest, there remains a research gap in understanding how Halal Destination Attributes (HDA) and SMM interact to influence revisit intention through trust formation. Many existing studies explore these elements in isolation or fail to integrate them within a comprehensive theoretical model. Moreover, while theories such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Spiritual Marketing offer valuable frameworks, few studies clearly operationalize them in the context of halal tourism. This study addresses that gap by proposing and testing a conceptual model that integrates HDA and SMM as antecedents of trust, which in turn influences revisit intention. The research focuses on domestic Muslim tourists in Indonesia, particularly Gen Z travelers, and contributes to both theory and practice by highlighting trust as a central mechanism for building long-term engagement with halal tourism destinations.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Halal Destination Attributes***

Halal tourism has emerged as a distinct, rapidly growing segment of the global tourism industry, catering to Muslim travelers seeking destinations that align with Islamic principles. A key element of halal destination attributes (HDA) is a halal-friendly environment that encompasses both physical facilities and the social and cultural setting. These include not only halal-certified food and accessible prayer spaces, but also gender-sensitive amenities and service staff who understand and respect Islamic values (Chrismardani & Arief, 2022; Muflihin et al., 2023). A halal destination must offer more than just functional compliance; it must cultivate a sense of emotional security and spiritual comfort for Muslim travelers (Rahmawati et al., 2021). The presence of culturally inclusive interpersonal interactions and local acceptance further enhances the destination's appeal, contributing to greater tourist satisfaction and a stronger intention to return.

Moreover, halal tourism can be positioned within the broader framework of spiritual tourism, where travel experiences are designed to foster spiritual growth and religious fulfillment (Purusottama & Wijanarti, 2022). Features such as halal dining, Sharia-compliant accommodations, and religious programming support the deepening of personal faith during travel (Hameed et al., 2022). As (Ruzulan et al., 2023) emphasize, accommodation providers play a critical role in ensuring that the spiritual needs of Muslim travelers are holistically addressed. In this sense, HDA does not function merely as a checklist of facilities but as a driver of trust and emotional connection—key factors that can strengthen loyalty and revisit intention.

### ***Social Media Marketing***

Social Media Marketing (SMM) has transformed how destinations communicate with potential tourists, enabling two-way interaction through platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. More than a promotional tool, SMM serves as a space where trust can be cultivated through transparent engagement, peer-generated content, and influencer narratives (Zanjabila et al., 2023). SMM plays a pivotal role in shaping tourist perceptions, particularly among digitally native generations such as Gen Z. The integration of influencer marketing further amplifies its impact; influencers act as trust agents by sharing authentic experiences that resonate with their audiences (Musiwiwa & Jacobson, 2023). Compared to traditional advertising, this form of marketing is perceived as more credible and emotionally engaging. In the context of halal tourism, SMM also facilitates the dissemination of information related to halal standards, destination offerings, and community experiences. It allows Muslim travelers to evaluate a destination's alignment with their religious values before making decisions. Thus, SMM not only influences destination awareness but also contributes to trust formation, a crucial factor in revisiting behavior.

### ***Trust***

Trust is a foundational construct in consumer behavior and plays a central role in tourism decision-making. It is typically defined as the willingness to be vulnerable to another party, based on positive expectations of that party's behavior (Amina & Warraich, 2022). In the tourism context, trust reflects perceptions of reliability, safety, service quality, and the credibility of promotional information. Trust becomes particularly salient when tourists evaluate intangible services in unfamiliar environments. It helps reduce perceived risks and enhances confidence in both the destination and the information received. Notably, electronic word of mouth (eWOM), such as reviews or testimonials on social media, has been shown to influence tourist trust (Adom, 2023) significantly. In halal tourism, trust encompasses confidence not only in service quality but also in the religious integrity of the destination. Previous positive experiences, the consistency of halal services, and transparent communication contribute to building this trust, which then mediates the relationship between destination attributes and revisit intention.

### **Revisit Intention**

Revisit intention refers to a tourist's willingness or likelihood to return to a destination in the future. It is a critical metric for measuring tourist loyalty and the long-term sustainability of a tourism destination. Compared to attracting new visitors, retaining existing tourists is more cost-effective and likely to generate positive word-of-mouth, which further enhances destination image and trust (Wantara & Irawati, 2021; Fan et al., 2023). In the halal tourism context, revisit intention is shaped by a combination of emotional satisfaction, religious comfort, and perceived alignment with Islamic values. A destination that delivers a fulfilling experience—both spiritually and socially—is more likely to be recommended and revisited, especially by Muslim travelers. This loyalty loop contributes to economic resilience and brand strength in increasingly competitive tourism markets.

### **Halal Destination Attribute, Trust, and Revisit Intention**

Several studies have investigated the relationship between halal destination attributes and revisit intention. While some research confirms a positive link (Akter & Hasan, 2023; Han et al., 2019), others report inconclusive or non-significant effects (Hasan, 2024; Wibawa et al., 2023). These inconsistencies suggest the presence of mediating factors, with trust emerging as a plausible mechanism. Trust, as proposed by (Amalia & Gunawan, 2022; Han et al., 2021), is often formed through consistent and authentic delivery of halal-compliant services and significantly shapes revisit behavior (Ardani, 2021; Poon & Koay, 2021). Hypothesis 1 is therefore proposed:

*H1: Halal destination attributes positively affect tourists' revisit intention, with trust as a mediating variable.*

### **Social Media Marketing, Trust, and Revisit Intention**

The role of social media marketing in influencing revisit intention has been widely explored. Some studies affirm its positive impact (BELANIO et al., 2022; Chin & Wong, 2022), while others show mixed results (Rakhmawati et al., 2024; Syafira & Nur, 2023). Similar to destination attributes, the effectiveness of SMM may be enhanced when it builds trust, acting as a bridge between digital engagement and loyalty outcomes. Research has shown that SMM enhances brand trust, which can lead to repeat visits (Gökerik, 2024; Ravishankar & Nimo, 2023). Hypothesis 2 is thus formulated:

*H2: Social media marketing positively affects tourists' revisit intention through the mediation of trust.*

## **METHODS**

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the relationships among Halal Destination Attributes (HDA), Social Media Marketing (SMM), Trust (TRU), and Revisit Intention (REV). Data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to 200 domestic Muslim tourists who had visited halal tourism destinations in East Java, Indonesia. The survey was conducted over two months from July to August 2025. A non-probability convenience sampling technique was applied due to the ease of access to respondents in various tourism areas. While this method has limitations in terms of generalizability, it is commonly used in exploratory studies and was deemed appropriate for the research context. The sample size meets the minimum threshold for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) as suggested by (Hair et al., 2019), particularly when using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach.

All constructs in the questionnaire were measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Measurement items were adapted from established scales in prior studies, ensuring content validity: Halal Destination Attribute (HDA): (Gaffar et al., 2024); Social Media Marketing (SMM): (Gaffar et al., 2022); Trust (TRU): (Al-Ansi & Han, 2019); and Revisit Intention (REV): (Rather, 2021). For data analysis, the study utilized WarpPLS 5.0, a tool designed explicitly for PLS-based SEM analysis. This method was selected for several reasons. First, PLS-SEM is robust for small to moderate sample sizes. Second, it accommodates complex models involving mediation effects and latent constructs. Third, PLS-SEM does not require multivariate normality and is suitable for predictive research models (Hair et al., 2019). Prior to hypothesis testing, the measurement model was assessed for reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, followed by evaluation of the structural model to test the proposed relationships. Mediation effects were analyzed through the indirect path estimation provided by the PLS algorithm.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Respondents' Profile**

A total of 200 valid responses were collected from domestic Muslim tourists in East Java, Indonesia. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1. The gender distribution was skewed

toward female participants (77%), indicating a dominant representation of women in the sample. This may reflect a growing interest among Muslim women in halal tourism, possibly due to heightened awareness of modesty, safety, and religious adherence in travel planning. In terms of generational classification, the sample was overwhelmingly composed of Generation Z (90%), followed by Generation Y (6%) and Generation X (4%). The overrepresentation of Gen Z is aligned with the study's emphasis on social media marketing, as this cohort is highly active in digital spaces and tends to rely on peer-generated content and influencers when making travel decisions.

Geographically, most respondents were domiciled in East Java (95%), the primary location of the studied halal tourism destinations. A minority came from other provinces such as Jakarta, Banten, Yogyakarta, West Java, and West Sumatra. Regarding education level, 74% of respondents had a senior high school education, while 21% held undergraduate degrees. This distribution suggests a young, relatively well-educated population with sufficient digital literacy to engage with social media-based tourism content. In terms of occupation, students made up the largest group (60%), followed by private employees (18%), business owners, and others. The income profile indicates that more than half of the participants (55%) had irregular income, which may influence their travel behavior, budgeting strategies, and revisit intentions.

**Table 1. Respondents' Profile**

Category	Subcategory	n	%	Category	Subcategory	n	%
Gender	Female	154	77%	Occupation	Student	119	60%
	Male	46	23%		Private Employee	36	18%
Generation	Gen Z	180	90%		Business Owner	11	5%
	Gen Y	11	6%		Civil Servant	2	1%
	Gen X	9	4%		SOE Employee	1	0.5%
Hometown	East Java	190	95%		Military Personnel	1	0.5%
	Jakarta	3	1.5%	Income Level	Others	27	14%
	Banten	3	1.5%		Irregular	109	55%
	Yogyakarta	2	1%		Less than Minimum Wage	38	19%
	West Java	1	0.5%		Minimum Wage	9	4%
	West Sumatra	1	0.5%		More than Minimum Wage	44	22%
Education Level	Junior High School	5	2.5%				
	Senior High School	148	74%				
	Undergraduate	42	21%				
	Postgraduate	5	2.5%				

Source: Research data, 2025

The demographic characteristics of the respondents suggest that halal tourism in East Java resonates strongly with young Muslim consumers, particularly Gen Z students who are digitally literate, socially active, and highly responsive to online content. Their irregular income patterns also indicate a segment that may value budget-conscious yet value-driven travel experiences, in which trust, religious alignment, and peer reviews (via social media) become crucial in shaping revisit intentions. The dominance of female respondents might also point to gendered dimensions of halal travel, such as preferences for privacy, safety, and modesty—factors that halal destinations should strategically address.

### Measurement Model Evaluation

The measurement model was evaluated to confirm the validity and reliability of the constructs used in this study. Following the recommendations by (Hair et al., 2019), the assessment focused on convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability. Convergent validity was evaluated using factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). All retained items had factor loadings above the acceptable threshold of 0.70, and their p-values were significant at < 0.001 (see Table 2), confirming that the observed indicators appropriately represented their latent variables. Discriminant validity was tested using the Fornell–Larcker criterion, which compares the square root of AVE for each construct to its correlations with other constructs. As shown in Table 3, the square root of AVE (in bold) exceeded the corresponding inter-construct correlations, supporting discriminant validity.

**Table 2. Factor Loadings and Significance**

Construct	Item Code	Loading	p-Value	Status
Halal Destination Attribute (HDA)	HDA10 – HDA22	0.743–0.858	< 0.001	Valid
Social Media Marketing (SMM)	SMM5 – SMM14	0.732–0.826	< 0.001	Valid
Trust (TRU)	TRU1 – TRU5	0.828–0.889	< 0.001	Valid
Revisit Intention (REV)	REV1 – REV8	0.723–0.841	< 0.001	Valid

**Table 3. Discriminant Validity – Fornell–Larcker Criterion**

	HDA	SMM	TRU	REV
HDA	0.795	0.624	0.672	0.540
SMM		0.782	0.649	0.582
TRU			0.864	0.668
REV				0.785

Note: Diagonal=  $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$ . All values above inter-construct correlations.

Source: Research data, 2025

**Table 4. Construct Reliability and Collinearity Diagnostics**

Construct	Composite Reliability (CR)	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE	VIF
HDA	0.923	0.902	0.632	2.066
SMM	0.940	0.929	0.612	2.045
TRU	0.936	0.915	0.746	2.576
REV	0.927	0.910	0.616	1.953

Source: Research data, 2025

The measurement model demonstrates excellent psychometric properties. All constructs achieved adequate convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability. The AVE and CR values indicate that the items are both statistically valid and internally consistent, while VIF scores confirm that collinearity does not compromise the model. These results affirm the suitability of the measurement instruments for further analysis in the structural model stage.

#### **Model Fit and Structural Model Evaluation**

To evaluate the model's structural integrity and predictive relevance, several global fit indices were analyzed. As recommended by (Hair et al., 2019) for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), a model is considered acceptable when it meets the cut-off values for key statistical parameters, such as Average Path Coefficient (APC), Average R-Squared (ARS), and Tenenhaus Goodness of Fit (GoF). As shown in Table 5, all key indices exceeded the required thresholds, indicating a well-fitting model. The GoF value of 0.587 falls under the “large” category (GoF > 0.36), suggesting that the model explains a substantial portion of the variance in the endogenous constructs. Additionally, other fit indices such as Simpson's Paradox Ratio (SPR), R-squared Contribution Ratio (RSCR), and Statistical Suppression Ratio (SSR) achieved ideal values of 1.000, further confirming the model's statistical robustness.

**Table 5. Model Fit and Quality Indices**

Fit Index	Value	Cut-off Value	Remarks
Average Path Coefficient (APC)	$p < 0.001$	$p < 0.05$	Good Fit
Average R-squared (ARS)	$p < 0.001$	$p < 0.05$	Good Fit
Average Adjusted R-squared (AARS)	$p < 0.001$	$p < 0.05$	Good Fit
Average block VIF (AVIF)	2.072	Acceptable $\leq 5$ , ideally $\leq 3.3$	Ideal
Average Full Collinearity VIF (AFVIF)	2.160	Acceptable $\leq 5$ , ideally $\leq 3.3$	Ideal
Tenenhaus GoF (GoF)	0.587	Small $\geq 0.1$ , Medium $\geq 0.25$ , Large $\geq 0.36$	Large
Sympton's Paradox Ratio (SPR)	1.000	Acceptable $\geq 0.7$ , ideally = 1	Ideal
R-squared Contribution Ratio (RSCR)	1.000	Acceptable $\geq 0.9$ , ideally = 1	Ideal
Statistical Suppression Ratio (SSR)	1.000	Acceptable $\geq 0.7$	Good Fit
Nonlinear Bivariate Causality Direction Ratio (NLBCDR)	1.000	Acceptable $\geq 0.7$	Good Fit

Source: Research data, 2025

#### **Hypothesis Testing and Structural Model Results**

Following the confirmation of model fit, structural model evaluation was conducted to test the proposed hypotheses. The results are presented in Table 6. All direct and indirect effects were found to be statistically significant at the 0.05 level, supporting all proposed hypotheses (H1 and H2). Halal Destination Attribute (HDA) and Social Media Marketing (SMM) both exerted significant direct effects on Trust (TRU) and Revisit Intention (REV). Additionally, trust significantly predicted Revisit Intention ( $\beta = 0.472$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), reinforcing its mediating role. Mediation analysis further confirmed the indirect effects of: HDA  $\rightarrow$  TRU  $\rightarrow$  REV (H1) and SMM  $\rightarrow$  TRU  $\rightarrow$  REV (H2). These mediation paths were both significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that trust partially mediates the relationship between both exogenous variables and revisit intention. The R-squared ( $R^2$ ) value of 0.509 for Revisit Intention indicates that the model explains approximately 51% of the variance in the dependent variable, which is considered a strong predictive capacity in behavioral studies.

**Table 6. Hypothesis Testing Results (Direct and Indirect Effects)**

Path	Beta	p-Value	Result
HDA → TRU	0.407	< 0.001	Significant
HDA → REV	0.126	0.035	Significant
SMM → TRU	0.405	< 0.001	Significant
SMM → REV	0.186	0.004	Significant
TRU → REV	0.472	< 0.001	Significant
HDA → TRU → REV (H1)	0.192	< 0.001	Significant
SMM → TRU → REV (H2)	0.191	< 0.001	Significant
R-squared (REV)	0.509		Strong Model

Source: Research data, 2025

The results highlight the critical role of trust in translating both halal-oriented destination attributes and social media engagement into long-term behavioral outcomes. While direct effects of HDA and SMM on revisit intention are significant, their impact is amplified through trust, supporting its status as a mediating construct. These findings are consistent with prior research suggesting that trust serves as a psychological bridge between brand image and behavioral loyalty, particularly in tourism and hospitality contexts (Al-Ansi & Han, 2019; Poon & Koay, 2021).

### Discussion

The findings confirm that Halal Destination Attribute (HDA) positively influences both trust and revisit intention, aligning with previous studies by (Han et al., 2019; Akter & Hasan, 2023). This supports the argument that when destinations offer Sharia-compliant experiences, such as halal food, prayer facilities, and gender-segregated spaces, Muslim tourists are more likely to feel confident and satisfied. Notably, the study reveals that HDA exerts a stronger effect on revisit intention through the mediation of trust, suggesting that functional halal elements alone are insufficient without fostering emotional and psychological assurance. This is consistent with the spiritual tourism perspective (Purusottama & Wijanarti, 2022), which argues that Muslim tourists seek not only facilities but also spiritual comfort and authenticity. Trust, therefore, acts as a bridge between destination design and long-term loyalty. The implication is that destination managers must view halal compliance not just as infrastructure, but as a means to cultivate a genuine psychological connection with Muslim travelers.

Social Media Marketing (SMM) also exhibited significant direct and indirect effects on revisit intention. The results highlight the dual role of SMM: 1) it influences revisit behavior directly, and 2) indirectly through the formation of trust. These findings are consistent with (Gökerik, 2024; Chin & Winnie Wong, 2022), who emphasize that peer influence, user-generated content, and influencer credibility all contribute to shaping trust in tourism brands. Given that the majority of respondents were Gen Z digital natives, it is not surprising that social media plays a pivotal role. This generation is highly responsive to digital storytelling and authentic narratives, especially those aligned with religious or ethical values. When Muslim influencers or peers recommend halal destinations, it increases perceived credibility and trust, which in turn drives revisit intentions. Therefore, SMM should not merely focus on promotions, but should also serve as a platform for value-driven engagement and trust-building storytelling.

Across both constructs—HDA and SMM—trust emerged as the strongest predictor of revisit intention, confirming its mediating role. This supports the work of (Poon & Koay, 2021; Ardani, 2021), who argue that trust is central in the service relationship, particularly in high-involvement experiences such as tourism. In halal tourism, where religious expectations are tightly interwoven with consumer behavior, trust becomes even more crucial. Tourists who perceive a destination as trustworthy—based on both its halal credentials and its social proof—are more likely to revisit. This underscores the need for halal tourism providers to strategically manage trust across multiple touchpoints: pre-visit (via SMM), on-site (via halal compliance), and post-visit (via customer reviews and feedback loops).

From a managerial perspective, the study suggests that destination marketing organizations (DMOs) should invest in both physical halal infrastructure and digital trust-building efforts. Social media campaigns should highlight not only aesthetic appeal, but also Sharia compliance, ethical tourism, and traveler testimonials to reinforce credibility. Theoretically, the findings contribute to the integration of spiritual marketing and consumer behavior theory by validating trust as a mediating variable in halal tourism contexts. The model provides an empirical basis for future research aiming to link religious values, digital engagement, and behavioral loyalty in the tourism sector.

This study fills important gaps identified by (Berakon et al., 2021; Dabphet, 2021), who called for a broader understanding of halal destination attributes beyond functional features. By including emotional-spiritual

dimensions and digital trust, the study expands the conventional framework of halal tourism marketing. Additionally, the model accommodates the post-pandemic shift toward online engagement, making it both timely and relevant for current tourism challenges.

## CONCLUSION

This study investigated the impact of Halal Destination Attributes (HDA) and Social Media Marketing (SMM) on Tourists' Revisit Intention (REV), with Trust (TRU) as a mediating variable. Drawing from data collected from 200 Muslim domestic tourists in East Java and analyzed using PLS-SEM, the results demonstrate that both HDA and SMM significantly influence revisit intention, both directly and indirectly through the formation of trust. The findings confirm that trust plays a pivotal mediating role in halal tourism decision-making. Halal destination features such as halal food, prayer facilities, and gender-sensitive infrastructure are essential but gain maximum effect when they foster emotional comfort and spiritual assurance. Likewise, social media engagement—particularly from trusted influencers or peer-generated content—builds credibility that enhances behavioral loyalty.

This research contributes to the literature by integrating spiritual marketing and consumer behavior theories within the context of halal tourism. It also offers practical insights for destination managers: developing not only Sharia-compliant infrastructure but also trust-driven digital communication strategies is key to sustaining tourist loyalty. Future research is recommended to explore additional moderating variables such as perceived risk, tourist motivation, or satisfaction, and to test the model in international or non-Muslim-majority contexts. Longitudinal studies may also help assess the evolution of revisit intentions over time in response to dynamic digital and cultural influences.

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