
ANALYSIS OF TOURIST DECISION FACTORS TO VISIT TOURIST DESTINATIONS IN BANDA ACEH

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the factors that influence tourists' decisions to visit tourist destinations in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. It is explanatory research to analyze antecedent, mediation, and moderation variables, namely user attitude, intention to visit, and influencer, using SEM-AMOS. The sample consisted of 205 respondents. The results showed that all variables were in the good category. User attitude significantly positively affects intention to visit, while intention to visit significantly positively affects decision to visit and fully mediates the user attitude influence on decision to visit. Conversely, influencers do not play a role as a moderating variable, and no difference was found in the user attitude effect on the decision to visit between tourists who follow influencers and those who do not. These findings reinforce the understanding that the decision to visit is a function of user attitudes, which indirectly influence them through their intention to visit.

Keywords: User Attitude, Intention to Visit, Decision to Visit, Influencer, Tourist Destinations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a strategic sector that contributes significantly to economic growth, job creation, cultural preservation, and regional development. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the tourism sector contributed approximately 10.3% to global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), equivalent to USD 9.6 trillion, and provided more than 333 million jobs worldwide (WTTC, 2022). In Indonesia, tourism is also a major foreign exchange earner and plays a crucial role in driving national economic development. Although the pandemic caused a sharp decline in tourist arrivals, the sector has shown significant recovery since 2022, along with the easing of travel restrictions, increased public confidence, and the transformation of digital-based promotional strategies (BPS, 2022); (Ministry-of-Tourism, 2025).

Banda Aceh is one of Indonesia's leading halal tourism destinations, boasting significant potential through its combination of religious, historical, cultural, and natural attractions. The Banda Aceh City Government continues to develop the tourism sector through infrastructure improvements, strengthening the Charming Banda Aceh brand, and digitizing tourism promotions. Data from the Banda Aceh City Tourism Office shows that tourist arrivals have rebounded after the pandemic. Domestic tourist arrivals increased from 251,636 in 2021 to 355,251 in 2023, while international arrivals increased from 711 to 26,778 during the same period. This trend demonstrates the recovery of the tourism sector and the increasing appeal of Banda Aceh as a halal tourist destination. Despite this, tourism development in Banda Aceh still faces various challenges. Competition between destinations is increasingly fierce, while digital promotion has not been optimally utilized by most

tourism industry players. Previous research has shown that most tourism MSMEs in Banda Aceh still have low digital literacy, resulting in suboptimal use of social media as a promotional tool (Ajis, 2019); (Lastri et al., 2024). This situation has resulted in suboptimal destination visibility amidst changing tourist behavior, which is increasingly relying on digital information before traveling.

The development of social media has transformed the way tourists search for information, evaluate destinations, and make travel decisions. Today, tourists no longer rely solely on official government promotions or travel agencies, but also use user-generated content and recommendations from influencers as primary sources of information (Pop et al., 2022). Influencers are considered more authentic, credible, and able to build emotional connections with their followers through visually shared travel experiences. Therefore, influencer marketing has emerged as an effective digital marketing strategy in the tourism industry (Balaban & Szambolics, 2022).

The Banda Aceh City Government has utilized various social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube to promote tourist destinations through collaborations with local influencers. Different content on the Baiturrahman Grand Mosque, the Tsunami Museum, Lampuuk Beach and Acehnese culinary specialties and cultural attractions has succeeded in making these destinations more widely known digitally. Adding to the official government account, promotions are also accompanied by micro-influencers and tourists who share their travel experiences on social media using supporting hashtags like #VisitBandaAceh, #ExploreAceh, & #WisataBandaAceh. This phenomenon shows that social media has become an important source of promotion for a destination. This phenomenon demonstrates that social media has become a crucial tool in shaping tourists' perceptions of a destination.

Theoretically, tourist behavior in making visit decisions is often explained using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which states that attitude influences intention, which then drives actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of digital tourism, exposure to information through social media is thought to shape user attitudes, increase intention to visit, and ultimately influence the decision to visit. Furthermore, influencers can enhance the effectiveness of marketing communications through their credibility, attractiveness, and expertise, thereby strengthening tourists' confidence in choosing a destination (Belanche et al., 2021); (Venciute et al., 2023). In comparison, despite rapid advances in research on influencer marketing in the tourism field, much of the process treats influencers as independent variables affecting destination image or intention to visit. Existing research utilizing influencers as moderators strengthening the relationship between user attitudes and intention to visit decisions is still very sparse. Moreover, research related to influencer marketing in halal tourism is limited, especially in destinations that have a religious character (like Banda Aceh) and have a sharia tourism concept. This research has highlighted the need for a model that can not only explain how influencers affect intention to visit but also how they bolster the conversion of favorable attitudes into real choices pertaining to an actual visit.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of user attitude on intention to visit and decision to visit, test whether intention to visit acts as a mediating variable and analyze the role of social media influencer intervention in user attitude on decision-making in Banda Aceh tourist destination visits. This study is hoped to contribute both theoretically and practically, especially in the development of the Theory of Planned Behavior from the perspective of digital information

technology utilization for tourism marketing as well as halal tourism; while practically this research provides implications for local governments, tourism practitioners, and digital marketers to design a more effective promotion strategy so that Banda Aceh can be used competitively.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Decision to visit

The decision to visit is a decision-making process similar to a purchase decision in a marketing context. As stated by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), intention to visit a destination and thereby factors such as Destination image, city branding and branding awareness have been involved in the decision-making to visit. This decision is about whether or not to try out other options according to preference, need and information gained. (Makuzva & Ntloko, 2018). In the tourism context, this process is often mediated by perceptions of destination attractiveness, ease of access, and emotional and social factors that shape interest and the final decision to visit. The visit decision indicator variables in this study were adapted from various previous studies that discuss tourist behavior in making visit decisions. Specifically, the indicators were adapted from (Purnawan et al., 2021), (Makuzva & Ntloko, 2018), (Akbara & Suryantari, 2024), and (Leung et al., 2022) regarding adjustments to the context of halal tourism and digital promotion in Banda Aceh. The visit decision indicators used in this study include:

1. The final decision to visit, which is the tourist's confidence in choosing a destination and their willingness to immediately implement it (Purnawan et al., 2021).
2. Travel preparation and planning, which includes concrete actions such as seeking information, arranging transportation, accommodation, or travel equipment (Purnawan et al., 2021).
3. Social influence, which is the role of discussions and recommendations from family, friends, or the community in strengthening the tourist's decision to visit (Akbara & Suryantari, 2024).
4. Confidence in the decision to visit, which is the tourist's level of confidence that choosing Banda Aceh as a tourist destination is the right decision (Makuzva & Ntloko, 2018).
5. The influence of digital promotion and influencers, which is the extent to which influencer content and recommendations on social media inspire tourists to decide to visit (Leung et al., 2022).
6. Consideration of religious values and halal facilities, namely the influence of the availability of Muslim-friendly facilities on the decision to travel to Banda Aceh (Fenitra et al., 2024); (Makuzva & Ntloko, 2018).

In this article, Decision to Visit will often be referred to as simply decision, to simplify the pronunciation in sentences.

Influencer

An influencer is an individual who wields significant influence over an audience through social media due to their reputation, credibility, or personal connection with their followers. In the tourism context, influencers act as communicators who can shape perceptions, foster intentions, and even influence tourists' decisions to visit a destination (Han & Chen, 2021). Followers are not only passive consumers of content but also active distributors, spreading content through comment sections, reposts and recommendations (creating an additional level of network effect) (Venciute et al., 2023). The influencer variables indicators of this study were adopted from several previous studies published in the field of digital tourism marketing and can influence the performance of

brand endorsement efficiency. In particular, the indicators were adjusted from (Han & Chen, 2021), (Venciute et al., 2023), (Jeena & Kumar, 2025); (Santoso et al., 2021), adapted to make a touristic context for Banda Aceh, whereby influencers act as a moderating variable between user attitude, visit intention, and decision to visit. In this study, the influencer indicators are:

1. Usefulness, the extent to which the content shared by the influencer is perceived as useful and relevant to the audience (Venciute et al., 2023)
2. Trustworthiness, the level of audience confidence in the honesty, consistency, and credibility of the information conveyed by the influencer (Han & Chen, 2021).
3. Attractiveness, the influencer's personal appeal and communication style that capture the audience's attention (Venciute et al., 2023); (Jeena & Kumar, 2025).
4. Experience and knowledge, the extent to which the influencer is perceived as having experience and insight in the tourism sector, which enhances the credibility of the content (Venciute et al., 2023).
5. Congruence, the alignment of the influencer's values, interests, and lifestyle with those of the audience, fostering a sense of closeness (Venciute et al., 2023).
6. Exposure (content exposure intensity) – the frequency with which the audience views or interacts with tourism promotional content shared by influencers on social media (Santoso et al., 2021).

Intention to visit

Intention to visit is an individual's perceived interest in a tourist destination. This intention reflects the probability that someone will visit the destination at a given time (Fenitra et al., 2024). Intention to visit is influenced by the information obtained and can reflect a person's plans or desires to travel (Wijaya et al., 2025). In the context of destination promotion, intention to visit includes the desire to visit, recommend, and share positive things about the destination (Di-Clemente et al., 2022). In this research, the intention-to-visit variable indicators were adapted from several previous studies relevant to tourist behavior in the digital era, namely (Yusra et al., 2023), (Faisal & Dhusia, 2022), and (Fenitra et al., 2024), with adjustments to the context of Banda Aceh tourism promotion through social media. The intention to visit indicators used in this study include:

1. Intention to visit after viewing digital promotional content, which emphasizes the relationship between content exposure and the emotional drive to visit a destination (Yusra et al., 2023).
2. Searching for further information about a destination reflects the active behaviour of tourists in confirming and exploring destination information (Faisal & Dhusia, 2022).
3. Destination consideration as the primary choice, describes the evaluative stage where tourists begin to prioritize certain destinations (Faisal & Dhusia, 2022).
4. The desire to plan a visit in the near future, as a form of actual intention to travel (Faisal & Dhusia, 2022).
5. Personal motivations for visiting include spiritual encouragement, the need for new experiences, or a desire to escape from routine (Fenitra et al., 2024).
6. External attractions that influence visiting intentions include tourist facilities, destination image, and the effectiveness of digital promotions (Fenitra et al., 2024).
7. This indicator combines the affective, cognitive, and conative aspects of tourist intention, reflecting a mix of internal push factors, external pull factors, and digital influences that facilitate the decision to visit. This adaptation is considered most appropriate for describing

the behavior of tourists in Banda Aceh exposed to digital promotions and influencer content on social media.

In this article, Intention to Visit will often be referred to as simply Intention, to simplify the pronunciation in sentences.

User Attitude

User attitude is an individual's perception and evaluation of an object, system, or phenomenon, including content presented on social media (Wijaya et al., 2025). Attitude is the tendency to respond to an object or situation in a certain way consistently (Júnior, 2022). In the tourism context, user attitudes toward the push and pull factors of a destination can influence their perceptions and feelings about that destination (Duong et al., 2023). The user attitude variable indicators in this study were adapted from several previous studies relevant to the context of digital tourism promotion through social media. Specifically, the indicators were adapted from (Wisnu & Sholahuddin, 2023), (Han & Chen, 2021), and (Jeena & Kumar, 2025) with adjustments to the context of tourism influencers in Banda Aceh. The user attitude indicators used in this study include:

1. Affective response, which is the positive feeling that arises when viewing tourism content on social media (Wisnu & Sholahuddin, 2023).
2. Cognitive evaluation, namely the assessment of the relevance and usefulness of influencer content in providing destination information (Wisnu & Sholahuddin, 2023); (Han & Chen, 2021).
3. Conative tendency, namely the urge to seek further information or take action after viewing tourism content (Wisnu & Sholahuddin, 2023).
4. Rational evaluation of influencer recommendations (evaluative), namely the extent to which following influencer recommendations is considered a wise decision (Han & Chen, 2022).
5. General attitude toward digital tourism promotion (overall attitude), namely a positive view of the use of social media as a means of destination promotion (Jeena & Kumar, 2025).

Research Framework

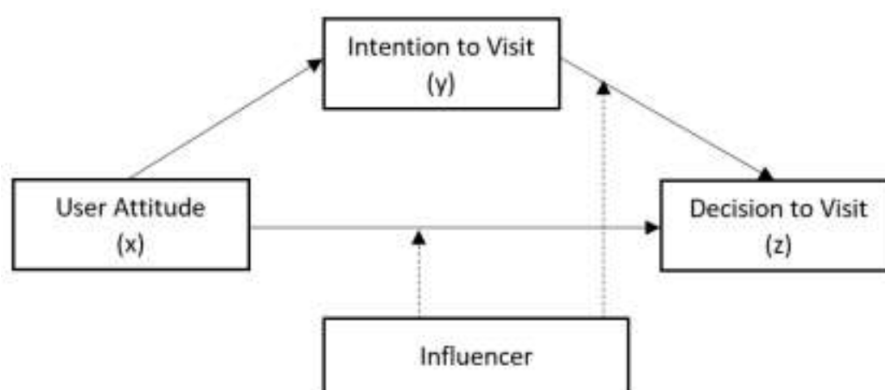


Figure 1. Research Framework

Hypothesis

For the explanations above, the hypotheses that have been formulated are as follows.

H1 : user attitude, intention, decision, and influencer are in good category

H2: significantly, user attitude affects the intention

H3: significantly, user attitude affects decision

H4: significantly, intention affects decision

H5: significantly, intention mediates the user attitude effect on decision

H6: significantly, influencers moderate the User attitude effect on Decision

H7: significantly, influencers moderate the Intention effect on Decision

H8: significantly, user attitude influence on the decision to visit is stronger for tourists who actively follow influencers than those who do not follow influencers

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using AMOS software, because this method is able to analyze direct relationships, indirect relationships (mediation), and moderating effects simultaneously in one research model. The population was domestic tourists who actively use social media and have been exposed to promotional content for Banda Aceh tourism destinations created by tourism influencers. The sample was determined using a purposive sampling technique with the following respondent criteria: (1) active users of social media such as Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube; (2) following at least one tourism influencer account; and (3) having seen or interacted with promotional content for Banda Aceh tourism on social media. The sample size was determined based on (Hair et al., 2020), which recommends a sample size of 5–10 times the number of indicators in SEM analysis. With 23 research indicators, the minimum sample size was 115 respondents. To increase the reliability and stability of the model, this study used 205 respondents, thus fulfilling the recommendations of SEM-AMOS analysis.

Hypothesis testing was conducted to analyze the relationships between variables in the research model. Descriptive hypotheses were tested using a one-sample t-test to determine whether the average respondent's perception of each variable fell within the good category. Furthermore, causal hypotheses were tested using SEM-AMOS, which can analyze direct relationships, indirect relationships through mediating variables, and the influence of moderating variables simultaneously within a single research model (Hair et al., 2020). As a note in explaining the narrative of the test results in the next chapter, to limit the number of words, the table/results of the rejected hypothesis are not included.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**4.1 Results****4.1.1 One-Sample t-test**

A summary of the results of the one-sample t-test for the four constructs is presented in the following table.

Table 1. One-Sample t-test

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	μ_0	T count	p-value	Decision
Influencer	215	4,138	0.899	3.41	11.69	< 0.001	H accepted
User attitude	215	4,181	0.876	3.41	12.52	< 0.001	H accepted
Intention to visit 215		4,190	0.862	3.41	13.46	< 0.001	H accepted
Decision to visit	215	4,153	0.852	3.41	12.32	< 0.001	H accepted

Source: Data processing with AMOS, 2025

Based on Table 1, all research variables have a calculated t value > t table at a significance level of $\alpha = 5\%$ (one-sided test) and have $p < 0.001$. These results indicate that the average value of the Influencer, User Attitude, Intention to Visit, and Decision to Visit variables is significantly higher than the comparison value ($\mu_0 = 3.41$). Thus, H_1 is accepted for all tested variables, so it can be concluded that respondents' perceptions of the Influencer, User Attitude, Intention to Visit, and Decision to Visit variables are in the good category.

4.1.2 Direct Effect

The results of the path coefficient estimation for the direct influence between latent constructs are summarized in the following table.

Table 2. Structural Model Path Coefficients (Direct Effect)

Structural Path	Estimate (β)	Std. Err	z-value	p-value	Results
User Attitude→ Intention	0.913	0.05	18.32	0.0001	H_2 accepted
Intention→ Decision	0.927	0.06	15.42	0.0001	H_4 accepted

Based on Table 2, the results of the direct influence test show that all structural paths tested have a $z > 1.96$ and a $p < 0.05$, so the proposed hypothesis can be accepted.

- 1) The test results show that User Attitude effect on Intention has a path coefficient (β) of 0.913, z 18.32, and p 0.0001. These values meet the significance criteria because the $z > 1.96$ and the $p < 0.05$. Thus, H_2 is accepted, where positively and significantly User Attitude affects Intention. This finding indicates that the more positive the user's attitude toward tourism promotion through social media, the higher their intention to visit tourist destinations in Banda Aceh.
- 2) The test results show that Intention effect on Decision has a path coefficient (β) of 0.927, a

z-value of 15.42, and $p < 0.0001$. These values meet the significance criteria because the $z > 1.96$ and the $p < 0.05$. Thus, H_4 is accepted, where positively significantly Intention affects Decision. This finding indicates that the stronger a person's intention to visit, the greater their tendency to make a decision to visit a tourist destination in Banda Aceh.

4.1.3 Indirect Influence (Mediation)

Table 3. Mediating Effect

Connection	Effect	Std. Error	z	p	Result
User Attitude → Intention → Decision to Visit	0.846	0.072	11.79	0.001	H_5 Accepted

Source: Data processing with AMOS, 2025

In Table 3 above, the analysis results show that Intention to Visit significantly mediates the relationship between User Attitude and Decision to Visit with an indirect effect value of 0.846 ($z = 11.79$; $p < 0.001$), thus supporting the H_5 hypothesis. This finding indicates that tourists' positive attitudes towards destination promotions do not directly influence the decision to visit, but first increases the intention to visit which then encourages the formation of a decision to visit. The failure to maintain the direct path User Attitude → Decision to Visit in the final model indicates that Intention to Visit acts as a full mediator in the relationship.

4.1.4 Hypothesis Test Results

The results of the one-sample t-test show that all research variables, namely Influencer (4.138), User Attitude (4.181), Intention (4.190), and Decision (4.153), have an average value above the reference value ($\mu_0 = 3.41$) with $p < 0.001$, so that respondents' perceptions of all variables are in the good category (H_1 is accepted). Furthermore, H_2 testing also shows that User Attitude affects Intention to Visit ($\beta = 0.913$; $p < 0.001$), which indicates that the more positive the attitude of tourists towards the promotion of Banda Aceh tourist destinations, the higher their intention to visit.

On the other hand, User Attitude does not affect Decision (not displayed), so hypothesis H_3 is not supported. However, Intention to Visit is proven to have a positive and significant effect on Decision ($\beta = 0.927$; $p < 0.001$) (H_4 is accepted) and fully mediates the relationship between User Attitude and Decision (indirect effect = 0.846; $z = 11.79$; $p < 0.001$) (H_5 is accepted). This finding indicates that tourists' visit decisions are formed through visit intentions which are influenced by positive attitudes towards destination promotion, so that increasing visit decisions needs to begin with efforts to build tourist attitudes and intentions.

Meanwhile, hypotheses H_6 , H_7 , and H_8 were not supported because Influencers were not proven to moderate the User Attitude and Intention effect on Decision, and no difference was found in the influence of User Attitude on Decision between tourists who follow influencers and those who do not (tables are not displayed). Overall, the results of the study indicate that tourists' decision to visit Banda Aceh is more influenced by the mechanism of forming Intention to Visit than the moderating role of influencers. Therefore, destination marketing strategies should be focused on

forming positive attitudes and increasing intention to visit, while influencers are more appropriately utilized as supporting media in digital promotions.

4.2 Discussion

The descriptive analysis results show that respondents' perceptions of influencers, user attitudes, intention to visit, and decision to visit were in the good category. These findings indicate that promoting Banda Aceh tourism through social media can shape positive perceptions, especially among the productive age group who actively use social media as a source of travel information. Exposure to engaging, informative, and credible content contributes to building a positive destination image and increasing tourist interest in visiting.

Structural model testing showed that user attitude positively significantly affects intention. This result aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which states that a positive attitude is a crucial factor in shaping behavioral intentions. Conversely, user attitude does not directly influence the decision to visit, so a positive attitude alone is not enough to encourage tourists to make a decision to visit without first forming an intention. Furthermore, intention to visit was proven to have a positive significant effect on the decision and fully mediated the user attitude effect on decision. This finding indicates that tourists' decision to visit is formed through a psychological process that begins with a positive attitude, then develops into an intention to visit, and finally results in a decision to visit the Banda Aceh tourist destination. Therefore, promotional strategies need to be focused on efforts to build and strengthen tourists' intention to visit.

The research also shows that influencers do not act as a moderating variable in either the relationship between user attitude and decision or between intention and decision. This finding indicates that influencers play a greater role in shaping tourists' perceptions and intentions than directly reinforcing the decision-making process. Therefore, promotional effectiveness depends not only on influencer popularity but also on the quality of information, content credibility, and ease of access to tourism services. Furthermore, no difference in the influence of user attitude on the decision to visit was found between respondents who followed influencers and those who did not. This indicates that the mechanism for forming the decision to visit is relatively similar in both groups, namely through intention to visit as the primary factor. Overall, the study results confirm that increasing the decision to visit Banda Aceh is more effective through strategies that build positive attitudes and strengthen intention to visit, while influencers should be utilized as a supporting medium to increase the reach and quality of destination marketing communications.

5. CONCLUSION

The results indicate that respondents' perceptions of the variables influencer, user attitude, intention, and decision are in the good category. Hypothesis testing proves that user attitude affects intention to visit, while intention affects decision. However, user attitude does not directly influence the decision to visit, but rather through a full mediation role of intention to visit. Furthermore, influencers are not proven to moderate the user attitude and intention effect on the decision, and no difference was found in the user attitude effect on the decision to visit between tourists who follow influencers and those who do not. These findings reinforce the understanding that the decision to visit is a function of user attitudes, which indirectly influence them through their intention to visit. This also forms a practical rationale that governments and tourism operators must first consider user attitudes and how they use social media, so they can develop strategies for

specific social media user segments to increase their intention to visit, ultimately leading to a decision to visit a destination, particularly Banda Aceh.

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