THE ATTRIBUTES OF TOURISTS' DECISION TO TRAVEL TO HALAL DESTINATIONS: THE CASE OF MALAYSIAN LOCAL TOURISTS.

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ABSTRACT

Halal tourism is a new phenomenon emerging from the ever-growing halal industry. Malaysia has consistently been recognized as a top Halal or Muslim-friendly destination in the world. However, research on Halal destinations is still insufficient and relatively new, particularly in the context of destination marketing. Various attributes can be studied as important predictors of tourists' intention to revisit Halal destinations. Thus, the aim of this study is to investigate the influence of destination image, the role of social media, and e-WOM on tourist satisfaction and revisit intention to halal destinations. Using a cross-sectional research design, self-administered questionnaires were distributed to local tourists in Klang Valley. A total of 256 respondents were surveyed using a convenience sampling technique. The partial least square-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) technique was performed to assess the research model. The results revealed that the exogenous constructs of destination image, social media, and e-WOM are significant predictors of tourist satisfaction and revisit intention to halal destinations. The discussion of the research findings focuses on the advantages of the antecedents of Halal tourism, specifically Halal destinations. In conclusion, this study provides valuable information to authorities for the implementation of strategic plans to promote halal destinations among tourists.

Keywords: Halal destinations, revisit, destination images, satisfaction, social media, Ewom

INTRODUCTION

Halal tourism plays a vital role in tourist marketing efforts because to the varying wants and attitudes of Muslim and non-Muslim travelers when it comes to visiting halal places. Developing the halal tourism business to attract tourists from diverse nations is a challenging endeavor. Non-Muslim visitors may choose not to visit a site that strictly adheres to halal practices if there are rigorous mandatory rules, lack of specified amenities, or if the destination imposes any special limitations. Tourism operators that are advertising Islamic/Muslim-friendly tourism locations have significant challenges, as highlighted by Rahman et al. (2020). The challenge faced by tourism marketers is the ability to offer halal facilities to non-Muslim visitors in order to attract them to Muslim-friendly areas, while also considering the possibility that these amenities may either, please or displease them. Halal tourism is not only appealing to Muslims, but it is also encouraging non-Muslim tourists to visit halal or Muslim-friendly destinations. This is due to the various aspects of halal hospitality, such as dietary foods and the proper slaughtering process of consumable animals. Non-Muslim tourists have the potential to contribute to the growth of this sector.

As reported in the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI) 2024, Malaysia remains ranked as the top country in the list of 'Best Muslim-Friendly Destinations' (Astro Awani 2024). Additionally, Malaysia was recognized as the 'Best Muslim-Friendly Destination' by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for the second consecutive year. Along with Indonesia, Malaysia has consistently maintained its position as one of the top Halal tourism destinations in the world since the GMTI was established in 2015. Based on the report, Malaysia was identified as having extraordinary potential for the growth of halal tourism destination. Despite the fact that there are efforts to improve the trajectory of Halal tourism in Malaysia, it has not been optimally implemented whether by the authority bodies or Destination Management Organizations (DMOs). The Islamic Tourist Center (ITC) is recognized as one of the leading organizations in Malaysia, playing a significant role in assisting the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Arts (MOTAC) and other relevant authorities in the development of the tourism industry as well as the Halal industry.

Malaysia has recognized as one of the most popular Halal destinations among Muslim travelers in the world and Halal tourism is getting popular as it accommodates tourism products to Shariah compliance perspectives. Due to that, the Halal tourism sector incorporates sub-sectors such as Halal hotel, Halal food, Halal logistics, Halal healthcare, Muslim-friendly hotel, Halal destination and others (Hassan et al., 2023). As of 2023, Malaysia, through MOTAC, targeted to receive the arrival of 3.2 million Muslim tourists from around the world (Bernama, 2023). This target represented an increase of 1.1 million compared to 2.1 million in 2022. For the year 2024, the target has further increased, with 1.5 million Muslim tourists from China being the main focus of the 'Discover Muslim-Friendly Malaysia' campaign (Kamal, 2024). As Halal destinations in Malaysia become more popular and the demand increases, it is important to study the attributes of Halal destinations in order to ensure their sustainability and increase demand worldwide. Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate the effects of attributes of destination image, social media, and eWOM on tourists' satisfaction and their decision to revisit the Halal destination in the future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Revisit Intention

The tourist's intention to return is the behaviour of tourist towards a destination (Mohamad et al., 2022). This behaviour occurs when the destination is considered as special and possesses natural resources, artificial attractions,

or cultures (Herman et al., 2024). Loyalty is another way of saying return intention, and it is defined as a strong commitment involving frequent purchasing of similar product or service without fail in the future. The rate of destination loyalty is often mirrored in the intentions of tourists to return to the destination and in their preparedness to recommend it, introduces quality of service, perceived price, value of the customer and perceptions of company performance as determinants of customer satisfaction which, in turn, are used to demonstrate revisit intentions.

A recent Halal tourism study in Malaysia by Rahman (2020) defined tourist loyalty as a tourist's tendency to recommend and revisit a Halal destination. In terms of tourism or recreation, intention manifests as the intent to revisit a destination within a certain time frame and to visit multiple times. Other factors involved in evaluating behavioral intention include the desire to recommend to others and positive word of mouth (Rahmawati et al., 2021). The intention of repeat visitors to a particular destination can be influenced by the performance of the venue itself, such as through promotional efforts and news about new attractions. Therefore, the intention to visit again can be interpreted as continuous satisfaction rather than just the initiator of the decision-making process (Rahmawati et al., 2021). This can be described as a strong likelihood of revisiting tourist attractions, whether or not accompanied by a positive attitude towards service providers. In-depth, the intention to revisit tourist destinations is the willingness to visit repeatedly (Hendijani & Sanny, 2021). Destination development is marketed to tourists to pique their interest and encourage their intention to visit again. This is more efficient because the cost of retaining visitors is much lower than the cost of attracting new visitors (Süer, 2021).

Revisiting intention is important to increase visits to Halal tourism destinations. From a recreational viewpoint, behavioral intention is the intention of visitors to revisit within one year and their willingness to frequently travel to destinations (Yuliviona et al., 2019). On the other hand, the intention to revisit is related to tourists' perceptions of the destination's reputation. Reputation is considered a representation of the company's past actions and future prospects, illustrating the overall attractiveness of the company to all its main constituents compared to other rival leaders (Govindan et al., 2019). Meanwhile, a traveler's perception of a destination influences their visit or intention to revisit (Wijayanto, 2020). The Islamic attribute is also an aspect that plays a role in creating the intention to revisit Halal tourist destinations (Rahmawati et al., 2021). The notion of the value of Islamic attributes is often considered by non-Muslims to relate only to food and what is permissible under Islam (Ab Rashid & Bojei, 2020). Attributes of Islamic destinations that could attract Muslim tourists include the inclusion of prayer facilities, Halal food, Islamic entertainment, Islamic dress code, general Islamic morality, and the Islamic call to prayer (Saeed & Shafique, 2020). Rahmawati et al. (2021) demonstrate that tourist revisit intention is a valuable concept in predicting future revisit behavior. Thus, this finding justifies that a better understanding of tourists' revisit intentions should be one of the main concerns for tourism marketers in successfully serving their target market.

Returning intentions and recommending intentions are affected by the destination's tourism identity and efficiency variables. Tourist return intention remains an attractive factor to be studied by many scholars in hospitality and tourism areas as it is a key factor in determining the success or continuity of organization in hospitality and tourism sectors. Previous studies have indicated that several important variables are positively related to revisit intention. In the current literature, these variables include destination image, destination satisfaction (Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020; Al-Ansi & Han, 2019; Mohamad, 2022)

Destination Image

The concept of destination image offers an overview of implementing ideas and an assessment process for determining a tourism destination's image efficiency (Al-Ansi & Han, 2019). Destination image is always shaped by experiences or facts, but it can also be shaped to become a motivating factor or driving force for tourists' trips. Meanwhile, destination images perceived by tourists can vary between individuals (Marlizar et al., 2021). Xue et al. (2020) reported that destination image is the result of consumers' expectations. This image has a significant influence on satisfaction and can affect selection factors related to visits, such as accommodation and travel itinerary. Additionally, destination image consists of cognitive, affective, and systemic dimensions (Marlizar et al., 2021). The cognitive dimension relates to the service experience, the affective dimension involves mental reactions of customers towards service delivery, and the systemic dimension represents the gap between the expected service and the actual experience.

Generally, Halal destination image is the belief that tourists purchase products or services according to Halal standards (Xue et al., 2020). Therefore, in the case of Halal destinations, destination image referred to the beliefs, perceptions, and thoughts of tourists regarding destinations that include various products and attributes according to Halal standards (Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020; Herman et al., 2024). Previous literature describes Halal tourism destinations based on six categories: food, facilities, places, social environment, clothing, and information and services (Battour & Ismail, 2016). A study by Herman et al. (2024) suggests that it is important for Halal tourism

destination management to consider the value of the Halal aspect, especially to attract Muslim tourists' interest, increase their enjoyment and satisfaction, and thus encourage their revisit intention.

To attract more Muslim travelers, many countries are expanding their halal tourism and Muslim-friendly destinations. In recent years, there has been an increased focus on the perspectives of Islamic tourism from both researchers and the tourism industry. A halal tourism destination can be summarized as any tourism object or activity that is permissible according to Islamic teachings for Muslims to use or engage with in the tourism industry (Al-Ansi & Han, 2019). Therefore, Muslim tourism activities include products and services designed with Islamic teachings in mind, both in Muslim and non-Muslim countries. Due to the increasing demand for Muslim-friendly tourism services, many Muslim countries have taken advantage of this trend to prosper their tourism industries. Southeast Asian countries such as Singapore, Indonesia, and Malaysia promote themselves as Muslim-friendly by focusing on Islamic tourism and offering halal tourism products to meet the needs of Muslim tourists (Mohaidin et al., 2010). Moreover, the increasing number of Muslim tourists from the Middle East, Malaysia, Indonesia, and India has prompted many countries, such as New Zealand, to attract Muslim tourists by showcasing their growing halal industry, Muslim-friendly groceries, and halal restaurants.

Previous studies have indicated that destination image has a significant influence on behavioral intentions. Mohaidin et al. (2010) suggested that destination image has a significant impact on the future behavior of tourists. Additionally, Ulfy et al. (2021) found that the intention of tourists to visit a destination is significantly influenced by a higher level of destination image. Furthermore, Afshardoost and Eshaghi (2020) suggest that a positive image of a destination will result in an increase in the level of satisfaction among tourists. Similarly, Xue et al. (2020) have stated that the destination image or brand has a positive relationship with tourist satisfaction, emphasizing the significant contributions of destination image to personal satisfaction and enhancing the image of the destination for tourists. By considering the previous literature, this current study hypothesized that:

H1: Destination image has significant effect on tourist satisfaction towards Halal Destination (P_{14})

Social media

The growth of the information and communication technology (ICT) industry has led to the emergence of numerous digital media. The emergence of Web 2.0 not only changed the way businesses or organizations communicate and interact with consumers but also altered communication and interaction among consumers or Internet users. Truly, the internet plays an important role in information dissemination, information exchange, and influencing people's attitudes and behavior (Mohamad, 2022). Based on the interactive characteristics of Web 2.0, social media channels, including social networking sites such as blogs, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and X, are consistently found to be significant platforms for businesses for marketing communications and branding purposes (Zhou et al., 2020). From a business point of view, social media allows business activities such as information delivery, promotions, sales, and communication with users to be carried out effortlessly and expeditiously (Carter, 2020; Mohd Hisham et al., 2020). Nowadays, most business organizations around the world tend to rely on social media and utilize all the interactive applications for advertising and marketing activities, as the interactive features enable users to find and disseminate information through various formats, such as texts, images, videos, and audio (Dedeoglu et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2020; Sobhanifard & Vaeysi, 2020). From a consumer's point of view, social media provides opportunities for them to access all the information needed and perform online activities such as sharing experiences, posting information, searching and reviewing products or services, creating discussions, and so on. Similarly, through social media, users are free to create, co-create, discuss, modify, and share content with known or unknown individuals and communities without any special technical expertise (Halawani et al., 2020). Due to this, social media is also commonly known as User Generated Content (UGC) as Internet users are able to share and receive information at any time without any boundaries.

Therefore, this study refers to social media as a group of Internet-based applications that are developed based on the ideology and technology that allow users to interact, communicate, and share ideas, content, experiences, perspectives, and information with other Internet users (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010; Dedeoglu et al., 2020). As innovation in Web 2.0 is thriving and formulated strategically, the characteristics and interactive functions in social media are no longer limited to individual social purposes (Dedeoglu et al., 2020). Study by Mardoni and Amsal (2023) found that tourist's willingness to visit Halal destinations will be influenced by their attitude to social media. Similarly, Al-Ansi and Han (2019) declared that four factors have a strong influence on tourists' decisions to revisit a tourism destination: professional advice, word-of-mouth (WOM), advertisements, and news. By considering the previous literature, this current study hypothesized that:

H2: Social media has significant effect on tourist satisfaction towards Halal Destination (P_{24})

Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM)

electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM) is described as any positive or negative comment made by potential, existing, or past consumers about a product or company that is made available to a large number of individuals and institutions over the Internet (Erkan & Evans, 2018; Ngo et al., 2023). With the advancement of technology and communication, consumers now have the

opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences through online evaluations. Online reviews are regarded as evaluations of products and services provided by the service provider or a third-party website (Ghose & Ipeirotis, 2011; Mudambi et al., 2016). With the development of internet technology, customers can now make online recommendations and share their experiences, making this one of the most powerful tools for consumers today (Bambauer-Sachse & Mangold, 2011; King et al., 2014; Toder-Alon et al., 2014). As a result, a new definition of word of mouth (WOM) has emerged: electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) (King et al., 2014). With current technological developments, people can access information about tourist destinations more easily; various kinds of social media can describe tourists' experiences, whether satisfied or not, in visiting tourist attractions. In addition, e-WOM provides feedback that can help companies improve the quality of their products and attract new customers (Amelia & Wardi, 2020). The idea of e-WOM represents a shift from limited word of mouth to an internet-based form that can encompass a larger audience (Brown et al., 2007). This valuable content enhances the dependability, enjoyment, and authenticity of e-WOM (Erkan, 2016). Related research has examined the major drivers of e-WOM and their influence on decision making as well as attitudes toward websites and brands (Wang et al., 2016).

Customers may believe that they should share their thoughts and opinions on the internet since sharing their experiences with products and services is a moral obligation to help others. The current trend of promotional activities, particularly through the internet, such as e-WOM,can spread more information about tourism destinations, attracting more tourists to visit. Tourists will be happy and comfortable if the best services are provided, and Islamic tourism will meet the needs of tourists. Tourist loyalty is created when there is a high degree of tourist satisfaction, leading visitors to return to the same tourist destination in the future, thereby increasing visitor numbers (Amelia & Wardi, 2020). The impact of e-WOM is particularly significant in the tourism industry. Intangible items, such as tourism services, cannot be assessed before usage. As a result, acquiring intangible items and services carries a higher risk. Customers then become increasingly reliant on online interpersonal influence and e-WOM (Verma & Yadav, 2021). e-WOM is also essential in shaping the image of a location that travelers form after their vacation. e-WOM has an impact on the image of Turkey as a tourism destination (Abubakar et al., 2017). Similarly, e-WOM has a beneficial impact on the destination image in Tehran, Iran (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; Chrismardani & Arief, 2022). The presence of positive e-WOM can increase and enhance the desire of potential visitors to visit a location, while negative e-WOM reduces the desire to visit a location. This is because visitors who plan to visit a location have seen and read material on reputable blogs or websites. As a result, e-WOM has a significant impact on the intention to repurchase and revisit (Harahap & Dwita, 2020; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; Putra et al., 2023). While researching the impact of e-WOM on satisfaction, Yoo et al. (2015) discovered that e-WOM has a positive and significant impact on market satisfaction. San-Martín et al. (2015) also found that WOM has a favorable and considerable influence on satisfaction. Previous research has shown that e-WOM has a positive and significant influence on satisfaction, as proven by Prayogo et al. (2016) and Putra et al. (2023). In addition, Al-Ansi and Han (2019) highlight one of factors that have strong effect on tourist's decision to revisit a certain destination word-of-mouth (WOM). By considering the previous literature, this current study hypothesized that:

H3: electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) has significant effect on tourist satisfaction towards Halal Destination (P_{34})

Tourist Satisfaction

Satisfaction is a component of attitude that persistently predicts loyalty (Mohamad, 2022). Customer satisfaction is a psychological reaction that refers to customers' emotion and affective attitude towards the product, services and service provider (Basari & Shamsudin, 2020). Customer satisfaction refers to a customer's evaluation of products or services to perform as expected (Sulphey & George, 2017). Prior studies stated that various potential factors can affect customer satisfaction towards a product, service, brand or business. For instance, the factors include social, psychology, personnel, facilities, knowledge, experience, product alternative, market trend, promotion, a medium of communication, etc. (Mohamad, 2020). It has been proven that customer satisfaction would gradually lead to customer trust and loyalty to an organization. Based on previous results, customer satisfaction is the bridge between the quality of service and intention to reuse (Herman et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2020). Furthermore, it also asserted that positive customer satisfaction is directly linked to customers' intention to reuse service in tourism industry. Satisfaction is the outcome of the subjective evaluation of whether or not the chosen alternative meets or exceeds expectations (Stylos & Bellou, 2019). It is important to note that all service providers need to have creative marketing strategies to enhance customer satisfaction. This is because a high level of satisfaction leads to high levels of loyalty, repeat purchases, revisit intentions, and an increased duration of stay. (Jeong & Kim, 2020). Previous findings also suggest that a positive destination image leads to greater visitor satisfaction, which in turn leads to greater destination loyalty (Jamaludin et al., 2018; Mohamad, 2022; Mohamad et al., 2022). By considering the previous literature, this current study hypothesized that:

H4. Tourist satisfaction has a significant effect on revisit intention towards halal destinations in Malaysia.
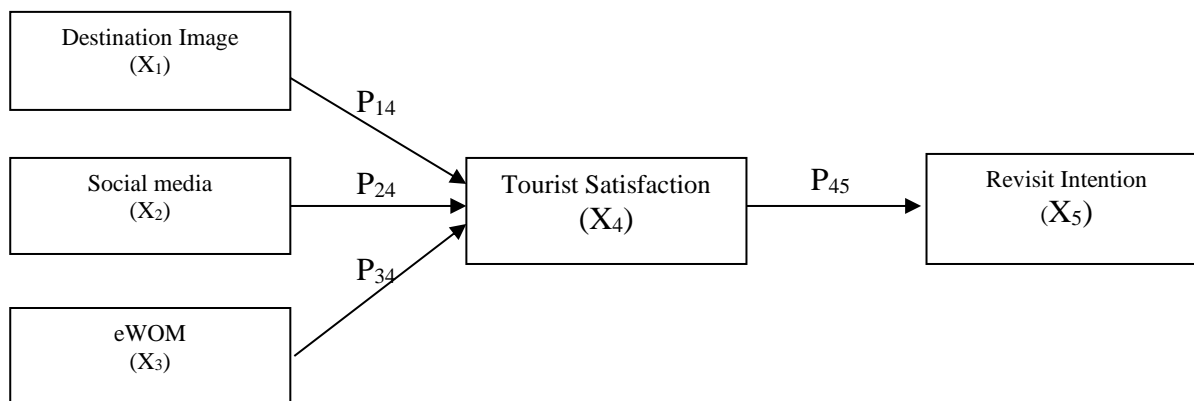
Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

Research design and sampling

The cross-sectional design was implemented in this study to investigate the attributes which influence tourist's satisfaction and their revisit intention towards Halal destinations. By employing the convenience sampling technique, self-administered questionnaires were distributed to the local tourists in Klang Valley, Malaysia. A total of 256 local tourists were participated and assessed in this study. The determination of sample size is based on several threshold statistical sampling procedures. First, based on G* power procedure, this study needs at least 70 respondents as a statistical power of 80% needs to be attained to detect R square (R2) values at least 0.25 at the significant level 0.05 (Hair et al., 2014). Second, concerning the PLS-SEM procedure, each structural path in the research model needs to be multiplied by 10 (Hair et al., 2011). Hence, the minimum number of respondents needed for this study was 40 (4 structural paths × 10). Third, Hair et al., (2006) suggested that for studies with a large number of respondents or unknown populations, the appropriate sample size is 100 to 200 respondents. Lastly, a sample size of 200 to 500 respondents is suitable for most management research (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Research Instrument-Questionnaire

The questionnaire is categorized into two sections. Section A includes demographic profile of respondents and their experience using social media in decision-making to revisit Halal destination in Malaysia, which are explained through frequency and percentage. Section B addresses the revisit intention, satisfaction, destination image, social media and eWOM constructs. Construct revisit intention was measured using five items adapted from Harahap and Dwita (2020). Four items were used to measure construct tourist satisfaction which adapted from Al-Ansi and Han (2019) and Suhartanto et al. (2021). While four items were retrieved from Al-Ansi and Han (2019) and Prayogo et al. (2016) to measure construct destination image. For construct social media, five items were adapted from Hanaysha (2017). Finally, seven items which belonged to construct eWOM were adapted from (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). All items belonging to constructs addressed in Section B were measured using a five-point Likert scale which 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree.

Data analysis

The IBM statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 25 was employed to complete the descriptive analysis. The descriptive analysis involved the analysis on profile demographic of respondents and others related question such as respondent's experience using social media to obtain information about the destination and type of social media content preferred by the respondent to gain information about the Halal destination. For research hypotheses testing, an inferential analysis which is Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS software was implemented. By conducting PLS-SEM technique, this study evaluates the reflective measurement model and structural model.

Measurement Model Evaluation

Based on PLS-SEM, the evaluation of reflective measurement model involves four main criteria, namely (1) internal consistency (Cronbach Alpha and composite reliability above 0.7), (2) indication of reliability (factor loading above 0.708), (3) convergent validity (AVE value greater than 0.5), and (4) discriminant validity (cross-loading, Fornell-Larcker criteria (AVE value more than *r* value) and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio value greater than 0.9)) (Garson, 2016; Hair et al., 2014).

Structural Model Evaluation

In contrast, the evaluation of structural model was made based on the assessment towards several indicators which are (1) the variance inflation factor values less than 5 (VIF<5), (2) path coefficient (β) values above 0.708 (β>.708), (3) standard error (SE) value, (4) significant level (t-value greater than 1.96 and p-values less than 0.05), and (5) confidence interval (CI) values at 95%. Besides, the significant path of coefficient between construct in the research model was also assessed by performing the

bootstrapping technique (with 5,000 resamples) (Garson, 2016; Hair et al., 2014). The structural model was also exhibited as the research model using the beta (β) and the coefficient of determination or R square (R^2) values. R^2 values were measured to evaluate the structural model by measuring the model's predictive accuracy. To interpret whether the R^2 has a weak, moderate, or strong coefficient of determination, the values of 0.25, 0.5 and 0.7 were used as thresholds (Garson, 2016; Hair et al., 2014).

FINDINGS

Profile Demographic of Respondents

The analysis towards 256 respondents revealed that majority of respondents were females (69.5%) compared to males (30.5%). Most of respondents were Muslim (65.2%) followed by Buddhist (22.7%), Christian (6.3%) and Hindu (5.9%). In terms of social media usage for obtaining information about Halal destinations, the analysis found that the majority of respondents believe that information disseminated on social media, whether by service providers or user-generated content (UGC), is reliable and trusted (93%). Similarly, 95.3% of respondents agreed that the Halal destination they had visited was capable and reliable, meeting their expectations in terms of Shariah compliance and being Muslim-friendly. Therefore, the results show that more than half of respondents (62.5%) had visited a Halal destination more than twice. An analysis of social media usage revealed that the majority of respondents (85.5%) refer to online travel reviews channels in their decision-making process to visit Halal destination, seeking information on Halal food and beverages as well as mosques or prayer areas. When it comes to online advertising, 87.1% respondents agreed that the destination matched the advertisements, particularly in terms of Shariah compliance and Muslim-friendly facilities. They also agreed that social media advertising for Halal destinations significantly influences their interest and decision-making.

Reflective Measurement Model Evaluation

Result displayed in Table 1 indicated the reflective construct met the criteria for reflective measurement model assessment. The analysis specifically revealed that the Cronbach alpha (α), composite reliability (CR), factor loading (λ) and AVE values for all constructs were well above the thresholds. Meanwhile, one item was found to have factor loading values under the thresholds (eWOM5 = 0.675). However, it remained since the construct where it belongs to (eWOM) had already achieved the CR (CR > 0.7) and AVE (AVE > 0.5) value (Garson, 2016; Hair et al., 2014). The evaluation of discriminant validity based on cross-loading value proved that the discriminant validity was obtained as all indicators were loaded in its appropriate construct.

Table 1 Reflective measurement model evaluation

Construct	Indicator	λ (>0.708)	IR (>0.501)	α (>0.7)	CR (>0.7)	AVE (>0.5)	Discriminant validity
Destination Image	DI1	0.861	0.741	0.884	0.92	0.742	Yes
	DI2	0.852	0.726				
	DI3	0.877	0.769				
	DI4	0.855	0.731				
eWOM	EWOM1	0.734	0.539	0.851	0.889	0.572	Yes
	EWOM2	0.812	0.659				
	EWOM3	0.756	0.572				
	EWOM4	0.781	0.610				
	EWOM5	0.675	0.456				
	EWOM6	0.771	0.594				
Revisit Intention	RI1	0.823	0.677	0.903	0.928	0.721	Yes
	RI2	0.872	0.760				
	RI3	0.763	0.582				
	RI4	0.897	0.805				
	RI5	0.885	0.783				
Social media	SM1	0.804	0.646	0.855	0.896	0.632	Yes
	SM2	0.798	0.637				
	SM3	0.768	0.590				
	SM4	0.814	0.663				
	SM5	0.791	0.626				
Satisfaction	TS1	0.889	0.790	0.878	0.916	0.733	Yes
	TS2	0.817	0.667				

TS3	0.889	0.790	
TS4	0.825	0.681	

Table 2 and Table 3 illustrate the discriminant validity evaluation based on Fornell-Larcker criteria and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. Fornell-Larcker criteria were achieved when each construct achieved AVE square root value greater than the correlation coefficient value ($\sqrt{AVE} > r$). This value indicates that the construct is unique and different from the others. While the HTMT criteria confirm whether the construct is unique based on the value of correlation coefficient between constructs lesser than 0.90 (HTMT.90 < 0.90) (Garson, 2016; Hair et al., 2014).

Table 2 Fornell-Larcker criterion

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5
Destination Image (1)	**0.861**				
Revisit Intention (2)	0.596	**0.849**			
Satisfaction (3)	0.707	0.738	**0.856**		
Social media (4)	0.635	0.58	0.674	**0.795**	
eWOM (5)	0.63	0.584	0.647	0.66	**0.756**

Notes: The values in bold are AVE square root values.

Table 3 Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5
Destination Image (1)					
Revisit Intention (2)	0.667				
Satisfaction (3)	0.799	0.821			
Social media (4)	0.728	0.657	0.768		
eWOM (5)	0.707	0.653	0.73	0.77	

Notes: HTMT.90 < 0.90.

Structural Model Evaluation

An analysis towards the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) showed that all the predictive constructs have no collinearity issue since the VIF value for each exogenous construct is less than 5 toward the endogenous construct. Table 4 displayed the highest VIF value is shows by relationship between construct social media and tourist satisfaction (VIF = 2.065).

Table 4 Construct collinearity evaluation

Satisfaction		Revisit Intention	
Construct	VIF	Construct	VIF
eWOM	2.043	Satisfaction	1
Social media	2.065		
Destination Image	1.932		

Notes: VIF < 5 = No collinearity.

Hypotheses Testing Results

The bootstrapping technique was performed using PLS-SEM to assess the significance level between exogenous and endogenous constructs. The assessment is based on a statistical t-value greater than 1.96 (t > 1.96). This threshold was used to test the two-tailed hypothesis which, describe the significant value of the parameter at 0.05 (p < 0.05) (Hair et al., 2011). The results show that all of the exogenous constructs significantly affect the endogenous constructs respectively. To start, the analysis revealed that destination image has significant effect on tourist satisfaction to Halal destinations (β=0.393, t=7.103, p=0.000, CI[0.268,0.499]). Previous studies have consistently found that destination image significantly increases people's satisfaction and behavioral intention. For example, a study by Mohaidin et al. (2010) stated that tourists' behavior to visit a certain destination is positively influenced by the image of the destination. Similarly, recent studies also agree that destination image is an important predictor of tourists' satisfaction and their behavioral intention to visit a tourism destination (Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020; Herman et al., 2024; Ulfy et al., 2021; Xue et al., 2020). Thus Hypothesis 1 (P_{14}) is accepted.

Next, research analysis shows that social media construct has significant effect on tourist satisfaction to Halal destinations (β=0.285, t=4.438, p=0.000, CI[0.160,0.409]). In line to this result is study by Mardoni and Amsal (2023) which indicated that tourist's attitude towards social media significantly influenced their willingness to visit Halal destinations in Indonesia. Thus Hypothesis 2 (P_{24}) is accepted. After that, eWOM construct also found has significant effect on tourist satisfaction to Halal

destinations (β=0.211, t=3.215, p=0.000, CI[0.086,0.346]). Similarly, Ngo et al. (2023) indicated that eWOM has a significant impact on customer purchase behavior among Generation Z. In addition, eWOM was also found to be one of the important factors in influencing customer's desire to repurchase (Putra et al., 2023). In the case of Halal destinations, a study by Chrismardani and Arief (2022) declared that eWOM significantly affects tourist's revisit intention. Thus Hypothesis 3 (P_{34}) is accepted. Lastly, the analysis indicated that tourist satisfaction has significant effect on revisit intention to Halal destinations (β=0.738, t=21.331, p=0.000, CI[0.666,0.803]). Study by Mohamad et al. (2022) posits that tourist's satisfaction towards urban recreational parks significantly influences their behavioral intention to revisit in the next future. It is essential for tourism destination management to enhance tourists' satisfaction levels and their behavioral return intentions. Previous literature consistently proves that tourists' satisfaction is an important predictor of their behavioral return intentions (Jeong & Kim, 2020; Mohamad et al., 2022). Thus, Hypothesis 4 (P_{45}) is accepted.

Table 5 demonstrates a summary of significant evaluation of exogenous and endogenous constructs.

Path	Constructs Relationship	β	t	P	95%CI	Results
H1 (P_{14})	Destination Image -> Satisfaction	0.393	7.103	0.00*	[0.268, 0.499]	Accepted
H2 (P_{24})	Satisfaction -> Revisit Intention	0.738	21.331	0.00*	[0.666, 0.803]	Accepted
H3 (P_{34})	Social media -> Satisfaction	0.285	4.438	0.00*	[0.16, 0.409]	Accepted
H4 (P_{45})	eWOM -> Satisfaction	0.211	3.215	0.00*	[0.086, 0.346]	Accepted

Note: *p<0.05

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The assessment of the coefficient of determination (R^2) is a major part of structural model evaluation. The structural model was evaluated by measuring its predictive accuracy. To explain the level of model's predictive accuracy, the R^2 value has been categorized into three thresholds, namely weak (0.25), medium (0.5) and strong (0.7) (Garson, 2016; Hair et al., 2014). The analysis revealed that the exogenous constructs of destination image, social media and eWOM can jointly explain 60.6% (R^2=0.606) of the variance in the endogenous construct of tourist satisfaction. Meanwhile, tourist satisfaction contributed 54.5% (R^2=0.545) of variance in the endogenous construct of tourist revisit intention. The findings indicated that all the exogenous constructs have medium to strong R^2 value in the endogenous constructs, respectively. Figure 2 illustrates the structural model, which displays the effect exogenous constructs on endogenous constructs, respectively.
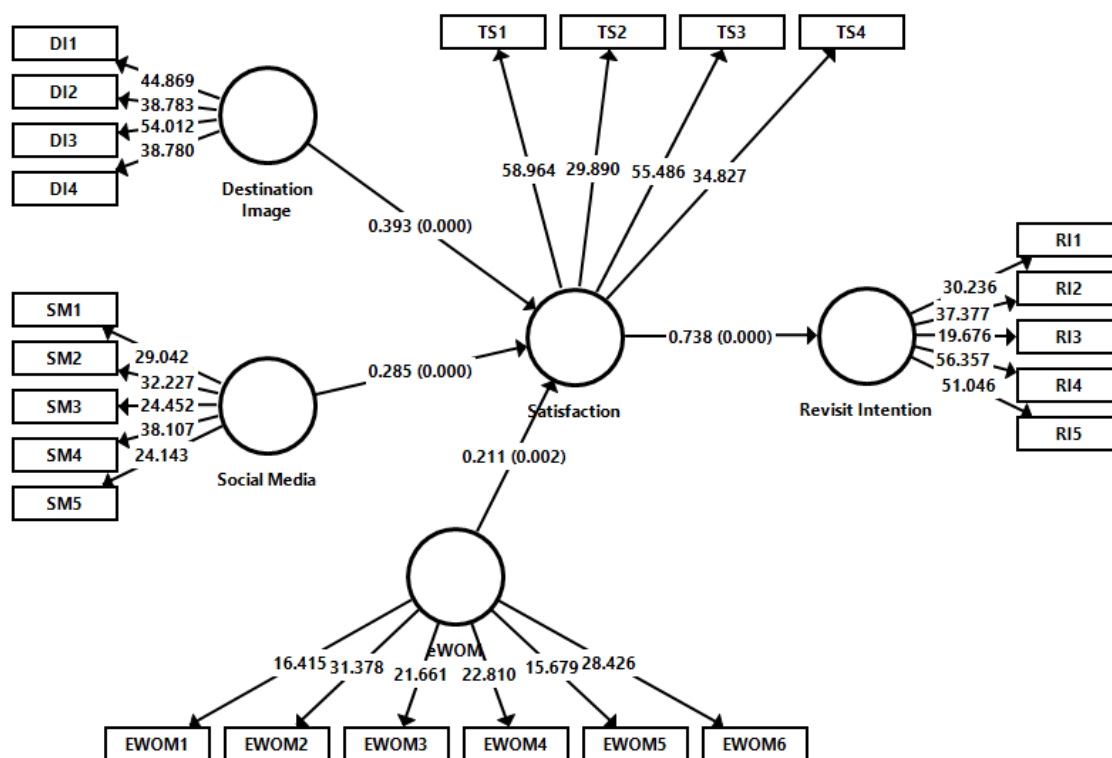

Figure 2 Structural Model

DISCUSSION

Overall, this study aims to investigate the effect of destination image, social media, and eWOM on tourists' satisfaction and their revisit intention to Halal destinations. The research findings reveal that tourists' intention to revisit Halal destinations is significantly influenced by their level of satisfaction with the destination, the Halal destination image, information shared on social media, and information disseminated through eWOM. In other words, a higher level of satisfaction with these factors will positively increase tourists' demand for Halal destinations. The analysis revealed that it is essential for Halal tourism destinations to highlight Halal elements such as food, services, facilities, cleanliness, and clothing clearly to increase tourist satisfaction and their revisit intention. The importance of destination image is not only to attract local visitors but also to appeal to international visitors who are looking for Halal destinations. In Malaysia, the Halal certificate is issued by The Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM). As of 2024, JAKIM has issued 716 Halal certifications to Malaysian hotels and resorts (Halal Malaysia Directory, 2024). The Halal certificate is important for Halal destinations, including other tourism products such as hotels and resorts. This certification prevents fraud, maintains Halal integrity, facilitates the trade of Halal products, and confirms that all food served, and premises are free from non-Halal elements.

The analysis also found that social media and eWOM significantly affect tourist satisfaction and revisit intention. When it comes to social media, people are often easily attracted to digital content such as messages, images, and videos, particularly unusual and eye-catching content. Therefore, many organizations in the tourism industry, including those in Halal destinations, tend to rely on social media for disseminating information, including advertising campaigns and promotions. This is because social media, with its interactive functionality, provides significant opportunities for Halal destinations to reach their target audience easily, creatively, and globally. Additionally, social media has become an important platform for eWOM. Given the nature of social media, tourists are free to describe their experiences, thoughts, and opinions, and make online evaluations about products or services they have experienced, which are then available to all Internet users. Typically, positive reviews generate a positive attitude among potential tourists, and vice versa. Thus, the effect of eWOM needs to be considered carefully, as it will affect tourists' attitudes and behavior in the future. Significantly, these research findings provide valuable information to the managers of Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), particularly for Halal tourism destinations, regarding Halal destination attributes as predictors of tourists' decisions and their revisit intentions. By understanding the findings, the management of the destination can improve its image, social media marketing channels, eWOM, and tourists' satisfaction. This improvement is crucial to attract more foreign tourists interested in Halal tourism.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the research findings indicate that destination image, social media, eWOM, and tourist satisfaction play important roles in influencing tourists' revisit intentions to Halal tourism destinations. It is important to note that the Halal image at the destinations must align with tourists' expectations and experiences to create a high level of satisfaction and positive behavioral intentions. As we live in a digital era, the importance of online platforms, particularly social media, cannot be ignored. While social media can bring a positive image to Halal destinations, it can also negatively affect them. Hence, it is essential for Halal destinations to provide consistent products and services. Marketers of Halal destinations must also develop better strategies for monitoring online reviews, including UGC platforms, to manage negative comments from previous tourists professionally. Besides the practical impact, this study also faces some limitations. First, this study only focuses on local tourists in identifying factors that influence their satisfaction and behavioral intentions towards Halal destinations. Future research should include perceptions from international tourists to enable comparative studies. Second, this study focuses on three factors namely destination image, social media, and eWOM as main predictors of tourists' revisit intentions. Future research is encouraged to highlight other predictors, such as Halal certification, services, and facilities. Third, this study employed PLS-SEM for generating the structural model. While this analysis technique is useful for hypothesis testing and model development, a comprehensive review of Halal destinations research would be beneficial. Thus, a bibliometric study is recommended for future research.

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