



Social Media Promotion and Tourist Visiting Interest at Maimun Palace in Medan

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between perceived social media promotion and tourist visiting interest at Maimun Palace in Medan. A quantitative questionnaire survey involved 100 respondents selected purposively from people who had visited the destination and were willing to participate. The reported partial least squares model comprised social media promotion and visiting interest, each represented by three indicators. The standardized path coefficient was 0.896, with a bootstrap t statistic of 39.454 and $p < .001$. The model explained 80.3% of the variance in the visiting-interest construct, with an adjusted R^2 of 0.801. Outer loadings ranged from 0.860 to 0.935, while average variance extracted was 0.765 for promotion and 0.822 for visiting interest. However, the promotion construct failed the Fornell–Larcker criterion: its square root of average variance extracted, 0.875, was below the interconstruct correlation of 0.896. The results therefore indicate a positive association whose interpretation is limited by insufficient construct separation. Differences between the conceptual descriptions and several output labels also require clarification. The findings support further evaluation of accurate and credible destination communication, but do not establish that promotion causes additional visits or identify the independent contribution of particular promotional activities.

Keywords: social media promotion; visiting interest; Maimun Palace; information quality; PLS-SEM

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INTRODUCTION

Social media provide channels through which travelers encounter destination information, visitor experiences, and promotional messages. Research on online travel information search shows that social media occupy an important place in the information available to travelers (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) extends interpersonal communication beyond face-to-face exchanges and raises questions about how tourism providers should interpret and manage visitor-generated information (Litvin et al., 2008; Tham et al., 2013). For a heritage attraction such as Maimun Palace in Medan, these channels offer opportunities to communicate both the destination's cultural appeal and practical visiting information.

Information quality and trust provide a useful basis for examining these communications. Data quality concerns more than accuracy; information should also suit the user's task, be understandable, and be accessible (Wang & Strong, 1996). Trust is a multidimensional concept, rather than a synonym for exposure to an information account (McKnight & Chervany, 2001). Tourism research likewise distinguishes tourists' use of online information from their perceptions of its trustworthiness (Munar & Jacobsen, 2013). In consumer research, information quality, credibility, usefulness, and adoption are associated with purchase intentions, although those findings cannot be transferred directly to destination visits (Erkan & Evans, 2016).

Empirical tourism studies suggest several possible pathways. Information quality has been linked to travel intention through trust and self-congruity (Wang & Yan, 2022), while destination image has mediated relationships involving social media marketing and visit intention (Baber & Baber, 2023). Local research has examined city branding and visiting interest in Medan, and branding and visitor perceptions in relation to returning to Maimun Palace (Kusnady, 2022; Syahira et al., 2025). These studies provide context for examining promotion at this destination, but they do not establish how well promotion and visiting interest are distinguished in the present questionnaire.

This study examines the association between perceived social media promotion and visiting interest among 100 prior visitors to Maimun Palace. The proposed relationship is positive: respondents who evaluate promotion more favorably are expected to report greater visiting interest. The analysis evaluates the reported measurement results before interpreting the structural relationship. Its contribution is a destination-specific assessment of this association and its measurement limitations. It does not compare individual platforms, evaluate a community training intervention, or estimate changes in actual visitor numbers.

METHODS

The study used a quantitative questionnaire survey at Maimun Palace, Medan. The stated population comprised visitors to the destination. Purposive sampling selected 100 respondents who had visited Maimun Palace and were willing to complete the questionnaire. Responses concerned participants' experiences and perceptions. This nonprobability sample does not establish statistical representativeness of all visitors or prospective tourists. The available study documentation does not specify the data-collection period, questionnaire response anchors, demographic distribution, or a separate eligibility criterion concerning social media exposure.

The conceptual description of social media promotion covered content quality, testimonials and reviews, and trust in social media information. Content quality concerned accuracy, relevance, completeness, and understandability. Review-related attributes concerned clarity, completeness, and honesty or credibility. Trust-related attributes concerned source credibility, information accuracy, and reliability. These descriptions were informed by information-quality, eWOM, and trust literature (Litvin et al., 2008; McKnight & Chervany, 2001; Wang & Strong, 1996); they should not be interpreted as a verified reproduction of the original authors' measurement scales.

Visiting interest was conceptually described through the desire to visit, interest in the destination, and desire to seek further information. The first included personal interest,

motivation, and a wish to experience the destination firsthand. Destination interest concerned visual appeal, activities, and curiosity. Information seeking concerned further searches for facilities, prices, access, and visitor experiences. However, the statistical output contains only three indicators per construct. It does not establish whether each represents one questionnaire item or an aggregate of several statements.

For traceability, the analysis uses the indicator codes and translated labels displayed in the output: X1, content information; X2, testimonials; X3, information accounts; Y1, visiting intention; Y2, an attractive destination to visit; and Y3, promotional content. The X3 and Y3 labels do not fully correspond to the conceptual descriptions of trust and further information seeking. These discrepancies constrain interpretation of the constructs. Because respondents had already visited the destination, the outcome is described as visiting interest among prior visitors; the documentation does not distinguish retrospective first-visit interest from future revisit intention.

The reported analysis used partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with one promotion construct, X, and one visiting-interest construct, Y. X1–X3 and Y1–Y3 are indicators within this model, not six independently tested predictors or outcomes. Measurement assessment considered outer loadings, cross-loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), reliability, and the Fornell–Larcker criterion (Cheung et al., 2024; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2019). Structural assessment considered the standardized path coefficient, R^2 , adjusted R^2 , and reported bootstrap statistics. For standardized construct scores, the model is expressed as:

$$Y = \beta X + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

Here, β denotes the promotion–visiting-interest path and ε represents residual variation. No unstandardized intercept is reported. The original output does not provide the software version, bootstrap resample count, confidence intervals, heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT), or out-of-sample prediction results. These quantities cannot be reconstructed from the summary tables. Accordingly, statistical interpretation is restricted to the reported model and does not constitute a re-estimation from respondent-level data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1 presents the original estimated model, including the six outer loadings, the path coefficient of 0.896, and R^2 of 0.803 for visiting interest. The diagram represents one relationship between two constructs. Its indicator loadings measure relationships with their respective constructs and do not establish separate promotional effects.

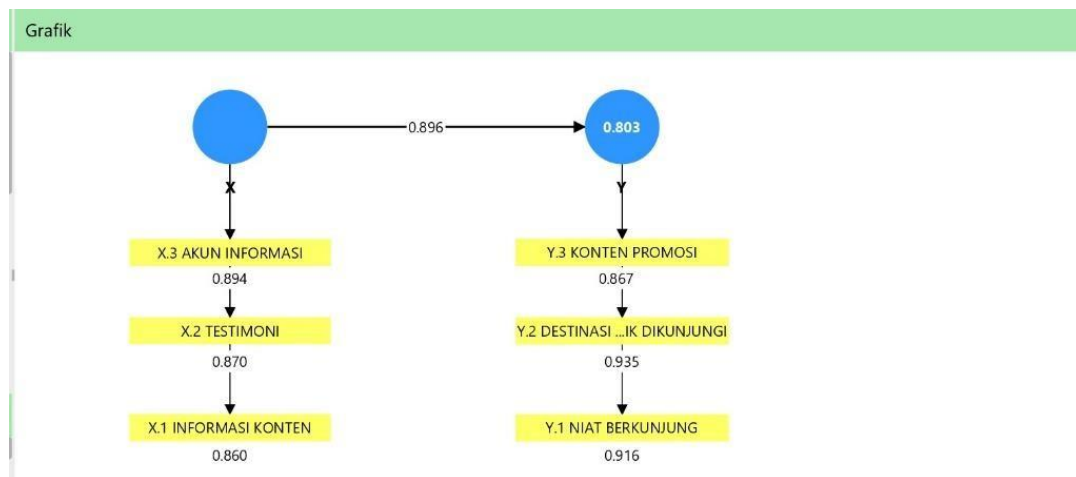


Figure 1. Original PLS model of promotion and visiting interest

The Indonesian labels in Figure 1 correspond to the indicator codes described in the methods. Table 1 gives the outer loadings for the six indicators. All six exceed 0.70, indicating strong relationships between the indicators and their assigned constructs under the reported measurement specification (Hair et al., 2019). The largest loading, 0.935, belongs to Y2; this does not imply that destination attractiveness has the largest causal effect on visits.

Table 1. Outer loadings of promotion and visiting-interest indicators

Indicator	Promotion (X)	Visiting interest (Y)
X1	0.860	—
X2	0.870	—
X3	0.894	—
Y1	—	0.916
Y2	—	0.935
Y3	—	0.867

Note. Codes correspond to the output labels defined in Methods. Values are transcribed from the original model output.

Table 2 compares each indicator's loading on its assigned construct with its cross-loading. Every indicator loads more strongly on its assigned construct. Nevertheless, several cross-loadings are high, including 0.856 for Y2 on promotion and 0.829 for X3 on visiting interest. This pattern warrants examination of construct overlap rather than an unconditional conclusion that discriminant validity has been established.

Table 2. Loadings and cross-loadings on the two study constructs

Indicator	Promotion (X)	Visiting interest (Y)
X1	0.860	0.716
X2	0.870	0.799
X3	0.894	0.829
Y1	0.797	0.916
Y2	0.856	0.935
Y3	0.781	0.867

Note. Each indicator has a higher loading on its assigned construct; this comparison alone does not establish discriminant validity.

The Fornell–Larcker results in Table 3 reveal a material measurement limitation. The square root of AVE for promotion is 0.875, which is lower than the interconstruct correlation of 0.896. Visiting interest satisfies the comparison because 0.906 exceeds 0.896, but the criterion is not satisfied for both constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Thus, the cross-loading pattern cannot justify a general claim that the constructs are distinct. HTMT assessment would provide further evidence, although no HTMT estimate is available (Henseler et al., 2015).

Table 3. Fornell–Larcker comparison of promotion and visiting interest

Construct	Promotion (X)	Visiting interest (Y)
Promotion (X)	0.875	—
Visiting interest (Y)	0.896	0.906

Note. Diagonal entries are square roots of AVE; the off-diagonal entry is the construct correlation. Promotion does not meet the criterion because $0.875 < 0.896$.

The label discrepancy for Y3 is relevant to this result. An indicator labeled "promotional content" within visiting interest may capture an aspect of promotion rather than behavioral intention. This is a possible explanation for the observed overlap, not a demonstrated diagnosis: the exact questionnaire wording and scoring procedures are needed to evaluate it. Reliability and convergent-validity statistics cannot resolve a problem of conceptual distinction on their own (Cheung et al., 2024).

Table 4 reports $R^2 = 0.803$ and adjusted $R^2 = 0.801$. In the fitted model, promotion accounts for 80.3% of the variance in the visiting-interest construct scores. The remaining 19.7% is unexplained variance within this specification; it cannot be allocated to particular omitted factors without additional analysis. These values describe in-sample explanatory performance and do not demonstrate forecasting accuracy for new visitors (Shmueli et al., 2019). Construct overlap may also contribute to the apparently strong relationship.

Table 4. R^2 and adjusted R^2 for the visiting-interest construct

Endogenous construct	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Visiting interest (Y)	0.803	0.801

Note. These statistics describe the fitted sample; no out-of-sample prediction assessment is reported.

Table 5 reports the single structural coefficient, 0.896. This agrees with Figure 1 and with the original-sample coefficient in the bootstrap output. For a standardized single-predictor

relationship, the squared coefficient is approximately 0.803, consistent with the reported R^2 after rounding. The fitted standardized relationship is therefore:

$$Y = 0.896X + \varepsilon \quad (2)$$

Table 5. Standardized coefficient for the promotion–visiting-interest structural path

Path	Standardized coefficient
Promotion (X) → visiting interest (Y)	0.896

Note. The model includes one structural path; indicator-specific effects are not estimated.

The positive coefficient indicates that higher promotion scores are associated with higher visiting-interest scores in this sample. It does not mean that a one-unit increase in promotional activity produces 0.896 additional visits. Nor does it rank content quality, testimonials, or trust as independent determinants: no separate structural coefficients for these dimensions were estimated.

Table 6 summarizes internal consistency and convergent validity. Cronbach's alpha is 0.847 for promotion and 0.891 for visiting interest. Both reported composite-reliability columns exceed 0.80, and AVE exceeds 0.50 for both constructs. These results support internal consistency and convergence under the specified model (Cheung et al., 2024; Hair et al., 2019). The distinction between the two composite-reliability columns cannot be confirmed because their full index labels are not visible in the supplied output; the values are retained without assigning an unverified index name.

Table 6. Internal consistency and average variance extracted for both constructs

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability 1	Composite reliability 2	AVE
Promotion (X)	0.847	0.851	0.907	0.765
Visiting interest (Y)	0.891	0.894	0.932	0.822

Note. Composite-reliability columns retain their left-to-right order in the original output. Their complete index labels are not visible. AVE = average variance extracted.

Table 7 presents the bootstrap summary. The original coefficient is 0.896, the bootstrap mean is 0.897, the standard deviation is 0.023, and the reported t statistic is 39.454. The software displays the p value as 0.000, reported here as $p < .001$. The table therefore supports a statistically significant positive path under the fitted model. However, significance does not remove the measurement concern in Table 3, and the missing bootstrap settings and confidence intervals limit reproducibility.

Table 7. Bootstrap results for the structural path

Path	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	t statistic	p value
X → Y	0.896	0.897	0.023	39.454	< .001

Note. X = promotion; Y = visiting interest. The displayed software value of 0.000 is expressed as $p < .001$. Bootstrap settings and confidence intervals are not reported.

The direction of the association is consistent with tourism research linking information quality and online communication to travel intention. Studies have examined destination image and tourist attitudes as additional pathways between eWOM and travel intention (Jalilvand et al., 2012), and information quality alongside attitudes and planned-behavior

constructs (Hu et al., 2025). In an Indonesian tourism setting, perceived usefulness of eWOM information was associated with visiting intention (Arifah et al., 2024). The present two-construct model does not test these mediators and cannot determine which pathway explains its positive coefficient.

Evidence is not uniform across informational dimensions. In an Indonesian study, information quality supported information adoption, whereas information credibility did not significantly explain adoption and positive eWOM did not significantly explain visiting intention (Effendy & Bakhri, 2022). Such differences caution against treating every favorable review or promotional message as equally effective. Research at a cultural World Heritage Site also relates user-generated content to destination image, satisfaction, and loyalty (Xu et al., 2023). Those outcomes provide useful comparisons, but loyalty and visiting interest should not be treated as interchangeable constructs.

For destination management, the findings justify evaluating the clarity, accuracy, and credibility of online information alongside visitor responses. Practical priorities could include consistent information about access and facilities and transparent presentation of visitor testimonials. These are implications for future communication practice, not interventions whose effectiveness was measured here. A stronger evaluation would clarify the questionnaire's construct boundaries, distinguish first-time interest from revisit intention, and compare reported intentions with subsequent behavior. The current survey cannot establish that social media promotion increases attendance or produces wider community benefits.

CONCLUSION

Social media promotion and visiting interest were positively associated among the 100 surveyed prior visitors to Maimun Palace. The reported path was statistically significant and the model showed substantial in-sample explained variance. However, promotion failed the Fornell–Larcker comparison, so the strength of the relationship must be interpreted with caution because the constructs are insufficiently separated. High reliability and outer loadings do not remove that limitation.

The study supports further investigation of credible and useful destination communication. It does not establish causal effects on actual visits or identify the independent effectiveness of content, testimonials, and trust. Subsequent analysis should first reconcile the questionnaire descriptions with the output labels, particularly Y3, and reassess discriminant validity using the original data. Clearer documentation of sampling, response scales, and bootstrap settings would improve reproducibility. A follow-up design linking exposure, intention, and later visitation would offer a firmer basis for evaluating promotional outcomes.

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