

# HOW SOCIAL MEDIA, EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT, AND DESTINATION IMAGE DRIVE MUSEUM'S VISIT INTENTION: THE ROLE OF INFLUENCER CREDIBILITY AT MOJA MUSEUM

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## Abstract

Nowadays, as museums are increasingly promoted as attractive tourist destinations, digital marketing plays an essential role in attracting more visitors, especially through social media and influencer engagement. This research examined how social media marketing (SMM) and influencer credibility shaped visit intention to Moja Museum by assessing the mediating roles of emotional attachment and destination image. A descriptive quantitative approach was applied, and data were collected from 247 purposively selected respondents exposed to Moja Museum's social media content. The findings showed that influencer credibility significantly enhanced emotional attachment and destination image, but did not directly influence visit intention. Emotional attachment and destination image served as mediators in this pathway. Conversely, SMM directly and significantly affected both destination image and visit intention, although destination image did not mediate the latter. These results contributed to the advancement of Source Credibility Theory in museum tourism by highlighting affective and cognitive mechanisms behind visitor behavior. From a practical perspective, the study suggested that credible influencers fostered emotional bonds and positive perceptions, while well-crafted social media campaigns directly encouraged visit intentions.

**Keywords:** Social media marketing, influencer credibility, visit intention, destination image, emotional attachment, museum.

## Introduction

The museum is one of the historical tourist destinations that acts as an institution to protect, develop, and convey cultural heritage and historical objects to the public, and therefore, museums offer unique learning experiences that attract curious visitors (Kemdikbud, 2019). As a tourist destination, museums need to present unique and different attractions to increase visitor interest (CNBCIndonesia, 2023). However, there has been a general decline in public interest in visiting traditional museums in recent years, particularly among younger audiences, due to perceptions of museums as static and less engaging (Furferi et al., 2024). In response to this trend, innovative museums such as Moja have emerged, offering immersive, interactive, and experience-based exhibitions that align with contemporary leisure preferences. One strategy that can be applied is utilizing technology to create interactive experiences for visitors. Buhalis (2019) and Zhang (2020) revealed that current technologies related

to the internet, mobile devices, and social media play an important role in shaping the tourist experience in a museum.

Moja Museum is currently considered one of the most prominent museums in Jakarta. Its most unique selling point is its interior designs that feature different concepts in every room. Each room has photogenic elements, vibrant colors, and creative layouts that make it a hotspot for social media users seeking visually striking backdrops for their content, which creates an 'Instagramable' environment that further boosts its popularity amongst younger audiences in recent years (Orami.co.id, 2023). This diversity in design enhances the museum's aesthetic appeal and aligns with modern trends emphasizing visual storytelling and memorable experiences.

Building on its distinctive aesthetic appeal, Moja Museum has gained significant attention among younger audiences through extensive coverage by young social media influencers who frequently feature the museum in their content (Orami.co.id, 2023). This exposure has amplified

the museum's visibility and engagement on digital platforms, highlighting the strategic role of social media marketing (SMM) in promoting cultural destinations. SMM is recognized for its ability to reach wider audiences, enhance brand awareness, foster consumer interaction, and bridge the gap between brands and their target markets (Wordstream.com). Within this context, influencers serve as credible and relatable voices and play a key role in influencing consumer behavior and shaping visit intentions (Claude et al., 2018).

The synergy between SMM and influencer credibility (IC) is therefore expected to strengthen the promotional impact of Moja Museum. At the same time, the museum's established and memorable destination image remains a critical factor in encouraging visit intention (Orami.com, 2023). These dynamics underscore the relevance of investigating the combined effect of SMM and IC on tourist visit intention, particularly as a response to existing research gaps and inconsistent findings outlined below.

In this context, emotional attachment to influencers emerges as a key psychological mechanism that helps explain how influencer credibility shapes visit intention. According to Kim and Kim (2023), emotional attachment in influencer marketing develops through consistent and meaningful engagement, allowing followers to internalize their relationship with influencers. This emotional bond enhances brand commitment and can translate into a higher intention to visit endorsed destinations. Therefore, emotional attachment is a relevant mediating variable between IC and visit intention and a crucial factor in maximizing the effectiveness of social media marketing in museum tourism.

Data obtained from The Global Statistic (2023) shows that the average time Indonesians spend using social media daily is the highest in Asia, around 3 hours and 17 minutes. The most used platforms include Instagram (84.8%), Facebook (81.3%), TikTok (63.1%), Twitter (58.3%), Pinterest (36.7%), and LinkedIn (29.4%). The number of Instagram users in Indonesia has surpassed 173.59 million and is expected to continue increasing. This shows the importance of using social media in the marketing of products and services today.

In addition, people's preferred social media content includes short videos such as TikTok (39.8%), Instagram Reels (30.6%), and Instagram posts (10.2%). More than 50% of social media users tend to choose short videos as their favorite

content format, especially when influencers recommend certain products or services (Ubaidillah, 2023). This research proves social media influencers' significant impact on social media users' decision-making process.

Previous studies have shown limited exploration of the combined effect of SMM and influencer credibility on visit intention, particularly in the context of museums. For instance, Gaffar et al. (2022) identified a gap in understanding how SMM influences visit intention through destination image. Furthermore, findings across studies remain inconsistent. While Han and Chen (2022) reported a positive relationship between influencer credibility and visit intention among millennials, contrasting results were found by Huang et al. (2023), who concluded that influencers had no significant effect on travelers' visit intentions. These discrepancies highlight the need for further investigation into the role of influencer credibility, especially within visually driven and experience-based destinations like Moja Museum.

This study aims to address existing gaps in the literature by examining how credibility and destination image, within the broader framework of social media marketing, influence tourists' emotional attachment and visit intention in the context of a museum. Specifically, this research seeks to strengthen understanding of how SMM and influencer credibility shape visit intention, with destination image and emotional attachment serving as mediating variables. By highlighting the emotional bond that travelers may form with influencers, this study offers a nuanced perspective on how credibility and perception influence behavioral intention. Guided by Source Credibility Theory, which emphasizes the persuasive impact of an endorser's trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness, this research provides a theoretical foundation to explain how credible influencers can shape audience attitudes and decisions. The findings are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the fields of tourism marketing and digital consumer behavior for museums.

### *Source Credibility Theory*

Source credibility can be defined as the level of trust that serves as a key element in rhetoric (Fogg & Tseng, 1999; Jaso, 2011). Source credibility theory has become one of the most researched topics in marketing, especially in the context of consumer interaction in the online

world (Ayeh, 2013; Lowry et al., 2013). In marketing literature, this theory is often utilized to evaluate the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements. In communication science, this theory is often applied to compare the credibility of various media channels (Johnson & Kaye, 2009). Zhang and Watts (2008) also used the source credibility perspective to analyse information adoption in online communities and its influence on information system acceptance (Li, 2013).

### ***Social Media Marketing (SMM)***

Social media is defined as web-based applications designed to encourage social interaction, collaboration, and creativity (Alzaydi & Elsharnoby, 2023). Governments, organisations, and universities are now using social media as a strategic tool to communicate and disseminate information to the general public (Tsao et al., 2021). SMM is one of the effective marketing methods, and it utilizes social media technology to convey company value and establish communication with customers (Ponarwan & Tjokrosaputro, 2020). SMM content that effectively engages customers both cognitively and emotionally could motivate customers/visitors to take actions aligned with the promotional goal of the content (Wissen & Anantan, 2023). The main objectives of SMM are to build brand awareness, interact with audiences, and ultimately drive purchase actions for certain products or services.

### ***Influencer Credibility (IC)***

Prayoga & Artanti (2021) described IC as the ability of an endorser to assess the effectiveness of the message they need to convey. This concept revolves around the consumers' ability to perceive the credibility of messages provided by influencers as a source of information, so ultimately, influencers can be an indicator of success in shaping consumer behavior. When consumers regard an influencer as credible, they are more likely to accept and act upon the information shared, making IC a critical factor in shaping consumer attitudes and behavior. Moreover, IC is not just about message delivery but also about establishing authenticity and relatability. These attributes can foster stronger emotional connections with consumers, leading to higher engagement levels.

### ***Visit Intention (VI)***

VI refers to an individual's decision to visit a destination, taking into account various relevant

situations and conditions (Özel & Çoban, 2022). It reflects a traveler's aspiration and interest in experiencing the destination, which could involve seeking novelty, recreation, or cultural enrichment. This concept also encompasses a traveler's desire to visit a particular destination either for the first time, or a repeated visitation. VI describes a person's interest in exploring a destination, both to discover new things and enjoy the features offered by the destination, with the aim of recreation or entertainment (Morrison et al., 2023). Understanding VI allows marketers to tailor strategies that align with tourists' expectations and enhance their VI.

### ***Destination Image (DI)***

DI represents travellers' perceptions and evaluations of a destination's attributes, encompassing its features, benefits, and overall appeal. It is a subjective construct shaped by emotional responses and cognitive impressions about the place (Thi Khanh & Phong, 2020). Jiang et al. (2018) state that DI involves emotional connections and tangible visitor perceptions, which is pivotal in influencing tourists' visit intentions. A strong and positive DI can be a competitive advantage for a museum, as it can foster higher visit intention. Moreover, DI is vital in connecting marketing efforts, such as IC or social media campaigns, with tourists' ultimate behavior.

### ***Emotional Attachment (EA)***

EA reflects a bond between consumers and brands that involves affection, passion, and familiarity (Dwivedi, Johnson, Wilkie, & De Araujo-Gil, 2019). In tourism, EA manifests as a visitor's strong connection to a destination, stemming from memorable experiences, personal significance, or cultural resonance. When applied to influencer marketing, EA emerges through meaningful interactions between influencers and their audiences. This emotional bond allows followers to internalize their interaction with the influencer, thus increasing their commitment to the brand (Kim & Kim, 2023). EA is critical in driving brand loyalty and behavioral intention, as it translates rational evaluations into emotional commitments. In tourism marketing, fostering EA can deepen tourists' relationships with destinations, turning them into repeat visitors.

### ***IC and EA***

Influencers may employ several strategies to build emotional attachment, but one often used is

pushing a relatable narrative, such as their lifestyle, personal traits or destinations. This connection strengthens audience engagement and emotional ties to the destination, such as the Moja Museum, driven by the influencers' credibility. Familiarity with the influencer may include the influencer's lifestyle, experience, background, interests, and personal traits. As a result, the audience tends to feel a deeper connection, which encourages the formation of EA between the influencer and the audience (Chapple & Corwnie, 2017; Ki et al., 2020).

*H<sub>1</sub>*: Influencer credibility positively and significantly influences emotional attachment to the Moja Museum tourist destination.

### *IC and DI*

Yusra et al. (2023) depicted the contribution of IC elements—such as attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise—on DI formation, particularly in the aspect of enjoyment. Research by Zhu et al. (2023) also supports that IC positively influences destination image, especially regarding visitor experience. Influencers' attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise enhance perceptions of the destination's image and visitor experience. This relationship underscores how influencers could shape a DI in cognitive and emotional dimensions and boost its appeal.

*H<sub>2</sub>*: Influencer credibility positively and significantly influences the destination image of Moja Museum.

### *SMM and DI*

SMM has a positive influence on DI (Gaffar et al., 2022). Likewise, Baber & Baber (2022) research shows a significant influence between SMM and destination image. Research by Maarif et al. (2023) reinforces these findings, where the results of his research show a significant effect between social media and destination image. Marketing campaigns on social platforms create visually engaging and informative content and could shape the audience's perception of the Moja Museum. This positive influence reinforces the destination's positioning as a must-visit location.

*H<sub>3</sub>*: Social media marketing positively and significantly influences the destination image at the Moja Museum.

### *IC and VI*

Social media influencers positively influence visiting intentions at a destination (Han & Chen,

2022). The research conducted by Seçilmiş et al. (2022a) revealed that trust in an influencer positively influenced visit intention. Customer trust in IC increases the likelihood of audiences acting on their recommendations, resulting in higher VI to destinations such as the Moja Museum.

*H<sub>4</sub>*: Influencer credibility positively and significantly influences visit intention at Moja Museum.

### *SMM and VI*

Gaffar et al. (2022) demonstrated that SMM positively influences tourists' intentions to visit a destination. Similarly, Pramudhita (2021) affirmed a significant positive relationship between SMM and visit intention. Effective use of social media platforms increases awareness and drives the audiences' visit intentions, leveraging compelling narratives and promotional efforts.

*H<sub>5</sub>*: Social media marketing positively and significantly influences visit intention at the Moja Museum.

### *EA and VI*

According to research conducted by Tsai (2015), EA positively influences intentions to engage in post-visiting behavior. Likewise, research by Prayag & Ryan (2012) shows that EA to a destination increases the intention to revisit and the willingness to recommend the destination to others. Emotional bonds with the museum encourage first-time visits and repeat visits and recommendations, reflecting the power of emotional connections in shaping tourist behavior.

*H<sub>6</sub>*: Emotional attachment positively and significantly influences visit intention at Moja Museum tourist destination.

### *DI and VI*

Gaffar et al. (2022) revealed that DI has a positive influence on tourist visiting intentions in a destination. Supporting this, research conducted by Putri Dwiandini et al. (2021) confirmed the positive implication between DI and visit intention. Thus, a positive destination image, characterized by favorable perceptions of the museum's attributes and benefits, directly drives tourists' VI.

*H<sub>7</sub>*: Destination image positively and significantly influences on visit intention at the Moja Museum.

### IC and VI through EA

Recent studies have highlighted the mediating role of EA in the relationship between IC and visit intention. Na et al. (2024) found that EA significantly mediates the effect of IC on audience attitudes, including behavioral outcomes such as visit intention. Similarly, Xu et al. (2025) demonstrated that IC influences VI indirectly through emotional attachment, emphasizing the importance of emotional bonds in digital persuasion. Furthermore, Hasan (Hasan, 2024) emphasized that EA plays a pivotal role in shaping tourists' intention to visit, particularly in experiential marketing contexts. Influencers who are able to foster personal, emotional connections with their followers enhance the likelihood of audience engagement and commitment, thereby strengthening visit intention.

*H<sub>8</sub>*: Influencer credibility positively and significantly influences visit intention at Moja Museum through emotional attachment as mediator.

### IC and VI through DI

Research conducted by Seçilmiş et al. (2022b) found that IC (expertise and attractiveness) influences VI through DI (cognitive response). Yusra et al. (2023) show that DI as a mediating variable fosters a connection between social media influencers (attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise) and visit intention. In addition, research by Laurance et al. (2023) confirmed that DI is a significant variable and influences source credibility on VI. Research conducted by Zhu et al. (2023) revealed that IC positively impacts DI and the positive influence of DI on visit intention. Credible influencers enhance a destination image, which drives tourists' intentions to visit the museum. This dual influence underscores the importance of combining IC with destination image.

*H<sub>9</sub>*: Influencer credibility positively and significantly influences visit intention at Moja Museum through destination image as a mediator.

### SMM and VI through DI

Research by Gaffar et al., (2022), shows that DI as a mediation influences SMM on visit intention. In addition, Baber & Baber (2022) revealed that there is a significant influence of SMM on VI

using DI as a mediating variable. SMM that enhance the museum's image could increase the effectiveness of marketing efforts, translating into stronger visit intentions through the role of destination image.

*H<sub>10</sub>*: Social media marketing positively and significantly influences visit intention at Moja Museum through destination image as a mediator

### Research Model

The research model is shown in Figure 1.

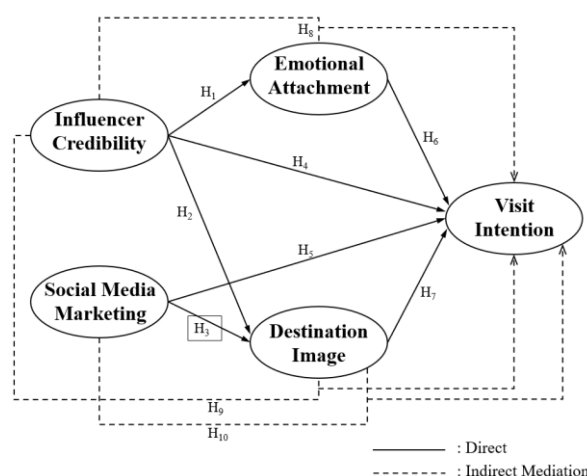


Figure 1. Research model

This research model comprehensively illustrates how IC and SMM affect the visit to Moja Museum, both directly and indirectly through the mediating roles of EA and destination image. IC is pivotal in fostering EA by enabling audiences to relate personally to the influencer, thereby deepening their affective engagement. Concurrently, credible influencers also shape DI by influencing both cognitive evaluations and affective perceptions of the museum experience. SMM further reinforces DI by disseminating compelling, visually rich content that enhances destination appeal. EA and DI act as critical mediators that strengthen the effect of IC and SMM on visit intention. This model highlights the significance of leveraging emotional resonance and destination perception in digital marketing efforts to drive tourist VI in the museum context effectively.

### Research Methods

The research design employed in this study is descriptive research, which explains ongoing occurrences within a social context. This study aims

to describe the conditions surrounding the identified phenomena. The population in this study comprises individuals who are familiar with Moja Museum as a tourist destination. A non-probability purposive sampling method was used to select respondents who met specific inclusion criteria. Screening questions were applied to ensure that participants knew about Moja Museum and had seen social media content or influencer reviews related to the museum. Only those who met these criteria were included in the final sample. Data were obtained from 247 qualified respondents using a Google Form distributed across multiple social media platforms.

### *Operationalization of Variables*

**Table 1**  
**Indicator of latent variable**

Variable	Indicator
SMM	1. Activeness of the social media community in sharing activities
	2. Activeness of the social media community in sharing news
	3. Presence of interactions between the admin and followers
	4. Attractiveness of the information from the social media account
	5. Quality of information from the social media account
	6. Diversity of information from the social media account
IC	1. Believe the content posted by the social media influencer is accurate
	2. Believe the influencer's posts reflect factual information
	3. Believe the influencer's content is reliable
	4. Believe the influencer who creates the content is trustworthy
	5. Believe the influencer is knowledgeable about the product
	6. Believe the influencer has relevant experience
VI	1. Future visit
	2. Future choice
	3. Preferential choice
	4. Intention to visit as suggested in the influencer's posts
	5. Probability of visiting
DI	1. Knowledge of attractions
	2. Knowledge of available facilities
	3. Reputation
	4. Evokes feelings
	5. Pleasant feelings
	6. Enjoyable feelings
	7. Relaxing feelings
EA	1. Feeling emotionally connected
	2. Says things that are genuine and profound
	3. I feel anxious if the influencer is no longer in the spotlight

This study intends to use variable operationalization to briefly explain the research variables, which focus on the impact of SMM and IC on the intention to visit the Moja Museum, mediated by EA and DI. Table 1 shows the indicator of each variable.

SMM, visit intention, and DI indicators are adapted from Gaffar et al. (2020); VI is also adopted from Han and Chen (2021). IC items are based on Han and Chen (2021) and Yan et al. (2020). EA indicators refer to the scale developed by Kowalczyk & Pounders (2016).

## **Results and Discussion**

### *Demographic Results*

Table 2 presents the demographic data of the respondents.

**Table 2**  
**Respondent data**

Demographic	Category	Freq	%
Gender	Male	87	35,2%
	Female	160	64,8%
Age	16 to 18 years	40	16,2%
	21 to 26 years	200	81%
	27 to 35 years	4	1,6%
	36 to 43 years	2	0,8%
	>43 years	1	0,4%
Education	Secondary	121	49%
	Undergraduate	124	50,2%
	Graduate	2	0,8%

Source: Respondent data process

Table 2 shows that 160 individuals (64.8%) were female respondents. Most respondents are aged 21-26 (81%) and have a Bachelor's degree (50.2%).

### *Statistical Results*

In this study, the results of the convergent validity analysis through the loading factor for the variables of social media marketing, influencer credibility, visit intention, and DI showed valid results, all greater than 0.7. The results of the loading factor analysis in this study are presented in Table 3.

The convergent analysis result shows that the indicator with the highest loading factor value is DI (DI2) with a value of 0.916. Other indicators also depicted values greater than 0.7, indicating that the variables used in this study meet the requirements and are considered valid. Additionally,

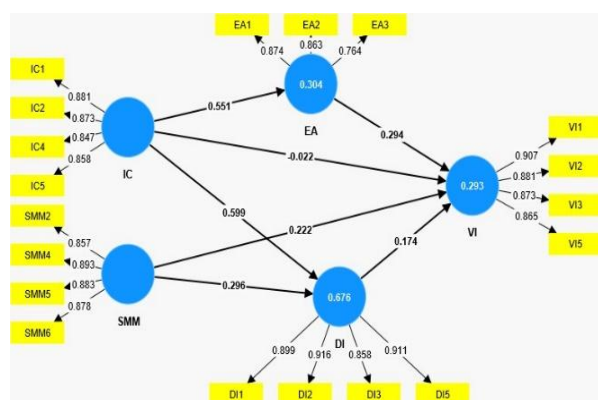
the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability results showed values greater than 0.7, suggesting the variables are reliable

The results on Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is considered as valid, as the results are greater than 0.5 which stated the high level of validity presented by the variables. AVE as convergent validity analysis results for the social media marketing, influencer credibility, visit intention, and DI show valid results, scoring above 0.5.

**Table 3**  
Reliability and validity test results

Item	Outer Loading	AVE	CA	CR
SMM2	0,857	0,770		
SMM4	0,893			
SMM5	0,883			
SMM6	0,878			
IC1	0,881	0,748	0,888	0,889
IC2	0,873			
IC4	0,847			
IC5	0,858			
VI1	0,907	0,777	0,905	0,908
VI2	0,881			
VI3	0,873			
VI5	0,865			
DI1	0,899	0,803	0,918	0,920
DI2	0,916			
DI3	0,858			
DI5	0,911			
EA1	0,874	0,698	0,787	0,823
EA2	0,863			
EA3	0,764			

The loading factor resulted from Smart-PLS 4.0 is depicted in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Loading factor diagram

Figure 2 depicts the loading factor diagram after eliminating indicators with loading factors below 0.7. The eliminated indicators were IC3, SMM1, DI4, and VI4, which will not be featured in the next tests.

**Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)**

Assessment of discriminant validity is a widely recognized prerequisite for analyzing relationships between reflectively measured constructs. This requirement is particularly critical in the application of variance-based structural equation modeling. In this study, the discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) and cross-loading methods (Henseler et al., 2015).

**Table 4**  
Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)

	DI	EA	IC	SMM	VI
<b>DI</b>					
<b>EA</b>	0.535				
<b>IC</b>	0.873	0.633			
<b>SMM</b>	0.750	0.383	0.721		
<b>VI</b>	0.489	0.513	0.467	0.471	

Source: Data processing result using SmartPLS 4.0

The Heterotrait-monotrait test results were valid as variables scored greater than 0.9, demonstrating that the variables met the requirements.

**Cross loadings**

The discriminant validity and cross-loading test results are attached below.

**Table 5**  
Result of cross loading test

	DI	EA	IC	SMM	VI
DI1	<b>0.899</b>	0.439	0.715	0.638	0.418
DI2	<b>0.916</b>	0.460	0.690	0.643	0.403
DI3	<b>0.858</b>	0.413	0.694	0.552	0.342
DI5	<b>0.911</b>	0.401	0.733	0.612	0.442
EA1	0.397	<b>0.874</b>	0.456	0.271	0.320
EA2	0.512	<b>0.863</b>	0.572	0.370	0.423
EA3	0.233	<b>0.764</b>	0.303	0.168	0.350
IC1	0.645	0.478	<b>0.881</b>	0.549	0.361
IC2	0.674	0.457	<b>0.873</b>	0.535	0.374
IC4	0.666	0.484	<b>0.847</b>	0.568	0.355
IC5	0.743	0.487	<b>0.858</b>	0.578	0.367
SMM2	0.611	0.296	0.517	<b>0.857</b>	0.327
SMM4	0.588	0.276	0.560	<b>0.893</b>	0.396
SMM5	0.605	0.336	0.579	<b>0.883</b>	0.410
SMM6	0.594	0.281	0.608	<b>0.878</b>	0.362
VI					

Source: Data processing result using SmartPLS 4.0

The Cross-Loading test in Table 5 showed a valid result, as every variable met the discriminant validity requirements of scoring higher than other constructs and greater than 0.7.

**Table 6**  
**Hypothesis test result**

	Hypothesis	Path Coefficients	f <sup>2</sup>	p-Value	R <sup>2</sup>	Hasil
H1	IC→EA	0,551 <b>Positive</b>	0,436 <b>Strong</b>	0,000 <b>Significant</b>	0,304 <b>Weak</b>	Accepted
H2	IC→DI	0,599 <b>Positive</b>	0,646 <b>Strong</b>	0,000 <b>Significant</b>	0,676 <b>Moderate</b>	Accepted
H3	SMM→DI	0,296 <b>Positive</b>	0,158 <b>Moderate</b>	0,000 <b>Significant</b>	0,676 <b>Moderate</b>	Accepted
H4	IC→VI	-0,022 <b>Negative</b>	0,000 <b>None</b>	0,410 <b>Insignificant</b>	0,293 <b>Weak</b>	Rejected
H5	SMM→VI	0,222 <b>Positive</b>	0,035 <b>Moderate</b>	0,001 <b>Significant</b>	0,293 <b>Weak</b>	Accepted
H6	EA→VI	0,294 <b>Positive</b>	0,084 <b>Weak</b>	0,000 <b>Significant</b>	-	Accepted
H7	DI→VI	0,174 <b>Positive</b>	0,014 <b>Weak</b>	0,017 <b>Significant</b>	0,293 <b>Weak</b>	Accepted
H8	IC→EA→VI	0,162 <b>Positive</b>	-	0,000 <b>Significant</b>	-	Accepted
H9	IC→DI→VI	0,105 <b>Positive</b>	-	0,027 <b>Significant</b>	-	Accepted
H10	SMM→DI→VI	0,052 <b>Positive</b>	-	0,039 <b>Insignificant</b>	-	Rejected

### *Hypothesis Test Results*

The hypothesis testing evaluates the relationships of each variables. In Table 6 each hypothesis is discussed in detail, emphasizing its relevance to the research objectives.

According to Hair et al. (2019), path coefficients sit within the range of -1 and +1, representing the direction of the relationship between variables, where +1 indicates a positive relationship and -1 indicates a negative relationship. Ghozali (2020) also stated that the R-squared value is used to measure the model prediction capability and can be classified into three categories: strong ( $\leq 0.70$ ), moderate ( $\leq 0.45$ ), and weak ( $\leq 0.25$ ). In this study, eight out of ten tested hypotheses, which is H1, H2, H3, H5, H6, H7, H8, and H9 were supported by the test results.

Research results show that the EA variable is highly affected by IC with a path coefficient value of 0.551. The DI variable is also explainable by IC (0.599) and SMM (0.296). Meanwhile, the VI variable is influenced by SMM (0.222), EA (0.294), and DI (0.174). Significant mediating effects were also found, where EA and DI mediate the relationship between IC and visit intention, with path coefficients of 0.105 and 0.052, respectively.

This research employs specific indirect effect analysis to test inter-variable mediating effects. According to the f-square result, the DI variable has a small effect size on visit intention (0.014), meanwhile EA shows a substantial effect to VI

(0.084). In addition, the influence credibility reveals its strong effect to DI (0.646) and EA (0.436), while only showing a small effect to VI (0.000). On the flip side, SMM has a moderate effect on DI (0.158) and a weak effect on VI (0.035).

The results of the mediation analysis indicate that DI serves as a full mediator in the relationship between IC and VI, but does not mediate the influence of SMM on VI. Employing the bootstrap resampling technique, the direct effect of IC on VI was not statistically significant (H4), whereas the indirect effect through DI was significant (H9), thereby providing evidence of full mediation in this context (Baron & Kenny, 1986)

Based on the R-Square values, SMM and IC together explain 67.6% (0.676) of the variance in the destination image, which is considered a strong influence. Factors outside the scope of this study explain the remaining 32.4%. Social media marketing, influencer credibility, emotional attachment, and DI account for 29.3% (0.293) of the VI variance, which is categorized as moderate. Similarly, IC explains 30.4% (0.304) of the variance in EA, which is also considered moderate, while the remainder is influenced by other variables not examined in this study.

### *Discussion*

The empirical result of Hypothesis 1 (H1) offers compelling evidence that IC serves as a pivotal driver of EA among Moja Museum's audience. This suggests that when followers perceive

influencers as a reliable source of information, they are more likely to develop an emotional connection with the influencer and the associated brand or destination—in this case, Moja Museum. This finding not only corroborates prior scholarly assertions (Aziz et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2022) regarding the affective power of trusted influencers but also provides a nuanced theoretical lens to interpret this dynamic.

When influencers are regarded as credible sources, their narratives transcend mere endorsement, instead fostering affective resonance that binds followers to the promoted destination. This mechanism aligns seamlessly with the theory's premise that credibility functions as a catalyst for emotional engagement, transforming passive audiences into emotionally invested stakeholders.

The results further demonstrate that IC positively and significantly influences destination image, confirming the second hypothesis (H2). This finding implies that when influencers are perceived as credible and trustworthy sources, they can enhance the public's perception of the Moja Museum. Such credibility contributes to the formation of favorable sentiments and strengthens the overall image of the museum in the minds of potential visitors. This result aligns with prior studies emphasizing the role of influencers in shaping destination perceptions (Yusra et al., 2023; Seçilmiş et al., 2022). Thus, the empirical support for H2 strengthens the argument that credible influencers are persuasive messengers and strategic assets in destination branding efforts.

Similarly, empirical evidence supports the third hypothesis (H3), which posits that SMM positively influences destination image. The analysis confirms that marketing efforts executed through social media platforms, particularly those that involve active community engagement and consistent messaging, can shape audience perceptions and enhance the reputation of Moja Museum. This finding is consistent with previous research suggesting that digital marketing contributes to stronger brand or destination imagery (Gaffar et al., 2022; Baber & Baber, 2022). SMM enables the audience to develop a more vivid and favorable image of the destination by facilitating interactive communication and continuous exposure.

Contrary to expectations, the results indicate that IC does not significantly direct visit intention, thereby leading to the rejection of the fourth hypothesis (H4). This finding diverges from prior research, which suggested that credible influencers

directly enhance individuals' willingness to visit a destination (Han & Chen, 2022). While IC may still play an indirect role through other variables, its lack of direct impact suggests that additional psychological or contextual factors may exert greater influence in shaping prospective visitors' decisions.

Conversely, SMM significantly and positively influences visit intention, validating the fifth hypothesis (H5). This result supports the notion that dynamic, interactive, and well-targeted marketing activities on social media platforms can effectively drive audience behavior. Through consistent exposure to visually engaging and informative content, potential visitors are more likely to develop the intention to engage with the destination. This finding aligns with previous studies asserting that effective social media strategies can influence consumer decisions (Gaffar et al., 2022; Isman et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the analysis reveals that EA significantly contributes to visit intention, supporting the sixth hypothesis (H6). Audiences who experience a strong emotional connection with Moja Museum often formed through personalized storytelling, nostalgic associations, or relational engagement via influencers are more inclined to translate this attachment into actual visit behavior. This confirms previous findings highlighting EA as a critical motivational driver in tourism behavior (Tsai, 2015).

The study also confirms that DI positively influences visit intention, supporting the seventh hypothesis (H7). A favorable perception of Moja Museum—characterized by its uniqueness, artistic value, and reputation—contributes to increased interest among prospective visitors. This supports earlier literature indicating that a strong and positive DI is vital in encouraging visitation (Gaffar et al., 2022b; Ahmad et al., 2021).

The findings further confirm that IC positively and significantly influences VI when mediated by emotional attachment, supporting the eighth hypothesis. This result suggests that as the audience's trust in influencers increases, it enhances their emotional connection to the destination, strengthening their intention to visit. These findings align with Fernandez (2021), who emphasized the essential role of IC in fostering meaningful emotional bonds that translate into behavioral outcomes.

Additionally, the ninth hypothesis is supported by the significant indirect effect of IC on VI via destination image. This pathway highlights

that influencers perceived as credible are more likely to construct favorable representations of Moja Museum, which in turn enhances potential visitors' intentions. This aligns with previous research by Seçilmiş et al. (2022), Yusra et al. (2023), Laurance et al. (2023), and Zhu et al. (2023), all of which demonstrated that DI plays a pivotal mediating role in the credibility-behavior linkage.

On the other hand, the mediation test for the tenth hypothesis (H10) yielded insignificant results. Although there is a positive influence between SMM and VI through DI, the effect is not strong enough to meet the significance threshold. The statistical test results indicate that the influence of SMM on VI through DI is not significant enough to support this hypothesis. These findings contradict studies by Gaffar et al. (2022b) and Chu (2018), which found a significant influence between SMM and VI through destination image. Therefore, the tenth hypothesis (H10) is not accepted, indicating that DI does not mediate the relationship between SMM and VI to Moja Museum. Nevertheless, SMM significantly and positively influences visit intention. This highlights the importance of social media marketing's impact on visit intention, suggesting that potential visitors do not focus on the role of DI in strengthening the VI.

### ***Contributions and Implications***

This study offers a significant theoretical contribution by extending the application of Source Credibility Theory within the context of digital tourism for museums' marketing. It demonstrates that IC affects VI through two key mediators: EA (affective) and DI (cognitive). These findings validate the theory while identifying its boundaries, as SMM influences VI independently of destination image, suggesting distinct underlying mechanisms.

From a practical standpoint, the findings provide valuable guidance for tourism marketers and cultural institutions such as Moja Museum. The strong role of EA as a mediator emphasizes the importance of collaborating with authentic influencers who can deliver emotionally engaging content. Authentic storytelling and visually appealing posts can strengthen emotional bonds and enhance destination image. In contrast, institutional social media campaigns should emphasize direct calls to action rather than image-building, given their limited indirect effect.

The results enrich the theoretical framework of Source Credibility Theory and offer actionable insights for digital marketing strategy. For optimal impact, cultural institutions should consider an integrated approach that leverages influencer marketing to build emotional and cognitive engagement, while using institutional social media for timely, informative communication. Tailoring content to convey credible information and foster trust-based emotional bonds is essential in today's experience-driven tourism environment. These findings highlight the strategic necessity of aligning digital communication styles with the unique strengths of each platform and marketing actor, ensuring consistency in brand message while enhancing audience engagement and VI.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the results, it is concluded that IC has a positive and significant impact on EA and the DI of Moja Museum. This indicates that credible influencers can establish a strong emotional connection with their audience while simultaneously improving the image of Moja Museum in the eyes of potential visitors. These findings align with previous research emphasizing influencer credibility's importance in destination marketing.

SMM has also proven to influence DI and VI positively. By actively utilizing social media, Moja Museum can build a more positive image and attract more visitors. This result highlights the essential role of digital marketing in influencing audience perceptions and interest in tourist destinations.

Although IC and SMM have been shown to influence DI and emotional attachment, the direct effect of IC on VI is more complex. While IC enhances EA and destination image, it does not directly influence visit intention. On the other hand, while SMM directly impacts both DI and visit intention, DI does not act as a mediator in this relationship.

Overall, this study's findings emphasize the importance of influencer credibility, social media marketing, and DI management in attracting visitors to Moja Museum. A more integrated and in-depth marketing strategy is required to improve the effectiveness of social media marketing, considering how each element influences visitors' decisions to visit.

Future research is recommended to explore additional factors that may influence visit intention, such as the level of trust regarding data security and privacy in digital technology usage. Moreover, technological innovations like augmented

reality or gamification elements could increase the museum's appeal and create a more interactive experience for visitors. This is crucial to ensure that marketing strategies remain relevant and can meet the needs and expectations of audiences in the rapidly evolving digital age.

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