



The Halal Consumer Dilemma: How Muslim Cognitive Dissonance Bridges Religiosity and Social Media Marketing Toward Visit Intention

Shofura Kamila Hasna¹, Bethani Suryawardani^{2*}, Astri Wulandari³

*Corresponding author email: bethanisuryawardani@telkomuniversity.ac.id

Article History

Manuscript submitted:
13 April 2026
Manuscript revised:
19 Mei 2026
Accepted for publication:
16 Juni 2026

Keywords

Religiosity;
Social Media Marketing;
Muslim Cognitive
Dissonance;
Visit Intention;
Muslim-Friendly Tourism

Abstract

The emergence of modern tourism destinations has generated new considerations for Muslim travelers, particularly when leisure-oriented attractions intersect with religious values. This research explores how religiosity and social media marketing shape visit intention toward Mezzo Beach Club Kebumen, while accounting for the role of Muslim cognitive dissonance. Using a quantitative explanatory design, data were collected from 250 Muslim respondents who had prior knowledge of the destination. The proposed relationships were evaluated through Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) using SmartPLS 4. The analysis demonstrates that religiosity contributes to both visit intention and Muslim cognitive dissonance, whereas social media marketing strengthens visit intention without significantly influencing cognitive dissonance. The results further show that higher levels of Muslim cognitive dissonance are associated with lower intention to visit. In addition, Muslim cognitive dissonance serves as a partial explanatory mechanism linking religiosity to visit intention, while no mediating role is identified in the relationship between social media marketing and visit intention. These findings enrich the understanding of Muslim tourist behavior by highlighting the interplay between religious commitment, marketing communication, and psychological evaluation when assessing contemporary tourism destinations.

Copyright © 2025, The Author(s).
This is an open access article under the BY-NC-ND license



Contents

Abstract	505
Introduction	506
Methods.....	507
Results and Discussions.....	507
Conclusion.....	511
Reference	511

¹ Marketing Management Study Program, Telkom University, Bandung, Indonesia

² Marketing Management Study Program, Telkom University, Bandung, Indonesia

³ Marketing Management Study Program, Telkom University, Bandung, Indonesia

Introduction

The expansion of the global tourism sector has encouraged destinations to develop services that accommodate increasingly diverse visitor preferences. Beyond recreational needs, travelers are becoming more attentive to cultural, ethical, and religious considerations when selecting destinations. This trend has contributed to the growing prominence of Muslim-friendly tourism, which emphasizes the provision of tourism experiences that enable Muslim travelers to fulfill their religious obligations while enjoying leisure activities (Hamdy & Eid, 2024; Suryawardani et al., 2023). The increasing participation of Muslim travelers in the tourism market has encouraged destinations to adapt their offering to better align with Islamic values. As one of the considerable potentials to develop tourism products that appeal to Muslim tourists has become an important concern for both researchers and tourism practitioners.

Along with the growth of Muslim-friendly tourism, modern tourism destinations have continued to evolve by offering entertainment-driven and lifestyle-oriented experiences. These destinations often emphasize relaxation, social interaction, and visual attractiveness to attract visitors. Although such attributes may enhance destination appeal, they can also generate different evaluations among Muslim tourists whose decisions are influenced by religious considerations. In the context, tourism choices are not solely determined by destination attractiveness but may also involve personal assessments regarding value compatibility. Digital communication has further transformed the way tourism destinations interact with potential visitors. Social media platforms allow destinations to disseminate information, build engagement, and create favorable impressions through visual and interactive content. Previous studies have reported that social media marketing can strengthen destination awareness and encourage behavioral intentions among prospective tourists (Gaffar et al., 2022; Hariyanti et al., 2023). As a result, social media has become an important instrument for influencing tourism-related decision-making.

Apart from marketing stimuli, personal values remain an important factor in shaping consumer behavior. Among Muslim tourists, religiosity the extent to which religious teachings guide attitudes and daily decisions. Individuals with stronger religious commitments may evaluate tourism destinations more critically, particularly when destination characteristics appear inconsistent with their beliefs and moral standards (Akhtar et al., 2020; Rizkitysha & Hananto, 2022). Therefore, religiosity may influence both destination evaluation and behavioral intention. Such evaluations can be understood through Cognitive Dissonance Theory, which explains that individuals may experience psychological discomfort when their beliefs and intended actions are not fully aligned (Festinger, 1957). In tourism settings, Muslim tourists may face internal conflict when attractive recreational opportunities coexist with concerns regarding religious appropriateness. This condition may lead to feelings of uncertainty and hesitation that influence subsequent behavioral decisions.

Although previous studies have investigated the effects of religiosity and social media marketing on tourist behavior, the psychological processes underlying these relationships remain insufficiently explored. Existing research has largely emphasized direct relationships among variables, while limited attention has been given to the role of cognitive dissonance in explaining how Muslim tourists form visit intentions. Furthermore, studies integrating religiosity, social media marketing, and Muslim cognitive dissonance within a single framework remain relatively limited. This issue is particularly relevant in destinations that operate within communities where religious values remain influential. Mezzo Beach Club Kebumen represents an interesting context because it combines modern leisure experiences with a social media environment characterized by strong religious norms. Accordingly, this study investigates the effects of religiosity and social media marketing on visit intention by examining the mediating role of Muslim cognitive dissonance. The findings are expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of

Muslim tourist behavior and provide practical insights for tourism destinations seeking to engage Muslim consumers more effectively.

Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach to explore factors associated with Muslim tourists' intention to visit Mezzo Beach Club Kebumen. The investigation focused on examining the roles of religiosity, social media marketing, and Muslim cognitive dissonance in shaping visit intention within a contemporary tourism setting. The research model was developed by combining the Theory of Planned Behavior and Cognitive Dissonance Theory. Religiosity and social media marketing were positioned as explanatory variables, Muslim cognitive dissonance served as the mediating construct, and visit intention represented the outcome variable. This framework was designed to capture both the direct and indirect relationships among the proposed variables.

The survey instrument consisted of measurement items adapted from prior studies and adjusted to fit the tourism context examined in this research. Religiosity was represented through indicators reflecting religious commitment and practice. Social media marketing was measured through aspects related to interaction, accessibility, and information sharing. Muslim cognitive dissonance reflected respondents' feelings of uncertainty and psychological discomfort, whereas visit intention captured their willingness and interest to visit the destination. Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Data analysis was carried out using SmartPLS 4. The evaluation process began with an assessment of construct quality through reliability and validity testing. Subsequently, the structural relationships proposed in the model were examined to determine the significance of direct and indirect effects. The statistical significance of each relationship was assessed through a bootstrapping procedure with a significance level of 5%.

Results and Discussion

1. Results

a. Respondent Profile

The dataset consisted of 250 valid responses. Female respondents and individuals aged between 18 and 24 years represented the largest proportion of participants, indicating that the sample was largely composed of young adults who frequently access tourism-related information through digital media.

b. Measurement Model Assessment

Construct validity and reliability were examined prior to testing the proposed relationships. The results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Constructs Reliability and Validity

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Religiosity	0.908	0.929	0.685
Social Media Marketing	0.880	0.909	0.624
Muslim Cognitive Dissonance	0.851	0.899	0.691
Visit Intention	0.809	0.875	0.636

All constructs satisfied the recommended thresholds for reliability and convergent validity, as indicated by Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values above 0.70 and AVE exceeding 0.50.

c. Structural Model Assessment

The explanatory capability of the proposed model is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Endogenous Variable	R^2
Muslim Cognitive Dissonance	0.346
Visit Intention	0.263

The model accounted for 34.6% of the variance in Muslim cognitive dissonance and 26.3% of the variance in visit intention.

The direct relationship among variables is reported in Table 3.

Table 3. Direct Effects and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t-value	p-value	Results
H1	Religiosity $\rightarrow$ Visit Intention	-0.174	2.507	0.012	Supported
H2	Religiosity $\rightarrow$ Muslim Cognitive Dissonance	0.583	14.130	0.000	Supported
H3	Social Media Marketing $\rightarrow$ Visit Intention	0.357	7.123	0.000	Supported
H4	Social Media Marketing $\rightarrow$ Muslim Cognitive Dissonance	0.066	1.236	0.216	Not Supported
H5	Muslim Cognitive Dissonance $\rightarrow$ Visit Intention	-0.265	3.836	0.000	Supported

The findings show that religiosity significantly affected visit intention and Muslim cognitive dissonance. Social media marketing significantly influenced visit intention but showed no significant effect on Muslim cognitive dissonance. In addition, Muslim cognitive dissonance significantly and negatively affected visit intention. The indirect effects are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Indirect Effects and Mediation Analysis

Relationship	β	t-value	p-value	Results
Religiosity $\rightarrow$ Muslim Cognitive Dissonance $\rightarrow$ Visit Intention	-0.154	3.695	0.000	Partial Mediation
Social Media Marketing $\rightarrow$ Muslim Cognitive Dissonance $\rightarrow$ Visit Intention	0.018	1.100	0.271	No Mediation

Muslim cognitive dissonance partially mediated the relationship between religiosity and visit intention. No mediating effect was identified in the relationship between social media marketing and visit intention.

2. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that religiosity remains an important factor in shaping Muslim tourists' decisions to visit Mezzo Beach Club Kebumen. This finding is consistent with previous studies which emphasise that Muslim tourists do not only consider the recreational appeal of a destination, but also pay attention to the compatibility of the destination with their religious values, norms, and needs.

Amalia and Gunawan (2023) showed that religiosity plays an important role as an antecedent in shaping halal awareness and destination image among prospective Muslim tourists. Similarly, Rostiani et al. (2024) emphasised that Islamic attributes, destination image, perceived value, and halal awareness influence tourists' intention to engage in Muslim-friendly travel. This finding is also in line with Hasan (2024), who highlighted that halal tourism elements, such as the social environment, halal food and beverages, and emotional attachment, can influence Muslim tourists' revisit intention. However, the present study provides a different emphasis by showing that religiosity does not only function as a driver of visit intention, but may also generate Muslim cognitive dissonance when tourists encounter modern destinations that are perceived as potentially not fully aligned with religious values.

The finding regarding the influence of religiosity on visit intention shows that the stronger the respondents' religious commitment, the greater their tendency to evaluate the destination based on its compatibility with Islamic principles. In the context of Mezzo Beach Club Kebumen, the identity of the destination as a modern recreational space may create dual evaluations among Muslim tourists. On the one hand, the destination offers visual appeal, a beach atmosphere, recreational facilities, and attractive social experiences. On the other hand, tourists with high levels of religiosity tend to consider whether the experience offered is consistent with standards of propriety, spiritual comfort, and halal consumption principles. This suggests that religiosity functions as a value-based filter in the tourism decision-making process. Muslim tourists do not merely respond to the destination's appeal as a recreational object, but also undertake a normative evaluation of value security, behavioural appropriateness, and the potential conflict between leisure needs and religious commitment (Muharis et al. 2026).

Religiosity was also found to be associated with increased Muslim cognitive dissonance. This finding can be explained through cognitive dissonance theory, which states that individuals experience psychological tension when there is inconsistency between their beliefs, attitudes, and intended actions. In the tourism context, Tanford and Montgomery (2015) demonstrated that cognitive dissonance is relevant in explaining travel decisions when tourists face choices that create conflict between personal preferences, social pressures, and specific values. Xu et al. (2025) also confirmed that cognitive dissonance in hospitality and tourism affects consumer decision-making, loyalty, and behavioural responses. Based on the findings of this study, Muslim tourists with stronger religiosity tend to experience tension when they are attracted to a destination that is visually and socially appealing, but at the same time raises concerns about its compatibility with Islamic values. Thus, Muslim cognitive dissonance emerges not because of a lack of interest in the destination, but because of a conflict between recreational attraction and religious consideration.

Unlike religiosity, social media marketing primarily functions as a communication stimulus that enhances destination appeal and encourages visit intention. This finding is consistent with Baber and Baber (2023), who found that social media marketing efforts, e-reputation, and destination image play an important role in shaping intention to visit through a stimulus-organism-response approach. Fitri et al. (2023) also showed that Instagram marketing influences destination image and intention to visit through both cognitive and affective dimensions. In the context of Mezzo Beach Club Kebumen, visual content, promotional messages, visitor experience posts, and digital interaction are likely to strengthen positive perceptions of the destination. Social media helps prospective tourists imagine the experience they may obtain, build impressions of the destination, and increase their curiosity to visit.

However, the finding that social media marketing has no significant effect on Muslim cognitive dissonance indicates that promotional communication is not sufficiently strong to change value-based evaluations. Social media can create awareness, enhance destination attractiveness, and shape a positive

image, but it does not necessarily eliminate religious doubts rooted in personal beliefs. This suggests that Muslim tourists' cognitive dissonance operates at a deeper evaluative level than visual perception or digital promotion. If social media messages only emphasise destination aesthetics, recreational atmosphere, and entertainment appeal, while aspects of propriety, Muslim comfort, worship facilities, and halal consumption assurance are not clearly communicated, such promotion may increase interest but not necessarily reduce doubt. Therefore, the effectiveness of social media marketing in the Muslim tourism context needs to be expanded from visual promotion to value communication that can address tourists' psychological and religious needs.

The negative relationship between Muslim cognitive dissonance and visit intention shows that psychological discomfort can become an important barrier to visitation decisions. Respondents who experienced higher levels of dissonance tended to show lower visit intention. When tourists feel that visiting a particular destination may be inconsistent with the values they hold, they may postpone the decision, seek alternative destinations, or abandon the intention to visit altogether. This finding strengthens the view that tourism decisions are influenced not only by external factors such as destination attractiveness and promotion, but also by the need to maintain psychological and moral consistency. In the context of Muslim tourism, this consistency is related to the belief that tourism activities can still be undertaken without neglecting religious principles.

The mediation analysis provides a deeper understanding of the mechanism through which each variable operates. Religiosity influences visit intention not only directly, but also through Muslim cognitive dissonance. This means that religious commitment may shape normative evaluations of a destination and subsequently generate psychological tension when there is a perceived mismatch between destination appeal and religious principles. In contrast, the influence of social media marketing on visit intention occurs primarily through a direct pathway. This indicates that digital promotion is effective in increasing attraction towards a destination, but does not operate by reducing cognitive dissonance. Thus, religiosity and social media marketing influence Muslim tourists through different mechanisms. Religiosity operates through value evaluation and psychological response mechanisms, whereas social media marketing operates through communication, image formation, and destination appeal stimulation mechanisms.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of Muslim tourist behaviour studies by integrating religiosity, social media marketing, Muslim cognitive dissonance, and visit intention within a single analytical model. This study extends the literature on halal tourism and Muslim-friendly tourism by showing that religiosity does not always operate as a linear driver of intention, but may also create dissonance when tourists encounter destinations positioned between modern recreational appeal and religious considerations. In addition, this study enriches the understanding of social media marketing in tourism by showing that digital promotion is more effective in directly shaping attraction than in addressing value conflicts experienced by Muslim tourists.

Practically, the findings provide important implications for the management of Mezzo Beach Club Kebumen and similar tourism destinations. Destination managers need to understand that Muslim tourists require not only information about facilities, prices, and visual appeal, but also assurance regarding value comfort, the availability of Muslim-friendly facilities, and communication that does not create religious ambiguity. Social media strategies should not only display attractive destination visuals, but also communicate aspects of safety, family comfort, the availability of halal food, worship facilities, and an atmosphere suitable for various tourist segments. In this way, digital promotion can be directed not only towards increasing awareness and visit intention, but also towards reducing the psychological uncertainty that Muslim tourists may experience.

The limitation of this study lies in the scope of the object, which focuses on a single destination, namely Mezzo Beach Club Kebumen; therefore, the findings should be understood within the specific characteristics of that destination. In addition, the use of a survey-based research design captures respondents' perceptions at a particular point in time, and therefore does not fully reflect changes in tourist perceptions over the long term. However, this limitation does not reduce the contribution of the study; rather, it opens opportunities for future research to expand the object of analysis to various types of modern tourism destinations, employ a longitudinal approach, or combine quantitative surveys with in-depth interviews to obtain a richer understanding of the psychological processes involved in Muslim tourists' visitation decisions.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship among religiosity, social media marketing, Muslim cognitive dissonance, and visit intention toward Mezzo Beach Club Kebumen. The findings indicate that religiosity significantly influenced both Muslim cognitive dissonance and visit intention, while social media marketing significantly influenced visit intention but did not significantly affect Muslim cognitive dissonance. In addition, Muslim cognitive dissonance was found to negatively influence visit intention, suggesting that psychological conflict may reduce Muslim tourists' willingness to visit destinations perceived as potentially inconsistent with their religious values. The mediation analysis revealed that Muslim cognitive dissonance partially mediated the relationship between religiosity and visit intention. This finding highlights the importance of psychological mechanism in explaining how religious values shape tourism-related decisions. However, Muslim cognitive dissonance did not mediate the relationship between social media marketing and visit intention, indicating that social media marketing effects. These results contribute to the literature on Muslim tourism by integrating religiosity, social media marketing, and cognitive dissonance within a single research framework.

From a practical perspective, tourism managers should consider not only promotional effectiveness but also the alignment between destination attributes and the values of Muslim visitors. Providing information, facilities, and services that accommodate religious needs may help reduce psychological concerns and strengthen visit intentions. Future studies are encouraged to examine additional psychological and behavioral variables, involve broader tourism settings, and employ larger samples to enhance the generalizability of findings.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to all parties who provided support and input in the preparation of this study. Their contributions were valuable in examining the roles of religiosity, social media marketing, Muslim cognitive dissonance, and visit intention in understanding Muslim tourists' decision-making towards Mezzo Beach Club Kebumen.

References

- Akhtar, N., Jin, S., Alvi, T. H., & Siddiqi, U. I. (2020). Conflicting halal attributes at halal restaurants and consumers' responses: The moderating role of religiosity. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 45, 499–510. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2020.10.010>
- Gaffar, V., Tjahjono, B., Abdullah, T., & Sukmayadi, V. (2022). Like, tag and share: bolstering social media marketing to improve intention to visit a nature-based tourism destination. *Tourism Review*, 77(2), 451–470. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-05-2020-0215>

- Hamdy, A., & Eid, R. (2024). Muslim-friendly tourist destination image in travel and hospitality industry: Conceptualization and scale development. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 102. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2024.102043>
- Hariyanti, T., Kurniawan, G., Yunus, A., Saputro, D., Husada, U. C., Rhynanti, C. L., & Rohman, F. (2023). The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Patient Visit Intention Mediated by Brand Awareness. *JMMR (Jurnal Medicoeticolegal Dan Manajemen Rumah Sakit)*, 12(2), 163–178. <https://doi.org/10.18196/jmmr.v12i2.67>
- Rizkitysha, T. L., & Hananto, A. (2022). “Do knowledge, perceived usefulness of halal label and religiosity affect attitude and intention to buy halal-labeled detergent?” *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 13(3), 649–670. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-03-2020-0070>
- Suryawardani, B., Noermijati, Hussein, A. S., & Aisjah, S. (2023). *Growing Behavioral Intentions for Muslim-Friendly Tourism in Indonesia: Does Muslim Tourism Attributes and Muslim Experiential Quality Matter?* (pp. 143–152). https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6463-214-9_16
- Muharis, M., Taufik, M., Nirwana, B. N. ., Fidiatunisa, & Sirajudin. (2026). Halal Tourism and Conventional Tourism Contestation: An Analysis of the Dynamics of Muslim-Friendly Tourism in Lombok. *Soshum: Jurnal Sosial Dan Humaniora*, 16(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.31940/soshum.v16i1.1-10>
- Amalia, F. A., & Gunawan, A. I. (2023). Livening up Japan’s halal tourism by captivating Indonesian potential Muslim tourists. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 14(9), 2235–2252. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-04-2022-0106>
- Baber, R., & Baber, P. (2023). Influence of social media marketing efforts, e-reputation and destination image on intention to visit among tourists: Application of S-O-R model. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, 6(5), 2298–2316. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTI-06-2022-0270>
- Fitri, F. R., Februadi, A. C., Elisabeth, V., & Yuardani, A. M. (2023). The influence of Instagram social media marketing as a promotional means to increase intentions to visit tourist destinations. *Journal of Marketing Innovation*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.35313/jmi.v3i2.70>
- Hasan, A. A.-T. (2024). Factors influencing halal tourism destinations revisit intentions among Muslim travellers of Bangladesh: The mediating role of emotional attachments. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 15(3), 720–744. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-02-2023-0045>
- Rostiani, R., Firdausi, A. S. M., Arini, H. M., Mulyani, Y. P., & Sunarharum, T. M. (2024). The effect of Islamic attributes, destination image, scepticism, perceived value and halal awareness on the intention to engage in Muslim-friendly travel. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 15(2), 613–632.
- Tanford, S., & Montgomery, R. (2015). The effects of social influence and cognitive dissonance on travel purchase decisions. *Journal of Travel Research*, 54(5), 596–610. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287514528287>
- Xu, S. N., Choi, J. G., & Wu, F. (2025). A review of cognitive dissonance theory for the hospitality and tourism industry: Focusing on contributions and limitations. *Global Business and Finance Review*, 30(12), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.17549/gbfr.2025.30.12.1>