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SOCIAL MEDIA USE, FOMO-T, AND VISIT BEHAVIOUR INTENTION IN HERITAGE TOURISM: A PLS-SEM STUDY OF YOUNG TOURISTS IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between social media use and Visit Behavioural Intention among Millennial and Generation Z tourists at Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan, Malang, Indonesia, by positioning Fear of Missing Out in Tourism (FoMO-T) as a mediating mechanism. Organised through the Stimulus–Organism–Response framework, social media use is conceptualised through Uses and Gratifications Theory as the stimulus, FoMO-T as the organismic state, and TPB-grounded Visit Behavioural Intention as the response. The study used a quantitative explanatory approach and analysed survey responses from 322 domestic Millennial and Generation Z tourists through PLS-SEM. The empirical results supported the four proposed hypotheses. Social media use positively influenced Visit Behavioural Intention ($\beta = 0.309$, $p < 0.001$) and FoMO-T ($\beta = 0.700$, $p < 0.001$). FoMO-T predicted Visit Behavioural Intention ($\beta = 0.449$, $p < 0.001$) and partially mediated the social media–intention relationship (indirect $\beta = 0.314$; VAF = 50.4%). Both endogenous constructs yielded identical R^2 values of 0.490. However, the two constructs differ in terms of their predictor structures and theoretical positions within the model. The study applies FoMO-T in Indonesian heritage tourism and demonstrates direct cognitive-informational and indirect FoMO-T-mediated affective pathways. It theorises experiential irreversibility as a context-specific amplifier for future operationalisation.

Keywords: FoMO-T; Generation Z; Heritage Tourism; Millennials; Social Media Use; Visit Behavioural Intention.

INTRODUCTION

Before visiting a destination, tourists often evaluate it through mobile screens. Peer reviews, visual travel narratives, and experience-based recommendations on Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube shape destination imagination before physical visitation occurs (Buhalis & Law, 2008; Leung et al., 2013; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Social media can therefore be understood as a space where tourists assess

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destinations through information, visuals, and social cues before deciding whether to visit. This process becomes more complex in heritage tourism. Beyond their surface appeal, heritage destinations carry dense layers of collective memory, cultural identity, nostalgia, authenticity, and ongoing cultural interpretation that distinguish them from conventional tourist sites (Timothy & Boyd, 2003; Urry & Larsen, 2011). When images of colonial architecture, historic streetscapes, local traditions, and distinctive cultural atmospheres circulate through user-generated content, tourists may begin to form expectations long before arriving at the site. Recent heritage tourism studies further indicate that cultural authenticity, heritage value, and destination image can strengthen tourists' revisit intentions and support sustainable destination outcomes (Alawneh et al., 2026; Ghosh et al., 2025; Kolar & Žabkar, 2010). Consequently, the influence of social media on heritage visit intention extends beyond information provision and may involve affective responses shaped by social comparison, peer visibility, and the desire to participate in culturally meaningful experiences.

Millennials and Generation Z are important segments in this context because digital and social media content often enters their travel decision process. For these cohorts, social media serves multiple roles: it provides destination information, supports identity construction, enables comparison with peers, and facilitates social validation through travel-related choices (Kim & Wongsa, 2025; Liu et al., 2023). Generation Z tourists, in particular, are highly responsive to digital travel information and socially embedded decision-making processes (Dimitriou & AbouElgheit, 2019; Rudež, 2023). Destinations that appear socially relevant, visually attractive, and experientially valuable within their peer networks may therefore become more salient in their travel consideration.

Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan in Malang, Indonesia, serves as a relevant empirical site for examining these dynamics. As a former colonial settlement transformed into an urban heritage destination, the area combines historic architecture, local memory, and visually distinctive streetscapes that are frequently represented through visitor-generated social media content. Its heritage character and digitally engaged visitor base make it well-suited for investigating how social media exposure may shape Visit Behavioural Intention among Millennial and Generation Z tourists. In this study, the destination's digital visibility is treated as a contextual condition rather than as an unsupported claim of virality.

To explain how social media exposure develops into visit intention, an analytical framework is needed that can connect digital stimuli, psychological responses, and behavioural tendencies. The Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) is used as the structural foundation for this analysis, enabling a step-by-step mapping from social media as the initial stimulus, through FoMO-T as the intervening psychological condition, to Visit Behavioural Intention as the final behavioural response. Social media use is interpreted through Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which positions users as purposive agents who consciously engage with digital platforms to address a range of needs, from seeking destination-specific information and consuming visual content to sustaining social interaction and momentarily stepping away from the demands of everyday life (Katz et al., 1973). At the psychological level, FoMO-T captures tourism-specific

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concerns such as anxiety about missing out on travel experiences currently circulating among peers, the sense that others are having more rewarding journeys, and the compulsion to continuously monitor and share travel-related information (Çetinkaya & Yıldız, 2025). Visit Behavioural Intention is then positioned as the response, grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which identifies intention as the psychological state most immediately preceding actual behaviour, or the final cognitive step before a travel decision is enacted (Ajzen, 1991).

Prior tourism research has used SOR and behavioural intention approaches to analyse the effects of digital stimuli, destination image, e-reputation, virtual tourism, destination marketing, and psychological responses on visit or revisit intention (Baber & Baber, 2023; Hamid et al., 2023; Kusumah et al., 2022). Extending this stream of research, the present study places FoMO-T as the psychological mechanism connecting social media use and heritage visit intention.

These gratifications may reduce uncertainty and support favourable destination evaluation, especially among Generation Z tourists who rely on social and mobile information features in travel decision-making (Rudež, 2023). For Millennials and Generation Z, travel inspiration and destination evaluation are closely connected to visual content, peer visibility, and digital validation. Prior studies show that social media marketing activities can shape Generation Z travel behaviour, while social media exposure may influence young travellers' tourism intentions (Jiang et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2023). In heritage tourism, visual content may be particularly persuasive because it communicates atmosphere, architecture, authenticity, and symbolic meaning before tourists arrive at the destination.

Tourism-related social media exposes users to peer posts, influencer content, destination trends, and visual travel stories that present travel experiences as attractive and socially meaningful. When tourists repeatedly see others joining such experiences, they may feel excluded from moments valued within their social circle. This response is linked to FoMO, namely the uneasiness that arises when individuals perceive others as taking part in desirable experiences while they are not included (Przybylski et al., 2013). Earlier studies also associate FoMO with social media engagement, psychological discomfort, and problematic online behaviour (Abel et al., 2016; Balta et al., 2020; Uram & Skalski, 2022).Recent studies also show that social comparison, influencer credibility, content quality, e-WOM, and digital tourism communication can activate FoMO-related travel intention, especially among younger tourists (Kim & Wongsa, 2025; Widaningsih & Putranto, 2025).

FoMO-T may strengthen Visit Behavioural Intention when tourists perceive a destination as socially visible, culturally meaningful, and worth sharing. Within the SOR logic, FoMO-T represents the internal response that helps translate digital exposure into behavioural tendency. From a TPB perspective, this condition may support favourable attitudes toward visiting, reinforce subjective norms through visible peer participation, and increase urgency to experience the destination. This mechanism is relevant in heritage tourism because heritage experiences are often associated with authenticity, nostalgia, cultural identity, and perceived distinctiveness (Jiang et al., 2025; Timothy & Boyd, 2003). In heritage settings,

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perceived authenticity and destination image can strengthen emotional attachment, satisfaction, loyalty, and revisit intention (Alawneh et al., 2026; Park et al., 2019). FoMO-related mechanisms have also been shown to influence purchase likelihood, museum visit intention, and travel decision-making (Good & Hyman, 2020; Uslu & Tosun, 2024).

Social media use may influence Visit Behavioural Intention through both evaluative and psychological routes. Through the evaluative route, destination content can provide information, reduce uncertainty, and support cognitive assessment. Through the psychological route, repeated exposure to peer visibility, social comparison, and shareable travel experiences may activate FoMO-T, which then strengthens motivation to visit. This logic is consistent with tourism studies showing that destination image, destination quality, virtual experience, and intangible cultural assets can operate as mechanisms linking destination-related stimuli to behavioural intention (Kusumah et al., 2022; Liestiandre et al., 2024). Prior studies have examined FoMO as a mediator in consumer and tourism contexts (Chetioui & El Bouzidi, 2023; Ulucan, 2024; Uslu & Tosun, 2024).

Despite the growing literature on social media and tourism behaviour, several issues still require further attention. First, many tourism studies still rely on generic FoMO, which may not fully capture travel-specific forms of comparison, social connection, and information-sharing motivation. Second, UGT-based studies of social media use rarely examine FoMO-T as a psychological mechanism linking social media use to visit intention. Third, empirical applications of FoMO-T in Indonesian heritage tourism, particularly among Millennial and Generation Z tourists, remain limited. Addressing these gaps, this study examines how social media use influences Visit Behavioural Intention toward Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan, with FoMO-T tested as a mediating mechanism. Four research questions guide the study: RQ1: Does social media use positively influence Visit Behavioural Intention? RQ2: Does social media use positively influence FoMO-T? RQ3: Does FoMO-T positively influence Visit Behavioural Intention? RQ4: Does FoMO-T mediate the relationship between social media use and Visit Behavioural Intention among Millennial and Generation Z tourists?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A quantitative explanatory design was used to examine the relationships among Social Media Use, FoMO-T, and Visit Behavioural Intention. PLS-SEM was selected for its suitability for prediction-oriented, mediation-inclusive models in exploratory-confirmatory research and its limited distributional assumptions (Hair et al., 2019, 2022). The model comprised three reflective latent constructs and 26 observed indicators, with Social Media Use as the exogenous variable, FoMO-T as the mediator, and Visit Behavioural Intention as the endogenous variable. Data processing was conducted using SmartPLS 4 (Ringle et al., 2024).

Sample and Data Collection

The target respondents were domestic Millennial and adult Generation Z tourists who had visited, intended to visit, or had been exposed to Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan through visual social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, or

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YouTube. Respondents were selected purposively to ensure that they matched the study context, namely digitally exposed Millennial and Generation Z tourists. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire distributed through online channels and on-site recruitment at or around the destination. Both modes used the same questionnaire structure and measurement items. Because formal mode-invariance testing was not conducted, possible response-mode differences are acknowledged as methodological limitations.

A priori sample adequacy was assessed using statistical power analysis rather than the ten-times rule, following current PLS-SEM recommendations (Hair et al., 2022). Using G*Power 3.1 for a multiple-regression framework with two maximum predictors, $\alpha = 0.05$, power = 0.80, and a conservative small-to-medium effect size assumption ($f^2 = 0.05$), the minimum required sample was approximately 196 respondents (Faul et al., 2009). The achieved sample of 322 respondents exceeded this requirement and was considered adequate for estimating the proposed mediation model and conducting bootstrapping procedures. The final sample consisted of 222 Generation Z respondents (68.9%) and 100 Millennial respondents (31.1%).

The decision to combine Millennial and Generation Z respondents into a single analytical sample is grounded in their shared digital media environment and overlapping behavioural characteristics in tourism decision-making. Both cohorts are characterized by high social media engagement, reliance on peer-generated content in travel planning, and sensitivity to digital social cues, which are central to the theoretical framework applied in this study (Dimitriou & AbouElgheit, 2019; Liu et al., 2023; Rudež, 2023). Accordingly, the two cohorts were pooled only for the purpose of estimating the proposed mediation model among digitally exposed young tourists, not to claim equivalence between Millennials and Generation Z. Analytically, the combined sample also enabled sufficient statistical power for PLS-SEM mediation estimation and bootstrapping procedures without further fragmenting the purposive sample.

Nevertheless, the sample distribution is uneven, with Generation Z comprising 68.9% of respondents. This imbalance means that the combined results may disproportionately reflect Generation Z patterns. Because formal multi-group analysis or measurement invariance testing was not conducted, the findings should be interpreted as reflecting a social media–FoMO-T–intention pattern among digitally exposed young tourists broadly, rather than as cohort-equivalent conclusions.

Table 1. Measurement Instrument

Construct	Dimension	Item	Indicator
Social Media Use	Entertainment	PSM1	Accessing tourism content for enjoyment
		PSM2	Filling leisure time with tourism content
		PSM3	Entertained by visual tourism narratives
	Information Seeking	PSM4	Searching practical destination information

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Construct	Dimension	Item	Indicator
		PSM5	Seeking travel reviews and tips
		PSM6	Prioritising social media over conventional sources
	Social Interaction	PSM7	Sharing tourism content with social network
		PSM8	Engaging with tourism posts to maintain connections
		PSM9	Participating in online travel communities
	Escapism	PSM10	Using tourism content to escape daily routines
		PSM11	Fantasising about travel after viewing content
FOMO-T	Fear of Losing Social Connections	FOMO1	Anxiety when friends travel to viral destinations without me
		FOMO2	Feeling isolated when not following travel trends
		FOMO3	Concern about being perceived as out-of-date
	Others Having Better Experiences	FOMO4	Comparing personal travel with others' social media posts
		FOMO5	Compulsion to visit viral destinations
		FOMO6	Feeling left behind on trending destinations
	Need to Learn and Share	FOMO7	Monitoring others' travel activities online
		FOMO8	Uploading travel content for social validation
		FOMO9	Sharing travel experiences to signal participation
Visit Behavioural Intention	Visit Intention	KBJ1	Definite plan to visit the destination
		KBJ2	Willingness to allocate financial resources and time
		KBJ3	Prioritising destination over alternatives
	Recommendation Intention	KBJ4	Recommending destination via digital platforms
		KBJ5	Intending to create and share visual content to advocate for the destination
		KBJ6	Intending to provide positive ratings or reviews to the destination online

All items measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree). PSM operationalised through UGT (Katz et al., 1973); FoMO-T measured using the validated tourism-specific scale of Çetinkaya & Yıldız (2025); KBJ grounded in TPB (Ajzen, 1991) and Zeithaml et al.'s (1996) multidimensional behavioural intentions framework, encompassing visit intention (KBJ1–3) and recommendation intention (KBJ4–6).

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Based on Table 1. all questionnaire items were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The instrument consisted of three reflective constructs: Social Media Use, FoMO-T, and Visit Behavioural Intention. Social Media Use was represented by four UGT-based dimensions, namely entertainment, information seeking, social interaction, and escapism (Katz et al., 1973). FoMO-T was measured using the tourism-specific scale developed by Çetinkaya & Yıldız (2025), which covers fear of losing social connections, perceptions of others having better experiences, and the need to learn and share information. Visit Behavioural Intention was grounded in TPB and measured through visit intention and recommendation intention indicators (Ajzen, 1991).

Visit Behavioural Intention was treated as a single reflective construct because the indicators reflect favourable behavioural responses toward the destination. The use of recommendation-oriented indicators is supported by the multidimensional behavioural intentions framework, where positive word-of-mouth, recommendation, and future behavioural intention are understood as related outcomes of favourable evaluation (Zeithaml et al., 1996). In social media tourism contexts, intentions to recommend, create, and share destination-related content may also appear before actual visitation as part of anticipatory behavioural intention, rather than only after the visit (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). However, because visit intention and recommendation intention may still be conceptually distinct, this measurement decision should be understood as a boundary condition of the present model.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted in two main stages (Hair et al., 2019, 2022). In the first stage, the measurement model was examined using outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, composite reliability, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), the Fornell-Larcker criterion, and HTMT ratios. These assessments were used to evaluate indicator reliability, internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Henseler et al., 2015; Ringle et al., 2024). In the second stage, the structural model was assessed through collinearity diagnostics (VIF), coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and bootstrapped direct and indirect effects using 5,000 subsamples. Mediation was evaluated from the significance and confidence interval of the indirect effect, while VAF was used descriptively to identify the mediation type (Hair et al., 2019). Common Method Bias was managed procedurally through anonymity, item arrangement, and neutral questionnaire instructions, and statistically through the full collinearity VIF approach. Nevertheless, because the data were cross-sectional and collected from the same respondents, method bias cannot be fully eliminated (Kock, 2015; Podsakoff et al., 2003).

RESULT & DISCUSSION

Result

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics (n = 322)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	190	59.00%

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	Male	132	41.00%
Generation	Generation Z (born 1997–2012)	222	68.90%
	Millennials (born 1981–1996)	100	31.10%
Education Level	Bachelor's Degree (S1/D4)	146	45.30%
	Senior High School/Vocational School	103	32.00%
	Diploma (D1/D2/D3)	55	17.10%
	Postgraduate (S2/S3)	17	5.30%
	Junior High School	1	0.30%
Occupation	Private Employee	107	33.20%
	Student	62	19.30%
	Civil Servant (incl. Military/Police)	37	11.50%
	Entrepreneur/MSME Actor	36	11.20%
	Freelancer	28	8.70%
	Educator/Lecturer	23	7.10%
	Healthcare Worker	18	5.60%
	Others (Unemployed, Housewife, etc.)	11	3.40%
Domicile	Malang City	157	48.80%
	Malang Regency	108	33.50%
	Outside Malang, within East Java	34	10.60%
	Outside East Java	23	7.10%
Daily Social Media Usage	More than 5 hours	58	18.00%
	3–5 hours	126	39.10%
	2–3 hours	104	32.30%
	1–2 hours	30	9.30%
	Less than 1 hour	4	1.2%[a]
Visit Status	Have visited more than once	118	36.60%
	Have visited once	180	55.90%
	Never visited, but planning to visit	21	6.50%
	Never visited and no plans	3	0.90%
First Encountered via Social Media	Yes	315	97.80%
	No	7	2.20%
Primary Discovery Platform[b]	Instagram	179	55.60%
	TikTok	165	51.20%

[a] Percentage rounded to one decimal place. [b] Multiple-response item; percentages do not sum to 100%.
Source: Primary data, processed (2026)

The sample consisted of 322 respondents: 190 female respondents (59.0%) and 132 male respondents (41.0%). Generation Z formed the majority (n = 222; 68.9%), while Millennials accounted for 100 respondents (31.1%). Most respondents were local or regional visitors, with 48.8% residing in Malang City and 33.5% in Malang Regency. The sample was appropriate for the study's digital tourism focus, as 57.1% reported using social media for three hours or more per day. Regarding visit status, 92.5% had either visited Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan or intended to visit it. In addition, 97.8% first encountered the destination through social media. Instagram (55.6%) and TikTok (51.2%) were the main discovery platforms; these figures reflect a multi-select response format and therefore do not sum to 100%.

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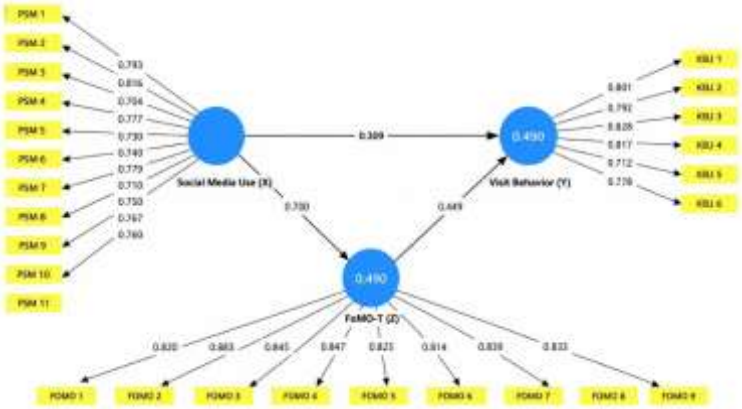
Measurement Model Assessment



Full PLS-SEM structural model with outer loadings for all latent constructs: Social Media Use (PSM/X), Fear of Missing Out in Tourism (FoMO-T/Z), and Visit Behavioural Intention (KBJ/Y). Source: SmartPLS 4 Output (2026)

Figure 1. PLS-SEM (Full Outer Model) Measurement Model Diagram

Indicator reliability, internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were examined following PLS-SEM guidelines (Hair et al., 2019, 2022). Figure 1 shows that all 26 indicators met the 0.70 loading criterion. Loadings ranged from 0.704 to 0.816 for Social Media Use (PSM), 0.795 to 0.883 for FoMO-T, and 0.712 to 0.828 for Visit Behavioural Intention (KBJ). All indicators were therefore retained.

Table 3. Construct Reliability, Convergent Validity, and Common Method Bias Assessment

Construct	Items	Cronbach's α	rho_a	CR (ρc)	AVE
Social Media Use (PSM)	11	0.926	0.927	0.937	0.574
Fear of Missing Out in Tourism (FoMO-T)	9	0.945	0.946	0.953	0.695
Visit Behavioural Intention (KBJ)	6	0.878	0.883	0.908	0.622
Common Method Bias – FCVIF (max)	—	3.505 (FOMO2)			Marginally above 3.3 criterion

Threshold criteria: Cronbach's α ≥ 0.70; rho_a ≥ 0.70; CR (ρc) ≥ 0.70; AVE ≥ 0.50 (Hair et al., 2019).
Source: SmartPLS 4 output (2026).

Internal consistency reliability and convergent validity were also satisfactory. Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, and composite reliability values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, while AVE values were above 0.50 for all constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2019). Specifically, Social Media Use recorded α = 0.926, ρc = 0.937, and AVE = 0.574; FoMO-T recorded α = 0.945, ρc = 0.953, and AVE = 0.695; and Visit Behavioural Intention recorded α = 0.878, ρc = 0.908, and AVE = 0.622. The ρc value for FoMO-T slightly exceeded the conservative 0.95 guideline, suggesting that possible item redundancy should be interpreted cautiously, although the construct represents theoretically differentiated dimensions.

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Table 4. Discriminant Validity – HTMT Ratio

Construct	PSM	FoMO-T
Social Media Use (PSM)	—	
Fear of Missing Out in Tourism (FoMO-T)	0.745	—
Visit Behavioural Intention (KBJ)	0.684	0.724

HTMT threshold < 0.85 (Hair et al., 2019)
Source: SmartPLS 4 data processing results (2026)

Discriminant validity was supported by both HTMT and the Fornell–Larcker criterion. All HTMT values were below the conservative threshold of 0.85: PSM–FoMO-T = 0.745, PSM–KBJ = 0.684, and FoMO-T–KBJ = 0.724 (Henseler et al., 2015). The Fornell–Larcker criterion was also satisfied because the square root of AVE for each construct exceeded its correlations with other constructs. Common Method Bias was assessed using the full collinearity VIF approach. The maximum FCVIF value was 3.505 for FOMO2, exceeding Kock's (2015) conservative threshold of 3.3. This result does not invalidate the model, but it indicates that common method bias cannot be fully ruled out and should be acknowledged as a limitation (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Table 5. Coefficient of Determination (R^2), Effect Sizes (f^2), and Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Variable / Path	R^2	Adj. R^2	Q^2	f^2	Interpretation
Endogenous Constructs					
FoMO-T (Z)	0.490	0.488	0.484	—	Modest
Visit Behavioural Intention / KBJ (Y)	0.490	0.487	0.378	—	Modest
Effect Sizes (f^2) by Path					
PSM → FoMO-T	—	—	—	0.960	Large
FoMO-T → KBJ	—	—	—	0.202	Medium
PSM → KBJ (direct)	—	—	—	0.095	Small to Medium

R^2 classification (Hair et al., 2019): weak = 0.25; moderate = 0.50; strong = 0.75. f^2 thresholds (Cohen, 1988): small = 0.02; medium = 0.15; large = 0.35.
Source: SmartPLS 4 output (2026).

The structural model was assessed by examining explanatory power, predictive relevance, and effect size. Table 5 shows that the model explained 49.0% of the variance in FoMO-T (R^2 = 0.490; adjusted R^2 = 0.488) and 49.0% of the variance in Visit Behavioural Intention (R^2 = 0.490; adjusted R^2 = 0.487). These values indicate a near-moderate level of explanatory power in the context of behavioural PLS-SEM research (Hair et al., 2019). Predictive relevance was also supported because both endogenous constructs had positive Q^2 values, namely FoMO-T (Q^2 = 0.484) and Visit Behavioural Intention (Q^2 = 0.378). The effect size results showed a large effect for PSM → FoMO-T (f^2 = 0.960), a medium effect for FoMO-T → KBJ (f^2 = 0.202), and a small-to-medium effect for PSM → KBJ (f^2 = 0.095), following Cohen's (1988) guidelines. Although FoMO-T and Visit Behavioural Intention recorded identical R^2 values of 0.490, these values should not be interpreted as indicating equivalent explanatory mechanisms. FoMO-T is predicted by Social Media Use, whereas Visit Behavioural Intention is predicted jointly by Social Media Use and FoMO-T. The adjusted R^2 values also differ slightly, with FoMO-T at 0.488 and Visit Behavioural Intention at 0.487. Therefore, the identical

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R^2 values should be read as construct-specific outputs rather than evidence of identical predictive processes, variance sources, or theoretical mechanisms. The large PSM → FoMO-T effect was also interpreted cautiously, although discriminant validity remained acceptable based on the PSM-FoMO-T HTMT value below 0.85.

Table 6. Direct Effects, Indirect Effect, Total Effects, and Mediation Analysis

Path	β	t-stat	p-value	LL 95%	UL 95%	Decision
Direct Effects						
H1: PSM → KBJ	0.309	3.626	< 0.001	0.138	0.474	Supported
H2: PSM → FoMO-T	0.700	19.073	< 0.001	0.630	0.766	Supported
H3: FoMO-T → KBJ	0.449	5.555	< 0.001	0.296	0.601	Supported
Indirect Effect & Mediation						
H4: PSM → FoMO-T → KBJ	0.314	5.317	< 0.001	0.199	0.430	Supported
Total Effects						
PSM → KBJ	0.623	—	—	—	—	—
FoMO-T → KBJ	0.449	—	—	—	—	—
PSM → FoMO-T	0.700	—	—	—	—	—
Mediation Assessment						
VAF (mediation type)	50.4%	—	—	—	—	Partial

β = standardised path coefficient from bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples. VAF = Variance Accounted For; 20% ≤ VAF < 80% indicates partial mediation (Hair et al., 2019).
Source: SmartPLS 4 output (2026)

The bootstrapping output showed significant positive relationships across all proposed paths. Social Media Use had a positive effect on Visit Behavioural Intention (β = 0.309, t = 3.626, p < 0.001), supporting H1. Social Media Use also had a positive effect on FoMO-T (β = 0.700, t = 19.073, p < 0.001), supporting H2. FoMO-T positively predicted Visit Behavioural Intention (β = 0.449, t = 5.555, p < 0.001), supporting H3. The indirect effect from Social Media Use to Visit Behavioural Intention through FoMO-T was significant (β = 0.314, t = 5.317, p < 0.001), with a 95% bootstrapped confidence interval that did not include zero [0.199, 0.430]. Thus, H4 was supported. The VAF value of 50.4% indicates partial mediation based on the 20% to 80% classification range (Hair et al., 2019). The total effect of Social Media Use on Visit Behavioural Intention was β = 0.623, showing that the relationship includes both direct and FoMO-T-mediated components.

DISCUSSION

The findings show that social media use is linked to Visit Behavioural Intention through two concurrent pathways: a direct cognitive-informational pathway and an indirect affective pathway mediated by Fear of Missing Out in Tourism (FoMO-T). All four hypotheses were supported, and the partial mediation result (VAF = 50.4%) indicates that social media's total effect on visit intention (β = 0.623) is partitioned across a direct route and an indirect FoMO-T-mediated route in approximately equal proportions. The key contribution is therefore not the statistical presence of

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mediation itself, but the substantive interpretation that social media shapes heritage visit intention through both rational destination evaluation and socially driven psychological urgency.

Social media functions as a pre-visit evaluative environment for heritage tourism, enabling destination assessment through information, visuals, and peer-generated content before physical visitation occurs. This cognitive-informational role is reflected in the significant direct relationship between Social Media Use and Visit Behavioural Intention ($\beta = 0.309$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that digital exposure retains a direct association with behavioural response rather than being fully absorbed by the organismic state. Within the SOR framework, this indicates that the digital stimulus can directly support behavioural response while also operating alongside an internal psychological mechanism (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Tam et al., 2024). Uses and Gratifications Theory explains this pathway by viewing tourists as active media users who seek information, entertainment, social interaction, and escapism through destination-related content (Katz et al., 1973).

In the context of Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan, this direct pathway is meaningful because heritage destinations often require interpretation before visitation. Their value is embedded in historical atmosphere, architecture, cultural memory, authenticity, and spatial experience. Visual social media content can reduce destination uncertainty by allowing potential visitors to preview streetscapes, atmosphere, accessibility cues, and shareable destination features before physically visiting the site. This supports previous tourism research showing that user-generated content, shared videos, and social media platforms influence tourists' information search, destination evaluation, and travel behaviour (Buhalis & Law, 2008; Leung et al., 2013; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). This influence is particularly relevant among younger tourists exposed to visual and social media-based travel content (Liu et al., 2023; Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009). Thus, social media is not merely a promotional channel; it functions as part of the pre-visit interpretation and evaluation process. This finding is supported by prior evidence that consumer-generated media, destination Facebook pages, and digital travel-related information shape how tourists search, evaluate, and form intentions before visiting a destination (Ayeh et al., 2013; Leung & Jiang, 2018; Rudež, 2023).

Within heritage tourism's socially saturated digital environment, consistent exposure to peer travel content creates conditions for tourism-specific social comparison and belonging-related anxiety. Social Media Use was the strongest predictor in the model, producing a large effect on FoMO-T ($\beta = 0.700$, $p < 0.001$; $f^2 = 0.960$). This finding is theoretically coherent within the stimulus–organism logic of the SOR framework, where digital stimuli activate psychological states that mediate subsequent behaviour. The large effect size should nonetheless be read carefully, as same-source cross-sectional data mean that shared variance between social media engagement and FoMO-T indicators may inflate the coefficient, and common method bias cannot be fully excluded.

Substantively, the findings are theoretically coherent. Social Comparison Theory explains why individuals evaluate their own experiences by referring to what others display, while Need to Belong Theory highlights the motivation to maintain social

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inclusion and avoid exclusion (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Festinger, 1954). In tourism-oriented social media environments, peer-generated heritage content may intensify upward comparison because travel experiences are often presented as visually attractive, culturally meaningful, and socially validated (Vogel et al., 2014). Generic FoMO describes the uneasiness that can emerge when individuals perceive others as participating in valued experiences while they are not part of them (Przybylski et al., 2013). FoMO-T extends this logic into tourism by capturing concerns related to social connection, comparative travel experiences, and the need to learn and share tourism information (Çetinkaya & Yıldız, 2025).

Affective-motivational urgency, rather than informational evaluation alone, appears to be a more proximal driver of heritage Visit Behavioural Intention among digitally engaged young tourists. FoMO-T's effect on Visit Behavioural Intention ($\beta = 0.449$, $p < 0.001$) exceeded the direct contribution of Social Media Use, suggesting that the psychological state activated by digital exposure carries greater motivational weight than exposure itself. Within TPB, FoMO-T may strengthen favourable attitudes toward visiting, intensify subjective norms through visible peer participation, and increase urgency to experience and share the destination (Ajzen, 1991). This interpretation is consistent with studies showing that FoMO-related mechanisms influence museum visit intention, travel decision-making, and Gen Z visit intentions (Kim & Wongsa, 2025; Uslu & Tosun, 2024; Widaningsih & Putranto, 2025). The finding suggests that social media-driven tourism behaviour cannot be explained only as rational information adoption; it also involves social visibility, comparison, and belonging-related motivation.

The coexistence of two distinct pathways, cognitive-informational and affective-motivational, helps explain how social media use translates into heritage visit intention. The significant indirect effect through FoMO-T ($\beta = 0.314$, $p < 0.001$), together with the retained significance of the direct path, confirms partial mediation. The direct path represents cognitive-informational evaluation, while the indirect path represents FoMO-T-mediated affective urgency. Because the total effect is nearly evenly partitioned, neither mechanism should be treated as secondary. This refines SOR-based digital tourism modelling by showing that the stimulus can influence behavioural response directly while also operating through an organismic psychological state.

The heritage context provides an important boundary condition for interpreting this mechanism. Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan is a colonial-era heritage precinct with visual distinctiveness, historical memory, architectural atmosphere, and cultural meaning. Heritage destinations are often associated with authenticity, identity, nostalgia, and cultural distinctiveness (Jiang et al., 2025; Timothy & Boyd, 2003). Destination image, cultural value, and authenticity further shape how tourists evaluate heritage experiences (Alawneh et al., 2026; Park et al., 2019). These qualities may make visitation appear not only enjoyable but also symbolically meaningful and socially shareable. They may also intensify FoMO-T because heritage experiences can be perceived as place-bound, culturally specific, and difficult to substitute.

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This supports a cautious conceptual interpretation of experiential irreversibility: the idea that certain heritage encounters may feel temporally bounded and non-substitutable because they are tied to specific historical settings and cultural meanings. However, experiential irreversibility was not directly measured in the present model and should therefore be treated as a conceptual proposition for future research rather than as an empirical finding.

The generational interpretation should also be treated cautiously. Because the sample was unevenly distributed across cohorts and no multi-group SEM or measurement invariance test was conducted, the findings should be read as a social media–FoMO-T–intention pattern among digitally exposed Millennial and Generation Z respondents in this Indonesian heritage context.

Theoretically, this study contributes to digital heritage tourism research in three ways. First, it extends SOR-based modelling by showing that Social Media Use can influence Visit Behavioural Intention both directly and indirectly through FoMO-T. Second, it applies the tourism-specific FoMO-T construct in an Indonesian heritage context, contributing to the limited empirical use of FoMO-T beyond general tourism or consumer behaviour settings. Third, and most substantively, this study advances an integrated multi-theory framework in which the component theories are not merely additive but functionally interdependent.

Uses and Gratifications Theory establishes the motivational basis for social media engagement: tourists actively seek entertainment, information, social connection, and escapism through destination-related content. This purposive engagement creates the social comparison conditions that Social Comparison Theory and Need to Belong Theory describe, because tourists repeatedly encounter peer-generated heritage content, evaluate their own travel experiences relative to those of others, and become more attuned to the risk of social exclusion. These comparison and belonging dynamics generate and sustain FoMO-T, which within the SOR framework occupies the organism position as the internal psychological state through which the digital stimulus is processed and transformed. Finally, TPB provides the action-oriented layer, explaining how this affective-motivational state, heightened by socially visible and culturally distinctive heritage content, crystallizes into intention through reinforced attitudes, perceived social norms, and a sense of urgency to participate. The framework is therefore not a set of parallel explanations, but a sequence of interlocking mechanisms: UGT-informed social media engagement creates the conditions for social comparison and belonging concerns, which then generate FoMO-T and translate through TPB mechanisms into heritage Visit Behavioural Intention.

Practically, the findings suggest that heritage destination managers should design social media communication that addresses both pathways. For the cognitive-informational pathway, content should provide clear information about access, routes, facilities, historical background, interpretation, and visitor guidance. For the affective pathway, content should communicate cultural distinctiveness, visual atmosphere, social participation, and the meaningfulness of heritage experience. This is consistent with recent destination management and social media communication studies showing that destination managers should align digital

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communication with destination identity, visitor experience, engagement value, and local cultural meaning (Bambauer-Sachse & Einsle, 2025; Ghosh et al., 2025; Pahrudin et al., 2023). However, the managerial implication is not to manipulate FoMO through artificial urgency or anxiety-based messaging. A more ethical strategy is to use social participation cues and heritage storytelling to motivate visitors while preserving the accuracy, dignity, and cultural value of the destination.

Several limitations should be considered. The cross-sectional design prevents causal interpretation of the relationship among social media use, FoMO-T, and Visit Behavioural Intention. The purposive sampling strategy and single-destination context also limit generalisability to other heritage sites, international tourists, and destinations with lower digital visibility. In addition, the study measured intention rather than verified visitation, while same-source data mean that common method bias cannot be fully ruled out. The uneven distribution between Generation Z respondents and Millennial respondents also introduces a potential cohort bias in the interpretation of the structural model. As Generation Z comprised 68.9% of the sample, the estimated relationships may be more strongly weighted toward Generation Z behavioural tendencies than toward patterns shared equally across both cohorts. Because no multi-group analysis or measurement invariance test was conducted, cohort-level differences in the strength or structure of the social media–FoMO-T–intention pathway cannot be empirically separated.

Future research should use longitudinal designs, confirmed behavioural data, balanced generational samples, and multi-group analysis. Comparative studies across heritage destinations would help test whether the social media-FoMO-T-intention mechanism differs between highly visible and less visible sites. Future studies should also operationalise experiential irreversibility directly and examine whether perceived non-substitutability strengthens the relationship between social media use, FoMO-T, and Visit Behavioural Intention.

Taken together, the findings show that social media shapes heritage Visit Behavioural Intention through both cognitive-informational and FoMO-T-mediated affective pathways. In Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan, social media helps tourists evaluate the destination, while FoMO-T transforms online visibility and social comparison into motivational urgency.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Social Media Use influence Millennial and Generation Z tourists' Visit Behavioural Intention toward Kampoeng Heritage Kajoetangan through two concurrent mechanisms. The direct cognitive-informational pathway shows that social media functions as an evaluative environment where tourists seek information, reduce uncertainty, and form favourable assessments before visitation. The indirect affective pathway, mediated by FoMO-T, shows that social media exposure activates tourism-specific comparison and belonging-related urgency, strengthening Visit Behavioural Intention beyond digital exposure alone. The partial mediation result confirms that

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both pathways operate simultaneously and contribute comparable shares of social media's total influence.

Practically, heritage destination managers should not rely on informational content alone. Effective social media communication requires clear destination information, historical interpretation, and visitor guidance, alongside storytelling that communicates cultural distinctiveness, visual atmosphere, and the social meaning of heritage participation. This does not imply the use of fear-based messaging or artificial urgency cues. Rather, destination managers are advised to present heritage experiences through authentic storytelling, enabling both rational evaluation and genuine social motivation to support Visit Behavioural Intention.

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