

GASTRONOMIC TOURISM IN CENTRAL JAVA: EXAMINING THE ANTECEDENTS OF TOURIST REVISIT INTENTION

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Abstract:

Background: Gastronomic tourism is gaining traction and is recognized as a strategic dimension of destination marketing in the digital age. Therefore, examining the factors that shape tourists' revisit intentions is crucial for researchers and destination managers.

Purpose: This study examines how influencer marketing reviews shape revisit intentions by incorporating social media engagement, influencer trust, and gastronomic experiences within an empirical model framework.

Methodology: This quantitative study involved 440 tourists who had experienced gastronomic tourism in Central Java. Data were collected through questionnaires administered to visitors during their trips, employing a convenience sampling approach, and subsequently analyzed using SEM-AMOS.

Finding: The results indicate that influencer marketing reviews play an important role in increasing social media engagement, trust, and intention to revisit but are not significant for gastronomic experience. In addition, gastronomic experience and trust in influencers are proven to be significant for the intention to revisit, while social media engagement is not significant. Gastronomic experience has the greatest influence on increasing repeat visits by tourists to gastronomic tourism.

Conclusion: Tourist intention to revisit gastronomic tourism can increase owing to the influence of influencer marketing reviews, trust in influencers, and gastronomic experience. Additionally, reviews from influencers are significant for social media engagement and trust in influencers.

Originality/value (state of the art): This research provides knowledge and adds insight into the intention to revisit Gastronomic Tourism, especially in Central Java.

Keywords: gastronomic experience, influencer, social media, revisit intention, heritage

How to Cite:

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INTRODUCTION

Cultural tourism, known as gastronomy tourism, is closely related to the unique local cuisine of a destination and is an important factor in showing cultural authenticity and providing an experience for tourists (Şahin & Kılıçlar, 2023). Gastronomy tourism is the cultural heritage food of a destination that includes local food festivals, restaurants, food production centers, and markets (Kokkranikal & Carabelli, 2024). The uniqueness of tourist attractions cannot be separated from traditional foods that are geographically attached to the destination or what is known as gastronomy tourism (Sanggramasari et al. 2024). Culinary and gastronomy serve as pivotal elements in delivering distinctive experiences to tourists when visiting a destination (Jonson & Masa, 2023). Gastronomy tourism is considered very important because it can make tourists' trips unique and help destinations develop and gain a good reputation (Sünnetçioğlu et al. 2020; Esparza Huamanchumo et al. 2023).

Central Java has a wealth of natural resources as well as the traditions and cultures of the local community, which are very diverse. For example, Semarang is famous for its gastronomy tourism of lumpia, wingko, tahu petis, mochi cake. Salatiga City, including *gecok kambing*, *opor bebek*, *sate sapi suruh*, *soto esto*, *enting-enting gepuk*, *ronde sekoteng*, and *tumpang koyor*. Solo, including *nasi liwet*, *selat*, *timlo*, *tengkleng*, *serabi* and. Kebumen Regency, including *nasi penggel*, *sate ambal*, *lanthing*, and *lanthing*. Apart from these cities, there are many other areas in Central Java that have authentic and interesting specialties. In addition, consumers often demonstrate a strong inclination to purchase local foods. (Riptiono, 2022).

The development of the tourism business is currently greatly influenced by social media activities (Asha John, 2023). The digital era has amplified the impact of social media on various business sectors, notably tourism, with influencer involvement evolving into a dominant strategy in social media marketing (Tanwar et al. 2022). Tourists who visit provide information by posting tourism activities on their social media to other media users (Asha John, 2023). Furthermore, the use of influencers in the digital world today makes a significant contribution to attracting tourists and serves as a foundation in digital tourism marketing (Iswanto et al. 2024).

Tourist visits to the tourism business are an important factor that must be improved and become a challenge in the future (Gholipour Soleimani & Einolahzadeh, 2018). Revisit intention is considered one of the main research topics in marketing. Revisit intention denotes tourists' motivational drive to experience a destination again in the future (Tiwari et al. 2023; Saryatun et al. 2024). This means that tourists are motivated to revisit and prepare for repeat visits. When tourists obtain a special impression and feel satisfied with the destination, the possibility of revisiting will be higher (Nguyen Viet et al. 2020; Aqsa et al. 2025).

The application of influencers' power in promoting business products is known to be very effective and efficient in achieving business targets (Iswanto et al. 2024). The presence of influencers has made it a highly relevant marketing medium, and its use continues to increase. Social media influencers often operate within particular fields because consumers are more receptive to and trust their perspectives. (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Social media influencers with established credibility and access to a large audience can be a persuasive force because of their authenticity and reach (Thilina, 2021). Engagement can be used to obtain feedback from customers and to improve image and product development (Joshi et al. 2023). Active social media users will always provide information or reviews related to their activities, including tourism activities (Joshi et al. 2023). Reviews of tourism information that are currently being discussed can easily be obtained through social networking platforms utilized by individuals.

In tourism marketing, the visitor experience represents a fundamental element in determining the decision to visit the next destination. Gastronomy tourism can provide different experiences from each other, this is because an area has traditional/typical food that is not owned by other areas (Hossain et al. 2023; Kokkranikal & Carabelli, 2024). This unique experience for social media users is posted and reviewed so that it has an impact on other social media users. Marketers use influencers who have many followers to provide positive reviews through social media in tourism activities (Asha John, 2023).

Trust plays an important role in determining consumer intentions and behavior towards an object. Moreover, in online platform businesses, relationships between service providers and consumers are built and formed

based on trust (Thilina, 2021). Especially on social media, consumers will have high trust in influencers who have many followers because they are considered trendsetters.

Studies related to the linkage between social media influencers and tourists' revisit intentions at a destination are still debated, and there is a research gap. Furthermore, studies on gastronomic tourism are limited. Previous studies have demonstrated that social media marketing has a tremendous influence on increasing tourists' revisit intentions (Tatar & Eren-Erdoğan, 2016). In addition, influencer reviews on social media are key to fostering behavioral intentions, whereas consumer reviews do not provide significant results on behavioral intentions (Dwidienawati et al. 2020; Joshi et al. 2023).

Furthermore, ongoing discussions relate to social media utilization, with specific attention paid to influencer marketing on Instagram (Jin et al. 2019) and other social media (Tanwar et al. 2022). The existence of social media facilities has an impact on the dissemination of tourist information that is very quickly received by individuals, which influences their behavior in choosing destinations (Harrigan et al. 2017). Consumer trust in online platforms increases when influencers are used (Joshi et al. 2023). Concerning gastronomic tourism, individuals trust more when influencers share stories related to their travel experiences (Kokkranikal & Carabelli, 2024). The novelty of this research is that it provides knowledge and adds insights into the intention to revisit Gastronomic Tourism, especially in Central Java.

The approach taken to solve the problem in this study is to identify research gaps based on previous literature related to gastronomic tourism and then create a concept and test a research framework based on previous studies. After that, we measured the variables based on previous literature, collected data using a questionnaire, and conducted data analysis.

This background suggests that tourists' behavioral intentions are not solely influenced by social media influencers but are also determined by other critical factors, including social media engagement, trust in influencers, and gastronomic experiences. Therefore, the present study was designed to fill the voids highlighted in previous studies. by conceptualizing these variables as consequences of influencer marketing

reviews and as predictors of revisit intentions in the sphere of gastronomic tourism. This study aims to fill this gap in previous research by testing an empirical model framework to increase tourists' revisit intentions regarding gastronomic tourism. This research is expected to provide practical and theoretical contributions and an in-depth understanding of how influencer marketing, social media engagement, trust in influencers, and gastronomic experience can increase tourists' revisit intention for gastronomic tourism in Central Java.

METHODS

The study applied a quantitative survey method, administered questionnaires, and conducted in-depth interviews with 440 tourists. Primary data were collected using a questionnaire. The questionnaire in this study was compiled by referring to indicators from previous studies, and each item was measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = disagreement and 5 = full agreement).

Data were collected using convenience sampling techniques, namely, by providing questionnaires to tourists who are enjoying gastronomic tourism visits. Measurement of revisit intention variables using four indicators was adopted from earlier studies by (Nguyen Viet et al. (2020) and Hossain et al. (2023). Influencer marketing reviews use three indicators adopted from previous studies (Jin et al. 2019; Dwidienawati et al. 2020). The construct of social media engagement was operationalized through five indicators adopted from earlier research conducted by (Abbasi et al. 2023). Gastronomic Experience using five indicators adopted from previous studies (González Santa Cruz et al. 2019; Jonson & Masa, 2023; Adem Ademoğlu & Şahan, 2023). Trust in influencers uses five indicators adopted from previous studies by (Tatar & Eren-Erdoğan, 2016).

This conceptual model is tested on gastronomy tourism visitors in Central Java. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to test whether the size of a construct was consistent with that of the construct or not (Hair et al., 2019). The use of CFA ensured the unidimensionality of the scale that measured each construct. Data analyses were performed using SEM-AMOS. Following Hair et al. (2010), who suggest a minimum of 10–20 observations per indicator in SEM, this study utilized a sample of 440 respondents derived from 22 indicators.

Previous studies have shown that reviews from influencers can positively influence consumer intentions to carry out certain behaviors (Thilina, 2021). As stated by (Harrigan et al. 2017) social media engagement is significantly influenced by reviews from influencers. The use of influencers can increase the intention to visit and revisit a destination (Iswanto et al. 2024). Therefore, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

H1: Influencer marketing reviews positive and significant toward social media engagement in gastronomy tourism positively and significantly.

H2: Influencer marketing reviews positive and significant toward trust in influencers on gastronomy tourism positively and significantly.

H3: Influencer marketing review positive and significant toward gastronomy tourism on gastronomy tourism.

H4: Influencer marketing review positive and significant toward revisit intention on gastronomy tourism.

Tourists who are interested in social media greatly influence their intention to visit a destination (Harrigan et al. 2016; Harrigan et al. 2017). A previous study revealed that social media engagement can be used as an alternative to increase consumer intention (Alsoud et al. 2023; Luo et al. 2024). Therefore, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

H5: Social media engagement positive and significant toward revisit intention on gastronomy tourism.

Experiences that make visitors feel memorable will increase their tendency to revisit the destination (Campón-Cerro et al. 2023; Adem Ademoğlu & Şahan, 2023). Therefore, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

H6: Gastronomic experience positive and significant toward revisit intention on gastronomy tourism.

The use of influencers is considered a marketing strategy to create its own appeal to influence tourists in their tourism activities (Femenia-serra & Gretzel, 2020). Influencer reviews are trusted more (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Consumers who trust have higher intentions to engage in behavior (Liang et al. 2018; Watanabe et al. 2020). Therefore, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

H7: Trust in influencer positive and significant toward revisit intention on gastronomy tourism.

Based on prior literature and the hypothesized linkages among constructs, this conceptual framework outlines the direct influence of influencer marketing reviews on social media engagement, trust in influencers, gastronomic experience, and revisit intention. It further specifies the effects of social media engagement, trust, and gastronomic experience on revisit intentions. These relationships are summarized in the conceptual model shown in Figure 1.

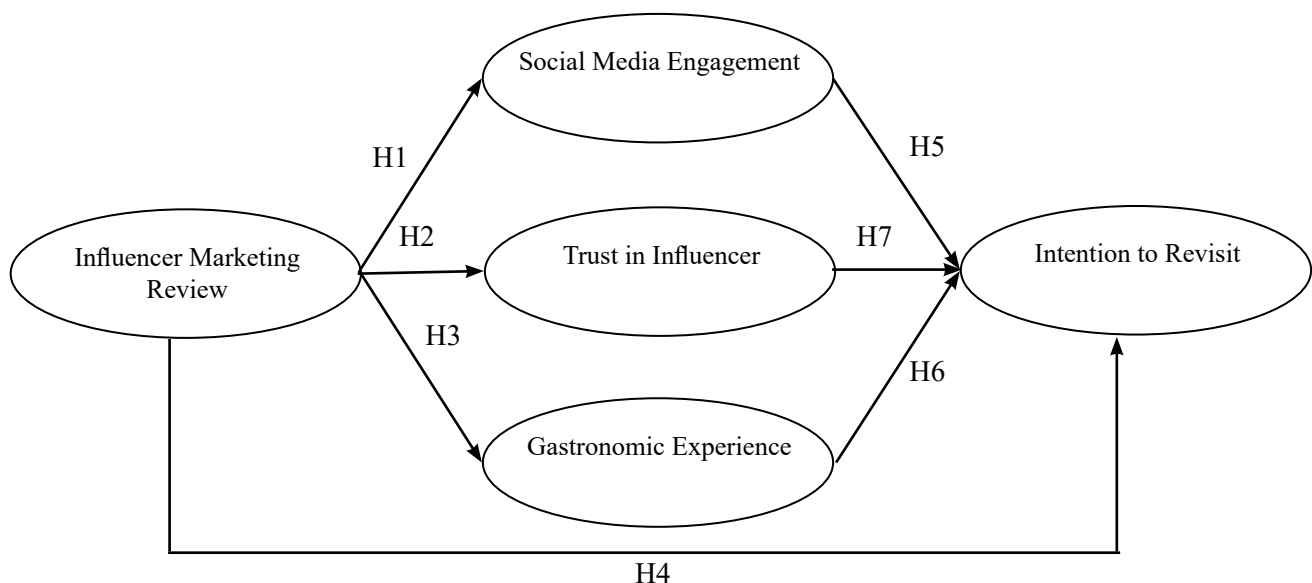


Figure 1. Empirical Research Framework

RESULTS

Sample Characteristics

A total of 440 tourists who participated in gastronomic tourism in Central Java were included in this study. Of these, 224 (55.45%) were female and 196 (45.55%) were male. The respondents were predominantly in the 31–40 age bracket, comprising 156 individuals, equivalent to 35.45% of the total sample. Most respondents were married or had family members (256 or 58.18%). In terms of education level, the majority were at the undergraduate level (214 respondents or 48.64%), and for the income level of respondents, most were in the income range of IDR4,001,000 - IDR5,500,000 as many as 128 people or 29.09%, followed by 112 respondents or 25.45% in the range of IDR2,501,000 - IDR4,000,000, and as many as 104 respondents (23.64%) had an income level above IDR5,501,000. Table 1 presents respondents' profile information.

Measurement Model

Model Fitness

Structural equation Modelling was used to assess the hypothesized relationships among latent constructs. Model adequacy was confirmed by multiple fit indices ($\chi^2 = 228.44$; $df = 143$; $p = 0.001$; $\chi^2/df = 2.15$; $GFI = 0.931$; $TLI = 0.938$; $CFI = 0.946$; $RMSEA = 0.053$).

Validity and Reliability Analysis

Prior to testing the structural model, its reliability and validity of the measurement model were assessed (Anderson and Gerbing). Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted with scale reliability evaluated using Cronbach's α and composite reliability, both of which were required to exceed 0.70. Convergent and discriminant validity were also examined. Convergent validity required AVE values above 0.50, and discriminant validity was achieved when the AVEs exceeded the squared inter-construct correlations. Table 2 presents the results.

Table1. Sample Profile (n=440 respondents)

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Proportion (%)
Gender	Male	196	45.55
	Female	224	55.45
Age (years)	< 20	38	8.64
	21 – 30	92	20.91
	31 – 40	156	35.45
	41 – 50	114	25.91
	> 51	40	9.09
Status	Married	256	58.18
	Single	184	41.82
Education	< High school	114	25.91
	Diploma	48	10.91
	Bachelor	214	48.64
	> Master	64	14.55
Income (000) (IDR)	< 1.000	24	5.45
	1.000 – 2.500	72	16.36
	2.501 – 4.000	112	25.45
	4.001 – 5.500	128	29.09
	> 5.501	104	23.64

Table 2. Result of measurement scale

Variables	Items	Loading Factors	Composite Reliability	Alpha	AVE
Influencer Marketing Review	IMR1	0.769	0.870	0.856	0.725
	IMR2	0.718			
	IMR3	0.832			
Social Media Engagement	SME1	0.736	0.918	0.892	0.716
	SME2	0.811			
	SME3	0.729			
	SME4	0.790			
	SME5	0.765			
Trust in Influencer	TiI1	0.840	0.905	0.877	0.767
	TiI2	0.721			
	TiI3	0.793			
	TiI4	0.837			
	TiI5	0.824			
Gastronomic Experience	GEX1	0.761	0.891	0.852	0.706
	GEX2	0.820			
	GEX3	0.725			
	GEX4	0.778			
	GEX5	0.714			
Intention to Revisit	ITR1	0.852	0.927	0.910	0.822
	ITR2	0.871			
	ITR3	0.813			
	ITR4	0.845			

The results indicate that every factor loading exceeded the recommended cut-off value of 0.50 (Hair et al. 2010). Convergent validity was determined based on both the statistical significance of factor loadings and the AVE (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al. 2010). All loading factors were significant ($p < 0.01$) and above 0.50, whereas AVE values surpassed the minimum criterion of 0.50, thereby supporting convergent validity. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), an AVE of 0.50 or higher, indicates adequate convergent validity, a condition met in this study. Discriminant validity was further examined by comparing AVE values with squared inter-construct correlations, where the former consistently exceeded the latter, confirming discriminant validity among constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al. 2010).

Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing

The analysis assessed the path coefficients to test the proposed hypotheses. Based on Table 3, the hypothesis number 1 (H1) test was conducted to determine the influence of influencer marketing reviews on social media engagement. The results show that the p value is less than 0.05, which is 0.001, indicating that the

first hypothesis is accepted. The estimated value or magnitude of the influence of influencer marketing reviews on social media engagement is shown by the coefficient value of 0.324. This study confirms previous research by Thilina (2021) and Harrigan et al. (2017), who find that the use of influencers in marketing plays a very important role. Influencers have their own appeal to their social media followers, especially when they provide reviews of what they discuss. The results of reviews from influencers on gastronomic tourism will have a positive effect on followers, creating a strong bond with social media. The better the influencer's marketing review, the greater the increase in social media engagement in gastronomic tourism.

The second hypothesis, assessing the relationship between influencer marketing reviews and trust in influencers, was supported, as indicated by a significance level of 0.002, well below the threshold of 0.05, which means that the results of the second hypothesis test are accepted. The magnitude of the influencer marketing review variable's influence on trust in influencers is indicated by a coefficient value of 0.213. Consistent with previous research, this study confirms that trust in influencers is enhanced when

they regularly share authentic and compelling reviews of their experiences (Dwidienawati et al. 2020; Tatar and Eren-Erdoğan 2016). Trust is not easy to form but needs to be developed. Influencer marketing reviews have been proven to positively influence trust in influencers. Reviews of gastronomic tourism by influencers will increase followers' trust.

Unlike previous findings, the analysis of the third hypothesis revealed that the link between influencer marketing reviews and gastronomic experience is not significant, leading to its rejection. The significance value obtained from this test is more than 0.05 or 1.229, with a coefficient value of 0.088. This means that the reviews provided by influencers do not affect the experience of visiting gastronomic tourism. This study differs from previous studies conducted by (Şahin & Kılıçlar, 2023) who stated that to improve the gastronomic tourism experience, there needs to be a stimulus, such as reviews from influencers. A destination provides a different experience for each visitor. Gastronomic tourism in an area, region, or even a country has its own characteristics and provides a different experience. Furthermore, the reviews provided by influencers do not necessarily have cultural similarities or cultural differences with visitors from various regions.

Hypothesis four tested the effect of influencer marketing reviews on tourists' intentions to revisit gastronomic destinations. The analysis yielded a significant result ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$) with a coefficient estimate of 0.419, thereby confirming the hypothesis. This study confirm previous research by (Iswanto et al. 2024; Dwidienawati et al. 2020) which stated that tourists' revisit intentions can be predicted by influencer marketing reviews. Reviews by influencers

of gastronomic tourism can trigger the intention of their followers to visit the reviewed destinations, even if followers who have visited are interested in making repeat visits. Therefore, influencers must be able to package their best reviews and be as attractive as possible, so that their followers are interested and make repeat visits.

The fifth test tested the effect of social media engagement on revisit intention in gastronomy tourism. The results showed a significance value of 0.187 and coefficient value of 0.035. Thus, the results of the fifth hypothesis test are rejected. This means that tourists' attachment to social media does not have a significant effect on their intention to revisit gastronomy tourism. The results of this study differ from those of previous research conducted by (Alsoud et al. 2023). Tourists with strong ties to social media can easily obtain the desired information they want (Luo et al. 2024). However, social media engagement can be used as an alternative to foster tourists' intentions to visit a destination (Alsoud et al. 2023).

The sixth hypothesis test was conducted to determine the effect of gastronomic experience on intention to revisit gastronomic tourism. The significance value obtained was less than 0.05 or 0.000, with an estimated coefficient value of 0.457. The sixth hypothesis was accepted, and the outcome reinforces evidence from previous research (Campón-Cerro et al. 2023; Adem Ademoğlu & Şahan, 2023), which stated that local cuisine can create its own experience for tourists, thereby influencing them to make repeat visits to gastronomic tourism. This means that the better the tourist experience of gastronomic tourism, the stronger the tourist's intention to revisit gastronomic tourism.

Tabel 3. Results of hypotheses testing

Hypothesis	Path	Coeff. (β)	P- Value	Hypothesis Remark
H1	Influencer Marketing Review \rightarrow Social Media Engagement	0.324	0.001	Accepted
H2	Influencer Marketing Review \rightarrow Trust in Influencer	0.213	0.002	Accepted
H3	Influencer Marketing Review \rightarrow Gastronomic Experience	0.088	1.229	Rejected
H4	Influencer Marketing Review \rightarrow Intention to Revisit	0.419	0.000	Accepted
H5	Social Media Engagement \rightarrow Intention to Revisit	0.035	0.187	Rejected
H6	Gastronomic Experience \rightarrow Intention to Revisit	0.457	0.000	Accepted
H7	Trust in Influencer \rightarrow Intention to Revisit	0.311	0.000	Accepted

In testing the seventh hypothesis, we examined the effect of trust in influencers on the intention to revisit gastronomic tourism. The significance value obtained is less than 0.05, that is, 0.000, and the estimated value with a coefficient of 0.311. Thus, the results of testing the seventh hypothesis are accepted. This means that trust built by consumers in influencers plays an important role in fostering tourists' intentions to revisit gastronomic tourism. In other words, the greater the trust in influencers, the greater is the intention to revisit gastronomic tourism. The results of this study are consistent with those of previous studies (Liang et al. 2018; Watanabe et al. 2020).

Managerial Implications

The findings of this study provide three main contributions to managerial implications. First, the results of the study provide additional understanding and knowledge of revisit intentions in gastronomic tourism. Second, to increase tourists' return visits to gastronomic tourism, managers must pay attention to aspects of tourists' experiences when visiting and enjoying their tours. Third, the use of appropriate influencers in tourism marketing to review gastronomic destinations plays an important role in increasing intention to revisit.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Tourists' intention to revisit a destination is a pivotal element of tourism marketing. This study specifically examined the antecedents of tourists' revisit intentions toward gastronomic tourism. This study proves that the use of influencer marketing in providing reviews contributes to growing social media engagement, trust in influencers, and the intention to revisit gastronomic tourism. However, it cannot improve the gastronomic experience of tourists. In addition, social media engagement for tourists has not been proven to increase their intention to revisit. Gastronomic experience and trust in influencers have been proven to contribute to increasing intention to revisit.

Recommendations

This study successfully tested the antecedents used to increase tourists' intentions to revisit gastronomic

tourism. However, there are still some limitations to this study. First, influencer marketing reviews have not been proven to influence tourist experiences; therefore, subsequent studies may deepen the analysis of the connection between influencer marketing reviews and gastronomy using mediation or moderators. Second, social media engagement is also not significant to the intention to revisit; thus, for further research, it can use certain social media that are most widely used by social media users, such as TikTok and Instagram.

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