



Influence Of The Role Of Government, Travel Barriers And Social Media Influencers On Visiting Interests With Destination Image As A Mediating Variable Study on Murung Batu Laba Tourism Visitors, Banjar Regency

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of government role, travel barriers, and social media influencers on tourists' desire to visit Murung Batu Laba via the medium of destination image.

Method: This study used quantitative research methods. A number of statistically significant connections were found between the dependent variables (destination image, social media influencers, government participation, and travel barriers) and the independent variables (interest in visiting the site). Both the destination's reputation and the attention of prospective tourists were directly impacted by social media influencers, according to the data. In contrast, travel limitations have the reverse impact on tourism and the destination's reputation, whereas government participation boosts both.

Result: The results showed that destination image mediates the relationship between social media influencers and interest in visiting, as well as between travel hurdles and desire in visiting. This highlights the significance of the destination's image in attracting prospective tourists by mediating the attention of other elements.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a pivotal element of Indonesia's economic landscape, contributing significantly to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In 2022, the tourism sector marked a notable achievement by contributing 4.1% to the GDP, alongside an impressive economic growth rate of 5.31%, as highlighted by (Hendriyani, 2023). This growth is further exemplified by the remarkable increase in tourism-related foreign currency earnings, which surged to 4.26 billion USD in 2022 from a mere 0.52 billion USD in 2020, underscoring the sector's booming potential and critical role in the nation's economic development. Adelin (2022) and Yasinta (2023) predict a significant influx of domestic and international tourists to South Kalimantan, drawn by its rich cultural heritage and natural diversity. According to Igarta and Handayani (2020) this potential necessitates a robust development of infrastructure and marketing strategies to capitalize on the region's offerings fully. In line with this Safitri (2023), emphasizes the need for substantial government and private sector support to spur growth in South Kalimantan's tourism industry.

Among the jewels of South Kalimantan, Banjar Regency stands out for its expansive landscapes, historical richness, and scenic beauty. Ansyari (2023) and Rahmah et al., (2023) note the regency's appeal to tourists, driven by its religious and natural attractions. However, challenges such as accessibility to tourist sites and developing eco-friendly communities centered around tourism need to be addressed to sustain and enhance visitor experiences. A less-trodden path in

Banjar Regency is Murung Batu Laba, known for its captivating natural beaches and ecotourism adventures. Despite its allure, Octaviani (2023) points out the area's accessibility issues, especially during the rainy season, stressing the need for immediate infrastructural improvements. Echoing this sentiment, Lestari et al., (2023) advocate for government intervention to resolve these challenges, emphasizing the importance of preserving natural areas, enhancing transportation and infrastructure, and supporting local tourism stakeholders.

The advent of digital tourism marketing, particularly through platforms like TikTok and Instagram, has revolutionized the way tourist destinations are promoted and perceived. Octaviani (2023) observes a surge in popularity for places like Murung Batu Laba, largely attributed to the influence of social media influencers. Ligariaty and Irwansyah (2021) highlight these influencers' significant impact on shaping public interest in visiting new destinations. Underscores the evolving nature of tourist preferences and the critical role of the government in fostering a sustainable and appealing tourism economy. This backdrop sets the stage for a study to explore the dynamics between government roles, travel barriers, social media influencers, and destination image in shaping tourist interest, particularly in South Kalimantan.

The study seeks to fill a gap in existing literature by examining how these factors interact and influence tourist perceptions and intentions. Previous research has often overlooked the mediating role of destination image in these relationships, a gap this study aims to bridge. The hypothesis posits a positive correlation between the government's role in developing and promoting Murung Batu Laba and tourist interest in visiting the area. Empirical evidence suggests that effective collaboration between tourism offices and local stakeholders, as seen in Central Lombok, enhances destination appeal through improved services, facilities, and promotional activities. This is further supported by findings from Iswanti and Zulkarnaini (2022), who note the impact of direct experiences, reviews, and varied information channels on consumer perceptions of government efforts in destination management and promotion. Lestari et al., (2023), also corroborate the significant influence of governmental roles on tourists' interests, thereby underlining the importance of strategic government involvement in tourism development.

This study provides a comprehensive understanding of the intricate relationships between government involvement, travel barriers, social media influencers, and destination image in the context of South Kalimantan's tourism industry. By integrating these variables into a holistic conceptual framework, the research aims to offer valuable insights for stakeholders involved in tourism marketing, destination management, and leveraging social media and influencers to enhance destination appeal and visitor satisfaction. Ultimately, this study contributes to the broader fields of tourism, communication, and marketing management, offering a nuanced perspective on the factors that drive tourist interest and satisfaction.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a survey method combined with a quantitative approach to investigate how government roles, travel barriers, and social media influencers impact tourist interest, with destination image serving as a mediating variable. The study is centered on Murung Batu Laba, examining how these elements influence tourist preferences and behaviors. The variables and operational definitions are presented in table 1.

The subjects of this study are individuals interested in visiting Murung Batu Laba in Banjar Regency. They will fill out questionnaires addressing government roles, travel barriers, social media influencers, destination image, and their general interest in visiting the site. The target population includes tourists who have either visited or plan to visit Murung Batu Laba and those who use social media for travel information. Based on Ferdinand (2014), the study requires a sample size of 180 respondents, reflecting the 18 indicators examined.

A non-probability sampling method, specifically purposive sampling, is used to select participants who meet certain criteria to ensure the data's relevance and utility. The selection criteria include being at least 17 years old, residing in South Kalimantan, using Instagram and TikTok for travel references, following influencers (@KalseiTimes and @Onemand), and having previously visited or not visited Murung Batu Laba.

Table 1
Variables and Operational Definitions

Variable	Definition	Item
Government Role (X1)	Individual assessment of government roles in tourism destination development includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Motivator: Providing motivation - Facilitator: Supplying facilities - Dynamize: Mobilizing resources for development (Pitana & Gayatri, 2005) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mobilizing village officials and private sectors - Road infrastructure, training programs, toilet facilities availability - Effective guidance and coordination
Travel Barriers (X2)	conditions that can hinder one's freedom, desires, and participation, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interpersonal: related to interactions with other individuals, - Intrapersonal: related to one's own self. - Structural: caused by external factors such as climate, weather, and access (Crawford & Godbey, 1987). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of friends and difficulty in communication - Anxiety and difficulty in decision-making - Lack of information and poor road conditions
Social Media Influencers (X3)	Influencers understand consumers, embrace communities, and deliver relevant content, strengthening emotional bonds, and enhancing influence in shaping consumer behavior. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engaging promotions: Promotions that capture attention and interest. - Followers: Individuals who regularly track and engage with an influencer's content. - Credibility: The level of trustworthiness and reliability associated with an influencer. - Captivating content: Content that is compelling and holds the audience's interest (Ge & Gretzel, 2018). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interested in the provided information - Large number of followers - Confident in the information provided - Feel happy and entertained by the content provided
Visiting Interest (Y)	Factors driving someone to visit a place or purchase a specific product include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tourists' information-seeking activity - Determination to visit - Decision to visit (Kotler et al., 2017). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seeking information about tourism - Confidence to visit - Making the decision to visit
Destination Image (Z)	The complexity of tourists' experiences involves emotional aspects, beliefs, ideas, and personal impressions shaping their perception of a destination, creating a unique and individual image consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reputation - Natural attractions - Entertainment - Historical and cultural appeal - Destination accessibility (Crompton, 1979); (Tasci & Gartner, 2007); 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tourism site reputation - Natural beauty - Provided entertainment - Tourism history - Tourism destination accessibility

In this study, the variables were measured using an interval scale, implemented through a 5-point Likert scale. This approach was designed to aid respondents in easily assessing the questions or statements presented. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), on the Likert scale, respondents are asked to express their level of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements, using an ordinal or nominal scale that offers multiple response options and values, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Data is collected online through Google Forms and social media platforms, and then analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics with SmartPLS software. Hypothesis testing assesses both the direct and indirect effects

of the variables to understand the mediating role of destination image and the overall explanatory power of the model.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

A survey of 180 respondents reveals that 91.67% are aware of the Murung Batu Laba tourist attraction in Banjar Regency, indicating high public awareness and suggesting the site's popularity and potential for tourism in the area. This widespread recognition implies a strong potential for Murung Batu Laba to become a major draw for visitors, contributing positively to the local tourism industry. Moreover, 81.66% of respondents have visited Murung Batu Laba, demonstrating not only awareness but also a significant level of engagement. The high visitation rate reflects a strong interest in exploring the attraction's beauty and offerings, underscoring Murung Batu Laba's potential to attract and retain tourists, thus playing a pivotal role in Banjar's tourism growth.

In terms of demographics, the survey indicates that 55.56% of respondents are women, suggesting a higher female interest in the attraction. This gender-based participation can provide valuable insights for targeted marketing strategies and enhancing the visitor experience, catering to the preferences and perceptions of the dominant female demographic. Age-wise, most respondents are between 22 and 26 years old, highlighting a youthful demographic driven by a desire to explore new places and influenced by social media trends. Additionally, 47.22% of respondents live in Banjarbaru, with 93.33% learning about Murung Batu Laba through social media. Influencers like @KalselTimes and @Onemand, followed by 83.3% and 75.56% of respondents respectively, play a crucial role in promoting the attraction. This emphasizes the significant impact of social media and influencers in increasing awareness and attracting visitors to Murung Batu Laba.

Convergence validity is a component of the measurement model in SEM-PLS, known as the outer model, while in covariance-based SEM it's referred to as CFA. There are two criteria to ensure convergence validity, which are that the loading factor values should exceed 0.7 and the p-values should be significant <0.05 (Sholihin & Ratmono, 2021). The loading factor values of the research variable indicators are above 0.7. This indicates that all observed variables meet the validity criteria based on outer loadings. Each variable in the model exhibits a strong correlation with the measured constructs, thus indicating a good fit between the variables and the represented constructs. The next step is to test the validity using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. This process is crucial to ensure that the constructs have adequate ability to explain the variation in the observed data. The results of the validity testing based on Average Variance Extracted (AVE) in Table 2 are as follows:

Table 2.
Validity Testing based on Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Destination Image	0.725
Social Media Influencers	0.659
Travel Barriers	0.736
Visiting Interest	0.671
Government Role	0.727

Composite Reliability (CR) testing evaluates the consistency of observed variables in measuring a specified construct. A CR value above the threshold of 0.7 is generally required to indicate sufficient reliability of the measurement instrument. This value reflects the overall consistency and reliability of the instrument used in the study, ensuring the analysis results are reliable and the interpretations of the investigated phenomena are accurate. The CR test results can be found in Table 3.

Table 3.
Reliability Testing based on Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha

	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Destination Image	0.940	0.924
Social Media Influencer	0.939	0.926
Travel Barriers	0.943	0.928
Visit Interest	0.935	0.918
Government Role	0.949	0.937

A CR value above 0.7 indicates that the measurement instrument has adequate consistency in measuring the specified construct. Observations from Table 3 show that all CR values for the observed variables exceed this threshold, demonstrating that the measurement instrument meets reliability criteria based on CR and can reliably provide consistent results in measuring the studied construct. The next step involves testing reliability using Cronbach's Alpha (CA), which evaluates the internal consistency of the measurement instrument by assessing how well all indicators relate to each other in measuring a construct. A Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.7 is generally expected to indicate sufficient consistency. Using CA as a reliability measure ensures that the measurement instrument can consistently and reliably generate trustworthy data for the research.

The Fornell-Larcker approach to discriminant validity testing assesses the uniqueness of a concept within a model compared to other concepts. By comparing the AVE values of each concept with the squared correlations between that concept and others, we can determine if a concept's variance is better explained by its own indicators rather than by other concepts. This step ensures that each construct in the model uniquely contributes to explaining variability in the studied phenomenon. The results of the discriminant validity test are presented in Table 4.

Table 4.
Discriminant Validity Testing

	Destination Image	Social Media Influencer	Travel Barriers	Visit Interest	Government Role
Destination Image	(0.851)				
Social Media Influencer	0.468	(0.812)			
Travel Barriers	-0.471	-0.383	(0.858)		
Visit Interest	0.736	0.555	-0.612	(0.819)	
Government Role	0.406	0.273	-0.397	0.567	(0.853)

Note: The value between “()” is the square root of AVE

In discriminant validity testing, the square root of the AVE of a latent variable is compared to the correlations between that latent variable and others. The square root of the AVE indicates how much of the construct's variability is explained by its own indicators, while the correlation values show the relationship strength between the constructs. Table 4 shows that the square root of the AVE for each latent variable is greater than the correlations with other latent variables, indicating that each construct's variability is better explained by its own indicators than by other constructs in the model. Thus, it can be concluded that the model meets the discriminant validity criteria, demonstrating that each construct uniquely contributes to explaining variability in the studied phenomenon.

Testing Path Coefficient and the significance of direct effects is an integral part of path analysis in inferential statistics, which examines the correlations between variables in a conceptual model. Path coefficient measures the strength and direction of the relationship between connected variables in the model, while the significance of direct effects determines whether the relationship is statistically significant. The Path Coefficient illustrates the anticipated change in the dependent variable in response to one unit change in the independent variable, while the significance of direct effects assesses if the relationship is significant. The test results can be observed Table 5.

Table 5.
Presents the Test of Path Coefficient & Significance of Direct Effects

	Original Sample (O)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Destination Image -> Visiting Interest	0.434	0.101	4.289	0.000
Social Media Influencer-> Destination Image	0.337	0.103	3.280	0.001
Social Media Influencer-> Visiting Interest	0.195	0.073	2.682	0.008
Travel Barriers -> Destination Image	-0.341	0.098	3.490	0.001
Travel Barriers -> Visiting Interest	-0.237	0.071	3.324	0.001
Government Role -> Visiting Interest	0.244	0.070	3.463	0.001

Based on Figure 1 and Table 5, it can be concluded that:

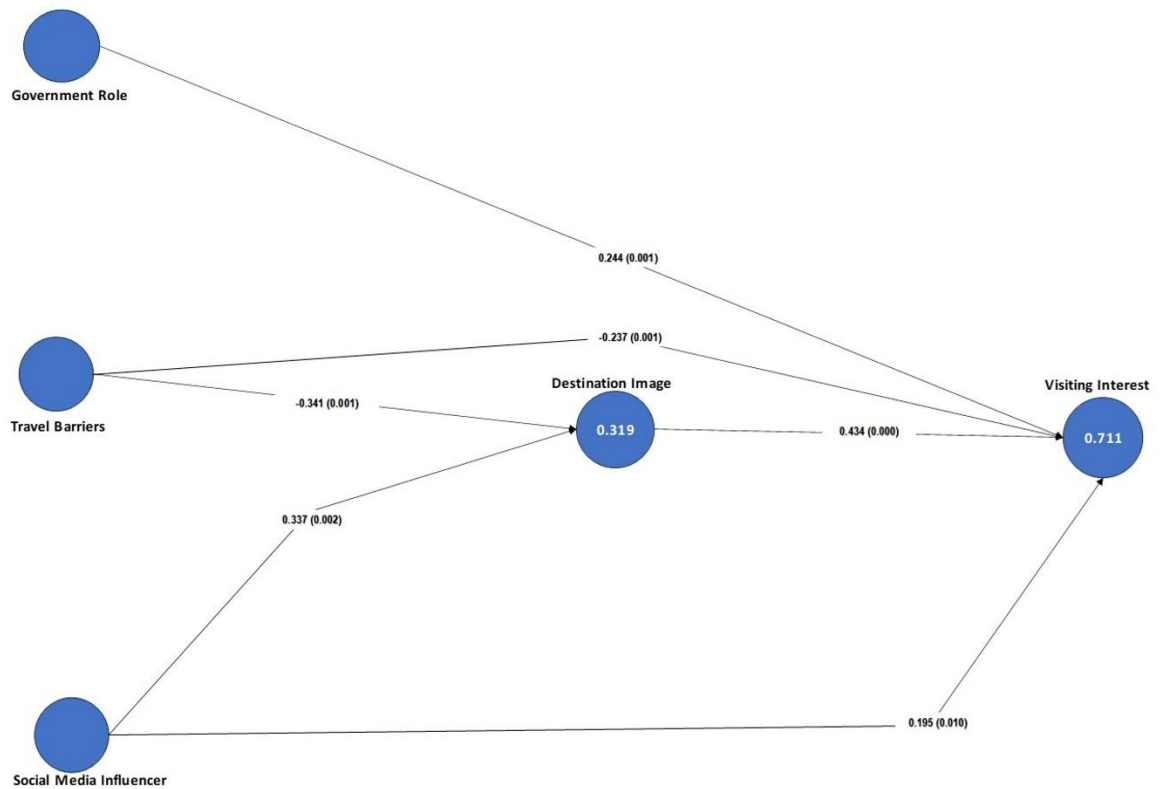


Figure 1. Testing the Significance of Direct Effects

The role of the government has a positive impact on the interest in visiting Murung Batu Laba, with a coefficient of 0.244, and significant at P-Values of 0.001 (H1 accepted). This indicates that local government actions significantly influence tourism interest. Respondents agree that the local government acts effectively as a motivator and facilitator in developing Murung Batu Laba tourism. Government efforts include financial incentives, policy support, infrastructure development, and tourism promotion, such as festivals, which enhance public interest in visiting Murung Batu Laba. The local government can launch digital campaigns like "Amazing South Kalimantan" to showcase the region's natural beauty, culture, and cuisine. As a dynamic player, the government adapts quickly to trends to maintain competitiveness, improving service quality, innovative promotions, and maintaining attractions to support tourism growth. This study aligns with Akbar (2021), research on increasing tourist interest in Lombok Tengah through collaboration to improve services and promotions. Similarly, Iswanti and Zulkarnaini, (2022),

emphasize the importance of direct tourist experiences and information in shaping consumer perceptions of government contributions to tourism management and promotion. Considering this study's findings, local governments can adopt more effective strategies for tourism development in areas like Murung Batu Laba. Concrete steps that can be taken include implementing financial incentives, policy support, and infrastructure improvements. Furthermore, local governments should adopt innovative tourism promotion approaches, such as launching digital campaigns like "Amazing South Kalimantan," to attract tourists by showcasing the natural beauty, cultural richness, and local cuisine. Additionally, tourism practitioners can leverage these findings to enhance service quality and destination attractiveness, while collaboration with local governments in organizing joint festivals and events can help boost tourist interest. Local communities can also benefit from tourism development through increased job opportunities and income and by serving as tourism ambassadors to enhance the long-term attractiveness of the destination.

Travel barriers negatively impact the interest in visiting Murung Batu Laba, with a coefficient of -0.237, and significant at P-Values of 0.001 (H2 accepted). This indicates a significant negative relationship between travel barriers and tourism interest. The study highlights that travel barriers, such as limited transportation infrastructure and lack of comfort, significantly deter respondents from visiting Murung Batu Laba. These factors must be considered in analyzing the impact of travel barriers on tourism interest. Interpersonal, intrapersonal, and structural constraints are critical considerations in the context of travel. The study found that respondents frequently encountered these issues, which impeded their willingness to visit Murung Batu Laba. This underscores the importance of addressing these barriers to enhance tourism interest. These findings align with Karl et al., (2020), who found that past travel experiences influence future destination preferences and risk perceptions. Additionally, research by Karl and Alexander (2020), highlights how travel barriers and motivations affect long and short-distance travel differently. For tourism managers, the study emphasizes the need to improve transportation infrastructure and enhance comfort levels to attract visitors. Practical steps include better road networks, public transport, safe accommodations, and promoting improved travel conditions. These actions can create a more favorable travel environment and encourage tourism. For the local community, improvements in tourism infrastructure can lead to significant socio-economic benefits such as higher revenue for local businesses, job creation, cultural exchange, and improved quality of life through better facilities and services. In summary, addressing travel barriers is essential to enhancing tourism interest, benefiting both the tourism industry and the local community by fostering sustainable growth and connectivity.

Travel barriers negatively impact the destination image, with a coefficient of -0.341, and significant at P-Values of 0.001 (H3 accepted). This indicates a strong negative relationship, meaning that more travel barriers lead to a worse destination image. The study highlights that travel barriers include not just physical factors but also interpersonal, intrapersonal, and structural issues. For instance, tourists to Murung Batu Laba face interpersonal constraints like fear of traveling alone due to lack of information, intrapersonal discomfort, and structural issues like inadequate infrastructure. These constraints contribute to negative tourist experiences and perceptions of the destination. Supporting research by Kim et al., (2021), identifies intrapersonal, interpersonal, structural constraints, and awareness as key factors. Intrapersonal constraints and awareness correlate negatively with the destination image, while cognitive and affective images influence destination perceptions. Destination management should address and mitigate various travel barriers to improve the destination image. By reducing or eliminating these barriers, the destination can attract more tourists and boost tourism revenue. Enhancing tourist experiences through infrastructure improvements and better accessibility can help overcome travel barriers and enhance the overall destination image. For the local community, these improvements can lead to economic growth, increased cultural exchange, and improved quality of life through better facilities and services. Thus, addressing travel barriers benefits the tourism industry and brings substantial socio-economic advantages to the community, fostering a thriving, well-connected region.

Social media influencers, specifically @Kalseltimes and @Onemand, have a significant positive impact on the destination image, with a coefficient of 0.337. Statistical analysis shows this relationship is significant, with P-Values of 0.001 (H4 accepted). Further research identifies several indicators that contribute to this positive influence. Respondents noted that influencers' engaging promotions increase tourist interest and desire to visit. The large follower counts and credibility of influencers add trust, while their high-quality photos and videos create appealing and imaginative representations of the destination. This finding is supported by Sadegh et al., (2023), who found that travel bloggers' practices of engaging followers and sharing information influence followers' interest in promoted destinations and enhance the destination image. Pan et al., (2021), also supported this, showing that destination images conveyed by social network members update knowledge and influence tourist behavior independently of previous images. In this study, the positive influence of social media influencers on Murung Batu Laba's destination image is attributed to engaging promotions, large followings, influencer credibility, and appealing content. By strategically leveraging social media influencers, destination management can strengthen their image, attract potential tourists, and boost the local economy through increased tourism. This can lead to economic growth, job creation, and improved facilities and services for the local community, fostering a vibrant and well-connected region. Thus, effectively utilizing social media influencers benefits the tourism sector and brings substantial socio-economic advantages to the local community.

The study confirms that destination image has a significant positive impact on the interest in visiting, with a coefficient of 0.434. This strong relationship is supported by statistical analysis, with P-Values of 0.000 (H5 accepted). Respondents agreed that Murung Batu Laba's positive destination image, supported by a good reputation, attractive natural beauty, glamping facilities, unique history, and good accessibility, contributes to increased interest in visiting. These factors collectively enhance tourists' perceptions and drive their interest in the destination. Supporting research by Charli and Putri (2021), found that social media marketing, tourist facilities, and destination image significantly influence tourist interest in Pulau Mandeh. This emphasizes the importance of effective promotion, adequate facilities, and an appealing destination image in attracting tourists. Theoretically, these findings highlight the significance of destination image and its components in shaping tourist behaviour and preferences. A strong destination image, bolstered by positive attributes and effective marketing, can significantly enhance a location's attractiveness. For destination management, these insights underscore the importance of maintaining a good reputation, improving the quality and uniqueness of offerings, and enhancing facilities and accessibility. By focusing on these areas, management can create an attractive environment for visitors, thus increasing tourist interest and promoting sustainable tourism growth. These improvements can lead to economic benefits for the local community, such as increased revenue from tourism, job creation, and the development of local businesses. Additionally, a positive destination image can foster community pride and encourage the preservation of local culture and natural resources. In summary, enhancing Murung Batu Laba's destination image through strategic improvements and marketing attracts more tourists and brings substantial socio-economic advantages to the local community.

The influence of social media influencers @Kalseltimes and @Onemand on the interest in visiting Murung Batu Laba is significant. The study shows that social media influencers have a positive impact on tourist interest, with a coefficient of 0.195. Statistical analysis supports this finding, with P-Values of 0.008 (H6 accepted). The study reveals that influencers successfully attract respondents' attention through engaging promotional content, large follower counts, high credibility, and appealing visuals. This indicates that the positive impact of social media influencers on visit interest is driven by these factors. Recommendations from influencers can build consumer trust and encourage visits to Murung Batu Laba. Supporting research by Yuan and Lou (2020), shows that the attractiveness, similarity, fairness, and personal interaction of influencers are positively related to parasocial relationships and followers' product interest. This provides practical insights for influencer campaigns to strengthen tourist interest. From a theoretical perspective, these findings emphasize the importance of parasocial relationships in influencing

consumer behaviour. The perceived connection and trust between followers and influencers can significantly impact followers' travel decisions and destination perceptions. Destination management can strategically leverage social media influencers to boost tourist interest. Collaborating with influencers with large followings and high credibility can increase visibility on social media platforms and enhance the destination's appeal. Management can ensure authentic and effective promotion by selecting influencers whose values align with the destination's image. For the local community, increased tourism driven by influencer promotions can lead to economic growth, job creation, and improved local infrastructure. Additionally, more tourists can facilitate cultural exchange and community development. Thus, social media influencers can be powerful tools in promoting tourism destinations and increasing visitor numbers, benefiting both the tourism sector and the local community.

Mediation effect testing is crucial in statistical analysis to understand the role of a mediator variable in the relationship between independent and dependent variables. This process determines if the mediator transmits or reduces the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The testing involves regression analysis to examine the relationships between the independent variable and the mediator, as well as between the mediator and the dependent variable. The results of the mediation test are presented in Table 6.

Table 6.
Mediation Testing

	Original Sample (O)	Standart Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Social Media Influencer -> Destination Image -> Visit Interest	0,146	0,060	2,457	0,014
Travel Barriers -> Destination Image - > Visit Interest	-0,148	0,068	2,174	0,030

Based on the mediation analysis results in Table 6, destination image significantly mediates the relationship between travel barriers and visiting interest, with P-Values of 0.030 (H7 accepted). This study reveals that destination image significantly mediates the relationship between travel constraints and visiting interest. The Variance Accounted For (VAF) is calculated by dividing the coefficient value of the indirect effect by the total effect ($-0.148 / -0.384$), resulting in 0.385, which indicates partial mediation. This means that while destination image does mediate the relationship between travel constraints and visiting interest, it does so only partially, implying that other factors also influence this relationship. With a T-Statistic of 2.174, which exceeds the critical threshold of 1.96, and a P-Value of 0.030, which is less than the significance level of 0.05, the hypothesis that destination image mediates the relationship between travel constraints and visiting interest is accepted. These findings indicate that the constraints experienced by tourists in their travels can influence their perception of the destination image, which ultimately affects their interest in visiting. Furthermore, this research is supported by the findings of Nazir et al. (2021), who found that risks and constraints have a negative impact on destination image and tourists' behavioral intentions. A positive destination image, as identified in previous studies, can help overcome these obstacles. In other words, a positive perception of the destination can mediate between the travel constraints experienced by tourists and their interest in visiting the place. In light of these findings, destination management can strengthen their destination image as a strategy to overcome travel constraints that may be experienced by tourists. Efforts to enhance the destination's reputation, improve service quality, and provide satisfying tourism experiences can help create a positive perception that can reduce the impact of travel constraints on tourists' visiting interest. Therefore, promotion and value-added services become increasingly important in managing the destination image and enhancing its appeal to potential tourists. For the local community, these improvements can lead to economic benefits such as increased revenue from tourism, job creation, and the development of local businesses. Additionally, a stronger destination image can foster community pride and encourage the preservation of local culture and natural resources. Overall, enhancing

the destination image attracts more tourists and brings substantial socio-economic advantages to the community, fostering a thriving, well-connected region.

The study reveals that destination image significantly mediates the relationship between social media influencers and visiting interest, with P-Values of 0.014 (H8 accepted). This study demonstrates that destination image significantly mediates the relationship between social media influencers and visiting interest. With a T-Statistic of 2.457, exceeding the critical threshold of 1.96, and a P-Value of 0.014, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05, the hypothesis that destination image mediates the relationship between these two variables is accepted. The Variance Accounted For (VAF) is calculated by dividing the coefficient value of the indirect effect by the total effect (0.146/0.342), resulting in 0.426, indicating partial mediation. This suggests that the influence of social media influencers on visiting interest is not solely direct, but also involves the formation of a positive perception about the promoted destination. This finding is consistent with Suryanto (2021), which highlights the significant and positive impact of social media on tourist destination interest. Furthermore, destination image acts as a mediator between the influence of social media and tourists' visiting interest. This implies that the positive effects of social media influencers not only directly stimulate interest but also contribute to shaping a positive destination image, thereby reinforcing tourists' interest in visiting the place. Considering these findings, destination management can strategically leverage the power of social media influencers to enhance tourist visiting interest. By collaborating with influencers who have a large following and high credibility, destinations can strengthen their image in the eyes of their target audience. Thus, the use of social media influencers can not only increase destination visibility but also shape a positive perception that enhances both interest and visitor numbers. For the local community, increased tourism driven by influencer promotions can lead to economic benefits such as increased revenue from tourism, job creation, and the development of local businesses. Additionally, a stronger destination image can foster community pride and encourage the preservation of local culture and natural resources. Effectively leveraging social media influencers can bring substantial socio-economic advantages to the tourism industry and the local community.

Table 7.
R Square & Q- Square

	R Square	Q ² (=1-SSE/SSO)
Destination Image	0.319	0.222
Visiting Interest	0.711	0.466

Based on the results in Table 7 In the inner model test using r-square, 71.1% of the variation in visit interest was explained by other factors, whereas 31.9% was accounted for by destination image. Other variables included government role, travel barriers, and social media influencers. In addition, the research model provides a good match to the empirical data and can explain the observed phenomenon, as shown by an SRMR score of 0.070 in the goodness of match model test results. The results of the statistical tests show that the research model is trustworthy, discriminantly valid, and validated. The factors examined within the context of the Murung Batu Laba tourist attraction have also been significantly affected. These findings support the hypothesis that the model may explain and predict occurrences related to visitors' fascination with and perceptions of the site.

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the significant influence of destination image on visitors' interest, highlighting the crucial role that perceptions play in attracting tourists. It also reveals the powerful impact of social media influencers in shaping both destination image and visit interest, suggesting that modern marketing strategies must integrate social media dynamics to be effective. Understanding these factors allows tourism managers to develop more focused and sustainable marketing strategies, enhancing both visitor satisfaction and the overall appeal of the destination.

To capitalize on these findings, tourism managers should collaborate with social media influencers to enhance destination image and address travel barriers by improving infrastructure and services. This strategic approach can boost visitor numbers and satisfaction, ultimately benefiting the local economy. Additionally, government support in terms of financial aid and facility management is vital for sustaining tourist interest. Future research should explore other influencing factors and test these findings across different contexts to ensure broader applicability and effectiveness.

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