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Destination Image: A Key Determinant of Tourist Intention to Visit Greater Madura

Raden Khaeru Ahmadi[1], Martaleni[2], Dwi Orbaningsih[3], M. Jamal Abdul Nasir[4]

[1]Doctoral Program in Management Science, Gajayana University, Malang - Indonesia
[2,3,4] Postgraduate Lecturer in Management Science, Gajayana University, Malang - Indonesia

ABSTRACT: This study aims to examine the contradictions of tourism in Greater Madura, a region rich in local wisdom yet still recording low tourist arrivals compared to other regions in East Java. Using a quantitative approach with 255 prospective tourists, this study tests an integrative model that positions destination image as a mediating variable for the influence of local wisdom, social media marketing, and attractiveness on visit intentions. The research findings revealed a critical fact in the form of a "broken link" in the local wisdom variable, where Madurese cultural values were proven to fail to have a significant influence on either the formation of destination image or direct visit intention. Furthermore, it was found that social media marketing was unable to trigger a visit decision without first strengthening the destination image. These results emphasize that cultural authenticity alone is not enough; instead, a reactualization of digital narratives and aggressive reputation management are needed to convert latent potential into concrete visit decisions.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a strategic sector in the creative economy, serving as an economic driver, job creator, and a means of preserving culture and natural resources (Arcos-Pumarola et al., 2023; Tapfuma et al., 2024). In this industry, potential tourists' intention to visit plays a crucial role as it is the primary predictor of actual visit behavior (Amalia et al., 2023; Baggio, 2017; Kummitha & Crutzen, 2017). Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior, intention reflects an individual's mental readiness and desire to allocate resources, both time and money, to visit a destination (Arman & Mas'ud, 2023; Fauzi et al., 2024; Hsu & Huang, 2012). The stronger the intention formed through positive perceptions, the greater the likelihood that tourists will actually make a visit (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Nicoletta & Servidio, 2012). Therefore, understanding the factors that drive interest in visiting is key to the successful marketing and sustainability of a tourist destination (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; J. Zhang et al., 2018).

However, the tourism phenomenon in Greater Madura shows a paradox between the rich potential and the performance achievements of tourist visits, which are still heavily influenced by initial perceptions (Dafit & Ismail, 2025; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993). Although the region encompassing Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan, and Sumenep has a wealth of unique local wisdom as well as strong natural and religious attractions, the number of tourist visits to Greater Madura according to data from the East Java Central Statistics Agency (CSA-JATIM) in aggregate is still relatively low and is in the lowest position compared to other regions. This low level of visits is thought to be influenced by several main issues, namely the suboptimal packaging of tourist attractions (Seguí-Llinás & Capellà-Cervera, 2006), the weak image of the destination in the public eye (Gorji et al., 2023; Koçyiğit & Küçükcivil, 2022; Wijaya et al., 2025), and not optimal use of social media marketing in building interest among potential tourists (Anggraini & Dzulquarnain, 2025; Baber & Baber, 2023). These conditions indicated that the vast potential of Greater Madura has not been fully converted into real interest in visiting.

This research is important due to a research gap in the form of inconsistent findings regarding factors that can influence visiting interest (Baber & Baber, 2023; Gorji et al., 2023; Seguí-Llinás & Capellà-Cervera, 2006). Several studies indicate that tourist attractions and social media have a significant influence on visiting interest, but other studies found insignificant results in

different contexts (Hermawan et al., 2023; Peng & Berutu, 2024). Furthermore, most previous studies tested these variables partially (Anggraini & Dzulquarnain, 2025; Baggio, 2017; Wijaya et al., 2025). The novelty of this research lies in the development of an integrated model that combines local wisdom, social media marketing, and tourist attractions simultaneously by positioning destination image as a mediating variable to explain the psychological mechanisms of forming potential tourists' visiting intentions (Mandagi & Centeno, 2025; Shi et al., 2022; Wahyuli et al., 2025; W. Wang et al., 2015).

In line with these issues, the main objective of this study is to examine and analyze the direct and indirect effects of local wisdom, social media marketing, and the attraction of potential tourists' intention to visit Madura Raya. Specifically, this study seeks to conduct an in-depth analysis of the role of destination image in mediating the influence of these three independent variables on visit intention. The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of a digital cultural value-based tourist behavior model, as well as provide practical recommendations for destination managers in formulating more competitive and sustainable branding strategies.

This article is systematically organized into several main sections. The first section is the introduction, which outlines the background and objectives of the study. The second section presents a literature review, which examines theoretical foundations such as the Theory of Planned Behavior and consumer behavior, as well as the hypothetical framework. The third section explains the research method, which includes a quantitative survey design and data analysis techniques using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS). The fourth section presents the results, discussion, which outline empirical findings related to the relationships between variables. Finally, the fifth section presents the research conclusions.

2. LITERATURE AND THE ART OF RESEARCH

2.1 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The TPB is a social psychology theory developed by Ajzen, (1991) to understand and predict individual behavior through behavioral intentions. These intentions are influenced by three main constructs: attitudes toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the context of tourism, the TPB is used to explain tourists' intentions to visit a destination, where positive attitudes, social support, and beliefs about easy travel access will increase their intention to visit (Siregar & Tresnasari, 2024; Zheng et al., 2024). This theory is also relevant to digital marketing, as information tourists receive through social media can shape attitudes and perceived control, which then influence their intention to visit (Al-Khaldy et al., 2022; Chetioui et al., 2020). Overall, TPB emphasizes that interest is the main predictor of actual behavior because it reflects an individual's readiness to allocate time and costs for a trip (Ajzen, 1991; Baggio, 2017; Ferdiansyah & Pratomo, 2023; Johnson et al., 2017).

2.2 Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior is the study of the processes individuals or groups use to select, purchase, use, and dispose of products, services, or experiences to satisfy their needs (Madichie, 2009; Efendioğlu, 2024). This study encompasses emotional, mental, and behavioral responses that occur before and after consumption (Wells & Foxall, 2012). Consumer decisions are often influenced by internal and external factors, providing an important basis for marketers to understand how consumers form attitudes and respond to marketing strategies (Argyriou & Melewar, 2011; Kotler & Keller, 2016). In the tourism industry, intention to visit is analogous to intention to purchase, where intention is an internal drive influenced by stimuli and positive feelings toward a destination (Albarq, 2013; Hosany et al., 2020). Therefore, understanding the visiting interests of potential tourists is a crucial aspect for destination managers in designing tourism development strategies that are oriented towards tourist experience (Liao & Chuang, 2020; Tang et al., 2026).

2.3 Research Hypothesis

This study builds a conceptual framework that integrates local wisdom, social media marketing, and tourist attractions as stimuli that influence visiting interest through destination image as a mediating variable.

a.The Influence of Local Wisdom, Social Media Marketing (SMM) and Tourist Attractions on Visit Intention

Local wisdom plays a crucial role in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model, influencing tourist behavior (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Cultural values, traditions, and local authenticity create unique perceptions that attract potential visitors to experience authentic experiences (Hofstede, 1983; Jing & Loang, 2024). Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior, a positive

attitude toward local wisdom then shapes an individual's intention or interest in visiting (Ajzen, 1991; Permadi et al., 2026; Vitasurya, 2016). Furthermore, several other studies have shown that SMM functions as a stimulus that conveys visual information, narrative experiences, and interactive promotions that directly shape potential tourists' perceptions (Abdillah et al., 2026; Kotler & Keller, 2016). An effective social media marketing strategy can create awareness and emotional engagement, which, according to consumer behavior theory, are key drivers of purchase intention or interest in visiting (Evans, 2012; Pramudhita, 2021). Through accessible information, SMM influences tourists' decision-making processes before a physical visit occurs (Mehataj et al., 2024; Shen, 2025). Another perspective on tourist attractions, which includes natural beauty, cultural uniqueness, and complete facilities, is a fundamental reason for tourists to assess the suitability of a destination (Gu et al., 2022; Reitsamer & Brunner-Sperdin, 2017). Theoretically, strong attractions act as motivational factors that trigger attention and positive evaluations from potential tourists (Guo et al., 2024; Pratama & Prayoga, 2024). The higher the quality and variety of attractions offered, the greater the tendency of individuals to allocate resources to visit the destination (Guo et al., 2024; Reitsamer & Brunner-Sperdin, 2017), therefore this study hypothesizes as follows:

H1: Local wisdom has a significant influence on visiting intentions

H2: Social media marketing has a significant influence on visiting intentions

H3: Tourist attractions have a significant influence on visiting intentions

b.The influence of destination image on visiting intentions

Destination image is a mental representation encompassing tourists' beliefs, feelings, and impressions of a destination (Anggraini & Dzulquarnain, 2025; Degor et al., 2025). Several studies have demonstrated the positive influence of image in reducing perceived risk and increasing confidence in the promised tourism experience (Tavitiyaman & Qu, 2013; H. Zhang et al., 2019). According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, positive attitudes or perceptions of a destination's quality and reputation are key predictors of tourists' intention to visit (Abbasi et al., 2021; Alqudah et al., 2022; Soliman, 2021). Therefore, this study hypothesizes the following:

H4: Destination image has a significant influence on visiting intentions

c.The influence of local wisdom, social media marketing (SMM) and tourist attractions on destination image

Strong and authentic local wisdom serves as a differentiating element that shapes a destination's distinctive identity in the minds of tourists (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Tasci et al., 2007). Through the accumulation of information about local traditions, customs, and values, tourists build in-depth cognitive and affective perceptions of the destination (San Martín & Rodríguez Del Bosque, 2008; Stylidis, 2020). Unique cultural representations are believed to strengthen the positive image of a destination as a place of high historical value and authenticity (Tasci et al., 2007; H. Zhang et al., 2025). Furthermore, studies show that social media marketing plays a strategic role in building a destination's image through visual content and intensive digital interactions (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Tasci et al., 2007). Information disseminated through digital platforms, both by managers and through user-generated content, is a primary source influencing how potential tourists imagine the atmosphere and quality of a destination (Chaulagain et al., 2019). Engaging and credible content on social media effectively strengthens a destination's digital reputation (Baber & Baber, 2023). Furthermore, the quality of a destination's physical and non-physical attractions directly influences tourists' rational and emotional assessments (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Tasci et al., 2007). Attributes such as natural beauty, cultural richness, and complete infrastructure are key stimuli processed by tourists to form a complete mental image of a place (Abbasi et al., 2021; Stylidis, 2020). The more appealing and unique the perceived attractions, the stronger the positive image embedded in the minds of potential visitors (Alqudah et al., 2022; Stylidis, 2020). Therefore, this study hypothesizes as follows:

H5: Local wisdom has a significant influence on destination image

H6: Social media marketing has a significant influence on destination image

H7: Tourist attraction has a significant influence on destination image

d.Destination image mediates influence on visiting interest

Theoretically, the influence of local wisdom values does not always trigger direct visitation interest but rather through perceptual mechanisms such as destination image (Tigre Moura et al., 2015; H. Wang & Yan, 2022). Destination image serves as an intervening variable that bridges tourists' appreciation of cultural uniqueness with their decision to visit (Goeltom & Hurriyati, 2024; Huang et al., 2013). Local cultural values translate into a comprehensive evaluation of the destination's quality, which then strengthens tourists' visit intentions (Liu et al., 2024). Baber & Baber, (2023) explain that social media marketing provides digital stimuli that help bridge the information gap between destinations and potential tourists. However, these social media stimuli work by first shaping the destination's image before generating a behavioural response in the form of visit intentions (Sultan et al., 2021). A strong destination image, formed through interactions on social media, serves as a crucial link that convinces tourists to realise their intention to visit (Llodra-Riera et al., 2015). Furthermore, Baloglu, (2000) explains that the presence of tourist attractions often requires psychological evaluation media to optimally influence visiting intentions. Destination image can act as a mediator that summarises tourists' perceptions of various physical attractions and aesthetic experiences into a unified, trusted reputation (Akroush et al., 2016). Through a positive image built from the superiority of attractions, potential tourists feel more motivated and confident in choosing the destination as their travel destination (Akroush et al., 2016; Llodra-Riera et al., 2015; Mandagi & Centeno, 2025). Therefore, this study hypothesizes as follows:

H8: Destination image mediates the influence of local wisdom on visiting intentions

H9: Destination image mediates the influence of social media marketing on visiting intentions

H10: Destination image mediates the influence of attractiveness on visiting intentions

3. METHOD

3.1 Measurement Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research type that aims to explain causal relationships and test hypotheses between formulated variables. The research design applied is a causal design, which specifically seeks to identify and analyze the direct and indirect effects of local wisdom, social media marketing, and attractiveness towards visiting intention through Destination Image as a mediating variable. The survey method is used as the main data collection strategy to obtain a comprehensive picture of potential tourist behavior in the context of tourism in Greater Madura.

The variables in this study were measured using a closed-ended, structured questionnaire. The measurement scale used was a 1-5 Likert scale, where a score of 1 represents "Strongly Disagree" and a score of 5 represents "Strongly Agree." Each latent variable is operationalized into specific indicators adapted from previous research, which include aspects of cultural uniqueness for local wisdom (5 research question indicators including perceived uniqueness of local cultural values, perceived attractiveness of traditional customs, perceived authenticity of cultural representation, interest in cultural narratives promoted online, and relevance of cultural identity to personal travel interest) (Muda, 2026; Qiu, 2023), visual content quality for social media marketing (5 research question indicators including quality of visual content, clarity and informativeness of destination posts, frequency/consistency of posts, appeal of digital narrative and promotions, trust in the content presented) (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021), completeness of attractions for tourist attractions (5 research question indicators including perception of natural/cultural beauty, perceived uniqueness compared to other destinations, perceived completeness of attractions, ease of access based on available info, perceived appeal of facilities promoted online) (Goeltom & Hurriyati, 2024), destination reputation for destination image (measured by 5 question indicators including global positive perception of destination, viewing the destination as interesting to visit, destination's reputation in public perceptions, perceived safety and comfort, perceived overall desirability to visit) (Marine-Roig, 2019), as well as willingness to allocate time and costs for the visiting intention variable (Dafit & Ismail, 2025).

3.2 Sample and Data Collection Methods

The population in this study were prospective domestic tourists domiciled outside Madura Raya and interested in visiting the region. The sampling technique used a non-probability sampling method with a purposive sampling approach, namely determining respondents based on certain criteria such as a minimum age of 17 years, active social media users, and never having visited Madura Raya. The goal was to obtain an overview of pre-visit perceptions resulting from the destination image formed through indirect information, such as social media, digital promotions, online reviews, and public narratives. Data were

collected through the distribution of online questionnaires using the Google Form platform distributed through social media and digital travel communities.

3.3 Research Analysis

The data analysis technique used in this study is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the Partial Least Square (PLS) approach using SmartPLS version 3 software. The analysis process is carried out in two main stages: the first is the evaluation of the outer model to test the validity (convergent and discriminant) and reliability of the research instrument. The second stage is the evaluation of the inner model to measure the robustness of the predictive model through Q-Square, and Goodness of Fit (GoF) and see the R-Square values. Hypothesis testing and the significance of the relationship between variables, both direct and mediating effects, are carried out through the bootstrapping procedure by looking at the p-value and path coefficient.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Respondent Characteristics

Of the 416 respondents who accessed the questionnaire, 158 respondents did not meet the criteria because they had previously visited Greater Madura and did not match the research characteristics. Therefore, they were eliminated, leaving 255 respondents who met the screening criteria. Respondent characteristics were identified to provide a profile of potential tourists to Greater Madura based on gender, education level, employment, and domicile (see Table 1 and Appendix A).

Table 1. Overview of Potential Tourist Profiles in Greater Madura

No	Information	Total	%	No	Information	Total	%
1	Gender			3	Employment		
	Man	129	50,6		Private Employees	96	37,6
	Woman	126	49,4		Students	59	23,1
2	Educational level				Civil servants	32	12,5
	Bachelor's Equivalent	118	46,3		Housewife	26	10,2
	High School Equivalent	80	31,4		Educators	17	6,7
	Master's Degree	34	13,3		PPPK	9	3,5
	Diploma	14	5,5		Employee BUMN/BUMD	6	2,4
	Doctorate	6	2,4		Entrepreneurs	3	1,2
	Junior High School Equivalent	2	0,8		Armed Forces/Police	2	0,8
	Primary School Equivalent	1	0,4		Doctor	2	0,8
					Laborers	1	0,4
					Honorary Employees	1	0,4
					P3KPW	1	0,4
Description: PPPK = Government Employees with Work Agreements), BUMN/BUMD = State-Owned Enterprises/Regional-Owned Enterprises, P3KPW = Government Employees with Part-Time Work Agreements)							

The composition of respondents was relatively balanced, with 50.6% women and 49.4% men, indicating a highly proportional representation of gender perspectives. Furthermore, for educational background, Bachelor's Equivalent graduates dominated at 46.3%, followed by High School Equivalent at 31.4%, and this profile indicates a very adequate level of literacy in understanding the survey instrument. At the employment level, private employees (37.6%) and students (23.1%) dominated, reflecting the productive age group with high mobility for tourism activities. Finally, the geographical distribution (see appendix A) is very broad, covering various cities in Indonesia, with the highest proportion coming from Bandung (8.6%), Malang City (7.8%), and Jakarta, Kendari, and Solo (4.7% each).

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Table 2. Results of Convergent Validity Test

Variable	Instr.	O. loading	Variable	Instr.	O. loading	Variable	Instr.	O. loading
X_1 - *Local wisdom*	$X_{1.1.2}$	0.812	X_3 - *Tourist Attractions*	$X_{3.1.2}$	0.803	Z - *Destination Image*	$Z_{1.1.1}$	0.717
	$X_{1.2.1}$	0.799		$X_{3.2.1}$	0.811		$Z_{1.1.2}$	0.822
	$X_{1.2.2}$	0.821		$X_{3.2.2}$	0.864		$Z_{1.2.1}$	0.796
	$X_{1.3.1}$	0.805		$X_{3.3.1}$	0.869		$Z_{1.2.2}$	0.858
	$X_{1.3.2}$	0.725		$X_{3.3.2}$	0.877		$Z_{1.3.1}$	0.841
	$X_{1.4.1}$	0.759		$X_{3.4.1}$	0.857		$Z_{1.3.2}$	0.874
	$X_{1.4.2}$	0.820		$X_{3.4.2}$	0.845		$Z_{1.4.1}$	0.836
	$X_{1.5.1}$	0.817		$X_{3.5.1}$	0.807		$Z_{1.4.2}$	0.872
	$X_{1.5.2}$	0.773	Y - *Visiting Intention*	$Y_{1.2.1}$	0.836		$Z_{1.5.1}$	0.819
X_2 - *Social media marketing*	$X_{2.1.1}$	0.793		$Y_{1.2.2}$	0.777		$Z_{1.5.2}$	0.846
	$X_{2.2.2}$	0.866		$Y_{1.3.1}$	0.820			
	$X_{2.3.1}$	0.849		$Y_{1.3.2}$	0.892			
	$X_{2.3.2}$	0.869		$Y_{1.4.1}$	0.880			
	$X_{2.4.1}$	0.883		$Y_{1.4.2}$	0.870			
	$X_{2.4.2}$	0.894						
	$X_{2.5.1}$	0.887						

4.2 Inferential Statistical Analysis

Inferential data analysis in this study includes evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model).

Table 3. Discriminant Validity Test of Cross Loading Values

	DC	DT	LW	MB	SMM		DC	DT	LW	MB	SMM
X1.1.2	0.557	0.639	**0.812**	0.497	0.634	X3.3.2	0.713	**0.877**	0.706	0.668	0.744
X1.2.1	0.574	0.621	**0.799**	0.526	0.615	X3.4.1	0.716	**0.857**	0.664	0.688	0.744
X1.2.2	0.608	0.659	**0.821**	0.530	0.621	X3.4.2	0.699	**0.845**	0.640	0.660	0.742
X1.3.1	0.563	0.580	**0.805**	0.514	0.603	X3.5.1	0.668	**0.807**	0.648	0.651	0.713
X1.3.2	0.481	0.556	**0.725**	0.442	0.539	Y1.2.1	0.706	0.705	0.620	**0.836**	0.607
X1.4.1	0.701	0.673	**0.759**	0.663	0.737	Y1.2.2	0.607	0.591	0.559	**0.777**	0.531
X1.4.2	0.656	0.717	**0.820**	0.621	0.745	Y1.3.1	0.695	0.617	0.601	**0.820**	0.622
X1.5.1	0.666	0.729	**0.817**	0.715	0.719	Y1.3.2	0.737	0.675	0.666	**0.892**	0.671
X1.5.2	0.673	0.718	**0.773**	0.717	0.684	Y1.4.1	0.731	0.685	0.646	**0.880**	0.683
X2.1.1	0.642	0.648	0.661	0.556	**0.793**	Y1.4.2	0.765	0.716	0.696	**0.870**	0.698
X2.2.2	0.692	0.726	0.771	0.640	**0.866**	Z1.1.1	**0.717**	0.692	0.616	0.623	0.618
X2.3.1	0.647	0.674	0.667	0.636	**0.849**	Z1.1.2	**0.822**	0.679	0.665	0.669	0.729

X2.3.2	0.708	0.690	0.688	0.658	**0.869**	Z1.2.1	**0.796**	0.669	0.645	0.649	0.620
X2.4.1	0.679	0.750	0.753	0.634	**0.883**	Z1.2.2	**0.858**	0.775	0.741	0.758	0.732
X2.4.2	0.749	0.792	0.736	0.677	**0.894**	Z1.3.1	**0.841**	0.723	0.651	0.715	0.685
X2.5.1	0.763	0.815	0.771	0.736	**0.887**	Z1.3.2	**0.874**	0.651	0.609	0.713	0.686
X3.1.2	0.675	**0.803**	0.755	0.671	0.666	Z1.4.1	**0.836**	0.647	0.583	0.670	0.664
X3.2.1	0.710	**0.811**	0.759	0.621	0.653	Z1.4.2	**0.872**	0.669	0.621	0.690	0.673
X3.2.2	0.708	**0.864**	0.738	0.677	0.715	Z1.5.1	**0.819**	0.634	0.627	0.681	0.638
X3.3.1	0.669	**0.869**	0.709	0.661	0.715	Z1.5.2	**0.846**	0.693	0.680	0.758	0.653
DC = Destination Image, DT = Attraction, LW = Local Wisdom, SMM = Social Media Marketing, MB = Interest in Visiting											

4.2.1 Evaluation of Measurement Model (Outer Model)

A. Convergent Validity Test

The results of the first stage convergent validity test calculation found several indicators that showed outer loading values below the minimum limit of 0.70 (such as indicators X1.1.1 in the local wisdom variable, X2.1.2, X2.2.1, and X2.5.2 in the social media marketing variable, X3.1.1 and X3.5.2 in the Tourism Attraction variable, and Y1.1.1 and Y1.1.2 in the Visiting Intention variable) so they had to be eliminated. After these indicators were removed, all remaining indicators were declared valid with outer loading values > 0.70 (see table 2).

Table 4. Composite Reliability Value dan Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	***Cronbach's Alpha***	***Composite Reliability* (rho_a)**	***Composite Reliability* (rho_c)**
Local Wisdom (X_1)	0.926	0.931	0.938
Social Media Marketing (X_2)	0.943	0.946	0.953
Tourist Attractions (X_3)	0.941	0.941	0.951
Destination Image (Z)	0.949	0.950	0.956
Visiting Intention (Y)	0.921	0.924	0.938

B. Discriminant Validity Test

This test was conducted to determine whether the indicators within a variable were more correlated than their correlations with other variables. Based on the cross-loading values (see Table 3), each indicator was shown to have the highest correlation with its own construct compared to other constructs, thus meeting the criteria for discriminant validity.

Table 5. Results of R-Square and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Values

Variable	R-Square	(AVE)
Local Wisdom (X_1)		0.629
Social Media Marketing (X_2)		0.746
Tourist Attractions (X_3)		0.709
Destination Image (Z)	0.731	0.688
Visiting Intention (Y)	0.735	0.717

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Variable	R-Square	(AVE)
Avarege	0,733	0,698

C. Reliability Test

This test uses Cronbach's Alpha measurement requirements and composite reliability > 0.70 (Henseler et al., 2015). The reliability test results, as presented in Table 4, show that all research variables have values above the requirements, indicating that all constructs in the study have a good level of internal consistency and are declared reliable.

4.2.2 Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

Structural model testing is carried out in three ways, namely: First, finding the value of the Goodness of Fit Index (GoF) from the equation of the root of the product of (AVE) with the R2 model. Second, the Q-Square Predictive Relevance is obtained from the R2 formulation of each endogenous variable. Third, looking at the R-Square value. The AVE value as shown in Table 5 is 0.698 and with the R2 model of 0.733, then for the GoF measurement method, namely:

$$GoF = \sqrt{Average\ AVE\ x\ Average\ Rsquare}$$

$$GoF = \sqrt{0.733\ x\ 0.698}$$

$$GoF = \sqrt{0.375}$$

GoF = 0,612 (high)

Next, for the calculation of Q-Square Predictive Relevance with the following conditions:

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - R_1^2)(1 - R_2^2)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - 0{,}731)(1 - 0{,}735)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - (0{,}269 \times 0{,}265)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - 0{,}071285$$

$$Q^2 = 0{,}928715$$

The GoF calculation result is 0.612 > 0.36 (Mulaik et al., 1989) so it is included in the large category and shows the research model has a good level of fit between the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model). Furthermore, the Q-Square Predictive Relevance calculation result is 0.928715 or 92.87% of the variation in endogenous variables can be explained by exogenous variables in the model. The R-Square value on the Z variable is 0.731 or the research construct is able to explain the Z variable by 73.1%, in addition the R-Square on the Y variable is 0.735 indicating that the independent variables and mediating variables in the model construct have an influence on Y by 73.5%.

	Influence	**Original sample (β)**	**Sample mean**	**Standard deviation**	**T-statistics**	**P values**	**Information**
H1	LW → MB	0.122	0.120	0.067	1.821	0.069	rejected
H2	SMM → MB	0.042	0.045	0.082	0.508	0.611	rejected
H3	DT → MB	0.204	0.202	0.068	3.006	0.003	accepted
H4	CD → MB	0.540	0.541	0.087	6.193	0.000	accepted
H5	LW → CD	0.159	0.170	0.086	1.855	0.064	rejected
H6	SMM → CD	0.317	0.305	0.135	2.355	0.019	accepted
H7	DT → CD	0.425	0.428	0.108	3.943	0.000	accepted

	Influence	Original sample (β)	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T-statistics	P values	Information
H8	LW→ CD → MB	0.086	0.092	0.050	1.733	0.083	rejected
H9	SMM → CD → MB	0.171	0.164	0.077	2.236	0.025	accepted
H10	DT → CD → MB	0.229	0.232	0.073	3.152	0.002	accepted
Description: LW = Local Wisdom, MB = Visiting Intention, SMM = Social Media Marketing, DT = Attraction, CD = Destination Image.							

Table 6. Bootstrapping Statistical Analysis Results

4.3 Hypothesis Test Results

Bootstrapping statistical analysis was carried out in this test to determine the t-statistics value > 1.96 and p-values < 0.05 of each variable influence (Luke, 2017), the results shown in table 6 show that there are 4 direct influences that support the hypothesis such as H3 (β = 0.204, t-stat = 3.006, p-values = 0.003), H4 (β = 0.540, t-stat = 6.193, p-values = 0.000), H6 (β = 0.317, t-stat = 2.355, p-values = 0.019), H7 (β = 0.425, t-stat = 3.943, p-values = 0.000) and 3 direct influences that reject the hypothesis such as H1 (β = 0.122, t-stat = 3.006, p-values = 0.003). = 1.821, p-values = 0.069), H2 (β = 0.042, t-stat = 0.058, p-values = 0.611) and H5 (β = 0.159, t-stat = 1.855, p-values = 0.064). Furthermore, the results of bootstrapping statistical calculations on the mediating effect of destination image variables support 2 hypotheses, namely H9 (β = 0.171, t-stat = 2.236, p-values = 0.025) and H10 (β = 0.229, t-stat = 3.152, p-values = 0.002) and reject 1 hypothesis H8 (β = 0.086, t-stat = 1.733, p-values = 0.083).

4.4 Discussion

The synthesis of the role of destination image, identified as a significant determinant in this study, confirms that destination image is the most dominant variable influencing potential tourists' intention to visit Greater Madura. Within the framework of the theory of planned behavior (TPB) and the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) model, destination image functions as a psychological component (organism) that encapsulates an individual's cognitive and affective perceptions before transforming into behavioral intentions (Al-Sulaiti, 2022). This demonstrates a shift in modern tourist behavior, where visiting decisions are no longer solely based on the physical presence of tourist attractions, but rather on mental constructs and reputations built through digital information and indirect experiences (Baber & Baber, 2023). Critically, the dominance of this variable indicates that Greater Madura must prioritize consistent reputation management and branding to overcome perceptual barriers, such as social stereotypes or limited infrastructure, that still cloud the region's image.

The paradox of local wisdom and disconnected cultural stimuli: The research reveals a significant paradox: Although local wisdom in Greater Madura is assessed as very good descriptively, this variable does not have a significant influence on either destination image or direct visit intention. This phenomenon indicates a "broken link" in the SOR model in Greater Madura, where strong cultural values remain latent and symbolic but have not been successfully transformed into competitive tourism products. Critically, this failure is caused by the lack of digitalization of cultural content and experiential narratives (storytelling) that can touch the emotional aspects of modern tourists. Today's tourists tend to seek interactive and participatory experiences so that cultural identities that are only passively displayed fail to be a strong stimulus to trigger visit intention (Yu et al., 2025).

The integrated effectiveness of social media marketing and the attractiveness of social media marketing and tourist attractions have been shown to positively influence travel intentions, but only effectively through the mediation of destination image. The finding that social media marketing has no direct effect on travel intentions provides a fundamental critique of current digital promotion strategies, which may remain stuck in the awareness phase without successfully building trust or deep emotional attachment. This confirms that digital information serves as a tool for forming initial perceptions that must be managed credibly to avoid a gap between expectations on social media and reality on the ground (Llodra-Riera et al., 2015). Meanwhile, physical attractions remain a fundamental stimulus that strengthens a destination's image, but their success depends heavily on their ability to provide memorable tourism experiences.

4.5 Practical Implications

This research provides a critical contribution, demonstrating that tourism development in Greater Madura cannot rely solely on its rich natural and cultural potential in a conventional manner. A strategy of reactualization and rebranding of local cultural values is needed to be more relevant to tourist preferences in the digital marketing era (Yang et al., 2025). Destination managers must be able to integrate the power of local wisdom into social media narratives and experience-based attraction innovations so that the resulting destination image is authentic, competitive, and sustainable. These findings enrich the literature on tourist behavior by demonstrating the role of destination image as a selective mediator that bridges the influence of digital marketing stimuli and attraction quality on tourist decisions.

4.6 Limitations and Future Research

Despite its significant theoretical and practical contributions, this study has several fundamental limitations that should be considered when interpreting its results. Methodologically, the use of a cross-sectional design resulted in data collection covering only a single time period, making it incapable of explaining the dynamics of long-term changes in tourist behavior or perceptions. Furthermore, the specific focus of the study on the Greater Madura region, with its unique socio-cultural characteristics, presents challenges in generalizing the findings to other tourist destinations. Finally, the reliance on self-reported data from online questionnaires has the potential to introduce response bias, while a purely quantitative approach is unable to fully explore the subjective meanings and authentic experiences of tourists that underlie the formation of their travel intentions.

Future research is expected to expand the scope of the conceptual model by integrating other relevant determinant variables such as electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), perceived value, tourist trust, and perceived risk to provide a more comprehensive understanding of multidimensional tourist behavior. Furthermore, the use of a longitudinal research design is highly recommended to capture the dynamics of changes in tourist perceptions and visit intentions over time, considering that the cross-sectional approach in this study is only able to capture the phenomenon in a certain period. Methodologically, future research has the opportunity to apply a qualitative or mixed-methods approach through in-depth interviews and direct observation to explore the subjective meanings and authentic experiences of tourists that cannot be fully explained by this statistical analysis. Finally, expanding the research object to various tourist destinations with different cultural and social characteristics, both at the regional and national levels, is very necessary to strengthen external validity and increase the generalizability of the findings in the scientific literature of tourism marketing management.

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that destination image is the primary determinant and the most dominant variable influencing potential tourists' intention to visit Greater Madura. Empirical findings confirm that tourist attractions and social media marketing significantly contribute to strengthening destination image, which in turn acts as a crucial mediator in driving tourist intention to visit. However, a significant paradox exists where local wisdom has been shown to have neither a direct nor an indirect influence on destination image and intention to visit, indicating a "broken link" in the process of converting cultural potential into concrete visit decisions. Overall, these results emphasize that tourism development in Greater Madura cannot rely solely on conventional physical and cultural assets but must prioritize reputation management strategies and the reactualization of cultural values through more interactive digital narratives to build a competitive and sustainable destination image.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Raden Khaeru Ahmadi: Conceptualization, Investigation, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing—Review & Editing.

Martaleni: Methodology, Laboratory Analysis, Supervision

Dwi Orbaningsih: Methodology, Formal Analysis, Supervision

M Abdul Nasir: Review & Editing, Formal Analysis, Supervision

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

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APPENDIX

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