

When Fear of Missing Out Meets Fatigue: Understanding How Social Media Dynamics Shape Travel Intentions in West Sumatra

Astri Yuza Sari^{1*}, Ofanto², Hari Setia Putra¹, Fitria Ridhaningsih³, Jefriyanto⁴

¹ Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia

² Universitas Andalas, Padang, Indonesia

³ Johannes Kepler University, Linz, Austria

⁴ Universitas Utara Malaysia, Sintok, Malaysia

*Corresponding author; E-mail: astriyuza@fe.unp.ac.id

Abstract

In today's digital landscape, the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) has become a strong psychological driver influencing how people choose travel destinations, particularly when those places gain popularity on social media. However, the constant stream of curated posts can also trigger social media fatigue (SMF), reducing enthusiasm for travel. This study investigates how FoMO affects tourists' intentions to visit destinations in West Sumatra and explores whether SMF mediates this relationship. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Instagram and WhatsApp among users who regularly engage with travel-related content. A total of 500 valid responses were analyzed using SmartPLS to test both direct and mediating effects. The findings highlight how digital and psychological factors jointly shape travel behavior and offer destination marketers insights into creating authentic, sustainable social media strategies that balance online excitement with emotional well-being.

Keywords: Fear of Missing Out, Social Media Fatigue, Intention to Visit, Digital Tourism.

1. Introduction

Digital transformation has reshaped tourism into one of Indonesia's most dynamic industries, influencing how destinations are discovered and shared. (Hussain, 2024). Social media now serves as a primary promotional channel, shaping how travelers perceive, plan, and select destinations. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube enable influencer marketing and user-generated content to quickly amplify a destination's visibility. (Ingrassia et al., 2022; Zhang, 2025). Many tourism managers rely on these tools to attract visitors, yet this exposure can also lead to unintended psychological consequences. (Pettersen-Sobczyk, 2023; Tandon et al., 2021). While social media fosters engagement and curiosity, it may simultaneously trigger emotional stress such as FoMO and social media fatigue (Jabeen et al., 2023; Zheng & Ling, 2021).

FoMO, or the anxiety of missing out on rewarding experiences, often motivates individuals to visit destinations showcased online by others. In Indonesia, when scenic spots in West Sumatra go viral, many users feel compelled to visit and experience them firsthand (Anggraini, 2022; Redaksi, 2022). However, this behavior does not always promote sustained engagement or long-term loyalty.

Continuous exposure to repetitive travel posts may also lead to SMF, a state of mental exhaustion and disinterest (Zhang et al., 2020). For destination marketers, this poses a challenge: while online visibility

generates attention, digital overload may undermine trust and authenticity. Although FoMO and SMF have been examined separately, research on their combined influence in Indonesia's tourism context remains scarce. This study, therefore, provides an integrated perspective, analyzing how FoMO impacts tourists' intentions to visit through the mediating role of SMF. By focusing on West Sumatra, an emerging digital tourism hub, this research contributes both theoretical and practical insights into sustainable destination marketing.

Despite the growing influence of FoMO and SMF on consumer behavior, research examining their combined impact in the tourism sector (particularly within Indonesia) remains scarce. Previous studies have mainly explored FoMO in purchasing contexts or general social media usage, while SMF has only recently gained attention following the COVID-19 pandemic. Understanding how these two psychological factors interact is crucial for developing more authentic and sustainable destination marketing strategies.

Unlike prior studies that have treated FoMO and social media fatigue as separate constructs, this research offers a more integrated perspective by analyzing how both jointly shape tourists' behavioral intentions. It also adds contextual novelty by focusing on West Sumatra, an emerging tourism hub that reflects Indonesia's rapid digital transformation across regional destinations. These combined elements position this study to bridge theoretical and practical gaps in understanding how psychological dynamics influence digital destination marketing.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the relationship between FoMO and tourists' intention to visit, with social media fatigue serving as a mediating variable. By examining these dynamics, this study contributes to the growing body of digital tourism research and offers practical insights for tourism managers seeking to balance viral appeal with visitor authenticity.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Intention to Visit

Intention to visit or visit intention represents an individual's likelihood or willingness to travel to a particular destination. This construct is influenced by psychological, social, and situational factors, including satisfaction, destination image, perceived risk, and exposure to digital marketing. (Ganguly, 2025; Suhud & Allan, 2024; H. Zhang & Lu, 2009). Understanding these elements helps destination managers strengthen competitiveness and build visitor loyalty. In digital tourism, social media engagement and perceived authenticity significantly influence visit intentions.

The construct of visit intention is inherently multidimensional, shaped by a range of antecedents, including tourist satisfaction, destination image, digital marketing exposure, socio-demographic profiles, perceived risk, and cultural orientation. Prior studies emphasize that a comprehensive understanding of these interrelated factors is essential for developing theoretical models that explain tourists' behavioral intentions to visit and revisit destinations. (Armutcu et al., 2023; Blešić et al., 2024; Muliawanti et al., 2026; Ramadan et al., 2026; Setyawati et al., 2024; Sihombing et al., 2024; D. Wang, 2025; Yang et al., 2009).

Consequently, by conceptualizing visit intention in terms of these determinants, researchers and practitioners can identify key leverage points for enhancing destination competitiveness and long-term visitor engagement within the broader framework of tourism behavior theory.

2.2. Fear of Missing Out

Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) is a psychological phenomenon characterized by the apprehensive feeling that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent. (Rowson, 2025; Yayın et al., 2025). It involves a desire to stay continually connected with what others are doing, often driven by the perception that others are having more satisfying experiences. (Gupta & Sharma, 2021; Sette et al., 2020). FoMO is distinct from related feelings such as regret and loneliness, as it involves a perceived threat to one's social connections (Rowson, 2025).

FoMO is associated with various negative mental health outcomes, including anxiety, depression, and lower life satisfaction. (Bagley & Coombs, 2024; Fabris et al., 2020; Oliveira et al., 2024; N. Wang et al., 2023). It is closely linked to the use of social media, where individuals feel compelled to stay updated on others' activities, leading to problematic social media use and addiction (Sette et al., 2020; Uram & Skalski, 2022).

2.3. Social Media Fatigue

Social media fatigue (SMF) is a phenomenon in which users experience physical and mental exhaustion, irritation, and disinterest due to prolonged, extensive use of social media platforms (Al-Jallad & Radwan, 2021; Alfasi, 2022; Dave et al., 2024; Zheng & Ling, 2021). It encompasses a range of negative emotional responses such as tiredness, burnout, frustration, and disinterest in communication (Zheng & Ling, 2021).

2.4. Effect of FoMO on Social Media Fatigue

Some studies have found a weak association between FoMO and fatigue. In contrast, others have found a strong link between FoMO and social media fatigue in the context of social media advertising (Bright et al., 2022). Likewise, research by Tugtekin (2020) has shown that FoMO is strongly related to social media fatigue. According to Zhou et al. (2018), FoMO can lead users of platforms like WeChat (a popular mobile social media app) to maintain a constant online presence. Based on these findings, we hypothesize that FoMO acts as a stressor, inducing individuals to maintain continuous connectivity with social media. This suggests that specific stressors or negative emotions can trigger excessive or problematic social media use, ultimately leading to fatigue. While past studies have yielded inconsistent findings regarding the relationship between FoMO and fatigue, the literature suggests a connection between the two. Moving forward, we hypothesize that if users continue to engage with social media due to FoMO, they will likely experience information overload and communication fatigue, leading to social media exhaustion. So, FoMO is consistently positively associated with social media fatigue. Users experiencing FoMO tend to feel more exhausted and overwhelmed by their social media interactions (Al-Jallad & Radwan, 2021; Hattingh et al., 2022; Huang, 2025; Jabeen et al., 2023; Shen et al., 2022; Tandon et al., 2021; Xie et al., 2024; Zhu et al., 2022).

H₁: FoMO has a significant and positive effect on Social Media Fatigue at tourist destinations in West Sumatra.

2.5. Effect of FoMO on Intention to Visit

FOMO directly increases the intention to revisit events, such as festivals, by enhancing attendees' overall satisfaction and engagement (Tan et al., 2023). In the context of sports events, FOMO-driven marketing strategies have been shown to increase attendance and viewership by leveraging the fear of missing out on exciting experiences (Bagley & Coombs, 2024; Blose et al., 2023; Kim & Li, 2020). For museum visits, FOMO, driven by a desire for continuous learning and involvement, positively impacts visit intentions. (Uslu & Tosun, 2024).

FoMO enhances the attractiveness of trending locations, prompting potential travelers to develop stronger intentions to visit these places. (Hussain, 2024; Shang et al., 2021) This effect is particularly salient among digitally savvy generations such as Generation Z and Millennials, who frequently rely on social media cues for travel inspiration and decision-making. (Ivaľcsciuc, 2024). Nonetheless, FoMO-driven intention to visit can be moderated by factors such as perceived authenticity of the experience and social media fatigue, which may dampen actual behavioral follow-through. (Jabeen et al., 2023; Siegel, 2023) Understanding the influence of FoMO on travel intention is critical for destination marketers aiming to leverage social media trends while managing customer expectations and engagement sustainably.

H₂: FoMO has a significant and positive effect on the Intention to visit tourist destinations in West Sumatra.

2.6. Effect of Social Media Fatigue on Intention to Visit

Social media fatigue can reduce users' engagement and their intention to continue using social media platforms (Ji & Jan, 2024; Zhou et al., 2018). This disengagement can extend to behaviors influenced by social media, such as visiting a destination. Specifically, social media fatigue has been shown to negatively impact users' intentions to adopt behaviors promoted through social media, such as protective behaviors during the COVID-19 pandemic (Sun & Lee, 2023).

Social media fatigue likely reduces the intention to visit destinations promoted on social media due to the overall decrease in engagement and increased avoidance behavior (Dai et al., 2020; Sun & Lee, 2023; Zhou et al., 2018)

Users experiencing fatigue may avoid travel-related content, reducing the likelihood of planning visits based on social media information (Dai et al., 2020; Li et al., 2022).

H₃: Social Media Fatigue has a significant and negative effect on the Intention to Visit tourist destinations in West Sumatra.

2.7. The role of social media fatigue on FoMO and Intention to Visit

Privacy concerns also play a significant role in mediating the effects of social media fatigue on user behavior (Bright et al., 2022; Li et al., 2022).

Social media fatigue can mediate the relationship between FOMO and various outcomes. For instance, FOMO leads to increased social media use, which, in turn, causes fatigue and ultimately affects behaviors such as discontinuance intention (Xie et al., 2024).

In the context of visiting intentions, it can be inferred that social media fatigue might reduce the positive impact of FOMO on the intention to visit. When individuals are fatigued by social media, their enthusiasm driven by FOMO might diminish, leading to a lower intention to act on that FOMO (Xie et al., 2024).

This mediation highlights the complex interplay between psychological states induced by social media and actual behavioral outcomes. The consistent findings across multiple studies support the mediating role of social media fatigue in the relationship between FOMO and various behavioral intentions (Huang, 2025; Xie et al., 2024).

H₄: FoMO has a significant and positive effect on the Intention to visit tourist destinations in West Sumatra through Social Media Fatigue.

3. Methods

This study employed a quantitative research approach focusing on potential tourists who intend to visit destinations in West Sumatra. The population comprises individuals who express an interest in traveling to Padang City, Bukittinggi City, Limapuluh Kota Regency, Solok Regency, and Pesisir Selatan Regency. This location is determined by the number of viral tourists and the number of annual visits to the tourist destination. Data were collected through a structured online questionnaire distributed via social media platforms such as Instagram and WhatsApp. Before participation, respondents were screened to ensure that they had considered visiting at least one destination in West Sumatra within the next twelve months.

A convenience sampling method was used, yielding 500 valid responses. This approach has been integrated into modern SEM literature to ensure that the estimated model achieves adequate power for hypothesis testing (Hair et al., 2019). Therefore, this

study followed Hair et al. (2019)'s recommendation by ensuring that the sample size exceeded the minimum requirements derived from both the 10-times rule and power analysis. Thus, the final sample of 500 respondents meets the upper threshold for this requirement, ensuring sufficient statistical power for the SmartPLS analysis. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions designed to measure Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), social media fatigue, and intention to visit.

Data processing in this study will be conducted using SmartPLS. Partial Least Squares (PLS) is a powerful analytical method that does not rely on many assumptions (Hair et al., 2019). The PLS analysis method will include the following techniques.

3.1. Outer Model Analysis

An outer model analysis is performed to ensure that the measurements used are suitable for evaluation (i.e., valid and reliable). In this model analysis, the relationships between the latent variables and their

indicators are specified. The outer model analysis can be evaluated using the following indicators:

1. Convergent Validity
2. Discriminant Validity
3. Composite Reliability
4. Cronbach's Alpha
5. Inner Model Analysis

Inner model analysis describes the relationship between latent variables based on substantive theory. Inner model analysis can be evaluated using R-square for dependent constructs, Stone-Geisser Q-square test for predictive relevance, and t-test and significance of structural path parameter coefficients.

3.2. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing in this study was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS. The significance of each path coefficient was evaluated based on the p-value generated from the bootstrapping results. Since the hypotheses in this research specify the

Table 1. Variables and measurement

Construct	Operational Definition	Measurement Items
Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) (Przybylski, 2013; jabeen 2023)	FoMO is measured by the extent to which potential tourists feel anxious or compelled to stay connected with travel-related content on social media to avoid missing trending destinations or experiences. It reflects the psychological motivation driving individuals to visit places that gain popularity online.	FoMO1: I'm afraid that other people have more valuable experiences than me on social media FoMO2: I'm afraid my friends have more valuable experiences than me on social media FoMO3: I feel worried when I know my friends are having fun without me on social media FoMO4: I feel worried when I don't know my friends' activities on social media FoMO5: I feel left out when I don't have time to interact with friends on social media FoMO6: I feel annoyed if I am not updated on the latest issues being discussed on online platforms FoMO7: It is important for me to update my status regarding whatever activities I am doing. FoMO8: When I have fun, it is important for me to share the details online FoMO9: When I go on vacation, I keep track of what my friends are doing through social media
Social Media Fatigue (bright, 2015; jabeen, 2023)	Social Media Fatigue is the level of psychological strain and reduced interest that users experience when overwhelmed by the constant flow of travel-related information, promotional posts, or influencer content on social media platforms.	SMF1: Sometimes I feel tired when using social media SMF2: Sometimes I feel bored when I use social media. SMF3: Sometimes I feel drained from using social media. SMF4: Sometimes I feel tired when I use social media. SMF5: I feel uninterested when new things happen on social media SMF6: I feel indifferent to reminders or notifications about new things on social media.
Intention to Visit (Tanner, 1991; hussain 2024)	Intention to Visit is measured by the degree to which potential tourists plan, express interest, or show readiness to visit destinations in West Sumatra that they have discovered through social media exposure or online recommendations.	ITV1: I make an effort to travel to places that go viral on social media ITV2: I make plans to travel to places that go viral on social media to ITV3: I am willing to travel to places that go viral on social media

direction of relationships (positive or negative effects among variables), a one-tailed significance test was applied. A hypothesis is considered supported when the p-value is less than 0.05 ($\alpha = 5\%$), indicating a statistically significant effect. This approach ensures a straightforward and accurate interpretation of the hypothesized relationships, thereby strengthening the validity and reliability of the research findings concerning the factors that influence tourists' intentions to visit destinations in West Sumatra.

4. Result

The demographic profile of the respondents indicates a 40% male and 60% female composition. The majority belong to the Millennial and Generation Z cohorts, reflecting a younger population segment. Educational attainment among respondents is predominantly at the senior high school and undergraduate degree levels. In terms of occupational status, most participants are either students or engaged in entrepreneurial activities. Their reported average monthly expenditure falls within the lower to middle-income bracket, specifically ranging from IDR 2,000,000 to IDR 7,500,000.

Table 2. Demographic and socio-economic data

Criteria	N	%
Gender		
Male	200	40
Female	300	60
Age		
< 25	306	61.2
26 - 30	106	21.2
31 - 35	48	9.6
36 - 40	19	3.8
>40	21	4.2
Education		
Elementary School	8	1.6
Junior High School	36	7.2
Senior High School	238	47.6
Bachelor Degree	208	41.6
Master Degree	10	2.0
Household Expenditure		
0 – 2,000,000 (IDR)	342	68.4
2,600,000 – 5,000,000 (IDR)	131	26.2
5,100,000 – 7,500,000 (IDR)	25	5.0
7,600,000 – 10,000,000 (IDR)	1	0.2
>10,000,000 (IDR)	1	0.2
Job		
Student	240	48
Civil Servant	45	9
State-owned Enterprise	10	2
Private Sector Employee	10	2
Entrepreneur	65	13

Source: Data processed, 2024

To ensure the research model demonstrated an acceptable level of fit, several measurement assessments were conducted, including tests of convergent validity, discriminant validity, composite reliability, and Cronbach's alpha. As shown in Table 3, five statement items were removed because their outer loading values were below the recommended threshold of 0.70—specifically, FOMO7, SMF1, SMF2, SMF3, and SMF4. The decision to drop these items was made after careful evaluation of their statistical performance and theoretical relevance. These indicators reflected redundant or weakly expressed behavioral aspects that were already represented by other items within the same construct. Therefore, their removal did not alter the conceptual meaning or dimensional coverage of either the Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) or Social Media Fatigue (SMF) constructs. The remaining indicators continue to capture the essential cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions defined in prior studies (e.g., Przybylski et al., 2013; Bright et al., 2015; Jabeen et al., 2023). Furthermore, all Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeded the minimum criterion of 0.50, indicating satisfactory convergent validity for all constructs after item refinement.

Table 3. Convergent validity result

Criteria	FoMO	ITV	SMF	AVE
	>0.7			>0.5
FoMO1	0.702			
FoMO2	0.800			
FoMO3	0.765			
FoMO4	0.847			
FoMO5	0.875			0.622
FoMO6	0.750			
FoMO8	0.845			
FoMO9	0.705			
ITV1		0.945		
ITV2		0.941		0.801
ITV3		0.790		
SMF5			0.951	0.879
SMF6			0.924	

FoMo: Fear of Missing Out
 ITV: Intention to Visit
 SMF: Social Media Fatigue

Table 4. Discriminant validity result

Criteria	< 0.95		
	FoMO	ITV	SMF
FoMO	0,789		
ITV	0,646	0,895	
SMF	-0,229	-0,366	0,938

Source: Data processed, 2024

The discriminant validity assessment in Table 4 was conducted to verify that a reflective construct shows stronger associations with its own indicators than

with other constructs in the model. The final test in the outer model analysis involves examining Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability.

Based on the results presented in Table 5, the model in this study meets the required criteria.

Table 5. Composite reliability and cronbach's alpha

Criteria	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
FoMO	0,913	0,929
ITV	0,877	0,923
SMF	0,864	0,936

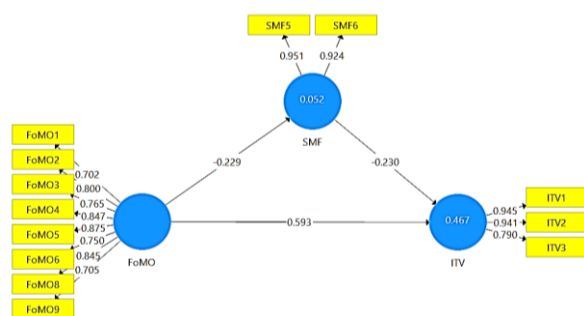


Figure 1. Structural measurement model

Table 6. Hypothesis testing results

	(O)	P Values	Conclusion
FoMO → SMF	0,653	0,000	Accepted
FoMO → ITV	0,063	0,024	Accepted
SMF → ITV	0,411	0,000	Accepted
FoMO → SMF → ITV	0,165	0,001	Complementary (partial mediation)

5. Discussion

This study examined how Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and Social Media Fatigue (SMF) interact to shape tourists' intentions to visit destinations in West Sumatra, particularly among younger generations who are highly active on social media. The results provide essential insights into the dual role of social media engagement—serving both as a source of inspiration and as a source of psychological strain. Overall, the findings confirm that FoMO significantly increases both SMF and travel intention, while SMF itself unexpectedly positively affects travel intention. These outcomes suggest that digital exposure not only drives the desire to participate in trending experiences but may also trigger compensatory travel behavior as individuals seek relief from online overload. The following discussion elaborates on these findings in light of the measurement and structural results, respondent demographics, and relevant theoretical perspectives.

Figure 2 presents the outer loadings from the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling

(PLS-SEM) analysis, while Table 4 summarizes the hypothesis testing results obtained via the bootstrapping procedure. The outer model in Figure 2 confirms that all retained indicators exhibit loading values above 0.70, indicating satisfactory convergent validity and demonstrating that each indicator adequately represents its respective construct—Fear of Missing Out (FoMO), Social Media Fatigue (SMF), and Intention to Visit (ITV). Specifically, the FoMO construct is reflected by nine valid indicators, SMF by two reliable indicators (SMF5 and SMF6) after item refinement, and ITV by three strong indicators (ITV1–ITV3). The R² values (0.052 for SMF and 0.467 for ITV) illustrate the model's explanatory power, suggesting that FoMO explains 5.2% of the variance in SMF, and that FoMO, together with SMF, explains 46.7% of the variance in tourists' intention to visit.

Table 6 shows that the path from FoMO to SMF ($\beta = 0.653, p < 0.001$) is positive and significant, indicating that individuals with higher FoMO levels tend to experience greater social media fatigue. The direct path from FoMO to Intention to Visit ($\beta = 0.063, p = 0.024$) also shows a positive and significant effect, suggesting that FoMO directly enhances the desire to visit trending destinations. Interestingly, the path from SMF to Intention to Visit ($\beta = 0.411, p < 0.001$) was positive and significant, contrary to the theoretical expectation that fatigue would reduce behavioral intention. The mediation test further reveals a complementary (partial) mediation effect of SMF in the relationship between FoMO and Intention to Visit ($\beta = 0.165, p = 0.001$), confirming that FoMO influences visiting intention both directly and indirectly through SMF. This demonstrates the complex psychological dynamics through which social media shapes travel behavior.

These patterns can be better understood by examining the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The majority were female (60%), young (<25 years old, 61.2%), and students (48%), with relatively low to moderate household expenditure—around 68.4% earning less than IDR 2 million per month. Educationally, most had a senior high school degree (47.6%) or a bachelor's degree (41.6%), reflecting a group that is digitally literate but economically cautious. This demographic composition indicates that respondents are predominantly Generation Z, who are highly engaged in online environments, responsive to social media trends, and often driven by emotional and peer-based motivations rather than purely economic or rational ones. For these digitally active users, social media serves as both a source of inspiration and a source of stress. The positive effect of SMF on travel intention may therefore reflect a compensatory mechanism in which individuals

overwhelmed by digital content seek relief through offline experiences. Consistent with (Dhir et al., 2018), (Lee et al., 2021), and (Siegel, 2023), social media fatigue can paradoxically motivate travel as a means to “escape” online saturation and re-establish a sense of authenticity. Many younger users may feel compelled to visit destinations that have dominated their feeds, not only to validate what they have seen online but also to momentarily disconnect from their screens. Thus, what appears to be fatigue may in fact drive escape-driven engagement—a behavior consistent with emotional compensation theory in digital contexts.

The significant role of FoMO further reflects the behavior of youthful and socially connected respondents. FoMO—the fear of missing out on others’ rewarding experiences (Przybylski et al., 2013)—amplifies the perceived attractiveness of destinations featured in viral content (Hussain, 2024; Jabeen et al., 2023). Social platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube intensify this effect by promoting idealized and socially endorsed experiences (Sabiote-Ortiz et al., 2024; Shang et al., 2021). For younger individuals, these cues become powerful motivators that shape travel preferences, as participation in such experiences is linked with social belonging and identity expression (Ivačsciuć, 2024). The gender composition, with more female respondents, may also have contributed to this pattern, as previous studies have shown that women are more responsive to social cues and emotionally driven marketing stimuli (Pettersen-Sobczyk, 2023). However, prolonged engagement with idealized content can trigger social media fatigue, which in turn creates cognitive dissonance and unrealistic expectations. When expectations shaped by social media imagery fail to match real-world experiences, satisfaction diminishes, as described by expectancy-disconfirmation theory. Thus, while FoMO initially enhances the intention to visit, excessive digital exposure may reduce long-term satisfaction and revisit intention if marketers fail to align expectations with reality.

From a managerial perspective, these findings highlight the importance of designing marketing strategies that balance excitement and authenticity in digital destination promotion. While FoMO-based campaigns can effectively stimulate short-term interest, they must be paired with realistic, honest storytelling to avoid disappointment and fatigue. Tourism managers should focus on presenting content that reflects genuine traveler experiences, avoiding exaggerated or overly filtered representations. Encouraging user-generated content (UGC) can build credibility and emotional resonance, particularly among younger audiences who value authenticity. Furthermore, the finding that social media fatigue can still lead to higher travel intentions suggests that destinations could strategically position

themselves as digital detox or mindful travel experiences—offering opportunities for visitors to disconnect from screens and reconnect with nature, culture, or community. This approach not only appeals to fatigued users but also supports sustainable and well-being-oriented tourism. Given that most respondents were female and low-income students, destination marketers could also develop inclusive packages emphasizing affordability, accessibility, and social engagement, helping translate digital aspiration into tangible travel action. Overall, a more empathetic and human-centered marketing approach—one that understands the psychological states of connected yet fatigued digital users—can sustain engagement while minimizing the negative effects of overexposure.

5.1. Limitations and Future Research

This study’s demographic composition—dominated by young, low-income female student respondents—limits the generalizability of its findings to other groups, such as working professionals or older generations. Future research should involve more diverse demographic profiles and explore additional psychological constructs such as destination attachment, authenticity perception, and emotional regulation. These extensions would deepen understanding of how digital engagement, FoMO, and fatigue jointly influence sustainable travel behavior in broader contexts.

6. Conclusions

This study explored how Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and Social Media Fatigue (SMF) influence tourists’ intentions to visit destinations in West Sumatra. Based on data from 500 respondents, primarily young, female, and digitally active, the findings reveal a nuanced psychological dynamic in digital tourism behavior. FoMO significantly increases both SMF and intention to visit, confirming that social exposure and viral trends stimulate travel interest. Surprisingly, SMF also shows a positive effect on intention to visit, indicating that digital exhaustion may not always reduce engagement. Instead, it can encourage individuals to seek offline experiences to escape online overload. This pattern supports the notion that fatigue can act as a compensatory driver of behavior rather than a barrier to participation.

The respondent profile, dominated by Generation Z and young Millennials, helps explain these results. These groups spend considerable time on social media and are highly responsive to social validation, making them prone to FoMO while simultaneously vulnerable to fatigue. However, rather than disengaging, they tend to convert digital pressure into travel motivation by

visiting destinations that dominate their feeds. In contrast, older users, such as early Generation X, may respond more skeptically to online portrayals, showing lower behavioral influence.

Overall, the findings show that FoMO and SMF are not opposing forces but interconnected processes that shape modern travel behavior. For destination marketers, this implies that emotional appeal must be balanced with authenticity. Campaigns should inspire excitement while maintaining realistic expectations through genuine storytelling and user-generated content. By positioning destinations as spaces for mental refreshment and meaningful connection, marketers can transform digital exposure into sustainable visitation, ensuring long-term trust and engagement in an increasingly connected tourism landscape.

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