SOCIAL VISIBILITY OF CONSUMPTION AS A PHENOMENON DRIVING THE SELF-EXPRESSION AND TRAVEL INTENTION OF MUSLIM TOURISTS

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Abstract: This study aims to empirically predict the relationship between social visibility of consumption and word-of-mouth communication (e-WOM) and travel intention, with self-expression as the mediator variable. Survey data obtained from 483 tourists who follow the Halal Booking online travel agency on Facebook and Instagram was analyzed Structural Equation Modeling SEM. Results revealed that the social visibility of consumption among Muslim tourists positively affected self-expression (spiritual and social), e-WOM and travel intention. This research was able to promote ways on how social media can best promote travel destinations among Muslim travelers.

Key words: Social media, social visibility, self-expression, word-of-mouth communication, travel intention

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INTRODUCTION

The halal tourism market is comprised of Muslim consumers who are susceptible to acquiescence to Islamic rules regarding food, beverages, accommodation, entertainment, and activities during their travels. This market, which is described as one of the largest niche markets of the tourism industry (Boğan and Sarıışık, 2019), is expected to reach 230 million travelers in 2026 (Crescent Rating, 2019). Moreover, the remarkable growth experienced in the halal tourism market is strongly attracting destinations and businesses that want to take advantage of the market (Sulong et al., 2022). Destinations and businesses pay more attention to activities that are aimed at discovering their expectations, wishes, and needs and understanding the factors that shape their purchasing attitudes and behaviors in order to develop long-term relationships with Muslim tourists based on satisfaction. Although the findings on the motivation of Muslim tourists regarding their spiritual travels such as Hajj and Umrah are definite, the level of knowledge regarding the needs, wishes, and expectations of Muslim tourists inquiring about leisure holidays as well as the factors influencing their travel choices are quite limited (Wingett and Turnbull, 2017). Today, in the information age, social media is a dynamic that profoundly influences the purchasing behavior of tourists who identify themselves as Muslim. Social media can be described as a mass communication channel that helps people communicate with one another and where consumer habits, choices, thoughts, tastes, and experiences are personalized and displayed (Hajli, 2014). The effect of social media covers a broad range from raising awareness and sharing knowledge, thoughts, and experiences to the purchasing process and post-travel comments (Tatar and Erdoğmuş, 2016). Another aspect of the profound influence that social media has on the travel choices of tourists is the visualization of consumption with pictures and videos in the real-time sharing of the travel experiences (Josiassen and Assaf, 2013; Kim and Fesenmaier, 2017; So et al., 2018).

In industries where visuality is very important, such as the tourism industry, visual content sharing via social media inevitably affects the travel behavior of the followers more than other ways of conveying experiences (So et al., 2018). Furthermore, as many consumption behaviors in everyday life are seen by other people (Heffetz, 2011) visualizing consumption through social media plays an active role in communicating the mood of the tourists and their social class or status to which they belong, beyond conveying their travel experiences for tourists. So et al. (2018) reported that the social visibility of consumption increased tourists' motivation to express themselves and develop e-WOM. In this direction, the social visibility of consumption holds a symbolic meaning that tourists utilize to build their personal and social identity, realize their representation goals, and display their feelings of self (Popp and Woratschek, 2017). Hence, social media is functional to reveal the connection between the social identity of the tourists and their purchasing behavior and to express the identity that the tourist considers real or ideal. However, research on social media using by Muslim tourists is quite limited. This research is focused on the visual sharing of Muslim tourists on social media about travel from the perspective of conspicuous consumption. Moreover, a link has been established between the visual sharing of Muslim tourists on social media and their self-expression, e-WOM, and travel intentions. In this respect, revealing the use of social media among Muslim tourists and the effect of social media on their travel intentions is important to fill the gap in the literature.

This study aims to empirically predict the relationship between social visibility of consumption and e-WOM and travel intention, with self-expression (spiritual and social) as the mediator variable. In this direction, the conceptual framework of

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the research was based on theory of conspicuous consumption, then the relations between the variables were systematically analyzed and the research hypotheses were grounded. The methodology section includes the study population, sampling, data collection, and analysis. In the following sections, the findings of the data analysis are presented. Subsequently, the study results are revealed, and suggestions are given for practitioners and researchers.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT
1. Social Visibility of Consumption

The visible aspects of consumed goods or services form the basis of the inferences about the person's income, personality, social status, and identity in almost all cultures (Belk, 1978:11). Displaying a purchased good or service to others helps individuals to declare the social class or status to which it belongs (Seo and Park, 2018) and supports their thought that they will be socially accepted by reference groups such as friends, family, and colleagues (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003). There are some findings have shown that consumers attribute significance to product categories such as cars, clothes, and sunglasses because of the high social visibility to reveal their social identity and status in the literature (Heffetz, 2011; Josiassen and Assaf, 2013). In this regard, the social visibility of consumption follows the theory of conspicuous consumption, which involves consumers purchasing products from prestigious brands to advance their social status (O'Cass and McEwen, 2004). The social visibility of consumption in the information age means a bridge or fence in getting closer or moving away from social groups (Berger and Ward, 2010).

Many social media communication channels such as YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WeChat, and blogs facilitate individuals to share their knowledge, thoughts, comments, and experiences through visual content (Hajli, 2014). These shares enable the created content (text or visual) to be published, discussed, and known instantly among other users (Tsimonis and Dimitriadis, 2014). These characteristics prompt individuals to create visual content that shows their statuses, and purchasing levels on social media (Heffetz, 2011), highlights products and brands with prestige and visual appeal, and shows their social identity (Stokburger-Sauer et al., 2012).

Social media is efficient in visually transferring tourists' travel experiences to the people around them (So et al., 2018). Researchers have revealed that tourists are quite enthusiastic about sharing their travels with other people via social media communication channels such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Trip Advisor (Kim and Fesenmaier, 2017). When analyzed from the perspective of Muslim tourists, the social visibility of consumption must satisfy specific criteria regarding Islamic beliefs. Muslim tourists must behave accordingly to Islamic rules when sharing texts or images on social media before, during, and after their travels (Sofyan et al., 2022). In this regard, Muslim tourists must preserve their privacy within the boundaries that Islam represents and make sure that they do not use their financial opportunities as a sign of superiority over other people in the visual content they share of their touristic travels. The findings of various studies in the literature suggest that visually sharing halal hotels, halal travel packages, and halal restaurants play a vital role in the purchasing processes of Muslim tourists (Khan et al., 2022; Akhtar et al., 2019). Nevertheless, no studies conducted on the tendency of Muslim tourists to display consumption innerly and socially were encountered in the literature.

2. Self-expression and Social Visibility of Consumption

People can use various methods (written, verbal, and visual) and communication channels to show their true or ideal selves as others desire. As one of these methods, self-expression through the social visibility of consumption constitutes a form of communication in which people seek to deliver visual messages about who they are (Feizollah et al., 2022; Kim and Tussyadiah, 2013). This form of communication visually conveys the individual's social identity, status, economic competence, and psychological status (picture or video) instead of a verbal or text status. Social media is an important communication channel that increases the social visibility of consumption and assists its users in showing themselves to the world with visual content and obtaining social support (Kim and Lee, 2011). Studies have revealed that consumers actively use social media to show brands they have identified with to represent their social identity or status (Simon and Tossan, 2018; So et al., 2018). Also, when all social media posts are considered, it is striking that the content related to travel is high (So et al., 2018). When tourists visualize their travel experiences on social media, they tend to highlight items that will positively affect others' perceptions of themselves (Kim and Tussyadiah, 2013). The travel experiences visualized on social media allow tourists to think about other people's travels, comprehend their moods, and display their social identity and status. These opportunities granted by social media fill tourists with the desire to share exceptional products and brands to display their differences and create a social identity (Batra et al., 2000).

Regarding the perspective of Muslim tourists, like other tourist groups, Muslim tourists seek experiences that will present a high level of social and emotional support in their travel preferences (Han et al., 2019). The fact that Muslim tourists prefer halal-friendly destinations or halal tourism businesses naturally shows that they have a separate social identity. In this respect, a visual message to be shared concerning halal-friendly destinations or halal businesses can be actively used to display the diversity of Muslim tourists' values and social identity from other tourist groups or their connection to the Islamic social identity. Research findings revealed by Sirgy and Su (2000) prove that travel preferences are affected by the attractiveness of tourists to promote their individual and social identities. As interacting with others on social media increases the psychological well-being of tourists (Valkenburg et al., 2006), the reactions of others, such as liking and commenting, to the posts of Muslim tourists can make them feel better spiritually. Moreover, tourists can easily express their feelings and moods by simply updating their status or changing their wall photos on social media (Kim and Fesenmaier, 2017). Similarly, Muslim tourists can show their mood and inner peace by including prayer and worship instruments in their stories or situations during their travels (Idris et al., 2023). In the literature, the focus on the relationship

between the social visibility of consumption in tourist travels and the self-expression of tourists is very limited, and the findings are not clear. Slama (2023) revealed that visual posts on social media are used by the Muslim middle class in Indonesia as a means of comparison for their travels. Hence, the hypotheses to be tested in the present study are as follows:

H1: There is a positive relationship between social visibility of consumption and the social self-expression of Muslim tourists.

H2: There is a positive relationship between social visibility of consumption and the spiritual self-expression of Muslim tourists.

3. e-WOM, Social Visibility of Consumption, and Self-Expression

Bearing visuality to the fore with photos and videos in sharing travel experiences on social media increases e-WOM among users (Josiassen and Assaf, 2013). This interaction is critical for tourists in reducing risks and ambiguities, especially in complicated and high-risk services such as touristic travel, for which there is no pre-purchase experience (Litvin et al., 2008). Various studies have revealed that social media has turned into an effective social tool that enables tourists to communicate online with other tourists to improve, rate, and interpret their travel experiences, share their ideas, and cooperate (Kim and Fesenmaier, 2017; Sotiriadis, 2017). A picture or video shared by tourists on a beach, trekking, parachuting, or conducting any touristic activity enables them to express much more than they would be able to by writing or stating their travel experience. Furthermore, the visual transfer of a touristic experience instead of text or verbal on social media enables a wide crowd to have visible evidence of this experience through e-WOM. Schmallegger et al. (2009) reported that photos shared on social media were useful for the e-WOM of tourists in terms of destinations. Ranjbarian (2011) and King et al. (2014) determined that the fast visibility of social media that requires no speech helps the e-WOM of tourists. In addition, So et al. (2018) discovered that the social visibility of consumption in the airline industry decidedly affected the e-WOM of tourists. Abror et al. (2020) found that photos shared on social media boosted e-WOM among Muslim tourists. Therefore, the hypothesis to be tested in the study was determined as follows:

H3: There is a positive relationship between the social visibility of consumption and the e-WOM of Muslim tourists.

Social media features such as ubiquity, mobility, and interactivity allow users to communicate and connect more often and closer to each other (Wang et al., 2016). Such an environment gives users unique opportunities to represent their ideally preferred self, even if it is an unsupported self in their material world (Schau and Gilly, 2003). Fotiadis et al., (2023) reported that the primary motivation of Muslim tourists who seek to build or develop their identities via social media posts is increasing their e-WOM. This is because consumed brands (that is, self-expressing brands) visually present the profit of expressing oneself to others without effort (Liu et al., 2012). Trusov et al. (2010) asserted on Facebook that consumers who communicated with brands liked to be part of how they expressed themselves in the online environment. Syed-Ahmad (2011) concluded that Muslim tourists actively utilized their social media profiles or story sharing to draw the attention of others to their social and mental situation and to develop their e-WOM. Various studies in the literature have found that halal tourism decidedly affects the e-WOM of Muslim tourists (Khan et al., 2022; Wardi et al., 2018). Nevertheless, there was no finding between Muslim tourists' expressing themselves socially and mentally and e-WOM on social media. The hypotheses formed in this direction were as follows:

H4: There is a positive relationship between Muslim tourists expressing themselves socially on social media and e-WOM.

H5: There is a positive relationship between Muslim tourists expressing themselves spiritually on social media and e-WOM.

4. Travel Intention, Social Visibility of Consumption, Self-Expression, and Word-of-mouth Communication

The social visibility level of a product or service, whether it is touristic or not, has a crucial impact on the image perceptions of consumers and their purchase intentions (Josiassen and Assaf, 2013). In the current social media period, where social visibility is growing in travel purchases (So et al., 2018), it is only probable to achieve the desired recognition level of a destination or tourism product with high social visibility (Correia et al., 2016). In this regard, social media is a useful tool for tourists to visually declare their sentiments, observations, recommendations, and complaints to others at every stage of the travel experience (before, during, and after the trip) (Leung et al., 2013). The fact that tourists visually share their travel experiences on social networks or with a social community helps other tourists reconstruct their mental reactions (positive-negative) to the shared content (Jansson, 2007). This is because the content has been created by a tourist and, thus, encourages a sense of credibility and closeness in other tourists (Mersey et al., 2010). Josiassen and Assaf (2013) and So et al. (2018) revealed that tourists favored high-visibility destinations and businesses when traveling. Similarly, the social visibility of consumption has a decisive effect on the travel intentions of Muslim tourists (Juliana et al., 2022). In this direction, the hypothesis that was developed is as follows:

H6: There is a positive relationship between the social visibility of consumption and the travel intentions of Muslim tourists.

On the other hand, when tourists are interested in how others think about them, they are more inclined to share high-visibility content regarding their travels (Josiassen and Assaf, 2013). Tourists can instantly express themselves mentally and socially to a broad audience and observe the responses of others by sharing their travel experiences on social media (Hudson et al., 2016). The acts of liking, sharing, and tagging a photo shared by a tourist of a branded tourism business or from a destination by others support the tourist's social expression (Ruane and Wallace, 2015). In this respect, Muslim tourists prefer fancy destinations and halal tourism businesses with which they can express themselves more efficiently, both visually and socially. This is because decisive feedback and social support for the travel content they share can develop a pleasant tourism experience for them (Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier, 2009). In terms of Muslim tourists, the social and spiritual perspectives of a touristic journey that can be conveyed to others shape others' opinions of them. Hence, Muslim tourists who desire to acquire a reputation with their Muslim social identity in their social environment visit destinations and use halal tourism businesses that will allow them to present themselves as they want in their travels. The hypotheses formed from this assumption were as follows:

H7: There is a positive relationship between Muslim tourists expressing themselves socially on social media and their travel intentions.

H8: There is a positive relationship between Muslim tourists expressing themselves spiritually on social media and their travel intentions.

Currently, online content produced and shared by others in the tourism industry is highly evaluated by tourists in their travel purchasing decisions (Khan et al. 2022; Fotis et al., 2012). Before tourists determine a destination, they examine content (text/visual) shared on social media communication channels such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and observe the ratio and evaluation of others regarding facilities by visiting sites such as Trip-Advisor.com, LateRooms.com and Hotels.com (Mohammed Abubakar, 2016). As e-WOM is generally business-independent and non-profit communications, tourists rely more on these sources of information and are more easily influenced by them (Leung et al., 2013). Amalia et al. (2019) revealed that e-WOM on social media increased the intention of Muslim tourists to visit Islamic destinations. Juliana et al. (2022) and Ismail et al. (2019) determined that Muslim tourists were very sensitive about halal and that adverse e-WOM instantly changed their preferences. The research hypothesis formed in this regard is as follows:

H9: There is a positive relationship between Muslim tourists' e-WOM and their travel intentions.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the quantitative method was adopted to reveal the relationships between social visibility of consumption, self-expression, e-WOM, and travel intention of Muslim tourists. Figure 1 summarizes the proposed research model. Online surveys were used to reach out to Muslim tourists who actively use social media and prefer halal hotels and destinations for their travels. The population of this study was Muslim tourists who follow the HalalBooking online travel agency on Facebook and Instagram. The number of users who followed HalalBooking in these social media communication channels was over 400 thousand people. However, information regarding the users' gender, nationality, beliefs, travel frequency, and post content on their profiles were very limited. Therefore, a purposive sampling method was employed in this study to obtain the data. Online surveys were sent online to users who liked or shared the agency's posts, starting with the most up-to-date posts on the HalalBooking online travel agency's Facebook and Instagram social media accounts. The responses of the participants who preferred halal restaurants or hotels in their travels in the last two years were considered. The reliability of the measurement instrument was tested and verified with data from 74 Muslim tourists (α = 0.874). The study data was obtained through online surveys of Muslim tourists shared on Facebook and Instagram between June and October 2022. Data were collected from 506 Muslim tourists through online surveys. However, 23 of these answers were deemed invalid due to being incomplete and a total of 483 answers were accepted as valid. The data used for the pre-test were not included in the analysis.
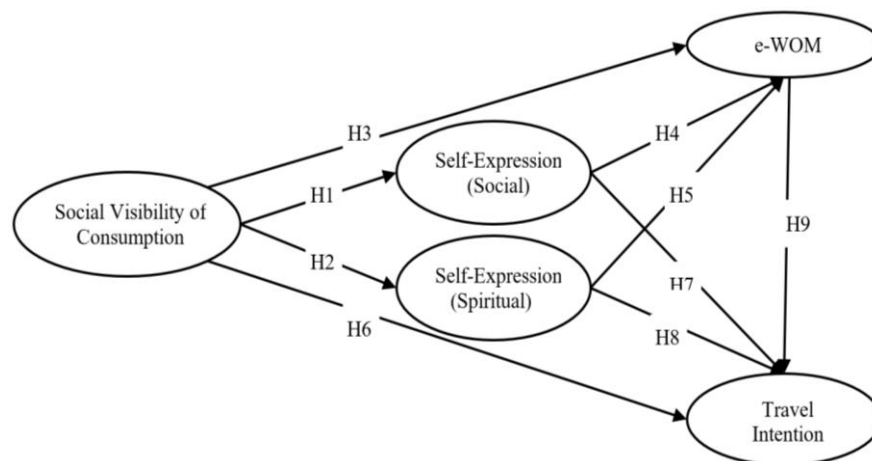

Figure 1. Proposed research model

The observed variables determined to measure the latent variables were adapted from empirical studies. All constructs were modified to relate to Muslim tourists' sharing their travel experiences and were rated on the five-point Likert scale (1-strongly disagree, 5- strongly agree). The measurement instrument consisted of two parts. The first part consisted of 10 closed-ended questions regarding the demographic characteristics of the Muslim tourists, while the second part comprised 20 items about the latent variables of the study. Four expressions were adapted from So et al. (2018) and Bilgin (2018) to measure consumption's social visibility. Eight items related to Muslim tourists spiritually (four items) and socially (four items) expressing themselves were adapted Algharabat (2017). Four items measuring the word-of-mouth communication of Muslim tourists were adapted from Preko et al. (2020), and four items measuring Muslim tourists' travel intentions were adapted from Nurhayati and Hendar (2019). The content validity of the created measurement instrument was tested by calling the opinions of two marketing experts and two tourism experts. The items in the measurement instrument are shown in Table 2. In this study, explanatory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to achieve the determined goals. The demographic characteristics of the participants were analyzed using the descriptive statistics for the measurement model and the SPSS 23.0 package program for the EFA. AMOS 23.0 statistical analysis software validated the measurement model and tested the hypotheses.

FINDINGS

1. Demographic Characteristics

The demographic characteristics of the participants are shown in Table 1. Accordingly, most of the participants were women (66.9 %), between the ages of 26-and 35 years (43.8 %), and married (63.0 %). Most of the participants had received an undergraduate education (62.0 %), had an income between $2501 and above (54.2 %), and traveled with their families (56.7 %). In addition, most of the participants spent more than four hours a day on social media (40.8 %), and their most frequently used social media communication platform was Instagram (41.3 %).

2. Measurement Model

The skewness (-0.13-1.21) and kurtosis (-0.81,1.50) tests showed that the data did not violate the assumption of normality (George and Mallery, 2010). EFA was applied to the data based on Principal components and Varimax rotation methods before CFA. In the EFA, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.895 indicated that the sample was sufficient for factor analysis (Kaiser, 1974), while Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (p <0.001) value indicated that the correlation between the items for principal component analysis was high enough. In the EFA, a five-factor structure that explained 76.157% of the total variance and varying eigenvalues between 1.328 and 7.871 was determined. The reliability of these factors was between .782 and .860, and the factor loadings were between .880 and .912. The EFA results showed that the measurement model was compatible with the constructed structure. The CFA was performed using a five-factor structure derived from the EFA to purify and cross-validate the measurement model. In the CFA, the five-factor structure of the model was verified by considering the standardized factor loadings of each item, composite reliability (CR), and mean-variance (AVE). The indices used to evaluate the goodness of model fit were as follows: chi-square (χ^2 = 457.144, df = 160, x 2/df = 2.859, p <.001), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.06 and comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.954, GFI = 0.912 AGFI = 0.885, NFI = 0.932). The indices demonstrated that the model fit was within the recommended minimum levels (Hair et al., 2010). The CFA results are presented in Table 2.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Variable	Category	N	%
Nationality	Turkish	146	30.2
	French	93	19.3
	German	87	18.0
	Dutch	69	14.3
	Others	88	18.2
Gender	Male	213	33.1
	Female	431	66.9
Age	25 and under	13	2.0
	26-35 years	282	43.8
	36-45 years	260	40.4
	46-55 years	65	10.1
	51 and over	24	3.7
Education level	Primary school graduate	7	1.1
	Vocational school graduate	87	13.5
	University graduate	399	62.0
	Master or PhD	151	23.4
Marital status	Single	221	34.3
	Married	406	63.0
	Divorced	17	2.6
Monthly income	US$ 1000 or less	67	10.4
	US$ 1001- 1500	96	19.8
	US$ 1501-2500	220	34.2
	US$ 2501 or more	261	54.0
The person/s Accompanying the travel	Alone	59	9.2
	With family	365	56.7
	With friends	220	34.2
Time spent on social media (daily)	Less than 1 hour	22	3.4
	1-2 hours	134	20.8
	2-4 hours	225	34.9
	More than 4 hours	263	40.8
The most used social media platform	Facebook	172	26.7
	Twitter	120	18.6
	Instagram	266	41.3
	LinkedIn	10	1.6
	YouTube	76	11.8

Table 2. CFA results; Note: ***p < .001, λ= Standardizad loadings, AVE = average variance extracted, CR = composite reliability

Construct	λ	t-value	CR	AVE
Social Visibility of Consumption				
I would like to show my journey to the people around me.	0.788	----	0.91	0.72
I want others to see the attractions I witnessed during my travels.	0.873	21.449***		
When traveling I prefer destinations and businesses with high visual appeals.	0.878	21.620***		
I pay attention to privacy in my visual posts about my travel experience on social media.	0.869	21.348***		
Social Self-Expression				
My visual posts on social media … --- about my travels contribute to my personal image.	0.816	----	0.88	0.64
--- about my travels support the social role I have.	0.815	19.582***		
--- have a positive effect on others' thoughts about me.	0.801	19.179***		
--- improve the way society views me.	0.789	18.801***		
Spiritual Self-Expression				
--- symbolize the person I really feel on the inside.	0.823	----	0.88	0.66
--- reflect my personality.	0.864	21.636***		
--- are an extension of my inner self.	0.825	20.449***		
--- mirror my real emotions.	0.737	17.648***		
Word-of-mouth Communication				
I want everyone around me to know that I prefer a halal-friendly destination when traveling.	0.858	----	0.89	0.67
It's exciting to share my travel experience with someone seeking my advice.	0.725	18.653***		
I like to answer comments or questions about my travels on social media.	0.754	19.751***		
I receive good comments from my friends anytime I share my travel experiences.	0.941	27.414***		
Travel Intention				
I am planning to visit a halal-friendly destination soon.	0.770	----	0.89	0.67
When planning my budget, I consider the touristic trips I plan to do.	0.804	18.259***		
I try to follow the developments about Muslim-friendly tourism products and services.	0.868	19.812***		
I will continue to prefer Muslim-friendly businesses and destinations in my travels.	0.836	19.065***		

Discriminant validity was examined by comparing the correlation between the latent variables in the model and the square root of the AVE obtained for each structure. Table 3 shows the discriminant validity results. The AVE square for all structures was higher than the square of the correlation coefficients. Therefore, the intended structure of each item in the measurement model was explained better than the other structures, and there were no problems with discriminating validity for any of the structures (Hair et al., 2014).

3. Structural Model

The structural model showed an acceptable fit between the data and the proposed model. The fit indices of the structural model were as follows: chi-square ($\chi 2$ = 483.178, df = 161, x 2/df = 3.00, p <.001, RMSEA = 0.064, CFI = 0.950, GFI = 0.907 AGFI = 0.878, NFI = 0.928. All values of the fit indices met the recommended minimum criteria for model fit (Hair et al., 2019). Table 4 shows the results of the structural model.

In the path analysis, the significant coefficients were noted for the paths running from the social visibility of consumption to social and spiritual self-expression, e-WOM, and travel intention (β = 0.60, β = 0.43, β = 0.39, β = 0.23; p <0.001, respectively). The findings showed that the social visibility of consumption had a significant effect on social and spiritual expression, e-WOM, and travel intention and that H1, H2, H3, and H6 were supported. In addition, the paths from spiritual self-expression to e-WOM and travel intention were found to be meaningful (β = 0.32, p <0.001; β = 0.10, p <0.05, respectively). Therefore, H5 and H8 were supported. However, the coefficients were meaningless for the paths from social self-expression to e-WOM and travel intention. Hence, H4 and H7 were not supported. Finally, the path from e-WOM to travel intention was significant (= 0.35, p <0.001), and, thus, H9 was supported. However, the social visibility of consumption indirectly affects the e-WOM and travel intentions of Muslim tourists. In addition, spiritual self-expression through the visualization of travel has a mediating role in the effect of social visibility of consumption on travel intention. Direct and indirect effects of social visibility of consumption on endogenous variables are presented in Table 5, along with the total effect.

Table 3. Discriminant validity

Construct	Items	Mean	S.D.					
Social Visibility of Consumption	4	3.99	0.74	*0.852*				
Social Self-Expression	4	3,46	0.85	0.598	*0.805*			
Spiritual Self-Expression	4	3.34	0.81	0.421	0.452	*0.813*		
Word-of-mouth Communication	4	3.97	0.62	0.449	0.352	0.463	*0.823*	
Travel Intention	4	4.21	0.66	0.418	0.276	0.359	0.501	*0.820*

Table 4. Results of the structural model
Note: Significant at [***]p <0.001, [**]p <0.05 (two-tailed); ns= not significant; β= standardized path coefficients

	Hypotheses		β	t-value	Results
H1	Social Visibility of Consumption	→ Social Self-Expression	0.607	11.915[***]	Supported
H2	Social Visibility of Consumption	→ Spiritual Self-Expression	0.435	8.372[***]	Supported
H3	Social Visibility of Consumption	→ e-WOM	0.391	4.564[***]	Supported
H4	Social Self-Expression	→ e-WOM	0.038	.664[ns]	Not supported
H5	Spiritual Self-Expression	→ e-WOM	0.322	6.089[***]	Supported
H6	Social Visibility of Consumption	→ Travel Intention	0.236	3.621[***]	Supported
H7	Social Self-Expression	→ Travel Intention	0.041	0.676[ns]	Not supported
H8	Spiritual Self-Expression	→ Travel Intention	0.106	2.002[**]	Supported
H9	e-WOM	→ Travel Intention	0.357	6.424[***]	Supported

Table 5. Standardized direct, indirect, and total effects

Dependent Variables	Indirect Effect		Direct Effect			Total Effect		
	SVC	Spiritual	SVC	Spiritual	e-WOM	SVC	Spiritual	e-WOM
Social Self-Expression	---		0.607	---	---	0.607	---	---
Spiritual Self-Expression	---	---	0.435	---	---	0.435	---	---
e-WOM	0.163	---	0.291	0.322	---	0.454	0.322	---
Travel intention	0.184	0.115	0.236	0.106	0.357	0.421	0.221	0.357

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social media is an effective platform that facilitates tourists to declare their travel experiences to others with visual evidence, and strengthens their motivation to express themselves spiritually and socially. This study examined the influence of the social visibility consumption of Muslim tourists' travel experiences on social media on their social and spiritual self-expression, e-WOM, and travel intentions. The study results showed that the social visibility regarding the travel experience on social media among Muslim tourists played an important role in their spiritual and social expression. Similar to those obtained in previous studies (Hudson et al., 2016; Josiassen and George Assaf, 2013; So et al., 2018), this result highlighted the strong perception of Muslim tourists' consumption behavior being followed by others and the importance of social visibility in their travels in presenting themselves both spiritually and socially to others.

In addition, this study determined that the visualization of the travel experiences of Muslim tourists on social media had a positive influence on their e-WOM. Similar results have been obtained in empirical studies that have reported that photo and video sharing, in which visuality is prominent, on social media increases e-WOM regarding users' travel experiences (Barreto, 2014; King et al., 2014). In addition, the social visibility of consumption positively affected the travel intentions of Muslim tourists. High visibility on social media increases the awareness of a touristic product and

encourages users' sense of curiosity. Therefore, this result supported the behavior of tourists who prefer high social visibility destinations and businesses for their travels, which has been revealed in previous studies (So et al., 2018).

Descriptive statistics show that Muslim tourists tend to visualize their travel experiences on social media. In other words, the desire of Muslim tourists to visually communicate their travel experiences to others on social media is similar to other tourist groups (Kim and Fesenmaier, 2017). Findings in the literature have shown that Muslim tourists take privacy into account when visualizing the travel experience on social media, in line with Islamic beliefs (Sandikci and Ger, 2010). In addition, studies have revealed that Muslim tourists attach more importance to social expression than spiritual expression when visualizing their travels. However, social self-expression does not significantly affect e-WOM among Muslim tourists. Conversely, spiritual self-expression has a positive effect on the e-WOM of Muslim tourists. In this respect, it can be said that the visual sharing of the travel experiences of Muslim tourists on social media was made to communicate with others, provide social and emotional support, and feel better.

In the study, it was determined that the social self-expression of Muslim tourists did not have a significant effect on their travel intentions. On the other hand, it was found that Muslim tourists' spiritual self-expression had a very low effect on their travel intentions. Accordingly, it can be said that Muslim tourists did not go on travel to reflect the social identity or inner world that they consider ideal for themselves. However, Sirgy and Su (2000), and Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) determined that social identity development and desire for social acceptance were influential in the travel preferences of tourists in line with conspicuous consumption. In contrast, the behavior of Muslim tourists visualizing their travels was not compatible with the conspicuous consumption theory. This result can stem from the Islamic belief that orders Muslims to not use their social status and financial competence as a means of superiority over others.

In the Islamic belief, the pretentious behavior of someone to be accepted by others or to show that they are superior to them is called "Riya." These acts of showing off are expressed in some verses of the Qur'an, and it is stated that showing off is a behavior that should be avoided even in worship (Qur'an, 2:264). In Islamic teaching, the determinant of whether an individual's behavior is for the show (Riya) is intention. The intention is the explicit or implicit end goal that a person aims at while performing a behavior. Therefore, the fact that Muslim tourists express themselves socially through visual sharing on social media does not affect their travel intentions may be because they do not travel to show others their social status or wealth. However, the fact that Muslim tourists want to express themselves socially through visual posts about their travels on social media shows that they are to balance their desire for religiosity and modernity, in line with previous research findings (Khan et al., 2022). In this study, the participants' commitment to Islamic teachings and their level of religiosity was not considered. However, the fact that the participants follow the halalbooking.com online travel agency on social media and have preferred a halal hotel or a halal-friendly destination at least once in their travels in the last two years shows that they consider Islamic teachings. However, the result that socially self-expression did not affect travel intention may have been affected by the characteristics of the sample. Because most of the participants are women, the current research findings show that the priority of Muslim women in their touristic travel planning is the sense of freedom in accessing women-only facilities such as hammams, beaches, and pools (Vargas-Sánchez and Moral-Moral, 2019). Moreover, a commercialization and branding process that will consider tourist differences such as service types, age groups (generations), wealth, social status, and education level in halal tourism has not been completed yet (Wingett and Turnbull, 2017). However, current research findings show that Muslim women expressing themselves on social media is an effective tool in strengthening their social identities (Khan et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

The present study determined that social media influences visualizing the travels, word-of-mouth communications, and the travel intentions of Muslim tourists. In this regard, the managers of halal tourism enterprises are recommended to use social media more effectively for their direct marketing activities and enhance customer communication. The findings showed that tourism businesses that serve Muslim tourists should pay attention to visual appeal and prestige. However, that is not enough to attract Muslim tourists, as visual posts to express social status, social role, and ideal social identity among Muslim tourists do not increase their e-WOM and travel intentions. On the other hand, visual posts express peace, freedom, emotion, and spirituality. Muslim tourists feel that their travels positively affect their word-of-mouth communication and travel intentions. In this respect, halal tourism businesses, the target market of Muslim tourists, should provide them with a peaceful, accessible, and spiritual atmosphere, visual appeal, and prestige. This research has some limitations. Firstly, the findings of this study were obtained from users who followed the Halalbooking online travel agency on the social media communication channels of Facebook and Instagram. In other words, the findings to be obtained from Muslim tourists using other social media communication channels may differ. In addition, another limitation of the study is related to the sampling. Most of the participants are women, and Muslim women rarely travel alone. Therefore, factors not included in the research other than word-of-mouth communication and self-expression may have played a more influential role in their travel intentions. Two suggestions are offered to researchers for future studies. The first is to examine the conspicuous consumption theory within the framework of the tendencies of Muslim tourists to visualize their travels on social media and their travel behaviors. The second is to examine the relationship between the behavior of Muslim tourists expressing themselves through the social visibility of consumption and the level of overlap of halal tourism businesses' brands.

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