



Mediating Role of Trust in Celebrity Endorsements and Millennial Purchases of Halal Tourism Packages

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Abstract

The millennial generation is an active user of social media and is often exposed to promotional content from celebrities or influencers. While celebrity endorsements can increase exposure, not all endorsements are effective in driving purchase decisions. Thus, trust is the main factor that connects celebrity endorsements with purchase decisions. This research aimed to determine celebrity endorsement in improving the purchase of halal tourism packages and analyzing the mediation of trust in purchase decisions. This study used a quantitative survey method. The data analysis technique employed the Structural Equation Modeling method using purposive sampling. Respondents were selected based on age and social media users who made purchases of halal tour packages. The exclusion criteria included individuals who were only interested in or considering buying but had never traveled halal before, as they were not included as research respondents. The number of research samples was 130 participants. The study indicated that celebrity endorsers significantly influence millennial purchase decisions by mediating the trust variable on halal tourism packages. This study focuses on West Java millennials, limiting generalizability. Future research must expand to other regions and analyze the long-term trust effects that could enhance the understanding of halal tourism purchasing behavior. This finding contributed to halal tourism providers implementing effective marketing through social media optimization to encourage increasing sales.

Keywords: Celebrity Endorsement; Purchase Decision; Trust; Millennials; Halal Tourism.

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INTRODUCTION

Business competition has become more competitive today, especially with the advancements brought about by the digital era in Indonesia. Technology disruption and uncertainty have become serious problems faced by business actors. Digitalization in business processes results in changes in business behavior and public consumption. Businesspeople optimize digital platforms to promote their goods and services as an entity. This is because business processes have become more efficient in human resource management, production, communication, and other business processes.

The promotion process is an important thing related to the business processes that can significantly impact the business. The penetration of Internet Users in Indonesia reached 79.5 percent in 2024, an increase of 1.4 percent from the previous period, and the increase in penetration in rural areas reached 30.5 percent. Considering age demographics, millennials represent 30.62 percent of internet users, making them the second largest after Generation Z (34.4 percent) (Arif, 2024).

The high penetration then creates an opportunity for the halal tourism industry in Indonesia, especially West Java, to offer products and services through social media, primarily through endorsement strategies, to increase trust and attract consumers to make purchases. The trend of religious tourism is skyrocketing in Muslim countries and globally (Chookaew *et al.*, 2015; Nhamo *et al.*, 2020; Tsironis, 2022).

Indonesia become the second largest percentage of the Muslim population after Pakistan in 2024 (Waulat, 2024). This means that market opportunities in this industry have great potential (A. Mukherjee *et al.*, 2023). Saifudin and Puspita (2020) predicted the intention of millennial Muslims to visit halal tourism by attitude, subjective norms, and halal certification. However, some of these halal service providers carry out unhealthy business practices that harm various parties, especially consumers from the millennial age. There are many scams related to halal travel, which ultimately reduce consumer confidence. The results of the investigation by the Indonesian police in the Malang sector, for example, in January 2024, arrested the perpetrators of a fraudulent case of Umrah travel agents who lost IDR1.9 billion to consumers (Febrianto, 2024).



Thus, trust in the implementation of halal tourism by travel agents has decreased. After the revelation of a fraud case against the organizer of religious tourism activities, which included halal tourism activities, the public became suspicious of the tour service provider. From the perspective of halal tourism service providers, these situations pose significant challenges. It is essential to adopt a comprehensive approach to engage the community, particularly millennials, in order to rebuild trust and encourage greater purchases of halal tourism services. One of the efforts made by halal tourism service providers is marketing through an endorsement system with influencers on social media.

The millennial group has a significant contribution to the halal tourism trend and the ability to quickly adapt to technology, especially social media, strong purchasing power, purchasing behavior through platforms, and the tendency to have high interaction on social media (Han & Chen, 2022; A. Mukherjee et al., 2023; Rehman & Aisha, 2023). In addition, by researching millennial purchasing behavior, halal tourism service providers can develop more effective strategies to attract and retain customers, help anticipate future trends and adapt business models according to changing consumer preferences.

Several research studies have explored the customer behavior caused by celebrity endorsement, focusing on the endorsers' credibility, attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness. A shift in consumer trust has emerged, with young females exhibiting a greater susceptibility to purchase influence from social media influencers than traditional celebrities. This phenomenon can be attributed to the perceived credibility and relatability that influencers cultivate on their platforms (Schouten et al., 2020). Moreover, celebrity trustworthiness, attractiveness, and expertise positively affect purchase intention and impulse buying tendencies, indicating their significant role in consumer decision-making (Liu, 2022). McCormick (2016) pointed out that celebrity endorsements can enhance advertisement attention, break brand clutter, and impact consumer behavior in the purchase, showcasing the persuasive power of celebrity endorsements in marketing campaigns.

Furthermore, Firman et al. (2021) demonstrated that celebrity endorsements and electronic word-of-mouth significantly affect the confidence of consumers and purchase by mediating the effect of trust and emphasizing the role of trust in the endorsement process. In addition, Shi et al. (2021) suggested that celebrity

popularity, expertise, and trustworthiness can enhance purchase behavior, contributing to the celebrity endorsement process in influencing consumer behavior. Then, Natalia et al. (2021) explored how celebrity endorsers influence emotional attachment, brand trust, and purchase intention, highlighting the indirect effects of emotional connections and trust on consumer decisions.

Moreover, Anwar and Amelia (2023) and Febrian and Fadly (2021) emphasized the significant impact of celebrity endorsers on purchase decisions, with celebrity endorsements significantly affecting purchase intentions. Meanwhile, Singh and Banerjee (2018) highlighted that celebrity endorsements help build brand visibility and affect consumers' pre-purchase perceptions, indicating the role of celebrities in shaping brand attitudes and purchase intentions.

Additionally, Hussain (2020) noted that celebrities possessing attributes like likability, credibility, and attractiveness positively influence consumer purchase intentions, contributing to the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements in driving consumer behavior. Celebrity endorsements undeniably enhance product appeal, leading to an increased willingness to purchase endorsed products and highlighting the persuasive power of celebrity endorsements in marketing strategies (Calvo-Porrall et al., 2021).

The current study emphasizes the importance of celebrities' credibility, attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviors. Celebrity endorsements play a significant role in consumer behavior, brand perceptions, and purchase decisions, underscoring the value of leveraging celebrity endorsements in marketing strategies to enhance brand visibility and drive consumer engagement and purchase decisions.

Most research on celebrity endorsements and purchasing decisions focuses on general consumer products such as fashion, cosmetics, or food. However, this study focuses on potential halal tourism packages in West Java. Then, this study uses the millennial target as a specific segment because the millennial generation has different characteristics regarding trust in celebrities, digital-based purchasing decisions, and the tendency to choose halal tourism as a lifestyle. Furthermore, trust is used as a mediator in the halal tourism industry because trust in endorsements is crucial, and millennials tend to be skeptical of celebrity endorsements and will consider the credibility of celebrities before



deciding to buy. Without trust, celebrity endorsements can be ineffective or even cause resistance to the advertised product.

Therefore, this research aims to analyze the effect of celebrity endorsements on purchase decisions and the effect of mediation of trust on millennial purchase decisions regarding halal tourism packages in West Java, Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Celebrity Endorsement

A celebrity endorsement involves a well-known person recognized for their popularity, professionalism in the beauty industry, and overall competence (Kahle & Valette-Florence, 2015). Celebrity endorsers affect the behavior of consumers in purchasing content, campaigns, and the creation value of the product (Escalas & Bettman, 2017). Endorsement effectiveness is positively linked to consumer self-congruence. When advertisements leverage testimonials or celebrity endorsements that resonate with consumers' ideal self-image, this fosters a more positive evaluation of the advertised product and ultimately increases purchase likelihood (Choi, 2019). Endorsement becomes an effective strategy that engages famous people to promote goods and services, such as actors, athletes, or influencers. This tactic leverages the celebrity's popularity, influence, and credibility to create awareness, enhance brand image, and drive sales (Han & Chen, 2022).

Celebrity endorsement is an effort by business actors to introduce products and services through endorsement on digital platforms. Jha et al. (2020) defines celebrity endorsement as a marketing strategy involving a popular individual to promote a product. This strategy is particularly effective in product categories that enhance the image, such as fashion and cosmetics (Raluca, 2012). However, celebrity endorsement can affect the congruence between the celebrity and the product, as well as the celebrity's exposure level (Roy & Hyderabad, 2012).

Celebrities can influence purchasing decisions through their endorsement due to their visibility and perceived authority or attractiveness by the public (Raluca, 2012). However, the indicators of celebrity endorsement include celebrity-brand fit, celebrity image, perceived motivations, consistency, and trust in the celebrity (Yousaf et al., 2018). Based on previous research, celebrity endorsement



affected purchase decisions. So, the current study posits a hypothesis that celebrity endorsement positively influences consumer decision-making on halal tourism packages.

Customer Trust

Customer trust is the foundation of successful relationships between businesses and their customers. It is the customers' trust in a brand's products, services, and promises. Customer trust has become a factor for successful marketing and branding strategies such as buying intention, customer retention, and loyalty (Alkitbi *et al.*, 2021; Gao *et al.*, 2023; Park & Kim, 2016). Customer trust is crucial to business success, creating customer satisfaction, loyalty, and brand value (Azahari & Nayan, 2020). Trust is essential in electronic commerce, with order fulfillment and a hassle-free experience being key elements (Shettar, 2019). Ultimately, trust is about creating a reliable and customer-focused relationship, leading to satisfaction and loyalty (Baharin & Nayan, 2020). Based on Baharin and Nayan's (2020) study, customer trust in loyalty underscores the role of reliability, reputation, and excellent customer service in earning customer trust. Based on previous research, customer trust positively affected purchase decisions. Therefore, this study frames the hypothesis that customer trust indicated a positive effect on that customer trust has purchasing decisions on halal tourism packages.

Purchase Decision

Prior to completing a purchase, consumers engage in a multistage decision-making process (S. Mukherjee & Chatterjee, 2021; Schrift *et al.*, 2018). This process commences upon identifying a specific need and encompasses the selection of the purchase location, desired brand and model, quantity required, optimal purchase timing, budgetary allocation, and preferred payment method. As Kotler and Keller (2015) defined, consumer purchase behavior transcends a single decision point. It is a sequential process initiated by recognizing a need or problem. This is followed by an active information search for products or brands that could fulfill that need. Subsequently, a meticulous evaluation of alternatives occurs, where factors like perceived ease of use, value proposition, and price



point are carefully weighed. Ultimately, this evaluation culminates in a purchase decision and interpersonal influence (Sfenrianto et al., 2018).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study analyzes the mediation of trust and the effect of celebrity endorsement on millennial purchase decisions regarding halal tourism packages. The subject of this study is social media users who have made purchases of halal tourism packages in West Java. The data was collected using a survey method. Determining the research sample uses a non-probability sampling method with a purposive sampling approach; respondents are selected based on specific criteria relevant to the research. Respondents were selected based on age, specifically millennials aged 18 to 40, who were social media users and had made purchases of halal tour packages in West Java within the last two years. The researcher considered the exclusion criteria, namely those who were only interested in or considering buying but had never traveled halal were not included as research respondents.

According to Sarstedt et al. (2021), the researchers considered the number of factors involved and how extensively each factor would be rated to determine the number of participants needed in the study. In this case, the researchers multiplied the number of factors by a rating scale of 1 to 5, which is commonly used in social science research. As a result, the total number of research samples included 130 participants.

A quantitative approach was selected for this research to involve a large number of participants and collect a significant number of responses. This method is especially appropriate when the target population consists of many individuals who do not require special skills to fill out the questionnaire. A purposive sampling method was employed for this study. In order to gauge perceptions, each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”). The measurement of celebrity endorsement variables is based on research by Yousaf et al. (2018), which consists of indicators of celebrity-brand fit, celebrity image, perceived motivations, consistency, and trust in the celebrity.

The measurement of trust variables is based on the research of Baharin and Nayan (2020) and Kalia et al. (2021), which consists of indicators of the



role of reliability, reputation, and excellent customer service. Meanwhile, the measurement of purchase decision variables is based on the research of Sfenrianto *et al.* (2018), which consists of perceived indicators of perceived ease of use and usefulness, perceived low cost, purchase experience, compatibility (with value, norm, and belief), and interpersonal influence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Outer Model Analysis

This study evaluates the research model's inner and outer aspects using the structural equation modeling method and partial least squares.

1. The Discriminant Validity

The validity test result can be seen based on the outer loading value for each latent variable. The measurement of outer loading for each construct is above the value boundary of 0.7 which can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. The Outer Loading

Constructs	Indicators	Original Sample	Value Boundary
Celebrity Endorsement	X1	0.831	0.7
	X2	0.901	0.7
	X3	0.902	0.7
	X4	0.844	0.7
	X5	0.795	0.7
Customer Trust	Y1	0.809	0.7
	Y2	0.832	0.7
	Y3	0.840	0.7
Purchase Decision	Z1	0.863	0.7
	Z2	0.754	0.7
	Z3	0.754	0.7
	Z4	0.850	0.7
	Z5	0.723	0.7

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2024



This means that the validity value of the research latent variable is highly recommended. It can be inferred that the overall item that measures celebrity endorsement, customer trust, and purchase decisions was valid. Discriminant validity defines how multiple variables are distinguished from each other (Duarte & Amaro, 2018). The cross-loading value also assesses the discriminant validity of the measurement model. If the value of the cross-loading of the construct's indicator is more substantial than that of the cross-loading construct's other, then the indicators are valid.

Table 2. Cross-Loading Value

Indicators	Celebrity Endorsement	Customer Trust	Purchase Decision
X1	0.831	0.609	0.614
X2	0.901	0.660	0.716
X3	0.902	0.620	0.638
X4	0.844	0.585	0.612
X5	0.795	0.507	0.607
Y1	0.413	0.809	0.577
Y2	0.616	0.832	0.587
Y3	0.663	0.840	0.825
Z1	0.638	0.687	0.863
Z2	0.540	0.474	0.754
Z3	0.559	0.599	0.754
Z4	0.709	0.763	0.850
Z5	0.479	0.676	0.723

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2024

The result in Table 2 shows that the cross-loading values of the constructs are greater than the cross-loading values of other variables, which means the discriminant variable is good.

2. Convergent Validity

The outer model can also be obtained by convergent validity by assessing the average variance extracted. The values should be above 0.5 (Sarstedt et al., 2021).

Table 3. The Average variance Extracted (AVE)

Latent Variable	AVE Value	Information
Celebrity Endorsement	0.732	Valid
Customer Trust	0.684	Valid
Purchase Decision	0.625	Valid

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2024

Based on the result in Table 3, the value of each construct in the range of 0.6 to 0.73 indicates that the research instrument meets convergent validity criteria.

3. Reliability

Then, the outer model can be assessed by the reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values. Both values should be greater than 0.7 (Sarstedt et al., 2021).

Table 4. Reliability Test Result

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability
Celebrity Endorsement	0.908	0.913	0.932
Customer Trust	0.774	0.796	0.867
Purchase Decision	0.849	0.862	0.893

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2024



The result in Table 4 shows that the values of Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability of each latent variable were greater than 0.7. Thus, based on Cronbach’s alpha calculation, all indicators are declared reliable in measuring their latent variables.

Inner Model/ Structural Model Analysis

The model analysis of this study (figure 1) will examine the test of goodness of fit model and hypothesis test.

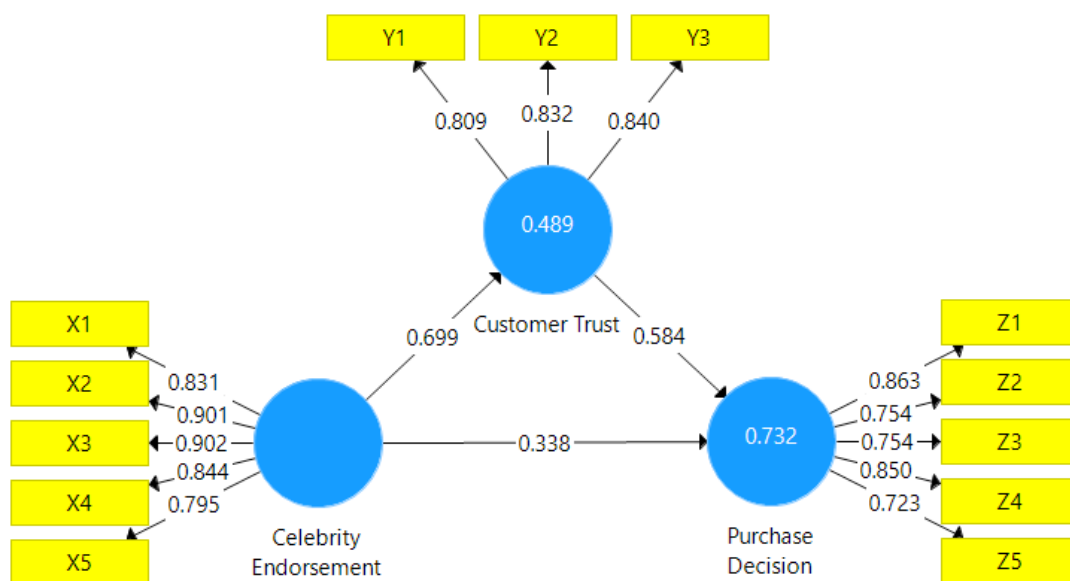


Figure 1. Structural Path Model

1. Evaluate the Goodness of the Structural Model

The goodness of the fit model is used to determine the magnitude of an endogenous latent variable’s ability to describe the diversity of an exogenous latent variable and determine the importance of the contribution of the exogenous to the endogenous latent variable. The goodness of a fit model in PLS analysis is conducive using the R-Square and F Square.

Table 5. Specification of Model

	R Square Value	R Square Adjusted Value
Customer Trust	0.489	0.485
Purchase Decision	0.732	0.728

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2024

The result in Table 5 shows that the R-squared value of customer trust is 0.489 or 48.9%. This result indicates that 48.9% of the diversity of the trust construct can be explained by celebrity endorsement; in other words, celebrity endorsement contributed 48.9% to customer trust, while the remaining 51.1% is another variable contribution not discussed. The R-Square of purchase decision is worth 0.732 or 73.2%. It can be concluded that the purchase decision can be explained by the celebrity endorsement and trust of 73.2%, and the remaining 26.8% is another construct contribution not discussed.

In addition, this study tested the effect size by f-square to examine the influence between latent variables. The value of the f square is 0.02 as small, 0.15 as medium, and 0.35 as large. A value of less than 0.02 can be ignored or considered to have no effect (Sarstedt et al., 2021).

Table. 6 F-Square

	Customer Trust	Purchase Decision
Celebrity Endorsement	0.958	0.218
Customer Trust		0.649

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2024

The results in Table 6 show that the size effect (F-Square) of celebrity endorsement on customer trust of 0.958 is large. The effect of celebrity endorsement on purchase decisions has a side effect of 0.218 and a moderate



effect. The influence of customer trust on purchase decisions has a side effect of 0.649, which is a large effect. This means the latent variable's dominant contribution is celebrity endorsement's effect on customer trust.

2. Hypothesis Test Result

The hypothesis test result is based on the Bootstrapping procedure, which allows for testing the statistical significance of various partial least squares.

Table 7. Hypothesized Result (Direct Effect)

	Original Sample	T-Statistics	P-Values	Significant Level
Celebrity Endorsement -> Customer Trust	0.716	17.813	0.000	Significant
Celebrity Endorsement -> Purchase Decision	0.340	6.223	0.000	Significant
Customer Trust -> Purchase Decision	0.578	10.530	0.000	Significant

The result in Table 7 highlights the direct effect information and significant testing of the hypothesis. Based on the results of the analysis with partial least square, the t-statistics value of each hypothesized path has a value above the t-table of 1.657, and a P-Values of 0.000 is less than 0.05 at a significance level of 5% ($\alpha=0.05$) which means that all hypotheses are accepted. Celebrity endorsement has a positive and significant influence on consumer trust with a direct effect of 0.716, celebrity endorsement has a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions with a direct effect of 0.340, and customer trust has a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions on halal tourism packages with a direct effect of 0.578.

Table 8. Hypothesized Result (Indirect Effect)

	Original Sample	T-Statistics	P-Values	Significant Level
Celebrity Endorsement -> Customer Trust -> Purchase Decision	0.408	8.073	0.000	Significant

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2024

The mediation of customer trust on the effect of celebrity endorsement on purchase decisions was conducted using the P-value of a specific indirect effect of 0.000, which can be seen in Table 8. If the P-value is less than 0.05, it can be ascertained that the indirect influence of celebrity endorsement on purchase decisions mediated by customer trust is significant, with an influence of 0.408 (the indirect effect). This means that purchase decisions from halal tourism packages are increasing along with the influence of celebrity endorsements, but through customer trust first.

Discussion

The current study offers research and theoretical frameworks regarding the influence of endorsement promotion by the influencers on trust and purchase decisions based on relevant theories and previous research. The findings showed that celebrity endorsement affects the trust and millennial purchase decision of the halal tourism packages in West Java, Indonesia.

Influence of Celebrity Endorsement on Customer Trust

Promotional activities using social media influencer services will make users more confident in the product. Moreover, the celebrity endorser has a good reputation and does not have a bad track record. The influence of celebrity endorsement can significantly affect the customer's and brand's trust. When a celebrity is seen endorsing a brand, consumers may perceive the brand as more credible due to the association with a person they admire or trust. This can be



particularly effective if the celebrity is perceived as having expertise or a genuine connection with the product they are endorsing.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement in influencing consumer trust is not solely dependent on the celebrity's popularity but also on their perceived authenticity and alignment with the values of the endorsed product. In the context of halal tourism, where ethical considerations and religious compliance play a crucial role, the credibility of the endorser becomes even more significant. Millennials in West Java, as digital-native consumers, tend to scrutinize the consistency between a celebrity's lifestyle and the values promoted by the endorsed brand. If the celebrity is known for adhering to halal principles or has personally experienced the product, their endorsement will likely be more persuasive.

This research contributes novelty by focusing on the mediating role of trust in the relationship between celebrity endorsement and millennial purchase decisions in the halal tourism sector. Unlike previous studies that mainly examined direct effects, this study highlights how trust is crucial in determining whether celebrity endorsements successfully translate into consumer action. By integrating consumer psychology and Islamic marketing perspectives, this research provides deeper insights into how celebrity endorsements influence decision-making in a niche yet rapidly growing market segment.

Halal tourism service providers consider and use promotional media with endorsements to reach millennials, improve services, and build brands so that they make purchase decisions on purchases (A. Mukherjee et al., 2023). Promotion methods with endorsements make companies more efficient. The findings are in line with Hussain (2020), who states that celebrities possessing attributes like likability, credibility, and attractiveness positively influence consumer purchase intentions, contributing to the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements in driving consumer behavior, especially purchase decisions. Furthermore, Schouten et al. (2020) and Liu (2022) showed that celebrity endorsement affects purchase decisions.

Influence of Customer Trust on Purchase Decision

Customer trust, which includes the reliability of the product or service obtained by the customer from the purchased product, the reputation of the



product and the provider company, as well as good service, will make the customer confident that the product they are buying has good reliability so that there is no longer any worry from them to buy. If customers have formed trust, the product's purchase decision will be affected. Trust in halal tourism packages offered by halal tourism service providers can occur when millennials are confident in positive testimonials and good experiences experienced by others so that they can purchase for themselves. Therefore, halal tourism service providers should be selective in choosing celebrity endorsements with integrity, popularity, and a positive track record to convince consumers.

Moreover, trust in halal tourism packages is not only shaped by product reliability and company reputation but also by the alignment between consumer values and the credibility of endorsements. Millennials in West Java, who are highly active on social media, tend to rely on digital word-of-mouth, such as online reviews and influencer testimonials, before making purchasing decisions. When a celebrity endorser with integrity and a strong personal brand promotes a halal tourism package, their perceived authenticity strengthens consumer trust, reducing hesitation in purchasing.

This research offers novelty by emphasizing trust as a mediating factor in the relationship between celebrity endorsement and millennial purchasing behavior in the halal tourism sector. Unlike previous studies that primarily focused on direct advertising effects, this study highlights how trust transforms consumer perception, making celebrity endorsements more impactful. By integrating consumer behavior theories with the principles of Islamic marketing, this research provides strategic insights into how halal tourism service providers can enhance their marketing effectiveness by leveraging credible and value-aligned endorsers.

The finding was in line with Liu (2022), which suggests that celebrity endorsements are other factors that influence purchase decisions and the trust generated by the influence of the celebrity. Then, young Muslim online shopping consumers depended on customer reviews, trust, and security (Rokhman & Andiani, 2020).



Influence of Celebrity Endorsement on Purchase Decision

The study results show that celebrity endorsement can influence customer purchase decisions. The influence is seen in the celebrity's image, customer encouragement, and the consistency and trust that arises from the celebrity. Millennials have much experience using tourism services because they have high purchasing power. The trust can influence their purchase decisions for halal tourism packages. Halal tourism service providers provide tourism services according to their promises when promoting products, providing extra services, and providing positive experiences so that millennials are more confident in making purchases.

Additionally, the impact of celebrity endorsement on millennial purchasing decisions in halal tourism is deeply rooted in the psychological association between the endorser's credibility and the perceived value of the service. Millennials, as digital-savvy consumers, not only assess a celebrity's popularity but also evaluate their consistency, personal values, and alignment with the principles of halal tourism. When a trusted celebrity conveys positive experiences and reinforces the brand's promise, it enhances perceived reliability, reducing perceived risks associated with purchasing tourism services.

This research introduces novelty by identifying trust as a critical mediating variable that transforms celebrity influence into actual purchasing behavior. Unlike previous studies that mainly explored the direct impact of celebrity endorsements, this study highlights how perceived trustworthiness and service consistency strengthen consumer confidence in halal tourism providers. By integrating consumer psychology and Islamic marketing perspectives, this study provides strategic insights for halal tourism businesses on optimizing celebrity endorsement effectiveness, ensuring long-term consumer loyalty, and sustainable market growth.

The finding was in line with Febrian and Fadly (2021), which concluded that the endorsement of celebrities influences consumer behavior, especially purchase decisions.



Influence of Celebrity Endorsement on Purchase Decisions with Mediation Effect of Trust

The study's results show that customer trust mediates the influence of celebrity endorsement on purchase decisions. Celebrity endorsements not only directly affect the decision to be administered but also indirectly influence it through trust. Customers will purchase after they feel confident and believe in the influence caused by celebrity endorsements. A good celebrity endorser reputation and being known by many people will help customers be confident that the product is safe and can meet their needs. Thus, customers will decide to buy the product.

Furthermore, the role of trust as a mediating factor highlights the deeper psychological mechanism behind celebrity endorsements in influencing consumer behavior. While a well-known celebrity can instantly attract attention, their long-term impact on purchase decisions depends on the level of trust they establish with consumers. As critical and informed buyers, Millennials do not solely rely on a celebrity's fame but also assess their credibility, consistency, and alignment with the values of halal tourism. When an endorser is perceived as authentic and genuinely supportive of halal tourism, their influence strengthens consumer confidence, reducing hesitation in making a purchase.

This research introduces novelty by shifting the focus from a direct relationship between celebrity endorsement and purchase intention to an indirect relationship mediated by trust. Unlike prior studies that only examined the direct promotional impact, this study demonstrates that trust acts as a key determinant in converting celebrity influence into actual buying behavior. By emphasizing the interplay between perceived credibility, consumer trust, and halal brand positioning, this study provides valuable insights for halal tourism businesses in optimizing endorsement strategies to build stronger consumer loyalty and sustainable market growth. Firman *et al.* (2021) strengthen this research's findings, stating that celebrity endorsement affects purchase decisions mediated by customer trust.

The role of trust mediation on the influence of celebrity endorsement on millennial purchase decisions on halal tour packages in West Java has a greater contribution than the direct influence of celebrity endorsement on purchase decisions. Widely known celebrities can capture the audience's attention and create



interest in the product. However, celebrity endorsements alone do not necessarily lead to purchases, especially among millennials, who are more critical in choosing products. The role of trust mediation affects whether the audience trusts the promotions carried out by celebrities. In other words, millennial trust is formed if the celebrity is considered relevant and credible to the halal tourism industry, the message conveyed is following the values and needs of Muslim consumers, such as halal services and sharia compliance, and the halal tourism service provider has a good reputation and positive reviews on social media. If trust in celebrities and brands is formed, consumers will be more confident in making purchases.

The results of this study can then have implications for the marketing strategy of halal tourism service providers in West Java. They must focus on building trust through selecting credible celebrities, having a positive religious image, building credibility through service transparency and testimonials, and active interaction on social media. In addition, halal tourism service providers can combine Endorsement with More Personalized Influencer Marketing, which uses not only celebrities but also Muslim micro-influencers who have high engagement in their communities.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion showed that celebrity endorsement influences trust and millennials' purchasing decisions on halal tourism packages using the Partial Least Square technique. This research significantly adds knowledge about the promotion process with a pattern of cooperation with social media influencers in the form of endorsements in increasing consumer trust from millennials and its implications on consumer purchase decisions of halal tourism packages.

This study has limitations, including the use of cross-sectional data, which prevents us from establishing causal relationships between the variables. Additionally, due to the purposive research design, the findings may not be applicable to all business individuals. Future research could explore how celebrity endorsements influence variables such as trust and brand image, and this work could serve as a reference for subsequent studies and help in decision-making.

The practical implications of this study are to provide an overview of halal tourism service providers in Indonesia and explain the attachment of celebrity



endorsements to influencing consumer trust and purchase decisions. Halal tourism service providers should carry out massive promotional activities using social media platforms that are in demand by millennials and choose celebrities who are not only popular with millennials but also have a trustworthy and positive image.

Celebrities with good reputations tend to increase consumer trust in brands. The halal tourism service providers should continuously monitor the level of consumer trust in brands after launching endorsement campaigns. They can achieve this by using surveys and social media analytics. In addition, developing long-term relationships with celebrities can offer lasting benefits in building consumer trust and loyalty, and using social media platforms effectively to reinforce endorsement messages and direct interactions with consumers can further enhance trust.

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