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Digital Content Stimuli and Visit Intention toward a Korean-Themed Café: The Mediating Role of Muslimah Emotional Connection

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Abstract

This study investigates how User Generated Content (UGC) and Firm Generated Content (FGC) are associated with Visit Intention (VI), with Muslimah Emotional Connection (MEC) as a mediating variable in the context of Korean-themed café as a creative space. Although previous studies have widely examined the relationship between digital content and visit intention, limited research has explored how identity and emotional connections influence Muslimah consumers within Hallyu-inspired spaces. This study addresses this gap by conceptualizing MEC as an emotional mediator that reflects emotional comfort, identity congruence, and alignment with personal and religious values in the context of Korean-themed café experiences. Kolato Café in Bandung was selected as the research context due to its strong Hallyu-themed branding and active Instagram presence. Using the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework and the Theory of Interpersonal Behavior (TIB), this study employed a quantitative approach involving 292 respondents and analyzed the data using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings indicate that both UGC and FGC significantly influence MEC and VI, with UGC demonstrating a stronger influence on emotional connection ($\beta = 0.481$) compared to FGC. In addition, MEC partially mediates the relationships between digital content and visit intention. These findings extend the application of SOR and TIB by showing that emotional engagement among Muslimah consumers is shaped not only by digital attractiveness, but also by authenticity, emotional reassurance, and value compatibility. Practically, the study suggests that Korean-themed café businesses should encourage authentic consumer participation and develop culturally sensitive digital marketing strategies that strengthen emotional connection among Muslimah audiences.

KEYWORDS

user-generated content; firm-generated content; muslimah emotional connection; visit intention; korean-themed café.

Introduction

The Korean Wave (Hallyu) phenomenon has grown rapidly and significantly influenced consumer behavior, particularly in shaping lifestyle preferences and consumption patterns through digital media (Jeong et al., 2017; Oh, 2017). Initially centered on the entertainment industry, Hallyu has expanded into various experience-based consumption sectors, including tourism and culinary businesses. One manifestation of this trend is the emergence of Korean-themed cafés, which function not only as dining venues but also as experiential creative spaces that combine cultural aesthetics, social interaction, and lifestyle expression. (Hargitai et al., 2023; Noaime et al., 2025). In many urban areas, including Bandung, Korean-themed cafés increasingly rely on Instagram-based digital marketing and visually appealing “Instagrammable” environments to attract young consumers (Chen et al., 2024; Yuniati et al., 2021). This development aligns with the growing role of social media in expanding Hallyu-related consumption and participatory digital culture among young audiences (Jin & Yoon, 2016). Indonesia itself represents one of the largest Hallyu markets globally, with an

interest rate reaching 86.3% according to the Overseas Hallyu Survey 2024. Moreover, Hallyu consumers in Indonesia are predominantly women, with approximately 92.1% aged between 15–25 years (Triadanti N, 2019). Considering that Indonesia also has one of the largest Muslim populations globally, Muslim women represent an increasingly relevant consumer segment within digitally mediated Hallyu consumption environments. Previous studies have shown that Indonesian Muslim consumers actively negotiate global cultural consumption alongside religious and halal-related values within contemporary digital culture (Rakhmani, 2024; Shin et al., 2025). This demographic and cultural context highlights the importance of understanding how female Muslim consumers engage with Hallyu-inspired spaces while balancing emotional experience and personal religious values.

Interestingly, many Muslim women (Muslimah) who engage with Hallyu culture continue to maintain religious values while selectively adapting elements of Korean popular culture into their lifestyles (Oh, 2017; Yoon, 2019). In hybrid creative spaces such as Korean-themed cafés, consumption experiences may not be evaluated solely based on entertainment or aesthetic appeal, but also through emotional comfort, value congruence, and identity considerations. Muslimah consumers may develop emotional engagement toward culturally appealing environments while simultaneously assessing whether these experiences align with their personal and religious values (K. H. Kim et al., 2023; Yoon, 2019). This indicates that consumer responses in culturally hybrid consumption contexts involve not only functional and hedonic evaluations but also emotional and identity processes. Therefore, understanding Muslimah consumer behavior becomes important for explaining how emotional responses toward digital content and consumption environments may shape behavioral intention.

In digitally mediated Hallyu consumption environments, social media content plays an increasingly important role in shaping how consumers perceive and evaluate consumption experiences. In the context of Korean-themed cafés, digital content does not merely function as promotional communication but also as a stimulus capable of influencing consumers' emotional and behavioral responses. To explain this process, the present study integrates the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework and the Theory of Interpersonal Behavior (TIB). Within the SOR perspective, digital content acts as an external stimulus that influences consumers' internal psychological states before generating behavioral responses (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Complementing this perspective, TIB suggests that consumer behavior is shaped not only by rational evaluations but also by emotional, social, and contextual factors that influence individual decision-making processes (Triandis, 1977). In this study, user-generated content (UGC) and firm-generated content (FGC) represent two important forms of digital stimuli that may shape consumers' perceptions and emotional evaluations differently. UGC is often perceived as more authentic and trustworthy because it reflects consumers' actual experiences, whereas FGC primarily functions as a strategically controlled communication tool for constructing brand image and desired consumption experiences (Aljarah et al., 2022; Rasouli et al., 2025).

Although several studies have demonstrated that UGC and FGC impact visit intention, the empirical findings remain inconsistent. Certain studies have indicated that UGC directly positively impacts visit intention by enhancing the destination's image and evoking an emotional response (Aboalghanam et al., 2025; Yamagishi et al., 2024). Meanwhile, other studies suggest that this influence is not always direct, but rather mediated by variables such as attitudes, perceptions, or destination image (Phan et al.,

2023; Wijaya et al., 2025). In certain contexts, neither UGC nor FGC directly influences visit intention, even though they influence consumer perceptions (Rasouli et al., 2025). This inconsistency highlights a critical gap in understanding the mechanisms that mediate the relationship between digital content and visit intention, particularly in terms of identity and emotional processes. Previous research has largely focused on generic emotional attachment, while limited attention has been given to how Muslimah consumers interpret digital consumption experiences within culturally hybrid Hallyu café environments. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates Muslimah Emotional Connection (MEC) as a potential mediator in these contexts, bridging emotional engagement with identity and value alignment.

MEC differs from general emotional attachment or constructs such as attitude, destination image, or satisfaction, as it specifically captures how Muslimah consumers evaluate culturally hybrid experiences in terms of both emotional appropriateness and consistency with personal and religious values (K. H. Kim et al., 2023; Oh, 2017; Yoon, 2019). The focus on Kolato Café and Muslimah consumers is not merely contextual. Kolato Café was chosen because it is a prominent Korean-themed café in Bandung with an active Instagram account, visually appealing Hallyu-inspired interiors, and a customer base dominated by young Muslim women. These characteristics make it an appropriate empirical setting to examine MEC, where cultural appeal intersects with religion-informed consumer choices (Rakhmani, 2024; Shin et al., 2025). Theoretically, integrating MEC into the SOR framework allows for a more precise understanding of how digital content (UGC and FGC) influences consumers' internal states before producing behavioral responses (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974; Triandis, 1977). Practically, this approach informs creative space businesses on crafting digital content strategies that foster emotional and identity connections with Muslimah audiences, aligning marketing initiatives with both consumer preferences and value systems. This positioning of MEC thus bridges a critical theoretical and empirical gap in digital consumer behavior research within culturally hybrid consumption contexts.

This study offers a novel contribution by examining Muslimah Emotional Connection (MEC) as a central mediator in the relationship between user-generated content (UGC), firm-generated content (FGC), and visit intention at a Korean-themed café, specifically Kolato Café in Bandung. The context of this study remains largely underexplored in the culinary tourism and digital marketing literature in Indonesia. By focusing on Muslimah consumers and using Kolato Café as an empirical setting, this research not only addresses theoretical gaps related to identity and value-based emotional engagement but also provides insights into how digital content influences consumer behavior in culturally hybrid consumption environments. Practically, the findings are expected to inform Kolato Café and other themed cafés in designing digital content strategies that are not only informative and visually appealing but also capable of fostering meaningful emotional connections aligned with the values and preferences of Muslimah consumers, thereby creating authentic and engaging consumption experiences.

Theoretical background & Hypothesis Grand Theory

This research pertains to the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory, put forward by (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). In digital marketing and tourism, this theory suggests that external stimuli, such as social media content, can impact a person's internal condition (organism), which in turn can affect their behavioral response. This framework is integrated with the Theory of Interpersonal Behavior (TIB) (Triandis, 1977) to capture a more comprehensive view of decision making. By

synthesizing SOR and TIB, this study acknowledges that visit intention is shaped not only by cognitive evaluations but also by emotional responses and the alignment of personal identity and religious values. This integrated perspective is crucial for understanding how digital content can foster personal emotional connections, especially for Muslimah consumers who prioritize emotional aspects, religious comfort, identity, and value alignment during their decision-making process (S. Kim et al., 2025; Wijaya et al., 2025).

Unlike general constructs such as customer attitude, satisfaction, or general emotional attachment, this study introduces Muslimah Emotional Connection (MEC) as a distinctive identity and value-based mediator. MEC captures how consumer choices among Muslimah are filtered through religious comfort and cultural identity alignment, particularly when consuming cross-cultural trends like the Korean Hallyu wave. Therefore, investigating Kolato Cafe and Muslimah consumers in Bandung is not merely a contextual application, but a theoretical advancement to understand how identity fit operationalizes within the SOR and TIB framework, providing the basis for the proposed hypotheses regarding the mediating role of MEC.

User-Generated Content and Muslimah Emotional Connection

UGC is often seen as more genuine because it reflects real user experiences (Aljarah et al., 2022). Digital content created at Korean-themed cafes can help consumers imagine the experience. When exposed to relevant experiences, consumers may feel emotionally engaged, especially if those experiences match their personal preferences and values (Aboalghanam et al., 2025; Yamagishi et al., 2024). Muslimah Emotional Connection (MEC) is defined as an identity and value-based emotional engagement, encompassing emotional engagement, identity alignment, and value congruence. Exposure to UGC can enhance these dimensions, supporting the hypothesis that UGC significantly influences MEC (Aboalghanam et al., 2025; Wijaya et al., 2025).

H1: User-Generated Content significantly influences Muslimah Emotional Connection.

Firm-Generated Content and Muslimah Emotional Connection

FGC aims to build an image and deliver brand messages clearly and in an organized way. (Aljarah et al., 2022; Rasouli et al., 2025). Through controlled visuals and narrative, FGC can shape expectations and create emotional appeal. When the content presented reflects the desired experience and aligns with consumers' values, an emotional connection can form.

H2: Firm-Generated Content significantly influences Muslimah Emotional Connection.

Muslimah Emotional Connection and Visit Intention

Emotional attachment is essential in influencing behavioral intentions, particularly in experience-based consumption contexts. Consumers who feel emotionally engaged and aligned with a location are more likely to have a stronger desire to visit. In the context of Muslim women, this connection is closely related to cultural and religious compatibility. Previous studies have shown that emotional attachment significantly influences visit intention among Muslim consumers, especially when supported by culturally appropriate and value-aligned experiences (Hasan, 2024; S. Kim et al., 2025).

H3: Muslimah Emotional Connection significantly influences Visit Intention.

User-Generated Content and Visit Intention

UGC can directly affect people's intention to visit because it is viewed as more credible and authentic in portraying the experience. (Aboalghanam et al., 2025; Yamagishi et al.,

2024). However, the effect is not always direct, as it can vary depending on internal conditions, particularly individuals' perceptions and emotional states (Phan et al., 2023; Wijaya et al., 2025). Nonetheless, UGC is still assumed to directly influence visitors' intentions to visit.

H4: User-Generated Content significantly influences Visit Intention.

Firm-Generated Content and Visit Intention

FGC plays a role in shaping initial perceptions through structured information and constructed images. Engaging content can increase visitor interest, although in some cases, the effect is not always immediate (Rasouli et al., 2025). Therefore, FGC is still expected to influence visit intention.

H5: Firm-Generated Content significantly influences Visit Intention.

Examining Muslimah Emotional Connection (MEC) as a mediator between digital content stimuli and visit intention.

Within the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework, stimuli influence behavioral responses through the individual's internal psychological state (organism) (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). In digital marketing, content like UGC and FGC can evoke emotional reactions, which in turn shape behavioral intentions and foster a deeper relationship with the brand (Dessart et al., 2015; Dolan et al., 2015). For Muslim consumers, emotional attachment is also related to the alignment of values and identity, thus strengthening its role as a connecting mechanism between digital content and visit intention (Wijaya et al., 2025).

H6: Muslimah Emotional Connection (MEC) functions as a mediator between User-Generated Content (UGC) and Visit Intention.

H7: Muslimah Emotional Connection (MEC) acts as a mediator between Firm-Generated Content (FGC) and Visit Intention.

Methods

Research Type

This study examines the hypothesized structural relationships among user-generated content (UGC), firm-generated content (FGC), Muslimah Emotional Connection (MEC), and Visit Intention using a quantitative explanatory design framework. A cross-sectional survey was employed to capture respondents' perceptions at a single point in time, acknowledging that such a design can test associations and structural relationships but cannot establish causality. The approach allows for the investigation of how digital stimuli, such as UGC and FGC, are associated with MEC and subsequent behavioral intentions in a structured model. Details regarding the population, sampling procedure, instrument adaptation, pilot testing, and expert review are described in the following sub-sections to provide transparency and methodological rigor. The study utilizes Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to analyze complex relationships among latent variables and assess mediation effects within the conceptual model, justified by its suitability for small to medium sample sizes and models with multiple latent constructs.

Population and Sample

The study's participants were Muslim women who had engaged with Kolato Café content via digital media, including both UGC and FGC. Engagement was operationally defined as viewing, liking, commenting, or sharing the content, regardless of whether participants had physically visited the café, to capture the influence of digital stimuli independently from in-person experience. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants who met the inclusion criteria:

(1) female, (2) Muslim, (3) 17 years old or older and (4) had viewed Kolato Café content on Instagram. A total of 292 eligible respondents were included in the analysis, considered sufficient for PLS-SEM analysis given the number of constructs and paths in the model (Hair et al., 2021). While there was no strict age or income limit, the majority of respondents were aged 21-25 years, mostly entrepreneurs, employees, or students, with monthly incomes of IDR 2,500,000-5,000,000, and reported visiting cafés 1-2 times per month. These characteristics describe the sample distribution but were not used as exclusion criteria.

Research Location

This research was conducted in the Bandung area of Indonesia, including the city of Bandung, its surrounding regions, and the Greater Bandung metropolitan area. Bandung was selected due to its status as a hub for themed cafés and creative spaces, particularly those influenced by the Hallyu (Korean Wave) phenomenon. The city provides a rich context for examining digital consumption behavior among Muslimah consumers in Hallyu-inspired cafés, as it hosts a high density of cafés that integrate Korean-themed aesthetics, social media engagement, and lifestyle-oriented experiences. The selection of this location ensures that the study captures relevant consumer interactions with digital content in settings that reflect both cultural appeal and value alignment.

Instrumentation or Tools

The study used a structured questionnaire to measure four primary constructs. User Generated Content (UGC) and Firm Generated Content (FGC) were each measured using seven indicators, while Muslimah Emotional Connection (MEC) and Visit Intention (VI) were measured using six indicators adapted from previous studies. All items employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The measurement items were adapted from established studies to ensure content validity (Aboalganam et al., 2025; Aljarah et al., 2022; Wijaya et al., 2025). To ensure the instrument was culturally and contextually appropriate for Muslimah consumers engaging with Korean-themed cafés, the items were translated into Indonesian, followed by expert review by the supervising faculty and a pilot test with 30 respondents. Data from the pilot test were analyzed using SPSS to evaluate reliability (Cronbach's alpha) and item consistency, and minor adjustments were made to improve clarity and comprehension. This careful process of adaptation, validation, and testing ensured that the questionnaire was both reliable and suitable for capturing the constructs of interest.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected using an online survey distributed from February to March 2026. The questionnaire was shared through Instagram, WhatsApp, and online communities targeting Muslim women who fit the inclusion criteria, ensuring that participants had prior exposure to Kolato Café content. Before starting the survey, participants received a clear explanation of the research objectives, instructions for completion, and information about voluntary participation. Responses that were incomplete or did not meet the inclusion criteria were excluded from the analysis. While online recruitment allowed for efficient access to the target population, the study acknowledges the potential for self-selection bias, as participants who are more active on digital platforms or more engaged with café content may have been more likely to respond. These procedures were designed to maximize data quality and ensure that the collected responses accurately reflected the perceptions of the

intended population.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS version 4. The analysis was conducted in two stages: first, the measurement model was evaluated to ensure construct reliability and validity, using outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT). Second, the structural model was examined to test the hypothesized relationships among constructs, including path coefficients, R^2 values, and the effect size (f^2). Collinearity was assessed using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values, and predictive relevance was evaluated with Q^2 and PLS predict procedures. The significance of direct and indirect effects, including mediation, was tested using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples (Hair et al., 2021). PLS-SEM was chosen because it is suitable for complex models involving multiple latent variables, allows for testing mediation effects, and provides robust estimates even when data are not normally distributed, making it ideal for this study's sample size and model structure.

Ethical Approval

This study followed ethical research standards. Participants chose to take part voluntarily, and informed consent was secured prior to completing the questionnaire. This study adhered to ethical research standards in accordance with institutional guidelines. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were provided with detailed information about the study objectives, procedures, and expected duration. Informed consent was obtained electronically before participants completed the questionnaire. To ensure privacy and confidentiality, all responses were anonymized, stored securely, and used solely for research purposes. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. These measures were implemented to protect the participants' rights and maintain the integrity of the research process.

Result and Discussion

The table below highlights key demographic features of the respondents, providing a comprehensive overview of their profiles in this study.

Respondents were Muslim women who had been exposed to content from Kolato Café on Instagram. A total of 292 respondents were collected and analyzed (Table 1). Most respondents were aged between 21-25. In terms of domicile, most respondents came from Bandung City, followed by the Greater Bandung area and outside Greater Bandung. This indicates that respondents were predominantly individuals residing near the research location. Furthermore, based on economic characteristics, most respondents reported a monthly income or allowance between Rp2.500.000 and Rp5.000.000. Additionally, most respondents visited cafes 1-2 times in the past month, indicating a moderate visit frequency. Although one respondent had never visited a café in a month, inclusion was justified as the study focuses on digital content engagement, not prior physical visitation. This demographic profile reflects the intended target population of digitally active Muslimah consumers, providing contextual relevance for interpreting subsequent results.

Outer Model Evaluation Results

This study's outer model testing included evaluating the outer loading value for each indicator, which indicates how effectively each indicator represents its construct. An indicator is deemed valid when its outer loading exceeds

Table 1. Summary of Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Classification	Number of Respondents	(%)
Age	17-20 years	50	17.1%
	21-25 years	111	38.0%
	26-30 years	107	36.6%
	>30 years	24	8.2%
Domicile	Bandung City	164	56.2%
	Greater Bandung Area	79	27.1%
	Outside Greater Bandung	49	16.8%
Monthly Income	< Rp1.000.000	81	27.7%
	Rp1.000.000 - Rp2.500.000	68	23.3%
	Rp2.500.000 - Rp5.000.000	109	37.3%
	> Rp5.000.000	34	11.6%
Frequency of Café Visits (per month)	1-2 times	136	46.6%
	3-5 times	107	36.6%
	>5 times	48	16.4%
	Never	1	0.3%

Source: Primary Data Processed by the Researcher (2026)

Table 2. Measurement Model

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loadings	CA	Rho_C	AVE
User Generated Content	UGC1	0,867	0,933	0,945	0,712
	UGC2	0,858			
	UGC3	0,826			
	UGC4	0,810			
	UGC5	0,845			
	UGC6	0,851			
	UGC7	0,851			
Firm Generated Content	FGC1	0,829	0,930	0,943	0,704
	FGC2	0,841			
	FGC3	0,840			
	FGC4	0,854			
	FGC5	0,860			
	FGC6	0,825			
	FGC7	0,826			
Muslimah Connection	MEC1	0,821	0,905	0,926	0,677
	MEC2	0,828			
	MEC3	0,842			
	MEC4	0,794			
	MEC5	0,821			
	MEC6	0,831			
Visit Intention	VI1	0,838	0,925	0,942	0,729
	VI2	0,849			
	VI3	0,869			
	VI4	0,840			
	VI5	0,840			
	VI6	0,885			

Source: Primary Data Collected by the Researcher (2026) 0,708 (Hair et al., 2021). According to the result in Table 2, all indicators for the variables UGC, FGC, Muslimah Emotional Connection (MEC), and Visit Intention (VI) have outer loading values above 0.708.

All indicators demonstrated satisfactory indicator reliability. Therefore, no indicators were removed from the measurement model. The average variance extracted (AVE) values for all variables exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.50. Specifically 0.712 (UGC), 0.704 (FGC), 0.677 (MEC), and 0.729 (VI). This shows that the construct meets the standards for convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019). The reliability assessment further confirms these results, as both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) values for all constructs exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70. Thus, all constructs demonstrate good internal consistency and reliability (Hair et al., 2021).

Fornell-Larcker

Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT)

To ensure that each construct is empirically distinct from the others, discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) approach (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Henseler et al., 2015). The Fornell-Larcker criterion evaluates whether the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct exceeds its correlations with other constructs in the model. As presented in Table 3, the square root of AVE values for all constructs (0.839, 0.823, 0.844, and 0.854) were greater than their corresponding inter-construct correlations,

indicating adequate discriminant validity. The HTMT values presented in Table 4 ranged from 0.060 to 0.753, all of which were below the recommended threshold of 0.90

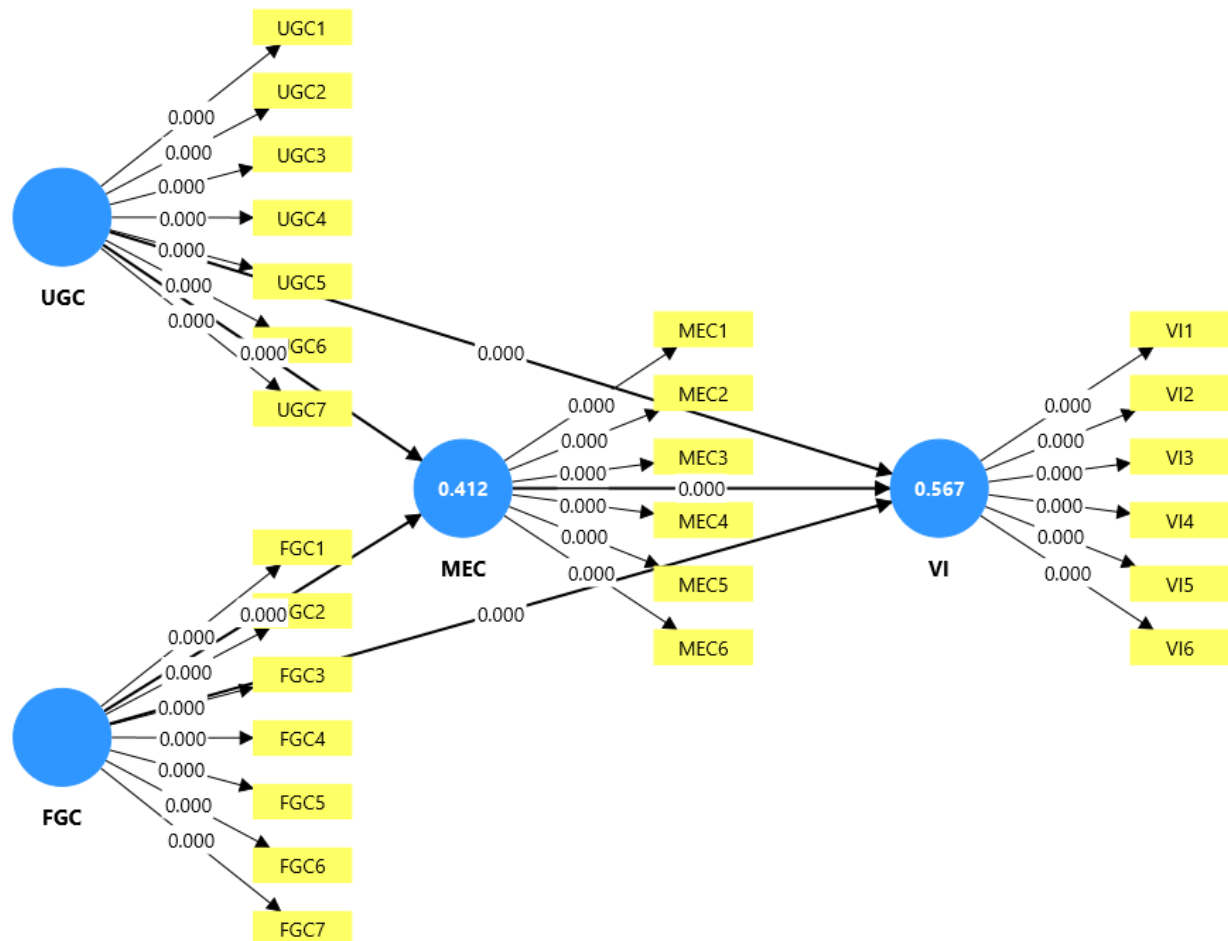


Figure 1. Results of the Hypothesis Test
Source: Output Smart-PLS, 2026

(Henseler et al., 2015). These findings further confirm that all constructs are empirically distinct from one another and demonstrate satisfactory discriminant validity.

Measurement Model Analysis Results (Inner Model)

Inner model testing was conducted to evaluate the structural relationships among variables and to examine the proposed hypotheses using bootstrapping procedures in SmartPLS (Hair et al., 2021). Based on Table 5, all hypothesized relationships were statistically significant, as indicated by p-values below 0.05 and t-statistic values exceeding 1.96. Firm Generated Content (FGC) significantly influences Muslimah Emotional Connection (MEC) ($\beta = 0.438$; $t = 10.837$) indicating that brand-controlled digital content can strengthen emotional attachment among Muslimah consumers by creating appealing and value-relevant consumption experiences. FGC also had a significant positive effect on Visit Intention (VI) ($\beta = 0.227$; $t = 5.404$), suggesting that professionally curated content may directly encourage consumers' intention to visit Korean-themed cafés.

Similarly, User-Generated Content (UGC) has a significant effect on MEC ($\beta = 0.481$; $t = 13.172$) and VI ($\beta = 0.326$; $t = 6.979$). These findings imply that authentic consumer-generated content may play a stronger role in shaping emotional connection and visit intention due to its perceived credibility and reliability. In addition, MEC significantly influenced VI ($\beta = 0.440$; $t = 9.520$), indicating that stronger emotional attachment among Muslimah consumers is associated with higher intention to visit Korean-themed cafés.

The indirect effect analysis further revealed that MEC significantly mediated the relationship between FGC and VI ($\beta = 0.192$; $t = 7.122$), as well as between UGC and VI ($\beta =$

0.211 ; $t = 7.279$). Since both the direct and indirect effects remained significant, MEC can be categorized as a partial mediator in both relationships (see Figure 1). These findings suggest that emotional connection plays an important role in explaining how digital content influences visit intention among Muslimah consumers.

The structural model was further evaluated using the coefficient of determination (R^2) to assess the predictive power of the endogenous constructs (see table 6). the R^2 value for Muslimah Emotional Connection (MEC) was 0.412, indicating that FGC and UGC explain 41.2% of the variance in MEC. Meanwhile, the R^2 value for VI was 0.567, suggesting that FGC, UGC, and MEC collectively explain 56.7% of the variance in visit intention. According to (Hair et al., 2021), these values indicate moderate explanatory power, suggesting that the proposed structural model demonstrates acceptable predictive capability. Collinearity diagnostics were evaluated using the inner Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values to ensure that multicollinearity among predictor constructs did not affect the structural model estimation. As presented in Table 7, all VIF values ranged from 1.001 to 1.702, which are well below the recommended threshold of 5.00 (Hair et al., 2021). These findings indicate that multicollinearity is not a concern and that the structural model is free from collinearity issues.

Effect size (f^2) analysis was conducted to evaluate the magnitude of the contribution of each exogenous construct to the endogenous constructs in the structural model (see table 8). According to Hair et al. (2021), f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large effects, respectively. User Generated Content (UGC) demonstrated a large effect on Muslimah Emotional Connection (MEC) ($f^2 = 0.394$), while Firm Generated Content (FGC) showed a medium-to-large effect on MEC ($f^2 =$

Table 3. Fornell-Larcker

Variabel	FGC	MEC	UGC	VI
FGC	0,839			
MEC	0,426	0,823		
UGC	-0,025	0,47	0,844	
VI	0,406	0,689	0,527	0,854

Source: Primary Data Collected by the Researcher (2026)

Table 4. HTMT

Variabel	FGC	MEC	UGC	VI
FGC				
MEC	0,426			
UGC	0,060	0,510		
VI	0,436	0,753	0,566	

Source: Primary Data Collected by the Researcher (2026)

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing

Relations hip Between Variables	Path Coefficient (β)	T-statistic	P-value	Results
UGC → MEC	0.481	13.172	0.000	Supported
FGC → MEC	0.438	10.837	0.000	Supported
MEC → VI	0.440	9.520	0.000	Supported
UGC → VI	0.326	6.979	0.000	Supported
FGC → VI	0.227	5.404	0.000	Supported
UGC → MEC → VI	0.211 (indirect)	7.279	0.000	Supported
FGC → MEC → VI	0.192 (indirect)	7.122	0.000	Supported

Source: Primary Data Collected by the Researcher (2026)

Table 6. R-square (R²) Result

Variable Construct	R ²	R ² Value
MEC	0,412	0,409
VI	0,567	0,563

Table 7. Inner VIF Values

Variable Construct	VIF
FGC → MEC	1,0001
FGC → VI	1,327
MEC → VI	1,702
UGC → MEC	1,001
UGC → VI	1,394

Source: Primary Data Processed by the Researcher (2026)

Table 8. Effect size (f²)

Variable Construct	FGC	MEC	UGC	VI
FGC		0,326		0,090
MEC				0,262
UGC		0,394		0,176
VI				

Source: Primary Data Processed by the Researcher (2026)

0.326). In predicting Visit Intention (VI), MEC exhibited a medium effect ($f^2 = 0.262$), UGC showed a medium effect ($f^2 = 0.176$), and FGC demonstrated a small effect ($f^2 = 0.090$). These findings suggest that UGC plays the strongest role in shaping emotional connection among Muslimah consumers within the proposed research model.

This study provides contextual insight into how digital content influences visit intention among Muslimah

consumers in Korean-themed cafés. The findings demonstrate that both User Generated Content (UGC) and Firm Generated Content (FGC) significantly influence Muslimah Emotional Connection (MEC) and Visit Intention (VI), both directly and indirectly through MEC as a mediating variable. However, UGC demonstrated a stronger influence on MEC compared to FGC, indicating that Muslimah consumers may respond more positively to authentic and relatable consumer experiences than to company-controlled promotional content. This finding is consistent with previous studies suggesting that UGC tends to generate stronger emotional engagement and behavioral intention due to its perceived authenticity and peer credibility (Wijaya et al., 2025; Yamagishi et al., 2024).

In the context of Korean-themed cafés, emotional connection appears to be shaped not only by visual attractiveness, but also by authenticity, social relatability, and identity compatibility. UGC may provide greater emotional reassurance because it reflects real consumption experiences from fellow consumers, including cues related to modest lifestyle preferences, social comfort, and perceived halal appropriateness within the café environment (Rakhmani, 2024; Ratnasari et al., 2021). In contrast, FGC primarily functions as a structured informational source that helps consumers evaluate café atmosphere, branding, and overall attractiveness, consistent with prior studies emphasizing the strategic and credibility-building role of firm-generated content in consumer decision-making processes (Anggasari et al., 2024; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2014). Furthermore, MEC represents more than general emotional attachment, as it reflects how Muslimah consumers negotiate their interest in Hallyu-inspired lifestyles while maintaining personal and religious values (Rakhmani, 2024; Shin et al., 2025). Digital content portraying socially comfortable environments, modest social interactions, and halal-compatible consumption cues may strengthen emotional reassurance and identity fit among Muslimah audiences. This interpretation is also supported by previous tourism studies showing that emotional experiences and attachment significantly influence behavioral intention (Hosany et al., 2015; Li et al., 2025; Purwanto et al., 2026).

This study offers several theoretical implications for digital consumer behavior and tourism marketing literature. First, the findings extend the application of the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework by demonstrating that emotional responses in digitally mediated consumption environments may also be shaped by cultural and religious considerations. This finding is consistent with previous studies applying the SOR framework in digital marketing contexts, which show that digital stimuli can influence consumers' psychological responses and behavioral intention (Christiariini et al., 2026). In this framework study, digital content functions as the stimulus, MEC functions as a contextualized organism variable that captures how Muslimah consumers emotionally interpret Korean-themed café experiences within the intersection of Hallyu culture and personal value systems, and visit intention emerges as the behavioral response.

Second, the findings also reinforce the relevance of the Theory of Interpersonal Behavior (TIB), which explains that consumer behavior is influenced not only by external stimuli and rational evaluation, but also by emotions, social meaning, and internalized values (Triandis, 1977). This perspective helps explain why Muslimah consumers may respond differently to digital content depending on perceived authenticity, emotional comfort, and identity compatibility within Korean Themed Café.

Finally, this study contributes contextually by showing that emotional engagement among Muslimah consumers differs from general emotional attachment constructs commonly discussed in prior digital marketing studies. Rather than representing only positive feelings toward a destination or brand, MEC reflects emotional comfort, identity compatibility,

and perceived alignment between global cultural consumption and religious-social values (Rakhmani, 2024; Shin et al., 2025). These findings suggest that emotional mechanisms in social media-driven consumption may operate differently across culturally specific consumer segments.

From a managerial perspective, these findings suggest that Korean-themed café businesses and digital marketers should not rely solely on highly curated promotional content, but also encourage authentic consumer participation through interactive social media engagement, customer-generated reviews, and experience-sharing activities. This finding is supported by previous studies highlighting the important role of social media engagement and digital interaction in influencing consumer behavior and marketing effectiveness (Murdana et al., 2019; Priansa & Suryawardani, 2020). Café businesses can develop more inclusive marketing strategies by presenting atmospheres that emphasize cleanliness, social comfort, modest interactions, and halal-friendly consumption cues without excessively commercializing religious identity. Encouraging organic consumer storytelling through Instagram and other digital platforms may help create stronger emotional reassurance and identity relatability among target audiences.

Conclusion

This study examined how User Generated Content (UGC) and Firm Generated Content (FGC) are associated with Visit Intention (VI) toward Korean-themed cafés, with Muslimah Emotional Connection (MEC) acting as a mediating variable. The findings indicate that both UGC and FGC significantly influence MEC and VI, both directly and indirectly through MEC. However, UGC demonstrated a stronger association with MEC compared to FGC, suggesting that Muslimah consumers may respond more positively to authentic and relatable consumer experiences than to company-controlled promotional content. These findings highlight that emotional engagement within Hallyu-inspired café consumption is shaped not only by digital attractiveness, but also by authenticity, emotional comfort, identity compatibility, and perceived alignment with personal and religious values. Therefore, the effectiveness of digital content appears to rely not only on delivering information, but also on fostering meaningful emotional connections with consumers.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that

Korean-themed café businesses should develop communication strategies that not only convey information, but also strengthen Muslimah Emotional Connection through authentic and participatory digital content. Encouraging user participation through reviews, social media storytelling, and experience-sharing activities may help create stronger emotional reassurance and identity relatability among Muslimah consumers. In addition, businesses may benefit from presenting socially comfortable environments, modest representations, and halal-compatible consumption cues that align with the values and lifestyle preferences of Muslimah audiences without excessively commercializing religious identity.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the study focused only on consumers exposed to Korean-themed café content associated with Kolato Café in Bandung, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to broader Muslim consumer populations or different cultural settings. Second, the use of purposive sampling and self-reported visit intention data may not fully capture actual consumer behavior. In addition, this study relied primarily on Instagram-related digital content exposure within a cross-sectional research design, which limits causal interpretation and the ability to observe changes in emotional responses over time. Therefore, future research is recommended to apply experimental or multi-site approaches to better understand the dynamics of Muslim consumer behavior. Future studies may also examine additional variables such as religiosity, Hallyu involvement, prior visit experience, and halal assurance perception as potential moderating factors influencing emotional connection and visit intention.

Author contributions

The author conceived and designed the study, developed the research framework and instrument, collected the data, conducted the data analysis, interpreted the findings, and wrote and revised the manuscript.

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