

TRAVEL INFLUENCER ATTRACTIVENESS, TRUSTWORTHINESS, AND CONTENT EXPERTISE: ATTITUDE-MEDIATED BEHAVIORAL INTENTION TO VISIT RECOMMENDED POST-DISASTER DESTINATIONS

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Abstract

This study examines how travel influencer attractiveness, trustworthiness, and content expertise influence behavioral intention to visit recommended post-disaster destinations through attitude toward a travel influencer. The research focuses on Central Aceh and Bener Meriah, Indonesia, and applies the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework. An online questionnaire yielded 155 eligible responses from Aceh residents who used TikTok, had viewed travel influencer content, and had previously visited either destination. Data were analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling in SmartPLS. Attractiveness and content expertise positively influenced attitude, whereas trustworthiness did not have a significant effect. Attitude and attractiveness positively influenced behavioral intention, while the direct effects of trustworthiness and content expertise were not significant. Attitude partially mediated the attractiveness-intention relationship and fully mediated the content expertise-intention relationship; the trustworthiness-mediated relationship was not significant. The model explained 74.0% of the variance in attitude and 78.3% in behavioral intention. Content expertise was the strongest predictor of attitude. The findings support selecting influencers for their content competence and appealing presentation, while emphasizing favorable audience attitudes in post-disaster tourism communication.

Keywords: Attitude toward a travel influencer; Attractiveness; Behavioral intention; Content expertise; Trustworthiness.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism communication increasingly involves social media content that enables audiences to observe destinations through other travelers' experiences. Short videos combine visual presentation, personal narration, and practical information, making travel influencers relevant to destination promotion. Research on influencer marketing connects source characteristics and message value with audience responses, while tourism studies examine how these responses develop into travel-related intentions (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Han & Chen, 2022; Serrano-Malebrán et al., 2025). This study addresses tourism recovery in Central Aceh and Bener Meriah following flash floods and landslides in late 2025. Damage to tourism destinations was reported by CNN Indonesia (2026). The research problem concerns more than physical recovery: tourism communication must address uncertainty about destination conditions while rebuilding interest in visiting. Travel influencers may help communicate destination experiences and recovery information to potential visitors within this setting. The study tests the direct effects of attractiveness, trustworthiness, and content expertise on attitude and destination visit intention, together with attitude's mediating role. Applying SOR to local post-disaster destinations in Aceh provides evidence for influencer selection and tourism recovery communication in Central Aceh and Bener Meriah.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical foundations

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework explains how environmental stimuli are processed through individuals' internal states before generating behavioral responses (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). In this study, perceived attractiveness, trustworthiness, and content expertise constitute the stimuli. Attitude toward a travel influencer represents the organism, or the audience's internal evaluation of the influencer. Behavioral intention to visit the recommended destination represents the response. This arrangement enables the analysis of both direct relationships and relationships operating through attitude, consistent with the tourism influencer model discussed by Serrano-Malebrán et al. (2025).

Source credibility provides a complementary explanation for why communicator characteristics matter. Hovland et al. (1953) emphasize the role of the information source in persuasion. In influencer marketing, audiences evaluate whether a communicator is appealing, trustworthy, and knowledgeable before accepting recommendations. These attributes are related but conceptually distinct. The travel influencer construct developed by Manthiou et al. (2024) incorporates attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, authenticity, and inspiration. The present study retains the first three attributes, following the study's selection and research focus. The theory of planned behavior identifies attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control as antecedents of behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1991). Here, it supports the broader relevance of psychological evaluations to intention. The estimated model nevertheless follows SOR and measures attitude toward the influencer, rather than testing all components of the theory of planned behavior. Subjective norms and perceived behavioral control are not included as study variables.

Travel influencer attributes and audience responses

Attractiveness extends beyond physical appearance to the visual quality of travel content, the influencer's presentation, and the fit between the influencer and the destination. These features can attract attention and encourage favorable evaluations. The tourism literature links compelling visual communication and narrative presentation with audiences' responses to destination content (Alamäki et al., 2019; Cao et al., 2021). In the present model, attractiveness is therefore examined as a stimulus that may influence attitude and visit intention through separate pathways.

Trustworthiness refers to perceived honesty, sincerity, and dependability in communicating travel information. Lou and Yuan (2019) discuss trustworthiness within the relationship between influencer credibility and trust in branded content. Pop et al. (2022) examine trust in the travel decision journey, while Babu and Philip (2025) consider credibility and trustworthiness in international travel decisions. In a post-disaster setting, these perspectives make trustworthiness relevant to the acceptance of destination recommendations, although its empirical contribution must be tested rather than presumed.

Content expertise concerns the knowledge, experience, and communication capabilities through which influencers explain destinations. The study emphasizes clear information, engaging travel narratives, and relevant experience. Attitude toward a travel influencer captures the audience's overall favorable or unfavorable evaluation of that communicator. Behavioral intention to visit the recommended destination concerns interest in visiting and consideration of the destination for future travel. Serrano-Malebrán et al. (2025) connect these concepts through an attitude-based model of travel influencer responses on TikTok.

Hypothesis development

Attractiveness may initiate a favorable audience response because visually appealing and contextually appropriate content makes an influencer easier to notice and evaluate positively. The hypothesis draws on the travel influencer literature to connect appearance, presentation, and communication style with attitude (Manthiou et al., 2024; Serrano-Malebrán et al., 2025). In SOR terms, these perceived characteristics act as external stimuli that contribute to an internal evaluation. H1 therefore proposes that attractiveness influences attitude toward a travel influencer. Trustworthiness may facilitate acceptance of information when audiences consider an influencer honest and dependable. The relevance of trust to travel decisions and the perceived credibility of influencer recommendations provides a basis for expecting a relationship with attitude (Han & Chen, 2022; Pop et al., 2022). Post-disaster communication makes this relationship particularly pertinent because the audience must evaluate information about destinations affected by disruption. H2 proposes that trustworthiness influences attitude toward a travel influencer. Content expertise may encourage favorable evaluations when an influencer demonstrates knowledge of a destination and communicates experiences clearly. Expertise can increase the perceived usefulness of the information provided, while coherent narratives help audiences interpret the destination experience. This

expectation follows Manthiou et al. (2024) and Serrano-Malebrán et al. (2025). H3 proposes that content expertise influences attitude toward a travel influencer. A favorable attitude may make audiences more receptive to an influencer's destination recommendations. Han and Chen (2022) link attitudes to travel intention, while Serrano-Malebrán et al. (2025) explicitly examine attitude toward a travel influencer as an antecedent of destination visit intention. In the present study, this is the organism-response relationship. H4 proposes that attitude toward a travel influencer influences behavioral intention to visit the recommended destination.

The model also retains direct relationships between the three attributes and behavioral intention. Appealing presentation may generate immediate interest in a destination, perceived honesty may support acceptance of recommendations, and expertise may provide information relevant to a prospective visit. The broader influencer literature establishes the relevance of these attributes to consumer responses, although their relative importance varies across research settings (Ao et al., 2023; Babu & Philip, 2025). Accordingly, H5, H6, and H7 propose that attractiveness, trustworthiness, and content expertise, respectively, influence behavioral intention to visit the recommended destination.

The mediation hypotheses distinguish exposure to influencer attributes from the audience's evaluation of the influencer. Under SOR, an attribute can shape attitude, which subsequently relates to intention. A direct effect is not the only possible route through which an influencer characteristic matters. Research on short tourism videos similarly emphasizes internal processes linking digital information with tourism intention (Liu et al., 2023). H8 proposes that attitude mediates the attractiveness-intention relationship; H9 proposes that attitude mediates the trustworthiness-intention relationship; and H10 proposes that attitude mediates the content expertise-intention relationship. Together, the ten hypotheses retain the study's three exogenous constructs, one mediator, and one final response. The study excludes inspiration, authenticity, intention regarding the influencer, and electronic word-of-mouth from the estimated model. This restriction keeps the analysis focused on attitudes and destination visit intention in the post-disaster context of Central Aceh and Bener Meriah.

METHOD

Design, participants, and data collection

The study used a quantitative online survey and nonprobability purposive sampling. Eligible participants resided in Aceh Province, were at least 18 years old, actively used TikTok, had watched travel influencer content, had previously visited Central Aceh and/or Bener Meriah, and were interested in destinations recommended by influencers. The prior-visit screening question used the wording "at least one to two visits." The inclusion criteria were intended to secure relevant exposure to influencer communication and familiarity with the study destinations, following the purposive sampling approach applied in the study (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019). Data collection took place from May 16 to June 8, 2026. The researcher distributed a Google Forms questionnaire through personal WhatsApp messages and relevant WhatsApp groups. There were 161 submissions. Screening excluded six respondents who did not meet the stated criteria, leaving 155 usable responses. The study specified a minimum of 147 respondents using 21 indicators multiplied by seven observations per indicator. The final sample exceeded that prespecified minimum.

Measurement and analysis

All five constructs were measured reflectively using 21 items on a five-point Likert scale, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Attractiveness, trustworthiness, content expertise, and attitude each had four items, while behavioral intention had five. The measurement framework follows Serrano-Malebrán et al. (2025), with questionnaire items adapted to the research context. The description here follows the questionnaire reproduced in Appendix 1; its wording differs in places from the operational-definition table in Chapter 4. The questionnaire measured attractiveness through appealing visual presentation, influencer-destination fit, and liking the influencer's appearance. Trustworthiness items concerned trust, honesty, straightforward information, and dependable recommendations. Content expertise covered destination knowledge, clear explanations, engaging narratives, and travel experience. Attitude items assessed liking travel content, a positive view of the influencer, interest in following the content, and overall liking. Behavioral intention items concerned interest, desire, future consideration, further information seeking, and intention to visit the recommended destination. Partial least squares structural equation modeling was conducted using SmartPLS. Measurement assessment examined outer loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), cross-loadings, the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT), Cronbach's alpha, and composite reliability. The study used loading and reliability thresholds above 0.70, AVE above 0.50, and an HTMT tolerance below 0.90 (Hair & Alamer, 2022). Structural assessment covered model fit, R^2 , Q^2 , effect size,

and bootstrapped path estimates. Hypotheses were evaluated using the study's criteria of $t > 1.97$ and $p < 0.05$. Direct and indirect effects determined the reported partial, full, or absent mediation classifications.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent characteristics

The sample comprised 110 women (71%) and 45 men (29%). The largest age group was 26–35 years (61 respondents), and 95 respondents held a bachelor's degree. TikTok was the main platform for viewing travel influencer content for 94 respondents (60.6%), followed by Instagram for 46 (29.7%), Facebook for eight (5.2%), and YouTube for seven (4.5%). These figures follow the thesis's narrative counts. Of the 155 respondents, 148 (95.5%) had viewed post-disaster tourism content, while seven (4.5%) had not. General exposure to travel influencer content was therefore distinct from exposure to post-disaster content.

Descriptive statistics

Tables 1–5 reproduce the descriptive statistics reported in Chapter 5 of the source thesis. All original values are retained, including the reported construct summaries. Decimal punctuation is standardized for English presentation. The identified inconsistencies are flagged below rather than recalculated.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for attractiveness

No.	Item	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mean	Std. dev.
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
1	AT1	4	2.6	0	0.0	12	7.7	77	49.7	62	40.0	4.24	0.808
2	AT2	3	1.9	1	0.6	9	5.8	69	44.5	73	47.1	4.34	0.785
3	AT3	2	1.3	3	1.9	13	8.4	72	46.5	65	41.9	4.26	0.796
4	AT4	3	1.9	2	1.3	11	7.1	66	42.6	73	47.1	4.32	0.820
Attractiveness												4.29	0.802

Source: Processed primary data (2026), original thesis Table 5.1.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for trustworthiness

No.	Item	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mean	Std. dev.
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
1	TW1	4	2.6	7	4.5	39	25.2	58	37.4	47	30.3	3.89	0.980
2	TW2	1	0.6	10	6.5	37	23.9	66	42.6	41	26.5	3.87	0.900
3	TW3	4	2.6	5	3.2	38	24.5	60	38.7	48	31.0	3.92	0.957
4	TW4	3	1.9	5	3.2	28	18.1	70	45.2	49	31.6	4.01	0.897
Trustworthiness												3.92	0.933

Source: Processed primary data (2026), original thesis Table 5.2.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for content expertise

No.	Item	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mean	Std. dev.
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
1	CE1	2	1.3	4	2.6	26	16.8	74	47.7	49	31.6	4.06	0.840
2	CE2	3	1.9	2	1.3	23	14.8	67	43.2	60	38.7	4.15	0.861
3	CE3	2	1.3	2	1.3	14	9.0	74	47.7	63	40.6	4.25	0.779
4	CE4	2	1.3	5	3.2	17	11.0	75	48.4	56	36.1	4.15	0.836
Content expertise												4.15	0.829

Source: Processed primary data (2026), original thesis Table 5.3.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for attitude toward a travel influencer

No.	Item	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mean	Std. dev.
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
1	ATT1	3	1.9	0	0.0	17	11.0	75	48.4	60	38.7	4.22	0.792
2	ATT2	1	0.6	3	1.3	19	12.3	72	46.5	60	38.7	4.21	0.779
3	ATT3	2	1.3	2	1.3	14	9.0	74	47.7	63	40.6	4.12	0.878
4	ATT4	2	1.3	0	0.0	28	18.1	66	42.6	59	38.1	4.16	0.810
Attitude toward a travel influencer (mediator)												4.18	0.815

Source: Processed primary data (2026), original thesis Table 5.4.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics for behavioral intention to visit the recommended destination

No.	Item	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mean	Std. dev.
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
1	BI1	2	1.3	1	0.6	21	13.5	70	45.2	61	39.4	4.21	0.795
2	BI2	2	1.3	2	1.3	14	9.0	79	51.0	58	37.4	4.22	0.767
3	BI3	4	2.6	2	1.3	23	14.8	74	47.7	63	40.6	4.17	0.913
4	BI4	2	1.3	3	1.9	11	7.1	72	46.5	67	43.2	4.28	0.787
5	BI5	3	1.9	2	1.3	16	10.3	70	45.2	64	41.3	4.22	0.834
Behavioral Intention to Visit the Recommended Destination												4.18	0.815

Source: Processed primary data (2026), original thesis Table 5.5.

Notes to Tables 1–5: F = frequency; SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; N = neutral; A = agree; SA = strongly agree; Std. dev. = standard deviation. The ATT2 percentage, ATT3 and BI3 frequency rows, and the behavioral-intention summary require checking against the thesis appendix. Original reported values are preserved.

Measurement model: convergent validity

All 21 indicators had outer loadings above 0.70, ranging from 0.806 to 0.912 (Table 6). Every indicator was retained. Attractiveness loadings ranged from 0.862 to 0.910; trustworthiness loadings ranged from 0.859 to 0.905; and content expertise loadings ranged from 0.868 to 0.882. The attitude indicators loaded between 0.847 and 0.912, while behavioral intention loadings ranged from 0.806 to 0.901. These results describe the measurement model used for the subsequent structural analysis.

Table 6. Outer loadings

Construct	Item	Attractiveness	Trustworthiness	Content expertise	Attitude	Behavioral intention	Result
Attractiveness	AT1	0.862					Valid
	AT2	0.888					Valid
	AT3	0.879					Valid
	AT4	0.910					Valid
Trustworthiness	TW1		0.859				Valid
	TW2		0.898				Valid
	TW3		0.905				Valid
	TW4		0.874				Valid
Content expertise	CE1			0.868			Valid
	CE2			0.882			Valid
	CE3			0.878			Valid
	CE4			0.882			Valid
Attitude	ATT1				0.897		Valid
	ATT2				0.847		Valid
	ATT3				0.907		Valid
	ATT4				0.912		Valid
Behavioral intention	BI1					0.887	Valid
	BI2					0.901	Valid
	BI3					0.806	Valid
	BI4					0.867	Valid
	BI5					0.895	Valid

Source: Processed primary data (2026), original thesis Table 5.6.

The AVE results also exceeded the study's 0.50 criterion (Table 7). The highest reported AVE was 0.795 for attitude, followed by attractiveness (0.783), trustworthiness (0.782), content expertise (0.770), and behavioral intention (0.760). Each construct therefore accounted for more than half of the variance in its indicators under the study's convergent-validity criterion.

Table 7. Average variance extracted (AVE)

Construct	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Result
Attractiveness	0.783	Valid
Trustworthiness	0.782	Valid
Content expertise	0.770	Valid
Attitude	0.795	Valid
Behavioral intention	0.760	Valid

Source: Processed primary data (2026), original thesis Table 5.7.

Taken together, the reported loadings and AVE values support the convergent-validity assessment used in this study. No indicator was deleted to obtain the reported estimates. The distinction between the constructs was then evaluated separately through cross-loadings, the Fornell-Larcker comparison, and HTMT, rather than inferred solely from high indicator loadings.

Measurement model: discriminant validity

Each indicator loaded most strongly on its designated construct in the cross-loading matrix (Table 8). The diagonal values in Table 9 represent the square roots of AVE and exceed the corresponding interconstruct correlations. These are the two discrimination checks reported before the HTMT assessment.

Table 8. Cross-loadings

Construct	Item	Attractiveness	Trustworthiness	Content expertise	Attitude	Behavioral intention	Result
Attractiveness	AT1	0.862	0.517	0.589	0.589	0.625	Valid
	AT2	0.888	0.586	0.625	0.679	0.698	Valid
	AT3	0.879	0.654	0.700	0.709	0.745	Valid
	AT4	0.910	0.643	0.663	0.680	0.724	Valid
Trustworthiness	TW1	0.578	0.859	0.593	0.584	0.563	Valid
	TW2	0.607	0.898	0.657	0.600	0.584	Valid
	TW3	0.585	0.905	0.703	0.650	0.626	Valid
	TW4	0.637	0.874	0.714	0.672	0.683	Valid
Content expertise	CE1	0.591	0.710	0.868	0.696	0.651	Valid
	CE2	0.679	0.734	0.882	0.761	0.720	Valid
	CE3	0.670	0.623	0.878	0.702	0.708	Valid
	CE4	0.621	0.591	0.882	0.754	0.681	Valid
Attitude	ATT1	0.710	0.624	0.732	0.897	0.782	Valid
	ATT2	0.598	0.628	0.728	0.847	0.706	Valid
	ATT3	0.702	0.651	0.739	0.907	0.777	Valid
	ATT4	0.672	0.633	0.763	0.912	0.760	Valid
Behavioral intention	BI1	0.664	0.631	0.748	0.752	0.887	Valid
	BI2	0.713	0.636	0.766	0.794	0.901	Valid
	BI3	0.600	0.559	0.548	0.654	0.806	Valid
	BI4	0.737	0.559	0.650	0.714	0.867	Valid
	BI5	0.730	0.652	0.701	0.778	0.895	Valid

Source: Processed primary data (2026), original thesis Table 5.8.

Table 9. Fornell-Larcker criterion

Construct	Attitude	Attractiveness	Behavioral intention	Content expertise	Trustworthiness	Result
Attitude	0.891					Valid
Attractiveness	0.753	0.885				Valid
Behavioral intention	0.849	0.792	0.872			Valid
Content expertise	0.831	0.731	0.787	0.877		Valid
Trustworthiness	0.711	0.682	0.698	0.757	0.884	Valid

Source: Processed primary data (2026), original thesis Table 5.9.

Table 10. Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)

Construct	Attitude	Attractiveness	Behavioral intention	Content expertise	Trustworthiness	Result
Attitude						Established
Attractiveness	0.823					Established
Behavioral intention	0.824	0.861				Established
Content expertise	0.815	0.804	0.860			Established
Trustworthiness	0.779	0.746	0.759	0.835		Established

Source: Processed primary data (2026), original thesis Table 5.10.

The reported HTMT values ranged from 0.746 to 0.861 (Table 10). They satisfied the study's less restrictive criterion of 0.90. The attractiveness-behavioral intention value (0.861) and content expertise-behavioral intention value (0.860) did not meet the stricter 0.85 threshold also discussed in the methodology. Discriminant validity was consequently assessed using the stated 0.90 tolerance.

Reliability and structural model assessment

Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.900 to 0.921, and composite reliability ranged from 0.930 to 0.941 (Table 11). All five constructs exceeded the study's 0.70 reliability threshold.

Table 11. Internal consistency reliability

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability	Result
Attractiveness	0.908	0.935	Reliable
Trustworthiness	0.907	0.935	Reliable
Content expertise	0.900	0.930	Reliable
Attitude	0.913	0.939	Reliable
Behavioral intention	0.921	0.941	Reliable

Source: Processed primary data (2026), original thesis Table 5.11.

Table 12. Model fit

Parameter	Rule of Thumb	Parameter value	Result
SRMR	Less than 0.10	0.053	Fit
d_ ULS	> 0.05	0.650	Fit
d_ G	> 0.05	0.538	Fit
Chi-square	χ^2 statistic $\geq \chi^2$ table	$479.910 \geq 31.410$	Fit
NFI	Close to 1	0.851	Fit

Source: Processed primary data (2026), original thesis Table 5.12.

Table 12 preserves the thesis's rules and "Fit" classifications. Its NFI value of 0.851 is below the 0.90 criterion stated in Chapter 4; this reporting inconsistency requires author reconciliation. No fit statistic has been changed. The model explained 74.0% of the variance in attitude and 78.3% in behavioral intention (Table 13). Adjusted R² values were 0.735 and 0.777, respectively. The reported Q² values were positive for both endogenous constructs: 0.726 for attitude and 0.710 for behavioral intention (Table 14).

Table 13. Coefficients of determination (R²)

Construct	R-square	Adjusted R-square
Attitude	0.740	0.735
Behavioral intention	0.783	0.777

Source: Processed primary data (2026), original thesis Table 5.13.

Table 14. Predictive relevance (Q²)

Construct	Q-square
Attitude	0.726
Behavioral intention	0.710

Source: Processed primary data (2026), original thesis Table 5.14.

Table 15. Effect size (F²)

Construct	Attractiveness	Trustworthiness	Content expertise	Attitude	Behavioral intention
Attractiveness				0.134	0.156
Trustworthiness				0.017	0.006
Content expertise				0.385	0.020
Attitude					0.266
Behavioral intention					

Source: Processed primary data (2026), original thesis Table 5.15.

Content expertise had the largest reported effect size on attitude ($F^2 = 0.385$), compared with attractiveness (0.134) and trustworthiness (0.017). For behavioral intention, the effect sizes were 0.266 for attitude, 0.156 for attractiveness, 0.020 for content expertise, and 0.006 for trustworthiness. The pattern distinguishes expertise's contribution to attitude from the more direct contribution of attractiveness to intention.

Direct and indirect hypothesis tests

The direct-effect results supported H1, H3, H4, and H5, but not H2, H6, or H7 (Table 16). Attractiveness positively influenced attitude ($\beta = 0.285$, $p = 0.002$), and content expertise showed a stronger positive coefficient ($\beta = 0.541$, $p < 0.001$). Trustworthiness was not significant ($\beta = 0.107$, $p = 0.176$).

Table 16. Bootstrapped path coefficients: Direct effects

Path	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	t statistic	p values	Result
Attractiveness -> Attitude	0.285	0.281	0.091	3.142	0.002	Accepted
Trustworthiness -> Attitude	0.107	0.107	0.079	1.354	0.176	Rejected
Content Expertise -> Attitude	0.541	0.542	0.096	5.645	0.000	Accepted
Attitude -> Behavioral Intention	0.472	0.467	0.091	5.193	0.000	Accepted
Attractiveness -> Behavioral Intention	0.300	0.293	0.083	3.616	0.000	Accepted
Trustworthiness -> Behavioral Intention	0.057	0.058	0.067	0.848	0.397	Rejected
Content Expertise -> Behavioral Intention	0.133	0.142	0.089	1.492	0.136	Rejected

Source: Processed primary data (2026), original thesis Table 5.16.

Attitude positively influenced behavioral intention ($\beta = 0.472$, $p < 0.001$), as did attractiveness ($\beta = 0.300$, $p < 0.001$). The direct coefficients for trustworthiness ($\beta = 0.057$, $p = 0.397$) and content expertise ($\beta = 0.133$, $p = 0.136$) were not statistically significant.

Table 17. Bootstrapped path coefficients: Indirect effects

Path			Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	t statistic	p values	Result
Attractiveness -> Behavioral Intention	Attitude ->		0.135	0.131	0.049	2.724	0.006	Accepted
Trustworthiness -> Behavioral Intention	Attitude ->		0.050	0.049	0.038	1.343	0.179	Rejected
Content Expertise -> Behavioral Intention	Attitude ->		0.256	0.254	0.071	3.578	0.000	Accepted

Source: Processed primary data (2026), original thesis Table 5.17.

Notes to Tables 16–17: O = original sample estimate; M = bootstrap sample mean; STDEV = bootstrap standard deviation. Values reported as 0.000 are retained from the source output and indicate $p < 0.001$, not a probability of exactly zero.

The indirect effect of attractiveness through attitude was significant ($\beta = 0.135$, $t = 2.724$, $p = 0.006$), supporting H8. Because the direct effect remained significant, this relationship was classified as partial mediation. The indirect effect of content expertise was also significant ($\beta = 0.256$, $t = 3.578$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H10. Its nonsignificant direct effect led to the reported full-mediation classification. The trustworthiness indirect effect was not significant ($\beta = 0.050$, $t = 1.343$, $p = 0.179$); H9 was not supported. The results therefore identify two supported attitude-mediated relationships rather than a uniform mediating role across all influencer attributes. The strongest antecedent of attitude was content expertise, whereas attractiveness retained both direct and indirect relationships with destination visit intention.

Discussion of the findings

Attractiveness matters at two points in the model. It relates positively to attitude and retains a direct relationship with behavioral intention after attitude is included. The significant indirect effect indicates that favorable evaluations account for part of this relationship, but attitude is not the only route represented. This pattern supports the SOR interpretation and the relevance of visual presentation and narrative content to tourism communication (Alamäki et al., 2019; Cao et al., 2021). The finding also corresponds with the positive attractiveness-attitude relationship discussed by Serrano-Malebrán et al. (2025). Ao et al. (2023) provide broader evidence connecting influencer characteristics with engagement and behavioral intentions, although their meta-analysis is not confined to post-disaster tourism. For Central Aceh and Bener Meriah, attractiveness can be interpreted as a means of attracting attention to destination content and improving receptiveness to recommendations. This interpretation concerns the respondents' evaluations and intentions; the study did not measure a subsequent increase in actual tourist arrivals.

Content expertise was the strongest predictor of attitude, with a coefficient of 0.541 and an effect size of 0.385. Its direct relationship with behavioral intention was not significant, but its indirect relationship through attitude was significant. The study therefore identifies full mediation. The central implication is that the value of expertise should not be judged only from its direct coefficient. Expertise remained relevant to intention through the audience's evaluation of the influencer. This result is aligned with the emphasis on expertise in Manthiou et al. (2024) and with the attitude-based pathway examined by Serrano-Malebrán et al. (2025).

The expertise pattern also resembles the broader distinction between information exposure and internal processing in short-video tourism research. Liu et al. (2023) examine psychological processes through which digital information relates to tourism intention. In the present study, attitude performs that mediating function. An influencer's clear explanations, destination knowledge, travel experience, and engaging narratives can contribute to a favorable evaluation, which is then associated with interest in visiting. The result does not establish that expertise is irrelevant merely because its direct coefficient does not reach significance. Trustworthiness produced a different pattern. Neither its relationship with attitude nor its direct or indirect relationship with behavioral intention was significant. This contrasts with the importance of trust discussed in Pop et al. (2022) and the influence of credibility and trustworthiness reported by Babu and Philip (2025). It also differs from the trustworthiness-attitude relationship described by Serrano-Malebrán et al. (2025). However, trustworthiness received a relatively favorable descriptive evaluation. A favorable average assessment and a significant unique structural relationship are different findings, so the two results should not be treated as contradictory.

One contextual interpretation is that, in post-disaster settings, perceived honesty may need to be accompanied by concrete information about access, facilities, safety, and destination readiness. The visual and informational characteristics of TikTok may also help explain the greater contribution of attractiveness and expertise. These are contextual interpretations rather than separately tested mechanisms: perceived risk, destination readiness, and cross-platform differences were not modeled as additional explanatory variables. The nonsignificant trustworthiness paths therefore should not be generalized into a claim that honesty is unnecessary in tourism communication. The positive attitude-intention coefficient reinforces the audience's evaluation as an important component of the SOR process. The results support an attitude-mediated relationship for attractiveness and content expertise, but not trustworthiness. This differentiated pattern is the study's main contextual contribution. It explains why the attributes should be examined separately and why mediation tests add information beyond direct effects (Han & Chen, 2022; Serrano-Malebrán *et al.*, 2025).

Practical and policy implications

The tourism authorities of Central Aceh and Bener Meriah should consider content expertise and attractiveness when selecting travel influencers. Selection should extend beyond follower counts to destination knowledge, clear communication, and appealing content. This recommendation is consistent with the distinction between visibility and marketing effectiveness discussed by Leung *et al.* (2022), but does not establish that any particular campaign has already increased visits. Promotional content should combine engaging visual presentation with factual information about destination conditions. The study specifically recommends clear accounts of accessibility, facilities, safety, and readiness to receive visitors. Local authorities and content creators can collaborate to communicate these conditions while presenting the destinations' attractions. The significance of attitude also indicates that content should encourage a favorable evaluation of the influencer through relevant information, authentic experiences, and constructive audience interaction. At policy level, influencer marketing can be incorporated into tourism recovery programs through selection guidelines and cooperation with digital creative communities. The proposed criteria include competence, content quality, audience interaction, and influencer-destination fit. TikTok merits attention because it was the most frequently used platform in this sample, although the study did not comparatively test whether it outperforms other platforms.

Scope and directions for further research

The evidence is limited to the 155 purposively selected respondents in Aceh and the destinations examined. Further research should use larger samples, broader geographic coverage, other destination types, and comparisons involving Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook. Such extensions would help establish whether the reported relationships also occur in urban, coastal, cultural, or non-disaster destinations. Generalization beyond the present sample should remain cautious because respondents were not selected through a probability design. The nonsignificant trustworthiness results warrant further examination rather than dismissal of the construct. Future studies could consider destination trust, perceived risk, destination image, or perceived authenticity as additional mediators or moderators. The distinction between credibility of the influencer and confidence in the destination is especially relevant to this proposal. Research on tourism-oriented short videos similarly highlights the role of internal perceptions in interpreting influencer-related responses (Matiza & Slabbert, 2024). Original table values are retained. The discrepancies noted in Tables 1–5 and 12, together with differences in questionnaire wording, require author checking before submission; no revised estimates replace the reported findings.

CONCLUSION

The study found that attractiveness and content expertise positively influenced attitude toward a travel influencer, while trustworthiness did not have a significant effect. Attitude and attractiveness positively influenced behavioral intention to visit the recommended destination. Trustworthiness and content expertise did not show significant direct effects on that intention. Attitude partially mediated the attractiveness relationship and fully mediated the content expertise relationship, but did not mediate the trustworthiness relationship. Content expertise was the strongest antecedent of attitude, whereas attractiveness contributed through both direct and attitude-mediated pathways. The model explained 74.0% of attitude variance and 78.3% of behavioral-intention variance. These findings support the study's emphasis on competent, visually appealing, and informative travel influencer communication for post-disaster tourism in Central Aceh and Bener Meriah. They also identify audience attitude as an important mechanism without assuming that every influencer attribute operates in the same way.

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