

**EXPLORATION OF FOODSTAGRAMMING CONTENT PREFERENCES IN  
MILLINEAL AND Z GENERATIONS IN WEST SUMATRA**

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**Abstract:**

*The goal of this study is to determine the behavior of tourists who use Instagram to discover about local destinations and cuisine in West Sumatra. Instagram, which is the most popular social media among millennials and Generation Z, offers advantages that other social media platforms lack, such as more complex visuals that shape the image and aid individuals interested in gastronomy tourism in West Sumatra Province. The method used in this study is a quantitative survey. This research used a cross-sectional study design, in which data is collected at the same time or period for both independent and dependent variables. The focus of this research is on millennials born between the 1980s and the 1990s. Respondents that use the Instagram social media platform and live outside of West Sumatra province will be sampled for the study. When the visual complexity of the destination image has a CR value of 7.291 ( $p_{0.00} \leq 0,05$ ) and an estimated value of 0.654,  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted, revealing that visual complexity has a positive influence on the destination image. It is well known that the influence of visual complexity on destination image has a CR value of 3.508 ( $p_{0.00} \leq 0,05$ ) with an estimated value of 0.418, showing that  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted, confirming that visual complexity has a positive influence on destination choice. The statistical test findings for hypothesis 3 revealed an estimated parameter value of 0.233, a standard error of 0.114, and a critical ratio value of 1.956 with a probability value of 0.05. With a significance level (alpha) of 0.05, it is possible to conclude that there is insufficient empirically strong evidence to reject  $H_0$ , hence  $H_a$  is rejected. Therefore, visual complexity increases the image of culinary attractions in West Sumatra. Visual complexity has a significant positive effect on the image of the destination as well as the tourist's destination choice in West Sumatra. Instagram can assist tourists who are considering West Sumatra as a destination for gastrotourism.*

**Keywords:** *Visual Complexity, Destination Image, Destination Choice, Content Preferences*

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## **1. Introduction**

Instagram is a popular social media platform for sharing videos and pictures (Duggan et al., 2015). Instagram has been in the spotlight of popularizing image complexity, where Instagram users can share their experiences by uploading photos to their Instagram profiles. The number of active Instagram users has increased considerably since 2013 (Louveau et al., 2015). In January 2018, for example, there were around 800 million active Instagram users globally, posting an average of 27.9 photographs per month (Statista, 2018) and spending 257 minutes per month on the app (Brandwatch, 2016). Instagram users spend 45 percent more time than Facebook users and 40 percent more time than Twitter users (Leibowitz, 2017).

As a consequence, users in both developed and developing countries are heavily reliant on this social media platform. Changes in the tourism business are being influenced by new technology and the internet. In the 2019 timeframe, West Sumatra as a province was determined to have 5 million active social media users known for its picturesque attractions and local culinary delights. Those in the tourist industry (destinations) as well as those pursuing a niche in local food tourism can take advantage of this potential.

Instagram has made the food and tourism industry one of the most recognizable on social media since its inception. Food and views (destinations) are currently among the most popular items advertised on Instagram (Bjork et al., 2015), where food may be presented better, express a more honest company image, and a more gorgeous destination and make the place more appealing to tourists who desire to visit it, as well as improve the destination's image Instagram is also influencing how people consume food, such as choosing Instagrammable foods or places or photographing their food and sharing it to their Instagram account before eating it (Tandoh, 2016).

According to data released by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), West Sumatra is one of the provinces where the people's livelihoods are based on trade and small industry. SMEs have been able to play a significant role as one of the variables that can help elevate small towns out of poverty, as the presence of SMEs will almost surely increase employment. According to Ministry of Cooperatives and MSMEs data from 2011, more than 55,2 million MSME units were able to absorb over 101,7 million workers, and this number climbed to around 57,8 million MSME units with a total workforce of 114 million people.

The food souvenir business in the West Sumatra area has grown at a breakneck pace. With 113,957 businesses, food management SMEs account for 19.64 percent of all SMEs in West Sumatra. Food-related SMEs are the second-largest in West Sumatra, after those that provide accommodation. The city of Padang, as the capital of West Sumatra province, is the largest contributor to SMEs, accounting for 89,699 or 15,46 percent of all SMEs. In addition to many entertainment venues, the city of Padang is also known for food souvenirs such as Sanjai Christine Hakim chips, which are popular among tourists. Apart from rendang, which is a must-bring back as a souvenir, Padang city is a must-visit.

Furthermore, if a restaurant or food brand's Instagram presence is lacking, customers may avoid them (Sheth, 2017). This could explain why there are so many food-related photographs on Instagram (McGuire, 2017). As a reason, food entrepreneurs using Instagram must promote their products more efficiently and in a variety of ways. Effective Instagram sponsored content has resulted in good consumer responses such as increased brand recognition, favorable perceptions toward the brand, and purchase intent (Colliander & Marder, 2018; Djafarova &

Rushworth, 2017a; Evans et al., 2017). Consumer emotions such as pleasure and arousal are stimulated by appealing food photos (J. Kim et al., 2017; Petit et al., 2016).

As a consequence, the complexity of a visual in increasing consumer favorable responses to food and destination marketing in West Sumatra via Instagram is investigated in this study. Furthermore, there is still a scarcity of academic study on Instagram (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017b; Sheldon & Bryant, 2016). Users can get a lot of visual information, images posted by other users, and product information submitted by marketers when they visit Instagram. Instagram users are exposed to information and only see a few photographs. As a necessity, marketers must build ads that can effectively halt viewers and hold their attention long enough for them to critically absorb the ad before scrolling up or down to view more photos.

To pique user interest, an Instagram post's first impression is critical. Because Instagram users are mostly seeking for enjoyment and entertainment, they are likely to jump from one image to the next to discover one they like. When visitors come to a halt while scrolling through a photo because they see a visually appealing object (Allen et al., 2013). According to several research, paying attention to the visual intricacy of advertisement design is very important (Kusumasondjaja & Tjiptono, 2019; Sohn et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2017).

Because complicated graphics distract consumers from messaging and companies, some studies recommend marketers to prioritize simple ad designs (Pracejus et al., 2013; Wong et al., 2015). Other studies, however, recommend using complex visualizations in advertising (Kusumasondjaja & Tjiptono, 2019; Peterson et al., 2017; R. G. M. Pieters & de Klerk-Warmerdam, 1996), because complexity causes people to pause and pay attention to advertisements, increasing their chances of cognitively processing advertisements (Geissler et al., 2006a; Lavie & Tractinsky, 2004; Nadkarni & Gupta, 2007). Since it is unclear if ad complexity helps or hurts ad effectiveness, it is indeed worth looking into how Instagram users react to brand messaging with various levels of visual complexity.

In addition to the previous explanation, the researcher conducted a study on the relationship between destination image and destination choice. Previous research in consumer behavior and tourism has discovered a link between image and behavioral intentions (Bagozzi, 1982). Perception (cognitive) and emotion (affective) are frequently considered as two different but interrelated components of image. Affective evaluation refers to feelings about an object, whereas perceptual or cognitive evaluation refers to beliefs and information about the object (Baloglu, 2000).

This research specifically addresses three hypotheses: Does visual complexity through Instagram social media have a better influence on destination image in West Sumatra?. Does the visual complexity of Instagram have an important role in the intention of tourists to visit West Sumatra?, and Does the image of the destination have a better correlation with the intention of visiting tourists to West Sumatra?.

Despite the large number of Instagram users in Indonesia, primarily in West Sumatra Province, the findings of this study should be useful not only to travel and culinary bureau owners and businesses related to other destinations and culinary delights, but also to businesses that use Instagram as a marketing tool.

## **2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development**

### **Social media**

Social media is “any online service where users can create and share a variety of content” (Bolton et al., 2013). These include user-generated content, social networking sites, online review sites, virtual gaming sites, collaborative projects, video sharing and online communities, where the users produce, contribute, post, edit, or search for content (Krishnamurthy & Dou, 2008; Okazaki & Taylor, 2013).

Users can obtain and access information outside of their social circle through social media, which is thought to be able to meet their information needs by providing factual, specific, non-commercial information, the first information that can be obtained and accessed by users through information sources outside of their social circle (Boerman & Kruikemeier, 2016; J. Kim et al., 2017; Yoo & Gretzel, 2011). Consumers' need for self-actualization can also be satisfied by social media, which allows them to explain themselves, reconstruct, and share their consuming experiences through new media platforms (Felix et al., 2017; Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009).

Instagram, in particular, has garnered millions of users since its debut. Instagram has surprisingly received worldwide enthusiastic reception since its launch, with 25,000 new users every day. In January 2021, We Are Social and Hootsuite counted Indonesian Instagram users who had 85 million users, and that number is expected to continue to grow.

Marketers who understand the shifting role of consumer social media can use new media platforms as marketing communication platforms (Felix et al., 2017; Herrero & San Martín, 2017). They use social media advertising to inform or influence target consumers of a product or brand (Zotos et al., 2014) and to encourage digital engagement (Voorveld et al., 2018). Marketers have also used social media to develop and maintain customer relationships (Warner-Søderholm et al., 2018), to create customer-based brand equity (A. J. Kim & Ko, 2012), to implement customized and interactive services (Bolton et al., 2013) and to monitor online conversations about how consumers perceive companies and brands (Schweidel & Moe, 2014).

In addition to the attractive features offered by Instagram, it also has excellent visual complexity. Visual complexity is an element that consists of many features, designs and variations that include visually complex colors, lighting, shapes, patterns (Donderi, 2006). (R. Pieters et al., 2010) states that there are six general dimensions of visual complexity, namely quantity, irregularity, dissimilarity, detail, arrangement asymmetry and irregularity.

### **Visual Complexity**

Visual complexity affects consumers' perceptions, preferences, and behavior towards various objects from advertisements and web pages to physical products and packages (Machado et al., 2015). Although there have been many studies that have raised the variable of visual complexity, there is still no consensus on whether to adopt a complex or simple design (Deng & Poole, 2010). Using a complex design can improve the evaluation quality of visual objects by providing rich information, while implementing a simple design helps consumers who have limited processing time and the ability to minimize the cognitive effort required to process visual information. Additionally, (Ochsner, 2000) found a negative correlation between visual complexity and affective states and a positive correlation between visual complexity and arousal in photographs.

According to several studies, in the context of interaction, the use of simple and simple visual social media is the most important factor in marketing interactive products (Eytam et al., 2017), and high visual complexity has a negative impact on consumer satisfaction and intentions to use social media sites (Crutzen & Ruiters, 2015).

However, many studies show that complex advertisements receive better consumer responses (Geissler et al., 2006b). Complex visual designs seem to be more appealing and preferred (Hart et al., 2002), as they capture and hold consumer interest (Deng & Poole, 2010). This process increases consumers' enjoyment and arousal levels, particularly when they are seeking pleasure, as in the Instagram consumption environment (Deng & Poole, 2010; Kusumasondjaja & Tjiptono, 2019). According to the research cited above, good visuals also have an effect on a variety of factors, including the image of an object, such as a destination, which influences tourists' decision to enhance their intention to visit tourist destinations (Deng & Poole, 2010).

Recognize visitor decision-making and the process of destination selection via social media Instagram is a key point of research for researchers and tourism practitioners when it comes to building efficient tourist marketing and communication methods. Basically, an object's image is established by the experiences of individuals who have visited a post-trip destination. They will present a summary of their experience, which is referred to in theory as cognitive and affective dimensions. In accordance with these elements, the experience will have an effect on the intention to visit (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991)

Over the last two decades, tourism that is prompted by a video commercial, whether through broadcast channels or social media, has expanded at a significant rate (Busby & O'Neill, 2006). (Croy & Heitmann, 2011) is one of the scholars who distinguishes tourism induced by channel broadcasts from tourism prompted by social media, believing that effective visualization has a long-term impact and drives visitors to travel.

To provide a balanced perspective, (Croy & Heitmann, 2011) suggest that increasingly advanced technology has resulted in high levels of tourist visits because the influence of the media is often exaggerated. however, from a supply side perspective, having a destination featured in channel broadcasts or social media is paramount in placing tourism products, creating an image that can last for decades (Kasprzak, 2012).

### **Relationship between variables**

The visual complexity of elements in an object or image and the detailed information provided by these visual elements are such as visual complexity: quantity, irregularity, inequality, detail, asymmetry arrangement, and arrangement irregularity (Lazard & Mackert, 2015). Previous research stated that the visual complexity generated by Instagram plays an important role in online search behavior and attracts consumers to buy something especially in the culinary field and also affects pre-trip behavior (for example, preferred destination) (Kuhzady & Ghasemi, 2019) and post-trip behavior (eg, revisit intentions) (Park et al., 2015).

H1: There is an effect of visual complexity on the destination image in West Sumatra

Furthermore, visually appealing television programming will encourage viewers to visit tourism destinations (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006).

H2 : Minang Kabau Visual complexity has an effect on destination choice in Minang Kabau cuisine in West Sumatra.

Additionally, the destination image is a person's or group's perception of a destination in the form of cognitive and emotional components comprised of a variety of a person's beliefs, ideas, memories, and impressions (Silva et al., 2013). The development of a positive image for a

destination will almost surely have a positive effect on the destination decision made by tourists. Destination image has a positive and significant relationship with destination choice (Wu & Liang, 2020).

H3: Destination image has an effect on destination choice in West Sumatra.

### **3. Research Method**

This study is a cross-sectional study, in which data is collected at the same time or period for both independent and dependent variables. The study's sample population was gathered through the distribution of online questionnaires, with an emphasis on the millennial generation. Purposive sampling was utilized in this study, in which the researcher established certain conditions for selecting the sample, such as that the responder must be an active Instagram user. The samples were randomly chosen (Random Sampling) and were distributed both within and outside the Province of West Sumatra, with a total sample size of 200 participants. Path analysis is a data analysis approach that is used to examine the reliance of multiple variables in a model (causal model). The data analysis tool used is SPSS Amos 23 with SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) as a method of multivariate data analysis.

According to Hair et.al (1998) in (Ghozali, 2017) SEM is carried out by following the following flow: validity, reliability, AVE testing then proceeds to the modeling and analysis stage which is divided into the following steps: 1. Theoretical model development; 2. Draw up a path diagram; 3. Convert path diagrams into structural equations; 4. Selecting the input matrix for data analysis; 5. Assess model identification; 6. Assessing the Goodness-of-Fit Criteria; 7. Interpretation of model estimates.

### **4. Results and Discussion**

#### **4.1. Results**

In terms of demographic profile, respondents appear homogeneous. The majority of respondents who use Instagram are women and have higher education, and are in a relatively young age and lower middle income group. The results of this study indicate that the model used is acceptable. The CMIN/DF value of 1,826 indicates a good structural equation model. The RSMEA measurement index is below the expected value, which is  $\leq 0,08$ , or 0,064. Furthermore, TLI, GFI and AGFI values are in the good fit model. Even though the chi-square is at the marginal level and the probability level is at the proof fit level. From several model feasibility tests, the model is said to be feasible if at least one of the model feasibility test methods is met. In an empirical study, a researcher is not required to meet all the goodness of fit criteria, but it depends on the judgment of each researcher. Therefore, the Chi-Square value in this study was 135,115.

If the structural model's goodness of fit criteria is estimated to be met, the next step is to analyze the structural model's relationship (hypothesis testing). The value of regression weights reveals the correlation between constructs in the hypothesis.

**Table 1. Regression Weights**

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Destination Image	<---	Visual Complexity	,654	,090	7,291	***	par_3
Destination Choice	<---	Visual Complexity	,418	,119	3,508	***	par_1
Destination Choice	<---	Destination Image	,223	,114	1,959	,050	par_2

Source : Processed data, 2022

Results of the research shown in the table above, it is known that the effect of visual complexity on the destination image has a CR value of 7,291 ( $p=0,00 \leq 0,05$ ) with an estimated value of 0,654, then  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted, which means there is a positive influence between visual complexity with destination image.

Furthermore, it is known that the effect of visual complexity on destination image has a CR value of 3,508 ( $p=0,00 \leq 0,05$ ) with an estimated value of 0.418, hence  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted, which means there is a positive influence between visual complexity and destination choice.

Moreover, the results of statistical testing on hypothesis 3 show the estimated parameter value of 0,233; standard error value of 0,114; the critical ratio value of 1,956 with a probability value of 0,05. By using a significance level (alpha) of 0,05, it can be concluded that there is insufficient empirically strong evidence to reject  $H_0$ , and hence  $H_a$  is rejected. Therefore, the hypothesis 3 which states that the perceived destination image affects destination choice is not supported.

**Table 2. Construct Reality and Validity**

No	Variable	Measurement	Indicator	Standard Loading (Loading Factor)	Standard Loading Factor <sup>2</sup>	Measurement Error (1-Std Loading <sup>2</sup> )	Construct Reliability
1	Destination Choice	Cost of living at the destination	P1A	0.640		0.590	0.608
		Price of the tourist package	P2A	0.682	0.465	0.535	
		Facilities	P3A	0.552	0.305	0.695	
		Cost of transportation-	P4A	0.570	0.325	0.675	



No	Variable	Measurement	Indicator	Standard Loading (Loading Factor)	Standard Loading Factor <sup>2</sup>	Measurement Error (1-Std Loading <sup>2</sup> )	Construct Reliability
		-tion and time taken					
		Quality of promotion and advertising	P5A	0.635	0.403	0.597	
		Quality of service	P6A	0.566	0.320	0.680	
			$\Sigma$	<b>4,302</b>	<b>2.228</b>	<b>3.772</b>	
			$\Sigma^2$	<b>13,286</b>			
2	Visual Complexity	Pleasure	P1B	0.721	0.520	0.480	0.717
			P2B	0.734	0.539	0.461	
		Arousal	P3B	0.781	0.610	0.390	
			P4B	0.769	0.591	0.409	
		Purchase Intention	P5B	0.780	0.608	0.392	
			P6B	0.517	0.267	0.733	
			$\Sigma$	<b>4.302</b>	<b>3.136</b>	<b>2.864</b>	
	$\Sigma^2$	<b>18,507</b>					
3	Destination Image	Distinctive historical and cultural heritage	P4	0.604	0.365	0.635	0.631
		Distinct characteristics of architecture and buildings	P5	0.683	0.466	0.534	
		Interesting historical sites and museums	P6	0.596	0.355	0.645	
		Appealing local food cuisine and variety of foods	P7	0.530	0.281	0.719	
		Variety of products that promote local culture	P8	0.752	0.566	0.434	
		Personal safety	P9	0.726	0.527	0.473	

No	Variable	Measurement	Indicator	Standard Loading (Loading Factor)	Standard Loading Factor <sup>2</sup>	Measurement Error (1-Std Loading <sup>2</sup> )	Construct Reliability
		Cleanliness of environment	P10	0.656	0.430	0.570	
		Hospitable and friendly residents	P11	0.673	0.453	0.547	
		Pleasant weather	P12	0.586	0.343	0.657	
		Tranquil and restful atmosphere	P13	0.772	0.596	0.404	
		Quality of infrastructure	P14	0.524	0.275	0.725	
		Quality and variety of accommodations	P15	0.667	0.445	0.555	
		Variety of shopping facilities	P16	0.580	0.336	0.664	
		Good nightlife and entertainment Opportunities for sports and outdoor activities	P17	0.580	0.336	0.664	
		(climbing, trekking, water sports, adventure sports, picnicking, camping, hunting, fishing, etc.)	P18	0.619	0.383	0.617	
			P19	0.683	0.466	0.534	
		Well organized traffic flow and parking information	P20	0.589	0.347	0.653	

No	Variable	Measurement	Indicator	Standard Loading (Loading Factor)	Standard Loading Factor <sup>2</sup>	Measurement Error (1-Std Loading <sup>2</sup> )	Construct Reliability
		Adequate and convenient parking lot	P21	0.651	0.424	0.576	
		Easy access to the city	P22	0.576	0.332	0.668	
		Adequate and convenient local transportation	P23	0.586	0.343	0.657	
		Unpleasant - Pleasant	P24	0.666	0.444	0.556	
		Gloomy - Exciting	P25	0.704	0.496	0.504	
		Sleepy - Arousing	P26	0.533	0.284	0.716	
		Distressing - Relaxing	P27	0.630	0.397	0.603	
			Σ	<b>15,166</b>	<b>9,691</b>	<b>14,309</b>	
			Σ 2	<b>230.01</b>			

Source: Processed data, 2022

According to the calculation of reliability value result, it is found that there is no construct reliability value below 0,50, hence all constructs in this study are feasible to use. Moreover, the table shows that of the twenty-seven indicators of the destination image variable, there are three variables that do not meet the requirements and cannot be maintained because the value is below 0,05 and while the AVE value obtained by all variables is more than 0,50, so this study has met the requirements of the validity test.

#### 4.2. Discussion

Study by (Kuhzady & Ghasemi, 2019) revealed that visual complexity generated by Instagram plays an important role in online search behavior and attracts consumers to buy something. Further, according to (Kusumasondjaja & Tjiptono, 2019) food advertising that uses high levels of visual complexity indications generates more pleasure and arousal than advertising that uses lower levels of visual complexity.

Moreover, visual complexity also affects the behavior of tourists both before and after the trip and the intention to make a return visit (H. Kim & Stephenkova, 2015). In line with the research above, tourists who visit areas in West Sumatra are not only for traveling, but they also want to do culinary tours.

Based on the results of this study, it is the same as the results of previous research conducted by (Kusumasondjaja & Tjiptono, 2019) which stated that visual complexity had an effect on destination choice. The research resulted in research results where good quality visualization of a

broadcast or social media application will make tourists intend to visit or make repeat visits to a destination.

## **5. Conclusion**

According to the analysis and discussion presented previously, the researchers discovered that the visual complexity of a post plays a significant role in tourists' intention to visit and their formation of a positive image of tourism and local food in areas of West Sumatra, notably for tourists interested in taking a gastronomic tour.

In this study, however, researchers were unable to discover the relationship between the image of the destination and the destination choice. According to the researcher, this is prompted by the situation of the COVID-19 outbreak, which makes the destination's image not based on tourist visits, but effective promotion by relying on good photos from Instagram has made places in West Sumatra a place to travel.

Based on the findings of this study, future research should focus on exploring destination image in greater depth, particularly research conducted during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Given the limited space for movement, tourists will find it difficult to choose which destination they want to visit, which is why social media, particularly Instagram, is one of the best places media to explore the products they want.

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