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Social Media Brand Exposure, Brand Awareness, and Guests' Decision to Stay: Evidence from HARRIS Resort Barelang, Batam

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ABSTRACT

Social media visibility does not necessarily indicate whether consumers recognise a hotel brand or consider it when choosing accommodation. This study examined the separate associations of perceived social media brand exposure and brand awareness with guests' self-reported decision-to-stay scores at HARRIS Resort Barelang, Batam. A cross-sectional survey was conducted among 120 purposively selected respondents using a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire. Data were analysed through descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression. Respondent achievement rates were 84% for social media brand exposure and 87% for both brand awareness and decision to stay. Social media brand exposure was positively associated with the outcome ($\beta = 0.204$, $p = 0.006$), as was brand awareness ($\beta = 0.624$, $p < 0.001$). The overall regression model was statistically significant ($F(2, 117) = 78.013$, $p < 0.001$), explaining 57.1% of the observed variance ($R^2 = 0.571$). Brand awareness had a larger standardised coefficient than social media exposure, although the difference was not formally tested. These findings suggest that brand familiarity and perceived exposure are distinct considerations in evaluating hotel choice, rather than interchangeable measures of marketing performance. For hotel management, assessing whether online content makes the property recognisable and memorable may be more informative than relying solely on exposure metrics. However, the cross-sectional design and self-reported measures do not establish causal relationships or actual booking behaviour.

1. INTRODUCTION

Instagram has become an important channel through which hotels present accommodation options, facilities, promotional packages, and guest experiences to prospective customers. For hotels, however, the commercial relevance of social media extends beyond how frequently their content appears on users' screens. Visibility may introduce a property to potential guests, but it does not necessarily mean that the hotel will be recognised or considered when an accommodation decision is made. Social media marketing provides opportunities for information exchange and customer interaction [1], while consumers' responses to digital communication depend on how that information is processed and evaluated [2]. This distinction raises an important question for hotel marketing: whether exposure to social media content and familiarity with the hotel brand have separate associations with guests' accommodation choices.

Brand awareness offers a useful basis for examining this distinction. Within the customer-based brand equity framework, consumers' knowledge of a brand influences how they interpret and respond to marketing information [3]. Recognition and recall are particularly relevant when consumers compare accommodation alternatives, as a familiar hotel may be easier to identify and retrieve from memory. Brand exposure, however, concerns contact with marketing communication, whereas brand awareness reflects the extent to which a brand can be recognised or remembered. Previous research has associated social media marketing activities with brand awareness and other brand-related responses [4], but these constructs should not be treated as interchangeable. Repeated encounters with hotel content do not

guarantee that consumers will recall the property when choosing accommodation. Conversely, familiarity may persist even when recent exposure to the hotel's social media content is limited.

HARRIS Resort Barelang provides a relevant setting for examining these relationships within Batam's hotel market. Observations conducted in 2026 recorded more than 27,400 followers on the hotel's Instagram account. During 2025, the hotel published approximately six to thirteen posts per month, while its reported engagement rate fluctuated between 0.25% and 5%. Internal records also indicated substantial variation in occupancy, ranging from 26% in March to 73% in December 2025. Although these figures illustrate changes in the hotel's digital activity and operational performance, they represent different outcomes and cannot establish whether Instagram exposure contributed to individual accommodation decisions. Research previously conducted at HARRIS Resort Barelang examined Instagram marketing and booking intention through the intervening role of brand image [5]. That study provides a relevant local comparison, but it does not directly address whether perceived brand exposure and brand awareness retain separate associations with guests' accommodation-related decisions when examined within the same regression model.

Existing research has examined social media marketing and brand-related perceptions in relation to consumer responses, including accommodation preferences and booking intentions. Nevertheless, the distinction between being exposed to hotel content and being able to recognise or recall the hotel deserves closer examination. Brand exposure may provide useful information about rooms, facilities, and promotional offers, while brand awareness may help a property enter the set of alternatives considered when accommodation is needed. The central issue is therefore not simply whether both variables are associated with hotel choice, but whether each retains a relationship with the outcome after accounting for the other. This distinction is also relevant to marketing evaluation, where posting frequency, audience engagement, and brand familiarity represent different aspects of consumer response. Strategic social media research has emphasised the importance of evaluating marketing activities beyond the volume of content published [6], while studies of hospitality marketing have examined the relevance of brand-related perceptions to accommodation choices [7].

The present study examines the separate and joint associations of perceived social media brand exposure and brand awareness with respondents' self-reported decision-to-stay scores at HARRIS Resort Barelang, Batam. Research on digital and social media marketing has highlighted the need to distinguish marketing communication activities from the consumer responses associated with them [8]. Building on this distinction, the study assesses whether the two constructs provide separate explanatory information when included in the same regression model. Its contribution lies in clarifying their respective relationships with an accommodation-choice-related outcome within a specific hotel setting, rather than claiming an entirely new relationship between social media marketing and consumer behaviour. Because the data were collected through a cross-sectional survey, the analysis does not establish whether exposure produces brand awareness, whether awareness mediates the relationship between exposure and hotel choice, or whether either variable leads to actual bookings.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Decision to Stay as a Survey Outcome

Consumers' decisions to stay at a hotel involve evaluating accommodation alternatives against their preferences, available information, and previous experiences. In online booking contexts, brand-related evaluations can influence whether a hotel is considered among competing properties [9]. However, an intention to book should be distinguished from a completed reservation, just as willingness to recommend or revisit a hotel represents a different behavioural response from the initial accommodation decision [10]. These distinctions are relevant to the present study because the eight-item decision-to-stay scale includes hotel-choice certainty and habitual selection alongside recommendation and future booking or revisit intentions.

The study retains the original eight-item composite score to preserve consistency with the reported regression analysis. Nevertheless, the indicators cover related but conceptually distinct aspects of accommodation-related behaviour. The dependent variable is therefore interpreted as a self-reported, hotel-choice-related evaluation rather than a direct measure of completed bookings or initial hotel selection

alone. Internal consistency does not necessarily establish that all items represent a single underlying construct, making item-level examination important when assessing the scope of the findings [11].

2.2. Social Media Brand Exposure

Social media brand exposure refers to consumers' contact with brand-related information through digital communication. In the present study, the construct encompasses five reported domains: reach exposure, engagement exposure, content quality, posting frequency and consistency, and perceived impact. These domains reflect more than the frequency with which users encounter hotel content. They also concern how respondents engage with and evaluate the information presented. Research on social media marketing has examined the relationship between communication activities, consumer engagement, and brand-related responses [12]. However, combining these dimensions requires a clear distinction between exposure itself and consumers' evaluations of the content they encounter [13]. A post may appear in a user's feed without attracting attention, while a favourable assessment of its content does not necessarily indicate frequent exposure.

This distinction affects how the variable should be interpreted. The 17-item scale captures respondents' perceptions of Instagram-related communication rather than actual platform-recorded reach or impressions. A relatively favourable score may reflect positive evaluations of content quality or engagement as much as repeated contact with the hotel's posts. Although previous research in aviation and hospitality has examined consumer responses to social media marketing using questionnaire-based measures [14], the individual dimensions of the present scale were not estimated separately. The aggregate score is consequently treated as a broad assessment of social media brand exposure and related communication experiences, without assuming that each dimension contributes equally to hotel choice [15].

2.3. Brand Awareness

Unlike brand exposure, which concerns contact with marketing communication, brand awareness reflects whether consumers can recognise or recall a brand when considering a product or service category. Within Keller's customer-based brand equity framework, brand knowledge provides a basis for understanding how consumers respond to marketing activities [16]. Recognition may help consumers identify a familiar hotel when reviewing accommodation options, whereas recall concerns whether the brand can be retrieved from memory without a direct prompt. These processes are particularly relevant in hotel selection, where consumers may compare several properties before making a reservation. A recognisable brand may be more readily included among the alternatives considered, although familiarity does not necessarily lead to preference or purchase. Research on online hotel booking has identified brand-related evaluations as relevant to booking intentions, providing a basis for examining brand awareness alongside perceived social media exposure [17].

2.4. Hypothesis Development

2.4.1. Social Media Brand Exposure and Decision to Stay

Instagram content provides prospective hotel guests with information that may otherwise require visiting the property or contacting its reservation staff. Photographs of rooms, descriptions of facilities, promotional conditions, and guest-related content can help consumers assess whether a hotel meets their accommodation requirements. Exposure to such information may remain relevant to hotel-choice evaluations even when consumers' existing familiarity with the brand is taken into account [18]. However, exposure should not be equated with persuasion: encountering a promotional message does not establish that the information was considered useful or influenced a subsequent decision. Studies of digital marketing have nevertheless identified associations between social media communication and consumer responses, providing grounds for testing the relationship empirically [19]. The first hypothesis is therefore proposed:

H1: *Social media brand exposure is positively associated with the survey-based decision-to-stay score.*

2.4.2. Brand Awareness and Decision to Stay

Brand awareness may be more closely connected to accommodation choice because consumers must identify a hotel as an available alternative before evaluating whether it suits their needs. Recognition can help a familiar property stand out during an online search, while recall may make the hotel more readily available for consideration when a need for accommodation arises. Research conducted in Nha Trang has examined brand-related factors in relation to online hotel booking intention, supporting the relevance of

these considerations in hospitality settings [20]. Similar research on hotel-related consumer decisions provides further grounds for examining whether brand awareness retains an association with accommodation-choice evaluations after accounting for social media exposure [21]. This reasoning leads to the second hypothesis:

H2: *Brand awareness is positively associated with the survey-based decision-to-stay score.*

2.4.3. Joint Relationship of Social Media Brand Exposure and Brand Awareness With Decision to Stay

Social media brand exposure and brand awareness represent different aspects of how consumers encounter and recognise hotel brands. The former concerns contact with and evaluations of marketing communication, while the latter concerns the brand's presence in consumer memory. Although the constructs may be related, neither should be treated as a substitute for the other. Previous accommodation research has examined social media marketing and brand awareness in connection with hotel-choice-related outcomes [22]. Including both predictors in the same regression model allows their partial associations and combined explanatory power to be assessed while accounting for statistical overlap between them [23]. This approach does not establish whether exposure produces awareness or whether awareness mediates a relationship with hotel choice. Accordingly, the third hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H3: *Social media brand exposure and brand awareness jointly explain statistically significant variation in the survey-based decision-to-stay score.*

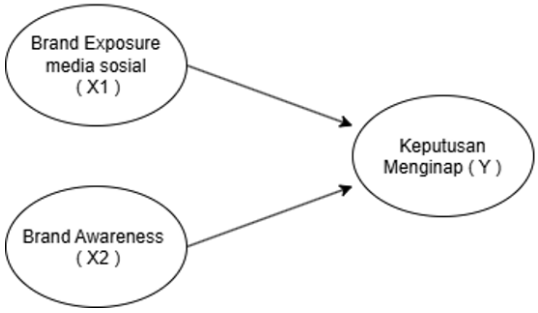


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3. METHOD

3.1. Research Design and Setting

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey to examine the associations of perceived social media brand exposure and brand awareness with respondents' decision-to-stay scores at HARRIS Resort Barelang, Batam, Riau Islands, Indonesia. Data were collected between April and May 2026 from individuals familiar with the hotel who reported exposure to its Instagram content. Each respondent served as the unit of analysis, with information on all research variables obtained through a single questionnaire. Multiple linear regression was used to estimate the separate and joint associations of the predictors with the outcome. Given the observational design and simultaneous measurement of the variables, the analysis does not establish temporal relationships or causal effects.

3.2. Respondents and Data Collection

A total of 120 respondents were recruited through purposive sampling. The reported eligibility criteria included being at least 17 years old, familiarity with HARRIS Resort Barelang, prior exposure to or interaction with the hotel's Instagram content, and willingness to participate. Recruitment also included individuals who had previously stayed at the hotel or were considering a future stay. Questionnaires were distributed through QR codes and printed forms. However, the respondent profile classified all participants as having stayed at the hotel at least once, creating an inconsistency with the broader eligibility criteria. Because individual screening records were unavailable for verification, the analysis retains the original sample without assuming that every respondent had a confirmed previous stay. The non-probability sampling procedure also limits the generalisability of the findings beyond the surveyed group.

The sample target was determined using the study's original recruitment guideline of approximately ten respondents per conceptual indicator. With 12 indicators across the research variables, the resulting

sample comprised 120 respondents. This rule provided a practical basis for recruitment but did not constitute an a priori statistical power analysis. Accordingly, no claim is made that the sample was statistically representative of the hotel's customer population or that its statistical power had been formally established.

3.3. Measures and Data Quality

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising 37 statements measured on a five-point Likert scale. Social media brand exposure (X1) was assessed through 17 items addressing exposure, engagement, content quality, posting frequency and consistency, and perceived impact. Brand awareness (X2) was measured using 12 items covering brand recognition, brand recall, and top-of-mind awareness. The remaining eight items assessed decision to stay (Y), including hotel-choice certainty, habitual selection, willingness to recommend, and future booking or revisit intentions. Although these indicators concern accommodation-related responses, they do not necessarily represent a single behavioural construct. The outcome is therefore interpreted as a composite self-reported score rather than a direct measure of completed hotel bookings.

Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with reported values of 0.970 for social media brand exposure, 0.960 for brand awareness, and 0.720 for decision to stay. The original analysis also reported that all questionnaire items satisfied the applied validity criteria. However, item-level validity coefficients, the original measurement sources, and documentation of instrument adaptation were not available for independent assessment. The reported reliability estimates were therefore retained without modifying the original 37-item scoring structure. These results provide information about internal consistency but do not, on their own, establish the dimensionality or construct validity of the measures.

3.4. Analytical Procedure

Data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 27. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarise respondent characteristics and the research variables. Before regression analysis, the reported diagnostic procedures examined residual normality using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, heteroscedasticity, and multicollinearity through tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) values. Multiple linear regression was then used to estimate the partial associations of social media brand exposure and brand awareness with decision to stay, while the overall model was evaluated using the F-test. Statistical significance was assessed at $\alpha = 0.05$, with findings reported through unstandardised coefficients (B), standard errors, standardised coefficients (β), t-statistics, p-values, R^2, and adjusted R^2. Additional assessments of linearity, influential observations, and residual independence were not documented in the available statistical output and are therefore not reported as completed [24].

3.5. Research Ethics

The study documentation reports that respondents were informed of the research purpose before completing the questionnaire and that participation was voluntary. Respondent information was used for academic research, and personal identifiers were excluded from the published findings. The original manuscript also referred to document no. 642/UN35.8/LT/2026, dated June 10, 2026, as evidence of ethical approval. However, this date followed the reported data collection period of April–May 2026, and the available documentation does not establish whether the letter was issued by an authorised research ethics committee or constituted research permission. Consequently, institutional ethical approval cannot be claimed on the basis of this document without verification of its issuing authority, purpose, and applicable institutional requirements.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Respondent Profile

The analysis included 120 respondents, of whom 51.67% were women and 48.33% were men. The largest age group was 26–35 years (33.33%), followed by 36–45 years (25.00%). Private-sector employees accounted for 40.00% of the sample, while civil servants and self-employed respondents represented 20.83% and 20.00%, respectively. The reported stay-frequency distribution indicates that 37.50% had stayed at HARRIS Resort Barelang once, 35.83% had stayed two or three times, and the remaining 26.67% reported at least four stays. Although these categories suggest previous experience with the hotel, they do not independently establish whether every respondent satisfied the original screening criteria, which also permitted participation by individuals considering a future stay. The characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	58	48.33
	Female	62	51.67
Age	17–25 years	20	16.67
	26–35 years	40	33.33
	36–45 years	30	25.00
	46–55 years	21	17.50
	Over 55 years	9	7.50
Occupation	Private-sector employee	48	40.00
	Civil servant	25	20.83
	Self-employed	24	20.00
	Homemaker	12	10.00
	Student	5	4.17
	Other	6	5.00
Frequency of stays	Once	45	37.50
	2–3 times	43	35.83
	4–5 times	20	16.67
	More than 5 times	12	10.00

4.2. Descriptive Scores and Instrument Reliability

The reported respondent achievement rates (*Tingkat Capaian Responden*, TCR) were 84% for social media brand exposure and 87% for both brand awareness and decision to stay. These percentages summarise questionnaire responses rather than actual Instagram reach, engagement, or hotel bookings. Because the underlying item-level totals and descriptive outputs were unavailable, the reported percentages could not be independently recalculated. They are therefore presented as descriptive figures from the study rather than independently verified estimates.

The reliability analysis yielded Cronbach's alpha values of 0.970 for social media brand exposure, 0.960 for brand awareness, and 0.720 for decision to stay. All three values exceeded the commonly applied threshold of 0.70, although the relatively high coefficients for the first two constructs warrant attention to possible item redundancy. The reliability results describe internal consistency and should not be interpreted as evidence that the scales are unidimensional or that their construct validity has been established. Table 2 summarises the reported descriptive and reliability results.

Table 2. Descriptive Achievement Rates and Internal Consistency

Variable	Items	Reported TCR (%)	Cronbach's α
Social media brand exposure (X1)	17	84	0.970
Brand awareness (X2)	12	87	0.960
Decision to stay (Y)	8	87	0.720

4.3. Regression Diagnostics

The reported regression diagnostics did not identify major departures under the statistical tests applied. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test of the unstandardised residuals returned a significance value of 0.200, indicating no statistically significant departure from the assumed normal distribution under this test. The heteroscedasticity tests were also non-significant for social media brand exposure ($p = 0.427$) and brand awareness ($p = 0.180$). Both predictors had tolerance values of 0.696 and variance inflation factors (VIF) of 1.437, suggesting that multicollinearity was not a substantial concern in the estimated model.

These findings provide some support for the suitability of the reported regression analysis, but non-significant diagnostic tests do not establish that all assumptions were satisfied. In particular, assessments of linearity, influential observations, and residual independence were not documented in the available output. The diagnostic results are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3. Regression Diagnostic Results

Diagnostic test	Reported result	Interpretation
Residual normality (Kolmogorov–Smirnov)	$p = 0.200$	No significant departure detected

Heteroscedasticity (X1)	p = 0.427	No significant association detected under the reported test
Heteroscedasticity (X2)	p = 0.180	No significant association detected under the reported test
Multicollinearity (X1 and X2)	Tolerance = 0.696; VIF = 1.437	No problematic multicollinearity detected

4.4. Multiple Regression and Hypothesis Testing

Multiple linear regression was used to examine the associations of social media brand exposure and brand awareness with respondents' decision-to-stay scores. As shown in Table 4, social media brand exposure was positively associated with the outcome after controlling for brand awareness (B = 0.121, β = 0.204, t = 2.817, p = 0.006). Brand awareness also showed a positive association after accounting for social media exposure (B = 0.485, β = 0.624, t = 8.599, p < 0.001). Both results were consistent with the directions proposed in H1 and H2.

Brand awareness had the larger standardised regression coefficient, indicating a stronger estimated association with the outcome within the fitted model. However, the difference between the two coefficients was not formally tested, and the results should not be interpreted as establishing that brand awareness is statistically more influential than social media exposure.

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Results

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	0.790	2.859	—	0.276	0.783
Social media brand exposure (X1)	0.121	0.043	0.204	2.817	0.006
Brand awareness (X2)	0.485	0.056	0.624	8.599	<0.001

The overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(2, 117) = 78.013$, $p < 0.001$. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.571$) indicates that social media brand exposure and brand awareness jointly accounted for 57.1% of the observed variation in decision-to-stay scores. After adjustment for the number of predictors and sample size, the explained variance was 56.4% (adjusted $R^2 = 0.564$). The remaining 42.9% represents variation not accounted for by the fitted model; it cannot be attributed to particular unmeasured variables without further analysis.

The model-level result was consistent with H3, indicating that the two predictors jointly contributed statistically significant explanatory information. It does not establish a causal relationship between the predictors and the outcome, nor does it demonstrate that social media exposure operates through brand awareness. The overall model statistics and ANOVA results are presented in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5. Regression Model Summary

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	SE of estimate	F (2, 117)	p
0.756	0.571	0.564	1.987	78.013	<0.001

Table 6. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square
Regression	616.253	2	308.126
Residual	462.114	117	3.950
Total	1,078.367	119	—

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Interpretation of Principal Findings

The regression results reveal a distinction between consumers' exposure to hotel-related content and their familiarity with the hotel brand. Both variables remained positively associated with respondents' decision-to-stay scores when included in the same model, although brand awareness had a substantially larger standardised coefficient (β = 0.624) than social media brand exposure (β = 0.204). This pattern is consistent with the possibility that brand recognition and recall are more closely related to accommodation-choice evaluations than exposure to promotional content alone. When comparing hotels in Batam, consumers may encounter information about several properties, but those they can readily recognise or recall may be more likely to enter their consideration set. Keller's brand-knowledge framework

offers a basis for interpreting this distinction [3]. Nevertheless, the present data do not establish the cognitive process underlying the observed associations, and the difference between the two coefficients was not formally tested.

The smaller coefficient for social media brand exposure should not be interpreted as evidence that Instagram communication has little value. Exposure retained a statistically significant association with the outcome after brand awareness was taken into account. However, the measurement of X1 extends beyond exposure frequency to include engagement, content quality, posting consistency, and perceived impact. Respondents who evaluated the hotel's Instagram communication favourably may therefore have reported higher exposure scores even when their actual frequency of contact differed. This distinction matters because the coefficient cannot be translated into the expected benefit of an additional Instagram post, impression, or follower. Earlier research at HARRIS Resort Barelang examined Instagram marketing in relation to booking intention, while another Indonesian hotel study considered social media marketing and accommodation decisions [5], [25]. The present results add a comparison between perceived exposure and brand awareness, rather than identifying which specific Instagram activities are most effective.

The findings also require a distinction between statistical association and the proposed sequence of consumer responses. Although repeated exposure might contribute to brand familiarity, the regression model did not estimate a pathway from social media exposure to brand awareness. Both constructs were entered as simultaneous predictors of the decision-to-stay score. It is therefore possible to identify their separate conditional associations, but not to conclude that Instagram exposure strengthens awareness and subsequently produces reservations. Previous experience with the hotel could also contribute to both brand familiarity and reported accommodation preferences. This alternative explanation is particularly relevant because the respondent profile records previous stays across the sample, although the original recruitment criteria also allowed prospective guests to participate.

The model accounted for 57.1% of the observed variation in decision-to-stay scores. While this represents a substantial proportion within the surveyed sample, its interpretation depends on the outcome being measured. The eight-item scale includes hotel-choice-related evaluations alongside recommendation and revisit intentions, which may reflect previous guest experiences rather than a new accommodation decision. Studies at The Kayon Resort and Ijo Echo Lodge have also investigated social-media-related factors associated with hotel selection [26], [27]. However, differences in sampling, measurement, and outcome definitions limit direct comparisons of explanatory power. The present R^2 should consequently be interpreted as the explanatory performance of two self-reported predictors within this particular survey, not as evidence that Instagram marketing and brand awareness account for a comparable proportion of actual hotel bookings.

5.2. Theoretical Contribution

The study contributes to hospitality marketing research by examining perceived social media brand exposure and brand awareness as distinct predictors of an accommodation-choice-related outcome. Its contribution does not rest on introducing new marketing constructs or demonstrating a previously unknown relationship. Rather, the findings show that both variables retain positive conditional associations when considered together, with brand awareness displaying the larger estimated coefficient. This distinction is conceptually important because contact with marketing communication and the ability to retrieve a brand from memory represent different aspects of consumer experience. Treating them as interchangeable measures may obscure how consumers evaluate hotel alternatives.

The findings raise a more specific question for subsequent research: whether brand recognition and recall represent responses more closely connected to hotel selection than general assessments of social media communication. This remains a proposition requiring direct investigation rather than an established mechanism. The present model cannot determine whether awareness develops through Instagram exposure, previous stays, word of mouth, or other sources of brand familiarity. Nor can it distinguish the initial choice of accommodation from post-stay loyalty without further validation of the dependent variable. Research on electronic word of mouth and hotel booking intention similarly illustrates the importance of distinguishing responses to online information from completed purchasing behaviour [28]. Future theoretical development would therefore benefit from separating exposure, brand knowledge, accommodation consideration, and subsequent booking behaviour into empirically distinguishable stages.

5.3. Managerial Implications

For HARRIS Resort Barelang, the findings suggest that evaluating Instagram performance solely through posting frequency, follower growth, or engagement rates would provide an incomplete picture of how consumers respond to the hotel's marketing communication. The hotel's Instagram account had more than 27,400 followers during the reported observation period, yet its engagement rates varied considerably. These platform indicators describe audience activity but do not establish whether the property is remembered when potential guests consider accommodation in Batam. A more informative evaluation would examine whether Instagram content communicates recognisable features of HARRIS Resort Barelang, including its location near Barelang Bridge, available room types, resort facilities, and promotional packages. Marketing communication research supports assessing consumer responses alongside the distribution and visibility of content [7], [29].

This approach could be implemented through a clearer separation of communication, brand-awareness, and commercial indicators. The marketing team could review whether promotional materials consistently display the hotel's identity and provide sufficient information for comparing accommodation options. Short surveys of prospective guests could assess unaided brand recall and aided recognition, while campaign-specific booking links or enquiry records could help distinguish interest generated through Instagram from reservations completed through other channels. Such measures would provide more useful information than follower counts alone. They would also help identify whether a campaign attracts attention without making the hotel sufficiently recognisable or whether consumers remember the brand but still require additional information before booking. These are proposed evaluation practices, not outcomes demonstrated by the present regression.

The operational implications should also be considered alongside the hotel's occupancy patterns. Internal records showed occupancy ranging from 26% in March to 73% in December 2025, but the survey did not establish a relationship between individual Instagram exposure and these monthly fluctuations. Occupancy may be shaped by seasonal demand, pricing, distribution channels, local events, and other operational conditions. Managers should therefore avoid attributing changes in occupancy to social media activity without linking campaign information to subsequent enquiries and verified bookings. The practical value of the findings lies in encouraging more precise measurement of brand-related consumer responses, rather than prescribing a specific increase in promotional expenditure or posting frequency.

5.4. Limitations and Further Research

Several limitations affect the interpretation of these findings. First, the study was conducted at a single hotel using purposive sampling, restricting the extent to which its results can be generalised to other properties or customer populations. Second, social media exposure, brand awareness, and decision to stay were measured simultaneously through the same questionnaire. This design does not establish temporal order, and common-method variance may have contributed to the observed associations [30]. Third, the respondent profile indicates that all participants had stayed at the hotel at least once, whereas the stated recruitment criteria also permitted individuals considering a future stay. This discrepancy requires verification because previous guests and prospective guests may evaluate the hotel through different experiences.

A further limitation concerns the dependent variable. The eight-item decision-to-stay measure incorporates hotel-choice certainty, habitual selection, recommendation, and future booking or revisit intentions. Although these responses are related to accommodation decisions, they do not necessarily represent a single construct. The findings should therefore remain tied to the reported composite score until the individual indicators and their measurement structure have been examined. The high internal consistency coefficients for the two predictors also warrant closer assessment of possible item overlap, as reliability alone does not establish construct validity.

Future studies should distinguish prospective hotel choice from repeat-stay intention and post-stay recommendation, using measures appropriate to each outcome. A longitudinal design could examine whether initial exposure to Instagram content is followed by changes in brand recognition, accommodation consideration, and subsequent booking behaviour. Linking respondents' reported exposure to campaign engagement records and verified enquiries or reservations would also help separate perceived communication experiences from observable commercial outcomes. Research involving several hotels and both first-time and returning guests would provide a stronger basis for examining whether the relationship between brand awareness and accommodation choice extends beyond the specific circumstances of HARRIS Resort Barelang.

6. CONCLUSION

Among the 120 respondents surveyed at HARRIS Resort Barelang, perceived social media brand exposure and brand awareness were both positively associated with the self-reported decision-to-stay score, jointly accounting for 57.1% of its observed variation. Brand awareness showed a larger standardised coefficient ($\beta = 0.624$) than social media brand exposure ($\beta = 0.204$), suggesting that recognising and recalling the hotel may be more closely related to accommodation-choice evaluations than exposure to its Instagram content alone. Although the difference between these coefficients was not formally tested, the findings underscore the need to distinguish brand familiarity from social media visibility when evaluating hotel marketing performance. For HARRIS Resort Barelang, this means assessing whether Instagram communication helps prospective guests recognise the property and recall its distinguishing features when comparing accommodation options, rather than relying primarily on posting frequency or follower counts. The findings remain specific to a single-hotel, cross-sectional survey using purposive sampling and a composite outcome that includes hotel choice, recommendation, and revisit-related responses. They therefore cannot establish causal relationships or predict completed reservations. Further research should validate the outcome measure, verify respondent eligibility, and examine how brand recognition and recall relate to subsequent booking behaviour.

DECLARATIONS

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The source manuscript states that the authors contributed collectively to the study design, methods, data collection, analysis, drafting, and revision. A verified individual CRediT allocation was not provided and must be confirmed by all authors before submission.

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Data Availability

According to the source manuscript, data may be requested from the authors for relevant academic purposes, subject to respondent confidentiality. The corresponding author should confirm the applicable access conditions.

Ethical Approval / Research Permission

The status of institutional ethical approval or exemption has not been verified from the materials available for revision. The source manuscript identifies document no. 642/UN35.8/LT/2026 dated June 10, 2026, after the reported April–May 2026 collection period. The issuing authority and whether this constitutes ethical approval, exemption, or research permission must be established from the original document before publication.

Informed Consent

The source manuscript reports that participants were informed of the study and provided consent before responding; the actual procedure and relevant records should be confirmed by the authors.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no competing interests.

Artificial Intelligence Use

ChatGPT (OpenAI) assisted with language editing, proofreading, manuscript restructuring, and drafting revised explanatory text. The authors remain responsible for verifying the accuracy of the statistical results, bibliographic details, ethical declarations, interpretations, originality, and final submitted manuscript.

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