

## Building the Halal Dining Experience: Physical Evidence, Satisfaction, and Revisit Intention in Banda Aceh

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### ABSTRACT

*This study investigates how physical evidence in Middle Eastern-themed restaurants influence revisit intention in Banda Aceh and whether Muslim customer satisfaction mediates that relationship. Motivated by the growth of halal dining and the centrality of servicescape to Muslim diners' experiences, the research addresses limited empirical evidence in this specific cultural setting. A cross-sectional survey was administered to 300 Muslim customers who had visited at least one target restaurant; responses were captured on a five-point Likert scale using reflective indicators for physical evidence, customer satisfaction, and revisit intention. Data were analyzed with partial least squares structural equation modeling (SmartPLS 3.0) and bootstrapping. Measurement results showed strong reliability and convergent-discriminant validity across constructs. Structurally, physical evidence had a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction and revisit intention, while customer satisfaction also significantly increased revisit intention. The model explained a substantial share of variance in customer satisfaction and revisit intention, and mediation testing indicated that customer satisfaction partially carried the effect of physical evidence on revisit intention. These findings highlight that an Islamic-aligned servicescape—covering architecture and interior, Islamic visual cues, cleanliness, absence of non-sharia activities, prayer facilities, and transparent transactions—directly encourages return visits and, through enhanced satisfaction, further strengthens customers' intentions to revisit. The study contributes context-specific evidence for halal hospitality management and suggests that operators should jointly invest in servicescape design and experience orchestration to build repeat patronage.*

**Keyword:** Physical evidence, Muslim customer satisfaction, Revisit intention, Halal hospitality, Servicescape

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## INTRODUCTION

The food and beverage service industry has experienced rapid growth over the past few decades, playing a strategic role in supporting the economy, creating employment opportunities, and strengthening the tourism sector (Jeaheng et al., 2020). Within this industry, restaurants are not merely viewed as providers of food, but also as spaces for recreation, social interaction, and integral components of the modern consumer lifestyle (F. Ali & Amin, 2014). Changes in consumption patterns, culinary globalization, and rising customer expectations have intensified competition in the restaurant sector (Han & Hyun, 2015). As a result, business owners are compelled to understand the factors influencing customer loyalty, particularly through revisit intention (Polas et al., 2022).

Revisit intention refers to a customer's tendency to return to a restaurant or reuse its services in the future after having a positive prior experience (Gustafsson et al., 2005). This variable plays a vital role in business sustainability strategies, as it supports customer retention and encourages positive word-of-mouth (Han & Ryu, 2009). Given the high cost of acquiring new customers, retaining existing ones through revisit intention is considered more efficient and profitable (Rather, 2019). Therefore, identifying the drivers that encourage customers to return has become a critical focus in service marketing and consumer behavior research.

One key variable frequently examined in revisit intention studies is physical evidence. This encompasses all tangible aspects of the physical environment and service indicators, including interior design, lighting, layout, cleanliness, comfort, and employee appearance (Han & Ryu, 2009). Prior research has shown that well-maintained physical evidence can foster positive emotional experiences, increase satisfaction, and enhance revisit intention (Ali et al., 2013). Conversely, an uncomfortable or unhygienic environment may reduce satisfaction and discourage return visits (Ariffin et al., 2017). In the context of halal restaurants, physical evidence carries a broader significance as it reflects the principles of cleanliness and halal compliance rooted in Islamic teachings (Hamid et al., 2018).

Customer satisfaction is another critical variable shown to mediate the relationship between physical evidence and revisit intention. According to Oliver (2014), satisfaction is an emotional evaluation that occurs when customers compare their expectations with actual experiences. Numerous studies have confirmed that satisfaction has a direct effect on customer loyalty and revisit intention (Gustafsson et al., 2005; Han & Hyun, 2015). In the restaurant industry, satisfaction is recognized as a strong predictor of revisit behavior (Han & Ryu, 2009). Additionally, several studies highlight the mediating role of satisfaction in the relationship between service quality, physical environment, and price perception with customer loyalty (F. Ali & Amin, 2014; Polas et al., 2022). This indicates that while physical evidence can directly affect revisit intention, its impact is significantly enhanced when customers feel satisfied with their experience.

The study of revisit intention becomes increasingly relevant in the context of halal culinary experiences. Demand for halal restaurants has grown significantly, driven by greater awareness among Muslim consumers regarding the halal-thayyib principles in food and beverage (Aisyah et al., 2019). Research suggests that Muslim consumers tend to prefer establishments that not only offer halal food but also provide environments aligned with Islamic values (Jeaheng et al., 2020). A recent meta-analysis further confirms that Islamic attributes consistently exert a positive influence on customer satisfaction (Sumardi et al., 2024). Therefore, in Middle Eastern-themed restaurants—characterized

by cultural and religious nuances—physical evidence is not merely aesthetic, but a core component of halal and sharia-compliant identity.

Several studies have investigated the factors affecting revisit intention in halal restaurants across various countries. For instance, Polas et al. (2022) in Bangladesh found that the physical environment, service quality, and price perception significantly influence revisit intention, with customer satisfaction serving as a mediator. Research in Malaysia also emphasizes the strong influence of physical environment and service quality on customers' emotional satisfaction (F. Ali et al., 2013). In Indonesia, Elistia & Maulana (2023) demonstrated that the physical environment in Bandung's culinary destinations positively affects satisfaction and revisit intention among culinary tourists. Furthermore, Abror et al. (2025) in their study on halal tourism in West Sumatra, confirmed that religiosity, digital halal literacy, and halal destination attributes influence satisfaction, trust, and revisit intention. These findings strengthen the argument that non-product factors related to religious and cultural values significantly contribute to Muslim consumer behavior.

However, most existing studies focus on general halal restaurants, sharia-compliant hotels, or halal tourism destinations. Very few have specifically examined Middle Eastern-themed restaurants, especially in the Indonesian context. These restaurants offer distinct experiences, including Arab-inspired interior design, traditional music, spatial arrangements that ensure privacy, and staff attire reflecting Middle Eastern culture. For Muslim consumers in Banda Aceh—known as the “Veranda of Mecca” for its strong implementation of Islamic law—such elements of physical evidence are likely to have a profound impact on satisfaction and revisit intention. Yet, to date, no empirical research has explicitly examined this relationship.

This research gap is critical, as Banda Aceh is a predominantly Muslim city with strong potential for halal culinary tourism development. Middle Eastern restaurants are gaining popularity among both locals and tourists. However, academic understanding of how physical evidence influences satisfaction and revisit intention among Muslim consumers remains limited. Accordingly, this study seeks to address that gap by investigating the relationships between physical evidence, Muslim customer satisfaction, and revisit intention in Middle Eastern-themed restaurants in Banda Aceh.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of Muslim consumer behavior models by examining the mediating role of satisfaction in the relationship between physical evidence and revisit intention. Practically, the findings will assist Middle Eastern restaurant managers in Banda Aceh in designing consumer experience-based marketing strategies that align with Islamic values, enhance customer satisfaction, and foster loyalty through revisit intention. Moreover, this research holds relevance for local government policymakers in formulating strategies to advance the halal creative culinary economy, in line with Aceh's vision as an Islamic tourism destination.

Based on the above, this study aims to: (1) Analyze the effect of physical evidence on revisit intention; (2) Analyze the effect of physical evidence on customer satisfaction; (3) Analyze the effect of customer satisfaction on revisit intention; and (4) Examine the mediating role of Muslim customer satisfaction in the relationship between physical evidence and revisit intention. The following sections of this article present the theoretical framework and hypothesis development, research method, results and discussion, and conclusions.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) Framework

The Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) framework posits that environmental stimuli influence internal states (organism), which in turn drive behavioral responses. This framework is highly relevant for explaining how physical evidence (stimulus) shapes customer satisfaction (organism) and ultimately leads to revisit intention (response) in the restaurant context (Mehrabian & Russell; contemporary applications in hospitality settings). Recent studies affirm the widespread adoption of the S-O-R framework in hospitality research—particularly in hotels and restaurants—where environmental factors (servicescape/atmosphere) function as stimuli, consumer affect and cognition as organisms, and behavioral intentions such as loyalty or revisit intention as responses (Ali et al., 2021; Gounaris et al., 2025).

In contemporary hospitality literature, the servicescape is understood as a configuration of physical cues—ambient conditions, design, layout, signage, and social elements—that collectively shape customer perceptions and behaviors. Recent research advocates viewing the servicescape as an integrated configuration rather than a collection of discrete elements, as customers tend to process environmental cues holistically, influencing their emotions, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions (Gounaris et al., 2025; Line & Hanks, 2020; Taylor Jr, 2020).

In the context of halal or culturally themed restaurants (e.g., Middle Eastern), a clean, aesthetically pleasing, and comfortable physical environment tends to enhance perceived value, trigger positive emotions, and increase satisfaction, thereby strengthening revisit intention. These findings are consistent across various settings—including restaurants, hotels, and halal tourism—and across diverse cultural contexts (Bichler et al., 2021; Han & Hyun, 2018; Jeaheng et al., 2020; Rajput & Gahfoor, 2020).

Specifically within halal restaurants, recent empirical evidence shows that physical environment has both a direct effect on revisit intention and an indirect effect mediated by customer satisfaction. These findings have been validated among younger Muslim populations (Gen Z) and confirmed using structural equation modeling (Polas et al., 2022; Rajput & Gahfoor, 2020). Additionally, (Polas et al., 2022) demonstrate that customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between the physical environment and revisit intention, highlighting the importance of layout, decoration, lighting, and cleanliness in creating a warm atmosphere that promotes return visits. Their model meets the necessary reliability and validity thresholds (e.g., AVE, CR) using SmartPLS.

Cross-contextual evidence further supports customer satisfaction as a robust predictor of post-consumption behavior (e.g., revisit and loyalty) in both restaurant and tourism services, making it a suitable key mediator in this model (Han & Hyun, 2015; Nazarian et al., 2024; Peng et al., 2023).

### Physical Evidence

In restaurant research, physical evidence encompasses environmental cues such as lighting, cleanliness, color, scent, and music, as well as interior/exterior design, spatial layout, signage, and social elements like employee appearance. Together, these components shape customers' quality perceptions and emotional responses. Recent studies confirm that a high-quality physical environment

enhances customer satisfaction and promotes favorable behavioral intentions (M. A. Ali et al., 2021; Han & Hyun, 2018; Taylor Jr, 2020).

## **Customer Satisfaction**

Conceptually, customer satisfaction reflects an affective and cognitive post-consumption evaluation that arises from comparing expectations with actual experiences. In the hospitality sector, satisfaction functions as a psychological mechanism that translates service and environmental experiences into behavioral intentions such as revisit or loyalty. Empirical findings consistently demonstrate the significant impact of satisfaction on revisit intentions (Han & Hyun, 2015; Nazarian et al., 2024; Rajput & Gahfoor, 2020).

## **Revisit Intention**

Revisit intention is considered a key behavioral intention indicator, reflecting the likelihood of customers re-engaging with the same service provider. It is widely used as a proxy for short-term loyalty in restaurant and hospitality studies (Bichler et al., 2021; Han & Hyun, 2018).

## **Interrelationships Among Physical Evidence, Customer Satisfaction, and Revisit Intention**

Research in both restaurant and hotel settings has demonstrated that the quality of the physical environment—including cleanliness, aesthetics, lighting, comfort, and layout—positively influences emotional responses and perceived value, which in turn foster revisit intention. Cross-national evidence (from Asia and Europe) confirms the significance of these effects, even in the context of post-pandemic dining arrangements (M. A. Ali et al., 2021; Han & Hyun, 2018; Taylor Jr, 2020). In halal and Gen-Z-specific settings, the direct influence of the physical environment on revisit intention also remains strong (Polas et al., 2022; Rajput & Gahfoor, 2020). Therefore, the first hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Physical evidence has a significant and positive effect on revisit intention.

A superior physical evidence enhances comfort, evokes positive emotions, and strengthens perceived quality, thereby increasing customer satisfaction. This pattern holds across various restaurant segments (fine dining, quick service, fast casual) and is consistently replicated within holistic servicescape models that integrate ambient, design, and social elements (Han & Hyun, 2018; Line & Hanks, 2020; Nazarian et al., 2024). In halal restaurant studies, conducive physical environments are also found to increase Muslim customer satisfaction (Polas et al., 2022). Thus, the second hypothesis is stated:

H2: Physical evidence has a significant and positive effect on customer satisfaction.

Satisfaction is a well-established determinant of behavioral intention. Both meta-analytic and empirical studies in hospitality confirm that satisfied customers are more likely to return and remain loyal, including in restaurant and destination contexts (Han & Hyun, 2015; Peng et al., 2023; Rajput & Gahfoor, 2020). Specifically, Polas et al. (2022) provide explicit evidence that customer satisfaction significantly and positively influences revisit intention in halal restaurant settings. Thus, the third hypothesis is formulated:

H3: Customer satisfaction has a significant and positive effect on revisit intention.

From a theoretical perspective, the S-O-R model positions satisfaction as the psychological mechanism that channels the effect of environmental stimuli (physical evidence) into behavioral intentions (revisit intention). Recent empirical studies in both mainstream and halal restaurant settings confirm the mediating role of satisfaction in this relationship (F. Ali & Amin, 2014; Polas et al., 2022; Rajput & Gahfoor, 2020). Polas et al. (2022) particularly emphasize the significance of satisfaction as a mediator in the path from physical environment to revisit intention. Accordingly, the final hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between physical evidence and revisit intention.

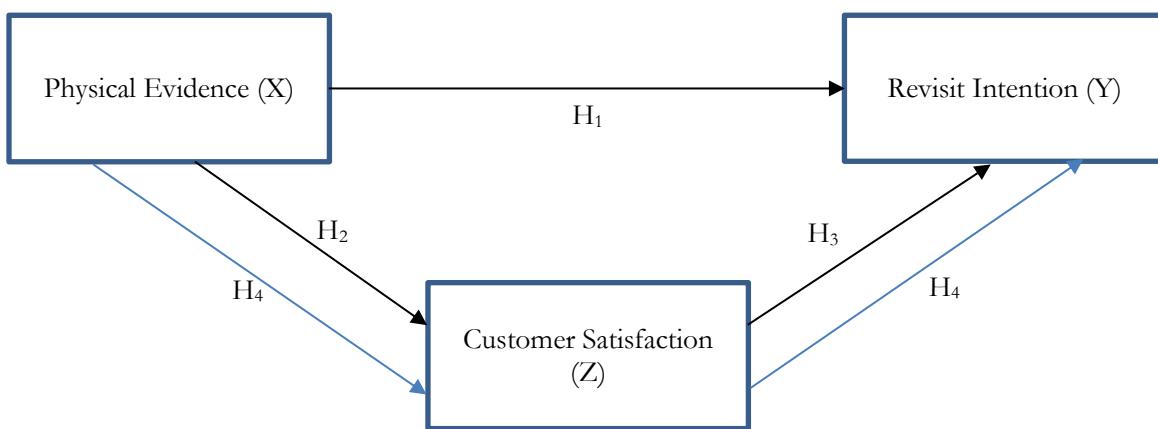


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

As illustrated in Figure 1, this study conceptualizes physical evidence as the independent variable, customer satisfaction as the mediating variable, and revisit intention as the dependent variable. The model tests the direct effects of physical evidence on revisit intention ( $H_1$ ), physical evidence on satisfaction ( $H_2$ ), and satisfaction on revisit intention ( $H_3$ ), as well as the mediating effect of satisfaction on the relationship between physical evidence and revisit intention ( $H_4$ ). This model aligns with the mainstream servicescape research, which emphasizes the configuration of the physical environment as a trigger of customer affect/cognition and post-consumption behavior, and has received strong empirical support in restaurant and halal service contexts (Gounaris et al., 2025; Han & Hyun, 2018; Polas et al., 2022).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional survey design to examine the impact of physical evidence on revisit intention, with customer satisfaction as the mediating variable, within Middle Eastern-themed restaurants in Banda Aceh. The analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 3.0 (Hair, 2014). PLS-  
<https://jurnal.utu.ac.id/jbkan/>

SEM was selected due to its suitability for predictive models involving reflective latent constructs, moderately non-normal data, and relatively large sample sizes (Hair, 2014).

The study population comprises Muslim customers in Banda Aceh who have visited at least one Middle Eastern-themed restaurant (e.g., Benjawas, Tabarak, Almaz). Respondents were selected based on the following criteria: (1) Muslim; (2) aged  $\geq 17$  years; (3) dined at one of the target restaurants in the past 12 months; and (4) willing to participate in the survey. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was employed through intercept surveys at restaurant locations and online questionnaire distribution via relevant customer networks and communities. The final sample size of  $n = 300$  is considered adequate for a PLS-SEM analysis involving three reflective constructs and four hypotheses, exceeding the 10-times rule and ensuring sufficient statistical power for detecting moderate effects (Hair, 2014).

All indicators were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Items were adapted to the Middle Eastern restaurant context and presented in clear, accessible Indonesian to minimize comprehension bias (Beaton et al., 2000; Hair, 2014). The revisit intention construct included six items adapted from Konuk (2019), the physical evidence construct included eight items from Abuznaid (2012), and the customer satisfaction construct consisted of six items adapted from (Singh et al., 2022).

Surveys were distributed both offline (intercepts during lunch/dinner hours) and online via survey links targeted at eligible customers. Participation was voluntary with prior informed consent; data confidentiality was maintained, and no financial incentives were offered that might bias responses (Hair, 2014). A total of 300 valid responses were collected and included in the analysis.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>			
1	Male	168	56.00
2	Female	132	44.00
<b>Age</b>			
1	< 20 years	36	12.00
2	21–30 years	165	55.00
3	31–40 years	60	20.00
4	41–50 years	27	9.00
5	> 51 years	12	4.00
<b>Education Level</b>			
1	Elementary or below	3	1.00
2	Junior High School	9	3.00
3	Senior High School	150	50.00
4	Diploma/Bachelor's Degree	114	38.00
5	Master's Degree	21	7.00
6	Doctorate	3	1.00
<b>Monthly Income (IDR)</b>			
1	< 2,000,000	84	28.00

2	2,000,001–4,000,000	111	37.00
3	4,000,001–6,000,000	63	21.00
4	6,000,001–8,000,000	27	9.00
5	> 8,000,000	15	5.00
<b>Occupation</b>			
1	Civil servant/Military/Police/SOE/ROE	30	10.00
2	Private employee	69	23.00
3	Entrepreneur	60	20.00
4	Student	123	41.00
5	Unemployed	18	6.00

Source: Primary Data Processed (2025)

As shown in Table 1, gender distribution was relatively balanced, with a slightly higher proportion of male respondents—168 males (56.0%) and 132 females (44.0%). In terms of age, the majority of respondents were 21–30 years old (165 people or 55.0%), followed by 31–40 years old (60 people or 20.0%). Those aged <20 comprised 12%, ages 41–50 made up 9%, and >51 accounted for 4%. Educationally, the sample was dominated by respondents with senior high school (50.0%) and diploma/bachelor's degrees (38.0%), while 7% held a master's degree and 1% a doctorate. Only a small portion had junior high (3%) or elementary education (1%).

Income distribution shows a concentration in the lower-middle to middle-income brackets: 28.0% earned < IDR 2,000,000; 37.0% earned IDR 2–4 million; and 21.0% earned IDR 4–6 million. Only 14% earned above IDR 6 million. In terms of occupation, the largest group consisted of students (41.0%), followed by private employees (23.0%), and entrepreneurs (20.0%). Government employees and state officers made up 10%, while 6% were unemployed.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### RESULT

Following the data screening process to ensure completeness across all indicators, 300 valid responses were included in the analysis. As shown in Table 2, respondents generally gave high ratings for all three constructs—Physical Evidence (PE), Customer Satisfaction (CS), and Revisit Intention (RI)—with mean values above 4 on a 5-point scale. The mean scores were: PE = 4.338 (SD = 0.624), CS = 4.326 (SD = 0.595), and RI = 4.286 (SD = 0.753). All three constructs also showed negative skewness (PE = -1.657; CS = -1.114; RI = -1.851), indicating a distribution skewed toward positive evaluations, consistent with the favorable perception of Middle Eastern-themed restaurants that align well with Muslim customer preferences.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Constructs

Construct	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Skew	Kurtosis
PE	4.338	0.624	1.000	5.000	-1.657	4.876
CS	4.326	0.595	2.000	5.000	-1.114	1.578
RI	4.286	0.753	1.000	5.000	-1.851	4.685

Source: Primary Data Processed (2025)

All indicators demonstrated strong outer loadings on their respective constructs ( $\geq 0.70$ ), as shown in Table 3. For Physical Evidence (PE), with eight items, the loadings ranged from 0.770 to 0.857, with the highest loading on  $X4 = 0.857$  (Islamic/Middle Eastern architecture and interior design), highlighting the prominent role of design and architecture in shaping perceived physical evidence. For Customer Satisfaction (CS), the loadings ranged from 0.793 to 0.853, with the highest being  $Z2 = 0.853$  and  $Z1 = 0.850$ , indicating that overall satisfaction and positive post-visit feelings were clearly recognized by respondents. The Revisit Intention (RI) construct showed the strongest loadings, ranging from 0.848 to 0.908, with the highest on  $Y5 = 0.908$ , denoting a strong and consistent intention to return..

Table 3. Outer loadings

Indicators	Loading
X1	0.829
X2	0.770
X3	0.787
X4	0.857
X5	0.800
X6	0.803
X7	0.845
X8	0.830
Z1	0.850
Z2	0.853
Z3	0.849
Z4	0.803
Z5	0.830
Z6	0.793
Y1	0.887
Y2	0.878
Y3	0.892
Y4	0.883
Y5	0.908
Y6	0.848

Source: Primary Data Processed (2025)

In terms of internal reliability and convergent validity (Table 4), all three constructs met the recommended criteria. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.927 (PE), 0.909 (CS), and 0.943 (RI), respectively; Composite Reliability (CR) was 0.941 (PE), 0.930 (CS), and 0.955 (RI); while Average Variance Extracted (AVE) reached 0.665 (PE), 0.689 (CS), and 0.779 (RI). The combination of  $\alpha$ , CR, and AVE values confirms excellent internal consistency and adequate convergent validity for all constructs.

Table 4. Reliability &amp; Validity

Construct	Cronbach's $\alpha$	CR	AVE
PE	0.927	0.941	0.665
CS	0.909	0.930	0.689
RI	0.943	0.955	0.779

Source: Primary Data Processed (2025)

The Fornell–Larcker criterion is met: the square root of the AVE on the diagonal (PE = 0.816; CS = 0.830; RI = 0.883) is higher than the inter-construct correlations in the same row/column (e.g., PE–CS correlation = 0.632; PE–RI = 0.731; CS–RI = 0.749) (Table 5). This indicates that each construct captures a larger variance of its own indicators than the shared variance with other constructs.

Table 5. Fornell-Larcker Matrix

	<b>PE</b>	<b>CS</b>	<b>RI</b>
<b>PE</b>	<b>0.816</b>	0.632	0.731
<b>CS</b>	0.632	<b>0.830</b>	0.749
<b>RI</b>	0.731	0.749	<b>0.883</b>

Source: Primary Data Processed (2025)

Additional confirmation through HTMT also stated that discriminant validity was met (Table 6), with values of HTMT(PE, CS) = 0.684, HTMT(PE, RI) = 0.782, and HTMT(CS, RI) = 0.809, all below the threshold of 0.85–0.90.

Table 6. HTMT Matrix

	<b>PE</b>	<b>CS</b>	<b>RI</b>
<b>PE</b>	1.000	0.684	0.782
<b>CS</b>	0.684	1.000	0.809
<b>RI</b>	0.782	0.809	1.000

Source: Primary Data Processed (2025)

The path test of physical evidence on customer satisfaction showed a positive and significant coefficient ( $\beta = 0.602$ ;  $t = 14.163$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) with  $R^2 = 0.399$ . These results confirm that the better customers perceive Islamic/Middle Eastern-style physical evidence—for example, architecture/interior, Islamic decoration, the absence of non-sharia-compliant activities, cleanliness, and prayer facilities—the higher their satisfaction. Thus, hypothesis 2 is supported. These results align with previous research by (Han & Hyun, 2018; Line & Hanks, 2020; Nazarian et al., 2024) which found superior physical evidence increases comfort, positive emotions, and perceived quality, thereby increasing satisfaction.

Table 7. Path Coefficient physical evidence to customer satisfaction

Parameter	Coef.	Std.Err.	t	p-value	95% CI (Lower)	95% CI (Upper)
Intercept	1.713	0.186	9.189	0.000	1.346	2.079
PE → CS	0.602	0.043	14.163	0.000	0.519	0.686

Source: Primary Data Processed (2025)

Furthermore, testing the physical evidence and customer satisfaction models on revisit intention simultaneously confirmed support for H1 and H3. The path between physical evidence and revisit intention was  $\beta = 0.518$  ( $t = 10.064$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), while customer satisfaction and revisit intention

were  $\beta = 0.605$  ( $t = 11.211$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Both predictors together explained  $R^2 = 0.671$  for revisit intention, which can be categorized as strong. These findings demonstrate that superior physical evidence not only directly increases revisit intention, but when the experience results in satisfaction, the urge to return becomes even greater. These results align with previous research by (Ali et al., 2021; Han & Hyun, 2018; Taylor Jr, 2020) which found that physical environmental quality (cleanliness, aesthetics, lighting, comfort, layout) strengthens emotions and perceived value, which ultimately leads to revisit intention. Furthermore, empirical studies in hospitality show that satisfied customers tend to revisit and remain loyal, including in the context of restaurants and destinations (Han & Hyun, 2015; Peng et al., 2023; Rajput & Gahfoor, 2020).

Table 8. Path coefficient of physical evidence and customer satisfaction towards revisit intention

Parameter	Coef.	Std.Err.	t	p-value	95% CI (Lower)	95% CI (Upper)
Intercept	-0.578	0.198	-2.924	0.004	-0.967	-0.189
PE → RI	0.518	0.051	10.064	0.000	0.417	0.619
CS → RI	0.605	0.054	11.211	0.000	0.499	0.711

Source: Primary Data Processed (2025)

The effect size ( $f^2$ ) analysis in Table 9 reinforces the above interpretation. For the endogenous construct of revisit intention, the effect size of customer satisfaction reached  $f^2 = 0.418$  (large), while physical evidence had a value of  $f^2 = 0.337$  (nearly large). This indicates that customer satisfaction contributes significantly to explaining variation in revisit intention, while also positioning satisfaction as an important mechanism that converts service/environment perceptions into behavioral intentions.

Table 9. Effect Size ( $f^2$ )

Predictor to RI	$f^2$
PE	0.337
CS	0.418

Source: Primary Data Processed (2025)

Testing the indirect effect of the physical evidence, customer satisfaction, and revisit intention pathways through bootstrapping with 5,000 replications yielded an indirect effect of 0.365 with a 95% CI of [0.159; 0.792] (significant). Meanwhile, the direct path of physical evidence to revisit intention when customer satisfaction was included in the model remained significant ( $\beta = 0.518$ ; 95% CI [0.095; 0.739]), and the total effect of physical evidence on revisit intention was 0.882 (95% CI [0.776; 0.985]) (Table 10). The mediation proportion calculated through VAF = 41.3% indicates partial mediation, that is, some of the influence of physical evidence on revisit intention is channelled through customer satisfaction while still leaving a significant direct effect. Thus, hypothesis 4 is supported. These results are in line with previous research by Polas et al. (2022) which confirms the significance of the mediating variable of satisfaction on the physical environment pathway towards revisit intention.

Table 10. Mediation summary (bootstrap 5,000)

Path/Effect	Estimate	95% CI (Lower)	95% CI (Upper)
a (PE → CS)	0.602	—	—
b (CS → RI   PE)	0.605	—	—
c' (PE → RI   CS)	0.518	0.095	0.739
indirect (a×b)	0.365	0.159	0.792
total (PE → RI)	0.882	0.776	0.985
VAF	0.413	—	—

Source: Primary Data Processed (2025)

Table 11. Research Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Information
H1: Physical evidence has a significant and positive effect on revisit intention	Supported
H2: Physical evidence has a significant and positive effect on customer satisfaction	Supported
H3: Customer satisfaction has a significant and positive effect on revisit intention	Supported
H4: Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between physical evidence and revisit intention	Supported

Source: Primary Data Processed (2025)

## DISCUSSION

Islamic/Middle Eastern-themed physical evidence significantly enhances both customer satisfaction and revisit intention among Muslim consumers. The highest loading items—such as Islamic interior design and atmospheric elements like cleanliness, Quranic verses on walls, and the absence of haram activities—indicate that a sharia-compliant servicescape configuration activates positive emotional evaluations (Bichler et al., 2021; Han & Hyun, 2018; Jeaheng et al., 2020; Rajput & Gahfoor, 2020). This is consistent with the S-O-R model, where environmental cues influence affective/cognitive evaluations, which in turn drive loyalty (M. A. Ali et al., 2021; Gounaris et al., 2025).

Customer satisfaction plays a critical role ( $\beta = 0.605$ ;  $f^2 = 0.418$ ), serving as the psychological bridge that converts perceptions of physical evidence into behavioral intentions. This finding echoes prior studies showing that satisfaction mediates revisit behavior in hospitality contexts (Han & Hyun, 2015; Peng et al., 2023; Rajput & Gahfoor, 2020). In other words, while the servicescape is important, it is how customers emotionally perceive and internalize the experience that ultimately bridges the gap toward loyalty—confirmed here by the presence of partial mediation.

The partial mediation effect of satisfaction ( $VAF \approx 41\%$ ) further implies that physical evidence exerts both a direct and an indirect influence on revisit intention (direct  $\beta = 0.518$ ). This may occur through symbolic cues of Islamic values that create a sense of identity fit and psychological safety or through functional features—such as layout, lighting, and cleanliness—that generate preference for

return visits even when satisfaction is already accounted for (Polas et al., 2022) Accordingly, all proposed hypotheses are supported (see Table 11).

From a managerial perspective, the implications are twofold: (1) Strengthen salient Islamic-themed physical elements—including architectural design, Islamic decorative accents, halal signage, and prayer facilities. (2) Ensure the customer experience fosters positive emotional engagement, through warm service, clear transaction processes, and consistently clean and comfortable environments, as satisfaction acts as a bridge toward revisit intention.

The model's robustness—evidenced by strong  $R^2$  values (CS = 0.399; RI = 0.671), and confirmed discriminant validity (Fornell–Larcker and HTMT)—increases confidence in the empirical findings. High composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) further indicate that respondents consistently interpreted the constructs, enhancing the generalizability of results to Muslim consumers in Middle Eastern-themed restaurants in Banda Aceh (Han & Hyun, 2015; Nazarian et al., 2024; Rajput & Gahfoor, 2020).

For practical application, restaurant managers should prioritize investments in Islamic architectural elements, clear halal-related signage (e.g., Quranic verses or hadiths), comprehensive cleanliness, accessible prayer facilities, and transparent transaction policies to strengthen the perceived servicescape. These should be orchestrated alongside consistently pleasant service delivery—courteous interactions, clear service flow, and ambient comfort—to maximize satisfaction and, in turn, revisit intention.

While the findings are strong and consistent, this study is based on a cross-sectional design; future longitudinal or experimental research could enhance causal inference. Further, exploring moderating variables such as religiosity, frequency of visits, and culinary preferences may help clarify when and for whom the servicescape is most effective in driving revisit behavior.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study confirms that Islamic-aligned Middle Eastern-themed physical evidence—including architectural and interior design, Islamic decoration and signage, cleanliness, absence of non-sharia-compliant activities, availability of prayer facilities, and transparent processes—plays a critical role in shaping Muslim customer satisfaction and encouraging revisit intention. Empirically, the quality of physical evidence significantly and positively affects satisfaction, and, together with satisfaction, contributes to revisit intention. Mediation analysis shows a significant indirect effect indicating partial mediation—that is, physical evidence affects revisit intention both directly and indirectly through satisfaction.

In terms of measurement quality, all constructs met established reliability criteria and demonstrated strong convergent and discriminant validity. These results reinforce the reliability of the inference that an Islamic and comfortable servicescape not only generates positive emotions and satisfaction but also enhances customers' likelihood of returning.

Substantively, the findings enrich the halal hospitality and service marketing literature by providing empirical evidence in the context of Middle Eastern-themed restaurants in Banda Aceh: (i) Physical evidence is a key driver of revisit intention; (ii) Satisfaction is the psychological mechanism converting environmental perception into post-consumption behavior; (iii) Both direct and mediated

pathways are significant, indicating that managerial interventions should combine servicescape improvement with the orchestration of consistently pleasant service experiences..

Despite the study's contributions, limitations should be acknowledged. The cross-sectional design and non-probability sampling constrain causal inference and generalizability beyond Middle Eastern-themed restaurants in Banda Aceh. All variables were measured via Likert-scale self-report questionnaires, which may be subject to common method bias or social desirability bias, although procedural remedies and collinearity checks were applied. The scope of constructs was limited to physical evidence, customer satisfaction, and revisit intention, leaving out potentially influential factors such as food/service quality, price fairness, perceived value, trust, religiosity, and brand familiarity, which were not modeled as controls or moderators. Additionally, some adapted indicators (e.g., transaction documentation, payment policies) may require refinement to better capture the F&B servicescape dimension, while the geographical and brand-specific scope limits generalization across cities or market segments.

Given these limitations, several recommendations are proposed: Managerial: Focus on enhancing the most emotionally resonant Islamic servicescape elements—such as architecture, comprehensive cleanliness, informative yet aesthetic Islamic signage, and accessible prayer spaces—while ensuring clarity in service and transactions to foster psychological security and trust. These efforts should be integrated with consistently positive service delivery to ensure satisfaction acts as a mediator toward revisit behavior.

Future research: Should employ longitudinal or experimental designs to capture the dynamic nature of satisfaction and revisit intention over time. Expanding the model with control or moderating variables (e.g., food/service quality, price fairness, perceived value, religiosity, visit frequency, brand familiarity) and testing for group differences via multi-group analysis and measurement invariance (e.g., MICOM) will provide deeper insight. Cross-regional and cross-brand validation can improve generalizability, while integrating objective behavioral data (e.g., transaction history) with mixed-methods qualitative approaches can enhance understanding of how specific servicescape components, when tangibly improved, translate into stronger satisfaction and actual revisit behavior.

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