

Conference Paper

Examining Tourist Visit Intention to Nature-Based Tourism in Post-COVID-19 Pandemic

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ORCIDLusianus KUSDIBYO: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4844-4925>**Abstract.**

The study aims to investigate tourist visit intentions to nature-based tourism destinations after the COVID-19 pandemic. The theory of planned behavior (TPB) was used as the primary theoretical foundation to foresee tourist visit intention. This study used a quantitative research design with a purposive sampling technique to collect data. A total of 325 datasets were found to be suitable for the next analysis using partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings indicate that entirely of the TPB factors are significant in influencing tourist visit intention. Specifically, tourist attitude has the greatest influence on tourist visit intention. It implies that the TPB can effectively forecast tourist visit intention to nature-based tourism destinations. Consequently, destination managers should consider the TPB elements when making decisions.

Keywords: nature-based tourism, theory planned behavior, visit intentions, post-COVID-19, PLS-SEM

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1. Introduction

Nature-based tourism provides great benefits for tourists such as improving mental health, creating joy, and providing fitness [1]. In addition, Qiu et al. [2] notes that nature experiences can help you relax, release anxiety and tension, prevent mental fatigue, and develop self-discipline and creativity. Nature-based tourism is a mainstay of tourism objects around Bandung and the West Java Indonesia in addition to creative, cultural and heritage tourism. Due to the COVID-19 there has been a drastic decrease in the number of tourist visits to Indonesia. Foreign tourist arrivals fell 75% in 2020 and fell 89% in January 2021. The decline in domestic tourists reached around 30%. The COVID-19 pandemic has created a profound crisis as it has successfully ceased the processes of the tourism sector [3,4]. To recover from the crisis and start tourism operations

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the Indonesian government and tourism related businesses encourage domestic travel intention.

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) model has been widely used in studies related to tourists' intentions and behavior [5]. A number of past studies have proven the usefulness of the TPB model in predicting tourists' intentions e.g. [6,7]. However, those previous studies discussing tourist visit intentions were conducted before the pandemic and those discussing in the post-COVID-19 pandemic are limited [8-10]. In addition, previous studies on tourist visit intention of nature-based tourism in post-COVID-19 pandemic are considerably rare [11]. Factors influencing tourist visit intention would be different before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Tourists' experience regarding COVID-19 pandemic can strengthen or weaken their behavioral intentions toward destinations [10,12]. Tourist destination managers need to be aware of this fact in order to design particular programs that increase the number of tourist visits and are relevant to the post-Covid-19 condition. This current research employed the theory of planned behavior to predict tourist visiting intentions to nature-based tourism.

To fill the research gap identified this study aims to examine domestic tourists' intention to visit nature-based tourism destinations by gauging the relationship between TPB variables and tourist intentions to visit nature-based tourism in the post-COVID-19 pandemic. The correlation among TPB variables and their effects on tourist behavioral intentions are crucial to observe in order to comprehend the strength of each variable in influencing tourists' intention to visit nature-based tourism. Theoretically, this study contributes to improve our understanding on TPB's components in predicting tourists' visit intention to nature-based tourism. Practically, this study increases our knowledge on how nature-based tourism destination managers could attract tourist visit intention through the implementation of the TPB.

2. Hypotheses Development

The TPB is an emotional concept that investigates the interaction of attitudes, intentions, and behaviors [5]. Its foundation is the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) [13]. The TRA proposed that individuals' behavioral intentions are determined by intentional factors along with attitude and subjective norms. The term "attitude" refers to a person's assessment of a particular behavior, while the term "subjective norms" refers to the social pressures that encourage or discourage a person from engaging in a particular behavior [14]. Because a person's intention or actions cannot be entirely defined by

oneself, the TPB was extended to embrace non-volitional aspects, specifically perceived behavioral control to improve its predictive power [5,15,16].

2.1. Perceived behavioral control

Perceived behavioral control (PBC) is the extent to which a person believes that they are capable of performing certain behaviors and controlling their performance [17]. PBC is related to the presence of factors that can facilitate or hinder behavioral performance, including required skills and abilities, availability or lack of time, money, cooperation with others, and other resources [17]. Assuming that attitudes and perceptions of social pressure support behavioral performance, the greater the perceived behavioral control, the stronger the intention to perform the behavior, and vice versa [17]. This PBC has a direct impact on actual behavior and an indirect impact through behavioral intentions. Positive attitudes and supportive subjective norms motivate to engage in behavior, but perceived control must be strong enough to shape actual action [17]. Previous research revealed that PBC significantly influences purchase intention for local cuisine [18,19] and on purchase intention of sustainable cuisine choices [20]. Additionally, past studies have proved that PBC influences consumer attitude and behavior intention in halal food consumption context and outbound travel intentions [5,21]. However, PBC has not been verified in the nature-based tourism context after the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, the following hypothesis was developed.

H1: Tourists' PBC influence their attitude to visit nature-based destination after COVID-19.

H2: Tourists' PBC influence their intention to visit nature-based destination after COVID-19.

2.2. Subjective norms

Subjective norms (SNs) refer to social pressure to perform or not to perform a behavior [14]. SNs are thought to be an individual's insight of how others denote to something, see a behavior, and stimulate that person's perception to fulfill with his views and decisions [22]. This shows that societies' judgments have an influence on individual's decision making or in other words SNs are social pressures that are felt by someone when the person wants to do something or behave [23]. As it explains by Ajzen [14] that the view from others could influences a person's choice when the other individual is deliberated

important to the individual. So, if relatives or close friends give a favorable evaluation of an action, the probability of that action being performed increases because the person feels he has fulfilled the requirements of significant individuals [8].

In tourism research, SNs are considered as an important determinant of a visitor's intention to visit any tourist destination [24]. In addition, some previous studies have proven that SNs significantly influence on tourists' visiting intentions. Such as, research directed by Lam and Hsu [25] found that Taiwanese tourists' intentions are significantly affected by SNs. Research conducted by Soliman [22] showed that a person's intention to visit is significantly affected by the view of those closest to them, whether family or friends. SNs are frequently found in tourism research inducing tourist intention to visit that has a significant effect on attitudes and ultimately lead to visit intentions. A study carried out by Quintal et al. [26] proves that SNs have impacted of Japanese, South Korean, and Chinese tourists' attitude to visit tourist attractions in Australia. Other proof has been provided by study carried out by Han et al. [27], that SNs have linked the attitudes of US travelers after the COVID-19 pandemic. However, SNs have not been tested in the nature-based tourism context after the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the hypotheses formulated are:

H3: Tourists' SNs influence their attitude to visit nature-based destination after COVID-19.

H4: Tourists' SNs influence their intention to visit nature-based destination after COVID-19.

2.3. Attitude

Attitudes play an important role in predicting and explaining human behavior. This refers to the level of a person's assessment of behavior that has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation [28]. Attitude according to Martínez García de Leaniz et al. [29] is defined as an individual's mental state in relation to his evaluation of behavior. More specifically, Chaulagain et al. [30] suggests that behavior can be evaluated through attitude, if an individual has a good attitude or a positive evaluation of a behavior, then that individual will have the motive to be more committed in the behavior. In the tourism context, attitude is regarded as one of the most pertinent antecedents of visit intention to any tourist destination [31]. Multiple studies have revealed that attitude is a significant predictor of a person's behavioral intention, particularly the intention to visit a tourism destination [32]. Additional proof that has been agreed by scholars concerning attitudes as vital in creating tourists' visiting intentions is a study carried out by Wang et al.

[33] where this study found that attitudes have a significant effect on tourists' visiting intentions in the future. To that end, the hypotheses formulated are:

H5: Tourists' attitude influences their intention to visit nature-based destination after COVID-19.

3. Method

3.1. Sampling and data collection

The descriptive method with a quantitative approach was used to achieve the study's objective. In addition, the quantitative approach was used to observe the relationship between variables in the TPB and tourist visit intention. The purposive sampling method was applied to anyone who has visited those nature-based tourism destinations after the Covid-19 pandemic. The research instrument was developed in the form of a questionnaire obtained from previous related studies. All statements were measured using a Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A self-administered questionnaire was employed to examine each item in the TPB constructs. The questionnaire were distributed online to the special interest groups in social media channels (WhatsApp groups) and targeted to those who have visited nature-based tourism destinations around Bandung e.g. Mount Tangkupan Perahu, Kawah Putih Crater, Ciwidey Tea Plantation, and Pengalengan Tea Plantation. The data were collected over a four-week period between June and July 2022.

3.2. Data analysis

The data were analyzed using the PLS-SEM approach to observe the relationship between variables. It aimed to test the hypotheses proposed. SEM was chosen because it can test the relationship between variables simultaneously thus the measurements become more effective [34]. SEM analysis was carried out in two stages; measurement model evaluation and structural model evaluation. The measurement model evaluation was conducted to ensure that the measurement used was feasible (valid and reliable). It could be determined using several indicators: convergent validity, discriminant validity, and unidimensionality [34]. Meanwhile, the structural model evaluation was conducted to ensure that the structural model built was robust and accurate. The evaluation was determined using several indicators, including the coefficient of determination (R^2),

cross-validated redundancy (Q^2), Goodness of Fit Index (GoF), effect size (f^2), and path coefficients [34].

4. Result

4.1. Respondents' profile

The results of the respondents' profile show that there was more response from women (63.7%) respondents compare to men (36.3%). Of the total respondents, 29.2% were between the age 54-60 years old, and 20.9% were 19-25 years old, representing the samples were covered different generations. In term of education, 46.5% had a university education and 23.1% had a high school qualification. The majority of the respondents had job as a government employee (40%) and as a student (30.5%). They earned mostly between IDR 2,000,000-5,000,000 (28.6%) and less than IDR 2.000.000 (24.9%). Among all, 63.1% with families and 26.2% with friends when visit the destinations.

4.2. Measurement model evaluation

The measurement model represents whether the indicators or observational variables are perfectly suitable to be used as measuring instruments for each construct by assessing the validity and reliability of the construct [34]. Table 1 presents the results of the validity and reliability test. The results of the loading factor (LF) for all variables are above 0.708, which means reliable [34]. Two items (Att3 and Pbc1) were deleted as those items below 0.6. The Cronbach's alpha results for each construct are above cut-off value 0.7 as recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein [35]. The second measure to evaluate reliability is Composite Reliability (CR). All composite reliability values in this study are higher than 0.854 and less than 0.918; CR values between 0.7 and 0.9 are considered satisfactorily [34]. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) exceeding 0.5. This value indicates acceptable of convergent validity [36].

The Fornell–Larcker criterion was used to test the discriminant validity as shown in Table 2. Each AVE construct value's square root has to be greater than the construct correlation with other latent variables [36]. The outcome indicates that the AVE construct value is greater.

Heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) ratio was also used to define the discriminant validity. There is discriminant validity when the value is below 0.90 [37] or below 0.85 [34]

TABLE 1: The Result of Validity and Reliability Test.

Variable indicator	FL	CA	CR	AVE
PBC		0.749	0.853	0.660
Pbc2	0.879			
Pbc3	0.786			
Pbc4	0.768			
SNs		0.863	0.916	0.784
Sn1	0.870			
Sn2	0.900			
Sn3	0.887			
Attitude		0.903	0.939	0.838
Att1	0.885			
Att2	0.940			
Att4	0.919			
Visit intention		0.826	0.871	0.629
Int1	0.810			
Int2	0.754			
Int3	0.825			
Int4	0.780			

*LF=Loading factor, CA=Cronbach's Alpha, CR=Composite Realibility, AVE=Average variance extracted

TABLE 2: Fornell-Larcker Criterion.

Variable	1	2	3	4
1 Attitude	0.915			
2 PBC	0.538	0.812		
3 SNs	0.623	0.446	0.886	
4 Visit intention	0.676	0.580	0.552	0.793

as indicated in Table 3. Hence, all constructs in this study have a good reliability and validity.

TABLE 3: HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio).

Variable	1	2	3	4
1 Attitude				
2 PBC	0.602			
3 SNs	0.701	0.528		
4 Visit intention	0.630	0.685	0.570	

4.3. Structural model evaluation

The structural model assessment was conducted to measure the accuracy of model prediction and the overall intensity of the effects. In this evaluation, several tests were carried out, including the coefficient of determination (R^2), predictive relevance model (Q^2), and Goodness-of-Fit (GOF) tests as shown in table 4. The first step was checking the variance inflation factor (VIF) value was carried out before testing the structural model. The results indicate that all VIF values were lower than 3 indicating there is no collinearity problem [34]. This test was followed by structural model evaluation. Using 5,000 iterations, a bootstrap procedure was carried out to assess the importance of indicators and path coefficients [38]. The result of the model quality assessment is presented in Table 4. The results show R^2 for attitude is 0.472 and R^2 for visit intention is 0.539. This shows that those two variables are influenced by exogenous variables with moderate conditions [34]. In addition, Stone–Geisser’s Q^2 was used to measure the predictive relevance of the model [34]. The result shows that all Q^2 values are above zero, indicating that the model has acceptable predictive power. The GoF was used to evaluate whether the proposed model can be used with an ideal estimation value of above 0.36 [39]. With the result of empirical estimation of 0.606, the relationship model between the TPB variables and visit intention of this study is reasonable to be sustained into the analysis stage. The effect size for each path model can be determined by calculating f^2 . The result shows that f^2 values indicating small to large criteria [34], as shown in Table 5.

TABLE 4: Goodness of Fit, R^2 and Q^2 Analysis Results.

Variable	AVE	R^2	Q^2
PBC	0.660		
SNs	0.784		
Attitude	0.838	0.472	0.389
Visit intention	0.628	0.539	0.262
Average score	0.728	0.506	
AVE × R square		0.368	
GoF = $\sqrt{(AVE \times R \text{ Square})}$		0.606	

4.4. Path coefficient analysis

The results of path coefficients analysis to test the research hypotheses are presented in Table 6. This study used a value of $t > 1.96$, with a significance level of 5%, to classify the significant relationship between constructs. As for the p-value, this study used $p < 0.05$

TABLE 5: The Results of the Effect Size Test (f^2).

	1	2	3	4
Attitude				0.206
PBC	0.160			0.116
SNs	0.346			0.035
Visit Intention				

(significance level = 5%) and $p < 0.01$ (significance level = 1%) to assess the significance level. The bootstrap procedure was performed using 5000 bootstrap subsamples [34].

The hypotheses testing results in Table 6 show that the exogenous variables significantly affect all endogenous variables, indicated by t-values above 1.96 and p-values below 0.05. It implies that all hypotheses are accepted. Tourists' PBC have a positive and significant effect on their attitudes and visit intentions. It supports H1 and H2. H1: tourists' PBC have a positive effect on tourists' attitude to visit nature-based destinations in the post-COVID-19 pandemic, indicated by ($\beta = 0.325$, $t = 6.071$, $p < 0.000$). H2: tourists' PBC have a positive effect on tourist intention to visit nature-based attraction after the COVID-19 pandemic, indicated by ($\beta = 0.279$, $t = 4.314$, $p < 0.001$).

Tourists' SNs have a positive and significant effect on their attitudes and visiting intentions. It justifies H3 and H4. H3: tourists' SNs have a positive effect on tourist attitude to visit nature-based tourism destinations in the post-COVID-19 pandemic, indicated by ($\beta = 0.478$, $t = 9.498$, $p < 0.000$). H4: tourists' SNs have a positive effect on tourist intention to visit nature-based attractions after the COVID-19 pandemic, indicated by ($\beta = 0.164$, $t = 2.822$, $p < 0.005$). The last result shows that tourists' attitude have a positive and significant effect on visit intention. It justifies H5, in which the attitude of tourists has a positive effect on their intention to visit nature-based destinations in the post-COVID-19 pandemic, indicated by ($\beta = 0.424$, $t = 5.953$, $p < 0.000$). In addition, Figure 1 shows the summary of the model results.

TABLE 6: Path Coefficient and Hypotheses Test Results.

	Hipotesa	beta	t-value	p-value	Remark*
H1	Perceived Behavioral Control -> Attitude	0.325	6.071	0.000	Sig
H2	Perceived Behavioral Control -> Visit Intention	0.279	4.314	0.000	Sig
H3	Subjective Norms -> Attitude	0.478	9.498	0.000	Sig
H4	Subjective Norms -> Visit Intention	0.164	2.822	0.005	Sig
H5	Attitude -> Visit Intention	0.424	5.953	0.000	Sig

*Sig=Significant

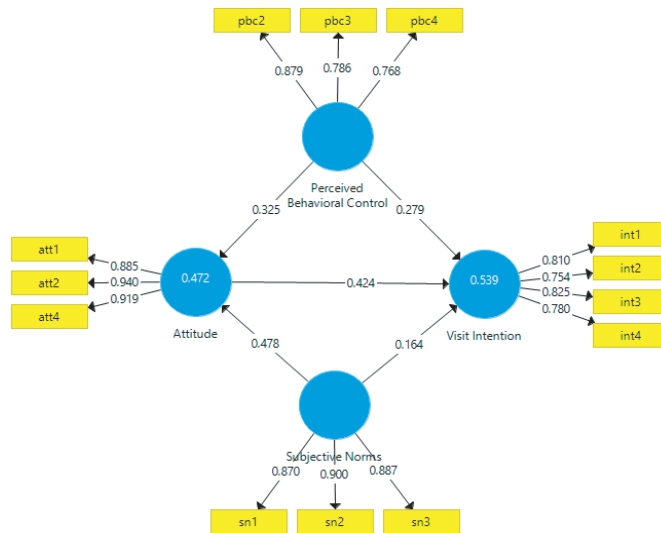


Figure 1: Summary of the Research Model Results.

5. Discussion

First, the purpose of this study was to measure domestic tourists' intention to visit nature-based tourism destinations in the post-COVID-19 pandemic using the TPB as a primary theoretical model. The results of this study show that all hypotheses tested provide significant results, which means that tourists have a high intention to visit nature-based tourism destinations in the post-Covid-19 pandemic. It also proves that the variables in the TPB can positively and significantly predict the intention of tourists to visit nature-based tourism attractions. Thus, these findings support previous research conducted by [9,40,41]. Although there have been studies related to the use of TPB in predicting future behavioral intention, this current study has tested and confirmed to explain tourist visit intentions to nature-based tourism destinations which contribute to a deeper understanding of the tourist visit intentions behavior after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Second, the result of this study shows that tourist PBC influence both attitude and visit intentions to nature-based attractions in the post-COVID-19 pandemic. This finding implies that tourists' PBC have a strength to shape directly and indirectly tourist visit intention to nature-based tourism destinations after the COVID-19 pandemic. This finding in line with results of previous research conducted by [18-20] in the context of local cuisine and in outbound travel intentions contexts conducted by [5]. The results also show that SNs affect both tourist attitudes and visit intentions to nature-based destinations. This finding suggests that the view of the closest person, be it family or friends, greatly influences a person's attitude and visiting intention to nature-based

attractions [22]. This finding supports previous studies carried out by [36,37] in the context of Japanese tourists visit Australia. Tourists' attitude has a greatest influence on visit intentions among other relationships and is followed by tourists' SNs affect tourists' attitude as a second greatest link. This finding highlights tourist attitude and SNs in developing tourists' visit intention to nature-based tourism destinations.

Last, the results of this study have contributed to theory in two ways. First, this study has verified the TPB model to be applicable to Indonesian nature-based tourism contexts. Thus, it extends our better understanding on the usefulness of TPB model in predicting behavioral intentions in the context of nature-based tourism. Second, this study discloses the instrument through which Indonesian travelers perceived the COVID-19 pandemic could affect their intentions to visit nature-based tourism destinations. In addition, this research also provides practical implications and advice for tourist destination managers to consider the TPB components in making decisions to increase tourist visitations. Through promotional programs, tourist destination managers can shape and influence attitudes, subjective norms, and behavior of tourists for traveling to natural hot springs.

6. Conclusion

This study has successfully verified the TPB model in the nature-based tourism destinations context. The results of this study reveal that the TPB has predicted well tourist visit intention to nature-based destinations in the post-COVID-19 pandemic. All the hypotheses tested were supported by the data of 325 respondents that collected through social media groups WhatsApp. The PLS-SEM has successfully exposed the TPB model and its relationship on tourist visit intentions. Theoretically, the results of this study have set the light on our better understanding on the effectiveness of TPB model in envisaging behavioral intentions in the context of nature-based tourism. Practically, the results of this study are useful for destination managers to increase the number of tourist visits to nature-based tourism destinations through decisions involving the TPB model in decision making process.

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