The understanding of the Islamic community's intention toward religious tourism

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to analyze the influence of attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, service quality, and religious tourism literacy on people's intention in recommending and returning to religious tourism destinations.

Research methods – The data source for this research was a survey method with a questionnaire distributed via broadcast on social media. This research uses a quantitative data processing method using structural equation modeling partial least squares (SEM-PLS) analysis with the SmartPLS 3.3 statistical tool.

Findings – The results of this study show that subjective norms (SN), attitudes (ATT), and religious tourism literacy (RTL) have a significant influence on the intention to recommend and revisit religious tourism. Meanwhile, service quality (SQ) and perceived behavioral control (PBC) were not accepted and did not have a significant effect on the intention to recommend and revisit religious tourism.

Implications – The government can also focus on developing religious tourism literacy programs to increase public knowledge, which, in turn, can enhance interest, positive attitudes, and the intention to recommend and revisit. Considering these implications, destination managers and stakeholders can design more effective strategies to enhance attractiveness and visitor satisfaction and contribute to the sustainable development of religious tourism.

Originality – This model adopts the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by incorporating service quality and religious tourism literacy. Service quality and religious tourism literacy are considered appropriate factors to capture issues related to the community's intention to recommend and revisit religious tourism destinations.

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Introduction

Tourism in Indonesia is characterized by diversity, including natural, culinary, marine, halal, and religious tourism. The diversity and potential of tourism can boost the local economy, create job opportunities, and develop existing tourism (Widodo & Indriyanto, 2022). According to Republic of Indonesia Law Number 10 of 2009 concerning tourism, tourism plays a crucial role in enhancing economic growth, improving the welfare of people, reducing poverty, addressing unemployment, and preserving the environment and natural resources (Anam, 2017).

Religious tourism itself carries meaning often associated with the religion, history, customs, and beliefs of individuals or groups within society. Religious tourism is closely related to cultural tourism, as some cultural heritage sites were originally built for religious reasons (Anam, 2017). The religious dimension, which includes aspects of personal, cultural, and religious belief, strengthens this connection. Many people travel individually or in groups to holy sites or the graves of saints or revered figures as part of religious tourism, also known as pilgrimage tourism or spiritual tourism in the international tourism industry (Madyan et al., 2018).

Religious tourism provides an allure for tourists with spiritual values and promotes tolerance among religious communities, serving as a guide for life. The diversity of Indonesia's natural beauty, combined with its spiritual values, gives tourist attractions a unique charm. Indonesia has a significant potential for religious tourism (Jaelani, 2017) because of its long-standing reputation as a religious country. Many historical buildings and places hold special meaning for tourists, and the presence of religious communities in Indonesia is a potential factor in the development of religious tourism.

Currently, there is a shift in the global tourism paradigm from the traditional concepts of sun, sand, and sea to serenity, sustainability, and spirituality (Bowler, 2013; Faletehan, 2019). This evolution was initiated by journalists and observers of the world tourism industry, including Imtiaz Muqbil, who noted concrete implications regarding the current preferences of visitors to tourist locations. Tourists increasingly seek peace of mind, sustainability, and spiritual aspects while engaging in recreational activities at tourist destinations (Sari et al., 2019).

The development potential of religious tourism deserves the attention of halal industry stakeholders. Understanding the community's desire for religious tourism is crucial for the development of halal tourism. This study aimed to identify the factors influencing individuals' intention in recommending and revisiting religious tourism. The theory employed was the Theory of Planned Behavior, incorporating variables such as attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavior control. Services at tourist destinations and community knowledge have an impact on the development of religious tourism in the Indonesian context. Therefore, variables such as service quality and religious tourism literacy were included in the research model.

Literature Review

Religious Tourism

Religious tourism literacy is an individual's ability to understand, appreciate, and participate in religious travel experiences related to religious aspects (Ohlan & Ohlan, 2023). This involves understanding the religious practices, sacred sites, traditions, and values associated with religious tourism destinations. Religious tourism literacy also includes knowledge of religious history, philosophy, mythology, and culture related to a particular destination (Cheer et al., 2017). Individuals with religious tourism literacy can recognize and appreciate the uniqueness and diversity of religion, as well as understand the meaning and significance associated with holy places and religious travel (Abror et al., 2019; Collins-Kreiner, 2020). They can establish meaningful interactions with religious practitioners, respect different religious practices, and appreciate the cultural heritage passed down through religious journeys. Religious tourism literacy involves the ability to read, understand, and interpret information related to religious tourism destinations, including sacred texts, mythological stories, sacred architecture, religious art, and rituals (Abbate & Di Nuovo, 2013). In addition, religious tourism literacy includes critical skills for analyzing the social, economic, and environmental impacts of religious tourism. Through religious tourism literacy, individuals can develop a deeper understanding of religion and spirituality, broaden their cross-cultural horizons, and gain meaningful experiences through religious travel (Huang et al., 2020).

Theory of Planned Behavior

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) assumes that most of the time, humans behave rationally (behave sensibly). TPB, developed by Icek Ajzen, is a psychological theory that explains human behavior and decision-making. This provides a framework for understanding the factors

influencing individual intentions and subsequent actions. TPB offers valuable insights into various domains, including psychology, marketing, health promotion, and the social sciences, by exploring the interactions between attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and intentions. Although other theories can be used to study individual or organizational behavior, Ajzen's (1980) TPB primarily discusses participants' involvement in product and service selection (Ajzen, 2015). TPB is a tool for understanding how people and organizations make decisions (Ajzen, 2012). TPB explains that individual desires and behaviors are influenced by these main factors, namely attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

TPB explains that three different types of considerations influence human behavior. The three considerations are behavioral beliefs, normative views, and beliefs about elements that facilitate or hinder behavioral performance (Ajzen, 1991). Initially, TPB was intended to research human behavior. Ajzen (2020) stated that various behavioral domains range from physical activity to drug use, recycling to travel mode choices, safer sex to consumer behavior, and technology adoption, strengthening the theory's application to various research fields until privacy protection was successfully explained and predicted using the theory.

Hypothesis Development

Attitude, intention to recommend and intention to visit

Attitude is defined as an individual's assessment of whether a person, action, or behavior is beneficial. Attitudes develop in each individual towards the object of the attitude, typically forming opinions about an object by associating it with specific characteristics such as other objects, events, and traits (Ajzen, 1991). Consequently, attitudes encourage individuals to consider the perspectives of others with similar tendencies. This instills confidence in individuals to assert their choices to others, inviting them to align with these choices. Research conducted by Kim et al. (2004) proved that tourists' attitudes towards tourist destinations have a significant influence on their willingness to buy souvenirs. Lam and Hsu (2006) also showed that attitudes are related to behavioral intentions in choosing a tourist destination. According to Zarrad and Debabi (2015), electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) and tourist attitudes significantly influence the goals and intentions of visiting a destination. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:
H_1: Attitude positively influences the intention to recommend
H_2: Attitude positively influences the intention to revisit

Subjective norm, intention to recommend and intention to visit

A subjective norm is characterized by the social pressures perceived by individuals to undertake a particular action (Ajzen, 1991). According to Ajzen (2005), subjective norm functions are based on beliefs regarding agreement or disagreement stemming from individuals who exert influence. The presence of normative beliefs and a person's propensity to uphold these beliefs influence the determination of subjective norms. Normative beliefs encompass expectations from influential figures such as parents, friends, and others that impact individuals. Many studies on tourist destinations use the TPB model, and Wang and Ritchie (2010) conducted research on the relationship between subjective norms and behavioral intentions. It has been found that subjective norms are correlated with the intention to recommend (Iriobe and Abiola-Oke 2019). Based on the existing literature, it can be concluded that subjective norms have a significant effect on attitudes. Thus, the following hypothesis is formulated:
H_3: Subjective norms positively influence the intention to recommend
H_4: Subjective norms positively influence the intention to revisit

Perceived behavioral control, intention to recommend and intention to visit

The perception of behavioral control is defined as the ease or difficulty perceived by individuals in carrying out an action (Ajzen, 1991). An individual's attitude towards halal food stems from their belief that the food is halal, thereby motivating them to make purchases. In other words, the presence or absence of factors that either encourage or hinder people from taking a particular

action affects the perception of behavioral control. PBC is the feeling that a person has when faced with difficulty or ease in deciding how to behave. PBC is the only factor that influences individuals' actions or decision-making. PBC refers to the level of difficulty a person assumes to behave in a certain way (Ajzen 2012). In other words, perceived behavioral control refers to someone's perceptions of how much they will travel and recommend halal tourism, according to Mital et al. (2018). Presumably, PBC can be calculated using the total set of accessible control beliefs. Tourists' perceived behavioral control, together with attitudes and subjective norms, significantly influences behavioral intentions, with greater effects compared to subjective norms alone. Lam and Hsu (2006) and Iriobe and Abiola-Oke (2019) showed that perceived behavioral control is valid for predicting the construct of people's intention to revisit. Based on these arguments, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H_5: Perceived behavior control positively influences the intention to recommend
H_6: Perceived behavior control positively influences the intention to revisit

Service quality, intention to recommend and intention to visit

Rukuiziene (2009:136) revealed that the perceived service quality of tourism is said to influence tourist satisfaction, and they always provide the best services for tourists, which ultimately influences tourists' intentions to return. According to the theory regarding service quality in the tourism sector, the quality of tourism services can be measured by the friendliness, safety, comfort, atmosphere, and responsiveness of public services, which can influence tourists' intention in returning to visit. Behavioral intention can be defined as a consumer's desire to behave in a certain way to own, dispose of, or use a product or service. Thus, consumers can form a desire to seek information, tell other people about their experience with a product, buy a particular product or service, or dispose of a product in a certain manner (Mowen & Minor, 2002: 322). Thus, behavioral intention in this study refers to the stated probability of returning to the destination and, in the future, recommending the destination to family, friends, and positive word of mouth (WOM). Previous research from Howat et al. (2008) stated that visitor satisfaction has a significant effect on visitors' intentions to recommend waterpark services. According to Howat et al. (2008), visitor satisfaction affects their level of loyalty, which manifests itself in their willingness to recommend service providers to their relatives (Chou and Lu, 2009). Based on these arguments, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H_7: Service quality positively influences the attitudes
H_8: Service quality positively influences the intention to recommend
H_9: Service quality positively influences the intention to revisit

Religious Tourism Literacy, intention to recommend and intention to visit

Religiosity is defined as a doctrine of certain beliefs about divine power or is interpreted as a person's relationship with tradition (Wong et al., 2006). Huber and Huber (2012) interpreted religiosity as one's belief about the existence of God and everything that is divine. When someone upholds the teachings of religion because of the development of emotions in the teachings that he believes are interpreted as a religious experience. Religiosity is defined as a concept that discusses many aspects, such as behavior, attitudes, and beliefs. Experiences and individual feelings towards the teachings of their religion. According to Sudarsono and Nugrohowati (2020), an individual's level of commitment to following religious orders is what determines their level of religiosity. Religious tourism literacy is an individual's ability to understand, appreciate, and participate in religious travel experiences related to religious aspects (Wirakurnia et al., 2022). This involves understanding the religious practices, sacred sites, traditions, and values associated with religious tourism destinations. Religious tourism literacy also includes knowledge of religious history, philosophy, mythology, and culture related to a particular religious tourism destination. Based on this definition, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H_{10}: Religious tourism literacy positively influences the attitudes
H_{11}: Religious tourism literacy positively influences the intention to recommend
H_{12}: Religious tourism literacy positively influences the intention to revisit

Framework

Based on theoretical research, previous research, and the formulation of the hypotheses explained above, a framework can be created that explains how attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, service quality, and religious tourism literacy influence the intention to recommend and revisit religious tourism. Figure 1 describes the research model as follows:
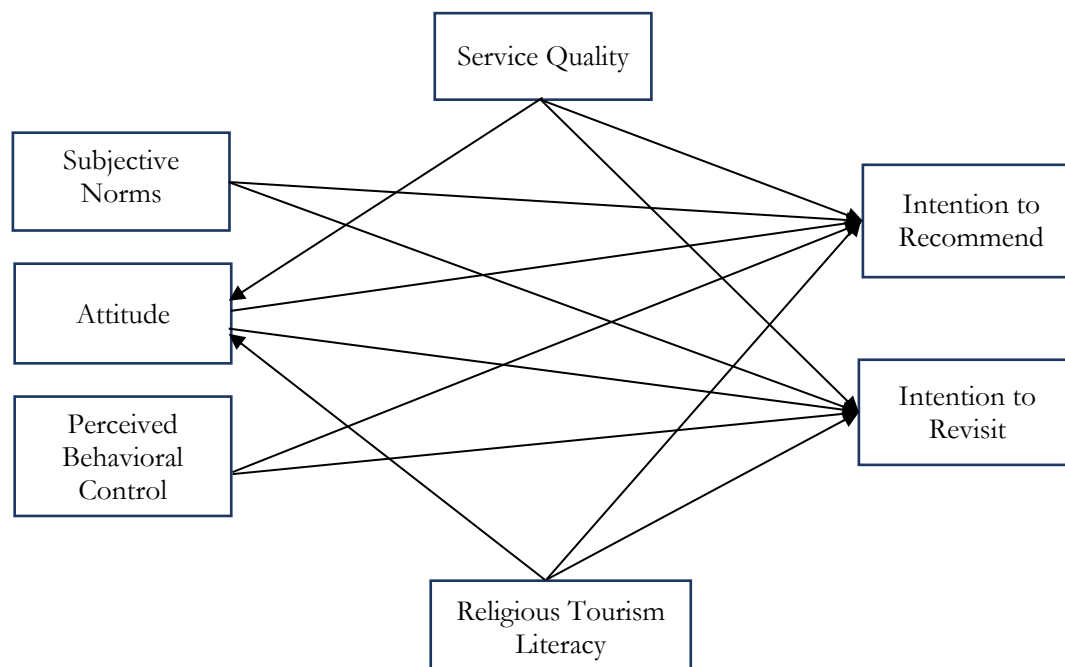
Figure 1. Research model

Research Methods

The target audience for this study was religious tourists, and Java was the main focus of this study. Implementation of this study began on December 6, 2022, and will last for 17 days, or until December 23, 2022. A population is a group that is studied from a certain object or topic and has the quantity and quality that lead to information data in research that will later lead to a conclusion. Respondents who met the researcher's criteria were selected as samples. Respondents visited religious tourism or local tourism sites at least once. This is survey research that uses questionnaires as the main instrument for data collection and involves direct sampling. Proposive sampling was used to collect samples. One strategy for finding non-random samples is proposive sampling, which involves selecting a sample based on unique qualities that match the researcher's requirements and goals for addressing the problem raised by the research (Sekaran 2013).

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is a set of multivariate techniques that integrate factor analysis and regression. This method has several advantages, such as not requiring normality of data distribution and allowing the use of data in structural equation modeling because its application is performed through non-parametric methods. PLS-SEM analysis was conducted using SmartPLS software. This technique is preferred because it allows the use of abnormal data to describe differences between constructs. PLS-SEM involves two steps, namely, testing for reliability and validity before path analysis and hypothesis testing.

The measurement model evaluated the accuracy and dependability of the model (outer model). A validity test was conducted to determine whether the capabilities of the research instrument matched the variables assessed. Reliability testing, on the other hand, measures how consistently a measuring instrument assesses an idea or vice versa and how consistently respondents answer questions in the researcher's questionnaire. The following section explains how convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability tests were used in this model.

Results and Discussion

Results

In this research, there are two parts, namely, the respondent data section, which explains the characteristics of the respondents and the questions for each variable to be tested. The results of this research consisted of 204 respondents who filled out a questionnaire that was distributed online; however, this number is the result of all respondents obtained from the entire island of Java. Respondents' characteristics, including age, gender, marital status, highest level of education, employment, monthly expenses, expenses for religious tourism activities, area of origin, and religious tourism visited, are as follows:

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Character	Group	Frequency	%
Gender	Man	113	55.4%
	Woman	91	44.6%
Marital status	Not married yet	107	52.5%
	Married	97	47.5%
Age	Under 15 years	0	0%
	16 – 25 years	102	50%
	26 – 30 years	11	5.4%
	31 – 35 years	14	6.9%
	36 – 40 years	9	4.4%
	41 – 45 years	14	6.9%
	46 – 50 years	17	8.3%
	More than 51 years	37	18.1%
Last education	High school graduate or equivalent	135	66.2%
	Bachelor Graduate (S1)	50	24.5%
	Master Graduate (S2)	8	3.9%
	Doctoral Graduate (S3)	1	0.5%
	Other	10	5%
Work	Student/learner	75	36.8%
	Government employees	26	12.7%
	Private employees	53	26%
	Entrepreneur/Entrepreneur	22	10.8%
	Housewife	14	6.9%
	Other	14	6.9%
Monthly expenses	Under IDR 1,000,000	51	25%
	IDR 1,100,000 – IDR 2,500,000	87	42.6%
	IDR 2,600,000 – IDR 5,000,000	52	25.5%
	IDR 5,100,000 – IDR 7,500,000	9	4.4%
	IDR 7,600,000 – IDR 10,000,000	1	0.5%
	IDR 10,100,000 – IDR 12,500,000	2	1%
	IDR 12,500,000 – IDR 15,000,000	-	-
	More than IDR 15,100,000	2	1%
Expenditures for religious tourism activities/year	Under IDR 100,000	83	40.7%
	IDR 101,000 – IDR 250,000	73	35.8%
	IDR 251,000 – IDR 500,000	33	16.2%
	IDR 501,000 – IDR 750,000	9	4.4%
	IDR 751,000 – IDR 1,000,000	4	2%
	More than IDR 1,000,000	2	1%
Origin	Special Region of Yogyakarta	144	70.6%
	Central Java	27	13.2%
	East Java	10	4.9%
	West Java	7	3.4%
	Other Areas	16	7.9%

The test results illustrate the correlation between each indication and its structure; the research indicators are suitable for use in research models and can be continued with further testing based on the findings in Table 2, which show that the average item has a loading factor (FL) above 0.7. It is then conducted by considering the composite reliability (CR) value with a threshold limit above 0.7. It can be concluded that all the variables met the requirements for further testing.

Table 2. Factor Loading, Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted

	Indicator	FL	CR	AVE
Attitude (ATT)	Religious tourism is my choice of tourism	0.820		
	Religious tourism is safe tourism	0.838		
	Religious tourism is a fun tourism	0.898	0.916	0.766
	Religious tourism is important tourism	0.863		
	Religious tourism is an impressive tourist attraction	0.824		
Intention to recommend (IR)	I would suggest to other people that halal tourist locations are comfortable tourist attractions	0.893		
	I would suggest to others that religious tourism is a fun tourism	0.881		
	I would suggest to other people that religious tourism is tourism that is important/meaningful for human life	0.834	0.924	0.708
	I would suggest to other people that visiting religious tourist sites is part of loving ancestral traditions	0.771		
Intention to revisit (IRR)	I intend to visit religious tourism locations again soon	0.877		
	I intend to visit religious tourism locations again next year	0.919		
	I intend to visit religious tourist sites every year	0.915	0.918	0.74
	I intend to return to visit religious tourism locations whenever there is a need/desire (to get good fortune, a soul mate, safety, etc.)	0.713		
Subjective Norm (SN)	My close friends (friends) influenced my decision to choose a religious tourism location	0.870		
	My close relatives (parents or siblings) influenced my decision to choose a religious tourism location	0.893		
	People who are important to me (parents, kyai, ustad, or ulama) influence my decision to choose a religious tourism location	0.858	0.91	0.718
	The majority of people I know (work friends or organizations) recommend that I visit religious tourism locations	0.763		
Service Quality (SQ)	I can easily get information (from offline and online) about religious tourism locations that I will visit	0.765		
	The information I get (via social media, flyers, flyers or posters) about religious tourism locations is interesting and easy to understand	0.886		
	I am happy with the tourism programs offered at religious tourism locations	0.876	0.927	0.717
	Complete supporting facilities (prayer room, toilet/WC, accommodation) are available at religious tourism locations	0.853		
	The services of religious tourism managers (parking guards, security officers or tour guides) make me feel safe visiting religious tourism locations	0.849		
Perceived Behaviour Control (PBC)	I will use my free time to visit religious tourist sites	0.832		
	I try to visit religious tourist locations even though they are far away	0.907		
	I try to visit religious tourism locations even though the infrastructure (roads and vehicles) is limited	0.916	0.929	0.766
	I try to visit religious tourist locations even though the costs are expensive	0.843		
Religious Tourism Literacy (LI)	I know about religious tourism (aims and objectives)	0.843		
	Religious tourism is part of the halal industry	0.902		
	Religious tourism is a government-supported tourism program	0.892		
	Visiting religious tourism locations (mosques and cemeteries) is part of maintaining ancestral traditions	0.8	0.935	0.742
	Religious tourism programs improve the welfare of the community at religious tourism locations	0.867		

Note: Factor Loading (FL), Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

The average variance extracted (AVE) value was used in this test, and the minimum limit for the AVE value was 0.5, indicating that the convergent validity indicator was reliable. Indicators are reliable tools for measuring variables that meet a minimum threshold. From the table above, it can be seen that the AVE value is greater than 0.5; therefore, it can be concluded that all variables meet the requirements and can be used. In this stage, testing can be performed in two ways. When using the AVE root, the AVE root value must be greater than the correlation between other constructs. Ideally, it should be greater than the correlation between the correlation ratios of the latent variables. The square root of AVE, commonly known as the Formel-Lacker criterion (see Table 3), is the second approach. The second method is to compare the cross-loading ratio and the Formell-Lacker cross-loading criterion for analyzing cross-loading. The AVE root value obtained was greater than the correlation between the construct and the other constructs. As shown in the table above, Consequently, it can be said that the analysis of the two stages of cross-loading has discriminant validity.

Table 3. Formell-Lacker's Discriminant Validity

	SQ	LI	IRR	IR	SN	PBC	ATT
Service Quality	0,847	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
Religious Tourism Literacy	0,714	0,862	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
Intention to Revisit	0,526	0,651	0,860	0,000	0,000	0,000	0,000
Intention to Recommend	0,669	0,786	0,724	0,842	0,000	0,000	0,000
Subjective Norm	0,492	0,575	0,646	0,622	0,848	0,000	0,000
Perceived Behaviour Control	0,595	0,634	0,799	0,658	0,643	0,875	0,000
Attitude	0,630	0,713	0,639	0,824	0,541	0,604	0,855

The coefficient of determination (R^2) tells us about the variables that are affected by endogenous variables, which are variables that are thought to have an effect on other variables in the model. Normal values for R^2 range from 0.670, which is strong, to about 0.333, which is moderate. From the results of the coefficient of determination, the R^2 value of the variable IRR intention to visit again is 0.704 (70.4%), the R^2 value of the variable. Thus, it can be interpreted that the ability of the independent variable has a strong level (70.4%) of IRR and (78%) of IR, while the ability of the independent variable moderately explains (53.9%) ATT.

From the results of the SRMR value estimated, the model estimate is 0.070 below 0.10, indicating that the model has a good model fit, which is still acceptable. Outlier data can have an impact on the SRMR value; if the SRMR value is greater than 10, it is possible to check the data or determine whether the level of model fit is poor or does not accurately reflect the empirical data. Meanwhile, the Net Fit Index (NFI) is 0.808; therefore, it can still be considered good. The closer it is to 1, the better the NFI. However, by examining the outer loading, it is possible to determine whether the built model is appropriate for smart PLS. It was considered fit if all items had a value > 0.7.

Table 4. Result Hypotheses

Variable	Coefficient	T Stat	P Values
Service quality → intention to revisit	1,442	1,365	0.173
Service quality → intention to recommend	1,000	0.948	0.343
Service quality → attitude	2,983	2,889	0.004
Religious tourism literacy → intention to revisit	2,154	2,013	0.045
Religious tourism literacy → intention to recommend	4,894	5,018	0,000
Religious tourism literacy → attitude	6,957	6,807	0,000
Subjective norm → intention to revisit	2,010	2,782	0.006
Subjective norm → intention to recommend	2,886	1,975	0.049
Perceived behaviour control → intention to revisit	7,864	7,252	0,000
Perceived behaviour control → intent to recommend	1,223	1,225	0.221
Attitude → intention to revisit	1,894	1,868	0.062
Attitude → intention to recommend	1,923	5,142	0,000

To test this hypothesis, a t-test was performed using the bootstrapping method with SmartPLS at a significance level of 5%. This hypothesis is accepted if the value is less than 1.96. From the results of the t-test, there are four t-test values that are less than 1.96, including service quality → intention to visit again with a t-test value of 1.365, service quality → intention to recommend with a t-test value of 0.948, perceived behavior -> intention to recommend with a t-test value of 1.225, and attitude → intention to revisit with a t-test value of 1.868. Thus, these results show that there are four hypotheses that are either not significant or rejected.

Discussion

Attitude has been proven to have a significant positive impact on Muslims' intention to recommend religious tourism. For Muslims, religious tourism is considered an integral aspect of fulfilling religious obligations by adding a spiritual dimension to their journey. Their visits to religious sites are not just tourism activities but also a form of obedience and devotion to religious teachings (Abbate & Di Nuovo, 2013). In this context, a positive attitude motivates them to share their experiences with others, encouraging recommendations so that others can experience the blessings of visiting these places. Moreover, attitude has a significant impact on Muslims' desire to revisit these religious locations. This confirms that the spiritual experiences and religious values found in halal tourism destinations provide unique attractions. Unlike conventional tourism, which may focus more on the physical beauty, cleanliness, or uniqueness of a place, halal tourism adds a dimension of historical and spiritual value that becomes the main attraction for Muslims. Particularly, the numerous Muslim visits to halal tourism destinations in Java, such as graveyards, pilgrimage sites, and historic mosques, show that their presence is more influenced by historical backgrounds and spiritual considerations (Collins-Kreiner, 2020). This reflects the richness of cultural and religious values inherent in halal tourism destinations, reinforcing the concept that this type of tourism is more than just a physical journey but also a journey of the soul and spirituality.

Subjective norms prove to be a crucial factor playing a positive role in shaping an individual's intention to recommend religious tourism. In this context, the influence of the surrounding environment, including support from close friends, the community, and family, plays a vital role in shaping Muslims' attitudes and intentions to encourage others to visit halal tourism destinations. Social support from the immediate environment creates norms depicting the importance of spiritual experiences in the context of religious tourism (Huang et al., 2020). Not limited to urban environments, subjective norms remain relevant among Islamic study groups that are typically found in rural areas. These groups, often closely linked to religious leaders and families, maintain the understanding that visiting sacred places such as gravesites, pilgrimage sites, and mosques is not just a physical journey but also an expression of spiritual life (Faletehan, 2019). This understanding is passed down through generations, creating norms and values that shape a positive perception of religious tourism among younger generations, inherited from religious leaders and their parents. Thus, subjective norms and support from the surrounding environment play a significant role in shaping the intentions and behavior of the community regarding religious tourism.

Perceived behavioral control has been proven to have a significant positive influence on the intention to return to religious tourism destinations. This phenomenon illustrates people's tendency to revisit previously visited religious tourism destinations, influenced by their positive experiences. When individuals experience something interesting and satisfying during their previous visits, perceived behavioral control becomes a key factor driving them to return (Iriobe & Abiola-Oke, 2019). The motivation to repeat enjoyable experiences is closely related to the desire to avoid the uncertainty that may arise from new experiences. Individuals tend to seek certainty and comfort in activities with which they are familiar; in the context of religious tourism, this creates a strong foundation for the decision to return (Sudarsono et al., 2021). The justification for individuals to do their best in deciding to return to religious tourism destinations reflects their desire to maintain and enhance their previous positive experiences. Therefore, perceived behavior control is not only a driver of the intention to return but also provides a psychological context explaining why individuals prefer to repeat known and satisfying experiences. In engaging in

religious tourism, factors such as certainty, comfort, and positive previous experiences become crucial foundations in shaping decisions to continue one's spiritual journey.

Service quality seems to have no significant impact on public intention in recommending and revisiting religious tourism destinations. Although service quality is generally considered a key factor in the tourism industry, in the context of religious tourism, people's motivation is focused more on spiritual aspects and historical experiences (Rukuiziene, 2009). The intention to visit religious destinations, such as the graves of scholars, pilgrimage sites, and historical mosques, is not only driven by service quality but also by an understanding of and adherence to religious teachings. People express their intention to pilgrimage to religious sites as part of their religious practices, seeking direct experiences with the history of scholars or spiritual places they have only heard of before. This activity is more related to personal spiritual matters than to mere entertainment or luxury services. Religious sites often develop a simple and natural atmosphere, distancing themselves from the luxurious impressions found in conventional tourist destinations (Ohlan & Ohlan, 2023). In this context, the public's perception of services received during visits to religious sites may be less of a primary concern. They prioritize spiritual aspects and personal experiences that are deep rather than services that may be considered secondary in their activities. Therefore, it is essential to understand that service quality may have a more limited role in influencing the intention and decisions of the public regarding religious tourism destinations.

Literacy in religious tourism has been proven to impact attitudes toward religious tourism, individual intention in recommending the destination to others, and the desire to revisit a religious tourism destination. Obtaining information about religious tourism destinations from various media sources encourages the public's curiosity about religious tourism. Although religious tourism activities are often associated with spiritual dimensions and undertaken by those who believe in transcendent values, this becomes an attraction for some people to delve deeper into these aspects (Wirakurnia, et al., 2021). Finally, the knowledge gained through religious tourism literacy becomes a key factor in increasing the public's intention in recommending religious tourism destinations to others, as well as in increasing the desire to revisit these places. With an increase in public literacy regarding religious tourism, it is expected that the intention to recommend and visit religious tourism will also increase. This literacy provides a deeper understanding of the spiritual and historical values surrounding religious destinations, making the tourism experience more meaningful and substantial for each individual.

Conclusion

Attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, literacy in religious tourism, and the influence of social environments play a crucial role in shaping the intentions and behaviors related to religious tourism. Subjective norms and perceived behavioral control have a significant impact, emphasizing the need for stakeholders to collaborate with the local community, friends, and family to enhance the appeal of religious tourism. Destination developers can also consider expanding facilities and providing better control to visitors to increase their intention to return while still addressing spiritual needs. Although service quality does not seem to have a significant impact on intention, improving services remains important for providing a satisfying experience for visitors. The government can also focus on developing religious tourism literacy programs to increase public knowledge, which in turn can enhance interest, positive attitudes, and the intention to recommend and revisit. Considering these implications, destination managers and stakeholders can design more effective strategies to enhance attractiveness and visitor satisfaction and contribute to the sustainable development of religious tourism.

This research has some limitations, including the predominance of student respondents compared to other groups, necessitating future research to include more non-student respondents. Additionally, all respondents were Muslims, and some Muslim groups may not permit religious tourism, especially when visiting gravesites. Therefore, in future research, it is necessary to consider grouping respondents based on their backgrounds. Finally, as the religious aspect is related to religiosity issues, future research should add religiosity constructs to investigate their influence on the intention to recommend and revisit.

Author Contributions

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