

Predicting Tourists Behavioral Intention through Antecedents of Attitude Towards Destination

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Article Link: <https://journals.brainnetwork.org/index.php/ssmr/article/view/27>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.69591/ssmr.vol01/006>



Volume 1, 2023

Funding

No

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Citation:

Ahmed, S. & Kamran, M., (2023). Predicting Tourists Behavioral Intention through Antecedents of Attitude Towards Destination, *Social Science Multidisciplinary Review*, 1, 96-124.

Conflict of Interest: Authors declared no Conflict of Interest

Acknowledgment: No administrative and technical support was taken for this research

Article History

Submitted: February 21, 2023

Last Revised: July 25, 2023

Accepted: August 19, 2023



**An official Publication of
Beyond Research Advancement &
Innovation Network, Islamabad, Pakistan**

Predicting Tourists Behavioral Intention through Antecedents of Attitude Towards Destination

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the effect of various antecedents on behavioral intention, with the mediating roles of attitude towards destination and destination attachment, by surveying tourists in Pakistan. Specifically, the antecedents considered are destination attractiveness, source credibility, and personality. A questionnaire-based survey was conducted on a sample of 367 tourists who visited several destinations in Pakistan. The PLS-SEM technique was used for analysis purposes. The results showed that destination attractiveness and destination personality significantly predict behavioral intention through the two mediators: attitude towards destination and destination attachment. In contrast, destination source credibility predicts behavioral intention only through destination attachment. The findings also indicate that attitude towards destination predicts destination attachment. These results provide a foundation for further research on attitudes towards destinations and destination attachment, which can be extended to other tourist attractions.

Keywords: antecedents, attitudes towards destination, destination attachment, behavioral intention

1. INTRODUCTION

The digital era is driving a fundamental upheaval in the worldwide tourism environment. The tourism sector has leveraged digital marketing to rethink how places interact with visitors, mold attitudes, and spur economic growth in a time when connectivity is crucial (Kamsar et al., 2023). Over the years, the tourism industry has transitioned from a traditional paradigm to a digitally driven behemoth (Sagolsem, 2023). The service sector, especially in innovation, now

plays a major and crucial role (Miles, 2001). Digital transformation is revolutionizing the tourism industry (Sofia Gomez et al., 2024).

In many developing countries, tourism is becoming one of the most important growing sectors. In recent years, many tourism destinations have emerged, and activities related to tourism have been increasing day by day (Arya et al., 2018). The term "destination attractiveness" has been widely studied in leisure and outdoor recreation research as it attracts tourists to visit destinations. It is defined as a tourist's perception of the facilities provided by a destination to fulfill their vocational needs (Cheng et al., 2013; Chien, 2016; Wang et al., 2018). Researchers have identified four dimensions most relevant to destination attractiveness: amenities, access, scenery, and the local community (Reitsamer et al., 2016).

An attractive tourist destination significantly affects tourists' attitudes towards the destination and their intention to visit (Ittoo et al., 2019). It is also considered an important component for evaluating tourist attachment to a place (Cheng et al., 2013; Shoimah et al., 2014) and as an antecedent of tourists' attitudes towards a specific destination (Reitsamer et al., 2016). As evident from previous research studies, this study used destination attractiveness (DAT) as an antecedent of attitude towards the destination.

Destination source credibility is considered another important aspect of attracting tourists to visit a destination. It refers to the credibility that destination management has in delivering on its promises and providing benefits to specific visitors related to a travel destination (Veasna et al., 2013). Furthermore, it comprises three components: trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness. In the decision-making process, source credibility plays a crucial role in influencing tourists' attitudes and behaviors towards a particular place (Veen & Song, 2010) and their attachment to it (Veasna et al., 2013; Kani et al., 2017). As evident from previous research studies, this study used destination source credibility (DSC) as an antecedent of attitude towards the destination.

In the context of tourism management, destination personality (DP) is considered an important factor in understanding tourists' attitudes, preferences, and behavioral intentions associated with a particular place (Quintal et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2019). It can affect the decision-making process of tourists and helps them identify with unique destination features, which may result in the development of strong and expressive tourist attitudes, attachment, and behavioral

intentions (Kumar, 2016; Pan, Zhang, Gursoy, & Lu, 2017; Souiden, Ladhari, & Chiadmi, 2017; Chi, Pan, & Chiappa, 2018). As evident from previous research studies, this study used destination personality as an antecedent of attitude towards the destination.

The attitudes of tourists are an important component that influences their decision-making process regarding visiting a place (Souiden et al., 2017). Attitude refers to a tendency, created by knowledge and understanding, to act and respond consistently toward an object, such as a product. This tendency can be favorable or unfavorable. Attitude comprises three components: cognitive behavior, affective behavior, and conative behavior (Souiden et al., 2017; Chavarria & Phakdee-auksorn, 2017). In the tourism context, it refers to the beliefs and feelings of tourists towards a destination. It can also act as an attachment facilitator, increasing the interest of tourists and leading to positive behavioral intentions (Bianchi et al., 2017; Feriyanto et al., 2019). As evident from previous research studies, this study used attitude towards the destination as a mediator between antecedents and behavioral intention.

Furthermore, destination attachment is another aspect that has received much attention from both recreation and tourism researchers due to its impact on behavioral intention. Most researchers have found that two dimensions are most relevant to destination attachment: place dependence and place identity (Fu et al., 2019). Several researchers also describe place attachment as a sufficient and necessary mediator for building relationships between many constructs (Fu et al., 2019; Hosany, Prayag, Veen, Huang, & Deesilatham, 2017; Prayag, Chen, & Chiappa, 2017; Su, Huang, & Hsu, 2018). As evident from previous research studies, this study used destination attachment as a mediator between antecedents and behavioral intention.

Recent evidence revealed that one of the elements that influence the selection of a sustainable destination is the behavioral intention of tourists. Behavioral intention refers to a person's likelihood or subjective probability of responding in each way (Kim et al., 2018; Choshaly & Mirabolghasemi, 2019). It comprises two dimensions: revisit intention and recommendation intention. Many researchers have focused on investigating this variable, as it is considered an important component in attracting tourists to return in the future and in attracting new visitors (Kani, Aziz, Sambasivan, & Bojei, 2017; Prayag, Chen, & Chiappa, 2017; Santos,

Ramos, & Almeida, 2017; Stylos, Bellou, Andronikidis, & Vassiliadis, 2017). As evident from previous research studies, this study used behavioral intention (BI) as the dependent variable.

However, based on the above introduction, this study contributes to the three major findings:

First, the aim of this study is to address antecedents (destination attractiveness, destination source credibility, and destination personality) as independent variables to measure the behavioral intention of tourists. Previous researchers have stated that discovering additional antecedents of attitude and destination attachment could refine the comprehensive framework and further extend the literature on tourism (Souiden et al., 2017), such as destination attractiveness (Reitsamer et al., 2016), destination personality (Prayag et al., 2017), and destination source credibility (Su et al., 2018). Recent research suggests more exploration into the consequences of destination personality, such as destination attachment and behavioral intention (Zhang et al., 2019).

Second, we propose two mediating variables—tourist attitude towards destination and destination attachment—to predict the behavioral intention of tourists. Previous researchers have stated that future studies could treat place attachment as a mediating or moderating variable between destination attractiveness and behavioral intention (Ma et al., 2017), and consider behavioral intention as a dependent variable in tourism studies to predict tourists' visits to recreational destinations in different regions of the world (Bianchi et al., 2017). The connection between destination attachment and behavioral intention should also be examined (Plunkett et al., 2019).

Third, the conceptual model highlights that affection is created only after the formation of an attitude. Thus, attitude serves as an attachment facilitator, increasing tourists' interest, emotional connection, and bond with a destination. Future researchers are encouraged to use measures related to attitude towards the destination and attachment to the destination that reflect the memorability of destination experiences with greater intensity (Reitsamer et al., 2016). Previous research also provides a comprehensive framework that can be utilized to study various other tourism destinations, as visitors from different countries may have different perspectives (Reitsamer et al., 2016; Kani et al., 2017; Chavarria & Phakdee-auksorn, 2017).

Hence, this study contributes to the understanding of the antecedents and consequences of attitude towards the destination and allows for a better understanding of tourists' behavioral intentions. The findings of this study also shed new light on the practices of the tourism industry in Pakistan. This paper is organized as follows: after a detailed literature review, the hypotheses are proposed, followed by a detailed discussion on methodology, results, and findings, and then the conclusion and recommendations for future studies are presented.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Antecedents of Attitude towards Destination

Social media information can be tailored to meet the demands of users, significantly enhancing its ability to influence their intentions and behaviors (Chen, Wu, Deng, & Zhi, 2023). Since research acknowledges that attitudes toward destinations are a crucial factor affecting behavioral intentions, we identify three antecedents of attitudes toward destinations: destination attractiveness, destination source credibility, and destination personality (Feriyanto et al., 2019; Reitsamer et al., 2016; Souiden, Ladhari, & Chiadmi, 2017; Kumar & Nayak, 2018; Sharifsamet, Jin, & Martin, 2018), and investigate them in relation to tourism attractions (Quintal, Lwin, Phau, & Lee, 2018; Zhang, Huang, Cao, & Chen, 2019; Prayag, Chen, & Chiappa, 2017).

2.2. Destination Attractiveness

The need for urban tourism has significantly increased due to recent trends in urbanization and the rise in urban tourism (Erdal & Martin, 2024). In persuasive tourism studies, many researchers have examined the structural relationship between two constructs: destination attractiveness and behavioral intention. Recently, in community-based tourism, scholars found a positive and significant relationship between destination attractiveness (DAT) and behavioral intention (BI) in terms of revisit intention and recommendation intention (Chang & Stansbie, 2018; Feriyanto et al., 2019). Attractiveness influences tourists' revisit intentions primarily due to natural beauty, which compels tourists to revisit (Pratiwi et al., 2018). When unique attractiveness can fulfill people's needs and potential, they are more inclined to stay in the destination and revisit it in the future (Cheng et al., 2013; Chein, 2016; Ma, Hisao, & Gao, 2017; Chang & Stansbie, 2018).

H₁: Destination attractiveness is positively related to behavioral intention.

Attractiveness is considered a major component in a tourist's experience that establishes favorable or unfavorable attitudes toward a place. Recent scholars have found a positive and significant relationship between DAT and attitude toward the destination (ATD) (Feriyanto et al., 2019). It can be assumed that tourist attitudes and travel intentions can be influenced by attraction (Ma, Hisao, & Gao, 2017). In another study, Reitsamer and his colleagues also found that dimensions of DAT significantly influence tourists' attitudes (Reitsamer et al., 2016). Similarly, another study provided evidence that DAT is an antecedent of ATD (Sparks & Pan, 2009).

H₂: Destination attractiveness is positively related to attitude toward the destination.

While previous studies have provided inconsistent pictures of how destination attractiveness affects destination attachment, recent scholars have found a link between destination attractiveness and attachment (Chen & Chou, 2019). As mentioned above, Reitsamer and his colleagues postulated that destination attractiveness is an antecedent variable of ATD, which leads to a strong attachment to the destination (Reitsamer et al., 2016). Therefore, a greater level of tourists' destination attractiveness is related to stronger place attachment (Hou, Lin, & Morais, 2005; Cheng, Wu, & Huang, 2013; Shoimah, Nimran, & Musadieq, 2014; Xu & Zhang, 2016).

H₃: Destination attractiveness is positively related to destination attachment.

2.3. Destination Source Credibility

Urban tourism is typically completed within a relatively short time frame, often just a few days or even less than a day compared to other forms of tourism (Erdal & Martin, 2024). In the past, much research has focused on discussing the relationship between destination source credibility and behavioral intention in various contexts. It is possible to enhance the perception of a particular destination through credible sources, as a better image leads to tourist satisfaction, influencing their intention to revisit (Kani et al., 2017). Previous researchers have found that two dimensions of destination source credibility—expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness—have a significant effect on tourists' behavioral intention (BI) (Hu, Shyam, & Sunder, 2010; Veen & Song, 2010; Veasna, Wu, & Huang, 2013).

H₄: Destination source credibility is positively related to behavioral intention.

From both psychology and marketing perspectives, destination source credibility (DSC) is considered an essential aspect of the tourism destination (Bianchi et al., 2017). In the context of consumer behavior, researchers from various fields have explored whether high source expertise leads to favorable attitudes toward endorsers and advertisements compared to low source expertise (Ivanov et al., 2018). Some scholars have argued that attitudes play a mediating role between source credibility and visit intention (Veen & Song, 2010; Ayeh et al., 2013; Veasna et al., 2013).

H₅: Destination source credibility is positively related to attitude toward the destination.

In previous tourism literature, some scholars have suggested a positive connection between brand attachment and source credibility in online communication (Chiou et al., 2013). Studies in tourism have also illustrated the significant influence of credible sources of information on creating a positive image of recreation destinations. Although destination source credibility has received less attention from researchers in the tourism perspective, it is recommended by Su et al. (2018) that future research should investigate the relationship between place attachment and source credibility in other contexts.

H₆: Destination source credibility is positively related to destination attachment.

2.4. Destination Personality

Destination personality is a crucial factor that travelers consider when assessing a place. Previous studies on destination personality have predominantly focused on its structural aspects and implications. For instance, certain findings highlight the symbolic and self-expressive roles that a distinctive brand personality plays in shaping traveler preferences (Kovačić et al., 2022). Destination personality can influence traveler attitudes, preferences, choices, and the likelihood of revisiting the destination in the future (Papadimitriou et al., 2015). It may also contribute to increased repeat visitation by loyal tourists, thereby influencing economic development (Quintal et al., 2018). In another context, researchers have asserted that the dimensions of destination personality significantly affect behavioral dimensions related to referral intention and revisit intention (Pool et al., 2016;

Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2015; Souiden, Ladhari, & Chiadmi, 2017; Chi et al., 2018).

H₇: Destination personality is positively related to behavioral intention.

Recent studies suggest that destination personality also plays a key role in predicting tourists' attitudes. Scholars have developed personality scales that influence attitudes (Zhang et al., 2019). Additionally, destination personality's impact on attitude toward product destination, travel destination, and overall destination attitude has been noted (Kumar & Nayak, 2018; Quintal et al., 2018). It is also observed that destination brand personality serves as an antecedent variable of attitude toward the destination (Papadimitriou, Apostolopoulou, & Kaplanidou, 2015; Kumar & Nayak, 2018; Chi, Pan, & Chiappa, 2018; Souiden et al., 2017; Sharifsamet et al., 2018).

H₈: Destination personality is positively related to attitude toward the destination.

Although the terms destination personality and destination attachment have been widely studied in tourism literature, destination personality has received less attention from researchers. However, it is recognized that personality traits, particularly those related to the OCEAN model, positively influence attachment (Kim et al., 2018). Overall, it is generally believed that brand personality guides the development of brand attachment (Louis & Lombart, 2010; Huang et al., 2017).

H₉: Destination personality will significantly affect destination attachment.

2.5. Outcomes of Attitude towards Destination

According to Souiden et al. (2017), attitude toward the destination can act as a driver of behavioral intention and destination attachment (Reitsamer et al., 2016) in recreational research studies. To investigate the impact of attitude toward the destination on its behavioral consequences, we consider two widely recognized behavioral metrics of destination: destination attachment and behavioral intention.

2.6. Destination Attachment

Recent researchers suggest that place attachment influences residents' attitudes in developing countries (Eusébio et al., 2018). Some have also observed a relationship between attitude toward tourism development and place attachment (Akbulut & Ekin, 2018). Tourists' attitudes toward a destination significantly

mediate the relationship among motivators of destination and attachment (Arya et al., 2018). Therefore, overall positive attitudes result in high place attachment, while overall negative attitudes lead to low attachment to the place (Reitsamer et al., 2016; Pan, Zhang, Gursoy, & Lu, 2017; Sharifsamet, Jin, & Martin, 2018; Prayag et al., 2017; Han et al., 2018).

H10: Attitude toward the destination is positively related to destination attachment.

2.7. Behavioral Intention

In consumer research, it has been found that attitude toward a place is a stronger predictor of visit intention (Verma et al., 2019). Additionally, positive audience responses toward positive destination placement in films facilitate a high and favorable attitude toward the destination and positive visit intention (Ito et al., 2019; Feriyanto et al., 2019; Vesci & Botti, 2019). Moreover, a positive relationship has been observed between attitude toward the destination and behavioral intention, including revisit intention and recommendation intention of domestic and foreign tourists (Chavarria & Phakdee-auksorn, 2017; Quintal et al., 2015; Yeo et al., 2017; Quintal et al., 2018; Choe & Kim, 2018; Kim & Kwon, 2018; Amalia, 2019; Han et al., 2019; Feriyanto et al., 2019; Vesci & Boti, 2019). Place attachment is also a key determinant of behavioral intentions among visitors (Santos et al., 2017; Song et al., 2017; Prayag et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2019). Visitors with a high level of attachment to the destination contribute to more recreational behaviors (revisit intention & recommendation intention) during their vacation (Kani et al., 2017; Hosany et al., 2017; Prayag & Grivel, 2018; Yen et al., 2018; Hosany et al., 2019; Plunkett et al., 2019; Cui et al., 2019; Han et al., 2019).

H₁₁: Attitude toward the destination is positively related to behavioral intention.

H₁₂: Destination attachment is positively related to behavioral intention.

2.8. Mediating Roles

The previous researchers have asserted that attitude toward the destination acts as a sufficient and necessary mediator for building relationships between many constructs (Veen & Song, 2010; Reitsamer et al., 2016; Souiden et al., 2017; Arya et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2019). In the tourism context, recreational researchers have

identified place attachment as an independent variable and as an antecedent of tourist behavior and attitudes (Hosany et al., 2006; Hosany et al., 2017), and as a mediator between antecedents and outcomes (Ma et al., 2017; Hosany et al., 2017; Reitsamer et al., 2016). Therefore, this study examines how antecedents affect the behavioral intention of tourists by considering two attributes as mediators: attitude toward destination and destination attachment.

H₁₃: Attitude toward destination acts as a significant mediator between destination attractiveness and behavioral intention

H₁₄: Destination attachment acts as a significant mediator between destination attractiveness and behavioral intention.

H₁₅: Attitude toward destination acts as a significant mediator between destination source credibility and behavioral intention.

H₁₆: Destination attachment acts as a significant mediator between destination source credibility and behavioral intention.

H₁₇: Attitude toward destination acts as a significant mediator between destination personality and behavioral intention.

H₁₈: Destination attachment acts as a significant mediator between destination personality and behavioral intention.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Our theoretical framework shows antecedents (DAT, DSC, and DP) as independent variables and two constructs (ATD) and (DA) as a mediating variable and (BI) as the dependent variable. The hypothesized relationships for this study have been shown in figure 1.

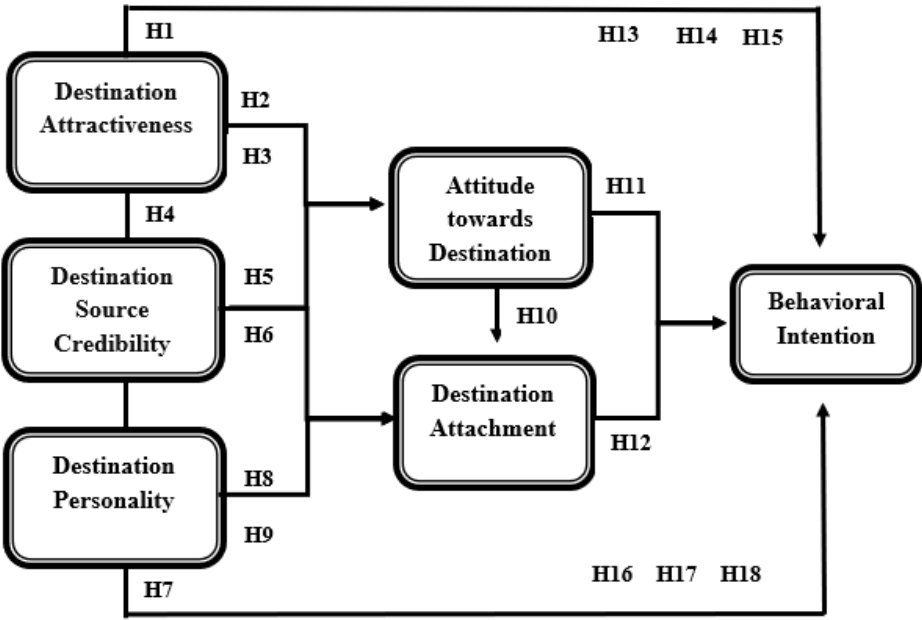


Figure 1: Proposed Research Model

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Location Selection

Pakistan's tourism industry has gained recognition as one of the world's most attractive destinations due to its rich culture, geographical diversity, and historical significance, boasting natural landscapes and architectural marvels that draw tourists from around the globe (Hye & Khan, 2013). In fact, Pakistan's tourism offerings include world heritage sites, attracting a significant number of visitors, with 1.75 million tourists recorded in 2017 alone (Alasttal & Burdey, 2017).

Moreover, the tourism sector plays a pivotal role as a driver of rapid and inclusive economic growth within Pakistan. Additionally, travel and tourism in Pakistan act as a unifying force, bringing together people from diverse cultures and traditions, thereby fostering global harmony, and understanding.

4.2. Research Design

The research employed a quantitative approach, utilizing a questionnaire for data collection. This approach involved the use of pre-structured standardized instruments, which were self-administered to participants. The questionnaire utilized a Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," allowing respondents to indicate their level of agreement with various statements or items.

4.3. Study setting and Unit of Analysis

The study setting is non-contrived, meaning it reflects real-world conditions rather than artificial or controlled environments. The unit of analysis for the research is individual tourists. The population selected for the study comprises domestic tourists. The time setting is "cross-sectional," indicating that data will be collected from the targeted individuals only once, and they will not be approached again for further data collection.

4.4. Data Collection and Sampling Technique

A survey instrument was developed to gather information from tourists who visited various destinations in Pakistan. The research survey was conducted through online forums on websites and travel companies that organized tours to different destinations. Only tourists who had completed their vacation were selected for participation, with platforms such as ApnaTrip.com, TripShip.com, TravelsandTours.com, and AdventureTreksandTours.com being utilized.

Convenience sampling technique was employed in this study, whereby 400 questionnaires were distributed to the target population. After eliminating incomplete questionnaires, a total of 376 completed questionnaires were used for data analysis purposes.

4.5. Administration of Questionnaire

To collect data, the survey instrument comprised three sections. The first section aimed to understand the sample distribution and structure, including demographic information such as gender, age, duration of stay, number of stays, and travel companions. The second section involved asking respondents to list the names of

destinations they visited in Pakistan. The third section consisted of 35 items, as detailed in Table 1, which presented the full measurement scale used in this study.

Table 1: *Full Measurement Scale*

Factors and Items
Destination Attractiveness: Access (Deng, King, & Bauer, 2002; Reitsamer et al., 2016). There are many alternative ways to go to my visited tourism destination. There are many convenient ways to go to my visited destination. There are many suitable transportation possibilities to go around in my visited destination.
Destination Attractiveness: Amenities (Bigne, Garcia, & Blas, 2008; Reitsamer et al., 2016). My visited tourism destinations have excellent local Cuisine-food. There are high-quality hotels in my visited destination.
Destination Attractiveness: Local Community (Reitsamer et al., 2016). I have good impressions of the local people. Local people were friendly.
Destination Attractiveness: Scenery (Reitsamer et al., 2016). Destination I visit has a pleasant climate. Destination I visit has attractive scenery.
Destination Source Credibility: Expertise (Veasna et al., 2013; Kani et al., 2017). Information claims from my visited destination are believable. Over time, my experiences with visited destination led me to be expecting it to keep its promises. My visited destination is committed to delivering on its claims.
Destination Source Credibility: Trustworthiness The destination I visit has a name I can trust. The destination I visit can deliver what it promises.
Destination personality: Sentimental (Kim & Lee, 2015; Souiden et al., 2017) My visited destination is Upper-class. My visited destination is Warming. My visited destination is Charming. My visited destination is Appealing.

My visited destination is Up to date.

My visited destination is Unique.

My visited destination is Friendly.

Destination Personality: Competence (Kim & Lee, 2015; Souiden et al., 2017)

My visited destination leads to other destinations.

My visited destination is Trustworthy.

Attitude towards the destination (Souiden et al., 2017)

I love the destination which I have visited.

I have a favorable opinion about the visited destination.

Visiting my selected destination is a good decision.

Destination Attachment (Veasna et al., 2013; Reitsamer et al., 2016)

Destination I visited is the best place I like to do on vacations.

I am much attached to my visited destination.

Holidays in the visited destination means a lot to me.

No other place can provide the same holiday experience as a destination I had visited.

Behavioral intention (Souiden et al., 2017)

I look forward to visiting the destination which I had visited.

I actively seek information about the visited destination in order to revisit it.

I would consider visited destination among my future destination.

I will visit that destination again.

I strongly recommend people to visit the destination I had visited.

4.6. Data analysis method

The analysis of this research study employed various statistical techniques, with the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) technique utilized to test the proposed model and relationships among variables. PLS-SEM enables the assessment of relationships between latent and observed variables, particularly useful when examining multivariate effects and relationships among multiple variables with the dependent variable (Hair et al., 2014; Santos et al., 2017).

5. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

5.1. Demographic Characteristics of Sample

The purpose of the descriptive analysis is to outline the various characteristics of a study through the demographic profile of respondents. Demographic

characteristics such as gender, age, areas visited in Pakistan, duration of stay, and names of destinations visited in Pakistan were considered for this study.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Sample under Study

Variable	Category	N = 376 Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	• Male	203	54%
	• Female	173	46%
Age	• Under 20	73	19.4%
	• 21-30	247	65.7%
	• 31-40	45	12.0%
	• 41-Above	11	2.9%
Visited Area	• Northern Areas	325	86%
	• Southern Areas	36	9.6%
	• Seaside	12	3.2%
	• Others	3	.8%
Duration of Stay	• 1-3 days	126	33.5%
	• 4-6 days	139	37.0%
	• 1-2 weeks	70	18.6%
	• 3-4 weeks	41	10.9%

Table 2 presents the analysis of the demographic characteristics of respondents. It can be observed that the number of male respondents (203 tourists or 54%) exceeds that of females (173 or 46%). Regarding age, the highest frequency falls between 21 and 30 years old (247 tourists or 65%). Furthermore, most areas visited by tourists in Pakistan are the northern areas (325 tourists or 86%). In terms of length of stay, most tourists stay between 4-6 days at their visited destination (139 tourists or 37%).

Table 3: Top 10 Visited Destinations in Pakistan

Sr. #	Names of Destinations visited in Pakistan	Votes
1	Muree	153
2	Naran Kaghan	139
3	Hunza	132
4	Swat	89

5	Kashmir	68
6	Islamabad	63
7	Gilgit Baltistan	47

Table 3 illustrates the top ten visited destinations in Pakistan by tourists. The first column displays the top ten destinations mostly selected by tourists for vacations, while the second column exhibits the total number of tourists who voted for each destination.

5.2. Assessment of Measurement Model

Reliability Analysis

In the measurement model, construct reliability is evaluated using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. Typically, values above 0.7 indicate acceptable reliability (Hair et al., 2014). In our study, Cronbach's alpha values range from 0.746 to 0.855, while composite reliability values range from 0.840 to 0.892, as depicted in Table 4, indicating high internal consistency.

Validity Analysis

Convergent validity is established when factor loadings of indicators are significant (>0.40) and the average variance extracted (AVE) is >0.50 . Outer loading values should ideally exceed 0.70 (Hair et al., 2014). In our research, values below 0.7 have been excluded. Table 4 shows that AVE values range from 0.569 (DSC) to 0.721 (ATD), with all constructs demonstrating positive variances, indicating good convergent validity.

Model Fit and R Square

The R^2 values for latent variables are as follows: ATD = 0.514 (Moderate), BI = 0.681 (Substantial), and DA = 0.607 (Substantial), as presented in Table 4. All R^2 values fall within acceptable ranges, indicating a highly fitting model. Additionally, the SRMR value of 0.071 is below the threshold of 0.08, confirming sufficient fit of empirical data for the research path model used.

Table 4: Summary of Measurement Model

Constructs	Items	Factor Loading	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE	R ²	Q ²
Destination Attractiveness DAT1, DAT2, DAT3, DAT4, DAT5 deleted due to poor loading	DAT6 DAT7 DAT8 DAT9	0.611 0.807 0.788 0.875	0.806	0.886	0.721	-	-
Destination Source Credibility DSC2 Deleted due to poor loading	DSC1 DSC3 DSC4 DSC5	0.644 0.728 0.840 0.792	0.830	0.880	0.596	-	-
Destination Personality DP1, DP2, DP5 Deleted due to poor loading	DP3 DP4 DP6 DP7 DP8 DP9	0.796 0.776 0.813 0.702 0.740 0.730	0.838	0.892	0.673	-	-
Attitude towards Destination	ATD1 ATD2 ATD3	0.849 0.865 0.833	0.780	0.856	0.603	0.541	0.332
Destination Attachment	DA1 DA2 DA3 DA4	0.830 0.863 0.830 0.784	0.855	0.892	0.580	0.685	0.357
Behavioral Intention	BI1 BI2 BI3 BI4 BI5	0.787 0.769 0.785 0.762 0.755	0.746	0.840	0.569	0.607	0.360

-*CR is used to determine reliability of data

-**AVE is used to determine convergent validity

Note: - Model Fit Statistics: $\chi^2 = 1,510.912$, D_G = 0.732, NFI = 0.734, d_ULS = 1.787, SRMR = 0.071

Assessment of Structural Model

Path coefficient values, t-values, p-values, and hypothesis tests are shown in Table 5 and Figure 2. Significant results are observed in the relationships between (DAT) and (BI) (path = 0.108, p-value = 0.024), (DAT) and (ATD) (path = 0.317, p-value = 0.000), and (DAT) and (DA) (path = 0.141, p-value = 0.002). However, the

relationship between (DSC) and (BI) (path = -0.118, p-value = 0.013) is significant, while the relationship between (DSC) and (ATD) (path = -0.018, p-value = 0.757) is not. All other hypotheses show significant values ($p < 0.05$), indicating acceptance.

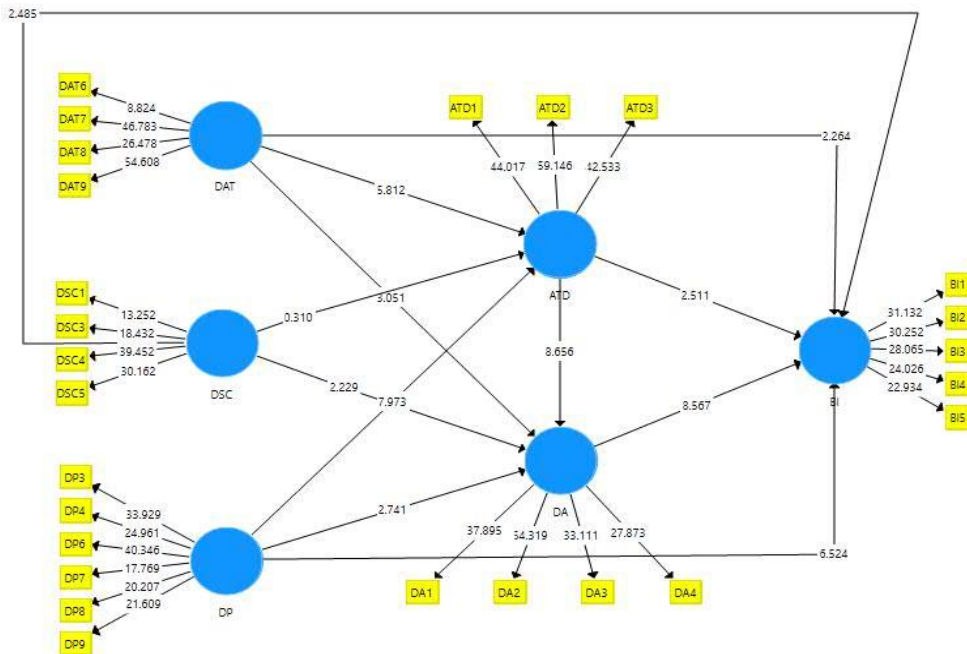
Indirect Effects

The results indicate that (DAT) and (DP) have significant direct and indirect effects on (BI), suggesting partial mediation. However, (DSC) shows a direct effect on (BI) but no indirect effect through (ATD), indicating no mediation. The indirect effects are presented in Table 5:

Table 5: Structural Model Analysis

Relationships	Path coefficient (B)	T Statistics	P Values	Supported/Not Supported
(H1) DAT -> BI	0.108	2.264	0.024	Yes
(H2) DAT -> ATD	0.317	5.812	0.000	Yes
(H3) DAT -> DA	0.141	3.051	0.002	Yes
(H4) DSC -> BI	-0.118	2.485	0.013	Yes
(H5) DSC -> ATD	-0.018	0.310	0.757	No
(H6) DSC -> DA	0.099	2.229	0.026	Yes
(H7) DP -> BI	0.370	6.524	0.000	Yes
(H8) DP -> ATD	0.508	7.973	0.000	Yes
(H9) DP -> DA	0.162	2.741	0.006	Yes
(H10) ATD -> BI	0.128	2.511	0.012	Yes
(H11) ATD -> DA	0.502	8.656	0.000	Yes
(H12) DA -> BI	0.427	8.567	0.000	Yes
(H13) DAT -> ATD -> BI	0.041	2.120	0.035	Yes
(H14) DAT -> DA -> BI	0.060	2.459	0.014	Yes
(H15) DSC -> ATD -> BI	-0.002	0.288	0.773	No
(H16) DSC -> DA -> BI	0.042	2.734	0.006	Yes
(H17) DP -> ATD -> BI	0.065	2.575	0.010	Yes
(H18) DP -> DA -> BI	0.069	2.086	0.037	Yes

-* Significant Positive relationship



Note: - Model Fit Statistics: $X^2 = 1,510.912$, $D_G = 0.732$, $NFI = 0.734$, $d_ULS = 1.787$, $SRMR = 0.071$

Figure 2: PLS- Structural Model output

6. DISCUSSION

In our study, all presented hypotheses are statistically confirmed. The structural model reveals that the relationship between Attitude Towards Destination (ATD) and Destination Attachment (DA) (H11) is the strongest (path coefficient = 0.502, t-value = 8.656, p-value = 0.000). Additionally, ATD emerges as the most significant construct, consistent with previous studies (Reitsamer et al., 2016; Prayag et al., 2017), which established that ATD significantly predicts tourists' behavioral intention (BI).

The second strongest relationship is observed between DA and BI (H12) (path coefficient = 0.427, t-value = 8.567, p-value = 0.000), indicating that DA is the second most significant construct in the structural model. These results are

consistent with previous findings (Prayag & Grivel, 2018; Prayag et al., 2017; Santos et al., 2017), which reported a positive relationship between DA and BI.

In the structural model, the relationship between Destination Personality (DP) and ATD (H8) emerges as the third strongest connection (path coefficient = 0.508, t-value = 7.973, p-value = 0.000). This finding aligns with previous research in tourism, which identified DP as a predictor of ATD (Quintal et al., 2018; Souiden et al., 2017; Kumar & Nayak, 2018).

The fourth strongest relationship is found between DP and BI (H7) in the structural model (path coefficient = 0.370, t-value = 6.524, p-value = 0.000). These results are consistent with past studies (Quintal et al., 2018; Souiden et al., 2017; Chi & Chiappa, 2018), demonstrating a significant and direct path between these latent variables.

The fifth strongest relationship is observed between Destination Attractiveness (DAT) and ATD (H2) (path coefficient = 0.108, t-value = 5.812, p-value = 0.000), consistent with previous research (Reitsamer et al., 2016; Feriyanto et al., 2019). Similarly, the connection between DAT and DA (H3) emerges as the sixth strongest relationship (path coefficient = 0.141, t-value = 3.051, p-value = 0.002), confirming previous findings (Reitsamer et al., 2016; Xu & Zhang, 2016; Shoimah et al., 2014) indicating a close causal relationship between DAT and DA.

Furthermore, the relationship between DP and DA (H9) emerges as the seventh strongest connection in the model (path coefficient = 0.162, t-value = 2.741, p-value = 0.006), supporting previous research (Kim et al., 2018; Huang et al., 2017) that revealed DP as a significant predictor of DA.

Our results demonstrate that the eighth strongest relationship is observed between ATD and BI (H10) (path coefficient = 0.128, t-value = 2.511, p-value = 0.012), confirming recent studies' conclusions (Feriyanto et al., 2019; Quintal et al., 2018; Souiden et al., 2017) that ATD significantly predicts tourists' behavioral intention.

The ninth strongest relationship is found between Destination Source Credibility (DSC) and BI (H4) (path coefficient = -0.118, t-value = 2.485, p-value = 0.013). These results are consistent with previous research (Veen & Song, 2010; Veasna et al., 2013; Peter & Olson, 2004; Kani et al., 2017) reporting a significant and positive relationship between DAT and BI.

Additionally, our study reveals a significant positive relationship between DAT and BI (H1) (path coefficient = 0.108, t-value = 2.264, p-value = 0.024), corroborating the findings of Ma et al. (2017) and Chein et al. (2017) in a different context.

The relationship between DSC and DA (H6) emerges as one of the second least relationships in the structural model (path coefficient = 0.099, t-value = 2.229, p-value = 0.26), in line with previous research studies (Veasna et al., 2013) indicating a significant relationship between DSC and DA.

Finally, the model shows that the connection between DSC and ATD (H5) is the least strong relationship (path coefficient = -0.018, t-value = 0.310, p-value = 0.757). This result contradicts previous research findings (Veasna et al., 2013; Veen & Song, 2010).

7. CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. Conclusion

This study explored various alternatives and compared different conceptualizations of the effects of antecedents on behavioral intention, considering the mediating roles of attitude towards destination and destination attachment. Our findings largely support the hypotheses posited. The results demonstrate a highly significant and positive effect of antecedents (DAT, DSC, & DP) on the behavioral intention of tourists, indicating that these antecedents serve as strong predictors of behavioral intention. This suggests that enhancing these factors can increase tourists' inclination to revisit in the future and attract new visitors.

7.2. Practical Implications

Destination managers are strongly encouraged to prioritize the delivery of memorable experiences focused on attractiveness aspects and creating moments that generate positive attitudes. Destination management organizations (DMOs) can invest in improving accessibility and enhancing facilities and offerings related to local food and hotels at recreational destinations. Additionally, DMOs can organize special events involving the local community and promote experiences that highlight local traditions, such as traditional celebrations, festivals, and participation in cultural events. Leveraging the physical attributes of the destination, such as beautiful scenery, amenities, beaches, theme parks, cultural

events, festivals, and shopping facilities, can also enhance destination attractiveness.

Furthermore, DMOs can work on crafting a distinctive personality for the destination and develop marketing campaigns centered around this identity to enhance the attraction and competitiveness of the destination. Utilizing cost-effective advertising channels like social media platforms (e.g., TripAdvisor, Facebook, Pinterest, travel blogs) can effectively promote Pakistan's destination personality to the local public.

Moreover, integrating antecedents presents an opportunity for DMOs to market tourism and outdoor entertainment services more effectively. Enhancing destination attachment can be achieved through investments in tourism infrastructure such as websites, information centers, and the provision of tourism services. Additionally, creating specific recreational activities tailored to visitor interests can further strengthen destination attachment.

7.3. Limitations and Recommendations

There are several limitations to this study. Firstly, the results may not be generalizable to other countries or regions, as using the same research model could yield substantially different results. Additionally, while the framework employed in this study can be applied to study various tourist attractions, it may not capture the nuances of different contexts.

Secondly, the use of a nonprobability convenience sampling technique to measure tourist behavioral intention could affect the generalizability of the findings. Future researchers are encouraged to consider employing probability sampling techniques to test the present model and enhance the reliability of the results.

Thirdly, this study investigates a limited number of antecedents of attitude towards the destination to measure behavioral intention. Future research should explore additional antecedents such as novelty seeking, lifestyle, involvement, motivation, and emotions to build a more comprehensive and integrated tourist behavioral model. Moreover, incorporating mediating or moderating variables such as memorable tourism experiences could further enrich our understanding of tourist behavior.

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