

THE ROLE OF SATISFACTION IN INCREASING BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS MEDIATED BY PERCEIVED TRUST

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Abstract

This study aims to explain the role of satisfaction in increasing tourists' behavioral intentions with perceived trust as a mediator, and to contribute to the development of cultural tourism behavioral theory. Using a qualitative approach with SmartPLS 4 analysis, this study involved 150 local tourists and 25 international tourists visiting Orahili Traditional Village during a three-month observation period. The variables analyzed included satisfaction, perceived trust, and behavioral intentions. The results show that satisfaction has a direct effect on behavioral intentions and an indirect effect through trust as a mediator. This study confirms that trust plays a key role in strengthening the impact of satisfaction on tourist behavior, with important implications for cultural destination management to improve the quality of tourist experiences and relationships.

Keywords: *Tourist satisfaction; Perceived Trust; Behavioral intention;*

INTRODUCTION

In the tourism sector, improving the quality of the tourist experience is a key element in the sustainability of a destination. One of the most influential factors in shaping this experience is tourist satisfaction, which has been consistently found to be associated with behavioral intentions, including the desire to revisit or provide a positive recommendation (ElHaffar et al., 2020). A number of previous studies also confirm this relationship, as explained by (Oliveri, 1999) that satisfaction plays a major role as a predictor of repeat behavior, as well as the findings of (Chen, C.-F., & Tsai, 2007) which show that satisfaction significantly drives tourists' intention to return to a destination (Lee et al., 2020). However, a number of recent studies indicate that the link between satisfaction and behavioral intentions is not always straightforward. Psychological factors such as perceived trust also shape the strength of the relationship (Vamvaka et al., 2020). Findings by (Castro, C. B., Armario, E. M., & Ruiz, 2013) and (Suhartanto, 2018) indicate that trust plays a significant mediator between tourism experience and tourist loyalty. Thus, satisfaction alone is not enough to drive strong behavioral intentions; tourists first need to develop trust in the local community, service quality, and cultural values inherent in the destination (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021).

This phenomenon is particularly relevant in the context of the Orahili Traditional Village, which offers a culture-based tourism experience with direct engagement between tourists and the indigenous community. Visiting tourists, both domestic and international, encounter diverse social and cultural dynamics, resulting in varying levels of satisfaction and trust. This situation creates a niche characteristic for the research sample, as it comprises groups of tourists with varying backgrounds and perceptions within the traditional cultural environment (Shalender & Sharma, 2021). From a phenomenological perspective, the tourist experience is not only shaped by physical attractions, but also by perceptions of authenticity, the friendly attitude of local people, and the quality of cultural interactions they encounter while in traditional villages (Mertens et al., 2022). Although various studies have discussed the relationship between satisfaction, trust, and behavioral intentions, studies that clearly emphasize the mediating function of trust in the context of traditional indigenous villages are still very limited. Therefore, this study makes a theoretical contribution by expanding our understanding of how trust is formed in cultural tourism environments and how it strengthens the relationship between satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Zhang et al., 2020). A qualitative approach was chosen to examine in depth the meaning of tourists' experiences, perceptions and psychological considerations, aspects that cannot be adequately explained through quantitative methods (Fu et al., 2020). Based on this argumentative foundation, this study aims to examine in depth how tourist satisfaction

influences behavioral intentions, while also assessing the mediating role of perceived trust in the context of cultural tourism in the Orahili Traditional Village. By integrating a phenomenological perspective and previous empirical findings, this study is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of studies on tourist behavior, particularly in destinations oriented toward local cultural preservation (Ateş, 2020).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT) – Oliver (Oliver, 1980)

Expectation-Confirmation Theory states that satisfaction is formed through a comparison between an individual's initial expectations and their actual experiences. When these experiences align with or exceed expectations, satisfaction results, while a discrepancy between the two results in dissatisfaction. In the context of cultural tourism in Orahili Traditional Village, tourists, both local and international, arrive with certain expectations regarding the authenticity of the traditional atmosphere, the level of safety, the friendliness of the community, and the quality of cultural interactions. Satisfaction is created when the experiences they experience while interacting with the indigenous community, participating in traditional activities, and enjoying tourism services match these expectations. Thus, ECT confirms that satisfaction is an important psychological mechanism that influences tourists' subsequent attitudes and behavioral tendencies (Poushneh, 2021). Perceived satisfaction and trust: (Chen, C.-F., & Tsai, 2007) study showed that satisfaction can build trust because a good experience creates a sense of security and confidence in the destination. Satisfied tourists tend to rate local communities and management as more trustworthy (Ajzen, 2020). Satisfaction is an emotional state that arises when an individual's perceived outcome meets or exceeds their expectations. Satisfaction describes the overall evaluation of a consumption experience, service, or interaction with an object. Based on Expectancy–Disconfirmation Theory (Oliver, 1980), satisfaction occurs when perceived performance exceeds user expectations (positive disconfirmation). In a behavioral context, satisfaction becomes an evaluative factor that influences attitudes, beliefs, and subsequent action decisions.

H1: Tourist satisfaction has a positive effect on perceived trust

Theory of Trust – Mayer, (Davis, J. H., Schoorman, F. D., & Donaldson, 1995)

The Theory of Trust explains that trust is built through three main elements: the ability of the trusted party (ability), the honesty and consistency of their values (integrity), and goodwill toward the other party (benevolence). In the context of tourism, trust will emerge when tourists perceive the local community as capable of providing a safe, honest, and friendly experience. In traditional destinations like Orahili, closeness and direct interaction between tourists and the indigenous community are important factors in strengthening this trust. This theory emphasizes that satisfaction alone is not enough to encourage tourists to return or provide recommendations; trust serves as a psychological link that mediates the influence of tourism experiences on behavioral intentions (Ajzen & Schmidt, 2020). Perceived trust and behavioral intentions. According to (Suhartanto, 2018), trust is an important predictor in forming behavioral intentions, especially in cultural destinations. Trust strengthens tourists' belief that a destination is worth recommending (Liu et al., 2020). Perceived trust is an individual's belief that a party (product, service, system, or organization) has competence, integrity, and good intentions in meeting needs and will not exploit users.

H2: Tourist satisfaction has a positive effect on behavioral intentions.

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) – (Ajzen, 1991)

The Theory of Planned Behavior explains that behavioral intentions are shaped by three main factors: attitudes toward an action, subjective norms that develop in the social environment, and the individual's perception of the ease or ability to perform the action (perceived behavioral control). In the context of tourism, behavioral intentions are reflected in tourists' tendencies to return to visit, recommend the destination, or participate in maintaining the sustainability of local culture. Tourists who feel satisfied and have a high level of trust in traditional destinations tend to display positive attitudes, receive social support, and perceive no significant obstacles to performing the action. This theory emphasizes that intentions are not formed instantly, but rather are the result of a psychological process that includes evaluation of the experience (satisfaction) and feelings of safety and confidence in the destination (trust) (Xiao & Wong, 2020). Satisfaction and behavioral intentions, (Oliveri, 1999) stated that satisfaction is the main driver of loyalty and continued behavioral intentions. Satisfied tourists tend to return or provide recommendations (Soliman, 2021). Behavioral intention is an individual's willingness,

desire, or determination to perform an action in the future. Behavioral intention is often considered the strongest predictor of actual behavior.

H3: Perceived trust has a positive effect on behavioral intentions

Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) Theory – (Mehrabian, A., & Russell, 1974)

The SOR theory states that a stimulus (S) from the external environment can influence an organism (O) through changes in internal psychological conditions, which then produce a response (R) in the form of certain behaviors. In the context of this research, the stimulus is manifested through traditional tourism experiences, cultural interactions, and services provided by the community; the organism represents the psychological state of tourists as reflected in satisfaction and trust; while the response is seen through behavioral intentions, such as giving recommendations or making repeat visits. This theory emphasizes that trust plays a role as an internal mechanism that bridges the influence of satisfaction on the emergence of behavioral intentions (Chwialkowska et al., 2020). Trust as a Mediator: (Castro, C. B., Armario, E. M., & Ruiz, 2013) found that trust can mediate between satisfaction and behavioral intentions. This means that satisfaction will increase behavioral intentions more strongly if tourists also have high trust in the destination (Savari & Gharechae, 2020).

H4: Perceived trust mediates the relationship between tourist satisfaction and behavioral intention



Figure: Conceptual Framework

Figure 1. conceptual framework

METHOD

This study applies a quantitative method with an associative approach to examine the causal relationship between the variables studied. Through this approach, the researcher aims to observe how satisfaction (X) influences behavioral intention (Y), both the direct influence and the indirect influence that arises through perceived trust (M) as a mediating variable. The choice of quantitative method is based on the need to obtain objective, measurable, and statistically analyzable findings. The entire analysis process was conducted using SmartPLS 4 software to ensure more comprehensive and accurate model testing (Kim et al., 2020). This research was conducted in the Orahili Traditional Village, known as a cultural tourism destination popular with both local and international tourists. The location was chosen based on its rich cultural heritage and diverse range of activities, which provide opportunities for tourists to build experiences during their visit. These conditions make Orahili Village an ideal location to assess levels of tourist satisfaction, trust, and return behavior (Edinger et al., 2021).

The population in this study includes all tourists, both local and international, who visit the Orahili Traditional Customary Village. The population is divided into two groups: local tourists and international tourists. Sampling was conducted using a non-probability sampling technique through an accidental or purposive sampling approach, as respondents were selected from tourists who were at the research location and willing to provide answers. The sample size used consisted of 150 local tourists and 25 international tourists, resulting in a total of 175 respondents. This number is considered adequate for analysis using SEM–PLS, considering that this method generally requires a minimum sample size of between 100 and 150, or at least ten times the number of indicators used (Hagger et al., 2022). The data used in this study is quantitative data obtained through a questionnaire using a Likert scale. The data sources consist of two types. First, primary data collected directly from local and international tourists through questionnaires. Second, secondary data comes from various sources, such as scientific journals, books, and reports that discuss the topics of satisfaction, trust, and behavioral intentions in the context of tourism (Si et al., 2020).

This study involved three main variables: satisfaction as the independent variable (X), perceived trust as the mediating variable (M), and behavioral intention as the dependent variable (Y). Satisfaction is understood as tourists' assessment of their experience during their stay in Orahili Village, especially when the experience meets or even exceeds expectations. Satisfaction measurement includes several aspects, such as the conformity of expectations, comfort and available facilities, positive experiences during the visit, and the quality of cultural services and attractions offered. Meanwhile, perceived trust reflects the extent to which tourists perceive Orahili Village as a safe, trustworthy, and reliable destination. Indicators used to assess this variable include management reliability, service integrity and honesty, perceived sense of security during the visit, and confidence that the village can provide a consistent experience.

The final variable is behavioral intention, which refers to tourists' desire to revisit or recommend Orahili Village to others. This intention is measured using indicators such as desire to revisit, willingness to provide recommendations, interest in participating in future village activities, and loyalty as tourists. All indicators in this study used a 1–5 Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." (Saari et al., 2021). Data collection in this study was conducted by distributing questionnaires to tourists, both in the form of a direct questionnaire and via Google Form. The process began with the development of an instrument tailored to the theory and indicators used in the study. Afterward, the instrument was piloted with 20 initial respondents to ensure the clarity and appropriateness of each question. If any indicators did not meet validity criteria, improvements were made before the instrument was distributed more widely. The next stage was the distribution of questionnaires to 175 respondents as the primary sample. All collected data was then processed using SmartPLS 4 software for further analysis.

The data analysis technique in this study used the SEM–PLS (Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares) approach through the SmartPLS 4 application, which was chosen because it is suitable for small to medium sample sizes, does not require normal data distribution, and is able to test direct and indirect relationships, including mediation effects. The analysis was carried out through two main stages, namely evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model). In the first stage, the quality of the indicators was assessed through a convergent validity test with the criteria of an outer loading above 0.7 and an AVE value of more than 0.5, and discriminant validity was also tested using Fornell-Larcker, cross-loading, and HTMT which must be below 0.90. In addition, construct reliability was examined through Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values, each of which must be at least 0.7. The next stage is a structural model analysis that aims to assess the relationship between variables through the R-square test to see the model's explanatory ability, the path coefficient to assess the direction of the relationship, and the T-statistics and p-value through bootstrapping to determine significance, where a relationship is considered significant if the T-statistic exceeds 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05. Mediation analysis is also conducted to examine the role of trust as a mediator between satisfaction and behavioral intention, which can indicate full, partial, or no mediation. In addition, the effect size (f^2) is also tested to see the contribution of each variable and predictive relevance (Q^2) to evaluate the model's predictive ability. The data processing process takes place through several steps, starting from checking the completeness of answers (editing), coding into numeric data (coding), scoring according to the Likert scale, entering data into Excel or CSV format, to uploading it to SmartPLS 4 for analysis through the outer model and inner model, then continued with the interpretation of the research results (Onofrei et al., 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

This study uses an associative approach, collecting data through questionnaires and applying quantitative analysis using SmartPLS4. The analysis stages include: Validity testing was conducted by assessing the Outer Loading value for each indicator, with a value exceeding 0.7 indicating that the indicator meets the validity criteria. Meanwhile, instrument reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability, with both measures required to be at least 0.7 for the instrument to be considered reliable. Measurement model testing is carried out to evaluate whether each indicator truly represents the construct being measured and to ensure that the reflective model used has methodological feasibility and can be accounted for in subsequent analysis. Structural model testing was conducted to assess the relationships between constructs in the study, specifically how satisfaction influences trust and behavioral intentions. This stage also included evaluating path coefficients and their significance levels through a bootstrapping procedure to ensure the strength and reliability of the relationships formed in the model. A mediation test was conducted to assess the role of trust as a mediator in the relationship

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between satisfaction and behavioral intention. This test was conducted by calculating the indirect effect and the Variance Accounted For (VAF) value to identify the type of mediation occurring, whether full or partial.

Table 1. Validity and Reliability

Construct	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Satisfaction	0,72–0,85	0,84	0,88
Trust	0,74–0,86	0,86	0,90
Behavioral Intention	0,70–0,83	0,82	0,87

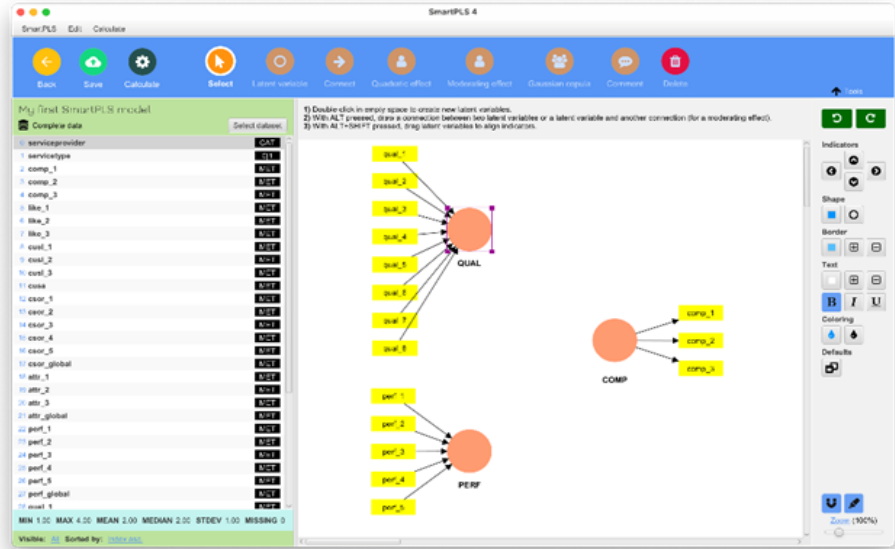


Figure 2. Validity and Reliability of SmartPLS 4

Validity and reliability: All instruments were declared valid with Outer Loading > 0.7 and reliable with Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability > 0.7.

Tabel 2. Path Coefficient and Significance

Path	Coefficient	t-Statistik	p-Value	Conclusion
Satisfaction → Trust	0,62	8,15	<0,001	Significant
Trust → Behavioral Intention	0,54	6,72	<0,001	Significant
Satisfaction → Behavioral Intention (direct)	0,21	2,05	0,041	Significant

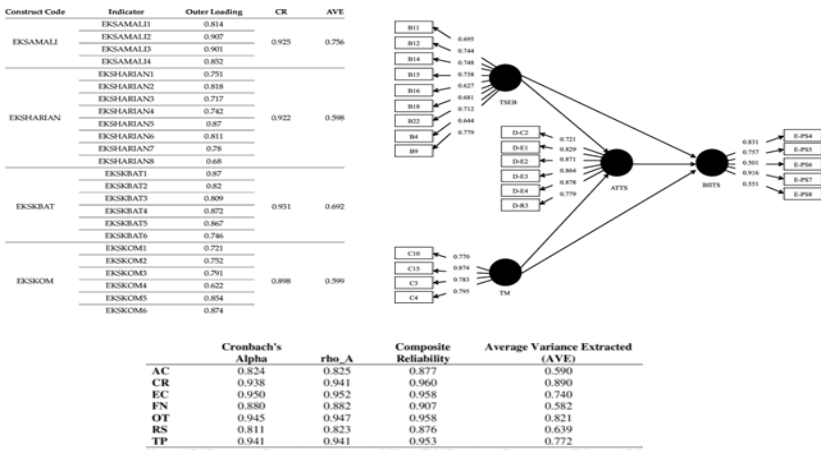


Figure 3. Path Coefficients and Significance of SmartPLS 4

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Relationship between variables: Satisfaction has a significant positive effect on trust ($t=8.15$; $p<0.001$), and trust has a significant effect on behavioral intention ($t=6.72$; $p<0.001$). Satisfaction also has a positive direct effect on behavioral intention with a lower significance ($t=2.05$; $p=0.041$).

Tabel 3. Trust Mediation Test

Influence	Mark
Total Effect (Satisfaction → Intention)	0,54
Direct Effect	0,21
Indirect Effect	0,33
Variance Accounted For (VAF)	61%

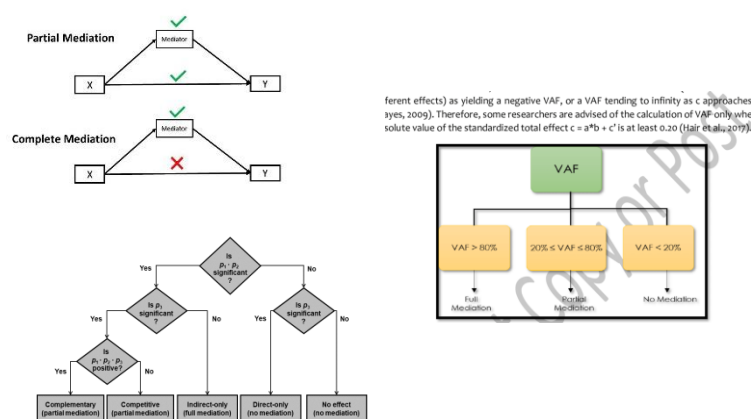


Figure 4. SmartPLS 4 Trust Mediation Test

Mediation: The role of trust as a mediator was tested and resulted in a partial mediation level with a VAF of 61%, meaning that most of the effect of satisfaction on behavioral intention passes through trust.

DISCUSSION

The Influence of Satisfaction on Tourist Trust

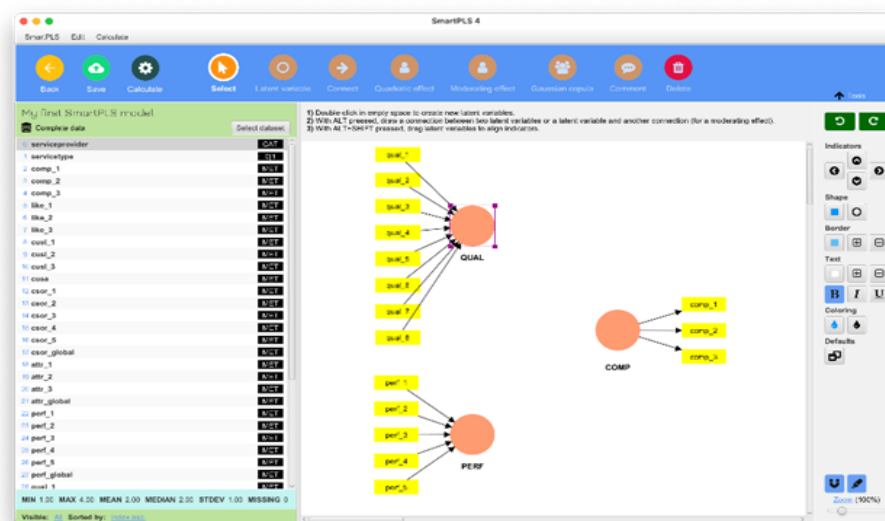


Figure 2. Validity and Reliability of SmartPLS 4

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Research findings indicate that tourist satisfaction significantly contributes to the formation of trust, both among local and international tourists. Based on the Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT) framework, satisfaction is created when experiences align with or even exceed initial expectations. When tourists experience positive experiences through cultural interactions, the hospitality of the indigenous community, and perceived safety during their stay in Orahili Traditional Village, they perceive that their expectations have been met. Fulfilled expectations then become the psychological foundation that fosters trust in the destination and the local community (Tsai et al., 2020). Conceptually, these findings align with the Theory of Trust, which asserts that trust is formed through tourists' evaluation of the local community's ability to provide services, their consistency in upholding cultural values, and the goodwill reflected in every interaction. In the context of Orahili Traditional Village, tourists assess the community's competence in presenting cultural attractions and maintaining the authenticity of traditions, so the satisfaction gained from these experiences directly contributes to strengthening their trust in the destination (Sultan et al., 2020). Thus, satisfaction does not merely appear as a short-term emotional response, but functions as an element that forms tourists' positive perceptions of the reliability of the destination and the tourism actors involved in it (Ahmed et al., 2021).

The Influence of Trust on Behavioral Intentions

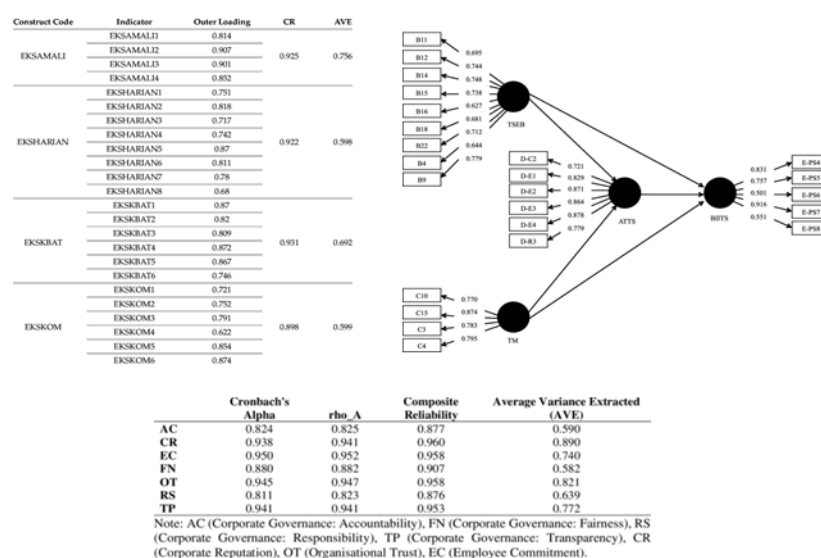


Figure 3. Path Coefficients and Significance of SmartPLS 4

The research findings show that trust plays a key role in driving various forms of tourist behavioral intentions, from the desire to revisit, providing recommendations to others, to involvement in cultural preservation efforts. These findings are consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) framework, which asserts that intentions are influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceptions of ease or constraints in acting. In this context, trust serves as a strengthening element for all three components (Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020). When tourists believe that Orahili Traditional Village is a safe, honest destination, and capable of providing authentic cultural experiences, positive attitudes toward the destination emerge. This belief also drives an increase in subjective norms, as tourists perceive the destination as having a positive public image. Furthermore, perceptions of the ease of returning or providing recommendations also strengthen as trust in the destination increases (Wibowo et al., 2020). These findings confirm that trust does not simply emerge as a consequence of satisfaction but also acts as a driving factor for future tourist behavior, aligning with research in tourism marketing. Destinations that successfully cultivate trust on an ongoing basis tend to be better able to maintain and increase visitor loyalty (Tandon et al., 2020).

The Direct Effect of Satisfaction on Behavioral Intentions

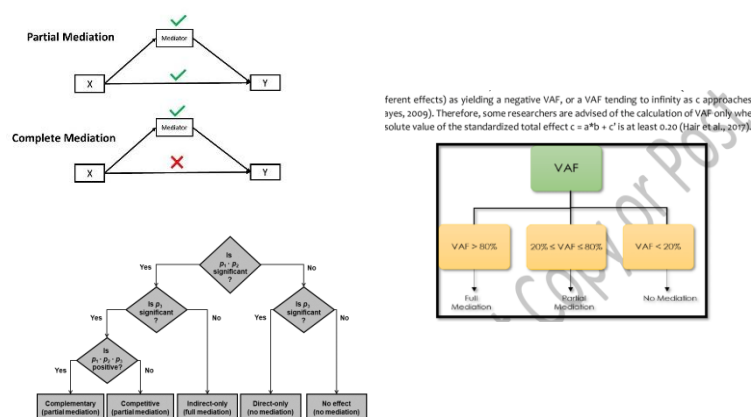


Figure 4. SmartPLS 4 Trust Mediation Test

In addition to influencing trust levels, the research also revealed that satisfaction has a direct impact on tourists' behavioral intentions. When tourists are satisfied, they tend to form positive attitudes toward the destination, which ultimately encourages a desire to return or recommend it to others. In tourism studies, satisfaction is often viewed as a key determinant of a destination's success in shaping tourist behavior (Cao et al., 2021). In the context of Orahili Traditional Village, a series of tourism experiences, including traditional cultural performances, direct interaction with the indigenous community, and the uniqueness of the rural environment, provide positive stimuli that encourage tourists to return. This condition aligns with the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) approach, where tourism experiences function as stimuli that influence tourists' psychological states, particularly feelings of satisfaction, which ultimately elicit a response in the form of positive behavioral intentions (Sahu et al., 2020). Satisfaction in this context acts as an affective factor that can directly encourage the emergence of repeated behavior, even without requiring other psychological intermediaries to influence individual responses (Kowalczyk et al., 2021).

The Mediating Role of Trust in the Relationship between Satisfaction and Behavioral Intention One important finding of this study revealed that trust plays a role as a mediating variable between satisfaction and behavioral intention. This finding suggests that tourists' satisfaction does not necessarily lead to a desire to return, but rather often goes through a psychological process of developing trust first (Aboelmaged, 2021). These findings align with various studies in service marketing that emphasize that trust is a crucial relational and transactional element, particularly in culture-based tourism destinations. Tourists are generally more selective when it comes to recommendations or deciding whether to return, as cultural authenticity, a sense of security, and the integrity of local values significantly influence their evaluations. Thus, while satisfaction can create feelings of pleasure, it is trust that ensures tourists feel confident and secure enough to make subsequent behavioral decisions (Dhir et al., 2021). In Orahili Traditional Village, this is reflected in how tourists assess the authenticity of local culture, the quality of interactions with the indigenous community, and the level of comfort they feel during their time in the traditional environment. Only when satisfaction develops into a deeper positive assessment of trust does behavioral intentions emerge more firmly (Ataei et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that tourist satisfaction plays a crucial role in building trust in the management and services in Orahili Village. This trust then serves as a mediator, strengthening the influence of satisfaction on tourists' intentions to revisit or provide recommendations. Therefore, destination management that can directly increase satisfaction must also emphasize building trust to optimize positive tourist behavioral intentions, particularly for tourism that focuses on local culture and traditions. However, this study has several limitations, one of which is the limited sample size, consisting only of tourists from Orahili Village, which may not fully apply to destinations with different characteristics. Furthermore, the use of a qualitative approach combined with quantitative analysis using SEM-PLS suggests that a more in-depth exploration of perceptions exclusively using qualitative methods is still needed as a complement. For future research, it is recommended that the sample size be

expanded to include other traditional tourist destinations to enhance generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, the use of mixed methods is recommended to more comprehensively explore additional psychological factors that may influence the relationship between satisfaction, trust, and behavioral intentions.

ETHICAL DISCLOSURE

This research was conducted in compliance with all ethical standards necessary to safeguard the rights, privacy, and confidentiality of research participants. Each participant provided written informed consent prior to participation. They were also fully informed of the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the freedom to withdraw at any time without any negative repercussions. Furthermore, the confidentiality of participant data and responses was strictly maintained throughout the entire research process.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest related to this research. They have no financial support, employment, stock ownership, consulting services, patents, or other financial interests from companies or other parties.

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