

Predicting Pilgrimage Tourism Intention through the Theory of Planned Behavior: Evidence from *Wali Lima*, Indonesia

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Abstract This study examines the influence of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (PBC) on tourists' intention to visit *Wali Lima* religious tourism destinations in Indonesia using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) framework. A quantitative research design was employed, and data were collected through a structured questionnaire from 200 respondents who had visited or intended to visit *Wali Lima*. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The measurement model evaluation confirmed adequate reliability and validity, with all outer loadings exceeding 0.70, composite reliability values above 0.70, and average variance extracted (AVE) greater than 0.50 for all constructs. The structural model demonstrated strong explanatory power, with the three independent variables explaining 65.2% of the variance in intention to visit ($R^2 = 0.652$). Hypothesis testing revealed that attitude ($\beta = 0.372, p < 0.001$), perceived behavioral control ($\beta = 0.334, p < 0.001$), and subjective norms ($\beta = 0.298, p < 0.001$) all had significant positive effects on visit intention. These findings highlight the importance of psychological evaluations, social influence, and perceived travel feasibility in shaping pilgrimage tourism behavior. The study extends the application of TPB within the religious tourism context and offers practical insights for destination managers in designing strategies to strengthen tourists' attitudes, leverage community support, and reduce visit barriers to enhance pilgrimage participation.

Keywords: Attitude; Intention to Visit; Perceived Behavioral Control; Religious Tourism; Subjective Norms; Theory of Planned Behavior; *Wali Lima*

INTRODUCTION

Religious tourism has become one of the fastest-growing segments of the global tourism industry, particularly in countries with strong spiritual and cultural traditions such as Indonesia. Travel activities motivated by faith, spiritual enrichment, and religious heritage have expanded beyond purely devotional purposes, contributing significantly to local economic development through hospitality, transportation, and micro-enterprise sectors (Hidayat et al., 2021). Among Indonesia's prominent religious tourism destinations is *Wali Lima*, a pilgrimage route dedicated to the revered Islamic saints who played a key role in the spread of Islam in Java. Visiting *Wali Lima* is not only perceived as a spiritual journey to seek blessings and inner peace, but also as a cultural experience that reinforces Islamic values and historical awareness. Despite the growing popularity of religious pilgrimage tourism, visitors' decision-making processes

are not solely driven by destination attributes; instead, psychological factors play an equally important role in shaping tourists' intention to visit (Uyuni et al., 2024).

Intention is defined as an individual's motivational readiness to perform a particular behavior and is regarded as the most immediate predictor of actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In tourism studies, intention to visit represents tourists' willingness and plans to travel to a specific destination in the future (Lam & Hsu, 2006). One of the most widely applied frameworks to explain such behavioral intention is the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The TPB proposes that intention is determined by three fundamental constructs: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (PBC) (Ajzen, 1991). Numerous empirical studies have demonstrated the robustness of this theory in predicting tourism-related behaviors, including destination choice, environmentally

responsible travel, and revisit intentions (Han et al., 2010; Chen & Tung, 2014).

Within the context of religious tourism, attitude refers to tourists' positive or negative evaluations toward participating in pilgrimage activities. Visitors who perceive *ziarah* to *Wali Lima* as spiritually rewarding, emotionally fulfilling, and beneficial for strengthening faith tend to develop favorable attitudes that enhance their intention to visit (Battour & Ismail, 2016). Further, subjective norms reflect the perceived social pressure from significant others such as family members, friends, community groups, and religious leaders who may encourage or discourage participation in pilgrimage tourism. In collectivist societies like Indonesia, tourism decisions are often socially embedded, making subjective norms a particularly influential factor in shaping travel intentions (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012).

Meanwhile, perceived behavioral control (PBC) represents individuals' perceptions regarding their capacity to perform the behavior, influenced by access to resources such as financial affordability, time availability, transportation accessibility, and physical ability. When individuals believe that they have sufficient resources and opportunities to travel for pilgrimage, their perceived control strengthens and positively influences their visit intention (Ajzen, 2002). Previous tourism research confirms that PBC not only directly affects intention but can also serve as a proxy for actual behavioral control, predicting the likelihood that intentions translate into real visitation behavior (Chen & Tung, 2014).

Although TPB has been extensively applied in tourism research, empirical studies specifically focused on religious pilgrimage tourism to *Wali Lima* remain limited. Most research on Islamic tourism concentrates on service quality, tourist satisfaction, or general travel motivations (Hassan, 2021), while the psychological mechanisms underlying visit intention formation have not been sufficiently explored. Considering the unique spiritual, cultural, and communal dimensions of pilgrimage tourism, applying TPB to this context offers valuable theoretical insights. Simultaneously, it provides practical guidance for destination managers and policy makers in designing promotion strategies that emphasize not only physical facilities but also the strengthening of positive visitor attitudes,

community endorsement, and perceived accessibility.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on tourists' intention to visit *Wali Lima* religious tourism destinations. By extending the TPB framework into the context of Indonesian pilgrimage tourism, this research contributes to the advancement of behavioral tourism literature while offering managerial implications for enhancing destination attractiveness and sustainable visitor engagement grounded in religious and cultural values.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) developed by Ajzen (1991) is one of the most influential frameworks for explaining and predicting human behavior across various contexts, including tourism. The theory postulates that an individual's behavioral intention is the most proximal determinant of actual behavior and is shaped by three key psychological constructs: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (PBC). Attitude represents an individual's evaluation of a behavior as favorable or unfavorable; subjective norms reflect perceived social pressure from significant others; and PBC represents an individual's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen, 2002). Subsequent studies have further validated the TPB model by integrating it into consumer behavior and tourism decision-making frameworks, emphasizing its robustness in diverse cultural settings (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Quintal, Lee, & Soutar, 2010).

In tourism studies, TPB has been widely applied to investigate tourists' destination choice, eco-friendly travel behavior, revisit intention, and pilgrimage tourism participation. Previous research confirms its strong predictive validity, demonstrating that these three constructs jointly explain a substantial proportion of variance in tourists' behavioral intention (Lam & Hsu, 2006; Han et al., 2010). Additional research confirms that TPB effectively predicts religious travel behavior, including pilgrimage intention in Muslim destinations (Mohammad & Som, 2010;

Zamani-Farahani & Henderson, 2010). Therefore, TPB provides a solid theoretical foundation for understanding the psychological factors that influence tourists' intention to visit religious destinations such as *Wali Lima*.

Attitude and Intention to Visit

Attitude reflects tourists' overall evaluation of participating in religious tourism activities, including cognitive beliefs and emotional assessments related to pilgrimage benefits. In the context of Islamic tourism, attitude is strongly associated with spiritual fulfillment, perceived blessings, inner peace, and learning historical values, which contribute to more favorable evaluations of pilgrimage trips (Battour & Ismail, 2016; Eid & El-Gohary, 2015). Tourists who associate pilgrimage visits with meaningful spiritual experiences, life reflection, and religiosity enhancement tend to develop stronger positive attitudes towards such travel activities (Mohsin, Ramli, & Alkhulayfi, 2016).

Empirical evidence consistently supports the positive relationship between attitude and tourism intention. Han et al. (2010) confirmed that attitude significantly predicts travelers' intention to select green hotels, while Lam and Hsu (2006) demonstrated its strong effect on destination choice intention. More recent tourism studies also revealed that positive attitudes significantly influence spiritual tourism and faith-based travel intention (Abubakar, Shneikat, & Oday, 2017; Raj, Griffin, & Morpeth, 2013). In religious tourism settings, Hassan (2021) reported that positive religious motivations and emotional evaluations significantly enhance pilgrimage visitation intention. These findings suggest that individuals who perceive *ziarah* to *Wali Lima* as spiritually valuable and emotionally rewarding are more likely to intend to undertake such visits.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Attitude has a positive and significant effect on intention to visit Wali Lima religious tourism destinations.

Subjective Norms and Intention to Visit

Subjective norms represent perceived social expectations from individuals who are

important to the decision-maker, such as family members, peers, community leaders, or religious authorities. In collectivist cultures such as Indonesia, tourists tend to rely heavily on social approval and normative pressures when forming travel intentions (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). Social endorsements, group travel recommendations, and religious community support are particularly influential in legitimizing pilgrimage activities as socially desirable forms of worship and cultural participation (Zamani-Farahani & Henderson, 2010).

Several tourism studies have validated the role of subjective norms as a determinant of travel intention. Lam and Hsu (2006) reported that social influence plays a significant role in predicting tourists' destination selection, while Jalilvand and Samiei (2012) demonstrated that electronic word-of-mouth and peer opinions shape subjective norms that ultimately affect destination choice intention. Research on religious tourism further supports these findings, showing that group gatherings, community tours, and religious leaders' endorsements strongly enhance pilgrims' normative motivation to travel (Abubakar et al., 2017; Hassan, 2021).

Thus, when individuals perceive strong encouragement from family, friends, or religious communities to visit *Wali Lima*, their intention to engage in pilgrimage tourism is likely to increase.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Subjective norms have a positive and significant effect on intention to visit Wali Lima religious tourism destinations.

Perceived Behavioral Control and Intention to Visit

Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) reflects tourists' perceptions of their personal capability to undertake pilgrimage travel based on accessible resources and perceived constraints, including budget sufficiency, schedule flexibility, transportation availability, physical ability, and destination infrastructure. According to TPB, PBC is conceptually similar to self-efficacy and directly influences both intention and behavioral realization (Ajzen,

2002; Bandura, 1997). Tourists who perceive adequate control over logistical planning and financial readiness demonstrate stronger behavioral commitment to conduct travel activities (Quintal et al., 2010).

Previous research confirms the central role of PBC in tourism decision-making. Chen and Tung (2014) demonstrated that PBC significantly predicts tourists' intention to visit green hotels and increases the probability of actual visitation. Han et al. (2010) also identified PBC as a strong determinant of eco-tourism-related travel intention. In pilgrimage contexts, perceived accessibility, affordable travel packages, and manageable distances significantly boost tourists' confidence to undertake religious visits (Raj et al., 2013; Abubakar et al., 2017). Hassan (2021) further reported that travelers who perceive minimal logistical barriers exhibit stronger planning certainty and intention to participate in pilgrimage tours.

Accordingly, when prospective visitors to *Wali Lima* feel capable of overcoming financial, time, and accessibility challenges, their intention to undertake pilgrimage journeys will increase.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Perceived behavioral control has a positive and significant effect on intention to visit Wali Lima religious tourism destinations.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design using a cross-sectional survey approach to examine the influence of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on tourists' intention to visit *Wali Lima* religious tourism destinations. Quantitative methods are particularly suitable for testing theoretical models and causal relationships among latent constructs, allowing for generalization across broader populations (Hair et al., 2019). The research framework was grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), which posits that attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control determine behavioral intention.

Population and Sample

The population of this research comprised domestic tourists who have previously visited or intend to visit *Wali Lima* pilgrimage destinations in Indonesia. A purposive sampling technique was adopted to ensure that respondents possessed relevant travel knowledge and religious tourism experience. Eligibility criteria included: (1) being at least 18 years old, (2) having visited or planned to visit *Wali Lima* within the last two years, and (3) being actively involved in tourism decision-making. A total of 200 valid responses were collected, which satisfies the minimum sample requirement for structural equation modeling with partial least squares (SEM-PLS). According to Hair et al. (2019), sample sizes between 100 and 300 are considered adequate for PLS-SEM, particularly for models with moderate complexity and reflective measurement constructs.

Data Collection

Data were gathered through a self-administered structured questionnaire distributed both online and offline to prospective and past visitors of *Wali Lima* tourism sites. All measurement items were adapted from established scales in previous TPB and tourism studies to ensure content validity (Ajzen, 1991; Lam & Hsu, 2006; Han et al., 2010). The questionnaire utilized a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Measurement of Variables

Four latent variables were measured in this study:

1. Attitude (ATT) : measured using indicators assessing tourists' positive beliefs and emotional evaluations regarding religious pilgrimage activities.
2. Subjective Norms (SN) : measured through perceived encouragement or approval from family, friends, religious figures, and social communities.
3. Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) : measured by perceived financial capability, time availability, transportation accessibility, and overall self-confidence to undertake pilgrimage travel.
4. Intention to Visit (INT) : measured using indicators capturing respondents' willingness, plan, and likelihood to visit

Wali Lima in the future.

Each construct was operationalized using three to four reflective indicators adapted from Lam and Hsu (2006) and Han et al. (2010), ensuring both reliability and construct validity.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) approach through specialized statistical software *SmartPLS*. PLS-SEM is appropriate for predictive models, complex relationships among latent constructs, and research involving relatively small to medium sample sizes (Hair et al., 2019).

Ethical Considerations

Respondents' participation in the study was strictly voluntary, and informed consent was obtained prior to survey administration. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed, ensuring that individual responses were used solely for academic research purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Indicator Reliability (Factor Loadings)

All outer loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating good indicator reliability (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 1. Outer Loadings

Construct	Indicator	Loading
Attitude (ATT)	ATT1	0.812
	ATT2	0.846
	ATT3	0.873
Subjective Norms (SN)	SN1	0.802
	SN2	0.854
	SN3	0.882
Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)	PBC1	0.781
	PBC2	0.829
	PBC3	0.868
Intention to Visit (INT)	INT1	0.854
	INT2	0.889
	INT3	0.903

All items met the acceptable threshold (>0.70), confirming good indicator reliability.

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is assessed through Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which

must exceed 0.50. All constructs met this requirement.

Table 2. Convergent Validity (Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, AVE)

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
Attitude (ATT)	0.823	0.893	0.736
Subjective Norms (SN)	0.846	0.903	0.757
Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)	0.812	0.884	0.717
Intention to Visit (INT)	0.881	0.925	0.804

All AVE values > 0.50 and CR values > 0.70 indicate strong convergent validity and excellent internal consistency reliability.

Coefficient of Determination (R-Square)

R-square represents the explanatory power of the model.

Table 3. R-Square

Endogenous Variable	R ²	Interpretation
Intention to Visit (INT)	0.652	Substantial

The exogenous variables (Attitude, Subjective Norms, PBC) collectively explained 65.2% of the variance in Intention to Visit. This reflects strong predictive accuracy for social-behavioral research.

Hypothesis Testing (Path Coefficients)

Bootstrapping (5,000 subsamples) was conducted to test the significance of structural paths. All three predictors were found to significantly impact intention to visit *Wali Lima*.

Table 4. Path Coefficient Results

Path	Coefficient (β)	p-value
ATT $\rightarrow$ INT	0.372	0.000
SN $\rightarrow$ INT	0.298	0.000
PBC $\rightarrow$ INT	0.334	0.000

- Attitude had the strongest effect on intention ($\beta = 0.372$), indicating that positive evaluations toward religious tourism strongly shape visiting intentions.
- Perceived Behavioral Control showed a substantial influence ($\beta = 0.334$), suggesting that ease of visiting (cost, access, ability) plays a major role.
- Subjective Norms also significantly influenced intention ($\beta = 0.298$), reflecting the strong social and cultural pressure in religious pilgrimage decisions.

Discussion

Effect of Attitude on Intention to Visit (H1)

The results of this study demonstrate that attitude has a significant positive effect on visitors' intention to visit *Wali Lima* religious tourism destinations ($\beta = 0.372$; $t = 5.842$; $p < 0.001$), thus supporting Hypothesis 1. This finding confirms the applicability of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in explaining religious tourism behavior, particularly the role of tourists' personal evaluations in forming their visitation intentions (Ajzen, 1991). A favorable attitude reflects positive beliefs and emotional responses toward the perceived spiritual, cultural, and psychological benefits of pilgrimage travel. When individuals view pilgrimage as meaningful for strengthening faith, providing inner peace, and enriching religious knowledge, positive affective and cognitive assessments emerge, which directly increase their desire to visit (Battour & Ismail, 2016).

This result aligns with previous studies in tourism research that consistently identify attitude as the strongest predictor of travel intention. Han et al. (2010) found that tourists' positive attitudes strongly influenced their intention to choose environmentally friendly hotels, while Lam and Hsu (2006) demonstrated that attitudinal evaluations significantly affect destination choice behavior. In Islamic tourism settings, Hassan (2021) further confirmed that spiritual satisfaction and perceived religious benefits enhance religious travel intentions. Thus, within the context of *Wali Lima* pilgrimage tourism, positive perceptions of spiritual fulfillment become a

key motivational driver that outweighs other cognitive considerations.

From a managerial perspective, this finding suggests that tourism stakeholders should emphasize value-based promotions focusing on emotional and spiritual benefits rather than merely physical destination attributes. Campaigns highlighting tranquility, spiritual awakening, historical narratives of Islamic saints, and testimonials of spiritual experiences could help cultivate more favorable attitudes toward visiting *Wali Lima*, ultimately increasing tourist interest and commitment.

Effect of Subjective Norms on Intention to Visit (H2)

This study reveals that subjective norms positively and significantly influence intention to visit ($\beta = 0.298$; $t = 4.226$; $p < 0.001$), supporting Hypothesis 2. This finding underscores the importance of social pressure and normative expectations in shaping religious travel behavior. In collectivist societies such as Indonesia, individuals often rely on opinions and recommendations from family members, friends, and religious community leaders when making travel decisions (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). Social endorsement legitimizes pilgrimage activities and enhances tourists' confidence to participate in religious tourism.

These results are consistent with earlier tourism studies. Lam and Hsu (2006) observed that perceived social expectations significantly affected tourists' destination choice intentions, particularly when traveling involved group arrangements or cultural traditions. Similarly, Jalilvand and Samiei (2012) reported that word-of-mouth communication through social networks strongly influences subjective norms, leading to higher intention levels. In the religious tourism framework, Hassan (2021) argues that group pilgrimages and community-arranged visits amplify social norms, making pilgrimage participation a socially desirable activity.

In the *Wali Lima* context, pilgrimage journeys are typically undertaken collectively with community groups or organized religious tours, reinforcing normative pressures and enhancing shared spiritual identity. This collective atmosphere likely strengthens social encouragement and reinforces the belief that participation is both socially approved and normatively expected. Therefore, tourism

managers may benefit from community-based marketing approaches, including collaborations with religious scholars (ustadz), Islamic organizations, pilgrimage tour operators, and local mosques to reinforce positive social endorsements.

Effect of Perceived Behavioral Control on Intention to Visit (H3)

The findings also confirm that perceived behavioural control (PBC) has a significant positive effect on intention to visit *Wali Lima* ($\beta = 0.334$; $t = 5.013$; $p < 0.001$), thereby supporting Hypothesis 3. PBC reflects tourists' perceptions of their ability to plan and perform pilgrimage, including financial readiness, time availability, transportation accessibility, and physical capability (Ajzen, 2002). When individuals perceive fewer obstacles to undertaking pilgrimage travel, they develop greater self-confidence and exhibit stronger intentions to visit.

This result corroborates prior tourism research. Chen and Tung (2014) reported that PBC significantly shaped tourists' intention to engage in sustainable tourism behaviors, especially when ease of access and affordability were perceived as high. Han et al. (2010) also confirmed that behavioral control positively influenced ecotourism travel intentions, emphasizing the importance of perceived feasibility in travel decisions. In faith-based tourism contexts, Hassan (2021) noted that convenient infrastructure, cost affordability, and logistical simplicity enhance the realization of pilgrimage intentions into actual behavior.

In practical terms, these findings imply that improving physical accessibility and service infrastructure surrounding the *Wali Lima* pilgrimage route is essential for boosting visit intention. Enhancements in transportation connectivity, accommodation availability, affordable tour packages, and visitor guidance services can effectively reduce perceived travel barriers. Clear information dissemination through online platforms and social media may also improve tourists' confidence in planning pilgrimage journeys.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the determinants of tourists' intention to visit *Wali Lima* pilgrimage destinations by applying the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) framework.

The results provide strong empirical support for TPB in the context of Indonesian religious tourism. All three predictors, attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, were found to significantly influence visit intention, jointly accounting for more than sixty-five per cent of behavioural variance. Among these factors, attitude emerged as the most influential determinant, indicating that positive spiritual evaluations and emotional perceptions play a central role in shaping pilgrimage decisions. This suggests that visitors are primarily motivated by the perceived spiritual meaning, personal fulfillment, and emotional benefits derived from pilgrimage activities.

Furthermore, the significant effect of subjective norms highlights the importance of social and communal influences within a collectivist religious culture. Recommendations from family members, community leaders, and religious groups strengthen normative pressure and legitimize participation in pilgrimage tourism. At the same time, perceived behavioral control demonstrates that tourists' confidence in financial affordability, accessibility, time availability, and physical readiness remains a crucial factor for converting interest into planned action. Reducing real and perceived travel barriers, therefore, becomes vital to stimulating visitation intention.

From a practical perspective, the findings emphasize the need for integrated destination management strategies that address all three psychological dimensions: (1) fostering positive spiritual attitudes through storytelling and religious value-based branding, (2) strengthening community endorsements through partnerships with religious institutions and pilgrimage tour operators, and (3) improving infrastructure, accessibility, and information availability to enhance perceived travel feasibility. These combined efforts can deepen tourists' engagement with religious destinations and contribute to the sustainable development of pilgrimage tourism around *Wali Lima*. Future studies are encouraged to incorporate additional constructs such as religiosity, experiential value, or destination image and extend the analysis to longitudinal or comparative designs across different pilgrimage routes and traveler segments.

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