

DESTINATION IMAGE AND INTENTION TO RECOMMEND: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF INTENTION TO REVISIT

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ABSTRACT

This study empirically examines the influence of destination image and intention to revisit on intention to recommend and the mediating role of intention to revisit in the relationship between destination image and intention to recommend. The research focuses on Sunan Ampel religious tourism site visitors in Surabaya, utilizing non-probability sampling with the purposive sampling method. The sample consists of individuals who have previously visited a religious site in Surabaya, Indonesia. There were 267 respondents participated in this study. This study found destination image has a significant influence on the intention to revisit and the intention to recommend. Furthermore, the intention to revisit significantly affects the intention to recommend. Finally, destination image significantly influences the intention to recommend through the mediating role of intention to revisit. Suggestions for religious tourism managers include stimulating tourists to have a high intention to recommend by providing easy access and comprehensive information. Improvements in facilities should be made to ensure that tourists can comfortably utilize them.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji secara empiris pengaruh destination image, intention to revisit terhadap intention to recommend serta peran intention to revisit sebagai mediator antara destination image dan intention to recommend. Responden penelitian adalah pengunjung wisata religi Sunan Ampel Surabaya, menggunakan metode non-probability sampling dengan purposive sampling. Sampel dalam penelitian ini adalah wisatawan yang pernah berkunjung ke sebuah wisata religi di Surabaya, Indonesia. Terdapat 267 responden pada penelitian ini. Penelitian ini menemukan destination image berpengaruh signifikan terhadap intention to revisit dan intention to recommend. Temuan lain adalah Intention to revisit berpengaruh signifikan terhadap intention to recommend. Temuan selanjutnya destination image berpengaruh signifikan terhadap intention to recommend melalui intention to revisit. Bagi pengelola wisata religi dapat memicu wisatawan untuk timbul intention to recommend yang tinggi dengan memberikan kemudahan akses dan informasi. Perbaikan terhadap fasilitas juga perlu dilakukan agar wisatawan merasa lebih nyaman saat berkunjung.

INTRODUCTION

Religious tourism has become an industry with numerous enthusiasts. A positive image is crucial to successful destination marketing strategies (Li et al., 2021). Through proper marketing strategies and positive reviews, marketers can create a positive destination image to attract tourists to their destinations (Govers et al., 2007). An image is necessary to capture the attention of individuals or prospective visitors. Ratnasari et al. (2021) highlight the significance of utilizing images as promotional material for effective promotion. Destination image is influenced by several factors, such as the intention to revisit and recommend. However, there is a need for further research to address this matter as highlighted by Hosany et al. (2016). Therefore, this research aims to determine the influence of the destination image obtained from religious tourism journeys.

A good destination image positively influences the visitation rate of many tourists (Qu et al., 2011). Destination image is the primary factor influencing visitors' decision-making, destination preferences, satisfaction, and future behavioral intentions (Bigné Alcañiz et al., 2009; Tan & Wu, 2016; Zhang et al., 2014). The research by Akgün et al. (2020) discusses the role of shaping a destination image in encouraging repeated visits, while Frangos et al. (2015) examine tourist loyalty by revisiting a destination and recommending it to others. Additionally, loyalty influences customer satisfaction (Alrawadieh et al., 2019; Rahman et al., 2018). Satisfaction is an expected aspect when considering revisiting a destination. If a tourist destination fails to meet expectations, visitors may indirectly experience dissatisfaction. Therefore, catering to the satisfaction and benefits sought by tourists who anticipate fulfilling experiences is crucial.

Tourists make travel decisions based on the information they receive and previous travel experiences. Destination image is a travel decision that arises from information, feelings, and actions based on the satisfaction experienced during the journey (Wibowo et al., 2016). Transparent reviews of religious tourism provide future tourists with an overview of the positive image and impression. Previous research has also focused on visitor experiences in Thailand (Hosany et al., 2016), Setu Babakan Betawi cultural village in Indonesia (Wibowo et al., 2016), Rishikesh tourism in India (Sharma & Nayak, 2019), and tourist visits in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam (Ho et al., 2021). A further investigation on religious tourism, considering destination image and intention to recommend through the mediation of intention to revisit, will increase tourist satisfaction and loyalty.

This study examines the relationship between destination image, intention to revisit, and intention to recommend. This research holds both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, research on the influence of destination image on the intention to recommend has not been conducted in the context of religious tourism, even though, based on Papadimitriou et al. (2013) and Wang & Hsu (2010) destination image influences an individual's intention to revisit and recommend a tourist destination. From a practical standpoint, it can serve as a benchmark for destination managers to prioritize service and image by providing more substantial positive energy. Religious tourism is expected to provide facilities and evoke each profound spiritual activity's character. Destination image is an essential factor for utilizing the potential of local religious tourism development in addressing existing issues.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Destination Image

Destination image creates credence about the destination and the sentiments of tourists during their journey. According to Trang et al. (2023), the destination image is a key determinant of both destination selection and tourist loyalty. Destination Image is a complex process that involves real experiences that have occurred previously (Huete Alcocer & López Ruiz, 2020). Destination image is dynamic and can change with specific stages based on tourism experiences (Xu & Ye, 2018). Therefore, research on destination image is crucial.

The previous research conducted by Eid et al. (2019) and Lee et al. (2013) examined the influence of destination image on tourist satisfaction levels. In this case, the destination image indicates tourist satisfaction with the service products and tourism destinations. Satisfied tourists tend to exhibit higher levels of loyalty and are more inclined to recommend the destination to others. Studies on destination images are still limited to specific aspects. To address the aforementioned gap, this research aims to examine destination images concerning tourists' decision-making processes and their inclination to provide positive reviews.

Intention to Revisit

Intention to revisit is a competitive factor for tourist destinations and should be taken into consideration by managers in evaluating tourist visits. Based on Cole & Scott (2004) and Han & Kim (2010), intention to revisit refers to an individual's willingness to revisit the same destination, often with the same purpose and purchasing vacation packages. Intention to revisit is the result of evaluating the values experienced by tourists and their satisfaction. Satisfaction forms loyalty, commitment, repeat purchase intentions, and brand transfer (Kusumawati et al., 2020).

The previous research conducted by Sharma & Nayak (2019) examined the influence of intention to revisit after obtaining satisfaction in recommending activities. Tourists can share positive impressions after visiting a desirable tourist destination, which instinctively sparks an interest in recommending the visit to others at a later time. With that in mind, this research aims to examine the intention to revisit the intention of recommending spiritual tourism activities that have exceeded expectations.

Intention to Recommend

Intention to recommend, which triggers the evaluation of destination image, should concern managers. According to Baker & Crompton (2000), intention to recommend refers to visitor loyalty or dissatisfaction behavior and indicators. In this case, it can be interpreted as post-visit behavior often having significant commercial value for area development (Eid et al., 2019). Intention to recommend is a crucial factor in portraying the image of a tourist destination. Spreading positive information about the destination encourages profitability. Therefore, research on the intention to recommend is important for further actions.

Intention to recommend has been the subject of previous research. Prayag et al. (2015) discussed how the overall tourism image influences tourist satisfaction and the intention to recommend. Visitors are unlikely to recommend a destination without finding it appealing; there needs to be a deeper interaction, such as visitor engagement with the surrounding activities. This engagement can be fulfilled if visitors feel attended to during the activities. With that in mind, the purpose of this research is to measure the intention to recommend in relation to the outcomes of visits to tourist destinations.

The effect of destination image on intention to revisit

Destination managers need to believe that a positive image can influence visitors' decisions to revisit. Destination image can be created through visits that make individuals want to return to a destination (Kim & Lee, 2015; Nadeau et al., 2008). Qu et al. (2011) argue that destination image can be proven to have an impact on the intention to revisit through visitor satisfaction. The influence of destination image on intention to revisit has yet to be studied, despite its importance for destination managers to assess the experience provided to visitors. This forms the basis for this study to examine the effect of destination image on intention to revisit.

This study argues that destination image significantly affects the intention to revisit. Based on Sharma & Nayak (2019) destination image can influence the intention to revisit, as engaging in positive tourism activities triggers positive experiences and fosters visitor loyalty. The aspect of image in

influencing visitor decisions becomes a competitive advantage for tourist destinations (Lin et al., 2007). This can be further developed if visitors exhibit enthusiasm throughout their journey. Visitor enthusiasm becomes a critical factor in the success of destination managers in building an image, leading to visitors having a greater intention to revisit. Based on these arguments, this study formulates the following hypothesis:

H₁: Destination Image Has a Significant Effect on The Intention to Revisit.

The Effect of Destination Image on The Intention to Recommend

Positive travel experiences and the resulting positive image can influence the action of recommending to others. If the destination image meets tourists' expectations, it can lead to satisfaction and repeat visits, thereby increasing the likelihood of recommendations to friends or family (Chen & Tsai, 2007; González et al., 2007). According to Mwaura et al. (2013), appropriate information and media are crucial in positioning a tourist destination in the target market. In influencing visitors' travel decisions, it is crucial to take into account the experiential aspect of decision-making based on tourists' perceptions of the destination that forms the basis for this study to examine the effect of destination image on intention to recommend.

This study argues that destination image significantly affects the intention to recommend. Based on Eid et al. (2019), destination image can influence the intention to recommend. When visiting, tourists critically evaluate the perceived role of the destination image, which becomes a decisive factor in their decision-making process and subsequent recommendations to potential tourists. The level of perceived need fulfillment also plays a pivotal role in assessing the intention to recommend (Eid et al., 2019). Therefore, prioritizing high-value tourist experiences through well-prepared and well-controlled facilities, information, and services is essential. Referring to these arguments, this study formulates the following hypothesis:

H₂: Destination Image Has a Significant Effect on The Intention to Recommend.

The effect of intention to revisit on intention to recommend

Returning visits create a desire for tourists to share their travel experiences. The intention to revisit arises based on the experiences felt during a specific period, which creates positive impressions about a destination and influences behaviors and final decisions (Whang et al., 2016). The intention to visit a tourist destination consists of the information, knowledge, responses, and reliability of the sources referred to by consumers (Gruen et al., 2006). According to Allameh et al. (2014), intention to revisit can be characterized by their willingness to review the same destination in the future and recommend it to others. This forms the basis for this study to examine the effect of the intention to revisit on the intention to recommend.

This study argues that the intention to revisit significantly affects the intention to recommend. According to Mat Som et al. (2012), intention to revisit can influence the intention to recommend, as visitors with positive impressions during their journey are more likely to engage in repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth to friends and relatives. Marketing strategies need to intensify the development of segments to disseminate the advantages of tourist destinations (Mat Som et al., 2012). Therefore, destination managers can prioritize visitor loyalty by focusing on providing an exceptional experience that encourages visitors to return. Refer to the arguments above, this study formulates the following hypothesis:

H₃: Intention to Revisit Has a Significant Effect on The Intention to Recommend.

The Mediating Effect of Intention to Revisit on The Relationship Between Destination Image and Intention to Recommend

Perceptions of a destination can influence decisions, such as the desire to revisit and recommend. Destination image plays a significant role in destination selection (Mwaura et al., 2013). According to Su et al. (2020) a good reputation for a tourist destination increases tourists' trust. If tourists have low trust, their intention to visit will be low (Boger et al., 2021). Tourists are attracted to visit if they have access to comprehensive information, so tourists' evaluations need to be considered to enable sustainable visitation and recommendations.

This study argues that the intention to revisit mediates the effect of destination image on the intention to recommend. Papadimitriou et al. (2013) state that a positive destination image generates the desire to revisit and recommend. Tourism managers must thoroughly comprehend visitor reviews, evaluate the destination's image, and analyze the emotions experienced by visitors, enabling repeated visits and recommendations. Word-of-mouth evaluations are more trusted by audiences compared to advertising messages (Kotler et al., 2014). Therefore, evaluations and the dissemination of information between individuals regarding the image of tourist destinations are necessary. Referring to the above arguments, this study formulates the following hypothesis:

H₄: Intention to Revisit Mediates The Significant Effect of Destination Image on Intention to Recommend.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a quantitative research design to examine the influence of destination image on the intention to revisit and the intention to recommend. The sampling technique employed was purposive sampling, which is a non-probabilistic sampling based on predetermined criteria, i.e., individuals who had visited the Sunan Ampel Religious Tourism Site in Surabaya, Indonesia (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Questionnaires were directly distributed to potential respondents in the religious tourism sites. In addition, questionnaires were distributed online via Google Forms to other potential respondents. This study employed the SEM-PLS (Structural Equation Modeling - Partial Least Squares) method for data analysis by evaluating both measurement models and structural models. Evaluation of the measurement model is intended to ascertain research instrument works properly in measuring the variables investigated in the current study. Evaluation of the structural model is intended to test the proposed hypotheses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The evaluation of the measurement model consists of four stages. First, in Table 1, the evaluation of reliability is shown through factor loadings.

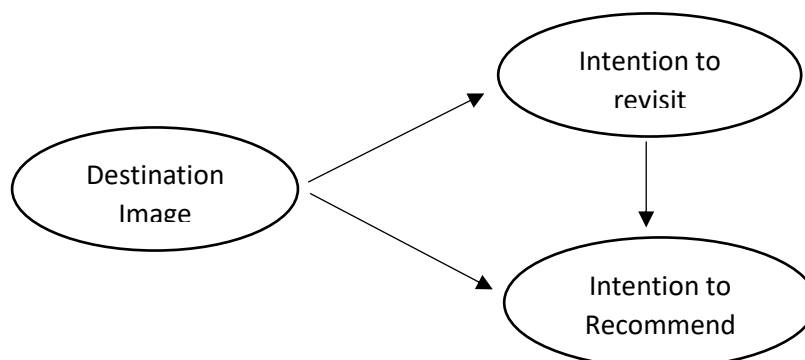


Figure 1. Research Design

Table.1 Reliability and convergent validity

Variable	Code	Loading	T-Value	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Destination Image	DNI01	0,861	46,661	0,905	0,929	0,724
	DNI02	0,869	40,690			
	DNI03	0,861	39,119			
	DNI04	0,816	26,661			
	DNI05	0,847	32,706			
Intention To Recommend	ITR01	0,943	61,595	0,942	0,963	0,896
	ITR02	0,937	82,345			
	ITR03	0,937	59,405			
Intention To Revisit	RVI01	0,942	77,390	0,933	0,957	0,881
	RVI02	0,959	144,969			
	RVI03	0,939	56,415			

Note: AVE, Average Variance Extracted

It is considered satisfactory because the minimum factor loading score for each item is 0.708 (Hair et al., 2019). Second, Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) values above 0.7 indicate internal consistency reliability meeting the criteria and ensuring reliability (Hair et al., 2019). Third, the Average Variance Extraction (AVE) values above 0.50 indicate that the values meet the criteria, indicating good convergent validity for all variables (Hair et al., 2019). Fourth, Table 2 presents the square root of the AVE values which are higher than inter-construct correlations, supporting discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2019). Then, this study evaluates the structural model to test the proposed hypotheses.

The evaluation of the structural model is presented in Table 3 and illustrated in Figure 1. All hypotheses are supported. Destination image significantly influences both intention to revisit (0.666, $p < 0.001$) and intention to recommend (0.381, $p < 0.001$), supporting H₁ and H₂. Intention to revisit significantly influences intention to recommend (0.347, $p < 0.001$), supporting H₃. Destination image significantly influences intention to recommend through the mediating role of intention to revisit (0.231, $p < 0.001$), supporting H₄.

This study has four important findings. Firstly, this study found a significant influence of destination image on the intention to revisit which is consistent with the findings of Hasan et al. (2018), Loi et al. (2017) and Papadimitriou et al. (2013), which state that the destination image serves as the primary reference when tourists consider revisiting a destination. By providing comprehensive information regarding safety, ensuring emergency support, and enhancing security, the perception of the destination's image can be elevated. Fulfilling the satisfied needs of visitors and paying special attention to their preferences positively impacts their intention to revisit the destination. This finding also indicates the significance of the destination image in influencing the decision to revisit a destination, as a positive impression after the initial visit can significantly impact future revisit intentions.

Tabel 2 Discriminant Validity

	1	2	3
Destination Image	0,851		
Intention to Revisit	0,666	0,947	
Intention to recommend	0,612	0,601	0,939

Note: The square root of AVE is on the boldface diagonal

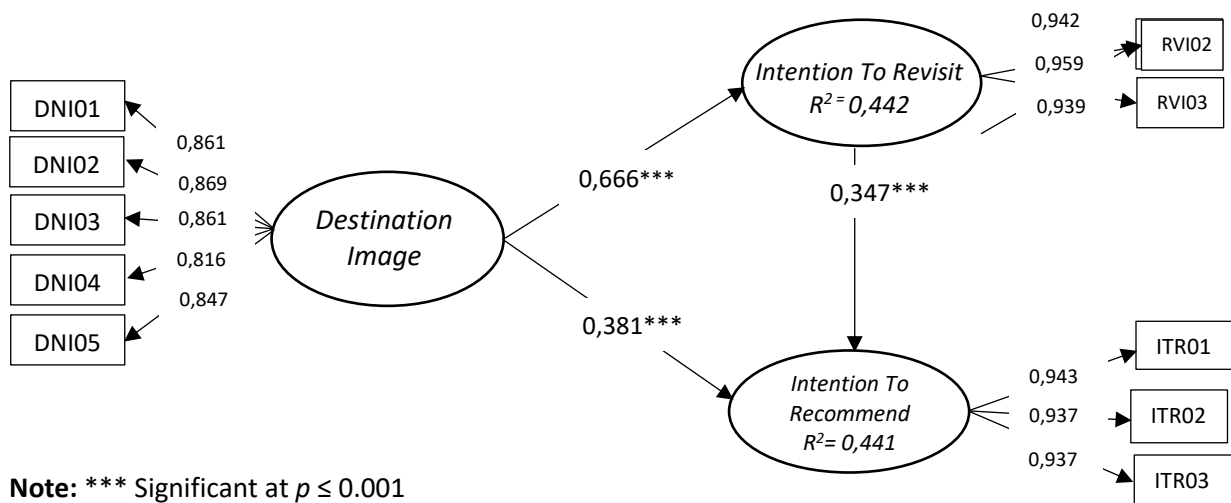
Table 3 Structural Path Result

Hypothesis	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	Conclusion
H1: Destination Image → Intention to Revisit	0,666***	-	-	Supported
H2: Destination Image → Intention to recommend	0,381***	-	-	Supported
H3: Intention to Revisit → Intention to recommend	0,347***	-	-	Supported
H4: Destination Image → Intention to Revisit → Intention to recommend		0,231***	0,612***	Supported

Note: *** Significant at $p \leq 0.001$

Secondly, this study found a significant influence of the destination image on the intention to recommend. This finding aligns with the findings of Eid et al. (2019) and Prayag et al. (2015) which state that the perceived destination image has a significant impact as it aids in making subsequent travel decisions and when recommending a destination to potential visitors. If tourists feel satisfied, they are more likely to share positive experiences about the place with others. Effective provision of quality services and facilities by destination management can encourage tourists to recommend the destination, thus fostering their loyalty and interest in revisiting. A positively memorable tourist destination can serve as an indicator for spreading positive news to others.

Thirdly, this study found a significant influence of the intention to revisit on the intention to recommend, corroborating the findings of Qu et al. (2011), who state that the intention to revisit a destination and subsequently spreading positive word-of-mouth are two important behaviors resulting from post-consumption behavior influenced by the perceived destination image. The intention to recommend becomes a source of information in shaping the image of a place. The more tourists receive positive information and impressions through repeated visits, the more indirectly the destination is promoted. This finding also indicates a relationship between the intention to revisit and the intention to recommend. Therefore, feedback from the intention to revisit can be achieved by implementing persuasive actions toward potential new visitors.



Note: *** Significant at $p \leq 0.001$

Figure.2 Result of the structural model

Fourthly, this study found that the destination image has an impact on the intention to recommend through the mediation of the intention to revisit. This aligns with the findings of Kadi et al. (2021), who state that the destination image is the main assessment criterion for tourists when considering revisiting and providing recommendations to others. This finding demonstrates the interrelationship between the destination image and the intention to recommend, mediated by the intention to revisit. Hence, the better the destination's image, the greater the likelihood that individuals will provide recommendations (in the form of reviews and social media posts) to others, which in turn will result in repeated visits as a form of loyalty.

The above findings suggest that the desire to return is obtained through interaction. The interaction process comprises two dimensions that contribute to building the destination image (Zhang et al., 2014). According to Beerli & Martín (2004), these two dimensions consist of cognitive and affective images. Cognitive image refers to the assessment of the characteristics of an object perceived by an individual, forming an image of the object even without prior visitation (Loi et al., 2017; Papadimitriou et al., 2015). Affective image, on the other hand, pertains to the emotional aspect experienced by tourists when visiting a specific destination (Hallmann et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2019). Research findings indicate that the destination image influences the intention to revisit the destination. Furthermore, the destination image can also prompt tourists to generate an intention to recommend.

In conclusion, this study emphasizes the importance of destination image in influencing both the intention to revisit and the intention to recommend. By understanding the destination image, cognitive and affective, tourism managers can focus on enhancing these aspects to create positive perceptions among tourists. Meeting tourists' expectations, providing excellent services, ensuring safety and security, and promoting positive experiences can contribute to the formation of a favorable destination image. This, in turn, leads to an increased intention to revisit and the likelihood of tourists recommending the destination to others.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that destination image has a significant influence on intention to revisit and intention to recommend. Furthermore, intention to revisit has a significant effect on intention to recommend. Finally, destination image has a significant influence on intention to recommend through the mediating role of intention to revisit. Therefore, when tourists perceive a destination image, it indirectly shapes their intention to visit that destination, subsequently stimulating the intention to recommend the same destination. The positive image created between tourists and a specific destination encourages repeated visits in the future. The findings are expected to aid tourism providers in comprehending the crucial role of the destination image as perceived by tourists. Religious tourism managers can shape a positive image for tourists, leading to loyalty from the tourists themselves. Consequently, it is hoped that tourism service providers can further enhance their services from various aspects to create a positive image for tourists and stimulate their intention to visit.

In addition, religious tourism managers can stimulate tourists to have a high intention to recommend by providing easy access and information. It is also important to improve facilities to ensure that tourists can comfortably use them. Moreover, managers need to consider the destination image that tourists develop after their visit. It is crucial to maintain and enhance the image of religious tourism. Lastly, in terms of intention to revisit and intention to recommend, religious tourism should strive to preserve all religious attributes. Maintenance, preservation, and even enhancement should be done to encourage more visits from the local community while ensuring the safety and comfort of visitors. Providing spiritual experiences by involving visitor interactions can be a new attraction. Through this opportunity, visitors can explore various physical and non-physical activities that they can engage in after their spiritual journey.

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