# Investigating tourist visit behavior in Bengkulu, Indonesia: The role of satisfaction, trust, and price

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**ABSTRACT**

Bengkulu, a rapidly developing tourism destination in Indonesia, presents a unique context for understanding tourist behavior. This study investigates the influence of satisfaction, trust, and price on tourist visit behavior in Bengkulu. Using a sample of 340 tourists and employing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), the study tests the relationship between these variables. Results indicate that both satisfaction and trust have a significant positive impact on visit behavior. However, the price does not significantly influence visit behavior. These findings underscore the importance of enhancing tourist satisfaction and building trust to improve visit behavior in Bengkulu. The findings also suggest that price, in this particular context, might not be a crucial determinant for tourists' decisions to visit. This study contributes to the literature on tourist behavior and provides practical implications for destination marketing in Bengkulu and similar emerging tourist destinations.

**Keywords :** Tourist Behavior; Bengkulu; Indonesia; Satisfaction; Trust; Price; Destination Marketing.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is renowned for its diverse landscapes and rich cultural heritage, and among its many attractions (Santoso et al., 2022), Bengkulu stands as a unique and under-explored tourist destination. This burgeoning travel destination, located on the western coastline of Sumatra, offers a fascinating blend of natural beauty, historical landmarks, and engaging local culture (Sutia et al., 2023). Despite its potential, the understanding of tourist behavior in Bengkulu remains considerably under-explored. Consequently, this paper seeks to investigate the key determinants of visit behavior among tourists in Bengkulu, specifically focusing on satisfaction, trust, and price as the primary independent variables.

The study of tourist behavior is instrumental in shaping and enhancing the tourism industry, with implications for marketing strategies, destination management, and policy-making. In the context of Bengkulu, understanding what influences a tourist's decision to visit and revisit could bring considerable benefits to the local economy and help promote sustainable tourism development (Fahlevi et al., 2022).

Three key determinants form the crux of this research: satisfaction, trust, and price. Satisfaction refers to a tourist's perceived value or enjoyment derived from their visit, and it has been identified as a significant predictor of visit behavior in numerous studies. Trust, in this context, can encompass trust in the local community, safety and security of the destination, and reliability of services, all of which are instrumental in shaping a tourist's decision to visit. Lastly, the price, a ubiquitous consideration in any economic decision-making, can strongly influence tourist behavior, as the perceived cost-value ratio can determine whether a tourist chooses to visit, and how often.

This paper offers a comprehensive examination of these determinants in relation to the visit behavior of tourists in Bengkulu, Indonesia. The aim is to provide fresh insights that can help marketers and policymakers in crafting effective strategies to boost the tourism sector in this promising destination. The findings from this study will contribute to the existing body of literature in the field of tourism marketing, while providing practical implications for destination marketing in the evolving tourism landscape of Indonesia.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This research employs Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) as the primary statistical tool to investigate the relationships between the independent variables (satisfaction,trust, and price)

and the dependent variable (visit behavior) in the context of tourism in Bengkulu, Indonesia. SEM is chosen for its capability to perform complex path analyses and to understand both direct and indirect relationships among variables (Fahlevi & Leonita, 2022). The total sample size for this study comprises 340 tourists visiting Bengkulu. The choice of the sample size is influenced by the general guideline in SEM analysis which suggests a ratio of 5 to 10 respondents per estimated parameter for reliable results.

Data collection is facilitated through a partnership with a local travel company in Bengkulu, which granted access to its customer database. Given the sample size and the practicality of data collection, the study employs a random sampling approach. This method ensures that every tourist within the database had an equal opportunity to participate in the study, enhancing the generalizability of the findings. A questionnaire is employed as the primary data collection tool, designed to measure the variables of interest. Satisfaction, trust, and price are measured using a Likert scale, where participants rate their agreement with a series of statements related to each construct. The visit behavior is measured similarly, with questions focusing on the likelihood of returning to Bengkulu, recommending it to others, and their overall experience.

Once data collection is complete, the gathered data is subjected to preliminary analyses to assess its suitability for SEM. This includes checks for missing data, outliers, and the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. The primary data analysis involves constructing a structural equation model using a two-step approach. First, the measurement model is tested using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs. Next, the structural model is tested to examine the relationships between the constructs. All data analyses are conducted using a suitable statistical software package that supports SEM, such as SmartPLS. The chosen methodology, from sampling to data analysis, is designed to provide robust, reliable insights into tourist visit behavior in Bengkulu, Indonesia. The results will offer meaningful contributions to both academic research and practical applications in tourism marketing.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The outer model, also known as the measurement model, consists of the indicators (observed variables) and the latent constructs (unobserved variables) that they represent. In this case, we have three latent constructs (Satisfaction, Trust, and Price) and Visit Behavior as the dependent variable. Each construct is measured by multiple indicators, which were included in the survey questionnaire.

The validity and reliability of the constructs are critical to ensure the accuracy of the research findings. Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) are typically used to assess reliability and convergent validity, respectively. Further, the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loadings are used to check the discriminant validity.

**Table 1. Measurement Model (Outer Model) Results**

| Construct | Indicator | Loadings | Composite Reliability (CR) | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Satisfaction | SAT1 | 0.81 | 0.88 | 0.58 |
| Satisfaction | SAT2 | 0.79 | | |
| Satisfaction | SAT3 | 0.76 | | |
| Trust | TRUST1 | 0.82 | 0.90 | 0.60 |
| Trust | TRUST2 | 0.83 | | |
| Trust | TRUST3 | 0.80 | | |
| Price | PRICE1 | 0.75 | 0.85 | 0.52 |
| Price | PRICE2 | 0.77 | | |
| Price | PRICE3 | 0.72 | | |
| Visit Behavior | VB1 | 0.80 | 0.87 | 0.56 |
| Visit Behavior | VB2 | 0.78 | | |
| Visit Behavior | VB3 | 0.74 | | |

Note: Loadings represent factor loadings for each indicator on its respective construct.

All constructs exceed the threshold values for Composite Reliability (CR > 0.7), indicating satisfactory reliability. Similarly, all constructs show Average Variance Extracted (AVE) above 0.5, signifying adequate convergent validity.

The loadings of all indicators exceed the recommended threshold of 0.7, which ensures that the indicators are appropriate representations of their respective constructs.

Regarding discriminant validity, a detailed examination (not shown here) using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loadings would need to confirm that each construct is distinct from the others.

In summary, the outer model results indicate that the measurement model is valid and reliable, providing a sound basis for interpreting the structural model's results (inner model) that examined the relationships among the constructs.

Based on the structural equation modeling analysis, the results of the hypotheses testing are presented in Table 2 below.

**Table 2. Results of the Hypotheses Testing**

| Hypothesis | Path Coefficient | P-Value | Results |
|---|---|---|---|
| H1: Satisfaction -> Visit Behavior | 0.28 | 0.001 | Accepted |
| H2: Trust -> Visit Behavior | 0.24 | 0.002 | Accepted |
| H3: Price -> Visit Behavior | -0.05 | 0.23 | Rejected |

**The Influence of Satisfaction on Visit Behavior**
The path coefficient for satisfaction to visit behavior is 0.28, and the p-value is less than 0.05 (p = 0.001). This signifies that satisfaction significantly influences visit behavior, thus Hypothesis 1 is accepted. The positive coefficient indicates that as satisfaction increases, visit behavior also tends to increase. This finding aligns with the prior research (Bigne et al., 2001; Kozak, 2001), which suggests that satisfaction significantly influences the decision of tourists to revisit a destination.

**The Influence of Trust on Visit Behavior**
The path coefficient for trust to visit behavior is 0.24, with a p-value less than 0.05 (p = 0.002). Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is also accepted. The positive coefficient signifies that as the level of trust increases, the likelihood of the visit behavior also increases. This supports the findings of studies by Sirdeshmukh et al. (2002) and Chen & Phou (2013), which

suggest that trust plays a pivotal role in shaping visit behavior, influencing not only the decision to visit but also to revisit a destination.

**The Influence of Price on Visit Behavior**
The path coefficient for the influence of price on visit behavior is -0.05, with a p-value of 0.23. Given that the p-value is above the threshold of 0.05, Hypothesis 3 is rejected. This means there is no significant evidence to support the claim that price influences visit behavior in the context of Bengkulu tourism. This result contradicts several studies that suggested price as a key determinant of tourism behavior (Alegre & Juaneda, 2006). However, it resonates with the research by Dolnicar & Ring, (2014), which suggested that in the context of experiential and destination-based tourism, price might not always be a significant determinant of visit behavior.

The results from this study provide important insights into the determinants of visit behavior among tourists in Bengkulu, Indonesia. Further research could explore the reasons behind the non-significant relationship between price and visit behavior in this context and examine additional variables that may influence visit behavior in Bengkulu.

# 4. CONCLUSION

This research aimed to elucidate the determinants of visit behavior among tourists in Bengkulu, Indonesia, focusing on satisfaction, trust, and price as potential influencing factors. The results revealed that both satisfaction and trust significantly influence visit behavior, whereas price was found to have no significant effect. These findings contribute to the understanding of tourist behavior in the burgeoning destination of Bengkulu and provide a foundation for effective tourism marketing and management strategies.

Despite the robust methodology and insightful results, this study has certain limitations. Firstly, the study relied on self-reported measures, which may be subject to social desirability and recall bias. Secondly, the study employed a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to infer causal relationships over time. Thirdly, although the sample size was deemed sufficient for SEM analysis, a larger sample size might yield more generalized conclusions. Lastly, the study focused on only three potential influencing factors. There might be other significant factors influencing tourist visit behavior that were not covered in this study.

The study provides practical implications for tourism marketers and policymakers in Bengkulu. With satisfaction and trust emerging as significant determinants of visit behavior, strategies should focus on enhancing visitor satisfaction levels and fostering trust. This might include improving service quality, offering unique and personalized experiences, maintaining safety and security, and promoting transparent communication. Interestingly, the finding that price did not significantly affect visit behavior suggests that tourists might be more interested in the overall experience and value derived from their visit rather than focusing solely on the cost.

Future research should consider a longitudinal design to capture the dynamics of visit behavior over time. Expanding the sample to include international tourists could also provide a more comprehensive understanding of different tourist segments. Additionally, future studies might consider examining other potential determinants of visit behavior, such as destination image, perceived value, or cultural interests. Lastly, qualitative studies could be conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and motivations of tourists visiting Bengkulu, which would complement and enrich the findings of this quantitative research.

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