

Tourists' intention to visit Bangka Island: How far does publicity affect destination awareness, preference and image?

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Abstract: This research aims to analyse factors that affect the tourists' intention by visiting Bangka Island, Indonesia, studying predictors that include destination publicity, awareness, image, and preference; this comprehensive approach is very rarely applied to island tourism. A total of 230 tourists were approached for participation in this study with an appropriate sampling method. The data were analysed using exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modelling. The results revealed that destination publicity has a significant influence on destination awareness, destination image, and destination preference. However, the study found that intention to visit was significantly influenced by knowledge about the destination and perceptions of the place. Choice of destination, however, had a minimum effect on desire to visit. These findings, in addition to enhancing our understanding of consumer behaviour and destination marketing in island tourism, reiterate the importance of good publicity within a country, showing just how awareness and image impact tourists' disposition toward visiting a destination and therefore offering valuable lessons for all stakeholders in tourism. This study indicates that effective destination publicity and improved destination awareness and image can contribute to the creation of economic growth and new jobs in island destinations like Bangka Island, while at the same time enhancing forms of responsible tourism that promote sustainable use of resources and reduce negative impacts on the environment. Thus, it would have very relevant repercussions on SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, and SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production.

Keywords: *Bangka Island, economic growth, Consumer behaviour, Destination marketing, Responsible consumption and production.*

1. Introduction

The importance of tourism regarding the economic, cultural, and environmental realities of an island destination is paramount since most of the issues and opportunities are embraced therein. Innovative concerns and opportunities about island tourism touching on sustainable development, resilience, and culture-environment management are highlighted by McLeod et al. (2021). While Zhang et al. (2020) focus on island tourism's rapid growth and preferential status, taking Koh Lan of Thailand as a case study to call for environment-friendly and sustainable tourism. Bulchand-Gidumal (2022), examine the unprecedented disruption that COVID-19 caused to island tourism, focusing much more on the islands that show a high dependency on mass tourism. The paper is representative of specific challenges small island territories face in managing their tourism sectors. Li et al., 2021, narrow it down

to Jeju Island in Korea by showing its uniqueness of natural landscape and cultural heritage and the problems of sustainability related to tourist nature across islands. Peterson (2023) reviews the economic consequences of tourism on small islands in the Caribbean, like Aruba, with an emphasis on how peak visitors can trigger adverse impacts on the social, ecological, and economic features of that island.

Research on factors influencing island tourism desire has shown an interplay of motivations, perceptions, and experiential factors playing in a complex way. According to Suhud et al. (2021), travel motive followed by destination image is the most considerable influence on visitors' intention to visit Belitung Island. They refer to 'push motivations' when they talk about the internal factors that move people to travel, such as the desire for relaxation or adventure. 'Pull motivations', on the other hand, refer to those external motives being referred to when considering what explicitly attracts someone to hurry into a destination, such as natural beauty or cultural heritage. Results of their study have shown that both points-related push and pull motivations significantly influence destination image but also the intention to visit. Choirisa et al. (2021) indicated that electronic word of mouth and destination image significantly influenced tourist attitudes and visit intentions, and online reviews and social media do change people's impressions. According to Mas'ud et al. (2022), destination brand awareness, brand image, quality, and value are factors intervening in visit intentions, requiring effective branding in island tourism. Aulia et al. (2021) further elaborate on how the interaction of a tourism destination image with an emotional connection toward the tourism destination, satisfaction, and frequency of visits influences loyalty and visit intentions of tourists at Weh Island. Ngah et al. (2021) suggested the concept of voluntourism, as elements like volunteer satisfaction, ongoing intention, volunteer roles, and environment awareness contribute a great deal to deciding the visitation intention concerning island voluntourism.

Although much research has been done on the factors that influence the intention to visit island tourism destinations, few studies have gone deep into establishing the prediction power of variables like destination publicity, awareness, image, and preference. In explaining this, this study attempts to integrate past research by going deeper into how exactly these specific variables influence tourists' plans to pay a visit to Bangka Island. Therefore, the implication of the findings to this study is very important to the development of Bangka Island as a tourism destination and is a must-read for all researchers in the field of tourism marketing and planning. Destination publicity, awareness, image, and choice are vital indices, as they bring about definite changes in such triple tents as travellers' perspectives and intentions.

Place marketing promotes a place; informs and motivates through different media used in communication. This can enhance a place's awareness largely among the targeted populace. The more aware the tourists are of the place, the more they formulate a mental picture in their minds about the same place upon receiving any piece of information available, such as its beauty, uniqueness, and overall attractiveness. Destination image has a positive perception and can create strong preferences, making tourists prefer the destination over others. Tourism marketers and planners, by understanding how these factors influence, can develop certain strategies to make Bangka Island more visible, attractive, and desirable, and therefore increase visitor counts.

It has immense potential for economic growth and development in terms of its tourism sector since Bangka Island is imbued with natural beauty, cultural uniqueness, and government support. According to Hikmawati et al. (2024), the beautiful coastline and unique foods are the major reasons that attract visitors in Bangka. Local handicrafts and other initiatives like training English-speaking tour guides and drone-based tourism movies add to those attractions. Nasrullah et al. (2023) state that Bangka's Kelapa Island has very large marine tourist potentials, resultant from the availability of a lot of coral reefs and several locations of shipwrecks, excellent for snorkelling or diving activities. While these attractions exist, the tourism industry has not yet been able to pay its due role in economic development for local communities. Evitulistono et al. (2023) indicate that the sustainable development of Panjang

Island for tourist use should focus on the business model related to responsible usage of coral reefs and a more advanced coastal, managerial, and fisheries programme. Tumober et al. (2024) note that Bangka Island is one of Indonesia's Super Priority Destinations aimed at boosting tourism outside Bali and attracting domestic and international tourists. Valeriani et al. (2024) show substantial development regarding tourism activity in Bangka. This was highly influenced by the famous novel and then film entitled "Rainbow Troops." Later, this growth became diminished due to the COVID-19 epidemic in 2020. These data present richly diverse potentials for tourism within Bangka Island. These opportunities to regional prosperity and community well-being need strategic development and sustainable practices in order to be fully capitalized. Liu et al. (2024) contributed with new approaches in understanding consumer decisions between the obligations to the environment and technology breakthroughs. Abdullah et al. (2023) highlighted millennial green travel preferences and pointed out that online travel agencies need to reconsider their policies. The research by Tee, Chaw and Khan (2023) revealed that green entrepreneurial intention is not mediated by green entrepreneurial knowledge. Liu et al. (2024) undertook research to close the current gaps in the body of knowledge on smart hotels. It presents fresh ideas that enable one to understand consumer decision-making procedures in the framework of environmental obligations and technology development.

1.1. Problems

1.1.1. Destination Publicity

Several studies have demonstrated the massive impacts of publicity on the perceived image and attractiveness of tourist destinations. For example, destination publicity was explained by Mandina and Preez (2022), as a purposeful plan for communication to promote certain places to increase their awareness and uplift their image, and this can be achieved by launching promotional campaigns, using social media marketing approaches, working with powerful people from the tourism community, and applying other means to introduce the place to potential tourists. According to Pike et al. (2021), location publicity involves the process of enhancing the image of a location, gaining visitor attention, and influencing travel decisions through various media communications, including mass media, websites, commercials, and promotion activities. These two sources acknowledge the efforts as vital in letting tourism destinations compete in the global marketplace by attracting potential visitors.

Moreover, destination publicity comes as a term with its share of negative and positive connotations. Su et al. mention that the public exposure of a destination could very well manipulate the way it is perceived and its image throughout. More specifically, they stress how this by products negatively affects the residents' quality of life and the social stigma attached therewith. In contrast, Sumb (2021) and Teodorov et al. (2020) explore the positive aspects of destination promotion, aimed at changing any previous negative perceptions and reinforcing a positive image of the destination through various media, both offline and online. The efforts to create an online brand of a destination are significant in increasing the share of visitors for that place by appealing to travellers with beautiful advertisements and promotional literature. It is in this promotional operation that intensive use of many media illustrates a diversified approach if boosting the reputation and attractiveness of a destination.

1.2. Destination Publicity and Destination Awareness

Publicity is part of a broader range of marketing and promotion strategies, although very important in developing destination awareness. The literature regarding the role of publicity in impacting a destination's awareness has not been considered much. For instance, Coca-Cola increased its brand awareness with the 'Share a Coke' campaign, whereby consumers were invited to share their personally addressed Coke bottles on social media—a pure example of how much work publicity alone can do with brand awareness. Kim and Lee (2018) found that advertising, publicity, and word-of-mouth were robust drivers of brand awareness. This should suggest that thoughtfully designed and integrated promotional

activities can help the remaining prominent in the awareness of a brand or destination stick in the minds of prospective customers. Utomo et al. (2023) illustrated how small and medium-scale enterprises may effectively use social network sites such as Instagram for publicity. These small and medium business owners capitalised on Instagram as a channel to reach the audiences to increase brand awareness, given the lack of a professional public relations department. Making engaging content, using some interactive freebies, engaging one-on-one with the consumer, the small and medium enterprise players made a strong impression that they caught consumers' attention to create brand awareness in demonstration of the influential effect of social media publicity.

Moreover, the power of publicity is not restricted to social media; rather, conventional sources also have a share. Manafe and Adriana (2022) claim that advertising campaigns through all sorts of media, both in cyberspace and traditional media, can increase brand awareness by manipulating the public perception about the brand image. One example is the case of the skincare brand, which exemplifies that well-conducted PR can disseminate key knowledge about the activities of a company to the public and advisable public reactions to those activities, thus contributing to increased awareness and brand trust. As'ad examines in his work the role of publicity campaigns, including media coverage and promotional activities, on increasing brand exposure and awareness with respect to Sharia banks in Yogyakarta. Iriani et al. (2023) provide further support for this finding. They exclaim that publicity simply creates awareness about the products or organizations to society and helps in developing a better understanding among consumers about the brand. It indeed increases brand identification and customer knowledge but also causes positive publicity, improves brand awareness, and offers better advertising and promotional activities.

1.3. Destination Publicity and Destination Image

Several studies indicate publicity as the determinant factor towards reputation and perception of brands, companies, or even individuals. According to Hofmann et al. (2021), the publication on strategic publicity behaviours has the objective of enhancing brand image for athletes. They said that through media, effectiveness and temperament can play a key role in relating positively to the perception of the brand. Effectively controlling the public visibility might be able to enhance athletes' market worth and brand perception. Jiang et al. (2021) use an example to show how social media publicity affects public perception regarding household garbage management. According to them, using social media wisely would change people's perceptions of environmental sustainability and create eco-friendly behaviours related to waste generation reduction and recycling. This goes to underline other uses of publicity in improving not only brand reputation but also in influencing public behaviours and attitudes towards social and environmental issues.

Furthermore, according to Ogunmuyiwa (2022), and Manafe and Ardeana (2022), such influence of publicity extends to corporate and product branding. In the view of Ogunmuyiwa (2022), publicity enables the establishment of a positive corporate relationship between businesses and the public by managing adverse circumstances and thus contributes to the company's reputation. Effective publicity strategies may have a direct and indirect impact on public opinion and build trust in setting positive expectancy about the organization. According to Manafe and Ardeana (2022), positive publicity can be of great help in building brand awareness, creating a positive perception of the brand in public opinion, strengthening brand positioning, and engendering consumer confidence. With its very wide reach, positive publicity has become an indispensable component of PR-based strategies that help organizations, and their products garner positive media attention and subsequently achieve familiarity with consumers. Therefore, effective advertising enhances the perception of the brand and is a sure way to a strong reputation, securing consumer trust and commitment with time.

1.4. Destination Publicity and Destination Preference

Although some research studies have contributed useful insights into related factors, an effective impact of destination publicity on destination preference cannot be comprehensively explored by perusing the relevant literature. Notwithstanding, Ratnadewi et al. (2022) hold that publicity has a significant impact on customer preference for certain products, suggesting that publicity campaigns can create consumers' choice. It follows that similar trends could apply to destination marketing also, where positive media coverage would then increase the attractiveness of a location to prospective tourists. Sumb (2021), discusses how influential media reports can be in influencing the decisions of tourists when choosing where to take their holidays; focus is also made on how negative media reports discourage visitors from choosing places such as PNG. It highlights the fact that, considering destination choice, it is profoundly important to control the way media conveys or projects a destination, so as to maintain a positive image and prove beneficial for tourist preferences.

On the other hand, McCartney (2008) asserts that media publicity, as a natural and powerful source of information, influences significantly the choices tourists make for a destination. It is within the neutrality or credibility of the publicity aired through media that can be used to either enhance or destroy the image of a place, thus affecting holiday makers' behaviour and decisions. Yu et al. (2018) underline the negative publicity exerting an important influence on brand perception, attitudes, and purchase likelihood. This shows how necessary proper communication techniques of public relations are to reduce the negativity of those consequences. Nevertheless, Muthi and Utama (2023) study factors influencing pricing, brand image, and marketing on customer satisfaction and repurchase intention. They do not provide, however, any conclusions about direct influence brought upon by publicity on preference.

1.5. Destination Awareness

Destination awareness is one of the important factors in tourism marketing and plays an effective role in influencing tourists' decision-making processes while enhancing the brand value of a place. Abbasi et al. (2024) describe destination awareness as the level to which tourist-identified destinations have understanding and knowledge. It forms an intrinsic part of their cognitive set for travel. This awareness involves recognition of the brand name of the destination and its ability to influence tourists' decision while planning for a visit. In this regard, Cambra-Fierro et al. (2022) established that destination awareness is triggered off by some form of learning whereby potential visitors acquire knowledge about the place, and in so doing, enhancing their understanding and perception of the place. The initial stage of the learning process is very significant in developing a positive perception and influencing tourists to visit the region.

Moreover, strategically creating and improving knowledge about a particular area relies on the use of various forms of media and marketing efforts. According to Carvalho (2022), destination awareness is more than simply awareness of the place or brand name. It comprises the development of positive associations in the minds of potential tourists. A positive image needs to be developed, and guests need to be inspired to choose the region. Chi et al. (2020) indicate that one of the major factors influencing brand equity is awareness, which is a strong determinant of travel intentions. This states that effective marketing strategies are very vital in increasing this awareness through advertising and creating unique brand identity. In the view of Dalgıç et al. (2023), social media plays a very important role in destination information diffusion, stating that user-generated content—especially the visually appealing ones, like memes—might raise awareness and stimulate the interest of potential visitors to a great extent. Taken together, these observations underline the reality that awareness creation for a destination has to be based on an overall strategy, where conventional and digital media are employed effectively to attract and hold tourist attention.

1.6. Destination Awareness and Visit Intention

Although few studies have considered the impact of destination awareness—posited to refer to a consumer's level of knowledge and familiarity with any given destination—on visit intention, existing research still offers some useful references, many of which point out the relationship between awareness and intention in several different contexts. For example, Dabbous and Barakat (2020) note that high brand awareness has a significant effect on the likelihood of purchase, which is considerably increased through social media by the actual involvement of consumers. This is the most valuable finding, as it would mean that heightened awareness might lead to stronger consumer intentions, and such findings could extend to the domain of destination awareness and visit intention. The claim that destination brand awareness exerts a significant influence on consumer intention is further supported by Dedeoğlu et al. (2020). Their results suggest that familiarity with a destination makes perception of it higher in quality, which can be expected to lead potential customers to visit the place.

Additionally, such an influence of awareness is also broadened or stretched across brand and destination contexts. In their research, Demir et al. (2021) discussed establishing a positive link between environmental knowledge on to the intention of visiting green hotels in Northern Cyprus among visitors. This goes on to portray that awareness has more far-reaching effects in the immediacy of forming visitor intentions. Dewi and Pratomo (2023) confirm that there was evidence of the high awareness of halal standards increasing the likelihood of customers intending to visit especially for those customers who really put importance on such considerations. Nevertheless, Ervina and Octaviany (2022) postulate that destination awareness has a positive effect on attitudes about a destination and a non-significant effect on future visit intentions. This would mean that while awareness is a necessary condition, it must be coupled with other factors, like sensory attributes or personal relevance, to have a profound effect on visiting intentions. These findings underline the importance of awareness in forming people's plans about visiting a place. Further research is required to pinpoint exactly when the awareness of a place practically triggers a visit, which will go on to prove that there is more to learn and add to this area.

1.7. Destination Image

The destination image is a complex construct and is very influential in the visitor's decision-making process and their overall travel experience. According to Gorji et al. (2023), destination image can be defined as the collective view persons hold about a multitude of characteristics of a place, such as its culture, physical features of the place, social environment, and emotional response toward the destination. This overall picture includes safety, friendliness of the residents, weather, quality of the accommodation available, tourist facilities, and the overall ambiance. Researchers explain this perceived image as summarizing the brainstorming about tourists' overall perception, feelings, attitude, fantasies, and feelings. All these elements combine to motivate them to choose one region over another for a visit. Destination image, according to Ran et al. (2021), is all about natural, cultural, social, and infrastructural features that give graphical information and feelings about a place joined with the qualities of a place or destination. This perspective could be gauged through a cognitive, affective, and behavioural approach and would be impacted by several characteristics such as sociodemographic attributes, past travel experiences, and nationality.

Moreover, destination image development is influenced by many different factors. According to Hamdy and Eid (2024), perceived risk, perceived safety, information received, and previous experiences influence the intention to visit a destination. Abad and Borbon (2021), emphasised further that travel vlogs are shaping and creating even a stronger perceived presentation of a destination. Travel vlogs, as an effective source of information, convey direct facts and viewpoints that might seriously enhance impacts on destinations when viewers shape their decisions about travel. Harrill et al. (2023) note that perception toward a destination is multi-elemental, made up of both cognitive and affective elements

shaped by the individual's beliefs, thoughts, and impressions about the place in question. In other words, these cognitive and emotive images can make an important difference in the tourists' perception of a site and therefore its attractiveness and competitive advantage against others in the global tourism market. As such, perception becomes something that a destination marketer needs to be aware of, understand, and manage effectively to achieve their goals of attracting and maintaining visitors.

1.8. Destination Image and Visit Intention

Specifically, a stream of research examines the influence of destination image on visit intention, reflecting its importance in forming tourists' travel decisions. Liang and Lai (2023), establish the perceptions about a destination are powerful motivators in traveling; this has a mediating effect between brand destination image and visit intention. These findings suggest that a positive perception of a site may increase its attractiveness, which in turn could raise the likelihood of tourists planning to visit. Similarly, Rodrigues et al. (2023) emphasise the role of global perceptions of a site as driving visit and re-visit intentions. The relationship between image and driven continuing interest and visits from visitors is especially central to maintaining a positive image in the context of sustainable rural tourism.

Further, Suban (2024) supports the fact that the overall perception of a destination has a positive influence on the desire to visit and intention to revisit. In simple terms, the perception developed by visiting tourists at a site affects not only the customer's first decision to visit the place but also their tendency to return. Suhud and Allan (2022) give exact implications taken from the case study of Anak Krakatau Mount in Indonesia, where indeed destination image significantly influences the tourists' intention to travel, which concurs with another research. perception of a place plays a significant role in determining whether tourists would like to revisit the place and their level of pleasure as highlighted by Suhud et al. (2021). These studies emphasize destination image in tourism marketing strategies. An image that is well managed and positive gives the outcomes of higher tourist satisfaction, visit intentions, and repeat visitations.

1.9. Destination Preference

Destinations are chosen based on a complex and multi-dimensional concept and vary significantly with the different demographic and psychographic factors of the travellers. According to Liao and Chuang (2020), Taiwanese tourists consider a lot of factors in choosing trip packages to Japan: attractions, hotels, length of stay, cost, food, transportation, seasonality. That brings out the diversified factors controlling destination preferences and establishes the need to tailor packages of travel to address the different aspirations and needs of various segments of tourists. Hassani and Moghavvemi (2020) make the argument that different factors—general considerations, Islamic consideration, and non-Islamic impact—control Muslim tourist destinations chosen by the tourist. These findings of the study indicate that religiosity and travel purposes play an important role in influencing the preferences of Muslim tourists from different backgrounds, represented by Iranian and Malaysian Muslim students. These results suggest, therefore, that motivational differences among tourists and their cultural settings have to be well understood in order to produce attractive tourism services.

The concept of destination preference is loaded with much more than the factors describing it. Various factors, relating to weather conditions, types of attractions, travel dates, accommodation budget, marketing strategies, destination image, advertisements, tourism potential, and consumer behaviour profiles, have been posited by different authors—including Alrasheed et al. (2020) and Ayyildiz-Durhan et al. (2023)—to impact significantly on the decisions of tourists to travel to the chosen destinations. According to Arif et al. (2021), variables like weather conditions, crowding, attractions, price of tickets, and public facilities lead to best choice by tourists and choosing alternative travel situations in line with their expectations and preferences. The above observations show the reasons why one needs to know the various variables influencing the choice for a place. In tourism

marketing and planning, these different elements should be taken into consideration and plans made that best suit the diverse tastes of different tourist groups. In the end, this will enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of destinations.

1.10. Destination Preference and Visit Intention

Although research concerning the destination preference effect on visit intention is scant, past studies in other contexts offer very important insight into the preference–intention relationship. Grüner and Krüger (2021) proved that personal preferences significantly affect the willingness to be vaccinated against COVID-19. In their study, it was shown that the level of trust in media, governmental actions, and health system levels were strong determinants of vaccination decisions. This suggests that, among others, the preceding factors shape individual dispositions, which may have a very strong impact on one's intention to carry out measures. Zhu et al. (2020) demonstrated a significant relationship between user preference and intention within next-item recommendation settings: what is shown is that user behaviour and preferences do form holistic representations of a user, which in turn enable more relevant recommendations to be made. This means that knowing individual preference is crucial for the making of accurate forecasts and influencing intentions within different contexts.

Moreover, Gómez-Rico et al. (2023) reveal that brand choice has a significant impact on the willingness to visit vineyards. The outcome of their research indicated that a stronger brand preference signifies acquiring higher interest in visiting, revisiting, and even recommending the winery. This proves the functions of preference in making choices about travel or places people visit. Personal values and preference substantially affect travel choices, which Pitts and Woodside (1986) proved. Their findings suggested that tourists' preferences for specific destinations influence their intention to visit such places. Another study by Lee et al (2021), showed that the preference of visitors towards the photography policy of tourist spots influences their revisit intentions. Precisely, those tourists who have taken photos before are less willing to go back to museums with a no-photography rule. These studies all underline the high influence of preferences on visit intentions, therefore underlining the need for more studies to be done to clarify this issue in the domain of tourism and destination marketing.

The figure below represents this conceptual model and the inter-relationships of the factors in influencing the intention to visit a tourist destination. In this framework, destination publicity was proposed to positively influence destination awareness, destination image, and destination preference. Destination awareness is the background information, and the measure of familiarity prospective tourists have toward a destination and that influences visit intention positively. Destination image is the perception and the mental image that the tourists create of the destination, formed from information and experiences, and that influences visit intention positively. Destination preference is an extent to which tourists will prefer one destination more than others, and this preference positively affects their visit intention. The overall framework suggests that effective publicity can enhance awareness, image, and preference for a destination, thus increasing tourists' intentions to visit. The proposed hypotheses (H1 to H6) outline the causal relationships among these variables.

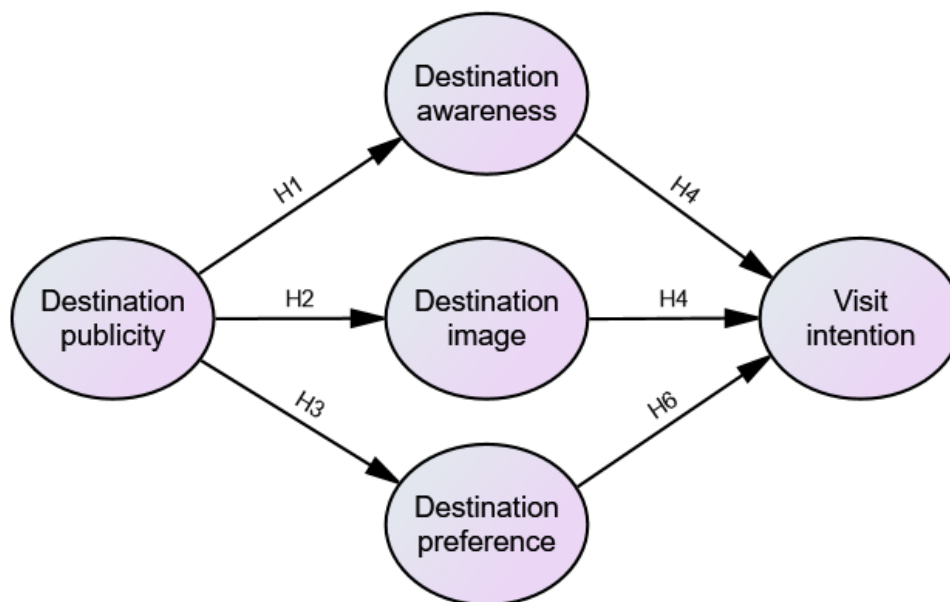


Figure 1.
Theoretical framework.

2. Methods

The variables in this study were assessed using indicators that have been modified from existing research to assure the accuracy and credibility of the measurements. As such, destination publicity was measured using metrics derived from the study of Kim and Lee (2018). Destination awareness was evaluated based on the research conducted by Tsaor et al. (2016). While destination image was analysed using the framework proposed by Hosany et al. (2007). Destination preference was measured based on the results of Mao and Zhang (2014). Finally, visit intention was operationalised based on Su et al. (2023) and Kim et al. (2019). Each of these indications was measured using a 6-point Likert-type scale with endpoints 1 (strongly disagree) and 6 (strongly agree). It has allowed the respondents to express agreement with each statement.

3. Data Analysis Methods

The steps of the study were very neatly and properly followed to ensure that the outcome was accurate and consistent. First, an Exploratory Factor Analysis was done at great length so that indicators could be validated with the help of SPSS version 29. A rigorous criterion was used wherein if the factor loading was 0.4 or higher, then only would the validity of an indicator be accepted. This followed by an extensive checking of reliability using Cronbach's alpha. A construct with an alpha score of 0.7 or above was considered reliable. At the third stage, the AVE was checked with the minimum acceptable average variance extracted set at 0.5. Finally, hypothesis testing using strong SEM with AMOS version 29, and a hypothesis was accepted if the critical ratio exceeded 1.96.

Table 1: Goodness of Fit Statistics for EFA and SEM To be good, the EFA and SEM must meet the appropriate requirements as shown in Table 1 above. These requirements, taken into consideration by calculable scholars in this field, are meant to ascertain that the models used in analysis are valid and reliable. According to Schermelleh-Engel et al. (2003), a probability value, p, has to range from between 0.05 to 1.00. According to Tabachnick et al. (2007), the Chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio recommended ranges from 0 to 2.00, and later Hu and Bentler (1995) explained that Comparative Fit

Index should range from 0.95 to 1.00. However, Browne and Cudeck (1992) explained that Root Mean Square Error of Approximation ranges from 0 to 0.05. Such stringent requirements set a very firm framework for checking assumptions that are made in this study.

Table 1.
The criteria for a fitted model.

Criteria	Rule of thumb	Resources
Probability	$0.05 < p < 1.00$	Schermelleh-Engel et al. (2003)
CMIN/DF	$0 \leq \text{CMIN/DF} \leq 2$	Tabachnick et al. (2007)
CFI	$0.95 \leq \text{CFI} \leq 1.00$	Hu and Bentler (1995)
RMSEA	$0 \leq \text{RMSEA} \leq 0.06$	Hu and Bentler (1999)

4. Results and Discussions

According to the information available in Table 2, the greater proportion comprises males, with 70% (161 participants), while females account for only 30% with 69 participants out of a total of 230. The age bracket that dominates is the one of 21-25 years, which includes more than half of the total participants, at 47.4%, while the group including 26-29 years includes approximately 33.5%. Regarding education background, most participants have completed bachelor's degree level with 42.6%, followed by those from the secondary school level at 37.4%. Looking forward to the employment status, most of the respondents are currently employed, whereas only a small number out of them are now self-employed or retired. In marital status, more than half of the total of the respondents were single with 41.7% being married. This means; as far as the experience of visiting Bangka Island is concerned, most respondents, accounting for 73.0%, have never visited the island while 27.0% did so. The information that follows will, therefore, deal with the different demographic profiles from the participants, which can be instructive in the analysis and strategy development during the studies or surveys conducted.

Table 2.
Profile of participants.

Profile		Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	161	70.0
	Female	69	30.0
	Total	230	100.0
Group of age	>39	7	3.0
	17-20	13	5.7
	21-25	109	47.4
	26-29	77	33.5
	30-34	16	7.0
	35-39	8	3.5
Level of education has been completed	Less than high school	7	3.0
	Diploma	36	15.7
	Postgraduate	3	1.3
	Undergraduate	98	42.6
	High school	86	37.4
Occupational status	Employed	166	72.2
	Unemployed	43	18.7
	Self-employed	19	8.3
	Retired	2	0.9

Marital status	Unmarried	119	51.7
	Separated/Divorced	13	5.7
	Married	96	41.7
	Widowed	2	0.9
Experience visiting Bangka Island	No	168	73.0
	Yes	62	27.0

5. Data Validity, AVE, and Reliability Tests

As indicated in Table 3, the validity and reliability tests regarding destination publicity, awareness, preferences, image, and visit intention are all strong and reliable to Bangka Island. All indicators have factor loadings higher than the required 0.7, thus signifying its high level of validity. More specifically, destination publicity has large correlations with both indicators, where the factor loadings are equal to 0.868. AVE equals 0.754, indicating that there is a high level of convergence between the indicators. Lastly, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient resulted in 0.670, suggesting that there is a moderate reliability. Destination awareness measured an AVE of 0.606 with six variables, while its Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.869; this appears to demonstrate internal solid consistency at just above good levels. Destination preference had a lower average of AVE at 0.595 and still gives decent reliability at 0.771. Destination image is characterized by its very high validity, with an AVE of 0.734, and reliability, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.927, thus showing its paramount impact on the perceptions of the travellers. Lastly, visit intention has an AVE of 0.565 and a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.870; it is highly reliable and might be interpreted to mean that many travellers are willing to go to Bangka Island. These findings present the huge potential of Bangka Island as a tourism area, thus serving the purpose of the report and maintaining its readers' interest in discussing it. Results bring confirmation of the reliability and validity of the metrics used, thereby setting a solid base for further analysis and strategic planning in the promotion of Bangka Island as a tourist destination.

Table 3.
Results of data validity, AVE, and reliability tests.

	Variables and indicators	Factor loadings	Average variance extracted	Cronbach's alpha
	Destination publicity		0.754	0.670
Pu1	I often find news from the mass media about Bangka Island.	0.868		
Pu2	News from the mass media about Bangka Island is positive and profitable.	0.868		
	Destination awareness		0.606	0.869
Da3	I can recognize Bangka Island among other similar destinations.	0.828		
Da4	Several characteristics of Bangka Island came to mind quickly.	0.814		
Da5	I easily explained Bangka Island to a friend.	0.765		
Da2	I am aware of Bangka Island as a holiday destination.	0.764		
Da6	I feel familiar with the name Bangka Island	0.752		
Da1	I can imagine what Bangka Island looks like	0.744		
	Destination preferences		0.595	0.771

Df2	Bangka Island is more interesting than other national parks.	0.802		
Df4	I intend to visit destinations other than Bangka Island in the near future.	0.774		
Df1	Bangka Island would be my first choice compared to other national parks.	0.763		
Df3	I am more interested in visiting destinations other than Bangka Island	0.745		
	Destination Image		0.734	0.927
Di5	Bangka Island is sad/relaxing.	0.888		
Di3	Bangka Island is gloomy/exciting.	0.876		
Di4	Bangka Island is cool/friendly.	0.875		
Di6	Bangka Island is isolated/easily accessible.	0.844		
Di2	Bangka Island is boring/interesting.	0.829		
Di1	Bangka Island is not fun/enjoyable.	0.827		
	Visit intention		0.565	0.870
V4	I can tell my friends about how to travel to Bangka Island with confidence.	0.812		
V2	I'm collecting information about Bangka Island	0.797		
V3	I want to experience a trip to Bangka Island	0.779		
V6	I hope that I will visit Bangka Island in the future.	0.747		
V1	I am interested in visiting Bangka Island	0.730		
V7	I prefer visiting Bangka Island compared to other destinations.	0.717		
V5	I have extensive knowledge about traveling Bangka Island	0.673		

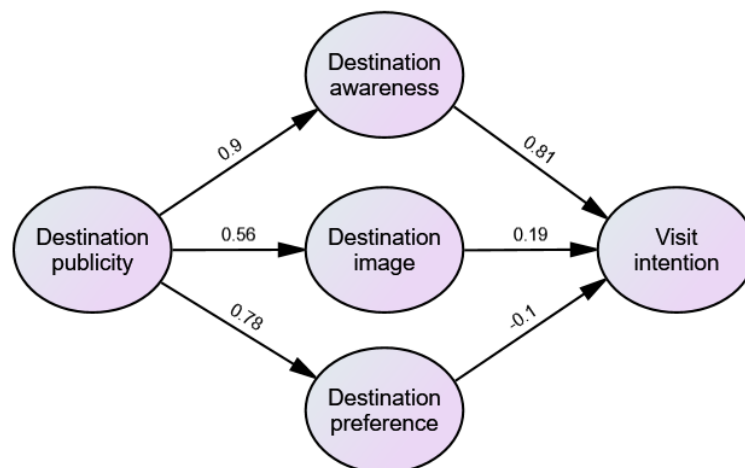


Figure 2.
Structural model of the hypotheses tests.

5.1. Hypotheses Tests

The structural model, as represented in Figure 2, hypothesizes and shows the links between destination publicity, destination awareness, destination image, destination preference, and visit intention. The model fit indices—the probability score of 0.083, the CMIN/DF score of 1.264, the CFI score of 0.989, and the RMSEA score of 0.034—show a reasonable fit. Noticeably, destination publicity has a strong influence on destination awareness, 0.9; on destination image, 0.56; and on destination choice, 0.78, thus showing the predictive power and statistical soundness of the model. In the same vein, visit intention is greatly influenced by destination awareness and image, with path coefficients of 0.81 and 0.19 respectively. Contrariwise, destination choice has a smaller although unfavourable influence of -0.1.

Table 4.
Results of the hypotheses tests.

Hypotheses	Paths	C.R.	P	Results
H1	Destination publicity > Destination awareness	10.129	***	Accepted
H2	Destination publicity > Destination image	7.117	***	Accepted
H3	Destination publicity > Destination preference	8.858	***	Accepted
H4	Destination awareness > Visit intention	6.408	***	Accepted
H4	Destination image > Visit intention	2.651	0.008	Accepted
H6	Destination preference > Visit intention	-0.910	0.363	Rejected

Results of the hypothesis testing, as indicated in Table 4, clearly and precisely give the links between various factors impacting visit intention. The findings of hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 support the fact that destination publicity significantly and positively influences destination awareness, destination image, and destination choice, with C.R. = 10.129, $P < 0.001$; C.R. = 7.117, $P < 0.001$; and C.R. = 8.858, $P < 0.001$, respectively. This is further validated by the results of hypotheses H4 and H5 that destination awareness, with a C.R. of 6.408 and a P-value of less than 0.001, and destination image, with a C.R. of 2.651 and a P-value of 0.008, both have a significant effect on visit intention. However, hypothesis H6, which predicted the significant effect of destination choice on visit intention, was not supported, as C.R. is -0.910 with a P-value of 0.363, indicating no significant impact. The findings reiterate the key roles of destination publicity, awareness, and image in shaping tourists' intentions to travel and at the same time confirm that destination preference does not have any direct significant effect.

6. Discussion

The results of this study support the first hypothesis that destination publicity greatly influences destination awareness, hence confirming past studies done by Kim and Lee (2018), Utomo et al. (2023), and Manafé and Adriana (2022), all indicating high influence in publicity to raise awareness. Such influence becomes notable, and it can be explained by well-conducted advertising activities that effectively share information about a website, increasing awareness and visibility of the place among potential visitors. Publicity activities, including media coverage, social media campaigns, as well as collaborations with influencers, help to create a consistent and compelling narrative of the place, raising its visibility and making a deep impression on the target audience. Increased awareness is quite necessary since it forms the foundation on which potential visitors will develop their perceptions and intend to visit.

The results of the study support the second hypothesis, which states that destination publicity influences destination image. This is consistent with prior research by Jiang et al. (2021), Ogunmuyiwa

(2022), and Manafe and Ardeana (2022), which all described the key role publicity plays in changing people's perceptions about a place. Efficient promotional strategies increase the visibility of the place and communicate advantageous qualities that help in a positive overall perception. Publicity is the process of using different media platforms with strategic messaging to create and strengthen certain perceptions about the cultural, social, and environmental attributes of a destination. Destinations perceived positively directly influence the attitude of potential tourists and considerably enhance the chances of consideration for travel plans. These findings thereby represent this existing connection with other research arguably in a more important way by highlighting the importance of strategic publicity in tourism marketing for creating and sustaining a strong, attractive destination image.

The third hypothesis states that destination publicity has a significant effect on destination preference, and in this view, previous research conducted by Ratnadewi et al. (2022) and Sumb (2021) reveals its substantial effect of publicity in changing consumer preferences. Effective destination marketing weaves awareness and an attractive narrative of destination attributes/benefits that set it unique. This not only increases the visibility of the location but also has a beneficial impact on the preferences of potential tourists by portraying the destination as pretty and coveted. Publicity campaigns, through many means of media and according to strategic narrative methods, could emphasise the attractions, culture, and experiences the place offers, thus developing high propensity within the prospective tourist. These findings are in relation to and in correlation with previous research, whereby strategic organization of publicity plays a pivotal role in deciding the tourists' destination.

These findings support the fourth hypothesis: destination awareness has a great influence on visit intention. The findings are partially consistent with those of previous studies conducted by Dabbous and Barakat (2020), Dedeoğlu et al. (2020), and Demir et al. (2021), which imply that the more awareness there is about a place, the greater the intention will be to travel to it. The more potential tourists are aware of a destination, the more likely they will show interest and intention to travel. Awareness with respect to different attractions, services, and peculiarities of a place is important for reducing ambiguity and adding value to the trip as perceived by customers. The potential visitors' tendency to choose a place largely depends on its familiarity and favourable opinion. In this respect, the findings are supported by previous studies, thus putting forward the need for website awareness through effective marketing strategies to enhance visit intentions adequately among tourists.

These findings support the fifth hypothesis, which states that destination image is a strong driver of visit intention. Hence, this finding is supported by studies of Liang and Lai (2023), Rodrigues et al. (2023), and Suban (2024), among others, who argue that destination image has a pivotal influence on the inclination to visit among tourists. A positive destination image about a place with regards to its attractions, facilities, safety, and experience comfortably contributes to the establishment of the destination's appeal. Further, the more positively perceived a destination is by potential tourists, the greater the intention will be to visit the place. This positive image will help decrease perceived risks and increase the expected satisfaction from the trip. The connection of the findings with previous research explains why the development and maintenance of a positive perception of the place through more effective marketing and public relations campaigns is necessary to attract more tourists and increase the likelihood of visitation among them.

The last hypothesis, stating that destination preference has the largest effect on visit intention, was not supported, thereby indicating that destination preference does not have any significant effect on visit intention within this study. This is contrary to other studies by Grüner and Krüger (2021), Zhu et al. (2020), and Gómez-Rico et al. (2023), which reported a strong relationship between preference and intention within different contexts. It could be due to the unique characteristics of Bangka Island, either as a tourism destination or from the side of the respondents of the questionnaire. The tourists may have preferences to visit Bangka Island, but what becomes their final choice is driven more by destination

awareness and image factors. Moreover, external factors can have more influence on choice than personal choice itself; examples include marketing efforts, accessibility, and quality of the travel experience. Future studies should, therefore, examine the complex interaction of multiple factors influencing visit intention and analyse different contexts to increase the present understanding of why destination preference does not always relate clearly with visit intention.

7. Conclusion

The study was aimed at analysing the determinants of tourists' intention to visit Bangka Island in Indonesia, looking at predictors such as destination publicity, destination awareness, destination image, and destination preference. All the proposed hypotheses were supported except for the sixth hypothesis. In other words, publicity about a certain place significantly influenced the knowledge, perception, and preference level towards a certain place. Moreover, destination awareness and destination image perception both had significant positive effects on intention to travel. However, the hypothesis that a preference for a specific destination directly influences the intention to visit remains unsupported. It will also emphasize how efficient destination publicity could increase tourists' awareness, perception, and preference—these being what might have great influence on the intention of visitors to come to the island.

This research fills a gap in the relevant tourism literature, assessing factors that affect tourists' intentions to visit, with specific focus on island tourism. It looks at how indicators of destination publicity, destination awareness, destination image, and destination desire interact to influence visitor behaviour and throws novel insights on this relationship. The findings underline that destination advertising does play an influential role in destination awareness, perception, and preference—all variables very influential in the process of tourists' decision-making. Moreover, the research also establishes a significant link between destination awareness and visit intention, as well as destination image and visit intention. How exactly preferences translate into real travel decisions needs further scholarly investigation considering this counterintuitive finding that destination preference does not have a positive direct influence on visit intention.

Managerially, the findings bring about real-life practical implications for tourism marketers and destination managers, especially those involved in the marketing of an island getaway like Bangka Island. More importantly, the deep influence of destination publicity on awareness, perception, and choice underscores the importance of well-planned publicity campaigns. Location management should therefore put some resources into mounting massive publicity campaigns through various media to improve the significance of and attraction to a location. Indeed, it is important to ensure a strong and positive perception of the destination, since it has direct implications for tourists' decisions to visit. This may be achieved by highlighting unique attributes and positive experiences associated with the destination. It simply means that, according to the study, destination choice by itself cannot lead directly to visit intention. The mediating effects of awareness and image, however, remain significant in their role of translating preferences into actual visits. Therefore, managers should prioritize these intermediary aspects to convert preferences into tangible visits.

Though providing insights, its limitations are necessary. First, this study is conducted in a specific setting—Bangka Island, Indonesia—and hence may have limited generalisation power to other island destinations or different categories of tourist attractions. Bangka Island has several unique cultural, environmental, and socio-economic features that may influence the relationships between predictors and intention to travel in ways which would not apply elsewhere. Moreover, this study only used self-reported data, including biases such as social desirability or recall bias. Moreover, the cross-sectional study form does allow for the examination of correlations between variables at a specific moment; however, it is a little difficult to indicate directly causality.

Future research may take on a more stringent longitudinal approach to clarify the linkages among destination publicity, awareness, image, preference, and travel intention for a longer time period. To improve generalizability of findings and to deeply understand the factors influencing tourist intentions, research scope needs to be expanded into various island destinations or varieties of tourist attractions. This can be supplemented with qualitative methods, either in-depth interviews or focus groups, to give voice to travellers' opinions and factors that influence their decisions. Further research may be conducted on other moderators and factors that could influence or moderate the relationships in this study, such as previous experience, social influence, or personal values of tourists. This will add to the overall understanding of the drivers behind visit intentions. Especially relevant for this research, hence, are two such goals: SDG 8, Decent Work and Economic Growth; and SDG 12, about Responsible Consumption and Production.

As such, it has been estimated to be one of the most vital factors accounting for economic growth, especially so in island destinations like Bangka Island. Therefore, this study contributes towards understanding and enriching those elements about driving tourists' intentions of travelling that offer more jobs and subsequently stronger local economies and, ultimately, sustainable economic growth. Effective destination marketing and enhanced destination awareness are required to attract more tourists, accompanied by an enhanced destination image. This would, in turn, provide great opportunities for fine jobs at the local level and enable local economic growth. Another important aspect is responsible tourism promotion so that sustainability of resources can be ensured while avoiding undesirable impacts in communities and environments in the surroundings. Results of the study indicate that effective management in traveller expectations and perceptions can be achieved through effective marketing channels and accurate representations of travel destinations. Encouraging tourists to make responsible consumption choices and bolstering the long-term sustainability of tourism destinations, this alignment with SDG 12 helps guarantee that tourism development promotes the sustainable use of natural and cultural resources.

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