

Understanding Pilgrimage Tourist Satisfaction: Determinants, Revisit Intention, and Word of Mouth in Java Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study examines the determinants of pilgrimage tourist satisfaction and analyzes its implications for revisit intention and Word-of-Mouth (WoM). Specifically, it explores the roles of religiosity, place attachment, destination image, emotional experience, and worldly desires in shaping satisfaction within pilgrimage tourism destinations.

Design/Methodology: A quantitative approach was employed using a cross-sectional survey design. Data were collected through a questionnaire survey conducted from 240 pilgrims visiting major Wali Songo pilgrimage destinations in Java, Indonesia. The proposed relationships among variables were tested using variance-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS).

Findings: The results show that destination image and worldly desires have a positive and significant effect on tourist satisfaction. In contrast, religiosity, place attachment, and emotional experience do not significantly influence satisfaction. Tourist satisfaction positively affects revisit intention but does not directly influence WoM. Revisit intention, however, demonstrates a positive effect on Word of Mouth (WoM).

Practical Implications: These findings suggest that pilgrimage destination managers should focus on strengthening destination image and addressing visitors' experiential and personal motivations to enhance satisfaction and encourage repeat visits. Strategies that emphasize revisit intention may be more effective in generating positive WoM than relying solely on satisfaction-based recommendations.

Originality/Value: This study contributes to pilgrimage tourism literature by positioning worldly desires as a key determinant of tourist satisfaction, offering a more comprehensive understanding of pilgrim motivation beyond purely spiritual dimensions. The results provide empirical insights for developing experience-oriented and sustainable pilgrimage tourism management strategies.

Keywords: Pilgrimage Tourism, Tourist Satisfaction, Revisit Intention, Word Of Mouth, Worldly Desires

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A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has great potential in the development of land and sea tourism which is supported by the richness and diversity of tourism resources. The development of national tourism destinations is carried out in stages until five super priority destinations are determined, namely Lake Toba, Mandalika, Labuan Bajo, Likupang, and Borobudur, which are considered to have high attractiveness and competitiveness. The development of these destinations considers tourist attractions, tourist and public facilities, accessibility, and community involvement in a sustainable manner. However, the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy 2020–2024 shows that the competitiveness of Indonesia's tourism products is still not optimal, especially in terms of attraction, facilities, and accessibility. Therefore, it is necessary to differentiate tourism products based on values and uniqueness to

increase the length of stay, reach new markets, and maintain environmental sustainability, culture, and integration with local communities.

One form of diversification of tourism products that has unique cultural, historical, and spiritual values is pilgrimage tourism. Pilgrimage activities that were originally religious rituals have developed into part of tourism activities, and are formally recognized as tourist attractions through Permenparekraf Number 18 of 2016 concerning Tourism Business Registration. Pilgrimage tourism has significant economic potential through the creation of business opportunities, jobs, and creative economic activities for local communities, such as the provision of accommodation, culinary, souvenirs, and other supporting services. A number of studies show that pilgrimage tourism has a real social and economic impact on the surrounding community (Khotijah & Rahmah, 2024; Rohanda et al., 2024). In line with the concept of "something to see, something to do, and something to buy", the success of the development of tourist destinations is highly determined by the experience felt by tourists.

Pilgrimage tourism is closely related to religious practices and beliefs combined with local traditions and culture, so that it becomes part of the life needs of people across social classes based on spiritual awareness. The practice of pilgrimage is generally carried out individually or in groups to places that are considered sacred and historic with the aim of obtaining blessings, peace, and happiness. In Indonesia, the pilgrimage of Wali Songo on the island of Java is a major destination for pilgrimage tourism, not only because of its spiritual value, but also because of its role as a local cultural identity that continues to develop in the modern context (Mubasyaroh et al., 2024; Ramadhan et al., 2025). In fact, Wali Songo has the potential to be developed as an international pilgrimage route due to its historical value and adequate infrastructure support (Fournié, 2019). In addition, local pilgrimage destinations such as Pamijahan in Tasikmalaya with the tomb of Sheikh Abdul Muhyi and Safarwadi Cave also have a strong spiritual attraction and are visited by pilgrims from various regions.

However, the competitiveness of pilgrimage tourism is still relatively low compared to natural and cultural tourism. The concept of pilgrimage tourism is generally still perceived as limited to the implementation of religious rituals, it is not fully understood as a tourist experience that is able to create birth and mind satisfaction, memorable emotional experiences, and trigger the desire to revisit and positive recommendations. In fact, visitor satisfaction is a key factor that affects revisit intention and Word of Mouth (WoM).

Various pilgrimage tourism studies in Indonesia have examined the motivation, spiritual meaning, cultural value, and economic impact of pilgrimage, such as the motivation of blessings and prayers (Indrawati et al., 2018), the role of images and positive information on interest in revisiting (Ratnawati, 2013), the motives of tradition and blessings (Muliadi et al., 2020), multidimensional value transfer and economic value (Fauzan et al., 2022), as well as the role of attitudes and subjective norms in pilgrimage intentions. However, the study has not comprehensively explained the factors that shape pilgrim satisfaction and how this satisfaction drives revisit intention and WoM.

Tourism literature shows that tourist satisfaction is the main indicator of destination success and determinant of revisit intention (Abror et al., 2021; Chen & Chen, 2010; Chiu et al., 2016; Correia et al., 2013; Hadi et al., 2020; Hakimi et al., 2018; Huete Alcocer & López Ruiz, 2020; Mohd Noor et al., 2018; Prayag, 2009; Preko et al., 2020; Quynh et al., 2021; Wang & Hsu, 2010; Yuksel et al., 2010). However, the results of previous research have not consistently shown the determinants of satisfaction and revisit intention, especially in the

context of pilgrimage tourism (El-Mesawi, 2020; Hasan et al., 2019; Nguyen Viet et al., 2020; Pratminingsih, 2014; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Zhou et al., 2023). Satisfaction has also been shown to encourage positive WoM and intention to revisit (Abror et al., 2021; Abubakar & Mavondo, 2014; Pourfakhimi et al., 2020; Taheri et al., 2021; Tsao & Hsieh, 2012; Wang & Hsu, 2010).

A number of international studies highlight the role of religiosity, place attachment, destination image, and emotional experience in shaping travelers' satisfaction, revisit intention, and WoM (Abror et al., 2021; Agarwala et al., 2019; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martín, 2004; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Dandotiya & Aggarwal, 2023; El-Mesawi, 2020; Grappi & Montanari, 2011; Gross & Brown, 2008; Han & Jeong, 2013; King et al., 2015; Patwardhan et al., 2020; Prayag et al., 2017; Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Preko et al., 2020; Sharifi-Tehrani, 2023; Tsaour et al., 2019; Ullah, 2021; Yuksel et al., 2010; Yüksel & Yüksel, 2007). However, the variable worldly desires as a representation of pilgrims' intrinsic motivations is still very rarely studied in the context of pilgrimage tourism, although this concept is closely related to tourist satisfaction, expectations, and motivation (Correia et al., 2013; Dann, 1981; Gnoth, 1997; Indrawati et al., 2018; Pratminingsih, 2014; Reiss, 2004; Yoon & Uysal, 2005).

Based on these gaps, this study examines the determinants of pilgrimage tourist satisfaction and analyzes its implications for revisit intention and Word of Mouth (WoM) by integrating religiosity, place attachment, destination image, emotional experience, and worldly desires into a single empirical framework. This study highlights worldly desires as an intrinsic motivational factor that has rarely been examined in the context of pilgrimage tourism, offering a broader perspective on pilgrim satisfaction beyond purely spiritual dimensions. By focusing on major pilgrimage destinations in Java, Indonesia, this research is expected to contribute to the development of experience-oriented and sustainable pilgrimage tourism management, while also strengthening the empirical foundation of pilgrimage tourism studies in Indonesia. Empirically, the proposed relationships are tested using a quantitative approach and analyzed through Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS)

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Religiosity

Religiosity is a multidimensional concept that includes beliefs, worship practices, spiritual experiences, values, and individual behaviors in carrying out religious teachings (Glock & Rodney, 1966). In the context of spiritual tourism, religiosity is the main factor that shapes tourists' motivation and evaluation of destinations. Tourists with a high level of religiosity tend to judge the pilgrimage experience based on the suitability of spiritual values and the perceived religious atmosphere (Battour & Ismail, 2016). Research shows that religiosity has an effect on emotional attachment and perception of the sanctity of the place, thus reinforcing a sense of calm, spiritual meaning, and satisfaction of the visit (Bhandari et al., 2024).

Empirical studies support that the higher a person's religiosity, the greater the influence on tourist satisfaction and loyalty in spiritual destinations (Bhandari et al., 2024). Alam et al., (2025) It was also found that destination management that applies Islamic values increases the perception of social responsibility and visitor satisfaction. However, most previous studies have been conducted in the broader context of religious tourism, with limited attention to pilgrimage destinations that are closely tied to historical and cultural heritage, such as the Wali Songo sites. Therefore, this study seeks to re-examine the relationship between religiosity and tourist satisfaction within the context of pilgrimage tourism in Indonesia. Therefore, religiosity can be

seen as a psychological variable that strengthens the relationship between spiritual experience and positive evaluation of destination. Based on this, the hypothesis proposed is:

H1: Religiosity has a positive effect on Tourist Satisfaction.

2. Place Attachment

Place attachment is a person's emotional and psychological attachment to a place that is formed through experiences, symbolic meanings, and social relationships built in it (Williams & Vaske, 2003). In the context of pilgrimage tourism, this attachment often arises because destinations have deep spiritual, historical, and cultural values. Travelers who feel a personal connection to the holy place will find their visit more meaningful and emotionally valuable, thus increasing satisfaction with the experience (Kyle et al., 2003; Prayag et al., 2017). Place attachment also mediates the relationship between positive experiences and tourist satisfaction because it reinforces a sense of belonging and closeness to the destination (Tsai, 2016).

Previous research has shown that the stronger the emotional attachment of tourists to a destination, the higher the level of satisfaction felt (Ramkissoon et al., 2013). In the context of religious tourism, place attachment is formed through the repetition of visits, religious rituals, and the symbolic value of the place that fosters a sense of spirituality and psychological comfort (Fang & Ko, 2025; Shafaei & Mohamed, 2015). Tourists who have a strong connection to the pilgrimage site tend to rate their experience more authentic and satisfying than those who only visit functionally. However, most of these studies have been conducted in the context of general tourism destinations or heritage tourism. Studies that specifically examine the role of place attachment in shaping tourist satisfaction at pilgrimage destinations remain relatively limited. Therefore, this study seeks to re-examine this relationship within the context of Wali Songo pilgrimage tourism in Indonesia. Based on these findings, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2: Place attachment has a positive effect on Tourist Satisfaction.

3. Destination Image

Destination image describes tourists' perceptions, feelings, and assessments of a place as a whole, which is formed from a combination of cognitive aspects (knowledge and belief in destination attributes such as facilities, accessibility, cleanliness, and infrastructure) and affective (emotions, moods, and feelings towards the place) (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). These two dimensions interact with each other in forming a comprehensive perception of the attractiveness of the destination. In the context of pilgrimage tourism, the image of the destination includes not only physical elements such as comfort and ease of access, but also the symbolic and spiritual meaning inherent in the holy place (Wijaya et al., 2025).

Previous research has shown that a positive image of destinations plays an important role in increasing tourist satisfaction because it affects the expectations and perception of the experience (Stylidis et al., 2017). A strong and authentic image of the destination fosters a sense of trust, emotional attachment, and a deep impression that strengthens the traveler's experience. In the context of spiritual tourism, images that reflect religious values, cleanliness, and sacred atmosphere contribute to increased satisfaction and return intent (Hasan et al., 2019; Nguyen-Viet et al., 2025). However, most previous studies have focused on general tourism destinations or religious tourism in a broad sense. Research that specifically examines the role of destination image in shaping tourist satisfaction in pilgrimage tourism remains limited. Therefore, this study re-examines this relationship in the context of Wali Songo pilgrimage destinations in Indonesia. Therefore, the hypothesis proposed is:

H3 : Destination image affects tourist satisfaction

4. Emotional experience

Emotional experience includes the affective reactions of tourists while interacting with the destination, including feelings of admiration, emotion, happiness, and inner peace that arise from the tourist experience (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010). In the context of pilgrimage tourism, this emotional dimension has a central role because spiritual experiences often evoke deep inner resonances, creating a sense of religious closeness and personal meaning. Travelers who experience positive emotions such as admiration, gratitude, and peace during the pilgrimage tend to find the experience more satisfying and meaningful than purely functional experiences (Prayag et al., 2017).

Empirical research shows that emotional experience has a direct effect on tourist satisfaction because positive emotions strengthen the perception of values and memories of the destination (Kim et al., 2012). In the context of museums and cultural sites, Ding et al., (2025) found that cognitive and emotional experiences significantly mediated the relationship between visitor engagement and repeat intent. Thus, it can be assumed that the more intense the emotional experience of tourists during the pilgrimage whether in the form of solemnity, emotion, or spiritual inspiration the higher the level of satisfaction they feel with the destination. However, most previous studies have examined emotional experience in the context of cultural tourism or recreational destinations, rather than specifically within pilgrimage tourism that is closely associated with spiritual dimensions. Therefore, this study seeks to extend the existing literature by examining the influence of emotional experience on tourist satisfaction in the context of Wali Songo pilgrimage destinations in Indonesia.

H4: Emotional experience has a positive effect on Tourist Satisfaction.

5. Worldly Desires

The concept of *worldly desires* in the context of pilgrimage tourism refers to worldly desires that drive a person to carry out pilgrimage activities, in addition to spiritual motivation. According to Reiss, (2004), individuals tend to pay attention to stimuli that are relevant to the fulfillment of their desires (intrinsic motivation). Thus, *worldly desires* can be understood as part of the intrinsic motivation that drives a person to go on a spiritual journey with the aim of fulfilling personal expectations, such as obtaining peace of mind, career success, smooth sustenance, or ease of matchmaking.

In the context of pilgrimage in Indonesia, *worldly desires* are often manifested through the belief that certain places have special blessing value. Research shows that pilgrims often visit the tombs of religious leaders in the hope of getting worldly blessings, such as smooth business, increased income, success in exams, or ease in family affairs. This means that the motivation for pilgrimage is not only transcendental, but also touches the dimension of worldly needs that are felt urgent by individuals.

Worldly desires are also in line with the theoretical framework of traveler motivation (Friesen & Miller, 1982; Yoon & Uysal, 2005) who mentioned that travel is often triggered by a combination of *push-pull factors*, including the psychological need to escape from the pressures of life, obtain positive emotional experiences, or achieve certain expectations that are considered to be realized through religious rituals. In this case, *worldly desires* are an important variable that affects the level of emotional involvement of pilgrims, which then has an impact on satisfaction, *revisit intention*, and information dissemination through *Word of Mouth* (WoM). However, previous studies on pilgrimage motivation have largely emphasized spiritual

and religiosity dimensions, while the role of worldly desires as an intrinsic motivation related to worldly expectations has received relatively limited empirical attention. Therefore, this study incorporates worldly desires as a variable to examine its influence on tourist satisfaction in the context of pilgrimage tourism in Indonesia.

H5: Worldly Desires have a positive effect on Tourist Satisfaction.

6. Revisit Intention as Post-Visit Behavior

Revisit intention refers to the intention of tourists to revisit the same destination in the future (Chen & Tsai, 2007). This intention is an important indicator of tourist loyalty and sustainability of tourism destinations (Zulfiqar et al., 2024). Tourist satisfaction is a key factor in forming the intention to revisit, because satisfaction reflects the results of emotional and cognitive evaluation of the tourist experience that has been experienced (Baghirov et al., 2025). When the experience exceeds expectations, positive feelings arise that encourage the intention to repeat the visit (Hasan et al., 2019). Research Nguyen-Viet et al., (2025) affirms that satisfaction in spiritual destinations not only serves as the end result of the experience, but also as a mediator that strengthens the relationship between destination image, emotional attachment, and revisit intentions.

In the context of pilgrimage tourism, revisit intention can be motivated by spiritual factors (the desire to deepen religious experiences), social (togetherness of the pilgrimage community), or psychological factors (the search for inner peace). When a destination is able to provide spiritual and emotional satisfaction, travelers will show a strong tendency to return, both as a form of worship and a reflective experience (Kumar & Adhikari, 2025). Thus, the higher the level of satisfaction travelers have with the pilgrimage experience, the more likely they are to make a repeat visit. However, in the context of pilgrimage tourism, the decision to revisit is not always driven solely by tourist satisfaction, but is also closely related to spiritual dimensions, religious rituals, and the reflective experiences perceived by visitors. Therefore, this study re-examines how tourist satisfaction influences revisit intention within the context of Wali Songo pilgrimage destinations in Indonesia.

H6: Tourist Satisfaction has a positive effect on Revisit Intention.

7. Word of Mouth

Word of Mouth (WoM) is one of the most influential forms of interpersonal communication in tourism marketing, especially in intangible and experience-based service products (Taheri et al., 2021). WoM is defined as informal communication between individuals regarding their experience, satisfaction, and perception of a product or destination (Litvin et al., 2008). In the context of modern tourism, WoM not only takes place directly (offline WoM), but also through digital media (electronic Word of Mouth or e-WoM), which can expand the reach of influence of tourists on other potential visitors (Liu et al., 2021). The cognitive perspective emphasizes on the tourist's rational evaluation of the quality of the destination, while the emotional and interactive perspective highlights the involvement of positive feelings as well as the social drive to share a satisfying experience (Prayag et al., 2017).

Tourist satisfaction has been shown to be a major predictor in the formation of word of mouth intentions and behaviors (Battour et al., 2025). Travelers who are satisfied with the pilgrimage experience—both in terms of spirituality, service, and facilities—tend to recommend destinations to others as a form of emotional appreciation and social legitimacy. In addition, the research Nguyen-Viet et al., (2025) shows that revisiting intentions also have a significant influence on WoM, as returning travelers generally show high loyalty and a tendency

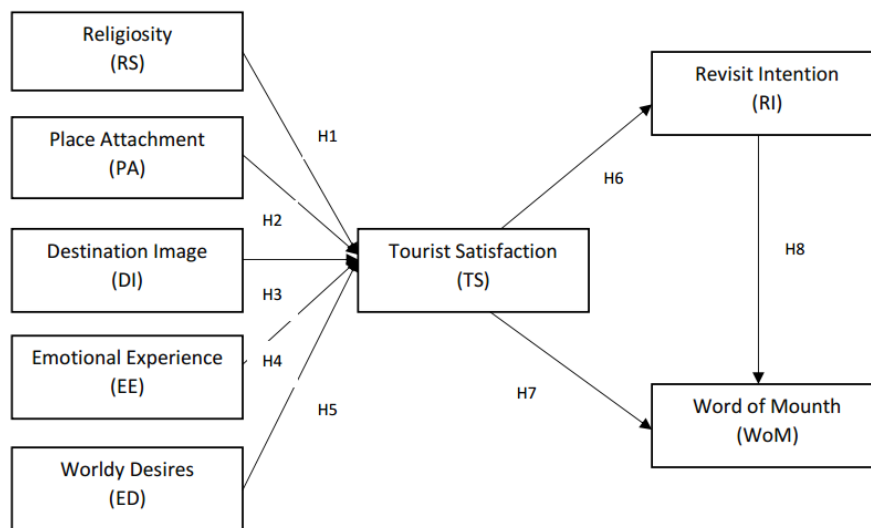
to encourage others to visit the same place. Although the relationships among tourist satisfaction, revisit intention, and Word of Mouth (WoM) have been widely discussed in tourism literature, studies that examine these three variables simultaneously in the context of pilgrimage tourism remain limited. Therefore, this study investigates how tourist satisfaction and revisit intention contribute to the spread of WoM in Wali Songo pilgrimage destinations in Indonesia. Thus, tourist satisfaction and revisit intention are two key factors that encourage positive communication between tourists and strengthen the reputation of the destination organically.

H7: Tourist satisfaction has a positive effect on Word of Mouth (WoM).

H8: Revisit intention has a positive effect on Word of Mouth (WoM).

Since motivation is considered an early driving force behind behavior, it is likely that tourist motivation will influence tourists' attitudes toward revisiting and revisiting intentions. If, as is widely claimed, tourism motivation is multidimensional, then each dimension of motivation may have a different effect on attitudes towards re-evaluation and re-evaluation intentions. Gnoth (1997) discusses the relationship between motivation and attitude in a conceptual study and obtains a conceptual framework in which attitudes are determined by tourism motivation (Gnoth, 1997). Thus, a deeper understanding of the different dimensions of tourist motivation is essential to explain how these motivations shape tourists' attitudes and their intention to revisit. Therefore, this study considers these motivational dimensions in explaining post-visit tourist behavior within the context of pilgrimage tourism.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Pilgrimage Tourism



Source: Processed data, 2025

C. METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design to test the causal relationships between latent constructs in the research model. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire survey that was distributed to tourists who had experience visiting pilgrimage tourism destinations in Indonesia. The research loci cover several main pilgrimage destinations on the island of Java, namely Pamijahan (Tasikmalaya) and the Sunan Gunung Jati Tomb (Cirebon) in West Java; Sunan Muria's Tomb and Sunan Kudus Tomb in Central Java; and the Tomb of Sheikh Maulana Malik Ibrahim in Gresik, East Java.

The study population was pilgrim tourists with the respondent criteria of at least 18 years old and had visited one of the studied destinations. The sampling technique used purposive sampling, with consideration of the suitability of the respondents' experience for the purpose of the study. The minimum number of samples is determined based on the number of structural paths in the research model, which is five paths, so that at least 50 observations are required (Yeni et al., 2023). Data were collected through the distribution of structured questionnaires to tourists who were visiting or had previously visited the pilgrimage destinations included in this study. This study involved 240 respondents, so as to meet the sufficiency of the sample for variance-based structural model analysis.

The research instrument was in the form of a closed questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The measurement items are structured to represent the latent constructs of the research. The questionnaire consists of three main parts, namely an explanation of the purpose of the survey, a measurement item of the research construct, and demographic information of the respondents. Data analysis was carried out through two stages, namely the evaluation of the measurement model to assess the reliability and validity of the construct, and the evaluation of the structural model to test the relationship between the construct and the research hypothesis. The operational variables in this study can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. Variable Operations

Variabel	Indicator	Source
Religiosity (RS)	RS1	I feel that religious values influence my decision in choosing tourist destinations.
	RS2	I try to carry out tourism activities in accordance with my religious teachings and principles.
	RS3	Visiting pilgrimage sites makes me feel closer to God and increases my faith.
	RS4	I went on a pilgrimage to obtain spiritual benefits.
Place Attachment (PA)	PA1	I feel a strong emotional bond with the pilgrimage destinations I visit.
	PA2	I feel that this place of pilgrimage is an important part of my personal spiritual experience.
	PA3	I would feel lost if I couldn't revisit this pilgrimage site in the future.
	PA4	I feel like I have positive and touching memories from the pilgrimage tour.
Destination Image (DI)	DI1	Pilgrimage tourism destinations have interesting natural attractions.
	DI2	Pilgrimage tourism destinations are a pleasant place to visit.
	DI3	Pilgrimage tourism destinations have their own uniqueness.
	DI4	Pilgrimage tourism destinations have a good reputation.
Emotional Experience (EE)	EE1	I am enthusiastic when I make a pilgrimage tour.
	EE2	I feel that a pilgrimage tour is an emotionally touching experience.
	EE3	I feel that I get something meaningful when I make a pilgrimage tour.
	EE4	I feel an emotional attachment to the pilgrimage

Variabel	Indicator	Source
	tourist attraction	
Worldly Desires (WD)	WD1	I do pilgrimage to get worldly pleasures.
	WD2	I did a pilgrimage tour with the aim of getting materials.
	WD3	I visited pilgrimage because of the social prestige.
	WD4	I visited the pilgrimage to ask for a position/mate/intention other than worship.
Tourist Satisfaction (TS)	TS1	I am satisfied with the experience of visiting pilgrimage tours.
	TS2	I feel that the visit to the pilgrimage tour is in line with my expectations
	TS3	I am satisfied with the service provided on the pilgrimage tour.
	TS4	I am satisfied with the facilities available on the pilgrimage tour.
Revisit Intention (RI)	RI1	I intend to visit another pilgrimage tour.
	RI2	I really want to visit the pilgrimage tour again.
	RI3	I will visit the pilgrimage tour again in the near future.
	RI4	I want to repeat my experience at the pilgrimage tourist spot.
Word of Mouth (WoM)	WM1	I will say positive things about walisongo pilgrimage tours to others.
	WM2	I would recommend a walisongo pilgrimage tour to someone who asks for my advice.
	WM3	I will encourage friends and family to visit the walisongo pilgrimage tour

Source: Processed data, 2025

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 2. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	108	45.0
	Female	132	55.0
Age	18–25 years	52	21.7
	26–35 years	74	30.8
	36–45 years	56	23.3
	46–55 years	38	15.8
	>55 years	20	8.4
Education Level	High School	58	24.2
	Diploma	36	15.0
	Bachelor	104	43.3
	Master	34	14.2
	Doctoral	8	3.3
Occupation	Student	48	20.0
	Government employee	44	18.3
	Private employee	72	30.0
	Entrepreneur	46	19.2
	Others	30	12.5
	First-time visitor	92	38.3

Visit Experience	Repeat visitor	148	61.7
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Source: Processed data, 2025

Table 2 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents involved in this study. Of the 240 respondents, 55% were female and 45% were male. This composition indicates that pilgrimage tourism in this study was slightly dominated by female visitors, although overall participation remained relatively balanced between the two gender groups. This pattern suggests that pilgrimage tourism is not solely associated with religious practices but also represents a form of travel experience that attracts diverse groups of individuals seeking spiritual meaning as well as cultural experiences (Battour & Ismail, 2016).

In terms of age distribution, the majority of respondents were between 26 and 35 years old (30.8%), followed by those aged 36–45 years (23.3%). These findings indicate that pilgrimage tourism is not exclusively dominated by older age groups, as often associated with traditional religious activities, but is increasingly attracting individuals within productive age groups. This trend reflects a shift in the pattern of religious tourism, where younger and middle-aged visitors increasingly view pilgrimage as part of a travel experience that combines spirituality, self-reflection, and the search for personal meaning (Poria et al., 2003).

Regarding educational background, most respondents held a bachelor's degree (43.3%). This relatively high level of educational attainment suggests that pilgrimage tourists in this study may possess a greater capacity to interpret the religious values, historical narratives, and symbolic meanings associated with pilgrimage destinations. Previous tourism literature indicates that educational background can influence how tourists evaluate their travel experiences and shape their perceptions of satisfaction with the destinations they visit (Prayag et al., 2017).

Based on occupation, the largest group of respondents consisted of private-sector employees (30%), followed by students (20%) and entrepreneurs (19.2%). This distribution indicates that pilgrimage tourism in Indonesia attracts individuals from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. In many cases, pilgrimage activities are not driven solely by religious devotion but are also associated with individuals' psychological needs for inner peace, reflection, and emotional experiences related to sacred places (Terzidou, 2010).

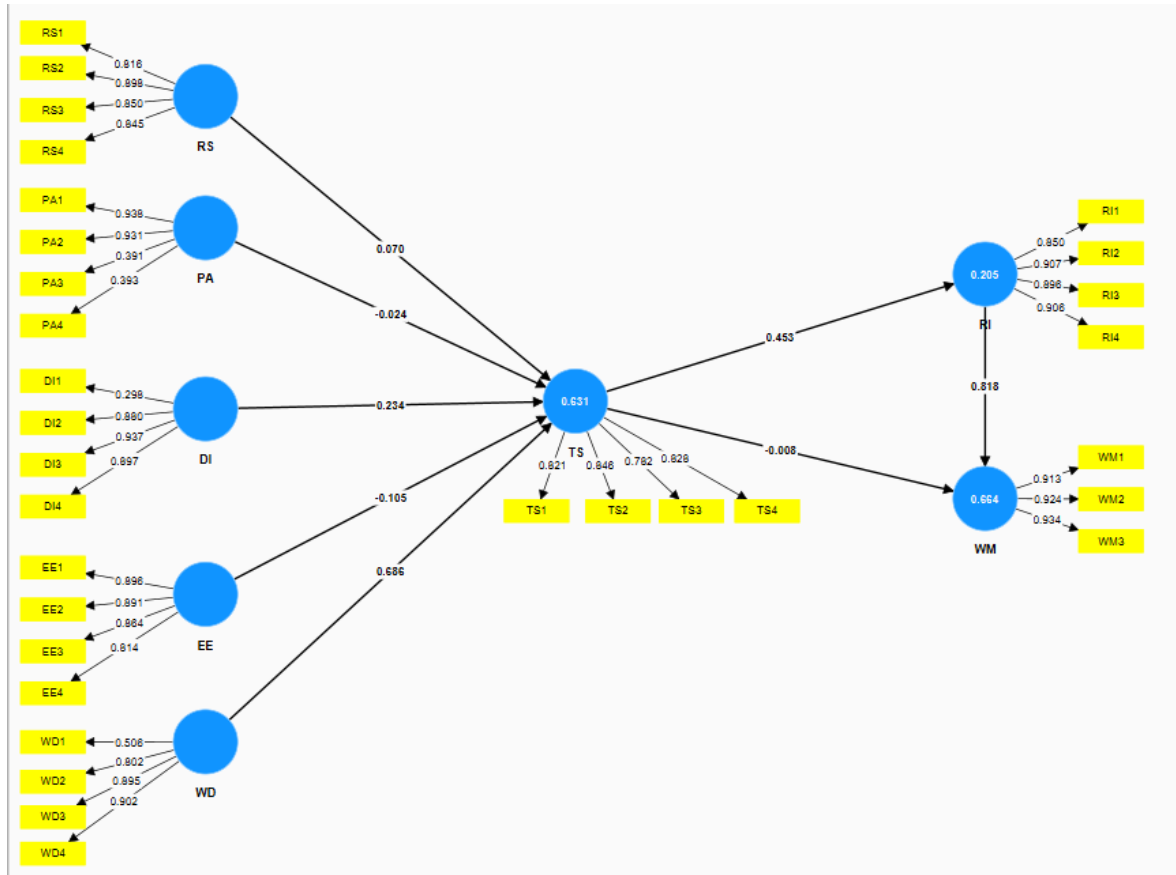
Furthermore, the majority of respondents were repeat visitors (61.7%), while 38.3% were first-time visitors. The predominance of repeat visitors suggests that pilgrimage destinations tend to foster strong emotional and spiritual connections among tourists. Meaningful spiritual experiences and high levels of satisfaction often encourage visitors to return to the same destination, reflecting a form of behavioral loyalty toward pilgrimage sites (Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Yoon & Uysal, 2005).

Overall, the respondent profile indicates that pilgrimage tourism in Java attracts visitors from diverse demographic backgrounds, with a notable presence of individuals in productive age groups and relatively high educational attainment. The high proportion of repeat visitors also suggests that pilgrimage destinations offer strong spiritual and emotional experiences that may reinforce tourist satisfaction and encourage post-visit behavioral intentions such as revisit intention and positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

Based on this respondent profile, the subsequent analysis focuses on evaluating the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model) using the SEM-PLS

approach to examine the relationships among the constructs proposed in the research model. Data processing through SEM-PLS shows the results that can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Path Coefficient Test Results



Source: Processed data, 2025

The results of the model estimation show that antecedent variables have a different influence on tourist satisfaction. The value of the determination coefficient (R^2) of 0.631 in the Tourist Satisfaction (TS) variable shows that the combination of religiosity (RS), *place attachment* (PA), *destination image* (DI), *emotional experience* (EE), and *worldly desires* (WD) is able to explain 63.1% of the variation in tourist *satisfaction* (TS). The R^2 value of 0.205 for the *Revisit Intention* (RI) variable indicates intermediate predictive ability, while the value of 0.664 for Word of Mouth (WOM) shows a very strong influence statistically.

Table 3. R-Square Value of Endogenous Variables

Variable endogenous	R ²	Category
Tourist Satisfaction (TS)	0.631	Very Powerful
Revisit Intention (RI)	0.205	Moderate
Word-of-Mouth (WOM)	0.664	Very Powerful

Source: Processed data, 2025

In addition to the value of the determination coefficient (R^2), the results of the data test through SEM-PLS show the results of the path coefficient (Hair et al., 2019) as follows:

Table 4. Path Coefficients

Relation	Coefficient	Remarks (Strong Influence)
RS → TS	0.070	Very weak
PA → TS	-0.024	Very weak
BY → TS	0.234	Moderate
EE → TS	-0.105	Very weak
WD → TS	0.686	Very Powerful
TS → RI	0.453	Strong
TS → WOM	-0.008	Very weak
RI → WOM	0.818	Very Powerful

Source: Processed data, 2025

In detail, the results of the strip test show that, worldly Desires (WD) has a very strong influence on Tourist Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.686$, significant), suggesting that personal motivations such as the search for meaning, fulfilled wishes, or pragmatic goals contribute to tourist satisfaction. These findings reinforce the argument that pilgrimage tourism is not only driven by spiritual motives, but also by individual psychological needs. Destination Image (DI) has proven to be one of the determinants that moderately (quite strongly) encourages tourist satisfaction, shown through the path coefficient with a positive value of $\beta = 0.234$. These findings confirm the important role of tourists' perceptions of destination attraction, cultural image, and quality of information presentation as cognitive factors that encourage positive evaluations of pilgrimage visits. This is consistent with the literature that states that the image of the destination is the initial foundation for the formation of tourist satisfaction and loyalty.

Religiosity (RS) refers to a value of $\beta = 0.070$ on tourist satisfaction. This variable has a very weak influence on tourist satisfaction. This can be caused by the characteristics of pilgrimage tourism that are not completely ritualistic, especially if the destination has a more dominant educational element or historical interpretation. The attachment of place and religious satisfaction may be more relevant in the context of ritual-oriented sacred pilgrimage, rather than in destinations that emphasize cultural or heritage narratives.

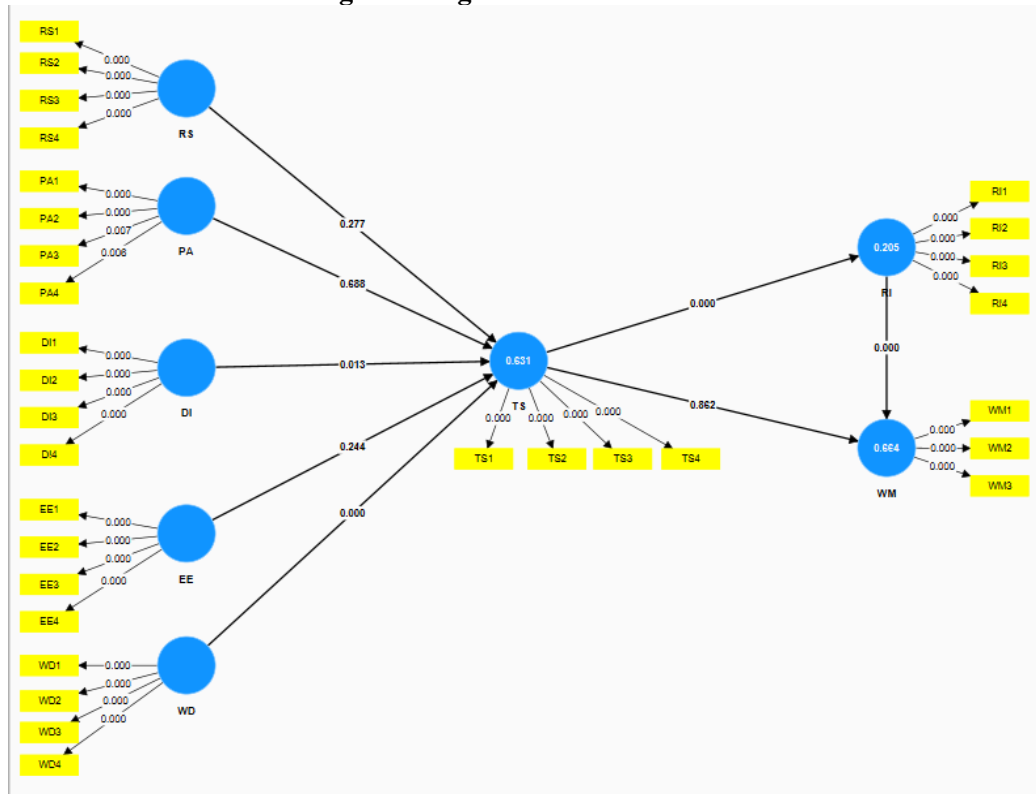
Emotional Experience (EE) had a very weak effect on tourist satisfaction ($\beta = 0.282$), confirming the theoretical relevance despite the statistical insignificance of affectively touching emotional experiences in creating tourism satisfaction. Place Attachment (PA) had a very weak effect on tourist satisfaction ($\beta = -0.024$). In pilgrimage, the place has "sacredness". But when destinations are managed as a tourist public space, there is a conflict between sacred and touristic perceptions. For people with strong attachments, changes in space due to tourism management can be considered to reduce sacredness, thereby lowering satisfaction. Furthermore, Emotional Experience (EE) also had a very weak effect on satisfaction ($\beta = -0.105$). Emotions that are too strong, even positive ones, can create an emotional overload, causing tourists to associate the visit not with "satisfaction" but with "drifting". In the theory of emotional psychology, this condition is called affective saturation, in which the intensity of feelings reduces the ability to comfortably or pleasantly evaluate experiences.

In addition, tourist satisfaction (TS) was shown to have a strong influence on Revisit Intention (RI) ($\beta = 0.453$), but tourist satisfaction (TS) showed a weak influence on Word of Mouth (WOM) ($\beta = -0.008$). The Revisit Intention variable had a very strong influence on WOM ($\beta = 0.818$), which means that when tourists are satisfied visiting pilgrimage tourist

attractions, tourists have high intention to revisit, and then recommend the pilgrimage tourist attractions to others.

The results of data testing through SEM-PLS also point to significance values, which are values that show whether a variable affects other variables, in this case the value of α used is 0.05. The results of the significance test can be seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Significance Test Results



Source: Processed data, 2025

Based on the results of the path analysis, the hypothesis in this study is as follows:

Table 5. Interpretation of Influence

Variable	Sig	Influence on TS	Hypothesis
RS → TS	0.277	Insignifikan	H1 rejected
PA → TS	0.688	Insignifikan	H2 rejected
DI → TS	0.013	Signifikan	H3 accepted
EE → TS	0.244	Insignifikan	H4 rejected
WD → TS	0.000	Signifikan	H5 accepted
TS → RI	0.000	Signifikan	H6 accepted
TS → WoM	0.862	Insignifikan	H7 rejected
RI → WoM	0.000	Signifikan	H8 accepted

Source: Processed data, 2025

Based on the analysis presented in Table 4, the results indicate that not all proposed hypotheses receive empirical support. Religiosity (RS), place attachment (PA), and emotional experience (EE) do not show a significant influence on tourist satisfaction (TS). In contrast, destination image (DI) and worldly desires (WD) are found to have a positive effect on tourist

satisfaction, suggesting that tourists' perceptions of the destination image as well as intrinsic motivations related to personal expectations play an important role in shaping satisfaction in pilgrimage tourism experiences.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that tourist satisfaction (TS) has a positive effect on revisit intention (RI), indicating that tourists who feel satisfied with their pilgrimage experience tend to have a stronger intention to revisit the destination in the future. However, tourist satisfaction does not have a direct influence on word of mouth (WoM). Instead, revisit intention (RI) shows a positive effect on WoM, suggesting that tourists who intend to revisit the destination are more likely to recommend the pilgrimage site to others.

The results of the study show that the satisfaction of pilgrim tourists is not only shaped by spiritual meaning alone, but also by how the destination is perceived functionally and the experience felt during the visit. These findings confirm that satisfaction in the context of pilgrimage tourism is the result of the interaction between religious, psychological, and destination perception dimensions.

1. The Role of Worldly Desires, Destination Image, and Religious Satisfaction in Tourist Satisfaction

The positive influence of worldly desires (WD) on satisfaction shows that intrinsic motivations such as the search for meaning in life, the fulfillment of curiosity, and personal psychological goals are important factors in shaping the evaluation of the travel experience. When these needs are met, travelers feel personal accomplishments that encourage the emergence of intrinsic satisfaction (Pearce & Lee, 2005). In the context of pilgrimage tourism, personal motives such as inner serenity, search for life answers, and symbolic experiences have been proven to contribute strongly to visitor satisfaction (Collins-Kreiner, 2010). These findings reinforce the argument that pilgrimage tourism is no longer entirely driven by purely spiritual motives, but has evolved into a hybrid form of tourism that combines a religious dimension with the need for experience and comfort.

Furthermore, destination image (DI) has also been shown to play an important role in shaping satisfaction. Destination imagery serves as an initial cognitive framework that shapes tourists' expectations of the quality, uniqueness, and attractiveness of the location (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martín, 2004). In pilgrimage tourism, the image of the destination includes not only the physical aspect, but also the perception of the sacredness, historical value, quality of interpretation, and religious atmosphere. When these elements are rated positively, travelers tend to give a better evaluation of the experience and feel higher satisfaction (Poria et al., 2003).

Meanwhile, religious satisfaction (RS) also makes a positive contribution to tourist satisfaction. The fulfillment of spiritual needs through ritual, prayer, sacred experiences, and feelings of inner peace reinforce a positive evaluation of the visit. Previous research has shown that religious satisfaction is an important predictor of tourism satisfaction, especially when the destination is able to facilitate space for reflection, religious value connection, and spiritual experiences that match visitors' expectations (Cohen, 1992; Vukonic, 1996). Thus, WD, DI, and RS jointly form an evaluation structure that complements each other in building the satisfaction of pilgrim tourists.

2. Tourist Satisfaction, Revisit Intention, and Word of Mouth

The results of the study also show that tourist satisfaction (TS) has a positive effect on revisit intention (RI). These findings are in line with a post-consumption behavioral model that places satisfaction as a major determinant of behavioral loyalty (Oliver, 1980). Satisfied

travelers are more likely to want to repeat positive experiences or deepen the meaning of previous visits. In the context of pilgrimage tourism, the characteristics of destinations that have sustainable spiritual value and emotional experiences that want to be repeated make the intention to visit again a form of loyalty relevant again (Collins-Kreiner, 2010).

Furthermore, revisit intention has been shown to have a strong positive influence on word of mouth (WOM). Travelers who have a strong intention to return usually show a higher level of trust and commitment to the destination. In the framework of destination loyalty, the intention to revisit often goes hand in hand with advocacy behavior because both are rooted in trust and attachment to the destination (Prayag et al., 2017). Thus, the Republic of Indonesia acts as a bridge between personal experience and the dissemination of social recommendations.

However, interesting findings emerged on the relationship between tourist satisfaction and WOM, which showed a negative relationship. Theoretically, this phenomenon can be explained through the perspective of self-presentation theory which states that the behavior of sharing experiences is not solely driven by satisfaction, but also by social motives and self-image (Goffman, 1959). In pilgrimage, experiences that are sacred, personal, and emotional are often considered too private to be shared openly, so satisfaction doesn't always translate into verbal recommendations.

In addition, the satisfaction–loyalty dissociation model also explains that evaluative satisfaction does not necessarily trigger social behavior (Oliver, 1980). In the context of pilgrimage, satisfaction is often born from deep spiritual reflection and intense emotions such as emotion, regret, or contemplation. Based on the theory of emotions, this condition can cause affective overload which actually decreases the tendency to share experiences verbally, even though the visit is still considered meaningful (Frijda, 1988; Collins-Kreiner, 2010).

3. The Role of Place Attachment and Emotional Experience on Satisfaction

In contrast to common expectations, place attachment (PA) and emotional experience (EE) show a negative relationship with satisfaction. Theoretically, the negative relationship between PA and TS can be explained through Expectation–Disconfirmation Theory. Tourists who have a high emotional attachment to sacred places often carry very high spiritual expectations. When the reality of the destination, for example due to commercialization or physical change—does not fully meet those expectations, then dissatisfaction is more likely to arise (Oliver, 1980; Kyle et al., 2005; Ram et al., 2016).

In the context of Indonesia, especially pilgrimage sites on the island of Java, many destinations have a dual function as sacred spaces and tourist attractions. Tourists with a high level of attachment to the sacredness of the location tend to be more sensitive to crowds, spatial changes, and mass tourism practices. This condition increases the potential tension between religious meaning and modern tourism management, which ultimately affects satisfaction evaluations.

Meanwhile, the negative influence of emotional experience on satisfaction shows that emotions in pilgrimage tourism are not always pleasant. Emotional experiences in pilgrimage often involve deep reflection, guilt, sadness, or heavy spiritual contemplation. Although these emotions reinforce spiritual meaning, they do not necessarily increase the satisfaction measured in the framework of tourism evaluation (Frijda, 1988; Collins-Kreiner, 2010). Thus, these results reflect the complexity of the pilgrimage experience that is at the intersection of the spiritual, emotional, and tourist dimensions.

4. Integration of Findings in the Framework of Theory of Planned Behavior

The findings of the research can be integrated within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). The variables of WD, DI, and RS play a role in shaping attitudes towards the tourism experience. WD represents personal motivation and psychological goals, DI forms a cognitive evaluation of the quality of the destination, while RS reflects the fulfillment of religious values. All three build a positive attitude that is reflected in tourist satisfaction.

Furthermore, satisfaction serves as a link between attitudes and intention to revisit, reflecting the readiness of the behavior in the future. The intention to visit again then encouraged the emergence of advocacy behavior in the form of WOM. Thus, the results show the consistency of the flow between beliefs, experiential evaluation, behavioral intentions, and recommended actions, as described in the SDG framework.

E. CONCLUSION

This study confirms that pilgrim tourist satisfaction in the context of pilgrimage tourism on the island of Java is multidimensional and cannot be explained solely by spiritual or emotional factors. The findings demonstrate that satisfaction is shaped by a combination of personal motivations, cognitive perceptions of destinations, and religious fulfillment, reflecting the complex nature of contemporary pilgrimage tourism.

The results indicate that worldly desires emerge as the strongest determinant of tourist satisfaction, highlighting that pilgrimage tourism is not only driven by transcendental motives, but also by intrinsic personal needs related to meaning, comfort, and psychological fulfillment. In addition, destination image plays a significant role in shaping satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of accessibility, facilities, cleanliness, service quality, and the overall reputation of pilgrimage destinations in forming positive visitor evaluations.

Conversely, religiosity, place attachment, and emotional experience do not show a direct positive influence on satisfaction. This finding suggests a shift in pilgrimage tourism from a purely sacred ritual space to a hybrid tourism space, where intense spiritual attachment and emotional depth do not always translate into evaluative satisfaction. In certain contexts, strong emotional involvement and attachment may even create tension between visitors' sacred expectations and the realities of destination management.

Furthermore, this study reveals that tourist satisfaction encourages revisit intention but does not directly stimulate Word of Mouth (WoM). Instead, revisit intention serves as the main driver of WoM, indicating that recommendation behavior in pilgrimage tourism is more strongly influenced by behavioral loyalty than by immediate satisfaction. This pattern reflects the phenomenon of private satisfaction–public silence, where spiritual and personal fulfillment tends to remain internalized rather than publicly communicated.

From a theoretical perspective, this research contributes to pilgrimage tourism literature by integrating the concept of worldly desires into the satisfaction and loyalty framework, providing a more comprehensive understanding of pilgrim behavior beyond purely spiritual dimensions. Practically, the findings imply that destination managers should not only focus on religious symbolism and emotional appeal, but also prioritize destination image quality, visitor comfort, and meaningful experiential elements, while preserving the sacred character of pilgrimage sites. This balanced approach is essential to strengthen visitor loyalty and support the long-term sustainability of pilgrimage tourism in Indonesia.

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