

From Intention to Actual Choice: An Extended TRA Model Using Structural Equation Modeling

Ho Dinh Phi¹, Hien Vo Thi Dieu^{2,*}

¹Board of Rectors, University of Phan Thiet, Lam Dong province, Vietnam

²Faculty of Economics, The transportation College, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

*Corresponding author: vtdieuhien@gmail.com; vtdhien@hcmct.edu.vn

ABSTRACT. This study develops and empirically validates a structural equation model explaining the transition from behavioral intention to actual destination choice. Grounded in the Theory of Reasoned Action and extended by incorporating perceived behavioral control into the attitudinal formation process, the proposed framework integrates psychological, social, and informational determinants within a unified analytical model. Using survey data from 360 tourists and applying covariance-based structural equation modeling with bootstrap estimation, the results confirm satisfactory measurement validity and structural stability. Model fit indices (CMIN/df = 1.931; CFI = 0.917; RMSEA = 0.051) indicate acceptable goodness-of-fit. All hypothesized relationships are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. The findings demonstrate that behavioral intention mediates the relationship between evaluative constructs and actual destination choice, while word-of-mouth exerts both direct and indirect effects. By positioning perceived behavioral control as an antecedent of attitude, the study provides an analytical refinement of intention-based behavioral models. The proposed framework contributes to applied structural modeling research by offering an empirically validated mechanism linking psychological evaluation to observable decision outcomes.

1. Introduction

Although previous studies have examined various determinants of tourists' destination choice, the relationship between behavioral intention and actual destination selection remains insufficiently explained, particularly in emerging tourism markets. Understanding how intentions translate into real travel decisions is essential for both tourism researchers and policymakers, as destination competitiveness ultimately depends on tourists' actual choices rather than stated preferences.

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In Vietnam, rapid tourism growth has intensified competition among destinations, yet empirical evidence on the psychological and social factors shaping tourists' destination decisions remains limited. Existing studies often emphasize intention formation without adequately examining how intention interacts with other determinants to influence the final decision-making process. Moreover, prior research has rarely explored how perceived behavioral control contributes to the formation of attitudes within the decision-making mechanism, leaving an important theoretical and empirical gap. Addressing this gap is important for developing more effective tourism development strategies and destination management policies.

Therefore, this study aims to identify the key factors influencing tourists' destination choice and to develop and empirically test a quantitative model explaining their relationships, including effects on both intention formation and actual decision-making. It also refines the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by incorporating perceived behavioral control as an antecedent of attitude. Empirical data were collected from 360 domestic and international tourists who stayed in Nha Trang for at least three days. As one of Vietnam's major coastal tourist destinations and the economic and service center of Khánh Hòa Province, Nha Trang offers abundant tourism resources, a mild year-round climate, and strong connectivity, making it an appropriate case for examining tourists' destination choice behavior in the Vietnamese context [1].

This study contributes to the literature in three main ways. First, it extends the TRA framework by conceptualizing perceived behavioral control as an antecedent of attitude, thereby enriching the theoretical explanation of tourist decision-making. Second, it empirically clarifies the mechanism linking intention and actual destination choice, addressing the gap between stated preferences and real behavior. Third, the study provides practical implications for destination managers and policymakers seeking to enhance tourism competitiveness in emerging markets such as Vietnam.

2. Literature review

2.1. Background theories

Theory of Reasoned Action: TRA, introduced by Ajzen and Fishbein [2], posits that an individual's behavior is primarily determined by behavioral intention. This intention arises from two key sources: the person's evaluation of the behavior (attitude) and perceived social expectations from others (subjective norms). Within this framework, both attitude and subjective norms play central roles in forming behavioral intention. TRA has been widely applied to explain and predict individual behavior by focusing on attitudes directed toward specific actions rather than toward objects or services. Empirical evidence has consistently supported a strong association between behavioral intention and actual behavior [3].

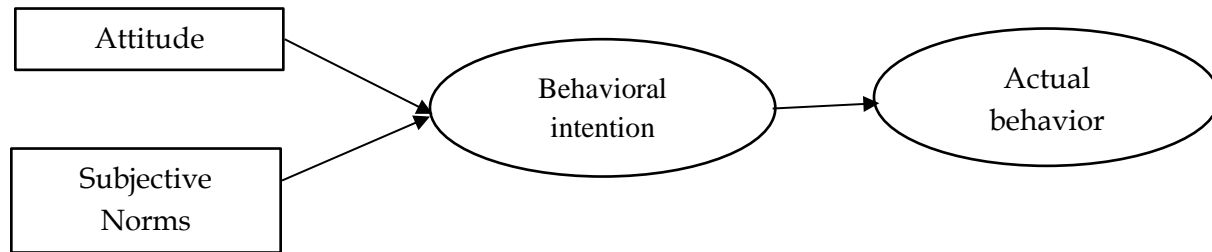


Figure 1. Theory of reasoned action (TRA)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB): TPB, proposed by Ajzen (1991) [4], extends TRA by incorporating perceived behavioral control (PBC), which reflects individuals' perceived ability and available resources to perform a behavior and helps explain actions that may not be fully under volitional control. Rooted in social psychology, TPB posits that human behavior is guided by behavioral intention, which is determined by three core components: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control [5]. The framework has been widely used to explain and predict both behavioral intentions and actual behaviors across various contexts, including consumer decision-making.

Perceived Behavioral Control in Attitude Formation:

To perform a behavior, individuals must perceive that they possess sufficient resources and opportunities, such as time, money, and access. This perception is referred to as PBC, reflecting both control beliefs about facilitating or constraining factors and individuals' perceived capability to manage these factors.

While TPB incorporates PBC primarily as a determinant of intention and behavior, it does not explicitly conceptualize PBC as part of the attitude formation process. In contrast, emerging evidence suggests that individuals' perceived control may influence how they evaluate a behavior and thus shape their attitudes. Empirical studies by La Barbera and Ajzen [6] in Germany and the UK, as well as Yusuf and Zulfritri [7] in Indonesia, provide support for a positive relationship between perceived behavioral control and attitude formation. These findings indicate that when individuals believe they have sufficient control over performing a behavior, they are more likely to develop a favorable attitude toward that behavior.

Grounded in TRA, this study conceptually refines the framework by incorporating perceived behavioral control as an antecedent of attitude. By integrating PBC into the attitudinal formation process, the proposed model extends the explanatory power of TRA in the context of tourist destination choice and provides a more comprehensive understanding of tourists' decision-making.

2.2. Empirical research

2.2.1. The relationship between attitude and intention to choose tourist destinations

Tourist destination: A tourist destination is commonly understood as a complex system composed of multiple interrelated elements, including attractions, accommodation facilities,

transportation services, and supporting infrastructure [8]. It refers to a defined geographical area such as a country, region, or city that attracts visitors and serves as the place where they stay for a certain period during their trip [9], [10]. Furthermore, destinations are also characterized by their unique attributes and by the tourism activities taking place within their geographical boundaries [11]. Both tangible elements, such as natural resources, cultural heritage, and tourism infrastructure, and intangible aspects, including local culture, traditions, social environment, and historical background, contribute to the overall perception of a destination [12], [13].

Attitude refers to an individual's evaluative judgment toward an object, person, or event and reflects whether the evaluated object is perceived as favorable or unfavorable, thereby guiding behavioral responses [14]. Prior studies indicate that several factors contribute to attitude formation. Confidence in perceived benefits has been shown to influence consumers' evaluative responses toward products and services [15]. In tourism contexts, perceived behavioral control has been found to shape travel-related attitudes [16], [17]. In addition, social feedback and perceived confidence have also been reported to influence individuals' attitudes [18], [19]. Drawing on this empirical evidence, the present study proposes that attitudes toward tourist destinations are shaped by confidence in benefits, perceived social feedback, and perceived behavioral control.

Since the 1990s, a substantial body of tourism research has highlighted the importance of attitudes in shaping visitors' intentions [20-23]. Empirical evidence across different destinations consistently indicates that favorable attitudes toward a destination are associated with stronger intentions to visit or revisit. For instance, research on Dubai by Souiden et al. [24] reported that tourists' attitudes significantly predict revisit intention. Similarly, Ervina and Octaviany [25] emphasize that positive destination attitudes help connect awareness with destination personality and influence future travel intentions.

Studies conducted in various national contexts provide further support for this relationship. Evidence from Vietnam shows that attitudes toward tourist destinations significantly affect individuals' intentions to select a destination [26]. Comparable findings have been reported in Indonesia, where attitudes were found to influence both environmentally oriented accommodation choices and destination selection decisions [27], [28]. Overall, prior research consistently confirms the significant role of attitude in explaining tourists' destination choice intentions. Based on empirical evidence, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Confidence in the benefits of a tourist destination has a positive impact on the intention to choose it.

H2: Perceived social feedback has a positive influence on the intention to choose a tourist destination.

H3: Perceived behavioral control has a positive effect on the intention to choose a tourist destination.

2.2.2. The relationship between subjective norms and intention to choose tourist destinations

Subjective norms: According to Fishbein and Ajzen [29], subjective norms refer to an individual's perception of how the social environment influences their decision to purchase a product or service. This perception is shaped by various social influences, such as family members and friends [30], as well as colleagues and public opinion [31]. As a result, these social influences can increase an individual's belief and motivation to make a purchase. In the workplace, subjective norms have a stronger impact on social behaviors, as individuals place a high value on maintaining group dependence and personal relationships [32]. Numerous studies conducted worldwide have demonstrated the significant impact of belief and motivation on subjective norms [33], [34]. Since the 1990s, there has been a growing body of research indicating that subjective norms play a crucial role in destination choice intentions [35-39], [23], [40]. In the tourism industry, a recent study in Pakistan by Wasaya et al. [41] found that subjective norms have a significant influence on destination choice intentions. Similarly, a study conducted in Vietnam by Le et al. [26] showed that subjective norms have a significant impact on individuals' intentions to select a tourist destination. Additionally, Febrianto et al. [27] found that attitude plays a significant role in determining the intention to stay at an environmentally friendly hotel. Furthermore, Syarif et al. [42] revealed that subjective norms play a crucial role in shaping individuals' intentions to choose a particular destination. Similarly, a study conducted in West Sulawesi, Indonesia by Listiawati et al. [28] also found that subjective norms play a significant role in influencing individuals' intentions to choose a tourist destination. Based on the findings of these empirical studies, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4: Belief has a positive effect on the intention to choose a tourist destination.

H5: Motivation has a positive effect on the intention to choose a tourist destination.

2.2.3. The relationship among word of mouth, intention and decision to choose a tourist destination

Word of mouth (WOM): WOM refers to informal interpersonal communication through which individuals share experiences or opinions about products, services, or destinations [43], [44]. Such communication is widely considered influential in consumer decision-making because it is perceived as credible and experience-based [45], [46]. With the rapid development of digital communication technologies, the reach and impact of WOM have expanded considerably, increasing its importance in shaping market and tourism outcomes [47].

A substantial body of research since the early 1990s has confirmed the role of WOM in influencing behavioral intentions [48-54]. In tourism contexts, empirical studies consistently indicate that positive WOM strengthens tourists' intention to select a destination and can also affect their final decision-making. Evidence from different countries, including Iran, Vietnam, and Indonesia, supports the significant influence of WOM on both destination choice intention and decision outcomes [55-60].

Based on the findings of these empirical studies, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H6: Word-of-mouth has a positive impact on the intention to choose a tourist destination.

H7: Word-of-mouth has a positive impact on the decision to choose a tourist destination.

2.3.4. The relationship between intention and decision to choose a tourist destination

Behavioral intention: Behavioral intention is commonly regarded as a key antecedent of actual behavior, reflecting individuals' readiness to perform a specific action [61], [62]. Prior research across different domains, including tourism, online banking, and digital service adoption, consistently demonstrates that stronger intentions increase the likelihood of corresponding behavioral outcomes [63], [64].

Empirical studies further support this relationship in consumer decision contexts. Evidence from Vietnam indicates that purchase intention positively influences actual purchasing decisions [65]. Similar findings were reported by Suyanto and Dewi [66], who showed that intention plays a decisive role in shaping product purchase behavior.

Within tourism research, intention to visit a destination has also been found to significantly affect the final choice of travel location. For example, Satyarini et al. [67] reported that visit intention strongly predicts destination selection in Indonesia. More recent studies in Vietnam, including research conducted in Hoi An, likewise confirm that behavioral intention significantly contributes to tourists' destination decisions [68], [26]. Based on empirical evidence, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H8: Intention to choose a tourist destination has a positive impact on the decision to choose a tourist destination.

2.3.5. The research model

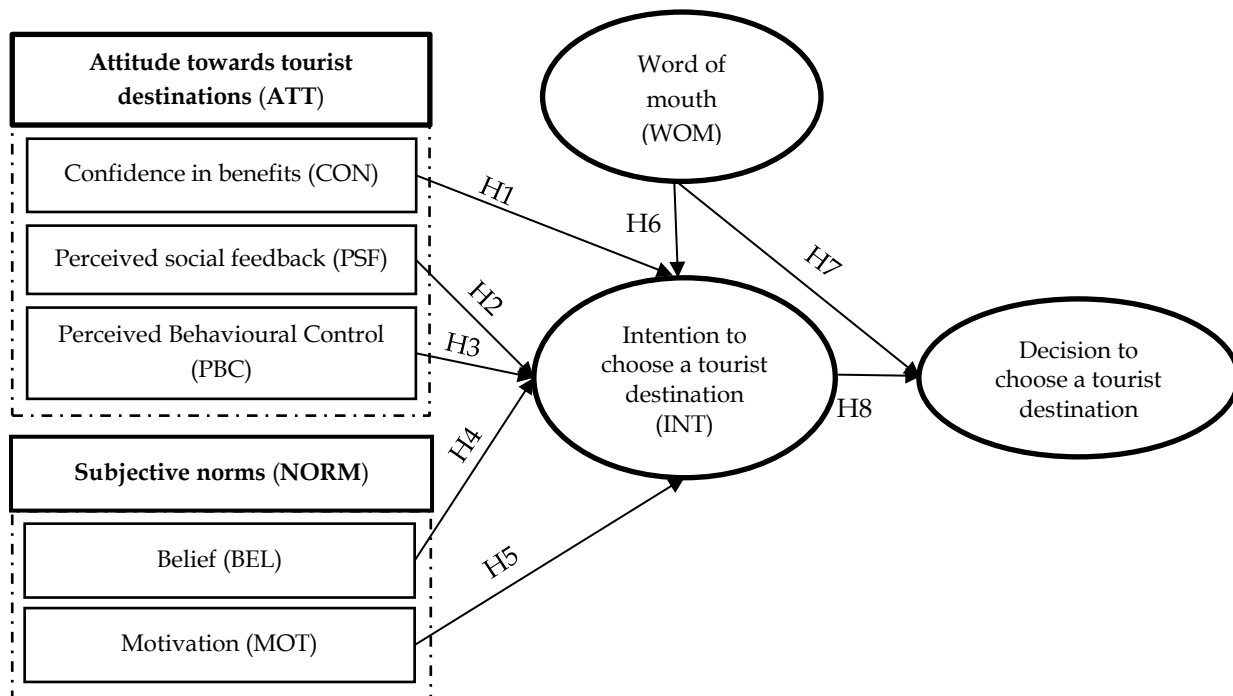


Figure 2. Proposed research model

Further research is needed to extend the theoretical framework and provide additional empirical evidence and policy implications regarding the link between intention and the decision to choose a tourist destination. Previous studies have shed light on the impact of these relationships and have used various quantitative models and metrics, such as exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and separate regression models. However, these studies do not offer a comprehensive analytical framework for understanding the decision to choose a tourist destination. Accordingly, this study synthesizes prior findings and incorporates the identified relationships into a structural equation modeling framework. Drawing on insights from the literature, a conceptual research model was formulated to address the study objectives, as illustrated in Figure 2.

3. Method

Measuring: The study employed measurement scales adapted from earlier research, with necessary refinements to ensure their suitability for the Vietnamese context. To ensure the accuracy and relevance of our questionnaire, we employed three survey processes. Firstly, we consulted with 10 experts from the tourism management department in Nha Trang City, Khanh Hoa province, who each had at least five years of experience in the industry. They provided valuable insights and suggested adjustments to tailor the questionnaire to the Vietnamese tourism industry. Secondly, we conducted a pilot survey with 20 participants who were currently traveling in Nha Trang to ensure that the questionnaire was error-free and contained appropriate content. Then, the full survey was administered to individuals who had recently traveled and stayed in Nha Trang City for at least three days.

A five-point Likert scale was employed to measure the extent to which respondents agreed with the survey statements. The constructs of "Confidence in Benefits", "Perceived Social Feedback", "Perceived Behavioral Control", "Belief", and "Motivation" were measured using scales adapted from Ervina and Octaviany [25] and Wasaya et al. [41]. These scales were subsequently refined through expert consultation to ensure their appropriateness for the Vietnamese tourism context. In total, 20 observed items were used to measure these constructs. To measure "Intention to choose a tourist destination" and "Decision to choose a tourist destination", the questionnaire included 8 observed variables. These measurement factors were based on the scale used in the Study on Tourist Destinations in Vietnam by Hoang Thi Xinh [68]. The scale for "Word of mouth" was measured using 3 observed variables, based on the scale developed by Asiku et al. [69]. Additionally, the authors developed several new variables through expert discussions, including "I am not concerned about the cost of traveling to this tourist destination," "I have sufficient financial resources to explore Nha Trang City", "Local authorities have implemented various policies to encourage tourists to visit Nha Trang City," "It would be a shame to visit Vietnam without going to Nha Trang", "Local communities are friendly

and supportive to visitors", "I plan to visit Nha Trang City in the future whenever I travel" and "Visiting Nha Trang has always been a dream of mine". The detailed measurement tables for the scale and observed variables can be found in the appendix (Table A).

Data collection and treatment: A questionnaire-based survey was implemented in Nha Trang City targeting tourist respondents. The data were gathered during the period from March to May 2025. After data cleaning and validation procedures, a final sample of 360 usable observations was obtained for analysis.

When conducting research focused on testing theories and explanatory models, CB-SEM is the preferred method [70]. In this study, the authors have chosen to utilize CB-SEM. The recommended software for conducting CB-SEM is AMOS. The data was analyzed using SPSS and AMOS 21.0 software [71], [72]. CB-SEM is conducted through four steps, including scale quality testing, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation analysis [73], [74].

4. Research findings

4.1. Respondent Background Information

Table 1. Summary of Respondent Background Information

	Frequency	%		Frequency	%
Gender			Income		
Male	212	59	<8	87	24
Female	148	41	8-15	125	35
Total	360	100	16-25	99	27
Ages			>25	49	14
<18	45	13	Total	360	100
18-40	72	20	student	59	16
41-50	141	39	Businessman	129	36
>50	102	28	Civil servants	102	28
Total	360	100	Manager	70	20
Education level			Total	360	100
Elementary	26	7	Marital status		
Junior high	66	18	Single	134	37
High school	139	39	Married	226	63
College & University	121	34	Total	360	100
Post graduate	8	2	Residence		
Total	360	100	Northern region	36	10
			HCMC	86	24
			Southern region	102	28
			Middle region	70	20
			International Tourist	66	18
			Total		100

Table 1 summarizes the survey sample, comprising 360 observations. Of these, 59% were male. Regarding age distribution, 13% of respondents were under 18, 20% were aged 18–40, 39% were between 41 and 50, and 28% were over 50. The education levels were also divided into five groups: Elementary, Junior high school, High school, College & University, and Postgraduate, with 7%, 18%, 39%, 34%, and 2% respectively. The income levels were distributed across four groups: under 8, 8-15, 16-25, and over 25 million VND/month, with 24%, 35%, 27%, and 14% respectively. The occupations of the participants were divided into four groups: student, businessman, civil servant, and manager, with 16%, 36%, 28%, and 20% respectively. The marital status of the participants was divided into two groups: single and married, with 37% and 63% respectively. The residence of the participants was categorized into four groups: Northern region, Ho Chi Minh City, Southern region, Middle region, and International Tourist, with 10%, 24%, 28%, 20%, and 18% respectively.

4.2. Reliability analysis

The results indicate that all measurement scales meet the reliability requirements. Specifically, the overall Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructs exceed 0.6, and the corrected item-total correlations are above 0.3, indicating satisfactory internal consistency among the observed variables. The Cronbach's Alpha values are as follows: CON = 0.803, PERR = 0.846, BEL = 0.840, MOT = 0.852, PBC = 0.812, INT = 0.847, WOM = 0.840, and DEC = 0.836. These values indicate good reliability in accordance with the threshold suggested by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) [75].

4.3. Exploratory Factor Analysis Results

Table 2. Measurement Scale after EFA

	Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
PSF4	0.837							
PSF2	0.835							
PSF3	0.822							
PSF1	0.810							
BEL3		0.845						
BEL4		0.829						
BEL2		0.807						
BEL1		0.793						
MOT4			0.844					
MOT2			0.835					
MOT3			0.831					
MOT1			0.793					
PBC4				0.835				
PBC3				0.817				

	Component							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
PBC2				0.802				
PBC1				0.760				
CON4					0.819			
CON2					0.810			
CON3					0.787			
CON1					0.747			
INT3						0.863		
INT1						0.862		
INT2						0.806		
INT4						0.786		
WOM2							0.886	
WOM1							0.846	
WOM3							0.732	
DEC4								0.831
DEC2								0.820
DEC3								0.815
DEC1								0.801
KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy					0.840	0.814	0.639	0.805
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity					0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Eigenvalues					1.513	2.756	2.036	2.669
Explained Variance (%)					67.144	68.901	67.862	66.726

According to Hair et al. [73], the KMO measure should fall between 0.5 and 1. Additionally, the Bartlett's test of sphericity should have a significance level of less than 0.05. For factor analysis, it is recommended to have factor loadings greater than 0.3, a percentage of variance explained greater than 50%, and an eigenvalue greater than 1.

The results presented in Tables 2 demonstrate that all variables meet the necessary requirements for values. Specifically, exploratory factor analysis identified five factors for the independent variables, accounting for 67.144% of the total variance, with all eigenvalues exceeding 1. The EFA of intention yielded four observable variables with a variance of 68.901% and an Eigenvalue of 2.756. Similarly, the EFA of WOM resulted in three observable variables with a variance of 67.862% and an Eigenvalue of 2.036. The EFA of DEC produced four observable variables with a variance of 66.726% and an Eigenvalue of 2.669. The promax rotation method was utilized for the EFA results.

4.4. Confirmatory factor analysis results

The adequacy of the measurement model was evaluated using five model fit indices: (i) the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (CMIN/df), (ii) the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), (iii) the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), (iv) the Normal Fit Index (NFI), and (v) the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) [70].

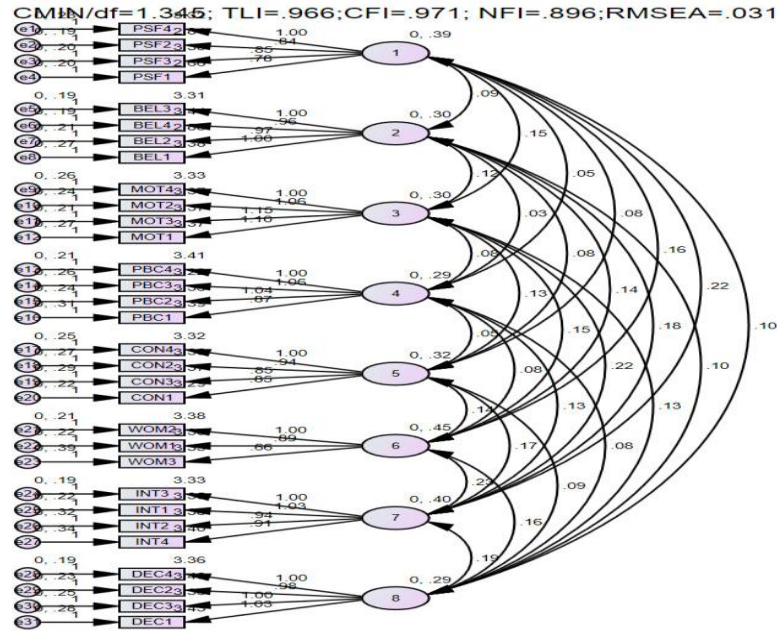


Figure 3. Confirmatory factor analysis results

CFA results support the adequacy of the measurement model. The CMIN/df value of 1.345 is below the commonly recommended cutoff of 3, suggesting an acceptable level of model fit [76], [77]. Incremental fit indices further confirm this assessment, as TLI = 0.966 and CFI = 0.971 both exceed the suggested threshold of 0.90 [78]. The NFI value of 0.896, although slightly lower than 0.90, still falls within an acceptable range for model evaluation [79], [78]. In addition, RMSEA = 0.031 lies well below 0.05, indicating a very good approximation of the data [80]. Overall, these results indicate that the measurement model adequately represents the observed data.

4.5. Structural Equation Modeling Results

Figure 4 indicates that the structural model achieved a CMIN/df value of 1.931, with TLI = 0.910, CFI = 0.917, NFI = 0.843, and RMSEA = 0.051. This indicates that the model demonstrates an acceptable overall fit to the data.

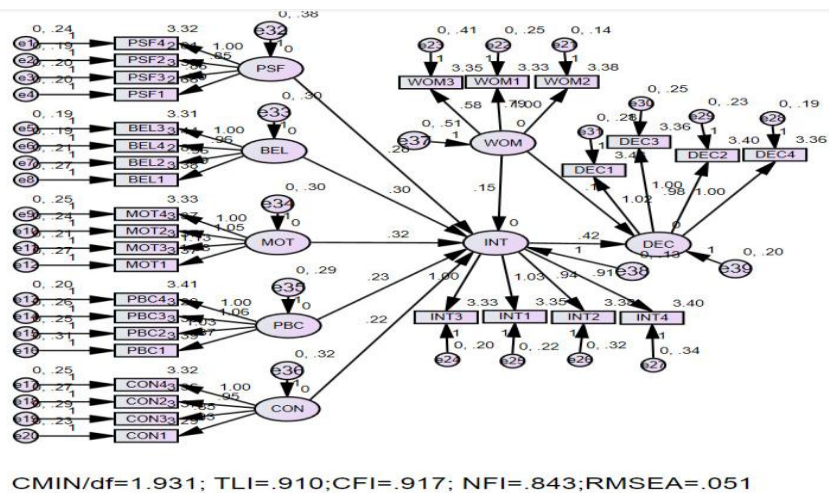


Figure 4. Structural Model Results

4.6. Bootstrap Validation of the CB-SEM Results

Structural equation modeling often benefits from large sample sizes [81], which can be a limitation in academic research. In these situations, Bootstrap can serve as a suitable alternative [82]. Bootstrap is a repeatable sampling method that uses the original sample as a population. This method generates random samples from the original sample, typically selecting 1,000 observations. The estimated results from these samples are then averaged, providing an estimate that is close to the population estimate. The reliability of the model estimates increases as the discrepancy between the bootstrap average coefficients and the estimates obtained from the original sample decreases.

Table 3. Bootstrap Validation Results

Parameter			SE	SE-SE	Mean	Bias	SE-Bias	*CR
INT	<---	WOM	0.048	0.002	0.188	0.006	0.003	2
INT	<---	PSF	0.055	0.003	0.281	0.003	0.004	0.75
INT	<---	BEL	0.067	0.003	0.277	-0.007	0.005	-1.4
INT	<---	MOT	0.071	0.004	0.382	-0.002	0.005	-0.4
INT	<---	PBC	0.059	0.003	0.235	0.000	0.004	0
DEC	<---	INT	0.057	0.003	0.422	-0.008	0.004	-2
DEC	<---	WOM	0.059	0.003	0.130	0.006	0.004	1.5

Note: *CR (Critical Ratios) = (Bias) / (SE-Bias)

The magnitude of the CR is significantly smaller than 1.96, indicating a confidence level of 95% or higher. Table 3 displays the results of the regression coefficients before the implementation of Bootstrap, which are considered to be highly reliable [73].

Table 4. Hypothesis test result

Hypothesis	Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Results
	Impact							
H6	INT	<---	WOM	0.155	0.04	3.845	***	Accepted
H1	INT	<---	CON	0.228	0.051	4.46	***	Accepted
H2	INT	<---	PSF	0.278	0.048	5.766	***	Accepted
H3	INT	<---	BEL	0.268	0.053	5.037	***	Accepted
H4	INT	<---	MOT	0.327	0.053	6.209	***	Accepted
H5	INT	<---	PBC	0.229	0.055	4.173	***	Accepted
H8	DEC	<---	INT	0.428	0.068	6.317	***	Accepted
H7	DEC	<---	WOM	0.125	0.045	2.765	0.006	Accepted

Note: *** (Sig. = 0.000).

In Table 4, all hypotheses were accepted with a confidence level of 95% or higher (P_value \leq 0.05).

Table 5. Relative Effects of Explanatory Variables on INT and DEC

Impacting level on INT			Estimate	%	Position
ATT = f(WOM, PERR, BEL, MOT, PBC)					
INT	<---	WOM	0.155	10.44	6
INT	<---	CON	0.228	15.35	5
INT	<---	PSF	0.278	18.72	2
INT	<---	BEL	0.268	18.05	3
INT	<---	MOT	0.327	22.02	1
INT	<---	PBC	0.229	15.42	4
Total			1.485	100.00	
Impacting level on DEC					
DEC = f(INT, WOM)					
DEC	<---		0.428	77.40	1
DEC	<---	WOM	0.125	22.60	2
Total			0.553	100.00	

In Table 5, the factors influencing the "Intention to Choose Tourist Destination" are listed in order of importance: MOT, PSF, BEL, PBC, CON, and WOM. Similarly, the factors affecting the "Decision to Choose a Tourist Destination" are also listed in order of significance: INT and WOM.

5. Discussions and implications

The findings confirm that tourists' intention to choose a destination is shaped by six key determinants: motivation, perceived social feedback, belief, perceived behavioral control, confidence in benefits, and WOM. This result supports prior tourism research emphasizing the combined role of psychological evaluations, social influence, and informational cues in intention formation (e.g., Wasaya et al. [41]; Hoang Thi Xinh [68]).

Importantly, the inclusion of context-specific indicators related to travel affordability, policy support, financial capability, destination attractiveness, and local hospitality provides a more nuanced representation of tourists' evaluations in the Vietnamese tourism context. From a managerial perspective, strengthening these dimensions can enhance tourists' intention to visit Nha Trang and improve destination competitiveness.

The results further demonstrate that both intention and WOM significantly influence the final destination decision. This finding reinforces earlier studies showing that interpersonal communication and behavioral readiness jointly determine actual travel choices [55], [68]. Practically, this suggests that destination managers should not only stimulate intention through marketing and service quality improvements but also actively foster positive visitor communication to reinforce actual destination selection.

Beyond these empirical findings, the study contributes theoretically in three ways. First, it refines the Theory of Reasoned Action by incorporating perceived behavioral control into the process of attitude formation. While classical TRA explains intention mainly through attitude and subjective norms, the present results indicate that perceived feasibility and resource availability also shape tourists' evaluative judgments toward a destination. This highlights perceived behavioral control as a cognitive foundation underlying attitudinal development.

Second, positioning perceived behavioral control as an antecedent of attitude provides a more comprehensive explanation of how destination preferences emerge. When individuals believe they possess sufficient time, financial resources, and opportunities to travel, they tend to develop more favorable attitudes toward visiting that destination. This suggests that destination attitudes are influenced not only by emotional and social considerations but also by perceived practicality and feasibility.

Third, the confirmed relationship between intention and the final destination decision clarifies the behavioral mechanism linking psychological evaluation to observable action. By empirically validating this transition from intention to actual choice, the study strengthens intention-based theories and provides clearer insight into how tourists' motivations and perceptions translate into real destination selection behavior.

6. Conclusion and research limitations

The purpose of this study is to expand upon the existing theoretical framework and present empirical evidence to demonstrate the two factors that influence the "Decision to Choose a Tourist Destination," using the case of Nha Trang City as an example.

The empirical analysis shows that both WOM and destination choice intention play important roles in shaping tourists' final destination decisions. This evidence enriches the current body of research by offering further insight into the factors associated with tourists' ultimate choice outcomes.

Nevertheless, several constraints should be acknowledged. The data were obtained from a single Vietnamese city, which may limit the broader applicability of the findings. Future investigations may extend the analysis to multiple destinations or regions and employ comparative designs to improve the robustness and external validity of the results.

Moreover, the present model considers only two predictors of the final destination decision. Subsequent research could incorporate additional variables to provide a more holistic explanation of tourists' destination selection behavior within the Vietnamese tourism context.

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Conflicts of Interest: The author(s) declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

APPENDIX

Table 6. Measurement scale

No.	Measurement scale / Indicator	Code
I	Confidence in benefits	CON
1	I have a good understanding of Nha Trang as a tourist destination.	CON1
2	I understand the benefits of traveling to Nha Trang as a destination.	CON2
3	I know that Nha Trang city is one of the most beautiful coastal cities in Vietnam.	CON3
4	I am not concerned about the expenses associated with traveling to this tourist destination.	CON4
II	Perceived Social feedback	PSF
5	The experiences of those who have traveled to Nha Trang have influenced my decision to visit it as a tourist destination.	PSF1
6	Information about the quality of tourism services in Nha Trang City from various media platforms (e.g., television, YouTube, Facebook) has influenced my perception.	PSF2
7	Information about tourism policies implemented by local authorities has influenced my decision to visit Nha Trang City.	PSF3
8	Other people's experiences traveling to Nha Trang have influenced my perception that it is a safe place.	PSF4
III	Perceived Behavioural Control	PBC
9	I am physically fit to travel.	PBC1
10	To participate in a trip to Nha Trang City, I have plenty of time.	PBC2
11	I have made all the necessary preparations regarding health, time, and visa procedures to visit Nha Trang city.	PBC3
12	I have enough financial resources to explore Nha Trang city.	PBC4
IV	Belief	BEL
13	The friendliness and kindness of the Vietnamese people make me confident when coming to the tourist destination of Nha Trang.	BEL1
14	It would be a shame to visit Vietnam without experiencing Nha Trang city.	BEL2

15	Vietnam's travel companies are known for their exceptional service and strong reputation among customers.	BEL3
16	Nha Trang city offers a diverse range of tourism options to cater to the preferences of visitors.	BEL4
V	Motivation	MOT
17	The cost of traveling in Vietnam is low compared to other countries I have visited.	MOT1
18	The Vietnamese government has implemented a number of effective policies to promote the growth of tourism.	MOT2
19	Local authorities participate in maintaining social order and safety and protecting food safety and the environment.	MOT3
20	Local communities are friendly and supportive to visitors.	MOT4
VI	Word of mouth	WOM
21	I frequently browse through online reviews written by travelers to learn about any potential issues or complaints they may have had with the tourist destination I am considering.	WOM1
22	I am seeking advice and recommendations from friends, colleagues, and relatives regarding tourism destinations in Nha Trang, Vietnam.	WOM2
23	I am interested in visiting Nha Trang, a popular tourist destination, based on the recommendations of my wife and children.	WOM3
VII	Intention to choose tourist destination	INT
24	I am planning to visit Nha Trang City in the near future.	INT1
25	I plan to visit Nha Trang City whenever I have a travel opportunity.	INT2
26	I would highly recommend Nha Trang as a destination to others.	INT3
27	In the future, I plan to visit Nha Trang whenever I have the opportunity to travel or work there.	INT4
VIII	Decision to choose a tourist destination	DEC
28	Come to Nha Trang and admire the unique architectural structures that reflect the distinctive characteristics of this coastal region.	DEC1
29	Visiting Nha Trang has been a long-held dream of mine.	DEC2
30	Come to Nha Trang to enjoy seafood cuisine	DEC3
31	Experience the vibrant culture of Nha Trang's coastal region by attending the annual Fishermen's Festival. Immerse yourself in the local traditions and customs of the people in this beautiful destination.	DEC4

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