

Factors Affecting Tourist Intention to Visit Local Places After Post-Covid-19: The Mediating Role of Perceive Control Behavior

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: March 07, 2025
Revised: April 25, 2025
Accepted: May 05, 2025
Available Online: May 09, 2025

Keywords:

Attitude; Intention to visit; Subject Norm; Perceive control behavior; University Students

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ABSTRACT

The research evaluated how university students intend to visit local places after COVID-19 based on their attitudes and subjective norm perceptions, with perceived behavioral control as a mediator. A quantitative research design collected data from 209 university students through survey distribution, enabling structural equation modeling to study variable relationships. The research confirmed that subjective norms and attitudes strongly affect students' intentions to visit local attractions. At the same time, perceived behavioral control is a mediating variable between attitude and intention to visit. Students demonstrated an increased willingness to engage in local tourism when positive attitudes receive support through societal norms and their confidence in their ability to connect with local tourism opportunities increases. The findings have essential implications for government leaders and local businesses who must create well-aimed marketing actions and community development programs to revitalize local tourism after the pandemic. Stakeholders who align their strategies with the research findings will be better able to engage students in sustainable tourism activities. The results of this study present a novel extension of the theory of planned behaviour. This study offers a fresh perspective by demonstrating the joint influence of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on the intention to adopt local tourism among local university students. Perceived behavioral control's mediation and partial explanation of the relation between attitudes and subjective norms further add to the plan. These findings are particularly engaging in the context of post-pandemic tourism, providing a nuanced understanding of the dynamics of influence.



Introduction

Throughout this 20th century, the world has suffered two global wars, three severe economic downturns, and four pandemics. These events have significantly impacted the tourist sector, making it one of the industries most influenced by global conflict. Though these challenges continued, the tourism sector showed it could recover and was even more helpful. For example, in the face of the financial crisis from 2007 to 2008, in which a considerable decrease in inbound tourism was observed, competent authorities understood the need for a strategic reaction (Gan et al., 2024). They took several steps to recover the industry, focusing heavily on stimulating local tourism. This strategy limited the effects of the crisis, encouraged domestic travel, and helped communities count on the tourist industry.

Attitude is defined as a person dealing somewhere with items, events, or wonders, which implicates their behavioral leanings, experiences, feelings, and points of view for casual opportunity (Kumar & Makand, 2021). In the field of tourism, it has been proved that a visitor's attitude has a significant role to play in intending to visit a destination when he has a positive perception, and when there is a positive perception, then the fate chances go higher for a destination visit. Therefore, the link between attitude and intention is significant, as a favorable attitude should correlate with firm travel intention, which leads to tourism demand (Alam et al., 2024). Numerous studies have been conducted, including how personal experience, social dynamics, and promotional strategies influence attitudes toward places (Oladoyinbo et al., 2024). Mainly, many of these published studies were mostly sector of focus based, with a lack of importance to diverse cultural backgrounds as well as newer trends emerging, such as sustainable tourism, on attitudes & intentions across varied populations (Streimikiene et al., 2021).

In addition, the pressures people feel from their social networks about a specific behavior include family influence, peer expectations, and general cultural standards affecting decision-making (Zhen Li et al., 2023). Travelers develop their destination visit intentions based on the opinions of their social environment within the tourism industry. The social influence of positive feedback provided by peers plays an essential role in boosting a person's willingness to discover new locations. Similarly, an established that social influences work as motivators and hindrances during decision-making processes toward travel (Gajić et al., 2023).

PBC consists of an individual's two components, The first is self-efficacy, which is their ability to execute behaviors and their perceived ease or difficulty of performing such actions. The ability for tourists to feel competent about taking a journey becomes a vital factor in destination visit intention because confident travelers demonstrate higher visit intentions (Guo et al., 2024). Therefore, understanding PBC works as a mediating factor between attitude and IV remains fundamental because it reveals which beliefs regarding capabilities affect the relationship between attitudes and intentions.

The worldwide travel sector faces unique difficulties because the COVID-19 pandemic transformed all aspects of global transportation operations (Ianenko et al., 2022). Developing countries, including Pakistan, must analyze elements that affect tourist decisions to travel locally after the pandemic. This study assesses the relationship between attitudes and SN toward local place visitation after COVID-19 through analysis of PBC as a potential mediator factor. Tourism in Pakistan supports economic development, but the COVID-19 pandemic degrades existing sectoral weaknesses, which combine health challenges with financial insecurity and cultural change regarding travel (Baloch et al., 2022). The research findings generate essential insights to assist policymakers, tourism operators, and local communities revitalize tourism operations.

Underlying research regarding positive attitudes and supportive SN for driving travel intentions will direct stakeholders to create focused marketing approaches alongside community involvement programs. Furthermore, research must examine PBC because it helps understand the relationship between confidence levels in travel capabilities and decision-making processes (Akter & Hasan, 2023).

In the previous studies, the recovery process following pandemics has mainly received research attention among developed nations (Gössling et al., 2020; Wen et al., 2021), while neglecting similar behavioral change dynamics affecting developing countries such as Pakistan. Research on tourism behaviour following TPB (Quintal et al., 2010) primarily disregards the analysis of its core psychological elements, including attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control in environments where social norms and economic and health conditions significantly impact decision-making. Earlier research has received criticism from scholars like (Li et al., 2021; Seyfi et al., 2020), who argue that Western research cannot correctly address Pakistani cultural factors that highly influence family expectations (subjective norms) regarding travel decisions (Khan et al., 2016). The connection between PBC and intentions and its mediating power between attitudes and intentions lacks investigation, particularly in conditions where external variables such as financial constraints and infrastructure boundaries limit travel decision-making freedom in developing countries (Ntounis et al., 2022). Current research about post-COVID recovery fails to recognize how public health policies at various locations and the level of trust in safety practices affect tourist behavior (Hall et al., 2021).

This study has made a few contributions to the field of knowledge. First, despite the expanding literature on tourism behavior, there is a lack of understanding about tourist intentions specifically for developing countries such as Pakistan during their recovery from COVID-19. Second, research on attitudes and SN toward travel intentions lacks a comprehensive theoretical analysis. PBC has not been studied as a mediating variable relative to the unique Pakistani socio-cultural environment. Current practical research about tourism retrieval strategies provides minimal guidance for Pakistan's local context, especially regarding how social influence factors should be used to boost domestic tourism after the pandemic. Past studies have pointed out the importance of these factors for tourism behavior but have failed to address specifically how the special case of Pakistan affects travel intentions because of its unique cultural context, economic realities, and public health threats. Exploring these dynamics seeks to complete essential research gaps while building a complete knowledge base of how beliefs operate with peer and control factors to modify travel decisions across post-pandemic periods. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine the impact of attitude and SN on tourist intention to visit local places after post-COVID-19 and the mediating role of PBC.

Theoretical Foundation and Hypothesis Development

Theoretical foundation

The theory of planned behavior framework, individuals can understand how different cognitive elements between attitudes SN and PBC affect their behavioral adoptions (Hou et al., 2022). The three components described in this theory merge to create the specific behavior intended by individuals. This study focuses on their plans to visit local Pakistani destinations after COVID-19. How people evaluate their traveling to local destinations constitutes their overall attitude regarding such behavior. A positive behavioral attitude enhances the planned visit because people naturally act similarly with their good evaluation of travel experiences (Fan et al., 2023). People form their opinions about behavior based on the social influence they perceive from their family members,

friends, and community peers. A social environment where individuals believe their closest contacts endorse local tourism will increase their involvement plans (Surla et al., 2025). The mediating variable of PBC describes how people feel able to perform the behavior under consideration. People with sufficient resources, good health, and self-assurance in managing travel procedures will consider local tourism. According to the TPB, a person who feels in control of the behavior is more likely to act on positive attitudes and observed norms (Saeidi et al., 2024).

Hypotheses Development

Attitude

The TPB faces possible limitations because contemporary social psychology demonstrates that attitudes adjust according to emotional states. Habitual changes in attitudes toward built-upon behaviors demonstrate how individuals' perceiving factors regarding risks and rewards influence their behavioral response toward those behaviors (Zhu et al., 2024). People develop favorable attitudes, which lead to greater chances of performing the behavior when they feel less at risk and more rewarded.

Furthermore, past studies demonstrated this relationship between risk/benefit perceptions and attitudes, which confirms that reduced risks for a particular action, such as local attraction visits, lead people to develop more positive attitudes toward that conduct (Choo et al., 2024). Local tourism benefits from understanding the impact of safety feelings and economic advantages because they directly influence traveler behavior intentions. A recent study confirmed risk perceptions and emotional factors enhance attitudes in specific situations (Shen et al., 2024). Similarly, another study suggested that understanding how assessed risks and rewards affect attitudes delivers essential knowledge about travel intention formation (Luong & Nguyen, 2024). Therefore, successfully regaining the tourism industry after the pandemic requires positive attitude promotion through favorable risk/benefit perceptions for visitors to increase their local destination intentions. Thus, following hypothesis is suggested based on above discussion:

H1: Attitude is positively related to IV.

H2: Attitude is positively related to perceive control behavior.

Subject Norms

Past studies have validated that reference groups, including family members, friends, and peers, determine the development of such beliefs and behavior patterns (Zirena-Bejarano & Zirena, 2024). Similarly, this study confirmed that the opinions and actions of reference groups influence people's choices about medical travel destinations based on factors like destination appeal and security (Jiang et al., 2024). Moreover, research showed that Taiwanese tourists' intentions to visit Hong Kong were strongly influenced by how their social circles perceived and behaved towards the city (Lai & Wong, 2024). Equally important is the impact of personal advice shared among trustworthy individuals on travel decisions because it demonstrates how SNs direct such choices. Family and friend endorsements about destinations subsequently modify a person's perception of those locations, consequently influencing their touring intentions.

In addition, reference groups are vital in determining visitors' satisfaction since people tend to seek confirmation about successful outcomes in local tourism services. A recent study suggested that local tourism consumers showed that reference groups determine how consumers perceive and plan their tourism activities across numerous tourism domains (Mandagi et al., 2024). Therefore,

reference groups' influence on tourist behavior substantially affects destination visits, thus validating the hypothesis that positive social influence leads to enhanced travel intentions. Lastly, successful local tourism promotion through social network marketing requires this understanding to develop goal-oriented marketing strategies (Casado-Montilla & Pulido-Fernández, 2024). In this regard, following hypothesis have been developed:

H3: SN positively related to IV.

Mediating Role of Perceive Control Behavior

Individuals assess how difficult it will be to execute specific behaviors, which constitutes PBC. The construct identifies expectations individuals hold regarding particular behaviors within specific contexts and is measured by assessing the likelihood of taking behavioral action. The theory of planned behavior (TPB) explains that calculated behavioral control aligns with historical conduct involvement and imagined operational hurdles people might experience while performing these acts (Wicht, 2024). Previous studies show this construct is vital in predicting tourist destination visit intentions.

The study indicated that PBC should function as a mediatory element between attitude and visit intentions since it helps explain the conversion of attitudes into actions. A recent study revealed that knowledge of considerable barriers, including logistical hurdles, health risks, and financial obstacles, can dissuade tourists from pursuing their travel plans, although their destination opinion remains positive (Al-Romeedy et al., 2025). A study confirmed that PBC is the connector between attitudes and intentions because it establishes how individual beliefs and environmental aspects shape the decision-making process (Trivedi et al., 2024). Lastly, strategies to promote travel intentions must focus on PBC because it demonstrates the significance of addressing belief-based challenges. Therefore, based on this discussion, the following hypotheses have been developed:

H4: Perceive control behavior is positively related to IV.

H5: Perceive control behavior mediations the relationship between attitude and IV.

Methodology

Data collection procedure

Researchers collected primary data by using an adapted questionnaire from previous works containing a five-point Likert scale. This research design produces detailed responses to better understand the elements that drive university students to participate in tourism activities. Face-to-face surveys were used to collect data, leading to higher response rates and question clarification opportunities that helped participants better understand assessment items. The research methodology included convenience and snowball sampling as part of its sampling approach. The researcher selected convenience sampling as an efficient method to contact participants and snowball sampling to broaden the participant network given the potential student social clustering at the institution (Heckathorn & Cameron, 2017). This specific population of 209 university students demonstrated a high travel tendency during holidays, so researchers selected them for research purposes due to their relevant characteristics for tourism studies. Data cleaning processes were executed through SPSS version 25 to guarantee the dataset's accuracy and completeness right after data collection. The study maintained strict confidentiality of participant data throughout the

research period to promote trust and honest responses, thus improving the validity of the study results.

Instrument of study

Attitude can be defined as people evaluate objects or phenomena through their overall feelings supported by beliefs which guide their behavioral responses toward them. The three research items were taken from the research of (Li et al., 2020). Sample item was “After this pandemic covid-19 is over, I believe that it is still a good idea to visit a local destination that I intended visiting”.

SN define how people experience social influences regarding their behavior decisions while family interactions and cultural customs together form expectations of acceptance. The three items of subject norms also taken from study of (Chen & Tung, 2014). Sample item was “After this pandemic covid-19 is over, I intend on going on travel a local destination that I have chosen before”.

PBC refers individuals who believe they can successfully carry out particular behaviors possess PBC because it unites their performance self-confidence with their ability to handle the procedure. The four research items were adopted from the study (Pahrudin et al., 2021). Sample it was “After this pandemic covid-19 is over, I have time and opportunities to visit a local destination that I intended on visiting originally”.

IV can be defined as a prime factor affect travel decisions when people demonstrate a willingness to visit designated locations for future vacations. The research items were taken from the study of (Pahrudin et al., 2021). Sample item was “After this pandemic covid-19 is over, I will go to travel a local destination in the future”.

Tool for data analysis

The selection of PLS-SEM for analysis over CB-SEM can be validated through various vital elements that support this decision. The flexibility of PLS-SEM makes it perform well for theoretical research by offering both data distribution flexibility and working with limited sample sizes (Ghasemy et al., 2020). PLS-SEM produces reliable output with non-normal data conditions and reduced sample sizes beyond CB-SEM's needs, thus becoming well-suited for exploratory research. The main focus of PLS-SEM is to maximize independent variable prediction of dependent variables when research aims to forecast outcomes rather than prove established theories. The predictive abilities of PLS-SEM become more assertive through its support of formative constructs because some research fields depend on variables that do not function as strictly reflective elements. The robust estimates of PLS-SEM remain valid even with measurement errors, thus ensuring better research findings reliability. PLS-SEM is the preferred method for studies focused on prediction and theory creation, but it requires flexible data compared to CB-SEM (Usakli & Rasoolimanesh, 2023).

Results and Discussion

Reliability and Validity

Table 1 shows the reliability and validity measures of the study's components, which include Attitude, SN, PBC, and IV.

Cronbach's Alpha establishes how well separate items connect within a combined set. Researchers usually accept Cronbach's Alpha measurements of 0.7 or higher, while higher values exceeding 0.8 are considered robust (Taber, 2018). Each construct listed in Table 1 demonstrates high reliability because its items effectively measure their associated concepts with scores of Attitudes (0.876), SN (0.894), PBC (0.916), and IV (0.932).

The composite reliability (CR) measurement tool functions similarly to Cronbach's Alpha but effectively analyzes the entire measurement instrument considering its individual items' weights. The recommendation for composite reliability is a minimum value of 0.70 (Taber, 2018). All measures in Table 1 fulfill the criterion for reliable measurement, as the values show attitude at 0.701 and IV at 0.820.

AVE is an assessment tool for comparing the amount of construct variance against measurement error variance. Research indicates that an AVE value greater than 0.5 represents an acceptable indicator (Haji-Othman & Yusuff, 2022). The values resulting from AVE analysis demonstrated that attitude has an AVE of 0.701 while SN has an AVE of 0.737 in this table. It indicates that these constructs offer a sufficient explanation of their measured variables.

The maximum factor-related loading values in the study comprise A3 (0.857) for attitude and IV1 (0.920) for IV, along with SN1 (0.870) for SN and PCB1 (0.924) for PBC. The factors measured by A2 (0.832) for Attitude and SN3 (0.851) for SN and PCB2 (0.780) for PBC, and IV1 (0.894) for IV have their lowest item loadings. PCB2's low loading value suggests it may correlate less powerfully to the construct than the other items. Results from the studied constructs demonstrate excellent reliability and valid measurement approaches.

Table 1. Reliability and Validity

Factor	Items SPSS coding	Item loading	Cronbach Alpha value	Composite reliability	Average variance extraction
Attitude	A1	0.824	0.788	0.876	0.701
	A2	0.832			
	A3	0.857			
Subject Norm	SN1	0.870	0.822	0.894	0.737
	SN2	0.854			
	SN3	0.851			
Perceive control behavior	PCB1	0.924	0.877	0.916	0.732
	PCB2	0.780			
	PCB3	0.838			
	PCB4	0.873			
Intention to Visit	IV1	0.920	0.890	0.932	0.820
	IV1	0.902			
	IV1	0.894			

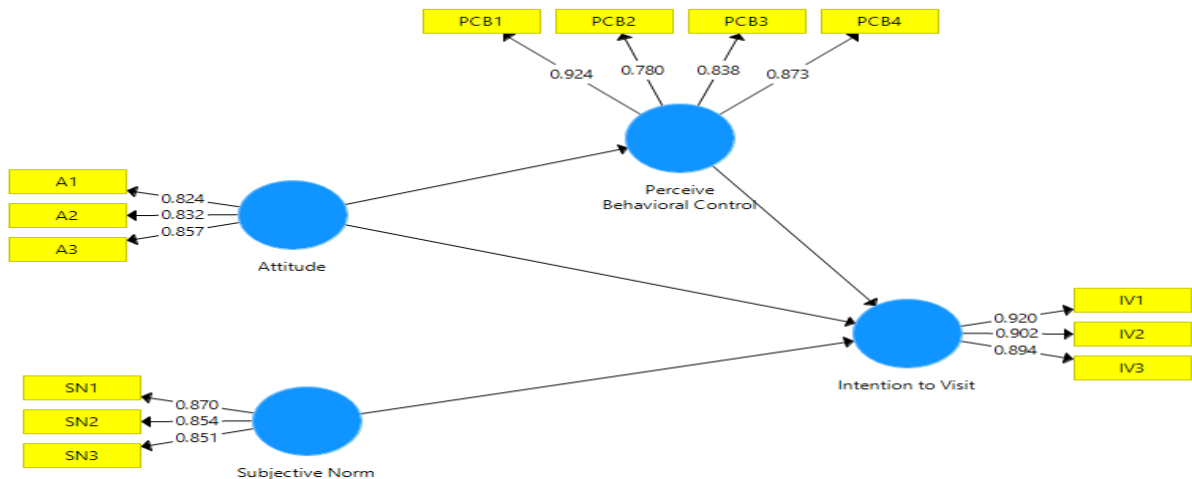


Figure 1. Measurement model

Hypothesis Testing and Discussion

The beta value indicates how strong and in which direction the link exists between two variables (Zhou et al., 2022). A positive relationship exists when beta takes a positive value, whereas negative relationships appear with negative beta values. The T-value shows the relationship difference size against the sample data variation (Francis & Jakicic, 2023). The size of a relationship increases when T-value measurements grow higher. Frequent decision-making methods assess T-values against T-distribution critical values and use 1.96 as the typical threshold from the two-tailed test at a 0.05 significance level (Francis & Jakicic, 2023). The null hypothesis gets rejected because the T-value exceeds the established threshold, showing a significant relationship.

H1: The value of 0.363 was recorded for beta, while the T-value registered at 5.539. The analysis reveals a substantial positive relationship between favorable local tourism attitude and the desire to make such travel plans. The research indicates a significant positive relationship between attitude and IV through the beta value of 0.363 and T-value of 5.539. According to the TPB, positive attitudes towards a specific action lead directly to executing the intended behavior. Multiple research studies confirm this pattern since positive destination attitudes make people plan their travel activities more often (Gonda, 2024), (Wijaya et al., 2025).

H2: The research value stands at 0.710 and a T-value of 22.845. The solid positive relationship shows that positive attitudes produce significant growth in PBC because people with favorable local tourism feelings tend to demonstrate better capability regarding their behavioral involvement. The relationship between attitude and PBC demonstrates strong statistical evidence because its beta value reaches 0.710, and its corresponding T-value achieves 22.845. The study conducted indicated that personal beliefs concerning behavior capability develop from the impact attitudes have on assessment methods related to activity execution (Raman et al., 2024). Travelers who experience more significant benefits than local tourism risks will develop stronger feelings (Schweiggart et al., 2025).

H3: The statistical results showed that the beta value is 0.331, and the T-value measures 5.400. The betas of 0.331 with T-values at 5.400 represent a significant positive association between social influences and perceived norms and the IV. The beta value between SN and IV was found to be 0.331, and the T-value reached 5.400, which suggests a significant positive relationship

between these variables. The research demonstrated that peers' social beliefs directly shape people's thoughts about visiting destinations (Schweiggart et al., 2025). Furthermore, research studies prove that people tend to let peer opinions guide their decisions in health situations (Hock et al., 2024).

H4: The T-value is 3.119 when analyzing the relationship between PBC and IV, while beta stands at 0.198. A positive relationship exists according to these paths but remains less significant than previous relationships, indicating that PBC strengthens IV measurement. PBC and IV showed a positive relationship through a path coefficient of 0.198 and T-value of 3.119, but this relationship remains weaker than that of the other paths analyzed. The research findings demonstrate that PBC affects intentions, but its strength is less significant than attitudes or social norms (Gaitan et al., 2024). Lastly, intention formation depends on perceived control based on research evidence, yet this factor works alongside social influences and attitudes (Gaitan et al., 2024).

H5: The statistical analysis demonstrated a positive and significant correlation between attitude and PBC, which leads to IV based on a T-value of 3.034 and a beta value of 0.140. Attitudes demonstrate both a direct and an indirect effect on intentions because they strengthen PBC. The TPB supports this discovery because positive attitudes enable control perception in behavior execution. A study confirmed that the formation of positive attitudes about local tourism increases the belief that people can handle essential arrangements related to travel (Badawi et al., 2024). The results from past studies demonstrate that positive attitudes generate stronger perceptions of behavioral control, which drives increased intentions for specific behaviors (Ivanov et al., 2024).

Table 2. Hypothesis Testing

Path direction	Beta value	Standard Deviation	T-value	Decision
A-> IV	0.363	0.066	5.539	Accepted
A-> PBC	0.710	0.031	22.845	Accepted
SN -> IV	0.331	0.061	5.400	Accepted
PBC -> IV	0.198	0.063	3.119	Accepted
A-> PBC -> IV	0.140	0.046	3.034	Partially Mediation

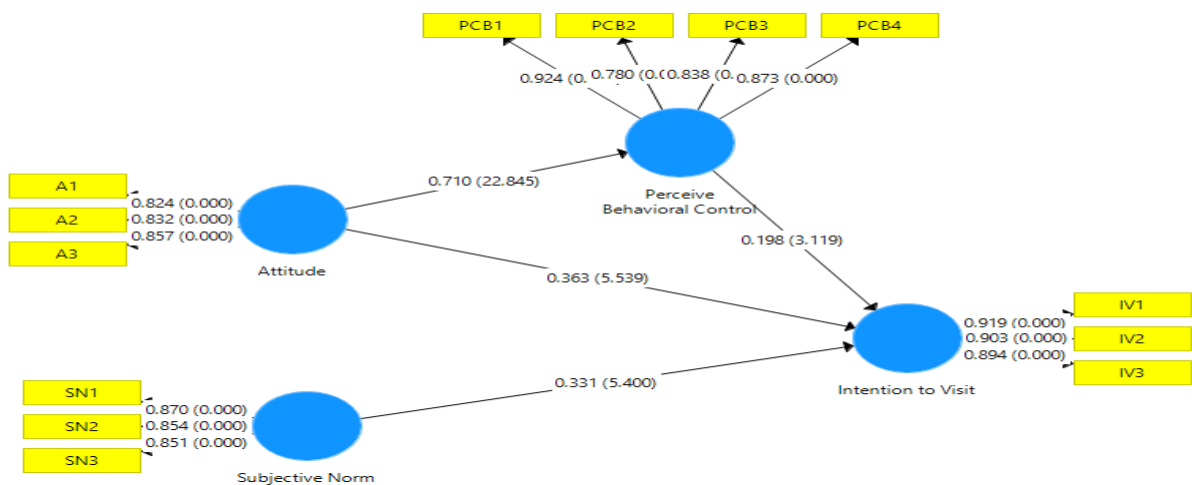


Figure 2. Structural model

Conclusion

This research evidenced that university students' intentions to direct their local place visits are based on attitudinal and social norms, while perceived behavioral control is a vital linking factor. Positive social surroundings and attitudes lead students to participate in local tourism activities. The research emphasizes that students need access to necessary information and resources, making them feel self-confident enough to make decisions to fill the gap between behavioral intentions and actual conduct. The research findings will help local policymakers and community leaders develop tourism recovery strategies to attract students to local attractions while implementing sustainability principles that match their educational values. The research results add essential field knowledge while demonstrating the importance of initiatives focusing on potential tourist perspectives regarding acceptance and control feelings.

Practical Implication

The study's findings reinforce the role of attitude and subjective norms in shaping university students' intention to visit the local places in the post-COVID-19 environment and the mediating role of perceived behavioral control. It means that, for policymakers and local businesses, attitudes toward local tourism and social norms that encourage visits can significantly influence student behavior. It could have strategies such as focusing on local tourism, advertising the benefits thereof, showing safety measures that would be in place, and ensuring that the event they promoted would attract this demographic. In addition, increasing students' perceived control through clear healthcare protocol information, making transportation available to them, and offering incentives to visit local attractions can bridge the gap between positive attitude and visitation intention. By aligning strategies with these insights, the stakeholders will better support the revival of local tourism that is in line with the values and preferences of the student population.

Limitation of study and future research directions

The study comprises several restrictions that need acknowledgment. Firstly, the research results may not apply broadly because the study population includes university students only. Secondly, data obtained from self-report methods might introduce biased results because respondents tend to answer with socially desirable answers rather than reveal genuine motives. Thirdly, this study only collected data at one selected time and faced restrictions in determining long-lasting patterns or cause-effect relationships between variables. Fourthly, the analysis excluded variables affecting perceived behavioral control, individual risk perception characteristics, cultural backgrounds, and differences in tourist travel experience. Additional research addressing these study restrictions will lead to a stronger understanding of variables affecting tourist intentions after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Funding: This study received no specific financial support.

Institutional Review Board Statement: The Ethical Committee of Bahria University Karachi, Pakistan has granted approval for this study on 09 December 2024 (Ref. No.0452).

Transparency: The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Authors' Contributions: All authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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