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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Cruise Tourism in Japanese Coastal Cities: The Role of Revisit and Word-of-Mouth Intentions as Proxies for Behavior

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ABSTRACT

This two-wave study was conducted within Japan's cruise tourism landscape to augment existing research and delve into an understudied area by evaluating the role of destination revisit and word-of-mouth (WOM) intentions as surrogates for self-reported behaviors in inbound tourism. The study employs partial least squares structural equation modeling to analyze data collected in 2018 and 2022, exploring the relationships among overall satisfaction, repeat visitation rate, distance, and revisit and WOM intentions. The analysis of the estimation partition, consisting of 580 valid first-wave responses, helps isolate the critical factors associated with overall satisfaction, such as destination attractiveness, transportation, prices, and tourist attractions and facilities. Based on 77 valid responses gathered in the second wave, which as a sample size has been deemed sufficient for a post-hoc power analysis, the findings significantly reveal that cruise goers' intentions correlate with self-reported behaviors for revisits and WOM, with intentions explaining 14.4% and 9.3% of the variance observed in the respective behaviors. These results emphasize intentions' multifaceted role in predicting tourist behavior, underscoring the importance of context-specific constructs in tourism management and unveiling potential pathways for further exploration. The conclusion offers insights that may guide future research and industry practices in crafting strategies to enhance visitor satisfaction and loyalty.

Keywords: Cruise tourism, Intention, Repeat visitation, Satisfaction, Word-of-mouth

Introduction

Cruise visitors' behaviors have increasingly attracted researchers' attention as passenger volumes grow (Casado-Díaz et al., 2021). Many cruise goers view their destination visits as formative experiences, shaping their decisions to revisit the same destinations by cruise or land (Teye & Paris, 2010). Researchers and destination management organizations (DMOs) often predict this revisit behavior through intentions to revisit and recommend (Chi & Qu, 2008; Hallak et al., 2018). However, empirical tourism studies examining this relationship between intention and behavior are nonexistent for inbound visitors. Furthermore, existing two-wave studies targeting domestic tourists report explanatory powers of less than 8% for revisit intention (RI; Pike, 2006; Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007; Hsu & Huang, 2012). Consequently, some researchers question the validity of RI as a proxy for behavior in tourism (McKercher & Tse, 2012). Similarly, a dearth of two-wave studies investigating tourists' word-of-mouth (WOM) intentions is found with regard to predicting WOM behavior.

Cruise tourism is an ideal context for studying the intention-behavior dichotomy for three main reasons: (1) surveying cruise goers immediately after their visit minimizes recall bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003), (2) targeting cruise goers enables sampling from multiple coastal destinations within a country, overcoming the generalizability limitation, and (3) cruise goers' experiences in different coastal cities share similarities in terms of length of stay, motivation, and mode of exploration, thus reducing potential confounding effects. In the study of cruise tourism, Japan stands out as a unique destination with multiple coastal attractions. Despite the popularity of these Japanese destinations, few studies have investigated cruise tourist behavior in Asia, a gap that is important to bridge as cruise goers form a distinct group of inbound tourists. Cruise goers spend less time at the destination, rely more on planned sightseeing tours and transportation, and depend less on culinary and accommodation establishments (Ozturk & Gogtas, 2016; Penco & Di Vaio, 2014). This may lead to disparate levels of overall satisfaction and likelihoods of revisitation between cruise goers and land-based visitors. For instance, while cruise goers may react more strongly to individual experiences, land-based visitors, who often spend more time at the destination, may not be deterred by an isolated negative encounter during

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the initial day of an extended stay. Therefore, understanding cruise goers' experiences and behaviors in Japan is vital for DMOs and cruise companies operating in Asia.

The present study aims to address the gaps noted above by focusing on three objectives: 1) investigate the relationship between the intentions and self-reported behaviors of cruise goers to Japan; 2) examine how factors such as distance, repeat visitation rate, and overall destination satisfaction impact cruise goers' intentions; and 3) explore the destination attributes that contribute to cruise goers' overall destination satisfaction in Japanese coastal cities. By utilizing omnibus surveys conducted in two waves in 2018 and 2022 and by applying partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) for analysis, this research emphasizes its uniqueness through a twofold contribution to tourism research: Firstly, it moves beyond single-city cross-sectional studies to analyze multi-city and year-long primary data for inbound cruise goers. Secondly, it pioneers a two-wave exploration of the suitability of revisit and WOM intentions as proxies for reported destination revisits and recommendations among inbound cruise goers.

Literature Review

Satisfaction and Intention

That overall satisfaction with a product is closely linked to attribute satisfaction has been well established (Oliver, 1993). Chi & Qu (2008) confirmed this link for destinations regarding land-based tourists. Likewise, researchers have observed similar correlations for cruise goers (Brida et al., 2012; Satta et al., 2015). However, the specific attributes contributing to destination attribute satisfaction may vary by market. For instance, Whyte (2018) reported that North American cruise goers prioritize cleanliness, beautiful scenery, weather, ease of access, and diverse scenery. In Asia, Sun et al. (2019) studied Chinese cruise goers' satisfaction with onshore experiences, reporting the importance of diverse attractions and shops, as well as the attractiveness of sightseeing attractions. Furthermore, Tao & Kim (2019) reinforced that onshore attributes significantly affect cruise goers' destination satisfaction in Asia. Therefore, satisfaction with specific destination attributes influences attribute satisfaction, which in turn affects overall satisfaction. To this end, Hypothesis 1 has been adapted (Alegre & Cladera, 2006; Ozturk & Gogtas, 2016), with attribute satisfaction being measured through items related to destination attractiveness, tourist attractions and facilities, and transportation (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Kozak, 2001), as well as other items that have been proven in the context of cruise tourism (Alegre & Cladera, 2006; Ozturk & Gogtas, 2016).

H_1: Attribute satisfaction exerts a positive influence on overall satisfaction with the destination.

Loyalty, satisfaction, and WOM have been subjects of extensive research (De Matos & Rossi, 2008; Chi & Qu, 2008). Oliver (2015) broke down loyalty into four components: cognitive, affective, conative, and action, with the first three corresponding to attitudinal loyalty and the last to behavioral loyalty (Han & Hyun, 2012). Destination RI reflects the conative loyalty phase; it serves as one way to operationalize loyalty and is a precursor to behavioral loyalty (Oliver, 2015). Ajzen's (1985, 1991) theory of planned behavior (TPB) further explains this relationship between intention and action. Another crucial factor in loyalty formation is satisfaction, an antecedent of behavioral intention (Gotlieb et al., 1994). Many tourism studies have supported this, affirming that overall satisfaction is associated with revisit and WOM intentions (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Hosany & Witham, 2010). Some researchers have found a significant short-term relationship between overall satisfaction and RI (Jang & Feng, 2007), while others confirm the long-term connection (Bigné et al., 2009). Cruise tourism literature also supports this association (Brida et al., 2012; Satta et al., 2015). For instance, Sanz-Blas et al. (2017) reported destination satisfaction and perceived quality to be antecedents of revisit and WOM intentions. In Asia, Chang et al. (2016) underscored the significance of destination satisfaction for revisit and WOM intentions among cruise goers to South Korea. Hence, Hypotheses 2 (Alegre & Cladera, 2006) and 3 (Ozturk & Gogtas, 2016) have been formulated in accordance with the reviewed literature.

$H2$: Overall satisfaction with the destination positively impacts the intention to revisit.

$H3$: Overall satisfaction with the destination positively impacts the intention to engage in WOM communication.

Distance, Past Repeat Visitation, and Intention

TPB suggests intention translates into behavior, barring hindrances like cost and cooperation (Ajzen, 1991). In tourism, distance can act as a constraint on revisiting a destination (McKercher, 2018). Models investigating the impact of distance on RI have confirmed its inhibitory role (Moutinho & Trimble, 1991; Ozturk & Gogtas, 2016; Um et al., 2006). Therefore, the distance between the tourist's point of origin and destination can act as a barrier variable, diminishing the likelihood of RIs (Gabe et al., 2006). This variable can be measured using either travel time or Euclidean distance (Nicolau & Mas, 2006). The current study adopts the latter approach, thereby indirectly accounting for travel costs, time, and budgets (Ahn & McKercher, 2015). Accordingly, Hypothesis 4 has been adapted (Ozturk & Gogtas, 2016) in alignment with Ajzen (1991) and Moutinho and Trimble (1991); this

hypothesis asserts that the distance between the visitor's city of residence and destination city negatively affects the likelihood of RI for both repeat cruises and land-based trips.

*H*4 : The distance between the destination city and the visitor's city of residence has a negative effect on RI.

A combination of background factors such as age, familiarity, and repeat visitation rate can play a role in shaping RIs (Alegre & Cladera, 2009; Gitelson & Crompton, 1984; Moutinho & Trimble, 1991; Prentice & Andersen, 2000). For cruise goers, factors such as age, time spent in port, gender, perceived value, quality, repeat visitation rate, and value for money emerge as potential influential variables (Gabe et al., 2006; Petrick, 2004; Silvestre et al., 2008). In this context, repeat visitation rate is equivalent to repeat purchasing behavior, which is a characteristic of the last three phases of Oliver's (1999) four-phase loyalty framework. In tourism, Oppermann (2000) found that past repeat visitation rates can predict revisits within a retrospective framework. Consequently, previous visit frequency is expected to correlate positively with the intention to return, as encapsulated in Hypothesis 5 (Alegre & Cladera, 2006).

*H*5 : Past repeat visitation rate positively impacts the intention to revisit.

Intention and Behavior

Research in marketing literature reveals that repurchase and recommendation intentions predict behavior (Keiningham et al., 2007). Although tourism studies have yet to examine the relationship between intention and behavior for inbound or cruise tourism, three existing studies have suggested a positive correlation between intention and self-reported behavior regarding domestic tourism (Pike, 2006; Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007; Hsu & Huang, 2012). Pike (2006) explored short-distance domestic travel by car in Australia with surveys conducted three months apart. Kaplanidou and Vogt (2007) focused on sport tourists visiting a small town in the USA using structural equation modeling (SEM) for data collected within a year after the first wave. Hsu and Huang (2012) examined visitors from major Chinese cities traveling to Hong Kong and applied ordinary least squares regression within a six-month timeframe. The same relationship is expected to hold for inbound cruise goers, many of whom view their destination visit as a sample experience. In an attempt to fill the existing research gap and better capture revisit behavior, this study extends the timeframe for assessing revisit behavior to three years for inbound tourism, in contrast to the shorter time spans commonly found in the current literature on domestic tourism. Consequently, the following hypothesis has been adapted from Hsu and Huang (2012), extending the inquiry period to a three-year timeframe instead of the three-month, six-month, and two-year periods utilized in prior studies.

*H*6 : The intention to revisit positively impacts self-reported revisit behavior.

Many tourism studies (Chi & Qu, 2008; Hallak et al., 2018) have used revisit and WOM intentions to operationalize loyalty, building upon the seminal work by Zeithaml et al. (1996). However, the role of WOM intentions as a proxy for behavior remains underexplored in inbound tourism. One notable exception is Naylor and Kleiser's (2000) study in the hospitality industry; they identified a marginal link between WOM intention and the behavior of resort visitors in the USA. Consistent with the connection between RI and behavior as described by TPB, WOM intention is anticipated to lead to corresponding behavior (activity) and valence (praise; De Matos & Rossi, 2008). This proposition is nuanced, as negative WOM is often more prevalent than its positive counterpart (East et al., 2007). The hypothesis that WOM intention positively impacts WOM valence acknowledges the multifaceted nature of WOM dynamics. While negative WOM is common in some contexts, positive WOM can prevail when specific conditions are met, such as experiences that lead to high satisfaction levels or unique characteristics at a tourist destination that may foster positive WOM. East et al.'s (2007) research has provided further insights into these conditions. In the context of the current study, the hypotheses have been formulated based on cruise goers' experiences of the destination. Recognizing the constructs that define the quantity (frequency) and favorableness (valence) of WOM communication (Harrison-Walker, 2001) and drawing on Oliver's (2015) approach, Hypotheses 7 and 8 explore WOM intention's influence on both WOM behavior and valence in a nuanced manner. Figure 1 illustrates all the stated hypotheses.

*H*7 : The intention to engage in WOM communication positively impacts self-reported WOM behavior.

*H*8 : The intention to engage in WOM communication positively impacts WOM valence.

Research Methodology

Based on the identified gaps and challenges, several actions were taken to build a sound methodology to address the developed hypotheses. To reduce any common method bias that may arise from common rater and measurement context effects, different scales and anchor points were employed for the predictor and criterion measures by gathering data in two waves (Podsakoff et al., 2003). A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure both attribute satisfaction (AS) and overall destination satisfaction (OS), with the inclusion of a "not applicable" option (Chi, 2012; Chung & Petrick, 2013). Following Cronin and Taylor (1992) and Füller

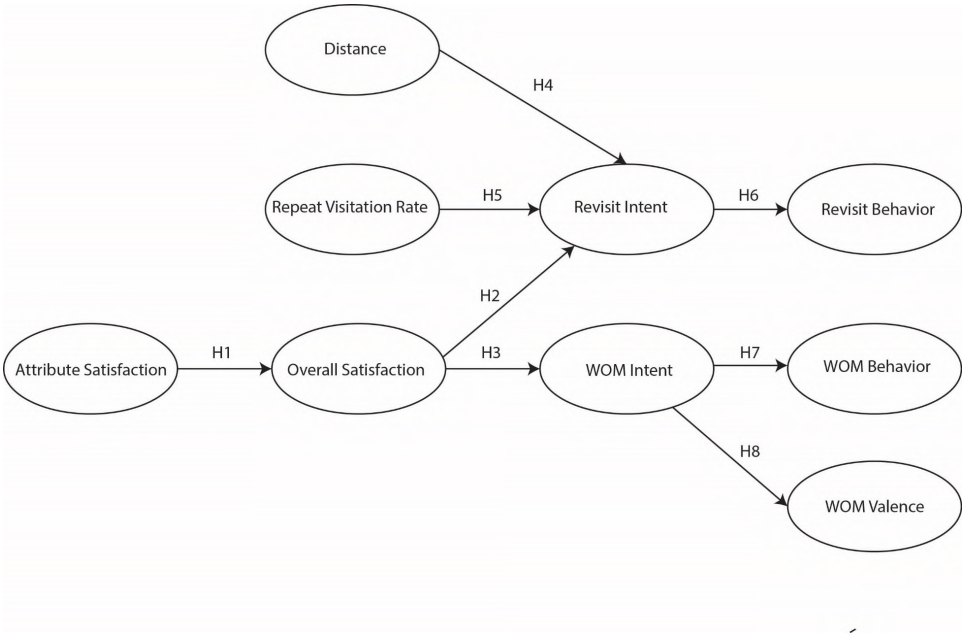

Figure 1. The hypotheses tested.

and Matzler (2008), these scales were anchored from "very unsatisfied" (1) to "very satisfied" (5). For attribute satisfaction, 10 items were adapted from Alegre and Cladera (2006), eight items from Kozak and Rimmington (2000), and two items from Kozak (2001). These specific items were chosen because they have been validated in similar studies for measuring tourist satisfaction, such as those related to accommodations, climate, destination attractiveness, hospitality, prices, social life, tourist activities, tourist attractions and facilities, and tranquility. For RI and intention to recommend, the Juster scales were used (Kerr et al., 2012). A single question was used for the likelihood of WOM intention (WI; Hosany & Witham, 2010; Taplin, 2013), and another to gauge RI (Kim et al., 2011; Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007; Taplin, 2013). However, importance is had in noting that the time horizon used here spans three years, divergent from the two-year timeframe employed by Kaplanidou and Vogt (2007). Information was also gathered on the respondents' past repeat visitation rate (RVR) using a ratio scale (Campo-Martínez et al., 2010), along with residence information and demographic details.

Before administering the survey, the instrument was pilot tested in Yokohama in 2017. Surveys were then conducted for the crew and passengers visiting Japan on 33 occasions in 2018. For every month of 2018, ships were chosen at random, resulting in a diverse list of locations throughout the country, as depicted in Figure 2. The survey sites span cities from north to south, including Fukuoka, Hakodate, Hiroshima, Ishigaki, Kagoshima, Miyako, Nagasaki, Naha, Osaka, Shimonoseki, Sakaiminato, Shimizu, and Yokohama. For the description and analysis of the first wave, the focus is on passenger data for 15 instances from July to December, pertinent to the hypotheses being tested and designated as the estimation partition. The remaining data from 18 cases before July, defined as the holdout data set, was used for split-sample validation. Participants provided their informed consent before completing the surveys, which were made available in Chinese, Korean, and English. Bilingual interviewers were trained to assist in conducting the surveys at each location. The ethics committee approval of this study was obtained from Soka University Institutional Review Board for Human Research (Date: 21.09.2017; Number: 29052). Due to a lack of a sampling frame, port access restrictions that eliminated the possibility of contacting all incoming passengers, and pilot test experiences, the convenience sampling approach was used. This approach aligns with previous research in similar settings (Hung & Petrick, 2011; Hsu & Huang, 2012).

For the first wave, data from 596 passengers surveyed in the latter half of 2018 were analyzed. While several items were initially adapted to measure attribute satisfaction, items with an indicator loading greater than 0.708 were selected, resulting in a final set of nine items for this construct. Missing value analysis eliminated 16 cases, corresponding to less than 3%. The remaining 580 cases had missingness values of less than 5% for all variables except for distance (7.2%) and repeat visitation rate (10%), which are not excessive (Hair et al., 2018). Separate variance t-tests and Little's test for Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) were nonsignificant as well. Consequently, missing data values were remedied via mean replacement (Hair et al., 2018). To address validity issues due to the adapted single-item scales, t-tests were used to compare first-time visitors and repeat visitors for overall satisfaction, revisit, and WOM intentions (Um et al., 2006), the assumption being that these two groups should be similar in satisfaction but differ in the latter two constructs (Chi, 2012). As expected, repeat visitors had significantly higher intentions than

Figure 2. Survey locations.

first-time visitors ($p < 0.01$); repeat visitors also had greater satisfaction levels, but the difference was not significant ($p = 0.432$). These results were replicated for the holdout partition for the first half of 2018 and demonstrate robustness ($p < 0.01$, $p = 0.596$).

For the second wave in 2022, the pretest and modifications due to the pilot test resulted in a 15-item survey. This paper focuses on three of those items. A minimum three-year window between the original visit in 2018 and the second wave in 2022 was intentionally scheduled to allow participants ample time to return to the cities they had visited. Two items asked the participants about the number of revisits and WOM frequency since their visit in 2018 using the ratio scales adapted from Kaplanidou and Vogt (2007) and Oliver (2015), respectively. WOM frequency was specifically measured by asking respondents about how many people they had talked to concerning the good or bad things about their visit to the destination city. The question did not differentiate among the mediums of WOM, as this was not a concern for this study. The third item used a 7-point Likert scale for WOM valence (WV) and was adapted from Oliver (2015), asking participants, "Did you tell these people mostly positive or mostly negative things about your visit to [the city name]?"

Participants from the first wave, including those from the holdout dataset, were contacted by email. The web-based survey was available from February-May 2022, with four follow-up reminders. Matching between the subjects of the two waves was accomplished using the email addresses provided in the first wave. Of the 557 emails sent successfully, 94 responses were received, resulting in a 17% response rate. However, the response rate for residents of China was low at 5%. As a result, the analysis for the second wave only focuses on respondents who do not reside in China, for whom the response rate was 28%. Although this rate is low, it is similar to those typically observed in web-based surveys (Beldona & Cobanoglu, 2007). For instance, a two-wave domestic tourism study by Hsu and Huang (2012) that utilized postal and email-based correspondence in China had a 21.4% response rate. T-tests were used to address the validity issue that may arise due to the lower-than-desired response rate by comparing early and late respondents for three key metrics: the number of revisits, WOM frequency, and WOM valence. No significant differences were found between these two subsegments. Respondents were also compared to nonrespondents for the critical metrics in the study's first wave via t-tests, and no significant differences were found in the revisit and WOM intention metrics (Armstrong & Overton, 1977; Lindner et al., 2001).

As stated above, the removal of Chinese respondents had resulted from a low response rate of 5%, which could introduce bias if retained. Noteworthily, the study's design did not emphasize or analyze cultural differences, and the exclusion was based on statistical considerations to help maintain the integrity of the results. After removing responses from residents of China and crew members, the resulting data consist of 77 responses. When considering the smaller data set and the fact that the focus of the second wave is on examining the link between intention and behavior, the latent variable of attribute satisfaction was also excluded from the model that was used. Excluding this variable allows the study to concentrate on the primary objectives of the second wave analysis. The percentage of missingness for all variables was less than 5.2%. Separate variance t-tests found significance in only two comparisons for WOM valence, and Little's MCAR test was nonsignificant, allowing the use of mean replacement (Hair et al., 2018). To address the single-item scale validity, first-time visitors were compared with repeat visitors regarding the number of revisits, WOM frequency, and WOM valence (Um et al., 2006). The only multiple-wave study within the context of hospitality found that prior experience is a marginal predictor of WOM valence ($p = 0.06$) but not of WOM activity ($p = 0.09$; Naylor & Kleiser, 2000). Therefore, t-tests were conducted using these assumptions, as well as the assumption that repeat visitors are more likely to revisit (Oppermann, 2000). The results confirmed the average number of revisits and WOM valence scores to be significantly greater for repeat visitors ($p = 0.04$, $p = 0.00$, respectively). On the other hand, even though WOM activity was greater for repeat visitors, the difference was not statistically significant ($p = 0.85$).

The regression-based hierarchical linear modeling was deemed to be inappropriate due to the same constructs not being repeatedly measured during both waves. Examining the Q-Q plot of Mahalanobis distance (Burdenski, 2000; Nunkoo et al, 2013) and z-values calculated from the skewness and kurtosis values shows that multivariate normality could not be assumed (Hair et al., 2018). Non-normality and the presence of metric and non-metric variables imply that PLS-SEM is better suited for understanding the predictive role of intentions for behavior than using covariance-based SEM (Hair et al., 2018; Evermann & Tate, 2016). All the calculations used SPSS 27.0.1.0 and SmartPLS 4.0.6.7 (Ringle et al., 2022). The consistent PLS-SEM (PLSc-SEM) algorithm was employed to correct for the reflective constructs' correlations. Before analyzing the results, the data were examined for outliers. Two potential outliers were detected in the first set, and five in the second. Nevertheless, they were retained as they were considered representative. Common method bias was checked using a variance-based technique for both data sets by measuring for full collinearity through variance inflation factors (VIF) for all constructs. All VIF values were determined to be less than 2.2, much lower than the recommended 3.3 value (Kock & Lynn, 2012), thus indicating common method bias to not be prevalent in this study.

Results

As shown in Table 1 for the first wave, most survey respondents are female, married, and traveling with others. The age groups are well represented, with a higher percentage of passengers being under 40. This observation aligns with research conducted in Asian contexts but diverges from findings in North America and Europe (Chen et al., 2016). Additionally, the passenger demographics reveal a predominantly well-educated cohort, with the number of passengers originating from China surpassing the total number of visitors from North America and Europe. The majority traveled with family or a partner, reflecting a preference for group travel, a common observation in cruise tourism, especially among Asian travelers who often emphasize communal experiences and shared enjoyment (Sun et al., 2019). Most of the surveys focused on Kyushu Island, followed by Okinawa and Honshu. Table 2 displays the statistics for the key variables in the first wave of the PLSc-SEM Model. Of the 20 attribute satisfaction items initially adapted, nine items that met the selection criteria outlined in the methodology (indicator loadings greater than 0.708; Hair et al., 2021) were kept for the attribute satisfaction construct. Destination attractiveness items (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000) and transport services received high ratings, while attributes such as shopping, tourist attractions, prices, and sightseeing tours received lower ratings, with the lowest average value being 3.72. Overall satisfaction is high at 4.15, which is comparable with results obtained in previous studies whose values range from 3.99 in Italy (Satta et al., 2015) to 4.49 in Aruba (DiPietro & Peterson, 2017).

The likelihood of RI is low at 50%, but that of WOM intention is higher at 68.6%. These low values are unsurprising because most cities surveyed are distant from top destinations like Tokyo. However, 86% of respondents were first-time visitors, so it is essential to pinpoint factors contributing to this low RI rate. The results confirm the positive correlation between repeat visitation rate and RI ($r = 0.182$, $p < 0.01$; Oppermann, 2000) and the negative correlation between distance and repeat visitation rates ($r = -0.173$, $p < 0.01$; McKercher & Tse, 2012). Before using the PLSc-SEM algorithm, the Pearson correlation coefficients were also examined, with overall satisfaction being found to positively correlate with RI ($r = 0.128$, $p < 0.01$) and intention to recommend ($r = 0.415$, $p < 0.01$).

As shown in Table 3, all item reliabilities for attribute satisfaction exceed 0.708, composite reliability is within the recommended range of 0.7-0.95, and the average variance extracted meets the minimum threshold of 0.5. Based on a bootstrap of 10,000 subsamples, the heterotrait monotrait (HTMT) method showed all values to be less than 0.85 and significantly lower than one. The correlation matrix in Table 4 shows that distance negatively correlates with repeat visitation rate and RI (McKercher & Tse, 2012). Overall satisfaction is strongly related to attribute satisfaction and correlates with behavioral intentions (Alegre & Cladera, 2006).

Table 1. *First-Wave Visitor Profile (July-December).*

	%		%
Gender:		*Traveling:*	
Female	58.8	Alone	3.1
Male	41.2	With a partner	37.3
Age:		With family	45.8
18-29 years	19.0	With a travel group	13.8
30-39 years	25.9	*Residence:*	
40-59 years	26.1	China and Taiwan	52.9
60+ years	29.0	USA	15.8
Marital status:		Australia	9.1
Married	72.3	UK, Germany, and France	7.1
Single	20.3	Canada	5.6
Separated/Widowed/Divorced	5.2	Korea	0.2
Cohabitation	2.1	Others	9.3
Education:		*Destinations:*	
High School or below	10.3	Kyushu	46.9
Some College	19.7	Okinawa	32.3
College Degree	39.1	Honshu	20.8
Postgraduate and beyond	30.9		
Income:			
Less than $50,000	28.8		
$50,001-$100,000	32.8		
$100,001-$150,000	17.9		
$150,001 or more	20.5		

Repeat visitation rate is also associated with behavioral intentions, but at a lower level (Oppermann, 2000). Attribute satisfaction correlates with behavioral intentions and has a stronger association with WOM intention than RI. Finally, WOM intention and RI are also associated with one another, thus supporting convergent, discriminant, and nomological validity (Hair et al., 2018).

The examination of VIF values (all less than 3 with the largest equaling 1.085) indicates that collinearity is not an issue (Hair et al., 2018). Bootstrapping with 10,000 subsamples demonstrates that all path coefficients are statistically significant. Hence, the data support the initial five hypotheses stated at the outset. Table 5 illustrates that overall satisfaction has a greater impact on WOM intention than on RI, which is consistent with previous research (Chang et al., 2016). As McKercher and Tse (2012) noted, distance is the most impactful factor on RI. Lastly, overall satisfaction is more impactful than repeat visitation rate for estimating RIs (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000). All three values for repeat visitation rate, distance, and overall satisfaction appear to be low; however, a strong connection exists between attribute satisfaction and overall satisfaction. The positive path coefficients for hypotheses *H1, H2, H3*, and *H5* and the negative coefficient for *H4* support the theoretical framework, suggesting a complex interplay among satisfaction, distance, and intentions.

Table 2. *Descriptive Statistics for The First Wave (July-December).*

Constructs	Items	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Overall Satisfaction	Overall Travel Experience in the City Visited	4.15	0.981	-1.356	1.783
Attribute Satisfaction					
	Shopping	3.72	1.093	-0.670	-0.165
	Sightseeing Tours	3.92	1.058	-0.789	0.081
	Prices	3.93	0.968	-0.799	0.450
	Tourist Attractions	3.96	1.056	-0.925	0.366
	Restaurants and Food	4.11	1.028	-1.171	0.925
	Transportation	4.17	1.060	-1.376	1.393
	Hospitality	4.55	0.952	-2.480	5.714
	Safety	4.56	0.888	-2.557	6.697
	Cleanliness	4.60	0.877	-2.742	7.670
WOM Intention	How likely is it that you will recommend city visited as a tourist destination to others?	6.86	2.620	-0.589	-0.476
Revisit Intention	How likely is it that you will visit this city again within the next three years?	5.00	3.062	0.108	-1.090
Repeat Visitation Rate	Including this trip, I have made ___ trips to this city	1.48	1.974	8.190	94.037
Distance	LogDist	3.50	0.424	0.051	-1.609

The model estimates 62.4% of the variance for overall satisfaction with an f^2 effect size of 1.835, demonstrating the large effect of the exogenous construct of attribute satisfaction on overall satisfaction. The R^2 for overall satisfaction is close to the values reported by Chung and Petrick (2013) and Kozak and Rimmington (2000). The R^2 value for RI is 11%, which is relatively low but comparable with the results reported by Um et al. (2006) and Murphy et al. (2000), which range from 8%-14%. This low value is expected, due to the model not including additional predictors such as image and motivation and a competing model with different predictors not being the present study's focus. The f^2 effect sizes for repeat visitation rate, overall satisfaction, and distance on RI are 0.023, 0.039, and 0.066, respectively, which are all small. However, the impact of distance is again relatively larger than that of overall satisfaction and repeat visitation rate. Finally, the R^2 value for WOM intention is larger than that for RI, but still low at 17.2%. This is not of concern for the reasons previously stated regarding RI. Overall satisfaction has a medium effect on WOM intention, with an f^2 effect size of 0.208, which is consistent with the idea that overall satisfaction plays a larger role in predicting WOM intention than RI (Chang et al., 2016).

Table 3. *Measurement Model Statistics for The First Wave (July-December).*

Construct		Loadings	AVE	CR	a
Attribute Satisfaction	Items		0.544	0.915	0.915
	Shopping	0.766			
	Sightseeing Tours	0.716			
	Prices	0.713			
	Tourist Attractions	0.721			
	Restaurants and Food	0.732			
	Transportation	0.785			
	Hospitality	0.760			
	Safety	0.713			
	Cleanliness	0.728			

Table 4. *Nomological Validity For The First Wave (July-December).*

	AS	LogDist	OS	RVR	WI	RI
AS	1					
LogDist	0.188**	1				
OS	0.805**	0.227**	1			
RVR	0.014	-0.173**	-0.033	1		
WI	0.386**	0.251**	0.415**	0.094**	1	
RI	0.12*	-0.234**	0.128**	0.182**	0.482**	1

Significance level: * = .05, **=.01

Table 5. *Path Coefficients for The Structural Model for The First Wave (July-December).*

Hypotheses	Structural Relationships	Path Coefficients	Sample mean	T statistics	P values	95% Confidence Intervals
H1	AS->OS	0.81	0.80	37.04	0.000	(0.759, 0.844)
H2	OS->RI	0.19	0.19	4.27	0.000	(0.104, 0.277)
H3	RVR->RI	0.15	0.15	4.46	0.000	(0.093, 0.219)
H4	LogDist->RI	-0.25	-0.25	6.26	0.000	(-0.328, -0.170)
H5	OS->WI	0.42	0.42	9.24	0.000	(0.327, 0.503)

The studentized residuals and leverage plots were examined for outliers, identifying one potentially influential case; however, the results were not significantly different after its removal. The post hoc minimum sample size was also checked to confirm that the sample size met the requirement for a 5% significance level and 90% power for all relationships tested. Finally, the path coefficient confidence intervals were recalculated using the holdout dataset for split-sample validation. All path coefficients were significant

($p < 0.001$), and coefficients from the estimation and holdout datasets did not significantly differ from one another, thus indicating robustness.

For the data analysis in the second wave, the approach outlined in the methodology was followed by excluding the latent variable of attribute satisfaction from the model due to the smaller data set and the primary focus on testing the relationship between intention and behavior. Only 11.7% of the respondents returned to the cities they had visited in 2018, but 96.1% discussed their visit with others. The HTMT method with a bootstrap of 5,000 subsamples resulted in values less than 0.420, which is statistically significantly different from a value of 1. Table 6 shows overall satisfaction to correlate with intention and behavior, except for RI, for which the correlation is not statistically significant. Furthermore, WOM intention is observed to correlate with WOM valence and WOM behavior (WB). Finally, RI is associated with revisit behavior (RB). These results support the discriminant and nomological validity.

Table 6. *Latent Variable Score Correlations for The Second Wave.*

	LogDist	OS	RVR	WB	WI	RB	RI	WV
LogDist	1.00							
OS	0.273	1.00						
RVR	0.013	0.112**	1.00					
WB	0.076	0.230*	-0.103	1.00				
WI	0.081	0.420**	0.041	0.305**	1.00			
RB	0.024	0.183**	0.093	0.142	0.181**	1.00		
RI	-0.031	0.147	-0.043	0.114	0.348**	0.379**	1.00	
WV	0.080	0.077	0.103**	0.341**	0.291*	0.083	0.009	1.00

Significance level: * = .05, **=.01

Collinearity is also not a concern for the second wave, as all VIF values are less than 3. The results derived from a 5,000-subsample bootstrap (see Table 7) lend support to Hypotheses 6-8. The post-hoc minimum sample size required for a 5% significance level and 80% power is less than 77 for Rows 1-4 in Table 7. Therefore, only these four relationships can be interpreted, which forms a limitation for this study. As a result, intention is a statistically significant antecedent of both behaviors ($p < 0.01$). Furthermore, WOM intention is a potential precursor to WOM valence ($p = 0.05$); however, caution should be exercised as the p value equals 5%.

Table 7. *The Structural Model Path Coefficients for The Second Wave.*

Hypotheses	Structural Relationships	Path Coefficients	Sample mean	T statistics	P values	95% Confidence Intervals
H6	RI->RB	0.379	0.368	4.022	0	(0.161, 0.529)
H7	WI->WB	0.305	0.3	3.467	0.001	(0.104, 0.457)
H8	WI-> WV	0.291	0.29	1.964	0.05	(0.005, 0.576)
	OS->WI	0.42	0.425	4.849	0	(0.249, 0.585)
	OS->RI	0.175	0.178	1.557	0.119	(-0.043, 0.397)
	LogDist->RI	-0.078	-0.047	0.49	0.624	(-0.347, 0.264)
	RVR->RI	-0.062	0.015	0.344	0.731	(-0.228, 0.391)

Table 8 shows small effect sizes for WOM intention and medium effect sizes for RI and overall satisfaction. All predictors are statistically significant, with low predictive ability. However, the 14.4% R^2 value obtained for revisit behavior in this study is much larger than those in previous studies for domestic tourists, which were reported as 4.8% in China and 7% in the USA (Hsu & Huang, 2012; Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007). Lastly, the absence of influential outliers is confirmed by examining residuals versus leverage plots.

Table 8. *R^2 and Effect Sizes For The Second Wave*

	Endogenous Constructs			
Predictor Construct	WB	WI	RB	WV
OS		0.215		
WI	0.102			0.093
RI			0.168	
R_2	0.093	0.177	0.144	0.085

Conclusions and Implications

A conspicuous absence of empirical studies examining the intention-behavior relationship is found in the context of inbound tourism. While researchers and DMOs anticipate revisit behavior through revisit intention (RI) and intention to recommend (Chi & Qu, 2008; Hallak et al., 2018), empirical investigations of this relationship have been largely nonexistent. Moreover, despite the popularity of Japanese destinations among cruise goers, the research addressing cruise tourist behavior in Asia remains limited. Given this context, this study pioneers a two-wave exploration into the suitability of RI and WOM intention as surrogates for reported behaviors among cruise goers. This study also advances the theoretical understanding of tourist behavior in Japan by elucidating how intentions, behaviors, and destination attributes interplay within the complex tourism landscape via eight hypotheses. Building upon past research regarding the link between intention and revisit in domestic tourism, three major conclusions have emerged in the context of inbound cruise tourism.

The primary conclusion is that cruise goers' intentions correlate with self-reported behaviors for revisits and WOM. Although the non-experimental design prevents causal inferences, the empirical study supports the antecedent role of intentions, allowing for a more solid assessment of the proxy role of intention regarding behavior in inbound tourism. However, despite their significant role, intentions explain 14.4% and 9.3% of the variance observed in the respective revisit and WOM behaviors, which surpasses the explanatory powers observed of 4.8% in China and 7% in the USA. The larger values in this study may stem from the extended timeframe, the heterogeneous sample, or the travel motivation differences between cruise goers, sport tourists, and the general tourist population. The low explanatory power of intention observed in tourism studies is partly due to temporal factors. Ajzen (1985) stated that the time that elapses between the stated intention and the manifested behavior is inversely proportional to the accuracy of the prediction. Hence, when predicting tourist behavior, intention may have a limited role. Moreover, revisiting a destination may also be construed as a goal. Therefore, as Sheppard et al. (1988) noted, Fishbein and Ajzen's (1980) theory of reasoned action (TRA) performs inferiorly regarding goal prediction. In TRA and TPB studies, R^2 values for behavior range from 0.19-0.38 (Sutton, 2006). All three studies on tourism that have investigated the antecedent role of intention, including the present study, have reported R^2 values less than 0.15 (Hsu & Huang, 2012; Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007). Therefore, difficulty is had in arguing intention to be useful as a standalone proxy for tourist behavior (Sutton, 2006). Consequently, tourism professionals are recommended to use context-specific constructs in conjunction with intention to serve as a proxy. The predictive power of intention on behavior regarding WOM is noteworthily lower than that for RI, thus further exploration of WOM intention's proxy role on behavior is required.

The second salient point concerns the relative role of distance in predicting revisit intentions compared to overall satisfaction and repeat visitation rates. Previous research has been limited to single-city cross-sectional studies and been unable to fully capture temporal effects across multiple destinations. The present study is distinctive in that it has relied on year-long, multi-city primary data for inbound cruise goers, corroborating that however satisfied cruise goers are, they are less likely to revisit the greater the distance they need to travel. This result behooves tourism authorities to subsegment potential visitors based on proximity to the destinations and repeat visitation rates when developing campaigns to incentivize revisits. This conclusion has been substantiated by split-sample validation and is importantly not limited to a single city or season. Therefore, the findings contribute to a nuanced understanding of the spatial factors regarding tourist behavior beyond the confines of single-city analyses by employing a more comprehensive year-long, multi-city dataset.

The third conclusion pertains to cruise goers' satisfaction with destination attributes, expanding upon the influential characteristics observed elsewhere. Notably, safety and prices have been key in both this study and others conducted in Hawaii, Europe,

and South America (Satta et al., 2015; Alegre & Cladera, 2006; Silvestre et al., 2008; Brida et al., 2012; Ozturk & Gogtas, 2016). The subsequent implication is that surveys targeting cruise goers should gauge satisfaction with four essential factors: destination attractiveness, transportation, prices, and tourist attractions and facilities. These are also vital for land-based visitors; however, the services provided during tours and the quality of transportation infrastructure are more critical for cruise goers who evaluate destinations based on their limited exposure. Furthermore, stakeholders should heed these factors when developing coordinated strategies to elevate cruise goers' experiences and to foster RIs. These strategies should focus on diversifying shopping options, improving sightseeing tours, offering competitive pricing, highlighting tourist attractions, ensuring culinary excellence, enhancing transportation infrastructure, prioritizing hospitality and safety measures, and maintaining cleanliness. For example, DMOs can collaborate with tech companies to create augmented reality guides for passengers to enhance their exploration of attractions by providing informative and engaging digital content and elevating their engagement and satisfaction with the destination.

Moreover, despite the high satisfaction with destination attributes, some dissatisfaction exists with the shopping environment, short visit durations, and information about the visited sites (see Table 3). As noted above, collaboration between port bureaus and cruise operators can address this by enhancing the information about attractions and shopping options near the terminals. Additionally, extending the time ships spend at a port could encourage passengers to spend more time exploring the destination. The responses to the open-ended questions indicate that discounted airfares and accommodation, easily accessible public transport information in English, and the availability of ride-hailing companies that can be booked in English may increase the likelihood of revisits. Thus, port authorities and the Japan Tourism Agency (JTA) are recommended to collaborate further to improve the aspects noted in Table 3. For instance, regarding the price attribute, targeted discounts offered to potential inbound visitors could incentivize revisits to less well-known destinations in Japan. During the pandemic, JTA implemented the Go to Travel Campaign, which covered a portion of domestic tourists' expenses (Kelleher, 2020). When considering the role of distance decay, designing similar city-specific campaigns that offer inbound visitors discounted bundled packages (e.g., air, train, hotel, sightseeing, and food) is recommended. These could target inbound visitors who travel greater distances than the average visitor, who traverses approximately 5,313 km to visit Japan. Doing so could increase revisits to the cities noted in this study.

Limitations and Future Research Opportunities

While this study provides novel insights, recognizing the potential limitations in generalizing findings across diverse contexts within cruise tourism is important. A critical assessment is warranted for three main facets of the study. First, the low response rate among residents of China during the second wave prevented the generalization of results and limited the analysis to 77 valid responses. Although small, this dataset was deemed sufficient for a post-hoc power analysis. By comparison, the two-wave study by Naylor and Kleiser (2000) based its conclusions on 97 valid responses. However, residents of China being excluded from the second wave does not invalidate the results, analysis, or conclusions drawn for the first wave or the remaining subset of visitors for the second wave. Securing higher response rates in future research could provide a more robust interpretation of all paths in the structural model.

Second, although the passengers were asked about their travel intentions either via a cruise or land-based trip for the three years following the first wave in 2018, all visitors on average had 21.5 months to revisit the destinations before pandemic-related travel restrictions took effect. Given that the intention to travel's predictive power for actual travel decreases over time, this time horizon is sufficient for capturing revisits by loyal visitors. It is also much longer than the three-month, six-month, and one-year timeframes previous studies had adopted. Nonetheless, future studies may explore extending this period to examine the actualization of intentions over longer periods.

The third limitation lies in the use of single-item scales in the omnibus surveys. Although all scales were drawn from the literature and validated through t-tests, replicating results with multiple-item scales in future studies is recommended. Furthermore, not all findings may be extrapolated to the broader cruise market, thus necessitating cross-validation through two-wave studies encompassing cruise goers visiting other coastal cities. Lastly, passengers surveyed in the first wave were those who had time to participate. Addressing these challenges and exploring alternative surrogate measures for repeat visitation and WOM behaviors represent potential future research areas.

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