

Article

Destination Inclusivity in Sustainable Heritage Tourism: The Roles of AI Literacy, Halal Literacy, and Information Quality: Evidence from Tana Toraja

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Abstract

The study examines relationships linking AI literacy, halal literacy, information quality, destination inclusivity, perceived value, destination preference, and visit intention in Muslim tourists' evaluations of Tana Toraja, a culturally distinctive non-Muslim heritage destination. Owing to the predominance of respondents without prior experience visiting Tana Toraja, the findings primarily concern anticipated perceptions and prospective visit intentions, not actual post-visit evaluations. The study contributes to tourism scholarship through a unified empirical framework connecting established constructs from AI-driven tourism, halal tourism, and inclusive heritage tourism. Data from 371 respondents were collected through an online survey and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Results show that AI literacy significantly affects information quality and halal literacy, suggesting that digitally literate tourists are better positioned to filter and verify AI-mediated travel information. Halal literacy positively affects destination inclusivity and perceived value, while information quality enhances inclusivity, preference, and visit intention. Perceived value also strengthens inclusivity and preference, and destination preference strongly predicts visit intention. Overall, the findings suggest that trustworthy AI-mediated information, practical halal understanding, and perceived inclusivity may help reduce uncertainty among Muslim prospective tourists considering culturally distinctive heritage destinations.

Keywords: heritage tourism; consumer behaviour; SDGs; destination marketing; sustainable tourism development



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1. Introduction

Heritage tourism has grown worldwide, driven by travelers' pursuit of authentic cultural encounters, historical narratives, and emotionally meaningful experiences beyond conventional leisure. Recent tourism studies position heritage destinations not only as educational or historical sites, but as spaces linked to identity formation, spiritual reflection, emotional attachment, and intercultural engagement [1,2]. Parallel to this growth, Muslim tourism has developed into one of the most dynamic segments of international travel [3]. Muslim travelers are consequently more willing to visit non-Muslim destinations, including heritage sites, where cultural sensitivity, halal-friendly facilities, and reliable tourism information are available [4]. The pattern aligns with a wider inclusive tourism agenda focused on accessibility, cultural respect, psychological comfort, and social acceptance for diverse visitor groups [5]. Digital information is increasingly relevant in the tourism environment, with tourists relying on online platforms, social media, review systems, and AI-supported applications before travel decisions are made [6]. Accurate, accessible, and credible digital information can reduce uncertainty, strengthen destination trust, and improve perceived inclusivity for Muslim travelers entering culturally unfamiliar heritage destinations.

Tana Toraja has long been recognized as one of Indonesia's most distinctive heritage tourism sites, owing to its strong ancestral traditions, living rituals, and unique cultural landscapes that persist amid modernization. The area is renowned internationally for its elaborate funeral ceremonies, tongkonan traditional houses, cliff burials, hanging graves, and stone tombs, which symbolize the continuity of Torajan cosmology and social identity [7]. Unlike many heritage sites that primarily focus on preserving physical artifacts, Tana Toraja embodies a living heritage in which rituals and communal traditions are actively practiced in daily life [8]. This distinctiveness has enhanced Toraja's role within Indonesia's tourism branding strategy, particularly by promoting cultural diversity and authentic indigenous experiences for both domestic and international visitors [9]. Despite its rich cultural appeal, Tana Toraja is not widely associated with halal tourism, given its roots in non-Muslim traditions and practices. Thus, Muslim travelers may face uncertainty regarding halal food options, worship facilities, and unfamiliar rituals [3]. Nonetheless, recent tourism discussions indicate that non-Muslim heritage destinations still have significant potential to develop inclusive tourism environments by providing accessible information, cultural sensitivity, and halal-friendly services [10]. The key issue in Tana Toraja concerns more than the availability of halal-related services. It concerns how a living heritage destination grounded in non-Islamic rituals can pursue greater inclusivity without weakening the cultural authenticity giving the destination its meaning. For Muslim travelers, inclusivity may include psychological comfort, respectful interpretation of local rituals, transparent information about food and prayer facilities, and clear guidance on appropriate visitor behavior. From the host destination's perspective, inclusivity should not recast heritage into a standardized halal tourism product. It should support access, respect, and understanding, and preserve the symbolic and ritual integrity of Torajan culture.

The tourism sector has shifted from an emphasis on destination appeal toward destination inclusivity as an important dimension of sustainable and responsible tourism development. Destination inclusivity refers to an environment where visitors from diverse cultural, religious, ethnic, and social backgrounds feel welcomed, respected, psychologically safe, and socially accepted [5]. Recent research reports that contemporary travelers evaluate destinations beyond physical attractions and entertainment, paying close attention to perceived cultural openness, accessibility, and emotional comfort [2]. For Muslim travelers, inclusivity holds particular importance, given that travel experiences depend on halal-friendly facilities, prayer spaces, trustworthy information, and respect for Islamic values in non-Muslim destinations [4]. Psychological comfort consequently contributes

to travel satisfaction and destination choice for Muslim tourists in culturally unfamiliar settings [3]. Although halal tourism and destination competitiveness have gained considerable scholarly attention, limited research has examined destination inclusivity in heritage tourism, particularly in places with strong non-Muslim cultural identities [11]. The gap points to the need to investigate how perceptions of inclusivity develop in culturally distinctive heritage destinations.

Progress in artificial intelligence has reoriented tourists' pre-trip search practices and destination evaluation. Travelers increasingly rely on AI-powered platforms, recommendation systems, chatbots, virtual assistants, and generative AI tools for personalized information on destinations, accommodation, transportation, attractions, and cultural experiences. AI-mediated information, however, is not automatically reliable. Tourists may encounter inaccurate recommendations, algorithmic bias, fabricated content, fake reviews, and overload of information, particularly in relation to culturally sensitive rituals, halal food, or prayer facilities. In such conditions, AI literacy gains importance. The term refers to individuals' capacity to understand, evaluate, and critically interpret AI-generated information, enabling tourists to compare sources, assess credibility, and avoid dependence on unverified machine-generated content.

AI literacy is treated in the present study as more than technological proficiency. It represents a critical capacity for filtering, verifying, and interpreting AI-mediated tourism information in relation to local conditions. A tourist who is proficient in using AI tools may lack the religious, cultural, or legal knowledge needed to evaluate halal-related claims accurately. AI literacy can facilitate access to and evaluation of halal information only if the relevant sources are credible, up to date, and transparent. The distinction is particularly relevant in Tana Toraja, where Muslim tourists may depend on digital information to develop expectations before visiting a heritage destination grounded in non-Muslim traditions.

Research on halal tourism and digital travel behavior has grown considerably, but several gaps continue to receive limited scholarly attention. Most studies examine Muslim-majority destinations, including Malaysia, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, and halal-certified regions in Indonesia, whereas non-Muslim heritage destinations attracting Muslim travelers have received far less attention [3]. Heritage tourism scholarship largely prioritizes cultural preservation, tourist experience, and authenticity, leaving halal accessibility, religious inclusivity, and Muslim travelers' psychological comfort insufficiently examined [11]. Empirical inquiry into AI literacy in tourism is similarly limited, particularly concerning its role in tourists' perceptions and destination decisions [6]. Existing studies generally examine halal literacy, information quality, and destination perceptions separately, producing a fragmented account of their interrelationships in tourism decision-making [12]. Few conceptual models combine AI literacy, halal literacy, information quality, and destination inclusivity in a unified framework for culturally distinctive heritage destinations. Moreover, Tana Toraja has received little scholarly attention from an inclusive heritage tourism perspective for Muslim travelers, notwithstanding its rich cultural identity and growing popularity. The present study responds to the identified gaps through a unified model explaining Muslim tourists' destination preferences and visitation intentions toward Tana Toraja.

Thus, the study examines relationships linking AI literacy, halal literacy, information quality, destination inclusivity, destination preference, and visit intention toward Tana Toraja, a heritage tourism destination. Given the substantial proportion of prospective tourists in the sample, the findings are interpreted primarily in terms of anticipated perceptions and stated intentions, not direct observations of actual post-visit behavior. The proposed model assigns destination inclusivity a mediating role connecting trustworthy information, halal understanding, and perceived value with destination preference

in a culturally distinctive setting. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is employed to test the hypothesized relationships and estimate multiple pathways across the proposed behavioral model.

2. Literature Review

2.1. AI Literacy

AI literacy has become increasingly important in the digital era, especially with the rapid integration of artificial intelligence across fields such as education, communication, commerce, and tourism. Typically, scholars define AI literacy as the ability to understand, evaluate, engage with, and critically utilize AI technologies in daily decision-making. Wang et al. [13] describe it as a set of skills that enable individuals to assess AI critically, communicate effectively with AI systems, and grasp the social impacts of AI use. Similarly, Ng et al. [14] view AI literacy as a multidimensional skill encompassing technical knowledge, ethical awareness, critical thinking, and the practical use of AI. Bayakhmetova et al. [15] add that AI literacy is not only about technological skills but also includes recognizing misinformation, algorithmic bias, and manipulative AI-produced content. While these definitions emphasize critical understanding and responsible AI use, they differ in scope; some focus on cognitive and technical skills, while others include ethical, social, and behavioral aspects. For instance, Airaj [16] argues that AI literacy should include awareness of the social consequences and ethics of human–AI interactions, while Kong et al. [17] emphasize operational understanding and user interaction. Despite these differences, there is consensus that AI literacy involves more than just technological familiarity; it also concerns the ability to make informed decisions in AI-driven environments.

In tourism research, AI literacy has gained importance as tourists increasingly depend on AI-powered platforms, recommendation systems, virtual assistants, chatbots, and generative AI tools to find travel information. Recent research indicates that tourists with higher AI literacy are better positioned to assess the quality of digital information, identify trustworthy sources, and use AI recommendations cautiously in trip planning. This does not mean that AI-literate tourists automatically trust AI outputs; rather, AI literacy helps users calibrate trust, compare AI-generated claims with official or human-verified sources, and recognize when algorithmic outputs may be incomplete or misleading. Empirical research on AI literacy in tourism remains limited compared with broader studies of technology adoption. Most tourism research focuses on AI acceptance, service robots, smart tourism innovations, and AI-driven customer experiences, rather than on tourists' skills and critical understanding of AI-generated data. Research linking AI literacy specifically to heritage tourism is also scarce, especially in culturally sensitive and religiously diverse destinations like Tana Toraja.

2.1.1. AI Literacy and Information Quality

Recent research has indicated growing importance to AI literacy in users' evaluation of information quality across digital environments. AI literacy equips users to assess AI-generated content critically, distinguish credible sources, interpret algorithmic recommendations, and limit exposure to misinformation and manipulation. In tourism, its contribution may emerge through four mechanisms, namely critical filtering of low-quality or fabricated content, uncertainty reduction through source comparison, confidence adjustment during reliance on verified information, and evaluative reframing of culturally or religiously sensitive claims. For Muslim tourists considering Tana Toraja, AI literacy may support judgments concerning the credibility of information on halal facilities, local rituals, prayer access, and visitor guidelines, distinguishing dependable information from machine-generated or socially circulated claims. AI literacy, thus, represents an important

cognitive capacity in tourists' evaluation of destination information across AI-mediated tourism environments. Based on these arguments, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1. *AI literacy will have a significant impact on information quality.*

2.1.2. AI Literacy and Halal Literacy

Existing research has paid limited attention to the relationship between AI literacy and halal literacy. Nevertheless, AI literacy can support halal literacy by strengthening tourists' capacity to access, compare, and evaluate halal-related information through AI-mediated and digital platforms. Technological proficiency alone does not produce religious or jurisprudential understanding of halal standards. A tourist may use AI tools effectively and nonetheless lack the ability to judge whether claims about halal food, certification, or religious compatibility are valid. AI literacy is better viewed as a facilitating condition. It helps tourists locate relevant halal information, compare sources, and detect unreliable content, if credible and transparent information sources are available. In Tana Toraja, where non-Muslim cultural elements are prominent, AI-literate tourists may be better prepared to evaluate information on food options, prayer facilities, local customs, and religious access before travel. The proposed relationship is interpreted cautiously through an information-access and source-verification pathway, not a direct progression from technological competence to religious knowledge. Based on these arguments, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2. *AI literacy will have a significant impact on halal literacy.*

2.2. Halal Literacy

Halal literacy has attracted growing scholarly attention amid Muslim consumers' stronger interest in halal principles across contemporary consumption and tourism activities. The concept generally encompasses knowledge, awareness, comprehension, and evaluative capacity concerning products, services, and activities in accordance with Islamic guidelines and halal standards. Multiple scholars frame halal literacy in cognitive terms, emphasizing its role in distinguishing halal from non-halal practices and incorporating Islamic values into everyday decision-making [18]. Lim et al. [19] conceptualize halal literacy through consumers' knowledge of halal principles, certification systems, production processes, and religious compliance. Rahmanto et al. [20] extend the concept toward its informational dimension, emphasizing individuals' capacity to access, interpret, and verify halal-related information in digital environments. Existing definitions converge around awareness, comprehension, and informed decision-making, though their conceptual boundaries differ. Some definitions prioritize religious compliance and product legitimacy, whereas broader accounts incorporate ethical, cultural, health, and lifestyle considerations [10].

In tourism research, halal literacy is often studied in halal tourism destinations, Muslim-friendly hotels, halal restaurants, and Islamic travel services, where tourists' understanding influences trust, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions [3]. However, few studies have investigated halal literacy in heritage tourism, especially in places with strong non-Muslim cultural identities. Existing research tends to emphasize authenticity, cultural preservation, and visitor experience, with little focus on tourists' awareness of halal issues during heritage visits [11]. Nonetheless, the increasing number of Muslim tourists visiting non-Muslim heritage sites suggests that halal literacy will become increasingly vital for helping travelers assess cultural practices, food availability, worship facilities, and religious comfort in diverse tourism settings such as Tana Toraja.

2.2.1. Halal Literacy and Destination Inclusivity

Previous studies have largely failed to examine the direct impact of halal literacy on perceptions of destination inclusivity. Nevertheless, related evidence suggests that a better understanding of halal principles can influence tourists' views on whether a destination is welcoming, safe, and respectful of religious needs. In Tana Toraja, this relationship is particularly meaningful because Muslim tourists may face uncertainty about pork-centered local food practices, prayer access near remote ritual sites, and the symbolic discomfort that may accompany participation in funeral or burial-related heritage experiences. Halal literacy enables Muslim tourists to assess halal food options, worship facilities, service ethics, and cultural compatibility, thereby reducing uncertainty when traveling to places where Islamic facilities may not be immediately visible. Because halal-literate tourists can better recognize halal-friendly cues, religious accommodations, and culturally respectful services, they are likely to perceive greater destination inclusivity even within a non-Muslim heritage setting. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3. *Halal literacy will have a significant impact on destination inclusivity.*

2.2.2. Halal Literacy and Perceived Value

Multiple previous studies suggest that halal literacy can enhance perceived value, as individuals with a better understanding of halal principles tend to evaluate products, services, and destinations more positively when their religious expectations are met. Halal literacy enables Muslim consumers to recognize halal attributes, assess religious compliance, and determine whether their experiences align with Islamic values, thereby boosting perceived benefits and reducing psychological risks [18]. In halal tourism, Muslim travelers with higher halal awareness often perceive greater emotional, functional, and spiritual value when destinations offer halal-friendly facilities and culturally respectful services [21]. Similarly, research on halal hospitality shows that knowledge of halal improves perceptions of service quality, trust, and destination worth, as travelers feel more confident and comfortable during their trips [22]. Although studies directly linking halal literacy and perceived value in heritage tourism are limited, evidence indicates that Muslim tourists visiting non-Muslim cultural sites still evaluate destinations positively when adequate halal information and religious accommodations are available [10]. In culturally distinctive places like Tana Toraja, halal-literate tourists may perceive greater value because they can more readily identify halal-compatible experiences in unfamiliar environments. Overall, halal literacy can enhance perceived value by increasing tourists' confidence, emotional comfort, and enjoyment of the destination. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4. *Halal literacy will have a significant impact on perceived value.*

2.3. Perceived Value

Perceived value is a key topic in consumer behavior and tourism research, as it captures tourists' overall assessment of the benefits they receive relative to the sacrifices they make during their experiences. Generally, scholars define perceived value as tourists' subjective judgment of the usefulness, worth, or desirability of a product, service, or destination, based on perceived benefits relative to monetary, emotional, social, and functional costs. Previous studies view perceived value as a trade-off between what consumers gain and what they give, a concept that continues to influence modern tourism studies. More recent research expands perceived value into a multidimensional concept, including emotional, functional, social, epistemic, and experiential values derived from tourism [23]. Correspondingly, Bayakhmetova et al. [15] see perceived value as tourists' cognitive and emotional assessments concerning destination quality, authenticity, enjoyment, and overall

satisfaction. While these definitions all emphasize tourists' evaluative judgments, they differ on which dimensions are most important. Some focus mainly on economic and functional aspects, while others highlight emotional fulfillment, symbolic meaning, and experiential enrichment in tourism contexts [24]. In heritage tourism, perceived value often relates to authenticity, cultural learning, historical immersion, and emotional ties to heritage. Heritage tourists tend to perceive greater value when destinations offer meaningful cultural stories, memorable experiences, and chances for identity exploration [2]. Research also shows that perceived value in heritage tourism goes beyond material satisfaction, as tourists seek emotional connection, cultural appreciation, and psychological enrichment during their visits [11]. Nonetheless, limited research has examined perceived value from the perspective of Muslim tourists visiting non-Muslim heritage destinations, particularly the relationships linking halal understanding, destination inclusivity, digital information, and value perceptions. The issue warrants closer scholarly attention in Tana Toraja, where visitors engage with distinctive cultural heritage amid religious and cultural differences.

2.3.1. Perceived Value and Destination Inclusivity

Previous research has rarely examined the direct relationship between perceived value and destination inclusivity. Available findings link higher perceived value to stronger perceptions of welcome, meaningfulness, and responsiveness to diverse visitor needs. Perceived value represents tourists' evaluation of functional, emotional, social, and experiential benefits in relation to the costs and efforts of travel [25]. In tourism, perceived value enhances satisfaction, trust, loyalty, and behavioral responses because valuable experiences foster positive emotional judgments about destinations [26]. In halal tourism, perceived value also mediates the effect of halal-friendly features on destination trust and visit intention, highlighting that Muslim tourists prefer destinations that alleviate religious uncertainty and offer psychological comfort [26]. In accessible tourism, an inclusive destination image is shaped by attributes that make different visitor groups feel accommodated, safe, and recognized [27]. Heritage tourism research shows that perceived value contributes to memorable experiences and positive behavioral outcomes, though its direct link to destination inclusivity has not been explored in Muslim heritage sites like Tana Toraja [28]. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5. *Perceived value will have a significant impact on destination inclusivity.*

2.3.2. Perceived Value and Destination Preference

Previous research generally indicates that perceived value enhances destination preference, as tourists tend to favor locations offering greater functional, emotional, social, cultural, and experiential benefits over competing options. In tourism studies, perceived value has been linked to improved satisfaction, destination image, loyalty, and behavioral intentions because it reflects the tourist's judgment that the destination justifies the time, money, effort, and psychological commitment involved in travel [29]. Specifically, in cultural heritage tourism, perceived value directly affected satisfaction and loyalty among international visitors to the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long, showing that meaningful heritage experiences can positively influence destination evaluation. Similar findings appear in heritage tourism, where perceived value contributed to memorable experiences and post-visit behavioral responses, emphasizing that tourists prefer destinations offering rich cultural interpretation and emotional enrichment [30]. In halal-friendly tourism, perceived value also impacted Muslim tourists' trust and intention to visit, especially when destinations minimized religious uncertainty and offered supportive travel conditions [26]. Nonetheless, there is limited direct research on how perceived value affects destination preference, specifically in Muslim heritage tourism, particularly in non-Muslim heritage

sites like Tana Toraja. In such contexts, Muslim tourists who see Tana Toraja as culturally significant, emotionally fulfilling, and religiously manageable are likely to develop stronger destination preferences. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6. *Perceived value will have a significant impact on destination preference.*

2.4. Destination Inclusivity

Destination inclusivity has gained importance in modern tourism studies as destinations strive to welcome visitors from diverse backgrounds, including various cultures, religions, ethnicities, genders, and social groups. In this study, destination inclusivity is conceptualized as a multidimensional perception comprising five related facets: cultural acceptance, psychological safety, respect for religious identity, accessibility of information, and the availability of religiously appropriate services. Cultural acceptance refers to whether visitors feel that their background is welcomed rather than merely tolerated. Psychological safety captures feelings of comfort, security, and freedom from discrimination. Respect for religious identity concerns whether Muslim tourists feel able to maintain religious practices without social discomfort. Information accessibility refers to clear, understandable, and trustworthy guidance about local customs, halal options, facilities, and visitor expectations. Religiously appropriate services include practical supports such as halal food information, prayer spaces, and service sensitivity. Together, these facets are especially relevant in heritage tourism because heritage sites often have strong local identities, customs, and cultural meanings that can seem unfamiliar to visitors. In Tana Toraja, inclusivity should therefore be understood not as replacing Torajan heritage with Muslim-oriented services, but as enabling respectful access to a living non-Muslim heritage destination.

Destination Inclusivity and Destination Preference

Recent tourism research increasingly indicates that destination inclusivity can positively affect tourists' preferences, as travelers are more likely to choose places where they feel welcomed, respected, emotionally at ease, and culturally accepted. This inclusivity reflects tourists' perceptions that a destination caters to diverse cultural, religious, and social needs, thereby easing psychological discomfort and fostering emotional bonds with the place [5]. Multiple studies have shown that inclusive tourism settings significantly enhance tourists' evaluations, satisfaction, and propensity to revisit, as visitors view such destinations as safer, more welcoming, and better aligned with their personal identities [31]. In culturally diverse tourism environments, inclusive experiences boost tourists' emotional connections and positive attitudes, which in turn increase their destination preference [2].

In heritage tourism, inclusivity is especially crucial because heritage sites often feature unfamiliar traditions, symbolic meanings, and culturally sensitive experiences that may impact tourists' emotional comfort [11]. Although limited research has specifically examined how destination inclusivity influences Muslim tourists' preferences for non-Muslim heritage sites, recent studies suggest that culturally respectful environments that accommodate religious needs can positively influence Muslim travelers' evaluations and choices [10]. For example, at destinations like Tana Toraja, tourists who perceive greater inclusivity tend to develop a stronger preference for the destination, feeling more psychologically secure and culturally accepted despite differences in traditions and religious backgrounds. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H7. *Destination inclusivity will have a significant impact on destination preference.*

2.5. Information Quality

Information quality is a crucial concept across information systems, digital marketing, and tourism because tourists increasingly rely on digital platforms to search for, evaluate, and compare destination-related information before traveling. It generally refers to users' perceptions of the accuracy, relevance, completeness, reliability, timeliness, and usefulness of information. In the present study, information quality refers specifically to AI-generated and AI-mediated tourism information about Tana Toraja, including information obtained through generative AI assistants, chatbots, AI-enabled recommendation systems, and digital platforms that algorithmically organize travel content. This scope is important because the quality of official destination information, user-generated reviews, social media content, and generative-AI outputs may differ substantially. Although this study measures information quality as a single construct, future research should separate source-specific information quality, especially official information, user-generated content, and AI-generated advice, because each source may produce different levels of trust, accuracy, and perceived usefulness.

2.5.1. Information Quality and Visit Intention

Previous research indicates that information quality is a key predictor of visit intention, as tourists rely on accurate, relevant, complete, timely, and trustworthy information when choosing a destination. In digital tourism, strong information quality enhances destination image and trust. While the quality of firm-generated tourism information clearly impacts behavioral intention, user-generated information may influence it indirectly through trust and image [32]. In studies of overseas travel, tourism information quality boosts travel intention by positively shaping tourists' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control [33]. Research on social media and destination marketing shows that credible, useful content increases destination awareness and encourages visits [34]. In halal tourism, digital information is especially vital, as Muslim tourists need reliable details about halal food, worship facilities, accommodation, and religious services before traveling [35]. However, in Muslim heritage tourism, direct evidence is limited; most studies focus on authenticity, local culture, perceived value, and memorable experiences rather than halal-specific information quality [36]. In Tana Toraja, high-quality information can reduce uncertainty among Muslim tourists by clarifying cultural practices, halal access, and available facilities. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H8. *Information quality will have a significant impact on visit intention.*

2.5.2. Information Quality and Destination Preference

Previous tourism studies suggest that information quality can influence destination preference, but direct evidence is less common than studies linking information quality with destination image, trust, attitude, and visit intention. Information quality encompasses the accuracy, relevance, completeness, timeliness, and credibility of destination-related information. When tourists perceive this information as useful and trustworthy, they are more likely to evaluate the destination favorably and choose it over competitors. Wang and Yan [37] found that high-quality tourism information on social media enhances travel intention via trust and self-congruity, implying that reliable information makes tourists see the destination as personally suitable. Li et al. [32] further showed that firm-generated content significantly improves destination image, trust, and behavioral intentions, while user-generated content influences these factors more indirectly through evaluative mechanisms.

In eWOM research, Yadav et al. [38] demonstrated that information cues shape destination preference and travel intentions, especially among highly involved tourists. In heritage

tourism, evidence is limited, but Maulina et al. [36] indicated that digital information and electronic word-of-mouth can influence tourists' responses towards heritage sites. For Tana Toraja, accurate information about heritage meanings, local customs, halal facilities, and accessibility may reduce uncertainty and increase Muslim tourists' preference for the destination. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H9. *Information quality will have a significant impact on destination preference.*

2.5.3. Information Quality and Destination Inclusivity

Even though the direct impact of information quality on destination inclusivity has rarely been explicitly examined, related research suggests that accurate, complete, accessible, and trustworthy information can influence tourists' perceptions of a destination as welcoming and supportive. High-quality tourism information reduces uncertainty, enhances destination trust, and helps tourists evaluate whether a place can meet their needs before traveling [37]. In digital tourism contexts, information quality affects destination image, trust, and behavioral intentions, indicating that reliable information encourages tourists to develop positive views of a destination's readiness [32]. For Muslim tourists, information about halal food, prayer facilities, cultural norms, and service accessibility is especially vital, as unclear information may cause anxiety and feelings of exclusion [35]. Accessible information is also crucial in inclusive tourism research because tourists from diverse backgrounds need clear guidance to feel safe, respected, and accommodated [27].

In heritage tourism, digital and multilingual information can help make complex cultural meanings more understandable and accessible to a wider visitor audience [39]. Nonetheless, there is limited evidence that this relationship has been directly tested in Muslim heritage tourism contexts, such as Tana Toraja. In this setting, high-quality information may enhance Muslim tourists' perceptions that Tana Toraja is culturally accepting, religiously considerate, and friendly to visitors. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H10. *Information quality will have a significant impact on destination inclusivity.*

2.6. Destination Preference

Destination preference refers to tourists' tendency to favor, prioritize, or choose a specific destination over others based on their evaluations, expectations, emotions, and perceived fit with personal needs. In tourism literature, this preference is often linked to tourists' cognitive and emotional assessments of a destination's attractiveness, value, image, comfort, and expected experiences. Some scholars define destination preference as an individual's comparative evaluation process that results in a stronger inclination to select one destination among various options [40]. Similarly, Tasci et al. [41] suggests that destination preference reflects tourists' psychological attachment and positive attitudes driven by favorable perceptions and anticipated satisfaction. Others emphasize behavioral and motivational aspects, proposing that preference develops when tourists see a destination as capable of fulfilling emotional, cultural, recreational, or spiritual needs [42]. The perspectives converge on evaluation and attitude, though they differ in the determinants prioritized in preference formation. Some studies examine cognitive considerations, including quality, accessibility, and value, whereas others emphasize emotional attachment, symbolism, authenticity, and identity-related experiences [43].

In heritage tourism, destination preference increasingly relates to cultural authenticity, memorable experiences, heritage conservation, and emotional ties to local traditions. Heritage tourists tend to favor destinations with unique cultural stories, historical continuity, and immersive experiences that are not available elsewhere [2]. Several studies show that

perceptions of authenticity, opportunities for cultural learning, and emotional connections with local communities influence tourists' preferences [11]. Nevertheless, little research has examined destination preferences among Muslim tourists visiting non-Muslim heritage sites, particularly regarding inclusivity, halal understanding, and digital information quality. Hence, exploring destination preferences in culturally distinctive areas like Tana Toraja remains a vital focus for future research.

Destination Preference and Visit Intention

Previous tourism studies consistently indicate that destination preference plays a key role in shaping tourists' intention to visit, as travelers are more likely to visit destinations they perceive as attractive, valuable, emotionally appealing, and aligned with their personal expectations. Destination preference reflects tourists' favorable evaluations and comparative choices among alternative destinations, which subsequently influence behavioral intention and travel decision-making [41]. Several empirical studies have demonstrated that stronger destination preference positively affects tourists' intentions to visit, revisit, or recommend destinations across various tourism settings, including cultural, eco-, and urban tourism [42]. Similarly, research by Uslu et al. [43] found that emotional attachment, destination authenticity, and positive destination evaluations significantly strengthen destination preference, thereby increasing visit intention. In heritage tourism contexts, tourists who prefer destinations with distinctive cultural identity, historical authenticity, and immersive experiences tend to exhibit stronger travel intention because they perceive these destinations as capable of fulfilling their experiential and emotional needs [2]. Although few studies have specifically examined this relationship in Muslim heritage tourism contexts, recent research suggests that Muslim travelers' preference for culturally distinctive destinations may significantly influence their intention to visit when destinations are perceived as inclusive, culturally respectful, and psychologically comfortable [10]. In destinations such as Tana Toraja, tourists who develop stronger destination preference through positive perceptions of heritage uniqueness, inclusivity, and destination value are more likely to exhibit stronger intention to visit. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H11. *Destination preference will have a significant impact on visit intention.*

Figure 1 presents the conceptual model that explores Muslim tourists' behavioral intentions toward Tana Toraja as a heritage tourism destination. The model combines AI literacy, halal literacy, information quality, destination inclusivity, perceived value, destination preference, and visit intention within the scope of inclusive heritage tourism. AI literacy is identified as a key factor influencing both information quality and halal literacy, as tourists increasingly rely on AI-driven digital platforms for destination information before traveling. Halal literacy is expected to affect destination inclusivity and perceived value, especially in culturally distinctive destinations where Muslim tourists seek religious understanding and psychological comfort. Information quality is linked to visit intention, destination preference, and destination inclusivity, while perceived value is linked to destination inclusivity and destination preference. Destination inclusivity is expected to enhance destination preference, and destination preference is expected to predict visit intention.

Beyond the direct paths, the model proposes a sequential mechanism linking AI literacy with visit intention through information quality, destination inclusivity, perceived value, and destination preference. The indirect sequence is examined in the discussion and identified as a promising avenue for mediation analysis in future research. The model yields eleven hypotheses. H1 proposes a positive effect of AI literacy on information quality. H2 proposes a positive effect of AI literacy on halal literacy. H3 predicts a positive effect

of halal literacy on destination inclusivity. H4 predicts a positive effect of halal literacy on perceived value. H5 proposes a positive effect of destination inclusivity on destination preference. H6 predicts a positive effect of information quality on destination preference. H7 predicts a positive effect of information quality on destination inclusivity. H8 proposes a positive effect of information quality on destination inclusivity. H9 predicts a positive effect of perceived value on destination inclusivity. H10 predicts a positive effect of perceived value on destination preference. Lastly, H11 proposes a positive effect of destination preference on visit intention.

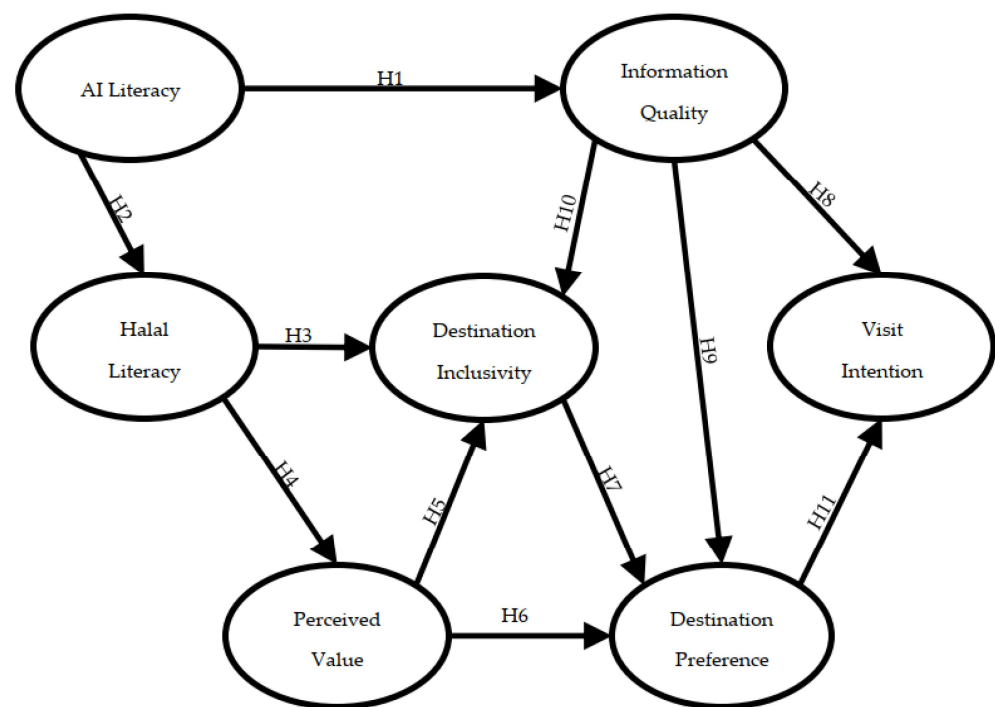


Figure 1. The Research Model.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Sampling

A total of 399 respondents participated in the online survey administered through Microsoft Forms. After the screening process, 371 respondents met the research criteria and were included in the final analysis, representing approximately 92.98% of the total participants. The respondents were required to fulfill several criteria, including being at least 17 years old, having traveled outside their hometown within the previous six months, and being aware of the existence of Tana Toraja. This study employed a self-selected sampling method, in which participation was voluntary, and respondents independently chose to complete the questionnaire. To facilitate respondent recruitment, the study collaborated with Jakpat, an online platform that provides access to potential survey participants. The company promoted the questionnaire to its panel members over a two-day period. As an incentive, respondents were offered the opportunity to participate in a lottery for cash prizes after completing the survey. Since the sample was recruited online and participation was self-selected, the findings should be generalized cautiously and interpreted as stated perceptions and intentions rather than observed travel behavior.

3.2. Measurements

The variables in this study were measured using indicators adapted from previous studies in the fields of tourism, halal tourism, artificial intelligence, and consumer be-

haviour. The AI literacy indicators were adapted from Wang et al. [13], Ng et al. [14], and Doborjeh et al. [6], who conceptualized AI literacy as individuals' capability to understand, evaluate, trust, and utilize AI systems in digital environments. Furthermore, the information quality indicators were derived from Islam et al. [44] and Zhang et al. [45], who explained that information quality reflects the accuracy, relevance, usefulness, understandability, and timeliness of digital information in supporting tourists' decision-making processes. The halal literacy indicators were adapted from Khan et al. [18] and Isa et al. [22], while the destination inclusivity indicators were adapted from Buhalis and Moldavska [5] and Perangin-Angin et al. [31]. In addition, the destination preference indicators were derived from Perry [2], and Genc and Gulertekin [11], whereas the perceived value and visit intention indicators were adapted from Jung et al. [21], Pujiastuti et al. [30], Calder et al. [4], and Suhud et al. [46]. All indicators were contextualized to the heritage tourism setting of Tana Toraja.

Each indicator in this study was measured using a 6-point Likert-type scale to capture respondents' levels of agreement with each statement. The scale consisted of: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = slightly agree, 5 = agree, and 6 = strongly agree. The use of an even-numbered Likert scale was intended to minimize neutral responses and encourage respondents to express clearer evaluative positions regarding AI literacy, halal literacy, destination inclusivity, perceived value, information quality, destination preference, and visit intention. Owing to the large proportion of respondents without prior experience visiting Tana Toraja, responses concerning perceived value, inclusivity, and visit intention are interpreted, for non-visitors, as anticipated perceptions and prospective intentions, not recalled post-visit evaluations. Future studies should phrase such items explicitly in prospective terms, for example, 'I expect that visiting Tana Toraja would be valuable,' when the target respondents include potential visitors. Because several items concern religion, diversity, and inclusion, the study may also be vulnerable to social desirability bias, as respondents could provide normatively acceptable answers rather than fully critical assessments. This issue is addressed as a limitation of the single-source self-administered survey design.

3.3. Data Analysis Methods

The quantitative data in this study were analyzed through four stages. First, validity testing was conducted using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) with IBM SPSS version 31. An indicator was considered valid if it achieved a factor loading of 0.40 or higher. EFA was employed to examine whether each indicator appropriately represented its corresponding construct and to ensure that the measurement items possessed adequate convergent validity before proceeding to the structural analysis stage. Second, reliability testing was performed using Cronbach's alpha with IBM SPSS version 31. A construct was considered reliable if it achieved a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.70 or above, indicating satisfactory internal consistency among the indicators measuring the same latent variable. Third, convergent validity was further evaluated using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with constructs considered acceptable if the AVE exceeded 0.50. According to Hair Jr et al. [47], AVE values above 0.50 indicate that the construct explains more than half of the variance of its indicators, thereby confirming adequate convergent validity.

The fourth stage involved hypothesis testing using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with AMOS version 31. A hypothesis was considered accepted if the Critical Ratio (C.R.) value was equal to or greater than 1.96 with a significance level below 0.05. In addition, model fit was evaluated to assess the structural model's adequacy before interpreting the hypotheses. Several goodness-of-fit criteria were used in this study, including Chi-square probability, CMIN/DF, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA),

Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), and Normed Fit Index (NFI). Following the recommendations of Hair Jr et al. [47] and Kline [48], a model is generally considered fit if CMIN/DF is below 3.00, RMSEA is below 0.08, and incremental fit indices such as CFI, TLI, IFI, and NFI exceed 0.90. Given the directional formulation of all hypotheses and the conceptual proximity of several constructs, discriminant validity and potential method bias were examined carefully during interpretation. Model-fit indices attest to statistical adequacy alone and cannot confirm the absence of conceptual overlap, self-selection effects, or single-source response bias.

4. Results

4.1. Participants

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of 371 participants, comprising 190 males (51.2%) and 181 females (48.8%), with a nearly balanced gender distribution. The largest age group was respondents aged 21–25 years (26.7%), followed by those aged 39+ years (19.1%), indicating that the study included both young adults and mature travelers. Regarding educational background, most respondents had completed undergraduate education (39.9%), followed by diploma holders (10.8%), with postgraduate respondents accounting for 3.8% of the sample. In terms of occupational status, employed respondents dominated the sample (50.4%), followed by unemployed participants (30.7%) and self-employed respondents (18.3%). Furthermore, most respondents were unmarried (55.5%), whereas married respondents accounted for 42.0% of the sample. The findings also show that the majority of respondents had never visited Tana Toraja (66.6%), while 33.4% had previous visiting experience. Given that the majority of respondents had not previously visited Tana Toraja, the findings should be interpreted as reflecting anticipated perceptions and prospective visit intentions rather than actual post-visit evaluations.

Table 1. Profile of Participants.

Profile		Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	190	51.2
	Female	181	48.8
	Total	371	100.0
Age group	>39	71	19.1
	17–20	58	15.6
	21–25	99	26.7
	26–29	45	12.1
	30–34	49	13.2
	35–39	49	13.2
Highest level of education completed	Less than high school	21	5.7
	Diploma	40	10.8
	Postgraduate	14	3.8
	Undergraduate	148	39.9
Occupational status	Employed	187	50.4
	Unemployed	114	30.7
	Self-employed	68	18.3
	Retired	2	0.5
Marital status	Unmarried	206	55.5
	Separated/divorced	8	2.2
	Married	156	42.0
	Widowed	1	0.3
Experience visiting Tana Toraja	No	247	66.6
	Yes	124	33.4

4.2. Data Validity, AVE, and Reliability Tests

As presented in Table 2, the results of the data validity, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and reliability tests indicate that all constructs in this study satisfied the recommended statistical thresholds and can therefore be considered valid and reliable measurement instruments. All indicators achieved factor loading values above the minimum criterion of 0.40, ranging from 0.704 to 0.873, confirming adequate convergent validity for each construct. The AI literacy construct demonstrated factor loadings between 0.775 and 0.870, while information quality showed loadings between 0.812 and 0.873. Furthermore, halal literacy, destination inclusivity, destination preference, perceived value, and visit intention exhibited satisfactory factor loadings above the recommended threshold. The AVE values for all constructs ranged from 0.641 to 0.720, exceeding the minimum acceptable value of 0.50, thereby indicating adequate convergent validity. In addition, Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.854 to 0.902, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 and indicating strong internal consistency across the indicators. Therefore, based on the results presented in Table 2, all measurement constructs were considered statistically acceptable for further structural analysis. However, because some constructs are conceptually related, particularly destination inclusivity, perceived value, and destination preference, the validity evidence should be interpreted as supporting measurement adequacy rather than eliminating all possible conceptual overlap.

Table 2. Results of Data Validity, AVE, and Reliability Tests.

Variables and Indicators	Factor Loadings	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha
AI literacy		0.678	0.876
AI4: I understand how AI-based recommendations help me identify tourist attractions in Tana Toraja.	0.870		
AI5 I trust AI recommendations when evaluating Tana Toraja as a tourist destination. (interpreted as calibrated trust in AI recommendations rather than blind reliance).	0.844		
AI2 I can assess the accuracy of information about Tana Toraja provided by an AI system.	0.825		
AI3 I am able to use an AI-based chatbot to plan a trip to Tana Toraja.	0.798		
AI1 I use AI technology to search for tourist information about Tana Toraja.	0.775		
Information quality		0.72	0.902
IQ2 The AI information about Tana Toraja is accurate and trustworthy.	0.873		
IQ1 The information I obtained from AI about Tana Toraja is relevant to my travel needs.	0.868		
IQ5 The AI information helps me make informed decisions about visiting Tana Toraja.	0.855		
IQ3 The information displayed by AI about conditions in Tana Toraja is always up-to-date.	0.834		
IQ4 The information I received about Tana Toraja's culture and attractions is easy to understand.	0.812		
Halal literacy		0.641	0.857
Hal3 I can search for halal information regarding culinary delights and facilities in Tana Toraja.	0.863		
Hal2 I can evaluate the halal services available in Tana Toraja.	0.855		
Hal1 I understand the principles of halal when traveling to Tana Toraja.	0.818		
Hal5 I am able to verify the halal status of Tana Toraja cuisine using digital media.	0.753		
Hal4 I understand the importance of halal certification in tourism to Tana Toraja.	0.704		
Destination Inclusivity		0.645	0.855
Din4 Tana Toraja provides a sense of security for tourists from various social groups.	0.862		
Din2 I assess that tourism services in Tana Toraja do not discriminate against visitors' backgrounds.	0.830		
Din5 I feel that Tana Toraja welcomes the cultural diversity of tourists.	0.815		
Din1 I feel that Tana Toraja provides equal access for all tourists.	0.773		

Table 2. Cont.

Variables and Indicators	Factor Loadings	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha
Din3 I feel that the facilities in Tana Toraja adequately support the needs of tourists with special needs.	0.730		
Destination Preference		0.693	0.885
Dp2 Tana Toraja's cultural appeal increases my preference for visiting.	0.862		
Dp4 Tana Toraja's safety makes me prefer it as a tourist destination.	0.842		
Dp3 I like Tana Toraja because its tourist facilities meet my needs.	0.834		
Dp5 The authenticity of traditions and cultural rituals makes me more inclined to choose Tana Toraja as a destination.	0.832		
Dp1 I prefer Tana Toraja over other destinations because of its uniqueness.	0.792		
Perceived value		0.714	0.899
Pv3 I feel the social value I gained from my travel experience in Tana Toraja is quite high.	0.870		
Pv5 I find my travel experience in Tana Toraja very valuable.	0.860		
Pv4 The services I received in Tana Toraja provided good functional benefits.	0.859		
Pv2 Tana Toraja provided positive emotional value for me.	0.828		
Pv1 I felt my visit to Tana Toraja was worth the money I spent.	0.807		
Visit intention		0.644	0.854
Vin2 I would recommend Tana Toraja to family or friends.	0.840		
Vin3 I would like to visit Tana Toraja again in the future.	0.836		
Vin4 Tana Toraja is my top choice in future travel plans.	0.832		
Vin1 I intend to visit Tana Toraja in the near future.	0.786		
Vin5 I am confident that Tana Toraja is a destination worth visiting.	0.710		

4.3. Hypotheses Tests

As shown in Figure 2, the structural model is a good fit and statistically acceptable because most goodness-of-fit indices met the recommended SEM thresholds. The chi-square value was 104.464 with 66 degrees of freedom and a probability value of 0.002. Although the *p*-value was below 0.05, this condition is often considered acceptable in SEM studies with relatively large sample sizes because the chi-square statistic is highly sensitive to sample size. More importantly, the alternative fit indices demonstrated strong model adequacy. The CMIN/DF value was 1.583, which was below the recommended threshold of 3.00, indicating good model parsimony. Furthermore, the RMSEA value reached 0.040 with PCLOSE = 0.882, confirming a close model fit because the RMSEA value was below 0.08. Incremental fit indices also showed excellent results, including CFI = 0.986, TLI = 0.981, IFI = 0.986, and NFI = 0.963, all exceeding the recommended cut-off value of 0.90. In addition, GFI = 0.961 and AGFI = 0.938 further confirmed the adequacy of the model fit. Therefore, the structural model presented in Figure 2 was considered statistically acceptable and suitable for hypothesis testing in the context of heritage tourism in Tana Toraja.

Table 3 presents the results of the hypotheses testing using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Overall, all proposed hypotheses were statistically supported because each relationship achieved a critical ratio (C.R.) greater than 1.96 and a significance level below 0.05. Although this uniform support indicates internal consistency with the proposed framework, it should not be interpreted uncritically as proof that the model is theoretically complete or free from conceptual overlap. The findings indicate that AI literacy significantly influenced information quality (C.R. = 16.771, $p < 0.001$) and halal literacy (C.R. = 6.198, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that tourists with stronger AI competencies were more capable of obtaining high-quality tourism information and understanding halal-related information in digital environments. Furthermore, halal literacy positively affected destination inclusivity (C.R. = 4.746, $p < 0.001$) and perceived value (C.R. = 10.456, $p < 0.001$), indicating that

Muslim tourists with a better understanding of halal principles tended to perceive Tana Toraja as more inclusive and valuable. These findings highlight the importance of religious understanding in shaping tourists' psychological comfort and perceptions of value within culturally distinctive heritage destinations.

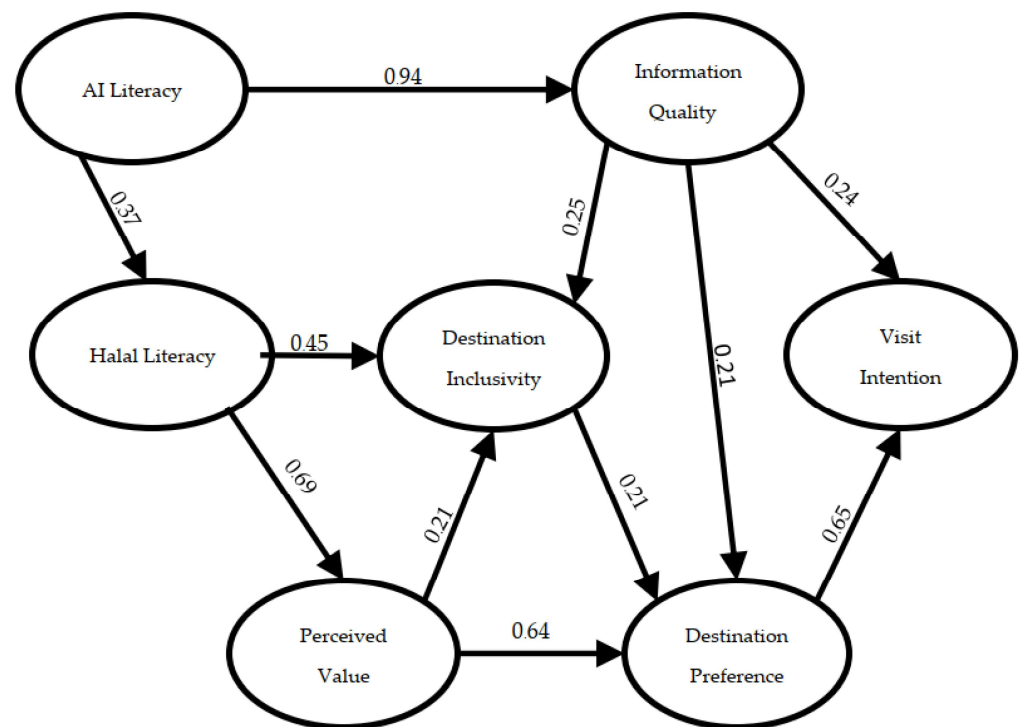


Figure 2. The Structural Model of the Hypotheses Tests.

Table 3. Results of the Hypotheses Tests.

Hypotheses	Paths	C.R.	<i>p</i>	Decision
H1	AI literacy > Information quality	16.771	***	Supported
H2	AI literacy > Halal literacy	6.198	***	Supported
H3	Halal literacy > Destination inclusivity	4.746	***	Supported
H4	Halal literacy > Perceived value	10.456	***	Supported
H5	Perceived value > Destination inclusivity	2.515	0.012	Supported
H6	Perceived value > Destination preference	9.104	***	Supported
H7	Destination inclusivity > Destination preference	3.073	0.002	Supported
H8	Information quality > Visit intention	4.116	***	Supported
H9	Information quality > Destination preference	3.856	***	Supported
H10	Information quality > Destination inclusivity	4.509	***	Supported
H11	Destination preference > Visit intention	9.320	***	Supported

Note: *** is $p < 0.001$.

The results also demonstrate that perceived value significantly influenced destination inclusivity (C.R. = 2.515, $p = 0.012$) and destination preference (C.R. = 9.104, $p < 0.001$), while destination inclusivity positively affected destination preference (C.R. = 3.073, $p = 0.002$). In addition, information quality was found to influence visit intention significantly (C.R. = 4.116, $p < 0.001$), destination preference (C.R. = 3.856, $p < 0.001$), and destination inclusivity (C.R. = 4.509, $p < 0.001$). These results indicate that accurate and trustworthy tourism information plays an essential role in strengthening tourists' perceptions of inclusivity and destination attractiveness. Finally, destination preference signif-

icantly influenced visit intention ($C.R. = 9.320, p < 0.001$), indicating that tourists with a stronger preference for Tana Toraja were more likely to intend to visit the destination.

5. Discussion

The findings identify positive associations between AI literacy and information quality, alongside halal literacy. The result is best interpreted through critical digital evaluation, not technological enthusiasm. Tourists with stronger AI literacy may filter low-quality content more effectively, compare AI-generated recommendations across sources, reduce uncertainty, and adjust their trust in digital travel information. AI literacy, however, does not automatically generate halal knowledge. Its contribution lies in supporting tourists' efforts to locate, verify, and interpret halal-related information on food, prayer spaces, cultural norms, and visitor conduct in Tana Toraja. The issue deserves particular attention, given the possibility of inaccurate or incomplete AI-generated information concerning culturally sensitive matters. Responsible AI-mediated travel planning thus depends on careful source verification.

Halal literacy also helps explain why Tana Toraja is a meaningful case rather than merely a background setting. For Muslim tourists, a non-Muslim heritage destination may raise questions about halal food, prayer access, pork-centered culinary practices, and the emotional or symbolic comfort of observing funeral and burial rituals. In this context, halal literacy can reduce uncertainty by enabling tourists to distinguish between cultural difference and religious incompatibility. It can also support a more informed appreciation of local heritage without requiring the destination to dilute its rituals or identity. Thus, inclusivity in Tana Toraja should be understood as a balance between cultural authenticity and religious comfort, not simply as the addition of halal services.

Information quality was positively associated with destination inclusivity, destination preference, and visit intention. The finding implies that trustworthy AI-mediated information can guide prospective Muslim tourists' pre-visit images of Tana Toraja. High-quality information may be particularly important for non-visitors, who depend on digital descriptions, reviews, maps, and AI-generated summaries in the absence of direct experience. Clear information concerning heritage meanings, appropriate conduct at ritual sites, halal food options, prayer arrangements, and transport accessibility can reduce ambiguity and strengthen perceptions of welcome. The association, however, depends on source reliability. Official information, user reviews, and generative AI outputs warrant different levels of authority and should be evaluated accordingly.

The positive effects of perceived value and destination inclusivity on destination preference indicate that Muslim tourists do not evaluate Tana Toraja only through functional service availability. They also appear to consider whether the destination offers meaningful cultural learning, emotional comfort, and a respectful environment for religiously diverse visitors. Inclusivity is likely to become most decisive when tourists perceive higher religious or cultural risk, such as when they are unfamiliar with non-Muslim heritage destinations or depend mainly on online information. The strong relationship between destination preference and visit intention should therefore be understood as a stated intention formed through anticipated value and perceived fit, not as evidence of actual travel behavior.

Although all direct hypotheses were statistically supported, this pattern requires cautious interpretation. The model may contain conceptually close constructs, particularly inclusivity, perceived value, and preference, and the cross-sectional design cannot establish causality. The structural pattern nevertheless suggests an indirect chain in which AI literacy may improve perceived information quality, information quality may strengthen inclusivity, inclusivity and perceived value may shape destination preference, and destination preference may increase visit intention. Future studies should formally test these mediation

pathways and compare visitors with non-visitors through multi-group analysis, because actual visitors may base value judgments on experience whereas non-visitors may rely more heavily on digital information and mental imagery.

6. Conclusions

This study examined how AI literacy, halal literacy, information quality, destination inclusivity, perceived value, destination preference, and visit intention are connected in Muslim tourists' evaluations of Tana Toraja as a culturally distinctive heritage tourism site. The findings support the proposed relationships, but they should be interpreted as evidence of associations among perceptions and stated intentions rather than as proof of actual travel behavior. AI literacy was associated with information quality and halal literacy, indicating that digital capability may help tourists evaluate AI-mediated destination information and locate halal-related content. Halal literacy improved perceptions of inclusivity and value, while information quality strengthened inclusivity, preference, and visit intention. Perceived value and inclusivity further shaped destination preference, and destination preference predicted visit intention. Given the large share of non-visitors in the sample, these results primarily reflect anticipated evaluations of Tana Toraja rather than post-visit experience.

The study contributes to tourism research by linking established constructs from AI-driven tourism, halal tourism, and inclusive heritage tourism in relation to a non-Muslim heritage destination. Its main contribution does not lie in proposing an entirely new theory. Instead, it develops a contextualized framework explaining how digital information, halal understanding, perceived value, and inclusivity jointly guide Muslim tourists' destination preference and stated visit intention. The findings highlight the need to conceptualize inclusivity as a multidimensional construct involving cultural acceptance, psychological safety, respect for religious identity, accessible information, and religiously appropriate services. The framing is particularly relevant for destinations, e.g., Tana Toraja, where tourism development needs to preserve cultural authenticity and improve comfort and access for religiously diverse visitors.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest several cautious and actionable implications for inclusive heritage destination management. Tana Toraja could develop an official and regularly verified digital map showing halal-certified or Muslim-friendly eateries, prayer spaces, ablution facilities, transport access, and visitor services. Destination managers could also provide a human-curated AI chatbot or digital assistant that explains halal food options, prayer logistics, heritage-site rules, and respectful conduct during ritual events, with clear source citations and update dates. Local guides and tourism staff should receive intercultural communication and religious-literacy training so that Muslim tourists can ask practical questions without discomfort. Finally, multilingual digital content should explain Torajan customs accurately while indicating available religious accommodations, thereby avoiding both heritage distortion and tokenistic inclusivity.

The study has several limitations. Its cross-sectional online survey design and self-selected sample restrict causal interpretation and broader generalizability. In addition, 66.6% of respondents had no prior visit experience in Tana Toraja, meaning that perceived value, inclusivity, and visit intention should be interpreted mainly as anticipated perceptions and prospective intentions, rather than actual post-visit evaluations. A related measurement limitation is that several perceived-value and experience-related items were worded in a manner more appropriate for actual visitors. This mismatch between item wording and respondent characteristics may have encouraged some non-visitors to respond based on imagined, expected, or digitally mediated impressions rather than direct travel experience. Stated intention in an online questionnaire further differs from an actual

travel decision. The self-administered single-source design may have introduced social desirability bias, particularly for items related to inclusivity, religion, diversity, and non-discrimination. The analysis did not compare visitors and non-visitors separately, nor did it distinguish official destination information, user-generated content, and generative-AI information. In addition, although the study reported acceptable factor loadings, AVE values, and Cronbach's alpha coefficients, discriminant validity was not formally assessed using HTMT or the Fornell–Larcker criterion. Therefore, the possible conceptual overlap among destination inclusivity, perceived value, and destination preference remains an unresolved methodological limitation.

Future research could employ longitudinal, mixed-methods, or field-based designs, develop separate measurement instruments for visitors and non-visitors, conduct multi-group analysis, examine mediation pathways, assess discriminant validity more rigorously, and test moderating variables, including religiosity, prior travel experience, familiarity with non-Muslim destinations, AI trust, digital fatigue, emotional responses, and social interaction during the visit.

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