

## REGULATORY TRUST AS A PSYCHOLOGICAL ANTECEDENT OF WELLNESS TOURISM EXPERIENCE: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PERCEIVED PRODUCT SAFETY

### *A CONFIANÇA REGULATÓRIA COMO ANTECEDENTE PSICOLÓGICO DA EXPERIÊNCIA DO TURISMO DE BEM-ESTAR: O PAPEL MEDIADOR DA PERCEPÇÃO DE SEGURANÇA DO PRODUTO*

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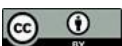
The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest

#### **Abstract**

This study examines the role of regulatory trust as a psychological antecedent of wellness tourism experience and investigates its indirect effect on tourists' behavioral intention through perceived product safety, experience quality, and emotional well-being. A quantitative approach was applied using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Data were collected from 302 domestic tourists in Indonesia who had participated in wellness tourism activities within the last six months. Measurement scales were adapted from prior studies and analyzed using SmartPLS with 5,000 bootstrapping resamples. The findings indicate that regulatory trust significantly enhances perceived product safety, which positively influences wellness experience quality. Experience quality significantly improves emotional well-being, and emotional well-being strongly predicts behavioral intention. The results also confirm both single and sequential mediation effects, demonstrating that regulatory trust influences behavioral intention indirectly through a chain of cognitive and affective mechanisms. This study contributes to wellness tourism literature by integrating institutional trust into the experience formation framework. It highlights regulatory trust as an intangible yet strategic component that shapes tourists' psychological security, emotional outcomes, and future behavioral intentions.

#### **Resumo**

*Este estudo examina o papel da confiança regulatória como antecedente psicológico da experiência de turismo de bem-estar e investiga seu efeito indireto sobre a intenção comportamental dos turistas por meio da percepção de segurança do produto, da qualidade da experiência e do bem-estar emocional. Foi aplicada uma abordagem quantitativa utilizando a Modelagem de Equações Estruturais por Mínimos Quadrados Parciais (PLS-SEM). Os dados foram coletados junto a 302 turistas nacionais na Indonésia que haviam participado de atividades de turismo de bem-estar nos últimos seis meses. As escalas de medição foram adaptadas de estudos anteriores e analisadas utilizando o SmartPLS com 5.000 reamostragens por bootstrapping. Os resultados indicam que a confiança regulatória aumenta significativamente a segurança percebida do produto, o que influencia positivamente a qualidade da experiência de bem-estar. A qualidade da experiência melhora significativamente o bem-estar emocional, e o bem-estar emocional prediz fortemente a intenção comportamental. Os resultados também confirmam efeitos de mediação tanto únicos quanto sequenciais, demonstrando que a confiança regulatória influencia a intenção comportamental indiretamente por meio de uma cadeia de mecanismos cognitivos e afetivos. Este estudo contribui para a literatura sobre turismo*



**Keywords:** Regulatory Trust. Wellness Tourism. Perceived Product Safety. Experience Quality. Emotional Well-Being. Behavioral Intention.

*de bem-estar ao integrar a confiança institucional na estrutura de formação da experiência. Ele destaca a confiança regulatória como um componente intangível, mas estratégico, que molda a segurança psicológica dos turistas, os resultados emocionais e as intenções comportamentais futuras.*

**Palavras-chave:** Confiança Regulatória. Turismo de Bem-Estar. Percepção de Segurança do Produto. Qualidade da Experiência. Bem-Estar Emocional. Intenção Comportamental.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Wellness tourism has emerged as one of the fastest-growing segments within the global tourism industry (Thal, 2025). This trend reflects a significant shift in travel motivations, from purely recreational purposes toward activities aimed at enhancing physical and psychological well-being (Konstantopoulou *et al.*, 2024; Quintela *et al.*, 2023). Contemporary tourists increasingly seek experiences that promote relaxation, emotional balance, and mental restoration rather than mere entertainment. In this context, the Global Wellness Institute (2023) defines wellness tourism as travel associated with the pursuit of maintaining or improving individual well-being through proactive health-oriented activities and lifestyle enhancement.

The rapid expansion of wellness tourism is closely linked to the growth of the global wellness economy. According to the Global Wellness Institute (2024), the global wellness economy reached approximately USD 6.8 trillion in 2024 and is projected to grow to nearly USD 9.8 trillion by 2029, with wellness tourism serving as one of its primary growth drivers. This development highlights the increasingly strategic role of wellness tourism within the contemporary tourism industry and its importance in destination development strategies (Kay Smith & Diekmann, 2017).

Conceptually, wellness tourism differs fundamentally from medical tourism. Wellness tourism emphasizes prevention, health maintenance, and the enhancement of quality of life, whereas medical tourism primarily focuses on clinical interventions aimed at treating specific medical conditions (Connell, 2013; Rapti *et al.*, 2024). As a form of special-interest tourism, wellness tourism encompasses a wide range of experiences that

are strongly shaped by destination-specific characteristics, including local culture, natural resources, and traditional healing practices embedded within particular regions (Sthapit *et al.*, 2023; Zhong *et al.*, 2021). Consequently, wellness tourists tend to seek authentic and meaningful experiences that provide emotional enrichment rather than standardized tourism services (Ni Desak Made Santi Diwyarthi, 2023; Subawa *et al.*, 2023).

Existing literature generally examines wellness tourism experiences from the perspectives of service quality, emotional engagement, and tourist participation. However, the distinctive nature of wellness tourism, which involves the consumption of health-related products and services such as herbal remedies, nutritional supplements, body therapies, and traditional healing treatments, differentiates it substantially from conventional recreational tourism (Bočkus *et al.*, 2023; Gan *et al.*, 2023a). The consumption of such products and services may directly influence tourists' physical and psychological conditions, thereby introducing a more sensitive and complex dimension of perceived risk (Abdullah *et al.*, 2025; Maulana *et al.*, 2022).

Although risk has been widely discussed in tourism studies, prior research has predominantly focused on destination-related risks, travel safety, and service operational quality (Ertuş & Kırlar-Can, 2022; Korstanje & Geoffrey, 2015). Comparatively limited attention has been devoted to the role of public regulation and supervisory systems as psychological determinants shaping tourists' experiences. In conditions characterized by information asymmetry and uncertainty, tourists may lack the ability to independently evaluate the safety and reliability of wellness products and services. Under such circumstances, trust in regulatory systems becomes an important mechanism for mitigating perceived risk (Mayer *et al.*, 1995; Svare *et al.*, 2020a).

From the perspective of institutional trust, regulation functions not merely as an administrative mechanism but also as a source of psychological assurance that enables individuals to make consumption decisions under uncertain conditions (Devine & Fairbrother, 2026; Van Der Meer & Dekker, 2011). Trust in regulatory systems can reduce perceived risk, enhance feelings of safety, and create emotional conditions conducive to positive tourism experiences (Kumagai & Iorio, 2020; La Ance Paulus *et al.*, 2025; Mas Bakar *et al.*, 2022). Therefore, regulatory trust may serve as an important psychological antecedent in shaping the quality of wellness tourism experiences.

Despite its potential significance, the relationship between trust in regulation and the formation of wellness tourism experiences remains underexplored within an integrated conceptual framework. Existing studies have not adequately explained how trust in regulatory systems influences perceptions of product safety, how these perceptions contribute to experience quality, or how such cognitive and affective mechanisms ultimately shape tourists' behavioral intentions (Gan *et al.*, 2023b; Jiang *et al.*, 2022; Wang, 2017).

Addressing these gaps, the present study seeks to develop and empirically examine a conceptual model that positions trust in regulation as a critical antecedent in the formation of wellness tourism experiences. Specifically, this study investigates the mediating roles of perceived product safety, experience quality, and emotional well-being in explaining the relationship between trust in regulation and tourists' behavioral intentions.

Accordingly, this study contributes to the tourism literature by extending the understanding of tourism experiences through the incorporation of institutional trust as part of the intangible architecture of destination experiences. This perspective provides a more comprehensive understanding of how public regulatory structures shape tourists' psychological conditions, which subsequently influence perceptions of safety, quality of experience, emotional well-being, and behavioral intentions.

## **2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Institutional trust and trust in regulation**

Trust is an important factor that helps individuals make decisions in situations of uncertainty and limited information (Storonyanska *et al.*, 2022; Sturgis *et al.*, 2015). From an institutional trust perspective, trust is not limited to interpersonal relationships, but also includes belief in the systems, rules, and formal institutions that govern social and economic activities (Bachmann & Inkpen, 2011; Svare *et al.*, 2020b). Through institutional trust, individuals can engage in consumption activities without having to understand all the risks in detail, because some of the risk responsibility is transferred to trusted institutions.

In this context, trust in regulation refers to the level of individual confidence in regulatory agencies and public oversight systems to ensure the safety of products and services. Trust in regulation serves as a form of systemic trust that provides assurance that products on the market have undergone oversight and meet certain safety standards (Sun *et al.*, 2022). Research in the field of governance shows that effective regulation can act as a *risk-absorbing* mechanism, particularly in the context of consumption related to health and safety (Castaldo *et al.*, 2024; Irawati & Siahaan, 2023).

In wellness tourism, trust in regulations is very important because tourists generally do not have the knowledge or competence to independently assess the safety of wellness products. Therefore, tourists tend to rely on the existence of regulations, certifications, and government supervision as a basis for forming a sense of psychological security. Thus, trust in regulations is positioned as an initial factor that influences how tourists assess safety in their wellness tourism experiences.

**H1:** Trust in regulations has a positive effect on the perception of wellness product safety.

## 2.2 Risk perception and product safety perception in fitness tourism

Risk perception theory explains that how a person reacts to an activity is influenced more by how they *perceive* the risk, rather than solely by the actual level of risk (Koc & Villi, 2021; Liu *et al.*, 2023). In the context of tourism, risk perception has long been associated with how tourists make travel decisions, evaluate their experiences, and determine their behavior after the tour is over.

Product safety perception refers to tourists' assessment of how safe the wellness products and services they use are and their potential impact on health. When tourists feel confident that the products they consume are safe, they tend to feel more relaxed and less worried, allowing them to enjoy their wellness tourism experience more fully. Conversely, if there are doubts about product safety, this can cause anxiety that disrupts psychological comfort and reduces the quality of the travel experience.

In situations where tourists have limited information to independently assess product safety, trust in regulations becomes an important factor in shaping perceptions of product safety. Tourists who trust the regulatory and oversight system tend to rate

wellness products as safe, even if they do not have in-depth technical knowledge about the products. Therefore, product safety perceptions serve as a psychological mechanism that explains how trust in regulations can influence wellness tourism experiences.

**H2:** Perceptions of product safety have a positive effect on the quality of the wellness tourism experience.

### 2.3 Experience quality, emotional well-being, and behavioral intentions

The quality of the tourism experience reflects tourists' overall evaluation of their involvement, satisfaction, and value gained during tourism activities. In the context of wellness tourism, the quality of the experience is determined not only by the functional aspects of the service but also by the psychological comfort and emotional responses felt by tourists (Sthapit *et al.*, 2023).

**H3:** The quality of wellness tourism experiences has a positive effect on tourists' emotional well-being.

Emotional well-being is one of the main outcomes of wellness tourism experiences and reflects positive emotional states, such as feelings of relaxation, calmness, and psychological balance. Wellness tourism experiences that are perceived as high quality tend to have a positive impact on the emotional state of tourists (Ding & Wu, 2022).

**H4:** Emotional well-being has a positive effect on tourists' behavioral intentions.

Furthermore, emotional well-being plays an important role in shaping tourists' behavioral intentions, including the intention to revisit and recommend destinations to others. Tourists who experience emotional benefits from wellness tourism generally demonstrate more positive attitudes and loyalty toward similar destinations or activities in the future. Thus, the quality of experience and emotional well-being form a sequential psychological pathway linking trust in regulation and perceptions of product safety to tourist behavioral intentions.

**H5:** Product safety perception acts as a mediator in the relationship between trust in regulations and the quality of the wellness tourism experience.

**H6:** Product safety perception, quality of wellness tourism experience, and emotional well-being act as sequential mediators in the relationship between trust in regulations and tourist behavioral intentions.

### 3 EMPIRICAL STUDY

This study was conducted in the context of wellness tourism in Indonesia, focusing on domestic tourists who had recently participated in wellness-related travel activities. Indonesia was selected as the study context due to the growing development of wellness tourism and the presence of formal regulatory oversight for wellness-related products and services through government institutions. Data were collected using a quantitative approach with non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling. An online questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms over a three-month period, from December 2025 to February 2026. The online distribution method enabled efficient access to respondents with relevant wellness tourism experiences and allowed for broader geographic coverage.

A total of 303 respondents completed the questionnaire. The target population comprised domestic tourists who had engaged in at least one wellness tourism activity in Indonesia within the last six months, including spa treatments, wellness retreats, traditional or herbal health consumption, and other wellness-related services. To ensure the relevance and reliability of the data, respondents were required to be at least 18 years old. Based on this criterion, 302 respondents met the age requirement and were included in the final dataset, while responses that did not meet the eligibility criteria were excluded from further analysis. Additionally, only respondents who had consumed or used wellness-related products or services during their trip were retained for analysis.

#### 3.1 Measurements

The measurement instruments used in this study were adapted from established scales in previous empirical research to ensure theoretical consistency and content validity. All constructs were operationalized using multiple items and measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = very strongly disagree to 5 = very strongly agree.

Five latent constructs were measured in this study: regulatory trust, perceived product safety, experience quality, emotional well-being, and behavioral intention. Items measuring regulatory trust assessed respondents' confidence in regulatory systems and institutional oversight related to wellness products and services. Perceived product safety captured respondents' subjective evaluations of the safety and health risks associated with wellness products and services consumed during their travel experience. Experience quality reflected respondents' overall evaluation of the quality and engagement of their wellness tourism experience. Emotional well-being measured the extent to which the wellness experience generated positive emotional states, such as relaxation and psychological comfort. Finally, behavioral intention captured respondents' intentions to revisit the wellness destination and to recommend it to others.

Prior to the main data collection, the questionnaire items were reviewed to ensure clarity, relevance, and contextual appropriateness for the wellness tourism setting in Indonesia. Based on this review process, each construct was operationalized using validated indicators adapted from prior studies, and the operational definitions and measurement indicators of each construct are presented below.

**Table 1**

*Adapted Measure from the Literature*

<b>Original Dimensions</b>	<b>Operational Definition</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Items</b>
<b>Trust in Regulation (RT)</b>	The level of trust that tourists have in regulatory agencies and oversight systems that regulate wellness products and services	RT1	I believe that regulatory agencies ensure that wellness products used by tourists are safe
		RT2	I am confident that wellness products available to tourists are monitored by government regulations
		RT3	Government regulations provide safety guarantees for wellness products.
		RT4	Supervision by agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration makes me feel safe consuming wellness products.
<b>Perceived Product Safety (PPS)</b>	Tourists' subjective assessment of the safety and health risks of the wellness products and services they consume	PPS1	The wellness products I consume feel safe for my health
		PPS2	I am not concerned about the negative health effects of these wellness products

		PPS3	The information about the wellness products I use is clear and reliable
		PPS4	I am confident that the wellness products used meet safety standards
<b><i>Experience Quality (EQ)</i></b>	Overall evaluation by tourists of the quality and engagement during the wellness tourism experience	EQ1	The wellness tourism experience I had was very enjoyable
		EQ2	The wellness activities I participated in met my expectations
		EQ3	This wellness experience provided me with positive value.
		EQ4	Overall, my wellness tourism experience was satisfying
<b><i>Emotional Well-being (EWB)</i></b>	The level of positive emotional state and psychological comfort felt by tourists as a result of their wellness experience	EWB1	I feel more relaxed after participating in wellness activities
		EWB2	Wellness experiences make me feel more emotionally balanced
		EWB3	I feel calmer and more peaceful after undergoing the wellness experience
		EWB4	Wellness activities improve my mood (e.g., feeling happier)
<b><i>Behavioral Intention (BI)</i></b>	Tourists' intention to revisit and recommend wellness destinations	BI1	I intend to participate in similar wellness tourism activities in the future
		BI2	I am willing to recommend this wellness tourism experience to others
		BI3	I will choose wellness tourism as one of my next travel options
		BI4	I am inclined to continue using similar wellness products or services

### 3.2 Data analysis

The collected data were analyzed using *Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares* (SEM-PLS) with the assistance of SmartPLS software. SEM-PLS was employed because this study focuses on testing a predictive research model involving multiple latent constructs and complex mediation relationships, which aligns well with the strengths of variance-based SEM approaches (Ringle *et al.*, 2023; Sarstedt *et al.*, 2022). Moreover, SEM-PLS is considered appropriate for models with relatively complex structures and data that do not strictly meet multivariate normality assumptions (Sarstedt *et al.*, 2021).

The data analysis followed a two-stage procedure consisting of the assessment of the measurement model and the evaluation of the structural model, which is a widely accepted analytical sequence in PLS-SEM studies (Aslam *et al.*, 2020; Chin, 1998). The measurement model was evaluated by examining indicator reliability through outer loadings, internal consistency reliability using composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha, and convergent validity through the *average variance extracted* (AVE). Discriminant validity was assessed using the *heterotrait–monotrait* (HTMT) ratio, which has been widely recommended as a robust criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based SEM (Henseler *et al.*, 2015; Roemer *et al.*, 2021).

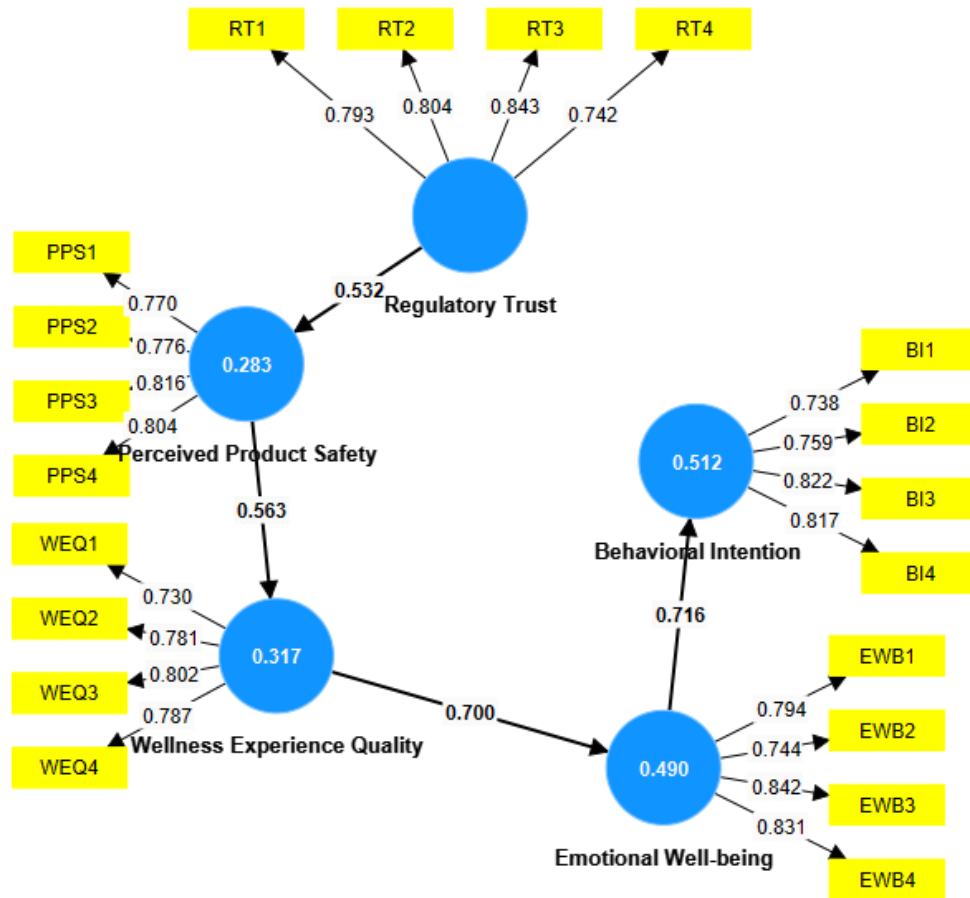
The structural model evaluation involved examining path coefficients, coefficients of determination ( $R^2$ ), f square ( $f^2$ ), and predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ) to assess the explanatory and predictive power of the model (Chin, 2010). The significance of the hypothesized relationships was tested using a bootstrapping procedure with **5,000 resamples**, which is commonly applied in PLS-SEM to obtain stable parameter estimates and reliable inference (Ali Memon *et al.*, 2018; Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

## 4 RESULTS

In this study, hypothesis testing was conducted using the *Partial Least Squares* (PLS) analysis technique with the help of SmartPLS software. *Inner model* analysis, also known as relationship testing or hypothesis testing, aims to predict and evaluate the relationship between latent variables in the research model. The following are the results of *inner model* testing using SmartPLS conducted in this study.

### 4.1 Construct testing

The structural equation model in this study can be illustrated in the following structural equation diagram:

**Figure 1***Construct Testing Model*

Convergent validity testing in this study was conducted by examining the *outer loadings* of each indicator based on the results of the analysis using *the PLS Algorithm*.

#### 4.1.1 Convergent validity

Convergent validity testing was conducted by looking at the *outer loading* values, where the acceptable *outer loading* value criterion was greater than 0.70. Based on the *outer loading* analysis results, the following research indicator values were obtained:

**Table 2**

## Outer Loading Results

	Outer loadings
BI1 <- Behavioral Intention	0.738
BI2 <- Behavioral Intention	0.759
BI3 <- Behavioral Intention	0.822
BI4 <- Behavioral Intention	0.817
EWB1 <- Emotional Well-being	0.794
EWB2 <- Emotional Well-being	0.744
EWB3 <- Emotional Well-being	0.842
EWB4 <- Emotional Well-being	0.831
PPS1 <- Perceived Product Safety	0.770
PPS2 <- Perceived Product Safety	0.776
PPS3 <- Perceived Product Safety	0.816
PPS4 <- Perceived Product Safety	0.804
RT1 <- Regulatory Trust	0.793
RT2 <- Regulatory Trust	0.804
RT3 <- Regulatory Trust	0.843
RT4 <- Regulatory Trust	0.742
WEQ1 <- Wellness Experience Quality	0.730
WEQ2 <- Wellness Experience Quality	0.781
WEQ3 <- Wellness Experience Quality	0.802
WEQ4 <- Wellness Experience Quality	0.787

The test results show that all indicators have *outer loading* values greater than 0.70. Thus, it can be concluded that the convergent validity of the research construct has been fulfilled.

#### 4.1.2 Cronbach alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE)

The reliability test results and *average variance extracted* (AVE) values for each variable are presented in the following table:

**Table 3**

#### Results of Cronbach Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Behavioral Intention	0.793	0.802	0.865	0.616
Emotional Well-being	0.816	0.817	0.879	0.646

Perceived Product Safety	0.803	0.810	0.870	0.627
Regulatory Trust	0.812	0.838	0.874	0.634
Wellness Experience Quality	0.782	0.796	0.858	0.601

The reliability test results using Cronbach's alpha show that all research variables have a Cronbach's alpha value greater than 0.70. Referring to the criteria proposed by Ghozali (2021), this value indicates that the research instrument has met the reliability criteria. Thus, all variables in this study are declared reliable.

Furthermore, the *composite reliability* test results show that all variables have a *composite reliability* value above 0.60. This indicates that each construct has met the internal reliability requirements.

The results of convergent validity testing using *Average Variance Extracted* (AVE) values show that all variables have AVE values greater than 0.50. Thus, it can be concluded that each construct in this study has met the criteria for convergent validity.

#### 4.1.3 Discriminant validity

The results of the *discriminant validity* test using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) are as follows:

**Table 4**

#### *HTMT Results*

	Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)
Emotional Well-being <-> Behavioral Intention	0.873
Perceived Product Safety <-> Behavioral Intention	0.703
Perceived Product Safety <-> Emotional Well-being	0.881
Regulatory Trust <-> Behavioral Intention	0.846
Regulatory Trust <-> Emotional Well-being	0.832
Regulatory Trust <-> Perceived Product Safety	0.620
Wellness Experience Quality <-> Behavioral Intention	0.882
Wellness Experience Quality <-> Emotional Well-being	0.846
Wellness Experience Quality <-> Perceived Product Safety	0.693
Wellness Experience Quality <-> Regulatory Trust	0.761

The results of discriminant validity testing using the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) show that all correlation values between constructs are below the 0.90 limit. Thus, it can be concluded that the research model has met the criteria for discriminant validity.

## 4.2 Inner model for full model

The *inner model* test aims to evaluate the feasibility of the structural model developed in this study. The results of *the inner model* test are presented in the following section:

### 4.2.1 Coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ )

**Table 5**

*Inner Model Test Results*

	R-square	Adjusted R-square
Behavioral Intention	0.512	0.511
Emotional Well-being	0.490	0.488
Perceived Product Safety	0.283	0.281
Wellness Experience Quality	0.317	0.315

The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) value shows that the *behavioral intention* variable can be explained by the variables that influence it by 0.512 or 51.2%, while the remaining 48.8% is explained by other variables outside the research model. The *emotional well-being* variable has an  $R^2$  value of 0.490 or 49.0%, which indicates that almost half of the variation in this construct can be explained by the variables in the model, while the remaining 51.0% is influenced by other factors outside the study.

Furthermore, the  $R^2$  value for the *perceived product safety* variable is 0.283 or 28.3%, indicating that this variable is moderately explained by the constructs that influence it, while 71.7% of its variation is explained by other variables outside the model. The *wellness experience quality* variable has an  $R^2$  value of 0.317 or 31.7%, indicating that about one-third of the variation in this construct can be explained by the variables in the study, while the remaining 68.3% is influenced by other factors outside the study model.

#### 4.2.2 F Square ( $f^2$ )

**Table 6**

*F Square ( $f^2$ ) Results*

	F-square
Emotional Well-being -> Behavioral Intention	1.050
Perceived Product Safety -> Wellness Experience Quality	0.464
Regulatory Trust -> Perceived Product Safety	0.395
Wellness Experience Quality -> Emotional Well-being	0.960

The F Square ( $f^2$ ) test results show that the ( $f^2$ ) value in the relationship between variables is above 0, indicating that the independent variables contribute to the dependent variable in the structural model. Based on these results, the *emotional well-being* variable has the strongest influence on *behavioral intention*, compared to other independent variables.

#### 4.2.3 Q-Square Predictive Relevance ( $Q^2$ )

**Table 7**

*Q-Square Predictive Relevance ( $Q^2$ ) Results*

	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
Behavioral Intention	1208.000	843,439	0.302
Emotional Well-being	1,208,000	833,948	0.310
Perceived Product Safety	1,208,000	1,003,591	0.169
Wellness Experience Quality	1,208,000	992,298	0.179

The *Q-square predictive relevance* value shows a value greater than 0, indicating that the model has good predictive capabilities. Thus, it can be concluded that the observed values can be adequately reconstructed by the research model.

#### 4.2.4 Hypothesis test results

The significance test of the estimation results provides important information for determining the relationship between variables in this study. Hypothesis testing was conducted by referring to the *p-value* and *t-statistic*. At a significance level ( $\alpha$ ) of 5%, the

criteria for accepting the hypothesis were determined by a *p-value* < 0.05 and a *t-statistic* greater than the *t-table* value of 1.986.

Hypothesis testing in this study was conducted using the *bootstrapping* method in SmartPLS software. Through this procedure, the results of testing the effect of exogenous variables on endogenous variables were obtained as presented below:

**Table 8**

*Bootstrapping Results of Direct Effect*

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values
Emotional Well-being -> Behavioral Intention	0.716	0.721	0.036	19.779	0.000
Perceived Product Safety -> Wellness Experience Quality	0.563	0.567	0.045	12.649	0.000
Regulatory Trust -> Perceived Product Safety	0.532	0.540	0.040	13.22	0
Wellness Experience Quality -> Emotional Well-being	0.70	0.707	0.036	19.21	0.00

Based on the output results in Table X, hypothesis testing in the structural model (*inner model*) shows the following direct effects between variables:

1. The Effect of Regulatory Trust on Perceived Product Safety

The path coefficient value of 0.532 with a *t-statistic* value of 13.220 and a *p-value* of 0.000 indicates that regulatory trust has a positive and significant effect on perceived product safety. This indicates that the higher the level of tourist trust in regulations, the higher the perceived safety of wellness products.

2. The Effect of Perceived Product Safety on Wellness Experience Quality

The test results show a coefficient value of 0.563, with a *t-statistic* value of 12.649 and a *p-value* of 0.000. These findings indicate that perceived product safety has a positive and significant effect on wellness experience quality. This means that the higher the perception of wellness product safety, the better the quality of the wellness tourism experience felt by tourists.

3. The Effect of Wellness Experience Quality on Emotional Well-being

The path coefficient value of 0.700, with a *t-statistic* value of 19.210 and a *p-value* of 0.000, indicates that wellness experience quality has a positive and significant

effect on emotional well-being. This shows that a better quality wellness tourism experience will improve the emotional well-being of tourists.

#### 4. The Effect of Emotional Well-being on Behavioral Intention

The analysis results show a coefficient value of 0.716, with a *t-statistic* value of 19.779 and a *p-value* of 0.000. These findings indicate that emotional well-being has a positive and significant effect on behavioral intention. Thus, the higher the level of emotional well-being felt by tourists, the stronger their behavioral intentions, such as the intention to revisit and recommend wellness destinations.

**Table 9**

*Indirect Effect (Mediation Effect)*

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values
Regulatory Trust -> Perceived Product Safety -> Wellness Experience Quality	0.171	0.172	0.042	4.092	0.000

Indirect effect testing was conducted to determine the role of mediating variables in bridging the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The test results show that perceived product safety mediates the relationship between regulatory trust and wellness experience quality. This is indicated by a *t-statistic* value of 4.092, which is greater than the *t-table* value of 1.986, and a *p-value* of 0.000, which is less than 0.05.

Thus, the hypothesis stating that perceived product safety mediates the effect of regulatory trust on wellness experience quality is accepted. These findings indicate that trust in regulations indirectly affects the quality of wellness tourism experiences through increased perceptions of product safety, with a positive and significant direction of influence.

**Table 10**

*Sequential Indirect Effect (Chain Mediation Effect)*

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values

Regulatory Trust -> Perceived Product Safety -> Wellness Experience Quality -> Emotional Well-being -> Behavioral Intention	0.150	0.157	0.023	6.526	0.000
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Indirect effect testing was conducted to identify the role of mediating variables in bridging the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The results of the analysis show that perceived product safety, wellness experience quality, and emotional well-being sequentially mediate the relationship between regulatory trust and behavioral intention. This is indicated by a *t-statistic* value of 6.526, which is greater than the *t-table* value of 1.986, and a *p-value* of 0.000, which is less than 0.05.

Thus, the hypothesis stating that there is sequential mediation between regulatory trust and behavioral intention through perceived product safety, wellness experience quality, and emotional well-being is accepted. These findings indicate that trust in regulations indirectly influences tourists' behavioral intentions through a series of positive and significant psychological mechanisms.

## 5 DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that trust in regulations plays a role as a psychological antecedent in shaping wellness tourism experiences. These findings reinforce the literature that places trust as an important mechanism in reducing uncertainty and shaping tourists' evaluations of destination risk (Alrawadieh *et al.*, 2025; Rasoolimanesh *et al.*, 2022). In the context of services directly related to health, tourists tend to rely on regulatory systems and institutions as sources of safety assurance when they lack the ability to assess risks independently. Post-COVID-19 pandemic, health and safety dimensions have become an integral part of a destination's image and reputation, significantly influencing tourists' trust and behavioral intentions (Omran, 2025). Thus, regulatory trust can be understood as a form of institutional trust that provides psychological legitimacy in the consumption of wellness products and services.

Furthermore, this study shows that product safety perceptions mediate the relationship between trust in regulations and quality of experience. These findings are in line with tourism psychology studies that emphasize that a sense of safety is a prerequisite for tourists' cognitive and emotional engagement (Chen *et al.*, 2023; Rafi *et al.*, 2025).

When tourists feel safe, they can enjoy wellness activities with greater focus and depth, resulting in a higher-quality experience. In other words, regulations do not directly improve the quality of experience, but work through the formation of subjective perceptions of safety.

Positive experiences have been shown to improve the emotional well-being of tourists. This is consistent with wellness tourism literature that places experiences as a means of achieving subjective well-being (Câmara *et al.*, 2023; Filep *et al.*, 2024). In the context of wellness tourism, experiences not only generate satisfaction but also positive emotional states such as relaxation, calmness, and psychological balance. These emotional benefits then form the basis for behavioral intent, as emphasized in research on the role of positive emotions in loyalty and revisit intent (Awais-E-Yazdan *et al.*, 2025b; Hosany *et al.*, 2020).

The main contribution of this study lies in the sequential mediation findings that show that the effect of trust in regulation on behavioral intention is indirect and occurs through an integrated cognitive-affective process. Trust in regulation shapes perceptions of safety (cognitive evaluation), which enhances the quality of experience (experiential evaluation), which in turn generates emotional well-being (affective response), and ultimately drives behavioral intention (Zhou *et al.*, 2022). This model reinforces the process approach in tourism literature, which places structural and institutional factors as initial triggers that work through internal psychological mechanisms before generating behavioral responses (Bagheri *et al.*, 2024; Mzembe *et al.*, 2023).

## 6 CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study demonstrates that trust in regulatory systems functions as a psychological antecedent in shaping wellness tourism experiences. Trust in regulations enhances tourists' perceptions of product safety, which subsequently improves experience quality, strengthens emotional well-being, and ultimately encourages positive behavioral intentions. These findings confirm that the influence of institutional factors on tourist behavior is not direct; rather, it operates through integrated cognitive and affective mechanisms.

Accordingly, wellness tourism experiences are shaped not only by the quality of destination services and facilities but also by the sense of security derived from trust in regulatory systems. Reliable and trustworthy regulations provide a psychological foundation that enables tourists to engage in more comfortable, meaningful, and emotionally satisfying experiences.

This study also offers several important theoretical contributions. First, it extends the tourism experience literature by incorporating the perspective of institutional trust into the experience formation framework. Previous studies on tourism experiences have predominantly emphasized service quality and tourist interactions, whereas the role of regulatory systems as psychological antecedents has received comparatively limited scholarly attention.

Second, this study reinforces the process-oriented perspective within tourism literature by demonstrating that the influence of structural factors operates through a sequence of cognitive evaluations (perceived product safety), experiential evaluations (experience quality), and affective responses (emotional well-being) before ultimately shaping behavioral intentions. The sequential mediation model proposed in this study therefore provides a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms underlying tourist loyalty formation in the context of wellness tourism.

From a practical perspective, the findings indicate that regulatory and monitoring systems should not merely be regarded as administrative instruments but also as strategic assets in developing high-quality wellness tourism experiences. For policymakers, transparent communication regarding safety standards, certification systems, and monitoring mechanisms is essential to strengthening tourists' perceptions of safety and enhancing the image of destinations as reliable and trustworthy wellness tourism destinations.

For practitioners in the wellness tourism industry, compliance with regulations and collaboration with supervisory institutions should not be viewed solely as formal obligations, but also as important elements that can strengthen tourists' sense of security and emotional engagement. Integrating safety-related aspects into experience design may therefore serve as an effective strategy for enhancing tourist loyalty and revisit intentions.

## 6.1 Limitations and future research directions

Despite providing important insights into the role of regulatory trust in shaping wellness tourism experiences, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged.

First, this study was conducted within the context of wellness tourism in Indonesia, where the findings are influenced by the characteristics of the national regulatory system and the prevailing level of public trust. Differences in institutional structures and trust cultures across countries may generate different relational dynamics. Future research is therefore encouraged to conduct cross-country comparative studies to examine the consistency and applicability of the proposed model across diverse governance systems.

Second, this study employed a perception-based survey approach using non-probability sampling techniques. Although such methods are commonly utilized in tourism research, they limit the generalizability of the findings. Future studies may adopt probability sampling methods or longitudinal research designs to provide stronger evidence regarding the causal relationships among the variables examined.

Third, this study primarily focused on the cognitive-affective mechanisms linking trust in regulation to behavioral intentions. Other potentially influential factors, such as personal values, health literacy, and previous experiences with wellness products or services, were not incorporated into the model. Future research could expand the proposed framework by integrating moderating variables and contextual factors to provide a richer understanding of the formation of wellness tourism experiences.

Finally, the quantitative approach employed in this study did not fully capture the depth and complexity of tourists' psychological processes. Future studies utilizing mixed-methods or qualitative approaches may provide more comprehensive insights into how tourists construct perceptions of safety and develop trust in regulatory systems within wellness tourism experiences.

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