

What Drives Tourist Loyalty toward Taiwan as a Tourist Destination? A Lesson Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Received 20 February 2022; accepted 10 June 2022

ABSTRACT

This study aims to develop an integrative model of loyalty formation to examine antecedent factors to visiting Taiwan. It clarifies the image of Taiwan as a tourist destination and the factors that differentiate this country from its competitors in terms of the target market. The data was collected from a total of 443 self-administered questionnaires. The responses were examined and analyzed using structural modeling. This study empirically confirms the quality-satisfaction-loyalty model and incorporates destination image and personality into it. The result reveals the direct impact of destination image, personality, service quality, perceived value, and customer satisfaction on destination loyalty. Besides, it affirms that destination image, both directly and indirectly, impacts destination loyalty through the role of destination personality. This study provides managerial implications for tourism industry practitioners in terms of future practical application; it can also serve as a reference for future studies.

KEYWORDS

Perceived value
Destination image
Satisfaction
Destination personality
Destination loyalty

INTRODUCTION

The tourism marketplace is increasingly competitive. Scholars agree that although several destinations offer similar attractions in the current diverse and competitive global environment (Tsai et al., 2009), they always try to adopt branding instruments to establish their destination's uniqueness that can distinguish them from their competitors. On the other hand, tourist loyalty is considered a major driving factor for the success and longevity of destinations (Chen & Phou, 2013; Chi & Qu, 2008; Getz & Page, 2015). Numbers of studies in various environments have explored consumer antecedents of loyalty, such as perceived value, destination image, satisfaction, and service quality (Chi & Qu, 2008; Prebensen et al., 2013; Luo et al., 2018; Foroudi et al., 2018; Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2000). With regard to destination development, research (Chi & Qu, 2008; Prebensen et al., 2013; Luo et al., 2018; Foroudi et al., 2018; Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2000) shows that customer loyalty is also an important success indicator of tourist destinations. Thus, it is necessary to further examine the factors that influence consumer loyalty toward a tourist destination.

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A destination always tries to become distinctive to compete in a rapidly growing industry. Thus, destination marketers attempt to integrate destination image and destination personality to build destination brands (Dickinger & Lalicic, 2016; Styliadis et al., 2017). Hosany et al. (2007) indicated that destination image and destination personality are two related concepts, in the context of which the terms brand image and brand personality are used interchangeably. Research shows that destination image influences destination preference, post-trip assessment, and potential actions of tourists (Alcorer & Ruiz, 2019; Alhemoud & Armstrong, 1996; Prayag, 2009; Junarta et al., 2021; Nazir et al., 2021). Further, a destination's positive image typically results in favorable outcomes, such as recommendations and revisitation, all of which lead to the development of tourist loyalty (Lai et al., 2018; Kanwel et al., 2019). Destination image management is also a critical aspect of destination marketing because travelers' perceptions of a destination strongly impact their destination decisions.

While destination image refers to travelers' personal perspectives about a destination, destination personality refers to destination branding in terms of human characteristics. Destination branding, in particular, has a significant relation to consumers' self-image and destination image. Ekinici (2003) stated that effective destination branding entails creating a strategic alliance between destinations and visitors through fulfilling their essential needs. Research indicates that destination personality predicts tourists' buying behaviors (Hosany et al., 2006). Although destination image plays a role in loyalty, a destination still needs to possess distinctive personalities in an increasingly competitive market; thus, destination personality becomes a viable factor in predicting tourists' loyalty behavior. Tourists' perceptions about travel destinations, therefore, should be analyzed to create a unique destination personality for brand salience to establish destination differentiation.

In this present study conducted in Taiwan, it was found that inbound (i.e., tourists received by a country or destination) and outbound (i.e., tourists traveling to other countries/destinations) tourism has expanded considerably. According to the Taiwan Tourism Bureau, in 2017, the country received approximately 11 million international visitors, generating nearly 12.3 billion US dollars from tourism and indicating further signs of growth. Although Taiwan's tourism industry has grown significantly, a tourism and hospitality literature review revealed that few empirical studies have examined the behaviors and preferences of foreign tourists, particularly regarding their loyalty behavior. Most previous studies were geared toward understanding tourists' travel choices, satisfaction levels, spending behaviors, and destination choices, whether domestic or abroad. Huarng et al. (2006) used the fuzzy neural time series and time series (ARIMA) model to forecast tourist demand. Hsu et al. (2009) identified the factors that influence tourists' destination choices and evaluated tourists' destination preferences. Their findings may help marketers craft Taiwan's unique destination features. Further, Huang and Li's (2015) brand association of Taiwan and Song and Hsu's (2013) study of Taiwan's destination image discussed Chinese tourists' perspectives of Taiwan's destination image. However, these studies have not examined the formation of international tourists' loyalty toward the country.

There are several reasons for people to visit Taiwan, such as its staggering natural beauty, raucous festivals, magnificent temples, mouthwatering street foods, fascinating indigenous traditions, etc. This study extends tourism and hospitality research by exploring factors of destination personality and destination image. These factors affect destination loyalty formation in Taiwan, contributing to the loyalty of international tourists to the destination. A structure of the tourist destination loyalty model was developed by integrating service quality, perceived value, destination image, destination personality, satisfaction, and loyalty. As such, our hypotheses define relationships among the proposed constructs.

Regarding COVID-19, according to Chiu et al. (2021), Taiwan has had extraordinary success in controlling and managing the pandemic. By April 12th, 2021, for example, this country only had 1,058 confirmed COVID-19 cases and seven deaths, being among the lowest counts worldwide. At one point, Taiwan went more than 250 days without a confirmed local transmission, and local cases accounted for only 7.2%. However, the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic has critically impacted the travel and tourism sector (Cambra-Fierro et al., 2022). Thus, the destination loyalty concept should be re-examined considering specific dimensions of the current situation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Destination Loyalty

According to the sequential relationships between the antecedents of tourist destination loyalty, previous experience is the most influential driver that manipulates tourist loyalty toward a destination (Gursoy et al., 2014). When a customer returns to a destination several times or recommends it to others, that person is loyal to the destination (Joo et al., 2020; Lee & Xue, 2020). Customer loyalty refers to customer returns, revisiting intentions, and suggestions for a specific destination (Prayag, 2008; Suhartanto et al., 2016). In a competitive and challenging tourism environment, tourist satisfaction does not always guarantee the survival and success of the business (Calvo-Porrall & Levy-Mangin, 2016). Tourists who leave a destination unsatisfied for the first time or with a bad first impression may not wish to return to that destination. According to Calvo-Porrall and Levy-Mangin (2016), customer retention helps businesses build customer loyalty, and loyal customers are usually less aware of product and service price changes. However, building loyalty takes time. Consequently, converting tourists into loyal visitors to a tourist attraction is a great challenge. Fandos and Flavián (2006) advised managers to observe consumer needs in advance and customize a particular product/experience that meets those needs. A tourist destination must incorporate both service attractions and the atmosphere of the destination to effectively meet the standards of customers.

Customer loyalty toward a product or service can be measured using three approaches, namely behavioral, attitudinal, and composite loyalty. Consumer loyalty is conceptualized as a behavioral term for tourists who visit and regularly purchase a product or service from a destination. The attitudinal approach labels loyalty as an emotional manifestation of the consumers' desire to rebuy, which directs other future customers to make purchases (Gursoy et al., 2014). However, behavioral and attitudinal strategies have drawbacks in explaining consumer loyalty. Therefore, scholars propose the third approach, the composite loyalty approach (Gursoy et al., 2014), which combines behavioral and attitudinal methods. The composite approach indicates consumers' commitment, in this case, to a tourist destination, which is measured using the willingness to visit and suggest a vacation spot to others. This approach helps scholars gain a clear picture of a tourist destination's present and future satisfaction rates. Seeing the effectiveness of the composite approach, this current analysis observes tourist loyalty toward tourist destinations using this blended approach.

Quality-Value-Satisfaction-Loyalty Chain

Olsen (2002) postulated the satisfaction-loyalty model, in which customer satisfaction indirectly influences customer loyalty. When the quality assesses product attributes and satisfaction based on consumer understanding of a product/experience (Oliver, 1999), the quality of the product or service

decides satisfaction (Lu et al., 2015). Hussain et al. (2015) and Nowacki (2009) confirmed that service quality positively impacts perceived value and consumer satisfaction. It then also has a positive impact on customer loyalty. Tourism industry studies confirm this relationship and reveal a positive correlation between the quality of service, perceived value, satisfaction, and loyalty toward destinations (Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Lee et al., 2011). Further, Gallarza et al. (2013) affirmed the quality–value–satisfaction–loyalty linkage and exemplified the complexity of value dimensions that are highly sensitive to tourism experiences. The results of their study also showed that tourist expectations negatively impact tour perceived experiential quality while tourist motivations have a positive influence on it. Similarly, an inverse relationship exists between tourist satisfaction and complaints, whereas satisfaction and loyalty have a positive direct relationship (Lee et al., 2011). Further, perceived tour quality is positively correlated with tourist satisfaction.

The adjusted customer satisfaction model deeply describes the relationships between perceived quality, perceived value, and customer satisfaction. Some researchers justify the direct connection between value, quality, satisfaction, and loyalty, including within the service industry (Gallarza et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2011). Consumer loyalty involves the product/service performance output viewed by post-purchase customers. These relationships have already been extensively investigated, including in the area of tourism. However, only limited research has been conducted in the tourism industry in Taiwan, particularly. The need to investigate these relationships in the context of Taiwan is clear because tourist destinations considerably vary from each other. Based on this discussion, the hypotheses below address the linkages between service quality, satisfaction, value, and destination loyalty in the context of Taiwan's tourism industry.

H₁: Service quality has a significant effect on customer satisfaction

H₂: Service quality has a significant effect on destination loyalty

H₃: Service quality has a significant effect on perceived value

H₄: Perceived value has a significant effect on tourist satisfaction

H₅: Perceived value has a significant effect on tourist loyalty

H₆: Tourist satisfaction has a significant effect on tourist loyalty

Destination Image

Foroudi et al. (2018) determined destination image as an overall experience by compiling tourists' views, ideas, expectations, and feelings about a location. It becomes a critical marketing variable that significantly predicts behavioral intentions (Chi, 2012; Chi & Qu, 2008; Lu et al., 2017). Because of its significant role in decision-making and subsequent tourist behavior, destination image has been discussed extensively in tourism literature (Pike, 2002).

The aspects and attributes of destination image and tourist perception are formed holistically (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). Researchers argue that consumer experience with product or service consumption and promotional strategies, such as advertising and public relations, notably shape destination image in the consumer's mind (Lee et al., 2008). Consumer experience determinants, such as promotion and brand image, are often shaped by association with other entities, such as a country, individual, location, or event (Park et al., 1996). Further, image affects visitors' behaviors and is mainly determined by factual and emotional experiences that coincide with the destination (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990). Hosany et al. (2006) specified that destination image and destination personality retain a variance in the dimensions of destination personality. Between these two factors (destination image and destination personality), some argue the most important aspect of a tourist's experience of a product or service at a destination. Conceptually, brand identity is regarded as an

essential determinant for brand loyalty. Thus, previous researchers have incorporated this variable into brand loyalty measurement for tourist destinations (Chi & Qu, 2008; Chi, 2012; Zhang et al., 2014). Nevertheless, it is challenging to incorporate this idea into the definition of loyalty toward tourist destinations. Therefore, expanding the model of tourist destination loyalty by including destination image as its determinant is rational and unavoidable.

H₇: Destination image has a significant effect on service quality

H₈: Destination image has a significant effect on destination personality

H₉: Destination image has a significant effect on destination loyalty

Destination Personality

Product branding has differentiated producers for many centuries (Keller, 1993). Brands gradually change into personalized entities, allowing consumers to identify brand aspects that reduce risks in a complex brand industry (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). Brand personality refers to the compilation of human characteristics associated with a brand (Tong et al., 2015). Individual perceptions, brand advertisement, and other factors determine a person's feelings about a brand. Therefore, brand personality is likely defined according to customer satisfaction, self-expression, and recognition. Brand personalization and customer-brand identification increase customers' predictability for brand choice and purchase motivation. Freling and Forbes (2005) and Loureiro et al. (2014) stated that brand personality significantly influences customers' product or service choices; the more personality a brand possesses, the more favor it gains from consumers' perspectives.

In the tourism area, destination personality can be described as the human characteristics attributed to a destination (Sertkan et al., 2018). Destination personality research is comprehensive, considering the most frequently cited review of brand personality literature (Aaker, 1997). According to Papadimitriou et al. (2013), perceived personality is one part of the destination image that directly impacts the overall image.

Despite their intrinsic similarities, tourist destinations are still perceived as distinct from one another. Hosany et al. (2006) established destination personality which is characterized by sincerity, excitement, and merriment. Besides, conviviality, wickedness, boastfulness, assiduity, compliance, and extensiveness have been formed into a destination personality level (d'Astous & Boujbel, 2007). Papadimitriou et al. (2013) found that urban tourists attribute personality to a destination (particularly sincerity and excitement), irrespective of their personal experience visiting the place. Nevertheless, destination personality becomes a marketing strategy that targets audiences and influences their attitudinal and behavioral intentions (Papadimitriou et al., 2013).

Brand personality refers to the differentiation characteristics that affect customers' habits and personalities with regard to their favorite product (Kim, 2000). Tourists tend to revisit destinations with unique and attractive personalities (Manhas et al., 2016). Drawing from the theory of reasoned action stated in Manhas et al.'s (2016) study, perceived destination personality significantly affects tourist loyalty in intention to visit and revisit.

Consumers with brand personality exposure tend to be more loyal and connected to the brand than those with only product information exposure (Freling & Forbes, 2005). Therefore, branding research shows that brand personality positively affects product evaluation. Based on the above considerations, the relationships between destination personality, service quality, and Taiwan as a tourism destination are hypothesized as follows:

H₁₀: Destination personality has a significant effect on service quality

H₁₁: Destination personality has a significant effect on destination loyalty

RESEARCH METHOD

Sample and Procedure

The convenience sampling technique was used to encompass the prospective respondents. The data was obtained from a self-administered questionnaire distributed in Taiwan's international airports from August 1 to September 30, 2019. Prior to distribution, the draft of the questionnaire was reviewed by experts (e.g., researchers, practitioners, etc.), and based on their evaluations, appropriate adjustments were made regarding the expressions of related topics and the accuracy of the English translation. To ensure the validity and reliability of the measurement tools, the pre-test sample involved 200 international students from different universities. Then, a series of Cronbach's alpha (α) tests were conducted to check the accuracy of the constructs. The alpha was calculated by comparing a test's reliability to other tests with the same number of items and measuring the same construct of interest (Taber, 2018).

There were three main sections of the questionnaire. First, participants were asked about the frequency of their visits to Taiwan. Second, they should state their nationality (e.g., Italy, Jordan, Mexico, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, India, South Africa, North America, etc.) and demographics, such as age, education, etc. In the final section, the participants were asked to answer a series of questions regarding the variables of research interest, including tourist destination image, destination personality, perceived value, service quality, satisfaction, and loyalty toward the destination.

Measurement

All the items to measure the constructs of this study are well-established scales derived from survey instruments of previous studies. Six parts were involved in this process. Part 1 assessed the destination image of Taiwan with 27 items (Kim & Richardson, 2003). The attributes of the destination image from this measurement section converged around themes of friendly people, landscape, history, cuisine, food, and shopping. Part 2 assessed the perceived value construct with three items (Gallarza, & Saura, 2006; Lee et al., 2011). Part 3 determined the service quality construct with 10 items (Del Chiappa & Gil-Saura, 2015; Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Hussain et al., 2015). The overall satisfaction was constructed with three questions in part 4 (Del Chiappa & Gil-Saura, 2015; Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Lee et al., 2011). Part 5 assessed the destination personality with eight questions split across three dimensions. The following attributes met the criteria and were included in the final questionnaire: honesty (family-focused, polite, hospitable), ability (reliable, safe, successful), and sophistication (charming, glamorous) (Aaker, 1997; Ekinici & Hosany, 2006). Part 6 assessed the destination loyalty with four questions, which involved revisiting and recommending (Prayag, 2008). A five-point Likert-type scale was used to measure the survey instruments, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Finally, a survey on the antecedent factors to visiting Taiwan was conducted on 443 respondents who had previous visiting experience in Taiwan; the responses from the survey were used for further analysis.

Analysis

The partial least squares (PLS) approach was used in this study to implement the structural model and evaluate the hypotheses. PLS allowed researchers to use a small/medium sample size, as the data distribution in this study proved anomalous (Chin et al., 2008). PLS was employed for its ability to comprehensively estimate the relationship of different coefficient paths within complex structural models (Hair et al., 2017).

RESULTS

As displayed in Table 1 below, the respondents' demographic characteristics are based on the 443 accessible data from foreign tourists.

Table 1. Characteristics of the respondents

Variable	Description	Tourist	
		Frequency	%
Age	15-17 years	84	18.96
	>17-37 years	262	59.14
	>37 years	97	21.90
Gender	Male	190	42.89
	Female	253	57.11
Occupation	Student	234	52.82
	Entrepreneur	100	22.57
	Employee	79	17.83
	Others	30	6.77
Number of visits	1 (first)	258	58.24
	>1	185	41.76
Visited with	Alone	24	5.42
	Friends	172	38.83
	Entourage	222	50.11
	Others	25	5.64

Measurement Model

The two-stage analysis methodology was applied to test the model. The first stage measured the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and outer loading to determine the construct's reliability and validity. Table 2 shows that the AVE is higher than 0.5, the loading factor is higher than 0.6, and Alpha and CR are higher than 0.7. The results indicate that the model is valid and reliable.

Recently, Hu and Bentler (1999) proposed the HTMT ratio as a tool for testing a construction's discriminant validity. The findings of HTMT indicate that all constructs have values below 0.9. As such, the criterion of discriminant validity is met.

Table 2. The loading, alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted

	Loading*	Alpha	CR	AVE
Destination Image (Mean: 3.878) (Sd.: 0.544)		0.865	0.903	0.653
Friendly people	0.854			
Scenery	0.865			
Culture	0.825			
Cuisine and food	0.745			
Shopping	0.743			
Personality (Mean: 3.687) (Sd.: 0.591)		0.737	0.850	0.657
Sincerity (family-oriented, friendly, hospitable)	0.848			
Competence (reliable, secure, successful)	0.906			
Sophistication (charming, glamorous)	0.657			
Service Quality (Mean: 3.816) (Sd.: 0.693)		0.924	0.937	0.600
Friendliness of employees	0.834			
Helpfulness of employees	0.799			
Responsiveness of employees	0.841			
Courteousness of employees	0.825			
Professional appearance of employees	0.799			
Efficiency of services	0.826			
romptness of services	0.807			
Language proficiency of employees	0.638			
Accuracy and reliability of the information provided by public services	0.685			
Availability of information centers with relevant information about the sites	0.656			
Perceived Value (Mean: 3.998) (Sd.: 0.651)		0.826	0.896	0.742
Compared to the travel expenses, I got reasonable satisfaction from visiting.	0.837			
The choice to visit this destination was the right decision.	0.879			
Overall, visiting this destination is valuable and worth it.	0.867			
Tourist Satisfaction (Mean: 4.081) (Sd.: 0.669)		0.794	0.879	0.708
I am satisfied with my decision to choose Taiwan as my travel destination.	0.844			
Quality of services I received met every aspect of my expectation.	0.831			
My travel experience in Taiwan has been a wonderful experience.	0.848			
Destination Loyalty (Mean: 3.946) (Sd.: 0.771)		0.791	0.876	0.704
I will revisit Taiwan in the future.	0.876			
I will recommend Taiwan to others as a vacation destination to visit.	0.756			
In the next two years, I am likely to take another vacation to Taiwan.	0.879			

*Significant at $p < 0.01$, Sd.: Standard deviation

Structural Model

In the second stage, the structural model was evaluated with the measurement model evaluation. Following Chin et al.'s (2008) suggestion, the structural model was estimated to bootstrapping 5,000 iterations. It determines the weights of indicators as well as their path coefficients. To measure the model's suitability, geometric mean and R^2 were constructed. The result is 0.560, indicating that the model is satisfactory.

The R^2 indicates the percentage of exogenous variable variance that the predictors can explain (Hair et al., 2017). The destination image and personality make up 48.2% (0.482) of the service quality variation. The destination image, destination personality, service quality, perceived value, and tourist satisfaction make up 45.8% (0.458) of destination loyalty. When destination image and

personality were not included in the test, the R^2 value is 39.1% (0.391). It indicates that the addition of destination image and personality will boost destination loyalty prediction.

Chin et al. (2008) stated that these percentages suggest that the explanatory power of the independent variable on destination loyalty is moderate in both samples. The Q^2 is crucial to gauge the model's goodness of fit. The Q^2 of destination image, satisfaction, personality, perceived value, service quality, and loyalty towards destination are all positive. It indicates the accuracy of the proposed model's prediction. Approximate fit indices were measured using normal fit index (NFI), and standardized root means square residual (SRMR). The model has an SRMR value of 0.076 (slightly below 0.08) and an NFI value of 0.76 (slightly below 0.9) (Hair et al., 2017). The other standards are appropriate but the NFI requirements are not met. The model can be assumed to be adequately acceptable.

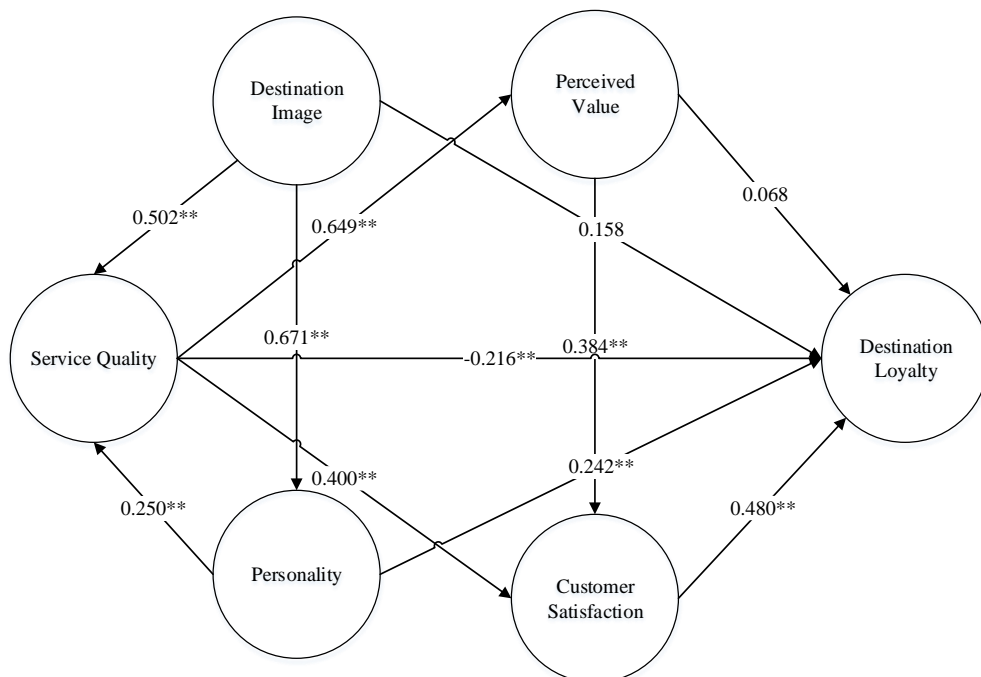
Table 3. The results of hypotheses testing

Path	Direct effect		Indirect effect		Total effect	
	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value
H ₁ : Service quality → Customer satisfaction	0.400	6.850**	0.250	5.659**	0.649	18.540**
H ₂ : Service quality → Destination loyalty	-0.216	2.800**	0.356	4.186**	0.140	1.405
H ₃ : Service quality → Perceived value	0.649	16.641**			0.649	16.641**
H ₄ : Perceived value → Customer satisfaction	0.384	6.333**			0.384	6.333**
H ₅ : Perceived value → Destination loyalty	0.068	0.734	0.184	3.988**	0.252	2.499*
H ₆ : Customer satisfaction → Destination loyalty	0.480	5.047**			0.480	5.047**
H ₇ : Destination image → Personality	0.671	16.495**			0.671	16.495**
H ₈ : Destination image → Service quality	0.502	7.615**	0.168	3.623**	0.669	18.010**
H ₉ : Destination image → Destination loyalty	0.158	1.476	0.256	3.406**	0.413	6.070**
H ₁₀ : Personality → Service quality	0.250	3.578**			0.250	3.758**
H ₁₁ : Personality → Destination loyalty	0.242	3.192**	0.035	1.313	0.277	3.838**

Note: **significant at $p < 0.01$, *significant at $p < 0.05$

The effect of service quality on customer satisfaction ($\beta_1 = 0.400$), destination loyalty ($\beta_2 = -0.216$), and perceived value ($\beta_3 = 0.469$) is significant ($p < 0.01$). Consequently, H₁ and H₂ are strengthened, and H₃ is rejected due to the negative effect. H₄ is accepted while H₅ is rejected as the perceived value effect on customer satisfaction is significant ($\beta_4 = 0.384$, $p < 0.01$), but its impact on destination loyalty ($\beta_5 = 0.068$, $p > 0.05$) is insignificant. Customer satisfaction significantly impacts destination loyalty ($\beta_6 = 0.480$, $p < 0.01$), which supports H₆. The influence of destination image on destination personality ($\beta_7 = 0.671$) and service quality ($\beta_8 = 0.502$) is also significant ($p < 0.01$), although its impact on destination loyalty ($\beta_9 = 0.158$) is insignificant ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, H₇ and H₈ are accepted while H₉ is rejected. Eventually, the impact of destination personality on service quality ($\beta_{10} = 0.250$) and destination loyalty ($\beta_{11} = 0.242$) is significant at $p < 0.01$, meaning the acceptance of H₁₀ and H₁₁.

Table 3 also reveals significant findings regarding the overall impact of destination image, personality, quality of service, perceived value, and customer satisfaction on destination loyalty. It shows customer satisfaction and destination image as the most prominent players in destination loyalty ($\beta_6 = 0.480$ and $\beta_9 = 0.413$, respectively) compared to other destination loyalty drivers. In addition, Figure 1 depicts the framework for the overall path relationship for the destination loyalty model.



Note: **significant at $p < 0.01$

Figure 1. The Destination Loyalty Model

DISCUSSION AND THEORETICAL IMPLICATION

The PLS finding indicates that destination personality and customer satisfaction significantly impact Taiwan tourist destination loyalty. Therefore, personality and satisfaction drive destination loyalty. According to Hultman et al. (2015), destination personality dictates customer satisfaction and desire to revisit. As a form of destination branding (Baloglu et al., 2014; Lam & Ryan, 2020), personality positively impacts Taiwan tourist destination loyalty (Lam & Ryan, 2020). The finding confirms the quality-value-satisfaction-loyalty chain model. Notably, personality conveys emotional connections between consumers and brands (Ekhlassi et al., 2012; Anggraeni & Rachmanita, 2015; Kim & Sullivan, 2019; Valette-Florence & Valette-Florence, 2020). The result suggests that visitors can highlight, return, and communicate about destinations that have unique and attractive nature (Bekk et al., 2016). In other words, destination image and personality significantly affect tourist loyalty in terms of their decision to visit and revisit. This finding is closely related to the theory of brand self-congruity (Kim & Malek, 2017). According to this theory, consumers are more likely to prefer brands with more symbolic values than cognitive values. The more favorably tourists connect visual-minded-frames with a place, the more likely they will visit and recommend that destination (Prayag, 2008; Suhartanto et al., 2016; Joo et al., 2020; Lee & Xue, 2020). They find pleasure in personal participation and connecting with their heritage. Tourists who engage more directly with the experience in the destination become more impressed with the destination image and establish a sense of loyalty. Similarly, urban tourists tend to attribute personality characteristics to the destination, authenticity, and enthusiasm, regardless of their personal experience visiting the places (Papadimitriou et al., 2013). Thus, destination personality is a marketing tool that targets, attracts,

and shapes consumers' attitudes and intentions toward the destination (Kim et al., 2018; Cohen et al., 2014).

Satisfaction has a positive effect on Taiwan tourist destination loyalty. Customer satisfaction is the most influential among the loyalty drivers, even stronger than destination personality. Customer satisfaction significantly impacts tourist loyalty, which is expressed through the attitude to suggest Taiwan tourist destinations. The more contextualized a destination, the more satisfaction a tourist receives. According to Suhartanto et al. (2018), tourist loyalty is primarily a function of tourist satisfaction. This finding is consistent with that of Kozak (2003), Prayag (2008), and Lee et al. (2011), who established a positive relationship between the two variables. The finding also confirms the quality-value-satisfaction-loyalty chain model (Gallarza & Saura, 2006) and adjusts the model of consumer satisfaction (Hussain et al., 2015). The result indicates that service quality positively affects customer satisfaction and perceived value, which results in increased customer loyalty (Hussain et al., 2015; Nowacki, 2009). Several studies support a direct relationship between satisfaction and loyalty (Kim et al., 2011; Gallarza et al., 2015). According to Mittal and Kamakura (2001), Faullant et al. (2008), and Lee et al. (2011), customers' commitment to suggest and desire to buy back a good or service from others reflect the positive effects of loyalty and satisfaction. The finding indicates that both factors are interrelated (Castañeda, 2011). Moreover, the result confirms Bitner's (1990) rationalization that satisfaction or dissatisfaction arising from balancing or unbalancing perceptions and perceived outcomes is considered a behavioral loyalty pattern. According to Bigné et al. (2001), the linkage between satisfaction and probability of recommendation/revisitation is justifiable evidence. Therefore, consumers' tendency to revisit and recommend increases as satisfaction rates increase. Consequently, word-of-mouth (WOM) suggestions are essential to loyalty.

Destination image is the next most crucial factor of destination loyalty (directly or indirectly through strengthening personality). According to Chen et al. (2016), destination image and personality can increase customers' intention to recommend. Knowing the behavioral goals of the visitors is critical in assessing the competitive advantage and viability of a destination. The built destination loyalty model can improve the accuracy of predicting destination loyalty using destination image and personality data. Thus, this study theoretically confirms the quality-satisfaction-loyalty model and extends this model using destination image and personality. Destination image can sway tourists' behaviors (Jacobsen et al., 2019). It includes quality accommodations, beautiful scenic views, and friendly people. Hence, the destination image largely influences the pre-visitation choice process.

This study also found that service quality negatively impacts perceived value, though not significantly. Data and results support that service quality is not an essential aspect of destination loyalty. According to Hikmah et al. (2018), service quality does not significantly impact destination loyalty because of tourists' lack of knowledge before visiting the location. Service quality must be in line with providing accurate information service based on actual events and must adapt to a reasonable standard (e.g., International Organization for Standardization). This finding does not confirm the quality-value-satisfaction-loyalty chain model (Gallarza & Saura, 2006) or the concept of loyalty structure (Herhausen et al., 2019). Gallarza and Saura (2006) noted that the important aspect of the dimensions is susceptible to tourism experience. The finding is also inconsistent with several prior studies' findings (Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Lee et al., 2011) that revealed a positive association between service quality and destination. Though not significantly, service quality positively affects loyalty to the destination (Gallarza et al., 2013). This positive impact is also evident in Murphy et al.'s (2000) empirical works. However, Kashyap and Bojanic (2000) and Hu et al. (2009) found that service quality's impact on destination loyalty is not significant in hospitality. The higher the service quality, the lower the destination loyalty, and vice versa. This finding is expected

for Taiwan tourist destination loyalty. In other words, Taiwan's travel agents should enhance tourist intentions when tourist service quality is high. It should cover affordable travel services to entice and meet the high standards of overseas tourists (e.g., Italy, Jordan, Mexico, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, India, South Africa, North America, etc.). Multi-group research by Kim et al. (2018) revealed the principal differences between Western and Eastern visitors. Western visitors emphasize comfort more while Eastern visitors were more enthused. Therefore, tourist perceptions notably affect a tour's expected experiential quality. According to Lee et al. (2011), this perception should increase tourism interest by encouraging cultural activities in the tourism industry. The combination of well-known tourism brands within and outside the country boosts overseas tourist responses and strengthens their destination loyalty, particularly in Taiwan.

Lastly, the PLS findings prove the direct impact of destination image (Papadimitriou et al., 2013; Chi, 2012; Chi & Qu, 2008; Lu et al., 2017; Pektas et al., 2019; Gonzalez, 2021), personality (Hultman et al., 2015; Usakli & Baloglu, 2011), service quality (Murphy et al., 2000; Kashyap & Bojanic, 2000; Hu et al., 2009), perceived value (Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Lee et al., 2011), and customer satisfaction (Kim et al., 2011) on destination loyalty. The results also show that strengthening service quality, perceived value, satisfaction, and personality may have an indirect impact on destination loyalty (Hussain et al., 2015; Nowacki, 2009; Joo et al., 2020; Lee & Xue, 2020).

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION

Studies have shown that Taiwan is among the world's most rapidly expanding economies. The country is also a major marketplace for tourism. This study offers insight into promoting and defining Taiwan's tourism industry. Furthermore, this research provides an understanding of hospitality and tourism issues by examining the effects of customer satisfaction, destination image, and destination personality on loyalty towards Taiwan tourist destinations. Our key findings reveal that tourist satisfaction is the most significant loyalty driver, followed by destination image. It has both indirect and direct effects on destination loyalty through the role of destination personality.

The relationship between destination personality and service quality has significantly improved destination loyalty. The implication thereof is that it is important for market practitioners to emphasize the management of the destination image and destination personality factors on tourists' perceptions. It includes environmental scenery, friendly people, culture, cuisine and food, and shopping, as well as the internal personality that encompasses sincerity, competence, and sophistication. For a successful marketing strategy and a brand that distinguishes a destination from its competitors, employing branding tactics to develop the personality of tourist destinations is essential. Furthermore, destination branding can be enhanced through the experience dimension, which is supported by the decision-making process in the tourism industry. These findings imply that the community needs to be involved in destination brand marketing. Collaborating with private and community groups is essential for destination brand development. Finally, locals represent a broad community of stakeholders who can create an enhanced image of a particular destination.

Taiwan is a diverse and unique region that combines traditional and modern cultures, offering an exciting, unique, and meaningful tourism experience. Wu (2016) noted that destination marketing managers determine the attractiveness of different regions (markets) in tourism products (including acknowledging the destination image of the major markets). Tourism organizations should also consider making a significant investment in promoting tourist destinations to enhance tourists' experiences and destination image. Tourists who engage directly in experiencing the destination become more impressed with the image, and thus, a sense of loyalty is established.

LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Although this study's results are promising, a few limitations and threats to validity remain. Although convenience sampling is a potential segment in the tourism industry, its utilization in this study's context could have decreased external validity. While the sample size was sufficient, a larger sample should be considered to improve the model reliability. Future research could consider probability sampling and random sample techniques to recruit prospective respondents. A longitudinal study that considers the impact of seasonality and other variables is required to generalize the findings. PLS is not necessarily better than other methods for evaluating possible higher-order and interactive effects. Future studies could examine the linkages between destination image, destination personality, and destination loyalty by using gender, age, history, and experience as moderating variables. Investigation of the mediating effect in the current model could enrich future research. Research on Western and Eastern tourists could also use a multi-group study (Kim & Eom, 2019) to conduct cross-cultural comparisons (Lu et al., 2017). Future studies could also include destination personality in their respective destination loyalty formation models to understand the direct and indirect impacts of destination image on destination loyalty through the strengthening of destination personality.

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