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Destination loyalty modeling of the global tourism☆

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the antecedents of destination loyalty and its relation to destination image, consumer travel experience, and destination satisfaction in the tourism context. This study raises important questions concerning how destination image, consumer travel experience, and destination satisfaction affect destination loyalty. This research attempts to identify three key antecedents of loyalty in the tourism context. The study empirically tests predicted relationships by using personal interview data from 475 foreign tourists. The conceptual model investigates the relevant relationships among the research constructs by using fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) approach. Findings from the research sample support the argument that destination image, consumer travel experience, destination satisfaction are the key determinants of destination loyalty. Furthermore, destination image and consumer travel experience influence destination satisfaction. The study also discusses theoretical and managerial implications of research findings for marketing the tourism products globally.

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the antecedents of foreign travelers' behavioral intentions. Understanding travelers' loyalty is an important goal for destination marketing managers. In the context of tourist destinations, foreign visitor loyalty remains an important indicator of successful destination management. Previous studies exist on the antecedents of tourists' loyalty, including motivation, destination image, trip quality, perceived value, and satisfaction in different destination settings (Bigne, Sanchez, & Sanchez, 2001; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chi & Qu, 2008; Ekinci, Sirakaya-Turk, & Preciado, 2013; Huang & Hsu, 2009). However, little research contributes to the theoretical development in country branding. Although earlier research focuses on city brand images (Merrilees, Miller, & Herington, 2009), country branding is a relatively new area of academic research in marketing.

The literature on destination loyalty is incomplete in several important respects. This study attempts to explain foreign travelers' destination loyalty by developing a model following the existing theory of planned behavior. This research advances country branding research in several ways. First, the article articulates a model of the

determination of country brand loyalty, enabling the identification of the important country brand attitudes. Next, in the context of tourism, the review of literature reveals a number of studies on destination loyalty that need thorough investigation. Therefore, practitioners and academics find that conducting more studies of destination loyalty to have a greater knowledge of this concept is important. The relationship among some of these constructs remains unclear and inconclusive in the tourism fields. Although recent advances in the general marketing field indicate the importance of destination image, previous travel experience, and satisfaction in explaining aspects of consumer behavior, research is scarce on the role of these elements in tourism. To address this shortcoming, the current study develops and tests a model linking destination personality and tourist–destination identification with tourist satisfaction, positive word-of-mouth, and revisiting intentions. To bridge the gap in the destination loyalty literature, the study proposes an integrated approach to examine the theoretical and empirical evidence on the relationships among destination image, consumer travel experience, destination satisfaction, and destination loyalty in the tourism context. Also, identifying the relative importance of these factors in determining loyalty may enable destination marketing managers to allocate scarce resources efficiently and consolidate visitor loyalty.

2. Literature review and research hypotheses

2.1. Destination loyalty

Newman and Werbel (1973) define loyal customers as those who re-buy a brand. Tellis (1988) defines loyalty in behavioral terms as a repeating purchasing frequency. Although previous studies explore the

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issue of repeated visitation (Bowen & Shoemaker, 1998; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Gyte & Phelps, 1989) and identify preliminary tourist loyalty (Backman & Crompton, 1991; Oppermann, 2000; Pritchard & Howard, 1997; Sirakaya-Turk, Ekinci, & Martine, 2015), the study of the concept of loyalty and its applications to destination in the country brand has limitations.

Loyalty for a tourist destination has been the subject of intense academic debate with respect to its measurement (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Ekinci et al., 2013; Oppermann, 2000; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Another issue for the behavioral loyalty measures in tourism contexts is the determination of an appropriate time frame during which customers may or may not return to a destination (Ekinci et al., 2013; Sirakaya-Turk et al., 2015). However, the loyalty behavior approach may not be an adequate assessment of repeated visitation for tourism destinations because many consumers undertake their holiday only on an annual basis. These approaches remain unclear with respect to their conceptual framework and inability to explain the factors that influence customer loyalty (Bastida & Huan, 2014; Yoon & Uysal, 2005).

2.2. Destination image

Image constitutes as an overall impression with some emotional condition (Oxenfeldt, 1974). Dobni and Zinkhan (1990) conclude that image is a perceptual phenomenon that takes shape through consumers' emotional interpretation with cognitive and affective components. The definitions of the destination image relate to individual or group perceptions of a place (Crompton, 1979; Jenkins, 1999; Min, Martin, & Jung, 2013; Zeugner-Roth & Žabkar, 2015). Destination image is an interactive system of thoughts, opinions, feelings, visualizations, and intentions toward a destination (Költringer & Dickinger, 2015; Tasci & Gartner, 2007). An overall or composite results from interactions between these consumer choice attitudes (Gartner, 1989; Lin, Morais, Kerstetter, & Hou, 2007; Pike & Ryan, 2004). The characteristics of tourism products or services, such as multidimensionality (Gartner, 1989; Zeugner-Roth & Žabkar, 2015) and intangibility (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991), complicate the measurement of the destination image construct.

However, the relationship between destination image and behavior intentions remains a debatable matter. A good image can influence repeat patronage (Dick & Basu, 1985). Kandampully and Suhartanto (2000) further identify that hotel image with the performance of house-keeping, reception, food and beverage has a positive effect on customer loyalty. Hotel image acknowledges that destination image affects tourists' behavior and destination choice (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Költringer & Dickinger, 2015; Milman & Pizam, 1995; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). Destination image influences tourists in the process of choosing a destination and revisiting the destination in the future (Hosany & Prayag, 2013; Zeugner-Roth & Žabkar, 2015). Following the earlier discussion:

H1. Destination image has a positive effect on destination loyalty.

2.3. Destination satisfaction

Oliver (1997) defines satisfaction as a judgment that a product or service feature provides a pleasurable level of consumption. Many tourism researchers deal with different aspects of consumer satisfaction in the hospitality and tourism industry, such as satisfaction with specific destinations (Danaher & Arweiler, 1996; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Hultman et al., 2015; Pizam & Milman, 1993; Qu & Li, 1997), time share (Lawton, Weaver, & Faulkner, 1998), group tours (Whipple & Thach, 1988) and restaurants (Dube, Renaghan, & Miller, 1994; Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung, 2007). In the tourism and leisure literatures, previous studies investigate visitors' satisfaction in a diverse range of contexts, including wildlife refuges (Tian-Cole, Crompton, & Willson, 2002), travel agency services (Millan & Esteban, 2004), shopping experiences

(Yuksel & Yuksel, 2007), holiday destinations (Tribe & Snaith, 1998), and tourists' overall satisfaction (Kozak, 2001; Severt, Wang, Chen, & Breiter, 2007; Yu & Goulden, 2006).

Research shows that satisfaction links closely to destination choice and decisions to return (Bigne, Andreu, & Gnoth, 2005; Hultman et al., 2015; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000). Satisfaction has a positive influence on loyalty through favorable revisiting intentions and recommendations to others (Bigne et al., 2001; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Hosany & Prayag, 2013; Prayag, 2008). A number of studies examine the antecedents of customer loyalty (Backman & Crompton, 1991; Cronin, Brady, & Hult, 2000), the results of this body of research show that satisfaction is a good predictor of loyalty (Cronin et al., 2000; Petrick & Norman, 2001). A number of studies confirm a significant positive relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Cronin et al., 2000; Hosany & Prayag, 2013). In tourism industry, some empirical evidences show that tourists' satisfaction is a strong indicator of revisiting and recommending the destination to other people (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Hultman et al., 2015). However, demonstrating that the effect of satisfaction on customer loyalty is not the same for all destinations worldwide is important (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000). Alternately, in the context of international tourism satisfaction may not have a direct effect on destination loyalty. Compared to the repurchase of consumer products, repeated visits to tourist destinations are relatively rare because of considerable travel time, cost constraints, and the variety of available alternative destinations (Michels & Bowen, 2005). Satisfaction leads to repeated purchase and positive word-of-mouth (WOM) recommendation.

H2. Destination satisfaction positively influences destination loyalty.

Destinations with a more positive image will be part of the decision making process (Gartner, 1989). Court and Lupton (1997) find that the image of the destination under study positively affects visitors' intention to revisit in the future. Image would affect how customers perceive quality; a positive image corresponds to a higher perceived quality, which will in turn determine the satisfaction of consumers (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000). Prior studies (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Bigne et al., 2001; Chi & Qu, 2008; Cronin, 2000; Prayag, 2009) establish the link between destination image and satisfaction. Further, destination image exercises a positive influence on perceived satisfaction.

H3. Destination image positively influence tourists' destination satisfaction.

2.4. Consumer experience

Tourism is a pioneering example of the experience economy (Dann, 1977). Experience originates from a set of complex interactions between the customer and a company's product offerings (Addis & Holbrook, 2001). In recent years, a consensus characterizes consumer experience as a multidimensional evaluation (Gentile, Spiller, & Noci, 2007; Hsu, Dehuang, & Woodside, 2009). The global tourism industry evolves into a fundamental challenge for marketers that need to comprehend the distinguishing characteristics of tourist experiences (Nikolova & Hassan, 2013; Perdue, 2002). The tourism experience is unique, emotionally charged, and with a high personal value (Ekinci et al., 2013; McIntosh & Siggs, 2005). Companies should provide unforgettable, satisfactory, and extraordinary experiences to their customers by adding value to their offerings (Berry et al., 2002; Nikolova & Hassan, 2013). The concept of the experience economy spawns some studies dedicated to the understanding of consumer experiences (Addis & Holbrook, 2001; Chang & Chieng, 2006; Gentile et al., 2007; Hsu et al., 2009; Nikolova & Hassan, 2013; Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung, 2007; Quan & Wang, 2004). However, research on the conceptualization and measurement of tourism experiences remains sparse.

In general, the uses of satisfaction are to evaluate past consumer experience, the performance of products and services, and the perceptions of the physical environment such as a neighborhood and tourist destinations in the tourism context (Ekinici et al., 2013; Ross & Iso-Ahola, 1991). A rich body of research understands tourist experiences from a number of perspectives (Jackson, White, & Schmierer, 1996; Li, 2000; Prentice, Witt, & Hamer, 1998). For example, past studies explore the personal and affective dimensions of tourists' experiences in natural and heritage environments (Beeho & Prentice, 1997; Schanzel & McIntosh, 2000). Other research investigates tourists' experiences of high-risk adventure and leisure activities (Arnould & Price, 1993; Celci, Rose, & Leigh, 1993; Hsu et al., 2009). For instance, studies show that interregional tourists who are highly satisfied with their experience are more likely to report an intention to revisit and actively recommend the destination to others (Chi & Qu, 2008; Severt et al., 2007; Tian-Cole et al., 2002). Previous studies find that past travel experiences influence satisfaction and loyalty (Mittal, Kumar, & Tsiros, 1999; Schreyer, Lime, & Williams, 1984). With repurchase and consumption of a tourism product or service, tourist consumers are able to evaluate the product or service, which affect destination satisfaction.

H4. Consumer previous experience positively influences destination satisfaction.

The tourism literature suggests a close relationship between past travel experience and future behavioral intentions (Oppermann; Sonmez & Graefe). Sonmez and Graefe, and Oppermann (2000) find that past travel experience appears to be a powerful influence on behavioral intentions. If consumers' perceptions about these experiences are positive and pleasant, they would like to repeat them and become more loyal (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2008; Hosany & Prayag, 2013). Past experiences of visiting a destination increase tourists' intention to travel to the same destination. Sirakaya-Turk et al. (2015) and Sonmez and Graefe (1998) find a significant relationship between previous travel experience and future tourist visitation behavior. Thus, visitors' travel experience increases their intention to visit the destination again.

H5. Consumers' previous experience positively influences destination loyalty.

3. Method

After reviewing the marketing and tourism literature and conducting a preliminary in-depth interview with 30 foreign tourists, three groups of constructs appear to influence destination loyalty: destination image, destination satisfaction, and consumer travel experience. The research hypotheses and framework appear in Fig. 1.

3.1. Measures

22 items capture destination image, consumer experience, destination satisfaction, and destination loyalty. The study adapts Gartner (1989) and Tasci and Gartner's (2007) 6-item scale to measure

destination image and Oh et al.'s (2007) 3-item scale to measure consumer experience. The present study uses a 4-item instrument that Bigne et al. (2001) develop to measure destination loyalty. The study uses Kozak and Rimmington (2000) and Lee, Back, and Kim's (2009) 9-item instrument to capture the destination satisfaction dimensions. Table 1 provides the item details for the means and standard deviations.

3.2. Data collection

To collect data, the study employs a personal interview questionnaire. The study distributes the questionnaire in the Taiwan Tourism Welcome Center from March 1 to April 30, 2015. A screening process of these foreign visitors attempts to examine the loyalty in the tourism context. Taiwan is the place of study for two reasons. First, the country has a high level of repeated visitation among Asia visitors. Second, the robustness and competitiveness of the tourism industry in Taiwan offer a valuable case study for understanding tourist loyalty and its antecedents. Similar to other island destinations, the tourism industry is a pillar of the economic development in Taiwan and constitutes approximately the 22% of the GDP, while employing 32% of the workforce (Annual Report on Tourism 2014, Taiwan). Official tourism statistics for the year 2014 recorded 8,236,507 international tourist arrivals. These tourists are primarily high-income groups, travel with family, and include a high level of repeaters (Annual Report on Tourism 2015, Taiwan).

Respondents sent 475 valid responses resulting in a final response rate of 36%. The demographic characteristics of the sample are outlined in Table 2. The early and late respondents show no significant differences on any of the variables, indicating that late respondents do not differ from early respondents, thus showing the absence of non-response bias.

4. Empirical results

This analysis provides a confirmatory technique that allows assessment of the reliabilities and validities of the constructs. The study conducts a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on all the research

Table 1
Measures used with mean and standard deviation and measurement model.

Construct and scale items	Mean	SD	Standardized loadings
<i>Destination image (7-point scales anchored from low to high)</i>			
1. Reputation	4.6	1.3	0.88
2. Natural attractions	4.5	1.8	0.82
3. Entertainment and events	4.7	1.5	0.85
4. Historic and culture attractions	4.2	1.5	0.92
5. Accessibility of the destination	4.5	1.3	0.87
6. Level of service quality	4.6	1.6	0.82
<i>Consumer experience (7-point scales anchored by strongly disagree and strongly agree)</i>			
7. My experience in Taiwan was what I expected	4.5	1.7	0.88
8. The visit made me happy	4.4	1.6	0.82
9. My choice to visit Taiwan was a wise one	4.7	1.5	0.75
<i>Satisfaction (7-point scales anchored from low to high)</i>			
10. Shopping	4.7	1.5	0.77
11. Activities	4.2	1.6	0.84
12. Lodging	4.6	1.7	0.85
13. Availability of travel information	4.7	1.7	0.88
14. Dining	4.8	1.6	0.82
15. Climate	4.4	1.6	0.85
16. Attractions	4.5	1.4	0.79
17. Environment	4.7	1.5	0.82
18. Sightseeing	4.6	1.8	0.86
<i>Destination loyalty (7-point scales anchored by strongly disagree and strongly agree)</i>			
19. I would recommend others to visit Taiwan	4.1	1.8	0.82
20. I will visit Taiwan in the future	3.9	1.6	0.82
21. Taiwan is my first choice among destinations	2.7	1.3	0.83
22. I will say positive things about Taiwan	3.2	1.5	0.71

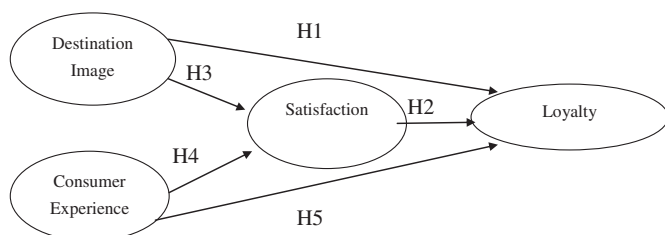


Fig. 1. Research framework.

Table 2
Demographic characteristics of the sample (n = 475).

	Percentage
<i>Nationality of foreign visitors (n = 475)</i>	
China	23.4
Korea	15.7
Japan	19.5
USA	12.2
EU	8.4
Others	20.8
<i>Gender (n = 470)</i>	
Male	42.6
Female	57.4
<i>Level of education (n = 435)</i>	
High school or less	5.5
University (undergraduate)	26.4
Graduate or high level	68.1
<i>Age of visitors (n = 433)</i>	
18–24	5.4
25–29	10.7
30–34	14.8
35–39	18.2
40–44	13.6
45–49	12.5
50–59	9.8
60–64	8.2
65 and older	6.8
<i>Visitation level (n = 452)</i>	
First time	45.3
Second time	33.1
Third time or more	21.6

constructs of destination image, consumer travel experience, destination satisfaction, and destination loyalty by employing AMOS 7. CFA shows a good fit for the theoretical model (Table 3). Average variance extracted (AVE) of constructs exceeds the minimum criteria of 0.50. Thus, the study supports the convergent validity of each construct. Table 3 verifies the discriminant validity for all constructs.

4.1. Overall model fit

Table 4 presents the relevant overall fit indices for each of the loyalty model elements. The data provides chi-squared values of 1425.06 for the samples (each with 925 degrees of freedom, p = 0.00). Thus, with a root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of .075 and comparative fit index (CFI) of 0.95, these fit indices provide values that support a good model fit for the data set.

4.2. Measurement model fit

The measurement model outputs are in Table 1. All 22 standardized loadings are high and have t-values that are significant (p < 0.01). All standard errors are small and acceptable. Thus, all indicators relate to their specified constructs, thereby confirming the postulated relationships among research constructs. Reliability estimates for each construct using coefficient alpha (Cronbach, 1951) and composite reliabilities exceed the threshold 0.70 level. All shared variances extracted

Table 3
Construct measures in the study.

Measures construct	Cronbach's α	AVE
Consumer experience	0.72	0.85
Destination image	0.78	0.78
Destination satisfaction	0.75	0.72
Destination loyalty	0.83	0.77

Table 4
Overall model fit.

Chi-square	df	p-value	RMSEA	CFI	NFI	GFI
1425.06	925	0.0000	0.075	0.95	0.91	0.92

Note: RMSEA: root mean square error of approximation; GFI = goodness of fit index; NFI: normed fit index; CFI: comparative fit index.

for each construct are acceptable as they exceed the recommended 0.50 value (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). To investigate the discriminant validity of the constructs, Fornell and Larcker (1981) suggest calculating whether the average variance extracted is greater than the square of the construct's correlations with the other factors. Overall, the measurement model statistics provide support for the psychometric properties of the survey instruments.

4.3. Structural model fit

The results in Table 5 involve the analyses of the causal paths the structural model hypothesizes. The models support the five hypotheses. Therefore, the destination image has a positive effect on destination loyalty (H1); destination satisfaction has a positive effect on destination loyalty (H2); destination image has a positive effect on destination satisfaction (H3); and consumer experience has a positive effect on destination loyalty (H5). The link between consumer experience and destination satisfaction is significant (H4).

4.4. fsQCA analysis

Another analysis technique for this study is fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA), a set-theoretical technique embracing complex causality (Woodside, 2013). This method has several advantages over traditional techniques such as multiple regression (MRA) and SEM analysis because all relationships between factors are not simple, linear, and complementary (Fiss, 2007; Ragin, 2006, 2008; Woodside & Zhang, 2013). Table 6 provides the details of the calibration of conditions.

The second step is to examine the conditions necessary for the outcome. Analysis of necessary conditions tests whether any causal condition is a necessary condition. Table 7 shows the five conditions and the outcome and shows the existence of two necessary conditions, with consistency for both exceeding the threshold of 0.9. Destination image is a necessary condition for marketing managers to enhance. The consistency for age is 0.937204. In addition, destination satisfaction is a necessary condition for the marketing managers to consider. The consistency for work experience is 0.901623.

FsQCA method analyzes combinations of causal configurations. Table 8 presents the results of the intermediate solution. This solution minimizes the combination, assuming that the conditions of destination image and satisfaction lead to loyalty. According to the results, the solution yields a coverage of 81% and a consistency of 96% (Table 8), indicating a sufficient relation between loyalty and a certain subset of conditions. The sufficiency analysis explains which combination of conditions is sufficient to obtain the outcome (Ragin, 2008).

Table 5
Path analysis results.

Path significant	Standardized path estimate	t-Value
H1: destination image → destination loyalty	0.52	8.29 s
H2: destination satisfaction → destination loyalty	0.35	6.35 s
H3: destination image → destination satisfaction	0.44	8.89 s
H4: consumer experience → destination satisfaction	0.38	7.07 s
H5: consumer experience → destination loyalty	0.58	10.64 s

ns = not significant, s = significant.
t values all significant at p < .05.

Table 6
Calibration of conditions.

Outcome	Calibration
Gender	Male → 1
	Female → 0
Age	From 18 to 34 → 1
	From 35 to 49 → 0.75
	From 50 to 64 → 0.25
	65 or older → 0
Educational attainment	Graduate or high level → 1
	University(undergraduate) → 0.5
	High school of less → 0
Visitation level	Third time or more → 1
	Second time → 0.5
	First time → 0

5. Discussions and implications

The research finds that destination image and consumer travel experience drive destination satisfaction. These findings are consistent with some previous studies (Mittal et al., 1999; Schreyer et al., 1984). Actually, a destination with good destination image and substantial consumer travel experience is in the best position to adopt the adequate marketing strategy. Research results show that a past travel experience and destination image positively influences a customer's destination satisfaction. This is consistent with the previous finding that past travel experience and destination are important determinants of success in tourism markets (Sonmez & Graefe, 1998; Oppermann, 2000). In terms of managerial practice, the finding suggests that tourism firms need to pay to promote constant accumulation of past travel experience and destination image for increasing the destination satisfaction.

Destination image and consumer experience have a positive effect on destination loyalty. An improvement for the overall image of a destination makes a positive assessment for visiting a destination. These findings suggest that destination marketers focus their efforts on managing positive visitor experiences and destination image. Broadly, they can maintain destination attractions, such as implementation of destination image management programs within the destination. Another significant finding of this study is that the destination satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on destination loyalty. The research result is consistent with previous studies for offering empirical support for the destination satisfaction and destination loyalty (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chi & Qu, 2008; Cronin et al., 2000; Kozak, 2001; Prayag, 2008). Therefore, as satisfaction levels increase for the international tourists, the propensity to return and recommend increases.

Indeed, the study advances the fundamental knowledge of the marketing and tourism literature and provides an empirical foundation for further research in the global tourism marketing strategy context by examining extended conceptualization of destination satisfaction and destination loyalty in country branding level. The major findings of

Table 7
Analysis of necessary conditions.

Analysis of necessary conditions		
Outcome: loyalty		
	Consistency	Coverage
Consumer experience	0.739000	0.827857
Destination image	0.937204	0.956412
Destination satisfaction	0.901523	0.926517
Analysis of necessary conditions		
Outcome: satisfaction		
	Consistency	Coverage
Consumer experience	0.8364781	0.862826
Destination image	0.7643654	0.824322

Table 8
Analysis of sufficient conditions.

Causal configuration	Raw coverage	Unique coverage	Consistency
di * ce	0.243667	0.135667	0.949351
di * sa	0.484333	0.274000	0.889473
ce * sa	0.331333	0.079000	0.901996
~di * ce * sa	0.266667	0.054333	0.947632
~ce * di * sa	0.467543	0.154784	0.874373
~sa * ce * di	0.266667	0.254333	0.823365
Solution coverage: 0.813734			
Solution consistency: 0.964765			

this study have significant managerial implications for tourism and hospitality marketers. In practice, destination marketing managers should carefully assess the attractiveness of various regions or markets in the tourism products. An attempt to integrate competitive moves recognizes that the destination image of the key regions or markets is important. Competitive pressures should dictate whether activities in certain markets should receive a subsidy from the government. The research findings suggest that the destination government should make greater investments in their tourism destination promotion to continue to enhance tourists' experiences and destination image.

Destinations marketing's high competitions are getting greater in the future. Therefore, gaining a better understanding of why travelers are loyal to a destination and what drives loyalty is essential. These results could help destination marketers to better understand the factors contributing to destination satisfaction and loyalty so that they can carefully marketing appropriate tourism products and services that accommodate tourists' needs and wants globally. Thus, destination managers should consider the practical implications of these destination image, consumer experience, and destination satisfaction, which may be fundamental elements in increasing foreign tourists' loyalty. Furthermore, the research findings provided guidance for the success of marketing destinations.

Destination managers should focus on establishing a high tourist satisfaction level to create positive re-purchase tourist behavior and improve destination competitiveness. Therefore, to achieve a high overall level of satisfaction, managers and government officials must be fully aware of the critical importance of delivering quality service or product as well as diagnosing the service quality. Satisfaction with shopping, tour activities, lodging, availability of travel information, dining, climate attractions, tour environment and sightseeing are the most important determinants of consumer travel experience. Investing in facilitating accessibility, and better cultural/historical attractions increase consumer travel experience through destination satisfaction and loyalty. Also, destination image relates to the perception that a setting possesses unique qualities, the findings of this study suggest that tourism authorities need to reinforce and improve the current positioning of country through intangible attributes such as image of the country. These attributes are highly satisfactory and are useful in differentiating the country effectively from other competing country destinations.

The findings also suggest that country image is a key determinant of destination satisfaction, and loyalty. Destination managers must monitor the evolution of this image and adjust advertising, public relations, promotional messages, and advising to travel agents and tour operators to correct deviations from the complex country image acquired by visitors. Furthermore, the indirect influence that image has on revisiting and recommending intentions through satisfaction requires destination marketers to proactively manage the destination image for successful destination development. This management enables the generation of positive word of mouth from the existing foreign visitors.

5.1. Conclusions and research limitations

The study proposes an integrated approach to understand tourism loyalty model and investigate the empirical evidence on the relationships among destination image, consumer experience, destination

satisfaction, and destination loyalty. The model this study proposes provides a broad basis for integrating global marketing strategy model in the tourism context. This study provides the empirical evidence that destination image, high destination satisfaction, and good consumer experience play essential roles in achieving the loyalty of foreign tourists, and that satisfaction needs proactive handling to develop a long term relationship. The extended tourism marketing model perspective in this study has several implications for theory development in the future research.

This study has several limitations that present opportunities for further research. First, because only foreign visitors coming to Taiwan have completed the survey, the findings may have limited generalizability to other countries. For that reason, further research should test the applicability of the theory in other countries. Second, despite the efforts in increasing the sample size, the response rate is relatively low. This potentially undermines the external validity of the findings, and the size of the sample means that the generalizability of present findings needs further testing. Further research might need more resources to increase the sample size and consider other types of firms or industries. Third, the research design is not longitudinal, and all information comes from the personal interview survey. Therefore, the causal attribution of relationships is relatively weak. Future work should consider adopting a longitudinal design to further test the causal relationship of the factors. Finally, further research should explore the relevance of other external and internal factors for examining the antecedent of destination loyalty. Moreover, the possibility that the globalization potential of a tourism industry may moderate the relationship among research constructs, so future research should be investigated some moderate variables. The structural model assumes unidirectional relationships among the various constructs, but bidirectional linkages may exist which need further investigation.

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