



Driving Ecotourism Loyalty through Destination Image, Satisfaction and Motivation

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of destination image, tourist motivation, travel satisfaction, and experience on ecotourism destination loyalty. This research approach uses a quantitative approach. The population and sample of this study were visitors to the Padang Savana ecotourism. The number of samples or respondents in this study were 110. Purposive Sampling was used as a sampling technique. The object of this research is the Padang Savana ecotourism site. The data source is primary data, obtained through surveys, by distributing questionnaires to research respondents. The research data was processed using PLS SEM software. The results of the study show that destination image and motivation have a positive and significant impact on travel satisfaction. Travel motivation and satisfaction effect on destination loyalty. For future research can be re-tested with different ecotourism sites and test hypotheses that have not been supported.

Keywords: Destination Image; Destination loyalty; Ecotourism; Tourism Motivation; Travel Satisfaction.

1. Introduction

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the tourism sector was one of the sectors that contributed to the country's foreign exchange and was part of supporting the Indonesian economy. Based on the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) in the 2020 Tourism Trends and Policies report, the tourism sector in 2017 contributed IDR 536.8 trillion (4.1%) to Indonesia's total GDP. In 2019 it increased to 6.1%, but after the pandemic it decreased to 2.2%. The tourism sector is a provider of employment for 12.7 million people, or 10.5% of the total national employment (Dewi, 2023b).

Ecotourism is part of the tourism sector developed in Indonesia. Ecotourism development complements the existence of conventional tourism and comes with a new concept that pays more attention to welfare, the environment, and has the opportunity to improve the economy of local communities and other parties in the tourism industry (Shi et al., 2019). The development of ecotourism in Indonesia is carried out throughout the region from Sabang to Merauke. One of these areas is East Lampung Regency, to be precise in Braja Selehah District, Padang Savana Ecotourism is being developed. Ecotourism is a market niche in the tourism business, the problems faced by practitioners and academics are (Dewi, 2023b) the same, how to improve this business, like other service industries. These problems include increasing destination image, experience, motivation, and satisfaction

which in turn can increase loyalty which is marked by the intention to visit again, are willing to recommend to others, and make the ecotourism site the first choice. Destination loyalty is one proof of business success in the tourism sector.

Loyalty is a variable that is widely studied in the marketing literature and is an important concept in strategic marketing (Kim & Park, 2017). Destination loyalty can be interpreted as a tourist commitment to subscribe or return to visit tourist attractions that have previously been visited (Asmelash & Kumar, 2020). Loyalty to tourism destinations today has attracted the attention of academics for research (Kim Thanh et al., 2020; Suraporn Mulkunee, 2023). Literature states that destination image is an important factor in increasing ecotourism visitor loyalty (Akroush et al., 2016b; Najar & Rather, 2023a; Tasci et al., 2022b; Shehab, Mat Som, et al., 2023). However, destination images are dynamic and modified by people's experiences (Lee et al., 2014). Research conducted by Lee (2009b) analyzed destination images from attribute-based and holistic dimensions. Whereas Chiu et al. (2014b) discussed individual attributes in the form of views, price levels, and facilities, he suggested that destination image be discussed from an emotional perspective based on general feelings and overall impressions. Meanwhile Reyes & Dael (2023) tested the relationship between destination image and destination loyalty from the cognitive and affective dimensions. This study examines the relationship between destination image and destination loyalty from only one cognitive dimension.

Various previous research studies have found that the factors that influence tourists' willingness to visit again are motivation, destination image, tourism experience, and travel satisfaction (Li et al., 2021). According to Dewi & Abidin (2021); Quynh et al. (2021) motivation is an important factor that encourages tourists to visit ecotourism sites, and can be a reason for tourists to return (Lee et al., 2014). Other factors that can be destination loyalty, interest in revisiting and recommending to others are tourism experience, travel satisfaction (Rajesh, 2013b; Shehab, Mat Som, et al., 2023; Tasci et al., 2022b; Akroush et al., 2016b; Najar & Rather, 2023a; M. Adam et al., 2023a). The purpose of this study was to analyze and test the effect of destination image on travel satisfaction and destination loyalty. Test and analyze the effect of tourism experience on travel satisfaction and destination loyalty. It also examines the effect of travel satisfaction on destination loyalty, and the effect of motivation on travel satisfaction and destination loyalty.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1. Relationship Marketing Theory

Relationship marketing is very important because consumers are getting smarter, more careful and selective in purchasing goods and services. Gronroos (1990) argues that relationship marketing is an effort to develop, maintain, improve, and commercialize customer relationships to realize the goals of all parties involved. Furthermore, Zeithaml et al. (2010) states that relationship marketing is seen as a strategic orientation, which focuses on maintaining and developing existing customers, rather than finding new customers. Relationship marketing theory is an approach to measure product loyalty, as well as tourism service loyalty (Berry, 1995). From these various opinions it can be concluded that

relationship marketing is a strategy to build long-term relationships between companies and consumers (loyal).

The ultimate goal of the company's success in establishing relationships with customers is to form strong loyalties (Sánchez-Casado et al., 2018). Loyalty is a variable that is widely studied in the marketing literature and is an important concept in strategic marketing (Kim & Park, 2017). Destination loyalty can be interpreted as a tourist commitment to subscribe or return to visit tourist attractions that have previously been visited (Asmelash & Kumar, 2020). To develop loyalty in the tourism business there are various factors that influence it. Destination loyalty can be built through increasing destination image, tourism experience, tourism motivation, and travel satisfaction. Increasing destination image, tourism experience, tourism motivation, and travel satisfaction then destination loyalty can also increase. Destination loyalty indicators are (1) telling positive things to others, (2) recommending to others, (3) intention to visit again, (4) making the first choice destination (Akroush et al., 2016).

2.2. Destination Image

Destination image is defined as the level of beliefs, thoughts and impressions that people have about a destination (Crompton, 1979). Destination images are dynamic and can be modified by people's experiences (BongKoo Lee, Choong-Ki Lee, 2014). Destination image has an attribute-based and holistic dimension (Lee, 2009). Perception of individual attributes (sight, price level, and facilities), while the second suggests a mental image of the destination based on general feelings and overall impressions (Chiu et al., 2014).

Some researchers found that's destination image has a positive effect toward satisfaction (Huwaie et al., 2020; Le et al., 2020; Ramseook-Munhurrin et al., 2015b; Chia et al., 2021). Increasing the destination image will also increase travel satisfaction. On the other hand, destination image also plays an important role in increasing destination loyalty. Several previous studies have proven that destination image has a positive effect on destination loyalty (Rajesh, 2013b; Shehab, Mat Som, et al., 2023; Tasci et al., 2022b; Akroush et al., 2016b; Najar & Rather, 2023a) or intention to return to tourist destinations (Adam et al., 2023). Based on the results several previous studies, hypothesis 1 and 2 can be propose as follows:

H₁ : Destination image has an effect on travel satisfaction

H₂: Destination image has an effect on destination loyalty

2.3. Tourism Experience

Tourism experience is everything that tourists go through in a destination which can be in the form of experience, be it behavior or perception, cognitive or emotional, or explicit or implied (Li et al., 2015). A unique tourist experience can be develop through the interaction of destination offers, which reflects their mental state during interaction (Kim et al., 2012). Satisfaction in the environmental and tourism context is typically used to evaluate consumers' past experiences, product and service performance, and perceptions of the physical environment (Wu, 2016a). Previous studies have shown that tourist experience has

a positive effect on travel satisfaction (Lončarić, Perišić Prodan, et al., 2017; Lončarić et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2017a; Suraporn Mulkuneea, 2023). The more pleasant the tourism experience, the higher the satisfaction of the trip. Tourist experience so hypothesis 3 in this study is:

H₃: Tourism experience has an effect on travel satisfaction

According to (Godovykh & Tasci, 2020a; Kim et al., 2012b) in tourism includes refreshment, hedonism, meaningfulness, and local culture. Various studies stated that tourism experience is also an antecedent of destination loyalty. Memorable tourism experiences play an important role in increasing destination loyalty (Azis et al., 2020a; Hung et al., 2021b; Kahraman & Cifci, 2023a; Pai et al., 2020b; Zhang & Walsh, 2020). Furthermore Jiang et al., (2022b) and Yigit, (2019) confirm that tourists who have satisfaction and quality travel experiences will visit again, so the hypothesis 4 in this study is:

H₄: Tourism experience has an effect on destination loyalty

2.4. Travel Satisfaction

Satisfaction has been described as a cognitive-affective state that results from positive consumer experiences (del Bosque & Martín, 2008). Furthermore, satisfaction refers to positive feelings or pleasure that is obtained after experiencing or consuming a tourism product. It is a psychological aspect and a state of mind that arises after tourists are exposed to an environment (Carvache-Franco et al., 2022). Previous studies found that satisfaction influences the intention to return to visit and willingness to recommend ecotourism places to others (Castellanos-Verdugo et al., 2016) and destination loyalty (Wu, 2016a). Satisfaction has a positive effect on ecotourism loyalty, (Guzman-Parra et al., (2016); Carvache-Franco et al., (2022b); Mohamad et al., (2021) on the description of the results of this study, the following hypotheses 5 is:

H₅: Travel satisfaction has an effect on destination loyalty

2.5. Tourism Motivation

Self-determination theory is one theory that discusses motivation. This theory emphasizes persistence and individual determination to achieve goals. Self-Determination Theory is a theory about human motivation that is associated with the development and function of personality in a social context (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Motivation is a psychological need and desire that drives, directs, and integrates behavior and activities (Wu & Pearce, 2017). Tourism-related motivation is a psychological need that makes people feel that psychological imbalances can be corrected through travel experiences (Mauricio et al., 2019). Motivation is a set of needs that influence a person to participate in tourism activities (Carvache-Franco et al., 2022).

Ecotourism motivation has a significant effect on travel satisfaction from the educational, social, sanitation, and relaxation aspects (Adam et al., 2019a; Aliyah & Sulastri, 2022). Research conduct by Carvache-Franco et al., (2022b) proves that tourism motivation can increase travel satisfaction and destination loyalty on eco-tourism sites. Motivation, has

a positive and significant effect on destination loyalty (Dewi & Abidin, 2021; Quynh et al., 2021). Based on some of these studies, hypotheses 6 and 7 are as follows:

H₆: Motivation influences travel satisfaction

H₇: Motivation has an effect on destination loyalty

Based on the description of previous research and the hypothesis, the following research model can be developed (Figure 1).

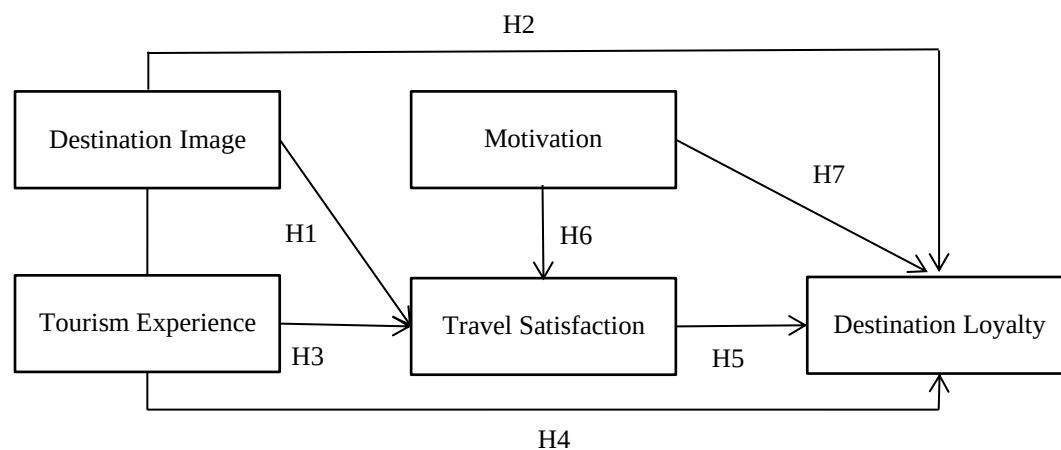


Figure 1. Research Model and Hypotheses

3. Method

The population and sample of this study were people who had visited the savanna ecotourism site in East Lampung. The research sampling technique used purposive sampling. The criteria for respondents in this study were having visited the Padang Savana ecotourism site at least 2 times, male and female, at least 17 years old. The number of samples or respondents to this study was 110 people. The research data is primary data, which was obtained through a survey by distributing questionnaires to respondents. The data is then processed using the Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Square (SEM, PLS) analysis tool.

The instrument to collect data is questionnaires of destination image and destination loyalty which are adapted from Akroush et al. (2016) tourism experience (Li et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2012) motivation (Llodra-Riera et al., 2015) and travel satisfaction (del Bosque & Martín, 2008) The answer is measured by 5 point scales, in which 1 = very disagree and 5 = very agree.

4. Result and Discussion

The results showed the characteristics of respondents based on gender, age, education level, and income. There were 52 male respondents (47.3) and 58 female respondents (52.7). The age of the respondents ranged from 17 to 60 years, and the most age was 17-27 years. The education level of the respondents ranged from junior high school to post graduate, and most were senior high school 47 people (42%), followed by bachelor degree 42 people (38%). The income level of most respondents is 3.1 – 4 million per month. The characteristics of the respondents in this study are summarized in Table 1. below.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristic

Profile of respondent	Amount	Percentage (%)
(1)	(2)	(3)
Gender:		
1. Male	52	47.3
2. Female	58	52.7
Age:		
1. 17-27	84	76.3
2. 28-38	19	17.2
3. 39-49	5	4.54
4. 50-60	2	1.81
Education:		
1. Junior high School	10	9.0
2. Senior high school	47	42
3. Diploma	4	3
4. Bachelor degree	42	38
5. Post Graduate	9	8
Income (million/month):		
1. 1 – 2	9	8.2
2. 2,1-3	38	34.6
3. 3,1-4	40	36.3
4. 4,1-5	14	12.7
5. > 5	9	8.2

Source: Primary Data

According to [Hair Jr et al., \(2014\)](#) a variable can be declared to meet the requirements of convergent validity, which can be seen from the results of the Average Variance Standard (AVE) test with a value of more than 0.5 (≥ 0.5) and Standardized Loading Factors (SLF) (> 0.5). Table 2 shows the AVE and SLF values for each variable ≥ 0.5 . Based on that, all variables of this study are declared valid.

Table 2. The Test of Validity Average variance Extracted (AVE)

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Cronbach alpha/CA	Composite Reliability/CR
Destination Image	0.586	0.765	0.849
Travel Satisfaction	0.718	0.902	0.927
Destination Loyalty	0.665	0.828	0.887
Tourism Motivation	0.533	0.874	0.901
Tourism Experience	0.622	0.899	0.920

Table 2. shows the results of testing the reliability of each variable. A variable can be declared reliable as seen from the Composite Reliability (CR) value > 0.7 (F. Hair Jr et al., 2014) and the Cronbach Alpha (CA) value must have a minimum value of ≥ 0.5 ([George & Mallery, 2018](#)). The variable destination image, travel satisfaction, destination loyalty, tourism motivation, and tourism experience have a CA value of more than 0.05, and a CR of more than 7. Table 4. Shows the results of the path coefficient test. The path coefficient is used to test the research hypothesis by looking at the strength of the relationship between variables ([Sarstedt et al., 2017](#)). There are conditions that must be met, namely the original sample value to determine whether the relationship is positive or negative, and the t value > 1.96 and the p-value ≤ 0.05 as a condition for the relationship to be significant.

Table 3. The Test of Validity Standardized Loading Factor

Variable	Instrument	Loading Factor
Destination Image	1. It is very easy to access the attractions provided at the Padang Savana ecotourism	0.673
	2. I am interested in the boat facilities that can take me around the river	0.722
	3. Residents around the Padang Savana ecotourism site are kind and friendly in welcoming tourists	0.795
	4. I feel happy, relaxed and comfortable while at the Padang Savana ecotourism	0.861
Destination Loyalty	1. I tell positive things from the Padang Savana	0.892
	2. I recommend others to visit Padang Savana Ecotourism	0.795
	3. I will return to Padang Savana someday	0.886
	4. Padang Savana Ecotourism will be my first choice for a vacation in East Lampung	0.669
Travel satisfaction	1. This ecotourism trip is a valuable journey for me	0.848
	2. This ecotourism trip is full of meaning	0.801
	3. I feel happy with this ecotourism trip	0.863
	4. The decision to visit the savanna was the right decision	0.834
	5. Overall, I feel satisfied after traveling to the savanna	0.888
Motivation	1. I gained knowledge about plants and animals while visiting Padang Savana ecotourism	0.762
	2. When I traveled to Padang Savana ecotourism, I saw and felt a beautiful environment	0.745
	3. I really enjoyed the natural beauty of the Padang Savana ecotourism	0.815
	4. I visited Padang Savana ecotourism to refresh my mind from my daily routine activities	0.754
	5. I visited Padang Savana ecotourism for accompanying family/friends	0.648
	6. I want to find a new experience by visiting Padang Savana ecotourism	0.700
	7. I visited Padang Savana ecotourism to spend vacation time	0.706
	8. The cost to visit savanna ecotourism is quite affordable	0.697
Tourism Experience	1. I learned a lot from the Padang Savana ecotourism trip	0.695
	2. This ecotourism trip is very educational	0.783
	3. This tourism trip made my knowledge increase	0.825
	4. This ecotourism trip increased my curiosity to learn new things	0.821
	5. I feel peace in this ecotourism trip	0.822
	6. The activities on this trip were very enjoyable	0.791
	7. I really enjoyed the activities on this trip	0.774

Table 4. The Direct Testing Path Coefficient

Variables	Original Sample (O)	P	Description
Destination Image => travel satisfaction	0.292	0.000**	H ₁ : Accepted
Destination Image => Destination loyalty	0.132	0.078	H ₂ : Rejected
Tourism Experience => travel satisfaction	-0.059	0.577	H ₃ : Rejected
Tourism Experience => Destination loyalty	-0.010	0.904	H ₄ : Rejected
Travel satisfaction => Destination loyalty	0.413	0.001**	H ₅ : Accepted
Motivation => Travel satisfaction	0.631	0.000**	H ₆ : Accepted
Motivation => Destination loyalty	0.340	0.008**	H ₇ : Accepted

** Sig< 1%

Table 4. shows that destination image has a positive and significant effect on travel satisfaction, which means that hypothesis 1 is accepted. This result is in line with the findings of previous studies which stated that destination image has an effect on travel satisfaction (Rajesh, 2013b; Shehab, Mat Som, et al., 2023; Tasci et al., 2022b; Akroush et al., 2016b; Najjar & Rather, 2023a). That means if destination increases, travel satisfaction will also increase. Furthermore, the findings of this study support the results of (Joo et al., 2020a;

Suraporn Mulkunee, 2023; Ramseook-Munhurrin et al., 2015b; Chia et al., 2021) that destination image plays an important role in travel satisfaction. Tourism companies can increase travel satisfaction through increasing visitor pleasure, friendliness, facilities, and ease of access to tourist sites.

The second hypothesis results of testing show destination image on destination has no effect. It means that hypothesis 2 is rejected. The results of this study contradict previous research which stated that destination image has an effect on destination loyalty. These findings indicate that to increase destination loyalty it is not enough just to increase destination image. So that tourism companies must look for other factors to increase destination loyalty besides destination image (Rajesh, 2013; Akroush et al., 2016; Najar & Rather, 2023; Tasci et al., 2022; Shehab et al., 2023; Li et al., 2021).

The third hypothesis result of testing show tourism experience has no effect on travel satisfaction. It means that hypothesis 3 is rejected. The results of this study are not in line with previous studies which state that tourist experience has an effect on travel satisfaction. Travel satisfaction does not guarantee a memorable tourism experience (Lončarić et al., 2017; Lončarić et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2017; Vinh & Hien, 2023; Syamsu et al., 2022; Wu, 2016). The results of testing hypothesis 4 show that tourist experience has an effect on travel satisfaction. That's means hypothesis 4 is not accepted. These results are not support research which states that tourist experience has an effect on travel satisfaction (Syamsu et al., 2022) dan memorable tourism experiences play an important role in increasing destination loyalty (Azis et al., 2020b; Hung et al., 2021a; Kahraman & Cifci, 2023b; Pai et al., 2020a; Zhang & Walsh, 2021).

The results of testing the fifth hypothesis show that travel satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on destination loyalty. It means that the fifth hypothesis is accepted. This result is in line with previous research which states that travel satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on destination loyalty (Li et al., 2021; Syamsu, Sasongko, Andadari, et al., 2022; Guzman-Parra et al., 2016; Carvache-Franco et al., 2022b; Mohamad et al., 2021) the results of testing the sixth hypothesis which states that tourism motivation has a positive and significant effect on travel satisfaction, thus the sixth hypothesis is accepted. The results of this study are in line with previous research conducted by Adam et al., (2019) and Carvache-Franco et al. (2022b) that tourism motivation can increase travel satisfaction and destination loyalty on eco-tourism sites. The results of testing the seventh hypothesis which states that motivation has a positive and significant effect on destination loyalty. Increasing motivation increases destination loyalty. Thus, hypothesis seven is accepted. These results are in line with research (Dewi & Abidin, 2021; Quynh et al., 2021).

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of hypothesis testing and discussion, it can be concluded destination image has positive and significant toward travel satisfaction of Padang Savana Ecotourism site. But destination image has no effect on destination loyalty of Padang Savana Ecotourism Site. This is possible because the destination image only tests the cognitive dimension, without testing the emotional dimension. Likewise with tourism experience has no effect on

travel satisfaction and destination loyalty. Travel satisfaction is proven to increase destination loyalty. Motivation can increase travel satisfaction and destination loyalty of Padang Savana ecotourism site.

Further studies can overcome these limitations and find new one research variables to test or use other research methods to clarify the results of this study. For researchers who are interested in researching this theme, in the future they can re-examine this research model. The effect of destination image on destination loyalty is not significant, further research should examine destination image from both cognitive and affective dimensions. Other variables that can affect destination loyalty such as perceived value (Suraporn Mulkunee, 2023) place attachment (Stylidis et al., 2020) self-congruity (Joo et al., 2020). Future research can also examine the relationship of variables that do not yet have a positive and significant effect by adding mediating or moderating variables.

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