




Tourist Engagement and Destination Loyalty Among Local Visitors in the Philippines

Eric Santos Parilla^{1*}

¹Northwestern University, Philippines

Received : January 6, 2023

Revised : March 20, 2023

Accepted : May 17, 2023

Online : July 31, 2023

Abstract

This research aims to establish the relationship between the five components of engagement and the destination loyalty of 1,400 local visitors in the province of Ilocos Norte. Enthusiasm, attention, absorption, interaction, and identification were the variables of this study. The study included structural equation modeling and a questionnaire tailored to the pandemic-related alterations. The results of the inquiry demonstrated this zeal. Attention, interaction, and identification were the factors that influenced destination loyalty. Interaction has the greatest impact on a visitor's loyalty to a place; consequently, it is advised to improve this component. In addition, the report recommends that the provincial government and local tourism officials do more research to identify potential discrepancies between male and female visitor reactions.

Keywords *Tourist Engagement, Destination Loyalty, Enthusiasm, Attention, Absorption, Interaction, Identification*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a rapidly growing industry and the world's most active sector. It is critical in establishing businesses, giving jobs and the principal source of revenue, and transporting people from one location to another to visit and be mesmerized by a place's spectacular beauty. Unsurprisingly, the tourism industry is booming, with people of all generations seeking new adventures and learning about life through cultural and historical places. Indeed, tourism gives individuals, communities, and economies several opportunities and advantages. Tourism activities can provide employment, expand the community's and government's revenue streams, and encourage the development of other businesses (Wang et al., 2017).

According to the Department of Tourism in their National Tourism Development Plan 2022-2028, the Philippines is strong in sun/beaches/islands, nature/natural parks/forests, and diving/water sports. Additionally, tourism contributes to the country's economic output and positively influences the surrounding community. The tourism industry's contribution to the economy climbed to 12.7 percent of the Philippines' Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2018, up 0.5 percent from 2017, according to Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) statistics released on June 6, 2019. The Tourism Direct Gross Value Added (TDGVA), a measure of the tourism industry's value-added, was PHP2.2 trillion in 2018, up 14.3 percent from PHP1.9 trillion in 2017.

For a tourism destination to be considered successful, it is crucial to offer tourist amenities that effectively cater to the needs of visitors, guaranteeing their comfort and satisfaction throughout their visit. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2008), amenities are items that service providers purposefully give for customers to use and enjoy to maximize their pleasure. When tourist facilities can deliver maximum pleasure to guests, it establishes a solid foundation for future trips and their readiness to share pleasant experiences with others, fostering loyalty. Tourist loyalty entails a strong dedication to procuring a particular product or service in the future, resulting in repeated purchases of the same brand. Nevertheless, situational influences and marketing

Copyright Holder:

© Eric Santos Parilla. (2023)

Corresponding author's email: eric.parilla@nwu.edu.ph

This Article is Licensed Under:



campaigns have the potential to influence behavior (Setiawan, 2021).

Many individuals and organizations, such as service providers, popular sites, tourists, travel companions, and locals, can start interactions in tourist destinations and attractions. Additionally, visitors are now satisfied with being proactive and enthusiastic about engaging with different products in a lively and dynamic online consumption setting. The subject of researching tourist engagement at a destination has gained significant popularity in academic circles. Tourist engagement is defined in this study as a psychological state that arises from interactive, co-creative tourist experiences with a focal agent/object (people, attractions, activities, and encounters) in focal travel experience interactions (Huang, 2017). The term "engagement" has gained popularity in the previous decade and is often utilized by marketers to understand consumer experience better. Customer experience and engagement are distinct concepts, as customer experience encompasses all interactions a customer has with a company, as stated by Lemon and Verhoef (2016). In contrast, the latter emphasizes the interactive, value-co-creative process between them (Brodie et al., 2011). Customer engagement, first utilized by consulting firms to create an emotional connection with customers, has sparked heated controversy among marketing researchers.

Ilocos Norte's tourism industry is thriving, owing to the province's abundance of natural resources, breathtaking scenery at various tourist spots, and a tranquil atmosphere, all of which serve as sufficient reasons for visitors to return despite the province's present circumstances. The province's economy had a sharp decline in growth due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Fortunately, the tourism industry recovered what has been lost by allowing local visitors to come and visit without additional restrictions, provided they are properly vaccinated.

Ilocos Norte has developed sustainable tourism in each tourist destination to maintain and conserve natural resources such as Pagudpod white beaches, Kapurpurawan in Burgos, Paoay Church, and Laoag Sand Dunes, the top 5 tourist destinations, according to local tourism officer Mr. Erwin Suguitan as of April 2022. Local sourcing, in which residents are encouraged to patronize small enterprises that offer things made locally. Moreover, biodiversity ensures the security of numerous species found in the ecosystem. One of their long-standing strategies for supporting other sectors in dealing with unexpected losses is to boost local sourcing by creating new possibilities. They have consistently supported local sourcing throughout the pandemic by providing small companies with targeted and affordable rent to continue operating and selling their locally created products and services regardless of the scenario. Local tourists consistently support local products and services.

This research paper determined the relationship between tourist engagement and tourist loyalty. A more rigorous scholarly investigation needs to be into the definition and scope of tourist engagement and loyalty and how the two constructs significantly affect each other. Under tourist engagement, the constructs to be investigated are enthusiasm, attention, absorption, interaction, and identification. These constructs make up tourist engagement. Finally, this study attempted to investigate which of the five components of tourist engagement significantly affects destination loyalty.

Research Objectives

This research study was conceptualized to find the relationship between the components of tourist engagement and destination loyalty. Specifically, it tried to find out the following:

1. What is the effect of enthusiasm on destination loyalty?
2. What is the effect of attention to destination loyalty?
3. What is the effect of absorption on destination loyalty?
4. What is the effect of interaction on destination loyalty?
5. What is the effect of identification on destination loyalty?

6. Is there a significant difference in the responses of tourists based on their demographic profiles?

Research Model

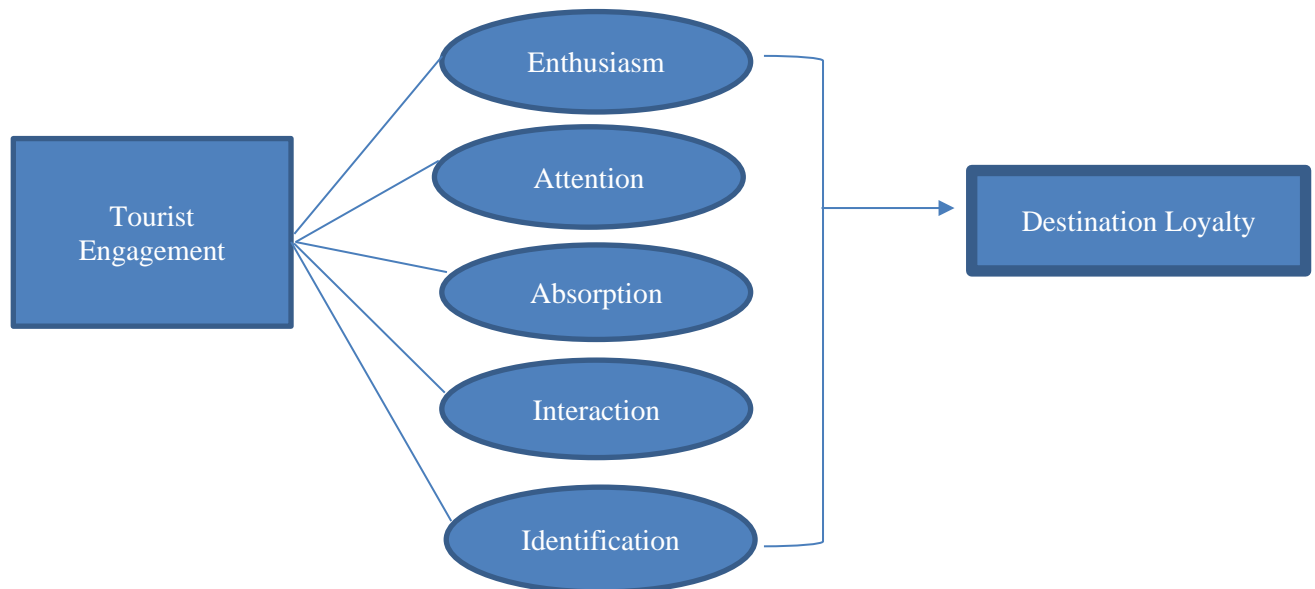


Figure 1. Research Model

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourist Engagement

Customer engagement has been a subject of exploration across various domains, including online media, service industries, and consumer brands. It has been examined from diverse viewpoints, encompassing notions of connection, interaction, behavior, loyalty, experience, commitment, and process, with three special characteristics in common. Customer engagement is a non-transactional connection that varies from established relationships in a more limited sense (e.g., participation, involvement). The second component of customer involvement is collaborative value creation and engaging experiences. Finally, customer engagement results from consumers' internal motivations, indicating that customers actively interact with focus objects (e.g., brands). Consumer interaction is perceived as either a unified or complex entity. In recent decades, significant endeavors have been dedicated to creating measurement scales for gauging engagement, specifically within the travel and hospitality sector. For instance, King and Sparks (2014) undertook the task of constructing and validating a customer engagement scale by drawing inspiration from the dimensions of job engagement and consumer engagement. This scale incorporated elements like passion, attention, absorption, interaction, and identification, focusing on airline and hotel brands as reference points. Harrigan et al. (2017) modified the three-factor (i.e., identification, absorption, and interaction) 11-item consumer engagement measure developed by So, King, and Sparks for use in a social media context. While these consumer engagement measures are advantageous, they cannot be applied to the setting of a destination since they need to accurately represent the behavior, emotions, and experiences of visitors in a location.

A comprehensive measurement scale for tourist engagement in cruise travel was created by Huang and Choi (2019). This four-dimensional measure encompasses social contact, interaction with staff, relatedness (referring to the sense of connection with travel companions), and activity-related engagement. A few essential engagement qualities should be highlighted when defining

visitor engagement from the perspective of social science and marketing in general (TE). TE cannot be separated from the venue and its participants, such as personnel, the local population, other tourists, and members of companion groups. Second, engagement goes beyond the transaction process and is engrained in the subject-object co-creation of value interactions. Using available resources, the subject is forced to get active or participate in value co-creation. Finally, whereas some research concentrates on a particular aspect of engagement (such as consumer engagement behavior), the majority stresses its complexity via a multidimensional approach that combines cognition, emotion, and behavior. This method was used in TE because continuous psychological connection and behavioral participation are essential components of engagement.

Components of Tourist Engagement

Interaction

According to Vivek (2009), an essential aspect of consumer/tourist engagement involves the vital process of sharing and exchanging ideas, thoughts, and emotions concerning one's experiences with the brand/destination, as well as with other consumers, residents, or stakeholders. The brand community literature (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001) facilitates these interactions among visitors, local community members, and other stakeholders. The interaction aspect of visitor engagement alludes to behavior, such as positive interactions with the location (So et al., 2014). To assess this particular facet of the tourist engagement viewpoint, the subsequent statements are employed: "I am someone who enjoys interacting with a similar tourism community," "I am someone who enjoys actively participating in tourism site community discussions," and "In general, I thoroughly enjoy exchanging ideas with other members of the tourism site community."

Attention

Attention refers to the conscious or unconscious concentration of a consumer or tourist on a brand or location. Devoting consistent attention to a specific destination is expected to heighten levels of engagement, as indicated by research conducted by Lin et al. (2008) and Scholer & Higgins (2009). Furthermore, the study conducted by So et al. (2014) discovered that tourists who display an interest in deepening their knowledge about a destination by means of advertisements and news articles tend to exhibit greater engagement with the destination and demonstrate increased attentiveness towards it. Therefore, items such as "I pay close attention to all aspects of this tourism site" and "I pay close attention throughout my entire visit at this tourism site" can be used to measure attentiveness.

Absorption

On the other hand, absorption refers to a level of consumer/tourist interest in a brand/destination that is all-consuming (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Even if customers are ignorant of how much time they have spent with a brand or place, they are viewed as exhibiting a desirable attribute when contently immersed in it (Scholer & Higgins, 2009). Consequently, a traveler who is engrossed and content when visiting a location might easily lose track of time (So et al., 2014). This dimension of tourist engagement with a destination is measured using the following items: "When interacting with the tourism site, I forget everything else around me"; "When interacting with the tourism site, time flies"; "When interacting with the tourism site, I get carried away"; and "When interacting with the tourism site, I find it difficult to detach myself."

Destination Loyalty

According to Oliver (1999), tourist loyalty is "a firm commitment to purchase or re-

consume a selected product/service in the future." This leads to repeated purchases of the same brand or package, despite the presence of situational and marketing triggers that may normally induce switching behavior. High-loyalty tourists constitute a substantial business segment for numerous tourism destinations. Since tourists are more likely to stay longer than first-time visitors, they are more likely to spread good word of mouth (WOM) and participate in additional consumer activities (Wardi, 2018). In addition, compared to acquiring first-time visitors, recurring visitors reduce marketing expenditures (Loureiro, 2008).

According to Kandampully and Suhartanto (2000), a loyal client repurchases the same goods or services from a provider whenever feasible and continues to suggest the provider or has a favorable opinion about it. In brief, marketing literature sometimes refers to repeated purchases or referrals to others as consumer loyalty (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Loyalty has been quantified in the following ways: (a) behaviorally (Iordanova, 2016), (ii) attitudinally (Iordanova, 2016), and (iii) compositely (Iordanova, 2016). (Yoon & Uysal, 2005).

Customer loyalty is viewed behaviorally as a behavior that may be quantified regarding repeat purchases, buy frequency, or purchase share (Kabiraj & Shanmugan, 2011). Consumer loyalty is an endeavor of customers to move beyond overt behavior and structure and the inability to describe the elements that impact customer loyalty (Wu, 2016). As a result, the attitudinal method is the most appropriate for analyzing visitor loyalty, as tourism destination experiences are distinct from other consumer goods (Ekinci et al., 2013).

Hypotheses Development

The Effect of Tourist Engagement on Destination Loyalty

Through a connection between customers and businesses, an understanding of tourist engagement may develop. Despite the growing clarity regarding the advantages and comprehension of tourist engagement, there is still a need for further empirical research to explore the development of this concept. Previous studies have primarily concentrated on conceptual associations without conducting empirical examinations, as noted by Brodie et al. (2011). Specifically, companies have widely implemented tourist engagement strategies, also known as employee engagement (Vivek et al., 2012). Previously, it was recommended to apply employee engagement to consumer engagement (Patterson et al., 2006). Both of these concepts demonstrate the passion, vigor, and exhilaration associated with an attachment relationship. So, King and Sparks (2014) define customer engagement as a marketing activity centered on the behavior and psychology of the consumer. According to Zou et al. (2022), place attachment and its aspects are positively associated with tourist loyalty, including tourist behavior loyalty, tourist attitude loyalty, and composite loyalty. In addition, place identity affects visitor loyalty more than any other aspect of place attachment. Depending on the extent of consumers' interpersonal and affective involvement, company-customer connections with a high level of engagement can affect customer satisfaction (Sashi, 2012). Clients who utilize a company's services experience positive emotions such as happiness, excitement, and satisfaction. When the engagement process begins, customers endeavor to increase their knowledge and social connection with brands (businesses) or with other customers to learn more about the brand (Wirtz et al., 2013). Thus, engagement connections between consumers and businesses may serve as an alternative method for customers to evaluate the service performance of the company (Brodie et al., 2011). If the company's service or response satisfies the customer's expectations during the interaction, both parties will feel satisfied (Hollebeek, 2011). Consequently, the hypotheses of this research paper are as follows:

H1: Enthusiasm significantly affects destination loyalty.

H2: Attention significantly affects destination loyalty.

- H3: Absorption significantly affects destination loyalty.
 H4: Interaction significantly affects destination loyalty.
 H5: Identification significantly affects destination loyalty.

RESEARCH METHOD

Participants

The study respondents were selected using a convenience sampling technique. They were the residents of Ilocos Norte who have visited Pagudpod White Beaches, Kapurpurawan Rock Formation, Paoay Church, and La Paz Sand Dunes within the last 12 months (May 2021-April 2022). The original plan of the researcher was 500 respondents, but because Google Forms was utilized, there were about 1400 who answered the questionnaire completely.

Table 1. Tourists' Socio-Demographic Profile

Tourist's Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Employment Status</i>		
Private	853	61
Government	546	39
<i>Age</i>		
18-21	275	19.7
22-25	415	29.7
26-29	292	29.6
30-34	155	11.1
35-39	85	6.1
40-44	65	4.6
45-49	41	2.9
50-54	29	2.1
55-59	20	1.4
60 above	22	1.6
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	555	39.7
Female	844	60.3

Research Instrument

This research used a descriptive-correlational methodology. The questionnaire served as the tool of research in the present study. The instrument included respondent demographics (kind of employment, age, gender, and level of education) and questions (measured on a 4-point Likert scale) for six (6) latent variables (enthusiasm, attention, absorption, interaction, and identification (tourist engagement), and destination loyalty). The 4-item enthusiasm, 4-item attention, 5-item absorption, 5-item interaction, 3-item identification, and 5-item loyalty were adopted from the study of Rasoolimanesh (2020) entitled *Tourist Engagement and Loyalty: Gender Matters?*

Data Analysis

Using a predictive-correlational approach, the proposed structural model on the relationship between visitor engagement and destination loyalty was examined to determine its applicability. Using the partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) method, parameter estimates for the proposed model were determined. In addition, One-Way ANOVA was used to determine the significance of the differences in demographic profile, visitor engagement,

and destination loyalty.

Ethical Considerations

Local visitors in Ilocos Norte were studied ethically. Participants learned about the study's goal and their unique contribution. After explaining the study's aim, informed consent was obtained. Participants might leave the study at any time. All questions were addressed honestly. The researcher followed all guidelines during the study. The researcher ensured that respondents received the best, benefited from the study's results, helped improve teaching and learning, and were never physically, mentally, or emotionally harmed. Informed consent also comprised (a) a researcher-participant agreement to participate in the study. Sufficient information will be presented and explained to participants at their level of comprehension, (b) information from which they can withdraw at any time, ask questions, and refuse to answer questions if they are uncomfortable, (c) an explanation of the study's potential risks and benefits to help them make informed decisions about their participation, and (d) a description of the participants. Data gathering required a completed permission form.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The relationship between two variables, including tourist engagement and destination loyalty, was investigated using PLS-SEM. Two phases are included in the PLS-SEM path model evaluation (Hulland, 1999). The first section consists of a measurement model evaluation. This stage analyzes the validity and reliability of the variables. The second stage evaluates the structural model by examining the hypothesized connections between variables (Hulland, 1999; Dimaunahan & Amora, 2016).

Indicators of Model Fit and Quality

Table 2 displays the structural equation model's model fit coefficients and quality indicators. According to the overall results, the SEM estimates fall within the allowable range.

Table 2. Model Fit and Quality Indices of SEM.

Model fit and Quality Indices	Coefficients
APC	0.101, $p < 0.001$
ARS	0.636, $p < 0.001$
AARS	0.634, $p < 0.001$
AVIF	2.973
AFVIF	2.728
Tenenhaus GoF	0.726

For the model to be deemed acceptable, the p-values of the average path coefficient (APC), average R-squared (ARS), average block VIF (AVIF), and average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF) indices must be less than 3.30. (Kock, 2017). Tenenhaus goodness of fit (GoF), an indicator of the model's explanatory power (Kock, 2017), is categorized as small if it is greater than 0.1, medium if it is greater than 0.25, and large if it is greater than 0.36. (Wetzels, Odekerken-Schroder, & van Oppen, 2009; Kock, 2017). The GoF is computed utilizing the average communality index and the square root of the ARS (Tenenhaus, Vinzi, Chatelain, and Lauro, 2005). The model's fit and quality indices lie within acceptable limits, as shown in Table 2.

Reliability and Validity Measurements

Table 3. Item Loadings, AVE, and Reliability of the Variables

Construct/Items	Item Loading	AVE	CR	CA
<i>Enthusiasm</i>				
I am very interested in this tourist site.	0.870			
I am enthusiastic about this travel site.	0.914			
I am excited about this tourist destination.	0.895		0.936	0.909
I am enthusiastic about this tourist attraction.	0.865	0.786		
<i>Attention</i>				
I'm curious to learn more about this tourist attraction.	0.878			
Anything associated with this tourist destination piques my interest.	0.866			
I focus intensely on my visit to this tourist attraction.	0.867			
I enjoy discovering more about this tourist attraction.	0.889	0.766	0.929	0.898
<i>Absorption</i>				
When interacting with the visitor site, I must recall everything in my immediate vicinity.	0.860			
When interacting with the tourist site, I became captivated.	0.885			
When interacting with the tourism site, I require assistance detaching.	0.862			
Immersed in my interactions with the tourism site.	0.883	0.739	0.934	0.911
When interacting intensively with the tourism site, I experience happiness.	0.805			
<i>Interaction</i>				
I enjoy participating in tourism site community discussions.	0.887			
I appreciate interacting with a tourism community that shares my interests.	0.858	0.772	0.944	0.926
I enjoy actively participating in community discussions on tourism-related sites.	0.900			
I enjoy exchanging ideas with other members of the tourism site community tremendously.	0.888			
I frequently participate in tourism site community activities.	0.860			
<i>Identification</i>				
When someone criticizes this tourism site, it feels like a personal attack.	0.893			
I typically refer to the site as "we" rather than "they" because its identity suits me.	0.896	0.795	0.921	0.871

When this tourist destination is praised, it feels like a personal compliment.	0.886			
<i>Loyalty</i>				
Positive remarks about this tourist destination to others.	0.905	0.796	0.951	0.936
I would recommend this tourist destination to anyone seeking my advice.	0.899			
I encourage my family and acquaintances to conduct commerce with this tourism site.	0.878			
In the coming years, I will visit this tourist destination more frequently.	0.891			
I intend to return to this tourist destination in the future.	0.887			

To evaluate the measurement model, the reliability and validity tests (convergent and discriminant) were investigated. The assessment of construct dependability permits the investigation of a reflective item or collection of reflective items regarding the construct for which it is intended to test (Straub, Boudreau, & Gefen, 2004; Roldan & Sanchez-Franco, 2012). Frequently, composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha are utilized to assess dependability (Kock, 2017). To indicate high dependability, the composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha (CA) scores must be at least 0.70. (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). According to Table 3, the construct dependability criteria were met by the variables of visitor involvement (enthusiasm, attention, assimilation, interaction, and identification) and loyalty.

In contrast, convergent validity evaluates the quality of the questions or question statements on a research instrument. This indicates that the participants understand the objects and question statements of each construct as their creators intended (Kock, 2017). The p-values for each item must be less than or equal to 0.05, and the loadings must be greater than or equal to 0.5 for convergent validity. (Kock, 2017). The relationship between an item and a structure is known as item loading (Kock, 2017). All item loadings in Table 3 are statistically significant and exceed the 0.5 thresholds. In addition, the average variance extracted (AVE) quantifies the variation of each construct extracted from its components relative to the measurement error variance (Amora et al., 2016). Each latent variable's AVE exceeds the suggested validity threshold of 0.5. (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Calculations of accurate AVE coefficients were made.

Table 4. Square Roots of AVE Coefficients and Correlation Coefficients

	Enthusiasm	Attention	Absorption	Interaction	Identification	Loyalty
Enthusiasm	0.886					
Attention	0.771	0.875				
Absorption	0.658	0.696	0.859			
Interaction	0.658	0.738	0.727	0.879		
Identification	0.612	0.648	0.710	0.727	0.891	
Loyalty	0.663	0.721	0.635	0.694	0.672	0.892

Table 4 presents the correlations between variables based on the square roots of AVE coefficients in order to evaluate the discriminant validity of the instrument. In terms of discriminant validity, it is determined whether or not questionnaire respondents can interpret the statements associated with each latent variable. Moreover, it ensures that, for example, claims about a particular variable do not contradict assertions about other variables (Kock, 2017). The square root of the average

value of each variable must exceed the square root of any correlation between variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). It is possible to conclude, based on the data, that the study's measures have discriminant validity.

Path Results

Table 5. Path Results

Hypotheses	B	P-value	SE.	f ²
H1. Enthusiasm → Loyalty	0.149	<0.001	0.026	0.099
H2. Attention → Loyalty	0.296	<0.001	0.026	0.214
H3. Absorption → Loyalty	0.007	0.396	0.027	0.005
H4 Interaction → Loyalty	0.187	<0.001	0.026	0.131
H5 Identification → Loyalty	0.252	<0.001	0.026	0.172

Table 5 presents the model for a substantial relationship test. There are significant relationships between enthusiasm and loyalty (B=0.149, p<0.01), attention and loyalty (B=0.296, p<0.01), interaction and loyalty (B=0.187, p<0.01), and identification and loyalty (B=0.252, p<0.01), but there is no significant relationship between absorption and loyalty (B=0.007, p=0.396).

There are significant relationships between enthusiasm and loyalty (B=0.149, p<0.01), attention and loyalty (B=0.296, p<0.01), interaction and loyalty (B=0.187, p<0.01), and identification and loyalty (B=0.252, p<0.01), but there is no significant relationship between absorption and loyalty (B=0.007, p=0.396). The parameter estimates for the mediation model are given in Table 5. The examination of the data demonstrated that a respondent's enthusiasm influences their loyalty (B=0.149, p<0.001). The positive route coefficient illustrates how passion increases destination loyalty. Cohen's $f^2 = 0.099$ indicates that the path from enthusiasm to loyalty has a low impact size. The conclusion suggests support for H1. Attention influences loyalty significantly (B=0.296, p<0.001). The positive route coefficient suggests that attention to a destination increases destination loyalty. Cohen's $f^2 = 0.214$ indicates that the path from attention to destination loyalty has a moderate impact magnitude. Consequently, H2 is supported. Absorption, however, does not affect destination loyalty (B=0.007, p=0.396). Consequently, H3 is not supported. Moreover, interaction has a statistically significant influence on destination loyalty (B=0.187, p<0.001). The positive route coefficient suggests that the presence of the interaction encourages destination loyalty. The relationship between engagement and loyalty has a considerable influence (Cohen's $f^2=0.131$). Consequently, H4 is supported. In addition, identity has a statistically significant influence on loyalty (B=0.252, p<0.001). The presence of identification improves loyalty, as indicated by the positive path coefficient. The relationship between identity and loyalty has a sizeable effect (Cohen's $f^2=0.172$). Consequently, H5 is supported.

Significant Differences

Table 6 presents the significant differences in the responses of the tourists on the different components of tourist engagement and destination loyalty. As gleaned from the table, as to employment status, the results showed no significant differences in the responses. This means that whether the tourist is a government or private employee, their response to tourist engagement and destination loyalty is the same. On the other hand, as to sex, there are three components in which the tourists have significant differences: attention, identification, and destination loyalty. It means that females want to learn more about the tourist destination, can identify more, and are more loyal to these tourist destinations than males. Lastly, as to age, older tourists are more loyal and can

identify more with the destination than younger tourists.

Table 6. Significant Differences

	Employment Status			Sex			Age		
	F	df ²	p	F	df ²	p	F	df ²	p
Enthusiasm	0.36635	1185	0.545	3.44	1152	0.064	2.418	175	0.013
Attention	2.00626	1250	0.157	8.01	1136	0.005	0.882	174	0.543
Absorption	0.00226	1226	0.962	2.34	1145	0.126	2.820	174	0.004
Interaction	3.27120	1231	0.071	3.33	1144	0.068	2.533	174	0.009
Identification	0.00246	1216	0.960	10.23	1132	0.001	6.478	176	<.001
Loyalty	0.90008	1260	0.343	9.05	1125	0.003	4.862	177	<.001

CONCLUSIONS

This study's outcomes illustrate the need to study visitors to understand differences in their behavior, cognition, and emotions, as well as the factors that influence their loyalty. The word "engagement" has gained widespread use throughout the last decade. It is used widely by marketing professionals to understand the client experience better and maintain consumer loyalty. The mechanism for customer loyalty may be investigated further by including the emotional connection and value co-creation process between consumers and a company, i.e., via customer engagement. This study's concept of tourist engagement seeks to assess the quality of a memorable tourist experience and develop a lasting emotional connection between tourists and a region.

In this research, enthusiasm, attention, interaction, and identification are essential to tourist engagement. However, one component, absorption, is tested incognizant to destination loyalty. Absorption is an all-consuming level of tourist interest in a destination (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002). This means that local tourists are not becoming loyal to destinations because they are interested in them. This result was quite unexpected, especially considering the extent of visitor absorption in the tourist destinations in the province of Ilocos Norte.

Notably, attention emerged as the one with the most impact on destination loyalty. It improves the behavioral, cognitive, emotional, social, and psychological elements of visitor experiences. The findings demonstrate the necessity of attracting and retaining the attention of travelers to foster destination loyalty. Previous literature by Hung et al. (2021) suggested the same findings as attention having the most impact on destination loyalty. Moreover, in a study by Zhou et al. (2022), tourist engagement is directly affecting destination loyalty. It was found that tourist engagement is directly correlated to destination loyalty.

As to significant differences in the responses, older female tourists are more loyal to certain tourist destinations. In order to attract female visitors, local authorities must establish a sense of tourist identity and appreciation, which are prerequisites for generating high levels of loyalty. Strategies to increase identification and engage female visitors may differ depending on their travel groups.

LIMITATIONS & FURTHER RESEARCH

Local governments and tourism organizations may reap substantial benefits from this study. This study illustrates a variety of optimal designs and essential criteria for nurturing tourist loyalty in Ilocos Norte. To attract tourists, local authorities should focus on fostering tourist attention and identification, which are prerequisites for achieving high levels of loyalty, and tourist attention, which has the greatest impact on achieving loyalty. Depending on the travel categories of

guests, strategies for attracting and engaging visitors may vary. Consider a traveler who is accompanied by her family. In this instance, tourism providers must be perceived as having taken care of everything so that tourists can "forget everything else," "get carried away," and "be immersed" - research indicates that tourists traveling with families find it difficult to be engaged at a tourism site because gendered roles and social norms often dictate that travelers assume responsibility for their travel companions and return from vacations exhausted. A second strategy for attracting more visitors is to increase the safety of tourist destinations, particularly for solo travelers. It is simpler to immerse oneself in a tourist destination when one is aware of its terrifying and dangerous topography. Incorporating more inclusive interactions, such as pre-booking, booking, and ingesting, may also increase interest.

Consequently, the provincial government must prioritize the demands and needs of visitors throughout their stay. Tourism is a unique service industry in which hospitality, dedication, and awareness of customer demands (ranging from fundamental ones such as rest periods and leisure activities to specific cuisine preferences) have a direct impact on customer loyalty. The study's findings indicate that the tourism industry in the province may take various measures to increase consumer loyalty to its services.

Lastly, gender-based research should be conducted to determine if there is a significant difference between female and male tourists. This would contribute significantly to the academic literature by contrasting the involvement and loyalty of male and female visitors to a place.

REFERENCES

- Amora, J., Ochoco, M., & Anicete, R. (2016). Student Engagement and College Experience as Mediators of The Relationship between Institutional Support and Academic Performance. *Digital Journal of Lasallian Research*, (12), 15-30.
- Awatara, I.G.P.D.S., Samsi, A., Hamdani, L., & Susila, N. (2020). The Influence of Corporate Social Responsibility, Reputation, and Customer Satisfaction Toward Tourism Loyalty on Karanganyar Regency. *Journal of International Conference Proceedings*, 3(1), 291–296. <https://doi.org/10.32535/jicp.v2i4.852>.
- Brodie, R. J., Ilic, A., Juric, B., & Hollebeek, L. (2013). Consumer engagement in a virtual brand community: An exploratory analysis. *Journal of Business Research*, 66(1), 105-114. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.07.029>
- Ekinci, Y., Sirakaya-Turk, E. & Preciado, S. (2013). Symbolic consumption of tourism destination brands. *Journal of Business Research*, 30(2), 10-15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.09.008>.
- Fornell C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobserved variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39–50. <http://doi.org/10.2307/3151312>
- Gummerus, Johanna & Liljander, Veronica & Weman, Emil & Pura, Minna. (2012). Customer engagement in a Facebook brand community. *Management Research Review*. 35. 857-877. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01409171211256578>.
- Harrigan, P., Evers, U., Miles, M., & Daly, T. (2017). Customer Engagement with Tourism Social Media Brands. *Tourism Management*, 59(April 2017), 597–609. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2016.09.015>.
- Hollebeek, L. (2011). Demystifying Customer Brand Engagement: Exploring the Loyalty Nexus. *Journal of Marketing Management*. 27. 785-807. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2010.500132>.
- Huang, S. (2017). *Tourist Engagement: Conceptualization, Scale Development, and Empirical Validation*. University of Guelph, Canada.

- Huang, S.Y. & Choi, H.C. (2019). Developing and Validating a Multidimensional Tourism Engagement Scale (TES). *The Service Industries Journal*, 39(7-8), 469-497. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02642069.2019.1576641>.
- Hulland, J. (1999). Use of partial least squares (PLS) in strategic management research: A review of four recent studies. *Strategic Management Journal*, 20(2), 195-204.
- Iordanova, E. (2016). Tourism destination image as an antecedent of destination loyalty: The case of Linz, Austria. *European Journal of Tourism Research*, 16, 214 - 232. <https://doi.org/10.54055/ejtr.v16i.286>
- Kabiraj, S. & Shanmugan, J. (2011). Development of a conceptual framework for brand loyalty: A Euro Mediterranean perspective. *Journal of Brand Management*, 18, 285-299. <https://doi.org/10.1057/bm.2010.42>
- Kandampully, J, Zhang, T. C., & Bilgihan, A. (2015). Customer loyalty: A review and future directions focusing on the hospitality industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 27. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-03-2014-0151>.
- Kock, N., & Hadaya, P. (2018). Minimum sample size estimation in PLS-SEM: The inverse square root and gamma-exponential methods. *Information Systems Journal*, 28(1), 227-261. <http://doi.org/10.1111/isj.12131>
- Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2008a). *Fundamentos de Marketing*. Pearson Educación.
- Kurniaty, D., Mayasari, I., Wiadi, I., Azmy, A., Wijanarko, A., & Driarkoro, R. Y. P. (2022). The Business Resilience of Small Micro Medium Enterprise During Pandemic Time. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Studies*, 2(1), 25-39. <https://doi.org/10.31098/ijeass.v2i1.792>
- Lin, A., Gregor, S., & Ewing, M. (2008). Developing a scale to measure the enjoyment of Web experiences. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 22(4), 40-57. <https://doi.org/10.1002/dir.20120>
- Loureiro, S.M.C.; González, F.J.M. (2008). The Importance of Quality, Satisfaction, Trust, and Image of Rural Tourist Loyalty. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 25(2), 117-136. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548400802402321>
- Muniz, A. M., & O'Guinn, T. C. (2001). Brand community. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 27(4), 412-432. <https://doi.org/10.1086/319618>
- Oliver, R. W. (1999). Whence Customer Loyalty? *Journal of Marketing*, 63, 33-44. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00222429990634s105>
- Patterson, P., Yu, T., & De Ruyter, K. (2006). Understanding customer engagement in services. Advancing Theory, Maintaining Relevance, Proceedings of ANZMAC 2006 Conference, Brisbane. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670511411703>
- Rasoolimanesh, S. M., Md Noor, S., Schuberth, F., & Jaafar, M. (2019). Investigating the effects of tourist engagement on satisfaction and loyalty. *The Service Industries Journal*, 39(7-8), 559-574.
- Rasoolimanesh, S. M., Khoo-Lattimore, C., Noor, S. M., Jaafar, M., & Konar, R. (2020). Tourist Engagement and Loyalty: Gender Matters? *Current Issues in Tourism*, 24(6), 871-885. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2020.1765321>.
- Sashi, C. M. (2012). Customer Engagement, Buyer-Seller Relationships, and Social Media. *Management Decision*, 50, 253-272. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00251741211203551>
- Scholer, A. A., & Higgins, E. T. (2009). Exploring the complexities of value creation: The role of engagement strength. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 19(2), 137-143. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2009.02.007>
- Schaufeli, W. B., Salanova, M., González-Romá, V., & Bakker, A. B. (2002). Measuring engagement

- and burnout: A two sample confirmatory factor analytic approach. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 3(1), 71–92. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1015630930326>
- Setiawan, H., Marwa, T., Wahab, Z., & Shihab, M. S. (2021). The Strength of Tourists Involvement in Mediating the Relationship Between Experience Value, Destination Image and Tourist Loyalty: An Empirical Study in Indonesia. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 8(6), 1079-1090.
- So, K.K.F., King, C., & Sparks, B. (2014). Customer Engagement With Tourism Brands: Scale Development and Validation. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 38(3), 304–329. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348012451456>
- Tenenhaus, M., Vinzi, V. E., Chatelin, Y. M., & Lauro, C. (2005). PLS path modeling. *Computational Statistics & Data Analysis*, 48(1), 159–205. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.csda.2004.03.005>
- Verawaty, V. (2022). Analyze of Customer Satisfaction BSI Mobile PT. Bank Syariah Indonesia Tbk. *International Journal of Emerging Issues in Islamic Studies*, 2(2), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.31098/ijeiis.v2i2.962>
- Vivek, S. D. (2009). *A scale of consumer engagement* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL.
- Vivek, S. D., Beatty, S. E., & Morgan, R. M. (2012). Customer Engagement: Exploring Customer Relationships Beyond Purchase. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 20(2), 122-146. <https://doi.org/10.2753/MTP1069-6679200201>
- Wang, T.-L., Tran, P. T. K., & Tran, V. T. (2017). Destination perceived quality, tourist satisfaction and word-of-mouth. *Tourism Review*, 72(4), 392–410. <https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-06-2017-0103>
- Wardi, Y.; Abror, A.; Trinanda, O. (2018). Halal tourism: Antecedent of tourist's satisfaction and word of mouth (WOM). *Asia Pasific Journal of Tourism Research*, 23(5), 463-472. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2018.1466816>.
- Wetzels, M., Odekerken-Schröder, G., & Van Oppen, C. (2009). Using PLS path modeling for assessing hierarchical construct models: Guidelines and empirical illustration. *MIS Quarterly*, 33(1), 177–195. <http://doi.org/10.2307/20650284>
- Wirtz, J., den Ambtman, A., Bloemer, J., Horváth, C., Ramaseshan, B., van de Klundert, J., Canli, Z. G., & Kandampully, J. (2013). Managing brands and customer engagement in online brand communities. *Journal of Service Management*, 24(3), 223-244. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09564231311326978>.
- Wu, C.W. (2016). Destination loyalty modeling of global tourism. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(6), 2213–2219. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.12.032>.
- Yoon, Y. & Uysal, M. (2005). Examining the Effects of Motivation and Satisfaction on Destination Loyalty: A Structural Model. *Tourism Management*, 26, 45-56. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2003.08.016>.
- Zou, W., Wei, W., Ding, S., & Xue, J. (2022). The relationship between place attachment and tourist loyalty: A meta-analysis. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 43, 100983.
- Zhou, M., & Yu, H. (2022). Exploring How Tourist Engagement Affects Destination Loyalty: The Intermediary Role of Value and Satisfaction. *Sustainability*, 14(3), 1621. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/su14031621>