

# AN INVESTIGATION OF INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS ON TOURISTS SATISFACTION, TOURIST EXPERIENCE AND DESTINATION LOYALTY

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## Abstract

In this fast-growing tourist economy, tourists are increasingly seeking greater variety than they have experienced in the past. Tourist experience has been a central theme in specific parts of tourism literature, little is known about significant components of tourist experience in the international context. The present study analyzed survey data from 603 international tourists arriving in Thailand to evaluate their tourist experience. Using structural equation modeling (SEM), an adapted scale of the tourist experience (i.e. cognitive, affective and behavioral experience) proved reliable and valid for measuring the international tourist destination loyalty. The objectives of this study were to investigate the causal relationships between tourist experience and tourist satisfaction on destination loyalty, and also to explore the mediating effects of cognitive and affective satisfaction on tourist experience and destination loyalty. The findings show that tourist experience has a significant effect on tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. Furthermore, the mediating effect results also show that affective satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between tourist experience and destination loyalty. The findings contribute to tourism marketing and management within the industry. The results suggest that tourism business operators should focus on the sensorial elements of their products and services, since affective experience is a significant contributor to tourist loyalty and can generate positive outcomes. Although the findings suggest that cognitive satisfaction is not paramount for building tourist loyalty, this component should not be overlooked, as it is often expected by international tourists.

**Keywords:** Tourist experience; cognitive satisfaction; affective satisfaction; destination loyalty

## **Introduction**

The tourist economy is quickly expanding, and tourists are seeking ever more compelling, different and novel tourist experiences which can have both hedonic and utilitarian attributes (Sandstrom et al., 2008), involving their cognitive, affective, and behavioral experience (Laura et al., 2016). These new tourist demands should become the focus of marketing plans produced by all those involved in creating a tourism destination and it should be ensured that products and services are developed to create memorable tourist experiences (Loncaric et al., 2017). It is noted that “with increasing global competition owing to newly-emerging destinations and tourists becoming more exacting in their choice and desire for a variety of options, relationship marketing arguably offers considerable potential to achieve competitive advantage” (Fyall et al., 2003). Pine and Gilmore (1998) note that memorable experiences can be produced “a company intentionally uses services as the stage and the goods as props” at tourist events.

Previous studies have found that the destinations can condition after decision-making behavior, consisting of participation (onsite experience, and evaluation or satisfaction), and future behavioral intention (loyalty intention) (Ashworth, 1998; Lee et al., 2005). Satisfying tourist experiences will enhance both overall tourist satisfaction with their trip as well as their degree of loyalty to the tourist destination or business operators (Yoon and Uysal, 2005; Loncaric et al., 2017). Past studies have confirmed the significance of tourist experience on tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. Determining tourist experience has been a central theme in specific parts of tourism literature, such as in wine tourism (Quadri-Felitti and Fiore, 2013; Fernandes and Cruz, 2016), co-creating tourism (Loncaric et al., 2017; Ryglova et al., 2018), and nature-based destination tourism (Tan, 2017a; Tan, 2017b). Meanwhile, tourist experience research is less known in international destination research. The present empirical study focuses on tourists’ experience (i.e. cognitive, affective, and behavioral experience) in international destination.

The objective of this study is to explore the relationship between tourist experience (cognitive, affective, and behavioral experience) and tourist satisfaction on destination loyalty, and to also confirm the content and construct

validity before analyzing and exploring those relationships. Furthermore, the present study expands understanding of tourist experiences and improves awareness of the management implications for tourism business operators and public sectors.

## **Literature Review**

### **Tourist Experience**

Experience is understood as a set of complex interactions between the objective features of a product or service and consumer's subjective responses (Addis and Holbrook, 2001). Pine and Gilmore (1998) introduced the concept of experience as a subjective and obscure mental state that is felt and tied to emotions, aesthetics, intellectualism, and spiritualism. In the tourism context, tourist experience is a set of physical, emotional, sensory, spiritual, or intellectual impressions that are subjectively perceived by tourists. The experience begins from the moment they plan their trip, while they are in their chosen destination, and even after returning home and the tourist remembers their trip (Otto and Ritchie, 1995). This research discusses the international tourist experience from the tourists' perspectives, while the tourist experience is defined as knowledge and understanding gained through the tourists' involvement in a particular destination or activity through traveling, seeing, learning, enjoying and living different lifestyles in other countries.

Tourism experiences are psychological phenomena; tourists have their own perception and encounter heritage spaces from different cultural perspectives (Ashworth, 1998). Accordingly, the subjective characteristics of the tourism experience essentially categorize the components of tourism experience. Therefore, this study focuses on cognitive, affective, and behavioral constructs. Cognitive experience is related to the individual's evaluation of tourism programs and destination areas by what they feel, such as value, quality, challenge, exploration, learning, and meaningfulness at every stage of planning, while they are at the destination, while returning home, and during the recollection stage (Clawson and Knetsch, 1966). Affective experience occurs when tourists develop both positive and negative feelings about their trip, which

may involve positive feelings of “loyalty, nostalgia, excitement”, but it may also give rise to negative feelings of “fear, anger and guilt” (Candan et al., 2013). Behavioral experience is acquired by tourists based on previous experience of going on a particular trip or to a certain destination, and is used when the tourist relies on previous experiences and compares that with their actual experiences on their current trip (Alba et al., 1991).

### **Tourist Satisfaction**

Satisfaction is also considered to be an outcome of a subjective evaluation which exceeds the expectation (Bloemer and Kasper, 1995). Oliver (1996) defined satisfaction as a final step in a psychological purchase or consumption process, resulting with the consumer comparing their prior feelings with the consumption experience. Oliver’s expectancy disconfirmation has received wide acceptance and the findings of Oliver (1996) had a significant impact on research into satisfaction applied to different contexts. Many companies seek to increase customer satisfaction to gain a competitive advantage (Patterson et al., 1997). If the performance of a product or service meets consumer expectations, those consumers will feel satisfied. But if the performance falls short of the consumer perceptions, they will feel dissatisfied. The Expectancy-Disconfirmation theory is widely used in the marketing field, with repurchase and revisiting intentions being particularly dependent on satisfaction (Chen, Yen, and Hwang, 2012).

Satisfaction can be categorized into two types; cognition and affect (Oliver, 1993). Cognitive satisfaction results when a customer has pre-consumption expectations and they then observe and compare the product or product performance against their prior expectations. Affective satisfaction is concerned when a consumer has either a positive or negative post-purchase experience which affects consumption (Oliver, 1993). Yu and Dean (2001) gave an example of affective satisfaction in which a positive emotional effect includes pleasure or surprise, while a negative effect is related to disappointment or dissatisfaction. However, most satisfaction or customer satisfaction research focus on cognitive component and disregard the affective element of satisfaction (Strauss and Neuhaus, 1997).

### **Destination Loyalty**

Oliver (1999) defines customer loyalty as “a deeply held commitment to rebuy or patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior”. Loyal consumers tend to buy the same product, continue to buy more, and are willing to recommend the product to others (Hepworth and Mateus, 1994). Loyalty can be assessed according to the individual’s intention of repeating their product purchase, revisiting a destination, or according to their willingness to recommend the product, service or destination to other people (Opperman, 2000).

Destination loyalty is operationally defined as the degree to which the tourist perceives the destination to be a good place which they would recommend to others (Chen and Gursoy, 2001). Yoon and Uysal (2005) state that a destination can be considered as a product and that tourists can return to the destination or give recommendations other potential tourists such as their friends, relatives, or family. However, destination loyalty has rarely been studied, so there are many outstanding questions about how tourist loyalty can be maintained in the long-term (Zamora et al., 2005). Additionally, the concept of loyalty in the tourism context has also received little attention in the literature (Yoon and Uysal, 2005).

### **Hypotheses Development**

Based on a comprehensive review of the existing literature, any good feelings arising from a tourist’s experience feedback can become part of the individual’s overall satisfaction (Tan, 2017b). Meanwhile, satisfaction consists of two components which are cognitive and affective satisfaction and are treated as the endogenous variables. In addition, cognitive, affective and behavioral tourist experiences have significantly positive effects on tourist satisfaction (Ali and Kim, 2015; Jalilvand et al., 2012; Tan, 2016). Cognitive satisfaction can be predicted by cognition, affect and behavior during the travel experience, because the level of satisfaction mainly happened during the pre-visit period (Homburg et al., 2006). In sum, tourist experience consists of cognitive, affective, and behavioral tourist experiences, and is treated as the exogenous variables. Furthermore, cognitive satisfaction is treated as an endogenous variable in the model. The tested hypothesis was formulated in the following statement:

**H1:** There is a positive relationship between tourist experience and cognitive satisfaction.

In wine tourism, tourist experience results in individuals' predicting positive satisfaction. Furthermore, tourist experience had the most significant effect on satisfaction in the context of nature-based destination tourism (Quadri-Felitti and Fiore, 2013; Tan, 2017b). In wine tourism, Fernandes and Cruz (2016) find that tourist experience has a significant and positive impact on affective satisfaction. This is consistent with Ryglova et al. (2018), who find that tourist experience acts as a direct antecedent of affective satisfaction in rural destinations context. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H2:** There is a positive relationship between tourist experience and affective satisfaction.

The existing literature often shows that tourist experience directly affects revisiting and loyalty intention (Kim et al, 2012; Tan, 2017b). Tourist experience suggests that fulfilling tourist expectations will lead to satisfaction and consequently result in the tourist intending on returning to the destination and recommending it to other people. For cruise (Hosany and Witham, 2010) and wine tourists (Quadri-Felitti and Fiore, 2013), tourist experience was found to be a statistically significant predictor of destination loyalty, especially entertainment and esthetics experience. In domestic holidaymaker research, behavioral experience is the only experiential dimension that directly and positively influences destination loyalty for both repeat and first-time tourists (Tan, 2017a). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H3:** There is a positive relationship between tourist experience and destination loyalty.

Previous studies contend that tourist satisfaction is a robust predictor to destination loyalty (Shirazi and Som, 2013; Loncaric et al., 2017; Ryglova et al., 2018). Cognitive satisfaction has been identified to positively affect loyalty intentions in co-creating tourism (Loncaric et al., 2017), while positive feelings between travelers and travel providers are important for their collaboration to continue in the future. In international tourist research, Shirazi and Som (2013) support the existing relationship between cognitive satisfaction and destination loyalty, finding that cognitive satisfaction was significant for both revisiting intentions and recommendations. Consistent with the results of Mendes et al.

(2010), they find that cognitive satisfaction can influence tourist interests and their likelihood to spread the positive words about the destination. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 is presented in the following statement:

**H4:** There is a positive relationship between cognitive satisfaction and destination loyalty.

A number of studies have attempted to investigate the relationship between affective satisfaction and loyalty using path analysis. These studies include the impact of affective satisfaction on destination loyalty in wine tourism (Quadri-Felitti and Fiore, 2013) and in the co-creation tourism context (Loncaric et al., 2017). The path analysis in the two studies found that the significance of affective satisfaction on destination loyalty had positive impacts. These results agree with previous findings of rural destination studies, with Ryglova et al. (2018) showing that affective satisfaction has a significant impact on destination loyalty in the rural destinations tourism. Thus, Hypothesis 5 is proposed in the following statement:

**H5:** There is a positive relationship between affective satisfaction and destination loyalty.

### **Mediating Effect of Tourist Satisfaction**

Getz and Brown (2006) identify satisfaction to have a positive effect on intentions within the tourism industry. According to a study on wine tourism, tourist satisfaction is a mediator between tourist experience and tourist loyalty, with the results showing that tourist satisfaction partially mediated the effects of affective and behavioral experience on loyalty intention (Quadri-Felitti and Fiore, 2013). Loncaric et al. (2017) examined the mediating effects of cognitive and affective satisfaction on tourist experience and destination loyalty in the co-creation tourism context, with their findings indicating that both cognitive satisfaction and affective satisfaction significantly mediated the relationship between tourist experience and destination loyalty. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

**H6:** Cognitive satisfaction mediates the relationship between tourist experience and destination loyalty.

**H7:** Affective satisfaction mediates the relationship between tourist experience and destination loyalty.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Sample and Data Collecting**

Employing a cross-sectional survey design, data was collected from international tourists arriving in Thailand via self-administered questionnaires. The data was collected over a three-week period from November to December 2018. Bangkok was selected as the study area since it is the most popular city for international travelers (MasterCard, 2018) and the capital city of Thailand. The respondents were given around 10 minutes to complete the survey. Besides demographic information, the questionnaire comprised 25 questions regarding tourist experience, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. Convenience sampling was used since the study's research population required individuals who were visiting the destination. Sample size requirements for Structural Equation Models (SEM) have been suggested by Hair et al. (2010) that the samples per estimated parameter should be greater than 10 times. However, there is no correct sample in the absolute condition, and larger respondents are always preferable (Raykov and Marcoulides, 2000). By using the ratio of 10:1 as suggested by Hair et al. (2010), a total 640 questionnaires were distributed to international tourists traveling in Bangkok based on the total number of items used in the survey questionnaires, with a total of 603 (94 percent) of the questionnaires being returned from the target sample.

### **Questionnaire Design and Content Validity**

A two-part questionnaire was designed to gather the data. The first part contained scales to measure the main constructs, while the second part consisted of demographic questions. The measurement items of tourist experience were measured by adapting Ali and Kim (2015), Jalilvand et al. (2012), and Tan (2016) to create 13 validated statements. Likewise, the 8-item scales to measure cognitive and affective satisfaction were drawn from Castaldo et al. (2016) and Oliver (1993). The 25 measurement items of tourist experience, tourist satisfaction, and destination loyalty were posed on a 7-point Likert scale of strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). These items were adapted from Parrott and Danbury (2015) and Roy et al. (2014) with some modifications to fit the present study. Demographic information was requested in the final part of the survey. In this study, the content validity index

(CVI) was inclusive of four rating criteria which consisted of relevance, clarity, simplicity and ambiguity (Lynn, 1986). CVI indicator is considered acceptable for values greater than 0.80 (Polit and Beck, 2006). All measurement items were confirmed by three experts in academic tourism study. The results of the content validity index showed that all items of tourist experience, tourist satisfaction, and destination loyalty ranged between 0.833 and 1.00. Thus, all measurement items were considered acceptable.

### **Pilot Test**

A pilot test was conducted to identify and validate the construct measures using a convenience sample of 101 international tourists in Bangkok. After the pilot study data was analyzed, the study instruments were revised and subsequently employed in the main study. One item for the questionnaire section on tourist experience was removed due to its poor reliability (item-to-total correlation<0.60). The 13 items on tourist experience therefore decreased to 12 items.

### **Reliability Test and Convergent Validity**

In order to estimate the reliability of the measurement items, Nunnally (1978) recommended that the cut-off point of a coefficient should be 0.50, with coefficients greater than 0.75 considered as a good indication of construct reliability. Convergent validity was indicated by an item factor loading greater than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2010). The average variance extracted (AVE) should be 0.5 or higher for thumb suggesting adequate convergence. Meanwhile, construct reliability (CR), which is often used in conjunction with SEM models should be 0.6 or higher, provided that the other indicators of the model's construct validity are good (Hair et al., 2010). Table 1 summarizes the results of reliability and convergent validity test, all constructs were deemed to have an acceptable level of validity, with cognitive experience ( $\alpha = .952$ ; AVE = .873; CR = .965), affective experience ( $\alpha = .939$ ; AVE = .848; CR = .957), behavioral experience ( $\alpha = .936$ ; AVE = .839; CR = .954), cognitive satisfaction ( $\alpha = .943$ ; AVE = .855; CR = .959), affective satisfaction ( $\alpha = .963$ ; AVE = .905; CR = .975), and destination loyalty ( $\alpha = .946$ ; AVE = .827; CR = .960). All measurement items were deemed to have an acceptable level of validity with factor loadings between .806 to .963. Therefore, the reliability and convergent validity are considered acceptable.

**Table 1:** Reliability Test and Convergent Validity

| Latent variables/                          | Factor Loading ( $\lambda$ ) | Cronbach's ( $\alpha$ ) | AVE | CR |
|--|------------------------------|-------------------------|-----|----|
| <b>Observed variables</b>                  |                              |                         |     |    |
| <i>Tourist Cognitive Experience (TCE)</i>  |                              |                         |     |    |
| TCE1                                       | .914                         |                         |     |    |
| TCE2                                       | .939                         |                         |     |    |
| TCE3                                       | .949                         |                         |     |    |
| TCE4                                       | .935                         |                         |     |    |
| <i>Tourist Affective Experience (TAE)</i>  |                              |                         |     |    |
| TAE1                                       | .911                         |                         |     |    |
| TAE2                                       | .942                         |                         |     |    |
| TAE3                                       | .933                         |                         |     |    |
| TAE4                                       | .897                         |                         |     |    |
| <i>Tourist Behavioral Experience (TBE)</i> |                              |                         |     |    |
| TBE1                                       | .897                         |                         |     |    |
| TBE2                                       | .929                         |                         |     |    |
| TBE3                                       | .934                         |                         |     |    |
| TBE4                                       | .904                         |                         |     |    |
| <i>Cognitive Satisfaction (CS)</i>         |                              |                         |     |    |
| CS1  | .903                         |                         |     |    |
| CS2  | .932                         |                         |     |    |
| CS3  | .929                         |                         |     |    |
| CS4  | .935                         |                         |     |    |
| <i>Affective Satisfaction (AS)</i>         |                              |                         |     |    |
| AS1  | .936                         |                         |     |    |
| AS2  | .959                         |                         |     |    |
| AS3  | .963                         |                         |     |    |
| AS4  | .948                         |                         |     |    |
| <i>Destination Loyalty (DL)</i>            |                              |                         |     |    |
| DL1  | .935                         |                         |     |    |
| DL2  | .938                         |                         |     |    |
| DL3  | .925                         |                         |     |    |
| DL4  | .938                         |                         |     |    |
| DL5  | .806                         |                         |     |    |

## Results and Findings

### Result of Descriptive Statistics

The demographic profile of the respondents was analyzed using descriptive statistics to show the demographic variables. A total of 603 international tourists successfully returned the survey, of which 343 were female (56.9%) and 260 were male (43.1%). In addition, 226 were aged between 23 to 30 (37.5%), 150 aged between 31 to 40 (24.9%), 116 aged less than 22 (19.2%), 43 aged between 51 to 60 (7.1%), 39 aged between 41 to 50 (6.5%), and 29 over 61 years old (4.8%). 478 of the respondents were in Bangkok on vacation (79.3%), 79 for a business trip (13.1%), and 46 for other purposes (7.6%). For average duration of stay, 187 were in Bangkok for more than a week (31%), 158 between 3 to 5 days (15.8%), 97 between 5 to 7 days (16.1%), 95 for less than 3 days (15.8%), and 66 for more than a month (10.9%). Japanese was the most common nationality with 63 respondents (10.4%), then 52 Americans (8.6%), 50 Germans (8.3%), 44 Chinese (7.3%), 24 Malaysians (4.0%), 23 Indians (3.8%), 17 Koreans, and 330 others (54.8%).

**Table 2:** Demographic Profile of Respondents (n=603)

| Demographics             | Frequency | %    |
|--------------------------|-----------|------|
| <b>Gender</b>            |           |      |
| Male                     | 260       | 43.1 |
| Female                   | 343       | 56.9 |
| <b>Age</b>               |           |      |
| Less than 22             | 116       | 19.2 |
| 23-30                    | 226       | 37.5 |
| 31-40                    | 150       | 24.9 |
| 41-50                    | 39        | 6.5  |
| 51-60                    | 43        | 7.1  |
| 61 and over              | 29        | 4.8  |
| <b>Purpose of Travel</b> |           |      |
| Vacation                 | 478       | 79.3 |
| Business                 | 79        | 13.1 |
| Others                   | 46        | 7.6  |

**Table 2:** Continued

| Demographics            | Frequency | %    |
|-------------------------|-----------|------|
| <b>Duration of Stay</b> |           |      |
| Less than 3 days        | 95        | 15.8 |
| 3-5 days                | 158       | 26.2 |
| 5-7 days                | 97        | 16.1 |
| More than 1 week        | 187       | 31.0 |
| More than 1 month       | 66        | 10.9 |
| <b>Nationality</b>      |           |      |
| Japanese                | 63        | 10.4 |
| American                | 52        | 8.6  |
| German                  | 50        | 8.3  |
| Chinese                 | 44        | 7.3  |
| Malaysian               | 24        | 4.0  |
| Indian                  | 23        | 3.8  |
| Korean                  | 17        | 2.8  |
| Others                  | 330       | 54.2 |

### Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The properties of the six constructs (1. cognitive experience; 2. affective experience; 3. behavioral experience; 4. cognitive satisfaction; 5. affective satisfaction; and 6. destination loyalty) in the initial model were first tested by a confirmatory factor analysis to explore the relationships between the observed and latent variables. The construct validity should be confirmed using the confirmatory factor analysis before the structural equation model is analyzed (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988).

After all the latent variables for each theoretical concept were validated, they were placed into a single complete construct model to assess the model as a whole. The most commonly used fit index is Chi-square test, which should be insignificant ( $p>0.05$ ,  $\chi^2/d.f.<5$ ). Other common fit indices include the comparative fit index ( $CFI>0.90$ ), the goodness fit index ( $GFI>0.90$ ), root mean square error of approximation ( $RMSEA<0.07$ ), and root mean square residual ( $RMR<0.08$ ) (Kline, 2005; Hair et al., 2010). Table 3 presents the assessment result of overall absolute fit indices. The absolute fit indices for the overall model were found to be unacceptable ( $\chi^2/d.f.=7.835$ ,  $p=0.00$ ,  $CFI=.911$ ,  $GFI=.751$ ,  $RMSEA=.107$ , and  $RMR=.075$ ), and the model was rejected since it achieved a GFI value lower than 0.90,  $\chi^2/d.f.$  value was higher than 5, and the RMSEA was higher than the critical value of 0.70. The adjusted indices were subsequently examined.

**Table 3:** Construct Validity Test (n=603)

| Dimensions and Items  | Loadings | S.E. | C.R.   |
|---|----------|------|--------|
| <b><i>Tourist Experience</i></b>                                      |          |      |        |
| <b><i>Tourist Cognitive Experience (TCE)</i></b>                      |          |      |        |
| TCE1 This destination exceeded my expectation.                        | 1.000    | -    | -      |
| TCE2 I enjoyed the place where I have not visited before.             | 1.055    | .031 | 33.794 |
| TCE3 Overall it was good value to visit here.                         | 1.113    | .031 | 36.393 |
| TCE4 I felt good about my decision to visit the destination.          | 1.062    | .031 | 34.564 |
| <b><i>Tourist Affective Experience (TAE)</i></b>                      |          |      |        |
| TAE1 The destination made me feel relaxed during the trip.            | 1.000    | -    | -      |
| TAE2 I had happy time at the destination.                             | 1.026    | .029 | 35.452 |
| TAE3 I really enjoyed the tourism experience at the destination.      | 1.039    | .031 | 33.206 |
| TAE4 I was thrilled about having a new experience.                    | 1.031    | .035 | 29.236 |
| <b><i>Tourist Behavioral Experience (TBE)</i></b>                     |          |      |        |
| TBE1 I was involved in something that I really liked to do.           | 1.000    | -    | -      |
| TBE2 I did something new and different at the destination.            | 1.034    | .032 | 35.452 |
| TBE3 I did something unique and memorable at the destination.         | 1.067    | .033 | 33.206 |
| TBE4 I had a “once in a lifetime” experience while spending the time. | 1.039    | .036 | 29.236 |

**Table 3:** Continued

| Dimensions and Items   | Loadings | S.E. | C.R.   |
|--|----------|------|--------|
| <b><i>Tourist Satisfaction</i></b>                                     |          |      |        |
| <b><i>Cognitive Satisfaction (CS)</i></b>                              |          |      |        |
| CS1 The tourism destination turned out better than I expected.         | 1.000    | -    | -      |
| CS2 Overall, this destination gave exactly what I needed.              | .973     | .030 | 32.080 |
| CS3 I think I made the right decision to visit the destination.        | .998     | .030 | 33.663 |
| CS4 Overall, I am satisfied with the value for price I paid.           | 1.008    | .030 | 33.235 |
| <b><i>Affective Satisfaction (AS)</i></b>                              |          |      |        |
| AS1 I am satisfied with my decision to travel to the destination.      | 1.000    | -    | -      |
| AS2 My experience at the destination made me happy.                    | 1.034    | .026 | 39.961 |
| AS3 Overall, this destination gave me a pleasant experience.           | 1.085    | .025 | 42.849 |
| AS4 Overall, I felt delight at the destination.                        | 1.102    | .027 | 40.169 |
| <b><i>Destination Loyalty(DL)</i></b>                                  |          |      |        |
| DL1 I would recommend the destination to my friends or relatives.      | 1.000    | -    | -      |
| DL2 I would encourage friends and relatives to visit the destination.  | .961     | .024 | 40.606 |
| DL3 I would say positive things about my trip to other people.         | .899     | .024 | 38.129 |
| DL4 I would suggest this destination to people if they want an advice. | 1.005    | .024 | 41.231 |
| DL5 If I had another chance, I would make the same choice again.       | .844     | .033 | 25.729 |

**Table 3:** Continued

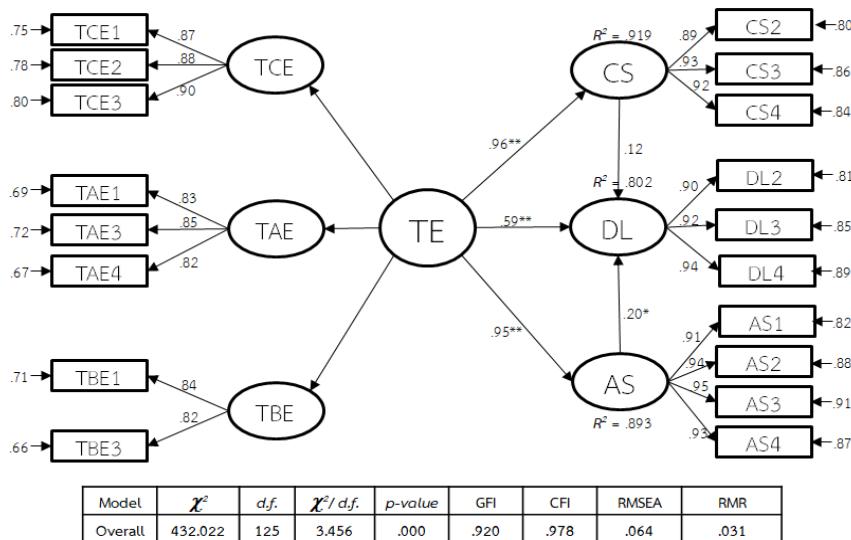
| Dimensions and Items       |          |             | Loadings      |                | S.E. | C.R. |
|----------------------------|----------|-------------|---------------|----------------|------|------|
| Absolute Model Fit Indices |          |             |               |                |      |      |
| Model                      | $\chi^2$ | <i>d.f.</i> | $\chi^2/d.f.$ | <i>p-value</i> | GFI  | CFI  |
| Initial                    | 2107.655 | 269         | 7.835         | .000           | .751 | .911 |
| Modified                   | 404.968  | 124         | 3.266         | .000           | .924 | .980 |
|                            |          |             |               |                | .061 | .029 |

The adjusted model was also examined to improve the model. The modification index is an estimate or prediction of the decrease in Chi-square that will be obtained if that particular path is introduced in the model. Based on the adjusted model, the modification indices were revised by applying minimal modifications to the covariance between the items (Byrne, 2005). Seven observed variables were found to be redundant and subsequently removed, they were: "I felt good about my decision to visit the destination" (TCE4); "I had happy time at the destination" (TAE2); "I did something new and different at the destination" (TBE2); "I had a "once in a lifetime" experience while spending the time at the destination" (TBE4); "the tourism destination turned out better than I expected" (CS1); "I would recommend the destination to my friends or relatives" (DL1); and "if I had another chance, I would make the same choice again" (DL5). The Chi-square value decreased to 3.266 per degree of freedom. The GFI value was above 0.9 and the RMSEA value was below 0.07, which indicate a good fit between proposed model and the data. The adjusted model was therefore deemed acceptable.

### **Structural Equation Model**

The structural model of this study is the causal relationship between tourist experience (TE), cognitive satisfaction (CS), affective satisfaction (AS) and destination loyalty (DL). After examination, the overall fit of the measurement model and the adjusted model were deemed acceptable (Chi-Square = 432.022, Chi-Square per degree of freedom = 3.456,  $p=0.000$ , root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.064, comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.978, goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = 0.920, and root mean square residual (RMR) = 0.031).

The structural equation model results summarized the causal relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variables. Tourist experience had positive effects on cognitive and affective satisfaction with completely standardized coefficients of .96 and 0.95, respectively ( $p<0.01$ ). Furthermore, affective satisfaction had a positive effect on destination loyalty with standardized coefficients of .20 ( $p<0.05$ ). However, the effect of cognitive satisfaction was found to be insignificant on destination loyalty (Figure 1).



Note. \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$

**Figure 1:** Research Framework

Table 4 shows that the total effects (TE) on destination loyalty are tourist experience (TE=.892), cognitive satisfaction (TE=.115), and affective satisfaction (TE=.201). Tourist experience had total effects on cognitive and affective satisfaction with standardized coefficients of .959 and .945, respectively. Tourist experience (TE) also had a significant indirect effect on destination loyalty with a standardized coefficient of .300 (IE=.300). In this study, the model was found to predict destination loyalty with 80.2 percent ( $R^2 = 0.802$ ).

**Table 4:** Effects of Antecedents on Consequences

| Antecedents                 | Consequences |    |      |              |    |      |             |      |      |  |
|-----------------------------|--------------|----|------|--------------|----|------|-------------|------|------|--|
|                             | Cognitive    |    |      | Affective    |    |      | Destination |      |      |  |
|                             | Satisfaction |    | CS   | Satisfaction |    | AS   | Loyalty     |      | DL   |  |
|                             | DE           | IE | TE   | DE           | IE | TE   | DE          | IE   | TE   |  |
| Tourist Experience (TE)     | .959         | -  | .959 | .945         | -  | .945 | .592        | .300 | .892 |  |
| Cognitive Satisfaction (CS) | -            | -  | -    | -            | -  | -    | .115        | -    | .115 |  |
| Affective Satisfaction (AS) | -            | -  | -    | -            | -  | -    | .201        | -    | .201 |  |

Note: DE = Direct Effect, IE = Indirect Effect, TE = Total Effect

### Mediating Effects of Cognitive and Affective Satisfaction

Table 5 shows that the direct effects of tourist experience are positively significant on destination loyalty with standardized coefficients of .615 and .635, respectively. According to the mediation effect analysis of classic causal step (Baron and Kenny, 1986), a direct link between the independent and dependent variables must be significant. The mediating effect of cognitive satisfaction on the relationship of tourist experience and destination loyalty was found to be insignificant. Furthermore, the result showed that affective satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between tourist experience and destination loyalty.

**Table 5:** Mediation Test

| Mediating effects | Direct effect    | Direct effect | Results           |
|-------------------|------------------|---------------|-------------------|
|                   | without mediator | with mediator |                   |
| TE → CS → DL      | .615(p=.000)     | .590(p=.218)  | No mediation      |
| TE → AS → DL      | .635(p=.000)     | .393(p=.024)  | Partial mediation |

### Hypotheses Results

Tourist experience had positive effects on cognitive and affective satisfaction with completely standardized coefficients of .96 and 0.95, respectively ( $p<0.01$ ). Therefore, Hypotheses 1 and 2 were supported. Meanwhile, tourist experience had a positive effect on destination loyalty with standardized coefficients of .59 ( $p<0.01$ ). Hypothesis 3 was subsequently supported. Furthermore, affective satisfaction had a positive effect on destination loyalty with standardized coefficients of .20 ( $p<0.05$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 5 was supported. However, the effect of cognitive satisfaction was found to be insignificant on destination loyalty. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 was not supported. The mediating effect of cognitive satisfaction on the relationship of tourist experience and destination loyalty was found to be insignificant. Thus, Hypothesis 6 was not supported. Furthermore, the result showed that affective satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between tourist experience and destination loyalty. Therefore, Hypothesis 7 was supported (Table 6).

**Table 6:** Hypotheses Summary

| Hypotheses   | Results  |
|--|----------|
| H1: There is a positive relationship between tourist experience and cognitive satisfaction.              | Accepted |
| H2: There is a positive relationship between tourist experience and affective satisfaction.              | Accepted |
| H3: There is a positive relationship between tourist experience and destination loyalty.                 | Accepted |
| H4: There is a positive relationship between cognitive satisfaction and destination loyalty.             | Rejected |
| H5: There is a positive relationship between affective satisfaction and destination loyalty.             | Accepted |
| H6: Cognitive satisfaction mediates the relationship between tourist experience and destination loyalty. | Rejected |
| H7: Affective satisfaction mediates the relationship between tourist experience and destination loyalty. | Accepted |

## Discussion and Conclusion

The present study identified the relationship between tourist experience and outcomes of cognitive satisfaction, affective satisfaction, and destination loyalty. The empirical results support those of previous studies, including Fernandes and Cruz (2016), Hosany and Witham (2010), Quadri-Felitti and Fiore (2013), and Tan (2017b), finding that tourist experience had a significant influence on the establishment of tourist's cognitive satisfaction. The dominant role of tourist experience in international destinations is consistent with other results (Fernandes and Cruz, 2016; Hosany and Witham, 2010; Quadri-Felitti and Fiore, 2013). Meanwhile, tourist experience also had a statistically significant influence on affective satisfaction. Tourist experience had the greatest effect on cognitive satisfaction, with tourist experience being related to visitors enjoying and passively appreciating in the destination environment (Oh et al., 2007).

The present study also found that tourist experience had a significant positive effect on destination loyalty, in line with previous studies (Quadri-

Felitti and Fiore, 2013; Tan, 2017a). In the cruise study (Hosany and Witham, 2010), tourist experience had the greatest impact for destination loyalty with a standardized coefficient of .36 ( $\beta=.36$ ). Meanwhile in the present study of international destinations, tourist experience was found to have the direct effect in predicting destination loyalty ( $\beta=.592$ ). Bangkok provides an affective experience through its novelty and pleasure of the tourist attractions. The present study supports the results of Oh et al. (2007) who found that travelers seek and expect different experiential attributes in different tourism contexts.

Furthermore, affective satisfaction had a significant effect on destination loyalty with standardized coefficients of .201. These results further confirm past studies, for example, Ryglova et al. (2018) found that the level of overall satisfaction with rural tourism had a considerable influence on destination loyalty to the same destination, the results confirmed this impact and was proven to be the most important factor ( $\beta=0.652$ ), which was expected due to the tight connection between tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. Meanwhile, Shirazi and Som (2013) studied international tourists in Malaysia, finding overall satisfaction had the greatest explanatory capacity, followed by the degree to which tourists intend to revisit a destination. However, the present study found a lack of a significant effect between cognitive satisfaction and destination loyalty. Despite Bangkok offering a variety of entertainment areas and exciting events, other international destinations also offer new experiences to visitors. The number of novel attractions is not necessarily a concern for international tourists, rather they may instead seek destinations that they can get the worth of their money and time. Tourists may subsequently seek to encourage their friends and family to experience specific leisure destinations with them.

Assessing tourist satisfaction is a precondition for identifying the factors behind destination loyalty, but this is insufficient. Examining tourists' expectations to achieve a deep understanding of destination loyalty shall be investigated in a further study. In addition, the mediation effect of tourist satisfaction on the relationship between tourist experience and destination loyalty has received little attention. The findings of the present study confirm that affective satisfaction involves mediation between tourist experience and destination loyalty.

## **Implications and Recommendations for Future Research**

The findings of this study have several implications for individual tourism business operators. Tourism business operators should focus on the sensorial elements of their products and services, since affective experience is a significant contributor to tourist loyalty and can generate positive outcomes. Although the findings suggest that cognitive satisfaction is not paramount for building tourist loyalty, this component should not be overlooked, as it is often expected by international tourists (Fountain and Charters, 2010). Tourist experience results in the perception of good value and help to build tourist satisfaction. This study also extends tourist satisfaction research by investigating the impact of tourist satisfaction on destination loyalty in the international destination context. While tourist satisfaction has a positive effect on destination loyalty, tourism business operators should improve their efforts to build tourist satisfaction in order to achieve more positive recommendations and revisiting intentions.

Further studies may adapt this proven model of assessing tourist experience to other specific tourism purposes, such as nature-based tourism (e.g. rafting, sightseeing, and bird watching), sports tourism (e.g. marathon and bicycle events) and should be used to test structural research models for other international destinations. Furthermore, an extension of the loyalty aspects towards both the attitudinal and behavioral components (Yoon and Uysal, 2005) can be considered in a future study. By measuring intent as well as return behavior, better insights can be used to improve destination loyalty.

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