



Emotional Experience and Conative Loyalty: The Mediating Role of Revisit Intention

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Abstract

This purpose of this study is to empirically investigate the influence of emotional experience and intention to revisit on conative loyalty, as well as the role of intention to revisit as a mediator between emotional experience and conative loyalty. The population of this research was the visitors of Sunan Ampel religious tourism, Surabaya, Indonesia. The data was analyzed using structural equation modeling. There were 267 respondents participated in this study. The findings show emotional experience has positive influences on both visitors' conative loyalty and intention to revisit. Moreover, emotional experience influences conative loyalty through the mediation of revisit intention. The stronger the positive emotional experience perceived by visitors, the stronger their desire to return to the same location.

Keywords: Conative Loyalty, Emotional Experience, Revisit Intention

INTRODUCTION

The company can conduct evaluations to determine the level of loyalty. Nevertheless, increased attractiveness of offers and competing brands can reduce customer loyalty (Evanschitzky & Wunderlich, 2006; Oliver, 1997, 1999). For this, companies must make efforts to encourage customers towards the conative service stage. Loyalty is attained when the loyalty stage is accompanied by actual actions (Oliver, 1997, 1999). Previous studies have focused on the hotel industry (Back, 2005), tourism (Yuksel et al., 2008), and restaurants (Han & Ryu, 2006). Positive attitudes towards products tend to direct customers to continue subscribing and increase purchase frequency (Bandyopadhyay & Martell, 2007). Conative loyalty plays a critical role in determining behavior, loyalty and actions (Back & Parks, 2003; Bandyopadhyay & Martell, 2007; Evanschitzky & Wunderlich, 2006).

It is important for tourism managers to analyze visitors' feelings when visiting tourist destinations. Studying tourists' emotional responses and destination images makes the predictive relationship construction more informative and clearer (Stylidis et al., 2017). The impact of emotional experiences can be observed through their influence on attitudes

and behaviors (Otoo et al., 2021). Revisit intention refers to the desire to return to a previous destination for the second time within a certain period (Cole & Scott, 2004). Therefore, research on emotional experience and revisit intention needs to be conducted.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between emotional experience, revisit intention, and conative loyalty. This research is both theoretically and practically important. This research is important because, in theory, tourism managers can enhance their services and infrastructure through emotional experiences and revisit intention (Grissemann & Stokburger-Saer, 2012). Generally, previous research has focused only on one component at a time (e.g., emotional experience) rather than on relationships between multiple components (Weaver et al., 2017). Emotional experience and revisit intention, which influence conative loyalty, have never been investigated in the religious tourism of Sunan Ampel Surabaya, despite the sector's importance in determining tourists' decisions to visit or revisit. This research is practically important because the perceived experience of each tourist can vary when visiting a tourist attraction. Emotions are considered significant stimuli for revisit intention (Lehto et al.,

2004). Thus, this can serve as a reference for tourism managers to establish effective service strategies, enabling tourists to continually visit and recommend the tourist attraction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional Experience

Sustaining the emotions of tourists holds paramount importance for tourism managers. Emotional experience refers to personal emotions that strongly emerge from the cognitive experience observed through mental states, biological responses, psychosocial interactions, and interactions with the environment (Prayag et al., 2017; Lee, 2016; Turner, 2009). Emotions is complex phenomenon characterized by a combination of cognitive factors, experiences, physiological, and behavioral representations (Rodriguez-Campo et al., 2019). Emotional experiences can result in both positive and negative emotions (Huseynov et al., 2020; Song et al., 2019; Nawijin et al., 2018). The tendency to overlook a better alternative than the current option can transform into a feeling of missing the better alternative (Burhanudin, 2020). Hence, research on emotional experiences is essential.

Previous studies have explored the concept of emotional experiences. Ratnasari (2020) conducted an emotional experience study to investigate the impact of halal certification, destination branding, and emotional experience on customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. The results show that emotional experiences play an important role in increasing customer satisfaction and increasing purchase intent. Customers tend to perceive positive emotions more strongly compared to negative emotions (Mitas et al., 2012; Nawijin, 2011). However, previous research on emotional experiences has focused primarily on satisfaction and purchase intentions.

Revisit Intention

Tourism managers play a crucial role in considering tourists' intentions to revisit. Revisit intention refers to the inclination to choose the same destination (Han and Kim, 2010). Revisit intention applies to customers who have already visited and helps businesses reduce the costs associated with acquiring new customers (Sirimongkol, 2021). Moreover, revisit intention contributes to continuous business profitability (Lee et al., 2011).

Previous studies have explored revisit intention as a topic of discussion. Polas et al. (2020) conducted research to investigate the influence of service quality, environment and price on revisit intention. The study indicated that customers tend to revisit when they receive good service quality, a pleasant environment, and affordable prices. The provision of better service corresponds to a higher intention to revisit (Liu & Lee, 2016). However,

previous research on revisit intention have predominantly focused on factors such a price, service quality, and the environment.

Conative Loyalty

The success of a tourist attraction relies heavily on loyalty. Loyalty is defined as a strong commitment to consistently purchase or support a preferred product in the future, resulting in repeated brand purchases (Oliver, 1999). Customers develop an attachment to a perceived brand or destination, resulting in repurchase and revisit. Conative loyalty, which represents the third stage of loyalty (after cognitive and affective), requires a strong commitment to the product and the intention to repurchase (Oliver, 1997, 1999). Among cognitive, affective, and conative loyalty, conative loyalty is considered the most significant predictor of behavioral loyalty as it reflects the intention to continue using a brand in the future (Pedersen & Nysveen, 2001).

Previous studies have explored conative loyalty as a subject of discussion. Yuksel (2008) conducted research to investigate the impact of customer satisfaction on cognitive, affective, and conative loyalty. The study demonstrated that positive emotional and cognitive connections to places can influence individuals' critical evaluations and loyalty to travel destination. However, research on conative loyalty has primarily focused on tourism consumer loyalty.

The Effect of Emotional Experience on Conative Loyalty

Positive attitudes of tourists towards a destination can assist managers in enhancing the brand image. According to Barnes (2005), customers who experience positive emotions demonstrate exceptional loyalty behaviors. Emotions are considered post-satisfaction states experienced by contented customers (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Despite emotional experiences directly influencing tourists' visitation intentions (Han & Hyun, 2018), the impact of emotional experiences on conative loyalty has not been well studied. Hence, the purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of emotional experiences on conative loyalty.

This study argues that emotional experiences have significant influence conative loyalty. It is supported by Kim & Lee (2010), who suggest that emotions can influence customers' conative loyalty. Customers who derive positive emotional satisfaction and fulfilling experiences develop strong conative loyalty, leading to a commitment and intention to make future purchases (Back & Parks, 2003). Thus, this study formulates the following hypothesis:

H₁ : Emotional experience significantly influences conative loyalty

The Effect of Emotional Experience on Revisit Intention

Tourism managers need to recognize the importance of emotional experiences in influencing a tourist's intention to revisit. Barnes et al., (2016) assert that long-term emotional experiences play a crucial role in influencing revisit intention. This is because these experiences influence the decision to revisit destination (Tsai, 2016; Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2013). Despite the importance of evaluating visitors' emotional experiences and satisfaction for managers, it is often more cost effective to retain existing customers than acquire new ones (Um, Chon & Ro, 2006), the effect of emotional experience on revisit intentions has not been well studied.

This study argues that emotional experiences do influence revisit intention. Barnes et al., (2016) state that emotional experiences can influence revisit intention. Creating memorable and positive experiences is crucial for a company's competitiveness (Grisseemann & Stokburger-Saer, 2012). Encouraging emotional and positive memories can effectively influence customers' intentions and decisions (Kuwabara & Pillemer, 2010). The cues stored in consumers' memories hold significant importance, as they are the cues that can be accessed to make inferences (Burhanudin, 2015). This pattern can persist due to the positive emotional experiences perceived by visitors towards the services of a tourist attraction, which, in turn, enhances their intention to revisit rather than choosing a similar tourist destination. Building upon the aforementioned arguments, this study formulates the following hypothesis:

H₂ : Emotional experience significantly influences revisit intention

The Effect of Revisit Intention on Conative Loyalty

Revisiting visitor behavior holds significant value for a tourist attraction. Oliver (1999) emphasizes that conative loyalty relates to customers' intentions or commitment to engage with a product, service, or brand. Conative loyalty signifies customers' steadfast dedication to consistently interact with a company (Kim & Lee, 2010). Despite the importance of studying the influence of revisit intention on conative loyalty, which occurs when customers intend to revisit or reuse the same brand in the future (Pedersen & Nysveen, 2001), it has not been extensively explored.

This study argues that revisit intention does influence conative loyalty. Pedersen & Nysveen (2001) propose that loyalty is shaped by customers' attitudes and intentions towards an object. Behavior

towards an object is determined by attitudes and intentions to act upon that object (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977). This pattern can persist when the intention to revisit or reuse is accompanied by loyal actions of consistently using the same product or visiting the same tourist destination. Building upon the aforementioned arguments, this research formulates the following hypothesis:

H₃ : Revisit intention significantly influences conative loyalty

The Effect of Emotional Experience on Conative Loyalty Through the Mediation of Revisit Intention

Loyalty plays a vital role in ensuring the long-term sustainability of a business. According to Chandralal et al. (2015), emotional experiences is the most powerful predictor of a future consumer behavior. For example, when tourists has a positive impression of the destination country, such as encountering friendly people and witnessing beautiful scenery, the likelihood of having a positive emotional experience increases. Consequently, this impression leads to the intention to revisit (Zhang et al, 2017). Despite the significance of revisit intentions and future behavioral intentions in tourism (Chen and Tsai, 2007), the impact of emotional experience on conative loyalty mediated by revisit intention has not been well studied.

This research argues that revisit intention serves as a mediating variable in the relationship between emotional experience and conative loyalty. Drawing support from Evanschitzky & Wunderlich (2006), who emphasize the importance of customer loyalty for a company's success, loyalty is influenced by prior knowledge, recent information, experience, and future behavioral intentions (Oliver, 1997, 1999). The emotional experience perceived by visitors will not directly impact conative loyalty unless the visitors possess the intention or desire to revisit the same destination. Having a positive emotional experience alone does not immediately result in conative loyalty towards the destination. Instead, visitors must first have the intention to revisit. In other words, if visitors already have the intention to revisit, they are more likely to demonstrate consistent conative loyalty to the destination. Building upon the aforementioned arguments, this study formulates the following hypothesis:

H₄ : Emotional experience significantly influences conative loyalty through the mediation of revisit intention

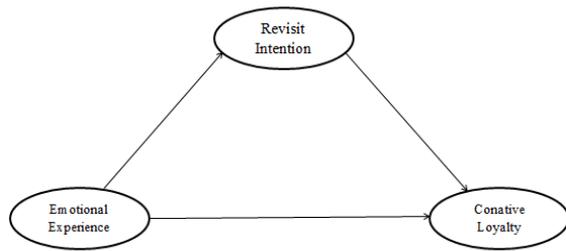


Figure 1. Research Framework

METHOD

The population of this research was the visitors of Sunan Ampel religious tourism, Surabaya, Indonesia. This study employed a convenience sampling technique. Data for this research was collected directly from respondents through face-to-face interviews and indirectly through Google Forms. To gather the necessary information, a questionnaire was constructed using a 7-point Likert scale, known for its effectiveness in capturing respondents' opinions (Preston & Colman, 2000). Initially, direct interviews were conducted with visitors at the site. Subsequently, questionnaires were then distributed online to tourists who had visited the Sunan Ampel religious tourism site. There were 267 respondents participated in this study and their responses were suitable for further analysis.

In analyzing the data, this study firstly assessed measurement model through evaluation of reliability, convergence validity, and discriminant validity. To test reliability, the criterion used was that each factor should possess Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) values of at least 0.70. The convergence validity was assessed by examining the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) values with a minimum threshold of 0.5. Secondly, this study assessed structural model to test the formulated hypotheses through bootstrapping. This study used SmartPLS software in analyzing the data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Factor Loadings

Variable	Code	Loading	t-value
Conative Loyalty	DNL13	0.910	62.681
	DNL14	0.897	55.353
Emotional Experience	DNL15	0.903	54.519
	DNL16	0.899	40.772
	EME01	0.851	32.541
	EME02	0.893	52.945
	EME03	0.882	43.365
	EME04	0.907	65.250
	EME05	0.899	56.229
	EME06	0.903	58.604
	EME07	0.888	53.803
	EME08	0.901	64.820
	EME09	0.760	18.188
	EME10	0.694	14.548
	EME11	0.811	26.793

Variable	Code	Loading	t-value
Revisit Intention	EME12	0.904	57.684
	RVI01	0.856	31.513
	RVI02	0.880	46.265
	RVI03	0.892	52.061
	RVI04	0.857	32.735
	RVI05	0.880	43.660
	RVI06	0.832	25.015

Table 1 shows factor loadings. It reveals that the factor loadings surpass the minimum criterion of 0.708, indicating a satisfactory level of item reliability (Hair et al., 2019). Moreover, Table 2 displays Cronbach's alpha and CR scores above 0.7, signifying a strong level of confidence in internal consistency reliability (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 2. Convergent Validity

Variable	CA	CR	AVE
Conative Loyalty	0.924	0.946	0.814
Emotional Experience	0.967	0.971	0.740
Revisit Intention	0.933	0.948	0.751

Note: CA, Cronbach's Alpha; CR, Composite Reliability; AVE, Average Variance Extracted

Table 3. Discriminant Validity

	1	2	3
Conative Loyalty	0.902		
Emotional Experience	0.852	0.860	
Revisit Intention	0.851	0.852	0.866

Note: The square root of AVE is on the diagonal of the bold line

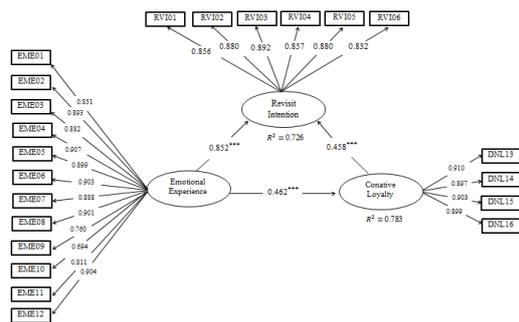
Furthermore, Table 2 shows all AVE values exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.5, indicating a high degree of convergence validity (Hair et al., 2019). Finally, Table 3 shows each square roots of AVE values is higher than inter-construct correlations, showing discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 4. Structural Path Results

Hypothesis	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	p-value	Conclusion
H1 Emotional experience → conative loyalty	0.462***	-	0.000	Supported
H2 Emotional experience → revisit intention	0.852***	-	0.000	Supported
H3 Revisit intention → conative loyalty	0.458***	-	0.000	Supported
H4 Emotional experience → revisit intention → conative loyalty	-	0.390***	0.000	Supported

Note: *** Significant at $p \leq 0.001$

Structural model is presented in Table 4 and illustrated in Figure 2. All hypotheses in this study are supported. Emotional experience has a significant effect on conative loyalty (0.462; $p < 0.001$), indicating the acceptance of H1. Emotional experience also has a significant effect on revisit intention (0.852; $p < 0.001$), indicating the acceptance of H2. Revisit intention has a significant effect on conative loyalty (0.458; $p < 0.001$), indicating the acceptance of H3. Revisit intention serves as a mediator of the influence of emotional experience on conative loyalty (0.390; $p < 0.001$), indicating the acceptance of H4.



Note: *** Significant at $p \leq 0.001$

Figure 2. Results of Structural Model Assessment

Discussion

Understanding the influence of emotional experience on consumer conative loyalty is crucial for companies. Emotions play a fundamental role in shaping unforgettable experiences (Kim & Fesenmaier, 2015), and play a fundamental role in creating more meaningful, extraordinary, and memorable travel experiences (Hogertz, 2010; Knobloch, Robertson & Aitken, 2017). The study reveals that emotional experience encourages the intention to revisit a tourist destination. Furthermore, emotional experience drives visitors' conative loyalty towards a tourist destination.

Firstly, this study discovered a significant influence of emotional experience on conative loyalty. This result contradicts Ratnasari et al. (2020). However this finding aligns with Yuksel et al. (2009) who propose that a positive emotional connection with place can influence individuals' critical evaluations of a destination and their loyalty towards it. A greater perception of positive emotional experiences among tourists corresponds to a stronger display of conative loyalty. Customer satisfaction and positive emotional experiences play a role in shaping post-purchase decision-making (Ting, 2004). This finding aligns with self theories that explore how beliefs about oneself, particularly the difference between the self and the desired self-state, can influence motivation and emotions (Phillips & Silvia, 2005).

Secondly, this study revealed a significant influence of emotional experience on revisit intention. This finding supports that findings of Barnes et al. (2016), who conducted a study on visitors to the Safari Park. It suggests that enduring and memorable experiences have strong influences on the intention to revisit. Visitors who have positive experiences are more likely to exhibit positive consumption behavior following their visit to the tourist destination (Hosany & Prayag, 2013). Positive emotions also act as drivers of a stronger intention to revisit and recommend destinations (Bosque & San Martin, 2008). The more positive the perceived emotional experience, the stronger the intention to revisit that particular tourism destination. In line with the theory of planned behavior, attitude towards a behavior refers to the extent to which an individual holds a favorable or unfavorable evaluation or judgment regarding their behavior in question (Ajzen, 1991).

Thirdly, this study discovered a significant influence of revisit intention on conative loyalty. This finding corresponds with the research conducted by Moore et al., (2013) in the context of nature tourism. This suggests that the intention to revisit a tourist destination may influence an individual's attitude towards demonstrating loyalty to that particular destination. Conative loyalty towards a natural area as a tourist destination arises from the intention to revisit the natural area (Rivera & Croes, 2010). Additionally, Lee et al. (2007) found a positive associations between attitudes, conative loyalty and behavior. This finding aligns with Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT) which posits that repurchase behavior and loyalty are effective factors in modeling the intention to recommend in market research (Oliver, 1997).

Fourthly, this study demonstrates that emotional experience had a significant influence on conative loyalty through the mediating role of revisit intentional. This finding is consistent with the research by Yuksel et al. (2009) on customer satisfaction in the context of destinations. It indicates that positively perceived emotional experiences can influence the intention to revisit, thereby fostering visitor loyalty towards the destination. Visitor emotional experiences do not directly affect conative loyalty unless the visitor possesses the intention or desire to revisit the same destination. Increased competition and recognition of the importance of repeat customers make loyalty an integral part of destination management (Lee, 2003). Visitor attachment to the destination plays a crucial role in predicting loyalty, as higher levels of attachment lead to higher visitor loyalty (Alexandris et al., 2006; Brocato, 2006).

Conclusion

Researchers and managers need to understand visitors' feelings when visiting tourist destinations.

This found emotional experience has a positive influence on visitors' revisit intentions. Emotional experience also has a positive impact on visitors' conative loyalty. Furthermore, emotional experience has a positive influence on conative loyalty through the mediation of revisit intention. The more positive the visitors' emotional experience perceived, the greater their desire to return to the same place.

There are suggestions for managers concerning the findings of this study. First, managers should continuously monitor the emotional experiences of their visitors. They can gather information by establishing an emotional connection with visitors or by actively listening to their suggestions and complaints. With feedback obtained from visitors, managers can evaluate their performance, contributing to the improvement of strategies and services aimed at encouraging visitor behavior to revisit the same destination in the future.

Second, there should be a continuous enhancement of understanding emotional experience, revisit intention, and conative loyalty. This is essential for developing relevant marketing strategies that can influence individuals' behavioral intentions. Furthermore, to ensure that the product image provides a positive emotional experience, managers need to enhance their holistic service strategies. This can have a profound impact when visitors frequently revisit the tourist attraction, thereby contributing to repeat visits to a tourist destination.

This research was conducted in a limited scope, focusing on a single tourist destination. Further research can be carried out by expanding the scope to include other religious tourism areas in Indonesia. In this study, the focus was solely on the variables of emotional experience and revisit intention, which have an impact on the conative loyalty of tourists. Future research is suggested to explore additional variables such as sensory experience, intention to recommend, and action loyalty, which can provide a more comprehensive understanding of religious tourist behavior.

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