

Unlocking Loyalty: The Power of Local Culture in Bali Tourism

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Abstract: This article explores how local culture influences tourist loyalty, using a case study from Bali, Indonesia. By employing a quantitative approach, the study applies Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS to analyze survey data from 276 tourists. It examines the direct effects of two key factors—'cultural richness' and 'cultural interaction'—on destination loyalty, with 'tourist satisfaction' serving as a mediating variable and 'previous travel experience' as a moderating variable. The findings reveal that both cultural richness and interaction significantly impact tourist satisfaction, which in turn drives destination loyalty. However, previous travel experience does not moderate the relationship between tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty ($\beta = -0.021$). These insights offer valuable guidance for destination managers and policymakers in crafting marketing strategies that emphasize local culture to boost tourist loyalty.

Keywords: culture; destination; loyalty; satisfaction

1. Introduction

Tourism is a vital pillar of Bali's economy, significantly impacting various sectors by attracting millions of visitors annually who are drawn to the island's natural beauty and rich culture (Setyari et al., 2020; Putra & Hitchcock, 2021). It plays a crucial role in boosting the local GDP and creating job opportunities, thus contributing to economic and social development (Wisnawa, 2018). However, not all tourists' expenses in Bali will stay in Bali, some portions go to outside Bali (tourism economic leakages) that will reduce the economic benefits for the local economy (Wiranatha et al., 2017). Bali's unique culture

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and traditions, including religious ceremonies, dance, music, and local crafts, add irreplaceable value and are integral to its appeal (Sucandrawati et al., 2023; Putra et al., 2021).

The distinctiveness of Balinese culture and heritage not only attracts tourists but also helps preserve local identity (Nobre & Sousa, 2022; Putra et al., 2021). This culture-oriented tourism supports sustainability by balancing economic growth with cultural preservation (Arabiun et al., 2023). The island's cultural richness, such as religious ceremonies and traditional arts, offers a unique and authentic experience, making it a key factor in destination marketing (Mayuzumi, 2022; Picard & Madinier, 2011).

Tourists' interaction with local culture through activities such as traditional cooking classes or local festivals has been shown to enrich their experience, deepen their connection with the community, and strengthen their loyalty to the destination (Suhartanto et al., 2020; Pechlaner et al., 2015; Wiranatha et al., 2018). These cultural interactions help shape a positive destination image and foster tourist loyalty (Ribeiro et al., 2018).

Building tourist loyalty is critical for the long-term success of tourism, particularly in an era of globalization where travelers have countless options (Wisnawa et al., 2020). Loyalty includes both the desire to return and the likelihood of recommending the destination to others, reducing marketing costs and improving promotional effectiveness (Liu et al., 2020; Patwardhan et al., 2020). For Bali, understanding factors like tourist satisfaction and unique cultural experiences is essential to developing sustainable tourism strategies (Wisnawa et al., 2023; Setiawan et al., 2023).

This research offers valuable insights into the role of local culture in shaping tourist loyalty in Bali. By analyzing the richness and interaction of cultural elements, the study provides guidance on preserving and promoting Bali's key cultural assets. These findings can support policymakers and destination managers in creating effective marketing strategies that emphasize Bali's unique cultural heritage, ensuring that the destination remains both attractive and sustainable.

2. Theory and Literature Review

Loyalty theory in tourism is essential for enhancing the sustainability of tourist destinations. It examines the factors influencing a tourist's decision to revisit or recommend a destination, focusing not only on repeat visits but also on advocacy behaviors, such as recommendations to others. Key factors influencing loyalty include overall satisfaction, fulfilling experiences, and emotional attachment to the destination (Su et al., 2020). High loyalty is associated with long-term benefits, including stable tourist flows and effective word-of-mouth.

In destinations like Bali, all regencies and cities have branding strength in nature, heritage, and culture (refer Figure 1). Nonetheless, local culture is a major attraction that provides unique differentiation and strengthens the destination's identity (Putra & Hitchcock, 2021). Cultural elements such as music, food, festivals, and language not only enrich the tourist experience but also foster emotional bonds, which significantly boost tourist loyalty (Suhartanto et al., 2020).

Tourist satisfaction, driven by service quality, unique attractions, and cultural interactions, is crucial for fostering destination loyalty, as satisfied tourists are more likely to return or recommend the destination, thereby enhancing its reputation through positive word-of-mouth (Kusumah, 2024; Truong et al., 2018; Jaya, 2018). This is supported by Sharmiladevi and Rameshraj (2017), who emphasize that rich local culture plays a significant role in differentiating destinations and driving loyalty, suggesting that tourism strategies should integrate cultural elements to enhance satisfaction and loyalty.

Cultural elements, such as traditions, arts, and daily life, play a crucial role in shaping tourists' decisions and satisfaction levels. Immersive and authentic cultural experiences, such as participating in traditional ceremonies or learning about local art, enhance tourists' understanding and appreciation, fostering stronger loyalty (Eröz et al., 2023; Suhartanto et al., 2020; Li et al., 2024). These cultural interactions also significantly influence satisfaction and the overall destination image, both of which are key predictors of tourist loyalty (Stylidis et al., 2022). Moreover, cultural experiences not only boost satisfaction but also increase the likelihood of return visits (Jeong & Kim, 2020; Sangpikul, 2018; Nguyen Viet et al., 2020). Participation in local customs and traditions further strengthens tourists' connection to the destination, directly and indirectly shaping revisit intentions, often through the mediation of cultural memory (Lai et al., 2021).

In creative tourism, several key factors such as experience quality, perceived value, tourist satisfaction, and motivation play a crucial role in shaping loyalty, with experience quality having the greatest influence (Suhartanto et al., 2020; Wang & Li, 2023; Zatori et al., 2018). Studies show that the tourism experience indirectly affects loyalty through the mediating roles of destination image and satisfaction (Li, Liu & Soutar, 2021). Specifically, destination image and tourist satisfaction directly influence loyalty, while the quality of the tourist experience moderates the relationship between motivation and loyalty (Hung et al., 2021). These findings underscore the interconnected nature of these factors in building tourist loyalty within creative tourism.

In light of this, the research focuses on analyzing how local cultural richness and interaction influence tourist satisfaction and loyalty in Bali. By examining the impact of cultural richness and interaction, the study aims to

offer insights for developing strategies that enhance tourist loyalty through deeper cultural engagement.

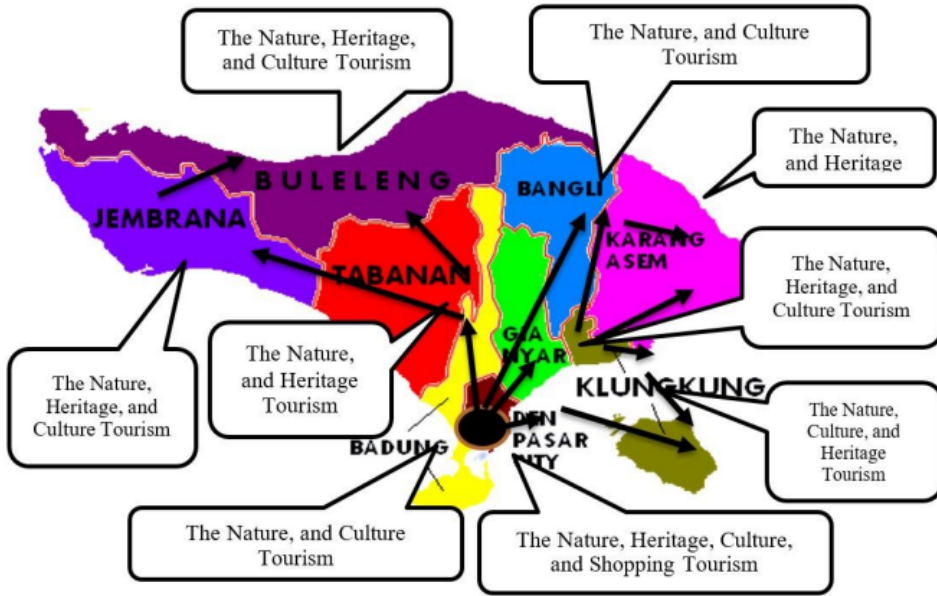


Figure 1. Attractions of all regencies and city in Bali as of 2023 (Utama et al., 2023)

Based on theoretical and empirical studies, the hypotheses of this study are as follows and Figure 2 presents the conceptual model of these hypotheses:

- (i) Cultural richness has a positive and significant effect on tourist satisfaction (Sharmiladevi & Rameshraj, 2017),
- (ii) Cultural richness has a positive and significant effect on destination loyalty, (Sharmiladevi & Rameshraj, 2017; Suhartanto et al., 2020),
- (iii) Cultural interaction has a positive and significant effect on tourist satisfaction, (Stylidis et al., 2022),
- (iv) Cultural interaction has a positive and significant effect on destination loyalty, (Eröz et al., 2023; Suhartanto et al., 2020; Li et al., 2024; Stylidis et al., 2022),
- (v) Tourist satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on destination loyalty (Wang & Li, 2023),
- (vi) Tourist satisfaction mediates the effect of cultural richness on destination loyalty (Kusumah, 2024),
- (vii) Tourist satisfaction mediates the effect of cultural interaction on destination loyalty (Kusumah, 2024; Truong et al., 2018; Jaya, 2018), and
- (viii) Previous tourist experience moderates the relationship between tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty (Suhartanto et al., 2020; Wang & Li, 2023; Zatori et al., 2018; Li, Liu & Soutar, 2021; Hung et al., 2021).

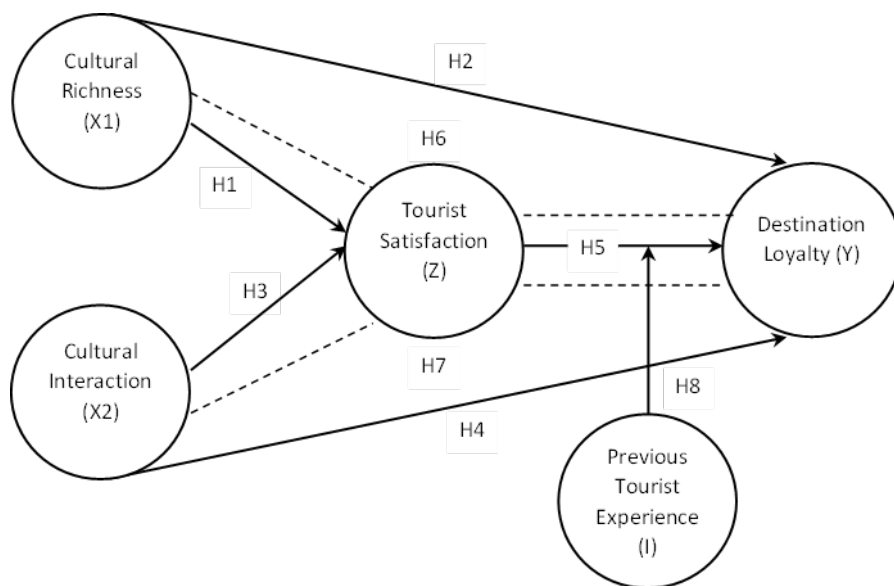


Figure 2. Conceptual Model

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Instruments and Measurements

In tourism research, indicators of local cultural richness include diversity of arts and crafts, authenticity of traditions, heritage preservation, community interaction, and cultural experiences in tourism activities (McKercher & Du Cros, 2002; Richards, 2018). Cultural interaction is measured through participation in cultural activities, learning about local culture, interaction with local people, attendance at cultural events, and culinary experiences (Kim & Jamal, 2007; Smith & Brent, 2001). Tourist satisfaction is evaluated based on satisfaction with facilities and services, cultural experiences, social interactions, value gained, and overall satisfaction with the visit (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Oliver, 2015). Tourist loyalty is assessed by the likelihood of revisiting, recommending the destination, destination preference, emotional attachment, and destination (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Meanwhile, previous travel experience (Sangpikul, 2018) includes frequency of travel, diversity of destinations visited, experience with different cultures, independent travel, and experience with different types of accommodation (Pearce, 2005; Uriely, 2005).

3.2 Data Collection

This study utilized a quantitative approach by collecting data through a survey. The survey involved distributing specially designed questionnaires to assess key research variables, including Local Cultural Richness, Cultural Interaction, Tourist Satisfaction, Previous Travel Experience, and Destination

Loyalty. Both online and in-person distribution methods were employed, targeting various tourist sites in Bali. Respondents included both domestic and international tourists who had visited Bali. The questionnaire employed a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (“Strongly Disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly Agree”).

Data collection spanned four weeks in October 2023, resulting in a sample size of 276 participants. The minimum required sample size for SEM-PLS analysis was taken into account, with calculations performed using G*Power based on the statistical power value (see Figure 3). The statistical power for this sample was 0.919, surpassing the recommended minimum threshold of 0.8 (Hair et al., 2019).

Exact – Correlation: Bivariate normal model		
Options:	exact distribution	
Analysis:	A priori: Compute required sample size	
Input:	Tail(s)	= Two
	Correlation ρ H1	= 0.2
	α err prob	= 0.05
	Power (1 – β err prob)	= 0.918
	Correlation ρ H0	= 0
Output:	Lower critical r	= -0.1180988
	Upper critical r	= 0.1180988
	Total sample size	= 276
	Actual power	= 0.9186079

Figure 3. Sample size calculations

The survey directed at tourists who visited Bali included 276 respondents, comprising 51.45% men and 48.55% women. The largest age group was 35-45 years old (38.04%), followed by 26-35 years old (31.52%), and 20.29% of respondents were over 46 years old. In terms of occupation, most respondents were private employees (37.32%) or entrepreneurs (27.90%). Monthly income levels were varied, with the majority earning over US\$1600 (26.81%) and the smallest group earning between US\$300 and US\$600 (5.07%). Geographically, most respondents were from Indonesia (33.70%), followed by Australia (22.83%) and the Netherlands (10.87%). Other participating countries included Malaysia, Singapore, China, Japan, France, and Russia, each contributing less than 10% of respondents. This data highlights the diverse demographics of tourists visiting Bali.

3.3 Data Analysis

In this study, PLS-SEM was selected as the data analysis technique due to its ability to simultaneously evaluate all relationships between variables in the conceptual model. The analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 3.2.7 software. In accordance with the PLS-SEM literature guidelines, the analysis was conducted in two main stages. The first stage involved assessing the measurement model

by evaluating the reliability and validity whereas the second stage focused on examining the structural model. To examine mediation effects, the approach recommended by Baron and Kenny (1986) and MacKinnon et al. (2012) was applied. The moderation test was conducted by evaluating the moderation path coefficient with a significance level of 0.05 (Hair et al., 2019).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Measurement Model

The evaluation of the measurement model in this study begins with an assessment of the scale reliability for each construct. This is achieved by examining the loading value of each indicator item within its respective construct. A loading value greater than 0.708 is required to demonstrate adequate reliability (Hair et al., 2014). As shown in Figure 4, all indicator loadings meet this criterion. Additionally, the overall reliability of each construct is assessed using Composite Reliability (CR) and Dijkstra-Henseler’s rho (ρ_A), both of which should be greater than 0.7, as recommended by Hair et al. (2019). In this study, all constructs achieved values within the recommended range, confirming reliable measurement.

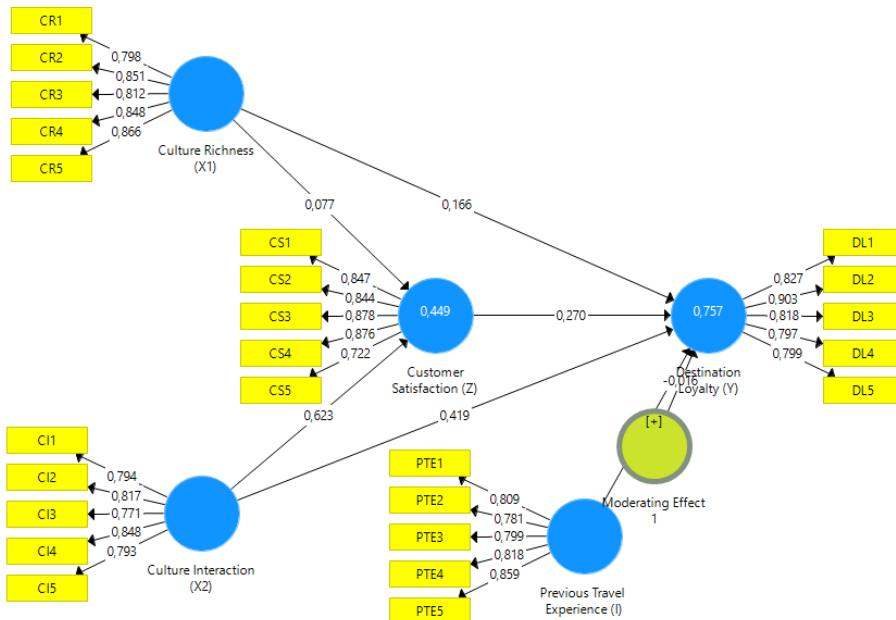


Figure 4. Structural Equation Model

After evaluating reliability, this study assessed convergent validity using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which must exceed 0.5 to indicate sufficient validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The analysis revealed that the AVE

values for all constructs ranged from 0.722 to 0.903, surpassing the required threshold. Furthermore, to evaluate the significance of each indicator loading, a bootstrap resampling procedure was conducted using 5000 sub-samples from the overall sample size, which produced statistical t-values (Hair et al., 2019). The results, as shown in Table 1, confirm that all indicator loadings are significant at the 99.9% confidence level.

Table 1. Model Measurement Test Results (authors' analysis)

Construct/item	Loading	Cronbach 'alpha	Dijkstra-Hensler's rho (ρ_A)	CR	AVE
<i>Culture Richness</i>		0,891	0,895	0,920	0,697
Diversity of arts and crafts	0,798				
Authenticity of traditions	0,851				
Preservation of heritage	0,812				
Community interaction	0,848				
Cultural experience in tourism activities	0,866				
<i>Culture Interaction</i>		0,864	0,865	0,902	0,648
Participation in cultural activities	0,794				
Learning about local culture	0,817				
Interaction with local residents	0,771				
Attendance at cultural events	0,848				
Culinary experiences	0,793				
<i>Tourist Satisfaction</i>		0,892	0,909	0,909	0,698
Facilities and services	0,847				
Cultural experience	0,844				
Social interaction	0,878				
Value obtained	0,876				
Overall satisfaction	0,722				
<i>Destination Loyalty</i>		0,886	0,890	0,890	0,688
Likelihood of revisiting	0,827				
Recommending the destination	0,903				
Destination preference	0,818				
Emotional attachment	0,797				
Defending the destination	0,799				
Previous Travel Experience		0,872	0,875	0,907	0,662
Travel frequency	0,809				

Construct/item	Loading	Cronbach 'alpha	Dijkstra-Hensler's rho (ρ_A)	CR	AVE
Diversity of destinations visited	0,781				
Experience with different cultures	0,799				
Independent travel	0,818				
Experience with various types of accommodations	0,859				

The next step in this study is to analyse discriminant validity using the Fornell-Larcker criteria. The square root of the AVE value for each construct must be greater than the construct's correlation with other latent variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The analysis results show that the AVE value for each construct is higher. Discriminant validity was also checked through the evaluation of the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT). This measure determines the ratio between heterotrait and monotrait correlations; discriminant validity is achieved when the ratio value is below 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015). In this study, all values obtained were below the set limit, indicating good evidence of reliability and validity (Table 2).

Table 2. Discriminant Validity Test Results (authors' analysis)

Fornell-Lacker Criterion						
	<i>Culture Interaction (X2)</i>	<i>Culture Richness (X1)</i>	<i>Tourist Satisfaction (Z)</i>	<i>Destination Loyalty (Y)</i>	<i>Moderating Effect</i>	<i>Previous Travel Experience (I)</i>
<i>Culture Interaction (X2)</i>	0,805					
<i>Culture Richness (X1)</i>	0,563	0,835				
<i>Tourist Satisfaction (Z)</i>	0,667	0,428	0,835			
<i>Destination Loyalty (Y)</i>	0,813	0,602	0,726	0,83		
<i>Moderating Effect</i>	0,004	0,046	-0,096	-0,036	1	
<i>Previous Travel Experience (I)</i>	0,733	0,523	0,63	0,728	0,003	0,814

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)						
	<i>Culture Interaction (X2)</i>	<i>Culture Richness (X1)</i>	<i>Tourist Satisfaction (Z)</i>	<i>Destination Loyalty (Y)</i>	<i>Moderating Effect</i>	<i>Previous Travel Experience (I)</i>
<i>Culture Interaction (X2)</i>						
<i>Culture Richness (X1)</i>	0,64					
<i>Tourist Satisfaction (Z)</i>	0,742	0,472				
<i>Destination Loyalty (Y)</i>	0,900	0,677	0,795			
<i>Moderating Effect</i>	0,094	0,072	0,1	0,068		
<i>Previous Travel Experience (I)</i>	0,844	0,592	0,695	0,827	0,04	

The mediation test in this study was conducted following three steps in accordance with the method developed by Baron and Kenny (1986) and MacKinnon et al. (2012), namely:

- i) Develop a regression equation from (X) to (Y), which results in a coefficient c. It is expected that this path has significance ($p < 0.05$).
- ii) Develop a regression equation from (X) to (Z), which results in a coefficient a. This path is also expected to have significance ($p < 0.05$).
- iii) Construct a regression equation that combines brand experience (X) and brand trust (Z) on brand loyalty (Y), which results in two estimated values: coefficient b from predicting Z on Y, and coefficient c' from predicting X on Y. It is expected that path b is significant ($p < 0.05$), while path c' is not significant ($p > 0.05$).

To evaluate the moderation effect, one of the methods used is the Ping method, which multiplies the indicator of the exogenous latent variable by the indicator of the moderator variable. A variable can be considered a moderator if the interaction path coefficient is significant. According to Hair et al. (2014), a path coefficient is considered significant at the 5% level if the absolute value of the t-count is greater than the critical value of $Z\alpha/2$, which is 1.96.

4.1.2 Structural Model

Before evaluating the inter-structural relationships in the model, it is essential to check for collinearity to ensure that the regression results are unbiased. The ideal Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value should be less than 3

(Hair et al., 2019). This study found no collinearity issues, as all VIF values were below the recommended threshold (Table 3).

To test the structural model, a bootstrap procedure with 5,000 iterations was applied to determine the significance of the indicators and path coefficients (Chin et al., 2008). Prior to hypothesis testing, the quality of the outer model was assessed. According to these criteria, the coefficient of determination R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 indicate substantial, moderate, and weak explanatory power of the endogenous structure, respectively. The findings proved that the R^2 for tourist satisfaction is 0.449, meaning that Cultural Richness and Cultural Interaction together explain 44.9% of the variability in tourist satisfaction. For Destination Loyalty, the R^2 was 0.757, indicating that Tourist Satisfaction accounts for 75.7% of the variability in Destination Loyalty, reflecting a strong explanatory power of the model.

Regarding effect size (f^2), the criteria used were 0.02 for a small effect, 0.15 for a moderate effect, and 0.35 for a large effect (Hair et al., 2019). The largest effect was observed in the relationship between Cultural Interaction and Destination Loyalty, with an f^2 value of 4.003. Meanwhile, the effect of Tourist Satisfaction on Destination Loyalty ranged from small to large, with f^2 values between 0.036 and 4.003. To conclude the structural model evaluation, the study assessed the model's predictive ability using Stone-Geisser's Q^2 (Hair et al., 2019). All Q^2 values were greater than zero (Table 3), indicating that the model possesses acceptable predictive power.

Table 3. Structural Model Evaluation (authors' analysis)

Relationships	β	T Value	Variance Explained (R^2)	R^2 Adjusted	Predictive Relevance Q^2	Effect Size (f^2)	P Values	VIF
Culture Interaction (X2) -> Tourist Satisfaction (Z)	0,627	12,133	0,449	0,445	0,300	0,156	0,000	2,491
Culture Interaction (X2) -> Destination Loyalty (Y)	0,422	7,096	0,757	0,752	0,512	4,003	0,000	1,000
Culture Richness (X1) -> Tourist Satisfaction (Z)	0,073	1,232				0,145	0,000	2,927
Culture Richness (X1) -> Destination Loyalty (Y)	0,165	3,837				0,014	0,078	2,304

Relationships	β	T Value	Variance Explained (R ²)	R ² Adjusted	Predictive Relevance Q ²	Effect Size (f ²)	P Values	VIF
Tourist Satisfaction (Z) -> Destination Loyalty (Y)	0,265	5,317				0,036	0,003	2,090
Moderating Effect 1 -> Destination Loyalty (Y)	-0,021	0,683				0,008	0,155	2,489
Previous Travel Experience (I) -> Destination Loyalty (Y)	0,167	3,348						

The findings from the hypothesis testing, carried out using the one-sided testing method, are presented in Figure 5 and Table 4. This approach is suggested when there is an expectation for the coefficient to have a particular direction (Kock, 2014). The findings revealed that Cultural Richness did not have a significant positive impact on Tourist Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.078$, $t = 1.272$) but did have a positive and significant effect on Destination Loyalty ($\beta = 0.165$, $t = 4.109$), leading to the rejection of H1 and acceptance of H2.

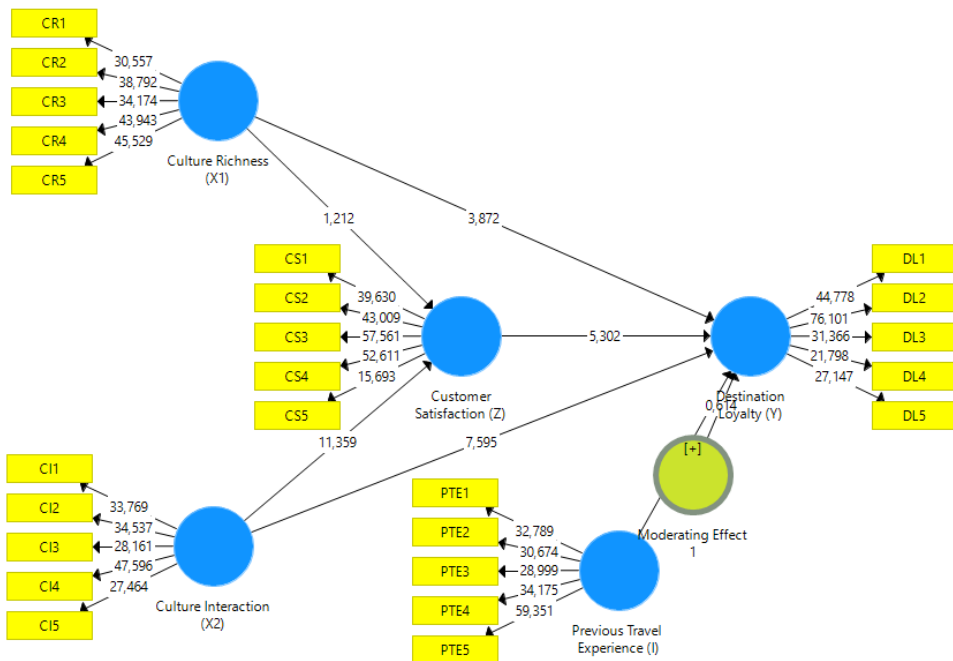


Figure 5. Test Results of Structural Equation Models

Cultural Interaction positively influenced both Tourist Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.624, t = 12.277$) and Destination Loyalty ($\beta = 0.417, t = 7.348$), supporting H3 and H4. Additionally, Tourist Satisfaction positively affected Destination Loyalty ($\beta = 0.270, t = 5.049$), confirming the H5 hypothesis. Tourist Satisfaction also acts as a partial mediator between Cultural Richness, Cultural Interaction, and Destination Loyalty, as the effects of Cultural Richness and Cultural Interaction on Destination Loyalty remained significant even when Tourist Satisfaction was included as a mediating variable. Therefore, H6 and H7 are accepted. However, Previous Travel Experience does not moderate the relationship between Tourist Satisfaction and Destination Loyalty ($\beta = -0.021, t = 0.634$), resulting in the rejection of H8.

Table 4. Hypothesis Test Results (authors’ analysis)

Hypothesis	β	T Value	P Values	Supporting
1 Culture Richness (X1) ->Tourist Satisfaction (Z)	0,078	1,272	0,204	No
2 Culture Richness (X1) -> Destination Loyalty (Y)	0,165	4,109	0,000	Yes
3 Culture Interaction (X2) -> Tourist Satisfaction (Z)	0,624	12,277	0,000	Yes
4 Culture Interaction (X2) -> Destination Loyalty (Y)	0,417	7,348	0,000	Yes
5 Tourist Satisfaction (Z) -> Destination Loyalty (Y)	0,270	5,049	0,000	Yes
6 Tourist Satisfaction (Z) mediating influence Culture Richness (X1) towards Destination loyalty (Y)				Yes, Partial Mediation
a. Culture Richness (X1) -> Destination loyalty (Y) (c)	0,610	13,213	0,000	
b. Culture Richness (X1) -> Tourist Satisfaction (Z) (a)	0,437	6,693	0,000	
c. Culture Richness (X1) -> Tourist Satisfaction (Z) -> Destination loyalty (Y)	0,574	12,504	0,000	
Tourist Satisfaction (Z) -> Destination loyalty (Y) (b)	0,356	7,038	0,000	
Culture Richness (X1) -> Destination loyalty (Y) (c')				
7 Tourist Satisfaction (Z) mediating Culture Interaction (X2) towards Destination loyalty (Y)				Yes, Partial Mediation
a. Culture Interaction (X2) -> Destination loyalty (Y) (c)	0,814	34,398	0,000	
b. Culture Interaction (X2) -> Tourist Satisfaction (Z) (a)	0,672	15,633	0,000	

Hypothesis		β	T Value	P Values	Supporting
c.	<i>Culture Interaction (X2) -> Tourist Satisfaction (Z) -> Destination loyalty (Y)</i>	0,331	6,005	0,000	
	<i>Tourist Satisfaction (Z) -> Destination loyalty (Y) (b)</i> <i>Culture Interaction (X2) -> Destination loyalty (Y) (c')</i>	0,591	11,276	0,000	
8	Previous Travel Experience moderating <i>Tourist Satisfaction (Z)</i> towards <i>Destination loyalty (Y)</i> Moderating 1 -> (Y)	-0,021	0,634	0,527	No

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Cultural Richness, Tourist Satisfaction and Destination Loyalty

The analysis of the relationship between Cultural Richness and Tourist Satisfaction shows that it is statistically insignificant. The results reveal a beta (β) value of 0.078, a t-value of 1.272, and a p-value of 0.204. This indicates that while cultural elements like arts and heritage are important, they do not significantly enhance tourist satisfaction on their own. Supporting this conclusion, research by Mihardja et al. (2020) suggests that socio-cultural activities and narrative approaches are more effective in boosting satisfaction than merely relying on cultural richness. Therefore, it is essential to incorporate these elements into tourism strategies to improve the overall tourist experience and satisfaction.

Cultural Richness has a complex impact on tourist behavior. In contrast, it significantly influences Destination Loyalty, evidenced by a beta value (β) of 0.165, a t-value of 4.109, and a p-value of less than 0.001. This suggests that diverse and authentic cultural experiences foster a strong sense of loyalty to a destination. However, the direct effect of Cultural Richness on Tourist Satisfaction remains statistically insignificant, as indicated by a beta value of 0.078, a t-value of 1.272, and a p-value of 0.204.

Notably, when Tourist Satisfaction mediates the relationship between Cultural Richness and Destination Loyalty, the effect is enhanced. Specifically, the direct beta value (β) rises to 0.610, while the beta value after mediation decreases to 0.574. This underscores that Tourist Satisfaction is a critical factor in promoting Destination Loyalty. In summary, while Cultural Richness alone does not significantly affect Tourist Satisfaction, it indirectly influences Destination Loyalty through the mediation of Tourist Satisfaction. This highlights the importance of authentic cultural experiences in building long-term loyalty to a destination. Research by Dienaputra (2023) supports the notion that cultural preservation and unique cultural identities are vital in fostering destination loyalty. Furthermore, Mihardja et al. (2020) emphasize the role of storytelling in enhancing both satisfaction and loyalty.

4.2.2 *Cultural Interaction, Tourist Satisfaction and Destination Loyalty*

The analysis of Cultural Interaction reveals a significant impact on both Tourist Satisfaction and Destination Loyalty. Key indicators of Cultural Interaction, such as participation in cultural activities, learning about local customs, and engaging with locals, show high loadings ranging from 0.771 to 0.848. The statistical analysis yields a beta (β) value of 0.624, a t-value of 12.277, and a p-value of less than 0.001, indicating a strong and statistically significant relationship. This suggests that increased cultural engagement significantly enhances tourist satisfaction. Research supports this conclusion; for example, Arabiun et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of cultural adaptation in the digital era, highlighting the need for tourists to engage with local cultures to enrich their experiences. Similarly, Nguyen et al. (2024) demonstrate that authentic interactions with ethnic locals lead to positive outcomes, further underscoring the role of cultural engagement in enhancing tourist satisfaction and fostering destination loyalty.

Cultural Interaction significantly impacts Destination Loyalty, reflected by a path coefficient (β) of 0.417, a t-value of 7.348, and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that participating in cultural activities and interactions plays a crucial role in shaping tourists' loyalty to a destination. Supporting research includes Arabiun et al. (2023), which highlights how digitalization enhances cultural experiences, and Leong et al. (2024), who note that storytelling enriches interactions and adds emotional value. Additionally, Eröz et al. (2023) identify festivals as key in promoting cultural interaction, while Li et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of cultural understanding in virtual tourism.

When tested as a mediator, Tourist Satisfaction positively affects Destination Loyalty, with a beta (β) value of 0.270, a t-value of 5.049, and a p-value of 0.000. The direct effect of Cultural Interaction on Destination Loyalty remains significant ($\beta = 0.331$, $t = 6.005$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that while Tourist Satisfaction partially mediates the relationship, Cultural Interaction still has a direct influence on loyalty. Supporting studies, including Abror et al. (2019), show that engagement in cultural tourism enhances both satisfaction and loyalty. Moreover, Truong et al. (2018) and Jeong & Kim (2020) highlight that unique cultural attributes and high-quality experiences are essential for driving satisfaction and loyalty.

4.2.3 *Tourist Satisfaction and Destination Loyalty*

The analysis of Tourist Satisfaction shows that all indicators—such as facilities, services, cultural experiences, social interactions, perceived value, and overall satisfaction—exhibit strong loadings above 0.7. This highlights their significant contribution to the overall construct of Tourist Satisfaction.

Additionally, a noteworthy positive relationship between Tourist Satisfaction and Destination Loyalty is evident. The path coefficient (β) is 0.270, with a t-value of 5.049 and a p-value of less than 0.001, indicating a strong and statistically significant correlation. This suggests that higher satisfaction with the Bali experience increases the likelihood of tourists demonstrating loyalty to the destination. This loyalty can be expressed in various ways, including repeat visits, recommendations, emotional attachment, and a preference for Bali over other locations. Ultimately, a positive tourist experience in Bali plays a crucial role in influencing tourists' decisions to return and recommend the destination, thereby cultivating a strong sense of loyalty.

Furthermore, Tourist Satisfaction serves as a mediator between Local Cultural Richness, Cultural Interaction, and Destination Loyalty. This means that rich and interactive cultural experiences enhance Destination Loyalty both directly and indirectly through increased Tourist Satisfaction. The partial mediation effect is suggested by the difference in the values of c' and c .

Supporting research highlights the role of Tourist Satisfaction in promoting Destination Loyalty. Abror et al. (2019) and Truong et al. (2018) emphasize that engagement with Halal tourism and unique destination attributes, respectively, boost satisfaction and loyalty. Jeong & Kim (2020) highlight the critical role of satisfaction in the quality-loyalty connection. Su et al. (2020) and Sangpikul (2018) discuss how motivation and local involvement, along with hospitality and culinary experiences, enhance satisfaction and loyalty. Suhartanto et al. (2020) and Kim (2018) point to experience quality and memorable experiences as essential for loyalty.

4.2.4 Previous Travel Experience, Tourist Satisfaction and Destination Loyalty

The statistical analysis indicates that Previous Travel Experience does not moderate the relationship between Tourist Satisfaction and Destination Loyalty. This conclusion is backed by a very low beta (β) value of -0.021, along with an insignificant t-value of 0.634 and a p-value of 0.527. This p-value is well above the standard significance threshold of 0.05, suggesting that the frequency or variety of previous travel experiences does not affect the relationship between Tourist Satisfaction and Destination Loyalty. This finding implies that, regardless of a tourist's past travel experiences, their level of satisfaction during their visit to Bali plays a consistent role in determining their likelihood of returning or recommending the destination. In other words, the experiences tourists have during their stay in Bali (whether positive or negative) are the key factors driving their loyalty, rather than their overall travel history.

The literature review supports this finding, showing that prior travel experience is not identified as a strong moderator between satisfaction and

loyalty in existing studies. Research by Abror et al. (2019), Jeong & Kim (2020), Kim (2018), Sangpikul (2018), Su et al. (2020), Suhartanto et al. (2020), Truong et al. (2018), Lv et al. (2020), and Zatori et al. (2018) highlights various factors like cultural dimensions, Halal tourism, destination uniqueness, and event quality as influencing satisfaction and loyalty, but none explicitly emphasize previous tourism experience as a significant moderator. This suggests that other factors, such as service quality, unique experiences, and natural beauty, play a more dominant role in determining tourist satisfaction and loyalty.

5. Conclusion, Implications and Limitations

5.1 Conclusion

Based on an in-depth discussion of the results of research using SmartPLS, The Influence of Local Culture on Tourist Loyalty Visiting the Island of Bali can be concluded in several key conclusions. They can be drawn regarding the influence of local culture on tourist loyalty in the context of Bali tourism.

- (1) *Cultural Richness*: The direct effect of Cultural Richness on Tourist Satisfaction is not significant. This suggests that other factors may be more dominant in influencing satisfaction.
- (2) *Cultural Interaction*: Cultural Interaction shows a very significant influence on both Tourist Satisfaction and Destination Loyalty. This highlights the importance of cultural interactive experiences in enhancing tourist satisfaction and fostering destination loyalty.
- (3) *Tourist Satisfaction as a Mediator*: Tourist Satisfaction acts as an important mediator in the relationship between Cultural Richness and Cultural Interaction and Destination Loyalty, affirming that positive and satisfying cultural experiences can strengthen loyalty to destinations.
- (4) *Previous Travel Experiences as a Moderator*: Previous Travel Experience did not moderate the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty, indicating that regardless of experience background, satisfaction with the current visit had a steady influence on loyalty.

5.2 Implications

This research offers practical recommendations that can be applied to various initiatives in Bali's tourism sector. These include the creation of cultural events, festivals, and attractions that highlight the authentic and unique aspects of Balinese culture. The recommendations are also crucial for the training and development of tourism staff, particularly in enhancing their skills in cultural interaction with tourists. Additionally, the findings can foster better collaboration between the government, private sector, and local communities

to preserve and promote Balinese culture, contributing both theoretically and practically to sustainable tourism development in Bali.

This research emphasizes the importance of local culture in fostering destination loyalty, providing valuable insights for policymakers and destination managers. In Bali, where culture and tradition are key attractions, understanding how these elements influence tourist loyalty is essential. Such research not only enriches the academic literature on tourism but also supports the development of sustainable tourism practices that respect and promote local cultural heritage while boosting visitor satisfaction and loyalty.

5.3 Limitations

This study examines the impact of Bali's local culture on tourist loyalty, but it suggests that similar influences likely exist in other culturally rich destinations worldwide. Future research could compare how different cultural contexts affect tourist loyalty, providing a broader understanding of the relationship between local culture and loyalty across various locations. Additionally, while the study confirms a link between satisfaction and loyalty in Bali, it acknowledges that this relationship could be influenced by moderating variables, such as tourist demographics, travel motivations, or cultural sensitivity. Exploring these factors in future research would offer a deeper insight into the complexities of tourist loyalty.

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