# 行政院國家科學委員會補助專題研究計畫成果報告

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# Destination fascination and destination loyalty:

# Subjective well-being and destination attachment as mediators


## Abstract

Liu et al. (*Tourism Management* 63, 255-267, 2017) developed a six-dimensional scale of destination fascination. Following the reasonable person model, this study aims to further point to and examine the effects of destination fascination on subjective well-being and destination attachment, and the subsequent outcome of destination loyalty. A total of 936 responses was collected from national parks (302), forest recreational areas (300) and theme parks (334). Results of this study proved the effects of destination fascination on improving subjective well-being and destination attachment, and the effects of both subjective well-being and destination attachment on enhancing destination loyalty. Besides, subjective well-being and destination attachment fully mediated effects from destination fascination to destination loyalty. Moreover, extensive validity of the proposed model was verified through different destination types. Findings of this study not only enrich knowledge of destination fascination in the tourism academy, but also contribute practical implications for destination management and marketing.



***Keywords*:** Destination fascination, Subjective well-being, Destination attachment, Destination loyalty


## 1. Introduction

Discussions of destination fascination come from studies of restoration through natural environments in environmental psychology (Kaplan, 1995). Environmental psychologists pointed out that people spent lots of physical and psychological resources on “directed attention” needed activities in work life, causeing senses of fatique, burnout, stress, anxiety, high chances

of work mistakes, and low intention to help coworkers (Cohen & Spacapan, 1978; Moray, 1990). To gain efficient mental recovery, staying in a fascinating environment has been emphasized and suggested by several former studies (e.g., Berto, 2005; Herzog, Maguire, & Nebel, 2003; Kaplan & Kaplan, 2011). Based on attention restoration theory, Liu, Wang, Huang, and Chen (2017) established a 24-item Destination Fascination Scale with six dimensions: fitness, friendliness, uniqueness, attractiveness, mystique, and richness.

Model examination is a common method used by former scale development studies to examine criterion-related validity for new measurement scales (e.g., Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009). Through model examination for destination fascination, this study could demonstrate the importance of destination fascination by clarifying its significant outcomes. The Reasonable Person Model (RPM), which shows how fascination (Kaplan, 1995) leads to human-environment relationships, was proposed by Kaplan and Kaplan (2009) to explain the benefits of environment fascination in an integrated and systematic perspective. Based on people's information needs and their recognition toward the information perceived in an environment, the RPM is conceptualized into three phases: model building, being effective, and meaningful action (Kaplan & Kaplan, 2009). People's perceived fascination in an environment could shape their recognition of the environment (model building), assist them recover from fatigue and improve competence (being effective), and make gain willingness and attention toward environmental sustainable development (meaningful action).

Based on RPM, this study proposes the model of destination fascination by conceptualizing destination fascination in the phase of model building, subjective well-being and destination attachment in the phase of being effective, and destination loyalty in the phase of meaningful action. During the phase of being effective, this study further extends this phase into both

internal side and external side. Through perceived destination fascination, this study argues the "being effective" phase happens in the internal side, improving tourists' subjective poitive mental feelings. The subjective poitive mental feelings include subjective well-being, stress release, reduce fatigue caused by long-term intention-intensive tasks (Ábrahám, Velenczei, & Szabo, 2012; Berto, Baroni, Zainaghi, & Bettella, 2010; Kaplan & Kaplan, 2011; White et al., 2010). Since subjective well-being could reflect people's overall inner feelings (Diener, 1984), this study argues subjective well-being as the outcome of perceived destination fascination in the internal side. On the other hand, this study argues that the "being effective" phase also happens in the external side, making tourists establish relationships with a fascinating destination. In former studies, the human-environment relationship could be extended into several aspects, such as environment attachment, emotional connection with a place, or the willingness to support pro-environmental actions (Corbett, 2005; Fielding & Head, 2012; Morgan, 2010). Funk and James (2001) proposed a Psychological Continuum Model (PCM), stating that people's psychological connection with fascinating leisure engagement includes four levels: awareness, attraction, attachment, and allegiance. Following PCM, this study argues destination attachment as the outcome of perceived destination fascination in the external side.

Moreover, this study further considers the validity of the proposed model of destination fascination in model extension, specifically in different types of destinations. In former empirical studies of RPM, researchers normally select natutral places as research settings to examin how fascinating natural environments cause positive influences to human (Hartig et al., 2011; Herzog & Strevey, 2008; White et al., 2010). However, in destinations, tourists could perceive destination fascination from not only natural destinations (such as national paers or botanic gardens) but also artificial destinations (such as theme parks or shopping malls). Velarde, Fry,

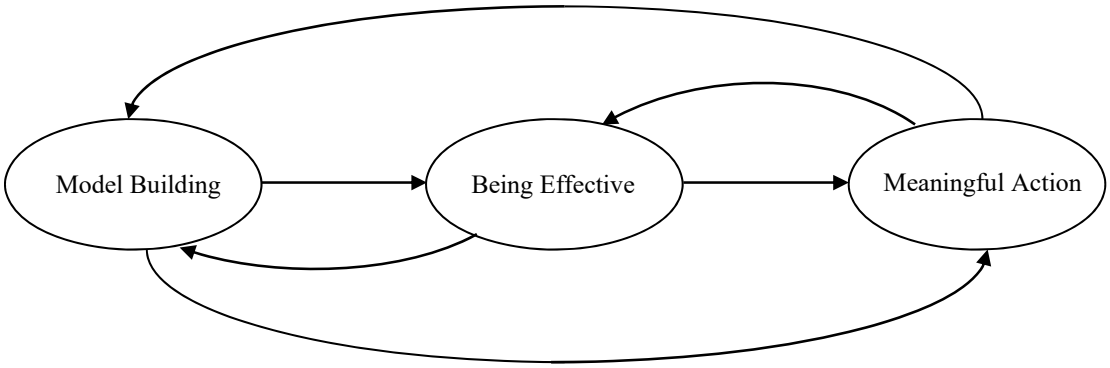
and Tveit (2007) also noted that emviromental psychologists normally categorize landscapes into natural and urban landscapes, which supports this study to separate destination types into natural destinations and artificial destinations. Additionally, Velarde et al. (2007) found that people generally become healther in natural landscapes than urban landscapes. Taken together, the proposed model for destination fascination should be examined in different destination types for clarifying its model extension and for enriching systematic understanding of destination fascination.

Based on RPM, the purpose of this study is to propose and examine the effects of destination faination on destination loyalty with both subjective well-being and destination attachment as mediators. Findings of this study could contribute both theoretical and practical implications. In theoretical implications, this study could demonstrate the important role of destination fascination in tourism through proposing and examining its effects on subjective well-being, destination attachment, and destination loyalty. Besides, conceptualizing both internal and external sides of the "being effective" phase in RPM through this proposed model could enrich systematic undertanding of destination fascination. Additionally, results of examiming the effectiveness of the destination fascination model in different destination types could further clarify the applicability of destination fascination. In practical implications, findings of this study could provide valuable information for destination marketing organizations to understand the benefits and tourists' behavioral changes caused by fascinating destinations.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Destination fascination

Liu et al. (2017) defined destination fascination as "the extent to which a destination gives tourists the freedom to pay attention to their interests, to freely explore details in the destination, and to freely and personally define meanings of the destination" (p. 257). Theoretical foundations of destination fascination are generated from discussions about human-environment relationships. Kaplan (1983) proposed the Model of Person-Environment Compatibility, arguing people's subjective compatibility toward an environment is based on information released by the environment. High person-environment compatibility allows people to gain physical and psychological health and release stress (Kaplan, 1983). Later, Kaplan and Kaplan (2009) proposed Reasonable Person Model (RPM), explaining effects of environment fascination on human sense-making and behaviors. As shown in Figure 1, the RPM begins with model building, which is the phase for people to absorb information of an environment and gain senses about the environment, followed by being effective and meaningful action. Model building could directly influence meaningful action, or influence meaningful action through being effective (Kaplan & Kaplan, 2009). In the long-term, the phase of meaningful action could also come back to influence model building through experience accumulation, or indirectly influence model building through the phase of being effective (Kaplan & Kaplan, 2009).



Source: Kaplan, S., & Kaplan, R. (2009). Creating a larger role for environmental psychology: The Reasonable Person Model as an integrative framework. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 29*(3), p. 330.

Figure 1. The reasonable person model

First, the phase of model building allows people to store memories and experiences of an environment for further explaining, planning and analyzing the environment (Johnson-Laird, 2005). Model building is important for people to understand and explore an environment, to utilize absorbed information of the environment for interpreting meanings of the place, to involve oneself into information of the environment, and to perceive fascination of the environment (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1978). According to Liu et al. (2017), fitness, friendliness, uniqueness, attractiveness, mystique and richness are six dimensions of destination fascination for tourists to accumulate information of a destination in the phase of model building. Second, in the phase of being effective, through processing and managing stored information of an environment in human brain, fascinating environments are able to assist people strengthen self confidence and awareness, gain the capability to pay attention for future works tasks, recover from fatigue, and regain energy for facing daily work life (Berto, 2005; Berto et al., 2010; Kaplan & Kaplan, 2009). Third, in the phase of meaningful action, people perform their participation in an environment to fulfill their needs for making a difference, to achieve goals, or to influence the world around them (Kaplan & Kaplan, 2009). Participations in the meaningful action could be actualized through diverse forms, such as behavior, attitude, belief, listen, respect, and being heard (Kaplan & Kaplan, 2009). In a fascinating environment, former studies have explored people's participations in meaningful action at emotional engagement for environmental protection (Morgan, 2010), revisit intention for a place (White et al., 2010), and the awareness and action for protecting natural resources (Fielding & Head, 2012).

Based on RPM, this study focuses on how destination fascination influences the follow-up phases of being effective and meaningful action. Figure 2 shows the research framework of this study. This study covers the paths of direct and indirect effects from modeling building to being effective and meaningful action. In the mediating mechanism of being effective, this study takes a deeper look to analyze the internal and external sides. For the internal side of being effective driven by destination fascination, this study emphasizes tourists' subjective well-being, which reflects tourists' positive emotion, stress release and fatigue reduction in a fascinating destination (Ábrahám et al., 2012; Berto et al., 2010; Kaplan & Kaplan, 2011; White et al., 2010). For the external side of being effective influenced by destination fascination, this study concentrates on destination attachment, which demonstrates how tourists are motivated to mentally gain connection with a destination through recognizing its fascination (Corbett, 2005; Fielding & Head, 2012; Morgan, 2010). Taken together, this study proposes that tourists' perceived destination fascination could directly improve destination loyalty, or directly enhance destination loyalty through subjective well-being and destination attachment. Justifications for the proposed hypotheses are explained in following sections.

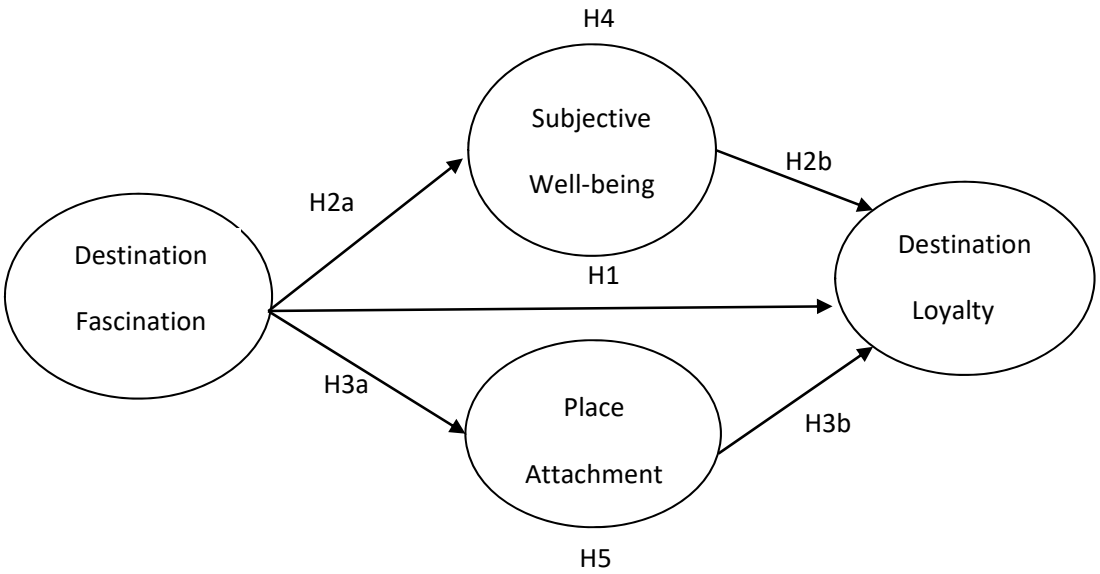



Figure 2. The research framework

## 2.2 Destination fascination and destination loyalty

Dick and Basu (1994) defined customer loyalty as customers' relative attitude and loyalty behavior toward a product, brand, service or store. Strengthening customers' relative attitude could be done through cognitive antecedents (such as trust, contact, information clarify), affective antecedents (such as emotion, satisfaction, and affection) and conative antecedents (such as sunk cost, switching cost, and expection) (Dick & Basu, 1994). Loyal behavior is the outcome of a loyal relationship, including the motivation to search for related information, positive word-of-mouth, repurchase/revisit, and resistence to receive related negative information (Dick & Basu, 1994). Oliver (1999) further classified loyalty into four phases: cognitive loyalty, affective loyalty, conative loyalty, and behavioral loyalty. Cognitive loyalty refers to customers' recognition and belief toward a product after receiving information about it; affective loyalty is customer' preference and attitude for a product accumulated by long-term satisfaction experiences; conative loyalty is customers' behavioral intention toward a product, as a promise for repurchae; and, behavioral loyalty represents the integration of the former three phasesm as an actual practice to engage in repurchase (Oliver, 1999). In former destination loyalty studies, conative loyalty is commonly used to measure tourists' destination loyalty (Chi & Qu, 2008; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Therefore, this study uses conative loyalty to measure destination loyalty for understanding tourists' revisit intention and willingness for positive word-of-mouth.

Destination loyalty covers a long-term percpective which shows tourists'revisit behavior toward a destination in the long run, connecting with their former travel experiences at the destination (Oppermann, 2000). Revisit intention and positive word-of-mouth are two behavioral intentions widely used in measuring destination loyalty (Chi & Qu, 2008; Hutchinson, Lai, & Wang, 2009; Phillips, Wolfe, Hodur, & Leistritz, 2013; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). In terms of revisit

intention, former studies consider tourists' intention to visit the same destinaiton in the near future, or tourists' intention to set a visited destination as the top priority in the same destination type or the same tourism region (Kim, Kim, & Kim, 2009; Lam & Hsu, 2006; Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2012). Positive word-of-mouth is tourists' behaviors to actively invest in resources for spreading positive information for a specific destination (Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008; Phillips et al., 2013; Simpson & Siguaw, 2008). Tourists' willinginess and frequency to perform positive word-of-mouth and its content varies based on destination types and their own familiarity with the destination (Phillips et al., 2013; Simpson & Siguaw, 2008). Besides, compared to traditional communication ways, through the advancement of modern technology, tourists could engage in more vivid, more interactive, and more updated approaches in electronic word-of-mouth (Litvin et al., 2008).

According to RPM, environment fascination could directly influence people's participation in actions related to the environment (Kaplan & Kaplan, 2009). The extent of perceived destination fascination could be conceptialized as the level of tourists' perceived positive image of the destination. Former destination image studies have proved that destination positive image could strengthen tourists' loyalty toward the destination (Chi & Qu, 2008; Phillips et al., 2013; Tasci & Gartner, 2007). Additionally, fascinating environments are more appealing to attract people's attention (Berto, Massaccesi, & Pasini, 2008). The study of Um, Chon, and Ro (2006) also found that attractiveness of a destination is more powerful than tourist satisfaction to stimulate tourists' revisit intention. Moreover, following dimensions of destination fascination in Liu et al. (2017), a fascinating destination has mystique to motivate tourists keep exploring the destination, own richness in tourism resources for tourists to enjoy diverse tourism experiences, and release attractiveness to assist tourists forget daily work stress. These dimensions of

destination fascination in Liu et al. (2017) cover major types of antecedents of loyalty proposed by Dick and Basu (1994), revealing that destination fascination could strengthen tourists' destination loyalty. Therefore, we propose:

H1: Destination fascination exerts positive effects on destination loyalty.

### 2.3 Subjective well-being as the mediator

Subjective well-being is people's subjective and positive evaluation toward their own overall life, including both work life and leisure life (Carter, 2004; Diener & Lucas, 2004; Kashdan, 2004). Diener (1984) pointed out three features of subjective well-being: (1) it is people's sujective feeling; (2) it is evaluted by positive items; and, (3) it includespeople's overall evaluation toward life. Carter (2004) argued that subjective well-being is people's perceived frequency of fluctuation in positive emotion under a certain time period, and mentioned that subjective well-being could influence people's mid- and long-term behavior. Besides, Kashdan (2004) noted that high subjective well-being involves three major elements: (1) the frequency and strength of positive emotion; (2) the relative lack of depression and anxiety; and, (3) overall life satisfaction.

The positive effect of environment fascination on subjective well-being could be considered as the positive mental feelings aroused by leisure participation. In former leisure participation studies, quality and pleasantness of leisure activities could significantly improve people's subjective well-being (Ábrahám et al., 2012; Brajša-Žganec, Merkaš, & Šverko, 2011; Newman, Tay, & Diener, 2014). Brajša-Žganec et al. (2011) explained that leisure activities provide people chances to pursue value in life and fulfilllike demand, allowing people gain opportunities to

establish social networking, experience positive emotion, gain skills and knowledge, and therefore improve subjective well-being. Ábrahám et al. (2012) sorted leisure activities into seven categories (balance internal mind, regular activities, self-awareness and growth, passive leisure, improve health, intelligent leisure, and social leisure), and proved that joyful experiences gained through leisure activities could significantly improve subjective well-being. Newman et al. (2014) reviewed past 363 studies related to leisure and subjective well-being, and summarized five major psychological mechanisms to explain how leisure activities improve personal subjective well-being: (1) escape from daily life and mental recovery; (2) have chances and experiences to be alone (3) gain challenging experiences and learn new things; (4) create meaning-making experiences through leisure; (5) establish affiliations with others. Since a fascinating destination enables people to efficiently achieve mental recovery (Liu et al., 2017), the destination offers chances for tourists to enjoy high-quality leisure activities. Due to positive mental feelings gained through leisure, tourists gain motivations to sustain their loyalty toward fascinating destinations for maintaining subjective well-being improved by the destination.

According to RPM, fascinating environments provide mental recovery to people, making them gain meaningful connections with the environments and motivating them to engage in interactions with the environments (Kaplan & Kaplan, 2009). Following the logic, mental applicability recovery gained through a fascinating environment could be the mechanism for tourists to obtain subjective well-being from a fascinating destination. To sustain the improvement of subjective well-being, tourists have the tendency to maintain loyalty toward the fascinating destination. Guite, Clark, and Ackrill (2006) also argued that a good environment could allow people free from crowd and oppression, and feel safe and comfortable; the good environment is like a fascinating environment where people could gain subjective well-being.

Taken together, this study argues subjective well-being as the mediator for the relationship between destination fascination and destination loyalty. Hence, we peopose the following hypothese:

H2a: Destination fascination exerts positive effects on subjective well-being.
H2b: Subjective well-being exerts positive effects on destination loyalty.
H4: Subjective well-being mediates the positive relationship between destination fascination and destination loyalty.

**2.4 Destination attachment as the mediator**

Morgan (2010) pointed out that the sense of attachment comes from people's dependence of and emotional engagement with parents in childhood; as ago grows with chances to explore new environments, people transfer the target of attachment into other objects, things or environments. Hidalgo and Hernandez (2001) defined place attachment as people's emotional connection with a place, and argued that place attachment is consisted by both social-level attachment and physical-level attachment of the place. Yuksel, Yuksel, and Bilim (2010) borrowed the concept of place attachment into destination attachment, and summarized that destination attachment is consisted by two dimensions: place dependence and place recognition. Place dependence is a physical-level attachment, which is sustained by functional value of a place; place recognition is a social-level attachment, which is a mental connection maintained through people's investment of phychological resources (Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Yuksel et al., 2010). The study of Prayag and Ryan (2012) found that tourists' engagement with a destination could strengthen destination attachment, and destination attachment could improve destination satisfaction, revisit intention

and positive word-of-mouth. This study uses the scale of destination attachment developed by Prayag and Ryan (2012) for its high reliability and validity. This scale has been applied by other studies such as Veasna, Wu, and Huang (2013). Following former literature (Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Yuksel et al., 2010), this study defines destination attachment as tourists' psychological engagement with a destination, and proposes that destination fascination could strengthen destination attachment and indirectly enhance destination loyalty through destination attachment.

The Psychological Continuum Model (PCM) developed by Funk and James (2001) could support the mediating role of destination attachment between destination fascination and destination loyalty. Funk and James (2001) developed PCM in the setting of sport fan involvement. The feelings of involving in leisure sport as a sport fan could be conceptualized similarly as tourists' involvement with a fascinating destination. Following PCM by Funk and James (2001), fans' psychological connection could be sorted into four levels: awareness, attraction, attachment, and allegiance. The awareness level is based on information received from external environments for people gain chances to know leisure destinations and obtain opportunities to participate in leisure; the attraction level is formed through the match between external information about destinations and people's internal leisure preference and demand, and high attraction is evaluated when the match is high; the attachment level represents people's subjective perception about how important and meaningful a destination is, making people consider that doing leisure at the destination as a presentation of personal core value and self awareness; and, the allegiance level is people's decision to commit a stable and continuous psychological involvement with a destination, committing through not only the cognitive level by considering self as an adherent of the destination but also the behavioral level by keeping visitations to the destination (Funk & James, 2001). PCM has been widely applied to explain

people's passionate involvement in leisure sport activities and how they invest psychological resources into leisure activities (Beaton & Funk, 2008). Applying PCM into this study, levels of awareness and attraction in PCM could be considered as the formation and perception of destination fascination, the level of attachment is tourists' perceived destination attachment, and the allegiance level is tourists' destination loyalty.

The flow of levels in PCM by Funk and James (2001) supports the logic for proposing destination attachment as the mediator for the effects from destination fascination to destination loyalty. Through a qualitative approach to explore people's preferences of environments, Korpela et al. (2001) also found that people and the tendency gain feel positive emotional feelings and connections toward environments with fascinating features, such as relax, escape, worry-free and reflection. In RPM, environment fascination could strengthen people's relationship with the environment, motivating people to participate in long-term actions with the environment (Kaplan & Kaplan, 2009); the strengthened relationship through environment fascination could be considered as destination attachment in this study. Former studies in environment fascination and environmental restoration have found that people could establish emotional connection and belongingness with fascinating environments, and then accumulate loyal visitations to the fascinating environments (Korpela et al., 2001; Morgan, 2010). Taken together, we propose the following hypotheses:

H3a: Destination fascination exerts positive effects on destination attachment.
H3b: Destination attachment exerts positive effects on destination loyalty.
H5: Destination attachment mediates the positive relationship between destination fascination and destination loyalty.

## 3. Method

### 3.1 Sampling and data collection

Based on number of tourists in 2016, the research settings of this study are top three destinations in national parks (Kenting National Park, Taroko National Park, and Yanmingshan National Park), forest recreation areas (Alishan National Forest Recreation Area, Xitou National Forest Recreation Area, and Taipingshan National Forest Recreation Area), and theme parks (Leofoo Village, Janfusun Fancyworld, and Lihpao Land Theme Park) in Taiwan, as a total of nine destinations. Population of this study is tourists of these nine destinations. Through convenience sampling, the researchers distributed 120 survey questionnaires at the exit of each destination, as a total of 1,080 distributed questionnaires. Finally, this study collected 936 usable responses with usable response rate of 86.67%, including 302 samples from national parks, 300 samples from forest recreation areas, and 334 samples from theme parks.

### 3.2 Measurement

This study adapted scale items developed by previous studies (Grzeskowiak & Sirgy, 2007; Kim et al., 2009; Liu et al., 2017; Prayag & Ryan, 2012) to measure all constructs. A five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), was applied for rating all scale items. Destination fascination's operational definition is the destination where tourists could freely pay attention to, explore details, and define meanings. The 24-item scale established by Liu et al. (2017) was used to measure destination fascination. Subjective well-being's operational definition is people's positive and subjective evaluation for their own overall life. A four-item scale developed by Grzeskowiak and Sirgy (2007) was applied to measure subjective

well-being. Destination attachment's operational definition is people's emotional connection with a destination. The eight-item scale from Prayag and Ryan (2012) was applied to measure destination attachment. Destination loyalty's operational definition is tourists' revisit intention and willingness for positive word-of-mouth for a destination. The four-item scale established by Kim et al. (2009) was used to measure destination loyalty.

### 3.3 Data analysis

This study used SPSS 19 for descriptive analysis of the collected data. LISREL 8.8 was used to run confirmatory factor analysis, structural equation modeling, and multi-group analysis. The structural equation modeling was conducted to examine the proposed hypotheses and the multi-group analysis was performed to check model extension of the proposed model in different destination types.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Profile of participants

Descriptive analysis of the sample showed that there were more female respondents (51.7%) than male (48.3%). Most participants were single (48.6%) and those who married with children (38.1%). Around 62.1% participants own a college degree and 21.6% participants got high school degree. More than half of the participants are professional technicians (48.2%), followed by students (17.4%), government employees (11.4%), and business executives (9.1%). Besides, 40.1% participants came from Northern Taiwan, followed by 30.8% from southern Taiwan and 26.8% from central Taiwan. In terms of income status, 36% participants had $ 9,000-18,000, 26.8% were under $9,000, 22.4% participants had annual income of $18,000-27,000, and 14.7%

had above $ 27,001. The average annual income was $19,626 in Taiwan in 2016 (National Statistics R.O.C, 2017).

### 4.2 Measurement model

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to test measurement reliability and validity. CFA results indicated an acceptable model fit, including $\chi^2/df$ of 4.74, goodness of fit index (GFI) of 0.98, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) of 0.056, comparative fit index (CFI) of 0.98, and normed fit index (NFI) of 0.98 (Jöreskog & Sörbom 1993). As shown in Table 1, all items were significantly related to their corresponding constructs ($p < 0.01$), and their standardized factor loadings ranged from 0.58 to 0.86. Average variance extracted (AVE) of these constructs ranged from 0.43 to 0.64. Composite reliability (CR) of all constructs ranged from 0.69 to 0.91. On the basis of CFA results, constructs of this study were reliable and valid (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Gerbing & Anderson, 1988; Hair et al., 2010). Table 2 shows correlation table of the constructs. To achieve discriminant validity, the coefficient for a correlation between a pair of constructs should be lower than the squared root of AVE of each construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Most construct in the model achieved this requirement, indicating adequate discriminant validity.

Table1. Results of confirmatory factor analysis

| Variable/Construct | Mean | *t* Value | SFL | ME | IR | CR (AVE) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Destination fascination scale** | | | | | | |
| **Fitness** | | | | | | 0.85 |
| This place could link with my life experiences | 3.27 | 20.52 | 0.63 | 0.60 | 0.40 | (0.54) |
| The atmosphere in this place is the style I like | 3.62 | 24.95 | 0.73 | 0.47 | 0.53 | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| This place truly reflects parts of my personal style | 3.35 | 29.77 | 0.83 | 0.31 | 0.69 | |
| This place reflects the real me | 3.36 | 27.95 | 0.80 | 0.36 | 0.64 | |
| Visiting this place could represent how I want to be | 3.06 | 21.92 | 0.67 | 0.55 | 0.45 | |
| **Friendliness** | | | | | | 0.85 |
| This place has hospitable and friendly local residents | 3.82 | 23.28 | 0.70 | 0.51 | 0.49 | (0.59) |
| This place has warm service employees | 3.74 | 27.44 | 0.79 | 0.38 | 0.62 | |
| Service facilities in this place can satisfy my need | 3.48 | 26.77 | 0.78 | 0.39 | 0.61 | |
| This place provides thoughtful tourism services | 3.59 | 27.67 | 0.80 | 0.36 | 0.64 | |
| **Uniqueness** | | | | | | 0.84 |
| This place performs unique style | 3.77 | 22.42 | 0.68 | 0.54 | 0.46 | (0.52) |
| This place looks visually different from others | 3.80 | 28.01 | 0.80 | 0.36 | 0.64 | |
| I feel this place is different from others | 3.77 | 28.44 | 0.80 | 0.36 | 0.64 | |
| This place has local features | 3.79 | 23.00 | 0.69 | 0.52 | 0.48 | |
| This place has special themed areas | 3.85 | 19.14 | 0.60 | 0.64 | 0.36 | |
| **Attractiveness** | | | | | | 0.85 |
| I can transfer my mood in this place | 4.32 | 25.02 | 0.73 | 0.47 | 0.53 | (0.58) |
| Sensory experiences offered by this place appeals me | 3.97 | 26.52 | 0.76 | 0.42 | 0.58 | |
| This place helps me perceive good feelings | 4.10 | 30.05 | 0.83 | 0.31 | 0.69 | |
| I would like to stay longer in this place | 3.86 | 24.99 | 0.73 | 0.47 | 0.53 | |
| **Mystique** | | | | | | |
| My curiosity toward the place is aroused while visiting the place | 3.62 | 25.22 | 0.77 | 0.41 | 0.59 | 0.78 |
| This place has people, items, and things worth to explore | 3.42 | 23.16 | 0.72 | 0.48 | 0.52 | (0.54) |
| This place has mystery | 3.39 | 23.05 | 0.72 | 0.48 | 0.52 | |
| **Richness** | | | | | | 0.69 |
| During visiting this place, I can experience different feelings | 3.38 | 18.75 | 0.63 | 0.60 | 0.40 | (0.43) |
| This place provides various leisure activities | 3.37 | 17.15 | 0.58 | 0.66 | 0.34 | |
| This place provides me diverse sensory experiences | 3.83 | 23.01 | 0.75 | 0.44 | 0.56 | |
| **Subjective well-being** | | | | | | 0.83 |
| This place met my overall well-being needs | 3.71 | 27.35 | 0.78 | 0.39 | 0.61 | (0.56) |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| This place played a very important role in my social well-being | 3.63 | 25.14 | 0.74 | 0.45 | 0.55 | |
| This place played an important role in my travel well-being | 3.70 | 25.83 | 0.75 | 0.44 | 0.56 | |
| This place played an important role in enhancing my quality of life | 3.58 | 23.62 | 0.71 | 0.50 | 0.50 | |
| **Destination attachment** | | | | | | 0.91 |
| This place is a very special destination to me | 3.87 | 25.70 | 0.74 | 0.45 | 0.55 | (0.55) |
| I identify strongly with this destination | 3.47 | 25.11 | 0.72 | 0.48 | 0.52 | |
| No other place can provide the same holiday experience as this destination | 3.70 | 24.79 | 0.72 | 0.48 | 0.52 | |
| Holidaying in this destination means a lot to me | 3.81 | 27.01 | 0.76 | 0.42 | 0.58 | |
| I am very attached to this holiday destination | 3.94 | 24.70 | 0.72 | 0.48 | 0.52 | |
| This destination is the best place for what I like to do on holidays | 3.60 | 27.03 | 0.76 | 0.42 | 0.58 | |
| Holidaying here is more important to me than holidaying in other destinations | 3.36 | 26.36 | 0.75 | 0.44 | 0.56 | |
| I would not substitute any other destination for the types of things that I did during my holidays in this place | 3.51 | 25.85 | 0.74 | 0.45 | 0.55 | |
| **Destination loyalty** | | | | | | 0.88 |
| Comparing to other similar destinations, I will choose this place as the top one choice | 3.41 | 24.53 | 0.71 | 0.50 | 0.50 | (0.64) |
| I want to revisit this place again | 3.82 | 31.61 | 0.85 | 0.28 | 0.72 | |
| I will recommend this place to other people | 3.98 | 32.25 | 0.86 | 0.26 | 0.74 | |
| I will share positive experiences of the place to others | 4.07 | 27.95 | 0.78 | 0.39 | 0.61 | |

SFL: Standardized factor loading; ME: measurement error; IR: item reliability; CR: composite reliability; AVE: average variance extracted

Table 2. Correlationships between of the constructs

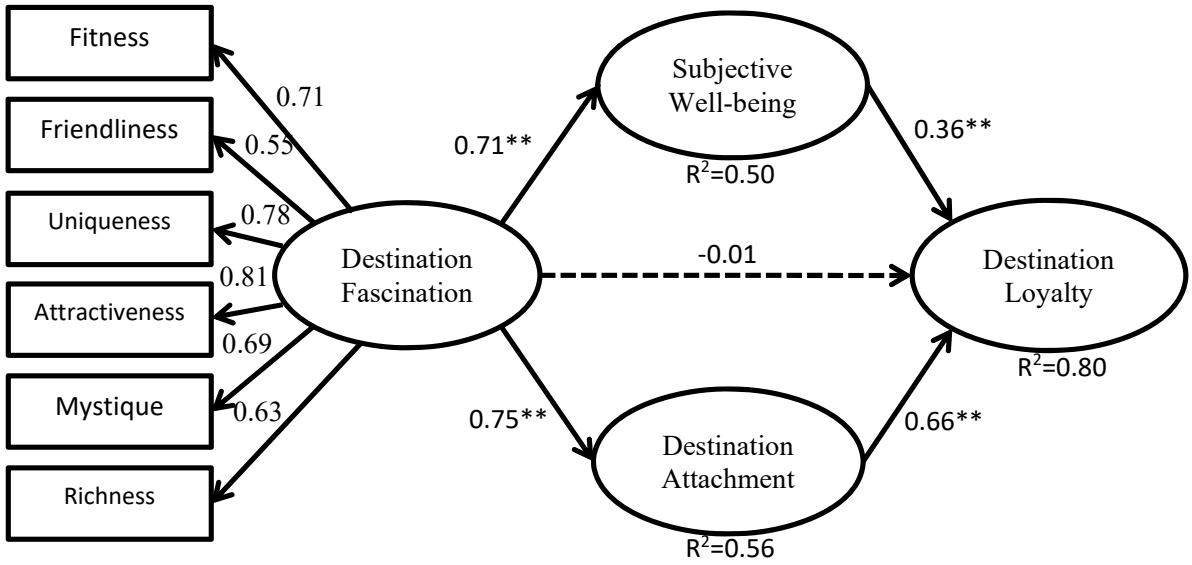
| Dimensions | DF1 | DF2 | DF3 | DF4 | DF5 | DF6 | SW | DA | DL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DF1-Fitness | ***0.74*** | | | | | | | | |
| DF2-Friendliness | 0.48 | ***0.77*** | | | | | | | |
| DF3-Uniqueness | 0.52 | 0.40 | ***0.72*** | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| DF4-Attractiveness | 0.61 | 0.40 | 0.74 | ***0.76*** | | | | | |
| DF5-Mystique | 0.49 | 0.39 | 0.63 | 0.63 | ***0.74*** | | | | |
| DF6-Richness | 0.55 | 0.48 | 0.55 | 0.69 | 0.57 | ***0.66*** | | | |
| SW | 0.69 | 0.51 | 0.59 | 0.73 | 0.64 | 0.59 | ***0.75*** | | |
| DA | 0.60 | 0.43 | 0.79 | 0.71 | 0.69 | 0.55 | 0.74 | ***0.74*** | |
| DL | 0.59 | 0.46 | 0.69 | 0.75 | 0.66 | 0.54 | 0.79 | 0.87 | ***0.80*** |

Note: The diagonal elements are the squared roots of the AVE

### 4.3 Structural model

Based on CFA results, in structural equation modeling, this study considered destination fascination as a second-order construct with six dimensions. Fits indices of the estimated structural model ($\chi^2/df$ = 8.38, GFI = 0.97, SRMR = 0.074, CFI = 0.97, NFI = 0.96) indicated that the model provided an acceptable fit (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). As Figure 3 shows, destination fascination was positively related to subjective well-being ($\beta$ = 0.71, $p < 0.01$) and destination attachment ($\beta$ = 0.75, $p < 0.01$), supporting H2a and H3a. Besides, subjective well-being ($\beta$ = 0.36, $p < 0.01$) and destination attachment ($\beta$ = 0.66, $p < 0.01$) were positively related to destination loyalty, supporting H2b and H3b. However, this study found that the effect of destination fascination on destination loyalty was not significant ($\beta$ = -0.01, $p > 0.05$), rejecting H1. The rejection of H1 reveals the important indirect paths for destination fascination to improve destination loyalty through both subjective well-being and destination attachment. Table 3 summarizes results of these proposed hypotheses.




Note: $^{**}p < .01$

Fig. 3. Standardized theoretical path coefficients.

Table 3. Results of the hypothesized paths

| Paths | Standardized Estimate | t-Value | Hypothesis |
|---|---|---|---|
| H1 Destination fascination→ Destination loyalty | -0.01 | -0.22 | Not |
| H2a Destination fascination→ Subjective well-being | 0.71 | 18.71** | Support |
| H3a Destination fascination→ Destination attachment | 0.75 | 19.33** | Support |
| H2b Subjective well-being→ Destination loyalty | 0.36 | 9.15** | Support |
| H3b Destination attachment→ Destination loyalty | 0.66 | 13.85** | Support |

### 4.4 Assessment of mediating effects

Based on Judd and Kenny (2010), this study used three steps to examine the proposed mediating effects. Results of the three-step testing are shown in Table 4. Focusing on destination

loyalty as the outcome variable, in step 1, destination fascination exerted significant positive effects ($\beta = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$), resulting in $R^2$ of 0.46. In step 2-1, destination fascination was positively and significantly related to subjective well-being ($\beta = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$), causing $R^2$ of 0.43. In step 2-2, destination fascination was positively and significantly related to destination attachment ($\beta = 0.71$, $p < 0.01$), causing $R^2$ of 0.51. In step 3, destination fascination was not significantly related to destination loyalty while both subjective well-being ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.05$) and destination attachment ($\beta = 0.61$, $p < 0.01$) positively influenced destination loyalty, resulting $R^2$ of 0.81. Taken together, effect of destination fascination on destination loyalty was decreased when adding subjective well-being and destination attachment as mediators, demonstrating the significant mediating effects of both subjective well-being and destination attachment. Therefore, H4 and H5 were supported.

Table 4. Mediator analysis of full model

| Steps | Variable | $\beta$ | $R^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|
| Step1 | | | |
| outcome | Destination Loyalty | | .46 |
| predictor | Destination Fascination | .68** | |
| Step2-1 | | | |
| mediator | Subjective Well-being | | .43 |
| predictor | Destination Fascination | .65** | |
| Step2-2 | | | |
| mediator | Destination Attachment | | .51 |
| predictor | Destination Fascination | .71** | |
| Step3 | | | |
| outcome | Destination Loyalty | | .81 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| mediator | Subjective Well-being | .31** |
| mediator | Destination Attachment | .61** |
| predictor | Destination Fascination | .05 |

Notes: * $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$

A further analysis was performed to clarify direct and indirect effects in the proposed model for determining the mediating effects of subjective well-being and destination attachment. Table 5 shows that the total effect of destination fascination on destination loyalty was 0.74 ($t$ = 18.60**, $p < 0.01$), indicating destination fascination improved destination loyalty. On the other hand, the total mediating effects of subjective well-being and destination attachment on the relationship between destination fascination and destination loyalty was 0.75 ($t$ = 13.95**, $p <$ 0.01). Taken together, the results clarified complete mediating effects of subjective well-being and destination attachment on the relationship between destination fascination and destination loyalty.

Table 5. Direct and indirect effects of the proposed model

| Independent variable | Dependent variable | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Subjective Well-being ($R^2$=0.50) | Destination Attachment ($R^2$=0.56) | Destination Loyalty ($R^2$=0.80) |
| Destination Fascination | | | |
| Direct effects | 0.71 (18.71**)[a] | 0.75 (19.33**) | -0.01 (-0.22) |
| Indirect effects | -- | -- | 0.75 (13.95**) |
| Total effects | 0.71 (18.71**) | 0.75 (19.33**) | 0.74 (18.60**) |
| Subjective Well-being | | | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Direct effects | 0.36 (9.15**) |
| Indirect effects | -- |
| Total effects | 0.36 (9.15**) |
| Destination Attachment | |
| Direct effects | 0.66 (13.85**) |
| Indirect effects | -- |
| Total effects | 0.66 (13.85**) |

Notes: [a] parentheses is t value; * $p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$

### 4.5. Extensive validity of the proposed model

Based on destination types, the overall collected usable data (936 samples) was sorted into three groups: national parks (302 samples), forest recreation areas (300 samples) and theme parks (334 samples). Multi-group analysis was performed to test the model equivalence of destination type on the research model for examining differences among these three groups (Kline, 2005). Table 6 summarizes the results multi-group analysis. Model A shows the baseline with no constraints among three groups ($\chi^2 = 2133.13$, $df = 612$), model B shows the factor loading invariance among three groups ($\chi^2 = 2169.99$, $df = 648$), and model C shows the path invariance among three groups ($\chi^2 = 2176.54$, $df = 658$). A factor loading invariance among three groups was conducted by testing the significance of the chi-square differences between two models, one in which the factor loadings were constrained to be the same of three groups and the other was without constraints (Bollen, 1989). As shown in Table 6, the chi-square difference was nonsignificant ($\triangle\chi^2$ (36) = 36.86, $p > .05$), suggesting the existence of factor loading invariance. Therefore, a series of multi-sample SEMs was later conducted to test and identify path coefficient invariance of these three groups. Results of testing the path coefficient invariance revealed that there was no significant difference in the chi-square values ($\triangle\chi^2$ (10) = 6.55, $p$

> .05), accepting model equivalence of destination type in this research model. Taken together, the analytical results showed good extensive validity of this research model, proving no differences among these three examined destination types.

Table 6. Model fits of the forest recreation areas samples' cross-validation model

| Model | $\chi^2$ | df | $\Delta\chi^2$ | $\Delta$df | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Loose replication | 2133.13 | 612 | | | |
| Moderate replication | 2169.99 | 648 | 36.86 (B-A) | 36 | 0.43 |
| Tight replication | 2176.54 | 658 | 6.55 (C-B) | 10 | 0.77 |

## 5. Discussion

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of destination fascination on destination loyalty with subjective well-being and destination attachment as mediators. Results of the study showed that destination fascination significantly improved both subjective well-being and destination attachment, and then subjective well-being and destination attachment significantly enhanced destination loyalty. Interestingly, there was no significant direct relationship between destination fascination and destination loyalty, supporting the full mediations of both subjective well-being and destination attachment. Moreover, this study further examined model equivalence of destination type in this research model, showing no differences of this model in national parks, forest recreation areas and theme parks. The following sections address theoretical implications, practical implications, and limitations and suggestions for future research.

### 5.1 Theoretical implications

Following the RPM of Kaplan and Kaplan (2009), this study proved full mediating roles of subjective well-being and destination attachment in transferring effects of destination fascination to destination loyalty. It is important to notice that through examining the flow of "model building-being effective-meaningful action" of RPM in destination fascination, there is no direct effect of destination fascination (model building) to destination loyalty (meaningful action). This finding not only validates the applicability of RPM in effects of destination fascination, but also reveals the importance of "being effective." For the phase of being effective, this study enriches the RPM by proposing and examining the internal and external sides in being effective.

The significant internal side in being effective, subjective well-being, recalls the study of Brajša-Žganec et al. (2011) about values and chances for leisure activities to improve people's subjective well-being. A fascinating destination allows tourists to experience fascination through dimensions of fitness, friendliness, uniqueness, attractiveness, mystique and richness (Liu et al., 2017), making tourists gain subjective well-being. The gained subjective well-being in fascinating destination is a key internal mechanism in tourists' mind because it enables them to enjoy mental recovery, improve mental health, balance internal mind, and establish a positive attitude toward future work tasks (Ábrahám et al., 2012; Brajša-Žganec, Merkaš, & Šverko, 2011; Newman, Tay, & Diener, 2014). Through the internal mechanism of being effective in subjective well-being, tourists have the desire and motivation to sustain loyalty toward a fascinating destination because they want to regain benefits of subjective well-being generated through experiencing destination fascination.

On the other hand, the significant external side in being effective, destination attachment, recalls the function of PCM by Beaton & Funk (2008). The role of destination attachment in being effective enlarges the scope of effects of destination fascination from changing tourists'

internal mind into establishing external mental connection. As Beaton & Funk (2008) argued in PCM about how passionate sport fans mentally build attachment with leisure sports, this study found that tourists who experienced fascination of a destination could perceive strong attachment with the destination. The external linkage with a fascinating destination enables tourists to define importance and meaning of the external fascinating environment. Through destination attachment, tourists perceive dependence and recognition toward a fascinating destination (Yuksel et al., 2010), and further own loyalty toward the destination (Prayag & Ryan, 2012). Tourists who perceive attachment with a fascinating destination possess loyalty toward the destination not only because they feel the destination means differently to them but also because they have the tendency to sustain stable psychological involvement with a mentally attached destination (Funk & James, 2001; Korpela et al., 2001; Morgan, 2010).

Another theoretical contribution of this study is to examine the extensive validity of this research model in national parks, forest recreation areas and theme parks. As suggested by former studies (e.g., Bacharach, 1989), testing a research model in different types of settings is meaningful and contributable for clarifying the validity and reliability of the model in other boundaries. Different from Velarde et al. (2007) found that people generally feel better and become healther in natural enviornments than urban environments, it is exciting for this study to find model equivalence in this research model across national parks (natural enviornment), forest recreation areas (natural enviornment) and theme parks (artificial enviornment). The multi-group analysis of destination type contributes an insightful implication for arguing that although people generally feel differently between natural and urban environments (Velarde et al., 2007), the mechanism of outcomes driven by destination fascination could still be the same. That is, tourists could experience high fascination in different destination types, gain subjective well-being and

destination attachment through visitations to different fascinating destinations, and then accumulate loyalty toward different fascinating destinations through the mediations of subjective well-being and destination attachment.

### 5.2 Practical implications

Based on analytical results, this study contributes to two major practical implications for destination marketing organizations (DMOs): one is focusing on the internal mechanism of subjective well-being, and the other one emphasizes the external mechanism of destination attachment. First, DMOs should make sure that they establish fascination of a destination that could significantly improve target tourists' subjective well-being. Dimensions of destination fascination, such as fitness, friendliness, uniqueness, attractiveness, mystique and richness (Liu et al., 2017) could be utilized as elements for creating well-being-driven fascinating destination experiences. For example, DMOs of destinations targeting for dating couples could improve tourists' subjective well-being through guiding tourists to experience fascination in love-related dimensions, such as mystique in local love stories, friendliness of providing customized memorable dating services, or richness in offering diverse dining locations and designs. Through forming fascinating elements of a destination for targeting tourists, DMOs could significantly assist target tourists gain subjective well-being. Dating couples who gained subjective well-being at the fascinating destination could develop loyalty for the destination, because this is a unique place for them to experience and relive the romantic feelings once again.

Second, DMOs could plan fascinating destination experiences for target tourists to establish attachment with the destination. For example, destinations targeting for family tourism could offer programs for parents and children to experience art co-creation activities for perceiving

uniqueness in the destination, offer tour activities for families to enjoy attractiveness of the destination, and provide family-friendly facilities and services for tourists to perceive friendliness of the destination. Through strengthening dimensions of destination fascination based on features of family tourism, DMOs could win target tourists' destination attachment because parents and children could feel the destination means different to them. With the established destination attachment, parents and children would gain motivations to share good things about the destination and plan their next visit accordingly, because of the dependence they feel toward the destination and the significance of the destination to them.

### 5.3 Limitations and suggestions for future research

First, although this study tries to examine the proposed model in different destination types, sample destinations are all in Taiwan and the major participants are Taiwanese. It could be meaningful for future studies to explore tourists' experiences of destination fascination in cross-cultural settings, and if different major outcomes of destination fascination could be found in cross-cultural settings. Second, a cross-sectional design of this study becomes a limitation for deeply understanding the longitudinal dynamic outcomes of destination fascination. Therefore, future studies are recommended to seek tourists for longitudinal participation. Interesting findings are expected to emerge through tourists' continuous report about their feelings and actions toward a fascinating destination. Third, this study only examines the direct and indirect effects of destination fascination, lacking the tests of moderating effects. Therefore, future studies are suggested to propose moderators for strengthening or reducing the proposed effects of this model.

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