

## The Mediation of Tourist Engagement on The Effect of Destination Quality on Tourist Loyalty

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine and analyze: The effect of destination quality on tourist engagement, the effect of destination quality on tourist loyalty, the effect of tourist engagement on tourist loyalty and the effect of destination quality on tourist loyalty mediated with tourist engagement. The data analysis method uses a structural equation model. The research sample is tourists who have visited natural tourist destinations in South Sumatra totaling 320 respondents. The results of this study prove that the destination quality affects tourist engagement. Destination quality affects tourist loyalty. Tourist engagement affect tourist loyalty. Tourist engagement mediates the effect of destination quality on tourist loyalty. The implication of this finding explains that tourist engagement driven by destination quality will be able to increase tourist loyalty.

**Keywords:** - Destination Quality, Tourist Engagement, Tourist Loyalty

## **INTRODUCTION**

The rate of economic growth is one of the parameters of a country's economic success. Indonesia's economic growth has progressed well with increasing income or foreign exchange contributed by various business or industrial sectors. One sector that has an important contribution is the tourism sector. Tourism is one of the highest and fastest growing sectors in the world and plays an important role in the economy and stimulates the growth of other economies (Osman & Sentosa, 2013). The transformation of economic development is centered on increasing the value of tourism foreign exchange and the added value of the creative economy. The achievement of the national tourism sector in 2015-2019 experienced significant and consistent growth. The contribution of the tourism sector to the national GDP continues to increase and achieve the target, so that tourism is the leading sector that contributes to foreign exchange after the palm oil industry.

Brida, et al., (2010) stated that tourism contributes to economic growth in various ways. Tourism is a contributor to the contribution of capital goods that can be used in the production process. Tourism has an important role in stimulating investment in new infrastructure and competition. Tourism stimulates other economic industries with direct, indirect and induced effects. Tourism contributes to creating jobs and increasing income (Chauhan, 2016). Then, the tourism sector plays an important role in improving the economy, especially increasing productivity and reducing unemployment (Jaffe & Pasternak, 2004).

South Sumatra as one of the provinces in Indonesia which has diverse natural and cultural resources has been designated by the government to be one of the Daerah Tujuan Wisata (DTW) in Indonesia. South Sumatra Province has a variety of natural, cultural and culinary tourism potentials spread across cities and districts. Tourism activities in South Sumatra Province play an important role in economic development and are able to contribute to Regional Original Income (ROI) as well as the creation of primary and secondary jobs (Ripparprov Provinsi Sumatera Selatan, 2020).

Then, in general, natural tourism attractions, cultural tourism, artificial tourism and culinary tourism in South Sumatra become tourist destinations for foreign tourists from Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, China, Korea, Saudi Arabia, Japan, the Netherlands and England. Domestic tourists who visit tourist destinations in South Sumatra mostly come from Jakarta, Bandung, Batam, Bangka Belitung, Jambi, Bengkulu and Lampung (Disbudpar Provinsi Sumatera Selatan, 2020).

This study focuses on the study of natural tourism in South Sumatra, because most of the destinations visited by tourists are natural tourist destinations. In addition, during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, artificial and culinary tourism destinations in South Sumatra were closed and their activities limited. Then, related to tourism facilities and infrastructure in South Sumatra, especially facilities and infrastructure for natural tourist destinations, based on the results of observations and interviews with a number of visitors in several natural tourist destinations in Lahat and Pagaralam, most stated that public infrastructure was still not good in the form of access roads to natural attractions where most of them have not been paved or are in a damaged condition so that the travel time is relatively long. In addition, public facilities and infrastructure provided by managers in most natural tourist destinations in Lahat and Pagaralam are still not good, such as clean water facilities, prayer rooms, telecommunications facilities, health clinics, souvenir shops, and toilet facilities so that they feel less comfortable. In addition, the unavailability of tourism infrastructure in the form of proper and healthy accommodation for tourists to stay, rest, eat and drink in natural tourist destinations (Ripparprov Provinsi Sumatera Selatan, 2020).

Loyalty plays an important role in the continuity and success of businesses, including tourist destinations. Loyal tourist behavior such as repeat visits and positive word of mouth (WOM) is highly appreciated by tourism destination managers because retaining visitors who have visited is cheaper than acquiring new visitors (Chi & Qu, 2008). Loyalty studies in the tourism sector reveal that repeated tourist visits are considered as expected by destination managers (Alegre & Juaneda, 2006). The success of tourism destination marketing is determined by good destination management so that it can attract loyal tourists (Morais & Lin, 2010). Tourist interest in revisiting tourist destinations and being willing to recommend tourist destinations to other parties is a manifestation of tourists who are loyal to a destination (Moliner et al., 2007). Tourist loyalty represents the future behavior of tourists who are influenced by their travel experiences (Lee et al., 2017).

Destination quality is understood as a guideline for competitive advantage in tourism activities, especially for destination brands (Laws & Pelley, 2000). The increasingly fierce competition between tourist destination managers requires measuring and improving quality management in tourist destinations (Murphy et al., 2007). The good name of a destination is related to the unique features of a tourist destination used to identify and distinguish it from other tourist destinations. With an increase in highly competitive destination marketing activities, tourist destination managers and travel companies can adopt innovative marketing strategies to develop a destination brand image that is different from competitors (Sharma & Dyer, 2012).

Rajaratnam et al., (2015) examines the connection of destination quality with tourist loyalty visiting rural tourist destinations in Malaysia. The results of the study explain the perception of destination quality significantly and directly affect loyalty. Furthermore, tourists who have previously visited rural tourist destinations in Malaysia are less satisfied with the quality of the destinations compared to tourists visiting rural tourist destinations for the first time.

On the other hand, several previous studies have explained that destination quality is not positively and significantly related to tourist loyalty. Chen & Chen, (2010) examines the relationship between experience at a destination and the behavioral intention of tourists in four cultural heritage destinations in Tainan City. The results of the study explain that directly and indirectly the quality of the destination experience is not significantly related to the behavioral intention of tourists. Quintal & Polczynski (2010) do a study on the relationship between perceptions of attractiveness, quality, value, and low risk impact with tourist satisfaction and intention to revisit tourist destinations. The results of empirical research with a structural model indicate that the attractiveness, quality, and value of a destination have a positive effect on revisit intentions.

Based on various research gaps in the relationship between research variables, this study develops the concept of tourist engagement as a mediating variable of destination quality and tourist loyalty. Tourist engagement is a manifestation of tourist actions related to the power of giving attention, the power of identification, the ability to strengthen participation, the power of sharing, and the ability of social interaction.

The power of giving attention can be done by developing tourist activities in tourist destinations, encouraging tourists to seek information about tourist destinations in a sustainable manner, and encouraging tourists to maintain cleanliness. The ability to identify can be done by increasing the spirit of tourist engagement in destinations, highlighting the suitability of tourist destinations with individual tourists, and increasing pride in natural tourist destinations. Furthermore, the ability to strengthen tourist participation can be done by increasing the activity of tourists while in tourist destinations, encouraging enthusiastic tourists to take part in activities at tourist destinations, and caring for tourists in activities in tourist destinations.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Tourist Loyalty Concept**

Customer loyalty is considered as one of the most important driving forces for business success, moreover the level of loyalty is one of the important indicators used to measure the success of marketing strategies (Sun et, al., 2013). Reichheld & Sasser (1990) state that 5% customer retention grows and 85% of additional profit will be generated in the service industry. In marketing research, loyal customers are most likely to show behavior to repeat purchases or have a willingness to recommend products to others (Flavian et, al., 2001). Furthermore, Allenby & Lenk, (1995) also state that customer loyalty is not only considered an important antecedent of customer recruitment and retention, but also a factor that stimulates customer willingness to pay more and reduce service costs. Similarly, travel destinations can be considered products, and loyal travelers can revisit or recommend travel destinations to other potential travelers (Yoon & Uysal, 2005).

Many researchers have conducted research on customer loyalty in the field of marketing, but research on tourist loyalty has received little attention in studies related to tourist destinations (Opperman, 2000). A small number of studies have exploited tourists' revisit intentions (Bowen & Shoemaker, 1998; Fakaye & Crompon, 1991) and identify typology of tourist loyalty (Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001; Petrick & Sirakaya, 2004).

### **Destination Quality Concept**

In the tourism and hospitality sector, perceptions of destination quality relate to consumer perceptions of the quality of the destination's infrastructure, hospitality services, and facilities such as accommodation (Pike et, al., 2010), and it is a key element of customer-based brand equity when applied to destinations (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007). Perceived quality is an intangible asset, which represents feelings about the brand. However, perceived quality is capable of generating value for its owner in many ways, including positioning and differentiation against competitors. Saleem et, al., (2015) reinforces the idea that quality is a psychological judgment, which depends on the tourist perception gap between quality and perceived performance. Perceived quality is a tourist's perception of the destination offering, such as ease of access, overall environmental cleanliness, diversity of tourist attractions, quality of accommodation, friendliness of local residents, and opportunities for rest (Zabkar et, al., 2010).

Study conducted by Enright & Newton, (2004) explains that the concept of competitiveness among destinations is based on perceptions of destination quality. Study conducted by Li & Kaplanidou, (2013); Schaar, (2013) have identified the perceived competitive advantage of a destination as compared to other destinations is an important construct for measuring destination quality. (Mukherjee et, al., 2018) states that the quality of tourist destinations can be grouped into three categories, namely: service quality, destination feature quality, and travel experience quality.

### **Tourist Engagement Concept**

The engagement construct shows variations in different contexts, and research on customer engagement represents one application in consumer behavior and marketing (Malthouse & Calder, 2011). Previous studies have shown a positive relationship between customer engagement and customer loyalty (Hollebeek, 2011; (Kumar et, al., 2010; Romero & Okazaki, 2015), and is an important concept that is directly related to the company's growth, revenue and profitability in a competitive market (Hallowell, 1996). The most important goal of a company is to retain customers and make them loyal to the company. Research on the emotional relationship between customers and

companies, such as customer engagement, customer loyalty can be more effectively measured, predicted and improved (Bowden, 2009).

Tourist engagement is defined as a psychological state of tourists that occurs based on interactive travel experiences and the creation of creativity together with a focus on objects (people/attractions/activities/encounters) in relation to the travel experience. (Huang et al., 2017).

Therefore, tourism research from various perspectives has used the concept of tourist engagement in detail (So et al., 2016; Taheri et al., 2014). Vivek et al., (2012) has investigated tourist engagement from the perspective of relationship marketing theory, which focuses on interactive consumer experiences (Brodie et al., 2013). Tourist engagement from this perspective refers to tourists' interactive experiences with other stakeholders and the environment, which then form the core of the tourism marketing system (Brodie et al., 2013).

## **Hypothesis Development**

### **The Effect of Destination Quality on Tourist Engagement**

A key aspect of product and service perception is the process of comparing the performance of competitors for the same product and service (Han & Ryu, 2007). This perception of quality occurs at two different levels called product performance and core product service (Bitner et al., 1990). The provision of high quality services is one of the important factors in the success of the tourism industry. The perception of destination quality is an important factor that spurs interest in tourist behavior to be able to be actively involved in sharing experiences about tourist destinations so that it must receive special attention from tourist destination managers (Lai & Chen, 2011). Higher destination quality will attract tourists to be involved and will come again to tourist destinations. Therefore, based on the explanation above, the hypothesis can be described as follows:

H<sub>1</sub>: The better the quality of the destination, the higher the engagement of tourists

### **The Effect of Destination Quality on Tourist Loyalty**

A destination is the location of a group of tourist attractions, facilities and services, the combination of these features forms a tourism product at the destination (Kim & Brown, 2012). Rajaratnam et al., (2015); Cong (2016) explaining the quality of a destination is a visitor's perception or evaluation of the standard of tourism products in a tourist destination (a group of tourist objects, tourist facilities) that meet the requirements or expectations of tourists. Therefore, destination quality is related to tourists' perceptions of the overall performance of tourist attractions, tourism services/facilities and infrastructure offered by tourist destinations. Zabkar et al., (2010) describing the relevant features of a destination is highly contextually high and the assessment of destination quality should reflect the specific attributes that characterize the destination. Study Chen et al., (2011); Moutinho et al., (2011); Eusebio & Vieira (2013) use different attributes to assess destination quality. Destination quality is an important element of tourist perception and can determine the decision of tourists to visit the destination again. Previous empirical studies measure the behavior or loyalty of tourists as a return visit intention and willingness to provide destination recommendations to other parties (Ozdemir et al., 2012; Sun et al., 2013; Kim & Brown, 2012). Word of mouth recommendation is another important factor, as satisfied travelers are more likely to revisit and recommend destinations to other individuals (Ozdemir et al., 2012; Sun et al., 2013). Therefore, based on the explanation above, the hypothesis can be described as follows:

H<sub>2</sub>: The better the quality of the destination, the higher the tourist loyalty.

### **The influence of tourist engagement with tourist loyalty**

Growing research has focused on studying the relationship between future behavioral intentions and tourist engagement (Hollebeek et, al., 2007; Lee & Beeler, 2009). Chen & Tsai (2007) stated that an in-depth understanding of the relationship between future behavioral intentions and determinants can assist destination managers in building an attractive destination image and increase promotional efforts to maximize resource use and engage tourists to maintain a positive destination image. Several studies have investigated the concept of consumer/tourist engagement in tourist destinations as an important factor influencing tourist loyalty (Bolton, 2011; Brodie et, al., 2013; Vivek et, al., 2012). Therefore, based on the explanation above, the hypothesis can be described as follows:

H<sub>3</sub>: The higher the power of tourist engagement, the higher the loyalty of tourists

### **The Mediation of Tourist Engagement on The Effect of Destination Quality on Tourist Loyalty**

Laws & Pelley (2000) argues that the quality of a destination is a measure of the competitive advantage of tourism activities, especially for destination brands. Lai & Chen (2011) explained that tourist destinations must be managed properly, especially with regard to the quality of the destination so that it can attract tourists to visit. Allameh et al., (2015) states that a good quality destination can positively attract tourists' intention to return to tourist destinations. Zabkar et al., (2010) explained that a good quality destination will be able to increase tourist loyalty higher. Lai & Chen (2011) state that the perception of destination quality is a driving factor for tourist behavior interest to be able to be actively involved in sharing experiences about tourist destinations. Good destination quality will attract tourists to get involved and will return to tourist destinations. Therefore, based on the explanation above, the hypothesis can be described as follows:

H<sub>4</sub>: Tourist engagement mediates the effect of destination quality on tourist loyalty

Based on several hypotheses that have been described in this research study, a theoretical framework can be drawn based on a review of the literature related to the research. The theoretical framework is described as follows:

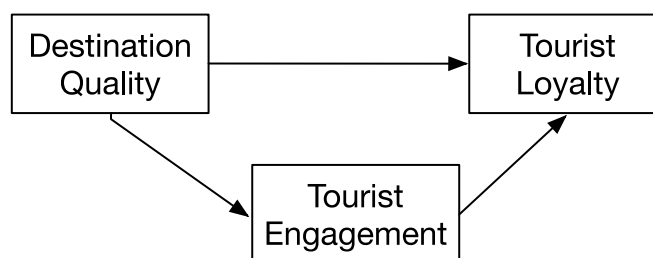


Figure 1 Empirical Research Framework

## RESEARCH METHOD

The population in this study were domestic tourists who had visited natural tourist destinations in Palembang City, Pagar Alam City and Lahat Regency. The sample size in this study refers to Gozali (2006) and Africano (2020) who state that the number of samples can be calculated from the size of the parameter multiplied by 5 to 10. This study uses 5 variables with an overall number of indicators of 34, so the sample required in this study a minimum of  $32 \times 10 = 320$  respondents. The research sample was 370 respondents with the provisions of the selection of tourists who have visited natural tourist objects, natural tourist destinations in Palembang City, Pagar Alam City and Lahat Regency. Purposive sampling technique is used in this study, where sampling is limited to certain types of people who can provide the desired information, either because they are the only ones who have the information, or according to several criteria set by the researchers (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). This study uses a survey method to collect data. The measurement scale uses a range of values from 1 to 10. Data collection is done by asking the participation of people who have visited natural tourist destinations in South Sumatra. The process of data analysis is carried out by structural equation modeling with the help of the AMOS program.

The questionnaire was designed based on a literature review related to the research variables, namely: destination quality, tourist engagement and tourist loyalty. Destination quality is measured by 3 dimensions adapted from (Sangpikul, 2017); Mukherjee et al., (2018) consists of: the quality of the manager, the quality of the destination features, and the quality of the trip. Tourist engagement is measured by 5 dimensions adapted from Huang & Choi (2019); Rasoolimanesh et al., (2019). The dimensions of the strength of tourist engagement are: the ability to pay attention, the ability to identify, the ability to strengthen participation, the ability to assimilate, and the ability to social interaction. Tourist loyalty is measured by three dimensions adapted from research Bhat & Darzi (2018) namely: intention to revisit, chain message, and intention to recommend.

## RESULTS

### Validity and Reliability Test

Prior to the SEM and ANOVA tests, a reliability test was conducted to see whether the survey instrument was appropriate. There are two tests given: validity test and reliability test. The test results can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 Test of Validity and Reliability

Variable	Dimension	Indicator	Loading Factor	Construct Reliability	Nilai variance extracted
Destination Quality	Management quality	KPL1	0,692	0,806	0,582
		KPL2	0,819		
		KPL3	0,772		
	Travel quality	KP1	0,513	0,649	0,388
		KP2	0,754		
		KP3	0,576		
	Destination feature quality	KF1	0,542	0,744	0,431
		KF2	0,509		
		KF3	0,849		
KF4		0,672			
Tourist Engagement	Ability to Pay Attention	KMP1	0,574	0,670	0,408
		KMP2	0,569		
		KMP3	0,755		

Variable	Dimension	Indicator	Loading Factor	Construct Reliability	Nilai variance extracted
	Ability to identification	KI1	0,774	0,720	0,469
		KI2	0,739		
		KI3	0,511		
	Ability to Strengthen Participation	KM1	0,555	0,617	0,351
		KM2	0,566		
		KM3	0,651		
	The power of sharing	KB1	0,517	0,782	0,556
		KB2	0,889		
		KB3	0,781		
Social Interaction Ability	KIT1	0,712	0,712	0,452	
	KIT2	0,661			
	KIT3	0,642			
Tourist Loyalty	Intention to visit again	NBK1	0,682	0,726	0,469
		NBK2	0,719		
		NBK3	0,652		
	Chain message	PB1	0,741	0,640	0,472
		PB2	0,629		
	Intention to recommend	NR1	0,648	0,660	0,494
NR2		0,754			

The validity test is intended to measure the accuracy and accuracy of the survey instrument in collecting data related to respondents' perceptions. Confirmatory analysis can also be used to measure the convergent validity of the loading factor known as the loading factor of each construct. The loading factor test results show a value greater than 0.500. This loading factor test limit is 0.500 (Hair et al., (2019), which implies that all indicators of each construct are suitable for use in this study. Thus, it can be said that the indicators including the constructs of Destination Quality, Tourist Engagement and Tourist Loyalty are declared valid.

The construction reliability test is used to see the consistency and stability of each indicator in relation to the construct. It can be seen from the table that the value obtained from the construct reliability test is greater than 0.60 (Hair et al., (2019). Similar results were also obtained from the extracted variance value. If the variance extracted value is smaller than the construct reliability value (Hair et al., (2019). Therefore, it is clear that all constructs in this study are reliable. It also implies that the survey instrument used in this study was suitable for data analysis.

### **Goodness of fit test in SEM**

Before applying this research model, a conformity test of the resulting model is carried out, which can be seen in Table 4. There are eight criteria used to test this research model, including 2, goodness of fit index (GFI), goodness of fit index (AGFI) ), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), comparative fit index (CFI), normed fit index (NFI), incremental fit index (IFI) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). Based on the results of all the criteria used in the goodness of fit test, it can be said that it is feasible to conclude that the SEM model used in this study is suitable for use in further analysis.

Table 2 Goodness of fit test Result

Goodness of fit index	Cut-off	Results	Conclusion
$\chi^2$		46.530	
Probability	$\geq 0.05$	0.221	Good Fit
GFI	$\geq 0.90$	0.975	Good Fit
AGFI	$\geq 0.90$	0.944	Good Fit



TLI	≥0.90	0.985	Good Fit
CFI	≥0.90	0.992	Good Fit
NFI	≥0.90	0.950	Good Fit
IFI	≥0.90	0.993	Good Fit
RMSEA	0.05–0.08	0.024	Good Fit

### Hypothesis test

The results of hypothesis testing given in this study are presented in Table 3.

From the results of hypothesis testing, it can be seen that Destination Quality has an effect on Tourist Engagement. Tourist engagement has an effect on tourist loyalty. Tourist engagement mediates the effect of destination quality on employee loyalty.

Table 3 Final estimation of measurement model parameters

Hypothesis	Exogenous variable	Endogenous variable		Standardized coefficient	Critical ratio	p-value	Conclusion
H1	Destination quality	Tourist engagement		0.440	3.255	0.001	Significant
H2	Destination quality	Tourist engagement		0.677	2.302	0.021	Significant
H3	Tourist engagement	Tourist Loyalty		0.576	3.146	0.002	Significant
Hypothesis	Exogenous variable	Endogenous variable	Intervening Variable	Sobel Test		p-value	Conclusion
H4	Destination quality	Tourist Loyalty	Tourist engagement	2.264		0.011	Significant

## DISCUSSION

### The Effect of Destination Quality on Tourist Engagement

This empirical result explains that the quality of the destination has an influence on the strength of tourist engagement. Therefore. The hypothesis which states that destination quality affects the strength of tourist engagement is accepted. This explains that the quality of the destination will contribute to the high and low strength of tourist engagement in natural tourist destinations.

The results of this study support *Service Dominant Logic* (S-DL) theory which states that the creation of shared value refers to the process of exchanging resources, where actors exchange resources through mutually beneficial interactions. and the value is determined by the beneficiary. Value in context is very important. because the value of goods or services is not attached. but formed according to the perception of tourists in different contexts. Therefore. become important to highlight the natural environment. physical. and the social environment that tourists are exposed to.

Quality is a consumer assessment related to the quality or the overall priority of goods or services with the intended function. Perceptions of destination quality are related to consumer perceptions of the quality of destination infrastructure. hospitality service. and amenities such as accommodation and are a key element of customer-based brand equity when applied to tourist destinations. Perceived quality is related to tourists' perceptions of the destination offering. such as ease of access. overall environmental cleanliness. diversity of attractions, quality of accommodation, the friendliness of the locals, and opportunities for vacation.

The results of this study are in line with the study from Lai & Chen (2011) who stated that the provision of high quality services is one of the important factors in the success of the tourism industry. Perception of destination quality is an important factor that spurs interest in tourist behavior to be able to be actively involved in sharing experiences about tourist destinations so that it must receive special attention from tourist destination managers.

### **The Effect of Destination Quality on Tourist Loyalty**

This empirical result explains that the quality of the destination has an influence on tourist loyalty. Therefore. The hypothesis which states that the quality of the destination affects tourist loyalty is accepted. This explains that the quality of the destination will contribute to the high and low loyalty of tourists in natural tourist destinations. The findings obtained prove that the quality of the destination has an important role in leveraging tourist loyalty. This means the quality dimension of the manager. travel quality. The quality of the destination features affects the loyalty of tourists coming to natural tourist destinations.

The results of this study are in line with the study from Lee et, al., (2007) who found that perceptions of service quality at tourist destinations attracted tourists to make repeat visits and recommend to friends about the destinations they visited. Research by Zabkar et, al., (2010) explained that destination attributes influence perceptions of tourism quality and are positively related to satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Research by Lai & Chen (2011) revealed that service quality has a significant and positive effect on perceived value, satisfaction, engagement, and behavioral intentions.

Allameh et, al., (2015) shows that the quality of the relationship indirectly has an impact on behavioral intention to return. Rajaratnam et, al., (2015) explain the perception of destination quality significantly and directly affect behavioral intentions. Cong (2016) explained that the quality of the destination as a predictor of chain message intentions and the desire to revisit tourist destinations. Wang et, al., (2017) describes that the perception of destination quality has a significant and positive direct effect on word of mouth (WOM).

### **The Effect of Tourist Engagement on Tourist Loyalty**

This empirical result explains that the strength of tourist engagement has an effect on tourist loyalty. Therefore. The hypothesis which states that the strength of tourist engagement has an effect on tourist loyalty is accepted. This explains that the strength of tourist engagement will contribute to the high and low loyalty of tourists in natural tourist destinations.

The findings obtained prove that the strength of tourist engagement plays an important role in increasing tourist loyalty. This means the dimension of the ability to pay attention. identification ability. ability to strengthen participation. sharing ability. and the ability of social interaction affects the loyalty of tourists to come to natural tourist destinations.

The results of this study are in line with Research Chen & Tsai (2007) state that there is a positive and significant relationship between tourist engagement and future behavioral intentions. Romero (2017) states that customer engagement plays an important role in developing advocacy behavior or offering information for the development of new products/services. Vivek et, al., (2012) explained that tourist engagement has an effect on tourist loyalty. Brodie et, al., (2013) revealed that the engagement of tourists will encourage more loyal tourists. Hollebeek (2011) states that tourist engagement has an effect on tourist loyalty. So et, al., (2014) explained that engagement is related to the level of individual interest in services.

The research findings explain that the dimension of ability to pay attention is one of the dimensions of concern for tourists to the sustainability of natural tourist destinations. Tourists tend to pay attention to the activities carried out by other tourists or managers in natural tourist destinations. Tourists try to find information related to natural tourist destinations both online and offline. Then. tourists try to always maintain the cleanliness of natural tourist destinations by getting involved in waste management. cleanliness of public facilities which will ultimately make tourists comfortable and will be willing to return to natural tourist destinations.

### **The Mediation of Tourist Engagement on The Effect of Destination Quality on Tourist Loyalty**

Based on the results of the analysis, it can be stated that the quality of the destination affects the loyalty of tourists through the strength of tourist engagement. The previous literature review in examining the effect of destination quality on tourist loyalty still leaves differences in research results (research gap), so it is better to add a mediating variable. Therefore, in this study the researchers added one variable, namely the strength of tourist engagement as an intervening variable that plays a role in mediating the relationship between destination quality and tourist loyalty. The results of the analysis prove that the strength of tourist engagement can significantly mediate the influence of destination quality with tourist loyalty seen from the value of the direct effect and indirect effect mediated through the strength of tourist engagement so as to produce the value of the total influence (total effect). effect) which has a significant level.

The quality of natural tourist destinations is perceived by tourists as relatively good. taking into account that the quality of the manager. travel quality. and the quality of the destination features is in line with tourist expectations. This is in line with the statement Wang et, al., (2017) explained that the perception of destination quality has a positive influence. significant. and directly to WOM in a positive way. Then Rajaratnam et, al., (2015) stated that the perception of the quality of the destination affects the behavior of tourists. This finding explains that the strength of tourist engagement in natural tourist destinations is based on the quality of natural tourist destinations as an assessment for tourists to show loyalty to visiting natural tourist destinations. The higher the quality of destinations offered by natural tourism destination managers, the more tourists will be actively involved in tourism activities and tend to increase tourist loyalty.

### **CONCLUSION**

The research findings explain that the quality of the destination affects the engagement of tourists. Destination quality and tourist engagement have an effect on tourist loyalty and tourist engagement as a mediating variable has been tested empirically in this study as an important predictor of destination quality in increasing tourist loyalty. The results of this study provide an important contribution and expand the repertoire of marketing management science. especially the science of tourism marketing management and strengthen the theory of Service Dominant Logic. This research can be useful information for tourist destination managers to better know and understand the loyalty of tourists visiting tourist destinations.

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