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Exploring the Impact of Destination Brand Equity on Destination Value, Destination Loyalty and Destination Advocacy

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ABSTRACT: This study explores and map the existing literature on destination personality, awareness, quality, culture, image, value, and loyalty all contribute to destination advocacy through a mixed method approach. The first study adopted partial least squares structural equation model to analyse the data gathered from 392 respondents from Sambalpur, Dhenkanal, Puri, Khordha, Kandhamal of Odisha. The study demonstrates that while Destination Awareness (DA) and Destination Quality (DQ) do not generate substantial serial effects, only Destination Personality (DP) and Destination Culture (DC) provide a significant serial route through Destination Image (DI), Destination Value (DV), and Destination Loyalty (DL) toward Destination Advocacy. These findings were validated through a qualitative inquiry in the second study. It improved our comprehension of Destination Advocacy (DAV) and increase the efficacy of its strategies. It will provide policymakers and stakeholders with important information and strategic inputs. They may use this information to prioritize cultural events, promote heritage, and design focused initiatives.

1. INTRODUCTION

In this era of heightened global competition and experiential consumption, destinations are no longer evaluated solely on the basis of tangible attractions or infrastructural endowments (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999; Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Panzera et al., 2021; Benur & Bramwell, 2015). However, the tourism in recent years has shaped by intangible, perceptual dimensions, cognitive evaluations, affective attachments, and conative intentions (Park & Jang, 2013). As tourists' are confronted with an abundance of destination choices (Karl et al., 2020) and information sources, their decisions are guided less by objective attributes and more by how destinations are perceived, experienced, and remembered (Seddighi & Theocharous, 2002). Destination Image is the integration of perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and impressions of tourists regarding a destination. (Woosnam et al., 2020). The destination image is a multi-faceted concept that evolves through time, depending on a tourist's information search, gaining experience, and perceptions, as well as other sociocultural factors (Kislali et al., 2020; Llodra-Riera et al., 2015; Kim & Chen, 2016). Destination image is constituted through interrelated dimensions like destination personality (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Kumar & Nayak, 2014; Seddighi, & Theocharous, 2002), destination awareness (Milman & Pizam, 1995), destination quality (Assaf & Tsionas, 2015), and destination culture (Dedeoğlu et al., 2020). The concept of destination image involves personality, attractiveness, quality, and culture, which help to influence the emotional connection of tourists, their destination choice, service evaluation, and perception of authenticity and uniqueness.

RQ.1. How do the core dimensions of Destination Image namely Destination Personality, Destination Awareness, Destination Quality, and Destination Culture influence Destination Advocacy in the context of tourism destinations?

The destination brand equity element elements play a role in shaping the image of the destination and in determining whether or not the destination is appealing to the potential visitors. A positive image of a destination is formed by tourist's benefits and losses during their visit and these two elements plays a decisive role in influencing tourists' behavioral intentions. (Jeong & Kim,

2020; Dedeoglu, 2019, Pandza Bajs, 2015). When tourists feel that the destination offers them values, intangible benefits and tangible benefits, they are more likely to be satisfied and attached to the destination (Trauer & Ryan, 2005; Prebensen et al., 2013).

A destination that is high potential is bound to have loyal tourists. The tourists will be satisfied and trust the destination. This will encourage them to keep coming back and recommend it to others over other options. First, the tourists create an image about the destination, followed by evaluation of its value, loyalty and then recommending it to others. This research implies that image, value and loyalty of the destination are correlated to transform tourist perceptions into recommendations.

The present study conceptualizes tourist behaviour as a systematic journey from perception formation to behavioural endorsement. In particular, this paper posits that the impact of Destination personality, Destination awareness, Destination quality and Destination culture on Destination advocacy is not direct but serially mediated by destination image, destination value, and Destination loyalty. First, tourists process destination-related cues, which leads to forming a mental picture of the destination, which, in turn, drives value judgments, which then trigger durable beliefs, which, eventually, are translated into advocacy (Hultman et al., 2015)

RQ.2. To what extent do Destination Image, Destination Value, and Destination Loyalty operate as a serial mediation mechanism in translating destination-related perceptions (Destination Personality, Awareness, Quality, and Culture) into Destination Advocacy?

The study identifies destination characteristics affect destination advocacy through a stepwise model that includes destination image, destination value and destination loyalty. The mediators, therefore, help identify the decision process of tourists and offer valuable information to destination managers on how to create loyal tourists who advocate for destinations.

RQ.3. What is the relative explanatory power of Destination Image, Destination Value, and Destination Loyalty in shaping tourists' progression from destination perception to attitudinal commitment and ultimately to advocacy behavior?

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Destinations are much more than just physical locations. destinations are perceived, judged, and recalled as brands that possess symbolic, emotional, and functional meaning (Hudson & Ritchie, 2009; Tasci & Kozak, 2006; Kladou et al., 2017; Robertson, 2015; Campelo et al., 2014). Destination brand equity depends on how tourists view and evaluate the destination; this impacts their choice of destination, behaviour, and competitive advantage (Boo et al., 2019). As tourists get more and more selective with regards to their destinations and destinations get more sophisticated with their use of technology, Destination Marketing Organizations need to gain knowledge regarding destination brand equity. (Lee et al., 2011; Parris & Guzman, 2023) and brand equity (Feldwick, 1996; Erdem & Swait, 2001). As tourists become more discerning in their choice of destination and destinations embrace digital technology, Destination Marketing Organizations need to understand the development of destination brand equity in order to achieve sustainable competitive advantage (Dwyer et al., 2008). Destinations have come to realize that traditional promotion is often no longer sufficient, and therefore destinations must develop strong brand identities in order to differentiate, favorably position, evoke positive emotional response, increase competitiveness, and ultimately yield loyalty from tourists (Nandan, 2005). In the tourism industry, brand equity is comprised of elements, such as brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty, which contribute to differentiating destinations and increasing their competitiveness (Stylos et al., 2017). Brand image can be described as the collective opinion or perception of a particular travel destination held by a target market. Such information is formed from the tourists' perspective, based on their individual experience, word of mouth and marketing (Tasci, 2020). Research has consistently demonstrated the importance of brand image as a key factor influencing tourist behavior. Yet, there is a lack of research exploring how brand image drives the connection between sets of destination characteristics and brand equity. Understanding the intervening role of brand image is critical to ensure that destination managers could prudently invest limited resources in brand equity-building programs with the expected improvements in brand image as outcomes (Priporas et al., 2022). Destinations invest financially in the physical infrastructure while others destinations put eye on culture and festivals or even digital marketing strategies. The truth is it still uncertain how efficient are all these approaches, regarding to the increment of brand equity from brand image. Tourism literature points out that the most significant competitive advantages that tourist destinations with a positive brand image getting visitors more satisfied, more loyalty, more sustainable in adversity and with more capacity to attract high spending tourists (Kladou and Kehagias, 2014). The theoretical foundation for brand image act as a mediator comes from consumer Behavior studies. These studies indicate that how we think and feel about brands play a crucial role in shaping tourists' intentions and loyalty (Kusumah 2024). Tourists create destination images in their cognitive beliefs and affective feelings. These two factors play an important

role, through which the destination attributes are transformed into the brand equity and increased the competitiveness of the destination (Su et al., 2018).

Review of literature and Hypothesis Development

Literature reveals that destination perception changes are likely to influence tourism development and will give rise to sustainable and responsible tourism. Technological investments are bound to help in promoting green tourism and will aid in economic recovery (Mogaji et al., 2024). The study determines the impact of destination image on tourism in Odisha, providing an insight to stakeholders and policymakers to strategies effective sustainable tourism policies for brand building of the state (Pike, 2007). Keller's (1993). Brand equity exists in customers' minds based on their learning experiences and perceptions, has been widely applied to tourist contexts. According to recent empirical research, visitor happiness, plans to return, and word-of-mouth recommendations are all strongly impacted by destination brand equity (Hamdy et al., 2024). Literature highlights that destination brand equity consists of four key aspects, which include brand awareness, image, perceived quality, and loyalty, all of which contribute to the destination's recognition, tourist's perception, service appraisal, revisit intention, and word-of-mouth (Boo et al., 2009). Recent research highlight that these dimensions work together with brand image being especially crucial in turning awareness into actual visitor Behaviour. The image of a destination plays an important role as a mediation between destination value, destination loyalty, and destination advocacy. (Qu et al.2011) Destination image is an essential element linking these factors to future visitor Behavior. They proposed that for the associations to have a positive effect on brand loyalty, they should be developed into destination images (Zhang et al. 2018). The concept of destination brand equity has evolved from the realm of traditional marketing of consumer products to the specificities of tourism destinations. The literature review provides an in-depth understanding of the conceptual underpinnings and empirical evidence supporting the linkages between destination brand equity dimensions, including destination personality, awareness, quality, and culture, to destination image as a critical outcome. This, in turn, influences destination advocacy, value, and loyalty (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007). Tourist destination advocacy entails how tourists feel about recommending and defending their destination, which denotes the existence of high emotional attachment, good experiences, satisfaction, and positive behavioural intentions. (Rahman et al., 2021). According Pike and Bianchi (2016) argued that destination advocacy is considered to be a more advanced level of tourist loyalty because tourists market the destination by recommending, giving reviews, and sharing it on the Internet (Marchiori & Cantoni, 2015). Moro and Rita (2018) finding out that A positive image of the destination encourages tourists to participate in online advocacy, resulting in increased volume and positive sentiment of online opinions, which enhance the image and popularity of the destination. destination advocacy reflects tourist perceptions of overall value, playing an essential role in destination competitiveness and quality. By assessing tourist perceptions of value, we obtain valuable information on the basis of destination competitiveness and level of satisfaction of tourists. Value perceptions can be functional, emotional, social, or related to knowledge. (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). According to Lee, Yoon, and Lee (2007) explored destination value is created in tourism, showing that the images destinations project can significantly influence tourists' expectations and how they evaluate their experiences. A positive destination image enhances the tourists' perceived value and satisfaction level. Destination Loyalty is defined as the tourists' tendency to visit the destination again (Oliver, 1999; Oppermann, 2000). Destination loyalty is a tourists' willingness to revisit a destination, which are expressed through repeated visits and word-of-mouth communication of the destination after the initial visit (Dick & Basu, 1994). Establishing loyalty is not an easy task for new destinations since new visitors do not have any experience to influence their perception (Petrick, Morais, & Norman, 2001). Loyalty is significantly impacted by the destination image, since pre-visit expectations of the tourists affect the loyalty intentions, while post-visit experiences and evaluations impact actual loyalty (Prayag, Hosany, & Odeh, 2013). loyalty can vary at every stage of the visitor experience, and Destination personality is concerned with the human-like characteristics associated with a place, which in turn influences the way tourists perceive its distinct atmosphere. From Aaker's (1997) Ekinci, and Hosany (2006) Destination personality helps tourists in identifying destinations using human characteristics. Destination personality plays an important role in shaping the attitude of tourists, their satisfaction level, and revisiting intention. In the case of Odisha, cultural authenticity can help build destination personality. Usakli and Baloglu (2011) also confirmed that a strong destination personality can enhance both the image of the destination and loyalty among visitors.

H1- There is a significant relation between Destination Image, Destination Value, and Destination Loyalty serially mediate the effect of Destination Personality on Destination Advocacy.

The Destination Awareness refers to the tourists' capability of recognizing and remembering a particular destination and has a greater impact on their intention to revisit (Milman & Pizam, 1995; Jenkins, 1999). Destination awareness depends on tourist

markets where continuous marketing efforts are required, supported by positive word-of-mouth to keep recognition stable and improve tourists' awareness of destinations (Kozinets et al., 2010; Ferguson, 2008). Destination awareness impacts tourists' decisions to choose the destination and positively affects destination images. Higher awareness increases tourist appeal and travel intention, while lesser-known destinations in Odisha have problems with competition against popular tourism brands (Tasci et al., 2025).

H2- There is a significant relation between Destination Image, Destination Value, and Destination Loyalty serially mediate the effect of Destination Awareness on Destination Advocacy.

Perceived destination quality refers to how tourists assess the overall excellence and superiority of their experiences at a destination. It consists of both the tangible components like the facilities and services as well as the intangible components like the atmosphere and feelings (Zeithaml 1988). It is imperative to adopt honesty, ethical practices to protect cultural heritage, and follow sustainable tourism practices in order to ensure the quality of a destinations In Odisha. the pursuit of service quality is well-rounded with cultural integrity which results in positive impressions of services received by visitors (Pinke-Sziva et al., 2024).

H3- There is a significant relation between Destination Image, Destination Value, and Destination Loyalty serially mediate the effect of Destination Quality on Destination Advocacy.

Destination culture includes both physical and non-physical elements that form the basis of visitor's ideas and experiences. Odisha is rich in heritage, classical dance, temple construction, crafts, and tribal traditions (Venugopal et al., 2024).

H4- There is a significant relation between Destination Image, Destination Value, and Destination Loyalty serially mediate the effect of Destination Culture on Destination Advocacy.

3. METHODOLOGY

Study-1

The study employs Smart PLS-SEM for quantitative analysis to explore the relationships between variables. To collect data, an online questionnaire was adapted, featuring a 7-point Likert scale, and was distributed to visitors of Odisha. A purposive sampling technique was utilized, resulting in 392 responses from tourist participants.

3.1. Sampling procedure

Purposive sampling is used to collect data from respondents in Odisha. We visit several tourist locations and gather information using a questionnaire. We connect with people who are interested in eco-friendly travel by having in person interactions. We question participants, "Are you aware of brand equity in both English and Odia?" to start the conversation. This aids in the selection of qualified participants for our research. Following ethical research rules, all replies are gathered in an anonymous manner.

3.2. Sample Size

542 replies in all are gathered. Only 392 legitimate replies are selected for data analysis after all responses have been examined. A bigger sample size is preferred since it improves the dependability of the results (Charter, 1999). This is the justification for choosing a greater sample size than the minimal required. According to the demographic profile of the 392 respondents in table-1. 34.2% of participants are female and 65.8% of participants are male. The majority of responders are between the ages of 21 and 65, with the largest percentage falling within the 21–30 age bracket. The majority of the sample is young, as evidenced by the fact that 64.8% of people are single. In terms of education, students make up the largest group (44.9%), followed by postgraduates and undergraduates. All things considered, the sample shows a population that is primarily young, male, and focused on education, providing insightful information about how they see the location.

Table.1. Profile Demography

Variable	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	258	65.80%
	Female	134	34.20%

Age	21–30 years	148	37.80%
	31–45 years	124	31.60%
	46–65 years	120	30.60%
Marital Status	Unmarried	254	64.80%
	Married	138	35.20%
Educational Qualification	Student	176	44.90%
	Undergraduate	122	31.10%
	Postgraduate	94	24.00%

3.3. Measurement

An adaptable questionnaire is being created. For every build, scale objects are being modified. The dimensions under investigation in this study are being measured using a 7-point Likert scale that goes from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

Structural equation modelling (SEM) and SmartPLS 4 are used to analyse the gathered data. Because PLS-SEM can handle intricate structural interactions, it is a useful method for assessing conceptual models. According to (Sarstedt et al., 2024) PLS-SEM is a suitable and advised technique for analysing theoretical models intended to forecast and explain important target constructs, especially dependent variables.

Study. 2

In the study two we have conducted a qualitative inquiry to verify the study one. In this we have followed the qualitative process of iterative and research paradigm. The type of research is pertinent for gaining live experiences, subjective representations, and multi-dimensional perspectives (Klein & Myers, 1999). This qualitative interviews were designed to gain deeper insights, role-specific perspectives and richer narratives on the transition dimensions. We have used semi structured questionnaire having representations from all the thematic indicators. These responses were thematically coded into first-order category and which again grouped into the second-order category (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The qualitative studies were conducted for 16 tourists 8 males and 8 females, through a semi-structured questionnaire where each interviews took around 40 minutes. All the questions were in English language as translated in local language where required. All the respondents were initially briefed about the purpose and context of the interview and given a free, relaxed environment to answer the questions without any compulsions or pressures. When the respondents answering the answers were written and coded during the interview itself by preparation of notes and brief wig nets, secondly, these codes were decoded and thematic categories were prepared according to various sub-themes, these are said to be the first-order codes, thirdly, broader theoretical categories were formulated by combining various sub-thematic categories, the last step generalized categories as aggregate theoretical categories that were formed to generate theory. The data deduction was done through an inductive and iterative process in a constant comparative method (Fendt and Sach, 2008).

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Quantitative Analysis

4.1.1. Common method bias

Harman's single factor test used to be the go-to method for identifying common method bias (CMB), but it's not as popular anymore. These days, a more effective strategy is to introduce a random dependent variable and link it to all the constructs in the model. By examining the inner VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) values for these connections, we can assess CMB. If all the VIF values are below 3.3, it indicates that CMB isn't a concern, which helps us ensure that our measurements are trustworthy and our model holds up. The results show that common method bias isn't a significant problem in the research (Podsakoff, P.M et al., 2024). Table-2 shows the inner VIF values of the brand equity construct and all the constructs connect to a single

random variable the result comes below 3.3 so there is no CMB exist. demonstrating low levels of multi-collinearity between the independent variables, making it possible to identify their individual impacts more clearly. Furthermore, inner VIFs were found below the threshold of 3.3 (Kock, 2015).

Table.2. Inner VIF Values

	DA	DC	DAV	DI	DL	DP	DV	Random
DA								1.069
DC								1.538
DAV								1.061
DI								1.673
DL								1.057
DP								1.379
DV								1.086
Random								

Source(s): Author own work

4.1.2. Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement calculation for the construct was evaluated according to the guidelines set by Hair et al. (2017) and Shmueli et al. (2019). The factor loadings were mostly above the threshold of 0.7, as shown in Table 2 (Sarstedt et al., 2019). The concept of reliability of indicators means that we consider how well the item represents the underlying concept in terms of the outer loading. The level of 0.70 and above of outer loading is considered reliable and proves the high correlation of the item with the concept. It is connected with the R^2 of 0.50, meaning that the concept accounts for at least 50% of the variability of the item. Low-loaded items should be deleted because they poorly measure the concept. Now it is time to move to the main topic of reliability and validity: the good value of Cronbach's alpha is 0.6, rho_ and rho_c are equal to 0.7, and the AVE should be no lower than 0.5. Essentially, 50% of each indicator's variance should be explained by the underlying construct, so all the squared factor loadings need to be at least 0.5. If the indicator reliability falls between 0.4 and 0.7 and the AVE is 0.5, then we can keep those indicators. So, if the outer loading results show that all AVE values are below the threshold of 0.5, I'll retain only the necessary indicators. The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio is used to determine the constructs' discriminant validity. The discriminant validity of the concept was demonstrated by HTMT ratios, which were clearly below the 0.85 above 9 its is not acceptable threshold limit.in table 3 (Sarstedt et al., 2015)

Table-3. Reliability Outcomes

Indicators	Construct	Outer loadings	Cronbach alpha	Rho_a	Rho_c	AVE
DP1	Destination personality	0.796	0.821	0.838	0.88	0.647
DP2		0.855				
DP3		0.782				
DP4		0.783				
DI1	Destination image	0.873	0.903	0.904	0.928	0.72
DI2		0.84				
DI3		0.832				
DI4		0.88				
DI5		0.818				

DQ1	Destination quality	0.743	0.814	0.863	0.889	0.729
DQ2		0.882				
DQ3		0.926				
DA1	Destination awareness	0.838	0.694	0.701	0.83	0.62
DA2		0.729				
DA3		0.792				
DC1	Destination culture	0.847	0.93	0.931	0.945	0.742
DC2		0.837				
DC3		0.84				
DC4		0.906				
DC5		0.881				
DC6		0.855				
DL1	Destination loyalty	0.895	0.777	0.781	0.899	0.817
DL2		0.913				
DV1	Destination Value	0.943	0.605	0.846	0.818	0.696
DV2		0.708				
DAV1	Destination Advocacy	0.919	0.736	0.774	0.882	0.788
DAV2		0.856				

Source(s): Author own work

4.1.3. Structural Model Assessment

The connections suggested in the hypotheses and demonstrate how they can be useful in predicting outcomes. To evaluate our research propositions, we compute the p-values using the bootstrapping method with 10,000 samples recommended (Henseler et al., 2023). To tackle multicollinearity issues, we relied on Inner VIF values that were set at a limit of 3.33 (Hair et al., 2022). It's important to highlight that all the path coefficients between the suggested relationships are significant shown in fig-1

Table.4. Structural Model Assessment

	DA	DC	DAV	DI	DL	DP	DQ	DV
DA								
DC	0.536							
DAV	0.47	0.579						
DI	0.372	0.823	0.478					
DL	0.535	0.828	0.488	0.567				
DP	0.383	0.434	0.812	0.588	0.299			
DQ	0.42	0.639	0.402	0.39	0.869	0.26		
DV	0.826	0.578	0.54	0.4	0.572	0.449	0.471	

Source: Author own work

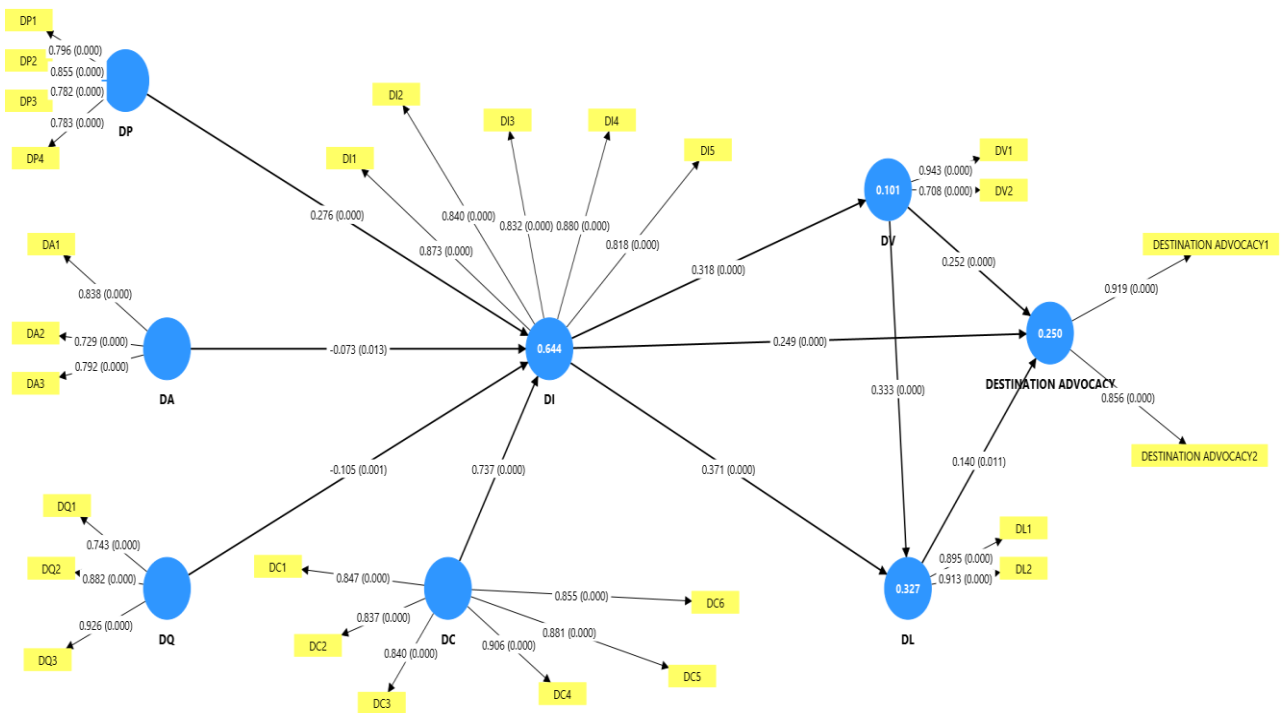


Fig-1: Proposed model structural model assessment. Source: Author own work

4.1.4. Mediaton Result

Destination image as mediator has significant positive role where the relationship between DI -> DV -> DA and DI -> DL -> DA has a significant positive total impact and specific indirect impact with ($\beta = 0.080$, T-Stat= 3.384, $p = 0.000$) and ($\beta = 0.052$, T stat= 2.149, $p = 0.016$) which support the hypotheses proposed (Table 4).

4.1.5. Serial Mediation Result

serial Mediation analysis of the study reveals that the adoption of destination personality, destination awareness, destination quality, destination culture has direct, indirect, and total significant effects on destination advocacy, having destination image as the mediator. The direct effects reveal that factors like destination personality, awareness, quality, and culture all play a role in shaping the destination image. This image is significantly influenced throughout the process. On an indirect level, all four elements also impact how much people advocate for a destination. While awareness and quality have a slight negative effect, personality tends to have a positive influence. Culture emerges to have the greatest influence, which makes evident its significance in fostering tourist advocacy.

The specific indirect effects show that both destination personality and culture exert a positive effect on destination advocacy through the process of image, value, and loyalty. However, the indirect effects of destination awareness and destination quality are very weak and insignificant. In conclusion, it is the personality and culture which affect advocacy via the mediation factors depicted in Table (5,6).

Table 4. Path coefficient

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Significant
DA -> DI	-0.073	-0.069	0.033	2.216	0.013	Yes
DC -> DI	0.737	0.736	0.047	15.791	0.000	Yes

DI -> DAV	0.249	0.248	0.053	4.689	0.000	Yes
DI -> DL	0.371	0.372	0.058	6.369	0.000	Yes
DI -> DV	0.318	0.319	0.055	5.832	0.000	Yes
DL -> DAV	0.140	0.141	0.061	2.280	0.011	Yes
DP -> DI	0.276	0.275	0.048	5.773	0.000	Yes
DQ -> DI	-0.105	-0.103	0.033	3.142	0.001	Yes
DV -> DAV	0.252	0.253	0.053	4.754	0.000	Yes
DV -> DL	0.333	0.331	0.055	6.031	0.000	Yes

Table 5. Mediation results

Total indirect effect	β values	T-statistics	P values	Significant
DA to DAV(DA->DAV)	-0.029	2.252	0.012	yes
DP to DAV (DP->DAV)	0.109	4.853	0.000	yes
DQ to DAV (DQ->DAV)	-0.042	3.124	0.001	yes
DC to DAV(DC->DAV)	0.292	7.615	0.000	yes

Table-6. Specific indirect effect

Specific indirect effect	β values	T-statistics	P values	Significant
DA->DI->DV->DL->DAV	-0.001	1.517	0.065	NO
DP->DI->DV->DL->DAV	0.004	1.773	0.038	YES
DQ->DI->DV->DL->DAV	-0.002	1.568	0.059	NO
DC->DI->DV->DL->DAV	0.011	2.070	0.019	YES

Table-7. Hypothesis Result

Hypothesis	P values	Result
DA->DI->DV->DL->DAV	0.065	Rejected
DP->DI->DV->DL->DAV	0.038	Accepted

DQ->DI->DV->DL->DAV	0.059	Rejected
DC->DI->DV->DL->DAV	0.019	Accepted

This research examines how certain essential dependent variables such as destination advocacy can be used to predict outcomes through the PLS-Predict approach (Danks et al, 2018). The results seem to indicate that the predictions generated from the model can be applicable in different scenarios in the future. A predictive value exceeding 0.02 can be seen as adequate, indicating a strong predictive capability for applying the results in the future (Richter et al, 2016). The results of the Q^2 value are shown in Table 7.

Table.8. Standardized Root Mean Square Residual Table

Items	Q^2_{predict}
DAV1	0.245
DAV2	0.176
DI1	0.422
DI2	0.475
DI3	0.467
DI4	0.48
DI5	0.427
DL1	0.227
DL2	0.286
DV1	0.163
DV2	0.054

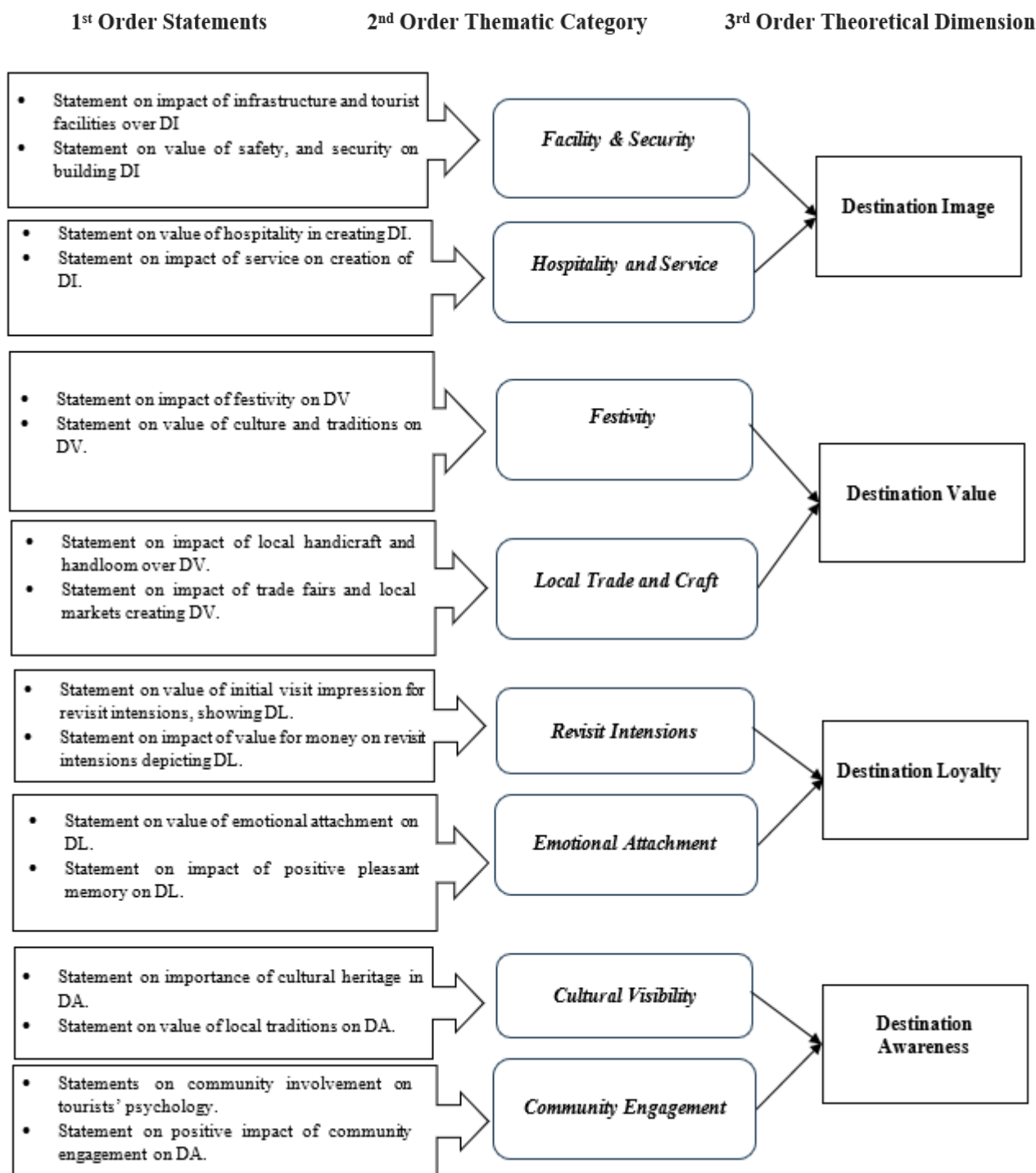
Source(s): Author own work

The dependent variable has an R^2 value of 25%, which suggests a moderate to high level of explained variance. When we look at Destination Image, it boasts an R^2 of 64.4%, indicating a moderate effect. On the other hand, Destination Loyalty comes in at 32.7%, also falling within that moderate to high range. Destination Value, however, is a bit lower at 10.1%, pointing to a weak effect. According to common guidelines, R^2 values of 0.02–0.15, 0.15–0.35, and anything above 0.35 are categorized as weak, moderate, and strong effects, respectively. Ozili (2023) mentions that R^2 values between 0.10 and 0.50 are generally acceptable in social science research, especially when most predictors are statistically significant, as illustrated in Table 8. The model fit, evaluated using the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) (Hair et al., 2017), demonstrates good explanatory power with an SRMR of 0.075, which is comfortably below the recommended threshold of 0.080. shown in table 8

Table 8. R^2 and model fit

	Saturated model	Estimated model	Constructs	R-square	R-square adjusted
SRMR	0.075	0.131	DAV	0.25	0.244
			DI	0.644	0.64
			DL	0.327	0.323
			DV	0.101	0.099

4.2. Qualitative Analysis



Note: This diagram is adapted from Gioia et al. 2022

Theoretical Dimension -1 (Destination Image)

The image of the destination can be built through facilities provided, the safety and security available, the kind of cleanliness, health, and hygiene observed, and the hospitality they provide. The theoretical inquiry segmented the DI dimensions into two broader thematic categories 1. Facilities and security, 2. Hospitality and service.

Facility and Security

The basic amenities and infrastructure remained the priority when tourists think of any destination, they are even more concerned about how secure the place is as told by one of them:

“...I prefer the destination which has good infrastructure and tourist facilities...”, (Male, Age-48), while another tourist added that “...For me safety is the first priority while choosing any destination...” (Female, Age-62).

Hospitality and Service

The second important aspect which most tourist consider while choosing any destination is the kind of hospitality and service available at a particular destination. As per one of the tourist who stated:

“... We get first-hand information on how the tourist are treated and how friendly people of that place...” (Male, Age-43), seconded by another tourist “...I see whether service given are money worth or not...” (Male, Age-39)

Theoretical Dimension -2 (Destination Value)

The value of the destination is demarcated by the tourists visiting those places. Parameters like festivity, food, service, and local trade and crafts played a pivotal role in determination of DV.

Festivity

The local festival attracts many tourists as it provides a range of activities, local food, and exhibition of local folk culture, all these attracts tourist from many places. Local festivals like Bali Yatra of Cuttack, Rath Yatra, Chandan Yatra, and Snana Yatra of Puri, Nuakhai and Sital Sasthi Yatra of Sambalpur, Magha Mela of Dhenkanal, Punkulu Puja of Kandhamal, and Raja Mahotsabh of Khorda district attracts many tourists from across the world. As pointed out by one

“... The local festival of particular region is the best attraction...” (Female, Age-33). The attractions can also be depicted from prompt response from another tourist, who stated with a smile that *“...The local traditions, food are the interesting part for me...” (Female, Age-32).*

Local Trade and Crafts

Local trade, handlooms, and handicrafts are another point of attraction for the tourist which enhance the value of the destination. The Pipili Handicraft and ikat silk of Puri, The Sambalpuri Saree of Sambalpur, Dokra and Terracotta Art of Kandhamal, Toshali Mela of Khorda etc are known for their local trade and craft and tourists planned to spend time and purchase these goods in these regions. As the tourists rightly point out that

“...I always look for local handicrafts and other things to purchase when I visit any places...” (Female, Age-35). Another tourist told *“...My family enjoy to spend time on shopping at the local market of the tourist places” (Male, Age-46).*

Theoretical Dimension -3 (Destination Loyalty)

The loyalty of tourist is one of the most important factor in DAV. It enhances the image of the destination as well as the loyalty for the destination. DL can be determined by considering two aspects: 1. Revisit intension, 2. Emotional Attachment

Revisit Intension

The revisit intention shows the level of satisfaction of tourists as well as the value of the destination in their mind. As, tourists usually revisit those destinations where they received highest satisfaction. As narrated by a few tourists

“...My first visit forms the basis for the second visit as per my satisfaction...” (Male, Age-37). Another tourist viewed that *“...We prefer to revisit the places where we get maximum value for money...” (Female, Age-38).*

Emotional Attachment

In many cases destination loyalty stems from the emotional attachment of the person for a particular destination due to some personal condition. It also attracts more tourists, and make the existing tourists to endorse the destination. It can best infer from the following responses:

".... I mostly revisit those places where I am attached emotionally like place of our honeymoon..." (Male, Age-49). Another tourist responded "....I am positive about visiting those places where I have pleasant memories...." (Female, Age-34)

Theoretical Dimension -4 (Destination Awareness)

The awareness about the destination is the primary step of tourists' DAV. The DA can be from other tourists, internet. Social media or from any other sources. It creates a level of expectation about the destination inside the tourist, and if the destination provides much more beyond the expectation of the tourist go for DAV.

Cultural Heritage

Tourist search from various sources about the destination, its culture, heritage, nearby places to visit, historical monuments, popular spots etc. then took decision to visit or not. It can be viewed from these statements of the tourists:

"Our first pick are those places which are known for their culture and heritage...." (Male, Age-52). Similarly, another tourist answered that "....The popular traditions of places attracts us to travel various places..." (Female, Age-31)

Communities Engagement

The community engagement and involvement of community in the tourism activities gives a favourable image of the destination. The DA of tourist about the community involvement and engagement drive them for DAV. It can be inferred from the following statements:

"...I feel it is interesting when the local communities involved in the process...." (Female, Age-37). Another male tourist responded to the question saying ".... We have positive image for the places which provides jobs to local communities..." (Male, Age-45)

4.6. Triangulation of Destination Image, Destination Value, Destination Loyalty, and Destination Advocacy

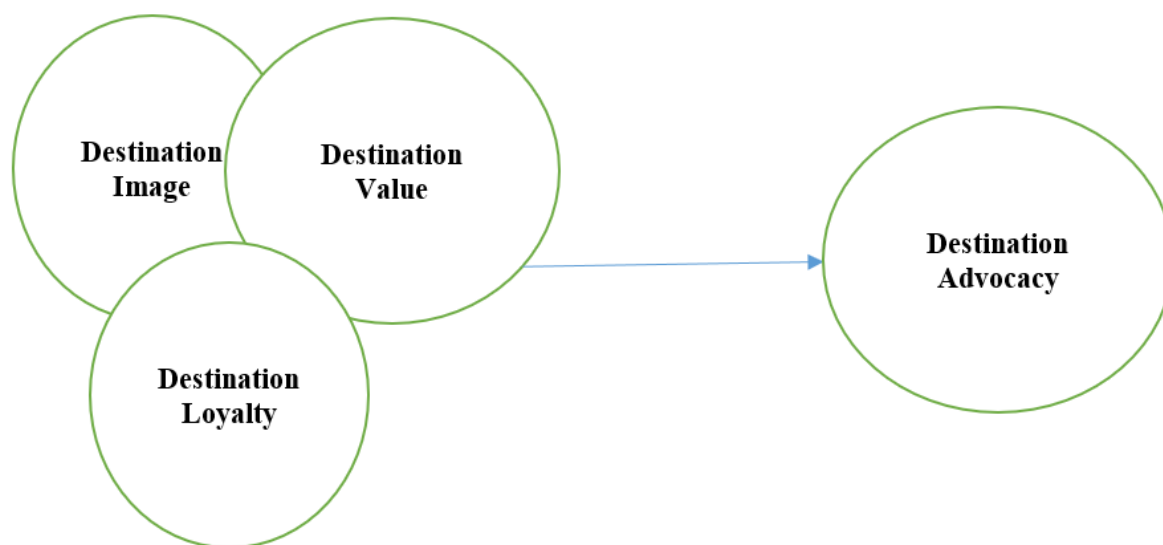


Figure. Triangulation of Destination Image, Destination Value, Destination Loyalty, and Destination Advocacy

DI emerges as a foundational construct that frames how potential and actual visitors interpret, evaluate, and emotionally connect with a destination. Rather than being a monolithic concept, DI is best understood as a multidimensional formation encompassing DP, DA, DQ, and DC. These dimensions interact synergistically to shape tourists' perceived DV, which subsequently drives DL and ultimately manifests as DAV.

At the cognitive affective level, DP humanizes the destination by attributing symbolic and emotional traits such as excitement, sincerity, sophistication, or authenticity that allow tourists to relate to places in a manner similar to interpersonal relationships. A distinctive and congruent destination personality fosters emotional attachment, enhancing affective evaluations and reducing perceived risk in destination choice. In parallel, DA plays a critical enabling role by ensuring that the destination is cognitively accessible within tourists' consideration sets. High awareness not only increases familiarity but also reinforces credibility, which

strengthens the salience of other image dimensions. Without sufficient awareness, even destinations with strong cultural assets or quality infrastructure struggle to convert potential interest into actual visitation.

DQ represents the functional and experiential core of DI, encompassing infrastructure, service excellence, safety, accessibility, and overall performance consistency. High perceived quality confirms or disconfirms expectations formed during the pre-visit image formation stage, thereby exerting a decisive influence on tourists' satisfaction judgments. Meanwhile, DC injects authenticity and symbolic meaning into the destination experience. Cultural heritage, local traditions, social norms, and lifestyle expressions contribute to the uniqueness of the destination and facilitate deeper experiential immersion. Collectively, DP, DA, DQ, and DC do not operate in isolation; instead, they converge to produce a holistic destination image that integrates rational evaluation with emotional resonance.

This multidimensional DI functions as a critical antecedent to DV, which reflects tourists' overall assessment of the benefits received relative to the sacrifices made (monetary, temporal, psychological, and effort-related). A positive and coherent destination image enhances perceived value by amplifying experiential rewards and justifying costs. For instance, strong cultural richness and service quality elevate experiential and emotional value, while high awareness and a trustworthy personality reinforce confidence and reduce uncertainty costs. Thus, DV emerges as a mediating construct that translates image-based perceptions into evaluative judgments grounded in utility and satisfaction.

The progression from DV to DL represents a shift from evaluative appraisal to behavioural intention. When tourists perceive high value, they are more likely to develop attitudinal loyalty, expressed through favourable attitudes and emotional commitment, as well as behavioural loyalty, reflected in revisit intentions. Importantly, loyalty in destination contexts is not solely transactional; it is relational and experiential. Repeated positive value experiences anchored in a strong destination image cultivate trust, attachment, and psychological bonding, making tourists less sensitive to competing destinations and promotional incentives.

The final and most strategic outcome of this triangulated process is DAV. Loyal tourists who perceive high destination value and maintain a favourable image are more likely to engage in advocacy behaviours, such as positive word-of-mouth, online reviews, social media endorsement, and active recommendation to peers. Advocacy extends beyond repeat visitation by transforming tourists into voluntary brand ambassadors who co-create destination reputation and credibility. In an era dominated by user-generated content and peer influence, destination advocacy represents a powerful, cost-efficient mechanism for sustainable destination marketing and long-term competitiveness. In sum, this triangulation demonstrates that Destination Image, through its personality, awareness, quality, and cultural dimensions, forms the perceptual foundation upon which DV is constructed. Perceived value, in turn, catalyses DL, which ultimately evolves into DAV.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results derived from the process of serial mediation and the qualitative research indicated that not all antecedent factors affect destination advocacy via the entire chain of destination image, destination value, and destination loyalty. The link between Destination awareness and destination advocacy is not significant, as shown by a p-value of 0.065. Conversely the impact of Destination Personality on Destination Advocacy is substantial, given its p-value of 0.038. In this case the more tourists attribute a special personality to a destination, the more positive perception of the destination and a higher value they ascribe to it they receive. In addition, it is important to mention that personality creates the psychological link that is working well through all three mediators of the event. When it comes to destination quality, the serial pathway isn't significant ($p = 0.059$). Even though quality is crucial, this result implies that tourists might react to quality more directly rather than through a lengthy chain of mediating evaluations. Quality by itself may not be sufficient to lead them toward loyalty-based advocacy, especially when other emotional or experiential elements aren't strongly present. Lastly, the serial mediation from DC to DAV is significant ($p = 0.019$). This highlights that cultural aspects play a profound and impactful role in shaping image, value, and loyalty. When cultural elements resonate with visitors, they move through the entire evaluative chain, ultimately leading to active advocacy. The qualitative study as well as the triangulation was grounded in the premise that tourists' behavioural outcomes are shaped through a sequential perceptual evaluative relational process. Specifically, DI functions as a higher-order formative construct composed of DP, DA, DQ, and DC. This multidimensional image influences tourists' perceived DV, which subsequently drives DL and culminates in DAV. The framework integrates cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions of tourist behaviour, offering a holistic explanation of how destinations transform visitors into loyal advocates.

5.1 Theoretical Implications

The results contribute to a better perspective on destination branding notions by proving how destination personality and culture contribute significantly to tourists' perception, values, loyalty, and advocacy. In destinations rich in culture such as Odisha, cultural identity and emotional experiences contribute more to destination branding than any other factor like awareness or service quality. The unified framework specifies that it is necessary to combine symbolic meaning, functional performance, and emotional attachment to achieve permanent tourist loyalty.

5.2 Practical implication

It is clear from the results that the personality and culture of the destination play a critical role in the development of tourism in Odisha. The promotion of the destination needs to focus more on its heritage, festivals, crafts, temples, and other cultural aspects in order to establish its image and encourage loyalty and advocacy.

5.3. Limitations and future Research

A limitation of the study is the data takes from only five districts of Odisha including Sambalpur, Dhenkanal, Puri, Khordha, and Kandhamal as a result this may not give an accurate picture of the visitor's experiences across Odisha. In addition, this research conducts a study using only limited essential variables leaving out other aspects that may influence advocacy. Future studies may take larger samples from different regions of Odisha and include additional components such as visitor participation, satisfaction, and emotions. More insights may also be gained through comparative studies with other states in India.

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