Symbolic, experiential and functional consumptions of heritage tourism destinations: the case of Angkor World Heritage Site, Cambodia

Abstract

This study empirically investigates the effects of three destination consumptions (namely symbolic, experiential and functional) on tourists' destination attachment and satisfaction, and further on destination loyalty at a heritage tourism destinations. Using a sample of 512 international tourists visiting Angkor, Cambodia, results reveal that all three types of consumptions have significantly positive effects on destination attachment and satisfaction, which in turn positively affect destination loyalty. However, the effects of symbolic consumption and experiential consumption are greater than that of functional consumption. The results also support the importance of the role of destination attachment in the quality-satisfaction-loyalty relationship.

Keywords: symbolic consumption, experiential consumption, functional consumption, heritage tourism

1. Introduction

Tourism consumption provides an important and meaningful part of an individual's life (Desforges, 2000), while tourism has been shown to increase economic activity across a destination in the form of tourist receipts, employment and government revenues (Chen & Chen, 2010). As with other branded consumer products, a tourism destination possesses both the tangible and intangible attributes (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006). These can provide a significant means of differentiation, and thus competitive advantage, for products and services (Aaker, 1996). Tourism destination consumption which meets tourists' expectations results in satisfaction and further activates destination loyalty

(Chen & Chen, 2010; Chen & Chen, 2013; Chen & Tsai, 2007). Tourism destination brands are consumed for different tourist motives. Previous studies mainly focus on the functional or physical attributes of the tourism destination as being the main driver of tourists' destination brand consumption (Sirakaya, Sonmez & Choi, 2001). However, recently aspects of tourists' symbolic (Ekinci, Sirakaya-Turk & Previado, 2013) and experiential benefits (Barnes, Mattsson, & Sørensen, 2014; Chen & Chen, 2010; Chen & Chen, 2013; Govers, Go, & Kumar, 2007) of destination consumption quality have been gaining more attention from tourism scholars and practitioners. For example, Ekinci et al. (2013, p.716) address the importance of symbolic attributes of tourism destinations for providing tourists "with a suitable venue for the enactment of self-concept, social identity, and enhancement of lifestyle". Otto and Ritchie (1996) emphasize the experiential nature of tourism consumption and view tourism as a consumption experience that pertains to the multisensory, fantasy and emotive dimensions of visitors' experiences (Barnes et al, 2014; Chen & Chen, 2010; Govers et al., 2007). Given the distinctiveness of various consumption perceptions (functional, symbolic and experiential) and their associated influences on tourists' consumption evaluations and post-consumption destination loyalty, relatively little research can be found to integrate these three types of destination consumptions to depict the whole picture of tourist destination consumption.

Understanding destination loyalty is important as it serves as the strong basis of competitive advantage and sustainability of a destination. With destinations competing to attract tourists and to motivate them to revisit and/or recommend the destinations to others, destination loyalty has attracted growing attention for destination marketing and management research. Academics and practitioners agree that satisfaction is the major antecedent of loyalty (Bigne, Sanchez & Sanchez, 2001; Chen & Chen, 2011; Chen &

Chen, 2013; De Rojas & Camarero, 2008; Martın-Ruiz, Castellanos-Verdugo & Oviedo-Garcıa, 2010 ; Petrick & Backman, 2002; Nam, Ekinci & Whyatt, 2011; Yuksel, Yuksel & Bilim, 2010). Past studies have supported the view that tourist perceived service quality positively affects satisfaction, and, in turn, satisfaction positively influences loyalty and post-visit behaviors. For instance, a satisfied visitor may revisit a destination or recommend it to others who might subsequently visit the destination (Chen & Chen, 2010). Recent tourism research suggests destination attachment, a variable widely studied in recreation and leisure literature, to be an important part of the self and to evoke strong emotions that would influence a person's behavior, including loyalty (Yuksel et al., 2010). They go on to advocate destination attachment as a significant predictor of tourist's loyalty to destination consumption. However, in light of destination consumption, little is known about how the various types of consumption perceptions affect a tourist's destination attachment.

To fill the aforementioned research gap, this study aims to take a deeper look at tourism destination consumption and to empirically investigate the inter-relationships between destination consumption, destination attachment, tourist satisfaction, and destination loyalty. More specifically, we propose a conceptual model (see Figure 1) that integrates the symbolic, experiential and functional consumptions of a tourism destination, and investigate how these consumption patterns affect both destination attachment and satisfaction, and their further influence on loyalty. The findings and discussion are based on data collected from tourists to Angkor, a well-known UNESCO World Heritage destination in Cambodia. The choice of a heritage context in which to empirically examine the proposed conceptual model of this study is ideal for two reasons. Firstly, heritage tourism has become as a popular form of tourism. Heritage sites are the unique tourism resources of a region or country that can be used to differentiate one destination from another. Branding heritage sites is believed to have a

positive influence on brand equity and in attracting tourists to visit both the designated site and others in the region (Poria, Reichel & Cohen, 2011). Thus destination loyalty and repeat visitation can be crucial for the sustainability of a heritage site, particularly pertinent given the current economically challenging operating environment where financial support for heritage conservation is declining and there is an increasing need to demonstrate value. Secondly, heritage attractions are increasingly adapting to a more visitor-oriented perspective, addressing consumer preferences and personal experience quality from the product-led perspective of sites (Apostolakis & Jaffry, 2005). Thus, heritage tourism offers a suitable context within which to investigate the symbolic, experiential and functional aspects of destination consumption.

2.   Theoretical background and hypotheses development

2.1   Destination consumption

In recent years, the concept of consumption of tourism destinations has attracted research attention (Ahn, Ekinci & Li., 2013; Ekinci et al., 2013; Nam et al., 2011; Stokburger-Sauer, 2011). From the perspective of travel motivation theory (Gitelson & Kerstetter, 1990; Park & Yoon, 2009; Shoemaker, 1994), destination consumption is driven by the benefits sought by tourists. The consumption of tourism destination brands, similar with that of other consumer product brands, is argued to be consumed for functional benefits (Murphy, Moscardo & Benckendorff, 2007; Nam et al., 2011), symbolic meanings (Ekinci et al., 2013; Nam et al., 2011; Stokburger-Sauer, 2011), and experiential benefits (Grappi & Montanari, 2011).

Functional consumption

Consumption is viewed as the "selection, purchase, use, maintenance, repair and disposal of any good or service" (Campbell, 1987, p.102). The functional (utilitarian)

value is, to a great extent, the reason why consumers seek to consume a good or service. From the perspective of service quality, functional quality (congruence) of tourism consumption pertains to the "match/ mismatch between perceived performance of the destination's functional attributes and the tourist's ideal performance of the destination's functional attributes (Ahn et al., 2013, p.719)". Extant tourism studies have investigated the functional consumption of tourism destination based on the service quality of the destination (Bigne et al. 2001; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chen & Myagmarsuren, 2010; Nam et al., 2011).

Symbolic consumption

Symbolic consumption is the core part of the self in terms of "creation, enhancement, maintenance, transformation, disposition, expression, association, and differentiation" (Ekinci, et al., 2013, p.711). Since the success of brands depends on their symbolic properties, the symbolic meaning of brand consumption is particularly highlighted. Brands provide symbolic resources for expressing the individual's self-concept (Bhat & Reddy, 1998; Sirgy, 1982); the lifestyle of consumers (Foxall, Goldsmith & Brown, 1998); and their social identity (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Similarly, in the context of tourism consumption, peoples' notions of self can be reflected by the tourism destinations they visit and the tourism activities they engage (Ekinci et al., 2013; Albert, Merunka & Valette-Florence, 2013). To examine how symbolic consumption affects destination loyalty Ekinci et al. (2013) and Nam et al. (2011) focus on three symbolic consumption aspects encompassing self-congruence (the degree of match/mismatch between the destination brand's image and the tourist's actual or ideal self-image); lifestyle-congruence (the degree of match/mismatch between the destination brand experience and tourist's actual or desired lifestyle); and destination brand identification (the brand's effectiveness in delivering information to the consumer, in relation to

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values and personality, and the extent of how the brand integrates into the consumer's self-concept).

Experiential consumption

Given the importance of service (functional) quality in the tourism literature, experiential quality has attracted vast research attentions recently (Chen & Chen, 2010). Otto and Ritchie (1996) differentiate between service quality and experiential quality, where the consumption benefit of service quality is functional or utilitarian while experiential quality is consumed for experiential or hedonic meanings. In terms of measurement, experiential quality is subjective, whereas service quality is objective, based on holistic rather than attribute-based evaluations, and with the evaluations focus on internal self instead of external service environment. Chen and Chen (2010) propose a three factorial structure of experiential quality consisting of peace of mind, educational experience and involvement in the heritage tourism context. Furthermore, Chen and Chen (2013) consider experiential quality with four aspects including hedonics, peace of mind, recognition and involvement to examine heritage tourism experience. Based upon previous studies, this study measures tourist experiential quality with three factors: education (Kang & Gretzel, 2012), escape (Pearce, 2005) and hedonism (Grappi & Montanari, 2011).

2.2   Destination attachment

Analogous to place attachment in recreational and leisure, and given that destination attachment could be a strong predictor of tourists' loyalty towards destinations, the exploration of the nature and degree of destination attachment among tourists would be of value for those organisations involved in marketing tourism destinations (Yuksel et al., 2010). Place attachment relates to the process whereby an individual's cumulative

experiences with both the physical and social aspects of an environment results in the development of strong emotional bonds with that place, and offers a theoretical basis on which to evaluate significant aspects of place. Attachment plays an important role in influencing what visitors see, feel, and think. Research has shown that an emotional connection to a destination enhances the likelihood of tourists demonstrating loyalty toward the place, or of offering positive evaluations to their social group (Yuksel et al., 2010). Two major dimensions of place attachment are place identity and place dependence (Lee, Kyle & Scott, 2012). Place identity pertains to the cognitive link between the personal self and a place, and any psychological investment within that place that has developed over time. Place dependence relates to the functional aspect of place attachment and reflects the importance of a place for specific activities desired by the tourist (Yuksel et al., 2010). Although after visiting a heritage destination a visitor may develop both cognitive connection and functional connection, our study merely centres on the cognitive connection (place identity), because he or she may not revisit the same destination determined by the functional connection (place dependence) in the short term.

2.3 Tourist satisfaction

Tourist satisfaction plays an important role in effective destination marketing since it influences the destination choice behaviour, the consumption of tourism-related products and services whilst in the destination, and loyalty behaviors such as the intent to return or recommend to other potential tourists. Satisfaction is conceived as the perceived discrepancy between prior expectations of a service and its perceived performance (Oliver, 1980; Fornell, 1992). In a tourism context, satisfaction is thus measured by the perceived discrepancy between pre-travel expectations and post-travel experiences. Overall satisfaction with a visit reflects the cumulative feeling that the

tourist experiences as a result of visiting a tourist attraction (Chen & Phou, 2013).

Some studies support that satisfaction within a setting could result in a sense of place attachment (Hou, Lin & Morais, 2005), while others suggest that the type and level of place attachment could result in customer satisfaction (Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Scott & Vitardas, 2008; Veasna, Wu & Huang, 2013). Component satisfaction can be measured by tourists' evaluations on the specific attributes of a destination, while overall satisfaction is described as the aggregate feeling derived from a result of visiting a tourism destination.

2.4 Destination loyalty

Destination loyalty encompasses both attitudinal and behavioral aspects. Attitudinal loyalty concerns a consumer's favourable feeling associated with a brand, while the behavioral loyalty pertains to the re-purchase frequency of a brand (Chen, 2007; Ekinci et al., 2013; Martın-Ruiz et al., 2010). As tourism destination consumptions differ from other consumption types by the characteristic of less likely re-visiting the same destination within a short period time, Chen and Gursoy (2001) argue that the attitudinal loyalty instead of behavioral loyalty is best suited to assess tourists' destination loyalty. Attitudinal loyalty in the tourism context is operationalized as behavioral intention and measured by intention to revisit and willingness to recommend (Chen & Chen, 2010; Chen & Chen, 2013; Martin-Ruiz et al., 2010). The positive association between consumer evaluations and behavioral intentions has been confirmed in the tourism literature (Bignie, et al., 2001; Chen & Chen, 2010, Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chen & Phou, 2013; De Rojas & Camarero, 2008; Petrick & Backman, 2002). Within the heritage context, Barnes et al. (2014) state how heritage brand consumption can be a powerful marketing tool that can build a positive image and emotional links with visitors and their perceived experience, which could in turn link to heritage loyalty, even if they

have no intention to revisit the same destination themselves (Ekinci, et al., 2013).

Service quality, i.e. consumer's perceived consumption evaluation, has been widely identified as one major antecedent of satisfaction and behavioral intentions in the tourism consumption context. The higher the trip quality is, the higher the satisfaction is and furthermore the more positive the behavioral intentions are (Bigne et al. 2001; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chen & Chen, 2010; De Rojas & Camarero, 2008). In addition, service quality which reflects the perceived benefits that the visitors are seeking, has been found to be positively related to place attachment (Brocato et al., 2015; López-Mosquera & Sánchez, 2013) and satisfaction (Barnes et al., 2014; Chen & Chen, 2010; Chen & Chen, 2013; Chen & Myagmarsuren, 2010) in previous studies.

2.5 Hypotheses development

In this study, we take a deeper look at destination consumption and use the classification of functional, symbolic and experiential consumptions. It is reasonable to extend the relationships between service quality and satisfaction as well as attachment to three specific consumptions. Hence, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1: Symbolic consumption is positively related to destination attachment.

H2: Symbolic consumption is positively related to tourist satisfaction.

H3: Experiential consumption is positively related to destination attachment.

H4: Experiential consumption is positively related to tourist satisfaction.

H5: Functional consumption is positively related to destination attachment.

H6: Functional consumption is positively related to tourist satisfaction.

The causal link between place attachment and satisfaction has not been evidenced in

related research, with the aforementioned divergence perhaps due to the conceptualization of satisfaction which can be classified into component satisfaction and overall satisfaction (Mannel & Kleiber, 1997). In this study, we argue that the satisfaction-attachment link holds where component satisfaction is concerned. In contrast, the attachment-satisfaction link exists if overall satisfaction is operationalized in the study. Since overall satisfaction is the case of the present study, we also propose the following hypothesis:

H7: Destination attachment is positively related to tourist satisfaction.

When attachments increase, consumers tend to be more resistant to competing alternatives, more willing to invest in the relationship, and more likely to develop loyalty to stores, brands, products, and services (Park & MacInnis, 2006). Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H8: Destination attachment is positively related to destination loyalty.

Tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty have been widely used in the literature as the outcome variables of an individual's evaluation of a visit (e.g. service quality and perceived value). Positive evaluations (e.g. service quality) lead to higher satisfaction and increase the likelihood of recommending the service to others and repurchasing it. Furthermore, higher satisfaction levels will lead to higher behavioral intention or loyalty (Chen & Chen, 2010; Martın-Ruiz et al., 2010; Nam et al., 2011). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H9: Tourist satisfaction is positively related to destination loyalty.

3. Method

3.1 Study site

Angkor World Heritage Site, Cambodia is chosen as a suitable research site for this study for several reasons. Firstly, Angkor is one of the world's most famous heritage destinations, offering unique identity, culture, activities, and a wide range of accommodation and entertainment for tourists. Featuring on the national flag, the Temple of Angkor Wat is the symbolic representative of Cambodia, with the whole Angkor Archaeological Park contributing significantly to Cambodia's reputation and prestige as an international tourist destination. In accordance with previous research investigating experiential consumption of tourists in a national park (Kang & Gretzel, 2012) and an historical city (Chen & Chen, 2010), Angkor is one of the most important historic archaeological parks in Southeast Asia (Wood & Leray, 2005).

3.2 Sample and procedure

A self-administrated questionnaire survey was used to collect empirical data from international tourists visiting the Angkor tourism destination in Cambodia. Based on a convenience sampling method, international tourists visiting the site in February 2013 were approached and asked to participate in the study, having been advised that their participation was voluntary and their identities would be kept confidential. Respondents were asked to complete the 15-minute survey on site, usually while they were waiting to see the sunset or taking a rest after visiting the Angkor Wat complex. From the 600 questionnaires distributed, we received 512 usable responses after removing incomplete ones, yielding a response rate of 85.3%.

The sample consists of males (52%) and females (48%), with the majority of the respondents being between 18-25 years old (42%) and 26-35 years old (31%). Sixty eight percent of respondents have college or university education, followed by graduate

education (23%) and high school or less (9%). As regards occupation, fifty four percent of the respondents (54%) are employed, 34% are students, 4% unemployed and 3% are retired. Most respondents are first-time visitors (81%), while 19% are repeat visitors. The respondents are from 35 countries, of which 64.3% from Europe, 13.1% North America, and 11.3% Asia and other parts of the world.

3.3 Measures

To establish content validity, we adopted measures and constructs from existing scales, and modified the wordings to suit the research context for content validity purposes (Netemeyer, Bearden & Sharma, 2003). A pretest of the questionnaire was conducted using a sample of 30 postgraduate students studying a travel management program in Taiwan. Based upon the feedback from the pretest results, the survey instrument was revised and finalized. As such, the adequacy of content validity of the survey instrument was ensured. The Appendix presents a complete list of items with their reliability and average variance extracted (AVE) statistics. All construct items were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale (1= "strongly disagree" and 5= "strongly agree").

To measure symbolic consumption, we employed 11 items consisting of three dimensions: four items of destination identification, four items of self-congruence and three items of lifestyle-congruence adopted from Ekinci et al. (2013). Functional consumption was measured by the functional quality scale with ten items adopted from Chen and Myagmarsuren (2010) and Konecnik (2006). Experiential consumption was measured by the experience quality scale with ten items adopted from Grappi and Montanari (2011) and Kang and Gretzel, (2012). Destination attachment was measured with three items of the place identity scale adopted from Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) and He and Harris (2012). Four items of tourist satisfaction and three items of

destination loyalty adopted from Chen and Phou (2013) were used to measure tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty, respectively. Demographic information including gender, age, education level, occupation, nationality, and past visit experience were also collected.

3.4   Data analysis

To verify the reliability of the research constructs adopted in this study, several tests were conducted, including exploratory factors analysis (EFA), correlation analysis, and internal consistency analysis (Cronbach's alpha). Employing the two-step approach proposed by Anderson and Gerbing's (1988), we performed Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) first on the conceptual model to assess the adequacy of all the constructs, and then Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to estimate the model fitness and test causal relationships. The model fit of the hypothesized model to the data is assessed with the chi-squared ($\chi 2$) statistics, the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), the comparative fit index (CFI), the normed fit index (NFI), the Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) and the root mean square of approximation (RMSEA). A small $\chi 2$ (especially statistically no-significant), and larger GFI, CFI, NFI and TLI (>0.9) indicate a good fit. A RMSEA value of 0.08 or smaller indicate that the model represents a reasonable approximation to the population (Hair et al., 2006)

4. Results

Since employing a multi-dimensional approach to measure symbolic consumption, experiential consumption and functional consumption, we conducted a series of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with varimax rotation to verify the dimensionality and reliability of these constructs. According to the EFA results, four dimensions of symbolic consumption were obtained and labeled as 'lifestyle-congruence' (3 items, α

= 0.753), 'self-congruence' (4 items, α = 0.743) and 'destination identification' (3 items, α = 0.727). A three-factorial structure of experiential consumption was obtained and named as 'hedonism' (4 items, α = 0.798), 'escape' (3 items, α = 0.793) and 'education' (3 items, α = 0.723). Functional consumption was delineated into three factors named as 'attraction' (3 items, α = 0.770), 'service quality' (4 items, α = 0.695), 'amenities' (3 items, α = 0.723). The means of the delineated factors of three types of consumption are calculated and used for subsequent analyses.

4.1 Measurement Model

CFA was conducted to check the convergent validity of the constructs in our measurement model and assessed model adequacy using the software program LISREL 8 (Jöroskog & Sörborn, 1996). The goodness-of-fit indices of the CFA results indicate the measurement model is deemed as parsimonious. Although the chi-square statistic ($\chi 2$ =266.73, d.f. = 231) was statistically significant, the ratio of the chi-square to the degrees of freedom ($\chi 2$/d.f. = 1.16) was less than the required cut-off value of 3 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Other indices including GFI (0.99), CFI (0.99), NFI (0.93), TLI (0.99) and RMSEA (0.015) indicate a good model fit (Hair et al., 2010).

The convergent validity of the measurement model was checked by the strength and significance of the factor loadings (i.e. item reliability), the construct reliability and the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct (Hair et al., 2010). As shown in Table 1, the factor loadings of each item were greater than the 0.50 threshold, the construct reliability estimates of all the constructs were over the critical value of 0.70, and the AVEs of the constructs are larger than the suggested value of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). These fit indices indicate the measurement model has a good convergent validity. Discriminant validity of the measurement model is assessed and

confirmed if the square root of AVE of a specific constructs is larger than the correlation coefficients between constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As shown in Table 2, the discriminant validities of all measures are supported.

/Table 1 inserted about here/

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4.2 Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing

We estimated the structural model using the maximum likelihood estimation method. The overall model achieves a good fit with χ^2 (512) = 442.870 (p = 0.000), χ^2/d.f. = 2.129, less than the criteria value of 3. Other indicators of goodness-of-fit also supported the good fit of the structural model (such as CFI = 0.928, NFI = 0.929, TLI = 0.904, RMSEA=0.042). Figure 2 shows the estimated model with the standardized path estimates.

/Figure 2 inserted about here/

As shown in Figure 2, all hypotheses are supported with significant estimates. Symbolic consumption of tourism destination is found to be positively and significantly related to destination attachment (β=0.421, t=6.303) and tourist satisfaction (β=0.393, t=5.591), supporting H1 and H2, respectively. Both H3 which states that experiential consumption (β=0.321, t=4.689) relates to destination attachment and H4 which states that experiential consumption (β=0.240, t=3.670) relates to tourist satisfaction received support. Functional consumption is found to be positively and significantly related to destination attachment (β=0.304, t=4.308) and tourist satisfaction (β=0.207, t=3.135),

indicating H5 and H6 are supported, respectively. Furthermore, destination attachment is related positively and significantly to tourist satisfaction (β=0.248, t=2.813) and destination loyalty (β=0.326, t=3.831), thus supporting H7 and H8. Finally, tourist satisfaction is related significantly and positively to destination loyalty (β=0.610, t=6.449), providing support for H9.

In addition, to examine mediating effects of destination attachment and satisfaction between destination consumption and destination loyalty, we ran a series of alternative models following the approach suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986). The results show the existence of full mediating effects of destination identification and satisfaction. Table3 reports the direct and indirect effects of all hypothesized relationships. All three types of destination consumptions have positive effects on both destination attachment and tourist satisfaction, and indirect effects on tourist satisfaction mediated by destination attachment. Among the three types of destination consumptions, symbolic consumption has the largest direct effects on both destination attachment (0.421) and tourist satisfaction (0.393), followed by experiential consumption and functional consumption. Destination attachment has both direct and indirect effects on loyalty mediated by tourist satisfaction. In terms of total effects on destination loyalty, tourist satisfaction has a greater effect (0.611) than destination attachment (0.474), proving that tourist satisfaction is the main predictor of destination loyalty.

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5. Discussion and implications

This study contributes to the destination consumption literature in three ways. Firstly, drawing on symbolic consumption, experiential consumption and attachment theory, an

integrated destination consumption model is proposed. The current study simultaneously considers symbolic consumption, experiential consumption and functional consumption to investigate how they influence destination attachment, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty within a heritage context. The results of the structural model demonstrated that all three patterns of consumption motivation have significant impacts on tourist destination consumption evaluation and post-visit behavioral intentions. In particular, in comparing the relative strength of visitor behavior among three types of consumptions, our evidence suggests that symbolic and experiential consumptions play more important roles than functional consumption, as consistent with claims in previous studies (Chen & Chen, 2010; Calver & Page, 2013; Ekinci et al., 2013; Nam et al. 2010).

Secondly, drawing on attachment theory, this study advances previous research by adding the role of destination attachment to the traditional knowledge of the 'quality-satisfaction-loyalty' relationship. More specifically, our evidence suggests that destination attachment serves as a mediator between various types of destination consumptions and destination loyalty. In line with the arguments by Yuksel et al. (2013), tourists' destination attachment is viewed not only as an outcome variable which predicts their destination consumption experience, but also as an antecedent variable which predicts satisfaction and loyalty.

Lastly, the study provides important managerial implications for destination marketing managers in terms of facilitating strategies to attract and motivate visitors to have positive behavioral intentions (e.g. revisit and/or recommendation), and ultimately to build tourists' destination loyalty (Pike & Ryan, 2004). Our findings indicate that destination managers need to consider how to meet all three vital consumption motives of a destination, i.e. symbolic consumption, experiential consumption and functional consumption, in order to build tourists' place identity and satisfaction. Only investing

in good functional quality but neglecting symbolic meaning and experiential quality will make it harder to attain sustainability and to enhance the competitive advantages of a destination in the current fiercely competitive environment. Hence, our results advance understandings of the relationship between place attachment and an individual's tourism experience evaluation as well as his/her destination loyalty. Further, our results also provide an empirical support for the positive association between place attachment and satisfaction in a heritage destination context which is underexplored in previous research.

Destination brand managers should aim to match their destination's symbolic meanings to those of potential tourists. Our results suggest that important aspects to match would be through destination identification, self-congruence and lifestyle-congruence. Therefore, strategies could be developed to strengthen the symbolic meanings associated with the destination via the development of heritage tourism products associated with features relating to aspects of local significance within the destination, in conjunction with awareness of the social identity of the potential tourists to the destination. Destination marketers and planners could use images, designs, and cultural artefacts as symbols and inspiration for creating symbolic consumption experiences. The opportunity exists for greater development of symbolic consumption via developing and engaging in travel forums and online communities to target and engage specific markets such as Gen Y. For heritage tourism it is important to enhance the destination loyalty, even if the visitor is likely not to return, as research shows they will still recommend to others in their social group. This is particularly important for groups such as Gen Y who place significant weight on WOM recommendations and online marketing material (Leask, et al., 2013).

In terms of enhancing tourist experiential quality, our results reveal that hedonism, education and escape are the main factors in providing memorable experiences to

tourists. Destination managers could develop, and communicate, heritage tourism products that emphasize these aspects within the destination experience. Instead of offering live performances or activities for tourists to engage with in a passive setting, destination managers could use this opportunity to develop experiences and services that actively engage tourists in activities that could then create the desired exciting hedonic experiences, learning opportunities and feelings of escape. Opportunities exist to target visitors' personalities and preferred modes of engagement with specifically developed heritage resources and opportunities for interaction, alongside the development of innovative communication strategies to engage with markets across the destination as a whole.

Finally, the study also has specific practical implications for the destination marketers of Angkor heritage tourism destination. Since the symbolic meanings of Angkor tourism destination have the greatest effects on tourists' social identification and satisfaction, both of which significantly influence their loyalty behaviors, Angkor destination marketers are encouraged to differentiate their destination based on these symbolic meanings, particularly the unique identity, the famous reputation, exceptional cultures, and special lifestyles of Angkor. In addition, experiential benefits and functional quality tourists received at Angkor tourism destination have significant impacts on their social identification and satisfaction. Hence, promoting the experiential benefits, in particular hedonism, educational benefits and escape feelings, and the development of exceptional functional quality such as destination attractions, amenities and service quality would help attract new tourists. Accordingly, Angkor tourism destination marketers should focus on developing marketing strategies that emphasize the unique symbolic meanings of Angkor, and to communicate the memorable experiential benefits and exceptional functional quality that their visit to

Angkor will offer in order to satisfy and maintain the existing tourists and to attract new tourists. Greater co-ordination of parties across the destination could enhance the overall satisfaction for tourists to the destination as a whole, rather than simply on-site at the heritage location, for example, promotion of the combined experience of visiting the Angkor Museum in Siem Reap in addition to the actual World Heritage site would add dimension and depth to tourists' experiences.

This study without exception has several limitations and generates a number of avenues for future research. Firstly, this study tested the hypotheses with tourists visiting one tourism destination, i.e. Angkor, thus caution must be taken when applying the findings to other destination contexts. Secondly, due to the use of convenience sampling method, the sample may not depict the whole picture of the entire visitor population of the study site. Future research could examine this model with larger samples or samples in other destination contexts, for example, with multiple tourism destinations and in different countries to obtain more insights of destination consumption. Furthermore, in this study we did not explore the differences in their perceptions of heritage tourism consumption among different sub-group heritage tourists. To enhance better understanding of heritage tourism consumption in the social-media marketing era, future research could investigate a specific tourist cohort, for example Gen Y, who are significantly influenced by online communications and who place great emphasis on personal relevance and the opinions of service quality experiences of friends and peers.

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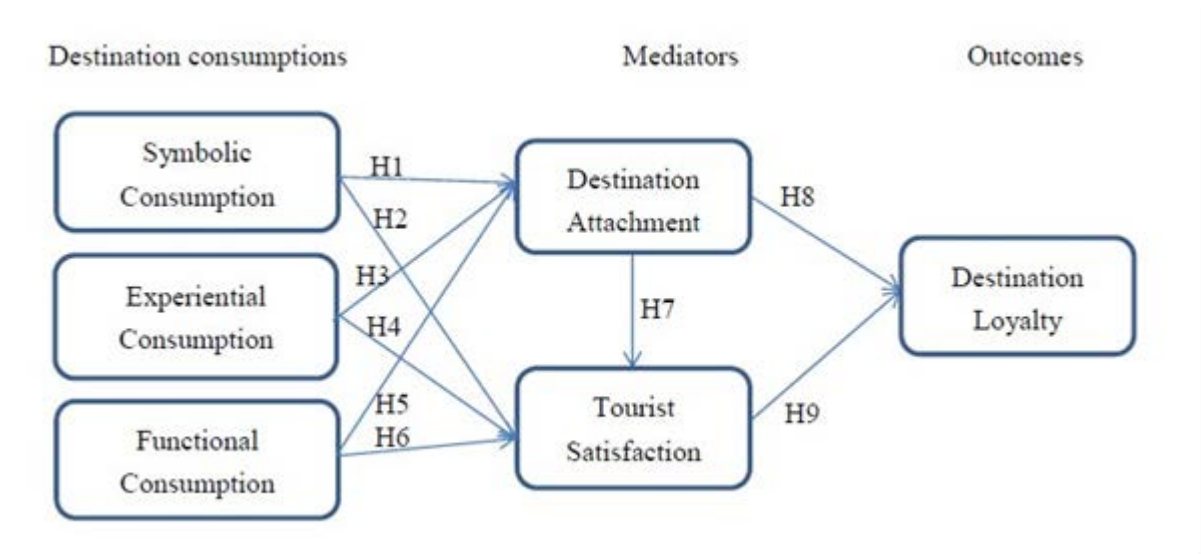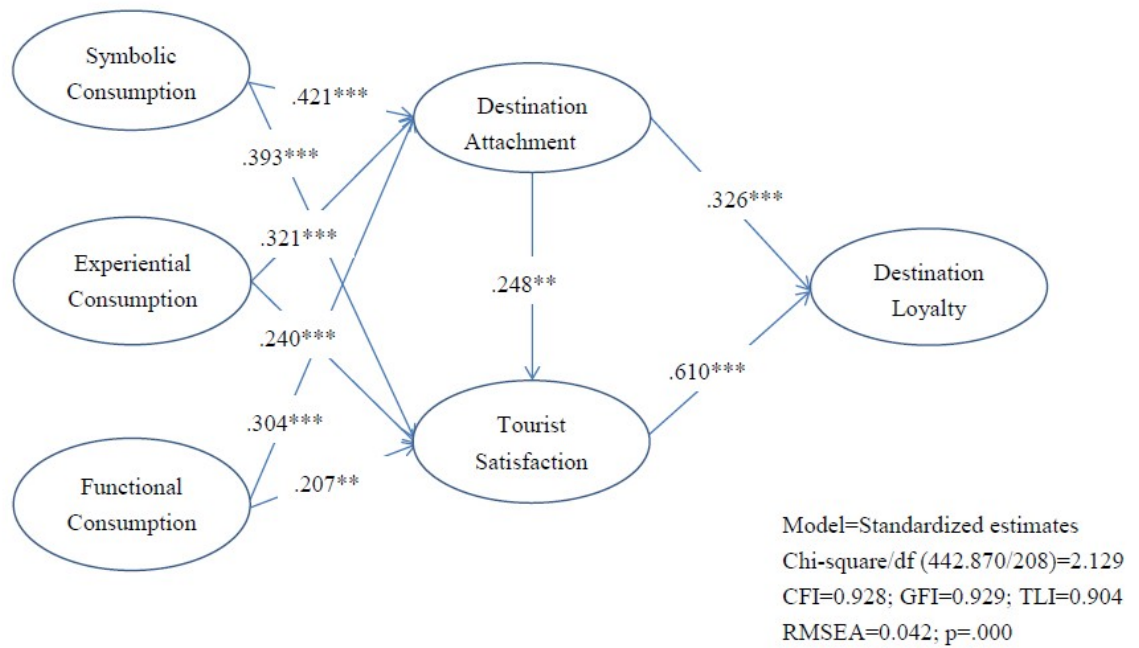
Figure 1. Conceptual framework

Figure 2. Estimated model

Table 1

Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

Constructs	Standardized factor loading	Error variance	t-Value	AVE	Construct reliability
Symbolic Consumption (Sym)					
LC	.706	.018	--	0.991	.705
SC	.648	.009	12.192		
DI	.521	.016	9.697		
Experiential Consumption (ExpQ)					
ExpQ1	.790	.009	12.747	0.992	.720
ExpQ3	.642	.015	--		
ExpD2	.630	.010	11.263		
Functional Consumption (FunQ)					
FunQ2	.743	.014	11.043	0.987	705
FunQ1	.681	.026	10.769		
FunQ3	.615	.013	--		
Destination Attachment (DAtt)					
DAtt2	.667	.017	10.771	0.987	.711
DAtt1	.641	.020	10.513		
DAtt3	.583	.021	--		
Tourist Satisfaction (Sat)					
Sat2	.689	.014	13.115	0.992	.774
Sat3	.688	.013	13.098		
Sat1	.673	.016	12.867		
Sat4	.669	.014	--		
Destination Loyalty (Loyalty)					
DL3	.741	.011	--	0.989	.700
DL2	.705	.013	14.090		
DL1	.551	.018	11.208		

Model fit statistics: χ^2/d.f.= 266.734/231 = 1.155, p-value = 0.05, CFI = 0.98, IFI = 0.98, NFI = 0.93, TLI = 0.98

RMSEA = 0.015

Table 3

Direct, Indirect and Total Effects of Relationships

Path	Direct Effect	Indirect Effects	Total Effect
H1:Symbolic consumption → Destination attachment	.421	--	.421
H2: Symbolic consumption → Tourist satisfaction	.393	.104	.497
H3: Experiential quality → Destination attachment	.321	--	.321
H4: Experiential quality → Tourist satisfaction	.240	.080	.320
H5: Functional quality → Destination attachment	.304	--	.304
H6: Functional quality → Tourist satisfaction	.207	.075	.282
H7: Destination attachment → Tourist satisfaction	.248	--	.248
H8: Destination attachment → Destination loyalty	.326	.151	.477
H9: Tourist satisfaction → Destination loyalty	.610	--	.610