

CRAFTING LASTING IMPRESSIONS OF HINDU TOURISM IN BALI: THE ROLE OF MEMORABLE TOURISM EXPERIENCES IN BUILDING STRONG DESTINATION BRANDS AND ATTACHMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of memorable tourism experiences (MTEs) on destination brand equity and destination attachment of Hindu tourism in Bali. It aims to elucidate how these experiences shape tourists' perceptions and behaviors. MTEs are characterized by their uniqueness and ability to create lasting impressions, significantly influencing tourist satisfaction and loyalty. The research employs partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine the relationships between MTEs, destination brand equity, and destination attachment. Findings reveal that memorable tourism experiences significantly enhance destination brand equity by fostering strong emotional connections and increasing perceived value. Additionally, MTEs positively influence destination attachment, which in turn strengthens brand loyalty. The study highlights the critical role of authenticity and immersive experiences in building and sustaining a destination's appeal. These insights offer valuable implications for tourism management and marketing strategies, emphasizing the importance of creating impactful experiences to differentiate destinations and foster long-term visitor engagement.

Keywords: Memorable Tourism Experiences, Destination Brand Equity, Destination Attachment

INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive tourism market, creating distinct and memorable tourism experiences (MTEs) is crucial for destinations seeking to enhance their appeal and differentiate themselves. MTEs are recognized for their ability to leave a lasting impression, shaping tourists' perceptions and behaviors through their uniqueness and significance (Morrison, 2023). Previous research underscores the role of MTEs in boosting tourist satisfaction and fostering loyalty, with concepts such as "memorable experience," "creative tourism product," and "gastronomic adventure" emerging as key factors (Leung et al., 2022). For instance, Kastenholz et al. (2022) highlight that memorable and satisfying rural tourism experiences enhance social interactions between travelers and locals, emphasizing the value of authenticity and immersion. Furthermore, Omo-Obas & Anning-Dorson (2022) argue that unforgettable experiences are vital for sustainable tourism, driving visitor loyalty and satisfaction.

Despite the recognized significance of MTEs, the challenge remains in understanding how these experiences influence both destination brand equity and destination attachment. Destination brand equity, which includes brand image,

perceived value, and loyalty, is significantly shaped by memorable experiences (Guleria, 2023). The interplay between authentic tourism experiences and brand equity allows destinations to stand out and thrive in a competitive market (Shi et al., 2022).

Strategic branding efforts and consistent marketing communications are essential for enhancing brand equity (Bowen & Sotomayor, 2021). Yet, the impact of MTEs on destination brand equity and how this relationship affects destination attachment remains underexplored. Destination attachment reflects the emotional bonds tourists develop with a location, which influences overall satisfaction and brand equity (Guleria, 2023). This emotional connection, mediated by memorable tourism experiences, is crucial for fostering attachment and encouraging positive future behaviors (Guleria, 2024). Place attachment, shaped by cultural, social, and environmental factors, also plays a significant role in affecting tourist satisfaction and future intentions. The link between destination attachment and resident participation in tourism activities further underscores the importance of these emotional bonds (Aleshinloye, 2024).

This study addresses the research problem of how memorable tourism experiences impact both destination brand equity and destination attachment of hindu tourism in Bali. By exploring these relationships, the research aims to provide a deeper understanding of how creating memorable experiences can enhance a destination's appeal, foster emotional connections, and drive brand loyalty. This investigation is essential for developing effective tourism management and marketing strategies that leverage the power of memorable experiences to build stronger and more engaging destination brands.

LITERATURE REVIEW

HINDU TOURISM IN BALI

Bali, known as the *Island of a Thousand Temples*, represents one of the world's leading Hindu tourism destinations because of its rich cultural heritage and sacred temple complexes (Pageh et al., 2022). The island's major temples—such as Pulaki, Pemuteran, Melanting, Pabean, Kerta Kawat, Pemulungan Agung Gobleg, Labuan Aji, Puncak Sinunggal, and Ponjok Batu—are central to religious tourism due to their historical, artistic, and spiritual significance (Pageh et al., 2022). Cultural events like the Bali Spirit Festival in Ubud further promote spiritual tourism through activities that unite religion, self-development, and nature-based harmony (Yusuf & Praptika, 2023).

Local Hindu values shape the ethical and social foundations of tourism practices in Bali (Mulyana & Busro, 2025). The philosophy of Tri Kaya Parisudha, emphasizing purity in thought, speech, and action, strengthens hospitality and tourist loyalty in villages such as Pedawa (Dini Andiani et al., 2020). Similarly, the values of Tat Twam Asi and Menyama-Braya encourage social harmony and solidarity across faiths, supporting sustainable and inclusive tourism models (Mulyana & Busro, 2025).

Sustainability has become a key principle in tourism development, with initiatives in North Bali utilizing ancient temples to promote community-based economic growth (Pageh et al., 2022). Environmental awareness is strengthened through projects that convert ceremonial waste into incense and organic compost, reducing pollution while creating local value (Nugraha & Desnanjaya, 2024). Pro-poor tourism programs in Pemuteran Village demonstrate how local traditions and performances such as *Drama Gong* empower communities and ensure that tourism benefits are equitably shared (Sarjana & Pitana, 2024).

Bali also faces challenges in balancing cultural traditions with ecological conservation (Susilo et al., 2024). The ritual use of turtles in Hindu ceremonies illustrates the tension between cultural preservation and biodiversity protection, prompting efforts by the Turtle Conservation and Education Centre to introduce more sustainable practices (Susilo et al., 2024). The increase in Indian visitors reflects a shift toward cultural affinity, where shared Hindu heritage deepens emotional and spiritual connections between tourists and local culture (Thirumaran, 2008).

To maintain this harmony, preserving temple areas and other religious tourism sites remains essential for sustaining Bali's cultural identity and ensuring equitable development (Geria et al., 2019). Integrating local wisdom and Hindu values into tourism policies is also necessary to balance economic growth with cultural and environmental preservation (Mulyana & Busro, 2025)

MEMORABLE TOURISM EXPERIENCES

Memorable tourism experiences (MTEs) are essential in shaping how tourists perceive and engage during their travels. These experiences stand out due to their significance, uniqueness, and ability to forge lasting memories (Morrison, 2023). Prior research underscores the importance of delivering remarkable and innovative experiences, with concepts like "memorable experience," "creative tourism product," and "gastronomic adventure" emerging as key factors in enhancing tourist satisfaction and loyalty (Chang et al., 2020). It has been observed that more satisfying and memorable rural tourism encounters foster greater social interactions between travelers and local residents, highlighting the value of creating authentic and immersive experiences (Kastenholz et al., 2022). Such positive and unforgettable experiences are crucial for promoting sustainable destination tourism, as they drive visitor loyalty and satisfaction (Omo-Obas & Anning-Dorson, 2022). Furthermore, the role of value co-creation in significantly boosting tourists' satisfaction, loyalty, and overall memorable experiences cannot be overstated (Zhou & Chen, 2023).

Authenticity, in particular, is a valuable asset that enhances the appeal of tourist destinations. Genuine interactions with locals are pivotal in crafting memorable tourism experiences (H. Shi et al., 2022). Moreover, the quality of relationships among tourists, such as those between adult children and their parents, has been linked to increased satisfaction and subjective well-being, emphasizing the importance of interpersonal dynamics in shaping memorable tourism experiences (Hu & Xu, 2022). Slow tourism experiences, including those centered around slow food, have also been associated with improved quality of life for tourists, suggesting that the satisfaction derived from such experiences can positively impact individuals' perceived quality of life (Huang et al., 2022).

DESTINATION BRAND EQUITY

Destination brand equity is fundamental to tourism marketing and management, as it significantly influences tourists' perceptions and behaviors toward a location. Research highlights that memorable tourism experiences have a profound impact on customer-based destination brand equity (CBD BE) by shaping tourists' emotional connection and overall satisfaction with a destination (Guleria, 2023). This equity encompasses elements such as brand image, perceived value, and brand loyalty, with visitor satisfaction playing a critical role in bolstering destination brand equity through hierarchical relationships (Nguyen et al., 2023). The interplay between the authenticity of tourism experiences and brand equity is crucial; strong brand equity and genuine experiences enable destinations to differentiate themselves and thrive in

the competitive tourism market (H. Shi et al., 2022). Moreover, brand equity extends to heritage destinations, where strategic branding contributes to the perceived value from visitors' perspectives (Rahman et al., 2020). The role of social commerce in mediating the link between value co-creation and destination brand equity underscores the importance of involving tourists in the co-creation process (Long et al., 2022).

Additionally, the consistency of integrated marketing communications affects destination brand equity, highlighting the necessity for a unified brand message across various communication channels (Šerić & Mikulić, 2022). In terms of enhancing destination competitiveness, engaging local residents in the rebranding process is essential for achieving sustainable development goals and establishing a strong destination identity (Bowen & Sotomayor, 2021). Furthermore, a destination's persona, shaped by the values of the local community, can influence stakeholders' dedication to branding, thereby contributing to a sustainable destination image (A Martins et al., 2023). Implementing sustainable tourism marketing practices is crucial for strengthening brand equity in rural community-based homestays, in alignment with the sustainable tourism objectives set by the United Nations (Janjua et al., 2022).

DESTINATION ATTACHMENT

Destination attachment is a pivotal concept in tourism research, denoting the emotional bonds and personal connections that tourists develop with a location. Studies have demonstrated that impactful tourism experiences are central to fostering this attachment, which in turn influences overall satisfaction and enhances the destination's brand equity (Guleria, 2023). The relationship between destination attachment and tourists' willingness to share their experiences underscores how memorable encounters, satisfaction, and brand value are interconnected (Guleria, 2024). Place attachment, closely related to destination attachment, refers to the positive emotional ties tourists establish with a location, shaped by cultural, social, and environmental factors (Haryanto et al., 2024; Wang, 2023). This emotional bond acts as a mediator between the attributes of a destination and tourist satisfaction, with factors such as accommodation significantly affecting satisfaction levels (Biswas et al., 2020). Additionally, place attachment can signal tourists' future behavioral intentions, offering valuable insights for businesses within tourist destinations (Soonsan & Somkai, 2021). Research has further explored how destination attachment influences tourists' perceptions and behaviors, affecting their advocacy and future actions (Razzaq, 2024). Engagement with audiences has been found to positively impact place attachment and behavioral intentions, highlighting the importance of emotional connections even before the visit occurs (Shi, 2024). Moreover, destination attachment plays a crucial role in residents' participation in tourism activities, demonstrating the link between place attachment and residents' attitudes and involvement with a destination (Aleshinloye, 2024).

METHODOLOGY

This study focuses on individuals visiting destinations in Hindu Tourism in Bali, aged between 16 and 35 years, inclusive of all genders. The sampling method employed was non-probability incidental sampling. The research utilized both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected directly from participants using measurement tools and direct engagement with those who provided the data. A questionnaire was used as the survey instrument to collect information from participants within a reasonable timeframe. An online survey was administered via Google Forms to obtain quantitative data. This data was then processed and analyzed

using the PLS-SEM method (Hair et al., 2020). On the other hand, secondary data consisted of information gathered indirectly through sources such as books, records, evidence, or archives, which may be either public or restricted. The study population included visitors to hindu tourism destinations in Bali. Primary data were gathered through a structured questionnaire employing a Likert scale, distributed to those visiting these destinations. Data analysis was performed using the Smart PLS 4.0 software, following the PLS-SEM approach. The selection of PLS-SEM was driven by the objective to identify and predict the key constructs and their targets. PLS-SEM was employed to model and validate the intricate relationships between variables affecting destination attachment. The theoretical framework for this research is illustrated as follows:

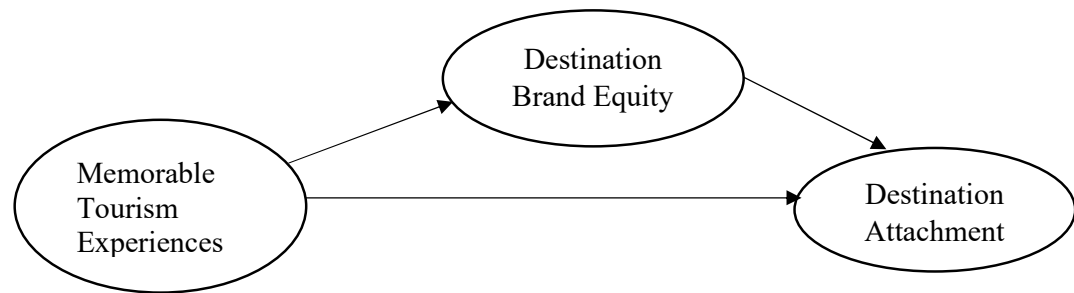


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Authors' own work

Here are the hypotheses of the study, derived from the theoretical framework established by the author:

- H1. Memorable Tourism Experiences influences Destination Attachment
- H2. Memorable Tourism Experiences influences Destination Brand Equity
- H3. Destination Brand Equity influences Destination Attachment

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To determine the structural relationships among various variables and their effects, this study utilizes partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The PLS-SEM process involves two phases of data testing: the assessment of the outer model and the evaluation of the inner model.

OUTER MODEL TESTING

The purpose of outer model testing is to clarify the relationship between latent variables and their indicators. This analysis includes several key components: convergent validity (measured by Average Variance Extracted or AVE), discriminant validity, and internal consistency (assessed by composite reliability).

INTERNAL CONSISTENCY (COMPOSITE RELIABILITY)

To assess whether items within a construct consistently measure the same attribute, internal composite reliability is utilized. This evaluation examines the

consistency of cross-item findings within the same test, which is reflected in the correlation values between items. Higher correlation values suggest better consistency. This assessment uses composite reliability values, where a constructed variable is deemed reliable if its composite reliability value exceeds 0.6.

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Destinantion Brand Equity	0.855	0.856	0.896	0.634
Destination Attachment	0.864	0.869	0.902	0.649
Memorable Tourism Experience	0.761	0.789	0.859	0.671

Source: Author's Work

Table 1 demonstrates that the composite reliability for all variables exceeds 0.6, indicating that each variable is reliable for testing.

CONVERGENT VALIDITY

The extent to which a measurement positively correlates with other measurements of the same construct is referred to as convergent validity. The outer loading value of an indicator of a construct variable is used to assess its validity. An indicator is considered valid if its outer loading value exceeds 0.7. While outer loading values greater than 0.7 are deemed optimal, values in the range of 0.4 to 0.7 can still be considered valid, particularly in exploratory research. However, if the outer loading value is less than 0.4, the indicator should be considered for removal from the variable.

Table 2 : Convergent Validity

	Destinantion Brand Equity	Destination Attachment	Memorable Tourism Experience
DA1		0.719	
DA2		0.837	
DA3		0.806	
DA4		0.797	
DA5		0.861	
DBE1	0.758		
DBE2	0.773		
DBE3	0.795		
DBE4	0.835		
DBE5	0.817		
MTE1			0.847
MTE2			0.820
MTE3			0.790

Source: Author's Work

DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY

Discriminant validity assesses whether an indicator of a construct variable possesses a strong discriminant value. The Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlation (HTMT) is employed to evaluate discriminant validity. A variable is considered to have strong discriminant validity if the HTMT value is less than 0.9. According to the SmartPLS output in Figure 1, the indicator results under 0.90, demonstrating that the indicators in this study are valid and accurately represent the latent variables in the research.

Table 3 : Discriminant validity

	Destinantion Brand Equity	Destination Attachment	Memorable Tourism Experience
Destinantion Brand Equity	0.796		
Destination Attachment	0.629	0.806	
Memorable Tourism Experience	0.425	0.659	0.819

Source : Author's Work

From Table 3, it is clear that the HTMT value is less than 0.9. The highest correlation value is 0.819, indicating that the indicators in this research are valid.

INNER MODEL ANALYSIS

The inner model testing aims to evaluate the influence of each model through t-tests and to determine whether the hypotheses are accepted or rejected based on the results of the bootstrapping report. Multicollinearity (VIF) The VIF test for multicollinearity is performed to identify potential multicollinearity issues. Collinearity is assessed through the VIF value, and if the VIF is less than 10, the data is considered free from multicollinearity.

Table 4: Multicollinearity (VIF)

	Destinantion Brand Equity	Destination Attachment	Memorable Tourism Experience
Destinantion Brand Equity		1.220	
Destination Attachment			
Memorable Tourism Experience	1.000	1.220	

Source: Author's Work

The PLS (Partial Least Squares) inner model employs R-squared to evaluate the extent to which independent variables can explain the variability in the dependent variable.

Table 5 : R-square

	R-square
Destinantion Brand Equity	0.180
Destination Attachment	0.584

Source: Author's Work

PATH COEFFICIENTS

Path coefficients are metrics used to assess the significance and strength of the research model, as well as to test the research hypotheses. This analysis includes the original sample value, T-statistics, and P-value to gauge the impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable. A variable is deemed positive and significant if the T-statistics exceed 1.96 and the P-value is below 0.05.

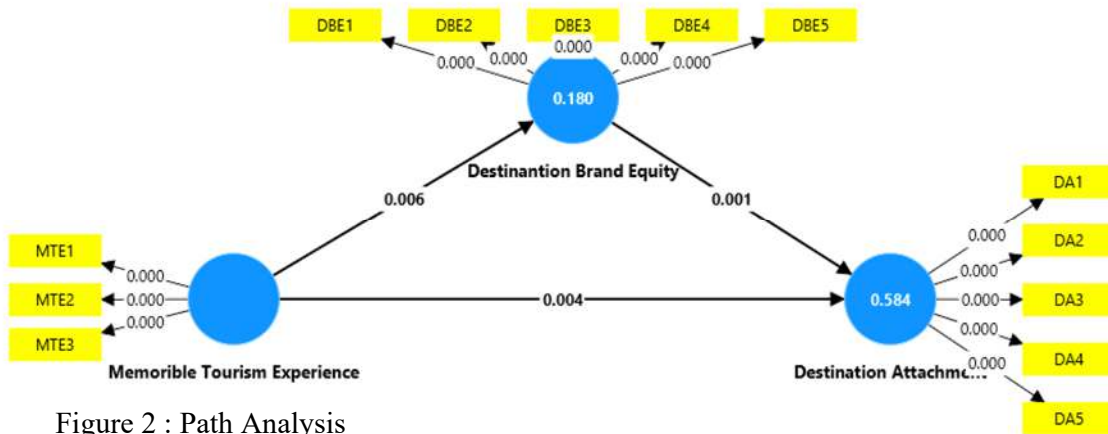


Figure 2 : Path Analysis
Source : Bootstrapping results

Table 6 : Path Analysis – PLS-SEM

Path Analysis	T Statistics	P Values
Destination Brand Equity -> Destination Attachment	3.282	0.001
Memorable Tourism Experience -> Destination Brand Equity	2.776	0.006
Memorable Tourism Experience -> Destination Attachment	2.852	0.004

Source : Author's Work

In analyzing the proposed hypotheses and the relationships among constructs, bootstrapping was used to compute path coefficients, t-values, and p-values. Detailed results are presented in Table 6 and Figure 2, providing insights into the hypothesized relationships. Hypothesis H1 indicated that Hypothesis H1 validated the significant positive effect of Memorable Tourism Experience on Destination Attachment ($t = 2.852$, $p < 0.004$), highlighting the role of Memorable Tourism Experience in shaping Destination Attachment. Hypothesis H2 showed that Memorable Tourism Experience significantly predict Destination Brand Equity ($t = 2.776$, $p < 0.006$), underscoring the importance of Memorable Tourism Experience in influencing Destination Brand Equity. Furthermore, hypothesis H3 confirmed that Destination Brand Equity significantly influence Destination Attachment ($t = 3.282$, $p < 0.001$), emphasizing the critical role of Destination Brand Equity in driving Destination Attachment.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the dynamics of memorable tourism experiences, destination brand equity, and destination attachment of hindu tourism in Bali. The results affirm that memorable tourism experiences play

a pivotal role in shaping destination attachment and enhancing destination brand equity, aligning with existing literature on the subject. Memorable tourism experiences significantly influence destination attachment. This outcome reinforces the notion that creating exceptional and unique experiences is essential for fostering strong emotional bonds between tourists and destinations. Previous research highlights that memorable experiences are characterized by their significance and uniqueness, which contribute to forming lasting memories and stronger attachments to the destination (Morrison, 2023; Chang et al., 2020). These findings are consistent with studies indicating that immersive and authentic encounters, such as those found in rural tourism settings, enhance social interactions and deepen tourists' connections to destinations (Kastenholz et al., 2022; Omo-Obas & Anning-Dorson, 2022). By providing tourists with engaging and memorable experiences, destinations can cultivate more profound emotional ties, which in turn promote sustained attachment.

Moreover, the impact of memorable tourism experiences on destination brand equity underscores the critical role that exceptional experiences play in enhancing a destination's perceived value and brand loyalty. This finding aligns with the literature suggesting that memorable experiences contribute to the emotional connection tourists have with a destination, thereby strengthening brand equity (Guleria, 2023; Nguyen et al., 2023). The ability of memorable experiences to elevate a destination's brand equity is further supported by research on the authenticity of tourism experiences, which highlights how genuine and immersive interactions with local communities can enhance a destination's appeal and differentiate it in a competitive market (H. Shi et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2020).

Additionally, the significant influence of destination brand equity on destination attachment confirms the importance of a strong brand image in fostering emotional connections with tourists. This finding is supported by studies emphasizing that a well-established brand equity can significantly enhance tourists' emotional bonds and overall satisfaction with a destination (Long et al., 2022; Šerić & Mikulić, 2022). The role of brand equity in reinforcing destination attachment is further evidenced by research on the impact of integrated marketing communications and local community involvement in branding efforts (Bowen & Sotomayor, 2021; Martins et al., 2023). The interplay between memorable tourism experiences, destination brand equity, and destination attachment highlights the intricate relationships among these constructs. The results suggest that the creation of memorable experiences not only enhances destination brand equity but also strengthens the emotional bonds tourists develop with destinations. This interplay underscores the importance of focusing on both experiential and brand-related factors in tourism management and marketing strategies.

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the profound impact of memorable tourism experiences of Hindu tourism in Bali on both destination brand equity and destination attachment, offering crucial insights for tourism management. The findings reveal that creating exceptional and unique experiences is not only central to fostering strong emotional bonds between tourists and destinations but also pivotal in enhancing a destination's perceived value and brand loyalty. By focusing on the significance and uniqueness of tourism encounters, destinations can effectively deepen tourists' connections and strengthen their brand equity. This emphasis on memorable experiences highlights their role as a powerful tool for cultivating lasting loyalty and satisfaction, thus guiding tourism strategies towards more immersive and impactful interactions. Ultimately, the

study demonstrates that memorable tourism experiences are key drivers of emotional engagement and brand strength, providing a valuable framework for destinations aiming to excel in a competitive market.

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