BEYOND THE IMAGE: INTERPLAY OF VALUE, INTIMACY, AND LOYALTY IN SHAPING DESTINATION SATISFACTION: INSIGHTS FROM EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA

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Abstract: This study looks at the connections between destination image (DI), functional value (FV), emotional value (EV), social value (SV), customer satisfaction (CS), customer intimacy (CI), and customer loyalty (CL) in Egypt and Saudi Arabia from a comparative perspective. The data were collected using a quantitative method from 702 customers in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and 10 hypotheses about the direct, indirect, and mediating effects of the targeted variables were tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) by WarpPLS software version 8. The findings revealed that (1) destination image has positively affected functional value, emotional value, and social value; (2) functional value has positively affected customer satisfaction; emotional value has positively affected customer satisfaction; and social value has affected customer satisfaction; (3) customer satisfaction has positively affected customer loyalty; and (4) the results have also shown that functional value, emotional value, social value, and customer satisfaction act as a partial mediator between destination image and customer loyalty; and (5) customer intimacy is a moderating variable between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. The findings demonstrated that customers have positive attitudes and intentions toward the destination and anticipate loyalty from their travel arrangements. This research offers destination managers, policymakers, managers, providers, travel agency, and marketing firms' in-depth insights to help maintain competitive positions in the market and ensure their survival in the travel distribution chain that meets tourists' needs and expectations.

Keywords: destination image, functional value, emotional value, social value, customer satisfaction, customer intimacy, Egypt, Saudi Arabia

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INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is considered one of the fastest-growing economic sectors in the world (Buhalis et al., 2023). In today's consensus, tourism has expanded to include an increasing number of new destinations, such as the New Administrative Capital and New El-Alamein City in Egypt (Ali, 2022) and NEOM City in Saudi Arabia (Farag, 2019), to create a global hub for trade, knowledge, and innovative construction sustainably, including all residential, tourist activities, and international hotels, which act as a driving force for regional growth (Buhalis et al., 2023). In an increasingly crowded market, competitive destinations should redesign their marketing plans and strategies if they choose to increase customer loyalty and forge lasting relationships with their customers (Elgarhy & Abou-Shouk, 2022).

Considering the primary focus of this study (a closer look at destination image: a cross-country national study of Egypt and Saudi Arabia), due to its importance, this study focuses on cognitive destination image because it is directly observable, descriptive, and quantifiable (Zhou et al., 2023); as a result, it may offer more specific and interpretive details about the distinctiveness of a destination, including its capacity to introduce attributes that characterize it (Xie et al., 2020). Atasoy and Eren (2023) define a destination image (DI) as the totality of customers' impressions, beliefs, observations, feelings, knowledge, and notions about a product or a location, including location, visitation, and visitor. Ramseook-Munhurrun et al. (2015) revealed that DI is one of the perceived values (PV) contributors. When assessing a product's attributes, service, effectiveness, and customer experience, PV is extremely important (Zhao et al., 2020).

Prior studies have argued that PV is considered a multidimensional angle in the tourism industry Bonsón Ponte et al. (2015), which emphasizes the functional, emotional, and social perspectives of value dimensions and is built as a post-consumption construct (Zhao et al., 2020). El-Adly (2019) and Atasoy & Eren (2023) revealed that DI is one of the functional value (FV), emotional value (EV), and social value (SV) contributors. In the same vein, (Lee & Han, 2022) highlighted FV, EV, and SV as an enablers of customer satisfaction (CS). CS is characterized as the fulfillment of needs, wants, requests, and hopes by a service, as determined by opinions and visitor assessments of that service (Elgarhy & Mohamed, 2023). In addition, CS as an enabler and increases customer loyalty (CL) (Chuah et al., 2017).

Tourism businesses that work to satisfy visitor needs, wants, and requests to win over more repeat business can anticipate a favorable long-term impact on their capacity to retain repeat customers and create customer intimacy (CI) (Elgarhy &

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Mohamed, 2023). Overall, prior research has emphasized that customers are more likely to develop satisfaction, intimacy, and loyalty if they perceive higher functional, emotional, and social values (P. Liu et al., 2021). It implies that greater expectations on the part of the customer translate into higher perceived value, which ultimately leads to greater CS, CI, and CL (Lei et al., 2023; Uzir et al., 2020). Accordingly, CS, CI, and CL will increase as PV increases (Chen & Chen, 2010; Matsuoka, 2022). Tracing the FV, EV, SV, and CS concepts, there is no integrative model that simultaneously examines the FV, EV, SV, and CS antecedents and links FV, EV, SV, and CS to CL, CI is used as a moderating variable to investigate the effects between CS and CL. The ten categories of prior investigations are as follows: The first, second, and third explore the effect of DI on FV, EV, and SV (Atasoy & Eren, 2023; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Kim et al., 2013; Ramseook-Munhurrun et al., 2015); the fourth, fifth, and sixth examine the impact of FV, EV, and SV on CS (Carlson et al., 2019; El-Adly, 2019; Lee & Han, 2022; Waheed & Hassan, 2016); the seventh analyzes the link between CS and CL (Chuah et al., 2017; Keshavarz & Jamshidi, 2018; Ramseook-Munhurrun et al., 2015); and the eighth and ninth measure the mediating role of FV, EV, SV, and CS (Bonsón Ponte et al., 2015; Chen & Phou, 2013; Kim & Tang, 2020; Zhao et al., 2023); and the tenth examines the moderating role of CI (Garrouch & Ghali, 2023; Jeon & Kim, 2016; Song et al., 2016). The current study integrates the connections between the antecedents of FV, EV, SV, and SC (i.e., DI). Since it explores the mediating role of FV, EV, SV, and SC, it differs from previous studies and develops a thorough research model that offers a deep understanding of FV, EV, SV, SC, and CL. Additionally, it investigates the moderating effect of CI to look into the interactions between CS and CL. As a result, this study aims to fill the knowledge gap concerning the influences of FV, EV, SV, SC, and CL. Therefore, the current approach investigates how Egyptian and Saudi Arabian destinations use FV, EV, SV, and SC to maintain customer intimacy and loyalty. The study offers empirical evidence that investing in promoting customer empowerment through destination image and functional, emotional, and social value will significantly boost customer satisfaction, intimacy, and loyalty.

Perceived Value (PV)

PV is a comprehensive evaluation of the products and services tourists purchase while considering the price and psychological aspects like perceived quality and emotional responses (Ramseook-Munhurrun et al., 2015). In the same vein, PV is an assessment of product attributes, service, performance, and the experience of customers (Parasuraman, 1997). Customer PV is a vital element in determining an organization's growth and a source of competitive advantage (Elgarhy & Abou-Shouk, 2023). El-Adly (2019) divided perceived value into seven dimensions: specifically, self-gratification, aesthetics, price, prestige, transaction, quality, and hedonic. Additionally, Jahn & Kunz (2012), for instance, identified five types of PV: functional, hedonic, social interaction, brand interaction, and self-concept value. Moreover, Yeh et al. (2016) divided PV into four components: functional, emotional, social, and brand identification. Similarly, P. Liu et al. (2021) identified that the dimensions of PV include, functional, emotional, and social values.

Other scholars, Chen & Lee (2023) and Lee et al. (2021), classified it as having utilitarian and hedonic values. Prior research examined the antecedents of functional, emotional, and social value. Kim et al. (2013) revealed a positive link between destination image and three dimensions of perceived value (i.e., functional, emotional, and social); Lee & Han (2022) discovered a link between functional value and customer satisfaction; Carlson et al. (2019) found a significant influence of emotional value on customer satisfaction; and Chuah et al. (2017) revealed a significant effect of social value on customer satisfaction; Elgarhy & Abou-Shouk (2022) revealed a significant effect of customer satisfaction on customer loyalty. The following sections will go over these relationships in more detail.

1. Destination Image (DI), functional value (FV), emotional value (EV), and social value (SV)

DI refers to one's perception of a place, such as its cost, exotic nature, urbanity, climate, or level of development (Woosnam et al., 2020). In the same vein, a DI is the totality of beliefs, ideas, and perceptions that form the opinions that tourists have of a destination (Liu et al., 2021), and it is a multifaceted construct made up of primarily cognitive, affective, and conative aspects in tourism research (Joo et al., 2023; Lee & Jeong, 2023; Wang et al., 2022). The cognitive component deals with beliefs, thoughts, and knowledge regarding a destination's physical attributes (Matsuoka, 2022), whereas the affective component pertains to the assessment of the affective quality of sentiments toward the attributes and the surroundings (Lee & Jeong, 2023). The conative component, which develops from cognitive and affective images, is taken to be analogous to behavior (Chen & Phou, 2013). This study adopts a destination image that plays a crucial role in the three-dimensional structure of perceived value i.e., functional, emotional, and social (Liu et al., 2021).

Functional value, which is the possession of significant professional, financial, or physical attributes (Zhao et al., 2020), as opposed to emotional value, elicits feelings or emotional states (Zhao et al., 2023), while social value is the perceived benefit associated with belonging to one or more particular social groups (Zhao et al., 2020). Hence, perceived value, namely functional, emotional, and social value, is a predictor of satisfaction rather than a one-dimensional construct that only considers quality or value for money (El-Adly, 2019; Matsuoka, 2022; Zhao et al., 2023). Previous studies by Chen & Tsai (2007); Kim et al. (2013); Ramseook-Munhurrun et al. (2015); Atasoy & Eren (2023) revealed a positive link between destination image and perceived value. The first three hypotheses, therefore, would be:

H1. DI significantly affects FV
H2. DI significantly affects EV
H3. DI significantly affects SV

2. Functional value (FV) and customer satisfaction (CS)

FV is the utility derived from the product's perceived lower long-term and short-term costs (Chuah et al., 2017).

Similarly, FV is the utility resulting from the product's perceived quality and anticipated performance (Lee & Han, 2022). When customers assess the quality of a product or service, this viewpoint includes all reasonable and cost-effective evaluations that they make (Carlson et al., 2019). Moreover, FV is also known as price or value for money (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). According to Kim et al. (2011), FV is the price utility and the function quality for the customer. In the tourism arena, customers' desire for functional gratification is satisfied when they have access to helpful and practical resources based on DI and FV (De Vries & Carlson, 2014; Eid, 2015). In addition, we conclude that satisfaction with leisure services introduced in the destination is an FV for customers (Benkenstein et al., 2003). As a result, customers who perceive a destination's FV positively are more likely to have an impact on CS levels (Eid, 2015). Prior studies by Chuah et al. (2017); El-Adly (2019); Carlson et al. (2019); and Lee & Han (2022) provided evidence to support this claim by confirming the importance of FV in determining CS, which in turn leads to customer loyalty. Hence, the hypothesis is formed as follows:

H4. FV significantly influences CS

3. Emotional value (EV) and customer satisfaction (CS)

Emotions serve as a vital substrate of consumption, and emotional value is of key importance to the customer experience (Sheth et al., 1991). EV is the utility resulting from the feelings or emotional reactions that a product causes and generates (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). Moreover, EV is also known as the aesthetics and playfulness that a product generates (Kim et al., 2011). Access to enjoyable, amusing, and exciting destinations is necessary for a customer to satisfy a hedonic gratification need (De Vries & Carlson, 2014). Interestingly, tourists are most concerned about their emotional judgment about products and services (Waheed & Hassan, 2016); the results revealed that emotional value is the most powerful factor that influences tourists' satisfaction at the destination (Lee et al., 2018). Customers are more satisfied when they perceive a product or service to have higher emotional value (Waheed & Hassan, 2016), as evidenced by their willingness to pay more (Carlson et al., 2019), plan to make another purchase, and spread positive word-of-mouth (Yeh et al., 2016). The existing research supports the effect of EV on CS with a tourism destination image (Carlson et al., 2019; Chuah et al., 2017; El-Adly, 2019; Lee & Han, 2022). Therefore, the hypothesis is formed:

H5. EV significantly influences CS

4. Social value (SV) and customer satisfaction (CS)

According to Sheth et al. (1991) and Waheed & Hassan (2016), social value describes consumer perceptions of product attributes in light of cultural, political, socioeconomic, and demographic characteristics. SV is the perception of social self-concept, and it reflects social identity or positive feedback from others (Waheed & Hassan, 2016). SV is the benefit that results from a product's capacity to improve social self-concept (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). When tourists perceive products or services to have a higher social value, they show higher levels of satisfaction behaviors (Elgarhy, 2023), such as disseminating and sharing positive information about a destination's physical attributes (Lee & Han, 2022; Yeh et al., 2016), including its natural environment and climate, attractions, activities, accessibility, friendliness of the locals, and culture, as well as accepting higher prices (Stylidis & Cherifi, 2018). Hence, social value is driven mostly by customer satisfaction (Eid, 2015). Several empirical studies revealed a positive link between SV and CS (Carlson et al., 2019; Chuah et al., 2017; Lee & Han, 2022; Waheed & Hassan, 2016)**.** Therefore, the hypothesis is proposed:

H6. SV significantly influences CS

5. Customer satisfaction (CS) and customer loyalty (CL)

CS refers to a customer's overall emotional reaction to the entire service experience for a single transaction at the point after the sale (Eid, 2015; Song et al., 2019). One of the main objectives of service providers is to satisfy their customers' needs because doing so results in word-of-mouth advertising, customer loyalty, and long-term profitability (Elgarhy & Mohamed, 2023; Matsuoka, 2022). Customer satisfaction has gotten a lot of considerable, in the literature on tourism and hospitality (Elgarhy & Abou-Shouk, 2022), customers' assessments and judgments of a product or service's fulfillment (Ramseook-Munhurrun et al., 2015). When a service provider successfully satisfies visitors, it is probably possible to predict the outcomes of their loyalty (Kim et al., 2013). Tourist satisfaction, which affects destination selection and the decision to return, is one of the essential components of successful destination marketing (Chen & Phou, 2013). Therefore, it is crucial to investigate the idea of image and how satisfaction is related to it in order to ascertain visitors' intentions to return and recommend the place (Ramseook-Munhurrun et al., 2015). Numerous studies in the field of tourism have discovered that customer satisfaction affects travelers' loyalty (Chuah et al., 2017; Elgarhy & Abou-Shouk, 2022; Elgarhy & Mohamed, 2023; Keshavarz & Jamshidi, 2018; Ramseook-Munhurrun et al., 2015). Consequently, the following hypothesis is developed:

H7. CS significantly influences CL

6. The mediating role of functional value, emotional value, and social value

Measuring the mediation effect aids in understanding and interpreting the indirect relationship between the variables. It sheds insight on the results made apparent by the interactions between the variables. Describing the earlier direct relationships between DI and FV, EV, and SV; and the direct connection between FV, EV, SV, CS, and CL provides convincing evidence of the mediating role of functional, emotional, and social value. Existing empirical research uncovered a significant FV, EV, and SV mediation effect between CS and CL (El-Adly, 2019). Atasoy & Eren (2023) verified the FV, EV, and SV mediation roles between perceived authenticity and behavioral intentions. Likewise, P. Liu et al. (2021) found a significant mediation effect of FV, EV, and SV between product interaction, interpersonal interaction, and purchase

intentions. Similarly, Kim & Tang (2020) found that FV, EV, and SV mediates the relationship between customer participation behavior, citizenship behavior, and satisfaction. A study by Bonsón Ponte et al. (2015) a significant mediation effect of FV, EV, and SV between trust and purchase intonation. A recent study by Zhao et al. (2023) found a mediation effect between education, esthetic, entertainment, escape, and satisfaction. On the other hand, Chen & Phou (2013) found a significant mediation effect of satisfaction between destination image, trust, and loyalty. Chen & Tsai (2007) verified the CS mediation roles between DI, trip quality, and behavior intonation. Lastly, Elgarhy & Abou-Shouk (2022) fund a mediation effect of CS between co-creation, subjective norms, customer trust, PV, CL.

H8. FV, EV, and SV mediate the association between DI and CS

H9. FV, EV, SV and CS mediate the association between DI and CL

7. The moderating role of customer intimacy

CI is defined as a greater level of partnership between (buyer and seller) partners in terms of organization, customer understanding, and attitudinal congruence (Ahmad & Ahmed, 2019). CI is defined as the degree to which customers and service providers know one another well and foster a sense of belonging that in turn triggers positive contributions (Garrouch & Ghali, 2023). In the same vein, CI is the ongoing collaborative relationship, such as feeling close and showing mutual understanding between a company and its customers, to develop and enhance its product or service offerings to cater to customer needs (Can et al., 2022). CI is vital for creating strong bonds between businesses and their customers based on satisfaction, commitment, trust, and loyalty (Shafiee et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2021) by minimizing any misunderstandings between the two parties and fostering a high level of commitment and a sense of belonging (Bügel et al., 2011). Moreover, CI can elicit positive contributions from both customers and providers (Mulia et al., 2021). A customer's readiness to develop close bonds with service providers depends on how much trust they have in them (Garrouch & Ghali, 2023). Hence, CI is attained when service providers, i.e., travel agencies, policymakers, and trip planners, develop relationships of trust with their customers. Prior studies demonstrated a significant moderating effect of CI on PV and customer citizenship behavior (Garrouch & Ghali, 2023). Song et al. (2016) found a significant moderating effect of CI on personalized e-mail messages and privacy risk. Another study by Jeon and Kim (2016) found a significant moderating effect of CI on service failure and consumer responses across failure types. It follows that, customer intimacy, which interacts with CS, is a vital moderator in enhancing CL and so on. Thus, we propose:

H10. CI moderates the impact of CS on CL

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

In conclusion, previous related studies were partially adopted and integrated (Atasoy & Eren, 2023; Carlson et al., 2019; Chuah et al., 2017; El-Adly, 2019; Ramseook-Munhurrun et al., 2015). The current study investigates the effects of DI on FV, EV, SV, and CS and the mediation role of FV, EV, SV, and CS on CL. It examines the moderating role of CI between CS and CL.

RESEARCH METHODS

1. Scale

The current study uses seven constructs from earlier studies and adapts and integrates them (Figure 1). Six items are used to measure destination image (Loi et al., 2017; Zhou et al., 2023), four for functional value (Carlson et al., 2019; Lee & Han, 2022; Yeh et al., 2016), four emotional value items from extant studies were used (Carlson et al., 2019; Lee & Han, 2022; Yeh et al., 2016), social value was assessed out of four indicators (Carlson et al., 2019; Eid, 2015; Yeh et al., 2016), customer satisfaction was assessed by five indicators (Elgarhy & Abou-Shouk, 2022; Song et al., 2019), four customer intimacy (Bügel et al., 2011; Garrouch & Ghali, 2023), and four customer loyalty (Chuah et al., 2017; El-Adly, 2019). Before distributing and modifying, and refining the survey was first developed in English and then translated into Arabic by academics fluent in both languages. We then contrasted the original text with a translated version. There were no substantive differences between the two versions.

2. Sampling and collecting data

After designing and refining the survey with both an English and an Arabic survey tool, data was gathered from the target respondents using the quantitative method to test the hypotheses representing customers in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. It took between 10 and 15 minutes for participants to complete the survey. Data was collected from August to October 2023, both online and offline. We created an online survey and then disseminated its URL on social media platforms to obtain more responses. Tourists who appeared at hotels or travel companies received the offline version of face-to-face methods. This study aimed to explore a closer look at the destination image of Egypt and Saudi Arabia and its benefits to customers regarding DI, FV, EV, SV, and SC. In addition, it investigates the effect of customer satisfaction and its antecedents on loyalty to customers in improving business innovation performance. It examines the moderating effect of CI to look into the interactions between CS and CL. To learn more about the tourism and hospitality customers' destination image in both countries, the first section of the survey asked visitors for socio-demographic data (i.e., gender, age, marital status, monthly income, educational background, occupation, nationality, how you prefer to travel, and number of visits in the last year). The second section presented 31 questions on different items focused on examining tourists' perspectives regarding adopting destination images by customers. On a five-point Likert scale, where one means "strongly disagree" and five means "strongly agree," all items assess how tourists

perceive their perceived value, customer satisfaction, intimacy, and loyalty towards customers. Out of 800 surveys that were randomly distributed to foreign customers, 702 valid respondents were returned from Egypt and Saudi Arabia tourists, which targeted the study's total community. Egyptian answers accounted for 402 responses, while Saudi Arabia contributed 300 tourists. Friends assisted in sharing the survey links with tourists.

3. Analysis method

PLS-SEM through WarpPLS is used in the study to test its hypotheses. PLS-SEM is suitable for evaluating complex models with direct and indirect causal linkages whose use is common in tourism and hospitality research. The construct validity is assessed (according to the rule of AVEs 0.50), and reliability will be ensured with estimates of 0.7.

FINDINGS
1. Demographic statistics

Looking at Table 1, it shows that out of 702 respondents from Egypt (402 customers) and Saudi Arabia (300 customers), females are the dominant respondents from Egypt (53.5%), while males are dominant from Saudi Arabia (60.3%). The majority of respondents are aged 35–44 years (26.6% for Egypt and 30.7% for Saudi Arabia). Of the respondent's, married customers are 60% from Egypt and 51.7% from Saudi Arabia. Of the respondents, 38.3 of Egypt customers have a monthly income of under 1000 dollars, while 39% of Saudi Arabia customers have 2001–3000 dollars. Most respondents have a bachelor's (44.5% for Egypt and 51.7% for Saudi Arabia).

The majority of respondent's occupations are workers (60.2% for Egypt and 65.3% for Saudi Arabia). Arabs make up 40.8% of Egypt respondents, followed by Americans (27.9%), Europeans (24.1%), and other countries (7.2%). Arabs make up 36.7% of Saudi Arabian respondents, followed by Americans (28.7%), Europeans (27%), and other countries (7.7%). In terms of how you prefer to travel, most respondents prefer to travel with friends (50% for Egypt and 52.7% for Saudi Arabia). Regarding the number of visits in the year, 65.2% of Egypt respondents visited 1 time a year, 19.9% visited 2-3 times a year, 10% visited 4-5 times a year, and 5% visited more than 5 times a year. While 56.7% of Saudi Arabian respondents answered 1 time a year, 29.3% answered 2-3 times a year, 9% answered 4-5 times a year, and 5% answered more than 5 times a year. Table 2 illustrates that Egypt and Saudi Arabia customers agree with the constructs' statements and have positive attitudes and intentions toward destination images (mean values > 4 for all constructs).

Table 1. Profile of respondents

	Attributes	Egypt (%)	Saudi Arabia (%)
Gender	Male	46.5	60.3
	Female	53.5	39.7
Age	18 – 24	25.6	23.7
	25 – 34	23.1	21.3
	35 - 44	26.6	30.7
	45 - 54	11.2	11
	55 - 64	6.2	6.7
	65 and more	7.2	6.7
Marital status	Single	40	48.3
	Married	60	51.7
Monthly income	Under 1000 $	38.3	25.7
	1001 – 2000 $	26.1	16.3
	2001 – 3000 $	16.2	39
	3001 – 4000 $	9	9
	4001 – 5000 $	7.5	7
	5001 $ and above	3	3
Qualifications	High school	14.7	15.7
	Bachelor's	44.5	51.7
	Postgraduate	40.8	32.7
Occupation	Student	29.9	29.3
	Worker	60.2	65.3
	Unemployed/retired/housewife	10	8.3
Nationality	Europeans	24.1	27
	Americans	27.9	28.7
	Arabs	40.8	36.7
	Other countries	7.2	7.7
How do you prefer to travel?	Alone	17.9	17.7
	With friends	50	52.7
	With family members	21.6	19
	Other	10.4	10.7
Number of visits the last year	1 time a year	65.2	56.7
	2-3 times a year	19.9	29.3
	4-5 times a year	10	9
	More than 5 times a year	5	5

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the research variables

	Mean		Std. Deviation	
	Egypt	Saudi Arabia	Egypt	Saudi Arabia
DI	4.216	4.450	.678	.510
FV	4.335	4.588	.581	.533
EV	4.384	4.465	.577	.579
SV	4.310	4.406	.594	.546
CS	4.329	4.408	.537	.513
CL	4.371	4.390	.587	.586
CI	4.298	4.498	.688	.631

2. Measurement model

Table 3 shows AVE values above 0.50, demonstrating convergent validity. Where the square root of AVEs exceeds the inter-construct correlations, discriminant validity also exists. Furthermore, Table 4 also displays values less than 0.90 as the discriminant reliability of the HTMT ratio. Concerns about collinearity are addressed by the VIFs for structures below 5 in Table 5 by demonstrating convergent validity. Moreover, Cronbach's alpha indicates that measurements have been accurate with reliability values above the 0.70 model's dependability.

Table 3. The square root of AVEs and inter-variables correlations

Constructs	country	DI	FV	EV	SV	CS	CL	CI
DI	Egypt	(0.856)						
	Saudi Arabia	(0.715)						
FV	Egypt	0.791	(0.832)					
	Saudi Arabia	0.661	(0.753)					
EV	Egypt	0.544	0.674	(0.831)				
	Saudi Arabia	0.608	0.689	(0.753)				
SV	Egypt	0.717	0.748	0.602	(0.832)			
	Saudi Arabia	0.613	0.628	0.717	(0.785)			
CS	Egypt	0.612	0.699	0.744	0.660	(0.772)		
	Saudi Arabia	0.604	0.672	0.713	0.723	(0.735)		
CL	Egypt	0.692	0.724	0.789	0.656	0.792	(0.845)	
	Saudi Arabia	0.601	0.606	0.650	0.715	0.802	(0.837)	
CI	Egypt	-0.011	-0.042	-0.055	-0.021	-0.054	-0.032	(0.922)
	Saudi Arabia	-0.073	-0.046	-0.067	-0.059	-0.032	-0.029	(0.934)

Table 4. HTMT ratios

Constructs	Country	DI	FV	EV	SV	CS	CL
FV	Egypt	0.891					
	Saudi Arabia	0.872					
EV	Egypt	0.612	0.795				
	Saudi Arabia	0.804	0.839				
SV	Egypt	0.806	0.880	0.710			
	Saudi Arabia	0.778	0.833	0.836			
CS	Egypt	0.698	0.835	0.886	0.786		
	Saudi Arabia	0.771	0.882	0.831	0.855		
CL	Egypt	0.773	0.846	0.820	0.769	0.836	
	Saudi Arabia	0.736	0.767	0.815	0.868	0.878	
CI	Egypt	0.045	0.056	0.065	0.050	0.069	0.055
	Saudi Arabia	0.096	0.077	0.080	0.088	0.071	0.073

Table 5. Measurement model statistic

Con.	Indicators	Egypt						Saudi Arabia					
		Loading	CR	CA	AVE	VIF	√AVE	Loading	CR	CA	AVE	VIF	√AVE
DI	The destination is a pleasant place to visit.	0.837	0.942	0.927	0.732	3.260	0.856	0.742	0.861	0.805	0.512	2.123	0.715
	The destination is an exciting place to visit.	0.830						0.629					
	The destination is a relaxing place to visit.	0.894						0.821					
	The destination is a fantastic place to visit.	0.865						0.767					
	The destination is a hospitable place to visit.	0.864						0.712					
	The destination is a safe place to visit.	0.842						0.684					
FV	**In my opinion, the functional value of the destination is:**		0.900	0.850	0.692	3.911	0.832		0.842	0.748	0.575	2.491	0.758
	to have an acceptable standard of quality.	0.759						0.743					
	that it is reliable in its performance.	0.830						0.836					
	good in terms of its overall excellence.	0.868						0.817					
	to possess a degree of quality that is satisfactory.	0.865						0.617					

EV	**In my opinion, the emotional value of the destination is:** delightful and interesting to me.	0.845	0.899	0.851	0.691	3.164	0.831	0.737	0.839	0.745	0.567	2.783	0.753
	make me feel good.	0.801						0.758					
	inspire my thoughts.	0.864						0.778					
	help me generate ideas and gives me pleasure.	0.813						0.746					
SV	**In my opinion, the social value of the destination is:** make a good impression on other people.	0.855	0.900	0.851	0.693	2.719	0.832	0.783	0.865	0.792	0.616	2.975	0.785
	win the admiration of other people	0.753						0.812					
	gain the approval of other people	0.854						0.777					
	enhance my social relationships with others.	0.863						0.767					
CS	The destination would meet my needs, I think.	0.792	0.881	0.831	0.597	3.267	0.772	0.783	0.855	0.787	0.541	3.880	0.735
	I made a wise decision by choosing to buy from this destination.	0.783						0.750					
	I believe that making a purchase from this destination was the right choice.	0.784						0.722					
	I would say that I have enjoyed experiencing this destination.	0.745						0.698					
	Overall, I am satisfied with visiting the destination.	0.757						0.721					
CL	The destination provides excellent service quality.	0.851	0.909	0.866	0.715	4.230	0.845	0.828	0.904	0.858	0.701	3.167	0.837
	I think the destination is the best choice for me.	0.841						0.858					
	I like the destination more than other destinations.	0.882						0.837					
	I recommend this destination to others who seek my advice.	0.806						0.827					
CI	I get the impression that this destination genuinely cares about my intimacy.	0.902	0.958	0.941	0.850	1.007	0.922	0.931	0.965	0.951	0.873	1.009	0.934
	I feel as though I fully comprehend this destination.	0.926						0.932					
	I feel as though I have known this destination for a long time.	0.932						0.946					
	I feel like this destination has a deep understanding of who I am.	0.928						0.937					

3. Structural model

These models examine the connections between the building blocks of research model constructs. Figure 1 shows that DI significantly affects the FV ($\beta1 = 0.79$ for Egypt and $\beta2 = 0.71$ for Saudi Arabia, and H1 is approved).
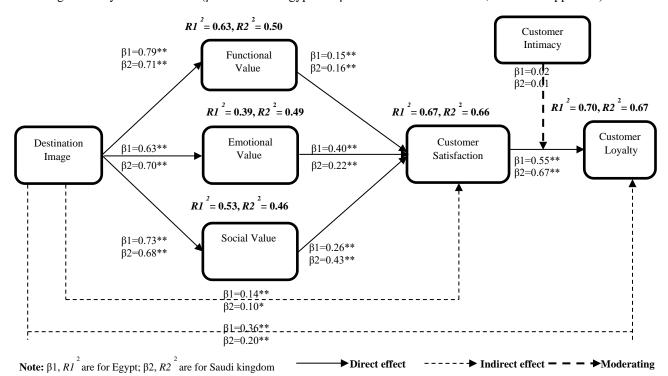

Note: $\beta1$, $R1^2$ are for Egypt; $\beta2$, $R2^2$ are for Saudi kingdom — Direct effect - - - - - ▶ Indirect effect ▬ ▬ ▬ ▶ Moderating

Figure 1. The structure model

Moreover, 63% of the variance in DI toward FV is for Egypt ($R1^2 = 0.63$) versus 49% for Saudi Arabia ($R2^2 = 0.50$). Similarly, DI significantly affects the EV ($\beta1 = 0.63$ for Egypt and $\beta2 = 0.70$ for Saudi Arabia, and H2 is confirmed). In addition, 39% of the variance in DI toward EV was for Egypt ($R1^2 = 0.39$) versus 49% for Saudi Arabia ($R2^2 = 0.49$). Additionally, DI significantly affects the SV ($\beta1 = 0.73$ for Egypt and $\beta2 = 0.68$ for Saudi Arabia, and H3 is accepted). In addition, 53% of the variance in DI toward SV was for Egypt ($R1^2 = 0.53$) versus 46% for Saudi Arabia ($R2^2 = 0.46$).

Furthermore, it is found that customer satisfaction is influenced by three factors, including the functional value ($\beta1 = 0.15$ for Egypt and $\beta2 = 0.16$ for Saudi Arabia, and H4 is accepted), the emotional value ($\beta1 = 0.40$ for Egypt and $\beta2 = 0.22$ for Saudi Arabia, and H5 is accepted), and the social value ($\beta1 = 0.26$ for Egypt and $\beta2 = 0.43$ for Saudi Arabia, and H6 is accepted). The three abovementioned variables explain 67% and 66% of the variance in customer satisfaction for Egypt and Saudi Arabia, respectively. Besides, the findings revealed that CS contributes significantly to CL ($\beta1 = 0.55$ for Egypt and $\beta2 = 0.67$ for Saudi Arabia, and H7 is confirmed). Moreover, 70% of the variance in DI toward FV is for Egypt ($R1^2 = 0.70$) versus 67% for Saudi Arabia ($R2^2 = 0.67$).

The mediating effects are as follows: Likely, FV, EV, and SV mediate the association between DI and CS. Customer satisfaction is significantly impacted by destination image ($\beta1 = 0.14$ for Egypt and $\beta2 = 0.10$ for Saudi Arabia, and H8 is confirmed). In addition, FV, EV, SV, and CS mediate the association between DI and CL. Customer loyalty is significantly impacted by destination image ($\beta1 = 0.36$ for Egypt and $\beta2 = 0.20$ for Saudi Arabia, and H9 is confirmed). Regarding the significance of direct interactions in hypotheses 8 and 9, it is conceivable that, firstly, FV, EV, and SV partially mediate the relationships between DI and CS, explaining 67% and 66% of the variance in DI and CS for Egypt and Saudi Arabia, respectively. Secondly, FV, EV, SV, and CS partially mediate the relationships between DI and CL; FV, EV, SV, and CS explain 70% and 67% of the variance in CS and CL for Egypt and Saudi Arabia, respectively.

The moderating effect is as follows: The WarpPLS analysis showed that CI has a significant negative influence on CS and CL ($\beta1 = 0.02$ for Egypt and $\beta2 = 0.01$ for Saudi Arabia, and indicating no support for H10). Table 6 summarizes the hypotheses tested. Estimates of direct effects, effect sizes, and interactions from the moderated mediation in Table 7.

Table 6. Examining the hypotheses

No.	Hypotheses	β Value		t-Value		p-Value		Result
		Egypt	Saudi Arabia	Egypt	Saudi Arabia	Egypt	Saudi Arabia	
H1	**DI - FV**	0.79	0.71	17.701	13.607	P<.01	P<.01	**Supported**
H2	**DI - EV**	0.63	0.70	13.704	13.494	P<.01	P<.01	**Supported**
H3	**DI - SV**	0.73	0.68	16.183	13.080	P<.01	P<.01	**Supported**
H4	**FV - CS**	0.15	0.16	2.986	2.641	P<.01	P<.01	**Supported**
H5	**EV - CS**	0.40	0.22	8.524	3.857	P<.01	P<.01	**Supported**
H6	**SV - CS**	0.26	0.43	2.782	7.954	P<.01	P<.01	**Supported**
H7	**CS - CL**	0.55	0.67	11.811	12.831	P<.01	P<.01	**Supported**
H8	**DI – (FV-EV-SV) – CS**	0.14	0.10	5.316	1.736	P<.01	P<.01	**Supported**
H9	**DI – (FV-EV-SV- CS) - CL**	0.36	0.20	7.588	3.606	P<.01	P<.01	**Supported**
H10	**CI*CS-CL**	0.02	0.01	-0.375	-0.203	P=0.35	P=0.42	**No Supported**

Table 7. Estimates of direct effects, effect sizes, and interactions from the moderated mediation

Hypotheses	Path Coefficients		Standard Errors		Effect sizes		95 % Confidence Interval Egypt		95 % Confidence Interval Saudi Arabia	
	Egypt	Saudi Arabia	Egypt	Saudi Arabia	Egypt	Saudi Arabia	Upper Limits	Lower Limits	Upper Limits	Lower Limits
Direct effect										
DI - FV	0.793	0.703	0.045	0.52	0.629	0.495	0.705	0.881	0.602	0.805
DI - EV	0.628	0.698	0.046	0.052	0.394	0.488	0.538	0.718	0.597	0.800
DI - SV	0.731	0.679	0.045	0.052	0.534	0.461	0.642	0.820	0.577	0.781
FV - CS	0.146	0.149	0.049	0.056	0.103	0.103	0.050	0.242	0.038	0.260
EV - CS	0.403	0.215	0.047	0.056	0.300	0.159	0.310	0.495	0.106	0.325
SV - CS	0.136	0.429	0.049	0.054	0.090	0.334	0.040	0.232	0.324	0.535
CS - CL	0.547	0.667	0.049	0.052	0.438	0.538	0.456	0.638	0.565	0.769
Mediating paths										
DI – (FV-EV-SV) – CS	0.256	0.099	0.048	0.057	0.180	0.067	0.162	0.351	-0.013	0.210
DI – (FV-EV-SV- CS) - CL	0.360	0.202	0.047	0.056	0.270	0.131	0.267	0.453	0.092	0.311
Moderating paths										
CI*CS-CL	-0.019	-0.012	0.050	0.058	0.005	0.003	-0.116	0.079	-0.125	0.101

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study looks into the impacts of DI on CL directly and indirectly via FV, EV, SV, and CS. Moreover, the CI is employed as a moderating variable to investigate the effects of CS and CL among Egypt and Saudi Arabia customers. The results showed that customers expect loyalty from their travel plans and have positive attitudes and intentions toward the destination. One main factor that attracts customer satisfaction and loyalty is the destination image. Following the literature review, no integrative model seems to have the in-depth knowledge and understanding to recommend an investigative model

fully explaining these effects of DI on CL, both directly and indirectly, through FV, EV, SV, and CS. In addition, CI is a moderating variable used to examine the interactions between CS and CL. Findings characterized travelers' experiences as a fun tool that gives them fun gives them vital insights and enjoyment. In order to meet customer expectations and ensure their continued existence in the travel supply chain, destinations in Egypt and the Arabia of Saudi Arabia can afford to provide services and products to their customers that aid policymakers, travel agency managers, trip planners, and travel marketers in maintaining competitive positions in those markets. They must adopt cutting-edge technologies and tactics for marketing, production, and operational processes. In light of the results, it is clear that it is conceivable that, firstly, FV, EV, and SV partially mediate the relationships between DI and CS, explaining 67% and 66% of the variance in DI and CS for Egypt and Saudi Arabia, respectively. Secondly, FV, EV, SV, and CS partially mediate the relationships between DI and CL; FV, EV, SV, and CS explain 70% and 67% of the variance in CS and CL for Egypt and Saudi Arabia, respectively. The indirect relationships show how destination image develops loyal customers who support them. Destination image is the totality of beliefs, ideas, and perceptions about a destination. We used a multidimensional scale to assess PV, which included FV, EV, and SV. Destination managers and marketers must constantly improve the DI in terms of the quality of the travel environment, attractions, infrastructure, events, and sports in order to increase the perceived value of the destination and ensure that tourists are satisfied. Destination managers should recognize the importance of image and value in stimulating tourist satisfaction and loyalty, which prompts tourists to return to the destination and recommend it to others, improving and sustaining the destination's competitiveness. Additionally, destination managers must develop more efficient and effective marketing strategies and service delivery to meet tourists' expectations and needs, with the goal of improving tourists' travel experiences.

The results are consistent with prior studies Ramseook-Munhurrun et al. (2015) and Atasoy & Eren (2023), revealed a positive link between DI and FV, EV, and SV. Furthermore, the study discovered a link between FV and SC. As a result, one of the main reasons for adopting FV is to enable CS. While value and satisfaction are the essential building blocks of CL, managers should focus on maximizing FV by developing marketing strategies that seek to empower customers with the knowledge and ability to derive the most functional utility from the destination offerings by focusing on satisfying their knowledge requirements. This finding is endorsed by Carlson et al. (2019) and Lee & Han (2022), who confirmed the link between FV and CS. Adding to that, EV is also influencing CS. This means that EV adoption is critical to improving destination CS. Adopting EVs will aid in meeting demand-side needs and the enjoyment obtained from the tourism product. The elements of play, fun, pleasure, delightfulness, inspiration, relaxation, and escapism that a consumer derives from a consumption experience for its own sake make up emotional value. This result is concurrent with El-Adly (2019) and Lee & Han (2022), who endorsed that EV is a significant driver of CS. Moreover, SV is positively affecting CS. SV can aid in developing a social self-concept and reflecting positive feedback from others, i.e., disseminating and sharing positive information about a destination's physical attributes, such as its natural environment and climate, culture, attractions, activities, accessibility, and friendliness with the locals. As a result, SV enables CS. This finding is endorsed by Waheed & Hassan (2016) and Carlson et al. (2019), which found significant links between SV and CS. If customers are satisfied with the service provided at their destination, we will recommend it positively to other service suppliers again the next time when planning their trips. One of the main goals of service providers is to satisfy their customers' needs because doing so results in word-of-mouth advertising, trust, loyalty, and long-term profitability. Moreover, it is one of the essential components of successful destination marketing. In response to CS, CL is a successful strategy for service providers to keep their customers. This result is concurrent with Ramseook-Munhurrun et al. (2015); Keshavarz & Jamshidi (2018), which found significant links between CS and CL. Regarding the moderating effect of intimacy on loyalty and satisfaction, the moderating hypothesis was rejected.

This finding suggests that regardless of a customer's emotional connection to a destination (i.e., service suppliers), the effect of customer intimacy on customer satisfaction and loyalty (i.e., service providers) is similar. This consistency is comforting because it shows that customer intimacy effectively increases customer satisfaction and loyalty among new and infrequent customers. In fact, they can serve as a springboard for improving the perception of customer intimacy with these customers (Garrouch & Ghali, 2023). Additionally, Egyptian and Saudi society is influenced by Eastern traditions and customs, and an intimate relationship can be viewed as one based on feelings such as love and affection. These findings are unique and provide fresh insights because they have not been found in previous research on the immediate effects of intimacy. Additionally, because new customers lack an emotional connection to a destination, the customer satisfaction and loyalty used by high customer intimacy may be more consistent and less reliant on perceptions of improved customer intimacy from transactions.

CONCLUSIONS AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS
1. Conclusions
This study addresses several gaps in the literature review, such as the mechanism of the relationship between destination image and customer loyalty. The study offers empirical evidence that investing in promoting customer empowerment will significantly boost customer satisfaction, trust, and loyalty in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The findings revealed that (1) DI has positively affected FV, EV, and SV; (2) FV, EV, and SV have positively affected CS; (3) CS has positively affected CL; and (4) the finding shows that FV, EV, SV, and CS act as a partial mediator between DI and CL; and (5) CI is a moderating variable between CS and CL.

2. Theoretical implications
Concerning the theoretical implications, the current study has produced a precise, coherent model that combines and quantifies the direct and indirect relationships among the research model constructs. It investigates ten hypotheses that provide convincing evidence and justification for FV, EV, SV, and CS to act as a partial mediator between DI and CL. Moreover, CI is

a moderating variable between CS and CL for customers in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. It advances and adds to our current knowledge of the causes, effects, and implications of FV, EV, SV, CS, and CI in the context of tourism and travel in developing nations. The rigorous study model could be applied to other providers i.e., hotels, restaurants, villages, airlines, catering services, museums, events, and other providers to generalize the findings. The findings of the proposed research model contribute to a better understanding of the factors that affect EV, SV, CS, and CI in hospitality and tourism destinations, with a focus particular on Egypt and Saudi Arabia, which must carefully improve their FV, EV, SV, CS, and CI to remain competitive in the customer's supply chain that is undergoing rapid change, technology, and innovation. The findings offer evidence of convenience that destinations in Egypt and Saudi Arabian Arabia can achieve and promote high CL in terms of customer satisfaction, intimacy, and loyalty by adopting DI and CL. This work closes the research gap identified by (Atasoy & Eren, 2023; Carlson et al., 2019; Chuah et al., 2017; El-Adly, 2019; Ramseook-Munhurrun et al., 2015), regarding the critical requirement to thoroughly analyze factors influencing service enterprises to adopt DI. How much do these methods influence destination managers' attitudes about FV, EV, SV, CS, and CI and high CL in their destinations? The overall interpretation of the factors affecting DI and CL in both destinations in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, will be improved by having a better understanding of the direct and indirect effects of the causal relationships between the research constructs. Additionally, scholars are also urged to expand on the research model that has been proposed to reveal global and multi-national evidence about customer and destination managers' perspectives on developing DI and CL in the tourism and hospitality arenas.

3. Practical implications

This research offers numerous managerial implications for destination managers and service providers. The present study revealed that the destination image significantly contributes to customer loyalty. First, it presents an opportunity for manager destinations to reevaluate their development priorities to achieve the three dimensions of perceived value, i.e., functional, emotional, and social value, as well as customer satisfaction, which is a vital factor in contributing to customer loyalty. Findings invite destination managers to review their plans and competitive development strategies. Therefore, the destination image concept is a multifaceted construct made up of primarily cognitive, affective, and conative aspects in tourism research, destination managers, policymakers, governments, and planners have to integrate these aspects to make the destination image competitive. It is revealed that DI is a significant enabler of FV, EV, SV, and CS. This illustrates the necessity for destination managers to keep a close eye on their destinations and analyze data to take advantage of opportunities for growth and competitiveness. Enabling business environments, such as the business environment, destination safety and security, health, and human resources, should be carefully improved to put the destination in a competitive position and stay ahead of its competitors. Monitoring technological advancements in their industry and seriously implementing innovative ideas will boost their competitiveness and enhance their performance. In addition, combining marketing data with contemporary technologies to meet demand needs will keep their customers interested, engaged, and satisfied with their services and products.

Moreover, the findings indicate the importance of paying attention to how FV, EV, and SV affect CS. CS also plays a vital role in enhancing CL. Functional, emotional, and social values are significant contributors to customer satisfaction. Hence, policymakers and planners should cautiously consider these facets to strengthen customer satisfaction. When customers are satisfied and have access to enjoyable, amusing, and exciting destinations, they feel loyalty and hedonic gratification toward their destinations. Countries seeking increased and significant growth in tourism should examine the competitive characteristics of their destinations. Managers need to support their destination's image, identify the core issues, and make improvements to stay competitive and achieve the destination's intended growth in the tourism market.

8. Limitations and future research

Conceptual and practical advancements notwithstanding, there are a number of limitations that must be acknowledged. First, because the study's population was restricted to travelers who had been to Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the findings cannot be definitively applied to other destinations. The results of this study can be generalized by conducting comparable research in other destinations. Second, the scales used for measurements might not be sufficient when using them for Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Consequently, this area requires an exploratory analysis. Future research may examine how both first-time customers and repeat visitors perceive the destination, the impact of first-time and previous travel experiences on tourists' perceptions of a destination's image, as well as their impact on that image's functional, emotional, and social value, as well as their effects on customer satisfaction, intimacy, and loyalty Given that the travel market's demographics are shifting and may have an impact on the perception of a destination and visitors' behavior, tourist demographics are receiving more attention in destination literature. As a result, future research could focus on creating a more valid, reliable, and broadly applicable destination scale for use in tourism studies.

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