# Role of Travel Motivation and Destination Image to Promote Destination Loyalty

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This study examines the impact of travel motivation on destination loyalty through the mediating role of destination image and moderating influence of destination satisfaction using the push and pull theory. The data was collected from 209 local visitors visiting Kaghan Valley, the northern areas of Pakistan, through a self-administered questionnaire. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling was employed to investigate the impact of hypotheses. Results postulate that there is a positive influence of travel motivation on destination loyalty whereas destination image significantly mediates this relationship. Results further reveal an insignificant moderating influence of destination satisfaction on destination image and destination loyalty. This research provides guidelines for the policymakers to adopt destination-specific strategies to boost tourism industry in Pakistan.

*Keywords:* travel motivation, destination image, destination satisfaction, destination loyalty, Pakistan.

## Introduction

The tourism industry has become an essential contributor to economic growth over the past decade, offering multi-dimensional opportunities that create jobs, reduce poverty, and improve local infrastructure on both global and local levels (Destek & Aydın, 2022; Liu et al., 2022). Recognizing these benefits, many countries have focused on tourism growth through various initiatives. However, understanding travel motivation of tourists has been a focal point of research to comprehend tourist loyalty behavior (Woyo & Slabbert, 2020). Knowing the reasons behind travel and the factors influencing tourists' behavioral intentions is beneficial for effective tourism planning and marketing (Wasaya et al., 2022). Scholars have highlighted different travel reasons, like personal business travel, corporate business travel, visiting friends and relatives, and vacation travel for pleasure (Holloway & Humphreys, 2022). Among these, vacation travel for pleasure is the most extensively researched area. Research on vacation travel for pleasure has identified various motivating factors, such as the desire for no-

velty, knowledge enhancement, relaxation, shopping, self-esteem, social recognition, escape from routine, social bonding, learning and discovery, thrill and excitement, destination information, destination features, family and friends, leisure and relaxation and religious and cultural considerations (Holloway & Humphreys, 2022).

Extensive research has explored the relationships between travel motivation and destination image (Su et al., 2020), between travel motivation and tourists' attitudes toward destinations (Kim et al., 2021), and between destination image and tourists' attitudes toward destinations (Thi Khanh & Phong, 2020). However, the impact of travel motivation on both destination image and tourists' loyalty to destinations remains a significant knowledge gap in the literature (Pereira et al., 2022). Studies have mostly emphasized the importance of satisfaction as a significant indicator of loyalty (Al-Msallam, 2020; Khan & Hemsley-Brown, 2024). Similarly, research has also established a significant correlation between destination image and tourist satisfaction (Jeong & Kim, 2020). Considering the significant interplay between these variables, a recent study in a similar context highlighted a knowledge gap, emphasizing the need to explore the role of destination satisfaction in relation to motivation and destination image (Pereira et al., 2022). Likewise, Lee and Xue (2020), identified a knowledge gap, suggesting to examine tourists' motivation link with satisfaction and destination loyalty. Hence, this study has included destination satisfaction as a moderator. The important argument behind the expected moderating influence is that, despite the prominence of tourist satisfaction with destination (Asmelash & Kumar, 2019; Biswas et al., 2020), there are some unanswered questions about its potential role. Does destination image have a different impact on destination loyalty in relation to the tourist satisfaction level?

This study contributes to push and pull motivation theory by addressing notable knowledge gaps within the literature. Additionally, it advances the destination loyalty domain by examining the combined effect of travel motivation, destination image, and destination satisfaction in promoting tourist loyalty. Within the cultural context of an emerging economy, this study provides valuable insights into the specific factors that influence tourist loyalty behaviors. The findings also provide actionable recommendations for policymakers to design destination specific strategies to enhance tourist motivation and loyalty. These recommendations can be used to improve destination specific attributes to boost tourism industry of Pakistan.

## Literature Review
### Theory and Hypotheses Development
The concept of 'push and pull motivation,' initially proposed by Dann (1977), offers a social perspective on understanding visitor motivation in tourism. While early academic discussions predominantly emphasized push factors (Dann, 1981), subsequent research recognized the complementary role of pull factors in shaping traveler motivation (Jeong & Kim, 2020; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). According to Yoon and Uysal (2005), push motivations (e.g. relaxation, family togetherness, or safety and fun) serve as the primary drivers of tourists' travel decisions making process. Whereas pull factors (e.g. reliable weather, cleanness and shopping, night life and local cuisine) attract tourists to specific destinations. This balanced approach, considering both push and pull motivations, is crucial for crafting effective promotional strategies in tourism. Push factors represent internal motivations that drive individuals to engage in tourism activities, while pull factors encompass destination-specific attributes that influence visitors' perceptions of particular tourism locations (Higham & Hinch, 2018; Potti et al., 2023). For example, Kim et al. (2006), identified weather, fun, entertainment, spending time with friends, and escaping routine as key push factors, while travel time, cost value, accessibility, transportation convenience, and destination information emerged as significant pull factors for university graduates. Similarly, Prayag and Hosany (2014), highlighted shopping as a pull factor and rest and relaxation as a push factor motivating young Arab tourists visiting Western countries. Other studies have also underscored the significance of push and pull elements in elucidating tourist motivations and behaviors (Wen & Huang, 2019; Yim et al., 2021), highlighting their pivotal role in shaping travel preferences and destination choices.

### Travel Motivation and Destination Loyalty

Scholars consider travel motivation as a key factor in developing tourists' loyalty toward their destination (Al-okaily et al., 2022; Leo et al., 2021), as well as one's need to get involved in tourism activities. It results from both internal and external factors and frequently serves as the catalyst for a traveler's visit (Leo et al., 2021). According to the push and pull theory, tourist desires are influenced by internal factors like exploring recreation activities and escape from tedious routines and external factors like attractive environment and affordable pricing-related destination characteristics (Piper et al., 2022). Push aspects are closely linked to visitors' inner needs and can be both tangible and intangible (Gavcar & Gursoy, 2002) and demographic, socioeconomic, and psychological (Prebensen et al., 2013). Pull factors are destination specific that motivate tourists to destination selection (Prebensen et al., 2013). Prior research have also found a substantial correlation between travel motivation and destination loyalty (Sato et al., 2018). Hence, we propose

H1     *Travel motivation positively influences destination loyalty.*

### Travel Motivation and Destination Image

Travel motivation refers to an individual's inner aspirations and intentions in line with the attractive attributes of a destination, resulting in an urge to plan a visit to that location (Kusdibyo, 2022). Psychological, physical, social, and exploration needs jointly constitute the inner motivation of an individual called a push factor (Hsu et al., 2009). Whereas, the pull factor is considered as an external facet of an individual and results from the attraction attached to a destination while considering the tangible and intangible features of the location (Blomstervik & Olsen, 2022). Besides tourism, academics from other fields have highlighted motivation as a crucial aspect of perception. Li et al. (2010), while investigating the linkage between motivation and destination image, found a significant impact of motivation factors (intellectual, escape, and belonging) on cognitive as well as an effective image of a destination. In their literature review, Sio et al. (2024) discovered a significant association between motivation and image building. Chaulagain et al.

(2019), in their study, highlighted that destination image is an essential element that can influence travelers' choices of visiting some location. Therefore, we propose:

H2     *Travel motivation positively influences destination image.*

### Destination Image and Destination Loyalty

Destination image is referred as tourists' perceptions of a destination, comprising various dimensions such as tourism infrastructure, hospitality atmosphere and cultural attractions (Cardoso et al., 2019). Early researcher emphasized the role of, stimulus factors and personal factors in destination image formulation (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). The stimulus factors are referred as external stimulus and physical object along with previous experience, whereas, personal factors pertain to social and psychological characteristics of the tourist. The variety and type of information sources (stimulus factors) influence cognitive image, whereas socio-psychological motivations (personal factors) influence only affective image. Wang and Hsu (2010), building on this perspective, provided different dimensions of cognitive image, like amenities, tourism service quality, tourism resources, support factors, and travel environment. However, they emphasized that overall destination image formulation consists of both cognitive and affective image components and these dimensions do not operate in isolation but mutually influence each other in shaping tourist's experiences.

The later research highlighted that organic (personal experience, friends and acquaintances), induced (online information source) resources also influence destination images formulation (Beerli & Martín, 2004; Llodrà-Riera et al., 2015). While tourists consider both organic and induced sources when selecting a destination (Qiu et al., 2018), the influence of organic image tends to be perceived as stronger (Tasci, 2017). Image plays a pivotal role in the effective promotion of tourism destinations (Stylidis et al., 2017), as visitors often evaluate and choose destinations based on favorable impressions (Song et al., 2019). Earlier research has highlighted the critical role of destination image in developing loyalty (Folgado-Fernández et al., 2017).

Additionally, research has shown that tourists' loyalty intentions are positively influenced by both cognitive and affective features of destination image, suggesting that visitors with strong perceptions about a destination are more likely to recommend it to others and exhibit a higher inclination to revisit (Stylidis & Cherifi, 2018). Thus, we propose:

H3   *Destination image positively influences destination loyalty.*

*Mediating Role of Destination Image*

Destination image serves as a crucial factor in tourist decision-making processes, guiding their choices regarding destinations (Chen & Tsai, 2007). A positive image has been associated with increased intentions among travelers to revisit the destination or recommend it to others, commonly referred to as loyalty (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Stylidis et al., 2020). Hallmann et al. (2015), discovered that destination image may both predict and directly influence tourists' loyalty. Within this relationship motivation is considered as a crucial factor influencing the image-building process and destination selection (Hosany et al., 2020). Understanding tourist motivation is deemed essential for comprehending destination preferences and improving destination (Beerli & Martín, 2004), as well as its association with tourist loyalty. Yoon and Uysal (2005), argue that the effectiveness of destination promotion can be assessed through a detailed examination of traveler motivation and its interaction with loyalty. Thus, it is suggested that a destination's positive perception, influenced by appealing travel motivations, likely mediates the relationship between travel motivation and destination loyalty.

H4   *Destination image significantly mediates the relationship between travel motivation and destination loyalty.*

*Destination Satisfaction as a Moderator*

The extant literature on destination-specific satisfaction, rooted in the broader field of customer satisfaction (Shyju et al., 2023), has extensively examined the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction within tourism, encompassing factors such as travel motivation (Bayih & Singh, 2020), service quality & value

(Demir et al., 2021), tourism products and tourist facilities (Abror et al., 2021), image congruency (Huang et al., 2015) and travel involvement (Chi et al., 2018), and outcomes like traveler loyalty (Kusdibyo, 2022; Masserini et al., 2019). However, the role of satisfaction as a moderating variable in relation to destination loyalty remains underexplored, indicating a gap in understanding within the loyalty domain. Satisfaction is a crucial factor that influences loyalty (Oliver, 1980). It suggests that persons having a higher range of satisfaction visit the same place more frequently than those with low levels of satisfaction. The higher level of satisfaction with a destination (Seetanah et al., 2020), improves tourists' intentions to revisit. Satisfaction was found having non-linear impact on the intention to return, indicating that highly satisfied visitors are more likely to revisit as compared to those with low satisfaction (Antón et al., 2017). Park et al. (2019), while focusing on wine tourism at Marqués de Riscal in Spain, found substantial moderating effect of satisfaction on revisit intentions. Similarly, Wong et al. (2019) found moderating role satisfaction on the link between cognitive and affective image and destination loyalty intention. These varying views warrant further research to determine whether destination satisfaction can holistically affect the destination image and destination loyalty relationship:

H5   *Destination satisfaction has a positive and significant moderating influence on destination image and destination loyalty relationship.*

*Theoretical Framework*

By taking the lens of well-established push-pull framework, this study developed a theoretical model which includes variables, travel motivation, destination image, destination satisfaction and destination loyalty. The theoretical framework is presented in Figure 1.

## Methodology
### Research Context

The current study explores the relationship between travel motivation and tourists' loyalty toward a destination, with a focus on the mediating role of destination image and moderating role of destination satisfaction. Data was collected from local tourists
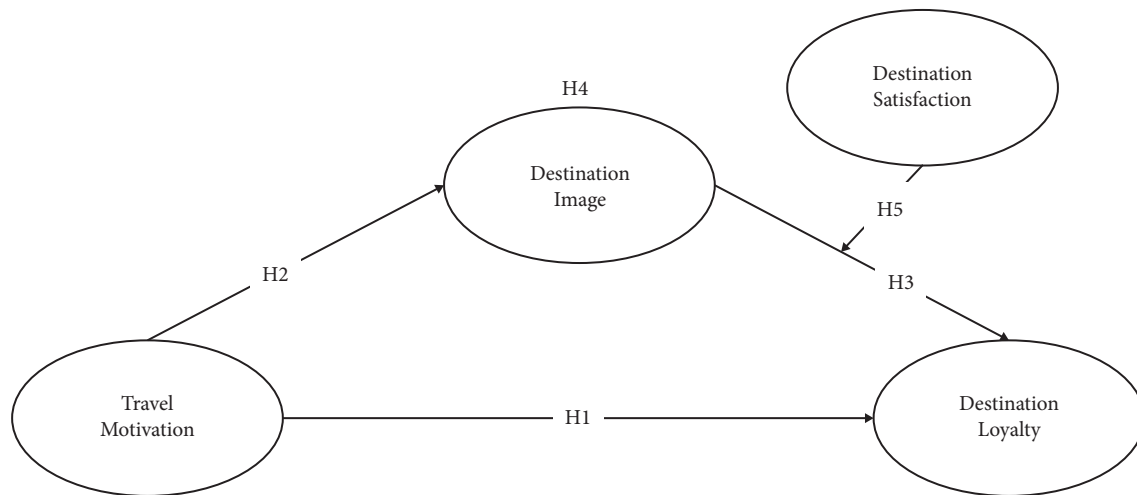
*Figure 1*    Theoretical Framework

visiting Kaghan Valley, the northern area of Pakistan. The Hazara region of Pakistan contains the Kaghan Valley, which borders Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir to the north and east, respectively, both of which are managed by Pakistan. The Lower Himalayan Mountain range encloses the 155-kilometer-long valley, giving rise to an alpine environment, pine woods, and alpine meadows. Glaciers, waterfalls, icy mountain streams, and lakes as beautiful as crystal can be found in the valley beside the Kunhar River. The Kaghan is a well-liked summertime resort for both locals and visitors because of its picturesque scenery and surroundings.

*Sample and Data Collection Procedure*
The study employed a deductive approach with a self-administered questionnaire survey. The data was collected from local tourists who had recently visited Kaghan Valley, the northern area of Pakistan. Section 1 of the questionnaire survey was related to demographics, whereas section 2 focused on study variables with items. Non-probability convenience sampling was applied to collect the data between April to May 2024. For the sample size requirements, 1 item into 10 times guidelines was applied (Kock & Hadaya, 2018) to collect the data from minimum of 220 respondents. The questionnaire survey was distributed to 345 re-spondents while 236 responses were returned (68.4%). Twenty-seven questionnaires were rejected because of the missing information, further data analysis was comprised on 209 questionnaires. For respondents' privacy, confidentiality and anonymity were ensured during the research process. No personally identifiable information, such as names, contact details, or any identifying details, was collected. Data was securely stored and used exclusively for research purposes to maintain the integrity of the study.

*Research Instruments*
The measurement scale was adapted from previously well-established studies on the travel motivation from Beerli and Martín (2004), destination loyalty from (Patwardhan et al., 2020), destination satisfaction from Westbrook and Oliver (1981), and destination image from Kaplanidou (2009). The respondents were asked to rate on a five-point Likert scale with "1" being "strongly disagree" and "5" being "strongly agree". The Cronbach's alpha value of all these variables was found to be above than 0.70, indicating strong reliability and internal consistency.

*Analytical Technique*
Partial Least Square Structural Modeling (PLS-SEM) via Smart PLS 4.0.9.3 was applied to validate the model

(Hair et al., 2019). PLS-SEM is recommended for exploring intricate mechanisms (Hair, Black et al., 2014), employing non-parametric assessment standards for model evaluation. Recent studies have increasingly used this technique for testing complex research models that incorporate both mediator and moderator variables (Abiola-Oke, 2024). PLS-SEM employs a two-stage approach. In the first stage, the measurement model is evaluated for reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The second stage utilizes the structural model for hypothesis testing.

### Findings

*Respondents' Socio-demographic Profile*

Out of all respondents, 61.4% (128) were male, and 38.6% (81) were female. The results revealed that 41.3% (87) participants were 31–40 years old, 48.9% (103) were 41–50 years old, 8.3% (17) were 51–60 years old and the remining 1.1% (2) were 61–above years in age. In the case of educational level, 55.3% (116) respondents had formal education (degree level studies), 39.4% (82) respondents had professional education (master level studies) and 5.3% (11) respondents had scholarly education (PhD/DBA level studies). In addition, all 209 participants were domestic tourists, belonging to different areas/states of Pakistan.

*Common Method Bias*

Self–reported data may result in "common method bias" (CMB) that might artificially articulate the findings (Podsakoff et al., 2003). To assess the potential issue of CMB, the criteria of Harman's single factor and variance inflation factor (VIF) criteria were used. Results of Herman's single factor method shows that the one factor explains less than 50% (40.60%) of the total variance, confirming the non–presence of the CMB. In addition, the values of VIF are less than 3.3, which also confirms that there is no issue of CMB (Kock, 2015).

*Measurement Model Assessment*

The "measurement model assessment" validates measures using factor loading, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) (Hair et al., 2019). Table 1 findings demonstrate factor loadings

within accepted criteria (0.62 to 0.89) (Hair, Black, et al. 2014). CR values (0.88 to 0.91) in Table 1 confirm strong internal consistency (Hair et al., 2019). AVE values (travel motivation = 0.61; destination image = 0.60; destination satisfaction = 0.65; destination loyalty = 0.65) indicate variance above 50%, establishing 'convergent validity' (Hair et al., 2019). Discriminant validity was confirmed by Fornell–Larcker and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio Criteria (Hair et al., 2019). HTMT values in Table 2 are below the criterion (0.85) confirm the discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015).

*Structural Model Assessment*

The proposed hypotheses were tested by using PLS-SEM in smart PLS. The "coefficient of determination" ($R^2$) and "effect size" $f^2$ values are used to explain the ability of the overall model and the effect of each exogenous variable, respectively (Hair et al., 2019). Results of $R^2$ show that travel motivation explains 28.6% and 49.7% variance in destination image and destination loyalty, respectively. The "effect size ($f^2$)", which measures the extent to which an "exogenous variable" contributes to the $R^2$ values of an "endogenous variable", was also examined. Values of $f^2$ show the high effect size of travel motivation on destination image. On the other hand, the effect of destination image on destination loyalty is small (Cohen et al., 2013). Moreover, model's predictive relevance was tested using the PLS-predict. The values of $Q^2$ in Table 4 show medium predictive accuracy of the PLS path model (Hair et al., 2019).

*Model Fit*

Scholars suggested standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) criteria to confirm the goodness of fit of the estimated model (Hair et al., 2019). The value of SRMR < 0.08 indicates a good model fit (Hair et al., 2019). Results in Table 4 confirm the goodness of fit of the estimated model with the empirical data as the value of SRMR = 0.07 < 0.08.

SmartPLS structure model offers an analysis of direct and indirect linkages among variables, presenting *t* values and path coefficients (Henseler et al., 2009). The 'path coefficient' is alike to the standardized beta

*Table 1*   Convergent Validity

| Construct | Items | Loadings | VIF | Alpha | CR | AVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Destination Image | People in Kaghan are friendly (DI1) | 0.80 | 2.06 | 0.83 | 0.88 | 0.60 |
| | Kaghan offers suitable accommodation (DI2) | 0.78 | 1.95 | | | |
| | Kaghan is a safe city (DI3) | 0.79 | 1.86 | | | |
| | Kaghan has beautiful natural scenery (DI4) | 0.78 | 1.81 | | | |
| | Kaghan is an interesting city (DI5) | 0.72 | 1.64 | | | |
| Destination Loyalty | I am willing to revisit there in future (DL1) | 0.83 | 2.06 | 0.87 | 0.90 | 0.65 |
| | I am willing to recommend there to my family and friends (DL2) | 0.89 | 2.76 | | | |
| | I stay for longer periods there compared to any other tourist destination (DL3) | 0.83 | 2.05 | | | |
| | I come with more companions there (DL4) | 0.85 | 2.43 | | | |
| | I have a wonderful image of this place as a tourist destination (DL5) | 0.62 | 1.43 | | | |
| Destination Satisfaction | I am sure it was the right thing to be a tourist in Kaghan (DS1) | 0.78 | 1.97 | 0.86 | 0.90 | 0.65 |
| | Using Kaghan has been a good experience (DS2) | 0.86 | 2.34 | | | |
| | I feel good about my decision to visit Kaghan (DS3) | 0.80 | 2.03 | | | |
| | I have truly enjoyed Kaghan (DS4) | 0.82 | 1.88 | | | |
| | I am satisfied with my decision to visit Kaghan (DS5) | 0.76 | 1.74 | | | |
| Travel Motivation | To know different cultures/ways of life knowledge (TM1) | 0.84 | 2.61 | 0.89 | 0.91 | 0.61 |
| | To travel for Intellectual improvement (TM2) | 0.79 | 2.08 | | | |
| | To travel to know new, different places (TM3) | 0.75 | 1.85 | | | |
| | To travel for rest and relaxation purpose (TM4) | 0.79 | 1.98 | | | |
| | To travel to seek adventure and pleasure (TM5) | 0.78 | 2.05 | | | |
| | To travel to seek diversion and entertainment (TM6) | 0.74 | 1.92 | | | |
| | To seek recreation and entertainment leisure (TM7) | 0.76 | 1.85 | | | |

*Note*   AVE: average variance extracted > 0.50, CR: composite reliability > 0.70, VIF: variance inflation factor < 3.

*Table 2*   Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criteria)

| | Destination Image | Destination Loyalty | Destination Satisfaction | Travel Motivation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Destination Image | **0.77** | | | |
| Destination Loyalty | 0.60 | **0.81** | | |
| Destination Satisfaction | -0.45 | -0.52 | **0.80** | |
| Travel Motivation | 0.54 | 0.62 | -0.68 | **0.78** |

*Table 3*   Discriminant Validity (HTMT Criteria)

| | Destination Image | Destination Loyalty | Destination Satisfaction | Travel Motivation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Destination Image | | | | |
| Destination Loyalty | 0.69 | | | |
| Destination Satisfaction | 0.51 | 0.56 | | |
| Travel Motivation | 0.61 | 0.67 | 0.76 | |

*Note*   Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio < 0.85

*Table 4*  Path Analysis

|      | Relationship | Beta | SD | t-value | P-value | Decision |
|------|--------------|------|-----|---------|---------|----------|
| H1 | TM →DL | 0.32 | 0.08 | 3.99 | 0.00 | Accepted |
| H2 | TM → DI | 0.54 | 0.06 | 8.32 | 0.00 | Accepted |
| H3 | DI → DL | 0.32 | 0.06 | 5.38 | 0.00 | Accepted |
| H4 | TM → DI → DL | 0.17 | 0.04 | 4.46 | 0.00 | Accepted |
| H5 | DS X DI → DL | 0.06 | 0.04 | 1.40 | 0.16 | Rejected |

*Note*   DI = destination image, DL = destination loyalty, DS = destination satisfaction, TM = travel motivation. Bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) bootstrapping with 5,000 resampling iterations, $R^2$ = Determination coefficients; $Q^2$ = Predictive relevance of endogenous. Standardized Root Mean Square Residual = 0.07; $R^2$ Destination Image  =  0.28; $Q^2$ Destination Image = 0.27; $f^2$ Travel Motivation = 0.40; $R^2$ Destination Loyalty = 0.49; $Q^2$ Destination Loyalty = 0.39; $f^2$ Destination Image = 0.12; $*p < 0.05$, $**p < 0.01$, $***p < 0.001$. $R^2$ considered weak (> 0.25), moderate (> 0.50), and substantial (> 0.75). Effect size ($f^2$) is considered small (> 0.02), medium (> 0.15), and large (> 0.35). $Q^2 > 0$ indicate predictive relevance. VAF = Variance accounted for = 34.64%; Full mediation is indicated by a VAF exceeding 80%, partial mediation by a VAF between 20% and 80%, and no mediation by a VAF below 20%.

coefficient in regression analysis. The study followed recommendations from (Hair, Hult et al., 2014) and utilized 'bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) bootstrapping with 5,000 resampling iterations' for hypotheses testing, as presented in table 4.

Findings suggest travel motivation has a positive effect on destination loyalty ($\beta = 0.32$, $t = 3.99$; $p < 0.05$); thus, hypothesis 1 is accepted. Results in table 4 confirm travel motivation has a substantial effect on destination image ($\beta = 0.54$, $t = 8.32$; $p < 0.05$) and destination image has a positive effect on destination

loyalty ($\beta = 0.32$, $t = 5.38$; $p < 0.05$); hypotheses 2 and 3 are accepted. Results also revealed that destination image significantly mediates the relationship between travel motivation and destination loyalty ($\beta = 0.17$, $t = 4.46$; $p < 0.05$), hence, hypothesis 4 is supported. Further the values of variance accounted for (VAF) in Table 4 indicated partial mediation as the value of VAF (34.64%) is between 20% and 80% (Hair, Black, et al., 2014). Finally, results showed an insignificant influence of destination satisfaction on the destination image and destination loyalty link ($\beta = 0.06$, $t = 1.40$;
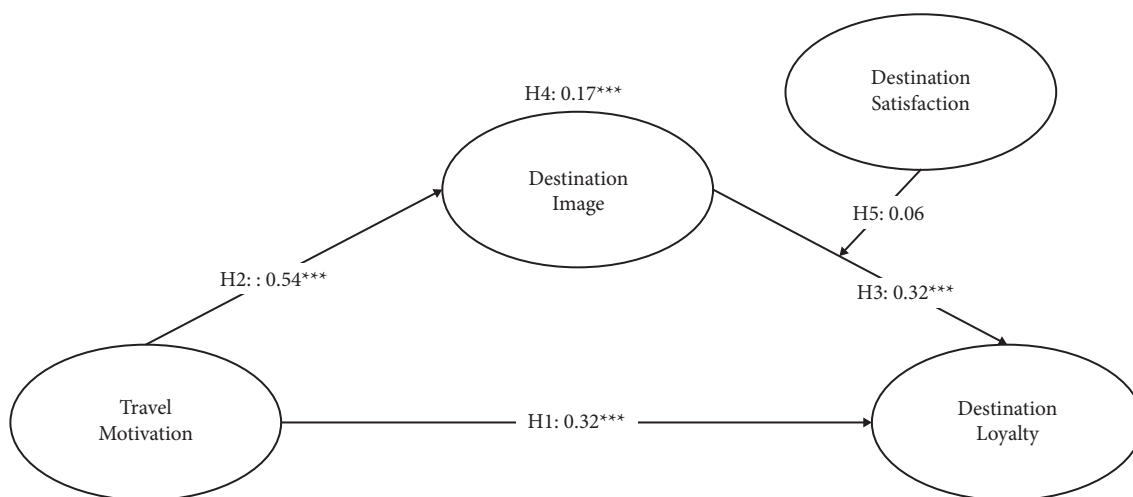


*Figure 2*   Structural Model (Hypotheses Testing)

p>0.05); hence, hypothesis 5 is rejected. The results confirm that, beyond a certain limit, tourist satisfaction does not yield different outcomes, highlighting the importance of a positive perception of the destination as a critical factor in influencing tourist loyalty.

**Discussion**

The study's findings, which demonstrate a positive mediating impact of destination image on the relationship between travel motivation and destination loyalty, alongside a non-significant moderating effect of destination satisfaction, hold significant implications that extend beyond the local context. Results confirmed travel motivation as a significant determinant of destination loyalty which is consistent with previous research (Pestana et al., 2020; Santana & Sevilha Gosling, 2018; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Additionally, travel motivation strongly influences destination image, suggesting tourists' motivation shapes their destination choices, aligning with the push and pull theory (Crompton, 1979). The findings of this study are also in line with earlier research which revealed tourists' overall image formulation, positively and significantly impacts tourists' revisit intentions and recommending destination to others, jointly referred as destination loyalty (Khasawneh & Alfandi, 2019; Santana & Sevilha Gosling, 2018).

Moreover, the third finding emphasized a strong positive link between Destination image and destination loyalty, indicating that a positive image significantly enhances loyalty. This corroborates Li et al.'s (2023) research highlighting the importance of an improved overall perception of the destination in driving visitor loyalty. The significance of destination image as a mediator in the relationship between travel motivation and destination loyalty aligns with established global trends in tourism research. A substantial body of research has emphasized the critical role of destination image in shaping tourist behavior across diverse cultural and economic contexts (Hosany et al., 2017; Hung et al., 2021). These findings highlight that enhancing overall perception positively impacts tourists' motivation to choose a destination. It further underscored that tourists' motivations for choosing a specific location are tied to meeting personal needs, with various destination attributes positively influencing their perception and, consequently, fostering loyalty.

The study shows that destination satisfaction has a minimal impact on the correlation between destination image and destination loyalty due to unique destination characteristics affecting tourist satisfaction (Wong et al., 2019). Positive destination perception significantly influences tourist loyalty and beyond a certain point, increased tourist satisfaction does not drastically change outcomes (Amissah et al., 2022). Cultural affinity and biases, especially tourists belonging to different provinces of Pakistan, may also influence this phenomenon. Moreover, Pakistan's diverse provincial cultural backgrounds can limit tourists' loyalty to destinations in other provinces, which is consistent with prior cross-cultural research (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2011).

**Conclusion**

This study aimed to assess how travel motivation affects destination loyalty both directly and through the intermediary of destination image. The results highlight that travel motivation significantly contributes to shaping the destination image for tourists, consequently fostering destination loyalty. Moreover, the findings emphasize that a positive perception of the destination is a pivotal influencer of tourist loyalty. Interestingly, beyond a specific threshold, tourist satisfaction might not yield significantly distinct outcomes.

*Theoretical Implications*

The findings confirm the crucial role of destination image as a robust mediating mechanism in the relationship between travel motivation and destination loyalty. Consistent with prior studies (Higham & Hinch, 2018; Trang et al., 2023), destination image emerges as a significant predictor of loyalty behaviors. The study further demonstrates that a positive destination image not only directly enhances loyalty but also serves as an important link, effectively translating tourists' motivations into loyalty behaviors. Aligning motivational factors with loyalty outcomes, the findings emphasize the importance of destination image

within the push-pull framework (Crompton, 1979), reflecting its essential role in shaping tourist behavior.

Study found an insignificant moderating effect of destination satisfaction on the relationship between destination image and destination loyalty, offering a significant contribution to the literature. While previous studies have predominantly focused satisfaction as a mediating variable (Bayih & Singh, 2020), this study took it as moderator, changing the conventional assumptions. Findings suggest that higher levels of destination image can independently drive loyalty, regardless of satisfaction levels. This insight provides new avenues for researchers on the moderating role of tourists' satisfaction in shaping their travel perceptions and behaviors in similar or different contexts.

Furthermore, by exploring the applicability of satisfaction as a moderator, the study extends the push-pull framework, highlighting the complexity of tourist behavior. It suggests that loyalty can be achieved through a strong destination image, even when satisfaction does not significantly influence the loyalty outcome (Vareiro et al., 2019; Wong et al., 2019).

*Practical Implications*
As the tourism industry continues to evolve in response to global challenges, understanding the complex relationship between travel motivations, destination image, and loyalty has become increasingly important. These insights can guide destinations in developing targeted marketing strategies that cater to the preferences of diverse tourist segments. First, understanding tourist travel motivations is essential for a destination's success. Marketers and service providers need to grasp what drives travel choices and preferences (Osei, 2022). Tailored marketing strategies based on travel motivations enhance destination image and loyalty. Therefore, destination managers must provide facilities for tourists' relaxation, family togetherness, and safety and fun to attract tourists' internal motivation for traveling (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Second, destination image significantly shapes tourists' perceptions and attitudes. Managers may focus on showcasing unique features and cultural experiences to cultivate a positive image aligned with tourists' preferences.

The insignificant moderating effect of destination satisfaction on the relationship between destination image and destination loyalty offers a fresh perspective with important implications for global tourism strategies. While earlier research highlights the correlation between satisfaction with the overall destination experience, destination image, and loyalty (Kumar et al., 2020), this finding suggests that loyalty may not always depend on satisfaction levels. In cultural contexts, like Pakistan, a strong and compelling destination image may independently foster loyalty, irrespective of satisfaction levels. Cultural aspects and emotional attachment are more important to shape loyalty (Prayag & Ryan, 2012) than satisfaction alone. Therefore, managers may prioritize exceptional visitor experiences and meet expectations through various aspects like quality of services, conservation of tourist attractions, adequate infrastructure, and compatible prices, may be considered while strategically positioning the destinations (Khasawneh & Alfandi, 2019; Santana & Sevilha Gosling, 2018).

Fourth, tourist feedback is crucial for understanding their experiences and perceptions. Addressing unmet needs influences revisits and positive reviews (Torabi et al., 2022). Gathering feedback through surveys, reviews, or social media helps managers identify areas for enhancement and boost tourist loyalty. Fifth, a positive destination image requires strong community and stakeholder engagement (Nguyen et al., 2022). Involvement of community allows tapping into local knowledge and resources, fostering a favorable perception and loyalty. Finally, tourism growth hinges on destination stability and safety (Zou & Yu, 2022). Finally, a secure environment is pivotal for attracting visitors. Policymakers should comprehend the diverse implications of tourism growth, guiding effective policies for development, especially in a developing country.

*Limitations and Future Directions*
This study offers valuable theoretical and practical insights, yet its limitations are important to acknowledge. The cross-sectional design may introduce 'common-method bias,' hindering cause-and-effect determination. Future research should explore time-

-lagged data collection or alternative approaches to mitigate this bias. While this study focused on the mediation of destination image and the moderation of destination satisfaction in the relationship between travel motivation and destination loyalty, future studies may explore other mediating variables, such as customer engagement, tourist experience, and involvement, to assess their effects in different contexts (Singh et al., 2024). Further, future research may explore 'destination familiarity' as a moderating factor in tourist motivation to visit a specific destination. Beyond satisfaction, destination image, and motivation, trust also plays a significant role in visitor loyalty. To improve the predictive model, future research may consider incorporating trust as a mediator (Chen & Phou, 2013).

Digitalization has reshaped tourism, influencing destination decision-making. Future research may explore the role of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and virtual reality in tourism marketing to enhance tourists' experiences and loyalty. Considering the diverse cultural contexts within which tourism operates (Stepchenkova et al., 2015), cross-cultural comparisons may provide valuable insights into how travel motivations and destination images differ across regions. Future studies may explore how cultural factors influence the relationship between travel motivation and destination loyalty, particularly in emerging markets. This can involve qualitative research methods such as interviews and focus groups to capture the perspectives of tourists from diverse cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, sustainability has become a critical concern in the tourism industry, with increasing pressure on destinations to adopt environmentally responsible practices. Future studies may investigate how sustainability initiatives influence destination image and loyalty, examining perceptions of eco-friendly practices and their effects on loyalty to sustainable destinations (Zulvianti et al., 2022).

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