



Using an Integration Model in researching destination loyalty of international tourists: Empirical evidence from Danang City, Vietnam

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Abstract

This study's aim was to propose an integrated model to examine the antecedents and the direct and indirect relationship between the antecedents that affect international tourists' destination loyalty in Danang, Vietnam. Based on the prior studies, this paper added safety and security constructs in the research model, and the study's findings reveal that safety and security, image, perceived value and satisfaction are likely to be the antecedents of international tourists' destination loyalty in Danang destination. This study could contribute in enriching the tourism and hospitality literature by examining factors that will lead to international tourists' destination loyalty, using data collected from Danang tourism destination. The study also proposes some likely usable recommendations for tourism marketers and managers.

Keywords: Destination image, perceived value, safety and security, tourist satisfaction, destination loyalty.

Introduction

Many studies have been implemented on tourists' loyalty (Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Horng et al., 2012; McDowall, 1997). Most of these studies stated that perceived value and destination image are two important antecedents of tourist satisfaction and likely to affect to destination choice behavior of tourists (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Alhemoud & Armstrong, 1996). A few other studies examined the factors that are likely to affect destination image perceptions of tourists (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Gartner, 1993). These studies reported that previous visits to a destination are an important antecedent of destination image formation and destination attractiveness (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Tasci et al., 2007); and those studies used the number of visits as a measure of familiarity with a tourists to a destination. However, the previous studies didn't mention safety and security



antecedents in researching tourism, although, in recent years, safety and security issues are emerging and getting much more attention in many countries and territories. Therefore, this study aims to propose an integration model to examine the antecedents and the direct and indirect relationship between the antecedents that affect to international tourists' destination loyalty in Danang as a desired destination.

Danang is the coastal city that located in Middle Region of Vietnam. In 2019, Danang city received 8,093,113 domestic and international tourists in which there were about 3,272,688 international visitors, an increase of 21.2% compared to 2018 and the total contribution of its travel and tourism was VND 28,841 0bn (10.2% of GDP Danang). The development of travel and tourism increased revenue, created new jobs, strengthened understanding and friendship between peoples and territories. According to the statistic of Google Hotel Search Data, Da Nang was in the lead in the top 10 global destinations in 2020. But there were still restrictions, and no-good things in developing travel and tourism to Danang city because inter-alia, tourism products are yet to diversify, the average days for staying over by tourists is short (about 1.9 days); the number of visitors from EU and America countries still accounts for a low proportion of the total number of international tourists visiting Danang city etc. Although Danang city has become one of the most famous destinations in the world, a review of tourism and hospitality literature has revealed a low number of empirical research has been conducted that investigated international tourists coming to Danang. The envisaged model suggests that safety and security, image, perceived value and satisfaction are likely to be the antecedents of international tourists' destination loyalty to Danang as a favoured destination. The study could thus hopefully contribute in enriching the tourism and hospitality literature by examining factors that will lead to international tourists' destination loyalty, and also utilizing data collected from Danang tourism as a destination.

Literature review and hypotheses development

Destination Image

Destination image is a set of associations that people have of the destination (Day et al., 2012). Destination image is regarded as a pre-existing concept corresponding to destination branding (Pike, 2002). The destination image has been known as a perceptual concept of destination which can be extracted by tourists depending on their itinerary, the purpose of visit, cultural background educational level and experiences. Faullant et al., (2008) researched the impact of satisfaction and image on loyalty: the case of Alpine ski resorts. The authors built a causal model of customer satisfaction and image predicting customer loyalty and their study's results show that ski resorts with the highest satisfaction ratings and the highest image ratings have the highest loyalty scores. With first-time-visitors, overall satisfaction is more important than image, with increasing numbers of repeat visits, the importance of overall satisfaction declines. Destination image plays significant roles in destination choice, and also decision making process and it also likely to have significant influences on post trip assessment such as the intention to revisit and willingness to recommend a destination to others (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Lee, Lee, & Lee, 2005).

The following two hypotheses were developed as below:

H₁. Tourism image influences directly and significantly to perceived value

H₂. Tourism image influences directly and significantly to tourist satisfaction

Safety and security

Over the past recent years, (WEF, 2015), terrorism has been on the rise, while the world has been facing geopolitical tensions in the South East Asia, the Middle East and Ukraine, fear and threats of global crisis all impact on the travel and tourism industry. A few countries faced a decrease in inbound tourism while other countries didn't face that problem. There are significant declines in tourist arrivals



in the actual war zones or other conflict areas; besides the macro level forces of unrest and terrorism, high crime levels and unsafe drinking water and food also affected tourist perceptions. Weaver and Lawton (2010) stated that the decline in arrivals was due to global uncertainty and is associated with both the prelude and aftermath of a particular incident.

The following two hypotheses are suggested:

H₃. Safety and security influences directly and significantly to tourist satisfaction

H₄. Safety and security influences directly and significantly to loyalty

Perceived Value

Hellier et al., (2003) stated that perceived value can be recognized as compared ideas between what a customer receives and what is given by service providers (costs or sacrifice in acquiring and utilizing the service). Many authors also agree that perceived value plays a significant role in decision making processes of customers (Nicolaidis, 2008, 2012; Mechinda, Serirat & Gulid, 2009; Velazquez, Saura & Molina, 2011; Zhang & Mao, 2012). Besides, perceived value not only influences customers' choice behavior at the pre-purchase stage, but also affects satisfaction and intentions to recommend and repurchase at the post-purchase stage (Parasuraman & Grewal, 2000).

Sun et al., (2013) found that destination familiarity, perceived value and tourist satisfaction influenced destination loyalty of Chinese domestic tourists. This study tested a destination loyalty formation model using data collected from Chinese tourists to Hainan Island. Toan et al., (2019) applied the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) in researching international tourists' behavior in Hoi An World Cultural Heritage site, Vietnam. This study confirmed the significance of the direct effect of satisfaction on behavioral intention of international tourists. Therefore, perceived value is likely to influence customer satisfaction with a product and also their brand loyalty.

The two hypotheses were developed as below:

H₅. Perceived value influences directly and significantly to tourist satisfaction

H₆. Perceived value influences directly and significantly to destination loyalty

Tourist Satisfaction

Tourist satisfaction is an important concept that is frequently used in researching tourism and the survival of many types of business (Oliver, 1997; Spreng & Chiou, 2002). Ozdemir et al., (2012) stated that satisfaction is a mandatory factor for a successful tourist destination because satisfaction is one of the most important factors in predicting customer loyalty. Tourists revisit and recommend to friends and relatives only when they are satisfied with supplied services (Chi & Qu, 2008; Nicolaidis, 2008; Prayag & Ryan, 2012). The satisfied customers will repurchase the product/service and encourage others to travel to a destination. Positive word-of-mouth recommendations and repeat purchases are two main indicators influence customer loyalty (Hawkins, Best, & Coney, 1995; Jones & Sasser, 1995). Therefore, this hypothesis was suggested:

H₇. Tourist satisfaction affects to loyalty significantly and directly

Destination Loyalty

Satisfaction of a customer indicates how well the expectations of the customer are met. Tourists can be loyal to a hotel, a destination or a tour operator but they may also find new experiences (Hanefors & Mossberg, 1999). International tourists couldn't return to the same destination because they may wish to travel to some different destinations on vacation. Si et al., (2019) studied factors affecting tourist loyalty in homestays in Southern Vietnam, and the study's results show that tourist loyalty is affected by homestay quality service through four components namely reliability, responsiveness,

assurance and tangibles which is in line with Nicolaides (2008, 2012) thinking. Tourist destination loyalty is affected by tourist satisfaction, destination accommodation and food service, destination hospitality destination attractions, destination local transportation (Bang, 2019). The competition among destinations and pressure to get satisfied customers who will be loyal to the destination continues to set new requirements for marketers. Marketers need to assure the satisfaction of first-time visitors and try their best to convince them to become repeat visitors. Besides the seven hypotheses which have been mentioned, there are also indirect relationships between the model's constructs as stated in the hypotheses below:

- H₈: Safety and security indirectly affects to perceived value via destination image*
- H₉: Safety and security indirectly affects to destination loyalty via tourist's satisfaction*
- H₁₀: Safety and security indirectly affects to destination loyalty via destination image and tourist satisfaction*

- H₁₁: Destination image indirectly affects to destination loyalty via perceived value*
- H₁₂: Destination image indirectly affects to destination loyalty via tourist satisfaction*
- H₁₃: Destination image indirectly affects to destination loyalty via perceived value and tourist satisfaction*

Conceptual Model: In the mentioned – prior researches, destination loyalty depend on factors such as destination image, perceived value, and tourist satisfaction. In the context of many countries over the world facing terrorism, geopolitical tensions, conflict, high crime levels and unsafe drinking water and foods, the problem of safety and security in tourist destination constantly needs to be raised. This study added the safety and security factor (SAFE) to the research model. Figure 1 describes the theoretical framework and Appendix 1 presents the indicators.

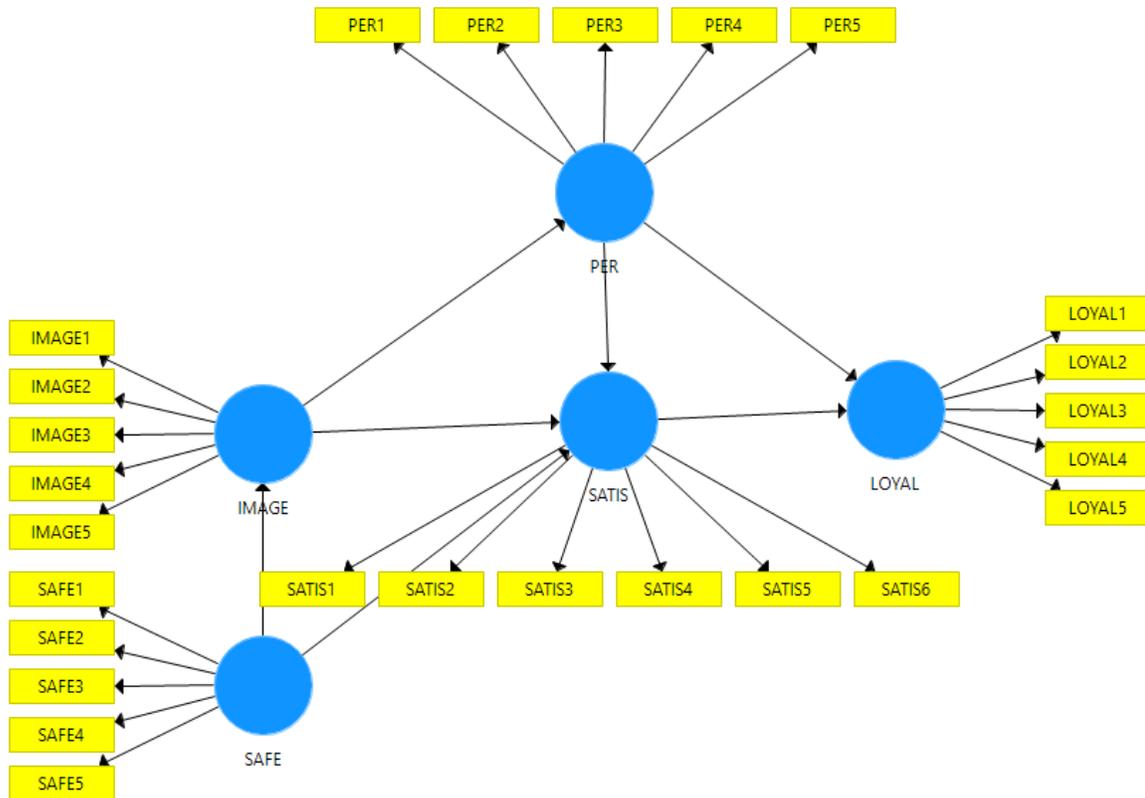


Figure 1. The research model

Source: Compiled by the authors



Data Collection

The indicators of constructs have been commented on by travel experts and who helped to edit and improve those indicators to enhance the clarity and readability thereof. A convenience sampling method was used in collecting data, because this method helped the researchers to get responses in a cost-effective way (Martin, 2014). Data for this study were collected from some international tourists travelling to Danang City. The survey was conducted from November 2019 to January 2020 in Da Nang City, Vietnam, with 420 respondents, of which there were 400 suitable samples for analysis. A Likert scale was used with 5 degrees: from 1—strongly disagree to 5—strongly agree. The characters of international tourist as gender, age, job and nationality are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of samples

	Number	Frequency (%)		Number	Frequency (%)
Age Group			Job		
From 20 to 30 years old	100	25	Student	60	15
From 31 to 50 years old	220	55	Employed	200	55
Over 50 years old	80	20	Retired	80	20
			Other	20	5
Nationality			Gender		
America	100	25	Male	120	30
European	80	20	Female	280	70
Asia	180	45			
Others	40	10			

Source: The data is collected by authors

Results

The study used the Smart PLS 3.0 software to identify the relationships that exist between the constructs and the indicator variable (Sarstedt et al., 2007) and implemented a bootstrap procedure to test the significance levels of coefficients (Davison & Hinkley, 1997).

Measurement Model

The research model includes seven reflective measurement constructs and analyzes the outer loading of the indicators and the average variance validity to test the convergent validity of the model. The outer loadings of all of the indicators were expected to be statistically significant and were required to be above 0.70.

The measurement model has 26 indicators (Table 2), but 4 indicators (IMAGE2, IMAGE5, SAFE1, SAFE5) were eliminated because their outer loadings were smaller than 0.70. The observed variables were reliable; therefore, 22 variables were used in the next analysis.

Table 2. Outer Loading

	IMAGE	LOYAL	PER	SAFE	SATIS
IMAGE1	0.827				
IMAGE2	0.686				
IMAGE3	0.692				
IMAGE4	0.743				
IMAGE5	0.558				
LOYAL1		0.852			
LOYAL2		0.856			
LOYAL3		0.708			
LOYAL4		0.852			



LOYAL5		0.849			
PER1			0.729		
PER2			0.717		
PER3			0.841		
PER4			0.838		
PER5			0.798		
SAFE1				0.426	
SAFE2				0.804	
SAFE3				0.769	
SAFE4				0.788	
SAFE5				0.405	
SATIS1					0.712
SATIS2					0.787
SATIS3					0.701
SATIS4					0.729
SATIS5					0.751
SATIS6					0.723

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Measurement Model: The R^2 value of SATIS was 0.663, indicating that about 66.3% of the variance in SATIS was explained by the research model, R^2 value of LOYAL was 0.316 (Table 3); these results could be accepted (Henseler et al., 2009).

Table 3. R^2 values

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
IMAGE	0.281	0.278
LOYALTY	0.316	0.311
PER	0.262	0.259
SATIS	0.663	0.659

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Composite reliability: To measure the internal consistency reliability, composite reliability (CR) was used. Hair et al. (2005) suggested a minimum threshold of 0.7 to be acceptable. In the model, all of the CR values were greater than 0.70, indicating that the model had composite reliability.

Convergent validity: The average variance extracted (AVE) was used to measure the convergent validity of the construct. Hair et al. (2017) suggested that an AVE value of 0.50 or greater was acceptable for the indicators. All five of the reflective constructs used in this research model had AVE values greater than 0.50, therefore the research model was considered to have convergent validity (Table 4).

Table 4. Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
IMAGE	0.747	0.856	0.666
LOYAL	0.883	0.914	0.681
PER	0.845	0.890	0.618
SAFE	0.771	0.868	0.687
SATIS	0.829	0.875	0.539

Source: Compiled by the authors.



Discriminant validity: It describes whether a construct is unique in the research model. Fornell and Larcker (1981) suggested that the square root of AVE in each latent variable can be used to establish discriminant validity, if this value is larger than other correlation values among the latent variables. In this study, Fornell – Lacker criterion was used to assess discriminant validity. LOYAL’s AVE is 0.825, its value is larger than the correlation values in the column of LOYAL and also larger than those in the row of LOYAL. Similar consideration is made for the latent variables IMAGE, PER, SAFE and SATIS. The results indicate that the research model gets discriminant validity.

Table 5. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	IMAGE	LOYAL	PER	SAFE	SATIS
IMAGE	0.816				
LOYAL	0.511	0.825			
PER	0.402	0.335	0.786		
SAFE	0.146	0.162	0.220	0.829	
SATIS	0.296	0.413	0.320	0.719	0.734

Source: Compiled by the authors.

Hypothesis Testing: To demonstrate the significance and relevance of the structural model relationships, the bootstrapping procedure was made. Hair et al. (2017) stated that commonly-used critical values for two-tailed tests are 1.65 (significance level = 10%), 1.96 (significance level = 5%), and 2.57 (significance level = 1%). The relationship between IMAGE and PER was accepted according to H₁ (t = 8.862, p < 0.05), between IMAGE and SATIS was accepted according to H₂ (t = 3.310, p < 0.05). Similarly, hypotheses as H₃, H₄, H₅, H₆, H₇ are accepted (Table 6 and Figure 2).

Table 6. Path Coefficients

	Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
IMAGE -> PER	H ₁	0.402	0.406	0.046	8.682	0.000
IMAGE -> SATIS	H ₂	0.147	0.148	0.044	3.310	0.001
SAFE -> IMAGE	H ₃	0.146	0.149	0.061	2.392	0.017
SAFE -> SATIS	H ₄	0.746	0.744	0.040	18.444	0.000
PER -> SATIS	H ₅	0.097	0.099	0.045	2.143	0.032
PER -> LOYAL	H ₆	0.226	0.228	0.066	3.412	0.001
SATIS -> LOYAL	H ₇	0.340	0.345	0.063	5.392	0.000

Source: Compiled by the authors.

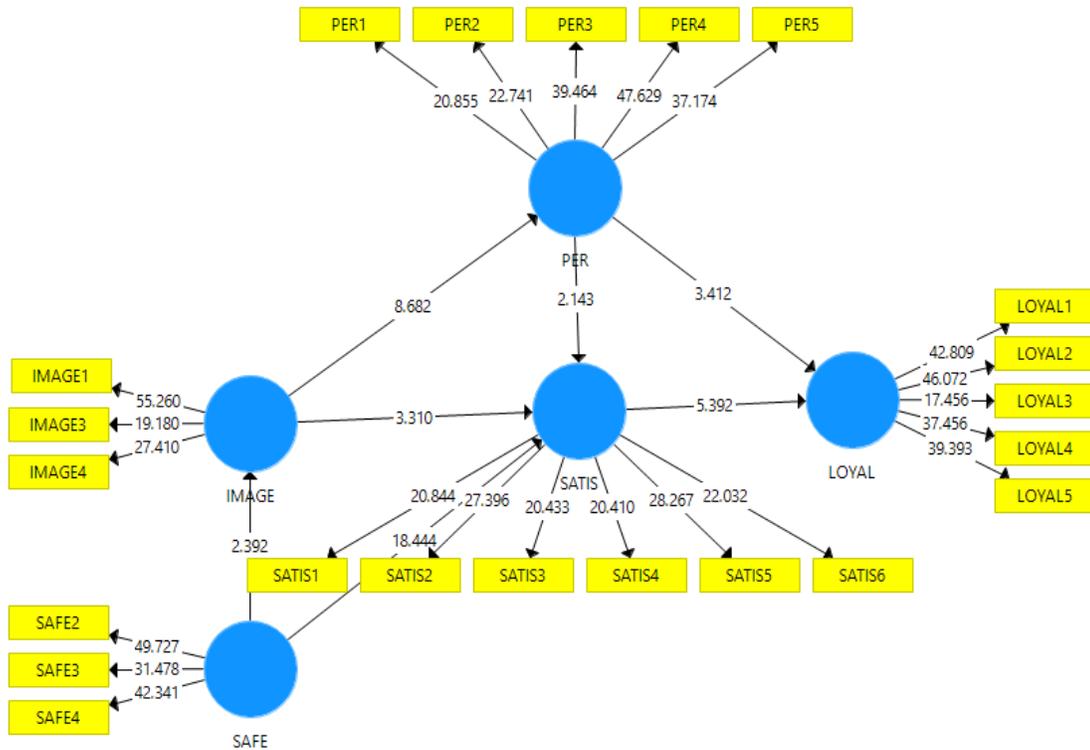


Figure 2. Measurement Model

Source: Compiled by the authors

Table 7. Specific Indirect Effects

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Hypothesis and validity
SAFE -> IMAGE -> PER	0.059	0.061	0.027	2.189	0.029	H ₈ : Accepted
SAFE -> SATIS -> LOYAL	0.254	0.255	0.041	6.218	0.000	H ₉ : Accepted
SAFE -> IMAGE -> SATIS -> LOYAL	0.007	0.008	0.005	1.374	0.170	H ₁₀ : Rejected
IMAGE -> PER -> LOYAL	0.091	0.094	0.033	2.742	0.006	H ₁₁ : Accepted
IMAGE -> SATIS -> LOYAL	0.050	0.052	0.022	2.306	0.021	H ₁₂ : Accepted
IMAGE -> PER -> SATIS -> LOYAL	0.013	0.014	0.008	1.731	0.084	H ₁₃ : Rejected

Source: Compiled by the authors.

In Table 7 the specific indirect effects between SAFE and PER (Hypothesis H₈), between SAFE and LOYAL (Hypothesis H₉) were considered to be statistically significant (p-value < 0.05). Similarly, the hypotheses H₁₁, H₁₂ were accepted; the H₁₀, H₁₃ were rejected (p-value > 0.05).

Mediation Analysis: When a third variable intervenes between two other related constructs, this relationship is described as mediation (Hair et al., 2017), where a mediator variable governs the nature of the relationship between two constructs. From Figure 3 and Table 7, it can be seen that destination image (IMAGE) served as mediator variable in the relationship between SAFE and PER; and SATIS was the mediation construct in the relationships between SAFE and LOYAL, between IMAGE and LOYAL.

Importance Performance Matrix Analysis (IPMA): IPMA compared the structural model's total effects on a specific target construct (destination loyalty—LOYAL) with the average latent variable scores of this construct's predecessors as safety and security, destination image, perceived value, tourist satisfaction.

The goal of using IPMA is to represent a potential area for improvement that may be of interest. This study created an importance–performance map to illustrate this concept, as shown in Figure 4.

+The x-axis represents the (unstandardized) total effects of the perceived value (PER) the destination image (IMAGE), tourist satisfaction (SATIS) and safety and security (SAFE) on the target construct (LOYAL).

+The y-axis depicts the average rescaled (unstandardized) latent variable scores of the perceived value (PER) the destination image (IMAGE), tourist satisfaction (SATIS) and safety and security (SAFE)

The total effects represented the predecessor constructs' importance in shaping LOYAL, while their average latent variable scores showed their performance.

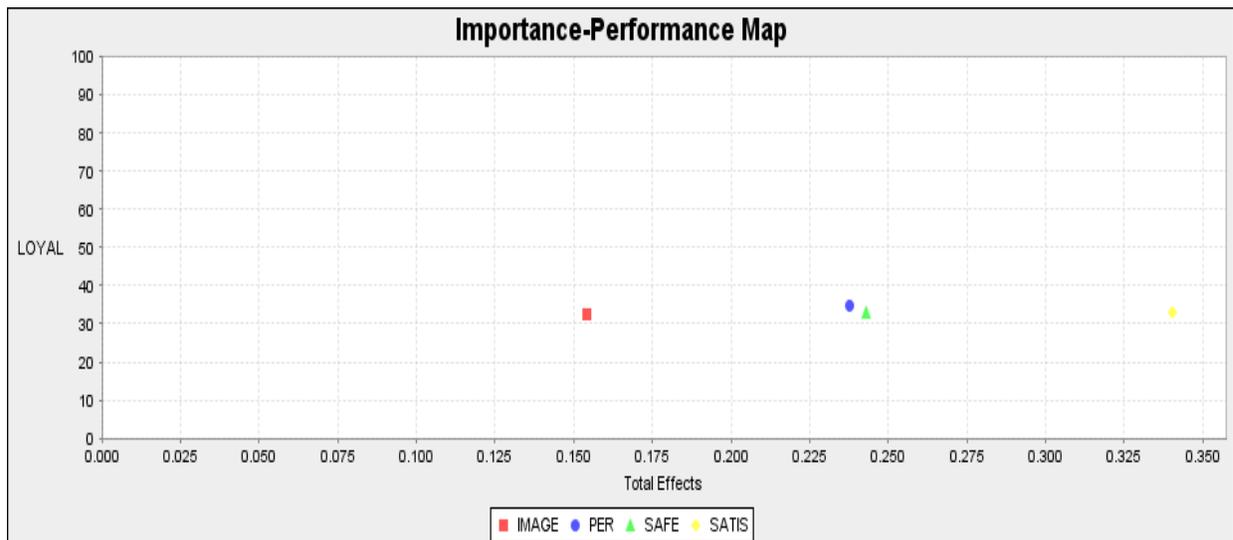


Figure 3. Importance–Performance Matrix Analysis

Figure 3 shows that the safety and security, perceived value and the destination image domains were the three most important constructs regarding the destination loyalty; this was due to their greater importance values compared to other latent variables. But destination image also represents that its average scores are little low compared with the other constructs. Thus, authorities and companies should focus on improving their performances in the destination image domain.

Conclusions and recommendations

A few recent studies focus on tourists' satisfaction and loyalty in Vietnam (Bang, 2019; Si & Bang, 2019) but those studies haven't yet mentioned the safety and security factor and the indirect relationships between factors in their research model. This study developed and tested the factors affecting destination loyalty of international tourists to Danang destination. The study's results indicated that safety and security, image, perceived value and satisfaction are all antecedents of international tourists' destination loyalty. This study added the factor of safety and security to the model and could enrich the literature by researching the antecedents, pointing to be possibility of a



destination loyalty model that can be applied to various contexts. Some recommendations are proposed as below.

Firstly, the study found that safety and security not only directly affects to destination image but also affects satisfaction. This study also indicated that destination image significantly affected satisfaction which in turn led to loyalty, confirming findings from previous research (Nicolaidis, 2008, 2012; Sun et al., 2013; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Soderlund, 1998). The safety and security aspect has a positive influence on the international tourist satisfaction. The problem of safety and security became the problem of tourism institutions and the entire country, since guaranteed safety increases the likelihood of visits to a particular destination. Therefore, the local government should strive to prevent terrorism, reduce crime levels and do away with unsafe drinking water and food, and reduce traffic accidents, improve traffic safety and handle violations of the law more strictly. Besides, it is necessary to improve the public transportation system connecting various tourist points in the city as well as between Danang and the other tourism places of interest such as Hue City, Quang Nam Province; international tourists will hopefully select Danang as a fortunate destination because from Danang they can travel other locations more easily.

Secondly, the results also demonstrate that tourists' satisfactions have a positive effect on international tourists loyalty (Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Sun et al., 2013). The international tourists' satisfaction take the most important place from among the factors most affecting loyalty. Danang is a coastal city with the special characteristics such as clean blue water, a salty taste, constant sea wave motion, wind, and a diversity of marine species: fish, prawns, crabs etc. but the stayed - day number of international tourists is still low, and the average day is about 1.5. Thus Danang as a destination is not yet attracting many international tourists to come from Europe or America. Therefore, Danang needs to invest more in creating many types of tourism, exploring the natural and humanistic tourism resources and making the new tourism activities effective such as sea tourism, marine recreational services, ecotourism, heritage tourism, shopping tours, health care tourism, MICE tourism. Local authorities need to hire foreign consultants to implement the master plan on a tourist development of Da Nang up to 2030 with orientations to 2040. The more the tourism products supply, the greater the number of international tourists who are likely to come. There are also ways in which to limit the seasonality of the Danang tourism destination. Attracting domestic and foreign investors will bring capital for deploying many additional services such as:

- + On the sand beach: sunbathing, sand dipping, beach volleyball, beach football, team building, beach tug, kite beach ...;
- + Under the sea: swimming, water motor, surfing, night fishing; scuba diving, sea exploration;

Simultaneously, there is a need to raise the tourists' satisfaction levels, and the service quality of accommodation facilities also need to be improved. Supplied tourism services must be listed and not raise their prices too much in peak season. If the price is raised too high, it will affect tourists' spending and make tourist uncomfortable and they will not enjoy their trips.

Thirdly, the results also indicate that perceived value not only has a direct a positive effect on satisfaction but it also has an effect on international tourist loyalty. These findings are contradictory with results reported by previous studies (Lee et al., 2007; Velazquez et al., 2011; Sun et al., 2013). Therefore, the tourism companies should have proper exploitations and protection plans to develop the pristine natural beauty and cultural value sustainably. Moreover, the local government and agencies should apply diversity to the the entertainment activities and events (especially the activities associated with culture) to extend the stay of tourism in Danang city and to attract more people. It is indeed necessary to strengthen the coordination of destinations to gain practical experience and supply many services to international tourists so that the area can be sustainable for tourism.



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Appendix: Questionnaires

		Epoxy
	Satisfaction customer	



1	Facilities and services that are up to international standards	SATIS ₁
2	I feel I benefited when I had travelled to Danang City	SATIS ₂
3	I found the visit worthwhile	SATIS ₃
4	The visit to Danang City was good as my expectance	SATIS ₄
5	Tourism services in Danang are diversification and good quality	SATIS ₅
6	I am satisfactory when travelling to Danang city	SATIS ₆
Safety and security		
1	Danang city is pressing traffic jams, overloading, the city has signage (directions and instructions)	SAFE ₁
2	Danang city in particular and Vietnam in general don't face geopolitical tensions and don't be war zone	SAFE ₂
3	The destination offers quality accommodation facilities	SAFE ₃
4	Danang is managed in safety and security, the local people are friendly and it is easy to communicate with them. Danang is the safe and secure destination	SAFE ₄
5	Danang is bearing water and air pollution	SAFE ₅
Destination Image		
1	Danang is the coastal city that has many natural tourism resource	IMAGE ₁
2	Danang tourism destination doesn't be enough of accommodations and necessary services	IMAGE ₂
3	The potential of Danang marine tourism is explored and used to serve tourists	IMAGE ₃
4	Danang is clean and well maintained, the local people are friendly and it is easy to communicate with them	IMAGE ₄
5	Danang doesn't have many tourism products and price of services is high	IMAGE ₅
Perceived value		
1	Room quality is moderate but staffs service warranty and always response to the tourist request	PER ₁
2	Service quality is good compared with tourist's hope	PER ₂
3	I am willingness with tourism products in Danang city	PER ₃
4	In Danang city, services' price is cheaper than many other international destinations	PER ₄
5	Tourists will be supplied good services when they come to Danang city	PER ₅



Loyalty customer		
1	I am satisfied to the visit in Danang City	LOYAL ₁
2	I usually travel to Danang City as my best choice compared to another city	LOYAL ₂
3	I would recommend this destination to my friends and others	LOYAL ₃
4	If I had the opportunity I would like to come back Danang City again	LOYAL ₄
5	The next time, I would choice Danang City to go travel	LOYAL ₅
Source: compiled by the authors		