

The Influence of Motivation, Perceived Discrimination, Acculturation Strategies, and Adaptation on Destination Loyalty

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ABSTRACT

Destination loyalty in education tourism can be characterized by tourists' intention to revisit and their recommendations of the place to others, serving as primary indicators. However, even though there is growing interest among academia and industry players in the concept of destination loyalty, our comprehension of the psychological factors influencing destination loyalty intention remains inadequate. Existing literature has not yet addressed the topic of education tourism in Norway. Therefore, this research explores the attributes of destination loyalty and the influence of perceived discrimination, acculturation strategies, psychological and sociocultural adaptation in elucidating international students' intention to exhibit loyalty in Norway. The theoretical framework draws on motivation theory (Crompton, 1979), acculturation theory (Berry, 1990; Berry, 1997), adaptation (Searle & Ward, 1990), and loyalty theory (Backman & Crompton, 1991), which

have been adapted to include perceived discrimination as an additional exploratory variable. This study extends previous research on destination loyalty by investigating the impact of acculturation strategies on enhancing the relationship between travel-related attributes and loyalty. The study utilizes partial least squares (PLS) to examine the links between the variables. Based on a questionnaire survey of international students in Norway, the findings indicate that psychological adaptation and acculturation strategies have a positive impact on loyalty. The coefficient of determination (R²) reveals that the final structural model can account for 34% of the variance in international students' loyalty behavior. These results highlight the importance for stakeholders in the education tourism industry to recognize the influence of acculturation strategies and psychological adaptation on travel loyalty. Understanding these factors can contribute to enhancing destination competitiveness in education tourism and ensuring its long-term sustainability. The study concludes by acknowledging its limitations and encouraging further research in this area.

Keywords: partial least squares, travel loyalty, perceived discrimination, acculturation strategies, education tourism.

INTRODUCTION

An individual recently returned from studying abroad at a renowned higher education institution located in an international hub for learning (Kudo & Simkin, 2023). Upon reflection, they note how the overseas destination fully met their expectations, culminating in a remarkably positive experience. They express contentment with their time spent abroad and a willingness to return as well as recommend the location to others. However, some fellow international students preferred remaining on campus with limited exploration of the surrounding area. These individuals did not feel satisfied or happy with their overall experience as their initial expectations were not fulfilled. As a result, they developed dislike for the place and little interest in sharing experience of their time there or recommending it to others (Smith, 2023).

This hypothetical scenario provides an example of how an individual's choices prior to engaging in study abroad significantly impact their subsequent allegiance to a given host location. Recently, Li and Stodolska (2022) investigated the factors shaping tourist loyalty within education tourism, finding acculturation strategies, psychological and socio-cultural adaptation, and perceived discrimination each shape destination loyalty. Their significant contribution advanced understanding of loyalty formation for education tourists. In sum, fulfilling expectations through meeting initial choice factors aids positive destination loyalty, while unmet preferences breed dissatisfaction (Brown & Robinson, 2021).

Up to this point, no empirical evidence has been published on destination loyalty in the education tourism market with regard to Motivational Theories (Crompton, 1979); Acculturation (Berry, 1990; Berry, 1997); Adaptation (Searle & Ward, 1990); and Loyalty (Backman & Crompton, 1991). Consequently, the study addressed this gap in the literature by examining the proposed theoretical framework.

This study is conducted as a response to the assertion made by Ryan and Glendon (1998) and Jamaludin et al., (2018) that insufficient attention has been given to the psychological aspects

of the international education experience. It is also a response to the suggestion by Yuksel, Yuksel, and Bilim (2010) to explore the relationship between destination loyalty and psychological factors, as there is currently limited knowledge on how and why psychological factors can influence destination loyalty.

As part of efforts to internationalize higher education, colleges and universities consistently recruit and enroll international students (Guo & Chase, 2011; Wildavsky, 2010). In some countries, exchange programs and educational travel have become thriving industries that surpass leisure and business tourism in terms of annual growth (Lesjak et al., 2015).

Further, international students often act as "ambassadors" for their home country during their time abroad (Jamaludin et al., 2016a). Upon returning to their home country, they even assume the role of reverse ambassadors, representing the countries where they studied. Based on their experiences abroad, they can influence individuals in their social network to visit the destination where they pursued their education. This role is closely tied to the students' loyalty towards the country they studied in, which is the main focus of this study.

The study sample consisted of all enrolled international students at the University of Bergen, Norway. Carr, (2003) and Chowdhury, (2022) emphasized the considerable amount of recent tourism research focused on the student market, indicating the rise in both domestic and international student populations and their potential spending (Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Weaver, 2003; Hung, & Yen, 2022). Nevertheless, most research exploring the impact of international students on tourism was centered on Australia, New Zealand, and the United States (Cardon, Marshall, & Poddar, 2010; Dwyer, Forsyth, Spurr, & VanHo, 2006; Phillimore & Koshy, 2010). There is limited published evidence of such research specifically conducted in Norway within the field of educational tourism (Jamaludin et al., 2018).

This study aimed to examine the relationships between motivation, perceived discrimination, acculturation strategies, psychological and sociocultural adaptation, and the loyalty of international students. Consequently, this study delineates these interconnections in order to establish a conceptual framework for a new research initiative on the loyalty of educational tourism, with the objective of optimizing the economic benefits derived from sustainable educational tourism. Furthermore, this study contributed to the expansion of the current body of knowledge by investigating the applicability of psychology and marketing principles within the context of loyalty in educational tourism. The present study aims to further develop the existing theories described earlier and to determine the key aspects that significantly contribute to international students' loyalty. These findings will enhance the systematic and theoretical framework for investigating travel behaviours and other related studies in this domain. Furthermore, this research makes a valuable contribution to the advancement of socially relevant knowledge that may be utilised by education institutions and other key stakeholders to their advantage.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Travel Loyalty Defined

The notion of destination loyalty serves as a crucial factor in the development of competitive advantages for a destination and the development of efficient education destination marketing strategies (Mechinda, Serirat, & Gulid, 2009; Weaver & Lawton, 2011; Yoon & Uysal, 2005;

Singh, & Bashir, 2022). This study uses tourists' intention to revisit and their recommendations of the destination to others as primary indicators of destination loyalty (Jamaludin et al., 2018; Martin Oppermann, 2000; Yoon & Uysal, 2005).

Nevertheless, there has been a scholarly debate regarding the innate disloyalty of tourists, as the desire to engage in travel is widely recognised as a dominating motivation (Castro, Armario, & Ruiz, 2007; Crompton, 1979; Niininen, Szivas, & Riley, 2004; Pearce & Kang, 2009; Marine-Roig, 2019). Furthermore, an examination of the existing body of research on tourism loyalty reveals that a majority of studies rely on comparable conceptual and methodological frameworks, leading to anticipated and parallel findings.

A significant portion of research on destination loyalty is typically conducted within the context of brand and product, service framework (Oppermann, 1999), motives (Yoon & Uysal, 2005), place attachment (Yuksel, Yuksel, & Bilim, 2010), demographics (Mechinda et al., 2009), and consumer participation theory (Pearce & Kang, 2009). Several authors have extensively discussed the negative impact of inertia on tourist research. To the present day, there has been a lack of research specifically examining the psychological aspects of travel loyalty. This research presents a psychological framework for examining loyalty in order to enhance comprehension of this phenomenon, elucidate intricate connections, and cultivate a comprehensive awareness of this subject matter.

Theoretical Underpinnings

The underlying framework is based on the theories of Motivation (Crompton, 1979), Acculturation (Berry, 1997), Adaptation (Searle & Ward, 1990) and Loyalty (Backman & Crompton, 1991). They have been modified to incorporate perceived discrimination as an additional exploratory variable. The model on travel loyalty as suggested by Yoon and Uysal (2005) (Figure 1) is the basis of this study.



Figure 1: The basic model: Expected relationship between motivation and satisfaction regarding travel loyalty.

The theoretical model representing the expected relationship of the total process of acculturation as suggested by Berry and Sabatier (2010) and Jamaludin et al., (2016) is presented in Figure 2. Perceived discrimination is considered a starting point of immigrants' acculturation experience. They suggested that adaptation is the outcome of acculturation strategies and discrimination. Their study suggested that a variable outcome to acculturation includes both psychological and sociocultural adaptation.

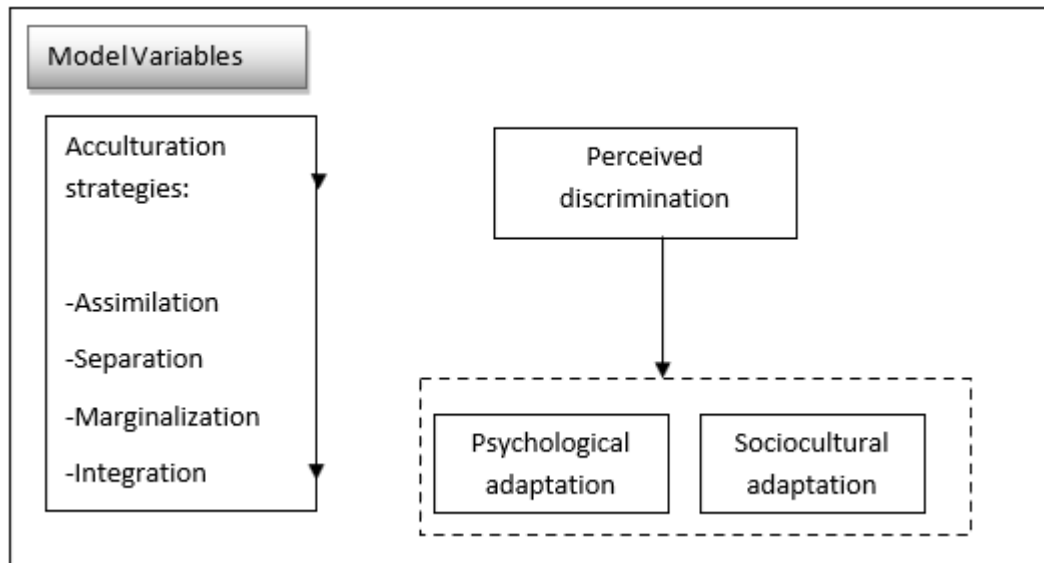


Figure 2: The basic model: Expected relationship concerning perceived discrimination (antecedent), acculturation (intermediate) and adaptation (outcome) variables.

Cross-cultural psychology has shown that there is a significant connection between cultural context and the development of individual behavior. As a result, researchers have been increasingly studying the experiences of individuals who have grown up in one cultural context and then try to adapt to a different one. The significance of tourism and education as crucial industries has gained recognition in recent years, both from an economic and social perspective (Carvalho, Ramires, & Bakas, 2023; Ferreira, & Sousa, 2022).

Educational tourism, in particular, is seen as a growing trend, and academic literature has provided substantial evidence to support the idea that more and more people are engaging in education-related travel on a global scale. Studies have employed the latest econometric techniques to provide new impetus to the empirical research on the link between education growth and economic growth (see Agasisti, & Bertolotti, 2022; Dahlin; Glewwe & Jacoby, 2004; Stevens & Weale, 2004).

According to research conducted by Katircioğlu (2010) and Agasisti, and Bertolotti (2022), there is evidence of a long-term equilibrium relationship between international tourism, higher education, and real income growth. The study found that both international tourism and higher education have significant effects on the real income growth, both in the short and long term. The key finding of the study suggests that international tourism and the higher education sectors play a crucial role in stimulating economic growth. Additionally, there is a growing trend of tourists seeking educational and learning experiences during their holidays (i.e., Park, Kim, & Xu, 2022; Sundbo, & Dixit, 2020).

This interest has led to the provision of tourism products with some form of learning or education as an integral component, including cultural heritage tourism and ecotourism (Ritchie, 2003; Park, Kim, & Xu, 2022). The phenomenon of international students relocating from their home country to a host country for educational purposes has become more prevalent. This transition not only brings about cultural and intellectual growth but also poses

various challenges and obstacles. Given the rising influx of international students in Norway, it is imperative to comprehend the psychological factors that contribute to their loyalty in order to establish a sustainable education tourism industry.

According to the European Migration Network's report in 2022, there has been an increase in the annual number of international students coming to Norway, rising from 25,961 in 2021 to 26,403 in 2022. This increase applies to both third country nationals and students from the EU/EEA. However, in the context of tourism, the concept of loyalty among international students and its application to tourism products or services has received limited attention in research, despite loyalty being recognized as a significant driving force in a competitive market (Dimanche & Havitz, 1995; Jamaludin et al., 2018; Rahmiati, et al., 2020). Therefore, a more comprehensive examination of consumer loyalty is needed based on the existing literature. Retaining current visitors is more cost-effective than acquiring new ones (Thomas, 2001; Gamlath, 2022), which forms the basis for this study.

The study by Yoon and Uysal, (2005); Jamaludin et al., (2018); and Latip, Newaz, and Ramasamy, (2020), confirmed that motivation influenced loyalty when mediated by satisfaction. Thus, this study explores the said relationships by incorporated perceived discrimination as an additional exploratory variable.

In addition, studies by Jamaludin et al. (2018), on destination loyalty intention are also extended by examining the role of acculturation strategies in improving the relationship of attributes on travel loyalty behavior using international students' 'pull and push' motivation factors together with acculturation strategies, psychological adaptation. These can also refer to an individual's satisfaction (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006) and sociocultural adaptation (Ward et al., 2001).

Previous studies have consistently shown that when tourists' actual experiences exceed their expectations, they tend to interpret this as satisfaction, which can lead to a willingness to revisit a particular destination (Chen & Chen, 2010; Devesa, Laguna, & Palacios, 2010; Jamaludin et al., 2018).

Satisfaction is subjective and based on an individual's personal evaluation of specific criteria. Shin and Johnson (1978) define life satisfaction as an overall assessment of an individual's quality of life based on their own chosen criteria. Sam (2001) and Jamaludin et al. (2018) highlight that life satisfaction is determined by comparing one's own standards and expectations. This definition emphasizes that life satisfaction is not a universally defined measure of quality of life but rather a subjective evaluation based on individual assessments. This is particularly relevant when considering individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds who may have different values and perceptions of what constitutes "the good life" (Sam, 2001). Psychological adaptation, as proposed by Jamaludin et al. (2018), refers to the adjustment of an individual's life satisfaction and aligns with the concept of satisfaction discussed above.

When talking about psychological adaptation, it is best to test the sociocultural adaptation (Sheng, Dai, & Lei, 2022). Sociocultural adaptation refers to how successfully the individual acquires the suitable sociocultural skills for living effectively in the new sociocultural setting.

The two forms of adaptation are interrelated; both deal with problems and positive interactions with members of the host culture are likely to improve one's feelings of wellbeing and satisfaction (Sam & Berry, 2010; Jamaludin et al., 2018). Research by Aycan and Berry (1996); Ward and Kennedy (1999); Jamaludin et al., (2016) and Sheng, Dai, & Lei, (2022) also suggested that both psychological and sociocultural adaptation are related but the magnitude of the relationship varies depending on acculturation conditions.

In the case of international students, it is crucial to examine the process of adaptation, as significant life changes and discrimination can potentially impact overall satisfaction and stability (Inglehart & Rabier, 1986; Jamaludin et al., 2018; Savicki, 2023). Previous research has indicated that better sociocultural adaptation is associated with improved psychological adaptation (Berry, 1997; Ward, 1996; Sheng, Dai, & Lei, 2022).

However, there is currently a gap in the literature regarding the specific relationship between individual satisfaction and destination loyalty in the context of education tourism. In addition, this study assumes that in relation to satisfaction, exploring the role of perceived discrimination and acculturation strategies and adaptation is essential to further understand the experiences of international students (Jamaludin et al., 2018). This is because, difficulties in adapting to a new environment have been found to impact the academic success and overall well-being of international students (Chiu, 1995; Alshammari et al., 2023).

Given that international students make up a significant portion of university student bodies worldwide, their perceived discrimination, academic success, acculturation process and adaptation are important considerations for the students themselves, university administration, and research communities (Buddington, 2002; Toyokawa & Toyokawa, 2002; Jamaludin et al., 2018; Alshammari et al., 2023). Berry and Sabatier, (2010) and Jamaludin et al., (2018) have suggested that adaptation is influenced by acculturation strategies and experiences of discrimination. Their research indicates that the outcomes of acculturation and perceived discrimination encompass both psychological and sociocultural adaptation.

Following recommendations from the literature this study assumes that loyalty can be explained by perceived discrimination, acculturation strategies and adaptation. However, whether the relationships of perceived discrimination to loyalty can be improved by acculturation strategies and adaptation as mediators remains elusive. This study follows Berry, (2003) and Jamaludin et al., (2018) recommendations, to investigate the relationship based on individually oriented acculturation strategies.

The Constructs' Relationships in This Study Are Hypothesized as Follows:

The study by Yoon and Uysal (2005) and Hoang, Pham, and Tučková, (2022) confirmed that motivation influenced loyalty mediated by satisfaction. Psychological adaptation in this case refers to an individual's life satisfaction, and was adapted in the models proposed by Yoon and Uysal (2005) and Jamaludin et al., (2018) as both dealing with the same issues of satisfaction. London et al. (1977); Jamaludin et al., (2016a, 2016b) and Jamaludin et al., (2018) conducted a survey to investigate the influence of motivation on leisure satisfaction/travel and life satisfaction. Their study revealed that motivation and leisure satisfaction accounted for meaningful variation in life satisfaction. Leisure/travel satisfaction accounted for more variation in life satisfaction among minorities groups. However, between motivation, life

satisfaction and travel satisfaction, the consensus is still open for debates. Nevertheless, Jamaludin et al., (2016a, 2016b) and Jamaludin et al., (2018) also confirmed that push motivation influence motivation. Therefore, the following hypothesis is developed for consideration:

- H1 Motivation influences psychological adaptation (life satisfaction)

As suggested by Ayman and Berry (1996) and Ward and Kennedy (1999), both psychological and sociocultural adaptation are related but the magnitude of the relationship varies depending on acculturation conditions. Previous studies on models of cultural adaptation have included motivational factors as important determinants of adaptation processes (Berry, 1997; Jamaludin et al., 2016a, Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001; Li, King, and Wang, 2022). Despite the importance psychological studies have attached to motivation and the existence of several interesting approaches, research on the motivation of international students to study abroad is not a well-developed research area, either conceptually or methodologically. Therefore, the following hypothesis is posited:

- H2: Motivation influences sociocultural adaptation

Numerous definitions have been devised to explain motivation across various disciplines. Motivation is directed toward emotional and cognitive motives (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). However, in tourism research motivation can be classified into two forces - 'push and pull forces' - that influence travel (Dann, 1977, 1981; Jamaludin et al., 2018). The evaluation of firstly, the motivation factor based on physical products and secondly, the psychological interpretation of a destination is necessary for human actions (Uysal & Noe, 2003; Jamaludin et al., 2018; Omo-Obas, & Anning-Dorson, 2022), which could signify travel satisfaction and destination loyalty. Based on this, the next hypothesis is taken into consideration:

- H3: Motivation influences loyalty

Richmond (1993) suggested that migrants can be categorized on a continuum between reactive and proactive. These contrasting factors have also been referred to as push and pull factors in the earlier literature on migration motivation. Berry (1997) suggested that motivation is one of the factors prior to acculturation. Acculturation strategies and their influence on motivation have been a subject of research (Wypych, 2020; Abu-Rayya, et al., 2023). Scholars have explored how individuals from different cultural backgrounds adapt to a new culture and the impact it has on their motivation levels. Various acculturation strategies, such as integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization, have been examined in relation to motivation. Studies have shown that individuals who adopt an integration strategy, which involves maintaining their cultural identity while also engaging with the new culture, tend to have higher levels of motivation compared to those who adopt other strategies (Williams, & Liu, 2023). This study provides insights into the complex relationship between acculturation strategies and motivation, shedding light on the factors that influence individuals' drive and engagement in a new cultural context. For this reason, the next hypothesis is developed as follows:

- H4: Acculturation strategies influences motivation

Berry and Sabatier (2010), Jamaludin et al., (2016a) and Guerra, Broekhuizen, Francot, & Kolancali, (2023) have suggested that the experience of discrimination (or even the perception of discrimination) has a major impact on the ways in which youth acculturate, and on the degree of adaptive success. Perceived discrimination has been found to be an important predictor of

acculturation attitudes, and of how well immigrant youth adapt, both psychologically and socioculturally, to life in their new society (Berry et al., 2006; Guerra, Broekhuizen, Francot, & Kolancali, 2023). When adolescents perceive that they are targets of discrimination, they are less likely to orient themselves to the larger society (Berry et al., 2006; Phinney, Berry, Vedder, & Liebkind, 2022) and instead to reject the larger society. Hence the following hypothesis is considered:

- H5: Perceived discrimination influences acculturation strategies

International students often report language barriers, culture shock, loneliness, and homesickness. These experiences are strongly associated with perceived discrimination, which is a common phenomenon among international students when studying abroad (Trilokekar & Kukar, 2011; Yu et al., 2019). Perceived discrimination has been linked to depression, anxiety, sadness, and other psychological problems that could be detrimental to the willingness and behavior of international students to integrate into the host country (Suh et al., 2019). Discrimination serves as the single strongest predictor; in a structural equation model, discrimination has a strong negative impact on psychological adaptation (Yu et al., 2019; Phinney, Berry, Vedder, & Liebkind, 2022; Yang, He, & Xia, 2023). Perceived discrimination has been found to be an important predictor of how well immigrant youth adapt to life in their new society (Berry et al., 2006; Yu et al., 2019). This leads to the following hypothesis being devised:

- H6: Perceived discrimination influences psychological adaptation

Sociocultural adaptation refers to the social skills of coping with daily life in a new culture (Searle & Ward, 1990). Berry et al. (2006) stated that discrimination has a strong negative impact on sociocultural adaptation. Perceived discrimination has emerged as an important predictor of how well immigrant youth adapt socioculturally, to life in their new society. In the case of international students, their adaptation experience may be influenced by situational factors, including perceived discrimination (Smith & Khawaja, 2011; Kunuroglu, 2021; Bierwiazek & Waldzus, 2016).

Perceived discrimination is negatively associated with sociocultural adaptation. Duru and Poyrazli (2011) have found that perceived discrimination could result in international students' negative attitudes towards the new culture, which may impede social interaction as well as normal life and study. Swami (2009) study found that students may suffer from perceived discrimination, that this may affect their daily lives (prayers, eating habits, and so on) and hinder their sociocultural adjustment. Buchanan et al., (2018) also found that immigrant youth who experienced more perceived discrimination had significantly poorer sociocultural adaptation. This leads to the following hypothesis being developed:

- H7: Perceived discrimination influences sociocultural adaptation

Sam and Berry (2010), Rhee, (2019) and Xing, et al., (2020) suggested that adaptation is not synonymous with acculturation, but it follows from the change. Berry et al. (2006) and Jamaludin et al., (2018) contend that acculturation strategies contribute to ethnic contacts, as well as to both psychological and sociocultural adaptations. The two forms of adaptation are interrelated in that both deal with problems and furthermore, positive interactions with members of the host culture are likely to improve one's feelings of wellbeing and satisfaction (Sam & Berry, 2010).

Research by Aycan and Berry (1996) and Ward and Kennedy (1999) suggested that both psychological and sociocultural adaptation are linked but the magnitude of this relationship varies depend on acculturation conditions. However, Berry et al. (2006) in their study on immigrant youth suggested that the relationship might also be in the opposite direction. Thus, the following hypotheses are tested to observe the outcome based on travel loyalty in the education tourism context:

- H8: Acculturation strategies influence psychological adaptation
- H9: Acculturation strategies influence sociocultural adaptation

The recent study by Kao and an (2012) and Ashaduzzaman, et al., (2021) found that acculturation does influences loyalty. This sequence has been substantiated in the literature. For example, a study of Asian-Indian US immigrants indicated that as their acculturation increased, they are more loyal to American advertisements (Khairullah et al., 1996).

In this vein, Maldonado and Tansuhaj (2002) and Baumert, et al., (2023) view members of the host culture as the reference group for highly acculturated immigrants who strive to achieve social acceptance and approval. Such individuals are likely to choose and more loyal to brands associated with the host culture more often than ethnic brands as a way of making and maintaining a connection with the host culture.

However, no study has found conclusive evidence of the impact of acculturation on travel loyalty. Consequently, further examination is required to assess the impact of acculturation strategies on the success of the loyalty process. Based on this premise the following hypothesis is tested:

- H10: Acculturation strategies influence loyalty

According to several studies (Chen & Chen, 2010; Devesa et al., 2010; Song, van der Veen, Li, & Chen, 2012; Tang, Wang, Jin, & Zhang, 2022), if the actual performance/experience is better than their expectations, this is often interpreted as tourists being satisfied and resulting in them being willing to revisit a location. The depth of tourists' loyalty to a destination is reflected in their intention to revisit the destination and in their willingness to recommend it (Oppermann, 2000; Jamaludin et al., 2018). Psychological adaptation in this case refers to an individual's life satisfaction. Berry et al. (2006) in their study stated that life satisfaction should be of interest to acculturation researchers given the drastic and often rapid changes that occur during acculturation.

Rapid changes in life have the potential to affect the stability of one's overall satisfaction (Inglehart & Rabier, 1986) and satisfaction with travel experiences contributes to destination loyalty (Alexandris, Kouthouris, & Meligdis, 2006; Bramwell, 1998; Oppermann, 2000; Rasoolimanesh, et al., 2023). Thus, this study explores further the relationship based on the hypothesis below:

- H11: Psychological adaptation influences loyalty

One basis for examining consumer loyalty is that previous research has suggested it is more desirable, and much less expensive to retain current visitors than to seek new ones (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990; Thomas, 2001; Herrmann et al., 2007; Loureiro, González, 2008).

Limited empirical evidence on the structural relationship of perceived discrimination, acculturation strategies together with psychological adaptation and destination loyalty has been found. The predictive ability of the constructs on loyalty is still open for debate as its veracity is simply assumed, even though some questions remain whether such a relationship does indeed exist (Caneen, 2003; Mechinda et al., 2009). Thus, this study seeks to stimulate discussion about the validity of perceived discrimination, acculturation strategies and adaptation to loyalty.

The literature (Hirsh & Lyons, 2010; Stainback & Irvin, 2012; Yu et al., 2019), has mentioned that reducing racial discrimination increases employer loyalty, and less likelihood of searching for another job due to strengthened social relationships and greater perception of fairness. It is also known that rapid changes in life can potentially affect the stability of one's overall satisfaction (Inglehart & Rabier, 1986) and in turn satisfaction with travel experiences contributes to destination loyalty (Alexandris et al., 2006; Tang, Wang, Jin, & Zhang, 2022).

Kao and an (2012) and Baumert, et al., (2023) concluded that acculturation does influence family loyalty and Wu (2011) noted the impact acculturation has on brand loyalty. In summary, it can be assumed that loyalty is influenced by two things: psychological adaptation and acculturation strategy. However, whether the relationship of perceived discrimination to loyalty can be improved by acculturation strategies and psychological adaptation as mediators still remains elusive. Thus, this study explores further the relationship based on the hypotheses below:

- H12: Perceive discrimination influences loyalty, mediated psychological adaptation.
- H13: Perceive discrimination influences loyalty, mediated by acculturation strategies.

Study by Swan and Combs (1976); Uysal and Noe (2003); Jamaludin et al., (2018) and Omo-Obas, & Anning-Dorson, (2022) stated that the evaluation of the motivation factor based on physical products and the psychological interpretation of a destination product are necessary for human actions. These could be demonstrated as taking the form of travel satisfaction and destination loyalty.

Besides that, Inglehart and Rabier (1986) found that rapid changes in life have the potential to affect the stability of one's overall satisfaction and satisfaction with travel experiences, which in turn impacts on destination loyalty (Alexandris et al., 2006; Bramwell, 1998; Oppermann, 2000; Pritchard & Howard, 1997; Jamaludin et al., 2018; Omo-Obas, & Anning-Dorson, 2022)). Consequently, the relationship is examined further based on the hypothesis below:

- H14: Motivation influences loyalty, mediated by psychological adaptation

The Proposed Hypothetical Model

Figure 3 depicts the hypothetical model. Each component of the model was selected on the basis of the literature review.

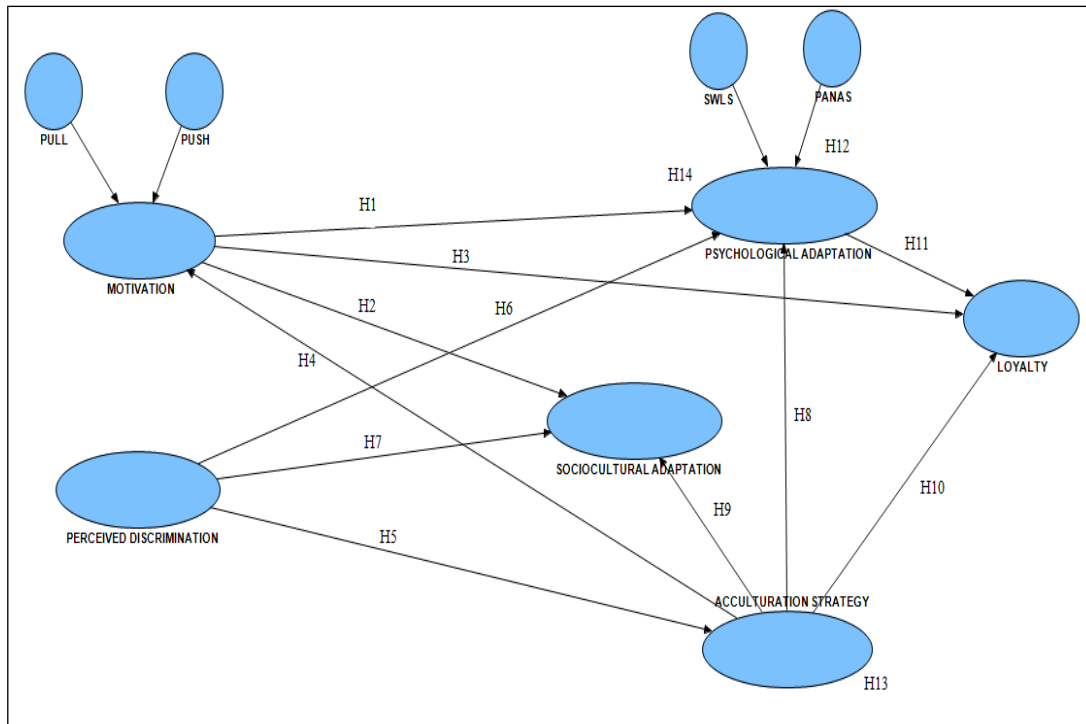


Figure 3: Proposed hypothetical model

A new psychological model of loyalty was tested to examine the relationship between motivation, perceived discrimination, acculturation strategies and psychological and sociocultural adaptation on travel loyalty.

METHODOLOGY

Setting

This study was executed in several steps. Firstly, the variables to be analyzed were selected based on the literature. Secondly, a model analyzing the reflective and formative character of each construct and the relationship of the latent variable was carried out. Thirdly, a survey to gather the information concerning travel loyalty was developed. Fourthly, a pilot test was done and finally, the data were collected. Fifthly and lastly, Partial Least Squares (PLS) was used to test the model and the formulated hypotheses.

Pilot Test of The Instrument

A convenience sample of thirty international students residing in Nattland Student Boliger, hailing from various universities in Bergen, was selected to conduct a pilot test of the instrument. These participants promptly responded to the instrument and provided feedback. The purpose of this pilot test was to evaluate the face validity of the questionnaire. Face validity refers to the intuitive process of determining whether the measure accurately reflects the content of the concept being studied (Bryman, 2012). It is important to note that the testing of the instrument was limited to face validity, specifically focusing on the clarity of instructions and questions. This decision was made because the measurement structure and language used to assess the predictors had already been rigorously tested by numerous researchers mentioned in the literature review. The participants were given the actual survey questions and were given a time frame of fifteen to twenty minutes to respond. None of the participants

requested verbal assistance during the pilot test and they were able to answer all the questions. Overall, the respondents in this pilot study reported that the instrument had clear instructions and questions.

Sampling Details

The chosen sample group consists of international students at the University of Bergen. For the purpose of this study, “International students” are defined as students who leave their home country in order to study at the University of Bergen, Norway.

All registered international students at the university are eligible to participate in the study. These students were contacted by email to participate, and the final sample of 280 comprised those who accepted the invitation and filled out the questionnaire. The international student population also includes those on short term programs lasting about one semester as well as those pursuing a complete degree, such the Quota-program students. Table 1 presents the respondents’ profiles.

Table 1: Profile of respondents

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Gender	Female	160	57.1
	Male	120	42.9
	Total	280	100.0
Nationality	Europe	157	56.1
	Africa	50	17.9
	Asia	43	15.4
	North America	15	5.4
	South America	10	3.6
	Oceania	5	1.8
Age	20 to 30 years old	221	78.9
	31 to 40 years old	47	16.8
	41 to 50 years old	11	3.9
	Above 50 years old	1	.4

In terms of gender the sample was mainly female (57.9%) compared to male (42.9%) students. The majority were aged between 20 and 30 (78.9%) and most of them came from other parts of Europe (56.1%).

Measurement of the Latent Variables

The interview questions were designed to explore key factors that influence travel loyalty. The questionnaire was based on multi-item measurement scales, adapted from previous studies on the five concepts of the theoretical model: perceived discrimination, acculturation strategies, psychological adaptation, sociocultural adaptation and loyalty (Table 2).

Items were measured by means of a five-level Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree) to avoid common method variance issues. Studies have generally shown that five-to-seven-point scales of measurement can improve its reliability and validity (Dawes, 2008).

Table 2: Measurement of the variables used

Scale	Dimension	Number of items
(Chirkov, Vansteenkiste, Tao, & Lynch, 2007) and (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002)	Motivation: Pull and Push factors	20
(Hocoy, 1993)	Perceived discrimination	5
Vancouver Index of Acculturation (VIA) (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000)	Acculturation strategies	20
Satisfaction with life scale (SWLS) by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, (1985)	Psychological adaptation	5
The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) by Watson, Clark, & Tellegen (1988)	Psychological adaptation	20
(Ward & Kennedy, 1999)	Sociocultural adaptation	23
(Oppermann, 2000)	Loyalty	3

A two-level measurement model was employed for these concepts and indicators. In this study, two approaches are distinguished: reflective and formative (Bollen & Lennox 1992; Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001; Jarvis, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2003; MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Jarvis, 2005).

It was anticipated that these two dimensions were related in the reflective form to their indicators and in a formative manner to their construct. PLS was used to estimate the measurement and structural model. Due to its predictable character, this statistical technical method is more appropriate when there are formative constructs (Reinartz, Haenlein, & Henseler, 2009).

This study used SmartPLS 3.0 (2010). The *bootstrap* technique was employed for signification, what implies the generation of a determined number of samples being the same size as the original. In order to analyze the significant, 500 sub-samples, being the same size as the original one was generated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before testing the hypotheses, the measuring instrument was evaluated using PLS regression. For this study, the research model is assessed using a two-step process: firstly, the assessment of the measurement model; and secondly, the assessment of the structural model. In general, the purpose of model validation is to determine whether both the measurement and structural models fulfil the quality criteria for empirical analysis (Urbach & Ahlemann, 2010). According to previous studies, the validation of a reflective measurement model can be established by testing its internal consistency, indicator reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity (Lewis, Templeton, & Byrd, 2005; Straub, Boudreau, & Gefen, 2004) as summarized in Table 3. The findings of the measurement test for this study are summarized in Table 4 for reflective construct and Table 5 for formative construct.

Table 3: Validation of a reflective measurement model

Validity Type	Criterion	Guidelines	Following
Internal consistency	CR	CR > 0.7 (for exploratory study) CR > 0.8 (advance research) CR < 0.6—lack of reliability	(Nunnally)

Indicator reliability	Indicator loadings	Item's loading > 0.7 and significant at least at the 0.05 level	(Chin, 1998)
Convergent validity	AVE	AVE > 0.50	(Fornell & Larcker, 1981)
Discriminant validity	Cross loading	Item's loading of each indicator is highest for its designated construct. The square root of the AVE of a construct should be greater than the correlations between the construct and other constructs in the mode	(Chin, 1998; Fornell & Larcker, 1981)

Table 4: The measurement model test for this study

<i>Latent Variable</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Loading</i>	<i>Indicator reliability (IR)</i>	<i>Cronbach Alpha</i>	<i>AVE</i>	<i>Composite Reliability (CR)</i>
Loyalty	L1	0.855	0.899	0.789	0.825	0.904
	L2	0.868	0.918			
Perceived Discrimination	PD1	0.732	0.735	0.755	0.577	0.843
	PD2	0.777	0.835			
	PD3	0.827	0.849			
	PD4	0.648	0.592			
Sociocultural Adaptation	SA3	0.685	0.711	0.912	0.508	0.925
	SA4	0.742	0.755			
	SA6	0.630	0.661			
	SA8	0.659	0.669			
	SA10	0.634	0.629			
	SA11	0.718	0.743			
	SA13	0.722	0.754			
	SA14	0.769	0.797			
	SA15	0.644	0.646			
	SA16	0.685	0.687			
	SA20	0.764	0.778			
	SA21	0.699	0.698			

Based on the findings in Table 4, in relation to the reliability of the reflective character of the latent variables, the calculated indicators suggested satisfactory reliability level: Cronbach alpha value above 0.7 and composite reliability (CR) higher than recommended value of 0.8 (Nunnally).

The average variance extracted (AVE) values were also over 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) and the individual indicator reliability (IR) values must be larger than minimum acceptable level of 0.4 and close to preferred level of 0.7 (Hulland, 1999). Besides reliability which is necessary, it is also best to test the validity and for this reason the loadings of each indicator were studied. Each indicator was significantly different from zero and higher than 0.6 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Only observed variables which have a standardized confirmatory factor loading (standardized regression weight) of more than 0.6 ($p < 0.001$) were included for further analysis (Chin, Gopal, & Salisbury, 1997). All factors were tested simultaneously in a single measurement model.

Table 4 summarizes the details on the observed variables included for further analysis based on their factor loadings. A total of 13 items were dropped. This is still acceptable based on the suggestion by Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2013) concerning the maximum amount of items that can be deleted, < 20% of the total items.

Table 5: Discriminant validity

	<i>Loyalty</i>	<i>Perceived Discrimination</i>	<i>Sociocultural Adaptation</i>	<i>AVE</i>
Loyalty	0.908			0.825
Perceived Discrimination	-0.406	0.760		0.577
Sociocultural Adaptation	-0.187	-0.018	0.713	0.508

Results in Table 5 indicate that discriminant validity is well established. The results confirmed the non-existence of the discriminant validity problem since the average variance extracted from each reflective construct was higher than the correlation squares among each set of factors (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

For the formative construct, the traditional indicator of reliability and convergent validity are not applicable (Bollen, 1989). As a consequence, the non-existence of collinearity problems was checked through the variance inflation factor (VIF), with the values being less than 3.3 (Petter, Straub, & Rai, 2007). The results are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6: Collinearity test

	<i>Weight</i>	<i>T Value</i>	<i>VIF</i>
AS1 -> Acculturation strategy	0.027	0.224	1.812
AS10 -> Acculturation strategy	0.225	1.840	1.589
AS11 -> Acculturation strategy	-0.021	0.217	1.753
AS12 -> Acculturation strategy	0.065	0.600	1.805
AS13 -> Acculturation strategy	-0.062	0.499	2.298
AS14 -> Acculturation strategy	0.013	0.101	2.150
AS15 -> Acculturation strategy	0.153	1.238	2.008
AS16 -> Acculturation strategy	-0.001	0.009	2.094
AS17 -> Acculturation strategy	0.128	0.983	1.825
AS18 -> Acculturation strategy	0.110	0.916	2.018
AS19 -> Acculturation strategy	0.066	0.642	1.641
AS2 -> Acculturation strategy	0.140	1.244	1.741
AS20 -> Acculturation strategy	0.214	1.958	2.046
AS3 -> Acculturation strategy	-0.066	0.678	1.754
AS4 -> Acculturation strategy	0.176	1.444	1.873
AS5 -> Acculturation strategy	-0.126	1.077	1.572
AS6 -> Acculturation strategy	0.053	0.444	1.871
AS7 -> Acculturation strategy	-0.139	1.231	1.894
AS8 -> Acculturation strategy	0.514	3.715	1.844
AS9 -> Acculturation strategy	-0.013	0.121	1.772
MPULL1 -> Motivation	0.435	1.464	2.007
MPULL10 -> Motivation	0.093	0.617	1.931

MPULL2 -> Motivation	0.035	0.218	1.905
MPULL3 -> Motivation	0.015	0.122	2.137
MPULL4 -> Motivation	-0.105	0.617	2.040
MPULL5 -> Motivation	0.078	0.545	2.475
MPULL6 -> Motivation	0.340	1.662	1.954
MPULL7 -> Motivation	-0.033	0.262	1.534
MPULL8 -> Motivation	0.134	0.877	1.598
MPULL9 -> Motivation	0.057	0.492	2.027
MPUSH1 -> Motivation	0.110	0.516	3.213
MPUSH10 -> Motivation	0.060	0.520	2.607
MPUSH2 -> Motivation	-0.067	0.385	2.462
MPUSH3 -> Motivation	0.008	0.027	2.458
MPUSH4 -> Motivation	0.116	0.666	2.459
MPUSH5 -> Motivation	0.098	0.769	2.434
MPUSH6 -> Motivation	0.258	1.359	2.199
MPUSH7 -> Motivation	0.009	0.051	2.369
MPUSH8 -> Motivation	-0.024	0.216	1.574
MPUSH9 -> Motivation	0.013	0.078	1.597
PA_PANAS1 -> Psychological Adaptation	0.366	2.037	2.485
PA_PANAS10 -> Psychological Adaptation	0.280	2.035	1.604
PA_PANAS11 -> Psychological Adaptation	-0.227	1.537	2.270
PA_PANAS12 -> Psychological Adaptation	-0.023	0.194	2.086
PA_PANAS13 -> Psychological Adaptation	-0.126	0.817	1.851
PA_PANAS14 -> Psychological Adaptation	-0.185	1.313	1.910
PA_PANAS15 -> Psychological Adaptation	0.170	1.314	2.408
PA_PANAS16 -> Psychological Adaptation	-0.182	1.277	1.928
PA_PANAS17 -> Psychological Adaptation	0.106	0.601	2.498
PA_PANAS18 -> Psychological Adaptation	-0.314	2.466	1.914
PA_PANAS19 -> Psychological Adaptation	0.163	1.109	2.225
PA_PANAS2 -> Psychological Adaptation	0.234	1.775	1.548
PA_PANAS20 -> Psychological Adaptation	0.279	1.716	2.011
PA_PANAS3 -> Psychological Adaptation	-0.138	0.828	2.046
PA_PANAS4 -> Psychological Adaptation	-0.422	2.648	2.323
PA_PANAS5 -> Psychological Adaptation	0.130	0.960	2.036
PA_PANAS6 -> Psychological Adaptation	-0.121	0.704	2.239
PA_PANAS7 -> Psychological Adaptation	0.068	0.467	1.845
PA_PANAS8 -> Psychological Adaptation	0.189	1.243	2.087
PA_PANAS9 -> Psychological Adaptation	0.330	1.960	2.696
PA_SL1 -> Psychological Adaptation	0.033	0.639	1.585
PA_SL2 -> Psychological Adaptation	-0.018	0.375	1.982
PA_SL3 -> Psychological Adaptation	0.038	0.399	2.367
PA_SL4 -> Psychological Adaptation	-0.052	1.438	1.777
PA_SL5 -> Psychological Adaptation	-0.013	0.346	1.848

According to (Chin, 1998), the evaluation of the structural model in PLS is based on the determination coefficients R^2 and the Stone-Geisser test Q^2 (Geisser, 1974; Stone, 1974). The summary is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Evaluation of the estimated models

Concept	TOTAL	
	R^2	Q^2
Loyalty	0.340	0.146
Sociocultural Adaptation	0.171	0.037
Psychological Adaptation	0.997	0.088
Acculturation Strategies	0.164	0.014

As stated in Table 7, the R^2 of three of the endogenous variables - loyalty, psychological adaptation and acculturation strategies - has surpassed the minimum level of 10% (Falk & Miller, 1992). According to Hair et al. (2013) it is difficult to provide rules of thumb for the acceptable R^2 because it depends on the model's complexity and research discipline being used. Thus, the variance that explains the particular endogenous construct can still be deemed adequate. The indicator Q^2 , obtained by means of blindfolding, was greater than 0 (Chin, 1998), which guaranteed the model's predictive relevance.

After evaluating the measuring instrument, the relationships among the constructs were analyzed by means of path coefficients and their significance. Figure 4 contains the results for the hypotheses.

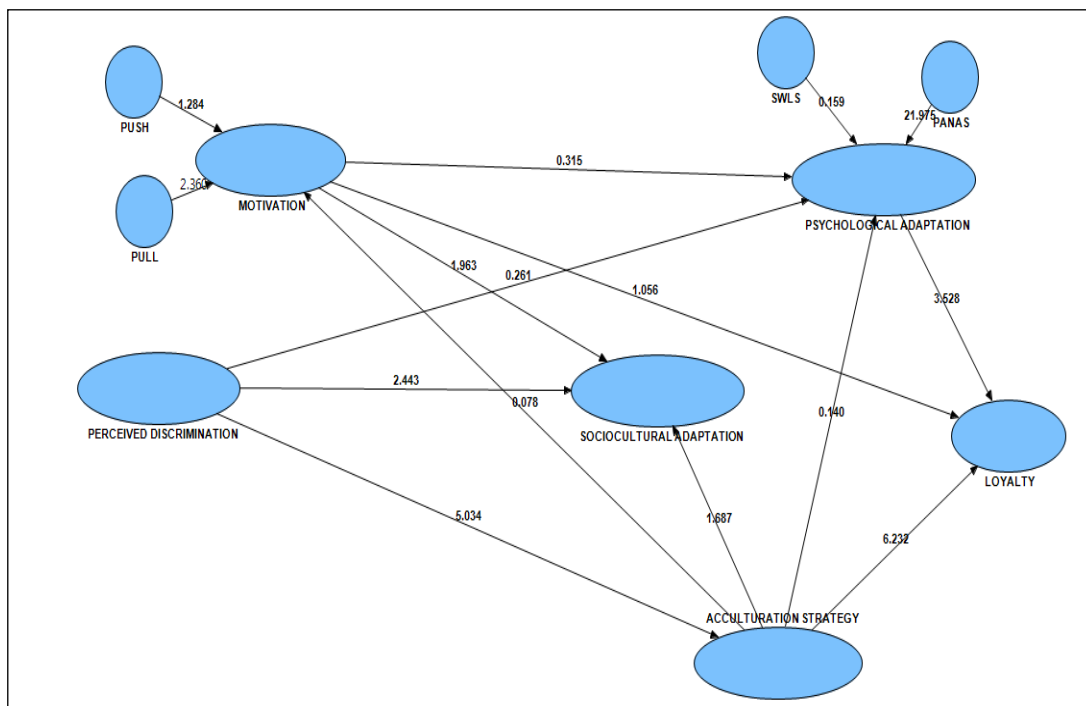


Figure 4: Hypotheses results

Based on our analysis, it is evident that motivation directly influenced sociocultural adaptation ($\beta=-0.3322$, $t=1.963$, $p<0.05$), perceived discrimination negatively influenced acculturation

strategies ($\beta=-0.406$, $t=5.034$, $p<0.01$), and directly influenced sociocultural adaptation ($\beta=0.180$, $t=2.443$, $p<0.01$). It also emerged that the acculturation strategy negatively influenced sociocultural adaptation ($\beta=-0.158$, $t=1.687$, $p<0.05$) and directly influenced loyalty ($\beta=0.400$, $t=6.232$, $p<0.01$). Finally, it is found that psychological adaptation directly influenced loyalty ($\beta=0.274$, $t=3.528$, $p<0.01$). As a result, hypotheses H2, H5, H7, H9, H10 and H11 are supported. On the other hand, psychological adaptation is not influenced directly by motivation ($\beta=0.003$, $t=0.315$, not significant) and loyalty is not influenced directly by motivation ($\beta=0.088$, $t=1.056$, not significant). Finally, it is also found that the acculturation strategy was not influenced by psychological adaptation ($\beta=0.001$, $t=0.140$, not significant). As a result, hypotheses H1, H3, H4, H6 and H8 are not supported. As shown in Table 8 most of the hypotheses developed for this study are not rejected.

Table 8: Hypotheses testing of direct effect

<i>Hypotheses</i>	<i>Relationship</i>	<i>Std Beta</i>	<i>Std Error</i>	<i>T Value</i>	<i>Decision</i>
H1	Motivation -> Psychological adaptation	0.003	0.008	0.315	NOT SUPPORTED
H2	Motivation -> Sociocultural adaptation	0.332	0.169	1.963*	SUPPORTED
H3	Motivation -> Loyalty	0.088	0.083	1.056	NOT SUPPORTED
H4	Acculturation strategy -> Motivation	0.003	0.033	0.078	NOT SUPPORTED
H5	Perceived discrimination -> Acculturation strategy	-0.406	0.081	5.034**	SUPPORTED
H6	Perceived discrimination -> Psychological adaptation	0.002	0.008	0.261	NOT SUPPORTED
H7	Perceived discrimination -> Sociocultural adaptation	0.180	0.074	2.443**	SUPPORTED
H8	Acculturation strategy -> Psychological adaptation	0.001	0.009	0.140	NOT SUPPORTED
H9	Acculturation strategy -> Sociocultural adaptation	-0.158	0.094	1.687*	SUPPORTED
H10	Acculturation strategy -> Loyalty	0.400	0.064	6.232**	SUPPORTED
H11	Psychological adaptation -> Loyalty	0.274	0.078	3.528**	SUPPORTED

**P<0.01, *P<0.05

Other than direct effect, recent statistical research suggests the importance of examining the indirect effects separately given that the total impact is not necessary for mediation to occur (Preacher & Hayes, 2008; Shrout & Bolger, 2002).

Table 9: The indirect effect of the mediator on loyalty

	<i>Mediator</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>
H12	Psychological adaptation	0.003	-1.959	1.961
H13	Acculturation strategies	0.037	-2.122	1.798
H14	Psychological adaptation	0.003	-1.959	1.961

Table 9 contains the parameter estimates for the total and specific indirect effects on the association between acculturation strategies and psychological adaptation as mediators of travel loyalty. The total indirect effects were all not significant as evidenced by the confidence intervals containing zero. Hence, acculturation strategies and psychological adaptation were all not significant mediators. Figure 5 contains the final results of the study.

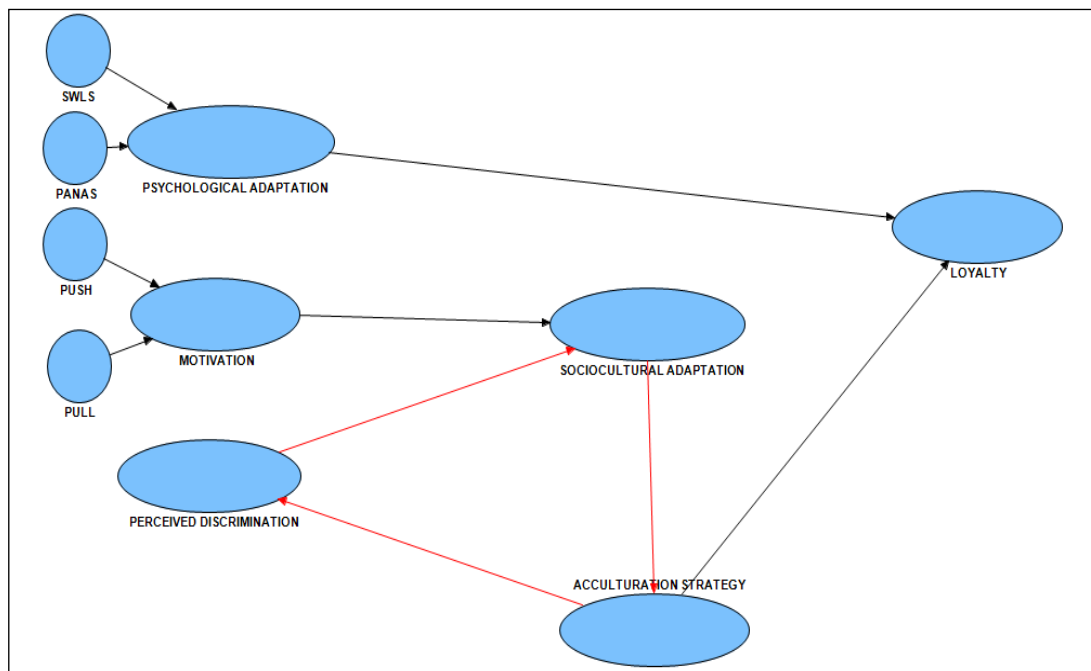


Figure 5: Final results

DISCUSSION

This study contributes to increasing the level of current academic knowledge about an important topic about which not much has been published. Its purpose was to uncover factors that propel travel loyalty in the context of education tourism. This study addressed two core questions:

Firstly, how do motivation, perceived discrimination, acculturation strategies, and psychological and sociocultural adaptation influence international students towards travel loyalty in education tourism?

Evidence relating to the first question and the hypotheses testing results show that acculturation strategies and psychological adaptation directly influence international students' loyalty in education tourism.

Horgan (2000), Ali, et al., (2022) and Birindelli, (2023) mentioned that international students, knowing that their stay in a place is temporary, may desire to learn more about the local culture so that they can assimilate to it as much as possible. This study suggested that, acculturation also influences the success of the travel loyalty process.

Current analysis revealed four distinct profiles or ways of acculturating that are consistent with the bi-dimensional model (Berry, 2017). The largest percentage of international students

(96.1%) was classified in the integration profile. They sought to acculturate by being involved both with their heritage and also the national culture of the country they were studying in.

The second largest group (7%) was in the separation profile where individuals reject the dominant or host culture in favor of preserving their culture of origin followed by assimilation (1.1%). This happens when individuals adopt the cultural norms of a dominant or host culture rather than their original culture. Finally, marginalization (0.4%) occurred where individuals reject both their culture of origin and the dominant host culture. This is supported in several studies (Berry, 1997; Ward, 1996; Zheng, Sang, & Wang, 2004; Ng, Tsang, & Lian, 2013).

The findings suggested that most international students tend to acculturate better even in the early stages of their stay in the new setting. Thus, it is important for tourism industry operators to consider both the heritage and the local natural environment or national culture to ensure that travel loyalty in education tourism remains successful or is encouraged.

With respect to the issues concerning adaptation, there are three distinct themes that may be of interest to both the acculturation researcher and tourism and travel loyalty researcher. First, it is known that, based on the study by Berry & Sabatier (2010), adaptation is the outcome of acculturation strategies and discrimination. Their study suggested that a variable outcome to acculturation includes both psychological and sociocultural adaptation.

According to Ayman and Berry (1996) and Ward and Kennedy (1999) both psychological and sociocultural adaptations are related but the magnitude of this particular relationship varies depending on acculturation conditions. However, based on the current findings, it is not always the case. Unexpectedly, this study found that acculturation strategy negatively influenced sociocultural adaptation and had no relationship with psychological adaptation.

This echoes the recent findings of Ng et al. (2013). Their study shows that acculturation strategies do not directly impact on psychological adaptation which is contrary to previous findings that social support and the appropriate uses of acculturation strategies are conducive to psychological adaptation (Berry, 1997; Brett & Werbel, 1980). Ouarasse and van de Vijver (2005) indicated that the direct link between attitudes toward ethnic and host cultures and psychological adaptation vanished while adjusting for sociocultural adaptation.

The current study offers evidence that the relationships between psychological adaptation and acculturation strategies may also be spurious. It is therefore recommended that researchers should take into consideration the influence of sociocultural adaptation when verifying whether a variable is a genuine predictor of psychological adaptation. Nevertheless, it is possible that psychological adaptation also affects sociocultural adaptation, or the two constructs have reciprocal effects on each other (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1994). The second issue concerning adaptation is as follows. It is evident that perceived discrimination does influence sociocultural adaptation which is consistent with the findings by Berry (1997), where perceived discrimination emerged as an important predictor of how well immigrant youth adapt socioculturally to life in their new society.

However, perceived discrimination only influences sociocultural adaptation according to how successfully the individual acquires the suitable sociocultural skills for living effectively in the new sociocultural setting. It does not influence life satisfaction or psychological adaptation.

This is supported by previous studies which found that the two types of adaptation are affected by different predictors. For instance, while psychological adaptation is predicted by personality traits and life events, sociocultural adaptation is predicted by length of residence in the host culture, cultural competence, and social interactions with people in the mainstream culture (Ward, 1996; Ward & Kennedy, 1994).

However, this is contradicted by Berry et al. (2006) who concluded that perceived discrimination was an important predictor of how well immigrant youth adapt, both psychologically and socioculturally, to life in their new society. Current findings suggested that, due the nature of the international student population, perceived discrimination does not really wield a major influence on their psychological adaptation. This study posits that if this had been applied to tourists in real market settings, perhaps the outcome would have been different.

This study also suggested that only psychological adaptation which focuses on life satisfaction have influence on loyalty. This is consistent with Yoon and Uysal (2005) who concluded that satisfied tourists may consequently be willing to revisit a location and increase their travel loyalty (Alexandris et al., 2006; Bramwell, 1998; Chen & Chen, 2010; Devesa et al., 2010; Oppermann, 2000; Pritchard & Howard, 1997; Yu & Goulden, 2006). Customer loyalty is influenced by customers' satisfaction (Bitner, 1990; Dick & Basu, 1994; Oliver, 1999).

The third issue concerns acculturation strategies. As suggested by Berry & Sabatier (2010), adaptation is the outcome of acculturation strategies and discrimination. However, based on the current finding, it is known that acculturation strategies can also influence perceived discrimination. These findings show that perceived discrimination can also be considered an outcome variable rather than only as an antecedent variable. This is consistent with Berry (1997) with reference to immigrant youth and also follows suggestions made by Sellers and Shelton (2003). They advocated treating perceived discrimination as an independent variable as it is considered to be the basis of immigrants' acculturation experiences.

Fourthly and finally with regard to motivation, it is found that motivation does not influence life satisfaction. London et al. (1977) conducted a large-scale survey examining the influence of leisure satisfaction/travel (compared to job satisfaction) on life satisfaction. Their study indicated that both job and leisure satisfaction accounted for meaningful variation in life satisfaction. This proves that a consensus regarding the relationship between life satisfaction and travel satisfaction has not been achieved.

This study suggested that further exploration should be done in this area to observe the total connection with a specific focus on a behavioral study of travel loyalty. It also emerged in this study that motivation has a direct influence on sociological adaptation.

Previous studies on models of migration and cultural adaptation have included motivational factors as important determinants of both the migration and adaptation processes (Berry, 1997; Ward et al., 2001). This present analysis supported the findings and concludes that

motivation is an important determinant on how successfully the individual acquires the suitable sociocultural skills for living effectively in the new sociocultural setting.

Motivation can be classified into two forces that are integral to the travel experience - push and pull factors (Dann, 1977, 1981) but do not directly influence loyalty. Swan and Combs (1976) and Uysal and Noe (2003) maintained that the study of motivation is necessary as it could be indicated as both travel satisfaction and destination loyalty. However, this study found that there are other factors, namely acculturation strategies and psychological adaptation which make more of an impact on travel loyalty.

Finally, this study found that acculturation strategy does not influence motivation. This contradicts the findings of Berry (1997) who suggested that motivation is one of the factors that is influential prior to acculturation. Furthermore Berry et al. (2006) and Berry and Sabatier (2010) suggested that perceived discrimination is the starting point of the total acculturation process which will lead to both psychological and sociocultural adaptation.

This study concludes that acculturation strategies and psychological adaptation are integral to the concept of loyalty. They have specific and important applications to tourism products and services. In short, they are the major driving forces in an increasingly competitive and global market.

Secondly, can acculturation strategies, psychological adaptation as mediating variables improve the relationship between motivation and perceived discrimination on travel loyalty in education tourism?

With respect to the second main question that is whether acculturation strategies and adaptation as mediating variable improve the relationship between perceived discrimination on travel loyalty in education tourism, this study found that none of the hypotheses could be accepted.

Acculturation strategies and psychological adaptation as mediating variables do not improve the relationship between perceived discrimination on travel loyalty in education tourism. Perhaps a future study can focus more on the possible moderator effect of various background variables such as gender, age and nationality on travel loyalty.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the two questions guiding the study of international students produced answers that are both consistent with and divergent from the literature on travel loyalty. Future avenues of research exploration have also been suggested. The study acknowledges the limitations of the approach taken here to analyze the total process of acculturation.

Ideally, longitudinal research is required to better understand the relationships, and causal links between perceived discrimination, acculturation strategies and adaptation to travel loyalty. To date, such a comprehensive longitudinal study has not yet been carried out. This notion points to an alternative explanation of the non-significant effects of acculturation strategies on psychological adaptation.

Future studies with more heterogeneous samples, such as host students and international students from other cultures, are required so that we have a better understanding of the current findings.

This study also acknowledges that the data collection, which was limited to only international students at the University of Bergen in Norway, may well be prone to single-source bias and should not be generalized to other countries due to their different national cultures. Future studies should consider examining the barriers to travel loyalty in the context of the total acculturation process because it is important to develop insights into what hinders the travel loyalty process as well as understanding the contributing factors. By far the most important contributor to loyalty was the experience of psychological adaptation and acculturation strategies. It may be concluded that acculturation strategies and psychological adaptation wield a direct influence on travel loyalty.

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