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**The Influence of Destination Marketing Factors on Destination
Loyalty in Secondary Cities of Thailand**



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The Influence of Destination Marketing Factors on Destination Loyalty in Secondary Cities of Thailand



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Abstract

Purpose: This study investigates the influence of destination image, destination branding, marketing communication, perceived service quality, and memorable tourism experience on destination loyalty among Thai domestic tourists visiting secondary cities in Thailand. The study addresses the limited empirical evidence regarding the marketing factors that influence tourist loyalty toward Thailand's secondary tourism destinations.

Methodology: A quantitative research approach was employed using a structured questionnaire administered to 400 Thai domestic tourists who had visited at least one secondary city in Thailand within the previous 12 months. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, and multiple regression analysis to examine the relationships between the proposed destination marketing factors and destination loyalty.

Findings: The results indicate that destination image, marketing communication, perceived service quality, and memorable tourism experience have significant positive effects on destination loyalty. Among these variables, marketing communication exerts the strongest influence. In contrast, destination branding does not have a statistically significant effect on destination loyalty. The findings suggest that tourists visiting secondary cities place greater importance on effective communication, high-quality services, and memorable travel experiences than on destination branding alone.

Contribution to Theory Practice and Policy: This study extends the destination marketing and tourism literature by providing empirical evidence on the determinants of destination loyalty in the context of Thailand's secondary tourism destinations, an area that has received limited scholarly attention. The findings offer practical guidance for destination management organizations, tourism marketers, and policymakers by highlighting the importance of strengthening integrated marketing communication, improving service quality, and creating memorable tourism experiences to enhance tourist loyalty and support the sustainable development and competitiveness of secondary tourism destinations in Thailand.

Keywords: *Destination loyalty, Secondary cities, Thailand Tourism, Marketing*

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has long served as a major contributor to Thailand's economic growth by generating employment, stimulating regional development, and supporting local economies. However, tourism revenue remains concentrated in a relatively small number of major destinations, resulting in uneven regional tourism development. To address this imbalance, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) launched the "Amazing Thailand Go Local" campaign in 2018, promoting 55 secondary cities with the objective of redistributing tourist arrivals and tourism income from primary destinations to emerging provinces. The campaign aimed to improve the visitor distribution ratio between major and secondary destinations from 70:30 to 65:35 and generate approximately 10 billion baht in additional tourism revenue for secondary cities (Tourism Authority of Thailand [TAT], 2018). TAT has continued this policy direction through subsequent tourism development strategies, emphasizing the enhancement of tourism products, infrastructure, and marketing activities in secondary destinations to achieve more balanced and sustainable regional tourism development (TAT, 2024). Despite these initiatives, empirical evidence examining the factors that influence tourist loyalty toward Thailand's secondary cities remains limited, highlighting the need for further investigation.

To address this imbalance, the Thai government and TAT have increasingly prioritized the promotion of secondary cities as alternative tourism destinations through various national campaigns, including *Amazing Secondary Cities: Must Visit, Must Love* and *365 Days of Wonders in Secondary Cities*. These initiatives aim to redistribute tourism income, reduce overcrowding in major destinations, and encourage sustainable regional tourism development. Despite these efforts, many secondary cities continue to face challenges related to destination competitiveness, revisit intention, and long-term tourist retention.

Destination loyalty has become an important strategic outcome in tourism research because it reflects tourists' intention to revisit destinations, recommend destinations to others, and engage in positive word-of-mouth communication. Loyal tourists are particularly valuable because they contribute to destination sustainability, reduce promotional costs, and function as informal destination ambassadors (Chen & Tsai, 2007). Consequently, understanding the factors influencing destination loyalty has become essential for tourism authorities and destination managers seeking to strengthen destination competitiveness and sustainable tourism growth.

Previous studies have suggested that destination loyalty is influenced by various destination marketing factors, including destination image, service quality, branding, communication, and tourism experiences. For example, destination image has been identified as an important determinant of tourists' behavioral intention because favorable perceptions of destinations often strengthen revisit intention and recommendation behavior (Chi & Qu, 2008). Similarly, memorable tourism experiences and service quality may strengthen tourists' emotional attachment and increase destination loyalty (Kim et al., 2012; Baker & Crompton, 2000). Marketing communication has also become increasingly influential due to the growing role of

social media, digital tourism platforms, and online travel information in shaping tourists' decision-making processes.

Despite the growing body of tourism marketing literature, several important research gaps remain. Recent studies have continued to examine destination loyalty primarily in the context of established tourism destinations or international visitors, with relatively limited attention given to secondary tourism destinations and domestic tourists in Thailand (Rather, 2021; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2023; Sodawan & Hsu, 2025). Moreover, previous research has frequently investigated destination loyalty by focusing on individual antecedents, such as destination image, destination branding, perceived service quality, or memorable tourism experience, rather than integrating these destination marketing factors within a comprehensive framework (Abbasi et al., 2021; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2023; Phosing & Jaroenwisan, 2025). Consequently, empirical evidence explaining the combined influence of destination marketing factors on destination loyalty among Thai domestic tourists visiting secondary tourism destinations remains limited, highlighting the need for further investigation.

Therefore, this study examines the influence of destination image, destination branding, marketing communication, perceived service quality, and memorable tourism experience on destination loyalty among Thai domestic tourists visiting secondary cities in Thailand. The findings are expected to contribute to tourism marketing literature and provide practical implications for tourism authorities and destination stakeholders seeking to strengthen tourist retention and sustainable tourism competitiveness.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Destination Image and Destination Loyalty

Destination image has long been recognised as a key determinant of tourists' behavioural intentions because it shapes tourists' overall perceptions and evaluations of a destination. While early studies conceptualised destination image primarily as tourists' cognitive and affective perceptions (Crompton, 1979), recent research suggests that destination image has become increasingly dynamic as tourists actively construct destination perceptions through digital media, online reviews, and social networking platforms (Stylidis et al., 2022; Rather, 2021). Although numerous studies consistently report that a favourable destination image enhances destination loyalty (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2023), evidence remains limited for emerging and secondary tourism destinations where destination awareness is relatively low. Given the increasing competition among destinations, developing a positive destination image may be particularly important for encouraging repeat visitation and positive word-of-mouth among domestic tourists.

H1: Destination image significantly influences destination loyalty in Thailand's secondary tourism destinations.

2.2 Destination Branding and Destination Loyalty

Destination branding enables destinations to establish distinctive identities that differentiate them from competing destinations. While traditional branding focused primarily on logos and promotional messages, recent studies emphasise destination branding as a strategic process of co-creating destination value through authentic storytelling, cultural identity, and stakeholder engagement across digital platforms (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2021; Rather, 2021). However, previous findings suggest that branding effectiveness varies according to destination maturity and tourists' familiarity with the destination. Compared with established tourism destinations, secondary cities often possess lower brand recognition, making effective destination branding essential for communicating their unique value propositions and strengthening tourists' emotional attachment.

H2: Destination branding significantly influences destination loyalty in Thailand's secondary tourism destinations.

2.3 Marketing Communication and Destination Loyalty

Marketing communication has evolved substantially with the rapid growth of digital technologies and social media. Contemporary destination marketing extends beyond traditional advertising to include destination websites, social media marketing, influencer content, online reviews, and user-generated content, all of which influence tourists' destination perceptions and travel decisions (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019). Recent studies indicate that effective digital marketing communication reduces perceived travel risk, enhances destination awareness, and strengthens destination engagement before, during, and after travel (Rather, 2021; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2023). Nevertheless, the effectiveness of marketing communication may differ between established and emerging destinations, suggesting that communication strategies may play an even greater role in promoting secondary tourism destinations with relatively limited market visibility.

H3: Marketing communication significantly influences destination loyalty in Thailand's secondary tourism destinations.

2.4 Perceived Service Quality and Destination Loyalty

Perceived service quality remains a fundamental determinant of tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. Although early research conceptualised service quality using the SERVQUAL framework (Parasuraman et al., 1988), recent tourism studies argue that service quality should be viewed more holistically by incorporating destination accessibility, hospitality, digital services, safety, and overall visitor experiences (Rather, 2021; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2023). High-quality tourism services consistently enhance tourists' overall evaluations, increase satisfaction, and strengthen destination loyalty. However, maintaining consistent service quality remains a challenge for many secondary tourism destinations due to differences in tourism infrastructure and service capability. Therefore, perceived service quality is expected to play an important role in encouraging tourist loyalty toward Thailand's secondary cities.

H4: Perceived service quality significantly influences destination loyalty in Thailand's secondary tourism destinations.

2.5 Memorable Tourism Experience and Destination Loyalty

Recent tourism research increasingly recognises memorable tourism experiences as an important source of competitive advantage because tourists seek authentic, meaningful, and emotionally engaging experiences rather than simply consuming tourism products. While Kim et al. (2012) established memorable tourism experience as a multidimensional construct, subsequent studies have shown that memorable experiences are increasingly shaped by authenticity, cultural immersion, personal interaction, and digital sharing through social media (Rather, 2021; Sharma et al., 2024). Such experiences foster emotional attachment and strengthen destination loyalty by encouraging revisit intentions and positive electronic word-of-mouth. Since Thailand's secondary tourism destinations are characterised by distinctive local culture, community-based tourism, and authentic experiences, memorable tourism experiences are expected to play a particularly important role in developing destination loyalty.

H5: Memorable tourism experience significantly influences destination loyalty in Thailand's secondary tourism destinations.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Sample

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the influence of destination marketing factors on destination loyalty among Thai domestic tourists visiting secondary cities in Thailand. The target population consisted of Thai domestic tourists who had visited at least one designated secondary city within the previous 12 months.

A purposive sampling technique was employed because respondents were required to possess prior travel experience in secondary cities. Data were collected through both online and on-site questionnaire distribution between December 2025 and February 2026. A total of 400 valid responses were obtained and used for statistical analysis. The sample size was considered adequate based on the recommendation of Hair et al. (2019), suggesting a minimum ratio of 5–10 respondents per measurement item for multivariate analysis.

3.2 Measurement Instrument

The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section included screening questions to ensure respondents met the study criteria. The second section collected demographic information, including gender, age, education, occupation, monthly income, and travel frequency.

The third section measured the study variables using previously validated scales adapted from prior literature. Destination image was adapted from Chen and Tsai (2007), destination branding from Konecnik and Gartner (2007), marketing communication from Pike (2007) and Kotler et al.

(2021), perceived service quality from Baker and Crompton (2000), memorable tourism experience from Kim et al. (2012), and destination loyalty from Oliver (1999) and Chen and Tsai (2007).

All measurement items were assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

3.3 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, and multiple regression analysis. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and perceptions toward the study variables. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess internal consistency reliability of the measurement constructs. Multiple regression analysis was subsequently conducted to examine the predictive influence of destination image, destination branding, marketing communication, perceived service quality, and memorable tourism experience on destination loyalty.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Respondent Profile

A total of 400 Thai domestic tourists participated in this study. The respondent profile indicated a relatively diverse sample in terms of age, occupation, income level, and travel frequency, providing adequate representation of domestic tourists visiting secondary cities in Thailand.

Table 1 : Respondent Characteristics (n=400)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	183	45.7%
	Female	217	54.3%
Age	18–25 years	78	19.5%
	26–35 years	69	17.3%
	36–45 years	107	26.8%
	46–55 years	97	24.3%
	Above 55 years	49	12.3%
Occupation	Government sector	122	30.5%
	Private Employee	134	33.5%
	Business owner/Self employed	102	25.5%
	Unemployed	42	10.5%
Travel Frequency (per year)	1–2 times	147	36.8%
	3–5 times	135	33.8%
	6–10 times	80	20.0%
	More than 10 times	38	9.5%

A total of 400 Thai domestic tourists participated in this study. Table 1 presents the demographic and travel-related characteristics of the respondents, including gender, age, occupation, and travel frequency per year. The respondent profile reflects a relatively diverse sample, thereby providing adequate representation of Thai domestic tourists visiting secondary cities in Thailand.

Regarding gender, female respondents represented a slightly larger proportion of the sample, accounting for 217 individuals (54.3%), while male respondents comprised 183 individuals (45.7%). This finding indicates a relatively balanced gender distribution, although female tourists were slightly more dominant among respondents.

In terms of age, respondents aged 36–45 years represented the largest group, accounting for 107 respondents (26.8%), followed by those aged 46–55 years with 97 respondents (24.3%). Respondents aged 18–25 years accounted for 78 individuals (19.5%), while those aged 26–35 years and above 55 years represented 69 respondents (17.3%) and 49 respondents (12.3%), respectively. The age distribution suggests that most respondents belonged to middle-aged and working-age groups, indicating that economically active individuals may constitute a major segment of domestic tourists traveling to secondary cities in Thailand.

With respect to occupation, private employees constituted the largest occupational group, accounting for 134 respondents (33.5%), followed by government sector employees with 122 respondents (30.5%). Business owners and self-employed respondents represented 102 individuals (25.5%), whereas unemployed respondents accounted for the smallest proportion at 42 individuals (10.5%). This distribution indicates that respondents originated from diverse occupational backgrounds, which may enhance the representativeness of the study findings.

Regarding travel frequency, the majority of respondents reported traveling 1–2 times per year, accounting for 147 respondents (36.8%), followed by those traveling 3–5 times annually with 135 respondents (33.8%). Meanwhile, 80 respondents (20.0%) reported traveling 6–10 times per year, while only 38 respondents (9.5%) traveled more than 10 times annually. These findings suggest that most respondents were moderate-frequency travelers, indicating that domestic tourism to secondary cities is generally undertaken periodically rather than frequently.

Overall, the respondent profile demonstrates a relatively diverse sample across demographic and travel behavior characteristics, thereby providing an appropriate basis for examining the influence of destination marketing factors on destination loyalty in secondary cities of Thailand.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Destination Image	3.95	0.70	High
Destination Branding	4.15	0.77	High
Marketing Communication	4.27	0.76	Very High
Perceived Service Quality	3.98	0.75	High
Memorable Tourism Experience	4.25	0.75	Very High
Destination Loyalty	4.23	0.72	Very High

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the key study variables, including destination image, destination branding, marketing communication, perceived service quality, memorable tourism experience, and destination loyalty. The findings indicate that respondents generally reported favorable perceptions toward all constructs, with mean scores ranging from 3.95 to 4.27, reflecting high to very high levels of agreement.

Among the independent variables, marketing communication recorded the highest mean score ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 0.76$), indicating that respondents perceived tourism-related communication and promotional efforts associated with secondary cities in Thailand positively. This was followed closely by memorable tourism experience ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 0.75$), suggesting that tourists generally experienced meaningful and memorable experiences during their visits.

Destination branding also demonstrated a relatively high mean score ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 0.77$), indicating favorable perceptions regarding the identity and attractiveness of secondary city destinations. Likewise, perceived service quality ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.75$) and destination image ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.70$) were rated at a high level, suggesting positive tourist perceptions concerning destination characteristics, infrastructure, and service experiences.

Regarding the dependent variable, destination loyalty recorded a very high mean score ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 0.72$), indicating that respondents generally expressed strong intentions to revisit secondary cities and recommend them to others. This finding suggests a relatively favorable level of destination loyalty among Thai domestic tourists. Overall, the results imply that respondents held positive perceptions toward destination marketing factors and exhibited a high level of destination loyalty, thereby supporting the suitability of further regression analysis to examine the predictive relationships among the study variables.

4.3 Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis was conducted to evaluate the internal consistency of the measurement constructs. Cronbach's alpha values exceeded the recommended threshold of .70, indicating satisfactory reliability for all variables.

Table 3: Reliability Analysis

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Destination Image	4	0.93
Destination Branding	5	0.72
Marketing Communication	6	0.88
Perceived Service Quality	4	0.78
Memorable Tourism Experience	5	0.82
Destination Loyalty	4	0.74

Note: Cronbach's alpha values above .70 indicate acceptable reliability.

Table 3 presents the reliability analysis of the study constructs using Cronbach's alpha coefficient to assess the internal consistency of measurement items. According to commonly accepted criteria, a Cronbach's alpha value above 0.70 indicates acceptable reliability, while values above 0.80 demonstrate good reliability.

The results indicate that all study constructs achieved acceptable to excellent levels of internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.72 to 0.93. Among the constructs, destination image demonstrated the highest reliability ($\alpha = 0.93$), indicating excellent internal consistency among its four measurement items. This suggests that the items measuring destination image were highly consistent in reflecting respondents' perceptions.

Marketing communication also exhibited a high reliability coefficient ($\alpha = 0.88$), followed by memorable tourism experience ($\alpha = 0.82$), indicating good levels of internal consistency among the respective measurement items. These findings suggest that respondents interpreted the questionnaire items related to communication efforts and tourism experiences consistently.

In addition, perceived service quality achieved a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.78, while destination loyalty reported a reliability coefficient of 0.74. Both values exceed the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory reliability for measuring the intended constructs.

Among all variables, destination branding recorded the lowest Cronbach's alpha value ($\alpha = 0.72$). Nevertheless, the coefficient remained above the minimum acceptable level, suggesting that the scale maintained adequate internal consistency and was suitable for subsequent statistical analysis. Overall, the findings confirm that all constructs demonstrated satisfactory reliability, supporting the appropriateness of the measurement instrument for further analysis, including descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis.

4.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of destination marketing factors on destination loyalty among Thai domestic tourists visiting secondary cities in Thailand.

Table 4: Regression Analysis Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	B (β)	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	Destination Image → Destination Loyalty	0.128	2.28	0.023	Supported
H2	Destination Branding → Destination Loyalty	0.042	0.85	0.393	Not Supported
H3	Marketing Communication → Destination Loyalty	0.153	2.71	0.007	Supported
H4	Perceived Service Quality → Destination Loyalty	0.132	2.16	0.042	Supported
H5	Memorable Tourism Experience → Destination Loyalty	0.117	2.17	0.031	Supported

The regression results revealed that four out of five hypotheses were supported. Destination image significantly influenced destination loyalty ($\beta = 0.128$, $p = 0.023$), supporting H1. Marketing communication demonstrated the strongest significant influence on destination loyalty ($\beta = 0.153$, $p = 0.007$), supporting H3. Perceived service quality also significantly influenced destination loyalty ($\beta = 0.132$, $p = 0.042$), supporting H4. Likewise, memorable tourism experience positively influenced destination loyalty ($\beta = 0.117$, $p = 0.031$), supporting H5.

In contrast, destination branding did not significantly influence destination loyalty ($\beta = 0.042$, $p = 0.393$), resulting in H2 not being supported. This finding suggests that destination branding alone may be insufficient to influence revisit intention and recommendation behavior in the context of Thailand's secondary cities.

5. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Discussion

This study examined the influence of destination marketing factors on destination loyalty among Thai domestic tourists visiting secondary tourism destinations in Thailand. The findings indicate that destination image, marketing communication, perceived service quality, and memorable tourism experience significantly influence destination loyalty, whereas destination branding does not exert a significant effect. These findings contribute to the growing body of destination marketing literature by providing empirical evidence from Thailand's secondary tourism destinations, where research on domestic tourist loyalty remains limited.

First, destination image was found to have a significant positive influence on destination loyalty, supporting H1. This finding is consistent with recent studies suggesting that destination image remains a fundamental determinant of tourists' behavioural intentions despite the rapid evolution of digital tourism marketing (Rather, 2021; Stylidis et al., 2022; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2023). Contemporary research argues that destination image is increasingly shaped through online travel information, user-generated content, and social media interactions, making destination perceptions more dynamic than in traditional destination marketing. For Thailand's

secondary tourism destinations, developing a favourable image that highlights authenticity, cultural identity, and local uniqueness may therefore enhance destination competitiveness and encourage repeat visitation and positive word-of-mouth.

Second, destination branding did not significantly influence destination loyalty; therefore, H2 was not supported. This finding contrasts with studies reporting positive relationships between destination branding and tourists' behavioural intentions (Rather, 2021; Kladou & Kehagias, 2014). A possible explanation is that many secondary tourism destinations in Thailand have relatively low brand awareness and limited brand equity compared with internationally recognised destinations. Consequently, domestic tourists may evaluate destinations primarily based on their actual travel experiences, perceived value, and service encounters rather than symbolic brand identity alone. This finding suggests that destination branding should be integrated with authentic tourism experiences and effective communication strategies rather than functioning as an isolated marketing tool.

Third, marketing communication emerged as the strongest predictor of destination loyalty, supporting H3. This finding reflects the growing importance of digital communication in contemporary tourism marketing. Recent studies have shown that destination websites, social media platforms, influencer marketing, electronic word-of-mouth, and user-generated content play a critical role in shaping destination awareness, expectations, trust, and post-visit behavioural intentions (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Rather, 2021; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2023). For secondary tourism destinations, where market visibility is often limited, effective digital marketing communication can reduce information asymmetry, increase destination awareness, and maintain tourists' engagement before, during, and after travel. The prominence of marketing communication in this study highlights the strategic importance of digital marketing for enhancing destination loyalty among domestic tourists.

Fourth, perceived service quality significantly influenced destination loyalty, supporting H4. This finding is consistent with recent tourism research demonstrating that high-quality service experiences enhance tourist satisfaction, trust, and long-term loyalty (Rather, 2021; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2023). Contemporary studies suggest that tourists evaluate service quality not only through traditional service encounters but also through destination accessibility, digital services, safety, hospitality, and the overall travel experience. Since secondary tourism destinations often compete on authenticity rather than iconic attractions, maintaining high service standards across tourism facilities and community-based services may provide a sustainable competitive advantage and strengthen tourists' loyalty.

Finally, memorable tourism experience significantly influenced destination loyalty, supporting H5. This finding reinforces recent evidence that memorable experiences are among the strongest drivers of tourists' emotional attachment and behavioural intentions (Kim, 2018; Rather, 2021; Sharma et al., 2024). In today's experience-driven tourism market, tourists increasingly seek authentic cultural interactions, local gastronomy, community engagement, and

personalised experiences that create lasting memories and are frequently shared through digital platforms. For Thailand's secondary tourism destinations, these authentic experiences represent a valuable competitive advantage that can foster destination loyalty and generate positive electronic word-of-mouth, thereby supporting sustainable tourism development.

Overall, the findings suggest that destination loyalty in secondary tourism destinations is primarily driven by tourists' holistic evaluations of destination image, digital marketing communication, service quality, and memorable tourism experiences rather than destination branding alone. These results support contemporary destination marketing perspectives, which emphasise that destination loyalty emerges through the combined influence of cognitive, experiential, and relational factors across the tourist journey. Consequently, destination management organisations should adopt integrated marketing strategies that combine digital communication, service excellence, and authentic tourism experiences to strengthen the competitiveness and long-term sustainability of Thailand's secondary tourism destinations.

5.2 Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of destination marketing factors on destination loyalty among Thai domestic tourists visiting secondary tourism destinations in Thailand. Specifically, the study examined the effects of destination image, destination branding, marketing communication, perceived service quality, and memorable tourism experience on destination loyalty to provide a better understanding of the factors that encourage repeat visitation and positive word-of-mouth in secondary tourism destinations.

The findings revealed that destination image, marketing communication, perceived service quality, and memorable tourism experience significantly and positively influenced destination loyalty, whereas destination branding did not demonstrate a significant effect. Among these factors, marketing communication emerged as the strongest predictor of destination loyalty, highlighting the critical role of digital communication and promotional activities in influencing tourists' behavioural intentions. The results further indicate that domestic tourists place greater emphasis on their actual travel experiences, service quality, and destination communication than on symbolic destination branding when evaluating secondary tourism destinations.

Overall, the study successfully achieved its research objectives by identifying the key destination marketing factors that influence destination loyalty among Thai domestic tourists. The findings contribute to the growing body of tourism marketing literature by providing empirical evidence from Thailand's secondary tourism destinations and offer practical insights for destination management organisations, tourism businesses, and policymakers. By emphasizing integrated marketing communication, high-quality service delivery, favourable destination image, and memorable tourism experiences, secondary tourism destinations can strengthen tourist loyalty and enhance their long-term competitiveness and sustainable tourism development.

5.3 Practical and Policy Implications

The findings provide valuable implications for tourism authorities, destination marketers, and policymakers. Destination stakeholders should strengthen destination image through authentic storytelling and invest in integrated digital marketing communication, including social media, tourism influencers, and user-generated content, to enhance destination visibility and tourist engagement. Improving service quality and creating authentic, memorable tourism experiences through local culture and community-based tourism are also essential for encouraging repeat visitation and positive word-of-mouth.

From a policy perspective, the findings support Thailand's strategy of promoting balanced regional tourism through the development of secondary tourism destinations. Policymakers should enhance destination competitiveness by improving tourism infrastructure, service quality, and marketing communication while encouraging collaboration among public agencies, tourism businesses, and local communities to deliver sustainable and authentic tourism experiences.

5.4 Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study focused exclusively on Thai domestic tourists, limiting the generalizability of findings to international tourists. Second, the study employed a cross-sectional design, restricting causal interpretation over time. Third, only selected destination marketing factors were examined, whereas other variables, such as tourist satisfaction, destination attachment, perceived value, and electronic word-of-mouth, may also influence destination loyalty.

Future studies may expand the research to international tourist segments and incorporate additional explanatory variables to improve predictive power. Researchers may also employ Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine mediating or moderating relationships among destination marketing variables. Comparative studies between major tourism destinations and secondary cities may further enhance understanding of tourism marketing effectiveness in Thailand.

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