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# **The Effect of Destination Image and Perceived Value on the Loyalty of International Tourists to Cultural Heritage Tourism in Hanoi**

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## **Abstract**

**Purpose** - Vietnam is a well-known country with many world cultural heritage. However, the exploitation of cultural heritage in tourism in academic research and practice activities in Vietnam is still limited. To bridge the gap in the literature, this study constructed the model to evaluate the relationship between expectation, perceived value, satisfaction, and loyalty of international tourists toward cultural heritage tourism in Hanoi.

**Design/Methodology** - Using the PLS-SEM method, the research tested eight hypotheses based on the survey conducted on 388 international tourists at the famous cultural heritage site of Hanoi, the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long.

**Findings** - The results indicate that all eight hypotheses are supported. Research results show that destination image strongly impacts perceived value, and both destination image and perceived value directly influence visitor satisfaction and loyalty. Satisfaction also has a direct relationship with tourist loyalty. The indirect relationships between the destination image and perceived value with tourist loyalty are indicated. Its results confirmed the role of mediators of satisfaction, contributing to academic theory.

**Originality/value** - This study provides recommendations for tourism managers and marketers in improving the image of the destination and increasing satisfaction as well as improving the visitors' return rate. In addition, this study makes a significant contribution to the literature because it demonstrated an indirect relationship between destination image and loyalty through satisfaction. Its results confirmed the role of mediators of satisfaction, contributing to academic theory.

**Keywords:** Destination Image; Perceived Value; Tourist satisfaction; Tourist loyalty; Cultural Heritage Tourism; Hanoi

**JEL Classification:** M31; L80

## 1. Introduction

Vietnam was designated "Asia's premier cultural destination" by World Tourism Awards for the three-year period 2019-2021, despite the effect of COVID-19. Vietnam attracted foreign travelers to its unique traditional Asian culture, which includes numerous monuments and events in human history, as well as diversity in traditions, lifestyle, food, and ceremony. Some historical tourism goods have established distinct brands for Vietnam's tourism industry. Thus, cultural heritage is an essential factor that differentiates Vietnam's tourism product and destination system, connecting and diversifying trans-regional and international tourist routes (Nguyen, 2020). Besides, the reopening of Vietnam's tourism industry to international visitors in March 2022 is considered a critical and necessary event.

According to the Hanoi government's tourism development strategy for 2030, by 2025 the city aims to receive between 35 and 39 million tourists, inclusive of 8–9 million international visitors, and revenue from tourists will reach approximately 151 trillion VND. By 2030, tourism will become a key economic sector of Hanoi city, welcoming approximately 49 million tourists, of whom around 14 million will arrive from international origins, and revenue from tourists will be approximately 270–300 trillion VND. To implement this plan, Hanoi has developed numerous programs to serve the visitor's needs (Hà Nội Tourism Department, 2020). Hung and Petrick (2012) show that enhancing a destination's image impacts visitor satisfaction (Ibrahim & Gill, 2005; Graziano & Privitera, 2020) and loyalty (Damanik & Yusuf, 2022; Profile et al., 2020). Consequently, to establish a foundation with which to plan the development of heritage tourism, there is a need for the identification of the primary factors that generate destination image. Such studies on tourist destinations are common (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2016). According to Thuy et al. (2020), the structure of destination loyalty within the context of Vietnam's heritage tourism should be developed. Huong et al. (2020) examined the adaptive resilience of a destination with a living heritage of culture and show the importance of destination image. Aside from the aforementioned studies, there are still a limited number of studies on the heritage-related tourist industry in Vietnam. Additionally, the exploitation of heritage cultures in Vietnam's tourism industry remains limited (Hoàng & Ngo, 2012; Vinh, 2013). This study aims to investigate the effect of destination image and perceived value on tourists' loyalty to the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long, a world cultural heritage site in Hanoi, to provide marketers and tourism managers with recommendations.

## **2. Literature review**

### ***2.1 Cultural heritage tourism***

Cultural heritage tourism represents a form of tourism developed through the exploitation of cultural values and respecting traditional culture's values as well as their contemporary counterparts while contributing to the promotion and preservation of traditional cultural values. (Viet Nam National Assembly, 2017). Cultural tourism seeks to improve tourists' understanding of the history, architecture, socioeconomic, lifestyle, and customs of the places they visit. Lord (1999) defines cultural heritage tourism as "the visit by a person outside a host country, motivated in part or whole by that person's fascination with historic architecture history, work of art, scientific heritage or way of life of a community, region, or group of people in that country." Contrary to the view of art and archaeology experts, tourism managers consider heritage as a resource to be developed (Smith, 2016). Thus, a country or locality with a rich heritage is considered a driving force for tourism development (Gravari-Barbas, 2018). Heritage is regarded as a connection between the past and the present (Smith, 2016). Heritage tourism encompasses the experiences or visits of past cultures through relics or ruins of a material or immaterial nature (Park, 2013; Santa-Cruz & López-Guzmán, 2017). Furthermore, Dela Santa and Tiatco (2019) argue that heritage tourism plays both roles on the supply side and demand side. Frost et al. (2015) show that art, culture, and heritage works are the key to attracting visitors, directing the focus and activities of visitors. Cultural heritage tourism is now increasingly being developed in terms of both primary and long-term goals and essential actors' activities such as economic development projects, museums, religious groups, tourism ambassadors, educators, and international and local tourism businesses (Damanik & Yusuf, 2022; Xu et al., 2021). Research has also shown that tourists passionate about cultural heritage tourism often have high incomes and are willing to spend (Frost et al., 2015). This situation positively affects cultural tourism, which was not exceptionally active in the past. In addition, cultural heritage tourism creates considerable added value for people offering tourism countries substantially affecting the quality of life in those countries (Dela Santa & Tiatco, 2019; Lord, 1999).

### ***2.2 Cultural heritage destination image***

As is well accepted, destination image influences tourists' decision-making process, subsequent appraisal, and future visit intentions (Wang, 2017). It is described that destination image is a psychological that comprises tourists' impressions, ideas, and beliefs regarding the destination

Fakeye and Crompton (1991). In the tourism sector, the image of the destination has received considerable attention (S. Kim et al., 2013), as well as the image of the event (Wong et al., 2015) and the brand image (Hwang & Lyu, 2015). In addition to the use of company image in marketing studies, the destination image is also employed (Kim et al. 2013). In the existing studies, scholars have distinguished different types of images according to many criteria. The cognitive is formed by knowing and believing in the destination, while feelings and emotions toward the destination shape the affective image (Stylidis et al, 2022), whereas the conative image shapes the behavior toward the destination, which is how individuals respond to the earlier formula of several images (Jeong & Kim, 2020; Xu et al., 2021). Three components of destination image and conative images are often used instead of destination loyalty (Stylidis et al., 2022). Therefore, a destination image includes two components: cognitive and affective, has been proposed by Beerli and Martin (2004). Furthermore, Lee et al. (2014) and Xu and Ye (2018) divided the destination's image into different visitor stages. Zhang et al.'s (2014) review found the investigation's focal point to be the cognitive image. This stance shows that the destination image includes other components, including an event or food image (Su et al., 2020). Thus, destination attributes can include service quality, infrastructure, environment, and landscape (Damanik & Yusuf, 2022; Su et al., 2020). The current study's approach toward destination image is based on the cognitive image approach. In a study on heritage destinations, Remoaldo et al. (2014) show that cognitive images include historical background, shopping, entertainment, and convenience. In contrast, Su et al. (2020) drew upon the work of Remoaldo et al. (2014) into three main attributes: historical background and function, entertainment, and efficiency. This study included the attributes of Su et al. (2020) and Remoaldo et al. (2014) to determine more specific attributes of a cultural heritage destination.

### ***2.3 Perceived value***

Perceived value is a customer's comprehensive evaluation of the product's utility, costs, and benefits (Zeithaml, 1988). This definition is prevalent and has become a reference for many researchers. Profile et al. (2020) argue for the perceived value's association with the relative comparison between what customers spend and receive from consuming. Perceived value is a multidimensional concept including functional or feelings of happiness brought about by that product or service (Profile et al., 2020). Jeong and Kim (2020) argue that customers will feel fair if they believe the ratio between what they spend and what they receive is about the same. Many studies have underscored the relevance of tourists' value perceptions to the extent that they are satisfied with tourist destinations (Caber et al., 2020). The type of service or product

impacts the perceived value, with measures differing depending on the region (Caber et al., 2020). Although perceived value was traditionally regarded as a product price function, more recently the primary indicator of perceived value has shifted to monetary value (Eid et al., 2019). Rasoolimanesh et al., (2016) suggested that a consumer's perceived value of similar services will differ based on different quality and price perceptions (Morrison, 2013). Moreover, additional psychological factors including emotional response, reputation, and quality may impact on purchasing a particular product or service (Jeong & Kim, 2020). Although perceived value has been widely considered in marketing research, it has only been recently included in tourism research (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2016).

#### ***2.4 Tourist satisfaction***

Customer satisfaction has referred the perception of products based on their experience and expectation (Torres & Kline, 2013), and it can be categorized into (i) transactional satisfaction that results from the evaluation of a service or purchase, and (ii) cumulative satisfaction based on an overall assessment of the experiences of using goods or services over time (Anderson et al., 1994). In order to collect visitors' perceptions regarding a destination, satisfaction surveys represent a vital instrument. Barsky and Labagh (1992) used a "meet expectations" model to measure satisfaction, concentrating on the assessment of specific attributes, and concluded that satisfaction was positively correlated with the willingness to return to destinations and the destination image was increased by visitors. Tourist satisfaction is a traditional theme in tourism marketing-related studies (Caber et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2014). Accordingly, tourists are users of tourism services, and satisfaction reflects the comparison between tourists' expectations and the value they receive from service providers. Damanik and Yusuf (2022) explain satisfaction as a feeling or attitude toward product consumption. Wu and Li (2017) suggest that customers often rank all the attributes of a destination and express their feelings towards the product, leading to visitor intention behavior. Moreover, it is argued that satisfaction is the main factor in the attraction of greater visitor numbers, creating positive impressions, and increasing the loyalty of visitors toward the destination (Yi et al., 2018). Destination impression is a fundamental construct that includes cognitive representations of feelings and knowledge regarding the destination (Wu & Li, 2017; Kim & Park, 2017; Lee et al., 2016; Saqib, 2019). Researchers have agreed that placing visitor satisfaction is a vital factor in destination development, reducing the elasticity of costs and product prices while also strengthening the image of the nation (Damanik & Yusuf, 2022).

## ***2.5 Loyalty***

Loyalty is the continued purchasing by a consumer and the customer's attitude toward the organization ( Hung & Petrick, 2012; Stylidis et al., 2020). Two types of loyalty include attitudinal and behavioral (Suhartanto et al., 2020).

Numerous studies have examined the loyalty construct based on attitudes and behaviours (Caber et al., 2020; Hung & Petrick, 2012; Stylidis et al., 2020; Suhartanto et al., 2020; Vinh, 2013a). Attitudinal loyalty is understood as customers who have a positive feeling about their products and services and try to influence others to use them by recommending them to others (Kim et al., 2013). Customer loyalty can be measured by intention or favorable remarks regarding the product provided, motivating relatives to use the product and return to purchase the product (Chi & Qu, 2008; Suhartanto, 2018; Yi et al., 2018). Attitude-based loyalty may include commitment or trust toward the service provider. Although customers have a positive attitude toward a company's products or services, these studies have also shown that customers may have an even more positive attitude toward another company (Suhartanto et al., 2020). Vinh (2013), and Yi et al. (2018) found that customer loyalty is essential to the destination when its results are demonstrated through visiting behavior. Thus, another aspect of loyalty is behavior, which is essential in creating long-term profits. Rust et al. (2012) suggested two additional items: consumers' willingness to share information with others and their desire to use experimental services developed by companies. According to Kuusik et al. (2011), the loyalty of tourists involves their intent to return or recommend to others.

## ***2.6 Hypothesis development***

According to Hung and Petrick, (2012), destination image influences travelers' subjective emotions, which contributes to satisfaction. Lai and Vinh (2013) maintain that leisure and sightseeing activities must be considered attributes of the destination to stimulate tourists' impressions. The destination image will provoke the visitor's curiosity, interest, desire, and action to satisfy that desire (Yaquab et al., 2019). Therefore, considerable research has indicated that the destination image impacts perceived value, satisfaction, and loyalty (Vinh, 2013; Suhartanto, 2018). Wu and Li (2017) view the image concept of heritage as a transient factor that attracts visitors through the traditional culture of the destination. Hwang and Lyu (2015) view destination image as a measure of brand integration into the self-perception of the consumer. Similar to Bové-Sans and Ramírez (2013), Domínguez-Quintero et al., (2020)



consider the image of a destination as a beliefs regarding a tourist destination or cultural or recreational activity that can satisfy specific visitor requirements. Consequently, the following hypothesis was formed:

H1: Destination image positively influences tourists' perceived value.

An attractive tourist site, attracting and meeting visitors' expectations will make visitors more satisfied with the destination. Numerous investigations in the tourism domain have verified the destination image–tourist satisfaction relationship (Jeong & Kim, 2020; Xu et al., 2021). Thus, the attractive destination image is a factor creating visitor satisfaction with the tourist destination. Eid et al. (2019) state that a destination's attributes impact its image and the satisfaction levels of visitors. Moreover, destination image also impacts the behavior intention, including introducing to others (Caber et al., 2020), while the image of the destination will lead to tourist satisfaction (Agag & El-Masry, 2017). Thus, the following hypothesis was developed:

H2: Destination image positively influences tourists' satisfaction.

Destination image is a construct of thinking, opinion, feeling, visualization, and intention toward a tourism site (Tasci et al., 2007). Dmitrović et al. (2009) show that the feeling evoked shapes tourist loyalty. Zhang et al. (2014) demonstrated a positive relationship between destination image and tourist loyalty. As mentioned, in marketing research, customer loyalty is often based on behavioral and attitudinal loyalty (Suhartanto, 2018; Suhartanto et al., 2020). Hung and Petrick (2012), Wang et al. (2021), and Zhang et al. (2014) present evidence of the positive destination image–attitude loyalty relationship. Furthermore, Zhang et al. (2014) group the intention to visit and then revisit the destination into behavioral loyalty. Other studies have combined behavioral and attitude loyalty approaches to composite loyalty and shown a destination image's considerable impact on aggregate loyalty. For instance, Styliadis et al. (2020) used a mixed loyalty variable consisting of several criteria such as "I will visit the destination," "I will recommend the destination," and "I will return to the destination." Thus, the following hypothesis was developed:

H3: Destination image positively influence tourist loyalty.

To determine how satisfied visitors are with a particular destination, researchers have used the gap score between the expectation and perceived value (Moutinho, 1987; Parasuraman et al., 1985). The most common model applied in service marketing involves investigating satisfaction as an emotive and cognitive response to the experience of service (e.g., perceived

value and quality). Furthermore, Yi et al. (2014) assert that perceived value is a vital determinant of tourist satisfaction. Lee et al. (2016) also provided evidence that perceived value strongly influenced tourist satisfaction in the heritage tourism context. Chen and Chen (2010) explored the tourists' behavior toward the heritage destination of Taiwan, whereas Kim and Park (2017) examined the tourist's behavior toward destinations in Korea, indicating the positive effect perceived value has on the visitor's satisfaction regarding a location. Khuong and Phuong (2017) in the study of tourists' behavior toward heritage destinations also showed perceived value's positive impact on visitor satisfaction. Therefore, the hypothesis was posed:

H4: Perceived value positively influences tourists' satisfaction.

Several investigations have considered perceived value's influence on a range of tourist behavior facets ( Suhartanto, 2018), behavior post-purchase (Hung & Petrick, 2012; Xu et al., 2021), behavioral intentions (Chen & Chen, 2010 ), and loyalty (Hung & Petrick, 2012; Lee et al., 2016; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2016; Suhartanto, 2018; Xu et al., 2021). The studies of Khuong and Phuong (2017) and Kim and Park (2017) have shown the positive influence of the value received from tourism services and the behavioral loyalty and attitudinal loyalty of tourists. Studies have also indicated that WOM is a form of attitudinal loyalty. The spillover effect from word of mouth not only occurs in real-life but also in the social media environment (Caber et al., 2020). Therefore, the subsequent hypothesis was posed:

H5: Perceived value positively influences tourists' loyalty.

Damanik and Yusuf (2022), Khuong and Phuong (2017), and Vinh (2013) demonstrate the significant connection between visitor satisfaction and repeat visits in which specific activities are directly correlated with specific characteristics. The higher the satisfaction level with the attributes of a destination, the more likely it is that visitor satisfaction will result in a desire to return; otherwise, the inclination to return will be lower. Chi and Qu (2008) contend that overall satisfaction necessitates attribute satisfaction, with overall satisfaction and attribute satisfaction constituting two decisive loyalty factors. Kuenzel and Katsaris (2009) depict behavior including word-of-mouth referrals and the intent to return in a comparable manner. In addition, Wu and Li (2017) explain the need to investigate the relative significance of each overall impression-making attribute because dissatisfaction can manifest after various evaluations of experience, including positive experiences. From the preceding arguments, the study derived

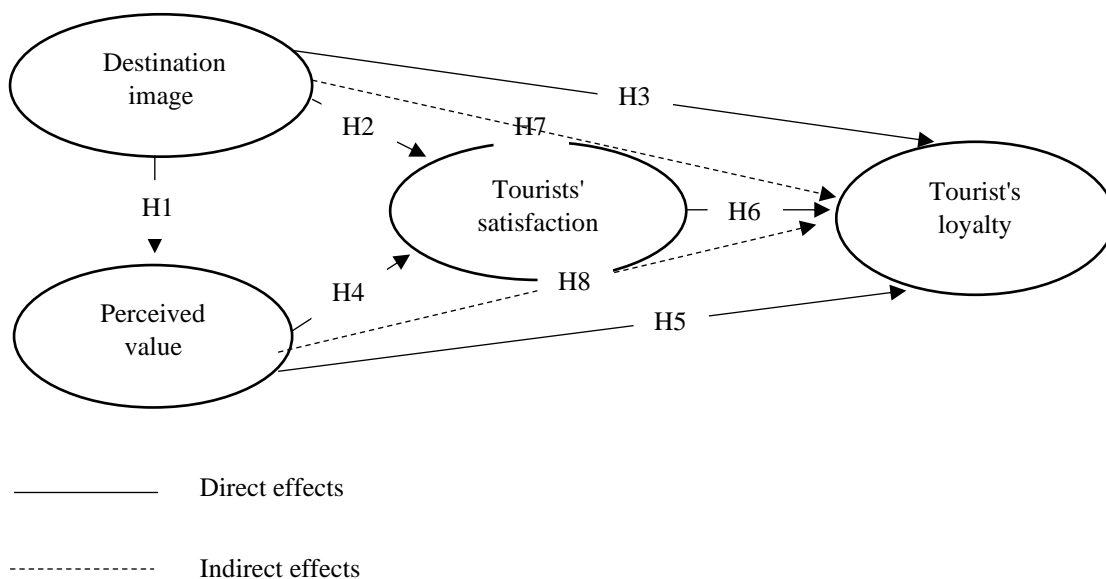
its hypotheses and research design. Consequently, the following hypothesis has been established:

H6: Tourist satisfaction positively influences tourists' loyalty.

Tourist satisfaction has a close relationship with perceived value and destination image attributes. If tourists feel that the destination has met their expectations, their intention will be to recommend it to others or to return again in the future (Lee et al., 2016; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2016; Suhartanto, 2018). Similarly, tourist satisfaction depends on perceived value and impressions of the destination attributes (Zhang et al., 2014; Hung & Petrick, 2012; Wang et al., 2021). Therefore, this is a reciprocal relationship, and satisfaction is considered a mediating variable for visitor loyalty (Yaqub et al., 2019). Numerous studies, including Battour et al. (2012), Chen and Chen (2010), Jeong and Kim, (2020), Nilplub et al. (2016), and Yaqub et al. (2019), support the mediating function of tourist satisfaction. In these investigations, value perception influenced tourist loyalty indirectly through satisfaction. However, more research needs to be conducted on the indirect relationship between destination image, visitor loyalty, and visitor satisfaction. Consequently, the following hypothesis has been established:

H7: There is an indirect relationship between destination image and tourist loyalty, mediated by visitor satisfaction.

H8: There is an indirect relationship between the perceived value on tourist loyalty, mediated by visitor satisfaction



**Figure 1** Research framework

### **3 Method**

Four steps were taken to determine the effect of destination image and perceived value on tourists' loyalty. First, Qualitative research was initially carried out through interviews with tourism managers in Hanoi, tour guides at the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long, and professors teaching at universities of tourism. Second, conduct a pilot test with 40 visitors at the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long to confirm the questionnaire. The pilot test's Cronbach alpha result showed: destination image: 9.2; Perceived value: 8.5; Satisfaction: 8.8; and loyalty: 7.8. Third, formal quantitative research by applying the PLS-SEM method. Last, complementary qualitative research is conducted by comparing this research result with previous research.

#### ***3.1 Study site***

The Imperial Citadel of Thang Long comprises a complex of historical relics found in the city of Hanoi. The vast structure was built by the kings over a number of historical periods and has become the most important relic in the system of Vietnamese monuments. King Ly Cong Uan, the first king of the Ly Dynasty, gave the current name of Hanoi's capital, Thang Long, which means flying dragon. From the Ly Dynasty (1010-1225) to Le Trung Hung Dynasty (1592-1789) all viewed Thang Long as the center of the culture and politics of Vietnam (Dinh & Ren, 2022). The Imperial Citadel is the main court area, residence, and working place of the mandarins in the court, including the Forbidden City, where the king, queen, and other members of the royal family lived. The ruins left today in Hanoi Capital are the central relic of Thang Long Imperial Citadel, with an area of approximately 20 hectares out of the total of 140 hectares of the Imperial Citadel (Dinh & Ren, 2022). Owing to this particular architecture's historical and cultural values, UNESCO recognized the central relic of Thang Long Imperial Citadel as a World Cultural Heritage in 2010 and it became a place to visit for researchers as well as a famous tourist attraction in Hanoi capital. According to the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long report, in the first six months of 2022, the number of tourists visited was approximately 70,000, including 6,500 international visitors.



Doan Mon, Imperial Citadel of Thang Long

Source: Authors

### 3.2 Instruments

Ten items from Su et al. (2020) and Damanik and Yusuf (2022) have been modified and adopted as destination image attributes. From Chen and Chen (2010) and Caber et al. (2020), the perceived value with three items has been adopted. Three items—satisfaction were taken from Chi and Qu (2008), Vinh (2013), and Suhartanto (2018) and amended. From Chi and Qu (2008), Vinh (2013), and Yi et al. (2018), the three-item loyalty variable was modified and adopted. The four constructs—destination image, perceived visitor value, satisfaction, and destination loyalty—were measured using a five-point Likert scale, with 1- disagreement and 5 - agreement. In addition, the questionnaire surveyed visitor demographic data such as gender, age, and occupation.

**Table 1: Scale and source of measurements**

Variables	Items	Coding	Sources
Destination image	History of works	DI1	Su et al. (2020); Damanik and Yusuf (2022)
	Museum	DI2	
	Traditional landscape	DI3	
	Culture space	DI4	
	Festival events	DI5	
	Architectural space	DI6	

	Information	DI7	
	Accessibility	DI8	
	Tour guide	DI9	
	Service quality	DI10	
Perceived value	Receive values that exceed expectations	PV1	Chen and Chen (2010); Caber et al. (2020)
	The experience at this destination is great compared to the costs	PV2	
	This experience offers more value than my previous trips to other heritage sites	PV3	
Tourists' satisfaction	This destination offers more benefits than costs.	TS1	Chi and Qu (2008); Vinh (2013); Suhartanto (2018)
	I've visited several regional places, but this one is the greatest.	TS2	
	This destination much exceeds my expectations.	TS3	
Tourist's loyalty	I will choose to visit this destination once more in the future,	TL1	Chi and Qu (2008); Vinh (2013); Yi et al. (2018)
	I will introduce this to others about this destination.	TL2	
	I will recommend the destination on social media.	TL3	

### 3.3 Sampling

The sample size for structural model analysis using the PLS-SEM method has to be ten times larger than the number of structure paths (Chin et al., 2003). Data was gathered between April and May 2022 at Thang Long Imperial Citadel when Hanoi resumed welcoming foreign tourists after being closed for two years because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was also the time of the 31st Southeast Asian Games held in Hanoi. Five hundred questionnaires were collected in total. Following the removal of invalid responses, 388 valid questionnaires were qualified for analysis, representing a 77.6% response rate, and satisfying the sample size required.

### 3.4 Data analysis

The PLS-SEM model is evaluated from two perspectives (Vinzi et al., 2010). First, the measurement model relates to the latent variable–indicators relationship. Several indices must be considered, including the loading factor  $\geq 0.7$  (Henseler et al., 2012). AVE is a coefficient that checks the convergence and dispersion of the model and a good model should have an AVE coefficient  $\geq 0.5$ . Convincing evidence is provided by Henseler et al. (2015) that the

proposed method of Fornell and Larcker (1981) did not assess the discriminants of a scale. Since then, this group of authors proposed an alternative and widely accepted assessment method among researchers called HTMT; the validity values are  $< 0.9$ . The second step was to assess the results of the structural model. Firstly, issues related to collinearity should be examined, and there is a noncollinearity phenomenon when the VIF is less than 5 (Hair et al., 2021). Secondly, a structural model is evaluated using the bootstrapping method with 3,000 iterations to estimate the significance of indices and paths (Hair et al., 2021). Thirdly, the evaluates the predictive capability, and three criteria must be considered, including  $R^2$ ,  $f^2$ , and  $Q^2$ . The coefficient value of  $R^2$  is within the 0–1 range, which means that the greater the value of  $R^2$ , the more accurate the model is.  $f^2$  is used when several other variables may impact a structural model variable. The removal of an exogenous variable can impact the dependent variable.  $f^2$  represents the shift in  $R^2$  when an exogenous variable is excluded from the model.  $Q^2$  is predictive relevance, which determines the predictive relevance of the model ( $> 0$  is good). Moreover,  $Q^2$  determines the endogenous constructs' predictive relevance (Chin, 2010).

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Respondents' demographic profile

A total of 388 respondents provided extensive demographic information, including gender, age, career, education level, destination visiting time, area, and information source, after the data filtering process. Table 2 provides demographic data for the respondents.

**Table 2 Respondents' demographic information**

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage	Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	257	66.2	Times of First visiting time	129	33.2	
	Female	131	33.8		Second times or more	259	66.8
Age (years)	< 25	57	14.7	Region	USA	76	19.6
	25–35	167	43.0		ASIA	78	20.1
	36–45	124	32.0		EU	49	12.6
	> 45	40	10.3		ASEAN	116	29.9
Career	Business	23	5.9	Others	69	17.8	

	student	58	14.9	Information source	Internet	193	49.7
	Staff offices	175	45.1		TV	101	26.0
	Other	132	34.0		others	94	24.2
Education level	High school	58	14.9				
	Bachelor,	283	72.9				
	Master, or PhD	47	12.1				

The result shows the considerably more females (66.2%) than males (33.8%). Those participants from the 25–35 age group accounted for the biggest of the respondents (43%), followed by the 36–45 group (32%). The youngest and oldest visitors recorded the lowest percentages, 14.7%, and 10.0%. 45.1% of respondents worked in staff offices, while merchants and students accounted for 5.9% and 14.4%, respectively, and other occupations accounted for 34.0%. As a cultural heritage site, the destination of Thang Long Imperial Citadel attracted visitors with a high level of education; 72.9% of visitors reported holding a bachelor's degree, while 12.1% of respondents earned a master's or doctoral degree; in contrast, 14.9% of visitors had a degree of high school.

The most of visitors (72.9%) reported that this was their second or subsequent visit to the Thang Long Imperial Citadel site. Of the total surveyed visitors, those from Asia and ASEAN countries accounted for over half of the respondents with 20.1% and 29.9%, respectively. In contrast, visitors from the USA and EU countries accounted for 19.6 and 12.6%, and other countries for 18%. Besides, most tourists in this survey reported that they found out about this destination through the Internet (49.3%), whereas TV channels accounted for 25.4% and other sources such as magazines, exhibitions, leaflets, and through relatives for 25.4%.

#### ***4.2 Measurement model evaluation***

The measure of a model relates to the latent variable–indicators relationship and consists of four factors containing a total of 19 items determined by the criteria established for the evaluation, which is presented in Table 3.



**Table 3** Factor model assessment

Factors	Items	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR.	AVE.
Destinaton image	DI1	0.719	0.902	0.921	0.594
	DI4	0.765			
	DI5	0.743			
	DI6	0.712			
	DI7	0.820			
	DI8	0.835			
	DI9	0.8.2			
Perceived value	DI10	0.761	0.802	0.883	0.717
	PV1	0.868			
	PV2	0.849			
Tourists' satisfaction	PV3	0.821	0.889	0.931	0.818
	TS1	0.904			
	TS2	0.918			
Tourists' loyalty	TS3	0.891	0.857	0.913	0.778
	TL1	0.867			
	TL2	0.908			
	TL3	0.871			

The results from Table 3 show that two items have a loading factor below 0.7, and accordingly, they were removed from the analysis system, including DI2 "Museum" and DI3 "Traditional landscape." Consequently, the loading values of all items are bigger than 0.70, and the values of both Cronbach alpha and CR are bigger than 0.70, assuring internal consistency and reliability. In addition, the value for each element's AVE is bigger than 0.50. Thus, the measurement of the model's four factors is confirmed to determine the convergent validity.

The Fornell–Larcker discriminants validity was evaluated, with each construct's square root of AVE being high relative to its correlation values with other variables (Table 4).

**Table 4** Fornell – Lacker discriminant validity

	DI	PV	TS	TL
DI	0.771			
PV	0.646	0.847		
TS	0.580	0.550	0.905	
TL	0.607	0.580	0.687	0.882

As the mean of the cross-correlation coefficients decreases, so does the likelihood that the latent variable will share the variation with other latent seas. Then, the indicators in two latent

variables will achieve a discriminant value (Henseler et al. (2015). Table 5 reveals that the value of HTMT is bigger than 0.8, indicating the discriminant value can be used.

**Table 5** HTMT discriminant validity

	<b>DI</b>	<b>PV</b>	<b>TS</b>	<b>TL</b>
<b>DI</b>				
<b>PV</b>	0.756			
<b>TS</b>	0.645	0.650		
<b>TL</b>	0.690	0.699	0.786	

In summary, the results from Tables 3, 4, and 5 indicate that all valuations justify the measurement model applied in this research.

### **4.3 Structural model evaluation**

#### **Evaluation of collinearity and predictive capability**

Table 6 demonstrates that all values of the VIFs are smaller than 3, indicating there is no collinearity of the construct.

**Table 6** Collinearity and predictive capability

	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Q<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Perceived value</b>		<b>Tourists' satisfaction</b>		<b>Tourist's loyalty</b>	
			<b>f<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>VIF</b>	<b>f<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>VIF</b>	<b>f<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>VIF</b>
Destination image			0.716	0.999	0.140	1.716	0.059	1.957
Perceived value	0.417	0.295			0.087	1.716	0.040	1.865
Tourists' satisfaction	0.389	0.313					0.284	1.636
Tourists' loyalty	0.556	0.426						

The R<sup>2</sup> and Q<sup>2</sup> are used to evaluate the predictive capability of the structure model. The R<sup>2</sup> results show that the perceived value was explained by 41.7% by the model, the tourists' satisfaction was explained by 38.9% by the model and tourists' loyalty was explained by 55.5% by the model, indicating the accuracy moderate level. Besides, the result shows that the f<sup>2</sup> value > 0.02, indicating that it is a reasonable effect size. In addition, the value of Q<sup>2</sup> is bigger than zero, indicating that the predictive utility is satisfied.

#### **Evaluation of the direct effect**

The results from Table 7 indicate that all direct hypotheses are supported with  $t > 1.96$  at  $p < 0.05$ . Specifically, the destination image influences the model's proposed constructs, such as perceived value ( $\beta = 0.646$ ,  $t > 1.96$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), tourists' satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.384$ ,  $t > 1.96$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and tourists' loyalty ( $\beta = 0.227$ ,  $t > 1.96$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). In addition, the results show the direct paths of perceived value and tourists' satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.302$ ,  $t > 1.96$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ); perceived value and tourists' loyalty ( $\beta = 0.148$ ,  $t > 1.96$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) with a cultural heritage site. In addition, the links between tourists' satisfaction and loyalty also indicated ( $\beta = 0.454$ ,  $t > 1.96$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). According to this model, destination image, perceived value, and tourist satisfaction are tourist loyalty determinants.

**Table 7** The direct effect results

Hypotheses	$\beta$	T	p	Result
Destination image -> Perceived value	0.646	14.075	0.000	Supported
Destination image -> Tourists' satisfaction	0.384	6.163	0.000	Supported
Destination image-> Tourists' loyalty	0.227	4.010	0.000	Supported
Perceived value-> Tourists' satisfaction	0.302	4.890	0.000	Supported
Perceived value-> Tourists' loyalty	0.184	3.498	0.000	Supported
Tourists' satisfaction-> Tourists' loyalty	0.454	8.746	0.000	Supported

### Evaluation of indirect relationships

Using Zhao et al.'s (2010) proposed bootstrapping technique, mediation is confirmed when the indirect relationships have a t-value that is bigger than 1.96 and a p-value that is smaller than 0.05, in addition, the confidence interval does not contain the zero value. Therefore, the findings from Table 8 indicate the indirect effect of destination image and perceived value on loyalty through the tourists' satisfaction.

**Table 8** Indirect effect result

Hypotheses	$\beta$	t	p	97.5% Confidence Intervals		Result
				Lower	Upper	
Destination image -> Tourists' satisfaction -> Tourist's loyalty	0.174	5.248	0.000	0.112	0.244	Supported
Perceived value -> Tourists' satisfaction -> Tourist's loyalty	0.137	4.134	0.000	0.072	0.202	Supported

## 5. Discussion and conclusion

This study aims to evaluate the effects of both destination image and perceived value on visitor loyalty. PLS-SEM was utilized to test eight hypotheses based on survey responses from 388 Thang Long's Imperial Citadel visitors, and all eight hypotheses were supported. In addition, the study confirmed indirect connections between variables such as destination image, perceived value, tourists' satisfaction, and tourists' loyalty. Moreover, the mediating function of tourist satisfaction is described.

From a theoretical point of view, current studies, see, for example, Suhartanto (2018), Suhartanto et al. (2020), and Yaqub et al. (2019) have rarely examined the link between destination image and perceived value, focusing instead on the destination attributes related to motivation or impressions of a destination. To circumvent the limitations of the literature and to fill in the gap in the literature, this investigation contributes to the theoretical system by demonstrating a relationship between destination image and perceived value. From an application point of view, some Vietnam tourism studies, see, for example, Khuong & Phuong (2017), Thanh et al. (2020), Vinh (2013b), and Vinh & Long (2013) have shown that the construct of destination image – satisfaction – loyalty often had a low influence or negative results. The results of our paper showed the influence of perceived value on satisfaction and tourists' loyalty, which is consistent with the findings in previous studies like Hung & Petrick (2012), Lee et al. (2016), Rasoolimanesh et al. (2016), and Suhartanto et al. (2020). Besides, the results of our study are consistent with the findings in the previous research when demonstrating the relationship between perceived value and loyalty (Chi & Qu, 2008; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2016; Thanh et al., 2020). Moreover, the influence of satisfaction on tourists' loyalty toward cultural heritage tourist destinations in Hanoi is also shown by this study. This result shows similarities with many previous studies, especially those on cultural heritage destinations such as Jeong and Kim, (2020), Nilplub et al. (2016), and Yaqub et al. (2019). As mentioned before, earlier research has demonstrated the indirect relationship between perceived value and tourists' loyalty mediated by tourists' satisfaction (Battour et al., 2012; Chen & Chen, 2010; Jeong & Kim, 2020; Kim & Park, 2017; Nilplub et al., 2016; Yi et al., 2014). Nevertheless, considering the research contribution, this investigation has also shown an indirect association between destination image, perceived value, and tourist loyalty. From the managers' perspective, the marketing of tourism, and, in particular, for cultural tourism destinations, requires more diversified cultural activities in tourist locations. The destination's attributes strongly impact tourists' perceived value as a destination's history of

works and cultural space. Moreover, managers of cultural heritage sites should focus on improvements to festival events, destination information, accessibility, tour guide quality, and service quality, especially for those impressed with events at the Thang Long Imperial Citadel, such as Thi Dinh, decoding Thang Long Imperial Citadel, or other activities. Therefore, marketers must place greater emphasis on attracting tourists to cultural heritage. Besides, the destination image also has a substantial impact on the satisfaction of visitors. Therefore, service quality needs to be improved, especially that destination-based staff (e.g., guides, souvenir shops, and restaurant staff members) and those employed in accommodation facilities. This research has also shown the destination image and perceived value's indirect influence on visitor loyalty through satisfaction. Therefore, Hanoi's tourism managers must pay more attention to these factors since the tourist return rate is unsatisfactory due to the service quality (Khuong & Phuong, 2017; Thanh et al., 2020; Vinh & Long, 2013). The promotion of the image of the Imperial Citadel should not only be based on its inherent attributes but also needs to promote visitors' perception of the heritage's long-standing values and improve the tourism service provision system to bring the highest satisfaction to tourists, thereby improving tourist loyalty to the destination. Despite a substantial service-quality improvement in recent years, improvements in Vietnam, and Hanoi specifically, are still required (Thanh et al., 2020). The findings of this study have important management implications. To begin, there are several components of destination image that appear to be critical elements that lead to visitor pleasure and loyalty. Destination managers should create the destination image. The destination image may be established to satisfy tourists with proper planning and administration.

Although the study has made significant contributions to cultural heritage tourism from academic and managerial perspectives, it still has significant limitations. For instance, this research only examined one cultural heritage site in Hanoi. As a result, other cultural heritage locations should be investigated in the extension. In addition, this analysis did not explicitly examine the unique tourist activities of cultural assets when considering aspects of the destination image and visitors arrived at a period when Hanoi had just recently reopened after being impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic for two years; hence, the sample was not extremely representative because it contained primarily visitors from Asian nations. Future research could address these limitations by identifying additional research variables that can be used to test and improve the findings of this study.

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