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THE INFLUENCE OF TOURISM EXPERIENCE ON REVISIT INTENTION WITH EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT AS A MEDIATOR (A CASE STUDY AT KUTA BEACH)

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Abstract:

This study examines the role of tourism experiences in shaping revisit intentions among domestic tourists in Bali in the post-pandemic context, with fluctuations in visitation and the issue of declining experience quality. Addressing the inconsistencies in previous findings, the study examined the influence of tourism experiences on revisit intentions and the mediating role of emotional attachment. Data were collected through a survey of 140 respondents who visited in the past two years and analyzed using PLS-SEM. The measurement results showed valid and reliable indicators; the aesthetic and escapist dimensions were the most dominant, while the entertainment dimension was eliminated as it did not meet the criteria. Structurally, tourism experiences were shown to increase emotional attachment, but not revisit intentions. Emotional attachment also did not affect revisit intentions and did not act as a mediator. The findings confirm that revisit decisions are more likely influenced by other factors, such as perceived value, satisfaction, accessibility, and attraction variety. It implies that managers need to design strong experiences along with more direct retention strategies. A repeat visit incentive program could be prioritized sustainably.

Keywords: Experience, Emotional Attachment, Revisit Intention, Tourism, Sustainability

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is a sector that continues to experience rapid growth, supported by promising prospects and interconnectedness with various other industrial sectors, thus playing a crucial role in driving economic growth. Tourism is considered to have a positive impact when it contributes to improving the economic well-being of local communities, preserving culture, and preserving the environment. In addition to opening up economic opportunities through the provision of goods and services as part of tourism products, tourism development is also often linked to achieving sustainable development goals, which emphasize poverty alleviation, environmental protection, and prosperity for all within a sustainable development framework.

In this context, the island of Bali is known as one of the world's top tourist destinations and a magnet for both international and domestic tourists. However, post-COVID-19 dynamics present new challenges. The growth in visits, especially among domestic tourists, is often associated with symptoms of overtourism, which has the potential to degrade the quality of the travel experience. On the other hand, the online daily Bali Post News reported that domestic tourist visits actually decreased by almost 850,000 this year, with factors cited including expensive airfare, flooding issues, and changing travel patterns. This seemingly contradictory situation underscores the need for a more focused evaluation of factors that can strengthen tourists' interest in returning, particularly within the domestic tourist segment.



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Revisit intention is seen as a key element of a destination's success (Viet et al., 2020). Conceptually, this intention does not emerge simply because the decision to revisit is a complex, risky, and often uncertain process, requiring relevant stimuli to trigger revisit behavior (Nurazizah & Marhanah, 2020). Research by Lee et al. (2020) confirms that escape is a crucial indicator influencing revisit intention; this means that a destination needs to provide an atmosphere that allows tourists to feel calm and "escape" from routine. Revisit intention also depends on the quality of the tourism experience. To create a strong and memorable experience, products and services need to be designed to be engaging and memorable for tourists (Luo et al., 2021). In the experiential context, stimuli can arise through aesthetic experiences, for example, when tourists enjoy dance, music, attractions, or activities that allow them to participate in a different lifestyle.

However, tourists also tend to seek new experiences by visiting destinations they have never been to. This preference is reinforced by the findings of a travel site survey of Indonesian tourists, which showed that the primary motivations for travel were relaxing with family and visiting places relatives had never been to for a different experience. At the same time, international tourists have more varied motivations: seeking a certain lifestyle, relieving work pressure, reminiscing, and pursuing new challenges. Indonesian tourists' preferences also tend toward destinations that are clean, naturally beautiful, safe, culturally unique, and have friendly residents. In addition to these motives and preferences, psychological factors such as stress also play a role; Kim and Ritchie (2014) explain that stress levels can encourage tourists to seek travel experiences, despite cultural differences.

To explain the quality of a tourism experience more measurably, experience can be understood through four main dimensions: educational experience, entertainment experience, escapism experience, and aesthetic experience (Lee et al., 2020; Paisri et al., 2022). In this study, educational experience refers to the situation where tourists can directly participate in events occurring at the destination and actively engage; entertainment experience describes passive participation through observing activities/performances such as local festivals; escapism experience emphasizes tourists' active involvement in various events, allowing them to feel "part" of a different reality and take a break from their routine; while aesthetic experience refers to the immersive, passive experience where tourists are "immersed" in the physical environment and enjoy the aesthetic beauty of the destination.

The quality of interactions and social processes at the destination also influences a good tourism experience. Chen et al. (2020) emphasize that social interactions can shape experiences that ultimately influence revisit intentions. Similarly, Anton et al. (2017) state that tourism actors need to create value in products or services to create meaningful experiences and encourage revisit intentions. Conceptually, the tourism experience is the result of the interaction of what tourists gain from a destination (Libre et al., 2022). However, the pressure of large numbers of visitors can lead to overcrowding, which reduces the quality of the tourist experience (Primananda et al., 2022). Ali et al. (2015) also showed that tourists need peace of mind, optimal service during leisure time, and meaningful experiences that contribute to destination satisfaction; this satisfaction then influences tourists' desire to return.

Empirically, several studies have shown that experience significantly influences revisit intention (Libre et al., 2022; Luo et al., 2021). However, the findings are not always consistent. Paisri et al. (2022) found that two experience indicators, namely education and escapism, had no significant effect on revisit intention. This discrepancy in results indicates a research gap and raises the



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possibility of the need for other variables to bridge the relationship between experience and revisit intention.

Based on this gap, this study proposes emotional attachment as a mediating variable. Emotional attachment is an affective attitude that has the potential to strengthen tourists' drive to revisit. Shahid et al. (2022) found that a good experience can enhance emotional attachment and impact customer loyalty. Similar results were also demonstrated by Gomez-Suarez and Veloso (2020), who found that a good brand experience increases emotional attachment and impacts word of mouth. Therefore, emotional attachment is relevant to examine as a psychological mechanism linking tourism experience and revisit intention, while also providing a more comprehensive explanation for the inconsistencies in previous studies.

The Influence of Experience on Revisit Intention. Tourism experience refers to tourists' perceptions of the series of experiences they experience during a visit to a destination. The construct of tourism experience is generally classified into four dimensions: education, entertainment, aesthetics, and escapism (Chen et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2020; Paisri et al., 2022). Several studies, including Chen et al. (2020), Realino et al. (2021), Luo et al. (2021), Primananda et al. (2022), and Libre et al. (2022), show that tourism experience significantly influences revisit intention. However, conflicting findings were also reported by Chen et al. (2020) and Paisri et al. (2022), who found that any indicator within the education, entertainment, aesthetics, or escapism dimensions had no significant effect on revisit intention. These discrepancies indicate inconsistencies in the empirical findings. Therefore, based on the description above, the following research hypothesis is formulated.

H1: Experience significantly influences revisit intention.

The Influence of Experience on Emotional Engagement. A good tourism experience can create emotional engagement among tourists or customers. Emotional engagement can be categorized into feelings of attraction, love, joy, connection, and passion (Rabbanee et al., 2020). Previous research by Cheng and Chen (2022) found that all tourism experience indicators significantly influenced cultural interest. Similar results were found by Gomez-Suarez and Veloso (2020), who found that tourism experience significantly influenced revisit intention. Therefore, based on the explanation above, the following hypothesis is formulated.

H2: Experience significantly influences emotional engagement.

The Influence of Emotional Attachment on Revisit Intention. A stronger emotional attachment typically leads to a higher desire to revisit. Revisit intention is a behavior expected by companies from their customers, in this case, tourists. Indicators of revisit intention include "will visit," "will recommend," "will plan," "first choice," and "will visit with my friend." Previous studies examining the influence of emotional attachment on revisit intention include Prayag and Ryan (2012) and Rabbanee et al. (2020), who found that emotional attachment significantly influences revisit intention. Based on the above explanation, the following hypothesis can be formulated.

H3: Emotional attachment significantly influences revisit intention.

The Role of Emotional Attachment in Mediating Experience on Revisit Intention. Emotional attachment is a suitable variable to mediate the relationship between experience and revisit intention. Previous research conducted by Gomez-Suarez and Veloso (2020) and Cheng and Chen (2022) found that emotional attachment can mediate the effect of experience on revisit intention. Based on the explanation above, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H4: Emotional attachment mediates the effect of experience on revisit intention.

METHODS



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This study uses a quantitative explanatory research approach that aims to explain the causal relationship between variables based on a conceptual framework and hypothesis testing. The research location is Kuta Beach, Bali, with domestic tourists as the unit of analysis. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, which selects respondents based on certain criteria to align with the research objectives. The respondent criteria include domestic tourists from outside Bali Province who have visited Kuta Beach at least once in the last two years. This criterion was established to ensure respondents have relevant experience and relatively current memories of their visits, thus enabling them to provide more accurate assessments of the variables being measured. Data collection was conducted through a structured questionnaire via Google Form using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) to measure respondents' level of agreement with the research statements. This study also used SmartPLS 4 for data analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The characteristics of the respondents in this study are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Information	Percentage
Respondents	
Male	57.9
Female	42.1
Age	
18 – 27 Year	31.4
28 – 44 Years	42.9
45 – 60 Year	15.7
Over 60 Years	10
Visit history (last 2 years)	
1 Time	74.3
2 Time	14.3
3 Time	8.6
More than 3 times	2.9
Data processed (2025)	

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents were men (57.9 percent), aged 28–44 (42.9 percent), and 74.3 percent had visited Bali once in the last two years. It indicates that the sample primarily represents productive-age tourists who have visited Bali, even if only once in the last two years.

Table 2. Outer Loading

Variable	Outer loadings
x1 <- Experience	0.794
x5 <- Experience	0.869
x6 <- Experience	0.817
x7 <- Experience	0.781
x8 <- Experience	0.848
y2 <- Intention to visit	0.905
y3 <- Intention to visit	0.912



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y4 <- Intention to visit	0.705
z1 <- Emotional attachment	0.777
z2 <- Emotional attachment	0.851
z3 <- Emotional attachment	0.826
z4 <- Emotional attachment	0.832
z5 <- Emotional attachment	0.774

Data processed (2025)

The outer loadings indicate that all indicators are adequate, as they are all above 0.70, thus the construct is well-measured. Outer loadings below 0.70 will be discarded.

Table 3. Reliability and Validity

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	(AVE)
Emotional attachment	0.871	0.874	0.907	0.660
Experience	0.881	0.893	0.912	0.676
Intention to visit again	0.808	0.922	0.882	0.716

Data processed (2025)

Table 3 above shows that all constructs meet the reliability criteria, as the Cronbach's alpha and composite values are above 0.60, while the AVE value is above 0.50, indicating strong convergent validity.

Table 4. HTMT

Variable	Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)
Experience <-> emotional attachment	0.706
Intention to revisit <-> emotional attachment	0.198
Intention to revisit <-> experience	0.158

Data processed (2025)

The HTMT values for all construct pairs were below 0.85, thus meeting discriminant validity. The highest value was found in the relationship between Experience and Emotional Attachment at 0.706, which is still strong and indicates moderate conceptual closeness. Meanwhile, Revisit Intention had low HTMT values for Emotional Attachment at 0.198 and for Experience at 0.158, confirming that Revisit Intention is the construct with the most distinct relationship compared to the other two constructs.

Table 5. R Square

Variable	R-square	R-square adjusted
Emotional Attachment	0.407	0.402
Intention to Visit Again	0.025	0.011

Data processed (2025)

The R-square values indicate the different predictive abilities of the models across endogenous constructs: Emotional Attachment has an R-square of 0.407 and an adjusted R-square of 0.402, meaning that approximately 40 percent of the variation can be explained by the predictor variables,



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thus categorizing the model's explanatory power as moderate. Conversely, Revisit Intention has an R-square of 0.025 and an adjusted R-square of 0.011, indicating that the explained variance is very small, thus categorizing the model's predictive ability for revisit intention as weak, indicating that there are other important factors outside the model that need to be considered.

Table 6. F-Square

Variable	f-square
Emotional attachment -> Intention to revisit	0.008
Experience -> emotional attachment	0.686
Experience -> intention to revisit	0.002

Data processed (2025)

The f-square value indicates that the path from Experience to Emotional Attachment has a large effect size of 0.686, making experience the primary predictor of emotional attachment. Conversely, the paths from Emotional Attachment to Revisit Intention (0.008) and Experience to Revisit Intention (0.002) show very small effects, making their contributions to revisit intention practically insignificant.

Table 7. Model Fit

Item	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.081	0.081
d_ULS	0.603	0.603
d_G	0.212	0.212
Chi-square	184.779	184.779
NFI	0.819	0.819

Data processed (2025)

The model fit test results indicate that the SRMR value of 0.081 is very close to the 0.08 threshold. Therefore, the difference between the observed relationship patterns between variables in the field and those predicted by the model is relatively small, and the model fit is considered adequate. Meanwhile, the NFI value of 0.819 indicates a moderate level of model fit, meaning the model provides a clear improvement over the baseline model, although it has not yet reached the very good category at the 0.90 threshold. Therefore, based on these two indicators, this research model is feasible and has sufficient fit to proceed with structural analysis.

Table 8. Path Coefficients

Variable	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
Emotional attachment -> Intention to revisit	0.113	0.122	0.126	0.899	0.369
Experience -> Emotional attachment	0.638	0.643	0.055	11.499	0.000
Experience -> Intention to revisit	0.061	0.060	0.144	0.426	0.670

Data processed (2025)

Table 8 shows that experience has a coefficient of 0.061 with a p-value of 0.67 on revisit intention. It indicates that experience does not significantly influence revisit intention; therefore, Hypothesis 1 is rejected. Experience has a coefficient of 0.638 with a p-value of 0.0 on emotional

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attachment. These results indicate that experience significantly influences emotional attachment; therefore, Hypothesis 2 is accepted. Emotional attachment has a coefficient of 0.113 with a p-value of 0.369 on revisit intention. These results indicate that emotional attachment has no significant effect on revisit intention; therefore, Hypothesis 3 is rejected.

Table 9. Specific indirect effects

Variable	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
Experience -> Emotional attachment -> Intention to revisit	0.072	0.078	0.082	0.878	0.380

Data processed (2025)

This study found that experience had no significant effect on revisit intention. It means that a good travel experience does not necessarily increase tourists' desire to revisit. These results differ from those of Chen et al. (2020), Realino et al. (2021), Luo et al. (2021), and Primananda et al. (2022), who found that travel experience significantly influenced revisit intention. This study found aesthetics to be the most influential experience indicator, alongside escapism, but it was insufficient to impact revisit intention. Furthermore, the effect of experience on revisit intention was the smallest among all the research hypotheses. These results indicate that other factors may bridge the influence of experience on revisit intention (Libre et al., 2022).

This study found that experience significantly influenced emotional attachment. It means that a good travel experience can increase tourists' emotional attachment to a destination. These results align with Cheng and Chen (2022), who found that travel experience significantly influenced emotional attachment. The influence of experience on emotional attachment was the largest of all the hypotheses. The results of this study can be interpreted as the need for a good tourism experience to increase tourists' emotional engagement. Tourist experiences need to be prepared and planned appropriately to create an emotional engagement (Gómez-Suárez & Veloso, 2020). Tourism experiences such as education, entertainment, aesthetics, and entertainment are very important for tourists because these indicators are crucial for the foundation of a good tourism experience (Paisri et al., 2022). However, in this study, the entertainment indicator was not calculated and had to be excluded from the study due to its inadequate outer loading.

This study found that emotional attachment had no significant effect on revisit intention. It suggests that high emotional attachment does not necessarily increase tourists' desire to revisit. Different results were obtained by Prayag and Ryan (2012) and Shahid et al. (2022), who found that emotional attachment had a significant effect on revisit intention. Similar results were found by Ghorbanzadeh and Rahehagh (2026), who found that emotional attachment had no significant effect on revisit intention. They argued that this finding further supports our claim that, in the process of becoming loyal to a particular brand, satisfied consumers tend to develop emotional attachments and build a "romantic" relationship with that brand. Furthermore, emotional attachment does not directly influence brand loyalty, but rather indirectly through brand affection.

This study also found that emotional attachment did not mediate the effect of experience on revisit intention. These results differ from those of Cheng and Chen (2022), who found that emotional attachment could mediate the effect of experience on behavioral intention. Other factors may increase revisit intention. However, in this study, emotional attachment played the largest role.



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The results of this study also explain that a higher emotional attachment does not necessarily increase the intention to revisit due to several factors, such as the availability of other destination options or tourism experiences that offer better vacation options.

CONCLUSION

The findings confirm that tourism experiences play a strong role in shaping affective responses. Experience has a significant influence on Emotional Attachment, but it does not automatically drive Revisit Intention. Furthermore, Emotional Attachment does not significantly influence Revisit Intention and does not mediate the Experience-Revisit Intention relationship. Therefore, the mechanism leading to revisits in this context likely requires a mediator or other determinant. The dominance of the aesthetic and escapist dimensions suggests that certain aspects of the experience are more relevant in building emotional attachment.

Destination managers need to prioritize experience design that strengthens aesthetic and escapist elements to build emotional attachment. However, retention strategies cannot rely solely on attachment. To encourage repeat visits, more direct decision levers such as increased perceived value and satisfaction, varied attractions or seasonal programs, ease of access, and repeat visit incentives are needed. The entertainment aspect needs to be evaluated because the entertainment indicator failed to pass the measurement, indicating that this element is not yet strongly perceived or appropriate.

Single visitors dominated the sample, so loyalty tendencies may not have yet formed. The cross-sectional study design limits the explanation of intention dynamics, and the model does not include other important determinants; thus, its ability to explain revisit intentions is low. Furthermore, the experience measurement does not include entertainment indicators.

Future research should add variables such as satisfaction, perceived value, service quality, destination image, trust, constraints, and novelty seeking, as well as test alternative mediators. Multigroup analysis of first-time versus repeat visitors and longitudinal or mixed-methods designs are also recommended to understand why tourists do not return despite emotional engagement.

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