

## **Assessing Visitor Commitment: Beach Tourism and Destination Loyalty in Batam**

Intan Bahtera Pertiwi, Dame Afrina Sihombing, and Oda  
Ignatius Besar Hariyanto

Bachelor of Tourism Program, Faculty of Business and Management, Universitas  
Internasional Batam

Corresponding Author Email: [dame@uib.ac.id](mailto:dame@uib.ac.id)

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the impact of place attachment, familiarity, and cognitive image on destination loyalty at Batam City Beach, with satisfaction as a mediator with the aim of investigating how these factors contribute to tourists' loyalty to beach destinations, and whether satisfaction plays an important role in this process and uses a quantitative data analysis method approach. A survey was conducted among tourists visiting Batam City Beach. The results show that place attachment, familiarity, and cognitive image have a significant positive impact on destination loyalty. In addition, satisfaction was found to be an important mediator in the relationship between the factors and destination loyalty. This study has practical implications for destination marketers, indicating that strategies aimed at improving the factors under study can increase satisfaction and loyalty among tourists.

**Keywords:** Destination Loyalty, Place Attachment, Familiarity, Cognitive Image, Satisfaction

### **Introduction**

Tourism is one of the largest sources of state revenue. Local governments get income from the number of tourist destinations visited. According to Jessica and Sihombing (2022) in increasing the number of tourists in Batam, efforts are needed to increase the attractiveness of destinations in Batam City itself. The Head of Badan Pengusahaan (BP) Batam, Muhammad Rudi stated that Batam's tourism sector is expected to be more advanced and rapidly growing BP Batam (2023). This is due to BP Batam's ability to seize various opportunities and Batam's reputation as an investment area, which is one of the contributions in having a strong and important capital in developing the tourism sector.

The tourism sector consists of several industries that provide various services and products that meet the needs of domestic and foreign tourists while on vacation, business trips, and other special trips. Some of these industries are accommodation, food, beverages, air, water, public transportation and travel agencies. The industry's revenue is derived from

the expenditure of tourists in consuming the products and services available Muhamad Nasir and Wongchestha (2022).

Competition that arises in the tourism sector is a challenge for tourism actors. The nature of what tourism operators receive from various tourists in terms of customer satisfaction and customer loyalty often changes, making tourism services more sophisticated and customized to meet the diverse demands of tourists. Therefore, the establishment of satisfying and long-term relationships with tourists is considered a form of success by tourism operators who wish to maintain their position in a highly competitive market Al-okaily et al. (2022). Besides that, leisure activities are the main needs for everyone, the availability of facilities and infrastructure that can be used to carry out leisure activities is a public facility that is needed by tourists (Hariyanto, 2017).

The geographical conditions of the islands are very distinctive, making the islands one of the destinations that offer different types of tourism from mainland tourism in general, for example the Riau Islands. In addition to its strategic location at the eastern entrance of the Strait of Malacca, Brunei, and West Kalimantan Province; Riau Islands also borders Singapore, which is the commercial and financial center of the Asia-Pacific. In addition, Riau Islands is adjacent to ASEAN countries such as Malaysia and Vietnam. One of the largest cities in the Riau Islands is Batam City so that the local government's desire to make Batam City as one of the commercial, industrial, maritime, and tourism areas is running smoothly which is proven by the increasing economy and investment in Batam City. The diversity of Batam City includes land and sea tourism objects. Through the mission of "Realizing sustainable, friendly, safe, and comfortable city development", Batam City has great expectations that are trying to be realized, namely becoming a reliable tourist destination. Some beach tourism destinations in Batam City are Nongsa Beach, Malay Beach, Setokok Beach, Marina Beach, Viovio Beach, Tanjung Pinggir Beach, Melur Beach, Elyora Beach, Mirota Beach, and others. Therefore, this research was conducted in the city of Batam by examining the variables of consumer behavior towards loyalty to a destination.

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), a development of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), is a psychological theory developed by Icek Ajzen that explains how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence individual intentions to perform certain behaviors and is widely used in various fields, including management, marketing, and social research Nyoman et al. (2017). TPB states that a person's intention to engage in a behavior is determined by three main factors: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms toward the behavior, and perceived behavioral control. Attitude refers to an individual's positive or negative feelings toward a behavior, subjective norm refers to the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform a behavior, and perceived behavioral control refers to an individual's perception of their ability to perform the behavior Mahyarni (2013).

## **Literature Review**

### *Destination Loyalty*

Destination loyalty is the commitment of tourists to revisit and their willingness to recommend the destination to family, colleagues, and friends Muhamad Nasir and Wongchestha (2022). Satisfied visitors may post positive comments about the place, promote it to family and friends, and revisit similar locations in the future Chen et al. (2020).

Destination loyalty is divided into three types: attitudinal, behavioral, and composite Suhartanto et al. (2016). Attitudinal loyalty concerns the tourists' intention to recommend the destination to others; behavioral loyalty concerns the support for returning or the intention to revisit; composite loyalty combines both behavioral and attitudinal loyalty. Further elaboration on destination loyalty indicates that a mixed measurement approach seems most appropriate for assessing Destination loyalty Raggiotto and Scarpi (2021). With the growth in the number of tourist destinations, strategies that reinforce competitive advantage, allowing for perceived differentiation aspects, will contribute to enhancing the image of a place Pereira et al. (2022).

#### *Place Attachment*

According to Zhou et al. (2023), place attachment is defined as a form of emotional connection between a person and a place, and describes a strong bond between connecting the relationship through the dimensions of dependence, identity, emotion, and social relationships. Place attachment is also described as a visitor's personal connection with the destination Sontikul and Jachna (2016). Meanwhile, according to Nasir et al. (2020), place attachment can be defined as place attachment can refer to a positive personal attachment between tourists and the destination country, namely a country where visitors value the destination and are genuinely interested in it.

According to Cardinale et al. (2015), there is a significant positive effect of place attachment on destination loyalty when reviewing visiting vineyards, where when vineyards receive new guests, they must prepare a number of activities which, if run well, will make customers have an emotional attachment which then contributes to strong loyalty to these vineyards. Research Nasir et al. (2020) shows that place attachment has a significant positive effect on destination loyalty. This contradicts Ajayi and Tichaawa (2021), where their research states that place attachment has no significant positive effect on satisfaction.

#### *Familiarity*

Bianchi et al. (2017) stated that familiarity is a key component that influences destination image, perception, destination selection, and future behavior. Familiarity is commonly used to analyze differences in travel behavior between visitors and non-visitors in a destination Jebbouri et al. (2021). Kim et al. (2019) describe experiential familiarity as the level of understanding or knowledge of previous travel experiences, and familiarity can reduce risk perceptions among tourists and strengthen confidence in their destination choice. In research Ariyanto and Ariesty. (2017) states that familiarity has a significant positive effect on destination satisfaction and loyalty.

#### *Cognitive Image*

Cognitive image in the context of its influence on destination loyalty is the perception formed by tourists about the tourist destinations they visit. Cognitive image contains information stored in tourists' heads about the destination, which can positively or negatively affect tourists' satisfaction and their loyalty to the destination Andrew Sitanggang and Pangestuti (2020). A positive cognitive image can increase tourist satisfaction and create loyalty, while a negative cognitive image can decrease tourist satisfaction and reduce loyalty Hidayatullah et al. (2020).

Cognitive image consists of three components: cognitive image, unique image, and affective image Andrew Sitanggang and Pangestuti (2020). Cognitive image contains information that can be received by tourists, such as the quality of facilities, safety, and services. Unique image contains information that distinguishes the destination from others, such as the uniqueness of culture, nature, and culture. Affective image contains information that leads to feelings that can be received by tourists, such as satisfaction, surprise, or dissatisfaction Andrew Sitanggang and Pangestuti (2020).

Research shows that cognitive image, unique image, and affective image have a significant effect on tourist satisfaction, which is reflected in their intention to revisit a destination and behavior that explains the tendency of consumers to take future actions such as making repeat visits and recommending a destination to others. Cognitive image and affective image have a significant effect on tourist loyalty, while unique image has no significant effect on tourist loyalty Andrew Sitanggang and Pangestuti (2020).

### *Satisfaction*

Jebbouri et al. (2021), visitor satisfaction at the visited destination can be seen from how visitors interact with the waiter, and this can be used to predict future visitor behavior, such as repeat visits to the destination. Therefore, satisfaction can be interpreted as the cognitive and emotional state of visitors, derived from their experiences which can then lead to destination loyalty Moniz et al. (2017).

Jebbouri et al. (2021) and Wang et al. (2022) state that satisfaction significantly affects destination loyalty. In research conducted by, that a significant positive effect on satisfaction mediates the relationship between place attachment and destination loyalty. Then research conducted by Ariyanto and Ariesty (2017) that there is a significant positive effect on satisfaction which mediates the relationship between familiarity and destination loyalty.

### **Research Methodology**

The research method used is quantitative research method, which is scientific thinking and involves the process of forming ideas and ideas with deductive patterns. Priyono (2008) and Syafrida Hafni Sahir (2021). The sample used is non probability sampling, with purposive sampling method, where the sample is selected not randomly and has characteristics or criteria set by the researcher (Amin et al., 2023). Therefore, in this study the population is the people of Batam City. The sample in this study were people/tourists who had visited beach tourism destinations in Batam City with a total of 290 respondents who were calculated using the following theory (Hair et al., 2019).

Hair et al. (2019) explains the sample size in SEM (Structural Equation Model) analysis if there are more than 20 indicators, then multiply by 10 for each indicator. Based on the above calculations, a sample of 250 respondents (25 indicators) was determined, to reduce the error rate the sample size selected was 290 respondents. The analysis process includes testing the quality of the measurement model, hypothesis testing, and measuring the coefficient of determination.

**A Proposed Conceptual Model/Framework**

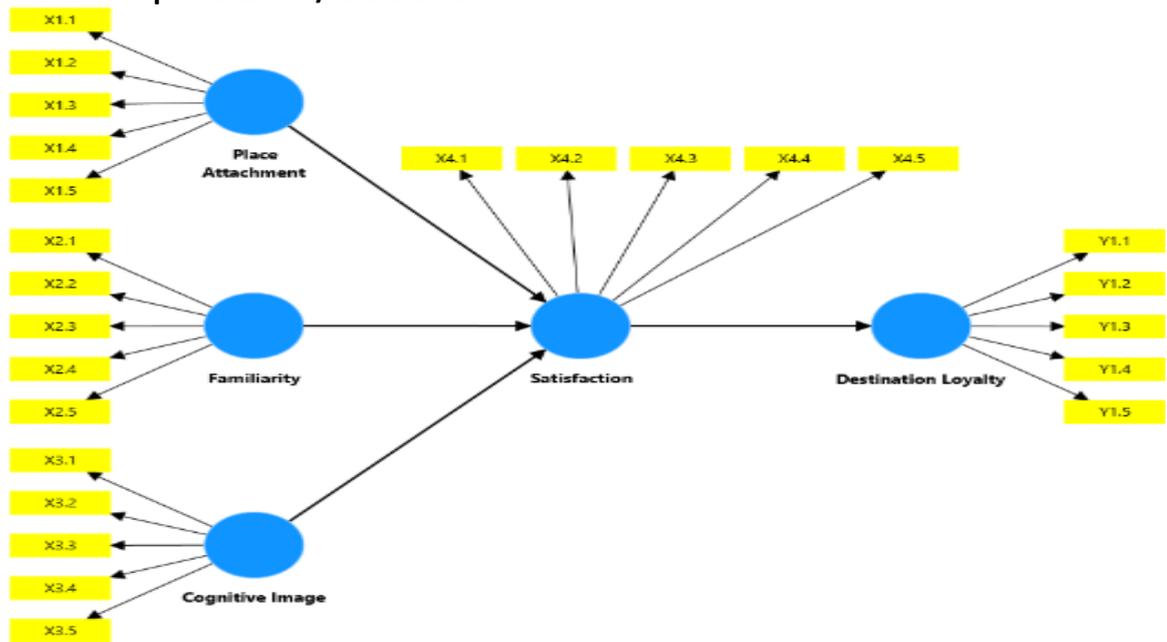


Figure 1. Research Model

Based on the introduction, previous research, and conceptual framework above, the following hypothesis is formulated:

- H1 Place attachment has a significant positive effect on satisfaction.
- H2 Familiarity has a significant positive effect on satisfaction.
- H3 Cognitive image has a significant positive effect on satisfaction.
- H4 Satisfaction has a significant positive effect on destination loyalty.

**Results and Discussions**

*Respondent Demographics*

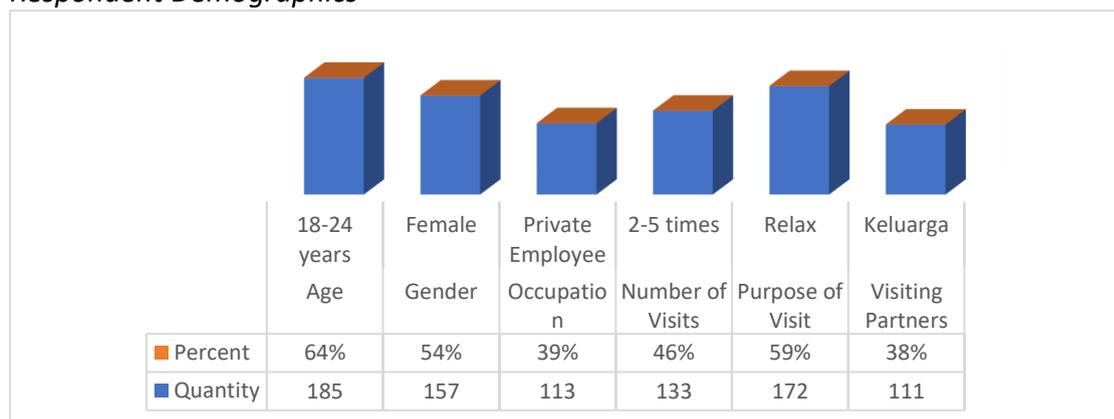


Figure 2. Respondent Demographics

A total of 290 respondents were collected by distributing questionnaire links through social media. Respondents aged 18-24 years were 185 respondents (64%) because teenagers tend to be more active, have more free time for vacation and enjoy recreational activities. According to Adrianus. (2016); Kristen Satya Wacana. (2022), the majority of respondents were female as many as 157 respondents (54%), women generally have a greater need for relaxation and stress relief, so the beach can be an ideal place for relaxation due to the calm

and beautiful atmosphere, as well as activities that can help reduce stress such as yoga and meditation Setyanti. (2015); Travel. (2013). The majority of respondents' occupations as students as many as 125 respondents (43%) they want to get rid of boredom from school/campus assignments and have more free time because they do not have heavy work obligations. Monalisa et al. (2023). The majority of respondents who answered 2-5 visits were 133 respondents (46%). The majority of respondents went to the beach to relax as many as 172 respondents (59%) because the calm and beautiful atmosphere of the beach can help reduce stress and increase relaxation, and the sound of waves, sand, and sea views can help reduce anxiety and tension Imran. (2023). The majority of respondents went to the beach with friends as many as 116 respondents (40%) because sharing experiences with friends can increase a sense of community and strengthen bonds of friendship RM. (2023).

### *Validity and Reliability Test*

Table 2  
*Validity and Reliability Test Results*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Factor loadings</b>	<b>AVE</b>	<b>Composite Reliability</b>
<b>Place Attachment</b>	X1.1	0.725	0.604	0.884
	X1.2	0.747		
	X1.3	0.700		
	X1.4	0.735		
	X1.5	0.758		
<b>Familiarity</b>	X2.1	0.794	0.646	0.901
	X2.2	0.802		
	X2.3	0.835		
	X2.4	0.771		
	X2.5	0.817		
<b>Cognitive Image</b>	X3.1	0.800	0.601	0.883
	X3.2	0.786		
	X3.3	0.805		
	X3.4	0.722		
	X3.5	0.769		
<b>Satisfaction</b>	X4.1	0.784	0.538	0.853
	X4.2	0.801		
	X4.3	0.823		
	X4.4	0.701		
	X4.5	0.762		
<b>Destination Loyalty</b>	Y1.1	0.752	0.590	0.878
	Y1.2	0.766		
	Y1.3	0.794		
	Y1.4	0.740		
	Y1.5	0.786		

Based on Table 2, it can be seen that all questionnaire items have met the convergent validity test standards, namely AVE above 0.5 and factor loading above 0.7, which means that all items are declared valid, and have met the composite reliability test standards, which are greater than 0.7, which means that all items are declared reliable.

Discriminant Validity Test

Table 3  
Fornell Larcker Criterion

	Cognitive Image	Familiarity	Satisfaction	Place Attachment	Destination Loyalty
Cognitive Image	0.777				
Familiarity	0.761	0.804			
Satisfaction	0.753	0.779	0.775		
Place Attachment	0.628	0.649	0.689	0.734	
Destination Loyalty	0.748	0.685	0.730	0.639	0.768

Table 3 shows that all constructs are proven to have high discriminant validity. This can be seen from the AVE value of each construct is higher than the correlation of that construct with other constructs.

Test Results

The test results were carried out using the Smart PLS version 4 program. The running process is carried out in 2 stages, namely PLS Algorithm and Bootstrapping. PLS Algorithm serves to display the research instrument test, which is displayed on the output of Factor Loading, AVE and Composite Reliability, Fornell Larcker Criterion, and Cross Loading. While PLS Bootstrapping serves to display multiple regression tests by displaying the output of t and the value of each coefficient.

The results of the coefficient value output on the regression model after the data running process can be seen in Figure 8 below:

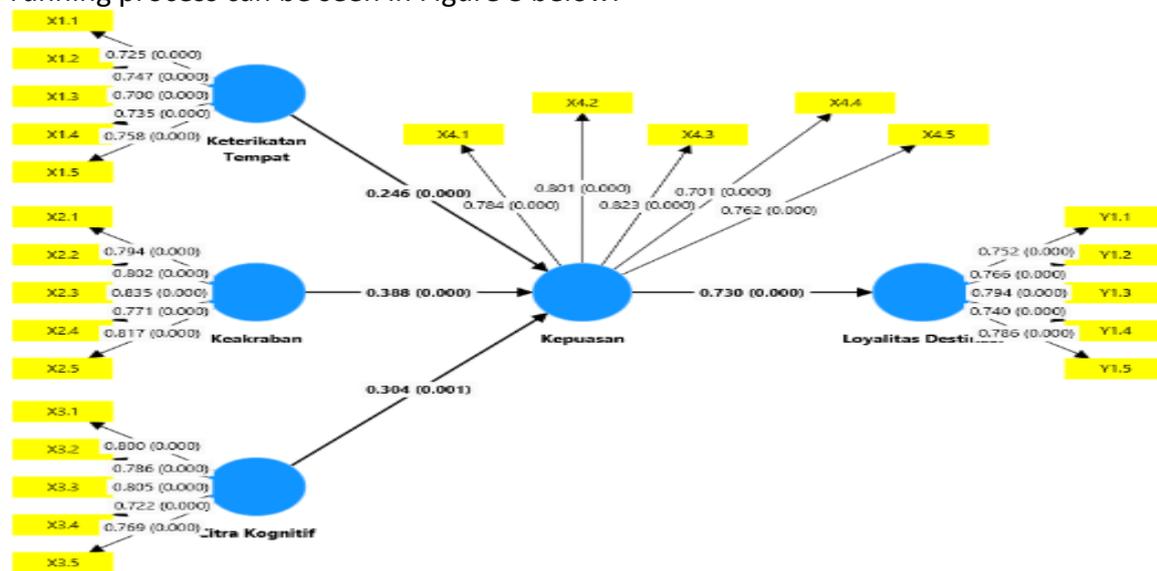


Figure 8. Path Model Regression Analysis Results (Coefficient)

After obtaining the output of the coefficient value in the regression analysis model above, the PLS Bootstrapping results are then obtained to display the regression analysis test by displaying the t-test output as shown in Figure 9 below:

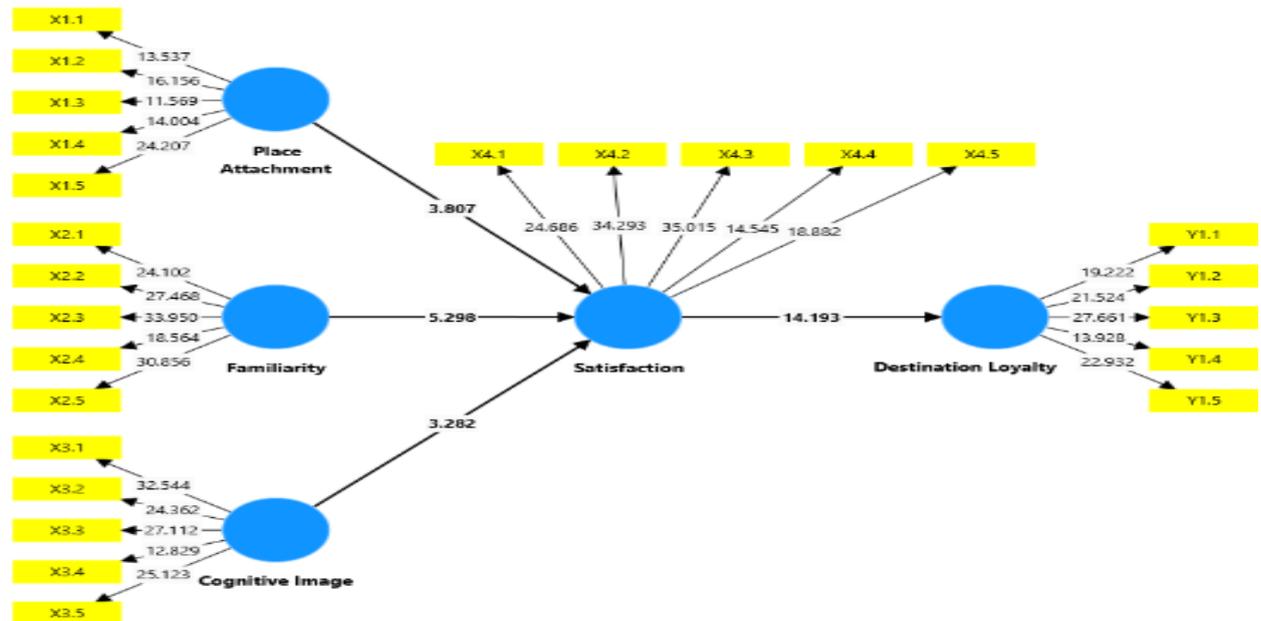


Figure 9. Path Model Regression Analysis Results (T-Test)

With the level of significance ( $\alpha$ ) used at 5% (0.05). The results of multiple regression analysis tests for significance values (P-Value) can be seen in the output of Figure 10 and Table 6 below:

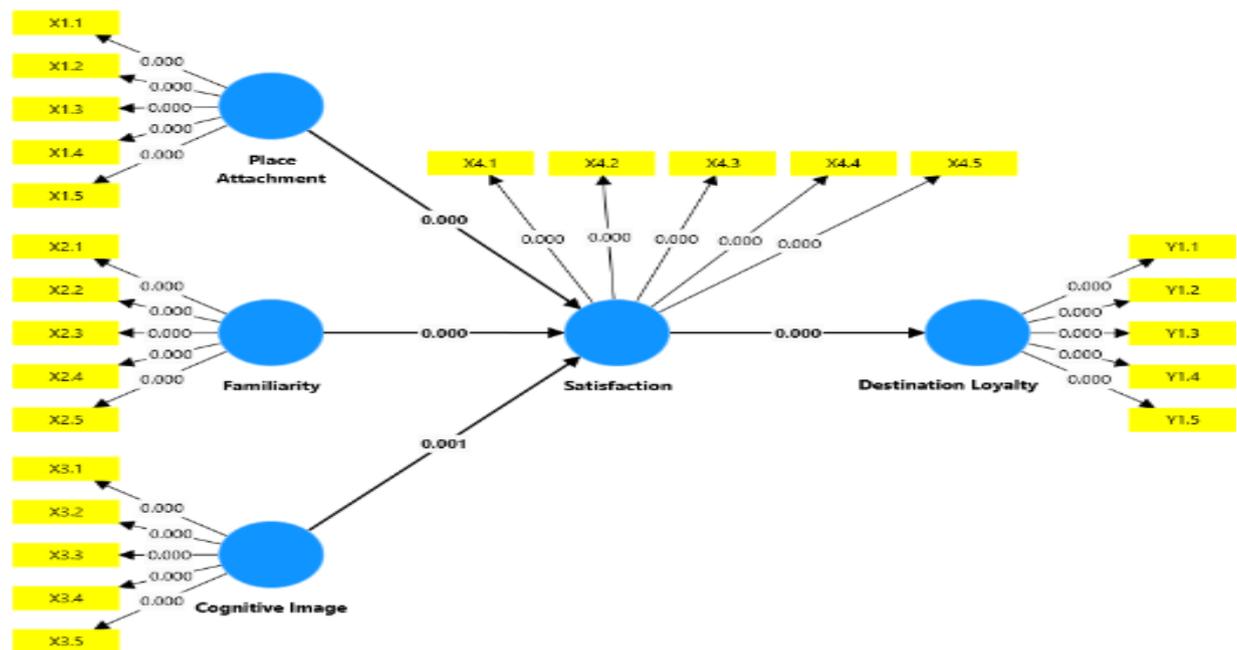


Figure 10. Path Model Regression Analysis Results (P-Value)

## Test Result

Tabel 6

### T Test Result

Hypotesis	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values	Sig
Cognitive Image -> Satisfaction	0,211	0,210	0.093	3.282	0.001	Significant
Familiarity -> Satisfaction	0,269	0,267	0.073	5.298	0.000	Significant
Satisfaction -> Destination Loyalty	0,0506	0,504	0.051	14.193	0.000	Significant
Place Attachment -> Satisfaction	0,170	00.25	0.065	3.807	0.000	Significant

## Determination Coefficient Test Results

Table 7

### Determination Coefficient Test Results

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Satisfaction	0.7	0.697
Destination Loyalty	0.532	0.531

After the test is carried out, the R2 (coefficient of determination) value in this study is 0.697 and 0.531. This means that the ability of the independent variables to explain the variance of the dependent variable is 69.7% and 53.1%. So that 30.3% of the variance of the dependent variable (satisfaction) and 46.9% of the variance of the dependent variable (destination loyalty) is explained by other factors.

## Conclusions

The first hypothesis proves that place attachment has a significant effect on Satisfaction. This shows that the higher the attachment, the higher the level of visitor Satisfaction. This result supports previous research conducted by Nasution (2022). The second hypothesis shows that Familiarity has a significant effect on Satisfaction. This result supports research Liung et al. (2017) which explains that Familiarity has an effect on visitor Satisfaction. This shows that the increasing Familiarity will have an impact on increasing visitor Satisfaction at Batam City Beach. The third hypothesis proves that cognitive image is proven to have the most significant effect on Satisfaction which supports previous research conducted by Hidayatullah et al. (2020). The fourth hypothesis proves that it has a significant influence on Destination Loyalty. This shows that the better the customer Satisfaction, the higher the destination loyalty of

Batam City Beach. These results support previous research conducted by Amalia et al. (2016) and Hanif et al., (2016).

This research has limitations, namely the imperfect coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), there is 30.3% variance in Satisfaction and 46.9% variance in Destination Loyalty which is explained by other factors not included in this research model. It is recommended that the local government is expected to pay attention to safety factors, as well as staff friendliness as an effort to increase Destination Loyalty. For beach managers, this research will help design better beach management strategies and improve the overall tourist experience. In addition, examining the role of familiarity in shaping tourists' perceptions of destinations and their attractions can provide valuable insights in the development of effective marketing strategies.

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