

## The impact of service quality performance on destination image and destination loyalty in Saudi Arabia: An empirical investigation

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### ABSTRACT

The interest in tourism destination loyalty has increased in recent times. Although the recent literature has shown that a tourist's loyalty to a destination is the direct result of quality service and the type of experiences, the correlation between service quality and customer loyalty has yet to be thoroughly researched within the tourist-destination context. Since these destinations are constantly changing, it requires further analysis and research. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the relationship between service quality performance and destination loyalty, as well as the mediation impact of destination image in Saudi Arabia for local tourist destination perspectives in Albaha region, while considering the attitudes towards service quality within three, four- and five-star hotels. The partial least square to structural equation modelling was used (PLS-SEM) to examine 298 local tourists from Saudi Arabia who took part in a survey. The results show a positive relationship between service quality performance and destination image, as well as a positive relationship between service quality performance and loyalty. The results also confirm that destination image mediated the relationship between service quality performance and destination loyalty. The results of this study contribute to knowledge by informing service managers in tourism sector about the perspectives of local tourists towards destination image and loyalty.

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## 1. Introduction

Recently, interest in tourism destination loyalty has increased (Kanwel et al., 2019). A tourist's loyalty to a destination results from the provision of tourist services and how tourists perceive those services (Al-Hawari, 2015; Sivadas & Baker-Prewitt, 2000). There is a clear research gap in determining a major correlation between service quality and customer loyalty and this has yet to be thoroughly researched within the tourist-destination context (Kim et al., 2013; Kislali et al., 2019). Since these destinations are constantly changing requires further analysis and research (Martín-Cejas, 2006). Tourism marketing is deeply rooted in tourism service quality and highlights different tourism contexts. Consequently, destination loyalty has become a fundamental concept to deliver high quality service in a tourist destination (Obenour et al., 2006). Provisionally, analysis has only been conducted on tourist loyalty in a destination in hotels. Recently, it has been discovered that many other factors (e.g. intellectual, emotional and initial factors) must be researched and understood in tourism marketing both locally and internationally to explore the relationship between tourism service quality and destination loyalty. This confirms the need to investigate destination image to help shed light on this relationship (Akroush et al., 2016; Debata et al., 2015). Scholars have drawn attention to research on tourism loyalty in the service marketing literature (Gallarza et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2013; Vinh & Long, 2013). Previous research has concentrated more on tourism quality of service on the supply side rather than the real demand of tourists and offering their wants and needs. Quality of service literature is rich in information and lacks an understanding of tourists' loyalty on the level of destination. Identifying the amenities to improve tourism service quality and tourists' experience, such as the hotel location, facilities (e.g. spa and gym), internal services (e.g. tours) and hospitality (e.g.

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tourist restaurant and room service) etc., would help tourism organisations to improve tourists' loyalty. These services are delivered by specific human resources who deliver quality and shape loyalty. However, the literature proposed that the relationships between the quality of service tourism, destination image and destination loyalty constructs have not been fully examined, particularly in the tourism sector in developing countries, such as Saudi Arabia. This study is looking at the relationships between quality of service provided by three, four and five-star hotels and destination loyalty from local tourist's perspectives and to test whether this relationship is mediated by destination image or not.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Destination loyalty

Destination loyalty has been considered by many researchers as a significant key to the future stability and growth of any firms and a tourism destination (Kim et al., 2013; Shoval & Birenboim, 2019; Vinh & Long, 2013). The destination can reach success through several aspects such as environmental analysis of tourist motivations and customer satisfaction and loyalty (McKercher & Prideaux, 2011; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). The determinants of customer loyalty are based on customer satisfaction that has been highlighted as the main key of loyalty concerning the availability of destination image (Gartner, 1994; Tran et al., 2015b). Recently, the expression of the tourism sector was clarified, and a market basket was used to display how tourists choose local goods and services at a tourist destination (Carvalho et al., 2018; Jafari, 1974). However, one has to question how far tourists are satisfied with their experience and their willingness to pay based on the services provided (Jafari, 1974). This concept was supported by a demand-supply matrix, in which firms contrast segment needs and available resources to help destination leaders in choosing market segment (Dommermuth, 1965). Moreover, the literature has confirmed a new concept pertaining to word of mouth as one of the most significant expressions of loyalty, as this can attract new customers based on the recommendations of existing customers (Ranaweera & Jayawardhena, 2014).

A destination image, which produce feelings, is likely to generate consumer experience, consequences with purchase and, if justified with his expectations, promote destination brand loyalty (Go & Govers, 2000). Many scholars agree with the assessment in which they identified destination uniqueness and authenticity as key determinants of promoting destination brand loyalty. Statistics confirm an increase of over 200 destinations globally owing to the growing number of tourist arrivals each year (World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), 2011). Therefore, service quality of the destination brand should be measured for instance, as Hotels and destination loyalty supposed to be the main element of destination marketing on both a national and international scale.

### 2.2 Service quality

Quality of service refers to the customer's expectations about a service with the perceptions of what is actually delivered by the service provider (Grönroos, 1984; Parasuraman et al., 1985). This view was challenged by scholars (Cronin and Taylor, 1992, 1994; Dabholkar et al, 2000) who argued that perception is the measure of quality of service. They suggest that since perceptions include an assessment of expectations, the use of both perceptions and expectations in quality of service is redundant. From a theoretical standpoint, quality of service assessment includes both perceptions and expectations. Some researchers (Fisk et al. 1993; Brown et al., 1994) recognise quality of service as the single most researched area in service marketing. Despite the volume of quality of service, a number of studies have stated they have yet to come to a consensus on how to measure service quality (Blut et al., 2014; Brown & Peterson, 1994; Eisingerich & Bell, 2007; Fisk et al., 1993; Liang & Wang, 2006; Ren & Zhou, 2008). Quality of service is defined by Parasuraman et al. (1988) in terms of the gap between the expectations of customers of a service and their perceptions of the actual service provision by an organisation. Quality in service industries cannot be measured objectively because it is a relatively abstract concept where different people will have different definitions of what they deem as quality service (Akbaba, 2006; Khan & Shaikh, 2011; Zeithaml et al., 1990). The assessment of quality performance for services is more complex than for products because of their inherent nature of heterogeneity (e.g. live concerts), inseparability of production and consumption (e.g. taxi service), perishability (e.g. cartoon networks) and intangibility (e.g. mobile network providers) (Frochot & Hughes, 2000). They developed the SERVQUAL scale, a survey instrument that is intended to measure the service quality in any kind of service organisation based on five dimensions, namely reliability, tangibles, assurance, responsiveness and empathy (Parasuraman et al. 1988). That would lead to a competitive advantage in the tourism sector (Lin & Su, 2003).

Several authors (Bastič & Gojčič, 2012; Filiz, 2010; Han & Hyun, 2015a; Qin et al., 2010) measured quality in service industries using either the service quality (SERVQUAL) scale in its original form (as developed by Parasuraman et al., 1988), or modified form. The scale was used to reflect some of the unique characteristics of the context of the investigated study or to avoid some of the inherent weaknesses of the original SERVQUAL scale (Augustyn and Seakhoa-King, 2005). A number of studies (Han & Hyun, 2015b; Juwaheer & Ross, 2003b; Kvist & Klefsjö, 2006) used SERVQUAL as an effective framework to measure tourism quality of service. Long-term marketing problems in terms of service and positioning in the market for firms, destinations or states can impede their ability to provide good quality of service.

Destination loyalty also relies on destination quality via a set of organisations producing services such as a hotel's destination quality, atmosphere, pricing, personnel, decoration, public and private facilities, food presentation, lighting and music (Kim et al., 2013; Nunkoo et al., 2020; Xiao & Smith, 2006). Local and overseas tourists evaluate service quality by assessing the actual perceived service quality from a service supplier (i.e. three, four or five star hotels in a destination) to accomplish the

promised service criteria that correspond with their understanding of destination loyalty. Nevertheless, the relationship between tourism quality of service and destination loyalty has been under-investigated, particularly about the effect of destination image as a mediating factor. Only a mediating relationship between service quality and destination loyalty and destination image with overseas tourist samples has been examined (Akroush et al., 2016).

### 2.3 Destination image

Any tourism sector requires a strategic mind-set to establish a positive destination image between actual and potential visitors (Rather, 2020). Recent researches have defined the notion of brand destination images as an individual's overall perception or impression of a given location (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Rather, 2020). Although destination image is considered as a perception, it is also considered a memory about a particular area (Stylidis, 2016). A destination image might be identified by any person, even those who do not intend to travel to the destination (Kislali et al., 2019). Nevertheless, individuals with a destination image who obtained tourism information ranging from magazine articles to holiday brochures will have different experience of the destination compared to those who have no prior information (Chon, 1991; Rather, 2020). This suggests that destination image is mostly based on intellectual factors (e.g. knowledge of the expected tourism pick up location) and emotional factors (e.g. behaviour about the target destination) and initial factors (e.g. the eventual selection of the individual's destination) (Qu et al., 2011; Rather, 2020). These factors demonstrate that providers must place more emphasis on measuring the service destination of hotels (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Dolnicar & Grün, 2013). This demonstrates that quality of service can be assessed on the destination level using its tourism firms concerned in offering different kind of services. Based on the above literature, this study focuses on associated service quality performance with destination loyalty through tourism services provided by firms at the provider side in a tourism region in Saudi Arabia (Albaha).

### 2.4 Research framework and hypotheses

When the service is perceived to be equal to the service expected, the service customer's expectations have indeed been met. In this particular situation, quality of service is satisfactory to that specific service customer (Cândido 2001; Grönroos 1990; Parasuraman et al. 1985; Wetzels 1998; Zeithaml et al. 1988). When service perceived is better than service expected, the provided service quality exceeds what the customer expected and the customer would be satisfied. Finally, when the service expected exceeds service perceived, then the expectations of quality of service are not met and the actual quality of service provided is perceived as disagreeable.



**Fig. 1.** Relationship between Variables (Adopted from Akroush, Jaraisat, Kurdieh, Al-faouri, Qatu, 2016: p.22)

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Service quality performance has a positive influence on destination image.

This research will investigate the actual performance of tourism quality in all activities assured by the hotel in three, four and five star hotels' destination in the Albaha region given the limited empirical evidence to support such an investigation. This paper has approved that the direct influence of service quality over customer loyalty (Moon & Armstrong, 2019). Quality of service with a good image reinforces the customer experience to use the services regularly at the hotels; hence, word of mouth will spread rapidly and tell other potential tourists about their enjoyable time with their destination (Moon & Armstrong, 2019). Therefore, better service quality suggests a better image of the tourist destination, which has been confirmed in previous literature in which a positive relationship between the dimensions of tourism service quality and destination image was found (Faullant et al., 2008).

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Destination image has a positive influence on destination loyalty.

We expect that the focus on improving destination image can be achieved through marketing strategies that target different market segments (McCartney et al., 2008). The comprehensive destination image reverses the significance of the brand, including functional and symbolic image attributes to respond to a destination (Qu et al., 2011). The literature found a relationship between the elements of a destination and emotional image dependent on cognitive image, and at the same time, dependent on the cognitive and emotional kinds of image (Tran et al., 2015a). In addition, it is very important for states to pay attention to the matter of image and they should have a very clear strategy to follow up their images. For example, appealing to tourists, proposing value to the local product, attracting more investors and recruiting talented citizens (Tran et al., 2015a). Hence, determining the segment market is a basic responsibility in identifying the correct branding for a destination image. Therefore, a regular evaluation of the brand image after tourists have left the location can help organisation to satisfy visitors and gain their loyalty. Loyalty means behaviour in terms of re-purchasing or re-using the services again via word of mouth.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** The relationship between tourism quality of service and destination loyalty is mediated by destination image.

We expect that the previous study on destination image demonstrate that it can influence the choice of destination, and thus influences the behaviour of visitors. A destination image comprises of several elements: first, tangible aspects, natural aspects, activities and accommodations; second, psychological aspects such as friendly people, emotions, atmosphere and environment (Dolnicar & Grün, 2013). As result, practical aspects related to tangible resources such as cognitive, and the psychological aspects contain intangible resources such as emotions. Service providers will always question the quality of service of a given destination and it is challenging to maintain customers and bring more customers to the tourism sector (Juwaheer & Ross, 2003b). A strong brand image is likely to attract potential visitors to a given destination, where the SERVQUAL scale has been used to test this hypothesis. The service quality variable is a key factor in creating destination loyalty, and thus tourism business obligates to build a strong brand image. This is supported by an experimental study that has confirmed a significant relationship between performance service quality and destination loyalty (Kim et al., 2013). Therefore, it is necessary to test whether there is a relationship between tourism quality of service and destination loyalty and is this relationship mediated by destination image.

### 3. Method

The research examined the impact of service quality performance on destination image and loyalty in Saudi Arabia, specifically in the Albaha region. We have chosen three, four and five star hotels as our chosen destination since these are one of the most active and common destinations of tourists. The target population was national tourists who visited Albaha region. The hotels were initially approached by e-mail to the hotel manager and followed-up with telephone calls inviting them to participate in the study. Saudi tourists were targeted who visit Albaha regularly because they are regular users of the service hotel and the services they provide, as well as experience issues regarding the dimensions investigated in this study. In fact, tourist families and lone holiday goers are considered as primary customers and therefore, their views of service quality performance were of interest. Non-probability samples were used given the positivist and quantitative nature of the research, where the researcher needs to reach a large sample of participants. Given the sample size of 68 hotels, a non-probability sample was applied for reasons of accessibility. Such an approach is justified because the sample covered every branch of the entire hotel operating in Albaha. Moreover, a large sample was drawn in order to reduce sampling error. The sample is considered reasonably representative of the target population. In this research, questionnaires were applied. Since the targeted samples were Saudi tourists, it was expected that questionnaires would be the most effective and efficient way to elicit their perceptions regarding destination image and destination loyalty in their hotels. Interviews, on the other hand, were not suitable given the time scale and we wanted to collect data from a large sample within a short time frame. There is an additional reason for applying questionnaires. Firstly, some experienced researchers in Saudi Arabia have stated that culturally driven individuals do not demonstrate their emotions and perceptions verbally and prefer to answer questionnaires anonymously (Bin Saeed, 1997). Since some of the targeted sample were Arabic speakers, the questionnaires were translated in both Arabic and English, as suggested by Bryman (2004).

### 4. Findings

#### 4.1 Respondent analysis

From the 350 questionnaires distributed, 298 were completed. Descriptive analysis of the respondents' answers showed that the majority of respondents (260 or 87.2% of the total sample) were male and 38 or 12.8% of the total sample were female. The frequency and percentage of the age groups in the sample were as follows. The first group was 16-18 year olds, which was the smallest group with six respondents, accounting for 6% of the total sample. The second age group (19-27 years) was 44 or 14.8%. The third age group was 28-36 years, which represented 48 respondents or 16.1% of the total sample. The fourth age group was 37-48 years and was the largest with 74 respondents or 24.8% of the sample. Finally, the second largest group of the total sample was age 49-55 and above with 73 respondents or 24.5% of the total sample size. As for the 49-55 age group, this represented 53 respondents or 17.8%. With regard to marital status, 76.8% (229 respondents) of the sample was married and 23.2% (69 respondents) was single. Respondents with a Diploma education was 30 respondents, accounting for 10.1% of the total sample. Furthermore, 161 respondents with an Undergraduate degree represented 54.0% of the total sample, while the largest number of respondents had a Postgraduate qualification, accounting for 46 respondents or 15.4% of the sample. Respondents with a PhD were the second largest category, representing 43 or 14.4% of the total sample. Thus, the majority of the respondents held a Bachelor degree or equivalent.

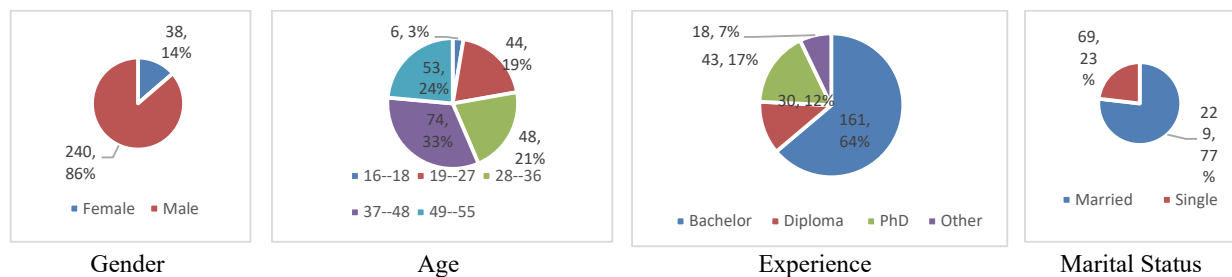


Fig. 1. Sample Demographics

## 4.2 Results

The reliability of instruments was tested using Cronbach's alpha. The coefficients for each construct are shown in Table 1. All scales have reliability coefficients in the range of 0.8 to 0.9 which exceed the cut off level of 0.6 (Nunnally, 1978), which leads us to conclude that all the alpha values of the instrument are reliable. The validity of used questionnaire (Pallant, 2010) was explored by measuring the correlation between the variables. In our study, we found that correlations between most of the variables were positive and were significant at the level of 0.01 and 0.05 and it was ranged between 0.77 and 0.55 (the correlations reached statistical significance within the range of .55 and .77,  $\alpha < 0.5$ ). It was found that the most significant result was the positive correlation between the independent and dependent variables, which ranged between 0.77 and 0.55.

The validity of used questionnaire (Pallant, 2010) can be assessed by measuring the correlation between the variables. On the other hand, criterion validity is quantified by the correlation coefficients between sets of scales and that proves the external validity. In our present study, we have used the existing theories and scales. According to Hair et al. (2006), Criterion validity is checked by using the correlation matrix among factors and if the correlation between the subscales constructs is significant, we can accept the validity to be approved. In our study, we found that correlations between most of the variables were positive and were significant at the level of 0.01 and 0.05 and it was ranged between 0.77 and 0.55. It was found that most significant result was the correlation between variables.

**Table 1**  
Summary of Construct Coefficients

	Mean	SD	AVE	Root of AVE	Composite Reliability	R Square	Cronbach's Alpha	Communality	Redundancy
Service Quality Performance (SQP)	3.51	0.93	0.617	0.785	0.975	0.000	0.973	0.617	0.000
Assurance (SQA)	3.51	0.98	0.718	0.847	0.911	0.743	0.869	0.718	0.532
Destination Image (DI)	3.71	0.87	0.636	0.797	0.913	0.479	0.886	0.636	0.297
Destination Loyalty (DL)	3.73	1.03	0.775	0.88	0.932	0.639	0.902	0.775	0.169
Empathy (SQE)	3.64	0.90	0.815	0.903	0.930	0.760	0.886	0.815	0.618
Reliability (SQRE)	3.49	0.88	0.713	0.844	0.937	0.875	0.918	0.713	0.623
Responsiveness (SQR)	3.52	0.90	0.761	0.872	0.950	0.848	0.937	0.761	0.645
Tangible (SQT)	3.25	0.99	0.785	0.886	0.948	0.817	0.931	0.785	0.641

**Table 2**  
Summary of Correlations Between Coefficients

	Service Quality Performance (SQP)	Assurance (SQA)	Destination Image (DI)	Destination Loyalty (DL)	Empathy (SQE)	Reliability (SQRE)	Responsiveness (SQR)	Tangible (SQT)
Service Quality Performance (SQP)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Assurance (SQA)	0.7618	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Destination Image (DI)	0.692	0.5911	1	0	0	0	0	0
Destination Loyalty (DL)	0.6474	0.5992	0.7661	1	0	0	0	0
Empathy (SQE)	0.7716	0.7133	0.6332	0.5989	1	0	0	0
Reliability (SQRE)	0.7352	0.7275	0.6808	0.5895	0.7715	1	0	0
Responsiveness (SQR)	0.7211	0.7723	0.5778	0.5528	0.7679	0.7074	1	0
Tangible (SQT)	0.7036	0.7206	0.6403	0.601	0.7315	0.7503	0.7347	1

We used linear regression to test the effect of the independent variable (H1) on the service quality performance (SQP) as shown in table. The total variance for destination image was 47% ( $\beta = 0.69$ ,  $t = 13.88$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ). This result was confirmed as positive, and thus H1 is supported. The total variance for destination loyalty was 63%. The result between destination image and destination loyalty indicates that the standardised regression weight was significant ( $\beta = 0.64$ ,  $t = 7.17$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This result confirm that the path was confirmed as positive, and thus H2 is supported. The study has tested the relationship between service quality performance and destination loyalty and indicates that the standardised regression weight was significant ( $\beta = 0.19$ ,  $t = 2.11$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Lastly, the analysis findings showed that R2 result of 0.63 indicates that 63% of variation in destination loyalty was caused by destination image and 47% of variation in destination image was caused by service quality performance.

## 5. Discussion

The purpose of this research was to investigate the relationship between service quality performance and destination loyalty as well as testing the mediated relationship by destination image. This was implemented in Saudi Arabian Albaha region from local tourists' overview. The findings demonstrated the model of the actual service

quality, which means service quality performance (SQP), had better fit indexes as the original model. The result confirmed the theory of service quality that SERVQUAL can be measured with five dimensions which means this research disagree with result of several empirical studies in the Middle East announced that service quality was better measure with four dimensions rather than the original theory with five dimensions (Al-Tamimi & Al-Amiri, 2003). Thus, the original five dimensions model is consistent with literature of SERVQUAL across service industries for example tourisms and countries such as Saudi Arabia, specifically the Albah region. The analysis showed that the six items of destination image confirmed the significantly of tangible resources and physical environment. Moreover, a significant and direct relationship between service quality performance and destination loyalty.

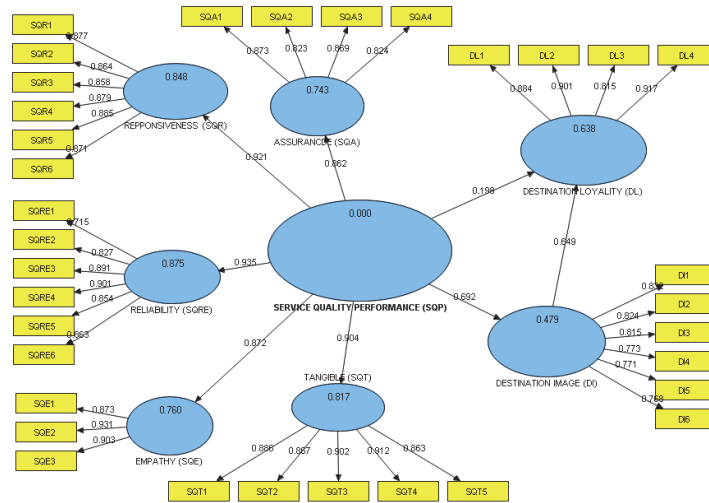


Fig. 2. Variable Coding Tree

The results support all the hypotheses. This can be observed in the five dimensions of service quality that positively and significantly influence the destination image for three, four- and five-star hotels in Saudi Arabia. This means that H1 was fully supported. These findings are a line with the empirical study that support the expectation of a positive relationship between service quality performance and destination image (Faullant et al., 2008; Gallarza et al., 2013). The results also demonstrate that service quality performance has a strong influence on destination image. Destination image had a positive effect on destination loyalty, confirming the empirical evidence for H2. This finding is in a line with the fact that the image of three, four- and five-star hotels, such as good locations, easy access, enjoyment of staying and brilliant service, leads to generating loyalty for the favoured destination to be visited in the future. This will lead to former visitors recommending the hotel as a first choice for a holiday or suggest this destination to other family members and friends. This finding aligns with prior studies, which found a strong relationship within the tourism context (Akroush et al., 2016), and this empirical research supported the results of their study in regard of the service quality performance.

The research has approved that destination image has a full mediation impact on the relationship between service quality performance and destination loyalty, which confirms that H3 had a positive relationship. This study is with a line with previous empirical research (Akroush et al., 2016; Faullant et al., 2008; Kim et al., 2013; Yoon & Uysal, 2005), which approved and confirmed that destination image is an important factor for the relationship between service quality performance and tourist loyalty. This study has examined the direct relationship between service quality performance and destination loyalty and found a positive impact. This has left with no doubt that service quality performance has significant elements in creating destination loyalty. As well as service quality supposed to reinforce a destination image to maintain loyalty for the local and visitors. The study has approved that destination image mediated the relationship between service quality performance and destination loyalty.

Table 3  
Coefficient Paths

Path	Coefficient path ( $\beta$ )	T Statistics	Remark
Service Quality Performance (SQP) → Destination Image (DI)	0.692	13.881**	Supported
Destination Image (DI) → Destination Loyalty (DL)	0.649	7.175**	Supported
Service Quality Performance (SQP) → Destination Loyalty (DL)	0.199	2.117*	Supported

\*\*p value is significant at 0.01

\*p value is significant at 0.05

From the previous discussion on tourism, firms have to pay attention to the destination image as a key factor between service quality performance and destination loyalty for tourist areas, such as the Albaha region. Nevertheless, the unique relationship that tourists have with a local destination like Saudi might be based on several different ideas including tourist's loyalty to a destination when revisiting. The first kind is vertical, which is loyalty to service providers on different levels of the tourism ladder such as travel agents and airlines. The second is horizontal, which is loyalty to service providers on the same level of the tourism ladder such as hotels. The third is experiential loyalty that pertains to the holiday style favoured by the tourist (McKercher et al., 2012). In a more specialised tourist market, there is the promise of excitement and adventure for the tourist who is looking for that little bit extra (Buckley, 2012).

## 6. Conclusion

### 6.1 Managerial and Practical Implications

The study has drawn the attention of practitioners and managers to the importance of the relationship between service quality performance and destination loyalty, as well as destination image playing a mediating role. The research results offered understanding in terms of destination loyalty within three, four- and five-star hotels operating in Saudi Arabia, specifically in the Albaha region. Thus, hotels should pay more attention to the strategy of attracting more customers to their business and add competitive advantage to the services they provide. This means that hotels need to focus on service quality performance as a key antecedent to destination image and destination loyalty.

The findings confirmed all the hypotheses, which means that the Albaha region should create their own brand image in order to make the area a more attractive and interesting destination to visit for all the locals and even international tourists. Destination image offers visual identity on how to develop destination brand and positioning strategy. This strategy helps all the practitioners and managers in the region to adopt a different kind of brand image that helps to create a suitable identity towards the target destination.

This research contributes to different areas of literature such as service marketing and tourism by investigating service quality performance, destination image and loyalty. To the best of our knowledge, there has been no investigation of how service quality performance affect destination image and loyalty. This study has provided a better understanding of the perspectives of local tourists towards destination image and loyalty. This study has given a wider point of view to the managers and practitioners to switch from the traditional firms to the contemporary organisation and follow the ambitious of the government's Vision 2030 project. The vision has a viable and promising strategy for branding and positioning impact on destination loyalty in the tourism sector that would help hotels to attract more tourists worldwide.

### 6.2 Limitation and Further Research Direction

As limitations are in the nature of any research, it is wise to consider the limitations of the work. Limitations can be identified in two fields: conceptual and methodological. The logic of social science studies always draws attention to the issue of what variables should or could have been involved in the study. This research is no exception, and the number of possible variables is endless, given the deep history of research into organisational psychology and tourists behaviours. For instance, social norms, habits and personality characteristics might also influence behaviour, as well as time, skills and cooperation of others (Hartnell et al., 2011). This study investigated service quality performance as an antecedent construct of future research that may examine perceived value. Moreover, destination image was the only mediation in this study, though satisfaction might be another area of interest to study as a potential mediator. Quality control initiatives may be worth investigating between service quality performance and destination image and loyalty. Given the cultural concerns in Saudi Arabia, such as the conservative nature of the traditional Saudi family had led to a reduced sample size owing to the small number of female respondents. It is also worth to apply this study in other regions of the Saudi Arabia, such North KSA with similar travel destinations.

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