



THE INFLUENCE OF COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES ON TOURIST ADVOCACY AND REVISIT INTENTION: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF COMMERCIAL FRIENDSHIP IN TOURISM

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Abstract. Mountain tourism has become an increasingly dynamic form of travel, offering not only natural scenery but also authentic interaction with local communities. In this context, cooperation between tourists and tourism businesses plays an important role in shaping emotional connection that contribute to long term loyalty. This study aims to examine the direct effects of collaboration on tourist advocacy and revisit intention, as well as its association with commercial friendship as a relational outcome rather than as a mediating mechanism. A quantitative explanatory research design was applied to test the hypothesized relationship among collaboration, commercial friendship, advocacy, and revisit intention. The findings demonstrate that collaboration significantly influences commercial friendship, indicating that cooperative experiences contribute to stronger emotional bonds between tourists and service providers. The results further confirm that collaboration directly and positively affects both advocacy and revisit intention. Additionally, commercial friendship shows a strong positive relationship with these loyalty related outcomes, reinforcing its relevance as key relational construct in mountain tourism settings. Overall, the study highlights that emotional connections formed through collaborative interaction can meaningfully shape tourist behavior, encouraging recommendations and repeat visits. These insights contribute to the ongoing discourse on sustainable and experience based tourism by emphasizing the importance of relationship oriented tourism practices. Practical implications are offered for destination managers and policymakers to strengthen tourist loyalty through participatory and human centered engagement strategies.

Keywords: Collaborative activities, Commercial Friendship, Advocacy, Revisit Intention.

1. Introduction.

Mountain tourism has become one of the most developed and meaningful forms of travel in recent years. Natural beauty, cool air, and the unique culture of the surrounding communities make destinations such as Bromo, Rinjani, Dieng Plateau, and Toba Caldera particularly attractive to tourists (Events, 2024). In addition to offering natural scenery, mountain tourism also provides emotional experiences that connect tourists more deeply with nature and local life. Amid the rising trend of experiential tourism, the challenge faced by destination managers is how to maintain tourist engagement and build long-term loyalty without compromising environmental sustainability.

The study (Liang et al., 2024) emphasized the importance of social relationships in shaping tourist behavior. In their study explains that the type of relationship that can significantly change consumer behavior is a personal social relationship, specifically friendship. These findings contribute significantly to understanding consumer behavior, but they have limitations because they still focus on the general context of the relationship between consumers and brand relationship, not on the context of tourism, which involves

direct and emotional social interaction. Thus, there is a research gap in explaining how friendship-like relationships can influence tourist behavior, especially in the context of community-based destinations such as mountain tourism. In response to these imitations, this study proposes the concept of commercial friendship as a relevant form of social relationship between tourists and service providers in mountain destinations. Commercial friendship is understood as an emotional relationship formed through mutual trust, closeness, and personal attention that develops from non-transactional interactions (Price et al., 1999). Through collaborative activities such as nature conservation, joint cultural activities, or community-based tourism experiences, this relationship can grow into an emotional bond that impacts positive tourist behavior. Several studies in the last five years also confirm that collaborative interactions and emotional relationships increase tourists' intention to revisit and advocate for the destination (He et al., 2018; Moon & Han, 2019; Zhou et al., 2025). However, research that specifically places commercial friendship as a mediator between collaborative activities and tourist loyalty behavior is still limited, especially in the context of mountain tourism in Indonesia. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of collaborative activities on tourist advocacy and revisit intention with commercial friendship as a mediating variable. This approach is expected to contribute theoretically by expanding the understanding of social relationships in tourism marketing, as well as practically by helping mountain destination managers build strong emotional relationships with tourists. Through a relationship based tourism management approach, the results of this study are expected to encourage increased tourist loyalty while strengthening the sustainability of mountain tourism destinations in Indonesia.

Relationship Marketing Theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Parish et al., 2015)) is a grand theory that coordinates the interrelationships between collaborative activities, commercial friendship, tourist advocacy, and revisit intention. This theory emphasizes that long-term relationships between service providers and consumers are built through trust, commitment, and valuable emotional interactions. In the context of mountain tourism, collaborative activities such as nature conservation and cultural activities create social interaction spaces that foster a sense of closeness and trust between tourists and service providers. Commercial friendship then becomes a tangible form of relational bonding, where transactional relationships develop into emotional bonds that strengthen tourists' commitment to the destination (Price et al., 1999). This relationship encourages loyal behavior such as tourist advocacy and revisit intention because tourists feel a personal connection and have positive experiences that they want to share (Kim & Kim, 2021). Thus, RMT integrates all research variables into a single conceptual framework that explains that collaborative interactions form emotional relationships (commercial friendship), which ultimately increase tourist loyalty to the destination

2. Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method to analyze the relationship between collaborative activities and advocacy and revisit intention, with commercial friendship as a mediating variable. This method was chosen to obtain a clear picture and analyze the relationship between variables at a specific point in time (Capili, 2022). The research data used is cross-sectional data, which means that the data was collected at a specific point in time. This approach emphasizes the importance of

obtaining a representative sample so that the research results can describe the population condition descriptively without manipulating variables (Capili, 2022). The population in this study is tourists who have experience using services in the mountain tourism industry. Mountain tourism was chosen because it is one of the favorite destinations, especially in Indonesia, which has a very diverse natural mountain potential. The sample criteria required include being at least 17 years old; having visited a mountain tourism destination at least once in the last 12 months; and being willing to complete the questionnaire. The minimum sample size was determined based on SEM requirements, with 26 indicators, resulting in an estimated 32 parameters. To meet the minimum standard, this number is multiplied by 5. Therefore, a minimum of (32 x 5) or 165 respondents are required. This means that although the targeted sample size matches the minimum requirement, the study still aims to collect 165 responses to ensure the results are more reliable and to anticipate any invalid or unusable data, which is considered sufficient for SEM analysis. The research instrument uses a Semantic Differential scale to measure respondents' attitudes toward the constructs being studied. The data is analyzed using Covariance-Based Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM) with the help of the AMOS application. The CB-SEM technique was chosen because it provides a more comprehensive and in-depth model analysis.

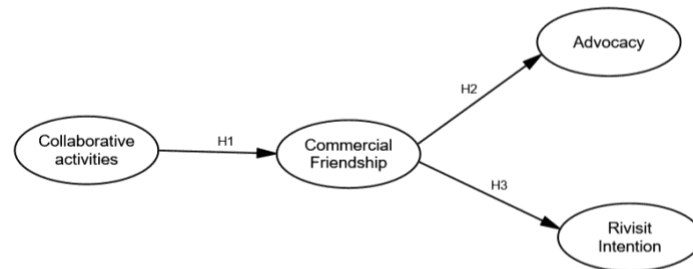


Fig 1. Research Model

From the research structural model, all item measurements were adapted from the literature. The following is the operationalization of the variables used in the study:

Table 1. Variable Operationalization

Variable	Indicators	Label	Source
<u>Commercial Friendship</u>	Emotional Approach	CF1	(Schau et al., 2009)
	Personal Attention	CF2	
	trust	CF3	
	Perception that the relationship with the provider is more than just a transaction	CF4	
<u>Collaborative Activities</u>	Ability to remember customer preferences	IS1	(Gwinner et al., 1998)
	tailoring services to needs	IS2	

Variable	Indicators	Label	Source
	Giving special attention compared to other customers	IS3	
Advocacy	Willingness to recommend	CI1	(Brown et al., 2005)
	Sharing positive experiences	CI2	
	Defending the provider	CI3	
Revisit Intention	Repurchase intention	IC1	(Han & Hyun, 2015; Rather & Sharma, 2017)
	Preference for the same provider	IC2	
	Willingness to become a regular customer	IC3	

Source: Research Result, 2025

3. Result

This study was conducted on 165 respondents. Respondent characteristics were divided into several groups, starting from Gender, Age, and Frequency.

Table 2. Characteristic Responden

Characteristics	Attribute	Total %	
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Gender	Male	92	56,00%
	Female	73	44,00%
Age	18 - 24 years	102	62,00%
	25 - 34 years	43	26,00%
	35 - 44 years	12	12%
Frequency of Mountain Tourist Visitors in the Last Year	1 time	41	25,00%
	2 - 3 time	66	40%
	4 - 5 time	30	18,00%
	> 5 time	28	17,00%

In this study, 165 respondents who had visited mountain destinations and participated in filling out the questionnaire were obtained. Based on gender, 56% or 92 people were male, while 44% or 73 people were female. Based on age, the majority of respondents were in the 18-24 age group, accounting for 62% or 102 people, followed by the 25-34 age group, accounting for 26% or 43 people, and the 35-44 age group, accounting for 12% or 20 people. In terms of the frequency of visits to the mountains in the past year, 25% or 41 people visited only once, 40% or 66 people visited two to three times, 18% or 30 people visited four to five times, and 17% or 28 people visited more than five times in a year. Overall, the majority of respondents in this study were men aged 18 to 24 who liked to visit mountains two to three times a year. These findings show that young people, especially men, have a high level of interest and participation in mountain tourism, making them a potential segment for the development of natural tourism destination promotion in Indonesia.

This study uses covariance-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS software. There are several processes that must be carried out, starting with building a model to create a conceptual framework based on the research hypotheses that have been estimated. After obtaining the required data, it is time to check to ensure that no data is missing and that the data collected meets the criteria for SEM analysis. Next,

after ensuring that the data is complete and meets the criteria for SEM , testing can be carried out, namely validity and reliability testing to determine and ensure that the data tested is in accordance with the model. Finally, if the test results show validity and reliability in accordance with the model fit, the next step can be carried out, which is to analyze the significance of how the influence between variables is in accordance with the hypothesis (Hair Jr et al., 2021).

In SEM analysis, a data normality test is conducted beforehand to ensure that the data obtained at the beginning follows a normal distribution (Hair Jr et al., 2021). Based on the analysis results obtained, the normality test with a value of -0.324 shows that there is no critical ratio value in multivariate that exceeds ± 2.51 . Thus, the data in this study has a normal distribution and is suitable for further analysis. After conducting the normality test, the next step is to test for outliers in univariate and multivariate data. The purpose of testing for outliers is to avoid bias that could affect the results of the study (Hair Jr et al., 2021). The output results show that the minimum and maximum Z-Scores are within the range of ± 3 , namely -2.360 and 2.241 , indicating that the data used does not have univariate outliers. In testing for univariate outliers, a comparison was made between the chi-square table value and the Mahalanobis distance output value. The Mahalanobis value was 28.436, and the chi-square table value was 77.315. This study did not have multivariate outliers. Thus, the data used in this study met the criteria for normality and were based on outliers.

Table 3. Measurement, Loadings,CR, and VE

Constructs	Indicators	LF	CR	VE	Description
CF	CF1	0,873	0,925	0,757	Reliable
	CF2	0,815			
	CF3	0,896			
	CF4	0,896			
CA	CA1	0,894	0,920	0,794	Reliable
	CA2	0,919			
	CA3	0,859			
AD	AD1	0,885	0,944	0,850	Reliable
	AD2	0,94			
	AD3	0,94			
RI	RI1	0,905	0,936	0,831	Reliable
	RI2	0,893			
	RI3	0,936			

Source: research Result, 2025

After conducting the SEM test, the next step is to test validity and reliability. Validity refers to the extent to which the measurement can define the intended concept, while reliability focuses on the consistency of the measurement. Based on Table 3, it can be seen that all research indicators have factor loadings greater than 0.40. This indicates

that the indicators in each variable accurately represent the intended construct in the study. For reliability testing, the variance extracted (VE) value for each variable must be greater than 0.50, while the Construct Reliability (CR) value for each variable must be greater than 0.70. The results of the analysis show that all VE scores for the research variables exceed 0.50, and the CR value for each variable is greater than 0.70.

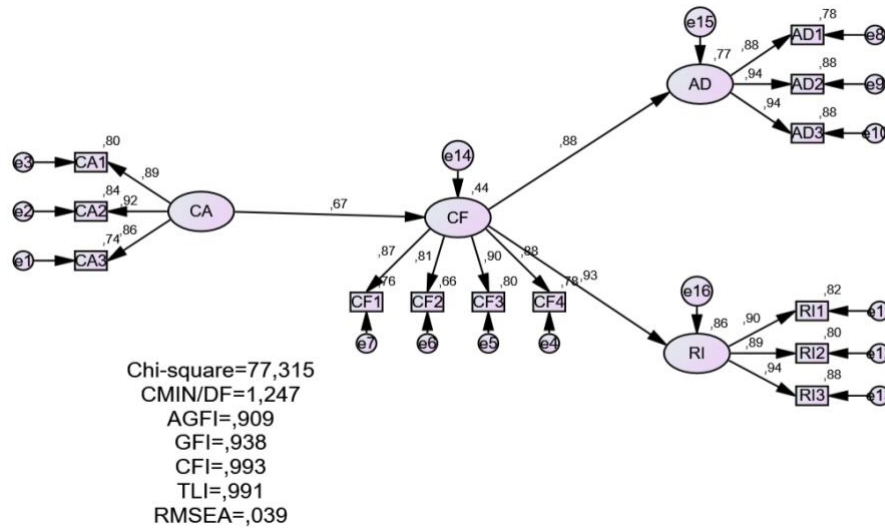


Fig 2. Research Framework

Source: Research Result, 2025

Figure 2. shows an SEM model that illustrates how CA influence CF, and how CF strongly affect AD and RI. Each indicator has high loading value, indicating that the measurement performs well. The model's fit indices are also in a good range, meaning the relationships among the variables can be considered valid and reliable.

Table 4. Goodness of fit (GoF)-AMOS MODEL

Goodness of Fit	Hasil Analisis	Cut of Value	Evaluasi Model
Chi-Square	77,315	Expected to be small	Marjinal Fit
CMIN/DF	1.247	< 2.000	Fit
AGFI	0,909	> 0.90	Fit
GFI	0,938	> 0.90	Fit
TLI	0,991	> 0.95	Fit
CFI	0,993	> 0.95	Fit
RMSEA	0,39	< 0.80	Fit

Source: Research Result, 2025

Model feasibility testing was conducted by evaluating the goodness of fit value. This is described in Table 4. The low chi-square value indicates that the SEM model created is a good fit. Not only that, the CMIN/DF value meets the acceptance criteria, with a result of less than 2.000. Furthermore, AGFI and GFI have values that meet the criteria, which are greater than 0.90. The TLI and CFI values have results that meet the

criteria, which are greater than 0.95. As for RMSEA, it has results that meet the criteria of less than 0.80, which indicates that the model fits the degree of freedom in the model. Based on the results of the analysis, the RMSEA value meets the established criteria. Thus, it can be concluded that the research model used is suitable for further analysis.

Hypothesis testing was conducted to analyze the relationship between latent variables in the research model (Hair Jr et al., 2021). In Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), hypothesis testing was conducted with path analysis using IBM AMOS 24 software. Hypotheses were tested based on critical ratios (critical ratio) or t-values and p-values. If the p-value is less than 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted, and the relationship between variables can be seen and the value for the t-value is positive or negative (Hair Jr et al., 2021).

Tabel 5. Hypotesis Testing

Influence Relationship	Estimate	C.R	P	Decision
Commercial Friendship <--- Collaborative Activities	0.658	8.675	0.00	Accepted
Advocacy <---- Commercial Friendship	0.905	13.226	0.00	Accepted
Repurchase Intention <---- Commercial Friendship	1.027	15.383	0.00	Accepted

Source: Research Result, 2025

Table 5 shows the results of hypothesis testing that indicate the relationship between several variables. There is a significant relationship between Utilitarian Value and Information Convenience with an estimated value of 0.229 and a p-value of 0.007. In addition, the relationship between Impulsive Buying and Utilitarian Value shows a significant relationship with an estimated value of 0.314 and a p-value of 0.007.

4. Discussion

The first research results show that collaborative activities have a positive effect on commercial friendship. Tourist involvement in joint activities, such as nature conservation or local culture, can foster a sense of togetherness and trust with service providers. These collaborative social interactions make tourists feel part of the destination community, so that the relationships that are formed develop into emotional closeness. This finding is in line with research conducted by (Dickinger & Kolomojets, 2024), which states that experience-based collaboration strengthens social closeness in natural destinations. Theoretically, this research expands on relationship marketing by showing that experience-based collaboration in natural destinations can form the basis for emotional bonds between tourists and service providers. Mountain tourism managers need to facilitate participatory activities such as environmental conservation so that tourists feel directly involved. Commercial Friendship has been proven to have a positive effect on advocacy. Emotional closeness and trust encourage tourists to recommend mountain destinations to others. Close social relationships foster pride and a desire to share positive experiences (Kim & Kim, 2021). This study theoretically reinforces tourist loyalty by emphasizing that emotional relationships play a major role in shaping advocacy

behavior in nature-based destinations. With these results, destination managers need to maintain warm interpersonal interactions, such as empathetic approaches and unique communication, to encourage tourists to become natural promoters of the destination. Commercial friendship has a positive effect on revisit intention, as evidenced by social relationships filled with attention and trust that create comfort, encouraging tourists to return. In mountain tourism, emotional bonds with local communities strengthen long-term loyalty (Fitriani et al., 2025). The results theoretically show that expanding emotional bonding in nature tourism emphasizes that social relationships are an important factor in revisit intentions. Based on these findings, mountain tourism managers need to maintain post-visit relationships through various communities or repeated experiences that involve tourists personally.

5. Conclusion

This study reveals that tourist involvement in collaborative activities plays a critical role in shaping deeper relational outcomes. Specifically, higher levels of co-creation strengthen commercial friendship by fostering trust, mutual understanding, and emotional closeness between tourist and service providers. This enhanced relational quality subsequently drives stronger advocacy behaviors such as recommending the destination to others and increases revisit intention. The findings indicate that loyalty in natural tourism destination is not solely determined by functional service performance but is largely influenced by the emotional bonds developed through interactive and collaborative experiences.

6. Limitations and Future Research

This study is limited to mountain tourism and uses a cross-sectional approach, so it cannot describe changes in tourist behavior over time. Further research is recommended to expand the object to various types of destinations and use a longitudinal or mixed-method approach to understand the dynamics of tourist relationships and emotions in greater depth.

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