



FACTORS INFLUENCING BRAND IMAGE, RETENTION AND TRAVEL MOTIVATION OF MATI CITY AS INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S DESTINATION

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Abstract:

This study investigated the level of factors affecting brand image, retention, and travel motivation on the recognized indigenous people's destination, the significant difference in terms of profile, and the significant effect of brand image on tourist retention and travel motivation. The data were obtained from 400 respondents. The results determined a very high level of perceived quality, brand awareness, brand loyalty, and brand satisfaction factors that affect brand image. The service quality, physical surroundings, customer satisfaction, and loyalty show very high factors that affect tourist retention. The travel motivation is highly associated with the indicators of cultural experience, social contact, adventure, relaxation, and novelty seeking. There's a significant difference between brand image, tourists' retention, and travel motivation in terms of age, location and economic status, while no significant difference in terms of gender. Moreover, brand image significantly impacts both tourist retention and travel motivation. This study has concluded that brand image significantly affects tourist retention and travel motivation. A well-established brand image raises familiarity with the destination, increases trust and loyalty, and boosts the likelihood of tourists returning for more.

Keywords: destination brand image, tourist retention, travel motivation, cultural destination

1. Introduction

The City of Mati is noted for its magnificent scenery and many gorgeous resorts, as well as for attracting many travelers. Still, some tourists may need help to visit and understand what Mati has to offer because of some factors, especially the need to give importance to

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and highlight the City LGU in terms of cultural and IP destinations. On the other hand, locals, especially residents, tend to stay due to its tourist spots, culture-based branding image, IP destinations, and travel incentives. Because of this, Mati needs to sustain its tourist retention, branding image, and travel motivation as an IP destination. Typically, "*customer retention*" refers to evaluating a particular service or good after use or experience, contrasting pre-purchase expectations with perceptions of performance (Kim and Lee, 2018). Because of this, monitoring customer retention is an excellent approach to determining if consumers received the same level of service as expected and is crucial for developing strong customer relationships (Cui, 2019).

Consumer behavior is influenced by brand image, which is the general opinion and sentiment of customers about brands. According to Huang (2019), the process of mutual communication between brand stimulation and customer perception is known as brand image. Tourists are encouraged and persuaded to visit various locations that offer cultural tourism based on their requirements and interests, and the characteristics of a destination site (Agnes and Gamueda 2019)

Motivation is one of the main factors influencing a tourist's decision to visit a location or place. In the modern world, push and pull variables that affect travel decisions are used to persuade travelers to visit specific locations by the plans of the Mati Council for Culture and the Arts (MCCA), which will promote the Culture and arts of the City of Mati. Indigenous Peoples Concerns technical staff stated that in addition to having stunning beaches and bays, Mati also has much to offer in terms of culture and the arts, particularly concerning the Mandaya culture. The City Government of Mati wants to create tourist attractions related to indigenous culture and art in 26 barangays.

Cultural tourism has undoubtedly seen the fastest growth among all types of tourism during the past several decades; because of this, visitors and researchers are interested in this section. A city may attract more tourists by enhancing its cultural material legacy (Hernández et al., 2021). Making continuous improvements to administrating these assets is crucial due to the intense rivalry for tourists among places with heritage and cultural monuments, particularly UNESCO-listed sites. By the turn of the 20th century, these long-existing market segments began to take shape. Unquestionably, a significant cultural and heritage offer enhances the perception of the location and influences consumer choice favorably (Pérez-Calderón et al., 2020). This motivated the scholars to study and examine passengers' loyalty to sites with material cultural legacy. It studies the loyalty of visitors to a destination with cultural heritage sites to produce results that may be utilized to improve the administration of the destination.

Also, the findings of this study may help the academic community by supplying more details and considering the push and pull aspects associated with cultural tourism. For the local population, the study's findings may help them better understand how to maintain their traditions and culture and promote their tourist attractions, which will improve and expand their economic standing. Future scholars may refer to this paper to help them understand the relationship between the factors that motivate people and the

benefits of cultural tourism. Giving the City LGU little consideration and attention in terms of cultural and IP destinations hinders development, links between the indigenous people and government, and the capability to deal with the issues and concerns of its community, implement policies, and exert influence over its communities. The statements above claim that the research challenge is whether it seeks to understand how Mati City's potential to be identified as an IP Destination is impacted by branding image, tourist retention, and travel motivation. Despite this, there needs to be more academic research on this topic, and only some studies specifically explore the influence of these tourist variables on the relationship between cultural tourism and transformational effect. Future researchers may also resort to this study to explain the association between the motivating variables and the effects of cultural tourism. Specifically, it is guided by the following objectives: to know the level of factors affecting the brand image in terms of perceived quality, brand awareness, brand loyalty, and brand satisfaction, to know the level of factors affecting tourist retention in terms of service quality, physical surroundings, customer satisfaction, and loyalty. To know the level of factors affecting travel motivation in terms of cultural experience, social contact, novelty seeking, adventure, and relaxation, to assess the significant difference between brand image, tourists' retention, and travel motivation of Mati City as an IP destination in terms of respondent's profile, and to measure the significant effect of brand image to tourist retention and travel motivation.

2. Review of Related Literature and Studies

For destinations trying to build their brand image, the primary qualities of the tourism product provide specific difficulties. Firstly, the impact of tourism is inconsequential. Second, the commodity cannot be preserved because it is perishable. Third, it is a composite commodity, which makes it challenging to manage the image produced. This means that several suppliers are involved in the production process. The indicators include perceived quality, brand awareness, brand satisfaction, and brand loyalty. (Coskun, 2021)

2.1 Brand Image

2.1.1 Perceived Quality

According to Ahn et al. (2020), in studies on visitor habits, perceived quality has been mentioned frequently as a key idea. Researchers defined the perceived quality of visitors as a general assessment based on the emotions that tourists experience throughout their trip. In other words, visitors may assess and recall their experience in a straightforward positive/negative categorical style, in which they still see the many aspects independently. A location's different qualities are rejected in the overall perception of quality.

2.1.2 Brand Awareness

According to Freire, Gertner and Gertner (2022), cultural appropriation has garnered significant public awareness due to the growing debate on this topic on social networking sites and news outlets. A wide range of circumstances has been perceived as cultural appropriation. A rising number of opponents contend that travel destinations in particular and destination branding abroad have taken advantage of native peoples for tourist entertainment purposes.

2.1.3 Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is essential for a location's emotional attachment and affective perception. It improves knowledge of brand-place linkages and pinpoints important boundary constraints. When creating destination marketing, tourism marketers must consider cultural distance and manage perceptions of the authenticity of local companies in order to promote place attachment (Liu & Wei, 2020).

2.1.4 Brand Satisfaction

A tourism product may sum up the emotional and physical satisfaction it offers travelers as they make their way to their final destination. The facilities and services targeted at tourists comprise the bulk of the offering. It is a composite good that combines a nation's tourism attractions, transportation, lodging, and entertainment to produce satisfied customers (Pathak and Paudel, 2019). The brand's reputation heavily influences visitor satisfaction, according to Helmy, Nassar, and Osama (2018). In order to keep customers from leaving, the business industry attractions engage in customer retention strategies and tactics. Customer retention programs aim to assist businesses in keeping many potential consumers, frequently through brand and customer loyalty programs. Customer retention measures how devoted a customer is to your goods or services. As a result, the indicators include service quality, physical surroundings, customer satisfaction, and loyalty.

2.2 Tourist Retention

2.2.1 Service Quality

The traveler's choice or process while selecting a vacation place is influenced by the amenities and service quality, which are the two critical components and factors. There are numerous accessible services and facilities that travelers can use to travel to a specific tourist location. Railways, roads, aviation, hotels, accommodations, restaurants, and cruises are just a few of the amenities and services that assist travelers in getting where they are going quickly. Providing excellent customer service to visitors could encourage their loyalty to a specific destination (Younis, 2020).

2.2.2 Physical Surroundings

As stated by Helmy, Nassar, and Osama (2018), from the perspective of the consumer, the setting plays a crucial role in providing any services. What is around the client affects

his choices and how he responds to the services offered. It also has an impact on his mental and emotional state. Managers spend a lot of time and effort creating environments that influence customers emotionally and boost their purchasing power. Sight, hearing, smell, and touch are the primary environmental senses. Additionally, in another definition, there are additional elements, including structures, swimming pools, dining establishments, and green spaces, that have a significant influence on visitor retention. One of the factors that will affect consumer retention is the physical surroundings of the attraction.

2.2.3 Customer Satisfaction

As stated by Huang, Lee, and Chen (2019), customer satisfaction is crucial to a company's development and progress. It is significant because it influences repurchase intentions and shapes a company's brand image (Basari and Shamsudin, 2020). Customers who are happy with their purchases are more likely to make more purchases and tell other people about their pleasant experiences, which helps the business's financial situation.

2.2.4 Loyalty

By attempting to increase a customer's loyalty to a location or a brand, retention strategies aim to reduce consumer loss. As a result, we may say that customer retention refers to the significant measures a company or organization takes in response to problems in order to decrease the number of consumers who leave. (Helmy, Nassar, and Osama, 2018). A tourist's primary travel motivation in engaging in cultural tourism is to learn, explore, experience, and enjoy both culturally tangible and intangible attractions and products in a travel destination (Richards, 2018). The market for cultural tourism is becoming increasingly saturated with new attractions, cultural routes, and heritage sites, and the demands of tourists are changing quickly, placing cultural tourism attractions in a highly competitive setting. As a result, the indicators include cultural experience, social contact, novelty seeking, adventure, and relaxation.

2.3 Travel Motivation

2.3.1 Cultural Experience

The cultural sector in tourism is an essential component of the tourism industry for many attractions; however, more needs to be recognized regarding the attributes that influence the overall cultural tourism experiences. Richards (2018) stated that there had been a transition from a quantitative approach to economic expansion based on the cultural tourism market to qualitative shifts in nature with that demand, with a particular emphasis on the growing pursuit of cultural experiences. As a result, cultural and historical tourism experiences emerge as a conceivably essential element of unforgettable tourist experiences at the destination level.

2.3.2 Social Contact

The absence of social contact has become one of the main stress factors during lockdowns caused by the pandemic (Rudert and Janke, 2023). According to Van Lange and Columbus (2021), social contact keeps people mentally healthy even with strangers since it involves many different activities, such as behavioral inhibition, timing, and mentalizing. They also believe it is wise to interact quickly with strangers during COVID-19, even if it is only a smile.

2.3.3 Novelty Seeking

The search for diversity is implied by novelty, a key trend in tourism, which is an escape from daily life while encountering something different and unusual (Mitas and Bastiaansen, 2018). According to recent research, novel encounters can stimulate intense feelings and boost attention, increasing the experience's retention (Skavronskaya, 2020). Tourists who participate in low-novelty events (hedonic experiences) are likely to promote the experience to others but are unlikely to return.

2.3.4 Adventure

According to Mackenzie (2018), outdoor adventures boost internal motivation, excitement, and consciousness in pursuing physical activity. One of the industries most impacted by the pandemic was tourism. Although it would take between 2.5 and 4 years for tourism to reach 2019 levels, it is anticipated that demand for outdoor and natural tourism activities will increase (UNWTO, 2021). Adventure sports tourism promotes hedonic, eudemonic, and cognitive well-being by gratifying fundamental psychological needs and fostering a connection with nature (Mackenzie, Hodge, and Filep, 2021). As a result, studies show that the reasons why people engage in adventure tourism differ depending on both the internal demands of the individual and the external factors that influence their choice of location. The main driving forces for this tourism were emotion from engaging in it, mental and physical relaxation, social contact, and love of the environment (Carvache-Franco, 2022).

2.3.5 Relaxation

People choose to travel in order to enjoy physical and mental relaxation. The safety issue and fear are the main factors. Fear causes much tension; thus, to feel calm, one needs to be in a different environment that is safe, stress-free, and pleasant. People are looking for this when they choose to travel internationally in post-COVID-19 times (Wiese, 2022).

3. Methods of Study

A descriptive design and a quantitative method were used in the study. The researchers utilized a survey questionnaire to collect data. Purposive sampling was used by the researchers, which is a non-probability sampling method in which the researcher uses their authority to select variables for the population sample. The entire sampling process

is dependent on the researcher's assessment and understanding of the frame of reference (Crossman, 2019). A purposive sample is a non-probability sample chosen depending on target population characteristics as well as the study's objectives. Furthermore, the research instrument was given to the respondents to share their willingness to answer, and the researchers ensured that the data collected was 100% retrievable.

The participants for this study are the 400 people who visit Mati City for cultural tourism. This research ascertains how cultural tourism affects their decisions to revisit Mati City. In Table 1, the data distribution about gender, age, location, and economic status is shown. Most identified responders are female, between the ages of 19 and 25, and in the middle class.

Table 1: Profile of 400 respondents included in the survey

Profile Variables	Group	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	139	34.8
	Female	223	55.8
	LGBTQ+	38	9.5
Age	15-18	37	9.3
	19-25	274	68.5
	26-35	48	12.0
	36-45	27	6.8
	46-55	13	3.3
	56 above	1	.3
Location	Mati	267	66.8
	Domestic (Visayas or Luzon)	37	9.3
	Mindanao	90	22.5
	International	6	1.5
Economic Status	Lower Class	172	43.0
	Middle Class	223	55.8
	Upper Class	5	1.3

This research utilized the adapted questionnaire from Kim and Lee (2018) about the branding image of a tourist destination, Helmy, Nassar, & Osama (2018) for tourist retention, in assessing the tourists' travel motivation. This study utilized an interval scale for brand image, retention, and travel motivation. In evaluating the level of factors affecting Brand Image, the questions come from the study of Kim and Lee (2018). The following metrics were used in this research: For brand image, tourist retention and travel motivation, the 5-point Likert-scale from 1 = very low to 5 = very high were used. After the topic was selected, objectives were established. The researchers then chose their research participants for the survey. In conducting the study, the researchers followed these steps: The researchers formulated a survey questionnaire and sought guidance from the research adviser and research coordinator. After the survey questionnaire had been validated, the researchers wrote a formal letter requesting approval to conduct the study in Mati City Tourism. After the requisition had been approved, the researchers moved on to the next procedure and went to Mati City to gather data via a survey questionnaire, which also sent a letter of permission to the respondents. Following

consent, the research team elucidated the purpose of the study to the chosen informants, and each respondent met the criteria. The data was gathered by the researchers using a questionnaire that included the demographic details and responses of the survey participants. Researchers personally managed the survey questionnaire, checked and tallied the data. The researchers sent the data to the statistician for statistical analysis after tallying.

In the statistical treatment of data, data was collected and analyzed to obtain the research objectives. The tools below are used to determine the data in this study, which will be used to interpret and analyze the data.

- Mean. This was used to determine and measure the tourists' cultural activities experience.
- Regression Analysis. This was implemented to see how significant IP destinations, cultural activities, and perceptions are for tourists to revisit the city.
- Frequency. A data analysis tool was used to determine what favorable item in a questionnaire is for the entire number of respondents.
- Analysis of Variance ANOVA was used to analyze and determine the differences in the level of tourist travel motivation and cultural activities experiences, along with analyzing its profile and tourism characteristics.
- T-test. A statistical test called a t-test was employed to evaluate the outcomes of two populations. It was frequently employed in concept testing to establish whether a procedure or treatment truly affects the population of interest or whether two groups vary from each other. To compare brand perception, customer loyalty, and travel incentives, this study used a t-test.

4. Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of Data

4.1 Brand Image

The data obtained in Table 2 are the factors affecting the brand image in Mati City. The overall mean score of the variables affecting brand image is 4.22, which is very high, with a standard deviation of 0.578. This indicates that the majority of respondents had a favourable assessment of the overall quality or brand of the actual product or service. Visitors to Mati City are well aware of the city's IP destination and are really pleased with the quality of the city's tourism-related products. Finally, responses demonstrate that respondents are devoted to Mati City as their IP destination and are fully aware of it as such.

Table 2: The level of factors affecting brand image

Indicators	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
Perceived Quality	4.43	0.628	Very High
Brand Awareness	3.84	1.127	High
Brand Loyalty	4.20	0.827	Very High
Brand Satisfaction	4.43	0.559	Very High
Overall	4.22	0.578	Very High

4.2 Tourist Retention

The overall mean score of the variables determining tourists' retention is 4.32, very high, with a standard deviation of 0.457. Data shows respondents on the level of factors affecting tourist retention is very high. This means that visitor respondents see how well a tourist destination meets their standards in terms of services and tangible products. Additionally, it is demonstrated that tourists have enjoyed Mati City's cleanliness and architectural beauty. Last but not least, respondents are happy with Mati City's IP destination and are eager to go there often to choose an attraction site.

Table 3: The level of factors affecting tourist retention

Indicators	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
Service Quality	4.27	0.583	Very High
Physical Surroundings	4.35	0.551	Very High
Customer Satisfaction	4.35	0.552	Very High
Loyalty	4.30	0.633	Very High
Overall	4.32	0.457	Very High

4.3 Travel Motivation

The factors influencing travel motivation in Mati City are shown in the data under Table 4. With a standard deviation of 0.470 and an overall mean score of 4.40, the factors influencing travel motivation are very highly correlated. This shows that most survey participants have a favorable view of the major motivational aspects. In this regard, tourists have a strong desire to go to Mati City.

Table 4: Level of factors affecting travel motivation

Indicators	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
Cultural Experience	4.42	0.580	Very High
Social Contract	4.50	0.561	Very High
Adventure	4.27	0.903	Very High
Relaxation	4.31	0.690	Very High
Novelty Seeking	4.49	0.584	Very High
Overall	4.40	0.470	Very High

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results show the significant differences between brand image, tourists' retention, and travel motivation of Mati City as an IP destination. A one-way ANOVA was performed to evaluate the extent of brand image, tourists' retention, and travel motivation in terms of the respondents' profiles. The results revealed

statistically significant differences in brand image, tourists' retention, and travel motivation between the two groups, remembered at the $p < 0.05$ level for the three groups. Table 5, according to respondents' gender, shows that the ANOVA was not significant at the 0.05 level [$F(2, 397) = .057, p = .945$].

Table 6, according to respondent's age was significant at 0.05 level [$F(5, 394) = 3.862, p = .002^*$], while table 7 shows according to respondent's location was significant at 0.05 level [$F(3, 396) = 20.648, p = .000^*$], and in table 8 according to respondent's economic status was significant at 0.05 level [$F(2, 397) = 11.976, p = .000^*$].

Table 5: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results show the differences in the extent of brand image, tourists' retention, and travel motivation of Mati City as an IP destination when analyzed by gender

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Brand Image	Between Groups	.370	2	.185	.551	.577
	Within Groups	133.151	397	.335		
	Total	133.520	399			
Retention	Between Groups	.144	2	.072	.343	.710
	Within Groups	83.213	397	.210		
	Total	83.357	399			
Travel Motivation	Between Groups	.056	2	.028	.125	.882
	Within Groups	88.265	397	.222		
	Total	88.320	399			
Overall	Between Groups	.020	2	.010	.057	.945
	Within Groups	70.419	397	.177		
	Total	70.439	399			

* $p < 0.05$

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results show the differences in the extent of brand image, tourists' retention, and travel motivation of Mati City as an IP destination when analyzed by age.

The table demonstrates how the levels of factors of brand image, tourists' retention, and travel motivation of Mati City as an IP destination are when respondents are classified based on age. Since the generated p-values for brand image is [$F = .4.090, p = .001$], tourists' retention [$F = .5796, p = .000$], and travel motivation [$F = .142, p = .669$], with the overall results of [$F = 3.862, p = .002$], are less than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the data above shows that there is a significant difference between the variables.

Table 6: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results show the differences in the extent of brand image, tourists' retention, and travel motivation of Mati City as an IP destination when analyzed by age

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Brand Image	Between Groups	6.588	5	1.318	4.090	.001*
	Within Groups	126.932	394	.322		
	Total	133.520	399			
Retention	Between Groups	5.711	5	1.142	5.796	.000*
	Within Groups	77.646	394	.197		
	Total	83.357	399			
Travel Motivation	Between Groups	.712	5	.142	.641	.669
	Within Groups	87.608	394	.222		
	Total	88.320	399			
Overall	Between Groups	3.291	5	.658	3.862	.002*
	Within Groups	67.149	394	.170		
	Total	70.439	399			

*p<0.05

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results show the differences in the extent of brand image, tourists' retention, and travel motivation of Mati City as an IP destination when analyzed by location.

The p -value for brand image [$F = 36.001$, $p = .000$], tourist's retention [$F = 13.743$, $p = .000$], and travel motivation [$F = 3.064$, $p = .028$] are all significant. Using the analysis of variance, the data obtained an overall p -value of $p = .000$, which is lower than the 0.05 level of significance. The researchers conclude that there is a significant difference between the level of factors of brand image, tourists' retention, and travel motivation of Mati City as an IP destination when respondents are classified based on location.

Table 7: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results show the differences in the extent of brand image, tourists' retention, and travel motivation of Mati City as an IP destination when analyzed by location

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Brand Image	Between Groups	28.612	3	9.537	36.001	.000*
	Within Groups	104.908	396	.265		
	Total	133.520	399			
Retention	Between Groups	7.860	3	2.620	13.743	.000*
	Within Groups	75.496	396	.191		
	Total	83.357	399			
Travel Motivation	Between Groups	2.004	3	.668	3.064	.028*
	Within Groups	86.317	396	.218		
	Total	88.320	399			
Overall	Between Groups	9.528	3	3.176	20.648	.000*
	Within Groups	60.911	396	.154		
	Total	70.439	399			

*p<0.05

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results show the differences in the extent of brand image, tourists' retention, and travel motivation of Mati City as an IP destination when analyzed by economic status.

The results show the overall significant difference based on economic status with p -value of $p = .000$. Since the p -value of all the variable is lower than 0.05 level of significance (brand image [$F = 12.252, p = .000$], tourists retention [$F = 7.855, p = .000$], and travel motivation [$F = 4.777, p = .009$]), it means that there is a significant difference between the level of factors of brand image, tourist's retention, and travel motivation of Mati City as IP destination when respondents are classified based on economic status.

Table 8: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results show the differences in the extent of brand image, tourists' retention, and travel motivation of Mati City as an IP destination when analyzed by economic status

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Brand Image	Between Groups	7.762	2	3.881	12.252	.000*
	Within Groups	125.758	397	.317		
	Total	133.520	399			
Retention	Between Groups	3.173	2	1.587	7.855	.000*
	Within Groups	80.184	397	.202		
	Total	83.357	399			
Travel Motivation	Between Groups	2.076	2	1.038	4.777	.009*
	Within Groups	86.245	397	.217		
	Total	88.320	399			
Overall	Between Groups	4.008	2	2.004	11.976	.000*
	Within Groups	66.431	397	.167		
	Total	70.439	399			

The significant effect of brand image on tourist retention and travel motivation.

The ANOVA results show that brand image significantly impacts both tourist retention and travel motivation. For tourist retention, there is a significant difference between groups based on brand image, with a total variation of 54.491 units and 28.866 units between groups. This indicates that brand image plays a significant role in influencing tourist retention, as there is substantial variation in the impact of various brand images on retention. Similarly, for travel motivation, brand image has a significant effect, with a cumulative effect of 39.760 units and 28.233 units between groups. This highlights the importance of cultivating a positive brand image to attract and retain tourists, as well as increase their motivation to travel.

Table 9: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results showing the significant effect of brand image to tourist retention and travel motivation

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Tourist Retention	Between Groups	54.491	91	.599	6.389	.000*
	Within Groups	28.866	308	.094		
	Total	83.357	399			
Travel Motivation	Between Groups	39.434	91	.433	2.730	.000*
	Within Groups	48.887	308	.159		
	Total	88.320	399			
Overall	Between Groups	39.760	91	.437	4.766	.000*
	Within Groups	28.233	308	.092		
	Total	67.994	399			

*p<0.05

5. Discussion

This study determined a very high level of perceived quality, brand awareness, brand loyalty, and brand satisfaction factors that affect brand image. According to Wu and Chen (2019) various objectives and ideals for product design must be included in brand image creation. An effective brand image does not emerge overnight. There should be a positive brand image that improves consumers' satisfaction and engagement with the brand. To receive favorable feedback from customers, tourist businesses must offer exceptional brands and products that reflect their brand personalities and features. Stated by Isoraite (2018), in some contexts, an image is interpreted as a component of the process. In others, it is connected to feelings, and in still other contexts, it represents the information that the organization disseminates. Companies must realize that a positive brand image reputation is essential to the success of their business because brands compete with one another.

The service quality, physical surroundings, customer satisfaction, and loyalty show very high factors that affect tourist retention. In the tourist industry, the intention to return is seen as a crucial element for the survival and growth of businesses. Tourists' purpose to return is very important for businesses to expand and succeed (Abbasi, 2021). According to Barusman and Rulian (2020), businesses must provide a fantastic client experience in order to achieve customer retention. As stated, maintaining customers can bring major benefits to businesses, including lower running costs and higher referral sales. Customer retention is determined by comparing the actual perceived performance to the standard expectation as the outcome of an effective evaluation of service, surroundings, satisfaction, and loyalty.

Moreover, the travel motivation is highly associated with the indicators of cultural experience, social contact, adventure, relaxation, and novelty seeking. The findings of this survey indicate that engaging in cultural experiences, social contact, adventures, relaxation, and novelty-seeking are some of the key reasons tourists visit Mati City. To support the research findings, a widely used framework in tourism research is Dann's

push and pull-theory of motives. Push factors are innate motivations that urge people to travel. These motivations are frequently fueled by desires for relaxation, recreation, adventure, and escape, as well as the need to overcome loneliness and depart from modern-day routines. Furthermore, the importance of travel motivations in tourism has been studied for decades. Tourism operators will be more capable of foreseeing tourists' behavior and their destination-choice process if they have an enhanced awareness of the travel motives and the factors that influence their intentions (Zheng, 2018).

This study determined that there is a significant difference between brand image, tourists' retention, and travel motivation in terms of age, location and economic status. The result shows there is a significant difference in the extent of brand image, tourists' retention, and travel motivation of Mati City as an IP destination when analyzed by age. As stated by Jonsson and Devonish (2008), for the cultural motivations factor, tourists in the older age groups were significantly more inclined than tourists in the younger age groups to travel to the destination according to the need *"to broaden the understanding of local places"* and *"to interact with local people."* Tourists in the older age groups (56 and over) were more inclined to travel to the destination based on the need *"to relax"* and *"to enjoy good weather,"* Visitors in the 36 to 55 age range were more likely to choose the trip they felt the need *"to be emotionally and physically refreshed"* (Boukas, 2019). Young people seek cultural attractions that they can enjoy, discover, and explore new things. The result shows there is a significant difference in the extent of brand image, tourists' retention, and travel motivation of Mati City as an IP destination when analyzed by location. According to Mangali (2021), destinations that highlight their image, pricing, facilities, convenience of accessibility and location attractiveness are factors that affect tourists' choice of a place and an attraction. Locations can have both negative and positive impacts on tourists visiting the area (Zhang and Xu, 2020). Travel distance has been discovered to be an important factor that influences tourists' decisions to visit a site and their behavior once there. Distance might discourage travelers from visiting a region due to things like more expensive flights, longer journey times, perceived risks, and uncertainty. On the other hand, as distant locations sometimes indicate exotic and more alluring cultures and landscapes, distance may be the same thing that motivates visitors to travel far from home. The result shows there is a significant difference in brand image, tourists' retention, and travel motivation of Mati City as an IP destination when analyzed by economic status. In the study by Djeri (2019), visitors with high monthly salaries claimed that they actively spend their free time engaging in travel, sports, cultural, and other travel-related events, or activities. Travelers with medium monthly salaries typically engage in passive leisure activities, which include considering the cost of the travel destination. Tourists with low monthly incomes typically select the least expensive tourist destinations, which typically have free or inexpensive attractions (Mayer and Vogt, 2019). When picking a vacation, travelers consider their income very carefully. No matter how operationalized, income is the most significant tourist-based factor influencing travel expenditures.

This study, however, presents that there is no significant difference in terms of gender. The result shows that there is no significant difference between brand image, tourists' retention, and travel motivation of Mati City as an IP destination when analyzed by gender. According to Devonish (2020), either males, women, or LGBTIQQ people are motivated to travel. There are disparities between male and female travelers' preferences for more activities and recreation when they are traveling, as well as their stronger need to relax and escape. The gender-specific constraints on leisure, also known as the leisure constraints by gender, are the restrictions of gender roles toward the activities available to both men and women (Swain et al., 2019). The frequent use of the word "culture" when discussing gender, however, understanding the word does not reflect the conceptual relevance of gender as a social construct and cultural construct.

Lastly, this study determined that brand image significantly impacts both tourist retention and travel motivation. Positive branding for a destination denotes a strong identity, favorable image, credibility, and value, and it plays a significant role in motivating and influencing travel decisions (Kralikova, 2020). Brand image perception at a certain place among tourists is crucial for gauging their pleasure with it, as well as for influencing their behavior, such as their on-site impressions, reviews, and loyalty to a specific location. Loyal visitors are more inclined to present a place in a more favorable light, as well as to stay longer and buy more things there. To distinguish themselves from their rivals, destination branding is crucial (Coskun, 2021).

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study has concluded that brand image significantly affects tourist retention and travel motivation. Brand image significantly impacts both tourist retention and travel motivation. A well-established brand image raises familiarity with the business, increases customer trust and loyalty, and boosts the likelihood that tourists will return for more. It can also draw in highly motivated tourists because it results from all the envisioned experiences that the tourists are expected to have with the business.

6.1 Theoretical Contribution

This study adds to the theoretical knowledge of tourism by investigating empirically the relationship between brand image, tourist retention, and travel motivation at the level of Mati City as an Indigenous Peoples (IP) tourist destination. By using the indicators like perceived quality, brand awareness, brand loyalty and brand satisfaction, the research has justified their importance in influencing tourists' perceptions and decisions. The results resonate that all these factors are significantly observed and powerful when compared to the context of Mati City, reinforcing and expanding already existing theories on destination branding and tourist behavior. In addition, the study emphasizes the very important role of travel motivation, namely cultural experience, social contact, adventure, relaxation, and novelty seeking, in determining tourists' decisions, thereby contributing to the existing literature on push and pull factors in cultural tourism.

6.2 Practical Implications

The findings provide practical information for the tourism stakeholders in Mati City. Brand image and tourist retention indicators are high, and local government units as well as tourism operators should maintain the investment in improving service quality, physical surroundings, and cultivating customer satisfaction and loyalty. Marketing strategies should focus on the unique cultural and indigenous experience found in Mati City, as these are one of the main attractions for tourists. With these strengths, Mati City will be able to position itself better as a premier IP destination, draw more tourists, and generate repeat tourism. The study also emphasizes the need for knowing the demographic profile of tourists- young, middle-class females- in launching targeted promotion campaigns and tourism products.

6.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This research has several limitations. The study is geographically confined to Mati City, which can limit the spreadability of the results to other destinations. The sample is also mostly made up of young, middle-class females, which does not capture the overall tourist population interested in IP destinations. Also, by employing a quantitative, cross-sectional design, the results capture only a snapshot at a time and do not account for time changes in tourist perceptions or behavior over the long term. Further research should involve different geographical locations as IP destinations for comparative analysis, in order to increase the generalizability of the results. Longitudinal studies may reveal the change in brand image, retention, and motivation through the years. The use of qualitative methods, including interviews or focus groups, could provide richer insights into how tourists experience and perceive the visit. Also, future studies should try to use a more varied sample to represent a greater variety of tourist demographics and motivations. It would also be useful to consider the views of indigenous communities themselves and include their voices in the development strategies of tourism to ensure sustainable and culturally considerate tourism approaches.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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