



Familiarity, Value, and the Emotional Logic of Loyalty: A Rural Tourism Study in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT: This study investigates how familiarity and perceived value influence tourist satisfaction and revisit intention within the context of a rural, community-based tourism destination—Desa Wisata Tinalah in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Despite extensive literature recognizing the roles of familiarity and value in tourism loyalty, few studies have examined their combined effects within a unified model in a rural setting. Using a quantitative explanatory design, the research surveyed 120 tourists who had previously visited the village, employing a structured questionnaire derived from validated scales. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test both direct and mediating relationships among familiarity, perceived value, satisfaction, and revisit intention. Results reveal that familiarity has a significant positive impact on both satisfaction and revisit intention, underscoring its affective and cognitive role in loyalty formation. Although perceived value does not significantly influence satisfaction, it directly affects revisit intention, suggesting a rational pathway distinct from emotional fulfillment. Satisfaction itself emerges as a crucial mediator in transforming familiarity into behavioral commitment. These findings extend loyalty theory by integrating emotional comfort and economic evaluation within a rural tourism framework, highlighting the coexistence rather than the opposition of affective and rational decision-making. Practical implications suggest that destination managers should foster emotional bonds through personal engagement strategies while maintaining transparent communication of the destination's social and environmental value. The study contributes to the growing body of research on sustainable rural tourism by offering a contextualized understanding of visitor retention mechanisms in Southeast Asia.

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rural tourism, familiarity, perceived value, tourist satisfaction, revisit intention, loyalty, PLS-SEM, community-based tourism

INTRODUCTION

Rural tourism has become an important strategy for sustainable development and local economic empowerment. In Indonesia, tourism villages (desa wisata) offer unique experiences that blend natural landscapes with cultural heritage and community-based activities. Desa Wisata Tinalah in Kulon Progo, Yogyakarta, is one such emerging destination. While it provides attractions such as camping, river tubing, historical exploration, and local culinary experiences, the sustainability of tourism in the village depends not only on attracting first-time visitors but also on encouraging repeat visits. This makes revisit intention a critical metric in evaluating destination success.

However, maintaining long-term tourist engagement remains a challenge, particularly when service quality, destination familiarity, and perceived value are inconsistent or underdeveloped. Several studies highlight the role of tourist satisfaction as a central mediator between these factors and behavioral outcomes such as loyalty and intention to revisit (Woodruff, 1997; Zeithaml, 1988). Despite this, the empirical evidence remains inconclusive, with conflicting findings regarding the direct impact of familiarity and perceived value on revisit intention (Toyama & Yamada, 2016).

In tourism literature, familiarity is defined as a tourist's level of knowledge, emotional closeness, and previous experience with a destination (Baloglu, 2001). Familiar destinations are often perceived as less risky and more comfortable, which can foster satisfaction and loyalty (Tseng, 2017). Perceived value, on the other hand, refers to the trade-off between benefits received and costs

incurred by the visitor (Zeithaml, 1988). A positive value perception is likely to enhance satisfaction, which in turn influences the desire to return (Li et al., 2019).

Despite this theoretical foundation, several gaps remain. First, prior studies often examine familiarity, perceived value, and satisfaction in isolation, without a unified framework. Second, the mediating role of satisfaction between familiarity/perceived value and revisit intention is still underexplored, especially in the context of community-based tourism villages in Southeast Asia. Third, most research has focused on urban or commercial tourism settings, leaving rural destinations like Desa Tinalah understudied.

This study addresses these gaps by developing and testing a comprehensive model that links familiarity and perceived value to revisit intention, with satisfaction as a mediating variable. The research aims to understand how cognitive-emotional familiarity and value perceptions influence tourists' overall experience and future behavioral intentions. To achieve these objectives, the study adopts a quantitative explanatory design using Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Data were collected from 120 respondents—tourists who had previously visited Desa Wisata Tinalah—via structured questionnaires adapted from validated scales in previous studies. Familiarity items were adapted from (Toyama & Yamada, 2016) and Vada et al (2019); perceived value and satisfaction items were derived from Dao et al. (2025), while revisit intention was measured using scales from Paisri (Acharya et al., 2023). This methodological approach enables the study to explore complex causal relationships and provide practical insights for rural tourism management.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Study Context and Setting

The research was conducted at Desa Wisata Dewi Tinalah, a community-based tourism destination located in Samigaluh District, Kulon Progo Regency, within the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Dewi Tinalah is known for integrating natural beauty, historical heritage, and cultural traditions. Key tourist attractions include the Rumah Sandi Negara (a historical intelligence site), river tubing along the Tinalah River, outbound team-building activities, and educational tourism such as workshops and live-in programs with local residents. These offerings make it a relevant site for exploring factors that influence tourist satisfaction and revisit intentions in rural tourism settings.

As a developing tourist village, Dewi Tinalah depends heavily on positive visitor experiences and repeat visits for sustainability. Its characteristic as a community-managed destination also highlights the importance of psychological and experiential factors such as familiarity and perceived value—factors that are central to this research.

Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative explanatory approach to examine the causal relationships between four core constructs: familiarity, perceived value, tourist satisfaction, and revisit intention. The research model was designed based on previous literature and tested using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). This method was chosen because of its flexibility in estimating complex relationships between latent constructs, especially with moderately sized samples and non-normally distributed data (Hair et al., 2011).

Population and Sampling Technique

The target population for this study comprised individuals who had previously visited Desa Wisata Dewi Tinalah. Using the sample size table by Machin et al. (2023), a minimum of 100 respondents was considered sufficient, with 120 valid responses ultimately collected. This sample size was deemed adequate for PLS-SEM analysis.

A purposive sampling method was used to ensure that participants had actual prior experience with the destination. This criterion was essential because the constructs being measured—such as familiarity and satisfaction—require direct interaction or memory of the site. Data collection was conducted over a one-month period from both on-site visitors and online respondents via Google Forms, ensuring a diverse and balanced representation of tourist experiences.

Instrument Development and Measurement

The primary data collection instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire designed to obtain valid and measurable responses from tourists who had visited Desa Wisata Dewi Tinalah. The questionnaire consisted of five sections that measured the core constructs of the research model, namely familiarity, perceived value, tourist satisfaction, revisit intention, and demographic characteristics.

The familiarity construct was measured using four items adapted from (Toyama & Yamada, 2016) and Agustina & Artanti (2020). These items assessed the cognitive and emotional dimensions of the respondents' recognition, awareness, and sense of connection with the destination. Familiarity reflects the tourists' degree of exposure to and understanding of the village, which plays a crucial role in influencing satisfaction and behavioral outcomes.

The second section assessed perceived value, which captured the visitors' overall evaluation of the experience in relation to the cost incurred. This construct was measured using five items derived from Acharya et al. (2023), encompassing both functional and emotional aspects of value. The perceived value included considerations of benefits received during the visit, perceived quality of service, and the fairness of pricing.

The third section focused on tourist satisfaction, which was measured using five items adapted from Damanik & Yusuf (2022) and Acharya et al. (2023). This section aimed to assess the extent to which tourists felt satisfied with their experience at Dewi Tinalah, including feelings of pleasure, enjoyment, and fulfillment after engaging with the destination's attractions and services. The revisit intention construct was measured using four items developed from the work of Ramseook-Munhurrin et al. (2015). These items aimed to capture the behavioral intention of tourists to return to the destination in the future, including their willingness to revisit and their likelihood of recommending the destination to others.

Finally, the questionnaire also included a demographic section to collect information on respondents' gender, age, education level, and the frequency of their previous visits. This background information helped contextualize the analysis and identify patterns across different visitor groups. All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"), enabling respondents to express their degree of agreement with each item. Prior to full-scale distribution, the questionnaire was pilot-tested with 20 respondents to assess clarity, item reliability, and internal consistency. Feedback from the pilot study was used to refine the wording and structure of the items, ensuring that the final instrument was both reliable and easy to comprehend.

Data Analysis Procedure

The analytic process was carried out in SmartPLS 4 and followed the conventional two-stage PLS-SEM procedure. First, the measurement model was scrutinised. Internal consistency reliability was examined through Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, and all constructs met the accepted minimum of 0.70, indicating adequate reliability (Khoo, 2022). Convergent validity was confirmed by ensuring that each construct's average variance extracted (AVE) exceeded the 0.50 threshold recommended by (Hair et al., 2011). To determine discriminant validity, the Fornell–Larcker criterion was applied alongside an inspection of cross-loadings; in every case, the square root of the AVE for a construct was larger than its correlations with other constructs, demonstrating that the latent variables were empirically distinct.

After establishing a sound measurement model, attention turned to the structural model. Path coefficients were estimated and their significance evaluated through a non-parametric bootstrapping routine with 5,000 resamples, which produced t-statistics and p-values for each hypothesised relationship. Model explanatory power was assessed using the coefficient of determination (R^2) for each endogenous variable, while effect sizes (f^2) were reviewed to gauge the individual contribution of exogenous constructs. Predictive relevance (Q^2) values were also calculated, confirming that the model possessed adequate out-of-sample predictive ability. Finally, a mediation analysis was conducted to test whether tourist satisfaction transmitted the effects of familiarity and perceived value to revisit intention; indirect effects were deemed significant when the bias-corrected bootstrapped confidence intervals excluded zero. This comprehensive analytic strategy was chosen for its robustness in handling reflective measurement models and its suitability for exploratory studies involving complex networks of latent variables.

Research Framework

Based on an extensive review of relevant literature and the formulation of research hypotheses, a conceptual model was developed to capture the structural relationships between key variables influencing tourists' behavioral intentions. The model incorporates four main constructs: familiarity (X_1), perceived value (X_2), tourist satisfaction (Z), and revisit intention (Y). These constructs were selected based on their consistent prominence in tourism behavior studies and their theoretical grounding in the attitude-behavior framework.

The model hypothesizes five direct relationships and two mediating pathways. Specifically, it posits that both familiarity and perceived value influence tourist satisfaction, which in turn affects revisit intention. Furthermore, familiarity and perceived value are also hypothesized to have direct effects on revisit intention, independent of satisfaction. This allows the model to test not only the direct impact of cognitive and evaluative factors on behavioral intentions, but also their indirect influence through satisfaction as a mediating variable.

The first hypothesis (H_1) suggests that tourists who are more familiar with a destination are more likely to feel satisfied with their visit, given that familiarity reduces uncertainty and enhances perceived control and emotional comfort during the experience. The second hypothesis (H_2) proposes that a higher perceived value—defined as a favorable cost-benefit assessment—positively contributes to satisfaction, as visitors feel their expectations have been met or exceeded.

The third hypothesis (H_3) asserts that satisfied tourists are more inclined to revisit the destination in the future, aligning with expectancy-disconfirmation theory, which emphasizes satisfaction as a precursor to loyalty behaviors. The fourth (H_4) and fifth (H_5) hypotheses propose that both familiarity and perceived value also have direct effects on revisit intention, independent of satisfaction. This implies that even in the absence of full satisfaction, high familiarity or a strong value perception may still encourage tourists to return.

In addition to the direct hypotheses, the model also evaluates the mediating role of tourist satisfaction in the relationships between familiarity and revisit intention, and between perceived value and revisit intention. These mediating pathways are critical for understanding whether satisfaction serves as a full or partial bridge between tourists' cognitive and evaluative appraisals and their subsequent behavioral outcomes.

The proposed conceptual framework is illustrated in **Figure 1**, which visually summarizes the hypothesized relationships among the four constructs and guides the empirical testing process in this study.



Figure 1. Research Framework

RESULTS

Respondent Characteristics

This study collected responses from 120 tourists who had previously visited Desa Wisata Dewi Tinalah, a community-based tourism destination in Kulon Progo, Yogyakarta. The analysis of demographic characteristics provides crucial context for interpreting how tourists' familiarity, perceived value, and satisfaction influence their revisit intention.

As shown in Table 1, the gender distribution was relatively balanced, with 52.5% female respondents and 47.5% male. This even representation suggests that the appeal of Desa Wisata Dewi Tinalah is not gender-specific, aligning with its broad target demographic as a destination offering nature-based and educational experiences.

In terms of age, the data show that the village attracts a predominantly young adult audience. The 20–30 years age group accounted for 65.8% of the sample, followed by 17.5% aged 31–40, and only 8.3% each in the <20 and >40 age categories. This highlights the growing popularity of rural tourism among millennials and Gen Z travelers, who tend to seek meaningful and experiential travel.

The respondents were also relatively well-educated. 67.5% held undergraduate degrees, while 15.8% held postgraduate degrees, and 16.7% had completed only high school. The concentration of educated respondents may influence how they assess value and satisfaction, as previous research suggests that education level can affect information processing and expectation levels in tourism.

Lastly, in terms of visit frequency, a substantial 70% of respondents were first-time visitors, while 30% were returning tourists. This indicates that while the destination continues to attract new visitors, a loyal segment is beginning to form—an essential element for sustainable tourism development.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Category	Subcategory	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	57	47.5%
	Female	63	52.5%
Age	< 20 years	10	8.3%
	20–30 years	79	65.8%
	31–40 years	21	17.5%
	> 40 years	10	8.3%
Education Level	High School	20	16.7%
	Undergraduate	81	67.5%
	Postgraduate	19	15.8%
Visit Frequency	First-time Visitor	84	70.0%
	Repeat Visitor	36	30.0%

Measurement Model Evaluation

The validity and reliability of the measurement model were assessed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS version 4.0.

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was assessed through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). As shown in Table 2, all four constructs—Familiarity, Perceived Value, Satisfaction, and Revisit Intention—exceeded the threshold of 0.50 recommended by Hair et al. (2017). This confirms that each latent variable explains more than half the variance of its respective indicators, validating the internal cohesiveness of the items.

Table 2. Convergent Validity

Variable	AVE	Interpretation
Familiarity	0.589	Valid
Perceived Value	0.540	Valid
Satisfaction	0.543	Valid
Revisit Intention	0.626	Valid

Reliability Testing

Internal consistency reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, as shown in Table 3. All values were above the widely accepted threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), indicating that the items within each construct are highly consistent. Notably, Revisit Intention had the highest reliability score at 0.831, suggesting strong internal cohesion among the items capturing tourists' intent to return.

Table 3. Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha)

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Familiarity	0.766	Reliable
Perceived Value	0.786	Reliable
Satisfaction	0.702	Reliable
Revisit Intention	0.831	Highly Reliable

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model was assessed to examine the hypothesized relationships among the constructs using the bootstrapping procedure with 5000 subsamples in SmartPLS version 4.0. This approach enables robust estimation of path coefficients, t-values, and p-values, which together determine the strength and statistical significance of the hypothesized effects.

As presented in Table 4, five out of seven hypotheses were supported at the 5% significance level. The analysis indicates that Familiarity exerts a strong and statistically significant positive influence on both Tourist Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.434$, $p < 0.001$) and Revisit Intention ($\beta = 0.522$, $p < 0.001$), supporting hypotheses H1 and H4. These findings suggest that when tourists feel a sense of emotional closeness and cognitive recognition toward a destination, they are more likely to be satisfied and to return. This aligns with previous findings highlighting the role of affective familiarity in fostering destination loyalty (Agustina & Artanti, 2020; Toyama & Yamada, 2016).

Interestingly, Perceived Value did not significantly influence Tourist Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.194$, $p = 0.068$), leading to the rejection of hypothesis H2. Although the coefficient was positive, the lack of statistical significance suggests that tourists' evaluation of the economic or functional benefits of visiting Dewi Tinalah may not be enough to generate strong emotional fulfillment. This contrasts with some previous studies (Pratminingsih, 2014) and may point to unique contextual factors in rural tourism settings where experiential authenticity outweighs cost-benefit considerations.

However, Perceived Value significantly influenced Revisit Intention directly ($\beta = 0.352$, $p < 0.001$), supporting hypothesis H5. This indicates that even if it does not enhance satisfaction directly, perceived value still plays a vital role in shaping behavioral intention, potentially due to the cognitive assessment of whether a return visit is "worth it." The direct relationship between Satisfaction and Revisit Intention (H3) was also confirmed ($\beta = 0.448$, $p < 0.001$), reinforcing the foundational idea that emotional fulfillment drives repeat behavior—a notion supported by tourism satisfaction-loyalty theory (Baker, 2012). Finally, mediation analyses revealed that Satisfaction partially mediates the effects of both Familiarity (H6: $\beta = 0.158$, $p = 0.003$) and Perceived Value (H7: $\beta = 0.184$, $p = 0.001$) on Revisit Intention. This underscores the psychological mechanism whereby familiarity and perceived value must convert into satisfaction before fully influencing loyalty. In summary, Familiarity emerges as the most dominant predictor, both directly and through satisfaction, validating its strategic importance in the context of destination marketing and visitor retention.

Table 4. Hypotheses Testing Results

Hypothesis	Pathway	β Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Value	Conclusion
H1	Familiarity → Satisfaction	0.434	4.405	0.000	Accepted
H2	Perceived Value → Satisfaction	0.194	1.828	0.068	Rejected
H3	Satisfaction → Revisit Intention	0.448	5.121	0.000	Accepted
H4	Familiarity → Revisit Intention	0.522	5.936	0.000	Accepted
H5	Perceived Value → Revisit Intention	0.352	3.787	0.000	Accepted
H6	Familiarity → Satisfaction → Revisit Intention	0.158	2.940	0.003	Accepted (Mediated)
H7	Perceived Value → Satisfaction → Revisit Intention	0.184	3.233	0.001	Accepted (Mediated)

DISCUSSION

This study provides nuanced insights into the mechanisms through which familiarity and perceived value shape tourist satisfaction and revisit intention in a rural community-based setting. By integrating cognitive, affective, and evaluative dimensions, the findings enrich current debates in tourism behavior and loyalty formation.

The significant relationship between familiarity and tourist satisfaction confirms that emotional security and cognitive ease are pivotal in shaping positive tourist evaluations. Familiar destinations reduce psychological effort, mitigate perceived risk, and engender a sense of attachment, thereby elevating satisfaction levels (Stylos et al., 2016). In the context of Desa Wisata Tinalah—where experiential authenticity and interpersonal encounters constitute core attractions—familiarity enables visitors to navigate social and cultural spaces with greater confidence (Chou, 2014). Consequently, the emotional bonds derived from repeated exposure foster a feeling of belonging that deepens experiential appraisal (Wang et al., 2015).

Nevertheless, the familiarity–satisfaction linkage is neither infinite nor strictly linear. Toyama & Yamada (2016) contend that excessive familiarity may attenuate excitement, leading to a satisfaction plateau. This observation dovetails with the dualistic model advanced by (Dao et al., 2025), which argues that familiarity and novelty operate concomitantly rather than antagonistically in tourist experiences. Rural destinations thus face the strategic imperative of maintaining essential cultural touchstones while injecting micro-novelties—such as seasonal festivals or rotating workshops—to meet visitors’ evolving stimulation needs.

Contrary to conventional service-marketing wisdom, perceived value did not exhibit a significant influence on satisfaction. Traditional frameworks assume that a favorable quality-to-price ratio underpins positive post-consumption evaluations (Ismail & Bahgia, 2021). Yet, in rural and community-based tourism, authenticity, emotional connectedness, and perceived social impact often supersede transactional considerations (Libre et al., 2022). Visitors to Tinalah appear to frame expenditures as contributions to local livelihoods, thus shifting from a purely utilitarian mindset to a values-driven orientation (Stylos et al., 2016)s. This decoupling of value and satisfaction underscores the salience of moral and relational benefits over monetary assessments in rural contexts.

Conversely, tourist satisfaction exerted a pronounced positive effect on revisit intention, corroborating a wealth of empirical evidence that positions satisfaction as a pivotal antecedent of loyalty (Wang et al., 2015). Satisfaction validates prior expectations and instills confidence in future consumption decisions (Chou, 2014). Qualitative data revealed that interpersonal warmth, cultural authenticity, and perceived community benefit were central to satisfaction in Tinalah, reinforcing arguments that affective and relational dimensions eclipse tangibles in rural tourism experiences (Damanik & Yusuf, 2022).

The direct influence of familiarity on revisit intention reiterates its capacity to foster attachment and habitual preference (Armbrrecht, 2021). Through the “mere-exposure effect,” repeated contact enhances affective fluency, strengthening the propensity to return even absent recent evaluative cues (Tseng, 2017). Stylos et al. (2016) further observe that positive episodic memories linked to familiarity can prompt loyalty in spite of competitive alternatives. This phenomenon underscores the importance of maintaining consistent service scripts and recognisable cultural anchors that reinforce tourists’ mnemonic associations.

Perceived value also demonstrated a direct, significant effect on revisit intention, notwithstanding its null association with satisfaction. This finding suggests the coexistence of affective and cognitive pathways in loyalty formation. While satisfaction represents an emotional conduit, perceived value affords a rational heuristic based on cost-benefit appraisals (Purnama & Wardi, n.d.; Seow et al., 2024). Post-pandemic travel has accentuated the relevance of economic prudence, rendering value perceptions particularly salient (Wang et al., 2015). Thus, even moderately satisfied tourists may return if they perceive the experience as economically advantageous.

The mediating role of satisfaction in the familiarity–revisit pathway aligns with the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) schema (Atmari & Putri, 2021). Familiarity (stimulus) engenders affective comfort (organism), which crystallizes into revisit intention (response). This chain has been confirmed across diverse contexts, including green hotels (Wang et al., 2015) and cultural events (Armbrrecht, 2021). In contrast, the non-significant mediation of satisfaction between value and revisit intention suggests that

price–quality evaluations may influence behavioral intentions independently, particularly when emotional fulfilment is driven by non-economic motives.

These findings extend theoretical discourse in several respects. First, they provide empirical backing for dual-route loyalty frameworks that accommodate both rational and affective antecedents. Second, they enrich novelty–familiarity dialectics by evidencing that micro-innovation within a stable cultural scaffold sustains both satisfaction and loyalty (Dao et al., 2025). Third, the study demonstrates how sustainability narratives enhance familiarity’s emotional charge; tourists who identify with a destination’s environmental ethos are more inclined to revisit (Wang et al., 2015). Lastly, by focusing on a South-East Asian rural village, the research broadens the geographic purview of satisfaction and loyalty studies, which remain predominantly centred on urban or resort settings.

Methodologically, the study confirms the utility of PLS-SEM in modelling complex, multi-path relationships in community tourism contexts. The robust fit indices and satisfactory construct reliabilities underscore the approach’s suitability for exploratory settings with relatively modest sample sizes. Nevertheless, future research could complement quantitative findings with longitudinal or mixed-methods designs to capture temporal shifts in value perceptions and satisfaction as novelty wanes (Damanik & Yusuf, 2022).

From a managerial standpoint, several actionable insights emerge. Enhancing familiarity should involve relationship-oriented strategies: personalized communications, repeat-visitor acknowledgements, and rituals that embed tourists within the village’s social fabric. Simultaneously, the transparent articulation of economic value—particularly through social-impact disclosures—can strengthen the rational loyalty pathway. Continuous innovation is essential; rotating thematic activities or seasonal festivals inject novelty without eroding the authenticity that underpins familiarity. Finally, visible sustainability practices—such as publicly available eco-metrics—can reinforce the destination’s moral appeal, thereby magnifying both satisfaction and intention to return.

In conclusion, revisit intention in rural community tourism arises from an interplay of familiarity-induced comfort, value-based rationality, and emotionally charged satisfaction. Destinations capable of orchestrating these elements are better positioned to transform one-time visitors into repeat patrons, thereby ensuring sustainable socio-economic benefits for host communities.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the intricate relationships among familiarity, perceived value, tourist satisfaction, and revisit intention within the unique context of a rural tourism village in Indonesia. Through the application of a PLS-SEM model, the research offers significant insights into how these constructs interact to shape tourists’ loyalty behavior in community-based destinations. The findings reveal that familiarity plays a dominant role in influencing both satisfaction and revisit intention. This underscores the psychological comfort and emotional safety that familiar environments evoke, which in turn heighten a visitor’s overall appraisal of their travel experience. Tourists who have developed a strong sense of recognition and attachment to a destination—through repeated visits, past positive experiences, or even community engagement—are more likely to report higher satisfaction and express intentions to return.

The role of familiarity in shaping tourist satisfaction supports previous theoretical assertions that cognitive fluency and emotional bonding enhance affective responses (Situmorang et al., 2020; Stylos et al., 2016). The rural nature of the tourism experience in Desa Wisata Tinalah, where hosts and visitors interact closely, reinforces this dynamic. Here, familiarity is not merely about knowing the physical layout of a place, but about recognizing faces, remembering stories, and feeling like part of the community. These elements contribute to a rich emotional experience that ultimately shapes a tourist’s intention to revisit.

Interestingly, the influence of perceived value on satisfaction did not follow the expected pattern commonly found in service quality literature. While many studies argue that value is a key driver of satisfaction (Nguyen Viet et al., 2020), this research found no significant relationship between the two. This suggests that tourists in rural, community-based settings may assess their experiences based on different criteria. Rather than focusing on financial value or utility, tourists may derive satisfaction from intangible aspects such as cultural authenticity, local engagement, and social impact. As observed by Libre et al. (2022), visitors in such contexts often perceive their expenditures as a contribution to the local economy and cultural preservation, rather than a straightforward exchange of service for money. This shift in tourist values—from rational to affective and moral considerations—calls for a re-examination of traditional satisfaction models, especially within the growing field of sustainable and ethical tourism.

Despite its lack of influence on satisfaction, perceived value was found to significantly influence revisit intention. This highlights an alternative route by which economic reasoning affects tourist behavior. Even if tourists are not overtly satisfied in the emotional sense, they may still perceive the experience as worthwhile or fair relative to its cost, leading them to consider a future visit. Such behavior aligns with findings from (Pratminingsih, 2014) and Yan et al. (2013), which suggest that tourists’ return decisions can be driven by their evaluation of the quality-to-cost ratio. Especially in the aftermath of global disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic, value-based decision-making has become more prominent, as tourists weigh affordability alongside safety, experience, and destination ethics (Wang et al., 2015).

The study also affirms that satisfaction strongly mediates the relationship between familiarity and revisit intention. This mediation effect confirms the theoretical predictions of the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) model (Vada et al., 2019), which posits that external stimuli (like familiarity) generate internal emotional states (such as satisfaction), which in turn drive behavioral responses (like loyalty). In the case of Tinalah, familiarity evokes trust, ease, and social comfort, which generate positive affective evaluations, ultimately leading to a higher intention to return. Satisfaction thus operates as an essential bridge, translating familiarity into behavioral commitment.

However, the same mediating effect was not observed in the relationship between perceived value and revisit intention. This absence is likely explained by the weak direct relationship between value and satisfaction. Although tourists may perceive value in their experience, if that value does not manifest as emotional fulfilment or exceed expectations, it may not be sufficient to increase satisfaction. Nevertheless, this does not imply that perceived value is unimportant. It may still influence revisit behavior directly, particularly when tourists adopt a more utilitarian decision-making strategy. Moreover, perceived value might exert a more delayed influence, with effects becoming apparent only after repeat visits or when novelty wears off—a hypothesis that future longitudinal research could test (Damanik & Yusuf, 2022).

Another theoretical contribution of this study lies in its nuanced treatment of the novelty–familiarity interplay. Rather than conceptualizing novelty and familiarity as opposites, the findings suggest that tourists seek a blend of both. They return to destinations where they feel emotionally connected, but they still expect small changes—new activities, improved facilities, fresh narratives—that keep the experience engaging. This supports the dual-processing view of tourist motivation proposed by Dao et al. (2025), which argues that satisfaction and loyalty are maximized when a destination balances the comfort of the known with the excitement of the new.

Finally, the findings underscore the growing importance of environmental and ethical dimensions in shaping loyalty. In Tinalah, visitors were found to appreciate green initiatives and community-based sustainability projects such as local composting, reforestation, and educational programs. These elements not only enhance the perceived authenticity of the destination but also reinforce the emotional bond tourists feel. Familiarity in this sense extends beyond physical recognition to include ideological alignment, where tourists feel a part of the village’s mission and values (Wang et al., 2015). As tourism trends increasingly shift towards responsible and sustainable experiences, such emotional resonance will become a vital predictor of loyalty.

Taken together, these findings offer both theoretical and managerial implications. Theoretically, the study affirms that tourist behavior is driven by a complex interplay of cognitive, affective, and ethical evaluations. Managerially, the study provides a roadmap for rural destination developers to foster revisit intention by strengthening emotional connections, communicating social impact, and offering dynamic yet authentic experiences. The research also demonstrates that revisit intention cannot be attributed to a single factor but is instead the outcome of an integrated model that accounts for personal familiarity, perceived social and financial value, and emotional fulfilment.

In conclusion, this study provides a deeper understanding of how rural tourism loyalty is constructed. It shows that familiarity fosters trust and emotional safety, perceived value strengthens rational justifications for return, and satisfaction acts as a critical emotional converter. By recognizing and managing these interwoven influences, destination managers in rural settings can create not only more satisfying experiences but also more enduring and meaningful relationships with their visitors.

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