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# Loyalty Measurement in Tourism: A Theoretical Reflection

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## 2.1 Introduction

A successful marketing strategy must focus not only on winning new customers but also on developing the loyalty of hard-won existing ones (Palmer 1994). The relational approach to marketing sets customer loyalty as a strategic objective given that many firms have come to realize the economic importance of a loyal customer base (Oliver 1999). Reichheld and Sasser (1990) are frequently cited to highlight this importance. In quantitative terms it estimates that a firm might increase its profits by between 25 % and 85 % by retaining 5 % of its customers. A key tool for determining the aforementioned impact is the concept of Customer Lifetime Value (CLV), an idea gaining importance as a measure of business success. Nevertheless, there are authors who counsel the maintaining of a certain degree of caution when it comes to measuring the value of a customer. Saren and Tzokas (1998) defend the idea that calculations cannot be based on repeat purchases given that in some sectors these are uncommon. With regard to the tourism sector, Bigné et al. (2005) hold that it is difficult to measure loyalty on the basis of repeat purchases because consumption is

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infrequent and customers may prefer to visit new places. In line with this assertion two issues present themselves: the need to study those factors that promote loyalty towards destinations or tourism businesses, and the importance of operationalizing the construct of loyalty as the final and fundamental element of previous models of study and so to try to reflect the dimensions it really possesses in a sector with such special characteristics as tourism.

Operationalizing the construct of loyalty in the tourism industry may turn out to be a complex task. Those who have written on this matter have chosen to use a wide variety of conceptualizations in their causal models of the determinants of loyalty in tourism. For this reason and with the aim of offering an overview of research on this construct in the literature, the objective of this present study is to examine the treatment and the operationalization of the loyalty construct in tourism, based on the results of several studies found in the literature review carried out. The research that has been examined focuses on what produces loyalty to destination, accommodation and other tourism products of interest and that was published in the form of either scientific articles or doctoral theses. The question at stake is, therefore, to find out how to measure loyalty on the basis of those elements that generate value for the tourist at the destination level.

The interest of this present study, at a general level, lies in the need to provide a response to relationship marketing and customer loyalty in the tourist industry as questions currently of interest (Bigné 1996, 2004; Oh et al. 2004; Bigné et al. 2008). More specifically, the importance of a study such as this has to do with the need to produce an operationalization of the construct of loyalty in tourism, that is as finely grained and real as possible. To this, is it important to show what factors produce it and how it correlates with other constructs. Such information is key for implementing relationship strategies that seek to develop a base of loyal customers that improve the profitability of destinations and tourism organizations.

This study is divided into five parts. The first of these is introductory in nature and presents the question under examination, the study's objective and interest. The theoretical framework in which the study was carried out is then presented with reference being made to relationship marketing and customer loyalty as questions to be examined, as well as, how they are dealt with in the literature. After that the methodology used is set out and the main results are presented. Finally some conclusions and final reflections are offered.

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## **2.2 Customer Loyalty in the Tourism Sector**

### **2.2.1 The Impact of Loyalty as a Strategic Objective of Relationship Marketing**

Since the 1990s there has been a large and growing interest in relationship marketing, within the broader field of marketing (Christopher et al. 1994). This has arisen as a response to a new competitive era characterized by growing maturity, fragmentation, complexity and competitive intensity in markets. At the

same time customers have been seeking more personalized treatment and become more sophisticated, which has forced organizations to focus their efforts on the construction and maintenance of relationships with the various parties who participate in the process of interchange of businesses (customers, suppliers, competitors, divisions of the company and employees, nonprofit organizations, government, etc.) (Hunt and Morgan 1994; Grönroos 1999; Payne 2000).

There is no agreed definition of what constitutes relationship marketing although some conceptualizations of it have common denominators (Grönroos 1996, 1999). Though many ideas about had been raised previously (Payne 2000) it was not until 1983 that it was introduced by Leonard Berry who defined it as “attracting, maintaining and – in multi-service organizations – enhancing customer relationships” (Berry 2000: 150). However, he later broadened his focus to the rest of the stakeholders involved in the interaction between customers and businesses (Martín 2005a).

Many businesses notice that the creation of long-term relationships with customers and other businesses is of competitive advantage to them (Ganesan 1994), as it contributes to the effective and efficient demand of goods and services of value for some sectors of the market (Hunt et al. 2006). However, the strategy of relationship marketing should only be put into practice when this competitive advantage is sustainable over time (Morgan and Hunt 1999). The process of creating and maintaining relationships with customers involves the carrying out of investment and the incurring of opportunity costs (Bendapudi and Berry 1997). In order to construct long-term relationships businesses must take account of the following: the activities carried out to create commitment and trust between a supplier and its customers produce costs, once the relationship is established the investment in it does not cease, when a relationship exists various departments of the organization are involved in it, and it is expected that the combined costs of the three previous points will be less than those involved in obtaining the same income through a series of discrete transactions (Blois 1996a, b).

Reichheld and Sasser (1990) is often cited to justify the benefits of implementing a relationship marketing strategy and it claims the following benefits from retaining customers: as purchases increase, operational costs fall; businesses with loyal customers can charge more for their goods and services; and there is free advertising in the form of word of mouth recommendations provided by loyal customers. In quantitative terms it estimates that a firm might increase its profits by between 25 % and 85 % by retaining 5 % of its customers.

CLV is an idea which is gaining ground as a tool to manage and measure the success of businesses as it allows quantifying the value of loyal customers. Gupta et al. (2006: 141) define it as “the present value of all future profits obtained from a customer over his or her life of relationship with a firm”. Reichheld and Sasser (1990) hold that if firms knew the real costs of losing customers they would accurately assess the investment necessary to retain them. Maicas et al. (2006) maintain that losing a customer is a serious blow to a company as it will need to invest resources in advertising, promotions, and discounts, among others, to attract new customers to substitute for the ones they have lost. Furthermore, loss of

customers may have other negative consequences such as negative word of mouth comments and damage to the prestige and reputation of the company.

Palmer and Mayer (1996) argue that the retention of a customer does not necessarily involve loyalty. Customers may remain due to not having an alternative provider or because they may be tied down by frequent purchase program, which may mean the end of their loyalty when the program ends. Reichheld (1994) holds that customers may remain loyal to a company not as result of promotions and loyalty programs but due to the value they receive.

Oliver (1999: 34) defines loyalty as “a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior”. Saren and Tzokas (1998) point out that though research has often focused on the identification of repeat purchases as proof of the existence of a strong relationship there are also authors who have defended the necessity of conceptualizing loyalty in socio-psychological terms more than in behavioral ones. This is due to the fact that in some industries repeat purchases are uncommon so customer value has to be measured in different ways; for example, in terms of quantity purchased, propensity to give positive word of mouth recommendations or willingness to participate in dialogue with the firm. Taking loyalty to be a relationship between attitude and behavior allows for it to be studied as a causal agent that leads to the identification of antecedents and consequences of the relationship. Traditional models have classified these antecedents into three categories: cognitive, associated with informal beliefs about the brand; affective, related to feelings toward the brand; and conative, behavioral disposition related to brands (Dick and Basu 1994). Ndubisi (2007) notes that it is important to empirically study the impact of the determinants of relationship marketing on customer loyalty. This knowledge will help produce better management of company-customer relationships and achieve a higher level of customer loyalty.

### **2.2.2 The Study of Loyalty in the Tourism Industry**

Loyalty in the tourism sector has been poorly studied, so there are many outstanding questions about how to keep these particular customers loyal in the long-term (Zamora et al. 2005). Tourism has seen the introduction of relationship marketing techniques and indeed has been in the vanguard of the industries that have adopted this focus. Nevertheless, the concept of destination loyalty has received little attention in the literature (Fyall et al. 2003; Yoon and Uysal 2005) and neither have companies that offer accommodation (Aksu 2006).

Today destinations face the toughest competition in decades and it may become tougher still in years to come so marketing managers need to understand why tourists are faithful to destinations and what determines their loyalty (Chen and Gursoy 2001). One might usefully ask whether a particular destination can generate loyalty in people who visit it. In this regard Alegre and Juaneda (2006: 686) hold

that “some tourism motivations would inhibit destination loyalty”, such as, for example, the desire to break with the monotony of daily life, engage with new people, places and cultures or look for new experiences. However, risk-averse people may feel the need to revisit a familiar destination. Barroso et al. (2007) found four groups of tourists, on the basis of the need for change which tourists have when it comes to taking a trip. These groups show significant differences depending on the intention of the tourists to return or to recommend the destination.

Riley et al. (2001) note that the literature on loyalty demonstrates a problem in its conceptualization, to be resolved by empirical means or operational definitions, depending on the purpose of the study. From the classical viewpoint, loyalty is a difficult to define abstraction because of the different roles it can play. This depends on the antecedents of attitudes and values, the repetition behavior and the specific characteristics of the object of loyalty. As a concept, it involves the power to attract the object and the propensity to commit the individual. The empirical question to be answered is what pattern of behavior in tourism consumption can be interpreted as an indicator of loyalty.

Yoon and Uysal (2005) note that destinations can be considered as products and tourists can visit them again or recommend them to other potential tourists such as friends or family. Chen and Gursoy (2001) operationally defined destination loyalty as the level of tourists’ perception of a destination as a good place, one that they would recommend to others, noting that studies which only consider repeat visits as an indicator of loyalty to the destination are deficient. This is because those who do not return to a particular destination may simply find different travel experiences in new places, while maintaining loyalty to the previously visited destination. Also, these authors argue for the intention to recommend a destination as an indicator of loyalty. An airline ticket has the potential to be sold routinely, but with regard to a trip to a particular destination it may be unlikely that a purchase would actually occur, so that willingness to recommend the product could be an appropriate indicator for measure of loyalty to the destination concerned. Therefore they point out that tourism researchers should use appropriate variables to evaluate the loyalty of the tourist to a specific tourism product.

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## 2.3 Methodology

For the purposes of the present study a literature review was carried out, this is a methodology which is defined as “identify, obtain and consult the literature and other materials that are useful for research purposes, where you have to extract and gather relevant and necessary information with respect to our research problem” (Hernández et al. 2007: 23–24). The recommendations made with regard to it by Hernández et al. (2007) have been taken into account. As a technique, it was used the content analysis, defined as “a technique for collecting, sorting and analyzing the information contained in communications expressed orally or in writing by an objective, systematic and quantitative process, with a descriptive and inferential aim with respect to the context where they arise” (Bigné 1999: 259). By means of

**Table 2.1** Research review (74 documents)

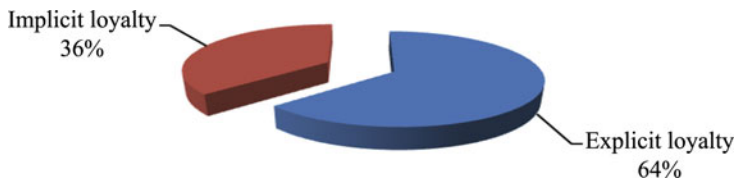
Destinations (42 documents)	Murphy et al. (2000), Bigné et al. (2001, 2005), Chen and Gursoy (2001), Kozak (2001), Lee (2001), Petrick et al. (2001), Tian-Cole et al. (2002), Baloglu et al. (2003), Tian-Cole and Crompton (2003), Lee et al. (2004, 2007), Chi (2005), Martín (2005b), San Martín (2005), Yoon and Uysal (2005), Alegre and Cladera (2006, 2009), Gallarza and Gil (2006), Hernández et al. (2006), Huang and Chiu (2006), Um et al. (2006), Barroso et al. (2007), Chen and Tsai (2007), Cladera (2007), Hui et al. (2007), Jang and Feng (2007), Kao (2007), Li et al. (2007), Yüksel and Yüksel (2007), Chi and Qu (2008), Kim (2008), Prayag (2008), Rodríguez del Bosque and San Martín (2008), Sanz (2008), Lee (2009), Martínez et al. (2009), Mechinda et al. (2009, 2010), Yen et al. (2009), Vale et al. (2010), Yüksel et al. (2010)
Accommodations (17 documents)	Gould-Williams (1999), Kandampully and Suhartanto (2000, 2002), Back (2001), Bowen and Chen (2001), Choi and Chu (2001), Kim and Cha (2002), Tsaour et al. (2002), Skogland and Siguaw (2004), Lin (2005), Voces (2005), Loureiro and Miranda (2006, 2008), Chitty et al. (2007), Shammout (2007), Sophonsiri (2008), Hu et al. (2009)
Others (15 documents)	Buracom (2002), Petrick and Backman (2002), Bigné and Andreu (2004, 2005), Petrick (2004), Alén and Fraiz (2006), Alexandris et al. (2006), Li (2006), Alén et al. (2007), Matzler et al. (2007), Faullant et al. (2008), Li and Petrick (2008a, b), Anuwichanont and Mechinda (2009), Kan et al. (2009)

content analysis a large quantity of textual material is reduced to a few categories and the frequency that each category has for the variable proposed (Callejo 2007). In this study the unit of analysis is published research articles from scientific journals and doctoral thesis that were accessed from the databases provided by electronic libraries of the University of Extremadura (Spain) and Beira Interior (Portugal). The selected documents deal with the utilization of study models to determine the factors that generate loyalty towards destinations, accommodation and other tourism products of interest. On this basis the final construct, loyalty, was studied, it sometimes being studied through behavioral intentions. Table 2.1 lists all the studies collected and analyzed.

## 2.4 The Operationalization of the Loyalty Construct: Results

The analysis of the 74 studies examined reveals that while many authors directly present loyalty as the result of some models proposed for the determination of loyalty to destinations, accommodation and other tourism products of interest, others include loyalty in behavioral intentions. Loyalty was analyzed as a separately construct in 47 studies of the 74 looked at, that is to say in 64 %, while it appears as included in other constructs in 27, that is to say, in 36 % (see Fig. 2.1).

Table 2.2 lists all those articles which present loyalty as a separated construct and as result of the models analyzed. The following studies treat the loyalty construct as one-dimensional: Gould-Williams (1999), Kandampully and



**Fig. 2.1** Explicit loyalty and implicit in behavioral intentions

Suhartanto (2000, 2002), Bowen and Chen (2001), Chen and Gursoy (2001), Buracom (2002), Tsauro et al. (2002), Bigné and Andreu (2004, 2005), Skogland and Siguaw (2004), Chi (2005), Lin (2005), San Martín (2005), Voces (2005), Yoon and Uysal (2005), Alexandris et al. (2006), Gallarza and Gil (2006), Huang and Chiu (2006), Loureiro and Miranda (2006, 2008), Chitty et al. (2007), Kao (2007), Matzler et al. (2007), Shammout (2007), Yüksel and Yüksel (2007), Chi and Qu (2008), Faullant et al. (2008), Kim (2008), Prayag (2008), Rodríguez del Bosque and San Martín (2008), Anuwichanont and Mechinda (2009), Kan et al. (2009), Martínez et al. (2009), Yen et al. (2009), Mechinda et al. (2010), Vale et al. (2010). While these treat it as two-dimensional, distinguishing between attitudinal and behavioral loyalty: Lee (2001), Martín (2005b), Hernández et al. (2006), Li et al. (2007), Li and Petrick (2008a) and Mechinda et al. (2009). Yüksel et al. (2010) treat loyalty as a three-dimensional construct distinguishing between the cognitive, affective and conative, while Lee et al. (2007) distinguish between the attitudinal, conative and behavioral loyalty. Some of the researchers who regard loyalty as a one-dimensional construct focus on a specific strand of it, attitudinal in the case of Mechinda et al. (2010) and behavioral in the cases of Kan et al. (2009) and Yen et al. (2009). Li and Petrick (2008b) studied the multi-dimensionality of loyalty through five separate constructs: cognitive, affective, conative, attitudinal and behavioral loyalty, applied to cruise liner tourism. In their study they postulate that conative, affective and cognitive loyalty together form a higher order factor, attitudinal loyalty. However, this claim is not backed up by the data as a competitive model based on the idea that attitudinal loyalty is one-dimensional offers a better fit than other combinations. Other authors who have looked at the multidimensionality of the construct are Back (2001) and Li (2006).

Loyalty as a one-dimensional construct appeared in 36 studies, that is to say 77 % of the total, followed by loyalty as a two-dimensional construct (6 %, 13 %), loyalty as a multi-dimensional construct (3 %, 6 %) and loyalty as a three-dimensional construct (2 %, 4 %) (see Fig. 2.2).

With regard to the indicators utilized, the authors preferred a multi-item to a single-item (Chen and Gursoy 2001) or a two-item scale embodied in the willingness to revisit and to recommend (Kandampully and Suhartanto 2000, 2002; Bowen and Chen 2001; Bigné and Andreu 2005; Chi 2005; Matzler et al. 2007; Chi and Qu 2008; Faullant et al. 2008; Prayag 2008). These two indicators are used in other multiple constructs of loyalty together with other items (Gould-Williams 1999; Buracom 2002; Tsauro et al. 2002; Bigné and Andreu 2004; Skogland and Siguaw 2004; Lin 2005;

**Table 2.2** Loyalty construct (47 documents)

Author/s (year)	Subsector	Loyalty construct	Indicator/s
Gould-Williams (1999)	Accommodations	Guest loyalty	I shall certainly recommend this hotel to anyone asking advice
			I shall say positive things about this hotel to other people
			This hotel will be my first choice if staying in the area again
Kandampully and Suhartanto (2000, 2002)	Accommodations	Customer loyalty	Intention to repurchase
			Intention to recommend
Bowen and Chen (2001)	Accommodations	Loyalty	Intent to return to the hotel
			Willingness to recommend the hotel
Chen and Gursoy (2001)	Destinations	Loyalty destination	Willingness to recommend a destination
Back (2001)	Accommodations	Attitudinal cognitive loyalty	The hotel ... provides me superior service quality as compare to any other hotel brands
			No other hotel brand performs better services than the ...
		Attitudinal affective loyalty	I believe ... hotel provides more benefits than other hotel in this category
			I love staying at the ... hotel
		Attitudinal conative loyalty	I feel better when I stay at ... hotel
			I like ... more so than other hotel brands
		Behavioral loyalty	Even if another hotel brand is offering lower room rate, I still stay at the ... hotel
			I intend to continue staying at ... hotel
			I consider the ... hotel to be my first lodging choice
			Could you please estimate how many times you have stay with ... hotel during the last year?
			Could you please estimate how many times you have stayed with other hotel brands during the last year?
			Could you please estimate the proportion of staying at the ... hotel as compared to the overall hotel staying in the last year?



Lee (2001)	Destinations	Attitudinal loyalty	How many times have you visited the U.S. in the past 3 years?
			How many other times have you visited the U.S.?
			How many holiday trips have you taken for four nights or more somewhere outside of Japan and South Korea?
			How many times have you visited the U.S. in the past 3 years?
			How likely is it that you will visit the U.S. in the next 5 years?
		Behavioral loyalty	Which one of these countries would you most like to visit in the next 2 years?
			How interested are you in visiting the U.S. in the next 12 months
		Attitudinal cognitive loyalty	The ... provides me superior service quality as compare to any other cruise lines
			No other cruise line performs better services than the ...
			I believe ... cruise line provides more benefits than other hotel in this category
Li (2006)	Others	Attitudinal affective loyalty	I love cruising with ...
			I feel better when I cruise with ...
			I like ... more so than other cruise lines
		Attitudinal conative loyalty	Even if another cruise line is offering lower rate, I still cruising with ...
			I intend to continue cruising with ...
			I consider ... my first cruising choice
		Behavioral loyalty	–
Buracom (2002)	Others	Loyalty	Continue to do business with the service provider
			Recommend friends and relatives to do business with the service provider
			Consider the service provider the first choice to buy services
			Pay higher price for the benefits received from the service provider
Tsaour et al. (2002)	Accommodations	Guest loyalty	Switch to a competitor if experiencing a problem with the service of this provider
			Recommend the hotel to others
			Revisit the hotel for the next stay
			Provide positive referral to others

(continued)

**Table 2.2** (continued)

Author/s (year)	Subsector	Loyalty construct	Indicator/s
Bigné and Andreu (2004)	Others	Loyalty	Say positive things about this museum/park
			Encourage to visit
			If I had to choose again, I would choose it
			Back to the museum/park in the coming years
Skogland and Sigauw (2004), Lin (2005)	Accommodations	Loyalty	I consider myself to be a loyal guest of the hotel
			If the hotel were to raise the price of my stay, I would still continue to be a guest of the hotel
			If a competing hotel were to offer a better rate or discount their services I would switch
			In the near future, I intend to use this hotel more often
			A long as I travel to this area, I do not foresee myself switching to a different hotel
			I would highly recommend the hotel to my friends and family
Bigné and Andreu (2005)	Others	Loyalty	I am likely to make negative comments about the hotel to my friends and family
			Recommend this room/museum
			Revisit this room/museum soon
			Intention to revisit
Chi (2005), Chi and Qu (2008), Prayag (2008)	Destinations	Destination loyalty	Willingness to recommend
Martín (2005b)	Destinations	Attitudinal loyalty	Willingness to tell positive aspects of the destination
			Willingness to recommend the destination
			Willingness to encourage other persons, friends or relatives, to visit ...
			Intention to revisit ... in the future
			Consider ... as first choice among alternatives
		Behavioral loyalty	Willingness to revisit the destination but the prices are higher than other years
			Willingness to revisit the destination but the prices are higher than those offered in other locations
			Number of times you have visited ...
			Frequency of visit ... with respect to other vacation destinations
			Frequency of recommend the visit to others

San Martín (2005)	Destinations	Loyalty	Try to return ... in the coming years After my current experience, I think I will visit ... again in the future I will encourage my family and friends to visit ... I recommend ... if someone asked me for advice
Voces (2005)	Accommodations	Loyalty	–
Yoon and Uysal (2005)	Destinations	Destination loyalty	In the next 2 years, how likely is it that you will take another vacation to Northern Cyprus? Please describe your overall feelings about your visit? Will you suggest ... to your friends/relatives as a vacation destination to visit
Alexandris et al. (2006)	Others	Loyalty	How much determined you are to continue skiing in the ... skiing resort How much committed you are to continue skiing in the ... skiing resort How much difficult would be for you to stop skiing in the ... skiing resort
Gallarza and Gil (2006)	Destinations	Loyalty	Likelihood to return to same destination in next 5 years Likelihood to return to same area in next 5 years Likelihood to recommend the destination to friends and relatives Likelihood to recommend the agency to friends and relatives Same situation, same choice of agency Same situation, same choice of destination
Hernández et al. (2006)	Destinations	Attitudinal loyalty	I will return to ... my next holidays I will recommend ... to my family and friends I intend to holiday in ... within the next 3 years
		Behavioral loyalty	How many times have you visited the tourism destination?
Huang and Chiu (2006)	Destinations	Loyalty destination	–

(continued)

**Table 2.2** (continued)

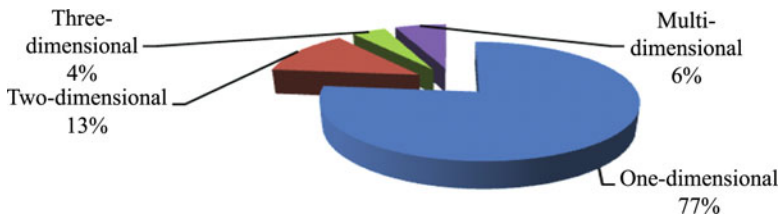
Author/s (year)	Subsector	Loyalty construct	Indicator/s
Loureiro and Miranda (2006, 2008)	Accommodations	Loyalty	I will speak well about this lodging service to other people
			I will recommend the lodging if someone ask for my advice
			I will encourage my friends and relatives to visit this rural lodging
			In the next vacation I intend to return to this lodging
			I would come continually even if the lodging price will increase
Chitty et al. (2007)	Accommodations	Loyalty	I prefer to pay a bigger price here than in other rural lodgings for the advantages that I receive in this rural lodging
			If I were faced with the same choice again I would stay at this hostel
			If I were faced with the same choice again I would stay at this type of room
			I would stay in hostels operated under the same chain elsewhere
			I will recommend this hostel to my friends
Kao (2007)	Destinations	Loyalty	–
Lee et al. (2007)	Destinations	Attitudinal loyalty	This place means a lot to me
			I enjoy recreating at this place more than any other place
			I am very attached to this place
			It would be difficult to change my beliefs about this place
		Conative loyalty	Even if close friends recommended another place, I would not change my preference for this place.
			I would not easily change my selection of this place as a recreation site
			I would recommend this place to people who seek my advice
			I would tell other people positive things about this place
		Behavioral loyalty	I would recommend this place to my friends
			I would visit this place again
Li et al. (2007)	Destinations	Attitudinal loyalty	In a typical year, how many days do you spend recreating at this place?
			–
		Behavioral loyalty	–

Matzler et al. (2007)	Others	Loyalty	Plans to revisit
Shammout (2007)	Accommodations	Loyalty	Recommendation to others
			I really care about the future of this hotel chain
			I am willing to put in extra effort to stay with this hotel chain
			I am proud to tell others that I stay at this hotel chain
			For me this hotel chain is the best alternative
			I expect to stay with this hotel chain regularly in the future
			I feel very Little loyalty to this hotel chain
			As a guest of this hotel chain, I feel that I am prepared to pay more for their high quality products/ services
			I would recommend this hotel chain to others
			I stay at this hotel chain on a regular basis
Yüksel and Yüksel (2007)	Destinations	Expressed loyalty intentions	This hotel chain stimulates me to stay
			I have used this hotel chain for a number of years
			I feel very strong loyalty to this hotel chain
			Choose again
			Say positive things
			Recommend to those seeking my advice
Faullant et al. (2008)	Others	Loyalty	Encourage others
			Do more shopping
			Repurchase intention
			Word of mouth
Kim (2008)	Destinations	Destination loyalty	Likeliness (attitude)
			Revisit (probability)
			Recommendation (word of mouth)
			(continued)

**Table 2.2** (continued)

Author/s (year)	Subsector	Loyalty construct	Indicator/s
Li and Petrick (2008a)	Others	Attitudinal loyalty	I believe ... provides more benefits than other cruise lines in its category
			No other cruise line performs better services than ...
			I feel better when I cruise with ...
			I like ... more than other cruise lines
			I consider ... my first cruising choice
Li and Petrick (2008b)	Others	Behavioral loyalty	During the last 3 years, how many times did you cruise with ...?
			During the last 3 years, how many times did you cruise with any cruise line (including ...)?
		Cognitive loyalty	... provides me superior service quality as compared to other cruise lines
			I believe ... provides more benefits than other cruise lines in its category
			No other cruise line performs better services than ...
		Affective loyalty	I love cruising with ...
			I feel better when I cruise with ...
			I like ... more than other cruise lines
		Conative loyalty	I intend to continue cruising with ...
			I consider ... my first cruising choice
			Even if another cruise line is offering a lower rate, I still cruise with ...
Rodríguez del Bosque and San Martín (2008)	Destinations	Attitudinal loyalty	–
		Behavioral loyalty	Proportion of brand purchase (the number of cruises the respondent had taken with the focal cruise line in the past 3 years, divided by the total number of cruises s/he had taken during that time)
		Loyalty	I will try to return ...
			I think I will revisit ...
			I will encourage relatives and friends ...
Anuwichanon and Mechinda (2009)	Others		I would recommend ...
		Loyalty	It could not see the indicators because the authors cite an article that is not found in the references

Kan et al. (2009), Yen et al. (2009)	Others	Behavioral loyalty	What percentage of your total expenditures for ... do you spend in this ...?
			Of the 10 times you select a ... to buy ... at how many times do you select this ...?
			How often do you buy ... in ... compared to other ... where you buy ...?
Martínez et al. (2009)	Destinations	Loyalty	Willingness to revisit the city
Mechinda et al. (2009)	Others	Behavioral loyalty	Number of repeated visit
		Attitudinal loyalty	I consider myself a loyal visitor of this place
			My next trip will most likely be this place
			I would visit this place again
			I would recommend this place to people who seek my advice
Mechinda et al. (2010)	Destinations	Attitudinal loyalty	I would tell other positive things about this place
			I will recommend others to use medical tourism from this hospital/clinic in Pattaya
			I will tell other positive things about medical tourism provided by this hospital/clinic in Pattaya
			I consider myself to be a loyal customer of this hospital/clinic
			If I had to do it over again, I would choose this hospital/clinic
			I try to deal with this hospital/clinic again because it is the best choice for me
Vale et al. (2010)	Destinations	Loyalty	–
Yüksel et al. (2010)	Destinations	Cognitive loyalty	Didim provides me superior service quality as compared to other places I have been to
			No other destination performs better than Didim
			Overall quality of Didim is the best as a tourism destination
	Affective loyalty		I believe Didim provides more benefits than other places
			I love staying in Didim
			I feel better when I stay in Didim
	Conative loyalty		I like Didim more than other destinations
			If I am given a chance, I intend to continue making my holiday in Didim
			I consider Didim to be my first holiday choice



**Fig. 2.2** Dimensionality of explicit loyalty

Martín 2005b; San Martín 2005; Yoon and Uysal 2005; Gallarza and Gil 2006; Hernández et al. 2006; Loureiro and Miranda 2006, 2008; Chitty et al. 2007; Lee et al. 2007; Shammout 2007; Yüksel and Yüksel 2007; Kim 2008; Rodríguez del Bosque and San Martín 2008; Mechinda et al. 2009; Mechinda et al. 2010). Of the 47 studies that deal with loyalty directly, 30 use repeat visits and recommendations as indicators of loyalty either alone or accompanied by other factors, that is to say 64 % of the total. It must be emphasized that those authors that differentiate between, on the one hand, attitudinal and behavioral loyalty (Martín 2005b; Hernández et al. 2006; Lee et al. 2007; Li et al. 2007; Li and Petrick 2008a, b; Kan et al. 2009; Mechinda et al. 2009, 2010; Yen et al. 2009) and, on the other, cognitive, affective and conative loyalty (Lee et al. 2007; Li and Petrick 2008b; Yüksel et al. 2010) use indicators which do not coincide with constructs of the same category.

Table 2.3 lists the studies that take loyalty to be an indirect result of the models studied. Most of the studies deal with the final result as a single construct. This construct may be the intention to return (Murphy et al. 2000; Choi and Chu 2001; Petrick et al. 2001; Petrick and Backman 2002; Alegre and Cladera 2006, 2009; Um et al. 2006; Cladera 2007), intentions regarding future behavior (Tian-Cole et al. 2002; Baloglu et al. 2003; Lee et al. 2004; Alén and Fraiz 2006; Alén et al. 2007; Chen and Tsai 2007; Sophonsiri 2008; Hu et al. 2009; Lee 2009), the probability of a recommendation or a repeat visit (Hui et al. 2007), future destination selection (Tian-Cole and Crompton 2003) or word of mouth recommendation (Kim and Cha 2002). Other authors chose to use two constructs (Bigné et al. 2001, 2005; Kozak 2001; Petrick 2004; Barroso et al. 2007; Sanz 2008) which usually took the form of the intention to return and the intention to recommend (Bigné et al. 2001, 2005; Petrick 2004; Barroso et al. 2007; Sanz 2008). There was one article which differentiated between three constructs as a result, namely the intention to pay a return visit in the short, medium or long term (Jang and Feng 2007). In 20 of the 27 studies examined (74 %) a single construct was used while 7 (22 %) studies used two constructs, basically the intention to return and recommend. Only one study (4 %) used three constructs (see Fig. 2.3).

With regard to indicators, the authors again preferred multi- to single-item scales (Choi and Chu 2001; Tian-Cole and Crompton 2003; Um et al. 2006; Cladera 2007; Alegre and Cladera 2009), all being related to the probability of returning, or scales with two items (Murphy et al. 2000; Bigné et al. 2001, 2005; Kozak 2001; Kim and Cha 2002; Petrick and Backman 2002; Alegre and Cladera 2006; Barroso et al. 2007;



**Table 2.3** Behavioral intentions construct and others (27 documents)

Author (year)	Subsector	Behavioral intentions and others	indicator/s
Murphy et al. (2006)	Destinations	Intention to return	Intention to return to Victoria within 2 years
Bigné et al. (2001)	Destinations	Return	Intention to return to other island destination within 2 years
		Recommend	Would you return to ...?
Choi and Chu (2001)	Accommodations	Repeat patronage	Would you recommend it to someone?
			Likelihood of returning to the same hotel in subsequent trips
Kozak (2001)	Destinations	Intention to return to the same destination	How likely to revisit the same destination
		Intention to visit other destinations in the same country	How likely to visit other destinations in Mallorca
Petrick et al. (2001)	Destinations	Intentions revisit destination	How likely they would visit the destination in the next 2 years
			How likely they would visit the destination and see a show in the next 2 years
			How likely they would visit the destination and visit and book a package in the next 2 years
Kim and Cha (2002)	Accommodations	Word of mouth	I want to recommend this hotel to others
Petrick and Backman (2002)	Others	Repurchase intention	I want to tell other persons about good things of this hotel
			If I were to purchase a golf vacation, the probability that the vacation would be at XYZ Resort in (name of city) is ...
			The likelihood that I would consider purchasing a golf vacation to the XYZ Resort again is ...
Tian-Cole et al. (2002)	Destinations	Future behavioral intentions	Encourage friends and relatives to go to this refuge
			Visit the refuge again in the future
			Say positive things about the refuge to other people
Baloglu et al. (2003)	Destinations	Behavioral intention	Revisitation for pleasure next year
			Revisitation intention for pleasure in the next 3 years
			Recommending Las Vegas to their friends and/or relatives

(continued)

Table 2.3 (continued)

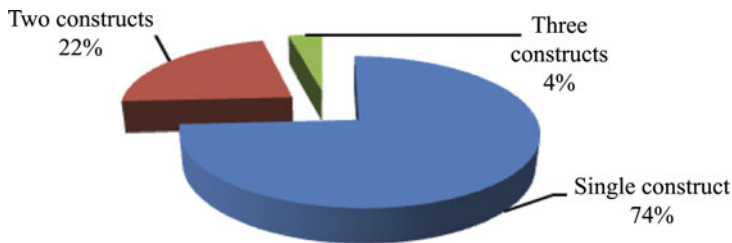
Author (year)		Behavioral intentions and others		indicator/s
Tian-Cole and Crompton (2003)	Subsector	Future destination selection		Intention to visit a destination
	Destinations	Behavioral intention		Recommend to advisees
				Positive word of mouth
Lee et al. (2004)	Destinations			Long-term intention to revisit
				Short-term intention to revisit
				If I were to purchase another cruise, the probability that the vacation would be with XYZ Cruise Line is ...
Petrick (2004)	Others	Repurchase		The likelihood that I would consider purchasing a XYZ cruise again is ...
				When discussing this week's cruise with other people, which of the following best describes how positively or negatively you will talk to others about XYZ cruise line?
		Word of mouth		Would you return to ...?
Bigné et al. (2005)	Destinations	Intention to return		Would you recommend it to someone?
		Willingness to recommend		How often they have holidayed in the Balearic Islands
				They chose to return to the same area for their holiday
Alegre and Cladera (2006)	Destinations	Intention to return		If I can, I have the intention of coming back to this spa resort
				I will give good references of this establishment to others
				I will advise others on the bad quality of this establishment
Alén and Fraiz (2006), Alén et al. (2007)	Others	Behavior intentions		If I have any problem with this establishment I will go to another one
				I rather pay a higher price than in other establishments, because of the advantages it offers
				I consider this spa resort the first on my list
				I will encourage my family and friends to come
				I would continue to come even if the prices were higher
				For some services I go to other establishments because they have lower prices
				I would recommend it to anyone that asks me

Um et al. (2006)	Destinations	Revisit intention	How likely would you return to Hong Kong for pleasure travel?
Barroso et al. (2007)	Destinations	Intention to recommend	Will you recommend that others visit this destination and its surroundings?
Chen and Tsai (2007)	Destinations	Intention to revisit	Will you return to visit this destination again?
		Behavioral intention	Likeliness to revisit
			Willingness to recommend
Cladera (2007)	Destinations	Intention to return	Intention to return
Hui et al. (2007)	Destinations	Likelihood of recommendation/revisiting	Likelihood of recommending
			Likelihood of revisiting
Jang and Feng (2007)	Destinations	Short-term revisit intention	Revisit interest within next 12 month
			Revisit likelihood within next 12 month
		Mid-term revisit intention	Revisit interest within next 3 years
			Revisit likelihood within next 3 years
		Long-term revisit intention	Revisit interest within next 5 years
			Revisit likelihood within next 5 years
Sanz (2008)	Destinations	Intention to return	Do you intend to return to ...?
			Do you intend to ... continue to be your second home?
		Intention to recommend	Would you recommend someone ... as a tourist destination?
Sophonsiri (2008)	Accommodations	Intentional behaviour	I would recommend this holiday resort to someone who seeks my advice
			I would consider this holiday resort my first choice, if I were going back to Samui Island
			I am a loyal patron of this holiday resort
			If I were going to Samui Island next time, I would definitely go back to this holiday resort

(continued)

Table 2.3 (continued)

Author (year)	Subsector	Behavioral intentions and others	indicator/s
Alegre and Cladera (2009)	Destinations	Intention to return	Intention to return
Hu et al. (2009)	Accommodations	Behavioral intentions	Repurchase intentions
			Willingness to recommend
			Price sensitivity
Lee (2009)	Destinations	Future behaviour	Willingness to revisit
			Willingness to recommendation to others
			Positive word of mouth to others



**Fig. 2.3** Number of constructs used for implicit loyalty study

Chen and Tsai 2007; Hui et al. 2007), half of which were related to the intention to return or recommend (Bigné et al. 2001, 2005; Barroso et al. 2007; Chen and Tsai 2007; Hui et al. 2007). As previously happened, when authors opted to use more than two items both the intention to return and the intention to recommend appear accompanied by other indicators (Tian-Cole et al. 2002; Baloglu et al. 2003; Lee et al. 2004; Petrick 2004; Alén and Fraiz 2006; Alén et al. 2007; Sanz 2008; Sophonsiri 2008; Hu et al. 2009; Lee 2009). This happened in 15 out of the 27 papers, that is to say 56 % of the total.

Once the constructs arising from the models proposed by the various authors had been studied it could be observed that both those who treated loyalty as a separately construct and those who examined it indirectly in the form of behavioral intentions, etc. frequently use the intention to return and recommend indicators. It can thus be concluded that there are no significant differences between studies – regardless of whether they treat loyalty explicitly or implicitly – that look at destination loyalty and loyalty to accommodation or other tourism products given that one way or another the great majority study loyalty in terms of intention to return and recommend, in spite of the existence of other formulas or the fact that they may be accompanied by other indicators.

Either explicitly or implicitly in behavioral intention, loyalty in selected works appears as a result of models which combined mainly construct such as satisfaction (present in 76 % of analyzed researches), quality (39 %), image (34 %), value (20 %) or overall satisfaction (18 %). It is noteworthy that although the final aim of relationship strategy is loyalty, its main components, trust and commitment, only appear in 14 % and 4 % of analyzed works respectively, as well as other constructs related to relationship (5 %). Only 14 % of studies demonstrate a relationship orientation. This situation suggests that there is a gap related to relationship orientation in researches focused to study models to determine the factors that generate loyalty towards destinations, accommodation and other tourism products of interest. Related to the methodologies used by these researches, they are mainly developed with structural equation models. These are methods widely used for determining causal relationships between factors. LISREL and AMOS are the more handled programs, although in some cases EQS and PLS are used too. Other analyses, with less impact in these works, are regression and logistic regression, descriptive analysis, reliability of scales and neural models.

## 2.5 Conclusions and Final Reflections

Relationship marketing is a strategy that aims to give continuity to the organization through the establishment of lasting and mutually beneficial relationships between companies, customers and other market players. Value creation and individualized marketing, by contrast with traditional mass marketing may contribute to the generation of loyal customers, which would allow for the making of profit from the value that those customers contribute to firms over time. Palmer (1994) emphasized that a successful marketing strategy should focus not only on winning customers but also on winning their loyalty.

In this respect various questions arise about how to define, measure, and operationalize the loyalty construct in empirical studies. This present study has tried to answer the final two questions. It may be difficult to correctly measure and operationalize the loyalty construct in the tourism industry if it is only understood in terms of repeat purchases. The review of the literature concerned with the determination of factors which influence loyalty at the level of destination (destination, accommodation and other tourist products of interest) produced the results set out below and it is possible to establish that operationalization in this field has been carried out in a varied manner but frequently with common denominators. The research findings of this present paper reveal that not all the studies (64 %), analyzed, relating to loyalty to destinations, accommodation and other tourist products of interest, address loyalty as a separated construct and as the final result of their models. 36 % did so via behavioral intentions. 77 % of the studies that dealt with loyalty as a separated construct did so on a one-dimensional basis, 13 % on a two-dimensional basis, 4 % on a three-dimensional basis and 6 % on a multi-dimensional basis. With regard to the indicators used, authors preferred multi-item to one- or two-item scales, which were embodied in terms of intention to return and recommend. In total 64 % of the studies reviewed examined the construct in terms of intention to return and recommend, whether alone or accompanied by other items. In those studies of the loyalty construct which looked at it as embodied in other constructs, the treatment of the final construct shows greater variety though also the presence of points in common. 74 % of cases preferred to use a single construct, while 22 % used two constructs and 4 % three. Authors once more preferred multi-item to single item scales (all related to intention to return) or two-item scales (half of which related to the intention to return and recommend). As was previously the case, authors mainly opted to use more than two items. Both, intention to return and to recommend, alone or with other indicators, appeared in 56 % of cases. In both type of analyses, it becomes clear that they frequently use the intention to return and recommend indicators, either alone or accompanied by other items (64 % and 56 % respectively). It can thus be concluded that there are no significant differences between studies – regardless of whether they treat loyalty explicitly or implicitly – that look at destination loyalty and loyalty to accommodation or other tourism products given that one way or another they frequently study loyalty in terms of intention to return and recommend, regardless of the existence of other formulas or the fact that they may be accompanied by other

indicators. Thus, in the studies reviewed, what predominates is intention to return as an indication of customer loyalty, as well as the disposition to recommend, these being more appropriate for tourist services, which have a lower consumption frequency (Chen and Gursoy 2001). Nevertheless Figs. 2.2 and 2.3 set out the multiple options identified, which may offer good research results as their authors demonstrate. When deciding to use a greater or lesser number of dimensions the results of the study by Li and Petrick (2008b) could be taken into account as they produced the best fit with a competitive model based on the traditional view that the attitudinal loyalty is one-dimensional, and not the combination of the cognitive, affective and conative constructs.

In summary, based on the literature review about studies that address the causal factors that determine loyalty in tourism at the destination level (destinations, accommodation and other tourism products of interest), it is found out that the general opinion of the authors does not only include the revisit in the operationalization of loyalty, because it can be infrequent as Bigné et al. (2005) pointed out. But also, it has to be into account the recommendation as Chen and Gursoy (2001) defended. Therefore, it seems suitable that a correct operationalization of loyalty in tourism should include revisit and recommendation, independently of other formulas combined with other indicators, or if the loyalty construct appear in an explicit way in the model or implicit in behavioral intentions. Thus, this is an attempt to solve the question posed by Riley et al. (2001) about the problem of conceptualize loyalty in tourism, and an answer for the objective of this work.

Knowing the factors that create loyalty in the tourism industry, and a good operationalization of loyalty construct is key to implement and measure the impact of relationship marketing strategies. It is necessary to recognize what generates loyalty and which are the main indicators for measuring it (revisit and recommendation) to design relationship strategies of success. The result will be obtaining the benefits identified by Reichheld and Sasser (1990). In the case of tourism, those benefits are related with getting a loyal customer base that will improve the profitability of tourism destinations and their organizations. Probably these results show the latent need to revise the concept of CLV in the tourism industry, because customers not only worth by their repeated purchases, but also by the recommendations they make to other tourists. However, an important challenge in quantifying the power of recommendations emerges. Also, currently it is necessary to take into account that recommendation is not made by word of mouth (WOM) only. The expansion of the information and communications technology (ICT) has introduced the concept of word of mouse (eWOM) to recognize the potential of recommendation via Internet (websites, social networks, blogs, etc.). This is a challenge for academics and practitioners.

With regard to the limitations of this present study the first that might be mentioned is the difficulty involved in an exhaustive revision of the literature on a global scale. Although every effort has been made to identify the largest possible number of studies of interest there can be no certainty that nothing has been missed, in spite of the thoroughness of the search carried out. Other limitation have to do with the subjective aspects of the carrying out of the search in terms of identifying relevant documents and making certain classifications as well as the risk of having

introduced erroneous data into tables and figures. Although every effort has been made to carry out the work required for this study in the most methodical manner possible it has to be recognized that it may not always have been possible to achieve this. Any errors identified will be corrected in future research.

As regards the direction of future research, given that the study proposal regarding the loyalty construct set out by Li and Petrick (2008b) seems complete and exhaustive, in terms of items and dimensions and in spite of the fact that the results drawn from it tend towards simplification, this study could be replicated in other kinds of tourism or destinations, different from cruise liners. These could include cultural, nature, business, and rural tourism, etc. and destinations with these characteristics. To complement this study it would be interesting to come up with an operationalization proposal for loyalty based on the literature here carried out. After a preliminary test, it could be incorporated into a structural model that seeks to find the factors that create loyalty to a destination, accommodation or other tourist product. Thus the final performance of the loyalty construct could be tested.

As for the implications of this issue in the study of tourism marketing, the aim here was to make a modest contribution to progress in understanding the processes which produce loyalty in tourists, and also to make progress in management techniques and marketing in this context. The research field is broad and interesting and it all aims to contribute to the better management and performance of tourism organizations and destinations, in this case from the implementation of customer retention tools that attempt to monetize the value these customers provide over time.

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