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## HERITAGE DESTINATION LOVE

### ABSTRACT

**Purpose** – Although love has received considerable attention in marketing literature, there is limited past research on love in a tourism context. This research attempts to overcome past research negligence by proposing the concept of heritage destination love.

**Design/methodology/approach** – A qualitative approach was undertaken, face-to-face in-depth interviews with 35 respondents respondents in London to discuss about the concept of heritage destination love antecedents and its consequences, tourists' behavior and tourists' feeling, passion and love about the destinations as playing a magnificent role in tourism development.

**Findings** – The outcome reveals that heritage destination love has three elements - passion, emotional attachment, and identification.

**Originality/value** – Despite its limitations, the current research offers a theoretical insights of the psychological theory of the love triangle in relation to heritage destination love.

**Keywords:** Heritage; destination; love; tourists' feeling; passion; emotion attachment

Andriotis, K., Foroudi, P., and Marvi, R. (2020) Heritage Destination Love, *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Love, something truly magnificent. Something that can turn the darkest nights in to the sunny dawn. However, sometimes humankind starts loving other things instead of their own kind (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2014). For example, the findings of Barta et al. (2012) indicated that customers can love Cannon (a camera brand) because of the pleasurable feeling of taking pictures of friends and families. Nevertheless, love can be conceptualized as the “degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied customer has for a particular trade name” (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006, p.81). Due to its critical importance in providing a deeper understanding of travelers’ behavior, destination love has been mainly studied in the academic tourism literature (e.g., Swanson, 2017; Lee & Hyun, 2016) in the context of brand love which mainly focuses on loving a service/product with a special trade name. For instance, a study done by Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) revealed that customers can love brand Nike, as the brand represents the love of running in its brand shoes. Additionally, the results of Swanson (2017) suggested that tourists can love a particular destination like Las Vegas, and they indicated that travelers who visited Las Vegas expressed an instant feeling of brand love toward the city.

An inescapable fact about love is that the word ‘love’ existed in ancient Greece (Wikipedia, 2019). However, the origins of love can be clearly identified in the work of the well-known 16<sup>th</sup> century writer, William Shakespeare. The concept of love also can be found in psychology, as Lasswell and Lasswell (1976) conceptualized love as ‘psychological arousal and cognition’. Love has also been discussed in sociology and social psychology (Albert, Merunka, & Valette-Florence, 2008). Thus, it is difficult to come up with one specific definition for love.

The literature review showed that love is a dominant variable regarding tourist behavior in specific destinations, which makes tourists committed to particular destinations. However, as Aro, Suomi, and Saraniemi (2018) suggested, there is an obvious difference between destination love and brand love. While in brand love customers form a deep relationship with a product/service of a particular trade mark (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010), destination love refers to establishing a relationship with a particular place and destination (Gitelson & Crompton, 1984). Hence, heritage destination love seems to have more common origins with destination love, which is often mentioned as place love. In spite of this fact, destination/place love refers to a particular place (Sharma & Nayak, 2018) and heritage destination love refers to loving and being attached to a heritage destination.

Previous studies (Aro et al., 2018; Hosany & Gilbert, 2010) examined the concept of love from a tourism perspective. For example, the studies by García, Gómez, & Molina (2012) and Barnes, Mattsson, & Sørensen (2016) illustrated that destination love mainly focuses on the attached feeling to a particular destination. While brand love (Langner, Bruns, Fischer, & Rossiter, 2016) and destination love (Christou, 2018; Sharma and Nayak, 2015; Swanson, 2017) have been widely studied, however, the concept of ‘heritage destination love’ has not been recognized by previous literature. It means that this important concept remains elusive and unknown. Considering the lack of research on this concept, the current study attempts to understand the concept of heritage destination love and its immense importance in the burgeoning growth of the tourism industry. In order to achieve this, the following research is based on the love triangle theory introduced by Sternberg (1986) to find a comprehensive understanding of when travelers are more likely to form and feel a sense of love with a heritage destination. Also, it aims to find a

deeper understating of heritage destination love antecedents and its consequences. The following research is a contribution to the burgeoning research regarding heritage destination by offering love as one of the most important psychological elements of forming such relationships.

Based on a systematic review on love in the tourism and hospitality industry, we found 68 articles which mainly discussed love in the tourism industry. However, some few researchers (e.g., Aro et al., 2018; Scarpi, Mason, & Raggiotto, 2019) studied the role of destination love and none have investigated heritage destination love. Due to the lack of research regarding heritage destination love, this exploratory research attempts to understand this concept and its magnificent role in tourism development. In order to do so, the researchers analyse the concept of brand love in the tourism industry, and heritage destination love as a way of making travelers loyal to a particular destination.

## **2.0 BRAND LOVE**

Brands have mostly been studied by assessing brand loyalty (Oliver, 1999), and customer satisfaction (Fournier & Mick, 1999). Satisfaction was mainly considered as an effective way of enhancing loyalty until brand love was introduced by Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) as an effective way of increasing customer loyalty. Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) conceptualized brand love as a satisfied consumer toward a particular brand/corporate name and the degree of the passionate emotional attachment. Emotional and attachment bonds might seem more logical than expressing love toward brands. However, utilizing the word *love* for loving things other than people might seem an insult for humankind (Ahuvia, 1993). In spite of these criticisms, it seems that love is a psychological procedure that can occur toward activities, individual and objects (Ahuvia, Batra, & Bagozzi, 2014). A study by Ahuvia (1993) has shown that objects related to nature, destination, place, and heritage are among the non-human objects that can be loved.

The theory of love was introduced by Sternberg (1986), and focuses mainly on interpersonal love. This theory is the most widely accepted theory among studies dealing with love in any context (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012). The psychological theory of love comprised three main components including (1) passion, (2) commitment, and (3) intimacy. Passion refers to the driver of romance and is the main reason that causes love, which involves ‘strong feeling toward another person’ (Baumeister and Bratslavsky, 1999, p.52). Tourists can forge a strong feeling of passion toward a particular destination heritage, such as food (Robinson & Getz, 2014), destination dance (MacIntyre, Baker, & Sparling, 2017), destination wildlife (Wijeratne, Van Dijk, Kirk-Brown, & Frost, 2014). Commitment is the second component of love according to love theory. During interpersonal love, individuals become committed to keep the love between them. In tourism, visitors become loyal to a particular destination heritage. For example, a study by Bryce, Curran, O’Gorman, & Taheri (2015) illustrated that tourists (n = 768) who visited Japan become loyal to the Japan heritage and their study revealed that the higher level of engagement with Japanese heritage had a positive influence on the visitor’s loyalty. Finally, the last component of love is the concept of intimacy, which encompasses the boundedness, and closeness. In the tourism industry, tourists could form a sense of identification with a particular destination heritage by expressing a feeling of closeness (Logan, 2012).

Although the theory of love is mainly used about brand love, some attributes like romantic, compassionate and parental cannot be applied to brand love and are applied to interpersonal love (Albert et al., 2008; Batra et al., 2012; Heinrich, Albrecht, & Bauer, 2012). The findings of Barta et al. (2012) examined the nature and consequences of brand love to find a comprehensive understanding of how customers experience love toward a specific brand. They conducted two studies in the USA. The first study comprised 70 telephone interviews, examining all types of non-interpersonal love (such as love of eating). The second study was based on 18 detailed interviews and focused mainly on the loved brand, such as Apple. Using qualitative studies and with the help of structural modelling, their results revealed that in the first study 96% of respondents stated that they love something apart from another person. Also, their results revealed that 72% loved doing a specific activity. The second study showed that, noteworthy, 100% of the participants mentioned that they ‘sort-of-love’ at least one brand. Additionally, 89% stated that they feel an absolute love toward a specific brand. Consequently, their study revealed that all respondents identified non-interpersonal ‘love’ or ‘a kind of love’ towards particular brands (Barta et al., 2012).

The result from Batra et al. (2012) revealed that brand love contains 6 major dimensions including (1) *positive attitude valence* which indicates that consumers assess the love object positively; for instance, a traveler may love a souvenir of a specific destination (2) *emotional connection* when consumers (i) have a spontaneous fit between him or herself and the love object (ii) they feel positive affection toward a destination when they think of it (iii) and ultimately they feel emotionally attached to the object they love. In this case, travelers consider destination as a part of themselves. (3) *Self-concept integration* is the object that consumers love and is linked to the consumer’s self-perception and their ideal self-concept. Consumers also find a meaning in using the brand or love object. Besides, they think about the brand during the day. (4) *Passion based behavior*, where consumers have a sense of nostalgia with the brand (past involvement with the brand) and they also feel a passionate motivation to use the love object and the brand. They are also interested in investing their tangible assets like money and intangible sources like time into the destination. Travelers feel passionate toward the destination and might invest their time in destination heritage. (5) *Long standing relationships* where consumers are keen to make the love object a part of themselves for a long period of time. Travelers keep visiting the destination over a long period of time and they return to visit the destination over time. (6) *Separation anxiety*, which derives from their loved brand and results in anxiety and stress; when travelers are not in their loved destination, they psychologically feel stressed and anxious.

However, a study by Albert et al. (2008) showed that only 55% of French respondents had a feeling of love toward a brand. Also, it has been shown that customers tend to use the word ‘love’ less frequently when they speak about their relationship with brand. This can be considered as one of the other differences with interpersonal love (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Loving a brand can vary due to cultural differences.

Interestingly, the results of Petr (2009) revealed that even two similar countries like Thailand and Hong Kong have a different set of heritage. Consequently, the likability of each destination is completely different from the other one. In other words, two similar heritage destination do not

make tourists love both heritage destinations. Additionally, the findings of Scarpi et al. (2019) suggested that older tourists who participated in a heritage destination felt more attached to the heritage destination.

Brand love differs from interpersonal love that individuals have toward each other. The first difference is that brand love is often considered a less important relationship than an interpersonal relationship. Secondly, while love between people contains a powerful unselfish concern for the loved person, this is not true regarding brand love. Thirdly, in healthy relationships, love is two-sided, but in brand love, the love is one sided. The fourth difference is that, in Stenberg's (1986) theory of love, individuals do not have to integrate with their loved one. However, in brand love study, integration is considered as an important part of brand love literature. Last but not least, people choose who to love consciously and view their relationship as love, while in brand love this is not the case.

### **3.0 HERITAGE**

Heritage is a well-established concept in the marketing literature (Hudson, 2011). Different scholars in the field of heritage brand (Balmer et al., 2006; Urde, Greyser, & Balmer, 2007), heritage marketing (Misiura, 2006), heritage tourism (Park, 2010) have investigated the heritage concept. In marketing the term 'heritage' is usually used to differentiate competitors from each other and help destinations/brands/corporates to have a unique identity (Hakala, Lätti, & Sandberg, 2011). However, the heritage concept is mainly used in tourism literature to distinguish destinations from each other (Urde et al., 2011), as a tool for attracting visitors (Foroudi et al., 2018), as a way of shaping the society's behavioral norms, and as an important element to influence repeat visitation (Poria, Reichel, & Cohen, 2011). It has been stated that "often tourism is based on local heritage resources such as older buildings and customs that attract visitors" (Madden & Shipley, 2012, p. 103). For instance, the results of Penrose and Cumming (2011) suggest that about 80% of tourists visited the UK mainly due to its rich heritage.

There has been a plethora of definitions for heritage. Timothy and Boyd (2003) defined heritage as the natural landscape of each country. Urde et al. (2007) suggested that heritage is made up of commonly used symbols within a group of people, for instance in an organization. Balmer (2011) suggested that heritage refers to the set of history and tradition that certain people try to follow and links the past to the present and future. Hakala et al. (2011) stated that heritage is mainly conceptualized as the core values. In addition, Chung (2009) also suggested that 'heritage has a 'multiplicity of values'. Based on the all the definitions discussed, perhaps the best definition is that heritage is nothing but 'not so much a 'thing' as a set of values and meanings' (Smith, 2006, p. 11). This set of values can make tourists fall in love with the destination heritage. Tourists can feel an emotional attachment toward a specific heritage destination. The results of Gu and Ryan (2008) suggested that tourists who visited Beijing experienced attachment to the place. Additionally, tourists can be passionate about a specific destination heritage. Visitors can show their passion by participating in the destination events (Kim and Morrison 2005). Ultimately, tourists can identify with heritage destination as well. Visitors can show their identification with the destination by buying souvenirs from the place (Paraskevaidis

& Andriotis, 2015) to learn about the destination language (Schianetz, Kavanagh, & Lockington, 2007).

In this research, the term heritage refers to the set of values accepted among people local to the destination, and heritage destination love could be defined as ‘the emotional attachment toward a heritage destination which can be different for different travelers but it includes passion (Albert, Marunka, & Valette-Florence, 2013), self-identification integration (Nam, Ekinici, & Whyatt, 2011), and emotional attachment (Yuksel, Yuksel, & Bilim, 2010).

#### **4.0 ATTACHMENT**

The procedure in which individuals feel an emotional relationship with a place/destination is known as place/destination attachment (Strzelecka, Boley, & Woosnam, 2017; Yuksel et al., 2010). In other words, the feeling of being at home is a sign that tourists have established an emotional bond to a place/destination. Hummon (1992) conceptualized place attachment as ‘emotional involvement with places’ (p. 256). Additionally, Low and Altman (1992) conceptualized place attachment as individuals’ cognitive or emotional connection to a specific setting (p. 165).

Attachment can occur between both buildings and environments heritage, cities, towns, wildlife. Similarly, Hidalgo et al. 2014 suggested that place attachment is made of two components: (1) physical bond to the place, and (2) social bond to the locals. However, their findings revealed that social attachment is more important than physical attachment in forming place attachment among visitors. Their results also highlight the importance of physical attachment in addition to social attachment. Physical/place attachment like all other relationships happens gradually and over time (Bramwell, 2015; Suntikul & Jachna, 2016; Wang & Chen, 2015) when individuals start developing attachment to a place usually after their first or second visit (More & Graefe, 1994). However, noteworthy, individuals might start feeling attached to a place even without seeing the place or destination. This could happen due to word of mouth from friends, families, and mass or social media (Hudson, Roth, Madden, & Hudson, 2015) who are loyal to the place.

#### **5.0 LOYALTY**

Loyalty is an old concept in marketing, and it dates back to 1960. However, in tourism and hospitality management it has gained attention since 1990 (e.g., Selin et al., 1988). Newman and Werbel (1973) conceptualized loyalty as repurchasing behavior of customers. Tellis (1988) defined loyalty as repeated purchase over time. Loyalty can be categorized in two ways: behavioral loyalty and attitudinal loyalty. Behavioral loyalty refers to actual loyalty behavior (Hariharan, Desai, Talukdar, & Inman, 2018) where customers not only remain loyal to a brand over time but also do not change their brand. Attitudinal loyalty refers to the time when customers have positive feelings toward a specific brand (Foroudi et al., 2018). Attitudinal loyalty is the one which lacks commitment to brand and happens because of financial rewards, time convivence, lack of sufficient information and discounts.

Measuring loyalty in the tourism industry has long been a subject of debate (Ekinici, Sirakaya-Turk, & Preciado, 2013; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). A problem for measuring loyalty in the tourism industry is the time-frame where travelers return and visit a particular destination (Sirakaya-Turk, Ekinici, & Martin, 2015). The intention of visiting a particular destination is highly related to the experiences gained from previous visits of the tourists, which could improve their loyalty towards the place (Antón, Camarero, & Laguna-García, 2017). Destination loyalty can be described as tourist's behavioral intentions to repeat destination visitation (Meleddu, Paci, & Pulina, 2015) which could reflect in their behavior by expressing their positive feeling through word-of-mouth (Pike, 2010) and recommending it to others (Foroudi et al., 2018).

## **6.0 REPEAT VISITATION**

Repeat visitation could be conceptualized as the time when tourists decide to visit a specific destination more than one time (Rittichainuwat, Qu, & Leong, 2003). Scholars (Baloglu & Erickson, 1998) have investigated the repeat visitation through eight perspectives (1) repeated visit (as a critical factor for tourists loyalty), (2) attributes of tourists (who revisit a destination and how familiarity influences tourists' decision to revisit a particular destination) (Gitelson & Crompton, 1984; Gyte & Phelps, 1989), (3) tourists' characteristics (sociodemographic), (4) feeling of inertia (lack of motivation to repeat the visit) (Alegre & Cladera, 2006), (5) destination quality (Tosun, Dedeoğlu, & Fyall, 2015), (6) place attachment (Lee, Kyle, & Scott, 2012), (7) trip satisfaction (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Mazursky, 1989; Oppermann, 1998), and (8) tourist experience (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Thus, when tourists are satisfied with their experience towards the destination, they are highly likely to visit the place in the future and ignore any additional information about the destination (Oppermann, 1998). Also, tourists who visit a destination more than one time are more likely to visit the destination, compared to the tourists who visited the place for the first time (Court & Lupton, 1997).

## **7.0 STUDY METHODS**

Perception and individual's experiences are better analysed through in-depth interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Paraskevaidis & Andriotis, 2017). To study the value applicability of the heritage destination love, semi structured interviews were conducted. This format was more suitable for the purpose of this study as it is a method to obtain huge amounts of data associated with the wider conversation topics (Berg, 1998).

This research was conducted in London, UK. London was selected because it is considered to offer a variety of tourist attractions to incoming tourists, it is rich in heritage (Foroudi et al., 2018) and is one of the main cities that attract tourists due to the rich heritage destination (Penrose and Cumming 2011). The participants were selected as a sample who had travelled to London and experienced the London heritage. They were selected in places like cafes, shopping malls, and tourists' places. We approached 52 people and only 35 (23 men and 12 women) participated and were interviewed. Based on the analysis the findings from 7 interviews were considered insufficient as the interviewee did not give any new and distinctive information. Participants were all between 27 and 61-years old. The majority of respondents were male (65.7%). The respondents were aged between 35-44 years (31.4%), 55-64 years (25.7%), 25-34



years (22.9%), 45-54 years (11.4), and 19-24 years (8.6%); 54.3% of the participants were married, and 34.3% were single; 40% held a postgraduate degree and 37.1 an undergraduate degree. Tabel 1 illustrates that most of the participants were visiting the place for the first time (57.1%) or second time (14.3%). Each interview was approximately between 35 and 65 minutes and all interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure reliability of the data (Foroudi et al., 2014).

<<<Insert Table 1>>>

An interview protocol was designed to ensure that all areas of interest were covered. However, all the participants were permitted to freely move from subject to subject without necessarily following the order of the subjects in the protocol. The open-ended questions enhanced the validity of the responses, which is essential for an exploratory study. The interview questions were mainly to understand the (1) concept of heritage destination love antecedents and its consequences, tourists' behavior and (2) tourists' feeling, passion and love about the destinations as playing a magnificent role in tourism development. The questions were obviously not strictly limited to the designed interview protocol but there was discussion that touched other topics and concepts.

The data analysis was conducted on two levels using a constant comparative method (Flick, 2009). The initial stage was to read and re-read the collected notes several times, until they formed into more meaningful data so the information could be grouped into three main categories which earlier had been identified in the literature. The second stage was to compare the evidence with secondary sources to confirm theoretical and empirical findings, a form of triangulation which enhances the reliability and validity of the study) - an additional effort to enhance the validity of the research. This member checking procedure aided the researcher to avoid any missed information inter-operation which can happen while the data are being analyzed (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

## **8.0 STUDY FINDING**

All of the participant mentioned that they were deeply attached to the heritage of the place they had visited the destination within last 3 months. This revealed that heritage could be a main reason of visiting a destination for tourists (Foroudi et al., 2018). Another surprising outcome of this research is that approximately half of the interviewees mentioned that they had some form of passion and emotional attachment to the heritage of London. According to these general results, the next subsections will analyze the key elements of heritage destination love in the literature.

### ***8.1 Love and Passion***

Passion shows the strong feeling a traveler has for a particular heritage destination (Albert et al., 2013). This outcome was obvious in this study as almost 90% participants said they had a special passion regarding UK heritage, such as museums. Approximately 80% of the respondents expressed that due to their desire to visit a specific heritage destination they had visited the heritage in the past and in addition those travelers who had traveled only once were willing to

travel to the destination in the future as well. An American soldier shed his preliminary anxiety on his second visit to London where he mentioned that he was looking at heritage places more seriously than on his last visit. He mentioned that

*“...even London looks more crowded compare to the last visit, just fell in love with it and we decided to visit here again next year. Every time, I feel it is a unique place even compared to New York, love here. I could enjoy exploring historical places, which was not found previously. All the heritage and historical attraction places give me some meaning of the culture and knowledge... all gives me some connection to the place... that why I will be back again... I might have been living here in my previous life”.*

The quote above is consistent with Aro et al. (2018) who stated that passion is a dimension of destination brand love. In this regard, tourists can also feel an emotional attachment to a specific heritage destination which makes them to savor visiting the destination. Besides, in line with the results of Albert et al. (2013) the above notion suggests that passionate travelers or tourists can feel love toward heritage destination.

Also, a 49 year old female traveler mentioned that passion is the main reason why she is so interested in visiting London in the near future. She mentioned “I brought my kids to London because of a passion and dream they had... it is our main personal reason”. In a similar vein, a middle-aged couple with a daughter aged 15 and a son aged 10, mentioned the main reason of their travel is “...to take my wife and kids to London to discover the unique culture of various countries and cities, and they have a clear mind-set when they design their future”. These two statements are also consistent with the results of Hudson et al. (2015) which states that passion is an important dimension of love for tourists feeling love toward a destination. Additionally, passion can make tourists visit a particular destination in the future (Pan, Zhang, & Gursoy, 2017). Also, the fact that the couple are visiting London with their children means that tourists promote their destination heritage love thus making them loyal visitors.

When tourists are passionate about a heritage destination, they purchase souvenirs so that the souvenirs remind them of the heritage destination they had visited (Swanson & Horridge, 2006) and their heritage destination passion. For instance, the results of Fountain, Fish, & Charters (2008) revealed that when customers are passionate about a winery in Australia, not only are they more likely to purchase wine to remind them of place, but also it is highly likely that these customers will revisit the place.

Being passionate about a heritage destination shows a higher level of interest in purchasing souvenirs from a particular destination. This was more obvious in purchasing items that remind tourists about a particular heritage destination. All mentioned that they bought souvenirs from London which illustrate the heritage of the place, such as statues of Westminster Abbey, a London Black Cab, a phone box, postcards, stamps, etc. A 28 year old father of twins stated that

*“I think the identity of London is back to its culture and heritage. It is fundamental to a city’s character, which has value and meaning, contains history of the past, current and imagination ..., I think heritage is an essential to the celebrations... Love every street of London, places...old shops... art galleries...museums...I don’t like the place, I Love London...”*

As a 58 year old man mentioned: “...we bought many gifts for my parents and friends... all are symbols of London...also many memories for my twins... already took over 1400 photos...all these will remind me of my wonderful times here, when I am back home”. Similar results from Paraskevaidis & Andriotis (2016) showed that a traveler who had traveled to France could recall all his memories by looking at the small statue of the Eiffel Tower and this makes tourists remember the pleasurable time they had in the destination heritage. Furthermore, this is consistent with the results of Swanson & Timothy (2012) which found that passionate heritage tourists show a greater chance of buying souvenirs and taking pictures.

A traveler who visited London also stated that: “I and my fiancé love heritage buildings...I think heritage and culture of London have attracted people, who have passion for heritage, look at the Victorian buildings, window design, etc.... I only choose a place to travel which has a kind of emotion to it”. Undoubtedly, the above notion reveals that being passionate about a destination heritage evokes the tourist’s emotion about a heritage destination. When tourists feel this emotion toward a heritage destination, they can feel love toward a heritage destination. Also, the above-mentioned quote is consistent with the research of Batra et al. (2012) in which passion is one of the main constructs of love.

Without a shadow of doubt such quotes show that passion is the main reason of loving a particular destination heritage (in this case, London). In addition, almost all travelers stated that their main purpose of a heritage destination visit was because they were passionate about the destination and they are willing to visit the destination regularly in the future. As a man, 65 years old mentioned:

*“I love, love to understand the hidden heritage when it comes to the fore...So, while their purchases have to have financial returns, the passion is for heritage, and the dream to make the world a more interesting place for travelers”*. Also as a woman of 42 years old stated *“I feel I am engaging in the behind the scenes history, and have more passion and attachment to any movies made in my lovely places”*. These two quotes show that when tourists are passionate about a heritage destination, they try to be engaged with the heritage destination, search for details about the heritage destination, learn about the heritage destination and ultimately be engaged with the heritage destination (Hudson et al., 2015). Similarly, the results of Wang, Qu, & Yang (2019) revealed that love can enhance engagement in the tourism industry. Also the results of Scarpi et al. (2019) suggested that passionate heritage destination tourists are more likely to participate in future heritage destination events.

There are also some cases when being passionate about a heritage necessarily resulted in recommendation to friends and relatives. As A majority of participants stated that they will recommend that all their friends and families visit the destination in the near future. For example, *A 37 year old lady, mum of 2 kids, said that, “heritage, I could explain it as a sharing a story, London shares the story, even if it is a new city compared to Rome, it has style...I love London and I am excited whenever I am here or talking about London on Facebook and WhatsApp... I already told my friends that we have to visit here again and stay longer to visit all old pubs...drink British, Irish, and Scottish beer... visit beverage museum...”*

Likewise, the results of Mellinas et al. (2016) showed that tourists have the same level of passion for sharing their experiences in online communities and due to the advancement of the internet they are becoming interested in sharing their point of view about their experiences of a destination (behavioral consequences of heritage destination love). Another traveler of 25 years old who was with her boyfriend from Australia had visited London heritage and mentioned that, *“Really enjoying my visit to London, even been here more than 4 times since 2010. Every time, I visit my favorite museums, V&A, Natural History Museum, Tate, and others, then, I visit my dream stores, like Harrods, Selfridges. I have to go for a walk in Hyde Park, Piccadilly and Green Park, I love London, London become a dream of ours to do something which is our passion... great experience to visit the heritage places...I joined an online community and all my virtual friends suggest I should visit specific places, hope we have enough time...”*

Among the travelers there were visitors who noted that because they experienced passion they feel more committed and loyal to the heritage (emotional consequences of heritage destination love). An American soldier stated that *“I visited military a cemetery and I felt the differences... I was travelling to World War II in my mind...visiting the actual places has a different feeling to what you see on the internet or movies, I am so excited and attached to it”*. In this case commitment, loyalty, excitement were consequences of heritage destination passion. Such a result was in line with the findings of Albert et al. (2013) which commitment is the consequence of passion.

My main problem with this as well as the next section is that they are not analytical enough. For each quote you need one paragraph of analysis.

## ***8.2 Emotional attachment***

Emotional attachment was interpreted as excitement and loyalty because of the tourists' visit and being emotionally attached to a heritage destination. This emotional attachment results in making a travel decision about a heritage destination. All interviewees considered a form of emotional attachment to the heritage destination effective in their decision and their way of thinking about a heritage destination. As a 65 year old woman mentioned: *“London is a city of the world, famous place which suffered fire, invasion, war, development, and plague...victories have shaped the world. London has significant moments that echo in history... it is the imagination of its citizens and visitors...It is a city with history”*. Her husband added *“London... heritage! I believe London is about heritage, it is the key thing to recall... heritage of London is about the present, but it is also about the future, also without understanding the history and past, no way to understand the present no way to map for the future. Love the place heritage because it helps to transform my imagination and outlook”*.

The above notion is consistent with the previous researches (Fedorikhin, Park, & Thomson, 2008; Yuksel et al., 2010) which suggested that emotional attachment results in the traveler's decision behavior. As an example, the results of Gross & Brown (2008) suggested that tourists who visited South Australia and felt an emotional attachment to the destination showed a higher level of purchasing food and wine. Additionally, consistent with the findings of Davis (2016), attachment is beneficial for developing a love between tourists and heritage destination. Furthermore, the place attachment occurs on account of heritage and destination value (Stylos,

Bellou, Andronikidis, & Vassiliadis, 2017) so consistent with the above quote, the feeling of attachment to a special heritage destination makes travelers love a particular heritage destination.

A German artist, 41 years old noted that *“I found eminent features of the heritage in the hotel I stay here, it has an amazing visual heritage, it is art deco design, architectural features which made the hotel very beautiful, I think it has an achievement image and longevity...”* His partner added: *“To my mind, cultural heritage is about collective memory in the form of tangible or intangible that has been given, which has a specific meaning by the residents and visitors. I always wanted to understand how their cultural heritage is created...where is coming from... I could feel, I could live here as my home town.”* This was consistent with other results. she has formed a specific emotional bond with London and the accepted norms of behavior in London, which she tries to do and behave accordingly in her own country. In this regard tourists feel an emotional attachment to a destination which makes visitors feel the destination is like their homes. The emotional attachment is required for a feeling of love (Karjaluoto, Munnukka, & Kiuru, 2016) to be formed between tourists and heritage destination.

A similar result was obtained in the statement of a father of 2 kids who said: *“London adding a memory in our lives, ...experience... fun and exciting. Kids read books about history of London, they tell us every detail...they challenge the tour guide, hahahaha, they love it, they don't want to go to hotel, they enjoy city and love it. Made a long list of visiting historical places, I never seen them so excited about a place... I am sure that our next trip will be here again”*. The results of such comments show that emotional attachment can change the way travelers behave (Yi, Fu, Jin, & Okumus, 2018). Also a 57 year old woman stated that: *“as you know, the history of London back to 2000 years ago, was the Centre of Roman Britain, the Tower of London was invaded in 1066 as part of the Norman Conquest of England. Since that time, London has had an identity, and was ruled by artisans and merchants...after the second war it became a center of arts and sciences. Now, is center of culture, society, politics, and trade. I assume all tourists visit the Houses of Parliament, Tower of London, Windsor Castle, Kensington Palace... London has a wealth of options for lovers of heritage, from history to art, architecture and culture”*. London is stylish and lovely, full of art and history to learn and feel...a comfortable place”.

Emotional attachment forms a connection between brand and the traveler's self. Heritage attachment can happen due to different reasons such as authenticity, uniqueness, originally, and positive emotions. Positive emotion not only has a positive influence on attachment but also it makes a traveler become committed to a particular heritage destination (Hakala et al., 2011). In these two comments, the visitors mention that they feel an emotional attachment to the destination heritage due to its unique architecture and its rich values. These two tourists also experienced a positive emotion toward the destination resulting in becoming committed to heritage destination which is a consequence of love (Wang et al., 2019).

The emotional attachment seems to have an influence on the heritage-destination traveler's behavior. This was confirmed by a mature lady, who travelled to London for five times. While all the respondents confirmed their ideas about the emotional attachment and believed it has impact on their behavior, they also think that it makes them love a particular heritage destination love.

### **8.3 Identification**

Foroudi et al. (2018) introduced place identification in terms of how well place concept fits with the visitors' self-concept. Based on identity theory (Mael & Ashforth, 1992) individuals try to define who they are by consuming and purchasing the same brand which has the concept which is consistent with their self-concept. In the tourism industry, the identification seems to have an important influence on the travelers, Nam et al. (2011) defines identification as a tool "which allows consumers to integrate or dis-associate with the group of individuals who constitute the social circle" (p. 1014).

Trying to express individuality using identification may be considered only an activity of product/service users. There is a sufficient body of evidence to show that many travelers revisit a heritage destination due to the same level of identification with the heritage destination (Aro et al., 2018; Zenker, Braun, & Petersen, 2017). Consistent with previous research, an Indian software engineer said that: "*This is my fifth trip to here but this time, we wanted only to explore and experience the old heritage places... here carved with heritage and constructed by love...surrounded by art, photos, love London, feel belonging here... I am quite in love with here*". This is consistent with the finding of Albert et al. (2008) which suggests that customers might love a brand because of self-image motives. Additionally, Hwang and Kandampully (2012) argued that higher level of self-expression has a more positive impact on the feeling of love.

Similar to the previous notion, a father of two kids mentioned that, "*...depends on what do you think of heritage. Every street of London central is full of stories and brings visitors with the knowledge of history values, nostalgia, or provenance. Here you could feel the expertise in craftsmanship, heritage in tradition, it refers back to my nostalgia for traditional values, incorporating childhood... here reminds me of my childhood, movies and cartoons...I was familiar with here even before I visited the place, it created something emotive to me and my family to latch onto*". Similar to the results of Ashforth and Mael (1989) which identifies positive effects on loyalty and positive word-of-mouth, both of which are consequences of love. In addition, the results of Albert and Merunka (2013) suggested that while identification is a cognitive process, love is both a cognitive and emotional process. In other words, when travelers identify a concept with a destination heritage, they are highly likely to experience a feeling of love toward a particular destination.

In this study most of the research participants considered one of their main reasons for loving a heritage destination is due to a perceived identification with the heritage destination. Many of the participants mentioned that the main intention of visiting and why they love this particular heritage destination is because they feel the society is different to the society where they live. Therefore, it is obvious that identification with a heritage destination is related to the heritage destination love and this can be one of the main reasons why tourists love a particular heritage destination. The model below summarizes the key findings.

## 9.0 CONCLUSION

In this study, we propose a new construct ‘heritage destination love’ which has not been explored by previous studies. Heritage destination love has developed based on (1) triangular theory of love, (2) literature review from marketing and tourism perspectives, and (3) qualitative study. Based on our study, we define heritage destination love as ‘the emotional attachment toward a heritage destination which can be different for different travelers, but it includes passion, self-identification integration, and emotional attachment with a destination heritage to some degree’. According to our definition, passion (Huber et al., 2015), emotional attachment (Aro et al., 2018) and identification (Alnawas & Altarifi, 2016) are the elements of heritage destination love.

Firstly, consistent with previous studies in marketing (e.g., Albert et al., 2008) passion was found to be the first component of heritage destination love. Passion reflects the sense of harmony between customers/visitors and brands/places they love. In other words, passion reflects the higher-arousal aspect of love (Belk, Ger, & Askegaard, 2003). Visitors who are passionate about a heritage destination can ultimately form a passionate emotional attachment with the heritage (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006) resulting in loving a heritage destination. Tourists who visited London stated that they are passionate about UK culture. As result, passion was identified to be a main element of heritage destination love.

Secondly, consumers who have a positive feeling toward a place, have a stronger experience (Harrison-Walker, 2001). Additionally, Sternberg’s (1986) theory of love suggests individuals can love a brand on account of ‘self-image motives’ (Albert et al., 2008, p. 73). Our research respondents point out that they experienced a feeling of ‘nostalgia’ or ‘felt that they had lived in London before’. All the quotes show signs of identification with destination heritage. Hence, identifying with a heritage destination love is the second vital element of heritage destination love.

Thirdly, emotional attachment was found to be the next element of heritage destination love. Heritage destination love is a particularly intense feeling of emotional attachment accompanied with a feeling of love. Participants in this research mentioned that they feel a strong emotion toward London’s heritage. Also, respondents noted that their main reason for visiting London was mainly due to their emotional attachment to London’s heritage. Consistent with previous researchers, emotional attachment changes the standard patterns of tourist behavior (Foroudi et al., 2018). Consequently, emotional attachment is the third component of heritage destination love.

The key managerial question for most of the tourism managers is how to make tourists love a destination and keep the relationship with it over time. Our new proposed concept helps managers to comprehend tourists’ feelings toward a heritage destination such as London. We suggest that all components of heritage destination love can lead tourists to love a specific heritage destination. Firstly, passion as discussed earlier expresses a strong willingness to use a particular trademark. Heritage managers need to create a strong desire for visiting a heritage destination. For instance, festivals or events like the World Cup are events that policy makers can utilize to evoke travelers’ passion. Secondly, identification which reflects the ability of expressing the travelers’ values. Consequently, managers can attempt to highlight the intrinsic

benefits (e.g., joy) of a heritage destination. This can be achieved through different advertising campaigns all over the world. Finally, emotional attachment which is broader than just having positive feelings in a destination can be very practical for assisting heritage managers to make a heritage destination lovable. Establishing an emotional attachment with a heritage destination can be done by endowing the destination heritage with a sense of authenticity from its history and origins. For instance, tour leaders can tell the story behind heritage destination to the visitors during their trips.

Just like all research, the current study has limitations. The main limitation of this study is about the contexts of the research. In this study, there was an attempt to overcome the lack of research about heritage destination love. However, due to its methodological technique, this research was limited to only a small number of tourists who visited London. Certainly, future research can add to the understanding of heritage destination love by carrying out research in different parts of the globe. Also, future researchers are encouraged to study the role of religious identity on heritage destination love. Clearly, religious people can experience different feelings toward a holy city (e.g., Mecca) compared to atheistic tourists. To sum up, in this study we tried to address the shortfall of heritage destination love in tourism literature. However, due to the limited number of respondents, much more work is needed to investigate love toward heritage destination.



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**Table 1: The details of in-depth interviews with visitors**

Interview Date	Gender	Age	Job	Country	Marital status	Education	Visit
26.3.2018	Male	57	Soldier	American	Married	Undergraduate	2
01.3. 2018	Female	49	University Professor	France	Single	PhD	1
03.4. 2018	Female	35	Designer	Australia	Married	Undergraduate	1
03.4. 2018	Male	47	Business Manager	Australia	Married	Postgraduate	1
03.4. 2018	Male	28	Architect	China	Married	Postgraduate	1
04.4. 2018	Male	58	Restaurant Manager	Czech Republic	Divorced	Undergraduate	1
06.4. 2018	Male	27	Student	China	Single	Postgraduate	1
06.4. 2018	Female	24	Student	China	Single	Postgraduate	1
07.5. 2018	Male	65	Retired	USA	Divorced	Diploma	1
09.5. 2018	Female	42	PhD student	Northern Ireland	Single	Postgraduate/PhD	3
09.5. 2018	Female	37	Dentist	Sweden	Married	PhD	4
14.5. 2018	Female	26	Insurance broker	Australia	Single	Postgraduate	1
14.5. 2018	Male	26	Budget analyst	Australia	Single	Undergraduate	1
19.5. 2018	Female	61	Fashion designer	Italy	Married	Undergraduate	6
19.5. 2018	Male	59	Fashion designer	Italy	Married	Postgraduate	6
22.5. 2018	Male	41	Artist	German	Single	Undergraduate	2
22.5. 2018	Male	35	Travel agent	German	Widow	Postgraduate	5
24.5. 2018	Female	57	HR coordinator	Lithuania	Married	Postgraduate	1
26.5. 2018	Female	54	Painter	Spain	Single	Undergraduate	2
26.5. 2018	Female	36	Software engineer	India	Single	Postgraduate	5
01.6. 2018	Male	28	Student	Saudi Arabia	Married	Undergraduate	4
01.6. 2018	Male	43	Mortgage Broker	Kuwait	Married	Postgraduate	2
04.6. 2018	Male	29	Air crew member	Greece	Single	Postgraduate	6
07.6. 2018	Male	35	Chef	Poland	Single	Diploma	1
08.6. 2018	Male	41	Chemist	Netherlands	Married	Postgraduate	3
08.6. 2018	Male	29	Personal trainer	Spain	Single	Undergraduate	2
08.6. 2018	Male	27	Librarian	Slovenia	Married	Undergraduate	1
16.6. 2018	Male	55	Lawyer	Bahrain	Widow	Postgraduate	1
22.6. 2018	Female	43	Florist	France	Married	Undergraduate	5
23.6. 2018	Male	37	Electrician	India	Married	Diploma	1
03.7. 2018	Male	24	Medical Secretary	Egypt	Married	PhD	1
03.7. 2018	Female	57	Writer	Russia	Married	Undergraduate	1
06.7. 2018	Male	59	Musician	USA	Married	Undergraduate	1
06.7. 2018	Male	58	Oral Surgeon	USA	Married	PhD	1
11.8. 2018	Male	47	Gardener	Northern Ireland	Married	Diploma	1