The hidden key to Bali's tourism: Co-creation and Tri Hita Karana

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the impact of co-creation experiences on tourists' intention to revisit North Bali, with destination image and tourist satisfaction acting as mediating factors, and Tri Hita Karana serving as a cultural moderator. Adopting a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design, the study collects data from international tourists through surveys. Grounded in the Theory of Planned Behaviour and Service-Dominant Logic, the research employs Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) for data analysis. The findings reveal that co-creation experiences significantly enhance both destination image and tourist satisfaction, which in turn positively influence the intention to revisit. Moreover, Tri Hita Karana strengthens the relationship between co-creation, destination image, satisfaction, and revisit intention. The study concludes that co-creation experiences are a vital factor in boosting tourist satisfaction and their intention to return to the destination. By integrating cultural values into experiential tourism models, this research contributes to the development of tourism theory. It offers practical insights for destination managers seeking to promote sustainable tourism through community engagement and cultural authenticity. The practical implications suggest that destination managers can enhance tourist satisfaction and revisit intention by focusing on co-creation experiences and the cultural values of Tri Hita Karana.

Keywords: Bali tourism, Co-creation experience, Destination image, Revisit intention, Tourist satisfaction, Tri Hita Karana.

1. Introduction

The intention to revisit is indeed a crucial element in building the sustainability of a tourist destination [1]. Tourists who tend to revisit a destination significantly contribute to the local economic stability, positive word-of-mouth promotion, and increased loyalty to that destination [2, 3]. In the context of destination management, maintaining and increasing return intent is a more cost-effective strategy than constantly attracting new tourists [4, 5]. This aligns with the view that a destination's success is not only determined by the number of first visits, but also by its ability to create experiences that encourage tourists to return [6-8].

One of the increasingly relevant approaches in modern tourism is the concept of *co-creation experience*, which is the active involvement of tourists in creating unique tourism experiences with local communities [9, 10]. Co-creation no longer positions tourists as passive consumers, but as value co-creators who are directly involved in the process of creating destination value [11, 12]. Through these interactions, travelers gain a more authentic and personalized experience, which not only increases their satisfaction but also forms a stronger image of the destination. In the long run, co-creation has the potential to be a significant catalyst in building tourist loyalty and encouraging return intent [13, 14].

Theoretically, the framework in this study is grounded in two primary theories: *The Theory of Planned Behaviour* (TPB) and *Service-Dominant Logic* (SDL). TPB explains that a person's intention to perform a behavior is determined by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceptions of control over that behavior [15]. In the context of tourism, positive experiences during a visit can form attitudes and beliefs that support the intention to return [15]. Meanwhile, SDL emphasizes that value in services is

not only determined by the provider, but is created through mutual interaction between providers and service users. Thus, SDL provides a theoretical basis for the importance of active participation of tourists in creating valuable travel experiences, which ultimately drives satisfaction and intention to return [16, 17].

Although research on return intentions has been extensively conducted in the context of tourism, several important gaps in the literature remain unexplored. One of the main gaps is the lack of studies that simultaneously examine the mediating role of destination image and tourist satisfaction in the relationship between *co-creation experiences* and return intentions. Destination image and satisfaction are two important psychological variables that are strongly influenced by experiences during travel, and have been shown to play a significant role in shaping tourist behavioral loyalty. Most existing studies still address these variables separately or are limited to direct relationships without examining the role of more complex mediation mechanisms. Studies conducted by Yen, et al. [18]; Forgas-Coll, et al. [19] and Fu [20] illustrate this limitation.

Additionally, within the local cultural context, research limitations exist in integrating local wisdom values, such as *Tri Hita Karana* (THK), into models of tourist behavior. THK, as a Balinese philosophy of life that emphasizes harmony between humans, nature, and God, has great potential to enrich the understanding of meaningful tourism experiences. However, THK has not been widely used as a moderation variable in tourism behavior models, even though this type of local value can function as a factor that strengthens or weakens the psychological influence of an experience on consumer behavior [21]. The implementation of the Tri Hita Karana philosophy has a significant influence on tourists' intentions to revisit Bali. This void becomes important given the urgency of developing a tourism model that is not only market-oriented but also rooted in local cultural values and sustainability.

Furthermore, there has been little research that integratively combines three relevant theoretical frameworks namely, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), Service-Dominant Logic (SDL), and local cultural values such as Tri Hita Karana in a comprehensive conceptual model. The SDG can explain behavioral intentions, SDL underlines the importance of creating shared value, and the THK can provide a cultural context that enriches the understanding of the relationships between these variables. These three theories, when combined synergistically, have the potential to produce a more holistic and contextual model for understanding the intention to revisit in the context of cultural tourism destinations such as Bali.

Previous studies have shown that when travelers are actively involved in the creation of experiences, this not only increases satisfaction but also forms a strong emotional bond with the destination, which ultimately influences their loyalty to return [22, 23]. Co-creation opens up space for travelers to be part of the narrative of the destination itself, making the experience more authentic, personal, and meaningful. In this context, it is essential to understand how mediation mechanisms, such as destination imagery and tourist satisfaction, can strengthen the relationship between co-creation and return intentions.

In addition, in the context of cultural tourism, such as Bali, the understanding of the intention to revisit cannot be separated from the local values that the community lives by. Tri Hita Karana (THK), as a philosophy of balance between humans, nature, and God, serves not only as a normative foundation but also as a moderating variable that enriches tourism behaviour models. THK is believed to enhance the impact of the co-creation experience on tourist perception by creating a more harmonious impression and engaging with deeper spiritual and social dimensions. By integrating THK as a moderator, this study aims to explore how local cultural values can strengthen the psychological relationship between experience and behavior, which has been poorly explained in Western approaches that tend to be rationalistic and individualistic.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Co-Creation Experience

Research demonstrates that the co-creation experience significantly contributes to the formation of destination image. Fu [20] found that active tourist involvement in designing travel experiences directly strengthens positive perceptions of a destination, particularly because authentic and participatory interactions with the local environment deepen emotional connections. In another study, [1] also confirmed that co-creation experience enhances destination image by increasing tourists' emotional affiliation with the cultural and environmental elements of the destination. This mechanism suggests that tourists who feel part of the value-creation process develop more meaningful and profound perceptions of the destinations they visit."

Co-creation experience has also been proven to significantly influence tourist satisfaction. In a systematic study by Hadiyanto [24] it was found that elements of co-creation, such as emotional engagement, freedom of expression, and social interaction, are key drivers of increased tourist satisfaction. When tourists feel they are not merely passive consumers of services but active participants in shaping them, their sense of ownership over the experience rises significantly, thereby enhancing satisfaction levels [25]. This satisfaction stems not only from formal facilities or services but from the collaborative process that strengthens social connections and personal value during the journey.

The influence of co-creation experience on revisit intention has emerged as one of the most consistent findings in recent tourism literature [26]. Through an empirical study in Portugal, it was found that co-created travel experiences foster stronger destination memories, create place attachment, and enhance revisit intentions. This aligns with the findings of Hossain, et al. [27] which demonstrated that tourists who feel involved in experience creation and decision-making during their travels tend to exhibit behavioral loyalty, including both recommendation intention and revisit intention. Co-creation generates more personalized and irreplaceable experiences, thereby amplifying the likelihood of positive behavioral intentions."

H₁: Co-creation experience significantly influences destination image.
H₂: Co-creation experience significantly influences tourist satisfaction.
H₅: Co-creation experience significantly influences revisit intention.

2.2. Destination Image

Numerous empirical studies have confirmed the crucial role of destination image in shaping tourist satisfaction. A study by Hu and Xu [28] on Bali tourism found that tourists' perceptions of a destination's aesthetics, cultural value, and environmental quality significantly influence their satisfaction levels. The more positive these perceptions, the higher the satisfaction levels reported by tourists. further demonstrated that destination image formed through cognitive (knowledge and information) and affective (emotions and feelings) dimensions serves as a primary predictor in creating overall satisfaction with travel experiences

A positive destination image significantly enhances the intention to revisit [28]. In their study of international ethno-festivals, they found that perceptions of visual quality, local hospitality, and cultural preservation directly impact tourist loyalty and their intention to return. Similar findings were confirmed by Huang, et al. [29] in their research on millennial tourists from Bangkok visiting Japan, where destination image proved to be a strong predictor of revisit intention. Furthermore, John and Supramaniam [30] demonstrated through a more complex approach that destination image can simultaneously shape satisfaction and reinforce the desire to revisit through positive experiences embedded in tourists' memories."

H₃: Destination image significantly influences revisit intention.
H₄: Destination image significantly influences tourist satisfaction.

2.3. Tourist Satisfaction

Tourist satisfaction is a key determinant in shaping the intention to revisit. Numerous studies demonstrate that travel experiences that meet or exceed tourists expectations directly influence their decision to revisit a destination. In a systematic study on medical tourism, Ghattami and Tharikh [21] identified satisfaction as a strong mediating variable linking service quality to tourist loyalty, manifested through revisit intention. Although focused on health tourism, these findings have broad relevance across other tourism sectors.

Dao, et al. [15] examined the relationship between sustainability perceptions and revisit intention in community-based tourism. Their results revealed that satisfaction with social and environmental aspects of the travel experience significantly contributes to tourists' intention to return. In the Indonesian context, Sari and Elmas [31] found that satisfaction with the *Sapta Pesona* (Seven Charms) elements at Mount Bromo significantly increased tourists' likelihood of recommending and revisiting the destination. This research underscores the significance of emotional factors and cultural values in shaping satisfying experiences.

Furthermore, Okul, et al. [32] investigated international cultural events and demonstrated that festival experience satisfaction not only enhances revisit intention but also strengthens positive word-of-mouth recommendations. Thus, satisfaction serves as a bridge between experience perceptions and post-visit behavior. These findings strongly support Hypothesis 4 (H4), confirming that tourist satisfaction plays a vital role in shaping revisit intention.

H4: Tourist satisfaction positively influences revisit intention.

2.4. Tri Hita Karana

Co-creation experiences, which actively involve tourists in shaping their travel experiences, have been shown to enhance emotional engagement and a sense of ownership toward destinations. When combined with Tri Hita Karana (THK) values, harmony with God (parhyangan), people (pawongan), and nature (palemahan) becomes more profound and meaningful.

THK enriches the quality of experience through spiritual, social-ethical, and ecological dimensions. This elevates the perceived value of experiences and fosters revisit intention, driven not only by satisfaction but also by cultural value alignment. Thus, THK serves as a moderator that strengthens the co-creation experience and revisits the intention relationship.

H11: Tri Hita Karana (THK) moderates the relationship between co-creation experience and revisit intention
H12: Tri Hita Karana (THK) moderates the relationship between destination image and revisit intention
H13: Tri Hita Karana (THK) moderates the relationship between tourist satisfaction and revisit intention,

2.5. Revisit Intention

Revisit intention reflects a complex interplay of service quality, emotional satisfaction, technological engagement, and cultural experiences. These elements collectively shape general satisfaction and foster a propensity among tourists to return to previous destinations [33].

Based on theoretical and empirical studies, this study examines how the experience of co-creation influences tourists' intention to revisit a tourism destination, mediated by destination image (M1) and tourist satisfaction (M2), with Tri Hita Karana (THK) serving as the moderating variable. In this context, co-creation experience (X) is considered an independent variable that has the potential to improve destination image and tourist satisfaction, which in turn affects the intention to return (Y). The influence of co-creation experiences on destination image and tourist satisfaction is strengthened by the concepts of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Service-Dominant Logic, which emphasize positive interactions between service providers and customers. THK, as a philosophy that prioritizes harmonization and balance, serves as a moderating variable that encourages the creation of a more meaningful and harmonious experience, thereby strengthening the impact of the co-creation experience on the destination's image and tourist satisfaction.
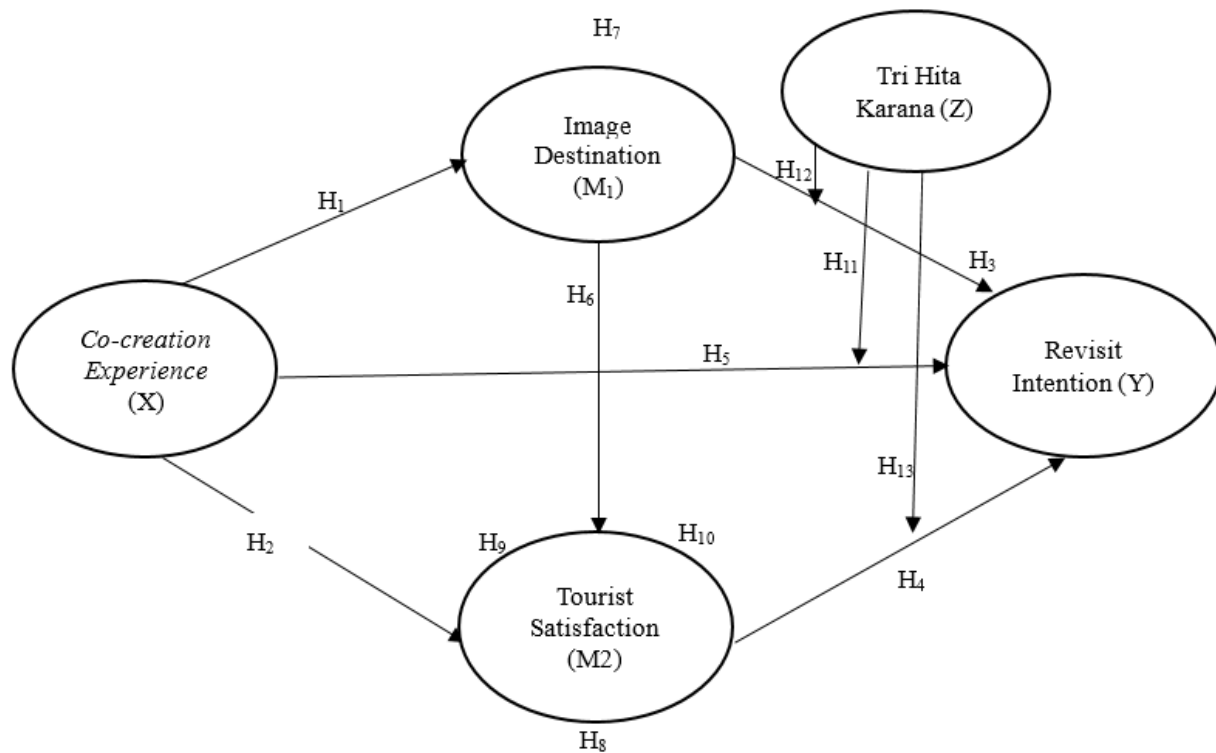
Figure 1.
Illustrates The Conceptual Framework of This Study.

3. Methods

This study employs a quantitative approach with a causal-explanatory design to examine the relationships between co-creation experience, destination image, tourist satisfaction, and revisit intention in North Bali. As a cross-sectional study, data were collected at a single point in time from three major tourist destinations in North Bali: Pemuteran, Lovina, and Air Sanih. The research framework incorporates an endogenous variable (revisit intention measured by four indicators: Traveling longer; Intending to return; Recommend; Sharing experiences [34-37]. An exogenous variable (co-creation experience with five indicators: *Cognitive involvement*; *Emotional involvement*; *Behavioral involvement*; *Social experiences*; *Personalization of experiences* [38-40]. Two mediating variables (destination image measured by four indicators: *Environment*; *Infrastructure*; *Attractions*; *Service quality* [41-44] and a moderating variable (Tri Hita Karana assessed by three dimensions [45, 46]. Parhyangan, pawongan, and palemahan Parhyangan consists of: Maintaining a place of worship well, Upholding the diversity of religions and beliefs, Faithfully participating in spiritual meetings, Having a spiritual lifestyle (always grateful/praying), Maintaining sacred values. Pawongan is characterized by the spirit of cooperation, Respect for art and culture, preservation of local community wisdom, maintenance of harmony among residents, immigrants, and tourists, and synergizing to build a thriving tourism presence in North Bali. Palemahan consists of striving to maintain environmental cleanliness, maintaining and preserving flora and fauna, conserving water and energy sources, maintaining trust in people's lives, preserving the Tri Mandala in the environment, and Practicing Wise and Sustainable land use.

The target population consists of international tourists who have visited North Bali. Using purposive sampling, participants were selected based on the inclusion criterion of having stayed for at least one week. Following the recommendation in Martins [47] the minimum sample size was set

at 256 respondents (calculated as 8 times the most significant number of indicators, totaling 32 indicators). Primary data were collected through offline questionnaires using a 5-point Likert scale. The research instruments demonstrated strong validity (all correlation coefficients > 0.30) and reliability (Cronbach's alpha values > 0.60 for all constructs) [48].

Table 1.
Validity and Reliability Test Result.

Variable	Statement Item	Correlation Coefficient	Note	Cronbach's Alpha	Note
Co-Creation Experience (X)	5 items	0.437 – 0.825	Valid	0.744	Reliable
Destination Image (M1)	4 items	0.496 – 0.831	Valid	0.668	Reliable
Tourist Satisfaction (M_2)	4 items	0.552 –0.831	Valid	0.638	Reliable
Tri Hita Karana (Z)	15 Items	0.471 – 0.988	Valid	0.950	Reliable
Revisit Intention (Y)	4 items	0.883 –0.920	Valid	0.915	Reliable

Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test hypotheses and evaluate both the measurement and structural models. The model assessment included tests of convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability, while hypothesis significance was examined through bootstrapping resampling. This analytical approach was selected for its ability to handle complex research models involving mediating and moderating variables, as well as its flexibility regarding data distribution requirements [47]. The methodological design ensures both scientific rigor and practical relevance for sustainable tourism development in North Bali, while effectively capturing the unique cultural dimensions of the Balinese context through the Tri Hita Karana framework.

4. Findings

4.1. Measurement Model

The researcher assessed the model's validity by applying convergent validity through outer loading and average variance extracted (AVE), and evaluated discriminant validity using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio. To evaluate reliability, the researcher used composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha. Table 2 presents the results of model measurements based on the convergent validity and composite reliability approaches. The outer loading values in the factor loading column exceed 0.7, indicating that each indicator effectively represents its corresponding construct [47]. Furthermore, the AVE test results show that all constructs have values above 0.5, indicating that each construct can explain more than 50% of the item variance.

Table 2.
Convergent Validity and Composite Reliability.

Item	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Co-creation experience (X_1)				
$X_{1.1}$	0.929			
$X_{1.2}$	0.723			
$X_{1.3}$	0.708	0.897	0.926	0.717
$X_{1.4}$	0.903			
$X_{1.5}$	0.940			
Image destination (M_1)				
$M_{1.1}$	0.893			
$M_{1.2}$	0.717	0.814	0.879	0.648
$M_{1.3}$	0.696			
$M_{1.4}$	0.892			
Tourist satisfaction				
$M_{2.1}$	0.873			
$M_{2.2}$	0.779	0.827	0.886	0.662
$M_{2.3}$	0.707			
$M_{2.4}$	0.882			
Revisit intention (Y)				
Y_1	0.926			
Y_2	0.897	0.934	0.953	0.834
Y_3	0.906			
Y_4	0.923			
Tri Hita Karana (Z)				
Z_1	0.992			
Z_2	0.955			
Z_3	0.946			
Z_4	0.943			
Z_5	0.986			
Z_6	0.967			
Z_7	0.869			
Z_8	0.847	0.987	0.988	0.849
Z_9	0.879			
Z_{10}	0.962			
Z_{11}	0.981			
Z_{12}	0.823			
Z_{13}	0.748			
Z_{14}	0.901			
Z_{15}	0.984			

4.2. Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

This study utilizes SmartPLS version 3.0 to test the model and evaluate the direct and indirect effects between variables. The researcher also applied the bootstrapping resampling technique in hypothesis testing. A p-value below 0.05 indicates a significant effect, while the original sample value indicates the direction of the effect [47]. Table 3 presents the results of hypothesis testing, including both direct and indirect influences, as well as moderation roles.

Table 3.
Testing of Direct Effect, Mediation, and Moderation Hypotheses.

Variable	Original Sample (O)	P Values	Significant
Co-creation Experience -> Destination Image	0.933	0.000	Significant
Co-creation Experience -> Revisit Intention	0.149	0.000	Significant
Co-creation Experience -> Tourist Satisfaction	0.291	0.000	Significant
Destination Image -> Revisit Intention	0.249	0.000	Significant
Destination Image -> Tourist Satisfaction	0.906	0.000	Significant
Interaction Co-Creation Experience*THK -> Revisit Intention	0.102	0.014	Significant
Interaction Destination Image*THK -> Revisit Intention	0.073	0.018	Significant
Interaction Tourist Satisfaction*THK -> Revisit Intention	0.248	0.000	Significant
Tourist Satisfaction -> Revisit Intention	0.174	0.000	Significant
THK -> Revisit Intention	0.755	0.000	Significant
Co_creation_Experience -> Destination Image -> Revisit Intention	0.232	0.000	Significant
Co_creation_Experience -> Tourist Satisfaction -> Revisit Intention	0.151	0.000	Significant
Destination Image -> Tourist Satisfaction -> Revisit Intention	0.158	0.000	Significant
Co_creation_Experience -> Destination Image -> Tourist Satisfaction	0.846	0.000	Significant

The study's findings reveal that the co-creation experience has a significant impact on destination image and tourist satisfaction, which in turn influence the intention to revisit. The interaction between the co-creation experience, destination image, and tourist satisfaction with THK also showed a significant impact on return intentions.

5. Discussion

This study reveals that travelers' co-creation experiences significantly shape the image of destinations through five key dimensions: cognitive, emotional, behavioral, social interaction, and personalization engagement. Empirical findings from foreign tourists in North Bali indicate that they assessed their co-creation experience as quite reasonable. Behavioral engagement was the most prominent aspect, with 10.2% of respondents actively participating in cultural and environmental activities. Theoretically, these results support the research of Monteiro, et al. [49] and Moukrim, et al. [50] on the importance of active participation in building an emotional connection with the destination. In practice, these findings confirm that tourist destinations need to develop collaborative activities that involve tourists as co-creators of experiences.

The following analysis showed a positive relationship between co-creation experience and tourist satisfaction. Personalization of the experience proved to be the dominant factor that increased satisfaction, especially in the context of tourism activities in Lovina and Air Sanih. These findings are consistent with the Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) framework that emphasizes the creation of shared value between service providers and consumers. Empirically, research byNan, et al. [51]; Nsaro and Msolla [52] and Permana [53] has demonstrated that the level of tourist involvement is directly proportional to perceived satisfaction.

A positive image of destinations has been proven to significantly increase tourists' intention to revisit. These findings are strengthened by research from Prebensen [54] and Preko, et al. [55] which demonstrates the consistency of the relationship between destination perception and tourist loyalty. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) offers a comprehensive explanation of this mechanism through three primary components: positive attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control. In practical terms, the results of this study underscore the importance of building a holistic image of destinations, not only through traditional marketing but also through the direct experience of tourists. Destinations like North Bali need to maintain consistency between the projected image and the actual tourist experience.

The level of satisfaction of tourists shows a strong direct influence on return intentions. Indicators such as feelings of happiness, conformity to expectations, and enjoyment of visits are important predictors in this model. Balance Theory provides a relevant conceptual framework for understanding

how the balance between expectations and actual experiences influences travelers' decisions. Empirically, these findings align with the research of Rather [56] andRita, et al. [57].

The mediation analysis revealed that destination image and tourist satisfaction function as a partial mediator in the relationship between co-creation experience and return intention. These findings are consistent with the research of Severino, et al. [58] and Sihombing and Antonio [59] on the mechanisms of value creation in tourism. Meanwhile, Tri Hita Karana (THK) served as a moderating variable, showing a significant influence in strengthening the relationship between the variables. These results support the research of Sihombing and Antonio [59] on the relevance of local cultural values in the development of sustainable tourism. Conceptually, the integration of THK in this research model enriches discussions about the role of local wisdom in shaping meaningful tourism experiences.

6. Implications
6.1. Theoretical Implications
This research makes three main contributions to the development of tourism theory. First, the findings enriched the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) by demonstrating that the active involvement of tourists in *co-creation* led to a positive attitude towards the destination, which in turn increased satisfaction and the intention to revisit the destination. Second, the results support Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) by emphasizing that destination value is created collaboratively through dynamic interactions between travelers and service providers, transforming travelers from passive consumers to active partners. Third, the study introduces Tri Hita Karana (THK) as a unique *cultural moderator*, which not only strengthens the relationship between *co-creation*, destination image, and satisfaction but also offers a new perspective on how local wisdom (harmony between human, nature, and spirituality) can shape a holistic tourism experience. These findings expand the theoretical framework of tourism by integrating culture-based and sustainability approaches, while providing an empirical basis for the development of *co-creation models* in community-based destinations.

6.2. Practical implications
This study demonstrates that *co-creation* experiences involve tourists in cultural, conservation, and social interaction activities, and personalization of services can enhance emotional engagement, satisfaction, and return intent. The integration of *Tri Hita Karana* (THK) values as a local philosophy enhances this relationship, forming an authentic and sustainable destination image. To optimize its benefits, destinations like North Bali need to: (1) develop participatory activities, (2) improve service quality, (3) build an image through digital narratives, and (4) apply THK principles consistently. This approach not only distinguishes destinations from mass tourism but also maintains the ecological and socio-cultural balance of local communities.

7. Limitation
This study has limitations because it employs *a cross-sectional* approach (only capturing data at one point in time) and is restricted to destinations in North Bali, which limits its ability to analyze dynamic changes, cause-and-effect relationships, and the generalizability of its findings. For future research, *longitudinal* approaches and geographic coverage expansion will provide more comprehensive results.

Transparency:
The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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