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Examining honeymoon tourist behavior:

Multidimensional quality, fantasy, and destination relational value

Abstract

This study examines which honeymoon quality dimensions contribute significantly to fulfilling fantasy and determining whether a realized fantasy enhances the relational value of honeymoon tourists. This study used Phuket, Thailand, as the study context and adopts a mixed-methods approach. The empirical validation of multidimensional qualities leads to a seven-factor structure. The structural model indicates that honeymoon service providers, honeymooner privileges, accessibility, honeymoon accommodation, and local tour product contribute to honeymoon tourist fantasy, subsequently increasing destination relational value. This study enriches the current body of honeymoon tourism literature and offers implications for tourism scholars and industry practitioners.

Keywords: Honeymoon tourism, perceived quality, fantasy, destination relational value, structural model

1. Introduction

Honeymooning is a type of tourism in which newlywed couples take a vacation together to either domestic or overseas destinations to celebrate their marriage (United Nations World Tourism Organization 2001). A honeymoon is often the first trip in which couples spend intimate time in an exclusive place after their wedding (Lee, Huang, and Chen 2010). At present, the honeymoon travel market has become an important segment of the tourism industry in many destinations (Reisenwitz 2013; Tourism Authority of Thailand [TAT] 2017). Honeymoon travelers spend money in a host destination in various ways: for

accommodation, restaurants, entertainment, and local tours (Kim and Agrusa 2005). Sardone (2018) reported that honeymooners have more economic impact on local communities than other types of tourists. In the U.S., honeymoon couples spend an average of US\$4,466 for a [romantic](#) vacation, three times more than a typical holiday. A similar pattern of spending is observed in other countries, such as South Korea (Kim and Agrusa 2005; South Pacific Tourism Organization 2015 [SPTO]), China (Button 2014; Jing Daily 2014), and the U.K. (Kuoni 2017). [Considering](#) that the demand for honeymoon tourism is increasing (SPTO 2015), many tourist destinations worldwide have devoted aggressive efforts to the honeymoon market (Jericó and Wu 2017; TAT 2017). Although global economic reports on the honeymoon [segment](#) are unavailable, industry [reports](#) from several countries indicate that the honeymoon travel market generates significant benefits for a host destination (Lee, Huang, and Chen 2010). For example, Thailand receives approximately US\$1.5 billion tourism revenue annually solely from the visits of international honeymoon travelers (Sritama 2018).

Honeymoon destinations are increasingly competitive, as shown by the continued development of romantic honeymoon packages, new honeymoon resorts, and special privileges exclusive to honeymooners (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999; Kim and Agrusa 2005). Travel destinations are increasingly developing products and services that appeal to honeymooners using several distribution channels (Lee, Huang, and Chen 2010; TAT 2013). As the competition among honeymoon destinations becomes more intense, tourism bureaus and service providers must identify variables that affect the quality of honeymooner experiences and establish effective marketing strategies to attract honeymoon tourists (Reisenwitz 2013). Honeymoon couples typically expect to fulfill their romantic fantasies (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999). By gaining insights into what influences the experience and fantasy of honeymooners, destination managers can develop appropriate

strategic plans and design products to attract honeymoon couples to their destinations while generating relational value among their existing clientele.

Although honeymoon tourism is widely recognized for its economic importance among industry practitioners (SPTO 2015; Sritama 2018; TAT 2017), research on honeymoon travel has received minimal attention in the past decades. Only a handful of studies have examined various aspects of honeymoon tourism, such as the [attractiveness](#) of overseas honeymoon destinations (Kim and Agrusa 2005), determining factors for choosing a honeymoon destination (Lee, Huang, and Chen 2010), fundamentals of the destination decision-making process (Reisenwitz 2013), and domestic honeymoon tourism satisfaction (Ünal, Dursun, and Caber 2017). The limited [studies](#) in honeymoon tourism leave many areas unexplored, particularly quality and its implications for tourist behavioral models (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999; Kim and Agrusa 2005; Lee, Huang, and Chen 2010; Reisenwitz 2013).

In honeymoon tourism, the quality perception of honeymoon products and services is a crucial element that actualizes the fantasies of honeymooners (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999; Knudsen, Rickly, and Vidon 2016). Although fantasy may have a significant relationship with quality (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999; Chinomona and Sandada 2013; Ioana-Daniela et al. 2018), the causal links between the two constructs have rarely been empirically verified in the tourism context. Thus, research that aims to examine the relationships between quality and fantasy can help bridge the knowledge gap in the tourism literature.

Furthermore, previous hospitality and tourism studies have dominantly used behavioral intention as a consequence of key service-oriented constructs (Baker and Crompton 2000; Hutchinson, Lai, and Wang 2009; Lee and Min 2016), leaving the search for an alternative variable as an important outcome for specific tourism fields, such as

honeymoon tourism. Tourists frequently do not revisit a destination they have already visited because they have many alternative destinations, even if they are loyal to a certain destination. Instead, they express their supportive behavior, such as recommendation to others (Chen and Gursoy 2001), suggestions for improvement, and resistance to switching to competing destinations (Melancon, Noble, and Noble 2011). Hogan, Lemon, and Libai (2003) reported that organizations, including tourism enterprises, may experience significant losses if customers leave them to consume the products or services of their competitors. In a tourism destination, loss can also be observed when defecting tourists generate adverse relational responses (e.g., bad referrals) to a place they have already visited. Considering that the relational value construct can reflect the quality of relational exchanges between organizations and customers (Melancon, Noble, and Noble 2011) and drive the nonfinancial or social behavior of tourists in the destination context, the current study uses the concept of relational value (comprising advocacy, openness, and immunity), instead of behavioral intention, to examine the relational behavior of honeymoon tourists and assess the validity and accuracy of construct prediction in a proposed research model (Figure 1). In summary, this study presents theoretical scope by adding insights, particularly in terms of quality attributes, fantasy, and destination relational value into the honeymoon tourism literature, and offers useful implications for managing honeymoon destinations. To achieve such research aims, this research seeks to examine which honeymoon quality dimensions contribute significantly to fulfilling fantasy and determine whether a realized fantasy enhances the relational value of honeymoon tourists.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: first, the literature on honeymoon tourism quality, fantasy and destination relational value is reviewed in section 2. In section 3 of this article, the research methodology is discussed. Section 4 presents the findings. Section

5 provides theoretical and managerial implications based on the findings. Finally, research limitations and recommendations are discussed in section 6.

Insert Figure 1 here

2. Literature review

2.1 Perceived quality of honeymoon tourism

Just-married couples take journeys, or honeymoons after their wedding (Kim and Agrusa 2005). A honeymoon is a romantic trip during which couples establish their first set of shared memories and form realities about their married life (Ünal, Dursun, and Caber 2017). MacInnis and Price (1990) indicated that honeymooners want high-quality products or services more than typical tourists because more time, money, and effort are typically allotted to plan such a romantic holiday. Thus, to develop quality-based honeymoon products and enhance couples' fantasy moments, destination managers or service providers must understand how honeymooners perceive the necessary qualities of the honeymoon in their destination.

Perceived quality is defined as the evaluative perception of the superiority of a product or service (Zeithaml 1988). Bitner (1990) observed that consumer quality assessment is predominantly based on experience with a service firm. Baker and Crompton (2000) asserted that quality is judged by the standard performance of attributes under the control of an organization. Building upon the idea of quality from the research, perceived quality in the tourism context is tourist assessment of tourism products or services as experienced in a destination.

Žabkar, Brencic, and Dmitrovic (2010) stated that quality in tourism is typically formed during the service delivery process (e.g., reliability, courtesy, and staff friendliness)

or the result of tourist participation or experiential consumption of destination products (e.g., hotels, restaurants, and tours). When an investigation focuses on evaluating tourist experiences at a destination, scholars generally use attribute-based measurements to assess the quality of destination attributes. For example, Tribe and Snaith (1998) assessed tourist satisfaction using quality attributes like heritage and culture, restaurants and bars, accommodation, transfers, physical resort and facilities, and ambience. Žabkar, Brencic, and Dmitrovic (2010) explored quality elements of a destination that lead to tourist satisfaction. The friendliness of the local people, accommodation, diversity of cultural attractions, cleanliness of a destination, accessibility, and opportunity to rest were identified as significant dimensions of perceived quality. Similarly, Cong (2016) suggested that quality perception can form through multidimensional quality attributes: transport, destination brand, attractions, entertainment, and hospitality of local people.

Prior hospitality and tourism studies have indicated that quality attributes rely heavily on the specific study context like events (Lee and Min 2016), heritage tourism (Wu and Li 2017), and wine tourism (Fernandes and Cruz 2016), suggesting that quality measurement should reflect the particular type of tourism (Žabkar, Brencic, and Dmitrovic 2010). Perceived quality has been a focus of research in many different tourism contexts other than honeymoon tourism. Existing research has clarified the broad perspectives of honeymoon tourism, leaving many other aspects unexplored, particularly quality attributes (Jang et al. 2007; Jericó and Wu 2017; Lee, Huang, and Chen 2010; Reisenwitz 2013; Ünal, Dursun, and Caber 2017). Building upon the foregoing theoretical insights of the honeymoon tourism literature, we have derived the following potential dimensions: attractions (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999; Vassiliadis 2008), destination image (Kim and Agrusa 2005), accessibility (Cong 2016; Park et al. 2019; Wu and Li 2017), destination environment (Kozak 2001; Vassiliadis, 2008), hospitality of local residents (Kim, Holland, and Han 2013; Tosun,

Dedeoğlu, and Fyall (2015), service providers (Lee, Huang, and Chen 2010; Wu, Li, and Li 2018), local tour products (Kim and Agrusa 2005; Lee, Huang, and Chen 2010), honeymooner privileges (Anderson 2016; Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999; Penner 2009), accommodation (Lee, Huang, and Chen 2010), and dining experience (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999; Lee, Huang, and Chen 2010).

Honeymooners find a destination with a variety of tourist attractions (e.g., beautiful natural sceneries, rich cultural heritage, and numerous shopping arcades) attractive (Bulcroft et al. 1997; Lee, Huang, and Chen 2010). Honeymoon activities like spa treatments, sightseeing, and entertainment may enhance the satisfaction of honeymooners (Kim and Agrusa 2005; Wu and Li 2017). Chon (1990) stated that image is an important element that affects the overall tourist impression. Like other types of travelers, honeymooners are influenced by destination image when selecting a place for honeymoon (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999). A honeymoon is a once-in-a-lifetime moment for couples; hence, honeymooners search for exotic, luxurious, and romantic destinations to fulfill their romantic desires (Jang et al. 2007).

Buhalis (2000) asserted that a tourist destination should be convenient through several types of transportation: airlines, railways, and automobiles. Although newlywed couples tend to prefer an exotic destination, a location that is **uneasy** to access is unappealing because **considerable** time and **money** may be **engaged** (Kim and Agrusa 2005; Lee, Huang, and Chen 2010). Local transportation is also important because honeymooners must travel from their accommodation to key attractions and entertainment venues (Kim and Agrusa 2005; Vassiliadis 2008).

Honeymooners also expect the environment of a destination to be pleasant (Kim and Agrusa 2005; Lee, Huang, and Chen 2010). Couples feel happier when they stay in an environment with enjoyable elements, such as tourism infrastructure, climate, and destination

atmosphere. Unsecured, unsafe, and risky situations that may affect a honeymoon experience are likely to be avoided (Bulcroft et al. 2000). Tosun, Dedeoğlu, and Fyall (2015) stated that the hospitality of local residents (e.g., friendliness and warm attitude of locals) can also affect visitor satisfaction/dissatisfaction. Honeymoon tourists are likely to interact with local people during their stay in a destination; hence, attributes under this dimension can form a favorable honeymoon experience.

In honeymoon tourism, service quality is evaluated when tourists come in contact with major service providers, such as accommodations, restaurants, and tour operators (Kim and Agrusa 2005). During honeymoon tours, honeymooners unavoidably encounter the staff of service providers (Lee, Huang, and Chen 2010). The quality of service delivered by service providers influences the experience of honeymoon couples; thus, this aspect is another essential quality element (Kim and Agrusa 2005; Lee, Huang, and Chen 2010).

Accommodation is a key dimension that influences tourist satisfaction (Kim, Lee and Han 2019; Qu and Sit 2007). Honeymoon tourism emphasizes having a peaceful, private, and relaxing stay (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999). Lee, Huang, and Chen (2010) asserted that the quality of accommodation is another crucial element that couples consider when determining a romantic place to visit. An accommodation that emphasizes on the privacy of honeymoon couples while providing appropriate honeymoon necessities favorably responds to the desires of honeymooners. Dining is another important activity that shapes experience quality when tourists visit a destination (Tribe and Snaith 1998). In honeymoon tourism, couples look forward to a romantic dining environment, such as a private set lunch, a candlelight dinner, and an evening drink specially arranged in a high-quality bar to fulfill their romantic fantasy (Lee, Huang, and Chen 2010). The quality of food and beverage, variety of restaurants and bars, and authenticity of local cuisine can also contribute to the

quality perception of honeymoon tourists (Kim and Agrusa 2005; Lee, Huang, and Chen 2010).

Honeymoon service providers are a crucial part of creating a meaningful experience for honeymoon couples by providing special privileges (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999). In response to the high expectations of honeymooners, special activities, such as a couple's massage, cooking class, or private romantic excursion, are exclusively designed for this cluster of tourists. Moreover, a pleasant surprise event can be organized to provide a "wow" honeymoon experience (Penner, 2009). Given that special privileges are perceived as exclusive benefits, honeymoon service providers are increasingly developing a surprise set of romantic enticements, such as special in-room preparation, honeymoon presents, and surprise moments for couples to enhance their honeymoon experience (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999; Kim and Agrusa 2005).

2.2 Fantasy

Fantasy is "the faculty or activity of imagining impossible or improbable things," or "an idea with no basis in reality" (The Oxford Dictionary 2017, 1). Klinger (1990) defined fantasy as a form of daydream or illusion in which people attempt to visualize things about which they are highly emotional. Lee and Qiu (2009) indicated that fantasy is conceptualized as consumer imagination as consumers anticipate an object (product/service). Knudsen, Rickly, and Vidon (2016, 43) stated that fantasy is "a domain of pleasure and as such it functions to avoid an encounter with the real." Although fantasy has been studied in various fields and thus portrayed differently, the emphasis remains on the inner worlds and mental imagery of consumers (Martin 2004; Seregina 2014). Martin (2004) said that fantasy is an important component of consumption activity in a consumer behavioral model. Holbrook and

Hirschman (1982) claimed that customer behavioral consumption is generally driven by the pursuit of fantasy, feelings, and fun.

Previous research generally provides understanding of fantasy from the customer perspective and in a context of consumer behavior. For example, Martin (2004) examined how consumers thematize fantasy and spur the imagination when playing a trading card game. The findings of a qualitative study suggested that fantasy is important to consumer consumption experiences. When people realize fantasy, they are likely to become fanciful in a way they cannot in the real world. Customer fantasy has also been studied in retail. Chinomona and Sandada (2013) discovered that when retail services provide customers with high pleasure and enjoyment, their mental image or fantasy may be fulfilled. Therefore, service providers must seek out thematic environments that evoke fantasy to fulfill customer desires (Martin 2004).

Although consumer research has focused on investigating fantasy (Rook 1985), hospitality and tourism scholars have given it minimal attention (Ioana-Daniela et al. 2018). Nevertheless, studies that emphasize fantasy have significant implications for tourism, particularly honeymoon tourism, given that honeymoons are closely associated with fantasy (Seregina 2014). Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft (1999) regarded a honeymoon as a meaningful life event for newlyweds because it is a journey about which they have fantasized, one that excites them. A honeymoon is also a period when couples liberate themselves from social obligations and stay in seclusion (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999). The purpose of a honeymoon involves a certain degree of separation from the couple's daily lives (Seregina 2014), a honeymoon appears to parallel the concept of fantasy (Martin 2004). Arguably, the fantasy of honeymooners can be fulfilled in accordance with their perceived experience and quality from the honeymoon tour (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999; Seregina 2014). Thus, comprehending the fantasy perception of honeymooners is

important in destination marketing is a critical part of helping newlywed couples fulfill their romantic desires (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999), enhancing the performance of service providers and fostering relational value between couples and their destination (Melancon, Noble, and Noble 2011; Lee, Tsang, and Pan 2015). Building upon the earlier research into fantasy (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999; Chinomona and Sandada 2013; Klinger 1990; Knudsen, Rickly, and Vidon 2016; Lee and Qiu 2009), fantasy in honeymoon tourism can be considered fanciful imaginings of romantic experience in an exclusive honeymoon destination.

2.3 Destination relational value

In the current competitive environment, tourism bureaus and destination management organizations (DMOs) have attempted to build long-lasting relationships with tourists (Wu and Ai 2016). The goal of developing relationships is to gain lifelong support from tourists, which helps maintain profits for the destination over the long run (Lee, Tsang, and Pan 2015; Oppermann 2000). In hospitality, repurchase is an integral part of the recency–frequency–monetary model (Hughes 2011; Oppermann 2000). For example, an airline offers a frequent flyer program to build loyalty among its passengers (Oppermann 2000); a hotel adopts a frequent stay program to develop customer loyalty (Lee, Tsang, and Pan 2015). In the tourism context, however, repeat visit alone does not explain supportive behavior among tourists. Tourists may not revisit a destination even though they love it because they have not yet explored other destinations. Instead, they demonstrate other favorable behavioral responses, such as recommendations for improvement, resistance to switch to other destinations (Melancon, Noble, and Noble 2011), and recommendations to family and friends (Chen and Gursoy 2001).

In the context of professional sports, Melancon, Noble, and Noble (2011, 345) developed a relational worth (relational value) construct and conceptualized it as “the

nonfinancial, social behaviors toward the organization that result from relational exchanges with consumers.” Arguably, service providers gain benefits from relational behavior when consumers are willing support providers (Lee, Tsang, and Pan 2015). Melancon, Noble, and Noble (2011) proposed five components of relational value: advocacy, openness, acquiescence, immunity, and honesty. Advocacy reflects the willingness of a customer to handle critics for a firm (Anderson 1998). Openness refers to the intention to share useful and unbiased feedback and recommendations for improvement with a service provider. Acquiescence is the degree to which customers cooperate to maintain a good relationship with an organization. Customers who accept changes and comply with organizational policies reflect important aspects of this dimension (Bendapudi and Berry 1997; Morgan and Hunt 1994). Immunity describes resistance to switch to competitors even if competitors offer a more attractive package or the firm is suffering from negative publicity (Bolton et al. 2000). Honesty indicates the extent to which a customer is honest and the unwillingness to exercise opportunistic behavior (Joshi and Arnold 1997). These constructs have been conceptualized as important relational behaviors of customers toward an organization (Melancon, Noble, and Noble 2011).

In the context of tourism, if tourists, or honeymooners in this case, exhibit unsupportive relational behavior, then destinations will suffer from a significant loss of economic benefits from defecting tourist groups. Investing in relational strength contributes to considerable economic and relational values (Lee, Tsang, and Pan 2015); thus, many destinations attempt to sustain long-lasting relationships with tourists by increasing their experiential quality through high-quality products or services (Chen and Chen 2010).

2.4 Presentation of hypotheses

Perceived quality has been identified as an antecedent of fantasy and behavioral intention (Chinomona and Sandada 2013; Ioana-Daniela et al. 2018; Seregina 2014). Quality

is principally assessed through a consumer's cognitive mechanism (Vida and Reardon 2008). Meanwhile, fantasy is typically considered a customer daydream or excitement about an loved object or activity (Patwardhan and Balasubramanian 2011). In a retail study, Chinomona and Sandada (2013) suggested that quality and fantasy are related constructs. For instance, the service quality level of a pick-and-pay chain store had a positive effect on consumer fantasy. Huang and Mitchell (2014) also reported that perceived cognitive benefits are positively related to customer fantasy.

In the hospitality industry, Ioana-Daniela et al. (2018) explored the relationships between customer attitude functions, including the utilitarian aspect (i.e., nonsensory attributes of product experiences), and fantasy. Their findings indicated that quality attributes perceived by luxury cruisers affect fantasy, showing that such attributes (e.g., food quality, variety of onboard activities, and excellent service) are key antecedents to satisfying customer fantasies. In the specific context of honeymoon tourism, Bulcroft et al. (2000) claimed that experience quality from honeymoon tours can fulfill couple expectations of honeymoon fantasies. As with previous research, the present study posits that honeymoon fantasies can be enhanced by increasing the level of honeymoon experience through quality dimensions perceived by honeymooners.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Honeymoon quality dimensions positively affect fantasy.

Customer fantasies about a dream activity, product, or event can be a driving force in developing customer behavioral intention (Compeau, Grewal, and Monroe 1998; Escalas 2004; MacInnis and Price 1990; Miller and Stoica 2004). In consumer behavioral models, many studies have demonstrated a causal connection between customer fantasy and behavioral responses (Chinomona and Sandada 2013; Fiore and Yu 2001; Holbrook and

Hirschman 1982). For example, Compeau, Grewal, and Monroe (1998) reported that fantasy influences willingness to purchase untried products. When a product or activity meets or exceeds customer fantasies, the product itself will induce more positive affective responses, causing a customer to behave favorably toward the object. In the hospitality and tourism literature, the links among experience, fantasy, and customer willingness to support has also been reported. Loureiro's study (2014) of rural tourism confirmed that customer fantasy and behavioral intention are related. Through favorable experience and fantasy, customer behavioral intention (i.e., repeat visit, recommendations) can be positively boosted. Ioana-Daniela et al. (2018) recently verified the connection between fantasy and willingness to pay a price premium for luxury cruises. Interestingly, fantasy had a positive effect on willingness to pay a premium. The findings also showed that cruise tourists who focus on psychological needs in social behavior perceive a high degree of fantasy while having a positive experience from a luxury cruise tour.

Couples may not revisit their honeymoon destination. However, if they are satisfied with the destination, then they support the destination by building up their relational value through such things as advocacy (Fernandes and Cruz 2016), recommendations for improvement, and resistance to visit competitive destinations (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999; Bolton et al. 2000; Melancon, Noble, and Noble 2011). A relational value is an imperative construct that reflects the in-depth behavioral intention of customers (Melancon, Noble, and Noble 2011; Lee, Tsang, and Pan 2015); thus, the current study examines whether the fulfilled fantasies of honeymoon tourists prompts their relational value toward a honeymoon destination. Three dimensions of Melancon, Noble, and Noble's (2011) relational value concept, namely, advocacy, openness, and immunity, are adopted in this study. Advocacy goes beyond the idea of recommendation or word-of-mouth because it also includes handling critics for a firm (Anderson 1998). Openness reflects the true opinions of

customers through giving feedback, sharing useful information, and providing suggestions for improvement (Bendapudi and Berry 1997; Melancon, Noble, and Noble 2011). Immunity is the high degree to which customers remain supportive of a firm despite negative publicity or better deals from competitors (Bolton et al. 2000). The three dimensions are interwoven to represent the rich details of tourist supportive behavior. The acquiescence and honesty dimensions were not adopted in this study because the measurements do not fit the destination context. The traits stressed in the dimensions of acquiescence and honesty, such as complying with requests, understanding changes of new policies, and exhibiting opportunistic behavior, were deemed inapplicable.

Fantasy is frequently discussed in the honeymoon literature because it can be fulfilled by the consumption elements (e.g., honeymoon products and activities) at a destination (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999). Knudsen, Rickly, and Vidon (2016) stated that couples anticipate their fantasies will be realized by because couples typically have great expectations of pleasure, happiness, and enjoyment on their dream trip. Given that a honeymoon is a journey that newlyweds dream of and about which they are highly emotional, honeymooner fantasies can be enhanced when they feel tremendously content with their destination (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999). For example, as with Thailand, many honeymoon destinations offer luxurious romantic packages, stunning natural resources, and warm hospitality to provide couples with a high-quality honeymoon place where they can realize their honeymoon fantasies (TAT 2016). A fulfilled fantasy can develop tourist relational value toward a destination. When a fantasy moment is realized, honeymooners will interact favorably with the destination they visited (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999), particularly in advocacy, openness, and immunity (Kim and Agrusa 2005; Melancon, Noble, and Noble 2011). For example, honeymooners could encourage friends or other just-married couples to visit the destination they love, provide insightful information for service providers

to improve performances, and even defend the destination to others if there is a negative publicity. These favorable relational behaviors can be induced particularly when a romantic fantasy is fulfilled (Bulcroft et al. 1999). Fantasy is an important domain of consumption activity in tourist behavioral models (Martin 2004); thus, this study postulates the following hypothesis in the honeymoon tourism context.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Fantasy positively affects destination relational value (advocacy, openness, and immunity).

3. Methodology

3.1 Study area

Phuket is a southern province in Thailand where tourism has been [an important](#) economic mainspring (Moghavvemi et al. 2017). Phuket is well recognized among international travelers for its beautiful natural resources, exciting tourist activities, and rich local heritage (TAT 2016). The Ministry of Tourism and Sports [MOTS] (2019) reported that 38.3 million international tourists arrived in Thailand in 2018; among them, 30% were Phuket arrivals. Given its travel environment, Phuket has attracted honeymoon couples for years (TAT 2013). Nevertheless, tourism in Phuket still has room for improvement. The TAT report (2013) suggested that Phuket needs concrete strategic marketing plans to become a high-quality honeymoon destination. As indicated in Thailand's National Tourism Development Plan 2017–2021, the country's tourism strategies are geared toward attracting high-quality tourists, including honeymoon travelers (MOTS 2017). Considering the suitability of the location for studying honeymoon tourism, this research was conducted in Phuket, Thailand.

3.2 Measurement

Following Churchill's (1979) suggestions, this study adopted a scale development process to establish a scale for measuring the quality of honeymoon tourism. This process is important to this research because the quality attributes of honeymoon tourism are not firmly established in the extant literature, although the literature does partly present the quality attributes in either qualitative or descriptive mode. Arguably, scales validated for the quality attributes of honeymoon tourism are not currently available. Therefore, this study used qualitative research through (1) an analysis of honeymoon-related documents (i.e., online travel magazines and promotional materials), (2) in-depth interviews with industry professionals, and (3) expert panel reviews. These three techniques were used because not all the underlying quality attributes of honeymoon tourism can be identified from the literature review.

An initial pool of 52 items was drawn from the honeymoon and destination literature. In particular, destination-related attributes were identified from the literature on attractions (Kim and Agrusa 2005; Lee, Huang, and Chen 2010; Tosun, Dedeoğlu, and Fyall 2015; Vassiliadis 2008), destination image (Chon, 1990; Kim and Agrusa 2005), hospitality of local residents (Cong 2016; Žabkar, Brencic, and Dmitrovic 2010), local tour products (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999; Kim and Agrusa 2005; Lee, Huang, and Chen 2010), destination environment (Albacete-Saez, Fuentes-Fuentes, and Llorens-Montes 2007; Kozak 2001), and dining experience (Anderson 2016; Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999). Honeymoon-specific attributes (e.g., honeymooner privileges and honeymoon accommodation) were obtained from extant honeymoon studies (Anderson 2016; Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999; Kim and Agrusa 2005; Penner 2009).

To develop additional attributes, 18 industry practitioners with more than 10 years of experience in the hospitality and tourism fields in Phuket were interviewed in depth. Considering that interviewees with dissimilar backgrounds should maximize differences in

perceptions of honeymoon quality attributes, the present study obtained varied views and gained valuable insights into honeymoon tourism from government tourism bodies, DMO staff, professional tour operators, and hoteliers who are particularly knowledgeable about the honeymoon market in Phuket. Interviews were also conducted with three honeymoon couples to search for additional concerns. The interviewees were requested to assess the attributes identified from the literature review and asked to recommend which aspects of quality contribute to a favorable honeymoon experience. Most suggestions agreed with attributes identified in prior studies. In addition, 10 new items were generated: “destination reputation,” “affordability of destination,” “value for money of destination,” “gaining unique local experiences,” “reasonable transport costs,” “considerateness of fellow visitors,” “reasonable accommodation price,” “presentation of genuine local hospitality,” “special recognition as honeymooners,” and “choices of honeymoon accommodation.” Two items (i.e., “helpfulness of local people” and “luxury of destination”) were eliminated because they were ambiguous and redundant. Consequently, 60 measurements were incorporated as statements in a measurement tool. All statements were submitted to a panel of experts to improve content validity (DeVellis 2003).

The expert panels, comprising three tourism academics and three industry executives, were asked to share their concerns and appraise the applicability of the items. The panel removed six items that were inappropriate, namely, “nightlife and entertainment,” “sea, sand, and sun destination,” “blessing ceremony is participatory,” “public transport prices are reasonable,” “an opportunity to gain local experiences,” and “a place with reliable infrastructure.” After this process, 54 quality items remained.

Fantasy was measured using a scale adopted from Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft (1999), with items such as “this honeymoon trip was the fulfillment of all my romantic fantasies.” Relational value was measured using three dimensions (advocacy, openness, and

immunity) with ten items. The scales of the items were modified from Melancon, Noble, and Noble (2011). Each item was operationalized on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree.

3.3 Data collection

To acquire a representative sample, data were collected with an on-site self-administered survey in Phuket, Thailand, during September and October, 2017, mainly at the Phuket International Airport. Considering the nature of the study, the target sample was limited to international honeymoon tourists. Potential couples were politely approached while passing the incentives (e.g., essential oils, and elephant silk dolls) to ask for their participation in the survey. A brief description of the research background was also provided before the survey instrument was handed out. The incentives were important to the data collection process. Respondents were requested to respond to the screening question “I traveled to Phuket to take a honeymoon trip,” and only those who answered in the affirmative were allowed to participate in the survey. Data were collected using a convenience sampling method mainly at the international departure hall, where comfortable seats were arranged for travelers before boarding aircraft. *Among the questionnaires distributed through convenience sampling, a total of 575 complete questionnaires were returned from individual respondents, both members of the honeymoon couples (with an overall response rate of 33%), but 10 responses were discarded because of missing values. Thus, further data analysis included 565 complete questionnaires.* The demographic information provided in Table 1 indicates that the survey is representative of international honeymooners.

Insert Table 1 here

A series of analysis of variance (ANOVA) explored the differences among the various demographic segments in the study. Appendix A presents the F-test results for each of the honeymoon tourism quality factors. Generally, we found no statistically significant gender

differences among the factors. The results revealed that the age group of 41-50 years showed more favorable perceptions of dining experience, advocacy, and openness. Groups based on high school and undergraduate degrees exhibited more positive perceptions of honeymooner privilege and dining experience. For income, groups with higher monthly incomes (i.e., US\$8,001–10,000 and US\$10,000 or above) are likely to have more favorable perceptions of honeymoon service providers, accessibility, and dining experience but have the least positive perception of immunity. Other than these groups, F-tests in general did not reveal statistical differences among the honeymoon tourism quality dimensions.

4. Results

4.1 Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of honeymoon tourism quality

The dataset ($n = 565$) was arranged into two subsets: Samples 1 and 2. Sample 1 ($n = 310$) was examined using EFA. In this stage, destination image items, namely, romantic place, relaxing destination, and reputable honeymoon location, were not incorporated because they were not considered qualities in the previous literature. EFA was performed using principle axis factoring with oblique rotation methods to determine the dimensionality of honeymoon tourism quality. EFA was confirmed by considering the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett’s sphericity test. A KMO value of 0.897 was achieved, which is considered “good” by Kaiser (1974). The result of Bartlett’s sphericity test was 6,162.52 ($p < 0.001$), demonstrating that the factor analysis was suitable. Items with factor loadings and communalities lower than 0.5 were deleted (Hair et al. 2010). A scree plot was also verified for a visible elbow to detect the number of dimensions that should be obtained, and only dimensions with eigenvalues higher than 1 were kept. After reviewing the items using these criteria, some items were removed, mostly from the destination environment and attraction dimensions, such as “considerateness of fellow visitors,” “affordable destination,” “good value for money,” “good place for shopping,” and

“a place with unspoiled beach”. Symbols of romance revealed a factor loading value slightly below 0.5. However, this item was kept in the model because its characteristic is closely associated with honeymoons. No major cross-loadings were found given the assessment of significant primary and secondary loadings among the identified factors (Hair et al., 2010). Following a scale purification procedure, a final seven-dimensional structure was presented, with 24 items accounting for 72.16% of the total variance: dimensions 1 (honeymoon service provider), 2 (honeymooner privileges), 3 (hospitality of local residents), 4 (accessibility), 5 (dining experience), 6 (honeymoon accommodation), and 7 (local tour products), as presented in Table 2. All dimensions have acceptable reliability (Nunnally 1978).

Insert Table 2 here

4.2 Testing the measurement and structural models

Applying the identified dimensions of honeymoon tourism quality, a conceptual model was proposed with seven factors, fantasy, and destination relational value (Figure 2). CFA test was first conducted to verify the validity of the measurement model using the data from Sample 2 (n = 255). Table 3 exhibits the results of CFA. The seven-dimension structure was verified with 23 items. One item (i.e., ‘The hotel offers various recreational facilities for honeymooners’) was eliminated because of its low factor loading. Most dimensions have composite reliability coefficients (CR) greater than 0.7, indicating an acceptable reliability for each construct (Nunnally 1978). “Dining experience” (0.65) was a lower than 0.7 but still above the minimum value of 0.6 (Bagozzi and Yi 1988). Correspondingly, all standardized factor loadings exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.5 (Ford et al. 1986). Goodness-of-fit indices, namely, chi-squared (χ^2) = 1378.23, df = 564, RMSEA = 0.051, CFI = 0.95, and NNFI = 0.94, suggested that the measurement model was theoretically accepted. Convergent

validity was evidenced given the statistically significant factor loadings of each item at $p < .05$ according to t values greater than 1.96 and by the average variance extracted (AVE) values of all constructs greater than 0.5 (Anderson & Gerbing 1988; Fornell & Larcker 1981). The validity examination results also showed no discriminant validity concern, indicating that the AVE for each dimension was more than 0.5 and higher than the squared correlation coefficients under the representative constructs (Table 4). Collinearity was evaluated by investigating the variance inflation factor (VIF) of all exogenous variables. As recommended by Diamantopoulos and Siguaw (2006), the threshold of VIF should be 3.3 or less. In this study, all VIFs ranged from 1.21 to 1.91, thereby exhibiting no sign of severe collinearity issue (Table 4). The collinearity was further assessed considering the correlations among the regressors. The correlations in our example ranged between 0.11 and 0.66 (lower than 0.8), thus indicating no severe issue of collinearity in a data set (Gujarati, 2004).

Insert Tables 3 and 4 here

Given that honeymoon quality measurements were developed through mixed-methods, the measurements must go through additional scale validation testing. To test the scale validation of honeymoon quality dimensions, as suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) and Baumgartner and Homburg (1996), three nested models were developed to check the model that best fits the data. In Table 5, Model 1 is single-factor structure where all items are loaded on one factor; Model 2 follows the factor structure identified by EFA; and Model 3 adopts a second-order factor with seven sub-dimensions. According to model fit indices, Model 2 was a better fit than models 1 and 3, suggesting that a seven-factor structure of honeymoon quality fits the data well.

Insert Table 5 Here

To further validate honeymoon quality scale, measurement invariance testing was undertaken with metric invariance and scalar invariance (Hair et al. 2006). Measurement invariance analysis was conducted on two sub-samples (male versus female) that are generally known to be distinct in terms of consumer/tourist behavior (Kim, Lehto & Morrison 2007). Chi-square differences indicated metric invariance ($\Delta\chi^2 (32.00) < 36.42, p > .05$) and scalar invariance ($\Delta\chi^2 (25.50) < 36.42, p > .05$) between the two sub-samples, indicating that measurements were equivalent across male and female samples.

Insert Table 6 Here

The presence of common method bias was also verified using Harman's single factor examination. All items were loaded into a shared construct using principal component analysis. Consequently, a variance of 36.7% was presented, indicating that common method bias is not an issue in this study (Lings and Greenley 2005). Nonresponse bias was also tested by comparing the opinions of survey participants in the first 10% with the last 10% to examine statistical differences in the mean values for each item. The results exhibited no significant difference ($p = 0.05$), signifying that nonresponse bias is not an issue.

Given that a large sample size is required for a research model, all data ($n = 565$) were used in the subsequent analysis. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was performed to identify which quality factors influence fantasy and whether fantasy is in line with the proposed direction in the hypothesis. Goodness-of-fit measures ($\chi^2 = 1809.90, df = 588, RMSEA = 0.06, CFI = 0.92, \text{ and } NNFI = 0.91$) indicated that the structural model fits the data satisfactorily. The resulting SEM model showed that the following five quality factors

influence fantasy positively: honeymoon service provider ($b = 0.12, t = 2.22$), honeymooner privileges ($b = 0.23, t = 5.04$), accessibility ($b = 0.16, t = 3.50$), honeymoon accommodation ($b = 0.17, t = 2.98$), and local tour product ($b = 0.17, t = 2.42$), partly supporting H1. In addition, fantasy strongly predicted destination relational value in terms of advocacy ($b = 0.64, t = 13.78$), openness ($b = 0.57, t = 11.45$), and immunity ($b = 0.51, t = 11.73$), supporting H2. The perceived quality construct explained 40% of the variance in fantasy, and fantasy explained 26% of the variance in advocacy, 32% in openness, and 41% in immunity.

Insert Figure 2 here

5. Discussion and implications

5.1 Theoretical implications

This study sought to examine which quality aspects of honeymoon tourism contribute to fantasy fulfilment to discover whether the realized fantasy develops destination relational value. Previous honeymoon literature addresses the causal links among quality, fantasy, and behavioral response in understanding honeymoon tourist behaviors (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999; Jericó and Wu 2017; Kim and Agrusa 2005; Reisenwitz 2013). Indulging in a once-in-a-lifetime moment is a vital reason that newlyweds take a honeymoon, and it is therefore important to understand what triggers honeymooner fantasies, and how fantasy affects destination relational value. Nevertheless, no study has investigated honeymoon tourist behavior using the structural relationships of multidimensional quality, fantasy, and relational value. Through the empirical investigation of critical honeymoon tourism concepts, this study provides an extended view of honeymoon travel, addressing the research gap to advance the extant honeymoon tourism literature.

Given that honeymoon tourists expect their honeymooning moments to be long-lasting and memorable, fantasy plays a significant role in fulfilling honeymoon experiences (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999). In this study, five quality dimensions (i.e., honeymoon service providers, honeymooner privileges, accessibility, honeymoon accommodation, and local tour products) were verified as significant antecedents of honeymoon fantasy. Among the five dimensions, honeymooner privileges were positively related to honeymoon fantasy more than the other underlying elements, given its coefficient ($b = 0.23$, $t = 5.04$). One plausible reason for the strong effect of this dimension on fantasy is that honeymooners strongly rely on the symbolic representations of the roles they play in the honeymoon script (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999). The value of honeymooner privileges is represented by exclusive benefits (e.g., in-room romantic breakfast, complimentary night stay, and surprise gifts) that are specially designed to cater to the desires of honeymoon tourists (Anderson, 2016). Therefore, a privilege offer is a necessary component of inducing honeymooners to realize fantasy, particularly when the service providers present exclusive benefits that exceed honeymooner expectations (Lee, Huang, and Chen 2010; Lee, Fakfare, and Han 2020). The findings support the work of Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft (1999) given that newlyweds generally portray a romantic story and often expect exclusive treatment when taking a honeymoon.

Honeymoon accommodations ($b = 0.17$, $t = 2.98$) and local tour products ($b = 0.17$, $t = 2.42$) had similar effects on driving favorable honeymooner fantasies. The current study supports previous studies by Kim and Agrusa (2005) and Lee, Huang, and Chen (2010) who found accommodation and travel-related products were important determinants in persuading newlyweds to select a honeymoon destination. Given that couples are very excited about their romantic stay at a tropical paradise resort and engaging in honeymoon activities when planning a romantic trip to Phuket (Kim and Agrusa 2015), service providers that attempt to

convey a sense of luxury, embrace symbols of romance, and respect honeymooner privacy could help develop the pleasurable and intimate fantasies of newlywed couples. Although honeymoon travelers spend more in a destination than other types of tourists (Sardone 2018), they are advised to keep costs to a minimum because a too grand honeymoon could set a standard that is difficult to maintain once the honeymoon was over (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999). Thus, honeymoon-related products or services that offer good value for money could enhance honeymooner contentment and fantasy.

Honeymoon tourists also consider the importance of accessibility ($b = 0.16, t = 3.50$) and honeymoon service providers ($b = 0.12, t = 2.22$). Honeymoon couples devote considerable time and money on their dream trip (Kim and Agrusa, 2005); hence, they expect a smooth trip and remarkable service from honeymoon service providers. The current study supports the previous research by Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft (1999), Kim and Agrusa (2005), and Ünal, Dursun, and Caber (2017), given that satisfying honeymooner experiences could be heightened when service providers (e.g., travel planners, hotels, and restaurant operators) exhibit expertise and reliable performance. Furthermore, the quality of accessibility is represented by reliability (i.e., on-time schedule, high frequency of transport services) and availability of public transport in a destination (Lee, Huang, and Chen 2010). The results of this study suggest that honeymoon tourists who find favorable accessibility attributes are likely to experience a boost to their honeymoon fantasy. Thus, accessibility is deemed a critical fantasy driver.

In the previous honeymoon literature, some underlying attributes (i.e., hospitality of local residents and dining experience) are among the primary dimensions affecting honeymoon satisfaction (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999; Ünal, Dursun, and Caber 2017). However, the current study did not detect any significant influence from these two dimensions on realizing fantasy. Their nonsignificant effects on fantasy are not too surprising

given the unique characteristics of honeymoon tourists. Although honeymooners potentially interact with various tourism stakeholders, they typically prioritize privacy and prefer an exclusive stay in an isolated place (Kim and Agrusa 2005). Newlyweds also consider a honeymoon a private retreat from social contacts and responsibilities (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999). Therefore, interaction with local residents may be less important to the couple's intimate fantasy. When it comes to food, honeymooners, particularly millennial couples tend to be more selective and increasingly aware of healthy dining (Travel Dejavu 2017). Nevertheless, changes in the preferences of honeymooners may not be the only reason because the idea of continuing celebration for days after the wedding may no longer appeal (Kuoni 2017; Travel Dejavu 2017). Therefore, anticipation of pleasure and fantasy on dining experience might be less important to this demographic.

The concept of fantasy is also a pivotal mediator in the relationship between quality dimensions and destination relational value. The results reveal that fantasy strongly influences destination relational value for advocacy ($b = 0.64, t = 13.78$), openness ($b = 0.57, t = 11.45$), and immunity ($b = 0.51, t = 11.73$). When honeymooners realize fantasy, they are motivated to show relational behaviors with a destination. Their emotional attachment may increase for a destination they love and show through recommending and defending the destination to family or other honeymoon couples, a willingness to provide suggestions for improvement, and a strong resistance to support other honeymoon destinations that offer better deals. The results support prior findings that favorable relational responses of customers contribute to organization profits (Lee, Tsang, and Pan 2015). Additionally, findings verify the importance of incorporating fantasy into a consumer behavioral model (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; MacInnis and Price 1990; and Chinomona and Sandada 2013), thus providing evidence for the mediating effect of fantasy between quality dimensions and destination relational value in the context of honeymoon tourism.

In hospitality and tourism studies, behavioral intention is a frequent consequence of key service-oriented constructs (Baker and Crompton 2000; Hutchinson, Lai, and Wang 2009; Lee and Min 2016), although an alternative variable that is suitable for specific tourism fields may be available. Melancon, Noble, and Noble (2011) reported that relational value is an alternative concept that provides richer measures than traditional behavioral intention. Thus, this study adopted the relational value concept to scrutinize issues in honeymoon tourism and test the validity and accuracy of prediction of the proposed research model. Previous honeymoon research has highlighted the importance of the relationships among destination quality, fantasy, and relational value which have only been described descriptively (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999; Kim and Agrusa 2005; Seebaluck et al. 2015). Even so, an empirical investigation of these underlying concepts has not yet been conducted in the honeymoon research field, although it will provide interesting implications in the honeymoon literature. This study is among the first within the honeymoon tourism literature that verifies the importance of these constructs, highlighting fantasy as a mediator in the relationships. Thus, the findings advance honeymoon research and can provide a foundation for subsequent studies in the honeymoon tourism field.

5.2 Managerial implications

The findings of this study provide several implications for tourism bureaus and service providers at honeymoon destinations. The established multiple-item quality measurement scales, comprising 23 items under 7 dimensions, can be a comprehensive worksheet for industry practitioners. In developing honeymoon products or services, particular attention should go to the 7 dimensions identified in this research.

In the current study, honeymooner privileges were the most important antecedent of fantasy; accordingly, service providers can focus on arranging honeymoon specials to

facilitate honeymooner satisfaction and fantasy experience. At the destination level, apart from showcasing only a range of romantic products or destination themes, a destination manager can cooperate with tourism stakeholders to design special treatments for honeymooners. For example, when newlyweds arrive at a destination, the airport's "*premium pass*" can be offered for couples to take a special lane instead of waiting in frequently long immigration lines. Destination managers can also go the extra mile by hosting a party specifically arranged for honeymooners at an iconic venue, such as a private beach, a luxury yacht, or a scenic rooftop restaurant (Thailand Current 2019). The exclusively arranged honeymoon party not only induces the fantasy of couples, but also helps increase the attractiveness of a destination. Honeymooner privileges at the level of service firms could include special treatment in the form of value-added benefits, such as a champagne breakfast served in the room, complimentary honeymoon activities (e.g., couples massage, Thai cooking classes), and a pleasant surprise.

Given that service providers can enhance the honeymoon experience (Lee, Huang, and Chen 2010), the managers and staff of a service organization should clearly understand honeymooner expectations and demands. Apart from providing regular training to staff members on service delivery and customer etiquette, tourism service providers (e.g., tour operators, hotels, and airlines) can collaborate with DMOs or tourism bureaus to organize a familiarization trip during the off-peak season by inviting overseas or domestic wedding planners and honeymoon specialists to experience honeymoon-specific products. Not only can tourism resources be effectively used during the off-peak period, but also market information and specific honeymoon knowledge gained from honeymoon elites can help managers and staff members improve their understanding of honeymooner desires and particular service areas that are deemed problematic. When service providers have the

necessary skills and knowledge, they can perform well, contributing to honeymooner quality experiences and fantasies.

To push Phuket as a top global romance destination, accessibility is another important domain that tourism authorities should consider. Honeymoon couples may prefer an exotic, remote place for their honeymoon (Bulcroft, Smeins, and Bulcroft 1999), but without disruptions during the trip. Thus, transportation within a destination should be convenient and reliable. Apart from a limousine service that should be prearranged for honeymooners, public transport options should be readily available because couples may travel around to explore romantic experiences. Accordingly, DMOs and tourism authority should devote particular effort to ensuring frequent and reliable transport services on every route.

Furthermore, our findings showed that quality directly influences fantasy, and subsequently, fantasy affects honeymooner relational behaviors. Therefore, when evaluating honeymooner quality perceptions, fantasies, and relational value with a destination, tourism bureaus and service providers should adopt an integrated managerial approach in an ongoing process. The attributes of honeymoon tourism should not be the only elements considered in forming satisfactory experiences; other elements of components of integrated marketing strategies should be considered in establishing honeymooner fantasies and destination relational value.

6. Research limitations and recommendations

This research has limitations, which also suggest new paths for future studies. First, this study was conducted in a tropical honeymoon location, namely, Phuket, Thailand. Thus, certain quality attributes may only capture specific elements of quality for this honeymoon type. The results of this research may not generalize to other honeymoon settings (e.g., winter honeymoon, old world romance honeymoon, and theme park honeymoon) because quality

attributes vary with type of honeymoon. Further research is suggested to examine dimensions and attributes of honeymoon tourism in different settings and locations.

Second, perceived quality and fantasy are considered antecedents of destination relational value in this study. Other variables may affect or be related to honeymooner relational behavior. Future studies could explore other constructs that may be associated with honeymoon tourism. For example, in addition to quality and fantasy, memorable experience is meaningful in the research model (Wang et al. 2020). This concept can be conceptually connected and act as a mediator between perceived quality and destination relational value. Lastly, this study was performed to examine how fantasy is perceived by newlywed couples based on their post-consumption experience. Therefore, the results may not embody elements that stimulate couple fantasies, particularly before a honeymoon trip starts. As Chen (2016) notes, the progression of initial fantasy formed prior to the actual consumption is vital because it could enhance individual perceptions of reality. Given that the construct of fantasy is closely associated with expectation, curiosity, and induced imagery (Chen 2016), future research can thus consider examining the effects of these variables on the initial preconceived fantasies of couples.

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Figure 1: Proposed conceptual model

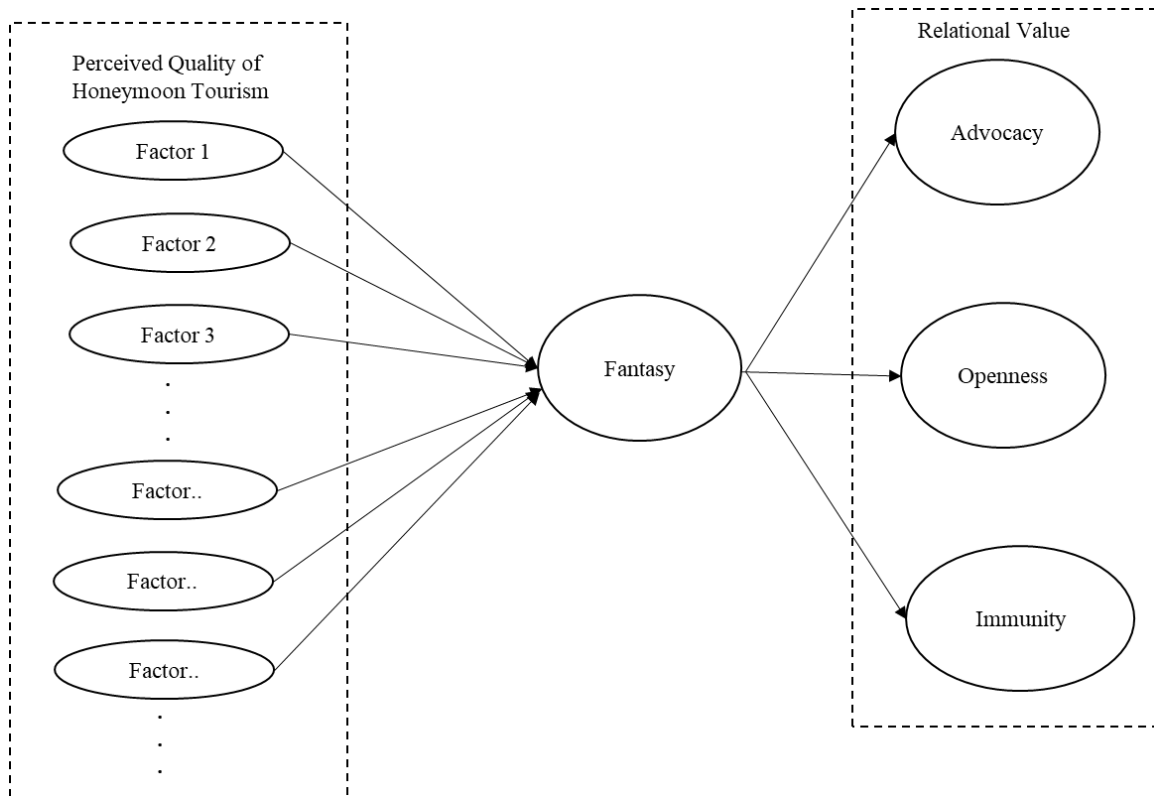


Figure 2: Results of the conceptual model

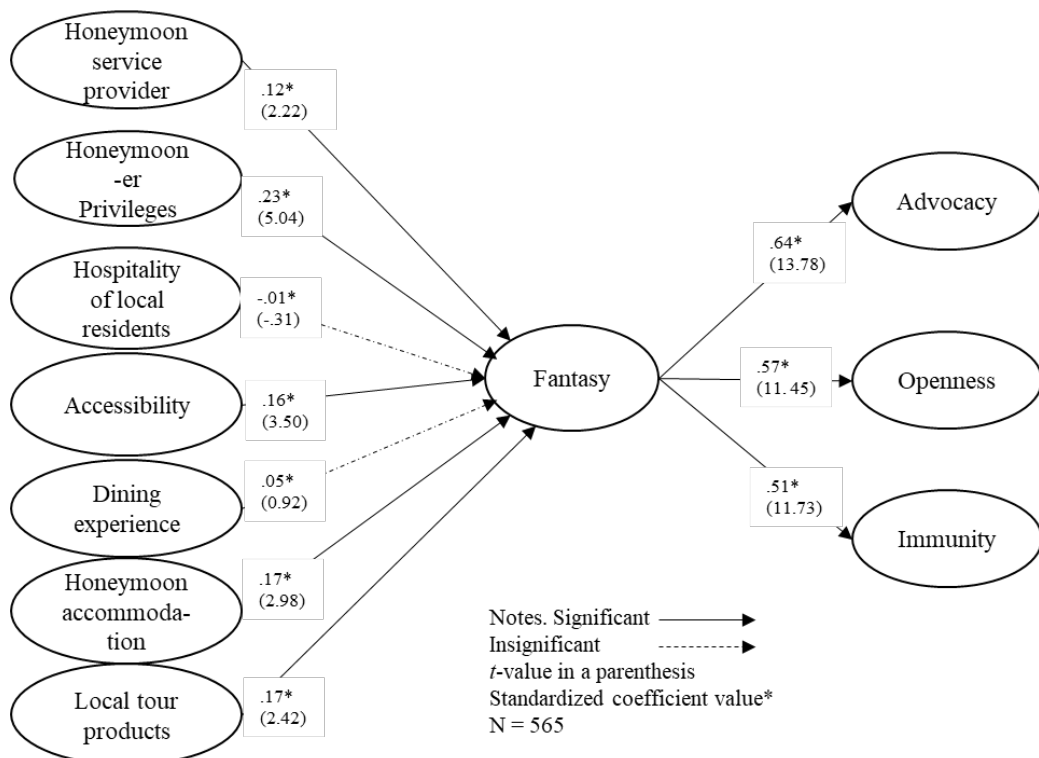


Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the sample (N = 565)

Profile Category		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	277	49
	Female	288	51
Age (years)	20 or below	11	1.9
	21–30	397	69.2
	31–40	150	26.5
	41–50	12	2.1
	51–60	1	0.2
Country of Residence	China	126	22.3
	Asia except China	55	9.73
	Middle East	26	4.60
	Europe	248	43.89
	North America	9	1.6
	South America	4	0.71
	Oceania	36	6.37
	Africa	61	10.80
Education	High School	94	16.6
	Associate Degree	86	15.2
	Undergraduate Degree	278	49.2
	Postgraduate or above	107	18.9
Monthly Household Income (US\$)	Less than 2,000	81	14.3
	2,001–4,000	238	42.2
	4,001–6,000	83	14.7
	6,001–8,000	59	10.4
	8,001–10,000	22	3.9
	10,001 or above	82	14.5

Table 2: EFA results for honeymoon quality

Factor	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
Factor 1: Honeymoon service providers (SP) (eigenvalue: 10.21, % of variance: 35.20)		0.93
1. Honeymoon service providers (i.e., tour operator, hotel, and restaurant staff) exhibit a good service attitude.	0.88	
2. Honeymoon service providers are trustworthy.	0.84	
3. Honeymoon service providers have good knowledge of their jobs.	0.77	
4. Honeymoon service providers (i.e., travel planners, hotels, and restaurant operators) are competent.	0.74	
Factor 2: Honeymooner privileges (PRV) (eigenvalue: 3.61, % of variance: 12.46)		0.94
1. An offer of room upgrade is made exclusively to honeymooners.	-0.95	
2. A special discount on products or services is offered exclusively to honeymooners.	-0.93	
3. A complimentary extra night stay is offered exclusively to honeymooners.	-0.83	
4. The status of honeymooners is especially recognized.	-0.79	
5. The honeymoon trip is full of pleasant surprises (i.e., honeymoon cake, surprise events, and other “wow” elements).	-0.77	
6. The activities that are specifically arranged for couples are memorable (i.e., batik painting, cooking class, and private romantic excursions).	-0.71	
Factor 3: Hospitality of local residents (HSP) (eigenvalue: 2.02, % of variance: 6.97)		0.92
1. Local people have a warm attitude.	0.91	
2. Local people are friendly.	0.91	
Factor 4: Accessibility (ACS) (eigenvalue: 1.56, % of variance: 5.38)		0.82
1. Public transport in Phuket is reliable (i.e., on-time schedule, high frequency of services on every route).	0.83	
2. Various types of public transport are available for tourists in Phuket.	0.81	
Factor 5: Dining experience (DIN) (eigenvalue: 1.29, % of variance: 4.45)		0.68
1. Food and beverages are of good quality.	0.84	
2. Food and beverages are varied.	0.58	
Factor 6: Honeymoon accommodation (HMA) (eigenvalue: 1.16, % of variance: 4.01)		0.84
1. The hotel offers a variety of recreational facilities for honeymooners (i.e., spa, gym, sport activities, and swimming pool).	0.60	
2. The hotel offers picturesque views.	0.69	
3. Honeymooners' privacy is well respected.	0.64	
4. The hotel is of acceptable quality.	0.59	
Factor 7: Local tour products (LTP) (eigenvalue: 1.07, % of variance: 3.69)		0.79
1. Local tour products provide access to exclusive places.	-0.73	
2. Local tour products provide a sense of luxury.	-0.61	
3. Local tour products offer good value for money.	-0.60	
4. Local tour products comprise symbols of romance.	-0.48	

Note: Total variance explained = 72.16%, Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy = 0.897, Bartlett's sphericity test = $p < 0.001$

Table 3: CFA results (measurement model)

Factor	Factor Loading	t-value
Honeymoon service providers (SP)		
1. Honeymoon service providers (i.e., tour operator, hotel, and restaurant staff) exhibit a good service attitude.	0.81	22.52
2. Honeymoon service providers are trustworthy.	0.89	23.70
3. Honeymoon service providers have good knowledge of their jobs.	0.80	N/A
4. Honeymoon service providers (i.e., travel planners, hotels, and restaurant operators) are competent.	0.85	26.92
Honeymooner privileges (PRV)		
1. An offer of room upgrade is made exclusively to honeymooners.	0.91	18.41
2. A special discount on products or services is offered exclusively to honeymooners.	0.92	19.21
3. A complimentary extra night stay is offered exclusively to honeymooners.	0.84	19.57
4. The status of honeymooners is especially recognized.	0.78	22.13
5. The honeymoon trip is full of pleasant surprises (i.e., honeymoon cake, surprise events, and other “wow” elements).	0.74	N/A
6. The activities that are specifically arranged for couples are memorable (i.e., batik painting, cooking class, and private romantic excursions).	0.70	23.04
Hospitality of local residents (HSP)		
1. Local people have a warm attitude.	0.87	N/A
2. Local people are friendly.	0.98	20.33
Accessibility (ACS)		
1. Public transport in Phuket is reliable (i.e., on-time schedule, high frequency of services on every route).	0.81	12.32
2. Various types of public transport are available for tourists in Phuket.	0.84	N/A
Dining experience (DIN)		
1. Food and beverages are of good quality.	0.85	N/A
2. Food and beverages are varied.	0.60	7.71
Honeymoon accommodation (HMA)		
1. The hotel offers picturesque views.	0.73	N/A
2. Honeymooners’ privacy is well respected.	0.81	16.28
3. The hotel is of acceptable quality.	0.73	14.86
Local tour products (LTP)		
1. Local tour products provide access to exclusive places.	0.75	16.25
2. Local tour products provide a sense of luxury.	0.70	15.97
3. Local tour products offer good value for money.	0.76	N/A
4. Local tour products comprise symbols of romance.	0.77	17.31
Fantasy (FAN)		
1. This honeymoon trip was the fulfillment of all my romantic fantasies.	0.86	30.52
2. This honeymoon trip provided the most intense emotional experience that my spouse and I have ever had together.	0.93	N/A
3. This honeymoon trip provided us with some of the most meaningful and exciting experiences of our relationship.	0.91	37.49
4. This honeymoon trip provided the most romantic time we have ever spent together.	0.90	33.99
Advocacy (ADV)		
1. I would try to get my friends and family to visit Phuket.	0.83	19.65
2. I would seldom miss an opportunity to tell others good things about Phuket.	0.75	N/A
3. I would defend Phuket to others if I heard someone speaking poorly about it.	0.79	18.10
4. I would bring friends/family with me to Phuket because I think they would like it here.	0.85	17.70
Openness (OPN)		
1. I would feel comfortable telling the travel service providers (i.e., hotel, restaurant, and travel planner) in Phuket when I think something needs improvement.	0.81	N/A
2. I would suggest changes to travel service providers in Phuket if I experience any problem with their services.	0.84	19.90
3. I would be willing to provide useful information to help travel service providers in Phuket.	0.73	16.44
Immunity (IMM)		
1. I would not switch to competing destinations, even if they made a better offer.	0.88	N/A

2. Even if I heard negative information about Phuket, I would not switch to competing destinations.	0.90	27.62
3. I would not be interested in offers from other competing destinations.	0.82	24.32

Note: All factor loadings are significant at $p < 0.000$. Parameters are fixed at 1.0 for maximum likelihood estimation. Thus, t -values are not obtained (N/A) for parameters fixed at 1.0 for identification purposes.

Table 4: Correlations (squared correlations), reliability, AVE, and mean

	SP	PRV	HSP	ACS	DIN	HMA	LTP	FAN	ADV	OPN	IMM
SP	1										
PRV	0.25(.06)	1									
HSP	0.22(.05)	0.11(.01)	1								
ACS	0.33(.11)	0.23(.05)	0.13(.02)	1							
DIN	0.17(.03)	0.34(.11)	0.18(.03)	0.22(.05)	1						
HMA	0.43(.19)	0.21(.04)	0.34(.12)	0.27(.07)	0.31(.09)	1					
LTP	0.53(.28)	0.40(.16)	0.40(.16)	0.36(.13)	0.32(.10)	0.43(.18)	1				
FAN	0.38(.14)	0.42(.18)	0.17(.03)	0.34(.11)	0.27(.08)	0.35(.12)	0.42(.18)	1			
ADV	0.40(.16)	0.32(.10)	0.39(.15)	0.32(.10)	0.35(.12)	0.47(.22)	0.54(.29)	0.54(.30)	1		
OPN	0.36(.13)	0.28(.08)	0.31(.09)	0.34(.12)	0.31(.09)	0.39(.15)	0.45(.20)	0.49(.24)	0.66(.44)	1	
IMM	0.25(.06)	0.32(.11)	0.10(.01)	0.24(.06)	0.18(.13)	0.22(.05)	0.31(.10)	0.44(.19)	0.46(.21)	0.45(.20)	1
CR	.90	.92	.92	.81	.70	.80	.83	.94	.88	.84	.90
AVE	.70	.67	.85	.68	.54	.57	.56	.81	.65	.63	.75
MEAN	5.66	4.65	6.08	5.30	5.63	5.94	5.34	5.86	5.88	6.68	4.54
SD	0.84	1.31	1.09	1.38	1.00	0.82	0.86	1.04	0.90	0.87	1.37
VIF	1.54	1.29	1.26	1.21	1.24	1.45	1.91	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 5: Competing measurement models for honeymoon quality

Model	Nested Models	χ^2/df	RMSEA	CFI	NNFI
1	Single-factor	1,796.27/245	0.15	0.55	0.50
2	Seven-factor	321.64/224	0.04	0.97	0.96
3	A second-order factor with seven sub-dimensions	480.15/239	0.06	0.93	0.92

Table 6. Testing for measurement model invariance for honeymoon quality

Model	Model Description	χ^2 (df)	$\Delta \chi^2$ (Δdf)
1	Freely estimated model for men vs. women	924.00(448)	
2	Metric invariance model for men vs. women	956.00(472)	32.00(24)
3	Scalar invariance model for men vs. women	981.50(496)	25.50(24)

Note: χ^2 (24) = 36.42

Appendix: Analysis of variance of demographic segments

Gender	SP	PRV	HSP	ACS	DIN	HMA	LTP	FAN	ADV	OPN	IMM
Male (Mean)	5.66	4.54	5.96	5.27	5.64	5.95	5.28	5.90	5.90	5.71	4.54
Female (Mean)	5.66	4.75	6.07	5.32	5.61	5.99	5.40	5.82	5.86	5.64	4.54
F-ratio	0.01	3.74	1.79	0.12	0.12	0.43	2.89	0.80	0.19	1.05	0.01
P-value	0.99	0.054	0.18	0.73	0.72	0.51	0.09	0.37	0.66	0.31	0.99
Age (years)	SP	PRV	HSP	ACS	DIN	HMA	LTP	FAN	ADV	OPN	IMM
20 or below	5.70	5.15	6.03	5.41	5.45	5.76	5.56	5.61	5.81	5.36	4.64
21-30	5.70	4.64	5.95	5.38	5.59	5.98	5.34	5.82	5.84	5.63	4.59
31-40	5.58	4.62	6.15	5.04	5.68	5.96	5.30	5.95	5.93	5.80	4.35
41-50	5.38	5.17	6.61	5.54	6.46	6.11	5.67	5.98	6.58	6.11	5.25
51-60	6.75	1.67	6.33	4.50	5.00	6.00	5.25	5.50	4.75	4.67	4.33
F-ratio	1.29	2.03	2.16	1.89	2.56	0.30	0.72	0.60	2.61	2.60	1.66
P-value	0.27	0.07	0.07	0.11	0.04	0.88	0.58	0.66	0.04	0.04	0.16
Education	SP	PRV	HSP	ACS	DIN	HMA	LTP	FAN	ADV	OPN	IMM
High school	5.52	4.69	6.15	5.26	5.76	5.85	5.22	5.74	5.79	5.67	4.64
Associate Degree	5.60	4.62	6.05	5.35	5.66	5.90	5.40	5.76	5.90	5.59	4.65
Undergraduate	5.67	4.76	5.98	5.35	5.69	6.03	5.34	5.97	5.91	5.69	4.51
Postgraduate	5.83	4.35	5.97	5.14	5.31	6.01	5.38	5.73	5.87	5.71	4.44
F-ratio	2.54	2.71	0.76	0.67	4.71	1.53	0.79	2.27	0.42	0.41	0.56
P-value	0.06	0.04	0.52	0.57	0.01	0.21	0.50	0.08	0.74	0.75	0.64
Monthly income (US\$)	SP	PRV	HSP	ACS	DIN	HMA	LTP	FAN	ADV	OPN	IMM
≤2,000	5.58	4.62	5.96	5.29	5.55	5.80	81	5.93	5.71	5.68	4.66
2,001–4,000	5.73	4.65	6.16	5.28	5.74	6.03	238	5.79	5.92	5.59	4.41
4,001–6,000	5.52	4.79	5.50	5.41	5.61	5.95	83	5.84	5.81	5.71	4.78
6,001–8,000	5.80	4.92	5.75	4.86	5.09	5.91	59	5.89	5.79	5.59	4.59
8,001–10,000	5.64	4.61	6.59	4.82	6.00	6.29	22	6.23	6.08	5.77	3.68
≥10,001	5.60	4.36	6.20	5.66	5.66	5.98	82	5.87	6.00	5.91	4.76
F-ratio	1.32	1.55	8.57	2.99	4.91	1.75	1.98	0.86	1.39	1.93	3.26
P-value	0.26	0.17	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.12	0.08	0.51	0.22	0.09	0.01