# DOES VISITORS' DEMOGRAPHICS, STATUS, LENGTH-OF-STAY, AND TRAVEL PARTY AFFECT LOYALTY INDICATORS? A CASE OF VISITORS TO EL-GÖLÜ PARK, IRAN

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**ABSTRACT :** *The main objectives of this study are to examine the effect of visitors' demographics, status (first timer or repeater visitor), length-of-stay, and travel party on the loyalty indicators, and to investigate whether there are any differences of visitors' loyalty indicators between male and female visitors, between single and married visitors, between visitors of different age groups, different education groups, different occupation groups, between first timer or repeater visitors, those who stayed in El-Gölü Park, and those who traveled alone or with friends or with family. In this study we focused on three loyalty indicators: recommending to other, willingness to positive word-of-mouth and intent to return. Results revealed that education level affected willingness to positive word-of-mouth and intent to return, and travel party influenced recommending to other. Results also indicated that there were significant differences in willingness to positive word-of-mouth and intent to return between visitors of different education groups, as well as in recommending to other among visitors of different travel party groups.*

**KEYWORDS**: Visitor demographics, Visitor status, Length-of-Stay, Travel party, Loyalty.

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism has a prominent role in the international economy (Cengiz, 2012) accounting for 11% of global gross domestic product (GDP) and employing 200 million people (Okello & Yerian, 2009). In the context of globalization (Mendes et al., 2010), tourism industry creates full and part-time jobs (Vassiliadis, 2008). Consequently, the economic prominence (Cengiz, 2012) has fostered competitiveness among tourism destinations (Mendes et al., 2010).

The business of tourism is complex and fragmented and since visitors arrive at the destination, until they leave, the quality of their experience is affected by many services and experiences, including a range of public and private services, community interactions, environment, and hospitality. Therefore, destinations have to deliver wonderful experiences and excellent values to visitors (WTO, 2007) to make them loyal (Haque & Khan, 2013), because businesses with loyal

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customers can pay more for their goods and services (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). Additionally, as purchases increase, operational costs fall (Campon et al., 2013). Moreover, serving and keeping the loyal clients is much cheaper, easier and more efficient (Movafegh & Movafegh, 2013; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). Furthermore, loyal customers provide free advertising through word-of-mouth (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). The aforementioned indicates that consumer loyalty is one of the most important construct and one of the main goals in the marketing and tourism behavior literature because it plays a central role for corporate/destinations success (Valle et al., 2006; Hagigi et al, 2003; Ebrahimpour et al., 2011), profitability (Campo & Yague, 2007), and the strategic marketing planning (Campon et al., 2013; Vassiliadis, 2008).

Loyalty, to include the act of consuming, is described as "deeply held commitment to rebuy or re-patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior" (Oliver, 1999: p.34). Both in the marketing and tourism behavior literature loyalty has been interpreted by three concepts: conative or behavioral loyalty, affective or attitudinal loyalty, and cognitive or composite loyalty. The behavioral concept refers to sequence purchase, proportion of patronage of probability of purchase (Eusébio & Vieira, 2013). The attitudinal concept goes beyond overt behavior, and expresses loyalty in terms of consumers' strength of affection toward a brand (Mechinda et al., 2010). The composite concept integrates both behavioral and attitudinal dimensions. To be truly loyal, a consumer must both purchase the brand and have a positive attitude toward it. The composite approach has been used a number of items in leisure setting. While this composite measurement seems to be the most comprehensive, it is not necessarily the most practical. It has serious inherent limitations, simply because of the weighting applied to both behavioral and attitudinal dimensions (Eusébio & Vieira, 2013).

The most important issue on the tourist loyalty is related to its measurement. The measurement of loyalty in tourism context is particularly difficult. Loyalty is a multi-dimensional construct and influenced by tourism experiences (Lee & Hsu, 2013) thus there is no comprehensive instrument for its measuring. On the other hand, the purchase of some tourism products, e.g. medical tourism product, is a rare purchase. It does not occur on a continuous basis, but rather infrequently (Mechinda et al., 2010). However, this construct has been intensively studied in tourism research, from different perspectives and methodologies (Eusébio & Vieira, 2013). Tourist loyalty is commonly measured by three indicators: intention to continue buying the same product, intention to buy more of the same product, and willingness to recommend the product to the others (Song & Cheung, 2010). Donnelly (2009) used intent to revisit, recommending, and word-of-mouth for measuring tourists' loyalty. Similarly, Debata (2013) used communicating positive thing, recommending to other, and willingness to revisit for measuring tourists loyalty toward medical tourism in India. Rajesh (2013) in his study conceptualized destination loyalty by three indicators: revisit, word-of-mouth, and recommending others. On the other hand, numerous studies used two indicators for measuring tourists' loyalty. Valle et al., (2006) used intention to return and willingness to recommend as loyalty indicators at Arade (a Portuguese tourism destination). Vassiliadis (2008) used willingness to repeat visits and willingness to recommend as loyalty indicators in the north of Greece. Similarly, Nowacki (2009) used intent to recommend and revisit as loyalty agents in Wielkopolska and Kujawy regions. Truong and King (2009) used intent to revisit and willingness to recommend for measuring loyalty among Chinese tourists in Vietnam.

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Craggs and Schofield (2011) used the intention to return and recommending for measuring tourists' loyalty in Quays. Chen et al., (2011) used willingness to revisit and recommend as indicators of tourist behavioral intentions in Kinmen National Park. Prayag (2012) used proxies of revisit and recommendation intentions for measuring tourists' loyalty. Phillips et al., (2013) used two indicators including revisit intentions and word-of-mouth for measuring tourists' loyalty in North Dakota.

Loyalty has received considerable attention in the ground of business (Kontogianni et al., 2011). In addition, understanding the significant of consumer loyalty, scholars in the field of tourism have paid increasing notice to loyalty-associated concerns in the current decades (Movafegh & Movafegh, 2013). Indeed, considering the determinants of tourist loyalty will allow management to focus on the major influencing factors that lead to willingness to revisit, willingness to recommend, and willingness to pay more and positive word-of-mouth to potential tourists. Customer satisfaction, customer experience, service quality or performance, value, product superiority, personal fortitude, social bonding and synergy, customer involvement, price, risk, brand name, demographics, habitats, and history of brand usage provided valuable insights into the process of building customer loyalty in the business field. Tourist loyalty antecedents are efficiency, service quality, social value, play, aesthetics, perceived monetary cost, perceived risk, time and effort spent and perceived value (Rajesh, 2013: p. 71). Studies have been indicated that satisfaction (Valle et al., 2006; Mendes et al., 2010), perceived quality (Campo & Yague, 2007), quality (Baker & Crompton, 2000), motivation (Lee & Hsu, 2013), cognitive and affective image, attributes such as basic services, comfort facilities, safety and infrastructure, cultural attractions and shopping, ambience and variety and accessibility affect tourist loyalty (Rajesh, 2013).

In the competitive world of tourism, demographic-based research has drawn increasing attention, because of rapidly changing demographic composition of the travel market (Chi et al., 2009). For more than one decade there has been a general view among tourism researchers on the relationship between demographics and loyalty. Researchers believe that: "there is no relationship between loyalty and demographics" (Riley et al., 2001). Nevertheless, a small number of empirical studies have been conducted to investigate the effect of demographics on the loyalty indicators. For example, Chi et al., in 2009 examined the potential differences in loyalty formation process across different demographic groups. Findings based on multiple-groups analysis revealed that travelers in different age and income segments exhibited no significant difference in loyalty levels. They also found that travelers in different gender and education segments formed comparable level of loyalty across groups. Chia-Ming et al., in 2009 analyzed differences between the Taekwondo training hall members' demographic variables as they related to participative motivation, satisfaction, and loyalty. A member's gender, age, family income, and time spent learning Taekwondo indicated statistically significant differences on his or her loyalty. Results showed that females indicated higher levels of loyalty than males. 19-year-old or older members scored higher on loyalty than 9 to 18-year-old members. Members with family income of NT 80,001 scored higher on loyalty than members with family income of 80,000. Members who had practiced Taekwondo for one to four years scored higher on loyalty than members who had practiced for less than one year. Movafegh and Movafegh (2013) examined the relations between demographics aspects (gender, age, and education level) and tourist loyalty. Findings indicated that there was no difference in the tourist loyalty between male and female tourists. On the other hand, there were

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differences in the tourists' loyalty between tourists of different age groups and different education groups. Paunovic (2014) analyzed relationship of age, length-of-stay, and brand loyalty in Serbia. He found that age and length-of-stay affected brand loyalty. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the visitor status, length-of-stay, and travel party affect the loyalty indicators.

As illustrated, empirical studies that have focused on loyalty in relation to visitors' demographics (e.g. gender, age, marital status, education level, and occupation) are relatively rare, and the relation to visitors' status, length-of-stay, and travel party is zero. It is worthwhile to examine the effect of demographic aspects, visitors' status, length-of-stay, and travel party on the loyalty indicators.

**Purposes of the study**

(1) To gather visitor profile of El-Gölü Park;
(2) To measure visitors' loyalty to El-Gölü Park using recommending to other, willingness to positive word-of-mouth, and willingness to intent to return;
(3) To investigate the effect of visitors' demographics, status, length-of-stay, and travel party on the loyalty indicators; and
(4) To examine differences of the loyalty indicators by visitors' demographics, status, length-of-stay, and travel party.

**The Study area**

In Iran, tourism is estimated to account for 5.6% of the country's total GDP, 5.1% of the country's total employment, 2.9% of the country's total capital investment, and 2.8% of the country's total exports (WTCC, 2013). Iran has a great potential for tourism e.g. Iran is the eighteenth largest country in the world in terms of area. It is located in the southwestern Asia and covers the land area of more than $1,648,000^{km2}$ (Rastegar, 2010). Moreover, a review of 3167 tourist attractions found that Iran is rich in cultural and natural tourism resources many of which are unique to the world (Alipour & Heydary, 2004).

One of the most popular tourism destinations in Iran for both of domestic and international tourists, due to various historical tourism attractions, such as Bazaar Complex, Goye Masjid, Arg-e-Alishah, El-Gölü Park (Shah Gölü), is Tabriz. El-Gölü is one of the most important tourism attractions in the South East of Tabriz (figure 1). El-Gölü Park, a historical and recreational park with a pool, covered an area of $54675^{m2}$ during Aq-Qoynlu dynasty in the 16th century. It was reconstructed in the 19th century in Qajar dynasty by Qahrman Mirza.
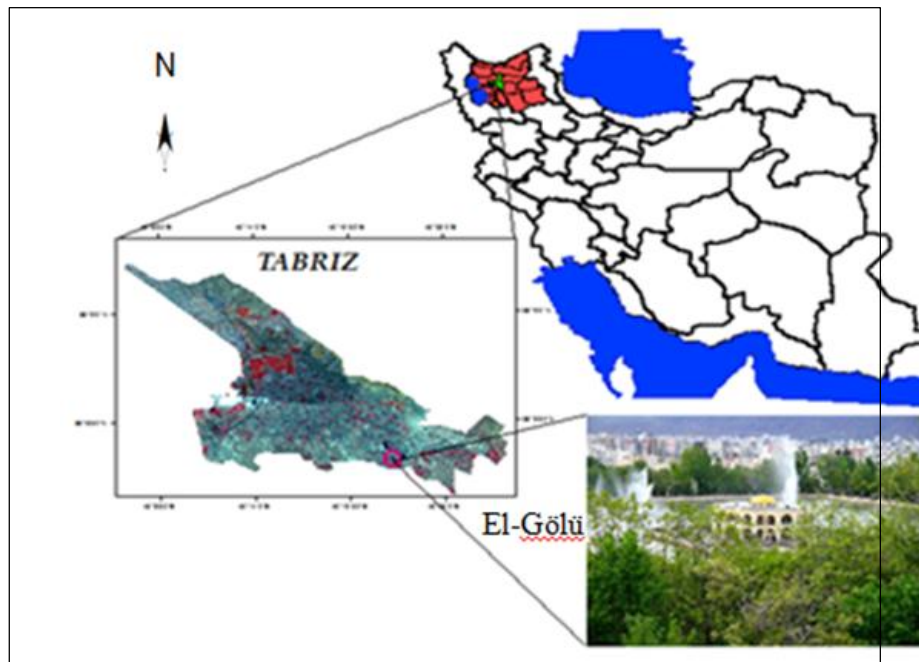
Figure 1: location of El-Gölü Park

**METHOD**

This research is a quantitative research where the source of information is gathered from a self-completed questionnaire. The survey includes two sections. The first section gathers information on the visitors' profiles. The visitors' profiles included gender (Schofield & Thompson, 2007; Perovic et al., 2012; Shani et al., 2010), marital status (Song & Cheung, 2010; Lee & Hsu, 2013; Phillips et al., 2013), age (Pearce, 2005; Haque & Khan, 2013; Matzler et al., 2007; Okamura & Fukushige, 2010), education level (Tsiotsou & Vasiotio, 2006; Truong & Foster, 2006), occupation type (Song & Cheung, 2010; Lee & Hsu, 2013), type of accommodation, transport used (Mendes et al., 2010; Valle et al., 2006; Yuksel, 2007), length-of-stay (Son, 2005; Kau & Lim, 2005; Okello & Yerian, 2009; Merwe et al., 2011), travel party or companion (Truong & King, 2009; Hung et al., 2012; Winter, 2011; Siri et al., 2012; Murphy et al., 2011) and type of visitors (first timer or repeater visitors).

The second part of the questionnaire investigated destination loyalty (Truong & King 2009). The visitors were asked to indicate their intentions of recommending, positive word-of-mouth, and intent to return. The Behavioral intentions were assessed by using statements such as: "will you recommend visiting ... to your friends? And would you like to visit … again"? (Nowacki, 2009), as a last indicator of intention, the statement on positive word of mouth was: I will write about my vacation … as a memorable day in my diary. The visitors' loyalty was measured on a 5-point scale: 'Very Unlikely' (1), 'Unlikely' (2), 'Neither Likely Nor Unlikely' (3), 'Likely' (4), and 'Very Likely' (5), (Craggs & Schofield, 2011). The items of survey instrument were adopted of the empirical studies, which were originally in English, were translated into Persian. Most of other information and data were gathered from published journals, articles, and books.

The researchers used convenience sampling method to get the data from the respondents. The researchers used this type of sampling because it was easy to obtain a large number of completed questionnaires quickly, at a low cost, and the least time (Saad et al., 2013). A total of 3 field assistants, randomly, distributed the questionnaire surveys at the Park. In total, 200 usable questionnaires were collected from the visitors. Of those returned, 12 questionnaires were eliminated (6 percent). These questionnaires were incomplete or had an excessive amount of missing data. After elimination 188 questionnaires were coded for data analysis (94 percent). The data was analyzed by Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 (Yeung et al., 2004).

*Data Analysis*
Descriptive analysis, including frequencies was calculated for analyzing respondents' profiles and their loyalty level. Moreover, the Pearson Correlation Coefficients were conducted to determine the effect of visitors' demographics, status (first timer or repeater visitor), length-of-stay, and travel party on the loyalty indicators. Furthermore, the independent samples t tests, and One-way analysis of variances (ANOVA) were conducted to investigate whether there were any differences of visitors' loyalty indicators between male and female visitors, between single and married visitors, between visitors of different age groups, different education groups, different occupation groups, between first timer or repeater visitors, those who stayed in El-Gölü Park, and those who traveled alone or with friends or with family.

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

*Visitor Profile*
The majority of the respondents participating in the study were males (68.6%) whereas only 31.4% were females. Of these, 63% were single and 37% were married. Regarding the age group, 22% of the sample was between 15-20 years old, 51% were between 21-30 years old, 13% were between 31-40 years, 6% were between 41-55 years old, and 7.4% were above of 55 years old. Regarding the level of education, most of the respondents had a university degree (75.5%), of these 18% had a postgraduate degree, 40% had a graduate degree, 16% had a post-diploma degree, and 25% had a high school degree. Finally, most of the visitors in the study were students (34.6%), several worked in the public sector (22%), 19 % were employees in the private sector or business, 9.6% were independent professionals or experts, 9.6% were unemployed, and 5 % were workers (Table 1).

In terms of accommodation, 68% were lodged in El-Gölü camping area, 9.5% used apart hotels, 7% used friends and relatives' houses, and 14.7% used other types of accommodations such as, private house. Furthermore, in terms of transportation, 42.6% of respondents travelled by public transportation, 41% travelled by private cars, and 16 chose others. Regarding length-of-stay, the majority of visitors stayed in El-Gölü for half a day or a few hours (77%), 7 % stayed in El-Gölü for 24-48 hours, and 16% stayed in El-Gölü for more than 48 hours, with the majority of them traveling with friends (65%), 23% with their family and 11% alone. Finally, 12% of the respondents visited El-Gölü Park for the first time and the majority of the visitors (88%) visited the Park twice and more (Table 1).

Table 1: visitors profile's (n=188)

| Gender | Male | 68.6 | Age | 15-20 | 22.3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Female | 31.4 | | 21-30 | 51.1 |
| Marit. | Single | 62.8 | | 31-40 | 13.3 |
| | Married | 37.2 | | 41-55 | 5.9 |
| | | | | 55 > | 7.4 |
| Education level | Postgraduate | 18.1 | Occupation | Experts | 9.6 |
| | Graduate | 40.4 | | Public sector | 21.8 |
| | (bachelor) | 16 | | Private sector or | 19.1 |
| | Post-diploma | 25.5 | | business | 5.3 |
| | High school | | | Worker | 9.6 |
| | | | | Unemployed | 34.6 |
| | | | | Students | |
| accommodatio | Camping area | 68.4 | transportation | Private car | 41 |
| | Apart hotel | 9.5 | | Public | 42.6 |
| | Friends and relatives | 7.4 | | transportation | 16.4 |
| | Other | 14.7 | | Other | |
| Length-of-stay | Half a day or few hours | 77.1 | Travel party | Friends | 65.4 |
| | 24-48 hours | 6.9 | | Family | 23.4 |
| | Above | 16 | | Alone | 11.2 |
| Visitors status | First timer | | 12.2 | | |
| | Repeater | | 87.8 | | |

*Measuring Visitor Loyalty*
In order to measure visitors' loyalty level, three indicators were used: recommending to other, willingness to positive word-of-mouth, and intent to return. The distribution of the three variables is shown in figure. 2. When visitors were asked about their intentions of recommending, interestingly, 73.7% (143) of them stated that either likely or very likely they would recommend El-Gölü Park to others. Only 3.1 % (6) of them stated that they would recommend it either unlikely or very unlikely. When visitors were asked about positive word of mouth, 54.6 % (106) of respondents indicated that they would respond either likely or very likely, and 16.5 % (32) of them stated either unlikely or very unlikely to the item positive word of mouth. Finally, when visitors were asked about their intent to return, surprisingly, 74.8% (145) of respondents indicated that they would revisit El-Gölü Park both likely and very likely and only 4.6% (9) of them stated that they would revisit it either unlikely or very unlikely. This method for measuring loyalty level was

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adopted from Truong and King (2009), who measured distributions of the behavioral intentions (intent to revisit and willingness to recommend) among Chinese tourists in Vietnam.
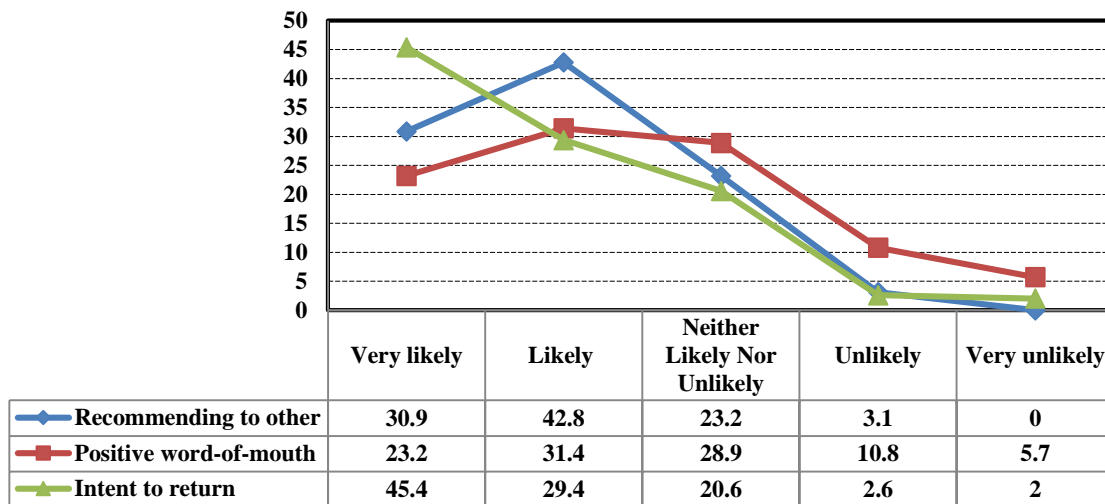
| | Very likely | Likely | Neither Likely Nor Unlikely | Unlikely | Very unlikely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Recommending to other | 30.9 | 42.8 | 23.2 | 3.1 | 0 |
| Positive word-of-mouth | 23.2 | 31.4 | 28.9 | 10.8 | 5.7 |
| Intent to return | 45.4 | 29.4 | 20.6 | 2.6 | 2 |

Figure 2: visitors' loyalty measures

*Analysis of relations between gender, marital status, age, education level, occupation type, visitor status, length-of-stay, travel party, and loyalty indicators*

In order to analyze to what extent demographic variables, visitor status, length-of-stay, and travel party are correlated with loyalty indicators, Pearson's correlation coefficients were conducted. Significant correlations were found between the variables at the level of $p < 0.05$. Table 2 presents the matrix of Pearson's correlation coefficients. The results indicated that gender, marital status, age, occupation type, visitor status and length-of-stay did not influence recommending to other, willingness to positive word-of-mouth and intent to return, significantly. Results also revealed that there was no relation between education level and recommending to other. This result suggested that education level did not influence recommending to other, significantly. On the other hand, there were negative relations between education level and willingness to positive word-of-mouth and intent to return ($r = -0.173$ and $-0.167$). These results suggest that education level affects willingness to positive word-of-mouth and intent to return, significantly. Furthermore, findings showed that there was a negative relation between travel party and recommending to other ($r = -0.146$). This result suggests that travel party affects recommending to other, significantly. Additionally, results indicated that travel party did not influence willingness to positive word-of-mouth and intent to return, significantly (Table 2).

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Table 2: Table of Pearson's correlation coefficients *r* between variables

| Variables | | G | M | A | E | O | V | L | T |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) Recommending to other | r | 0.08 | -.032 | .034 | -.108 | -.103 | -.117 | -.073 | -.146* |
| | Sig. | 0.276 | .663 | .641 | .141 | .161 | .110 | .317 | .045 |
| | N | 188 | 188 | 188 | 188 | 188 | 188 | 188 | 188 |
| Willingness to positive word-of-mouth | r | -0.05 | .000 | -.088 | -.173* | -.134 | -.021 | -.034 | -.069 |
| | Sig. | 0.49 | .998 | .230 | .017 | .066 | .773 | .643 | .345 |
| | N | 188 | 188 | 188 | 188 | 188 | 188 | 188 | 188 |
| intent to return | r | -0.05 | -.077 | -.073 | -.167* | -.055 | -.062 | -.084 | -.092 |
| | Sig. | 0.51 | .293 | .323 | .022 | .455 | .400 | .251 | .208 |
| | N | 188 | 188 | 188 | 188 | 188 | 188 | 188 | 188 |

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

*Analysis of Loyalty Indicators by Gender and Marital Status*

*Independent samples t tests* were conducted to examine whether visitors' loyalty indicators differed significantly by gender and marital status. Independent samples t tests compare means for two groups of cases. Moreover, the significance level was less than 5% (p < 0.05). Table 3 shows the results of these tests. The results revealed that there were no significant differences in recommending to other, willingness to positive word-of-mouth and intent to return regarding the male and female visitors as well as the single and married visitors (P > 0.05).

Table 3: Comparison of loyalty indicators based on gender and marital status

| Indicators of loyalty | Gender/ Marital status | N | Mean | Std. D. | Std. E. Mean | T | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) Recommending to other | Male | 129 | 1.9 | 0.79 | 0.07 | -1.09 | 0.27 |
| | Female | 59 | 2.1 | 0.86 | 0.1 | | |
| (2) Willingness to positive word-of- mouth | Male | 129 | 2.5 | 1.1 | 0.09 | 0.69 | 0.49 |
| | Female | 59 | 2.4 | 1.2 | 0.15 | | |
| (3) Intent to return | Male | 129 | 1.9 | 1.0 | 0.08 | 0.66 | 0.51 |
| | Female | 59 | 1.8 | 0.9 | 0.1 | | |
| (1) Recommending to other | Single | 118 | 2.0 | 0.82 | 0.07 | 0.437 | 0.66 |
| | Married | 70 | 1.9 | 0.81 | 0.09 | | |
| (2) Willingness to positive word-of- mouth | Single | 118 | 2.46 | 1.1 | 0.12 | 0.003 | 0.998 |
| | Married | 70 | 2.45 | 1.2 | 0.14 | | |
| (3) Intent to return | Single | 118 | 1.9 | 1.0 | 0.09 | 1.05 | 0.3 |
| | Married | 70 | 1.8 | 0.88 | 0.1 | | |

*Analysis of Loyalty Indicators by Age, Education Level, and Occupation*

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*One-way ANOVAs* were conducted to examine whether loyalty indicators differed significantly by age, education level, and occupation type. One-way ANOVAs compare means for more than 2 groups. Moreover, the significance level was less than 5% ($p < 0.05$). Furthermore, Tukey HSD Post Hoc tests were carried out to determine which age, education, and occupation groups differed significantly from each other regarding the loyalty indicators. Table 4 shows the results of these tests.

With respect to the loyalty indicators, the ANOVAs revealed that there were no significant differences in recommending regarding of different age, education, and occupation groups ($p > 0.05$). Moreover, results indicated that there were no significant differences in willingness to positive word-of-mouth and intent to return regarding of different age and occupation groups. On the other hand, the ANOVAs revealed that the education of visitors had a significant effect on willingness to positive word-of-mouth and intent to return ($p < 0.05$). Post Hoc tests revealed that the highest education category (postgraduate) reported stronger willingness to positive word-of-mouth and intent to return. On the other hand, the lowest education category (high school) reported weaker willingness to positive word-of-mouth and intent to return.

Table 4: Comparison of loyalty indicators based on age, education, and Occupation type

| Dependent variables | Independent variable | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age | (1) Recommending to other | 1.272 | 0.283 |
| Education level | | 1.186 | 0.316 |
| Occupation type | | 1.605 | 0.161 |
| Age | (2) Willingness to positive word-of-mouth | 1.598 | 0.177 |
| Education level | | 3.363 | 0.02 |
| Occupation type | | 0.915 | 0.472 |
| Age | (3) Intent to return | 0.693 | 0.598 |
| Education level | | 3.166 | 0.026 |
| Occupation type | | 0.682 | 0.638 |

*Analysis of Loyalty Indicators by visitor status*

To compare the loyalty indicators based on visitor status, independent sample t tests were conducted. Table 5 shows the results of these tests. The results revealed that there were no significant differences in visitor loyalty indicators regarding the first timer and repeater visitors ($p > 0.05$).

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Table 5: Comparison of visitors loyalty indicators based on visitor status

| Indicators of loyalty | Gender | N | Mean | Std. D. | Std. Error Mean | T | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) Recommending to other | First timer | 23 | 2.26 | 0.8 | 0.17 | 1.607 | 0.11 |
| | Repeater | 165 | 1.96 | 0.81 | 0.06 | | |
| (2) Willingness to positive word-of- mouth | First timer | 23 | 2.5 | 1.2 | 0.25 | 0.289 | 0.7 |
| | Repeater | 165 | 2.45 | 1.13 | 0.08 | | |
| (3) Intent to return | First timer | 23 | 2.04 | 1.26 | 0.26 | 0.843 | 0.4 |
| | Repeater | 165 | 1.86 | 0.92 | 0.07 | | |

*Analysis of Loyalty Indicators by Length-of-Stay and Travel Party*

In this study, the visitors were divided into 3 groups based on length-of-stay; they also traveled in 3 types: with friends, with their family, and alone. Thus, One-way ANOVAs with significance level of less than 5% ($p < 0.05$) were conducted to examine whether loyalty indicators differed significantly among these groups. With respect to the loyalty indicators, the ANOVAs revealed that there were no significant differences in recommending to other, willingness to positive word-of-mouth, and intent to return regarding of the different length-of-stay groups ($p > 0.05$), furthermore there were no significant differences in willingness to positive word-of-mouth and intent to return regarding the different travel party groups. On the other hand, there was a significant difference in recommending to other regarding the different travel parties ($p < 0.05$). Post Hoc tests revealed that those who traveled with their family had stronger willingness toward recommending to other. On the other hand, those who traveled alone had weaker willingness toward recommending to other.

Table 6: Comparison of visitors loyalty indicators based on length of stay and Travel party

| Dependent variables | Independent variable | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Length-of-stay | (1) Recommending to other | 0.521 | 0.6 |
| | (2) Willingness to positive word-of- mouth | 1.146 | 0.32 |
| | (3) Intent to return | 0.922 | 0.4 |
| Travel party | (1) Recommending to other | 3.461 | 0.03 |
| | (2) Willingness to positive word-of- mouth | 0.461 | 0.631 |
| | (3) Intent to return | 2.106 | 0.125 |

# DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION TO PRACTICE, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The first objective of this study was to gather information on visitor profile of El-Gölü Park. The visitor profiles included gender (Schofield & Thompson, 2007; Perovic et al., 2012; Shani et al., 2010), marital status (Song & Cheung, 2010; Lee & Hsu, 2013; Phillips et al., 2013), age (Pearce, 2005; Haque & Khan, 2013; Matzler et al., 2007; Okamura & Fukushige, 2010), education level (Tsiotsou & Vasiotio, 2006; Truong & Foster, 2006), occupation type (Song & Cheung, 2010; Lee & Hsu, 2013), type of accommodation, transport used (Mendes et al., 2010; Valle et al., 2006; Yuksel, 2007), length-of-stay (Son, 2005; Kau & Lim, 2005; Okello & Yerian, 2009; Merwe et al., 2011), travel party or companion (Truong & King, 2009; Hung et al., 2012; Winter, 2011; Siri et al., 2012; Murphy et al., 2011) and type of visitors (first timer or repeater visitor). The visitor profiles provide valuable information for El-Gölü's people in charge and decision takers to determine what segments or subgroups exist in the overall population, and secondly to create a clear and complete picture of the characteristics of a typical member of each of these segments. Once these profiles are constructed, they can be used to develop a marketing strategy and marketing plan (Saad et al., 2013).

The second purpose of this study was to measure visitor loyalty toward El-Gölü Park. Visitor loyalty was measured using recommending to other, willingness to positive word-of-mouth, and willingness to intent to return. The loyalty indicators were chosen based on empirical studies (Valle et al., 2006; Vassiliadis, 2008; Donnelly, 2009; Truong & King, 2009; Nowacki, 2009; Mechinda et al., 2010; Chen et al., 2011; Craggs & Schofield, 2011; Prayag, 2012; Debata, 2013; Phillips et al., 2013; Rajesh, 2013). Distribution of the loyalty indicators among visitors revealed that El-Gölü could be considered a successful destination (figure 2), although the claim needs more analysis specifically on the visitor satisfaction. Hence, one of the future studies in El-Gölü Park will be analyzing visitors' satisfaction.

The third goal of this study was to investigate the effect of visitor demographics, status, length-of-stay, and travel party on the loyalty indicators (recommending to other, willingness to positive word-of-mouth, and willingness to intent to return). The results of this section indicated that gender, marital status, age, and occupation type did not influence recommending to other, willingness to positive word-of-mouth and intent to return. Results also showed that there was no relation between education level and recommending to other. It corroborates the argument discussed by Riley et al. (2001) who posited that there was no relationship between demographics and loyalty. On the other hand, findings also showed that education level affected willingness to positive word-of-mouth and intent to return. This finding is consistent with that of previous studies (e.g., Chi et al., 2009; Movafegh & Movafegh, 2013). Moreover, analysis the effect of visitor status (first timer or repeater visitor), length-of-stay, and travel party on visitor loyalty found that visitor status and length-of-stay did not influence recommending to other, willingness to positive word-of-mouth, and intent to return. On the other hand, travel party affected recommending to other, but did not influence willingness to positive word-of-mouth, and intent to return.

The fourth objective of this study was to examine differences of the loyalty indicators by visitors' demographics, status, length-of-stay, and travel party. Analysis of loyalty indicators by gender and

marital status revealed that there were no significant differences in recommending to other, willingness to positive word-of-mouth and, intent to return regarding the male and female visitors as well as the single and married visitors. Moreover, analysis of loyalty indicators by age, education, and occupation type revealed that there were no significant differences in recommending to other regarding of different age, education, and occupation groups. Results also indicated that there were no significant differences in willingness to positive word-of-mouth and intent to return regarding of different age and occupation groups. On the other hand, education of visitors had a significant effect on willingness to positive word-of-mouth and intent to return. Post Hoc analysis revealed that visitors with a postgraduate degree reported stronger willingness to positive word-of-mouth and intent to return. Conversely, visitors with a high school degree reported weaker willingness to positive word-of-mouth and intent to return. Furthermore, analysis of loyalty indicators by visitor status revealed that there were no significant differences in visitor loyalty indicators regarding the first timer or repeater visitors. Additionally, analysis of loyalty indicators by length-of-stay and travel party revealed that there were no significant differences in recommending to other, willingness to positive word-of-mouth, and intent to return regarding of the different length-of-stay groups, as well as there were no significant differences in willingness to positive word-of-mouth and intent to return regarding the different travel party groups. On the other hand, there was a significant difference in recommending to other regarding the different travel parties. Post Hoc analysis revealed that those who traveled with their family had stronger willingness toward recommending to other, and those who traveled alone had weaker willingness toward recommending to other.

As a final result of this study, this study was the first comprehensive analysis toward the effect of visitors' demographics, status, length-of-stay, and travel party on the loyalty indicators. However, information on the relationship of demographics, visitor status, length-of-stay, travel party, and loyalty is relatively rare. Hence, researchers should analyze these relationships. They will certainly find very interesting results.

**Funding**

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