

**UNIVERSIDAD POLITÉCNICA DE MADRID**  
Facultad de Ciencias de la Actividad Física y del Deporte (INEF)



# **Examining Active Sport Tourist Loyalty: A Case Study in Spain**

## **DOCTORAL THESIS**

Submitted for the degree of Doctor by:

**Shiyi Luo**

Master of Education

Madrid, 2024



UNIVERSIDAD POLITÉCNICA DE MADRID  
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**Doctoral Degree in Sciences of Physical Activity and Sport Sciences**

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Under the supervision of:

**Dr. Lázaro Mediavilla Saldaña**

**Dra. Evelia Franco Álvarez**

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# Dedication

*To my beloved family and friends, for their endless love and support.*

*To my younger self, who chose to embark on this journey.*

*A mi querida familia y amigos, por su infinito amor y apoyo.*

*A mi yo más joven, que decidió embarcarse en este viaje.*

献给我挚爱的家人和朋友，感谢他们无尽的爱与支持。

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# Abstract

**Introduction:** Loyalty plays an important role in the tourism industry. In active sport tourism, loyalty becomes particularly important as it serves as a key predictor of future demand. Despite increasing industry interest and scholarly efforts, the dynamics between the antecedents and outcomes of active sport tourist loyalty remain insufficiently evidenced. Thus, the purpose of this thesis is to understand the relationships between the antecedents and outcomes of loyalty in active sport tourism. To achieve this objective, three complementary studies were conducted: one scoping review and two empirical cross-sectional studies, each targeting specific research aims.

**Objectives:** (*Aim 1*) First, to report on studies that have examined the antecedents and outcomes of loyalty in active sport tourism by systematically reviewing the research designs and findings of 47 empirical studies; (*Aim 2*) Second, to investigate the role of sport event image and attitudes toward event in predicting satisfaction with event and behavioral intentions in the context of a non-traditional sport event; (*Aim 3*) Third, to test a model predicting winter sport tourists' loyalty through their motivations, with involvement and subjective well-being as mediators.

**Findings:** *Aim 1:* The findings reveal that most of the sample focuses on sport event contexts. Regarding antecedents of active sport tourist loyalty, it is suggested that satisfaction and image are commonly measured antecedents. In addition, composite loyalty, including both attitudinal and behavioral loyalty, is most observed to explain active sport tourist loyalty. A theoretical framework has also been proposed. *Aim 2:* The findings showed that event characteristics, which is one of the dimensions of sport event image, and participants' attitudes toward event positively influenced satisfaction, which in turn, together with attitudes, positively influenced behavioral intentions for repeat visits and recommendations. However, the destination characteristics dimension of sport event image had no

impact on attitudes and satisfaction. Satisfaction had a mediating effect on the relationships between event characteristics and behavioral intentions, and attitudes and behavioral intentions. *Aim 3*: The findings indicated that the relationships between four motivations (escape, social recognition, enjoying nature, and excitement) and loyalty were fully mediated by serial mediation through involvement and subjective well-being. Moreover, although the direct relationships between motivations and loyalty were insignificant, certain motivations significantly influenced involvement and subjective well-being, both of which enhanced loyalty.

**Conclusions:** The findings of this thesis have significant theoretical and managerial implications for the field of active sport tourism. This thesis provides a comprehensive summary of the antecedents and outcomes in the active sport tourism context by systematically analyzing their relationships and demonstrating these through two case studies. Notably, it pioneers research on active sport tourist loyalty through a scoping review, addressing a gap in the current literature that largely remains homogeneous in terms of research contexts, sampling, and methodologies. However, the research on active sport tourist loyalty is still in the “work in progress” stage (*Aim 1*). This thesis also introduces a novel theoretical model tested in the context of non-traditional events, revealing that behavioral intentions are linked with event characteristics only when positive attitudes and a higher level of satisfaction are perceived. In addition, only event characteristics significantly influence attitudes and satisfaction, highlighting the importance of event organization (*Aim 2*). Moreover, this study advances our understanding of the mechanism behind winter sport tourists’ loyalty formation, with a focus on the mediating roles of involvement and subjective well-being (*Aim 3*).

# Resumen

**Introducción:** La lealtad juega un papel importante en la industria del turismo. En el turismo deportivo activo, la lealtad se vuelve especialmente crucial, ya que sirve como un predictor clave de la demanda futura. A pesar del creciente interés de la industria y los esfuerzos académicos, las dinámicas entre los antecedentes y los resultados de la lealtad en el turismo deportivo activo siguen estando insuficientemente evidenciadas. Por lo tanto, el propósito de esta tesis es comprender las relaciones entre los antecedentes y los resultados de la lealtad en el turismo deportivo activo. Para lograr este objetivo, se realizaron tres estudios complementarios: una revisión de alcance y dos estudios empíricos transversales, cada uno con objetivos de investigación específicos.

**Objetivos:** (Objetivo 1) Resumir los estudios existentes que examinan los antecedentes y resultados de la lealtad en el turismo deportivo activo, analizando el diseño y los resultados de 47 investigaciones empíricas; (Objetivo 2) Investigar el impacto de la imagen del evento y las actitudes hacia el mismo en la satisfacción y las intenciones conductuales, en un contexto de evento deportivo no tradicional; (Objetivo 3) Probar un modelo teórico en el que las motivaciones de los turistas predicen la lealtad, con la implicación y el bienestar subjetivo actuando como mediadores.

**Resultados:** Objetivo 1: La mayoría de la muestra se centra en los contextos de eventos deportivos. En cuanto a los antecedentes de la lealtad de los turistas deportivos activos, se sugiere que la satisfacción y la imagen son los antecedentes más comúnmente medidos. Además, se observa que la lealtad compuesta, que incluye tanto la lealtad actitudinal como la lealtad conductual, es la más observada para explicar la lealtad de los turistas deportivos activos. También se ha propuesto un marco teórico. Objetivo 2: Se observó que las características del evento, una dimensión de la imagen del evento deportivo, y las actitudes de los participantes influyen positivamente en la satisfacción, la cual, junto con las actitudes, afecta las intenciones de visitar nuevamente y recomendar el evento. No obstante, las características del destino (otra dimensión de la imagen) no

mostraron impacto significativo en las actitudes ni en la satisfacción. Se comprobó que la satisfacción media las relaciones entre las características del evento y las intenciones conductuales, así como entre las actitudes y dichas intenciones. Objetivo 3: Las relaciones entre las motivaciones (escape, reconocimiento social, disfrute de la naturaleza y emoción) y la lealtad están completamente mediadas por la implicación y el bienestar subjetivo. Aunque las motivaciones no influyen directamente en la lealtad, sí afectan significativamente la implicación y el bienestar subjetivo, que, a su vez, refuerzan la lealtad.

**Conclusiones:** Esta tesis ofrece importantes implicaciones teóricas y prácticas para el turismo deportivo activo. Por un lado, presenta un análisis exhaustivo de los antecedentes y resultados de la lealtad en este campo a través de una revisión sistemática y dos estudios empíricos. En particular, se destaca por abordar la brecha en la literatura existente, que sigue siendo limitada en términos de contextos de investigación, metodologías y diversidad de muestras (Objetivo 1). Asimismo, introduce un modelo teórico innovador aplicado a eventos no tradicionales, mostrando que las intenciones conductuales están influenciadas por las características del evento solo cuando se perciben actitudes positivas y un alto nivel de satisfacción. Esto subraya la importancia de la organización del evento (Objetivo 2). Por último, se avanza en la comprensión de los mecanismos que explican la lealtad de los turistas de deportes de invierno, destacando el papel central de la implicación y el bienestar subjetivo como mediadores en este proceso (Objetivo 3).

# Declaration

I, Shiyi Luo, declare that the Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled “Examining Active Sport Tourist Loyalty: A Case Study in Spain” is no more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references, and footnotes. This PhD. thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

Signature:

Date:

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparable Fit Index
CR	Composite Reliability
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
HTMT	Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations
IFI	Incremental Fix Index
MANOVA	Multivariate Analysis of Variance
NFI	Normed Fit Index
OCR	Obstacle Course Racing
REP	Recreation Experience Preference
RMSEA	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SDT	Self-Determination Theory
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SRMR	Standardized Root Mean Squared Residual
TLI	Tucker-Lewis Coefficient
TPB	The Theory of Planned Behavior

## CHAPTER 1

### General Introduction



# 1. General Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Over the last thirty years, a significant increase in the convergence of the sport and tourism industries has been witnessed (Higham & Hinch, 2018). This trend is underscored by a growing demand for travel related to sport and physical activities (Greenwell et al., 2024). The term “active sport tourism” has been introduced to characterize this phenomenon that individuals who travel to participate in sports, either traveling to take part in sport events or engaging in sport-related travels (Gibson, 1998a; Greenwell et al., 2024). Active sport tourism has not only been highly recognized for its economic, social, and environmental impacts but also its positive influence on personal wellness. The increasing prevalence of sports-related travel also offers a variety of advantages, particularly contributing to enhancing both physical and mental well-being, and plays an important role in promoting and sustaining a positive lifestyle (Hritz & Franzidis, 2018; Mirehie & Gibson, 2020).

Participatory sport event, a primary component of active sport tourism, such as marathons and cycling, are being organized worldwide, making significant contributions to local communities and economies (Helsen et al., 2022; Hillman et al., 2021). Sport events have already become one of the leisure activities that people enjoy in daily life. According to the latest industry report, the running events industry has successfully rebounded, returning to the participation numbers of 2019 and expecting growth in 2024 (RunSignup, 2023). Specifically in Spain, the 2023 Zurich Rock ‘n’ Roll Running Series held in Madrid attracted almost 34,000 runners from 102 countries (Madrid, 2023). However, according to Kennedy et al. (2019), traditional events such as marathons, have had a considerable growth from 2009 to 2014 but they have shown a tendency of decline in recent years. Interestingly, there has been a shift in the preferences of runners

toward non-traditional sport events, a trend that began to emerge in 2010. Unlike traditional events that emphasize running a specified distance and achieving personal best times, non-traditional events refer to running events that are typically organized around fun themes, beginner-friendly distance, and social teams, such as obstacle course racing (OCR) (Buning & Walker, 2016; RunSignup, 2023). OCR is a combination of military training, adventure, and fitness exercises through trail running and challenging obstacles (Lund et al., 2015). It provides a less competitive environment and focuses more on fun, fitness, camaraderie, and achievement (Buning & Walker, 2016; Maguire, 2017; Willams, 2013). OCR has become a fitness trend in Spain and has gained increasing popularity with various events being held over the country every year (González-Devesa et al., 2024). Given the novelty and growing popularity of this type of non-traditional sport event, more research is needed to better understand the behaviors of OCR participants.

Sport-related travel, such as skiing, golfing, and surfing, serves as another key component of active sport tourism. It also significantly contributes to economic growth and stimulates investment in local infrastructure (Tassiopoulos & Haydam, 2008). For instance, the winter sport market has experienced significant growth over the last five decades (Hudson & Hudson, 2015). In Spain, the winter sport market has been one of the most prominent sectors within the tourism industry. Specifically, skiing stands out as an important pillar, with a total of thirty-two winter resorts currently in operation (ATUDEM, 2020). Nevertheless, a noticeable decline in visitor numbers starting from the 2018-2019 season had already been witnessed, and the global pandemic has exacerbated this trend, for instance, during the 2020-2021 season, the number of visits to ski resorts in Spain declined by more than three million. This sharp decrease also led to a significant 68% reduction in annual income (ATUDEM, 2020; Vanat, 2021). Additionally, climate change has become a significant concern for ski resorts, as skiing relies heavily on adequate snow quantity, quality, and stable weather conditions (Hudson & Hudson, 2015). In Spain, evidence of climate change is particularly apparent, especially in southern regions (Campos Rodrigues et al.,

2018). This raises a critical question: how can ski resorts adapt to this change and maintain profitability in the face of these changes? The challenge lies in rejuvenating the appeal of winter destinations and attracting tourists (Moreno-Gené et al., 2020).

The evidence mentioned above demonstrates the necessity of gaining an understanding of active sport tourist behaviors. This challenge requires a primary focus on marketing strategies aimed at fostering and sustaining customer loyalty, which is essential for long-term successful management and sustainable operations in this industry (Kim, 2008; Yolal et al., 2017), especially for the event and destination development, in event organizers' and destination marketers' attempts to predict repeat visits and word-of-mouth communications (Lee, 2009; Newland & Yoo, 2021). By comparison, loyalty has received significant scholarly attention in the broader tourism literature (e.g. Suhartanto et al., 2020) ascribed to the economic benefits of retaining loyal customers over attracting new ones (Mullin et al., 2014). Furthermore, they tend to extend their stays, spread positive word-of-mouth, and increase their spending (Zhang et al., 2014). While no consensus has been made on the definition of loyalty, it has been conceptualized as favorable attitudes, purchase behaviors, or multidimensional dimensions (e.g. attitudes and purchase behaviors) (Bowen & Chen, 2001; Watson et al., 2015). When applied to active sports tourists, loyalty is often manifested through repeat visits to a destination, repeat sports event participation, and recommendation intentions (Aicher et al., 2020).

To address the importance of understanding active sport tourist loyalty, this thesis seeks to identify the key antecedents and outcomes of active sport tourist loyalty and to explore the relationships between these factors within the context of participatory sport events and sport-related travel.

## 1.2 Problem statement

Despite the increasing number of publications focusing on active sport tourist loyalty in recent years (Gibson et al., 2018), current research still faces limitations.

While systematic knowledge of tourist behaviors is not rare in literature, active sport tourists are distinct in several aspects, such as travel purpose (Gibson, 1998b), decision-making (Chen et al., 2023), and levels of physical engagement (Hillman et al., 2021), distinguishing them from other types of tourists. Despite ongoing calls for a more comprehensive and cohesive body of knowledge in this field (Gibson et al., 2018; Hillman et al., 2021), no prior review has systematically focused on active sport tourists. It is also worth mentioning that, while Chen et al. (2023) conducted a meta-analysis on examining the decision-making determinants of sport tourists, illustrating insightful correlations among important factors, it is important to note certain limitations. This study overlooked the distinctions that lie between passive and active sport tourists which holds important implications as active sport tourists exhibit different tourism behaviors compared with passive sports tourists who travel to watch sports, such as the Olympics (Gibson et al., 2018; Ito & Higham, 2020). For example, while sport event images were perceived by both passive and active sport tourists, their perceptions differ due to their involvement and types of activity. Active sport tourists may connect their emotions with physical and environmental aspects of the event, while passive sport tourists are more inclined to social and historical aspects (Hallmann et al., 2010). Compared to active sport tourists, previous literature on passive sport tourists also identifies several key factors, such as team identification, social prestige, and self-esteem that influence tourist loyalty, which are important in transitioning from casual attendance to regular spectating (Kim et al., 2021). Given these different contexts, it can be assumed that loyalty is likely to vary between active and passive sport tourists (Lamberti et al., 2022). However, the tendency to generalize both types of sport tourists is not unique to this study but has also been observed in other reviews (Takata & Hallmann, 2021; Yamashita, 2022). Therefore, to advance the

current literature and challenge the prevailing generalization of these two types of tourists, it is necessary to deepen our understanding by specifically looking at active sport tourists.

Furthermore, within the topic of active sport tourist, the existing literature yields a fragmented understanding of loyalty and a lack of solid connections between important loyalty antecedents and outcomes. For instance, some studies suggest a direct influence of destination image on tourist loyalty (Chen et al., 2021), some revealed an indirect relationship (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010), and others indicated both direct and indirect influences (Jeong & Kim, 2020). Meanwhile, the distinctive attributes of sport events or activities also give rise to a wide array of influencing factors, for instance, natural soundscape can significantly affect surfers' experiences (Jeong, 2023), while event quality may be an essential factor for participants in recreational cycling events (Jin et al., 2022). Additionally, loyalty may be demonstrated either attitudinally or behaviorally towards an activity or a destination, making it challenging to establish robust connections between antecedents and outcomes (Yoo et al., 2021a). These highlights the necessity to establish conclusive links between the antecedents and outcomes of active sport tourist loyalty, given that the emergence of this niche market and the diverse and multi-dimensional nature of related factors.

### **1.3 Study goals and objectives**

Despite substantial research on active sport tourist loyalty, the sport and tourism literature has yet to comprehensively synthesize the findings or systematically examine the relationships between the antecedents and outcomes of this loyalty. This thesis seeks to address these gaps by presenting a scoping review of active sport tourist loyalty. Moreover, two cross-sectional studies conducted in Spain examined obstacle course racing and winter sports, two major contexts within active sport tourism. The two cases, representing the typology of active sport tourism, provide a broader understanding of the field by highlighting diverse aspects of active sport tourism.

The scoping review in this thesis provides a foundational understanding for addressing research questions related to the factors that drive active sport tourist loyalty in these two distinct contexts. Two types of antecedents influencing loyalty were identified in this review, that is, appraisal-based antecedents and relational antecedents. Notably, the findings demonstrate the important roles of appraisal-based antecedents presented in Chapter 4.2 and relational antecedents presented in Chapter 4.3, offering valuable insights into how different factors shape active sport tourist loyalty in each setting.

More specifically, this thesis attempts to (a) report on studies that have examined the antecedents and outcomes of loyalty in active sport tourism context by systematically reviewing the research designs from the empirical evidence; (b) investigate the role of sport event image and attitudes toward event in predicting satisfaction with event and behavioral intentions in the context of a non-traditional sport event by surveying obstacle course runners; and (c) test a model predicting winter sport tourists' loyalty through their motivations, with involvement and subjective well-being as mediators, using a questionnaire among winter sport tourists.

## **1.4 Potential contributions**

This thesis contributes to the extant body of work both in academia and practice by exploring the antecedents and outcomes of active sport tourist loyalty. Its theoretical contributions are twofold: addressing gaps in current research and advancing established theories. The practical contributions are represented by providing managerial implications for sport events and tourism destination marketers.

First, it is expected that the findings of this thesis will make a valuable contribution to the existing active sport tourism literature. Through a comprehensive scoping review, this thesis identifies gaps in current research and emphasizes the need for a systematic examination of active sport tourist loyalty. It is the first study to propose a conceptual framework that examines both the

antecedents and outcomes of tourist loyalty in the context of active sport tourism. Moreover, it introduces new contexts and important antecedents. For instance, the second study is the first to explore active sport tourist behavior in a novel setting—small-scale and non-traditional sport events. The third study firstly integrates subjective well-being, an essential psychological factor, into a theoretical model to better understand active sport tourists' behavior. Additionally, these two case studies exemplify the application of appraisal-based and relational antecedents respectively, offering a more comprehensive understanding of active sport tourist loyalty based on the findings from the scoping review in this thesis.

Second, the thesis contributes to the broader development of sport tourism studies by applying established theoretical frameworks to the active sport tourism context. Over the past two decades, there has been a persistent call for greater theoretical rigor in sport tourism research, particularly in the interdisciplinary field of active sport tourism (Weed, 2006). In response to this call and building on the findings of the scoping review, two theoretical models have been developed and tested. The second study applies the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the “cognitive-affective-conative” framework, while the third study employs Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and the Bottom-up & Top-down theories. These applications not only respond to the demand for greater theoretical underpinnings but also provide valuable empirical evidence to advance this field.

Empirically, this thesis provides valuable managerial insights for various stakeholders in active sport tourism, including destination marketers, sport event organizers, and sport administrations. Using self-administered survey data, findings indicate the importance of positive tourism experiences in achieving loyal behaviors. Additionally, the results offer practical guidance on the development and promotion of both sport events and destinations, demonstrating effective strategies for enhancing engagement with both the event/activity and the destination.

## **1.5 Structure of the thesis**

This thesis is organized into six chapters. Chapter 1 serves as a general introduction to this thesis. Chapter 2 provides a review of the state of knowledge about (1) the research background of loyalty antecedents and outcomes; (2) the loyalty formation in the context of participatory sport event, specifically non-traditional sport events; (3) the loyalty formation in the context of the sport-related travel, specifically winter sport tourism. Chapter 3 describes the methodology adopted in this thesis, including research designs, overview of the three studies, and the procedures of each study. Chapter 4 presents the results of the three studies. Based on the overall findings, Chapter 5 offers general discussions and Chapter 6 offers conclusions and practical implications for this thesis.

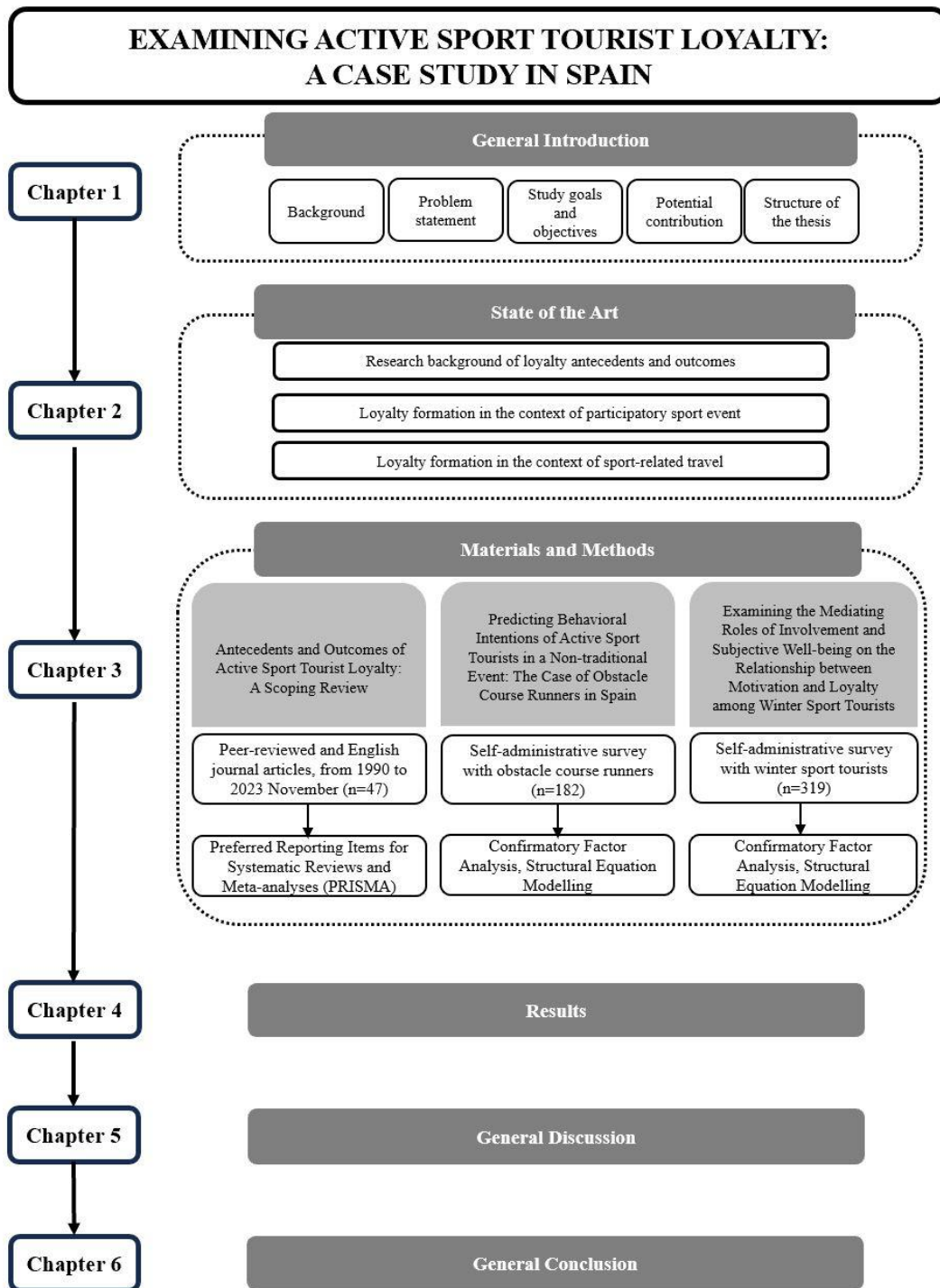


Figure 1.1 Structure of the thesis



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **State of the Art**

## **2 State of the Art**

This chapter focuses on an overview of literature on the antecedents and outcomes of active sport tourist loyalty. It begins by examining research on the antecedents and outcomes of loyalty, followed by studies specific to the context of active sport tourism (Section 2.1). The chapter then provides the literature on potential antecedents and outcomes in two specific contexts of active sport tourism: participatory sport event and sport-related travel, which form the theoretical foundations for the proposed models (Section 2.2 & Section 2.3).

### **2.1 Research background of loyalty antecedents and outcomes**

#### **2.1.1 Antecedents and outcomes of loyalty**

Customer loyalty is one of the most important factors in tourism, leisure, sport, and hospitality industries. Fostering and maintaining customer loyalty enables businesses to establish long-term and mutually beneficial relationships with their customers, which is a key indicator of business success (Pan et al., 2012). The question of how to sustain the driving forces behind loyal customer behavior remains a concern for industry stakeholders (Oppermann, 2000). Additionally, the practical and theoretical importance of loyalty has been addressed in academia. Loyalty has been one of the most extensively studied concepts in business and hospitality, with its early exploration dating back to Copeland's work on brand insistence in 1923 (Gursoy et al., 2014). Since then, specifically in the last four decades, research on customer loyalty has continued to thrive, producing a wealth of knowledge (Yin & Dai, 2021). Notably, numerous highly cited studies have investigated the antecedents of loyalty and their impacts on the outcomes of customer loyal behaviors, such as repeat behaviors and positive word-of-mouth (WOM) (e.g. Chen & Gursoy, 2001; Prayag & Ryan, 2012).

According to Pan et al. (2012), while numerous studies on customer loyalty have been published, there are still limitations that hinder a comprehensive understanding of the topic and the generalization of research findings. First, there is a lack of consensus regarding the relationships between loyalty antecedents and outcomes. For example, not all previous research confirmed the significant link between customer satisfaction and future patronage intentions (Kumar et al., 2013). Second, inconsistencies in findings can be attributed to the diverse contexts in which previous empirical studies were conducted. Third, there is no unified approach to conceptualizing and operationalizing the loyalty construct, with different views on whether to emphasize attitudinal or behavioral measures. Recognizing these challenges, Pan et al. (2012) highlighted the importance of examining the antecedents and outcomes of customer loyalty and addressed this gap by conducting a meta-analysis of empirical findings. Following their work, subsequent systematic reviews and meta-analyses have emerged to tackle these issues from various perspectives. For example, some researchers have concentrated on examining how specific antecedents, such as authenticity (Yin & Dai, 2021), destination image (Zhang et al., 2014), and place attachment (Zou et al., 2022), influence loyalty outcomes. Others have investigated the dynamics between loyalty antecedents and outcomes across diverse contexts, including hospitality (Tanford, 2016) and festivals (Tanford & Jung, 2017). Additionally, moderators, such as national culture, have been introduced to provide new perspectives on the inconsistencies in the loyalty antecedent and outcome relationships (Qi et al., 2023).

### **2.1.2 Antecedents and outcomes of active sport tourist loyalty**

Loyalty has received significant scholarly attention in the broader tourism literature and this trend extends to the field of active sport tourism. Despite the burgeoning demand of active sport tourism market and increasing publications in this domain, the current literature on understanding active sport tourist behaviors remains in a rudimentary stage due to its relatively recent establishment (Gibson et al., 2018). Compared to other types of tourism, the playful nature of active sport tourism, characterized by “the open-endedness and

versatility of these leisure forms, which make them an actual practice rather than a pre-structured behavior” (Geffroy, 2017, p. 3), highlights the need for a deeper understanding of active sport tourist behaviors.

For some time now, sport and tourism scholars have been calling for a deeper understanding of loyalty formation for the purpose of developing effective marketing strategies (e.g. McMullan & Gilmore, 2008; Yoo et al., 2021a). Given that many sport events or activities occur regularly, repeat visitation holds significant implications for destination marketing, as tourists often return to destinations for specific events (Getz, 2008). For active sport tourists, loyalty is often manifested through repeat visits to a destination, repeat event participation, and recommendation intentions (Aicher et al., 2020).

Since active sport tourism can be seen as a social phenomenon which integrate various disciplines such as marketing, sociology, and social psychology (Ulker-Demirel & Ciftci, 2020), multiple social psychology theories have also been applied to explain active sport tourist behaviors (e.g. An & Yamashita, 2022; Hallmann et al., 2015). Moreover, prior research often focuses on specific antecedents and outcomes to address distinct research aims. In the context of active sport tourism, various factors influencing loyalty have been extensively studied, including satisfaction, image, and attachment (Allameh et al., 2015; Hallmann et al., 2015; Halpenny et al., 2016), which have been found to significantly influence loyalty. Among them, satisfaction, destination image, event quality, and perceived value have been regarded as major antecedents of loyalty (Chen et al., 2023). The diverse settings and findings of active sport tourism literature limit the generalizability of the findings beyond a specific sport event (Pan et al., 2012; Tanford & Jung, 2017). This fragmented knowledge in this domain presents challenges for academic researchers attempting to develop a comprehensive understanding of customer loyalty and hinders the practical application of findings by event organizers and destination marketers. Despite its recognized importance, no comprehensive framework exists to evaluate the antecedents and outcomes of loyalty among active sport tourists. To address this

gap, this thesis conducts a scoping review of empirical studies to examine these relationships and provide a cohesive understanding of active sport tourist loyalty.

## **2.2 Loyalty formation in the context of participatory sport event**

One significant driver behind the growth of active sport tourism is the emergence of sport events (Getz, 2008; Higham, 1999; Milovanović et al., 2021). The second study focuses on the growing recognition of the tourism potential in small-scale non-traditional participatory sport events, a topic that has gained increasing scholarly interest in recent years (Bazzanella et al., 2023). Unlike widely studied large-scale sport events such as the Olympic Games and the World Cup, these smaller events are usually held annually and tend to receive limited media and economic attention (Wilson, 2006). These events also meet sustainability criteria, have fewer negative impacts, and generate positive influences on local communities while yielding significant tourism potential (Chen et al., 2018). While emphasis has been placed on the mega events, academic attention should also be directed toward small-scale sport events, as they have been shown to exert a considerable positive influence on the development of local economies, communities, and sustainability (Gibson et al., 2003; Milovanović et al., 2021). Given their novelty and characteristics, small-scale non-traditional sport events necessitate further investigation, particularly in understanding participants' behaviors (Maguire, 2017).

In this sense, behavioral intention (loyalty) for repeat event attendance is a crucial determinant of actual behavior and plays an important role in assessing the success of both the sport event and destination (Koo et al., 2014; Shonk & Chelladurai, 2008). In sport and tourism research, the concept of image has emerged as a significant factor in understanding individuals' behaviors and preferences (Newland & Yoo, 2021). While prior research has made efforts to explore the impact of destination image on the behavioral intentions of active sport tourists (An & Yamashita, 2022; Jeong & Kim, 2019), relatively few studies have explored the concept of event image in the context of active sport events and

its influence on active sport tourists' perceptions, including their attitudes toward event (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010) and overall satisfaction with event (Tzetzis et al., 2014).

Given the topical gap, this thesis contributes to literature by testing an integrated theoretical model in the context of non-traditional sport events, specifically OCR, for the first time. As such, this thesis aims to investigate how sport event image and OCR participants' attitudes toward event influence their satisfaction with event and behavioral intentions for repeat visits and recommendations. For a more thorough understanding of the relationships, satisfaction was considered as a mediator between the event characteristics and behavioral intentions, and attitudes and behavioral intentions.

### **2.2.1 Loyalty in participatory sport events**

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is the most used theory in academia to understand and predict human behaviors (Armitage & Conner, 2001). The extensive appliance of the theory allows us to integrate various predicting factors to extend the understanding of behaviors in multiple research fields. In the theory, behavioral intention is always linked with behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977), which was defined as an individual's tendency to behave according to his or her feelings, knowledge, or evaluations of previous experiences (Spears & Singh, 2004). As Zeithaml et al. (1996) suggested, favorable behavioral intention is associated with future purchases, positive word-of-mouth, and loyalty. This statement aligns with marketing literature, indicating that behavioral intention can serve as a predictor of loyalty. Individuals who have higher loyalty are more likely to revisit and recommend (Halpenny et al., 2016). Specifically in active sport event literature, behavioral intention has been tested as a significant predictor of behaviors in various small-scale sport events, such as amateur bicycling event (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007), the Senior Games (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010), and marathon (Koo et al., 2014). Behavioral intentions in the active sport event context normally refer to the intentions to revisit the destination of the event, re-participate in the event, and engage in word-of-mouth

communications for both the event and destination, consisting of important components of tourist loyalty (Koo et al., 2014; Shonk & Chelladurai, 2008). Given the effectiveness of retaining loyal customers over acquiring new ones (Tepeci, 1999), it is crucial to explore factors influencing behavioral intentions.

### **2.2.2 Factors within the cognitive-affective-conative framework which could explain active sport tourist loyalty**

The cognitive-affective-conative attitudinal model (Oliver, 1997, 1999) has been widely applied to understand customer loyalty (Ahn & Back, 2018). Oliver proposed three phases of loyalty, suggesting that consumer loyalty develops through three stages. According to the theory, consumers “become loyal in a cognitive sense first, then later in an affective sense, still later in a conative (behavioral intention) manner”, and their intentions will be converted into action finally (Oliver, 1999, p. 35). This study incorporates the cognitive, affective, and conative components into its research framework to understand potential factors that may influence behavioral intentions toward both the event and destination. To apply this theory to this context, the cognitive stage is an assessment of a sport event based on participants’ knowledge of both the event and destination. Subsequently, in the affective stage, participants develop favorable or unfavorable attitudes toward the event. Besides, satisfaction is widely investigated within this paradigm and is perceived as a “cognitive-affective state” that is influenced by cognition and emotion derived from the experience (Del Bosque & San Martín, 2008), as well as an important antecedent of loyalty (Oliver, 1999). Lastly, the conative stage is participants’ behavioral intentions. To elaborate further, attitudes and satisfaction (affective components) are determined by sport event image (cognitive component), serving as predictors of behavioral intentions (conative components) (Han et al., 2011) (See Figure 2.1). This relationship is important, as it suggests that a positive sport event image is linked to increased intentions for future participation and word-of-mouth recommendations when attitudes and satisfaction play pivotal roles.

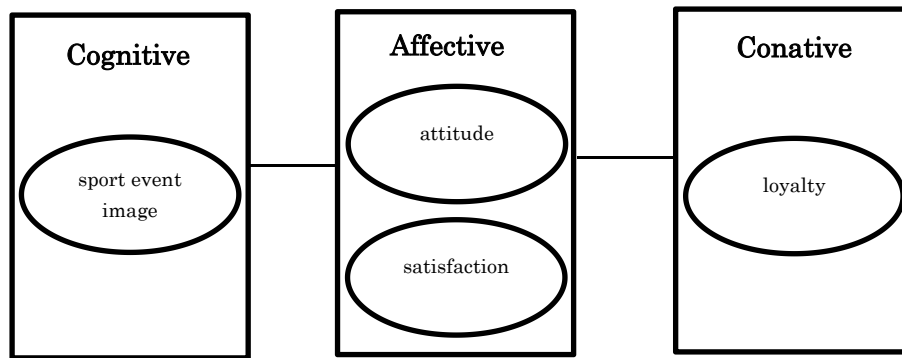


Figure 2.1 Model path diagram

### 2.2.3 Sport event image: sport characteristics and event characteristics as determinants of active sport tourists' attitudes and satisfaction

Since sport events are increasingly recognized as significant tourist attractions, researchers have adapted the definition of sport event image from the concept of destination image (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007). In the context of active sport tourism, sport event image is defined in terms of emotional, organizational, environmental, physical, social aspects and the unique characteristics associated with the event (Kaplanidou, 2010). Regarding the measurement of sport event image, limited efforts have been made so far except for the unstructured and structured methods proposed by Hallmann et al. (2010). The unstructured method focuses on measuring affective perceptions of a sport event image using 13 bipolar items (e.g., unfulfilling/fulfilling). In contrast, the structured method uses a cognitive approach, assessing specific attributes such as atmosphere (Hallmann & Breuer, 2010a; Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007). In recent years, the proposition of the convergence of destination and event attributes in measurements indicates a potential correlation between these two concepts, which raised academic interest (Newland & Yoo, 2021). The destination/event attributes are characteristics associated with the perceived image of a destination/an event (Kaplanidou et al., 2012). This idea was further supported by Hallmann and Breuer (2010a), who found how event characteristics and destination characteristics contribute to the conceptualization of sport event image, which has been applied in this study. Event characteristics and

destination characteristics are attributes related to perceived image of the event and destination. These attributes encompass various dimensions, such as natural resources, infrastructure, and atmosphere. However, the multidimensionality of sport event image and the different impacts of its components on loyalty formation necessitates further investigation (Zhang et al., 2019).

Active sport tourists evaluate a sport event from various perspectives associated with the event experience (Kaplanidou, 2010). Therefore, it can be assumed that the attitudes of active sport tourists toward the event and their satisfaction may be related to their cognitive perceptions of the event. Prior studies have proposed strong relationships where cognitive evaluations influence affective responses (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Deng & Li, 2014), suggesting that image significantly influences attitudes. However, image was not always a significant predictor of attitudes toward a sport event (Zhang et al., 2021), which showed the need for further investigations. In addition, satisfaction has been found to be a positive outcome of image (Prayag et al., 2017). This relationship has also been confirmed in sport event settings, such as a marathon (Koo et al., 2014). Thus, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H1a: Event characteristics positively affect attitudes toward event.

H1b: Destination characteristics positively affect attitudes toward event.

H2a: Event characteristics positively affect satisfaction with event.

H2b: Destination characteristics positively affect satisfaction with event.

#### **2.2.4 The role of attitudes toward event in the understanding of active sport tourists' satisfaction and loyalty**

Attitude is defined as “a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor” (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 1). These affective responses generated from the experience could predict travel satisfaction (Prayag et al., 2017). Conversely, satisfaction was also found to positively influence tourists' attitudes toward destination (Hasan et al., 2019;

Liao et al., 2021). Kaplanidou and Gibson (2010) reported that attitudes that were formed directly after the experience in the post-event phase of a sport event could be influenced by satisfaction with the overall event experience. Since the pathway from attitudes to satisfaction has not been tested extensively in the context of active sport event, more discussion on the interaction between attitude and satisfaction is required (Chua et al., 2021). Thus, it can be assumed that attitudes toward event may influence the satisfaction levels of active sport tourists. In addition, attitude is also an important factor to be examined in the effort to understand leisure behaviors because more favorable attitudes are associated with higher possibilities of an individual engaging in certain behaviors (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). As Kaplanidou and Gibson (2010) suggested in the case of the Senior Games participants, attitudes toward event significantly and directly predicted their intentions to participate in the event. Thus, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H3: Attitudes toward event positively affect satisfaction with event.

H4: Attitudes toward event positively affect behavioral intentions.

### **2.2.5 Satisfaction with event and its impact on active sport tourists loyalty**

Satisfaction with a sport event is defined as the pleasurable and fulfilling response to the entertainment and services provided during a game (Yoshida & James, 2010). This positive response has been regarded as an important precursor to behavioral intentions (Prayag et al., 2017). The “satisfaction-behavioral intention” link has been validated in tourism literature (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2022) and particularly in active sport tourism research (Xiao et al., 2020). For example, Kaplanidou and Gibson (2010) found that a higher satisfaction level in a small-scale sport event led to a higher likelihood of participants’ future attendance. Likewise, Tzetzis et al. (2014) reported similar findings and found satisfaction with event also linked to intentions of word-of-mouth communications. In addition, satisfaction was found to have a significant

and positive influence on sport tourists' future intention to revisit and recommend the host destination (Jeong & Kim, 2020; Osti et al., 2012). However, satisfaction was also reported to be an insignificant predictor of intentions to revisit the host destination in a bicycling event, which suggests the relationship between satisfaction and intentions needs more empirical investigation (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007).

According to the aforementioned definition of satisfaction, cognitive evaluation such as the quality of the facilities and services of the organizers, and emotions such as enjoyment derived from the experience, could contribute to satisfaction formation. Subsequently, satisfaction may evoke behavioral intentions. This sequence suggests a mediating role of satisfaction, which aligns with previous studies in tourism literature (Bloemer & De Ruyter, 1998; Hosany et al., 2017; Lee, 2009). For example, an "image-satisfaction-loyalty" scheme has been verified by Chi and Qu (2008) in the tourism context. Likewise, Koo et al. (2014) confirmed a "sport event image-satisfaction-behavioral intention" link in the context of active sport events. Furthermore, the mediating role of satisfaction between attitudes and behavioral intentions has also been tested in marketing and tourism literature, while there is still a lack of evidence in the context of active sport tourism (Ekinici, 2003; Hasan et al., 2020). Thus, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H5: Satisfaction with event positively affects behavioral intentions.

H6a: Satisfaction with event mediates the relationship between event characteristics and behavioral intentions.

H6b: Satisfaction with event mediates the relationship between destination characteristics and behavioral intentions.

H7: Satisfaction with event mediates the relationship between attitudes toward event and behavioral intentions.

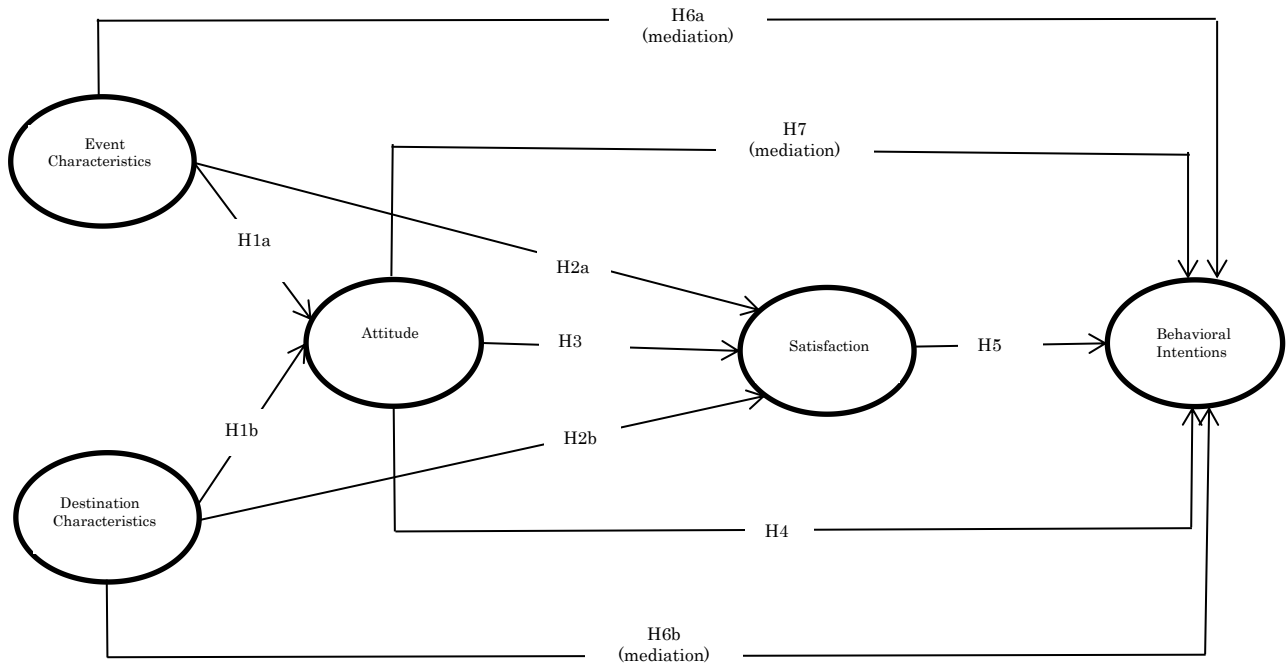


Figure 2.2 Hypothesis model

### 2.3 Loyalty formation in the context of sport-related travel

Participation in sport-related travel has been found to enhance well-being (Mirehie & Gibson, 2020). Thus, increasing attention has been given to sport, leisure, and tourism research to understand the antecedents of active sport tourist loyalty, with a particular focus on subjective well-being in recent years (Baloglu et al., 2019; Uysal et al., 2016; Vada et al., 2019). Subjective well-being has been interchangeably used as happiness and life satisfaction in the tourism context and is often associated with positive psychology derived from tourism experiences, which could trigger tourists' revisit and recommendation intentions (Lin, 2012; Reitsamer & Brunner-Sperdin, 2017). Despite these valuable insights regarding the relationship between subjective well-being and loyalty within the tourism context, our current understanding of well-being and its effects on consumer behavior remains limited, and more empirical evidence is needed within the active sport tourism context (Kim et al., 2015).

A sense of well-being can be achieved through involvement in preferred activities (Walsh, 2011). Involvement in activity is defined as an internal psychological process that leads to participation (Havitz & Dimanche, 1997), which is represented by the constructs of attraction, centrality, and self-expression in this study (McIntyre, 1989). In this sense, involvement could be perceived as an important concept in understanding individuals' personal needs, continued interests, and participation in their preferred activities (Chang & Gibson, 2011). It has been found widely that the positive influences of frequent participation in sport, leisure, and tourism activities are on enhancing mental health and well-being. In other words, individuals who frequently participate in their preferred activities often report a greater sense of subjective well-being (Uysal et al., 2016). This idea is also supported by Mirehie and Gibson (2020), which specifically addressed that continuous participation in winter trips leads to a higher level of subjective well-being. While prior research has examined the behavioral perspective of the involvement conceptualization, it is essential to note that the psychological concept of involvement remains relatively unexplored within winter sport tourism (Chang & Gibson, 2011).

Expectancy-value theory suggests that motivation is linked to individuals' involvement in an activity, driven by their pursuits for specific outcomes (Lawler III, 1973). Tourist motivation refers to "a meaningful state of mind which adequately disposes an actor or a group of actors to travel" (Iso-Ahola, 1982, p. 257). In other words, motivation can act as an antecedent of individuals' involvement in their preferred activities (Wong & Tang, 2016). In addition, patterns of involvement can vary significantly across individual characteristics, such as distinct motivations (Iwasaki & Havitz, 1998), for example, Kyle et al. (2006) reported that not all motivations of the campers could predict their levels of involvement in camping activities. As such, more empirical research is needed to clarify the relationships between these two factors.

Building upon existing studies, the third study empirically tested an integrated model to address the process of loyalty formation among winter sport tourists. To be more specific, this study uses a Spanish case study to test the hypothesis that

motivations, involvement, and subjective well-being serve as the antecedents of loyalty. It suggests that individuals tend to feel more motivated when their psychological needs are fulfilled, resulting in positive psychological outcomes. These outcomes, in turn, trigger repeated behaviors and word-of-mouth communications. This study contributes to our theoretical understanding by shedding light on new mechanisms that underlie the influence of motivation on winter sport tourists' loyalty to winter sports. In essence, this study emphasizes the significance of fostering involvement in preferred activities and subjective well-being achieved from their experiences as key drivers of loyalty within the winter sport tourism niche market.

### **2.3.1 Winter sport tourists' motivation**

Motivation has consistently been a popular topic in consumer behavior research, which has also been widely acknowledged as a crucial factor in understanding winter sport tourists' profiles, expectations, and decision-making process, especially when significant changes occur in demographic and geographic information nowadays (Bausch & Gartner, 2020; Cohen et al., 2014; Schlemmer & Schnitzer, 2023). Over time, the research focus has evolved from merely identifying "what is and who" to understanding "why" when understanding tourists' behaviors (Gibson, 2004). Despite this shift, research into the behaviors of winter sport tourists remains relatively limited as the motivations for winter vacations could be more complex and varying (Alexandris et al., 2009; Bausch & Unseld, 2018).

According to Motivation Theory, participating in active sport tourism plays a key role in achieving both psychological and physical goals. For instance, someone feeling overwhelmed by daily work may be motivated to go skiing, as it provides a sense of escape from stress, helping them fulfill a motivational need (Manfredo et al., 1996). This theory introduced the concept of recreation experience from a psychological perspective as a set of desired psychological benefits from their participation (Manfredo et al., 1996). It also provided explanations for why individuals engage in sports during their travel, while also offering insights into

what they seek from these experiences. This theory has also been successfully applied into the winter sport contexts, as demonstrated by Alexandris and his colleagues' study on recreational ski participation (Alexandris et al., 2009). This study identified eight motivational factors, which were escape (i.e., skiers were driven by rest, relaxation, and escape motives), social recognition (i.e., skiing was viewed as socially-accepted activity), enjoying nature (i.e., skiers were driven by opportunity to enjoy nature), excitement/risk (i.e., skiers look for excitement and risks in skiing), socialization (i.e., skiers were driven by the opportunity to spend time with friends and make new ones), skill development (i.e., skiers were driven by learning and improving their skills), and achievement (i.e., skiers were driven by achieving personal goals). Therefore, this current study aims to explore the motivations of winter sport tourists by applying the Recreation Experience framework grounded in Motivation Theory. This tool has also been applied beyond the realm of recreation, extending into various tourism sectors, including glacier tourism (Salim & Ravel, 2023) and urban tourism (Botha et al., 1999). In the field of active sport tourism, scholars have made some efforts to examine the connections between tourist motivation as a singular concept and their behavioral and psychological factors, such as satisfaction and loyalty (Duan et al., 2020; He & Luo, 2020; Jin et al., 2022). Despite such observations, there remain few studies examining diverse motivations as antecedents of important behavioral and psychological outcomes (Kim et al., 2015). It is important to note that tourists' motivations are not homogeneous, according to SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2008), especially among winter sport tourists, where they may have varying motivations influencing their decisions (Fodness, 1994). For instance, Kouthouris (2009) studied recreational skiers and tested 15 dimensions on their motivation, while only the motivations of achievement, be with friends, and enjoying nature could predict skiers' intention to continuing participating. Similarly, a study of Chinese recreational skiers found that, among seven motivational factors, only the motivation to escape influenced how frequently they engaged in skiing (Wang et al., 2020).

### **2.3.2 Involvement**

According to Kim et al. (1997), involvement can be measured from both social-psychological and behavioral dimensions. Compared to behavioral dimension such as the time and the frequency of participation, involvement is commonly perceived as personal relevance from a psychological perspective (Celsi & Olson, 1988). As stated by Kyle et al. (2006), leisure involvement is a psychological state that reflects the degree to which an individual perceives the activity as self-relevant to achieve their personal goals. Furthermore, a conceptualization introduced by McIntyre (1989) and McIntyre and Pigram (1992) has been widely recognized in the leisure literature to measure involvement from a psychological perspective (Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004). This involvement conceptualization consists three facets: (a) attraction measures the importance and pleasure of the activity an individual perceives; (b) centrality measures the extent to which an individual's social life is centered on the activity; and (c) self-expression measures the impressions that individuals want to convey to others through their participation in the activity (Alexandris et al., 2008; Chang & Gibson, 2011). This multifaceted conceptualization measures a spectrum of the levels of involvement in an activity, which largely depends on individual and activity characteristics (Kyle et al., 2004). The relationship between motivation and involvement have been explored across various sport, leisure, and tourism activities (Funk et al., 2004; Iwasaki & Havitz, 1998), often demonstrating a positive pathway from motivation to involvement, for instance, the motivations of campers positively influenced their involvement in camping activities (Kyle et al., 2006). However, it is important to note that these relationships may manifest differently in various leisure contexts. In the case of rafting activities, most of the rafters' motivations positively influenced their involvement while the motivation of learning negatively influenced involvement (Morris et al., 2018). Therefore, to avoid generalizing, it is necessary to consider these relationships within a specific leisure context (Kyle et al., 2006).

### **2.3.3 Subjective well-being**

Subjective well-being has received growing interest in research on positive psychology and experiences of sport, leisure, and tourism activities (Vada et al., 2020). Subjective well-being is commonly described as “the level of well-being people experience according to their subjective evaluations of their lives” (Diener & Ryan, 2009, p. 391). As such, in consumer behavior research, well-being is often perceived as the consequence of specific actions, such as physical activity (Hartman et al., 2020) and tourism experiences (Karagöz & Ramkissoon, 2023). According to Diener (1984), subjective well-being is associated with overall life satisfaction. While this concept is widely accepted, there remains uncertainty about the factors that influence subjective well-being levels (Friedman & Kern, 2014). This relationship has been extensively examined through Top-down and Bottom-up theories, which suggests that certain factors may cause subjective well-being, which, in turn, can lead to certain consequences (Headey et al., 1991). This relationship has also been tested in the context of active sport tourism. As Kim et al. (2015) noted, hiking-tourist motivation has a significantly positive effect on subjective well-being. Despite their valuable insights on the direct and significant influence of motivation on subjective well-being, exploring the different motivations that drive individuals to engage in activities seem to reveal diverse outcomes in their personal experiences and perceptions of subjective well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In addition to top-down effects, subjective well-being plays an important role in fostering tourist loyalty, where further empirical evidence is needed in the context of active sport tourism (Kim et al., 2015; Lin, 2014).

### **2.3.4 Loyalty in sport-related travel**

In marketing research, loyalty commonly refers to consumers’ repeated purchase behaviors (Petrick, 2004). However, regarding infrequent purchasing such as vacations, attitudinal loyalty is also an important factor that measures consumers’ willingness to re-consumption (Bloemer & De Ruyter, 1999). As such, loyalty is typically measured by three indicators: revisit intention,

recommendation to others, and positive evaluation (Oliver, 1999). As the consumer behavior literature posits, individuals' motivations are important in explaining their intention to repeatedly participate in certain activities and in understanding their needs (Cohen et al., 2014). Therefore, understanding which motivations drive winter sport tourists to repeated participation is a key element in developing successful strategies for destination marketing (Bichler & Pikkemaat, 2021). For Japanese rafting tourists, their motivations to experience local culture, combined with the quality of rafting services, plays a significant role in triggering them to revisit the destination (Sato et al., 2018). Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge that not all forms of motivation uniformly predict loyalty (Ryan & Deci, 2000). As reported by Halpenny et al. (2016), the motivation of runners to travel for a running event did not serve as a predictor of their loyalty. Therefore, more empirical studies are necessary to examine the predictability of motivation.

In conclusion, identifying winter sport tourists' motivations and examining their relationships with important psychological and behavioral outcomes could provide important and detailed customer information and link their preferences with activities and destinations, which may facilitate the development of marketing strategies for winter tourism (Dolnicar & Leisch, 2003). Taking the knowledge mentioned above, the hypotheses about motivations are listed below.

H1<sub>abcdefg</sub>: Tourists' motivation (escape, social recognition, enjoying nature, excitement, socialization, skill development, and achievement) has a positive effect on involvement.

H2<sub>abcdefg</sub>: Tourists' motivation (escape, social recognition, enjoying nature, excitement, socialization, skill development, and achievement) has a positive effect on subjective well-being.

H3<sub>abcdefg</sub>: Tourists' motivation (escape, social recognition, enjoying nature, excitement, socialization, skill development, and achievement) has a positive effect on loyalty to winter sports.

### **2.3.5 Involvement, subjective well-being, and loyalty**

Regarding the relationship between involvement and subjective well-being, considerable studies have reported a positive correlation, such as in surfing (Cheng & Lu, 2015) and sport event contexts (Sato et al., 2017). Participating in preferred activities can provide enjoyment and enhance subjective well-being (Stebbins, 2018). Researchers have also observed that individuals who are highly involved in leisure pursuits are more likely to revisit and engage in word-of-mouth communications (Alexandris et al., 2013; Choo et al., 2022). Furthermore, subjective well-being is also an important driver to examine tourists' loyalty to an activity (Baloglu et al., 2019). When individuals derive positive emotions from a leisure activity, it significantly increases the likelihood of future participation and word-of-mouth communications. Previous research has provided supporting evidence, such as tourists' food experience (Liu et al., 2023), wellness tourism (Backman et al., 2023), and sport event (Yamashita & Muneda, 2021). Building upon the insights, we put forth the following hypothesis:

H4: Involvement has a positive effect on subjective well-being.

H5: Involvement has a positive effect on loyalty to winter sports.

H6: Subjective well-being has a positive effect on loyalty to winter sports.

### **2.3.6 Mediation effects of involvement and subjective well-being**

Based on SDT, the reasons why individuals act stem from distinct motivations through realizing personal needs (e.g., personal experience, well-being) (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Although the above discussion has indicated involvement and subjective well-being directly correlated with loyalty, the process from decision-making to actual behaviors in fact requires other psychological determinants, such as personal involvement (Goossens, 2000). Furthermore, according to Diener (1984), in addition to the Bottom-up theory, the Top-down theory suggests that subjective well-being is determined by a personal's internal disposition, which could also explain a cause effect. In this sense, subjective well-being can act as both antecedents and consequences. Such evidence of testing the mediation roles

of involvement and subjective well-being can be found in previous research in sport and tourism domains (Vada et al., 2019; Wong & Tang, 2016). In addition, it has been proposed in the above discussion that involvement can act as a positive predictor of subjective well-being. Considering the mediating roles of these two variables in the relationship between motivation and loyalty, it can be assumed that involvement and subjective well-being may play a serial mediating role. Hence, we argue that involvement and subjective well-being could not only independently mediate the link between motivations and loyalty, but also simultaneously play a serial mediating role. According to the evidence, we proposed the hypotheses:

H7<sub>abcdefg</sub>: Tourists' motivation (escape, social recognition, enjoying nature, excitement, socialization, skill development, and achievement) indirectly influences loyalty through the mediating effects of involvement.

H8<sub>abcdefg</sub>: Tourists' motivation (escape, social recognition, enjoying nature, excitement, socialization, skill development, and achievement) indirectly influences loyalty through the mediating effects of subjective well-being.

H9<sub>abcdefg</sub>: The relationship between tourists' motivation (escape, social recognition, enjoying nature, excitement, socialization, skill development, and achievement) and loyalty is serially mediated by involvement and subjective well-being.

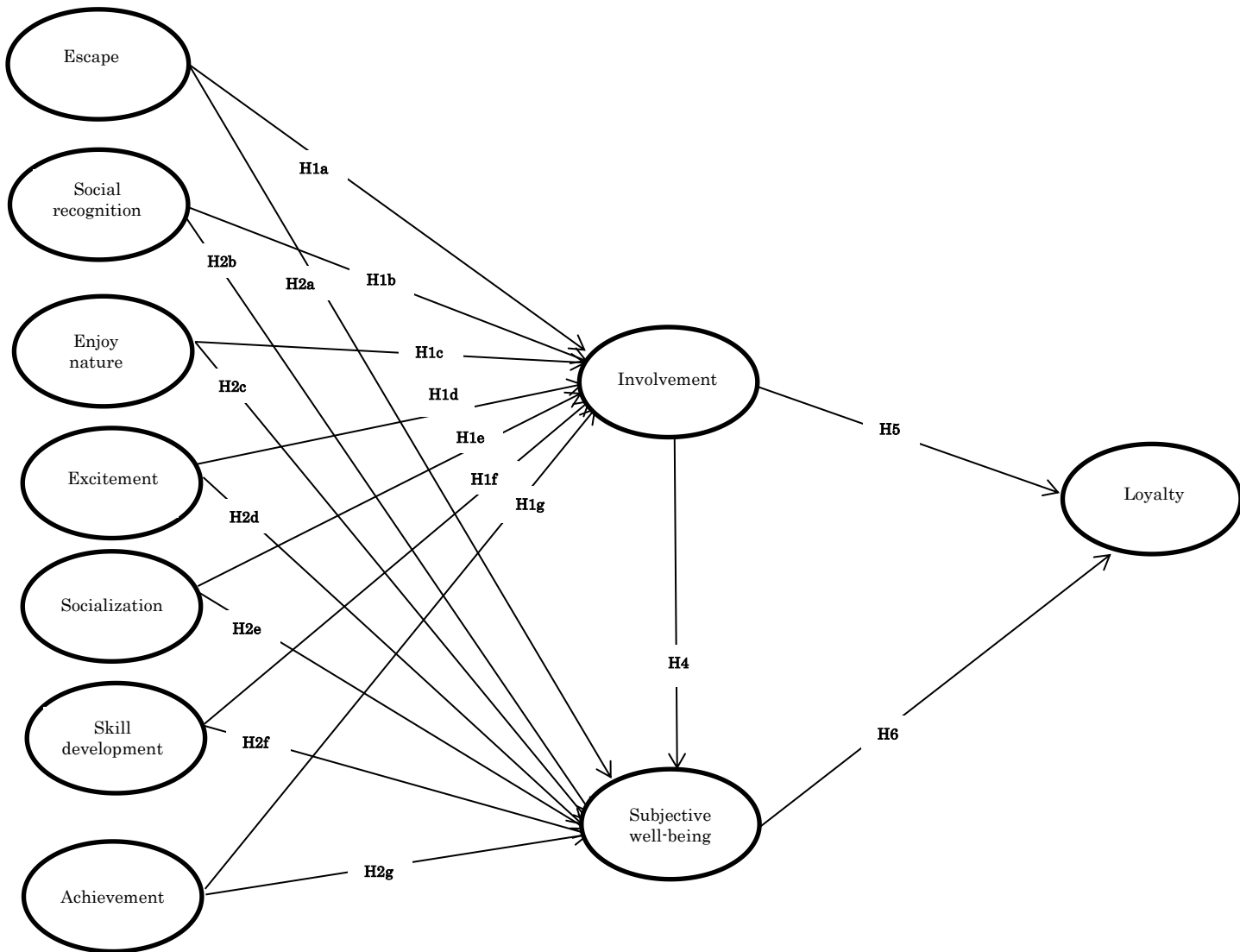


Figure 2.3 Hypothesis model

Note: For clarity purpose, this figure does not display the direct relationship between motivations and loyalty (H3<sub>abcdefg</sub>), nor the indirect relationships between motivations and loyalty (H7<sub>abcdefg</sub>, H8<sub>abcdefg</sub>, H9<sub>abcdefg</sub>).



## CHAPTER 3

### Materials and Methods



## 3 Materials and Methods

This chapter provides a detailed description of the research methodology in this thesis. Section 3.1 explains the structure and organization of studies and the rationale of such a design. Section 3.2 focuses on the research design of the first study by conducting a scoping review, which addresses the first aim of this thesis. Section 3.3 introduces the research design of the second study, which addresses the second aim of this study by using self-administrative survey data. Similarly, Section 3.4 introduces the research design of the third study, which addresses the third aim of this study by using self-administrative survey data.

### 3.1 Research design and study overview

After identifying the research aims and formulating the research hypotheses in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, it is essential to develop a suitable research design that aligns with these objectives. Critical research problems were identified for this study: What are the most important loyalty antecedents in the context of active sport tourism? Which outcomes are affected by these antecedents? What specific factors influence the formation of active sport tourist loyalty in the context of two distinct settings of active sport tourism?

To explore these questions, this thesis adopts a multi-method approach that integrates both a scoping review and two cross-sectional studies. The scoping review (Aim 1) explores the current state of the existing research and identifies research gaps. Scoping reviews are important for providing a preliminary overview of an emergent topic and to identify the nature and extent of evidence (Munn et al., 2018). In this thesis, this scoping review serves not only as a synthesis of prior research but also as a crucial step in shaping the design of the subsequent two cross-sectional studies by refining research questions, identifying important variables, and highlighting underexplored areas. These two cross-sectional studies (Aim 2 and Aim 3) then build on these insights by empirically

investigating two distinct types of active sport tourism and their corresponding loyalty antecedents. This approach allows for a more nuanced analysis of each setting, facilitating targeted sampling that yields more accurate and relevant findings. Together, these studies contribute to a more robust understanding of loyalty formation in active sport tourism.

To ensure methodological rigor, the scoping review followed Arksey and O'Malley (2005) five-stage framework, which includes: (1) formulating research questions, (2) sampling, (3) screening studies, (4) extracting and analyzing data, and (5) summarizing and reporting findings. This method is considered as suitable as it has gained increasing popularity in the field of social sciences, with a notable focus on its application in sports and tourism research (e.g. O'Neill et al., 2023; Welling et al., 2015). Additionally, a quality assessment was conducted to ensure transparency and the certainty of the evidence synthesis. For the empirical investigations in Study 2 and Study 3, a questionnaire-based quantitative method was employed, a technique widely recognized in the fields of Tourism, Leisure, Sport, and Hospitality research. This approach is particularly effective for capturing a comprehensive understanding of individual participation patterns, especially given the diverse nature of activities within leisure and tourism, which vary significantly in terms of characteristics such as frequency and level of involvement. It provides the means to collect the information across a broader population (Veal, 2017).

In all, this thesis presents three complementary studies that collectively establish a cohesive understanding of the relationships between antecedents and outcomes of active sport tourist loyalty.

## **3.2 Method for reviewing the antecedents and outcomes of active sport tourist loyalty (Aim 1)**

### **3.2.1 Formulating research questions**

To address the research gap, this study aims to report on studies that have examined the antecedents and outcomes of loyalty in active sport tourism context. Five research questions were then proposed to address the research aim, as outlined below.

RQ1: What is the picture of the existing literature in active sport tourist loyalty?

RQ2: Which type of active sport tourism has been studied?

RQ3: What theories or frameworks underpinned existing research?

RQ4: What methodologies have been used in existing research?

RQ5: What are the antecedents and outcomes of active sport tourist loyalty and what are their relationships?

### **3.2.2 Sampling**

Before scoping, the search terms were identified through a narrative review, which fell within two overarching meta themes: loyalty and sport tourism. In Search 1, loyalty and its alternates were applied. Search 2 included keywords related to sport tourism which has also been used in the previous review article (e.g. Chen et al., 2023). Search 3 combined both Search 1 and Search 2. Table 3.1 presents the specific search terms and search steps that are applied in this process. The search was conducted in the database of Web of Science and Scopus. Web of Science and Scopus both have been considered to have advantages of journal coverage in social sciences compared to other databases, which offer the best coverage in journals (Norris & Oppenheim, 2007) and have been widely used in tourism research (Doran et al., 2022). For Web of Science, the searches were conducted within the topic and title, and for Scopus, the searches were conducted within the article title, abstract, and keywords. To further narrow down the

searches, we applied four filters: peer-reviewed journal articles, the English language articles, the articles started in 1990 which is the time when the concept of “active sport tourism” was first introduced (Gibson et al., 2020), to November 2023.

Table 3.1 Search terms

N°	Search terms
1	loyal* OR attend* OR participat* OR travel* OR trip* OR engag* OR act* OR behavi* OR intent* OR consum*
2	sport tourism OR sport tourist*
3	1 AND 2

### 3.2.3 Screening studies

Figure 3.1 presents the research process, which contained both automatic and manual searches, following preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) (Page et al., 2021). The PRISMA protocol was selected for this study as it offers a systematic, rigorous, transparent, objective and easily replicated review process (Doran et al., 2022). Search terms were introduced in databases, and it finally returned 1568 and 1036 potentially relevant articles respectively, and 476 duplicates were removed. After screening the titles and abstracts of selected articles, 2075 of them were excluded from the selection criteria as they were irrelevant to the theme of this research, for example, articles about loyalty in other types of tourism. The Search 2 was broadly focused on sport tourism rather than active sport tourism, in order to capture those articles whose participants may actively engaged in sport tourism but have been referred to more broadly as sport tourists rather than active sport tourists (e.g. Filo et al., 2013).

### 3.2.4 Extracting and analyzing the data

In total, 53 articles were examined for reading the full text, out of which 13 were excluded. The reasons for exclusions were mainly related to sampling in these

articles, for instance, the articles did not use sampling of active sport tourists (e.g. Choo et al., 2016), and the sampling either included only passive sport tourists (e.g. Akhoondnejad, 2018) or both types of tourists (e.g. Hallmann & Breuer, 2010b), which were not in line with the objective of this study. In addition, 7 articles were also included from hand searching of known publications. Therefore, the final number of articles used in the scoping review was 47. The full list of reviewed articles is included in Appendix 5.

At the initial stage of extraction, structural coding was applied to organize the information about active sport tourist loyalty by developing a summary table that documented the bibliographic details of the articles (Zhao & Agyeiwaah, 2023). To ensure the appropriateness of the coding and the category, the first 10% included articles were used to develop the criteria and every subsequent 10 articles were rechecked (Pickering & Byrne, 2014). Guided by research questions, the categories in the checklist included: authors, journal title, year of publication, geographical location, research setting, sample information (sample size and gender distribution), theory, statistical analysis, antecedents of loyalty, outcomes of loyalty, and the associations between antecedents and outcomes.

### **3.2.5 Summarizing and reporting findings**

According to the five-stage framework, the results section will provide a comprehensive report on the findings of this scoping review on the 47 included studies.

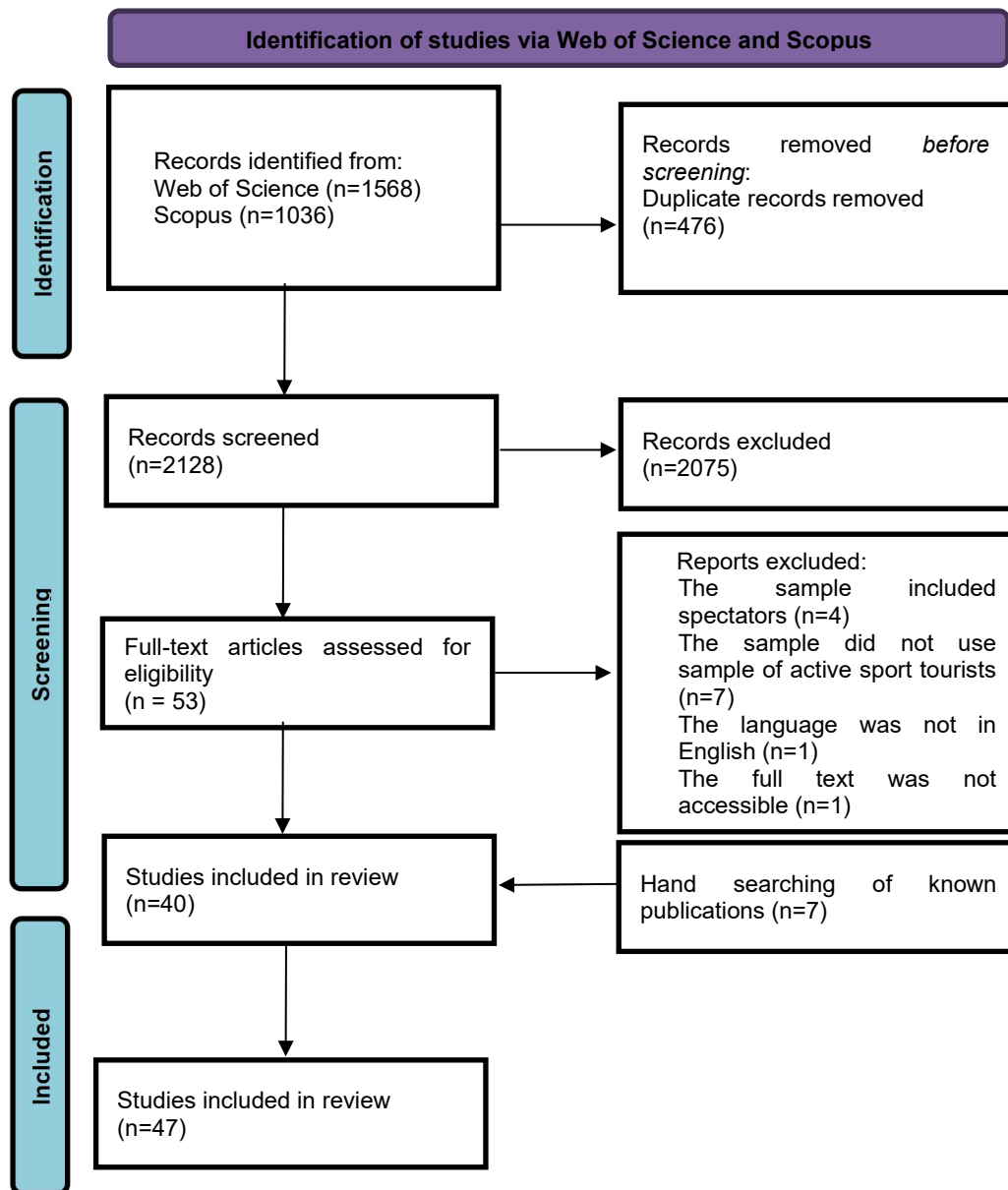


Figure 3.1 The PRISMA flowchart

### 3.2.6 Quality Assessment

Table 3.2 summarizes the quality assessment of the 46 studies selected. Two independent reviewers conducted the assessment, and any disagreements were resolved through discussion until a consensus was achieved. The evaluation criteria were based on an ad-hoc tool developed by Franco et al. (2024), which integrates recommendations from prior research. Each study was assigned a score ranging from 0 to 2 based on the following criteria: (a) inclusion in SJR or

JCR; (b) the clarity of the research question; (c) detailed methodological description; (d) clear description of the sample; (e) justification for the sample size; and (f) clear definition of measured outcomes. Detailed assessment results are presented in Table 3.3.

Overall, the quality of the selected studies was generally high, with all the studies being indexed in either the SJR or JCR. Notably, over 70% of the studies were published in JCR-listed journals. Most of the studies (89.1%) clearly presented their research questions and hypotheses. However, since nearly all the studies were cross-sectional, almost half (47.8%) didn't fully report their data collection procedures, and half of the studies (50%) didn't completely provide demographic information. Regarding the sample size justification, it is not uncommon that most of the studies (80.4%) lacked a sample size analysis. Most studies (80.4%) applied validated instruments and provided detailed reliability and validity information.

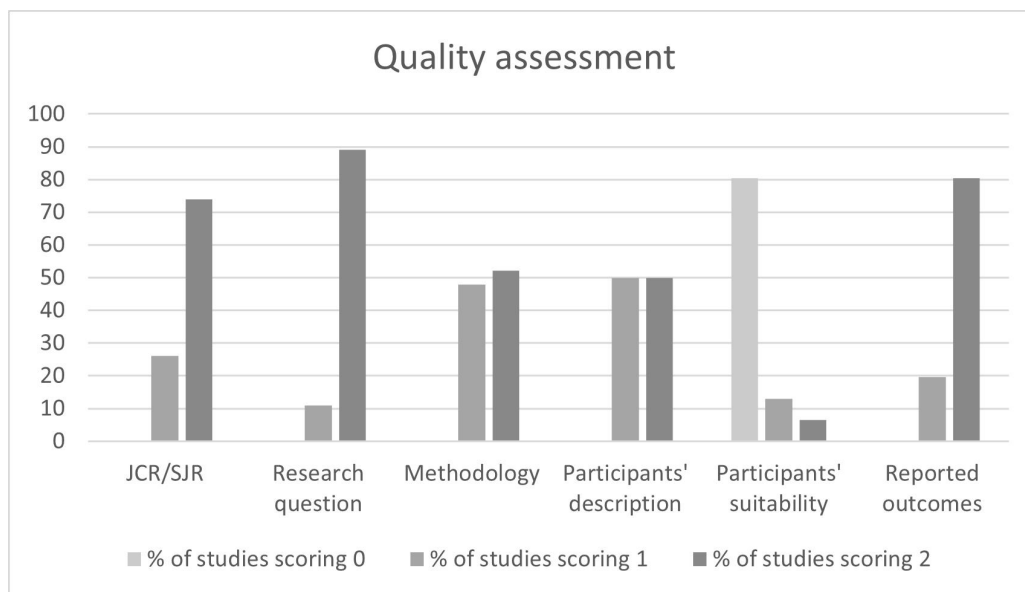


Figure 3.2 Results of quality assessment

Table 3.2 Summary of quality assessment

		SJR - JCR	Research question	Methodology	Participant s' description	Participant s' suitability	Reported outcomes	Total score
1	Alexandris et al., 2006	2	1	1	1	0	1	6
2	Alexandris et al., 2008	2	1	1	2	0	1	7
3	Allameh et al., 2015	2	2	1	2	0	2	9
4	An&Yamashita, 2022	2	2	2	2	0	2	10
5	Chen et al., 2021	2	2	1	1	0	2	8
6	Đuradević et al., 2022	1	2	1	2	0	2	8
7	Fam et al., 2020	2	2	2	1	2	2	11
8	Fernández-Martínez et al., 2022	2	2	1	1	0	2	8
9	Filo et al., 2013	2	2	2	1	1	2	10
10	Girish & Lee, 2019	2	2	2	1	0	2	9
11	Hallmann & Breuer, 2010	1	2	2	1	0	1	7
12	Hallmann et al., 2015	2	2	1	1	0	2	8
13	Halpenny et al., 2016	1	2	2	1	2	2	10
14	Huang et al., 2015	2	1	2	1	2	2	10
15	Hyun & Jordan, 2020	2	2	1	1	0	2	8
16	Jeong et al., 2020	2	2	2	2	0	2	10
17	Jeong & Kim, 2020	2	2	2	2	0	2	10
18	Jeong et al., 2020	1	2	2	1	0	2	8
19	Jeong al., 2023	2	2	2	1	0	2	9
20	Jin et al., 2022	2	2	2	2	1	2	11
21	Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007	1	2	2	1	0	2	8
22	Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010	1	2	2	2	0	2	9
23	Kaplanidou et al., 2012	2	2	2	1	0	1	8
24	Kim & Jogaratnam, 2015	2	2	2	1	1	2	10
25	Koo et al., 2014	2	2	1	2	0	2	9
26	Kouthouris & Alexandris, 2005	1	1	1	2	0	1	6

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27	Kruger et al., 2016	2	1	2	1	0	1	7
28	Liu et al., 2022	2	2	1	2	0	2	9
29	Ma & Kaplanidou, 2018	2	2	1	1	0	2	8
30	Mason & Moretti., 2015	2	2	2	2	1	2	11
31	Nakphin et al., 2023	1	2	1	1	1	2	8
32	Newland & Yoo, 2021	2	2	2	2	0	2	10
33	Okayasu et al., 2010	2	2	1	2	0	2	9
34	Raggiotto & Scarpi, 2020	2	2	1	1	0	2	8
35	Raggiotto & Scarpi, 2021	2	2	1	1	0	2	8
36	Rejón-Guardia et al., 2023	2	2	2	1	1	1	9
37	Sato et al., 2017	1	2	1	2	0	1	7
38	Sato et al., 2018	2	2	2	1	0	2	9
39	Schwab et al., 2022	2	2	1	1	0	1	7
40	Su et al., 2018	2	2	2	2	0	2	10
41	Triantafilli-dou & Petala, 2015	2	2	2	2	0	2	10
42	Vegara-Ferri et al., 2018	1	1	1	2	0	1	6
43	Vegara-Ferri et al., 2020	2	2	1	2	0	2	9
44	Xiao et al., 2020	2	2	1	2	0	2	9
45	Yamashita & Takata, 2020	1	2	1	2	0	2	8
46	Yoo et al., 2021	1	2	2	2	0	2	9
47	Zhang, 2022	2	2	1	2	0	2	9

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Criteria	Observational studies	
	Quantitative	Qualitative
JCR - SJR	'0', not indexed; '1', indexed on SJR; and '2', indexed on JCR	
Research question	'0' there is no research question; '1' research question-aims are presented; '2' research question is clear, and hypotheses are provided	'0' there is no research question; '1' research question-aims are presented; '2' research question is clear, and its relevance is provided
Methodology	'0', not reported; '1', reported but imprecise (not completely); and '2', exhaustive description reported, the study is replicable	'0', not reported; '1', reported but imprecise (not completely); and '2', theoretical approach established, research design clearly justified, exhaustive description reported, trustworthiness of data clearly established
Participants' description	'0', no information is provided regarding participant characteristics, '1', some sample characteristics are missing, '2' participants are described in detail providing demographics regarding age, gender, etc	'0', no information is provided regarding participant characteristics, '1', some sample characteristics and selection criteria are missing, '2' participants characteristics are described in detail
Participants' suitability	'0' no mention is made to sample size justification, '1' sample size is not justified in terms of statistical power, but authors refer to it regarding the requirements of the analyses carried out, '2' the number of participants is enough according to some sample size formula	'0' no mention is made to participants selection justification, '1', general explanation of the participants' selection criteria and procedure, '2' the procedure and the suitability of the recruited participants is clearly explained
Reported outcomes	'0' tools are not accurately defined and there is a lack of information to understand them, '1' validated tools are used, '2' information regarding the accuracy and reliability of the measures for the study sample is provided	'0' the analysis is not accurately defined and there is a lack of information to understand data treatment, '1' emerging themes/categories are defined and described '2' information regarding the trustworthiness of data analysis and results emerged in the study provided

Table 3.3 Quality assessment criteria

Note: 1. In mixed-method study both criteria have been considered. 2. This table was adapted from Franco et al. (2024).

### **3.3 Method for examining loyalty of active sport tourists in a non-traditional event (Aim 2)**

#### **3.3.1 Data collection**

Data collection took place through an on-site survey conducted in Madrid, Spain during a two-day obstacle course race held in October 2021. The event was hosted in a municipality located 49 kilometers away from the city of Madrid, enjoying a proximity to national park and natural resources. The questionnaires were distributed and collected by two researchers by hand who approached individuals at the refreshment station after the finish line, inviting them to participate in the survey voluntarily. The questionnaire was provided in both English and Spanish. The project of this thesis was submitted to the Ethics Committee of Universidad Politécnica de Madrid and registered under the number DATOS-20211209-LMS-Research (see Appendix 1). The survey was conducted anonymously, with respondents not required to provide any information, such as names or email addresses. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their access to the questionnaire (see Appendix 3).

The on-site survey was judged to be the most appropriate method to survey participants, as it has been proposed in the context of outdoor recreation (Veal, 2017). This type of survey collects information immediately after or during the events, providing better quality data about respondents' perceptions than a post-event survey, as it is a real-time measure (Chen & Funk, 2010; Petrick et al., 2001). To alleviate method bias during the data collection, procedural controls have been employed (Kock et al., 2021; Podsakoff et al., 2003). Firstly, clear and concise questions were designed based on feedback from event organizers and outdoor recreation experts during a pilot phase. Clear instructions and the anonymity of responses were ensured on site. Secondly, a temporal separation technique was applied to collect data at different time points. Lastly, a methodological separation technique was implemented in the questionnaire design to avoid potential item context effects. In accordance with UNWTO (2008),

a tourist is classified as any visitor, whether domestic, inbound, or outbound, whose journey involves an overnight stay. Additionally, individuals traveling more than 30 kilometers away from their residence can be also defined as tourists (Malchrowicz-Moško & Poczta, 2018). Considering these definitions, participants were required to answer a preliminary question before completing the questionnaire. Those individuals who did not meet the travel distance or who did not spend at least one night away from their homes were excluded from the survey. The questionnaire was delivered to a total of 201 respondents. The incomplete or incorrect filling resulted in an effective sample of 182. The total response rate is 90.5%. The use of the A-priori Sample Size Calculator for Structural Equation Models (Soper, 2024) verified that the sample size surpassed the required minimum sample size, which is 150 in this case, based on the 0.8 power level and a probability level of 0.05 (Westland, 2010).

### **3.3.2 Measures**

Two bilingual researchers translated all items of the instrument from English into Spanish. The translated responses were then back-translated into English to ensure content validity. Experts in sport event management also reviewed and modified the questionnaires where necessary to ensure their face validity.

#### ***Sport event image***

A nine-item scale was captured from the Host Event Destination Attributes Scale of Kaplanidou et al. (2012). Based on the conceptualization, two dimensions of sport event image: event characteristics and destination characteristics were tested, which are based on multiple sources and have been used in prior studies (Chen & Funk, 2010; Shonk & Chelladurai, 2008). Event characteristics included four items to measure the management and organization of the event, such as 'level of competition'. Destination characteristics in discussion in this study refer to attributes only associated with the event (exclude the attraction or cultural factors) since some small local communities are not widely known as tourism destinations and may be influenced occasionally by events (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007). Therefore, destination characteristics included five items measuring the

weather, location, transportation, ambience, and safety of the destination. Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which each attribute affected them, using a 7-point scale where 1 represented ‘extremely unimportant’ and 7 represented ‘extremely important’. Cronbach’s alpha values of this scale were found to be good (i.e., over 0.80) in previous research, supporting its internal consistency (Kaplanidou et al., 2012). The validity of this scale was tested in previous research (e.g. Yoo et al., 2021a), demonstrating satisfactory results ( $\chi^2/df = 3.32$ ; RMSEA = 0.06; GFI= 0.92; CFI = 0.93; IFI =0.93; NFI=0.91). In this study, Cronbach’s alpha values for both dimensions also exceed 0.70, indicating good reliability. Regarding convergent validity, only ‘Destination Characteristics’ dimension exceeds the accepted threshold for average variance extracted (AVE > 0.50) while ‘Event Characteristics’ dimension falls short, with an AVE value of 0.48.

### ***Attitudes toward event***

A four-item scale, adopted from Cunningham and Kwon (2003), was used to assess participants’ attitudes toward event by responding to a question ‘For me, attending an obstacle course race this time would be...’. The four items were ‘unpleasant–pleasant’, ‘boring–exciting’, ‘dull–entertaining’, and ‘worthless–valuable’, each rated on a 7-point scale, where 1 represented the negative end of the range (e.g., ‘unpleasant’) and 7 represented the positive end (e.g., ‘pleasant’). The same tool was also used in prior studies (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010, 2012), which showed excellent internal consistency (i.e., over 0.90). In this study, the Cronbach’s alpha value exceeds 0.80, indicating good reliability. Additionally, the threshold for AVE was met, supporting convergent validity.

### ***Satisfaction with event***

Satisfaction with event was measured with five items “overall event experience”, “registration process”, “administration of the event”, “quality of facilities”, and “overall event organization” Respondents rated their satisfaction with each of these attributes on a 7-point scale where 1 represents ‘extremely dissatisfied’ and

7 represents 'extremely satisfied'. This measurement was adapted from the satisfaction scale of Kaplanidou and Gibson (2010). The same tool was used in prior research (Fleshman & Kaplanidou, 2023), indicating a good internal consistency (i.e., over 0.80). In this study, Cronbach's alpha value exceeds 0.90, indicating excellent reliability. Additionally, the threshold for AVE was met, supporting convergent validity.

### ***Behavioral Intentions***

Behavioral intentions were measured with four items that asked respondents to indicate the likelihood of the following statements: "return to the destination for vacation" "participate in the event again", "recommend the destination to others", and "recommend the event to others"(Kaplanidou et al., 2012). Responses were measured on a 7-point scale, where 1 represents 'extremely unlikely' and 7 represents 'extremely likely'. This measure has been previously validated in terms of its reliability and validity (e.g., Newland & Yoo, 2021), demonstrating a satisfactory Cronbach's alpha value greater than 0.80 and an AVE exceeding 0.50 in the current study as well.

### **3.3.3 Sample characteristics**

Of the 182 respondents, 141 males (77.5%) consisted mostly of the sample. The predominant age was from 26 to 35 years old, with 83 respondents (45.6%). Slightly more than half of the respondents, 107 (58.8%), were single. The occupation that stood out was full-time job, with 108 respondents (59.3%). Most respondents held a degree higher than bachelor, among them, 66 respondents (36.3%) held a bachelor's degree while a further 56 (30.8%) held a master's degree. The annual household income was similarly distributed among the income levels surveyed. Most respondents, 164 (90.1%) came from the Spanish regions. 96 respondents (52.7%) were first-time runners, which consisted of more than half of the sample. As for the type of races, nearly half respondents, 90 (49.5%) ran 5-km races; while 10-km races and 21-km races shared the same percentage (22.5%), both with 41 respondents. The profile of the respondents is shown in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Demographic profiles of obstacle course runners

	n	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	141	77.5
Female	40	22
Gender non-binary	1	0.5
<b>Age</b>		
18-25	43	23.6
26-35	83	45.6
36-45	48	26.4
46-55	8	4.4
<b>Marital status</b>		
Married or domestic partnership	65	35.7
Divorced	7	3.8
Single	107	58.8
Separated	2	1.1
Widowed	1	0.5
<b>Occupation</b>		
Full-time/ Part-time paid workers	108	59.3
Self-employed	30	16.5
Students	29	15.9
Unemployed	5	2.7
Other	10	5.5
<b>Education</b>		
Doctor's degree	6	3.3
Master's degree	56	30.8

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Bachelor's degree	66	36.3
High school graduate or the equivalent	41	22.5
Secondary education	9	4.9
Elementary education	1	0.5
Non-schooling	3	1.6
<b>Annual household income</b>		
Below€10,000	28	15.4
€10,001-€30,000	46	25.3
€30,001-€50,000	52	28.6
€50,001-€70,000	20	11.0
€70,001-€90,000	8	4.4
Above€90,001	15	8.2
Prefer not to mention	13	7.1
<b>Region</b>		
Spain	164	90.1
Other country	18	9.9
<b>Previous participation times</b>		
None	96	52.7
1-3	25	13.7
4-7	15	8.2
8-11	10	5.5
12-15	36	19.8
<b>Type of race</b>		
Sprint (5-KM, 20 obstacles)	90	49.5
Super (10-KM, 25 obstacles)	41	22.5
Beast (21-KM, 30 obstacles)	41	22.5
More than one race	10	5.5

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### 3.3.4 Data analysis

After renaming the variables automatically imported into the SPSS data file, the data were reviewed for errors and missing values. Since this was a paper-and-pencil questionnaire, any incomplete responses were discarded prior to further analysis.

Then, a two-step approach was carried out to test the measurement model and structural model (Hair, 2018). Firstly, we tested the measurement model using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with the maximum likelihood method. Multiple fit indices were used to evaluate the model fit, chi-square/degree of freedom ( $\chi^2/df$ ), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), incremental fit index (IFI), comparable fit index (CFI), normed fit index (NFI), and Standardized Root Mean Squared Residual (SRMR) (Hu & Bentler, 1999). For an acceptable fit, a  $\chi^2/df$  value between 2 to 3, TLI, CFI, and IFI values above 0.90, an RMSEA value below 0.08, and an SRMR value below 0.08 are recommended (Hair, 2018).

Subsequently, the measurement model was further evaluated by examining item reliability, construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. For item reliability, the standardized loading estimates should be higher than 0.40 and Cronbach's Alpha should be higher than 0.70. Construct reliability was evaluated by composite reliability (CR), for which values of 0.70 or higher indicate good reliability, and values between 0.60 and 0.70 are acceptable. Convergent validity was assessed by average variance extracted (AVE), with a threshold of 0.50 suggesting adequate convergence. Finally, discriminant validity was examined by both Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion and the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio (Henseler et al., 2015).

Finally, structural equation modeling (SEM) with the maximum likelihood method was used to test the measurement model, as the sample did not follow a normal distribution (Bollen, 1989). The overall model fit was assessed following the same criteria to assess the measurement model. Finally, a bootstrapping method was used to examine the mediation effects. Bias-corrected 95% confidence

intervals and 5,000 bootstrap samples were used. Descriptive analysis and SEM were conducted by using IBM SPSS Statistics 29.0 and AMOS 26.0.

### **3.4 Method for examining loyalty of active sport tourists in winter sport tourism (Aim 3)**

#### **3.4.1 Data collection**

The data for this study were collected using an online questionnaire via Google Form. Since the original tool was designed for an English-speaking context, a back-translation process was conducted to ensure content validity and adapt it to a Spanish-speaking context. Prior to the formal survey, a pre-test was conducted with 22 skiers and snowboarders to ensure the correct interpretation of the questions. Based on their feedback regarding the clarity of the items, adjustments were made to the questionnaire items. Most modifications focused on improving the English-to-Spanish translation to better align with language use and terminology in Spanish. The formal survey was distributed to group chats of winter sports practitioners and individual enthusiasts in Spain through social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, using the snowball sampling method. An introduction to the study was first shared with individuals who had publicly posted about their winter sports experiences on social media. Subsequently, the survey link was sent via direct messages, inviting participants to complete the questionnaire. Similar approach has also been applied in previous research (e.g. Jin et al., 2022). Previous research may mention that different motivations exist among first-time visitors and repeat visitors (Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002). This study only requested individuals who had previously participated in winter sports to complete the questionnaire for a better understanding of the antecedents of their loyalty. An inclusion criterion was applied to include the respondents who have participated in winter sports in the past two years as they could recall their recent experiences. Therefore, a screening question was included in the Google Form. If respondents indicated that they had not engaged in winter sports during this period, they were prevented from proceeding with the questionnaire. During the winter season,

which is between January 2023 and April 2023, a total of 398 questionnaires were received. Among them, 76 were excluded as they were inactive participants, and 3 were excluded due to duplicate responses, leaving us with a total of 319 valid responses. The effective response rate was 80.9%. The use of the A-priori Sample Size Calculator for Structural Equation Models (Soper, 2024) verified that the sample size surpassed the required minimum sample size, which is 200 in this case, based on the 0.8 power level and a probability level of 0.05 (Westland, 2010). The questionnaire was provided in both English and Spanish. The project of this thesis was submitted to the Ethics Committee of Universidad Politécnica de Madrid and registered under the number RAUIOLBIS0-LMS-DATOS-20230419 (see Appendix 2). Similarly, the online survey was anonymous, respondents were not asked to provide any information such as names and email addresses. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their access to the questionnaire (see Appendix 4).

### **3.4.2 Measures**

A self-administered questionnaire was developed to test the variables: a) motivation, b) involvement, c) subjective well-being, and d) loyalty. All the Items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale where 1 represents “Strongly disagree” and “7” represents “Strongly agree”. Respondents were required to select responses regarding their experiences on winter trips. Items assessing demographics asked about their gender, age, marital status, occupation, education, annual household income, and place of origin. Furthermore, questions to determine their travel patterns were also asked, such as the length of the trip and their favored activities.

#### ***Motivation***

The study adapted 32 items, such as ‘To rest’ and ‘To enjoy nature’, representing seven motivational dimensions: ‘Escape’ (8 items), ‘Social Recognition’ (4 items), ‘Enjoying Nature’ (3 items), ‘Excitement’ (5 items), ‘Socialization’ (5 items), ‘Skill Development’ (4 items), and ‘Achievement’ (3 items). These items were selected from the Recreation Experience Preference Scales (REP) scale, originally

comprising 328 items across 19 domains (Driver, 1983), and were based on the previous work in the context of winter sport tourists (Alexandris et al., 2009). Respondents were asked to indicate their reasons for engaging in winter sports at a resort. To fit the different objectives of the studies and achieve good responses from the respondents, short versions of REP scales were preferred (Alexandris et al., 2009; Manfredo et al., 1996). Its robustness has been confirmed through meta-analysis by Manfredo et al. (1996), attesting to its validity and reliability in various contexts. In this study, Cronbach's alpha values of these seven dimensions ranged from 0.79 to 0.95, indicating good reliability. Additionally, the threshold for AVE ( $>0.50$ ) was met, supporting convergent validity.

### ***Involvement***

Involvement measures were drawn from the scale used previously in the context of recreational skiers (Alexandris et al., 2008), which was originally from Kyle et al. (2004). The scale includes three-facet involvement, altogether 11 items, which are: a) Attraction, measured with five items, such as 'Doing winter sports is important to me'; b) Centrality, measured with three items, such as 'I find a lot of my life is organized around winter sports'; and c) Self-expression, measured with three items, such as 'When I participate in winter sports, I can really be myself'. Respondents were asked to reflect on their experiences at the resort regarding their involvement with winter sports. The widely acknowledged three-facet model, which has been extensively applied in prior research, has consistently demonstrated its validity (e.g., Cheng & Lu, 2015; Morris et al., 2018). In this study, Cronbach's alpha values of these three dimensions ranged from 0.71 to 0.95, indicating good reliability. Additionally, the threshold for AVE was met, supporting convergent validity.

### ***Subjective well-being***

Four items were used to measure the subjective well-being of winter sports tourists. Items were captured from Kim et al. (2015), which include items such as "I am satisfied with life in general". Respondents were asked to reflect on their

experiences at the resort regarding their perceived subjective well-being. The internal consistency of the measurement was confirmed in prior research, with a high Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.929 (e.g., Kim et al., 2015). In this current study, both reliability and validity were also verified, as both Cronbach's Alpha and AVE values met the thresholds.

### *Loyalty*

Loyalty was measured using three items, which are: a) choosing winter sports over other activities; b) recommending winter sports to others, and c) spreading positive words about winter sports to others, adopted from Chang and Gibson (2015). This measurement, previously validated in other studies (e.g., Chang & Gibson, 2015; Lee, 2009), was again confirmed in the current research, demonstrating both reliability and validity through acceptable Cronbach's Alpha and AVE values.

### **3.4.3 Sample characteristics**

The sample was comprised of slightly more males (55.8%) than females (42.9%). The ages of the respondents ranged from 14 to 80 years old. The largest age group was between 26 to 35 years (25.7%), and the average age was 35.8 years. Respondents mostly came from the Spanish regions (92.8%). Regarding the length of the trip, most of the respondents prefer to take a trip of more than one day, 2-3 days trip (37.0%) and one week trip (32.3%) are the two most favorable types. Almost all the respondents (96.9%) were either skiers or snowboarders. Besides, the top three activities that respondents enjoyed are apres-ski/entertainment (31.0%), walks/ hiking (30.7%), and ski touring/ snowshoeing (22.3%). Respondents mostly came in a group of friends (54.9%) and family (35.1%). The demographic profile of respondents is shown in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5 Demographic profiles of winter sport tourists

	n	%
<b>Gender</b>		

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Male	178	55.8
Female	137	42.9
other	4	1.3
<b>Age</b>		
<18	42	13.2
18-25	55	17.2
26-35	82	25.7
36-45	46	14.4
46-55	54	16.9
>55	40	12.5
<b>Marital status</b>		
Married or domestic partnership	127	39.8
Divorced	14	4.4
Single	168	52.6
Separated	5	1.6
Widowed	5	1.6
<b>Occupation</b>		
Full-time/ Part-time paid workers	166	52.0
Self-employed	35	11.0
Students	91	28.5
Unemployed	3	0.9
Retired	13	4.1
Other	11	3.4
<b>Education</b>		
Doctor's degree	18	5.6
Master's degree	73	22.9
Bachelor's degree	114	35.7
High school graduate or the equivalent	73	22.9
Less than high school	34	10.7
Other	7	2.2
<b>Annual household income</b>		

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Below€10,000	18	5.6
€10,001-€30,000	66	20.7
€30,001-€50,000	74	23.2
€50,001-€70,000	45	14.1
€70,001-€90,000	16	5.0
Above€90,001	11	3.4
Prefer not to mention	89	27.9
<b>Country of residence</b>		
Spain	296	92.8
Out of Spain	21	6.6
NA	2	0.6
<b>Length of the trip</b>		
One-day trip (more than 50 km)	63	19.7
2-3 days trip	118	37.0
One week trip	103	32.3
More than one week	35	11.0
<b>Activities (multiple choices)</b>		
Alpine or Nordic skiing/snowboarding	309	96.9
Ski touring/snowshoeing	71	22.3
Walks/hiking	98	30.7
Sledging/tobogganing	21	6.6
Après-ski/entertainment	99	31.0
<b>Travel Companion</b>		
Family	112	35.1
Friends (non-club members)	175	54.9
Club members	14	4.4
Solo	18	5.6

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### 3.4.4 Data analysis

After renaming the variables automatically imported into the SPSS data file, the data were reviewed for errors and missing values. Since the survey was

conducted online, the system prevented submission of incomplete questionnaires, ensuring that no missing values or errors were present.

Firstly, the data were tested for the normality, the common method variance, and the multicollinearity. The normal distribution was tested by analyzing the skewness and kurtosis values of the items. All skewness and kurtosis values were found to be between  $\pm 2$  and  $\pm 7$  respectively (Hair, 2018)(see Table 4.10), thus ensuring a normal distribution. Harmon's single factor test was performed for the test of common method bias. The results indicated that a single factor explained 21.3%, which is lower than the threshold of 40% (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The Variance inflation factor (VIF) was used to test the multicollinearity problem, and no problem was detected as the VIF values for the dimensions ranged from 1.22 to 2.10.

A two-step approach was then carried out to test the measurement model and structural model (Hair, 2018). Firstly, we tested the measurement model using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Multiple fit indices were used to evaluate the model fit, chi-square/degree of freedom ( $\chi^2/df$ ), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), incremental fit index (IFI), comparable fit index (CFI), normed fit index (NFI), and Standardized Root Mean Squared Residual (SRMR) (Hu & Bentler, 1999). For an acceptable fit, a  $\chi^2/df$  between 2 to 3, IFI, CFI, and NFI above 0.90, RMSEA below 0.08, and SRMR below 0.08 are recommended. Subsequently, the measurement model was further evaluated by examining item reliability, construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. For item reliability, the standardized loading estimates should be higher than 0.40 and Cronbach's Alpha should be higher than 0.60. Construct reliability was evaluated by composite reliability (CR), for which values of 0.70 or higher indicate good reliability. Convergent validity was assessed by AVE with a threshold of 0.50. Discriminant validity was examined by Fornell and Larcker's criterion. Lastly, Structural equation modeling (SEM) with the maximum likelihood method was used to test the structural model. The overall model fit was assessed following the same criteria to assess the measurement model. A bootstrapping method was used to examine the mediation effects. Bias-corrected

95% confidence intervals and 5,000 bootstrap samples were used. The data analysis was conducted by using IBM SPSS Statistics 29.0 and AMOS 26.0.

## CHAPTER 4

### Results

## 4 Results

### 4.1 Results of the scoping review on the antecedents and outcomes of active sport tourist loyalty (Aim 1)

#### 4.1.1 RQ1: What is the picture of the existing literature in active sport tourist loyalty?

The 47 peer-reviewed articles analyzed in this review were published in 29 academic journals as presented in Table 4.1. The journals were classified by combining categories from both the JCR and SJR databases, considering any differences in their categorizations and cases where a journal appears in one or both databases. For example, *European Sport Management Quarterly* falls under the “Tourism, Leisure, and Hospitality Management” category in SJR database, while it is classified as “Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism” in JCR database. Therefore, to create a unified classification, the combined category “Tourism, Leisure, Sport, and Hospitality” was used in this thesis. Unsurprisingly, the number of journals in the Tourism, Leisure, Sport, and Hospitality field is the largest, accounting for 36 out of 47 articles. Additionally, four were published in the field of business and seven in the fields of environmental and social sciences. The various fields reflect the intricate nature of sport tourism which draws insights from multiple disciplines (Gibson et al., 2018). Among all the publications, Journal of Sport & Tourism (n=7) was published the most, followed by International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship (n=4) and Sustainability (n=4).

Table 4.1 Journal source

Journal titles	number
<b>Tourism, Leisure, Sport, and Hospitality (n=36)</b>	
Journal of Sport & Tourism	7
International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship	4
European Sport Management Quarterly	2
Event Management	2
Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	2
Sport Management Review	2
GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites	1
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	1
International Journal of Tourism Research	1
Journal of Convention & Event Tourism	1
Journal of Destination Marketing & Management	1
Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research	1
Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism	1
Journal of Physical Education and Sport	1
Journal of Sport Management	1
Journal of Travel Research	1
Journal of Vacation Marketing	1
Leisure Sciences	1
South African Journal for Research in Sport, Physical Education and Recreation	1
Sport Marketing Quarterly	1
Tourism and Hospitality Management	1
Tourism Management	1
Tourism Review International	1
<b>Business (n=4)</b>	
Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics	3
EuroMed Journal of Business	1
<b>Environmental and Social Sciences (n=7)</b>	

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Sustainability	4
International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	1
Sage Open	1
Social Behavior and Personality	1

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Figure 4.1 presents an overview of the number of publications on the topic of active sport tourist loyalty. All included publications were published between 2005 and 2023. This timeframe coincides with a shift in scholarly focus advocated by Gibson (2004) and Weed (2005), which is the transition from the mere definition and nature of sport tourism to exploring the “why” questions. The findings also indicate that it has been nearly two decades since the first paper on active sport tourist loyalty was published. While Kouthouris and Alexandris (2005) argued that the SERVQUAL model was not effective in predicting loyalty among active sport tourists, their study was the earliest attempts to examine the antecedents and outcomes of loyalty in a Greek outdoor setting. In the subsequent decade, this topic didn’t receive much scholar attention. Notably, since 2015, there has been a surge in academic interest towards active sport tourism, with over 80% of the reviewed articles published in the last decade. Since 2020, the number of articles published has increased rapidly from one in 2019 to nine in 2020, and interests continue to grow, as indicated by certain amounts of publications in recent years.

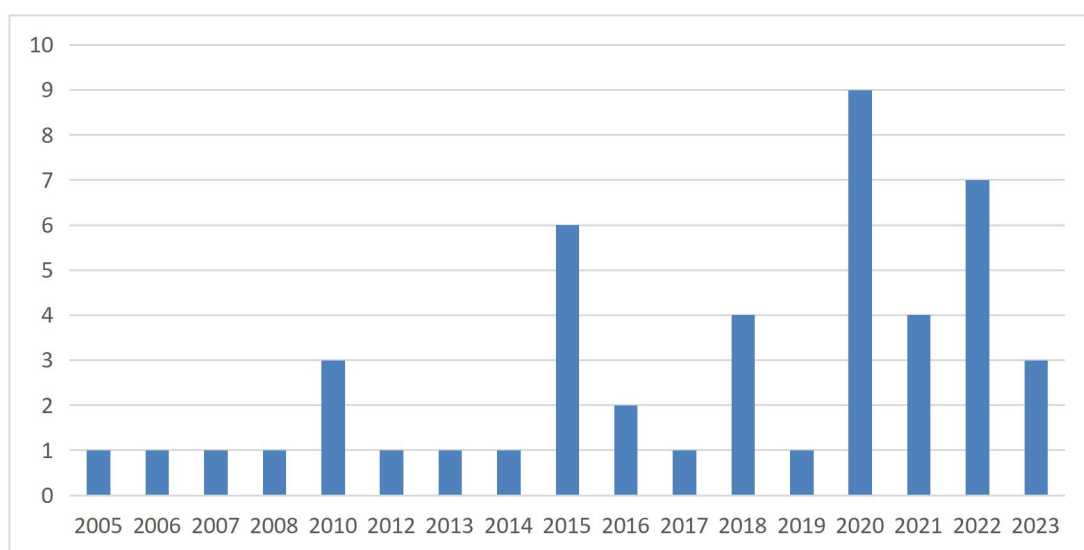


Figure 4.1 Years of publications (n=47)

An analysis was also conducted to identify the location where each study was conducted and the location of the first author's affiliation. These 47 studies were conducted in 17 countries with the U.S. taking the lead (n=10), followed by China (n=7), Spain, Greece, and the Republic of Korea (n=5). Table 4.2 shows the geographic information about the reviewed articles. Notably, North America, Europe, and Asia regions emerge as the main contributors to academic publications. The timeline of academic interest in this domain reflects a noteworthy shift. Starting from 2010, the Asian regions, particularly Japan, began displaying a growing interest in this field (see Table 4.6). An increase in investigations into active sport tourism within the Asian region becomes more evident from 2020 onwards, particularly in China and the Republic of Korea. The findings also suggest that, in comparison to other nations, the U.S. has been consistently taking the lead in active sport tourism research. This can be attributed to its early establishment and rapid development in active sport tourism two decades ago (Gibson, 1998a).

Table 4.2 Geographic information

Country	Study location	First author affiliation
	number	number
<b>North America</b>		
United States	10	11
Canada	1	1
<b>Asia</b>		
Iran	1	1
Japan	4	3
China	7	9
Malaysia	1	-
Republic of Korea	5	5

Thailand	1	1
<b>Africa</b>		
South Africa	1	1
<b>Europe</b>		
Greece	5	4
Iceland	1	-
Serbia	1	1
Spain	5	4
German	3	2
Austria	1	-
Italy	2	3
France	1	/
<b>Australia</b>		
Australia	/	1

#### 4.1.2 RQ2: Which type of active sport tourism has been studied?

Table 4.3 presents the various types of active sport tourism investigated in the reviewed articles. The results were analyzed according to the typologies of Gibson (1998a) and Hall (1992), in which activity participation (i.e., engaging in sport-related travel) and event participation (i.e., traveling to take part in sport events). Over 70% of the research contexts for active sport tourist loyalty were sport event participation. Among them, the marathon event was investigated most (n=21), followed by cycling event (n=5). Over the past two decades, small-scale participatory sport events hosted by communities have grown and events such as marathons and cycling have become popular (Buning & Gibson, 2018). Communities have started to recognize the importance of attracting outbound tourists for participation. Such events are normally recurring and could be seen as a hallmark to promote the destination and tourism (Gibson et al., 2012). Therefore, loyalty was often discussed in this context to understand tourists' intentions to revisit the event and, furthermore, to revisit the destination

(Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010). However, there is relatively less scholarly emphasis on activity participation due to the challenges in measuring loyalty, particularly in the contexts of seasonal outdoor activities and infrequent participation (Alexandris et al., 2008).

Table 4.3 Type of active sport tourism

Type of active sport tourism	number
<b>Activity participation</b>	
Skiing/ Winter sports	4
Surfing/ Water sports	3
Rafting	2
Outdoor sports	2
Golf	1
Active sport tourism	1
<b>Competition participation</b>	
Marathon/Running	21
Cycling	5
Sport event (multiple sports)	3
Extreme sports	2
Ultramarathon	2
Triathlon	2

#### 4.1.3 RQ3: What theories or frameworks underpinned existing research?

Numerous theories and frameworks have been employed to explore potential connections between antecedents and outcomes of loyalty. Table 4.4 illustrates the specific theories, frameworks, and perspectives used in the reviewed articles. Following Kim and Cuskelly (2017), the concept of ‘cited’ and ‘applied’ provides a criterion for a better understanding of the theoretical underpinnings.

*Cited means that a study mentioned a theoretical framework but there was no evidence that the researchers tested the cited theory. Applied means that a study was based on a specifically identified theory that informed the direction and research design of the article as well as being evident in the results and discussion. (p. 89)*

Among these studies, 32 applied at least one theory and 4 only cited but not applied; however, 11 studies did not explicitly indicate whether they applied or cited any theory. While loyalty lacks a specific theoretical foundation, the nature of loyalty as “a process in which favorability encourages behaviors” (Chang & Gibson, 2015, p. 43) calls for the application of various theories stemming from psychology, marketing, and human behaviors. In this study, the Stimulus-Organism-Response theory (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) emerged as one of the most used theories (n=3). Originally developed to understand customer behaviors (Bitner, 1992), this theory was employed to understand individual loyal behaviors (responses) through organisms such as event attachment, which is triggered by Stimulus, such as eventscape (Zhang, 2022). Another prevalent theory was the Cognitive-Affective-Conative theoretical framework (Gartner, 1996) (n=3), which has been proven useful in understanding tourists’ intentions to revisit (e.g. Allameh et al., 2015). The Push and Pull motivation theory (n=3) (Dann, 1981) has also been suggested to explain travel behaviors and decision-making (e.g. Rejón-Guardia et al., 2023).

Table 4.4 Theoretical basis

Theories, frameworks/models, and perspective	Applied	Cited
	number	number
<b>Theory</b>		
Push-Pull Theory	3	1
Self-determination Theory	2	
Theory of planned behavior (TPB)	2	1
Edgework Theory	2	
Resource Theory	1	
Attribution Theory	1	

Cognitive Adaption Theory	1	
Sensation-seeking Theory	1	
Disconfirmation Theory		1
Theory of Reasoned Action	1	
Match-up Theory	1	
Goal setting Theory	1	
Prospect Theory	1	
Achievement goal Theory	1	
Social exchange Theory	1	
Cultural value Theory	1	
Flow Theory		1
<b>Framework/Model</b>		
Cognitive-Affective-Conative Framework	3	
Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Model	3	
Valence-based Approach	2	
Psychological Continuum Model (PCM)	2	
Leisure Constraint Framework	1	
Emotion Specificity Approach	1	
Service quality-satisfaction-behavioral intention chain	1	
Service quality model	1	
EVENTQUAL model	1	
SERVQUAL model	1	
<b>Perspective</b>		
Service-Dominant (S·D) Logic perspective	1	
Destination loyalty formation perspective	1	

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#### **4.1.4 RQ4: What methodologies have been used in existing research?**

Regarding the methodologies applied in the reviewed articles, the majority of papers implemented a quantitative approach (n=46) and only one paper

implemented a mixed-methods approach (Schwab et al., 2022) (See Table 4.6). A self-administered survey, either on-site or online, was the most used quantitative method with a sample size varied from 107 (Schwab et al., 2022) to 3186 (Hyun & Jordan, 2020). The only mixed-methods approach study combined a survey and an interview. Regarding the statistical analysis, more than half of the papers conducted Structural Equation Modeling along with Confirmatory Factor Analysis (n=31), followed by regression analysis (n=12) and exploratory factor analysis (n=9), Hayes Macro Process Regression (n=4), and MANOVA (n=2).

In terms of gender distribution in the sampling, most articles used samples with a greater number of male respondents than female participants (n=39) (See Table 4.6). Notably, the study by Rejón-Guardia et al. (2023) reported the highest proportion of male respondents at 91%, highlighting an imbalance in the sampled populations within this field. This trend echoes the findings of Gibson et al. (2018), who noted that active sport tourism continues to be male-dominated, despite the ongoing calls for gender equality for over two decades.

Table 4.5 Methods and research approaches used

Research Methods and Approaches	number
<b>Quantitative</b>	
Survey	46
<b>Mixed Methods</b>	
Survey & Interview	1

#### **4.1.5 RQ5: What are the antecedents and outcomes of active sport tourist loyalty and what are their relationships?**

##### ***Antecedents***

Table 4.6 presents a detailed summary of antecedents, outcomes, and their associations. Antecedents in this study are categorized as appraisal-based and relational (Qi et al., 2023). Appraisal-based antecedents involve factors evaluated and appraised during the experience, such as image (e.g. An & Yamashita, 2022),

perceived quality (e.g. Fam et al., 2020), and satisfaction (e.g. Jin et al., 2022). These factors serve as determinants of loyalty, as positive evaluations often lead to loyalty behaviors. However, individuals may still exhibit loyalty even if the perceived benefits are not entirely satisfactory, driven by their personal experiences, emotions, and cognitive links between self and the object (Qi et al., 2023). Relational factors also significantly contribute to predicting loyalty, such as involvement (e.g. Filo et al., 2013) and attachment (e.g. Raggiotto & Scarpi, 2021). Although not mentioned in Qi et al. (2023)'s study, factors such as motivation and constraint were also included in this category since loyal behaviors may be driven or inhibited by reasons that individuals perceived or experienced. Demographic antecedents, such as income and country, were not incorporated into this conceptualization and therefore were not accounted in this study. Among the appraisal-based antecedents, satisfaction (n=25) is the most frequently measured factor, followed by image related to either destination or event (n=21). Tourists who express higher satisfaction or perceive the destination or event more favorably are more likely to return or recommend it to others (Moore et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2014). The influence of perceived value (n=9) and perceived quality (n=8) were more commonly studied in event settings, mostly in marathon events, to assess the various aspects associated with the event (e.g. Fam et al., 2020; Fernández-Martínez et al., 2022). Some articles explored attitudes (n=4), stemming from the TPB, which can explain the intentions to engage in a behavior (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010). Tourists' emotional factors (n=3), particularly their positive emotions leading to memorable experiences, are identified as triggers for loyalty. Additionally, factors such as natural soundscape (Jeong, 2023) and travel resources (Okayasu et al., 2010) may impact loyalty, though only one study each has explored these antecedents. In addition, active sport tourist loyalty is triggered by relational antecedents, primarily driven by attachment to either the event or destination (n=6) and motivation (n=5). It is also important to note that constraints can play a role as a negative determinant of loyalty (e.g. Alexandris et al., 2008).

### *Outcomes*

Based on the conceptualization of tourist loyalty, this study applied three perspectives of tourist loyalty, namely, attitudinal, behavioral, and composite (Yin & Dai, 2021). Attitudinal loyalty refers to the intention to engage in a word-of-mouth recommendation or speak positive words to others. Behavioral loyalty refers to the intention to revisit the destination or re-participate in the event. And composite loyalty refers to the combination of attitudinal and behavioral loyalty. Almost two-thirds of the articles reported a more comprehensive composite perspective to measure loyalty (n=30), followed by behavioral loyalty (n=13) and attitudinal loyalty (n=4). This aligns with prior reviews in tourism, indicating a preference for composite loyalty (Yin & Dai, 2021).

Destination loyalty has been extensively investigated in various tourism contexts (Zhang et al., 2014). However, active sport tourist loyalty seems more complicated, as their loyal behaviors are likely to be influenced by both the destination and the event or activity they are participating in. The present study further summarized the outcomes in different settings based on their research objectives, namely event/activity-based setting, destination-based setting, and composite setting (including both event/activity and destination) (See Table 4.6). The finding presented a consistent distribution of the setting investigated in the sample that event/activity (n=19), destination (n=14), and composite settings (n=14) were nearly equally measured.

### *The relationships between the antecedents and outcomes*

The relationships between the antecedents and outcomes of active sport tourist loyalty have been widely studied (Yoo et al., 2021a). Nevertheless, Tanford (2016) advocated for greater consistency in the tourism literature, as some variables could be viewed as direct or indirect antecedents, moderators, or mediators. To enhance clarity in presenting these relationships, this study categorizes them into distinct types: indirect antecedents, direct antecedents, and outcomes. Therefore, a framework that graphically presents relationships is essential at this stage, serving as a starting point for understanding the antecedents and outcomes of active sport tourist loyalty (see Figure 4.2).

The most observed indirect antecedent was image where 9 articles reported the indirect influence of either destination image or sport event image on loyalty, followed by service quality (n=5), perceived value (n=4), and attitude (n=3). Other factors were mentioned once, suggesting they might be specific to certain contexts, such as sensation-seeking in extreme sports events, which might not apply to other types of events (Raggiotto & Scarpi, 2021).

The most common direct antecedent is satisfaction (n=22), followed by image (n=16), perceived quality (n=7), and perceived value (n=5). Relational antecedents, such as attachment (n=6) and motivation (n=4) could directly trigger loyal behaviors. It is important to acknowledge that certain motivational factors may adversely affect loyalty, for instance, exploration and self-development could decrease the likelihood of repeated participation in cycling events (Rejón-Guardia et al., 2023). Certain direct antecedents were mentioned in fewer than three articles, indicating they are not prevalent in sport tourism studies, or they remain unexplored. Notably, there is also a link within the loyalty outcomes, that is event loyalty can directly predict destination loyalty. When individuals commit to an event, it can influence their feelings toward the destination, benefiting event organizers and destination marketers (Newland & Yoo, 2021). Such finding has been found in active sport event participation that event loyalty is positively associated with destination loyalty (Yoo et al., 2021a), which calls for a better establishment of the event-destination portfolio.

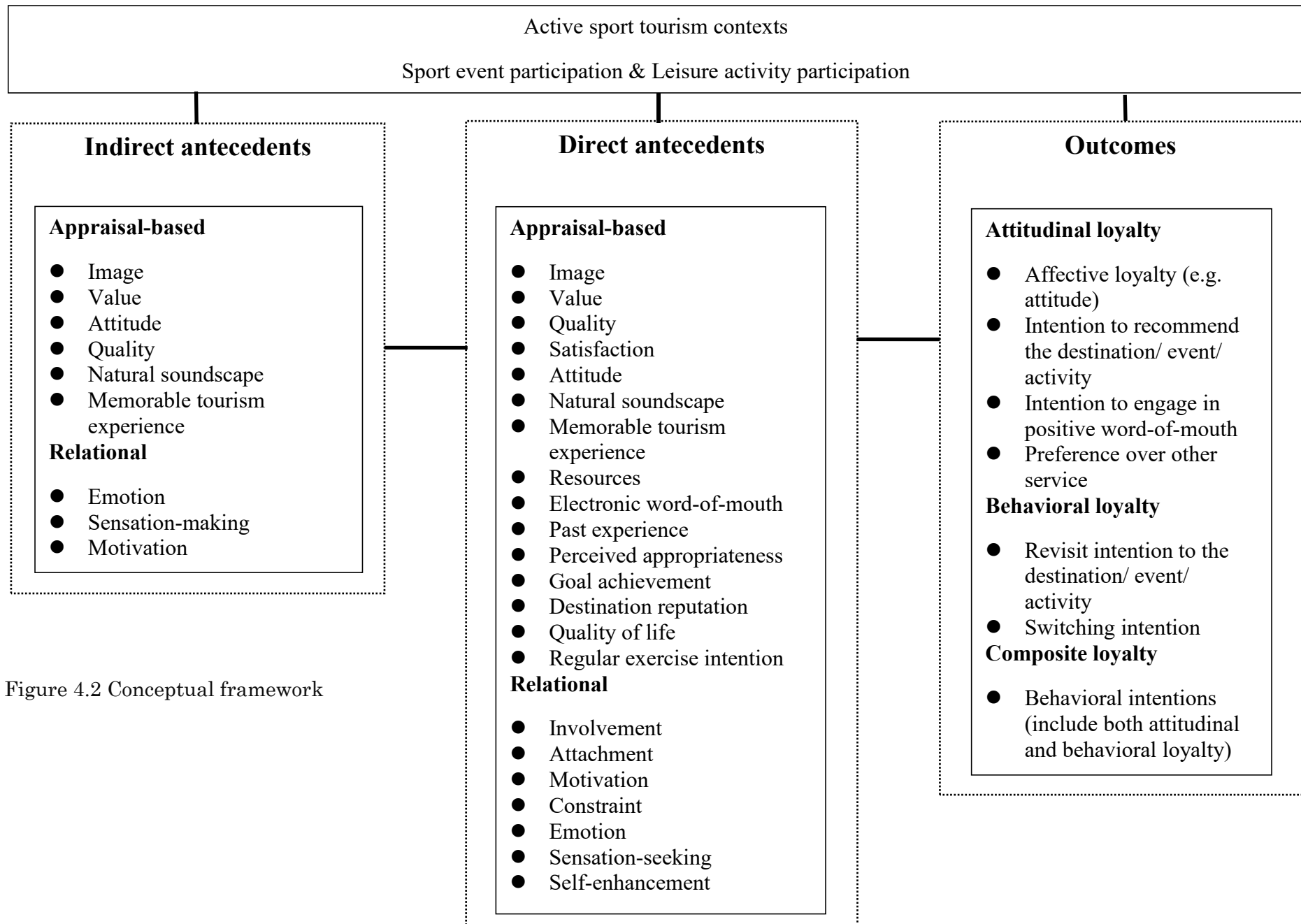


Figure 4.2 Conceptual framework

Table 4.6 Summary table

Author	Country	Sample	Method & statistical analysis	Antecedent		Approach of loyalty (attitudinal or behavioral or composite)	Type of loyalty (event/activity-related or destination-related or composite)	Association	
				appraisal based	relational			direct	indirect
Alexandris et al., 2006	Greece	n=264 56% male	quantitative survey & regression analysis		place attachment	attitudinal	activity-related	place attachment	
Alexandris et al., 2008	Greece	n=190 50.5% male	quantitative survey & EFA, regression analysis		involvement; constraint (neg)	attitudinal	activity-related	involvement; constraint	
Allameh et al., 2015	Iran	n=886 88.03% male	quantitative survey & CFA, SEM	destination image; perceived quality; perceived value; satisfaction		behavioral	destination-related	destination image; perceived quality; perceived value; satisfaction	
An&Yamashita, 2022	Japan	n=441 52.6% male	quantitative survey & CFA, SEM	event attitude; destination image		composite	composite	event attitude	destination image
Chen et al., 2021	China	n=392 73% male	quantitative survey & CFA, SEM	event service quality; destination image; satisfaction		composite	destination-related	event service quality; destination image; satisfaction	destination image; satisfaction
Đurađević et al., 2022	Serbia	n=207 65.6% male	quantitative survey & CFA, SEM	service quality		behavioral	event-related	service quality	
Fam et al., 2020	China	n=177 28% male	quantitative survey & PLS-SEM	perceived venue quality; perceived race competition; perceived		composite	composite	perceived venue quality; Perceived race	perceived value

				value				competition; perceived value	
Fernández- Martínez et al., 2022	Spain	n=866 84.4% male	quantitative survey & CFA, SEM	service quality; satisfaction; perceived value		attitudinal	destination -related	functional quality; satisfaction	functional quality; outcome quality; perceived value
Filo et al., 2013	Australia	n=1029 47% male	quantitative survey & CFA, MANOVA		destination involvement	behavioral	destination -related	destination involvement	
Girish &Lee, 2019	Korea	n=313 83.7% male	quantitative survey & CFA, SEM	sport event image		composite	event-related	sport event image	
Hallmann & Breuer, 2010	German	N=551 70.3% male	quantitative survey & regression analysis	sport event image; destination image; image fit		behavioral	composite	image fit; event/ destination image	
Hallmann et al., 2015	German	N=795 57% male	quantitative survey & CFA, SEM	image		behavioral	destination -related	image	
Halpenny et al., 2016	Canada	N=387 32.5% male	quantitative survey & CFA, SEM	perceived appropriate- ness; past experience image	park/event attachment; motive	composite	composite	perceived appropriate- ness; attachment image	motive; frequency
Huang et al., 2015	China	N=254 83.5% male	quantitative survey & EFA, CFA, regression analysis, Manova, Macro Hayes	congruence; satisfaction; past experience		behavioral	event-related	congruence; satisfaction; past experience	image congruence
Hyun & Jordan, 2020	USA	N=3186 53.22% male	quantitative survey & CFA, SEM	satisfaction; service quality; perceived value; goal achievement		behavioral	event-related	satisfaction	service quality; perceived value; goal achievement

Jeong et al., 2020	Korea	N=301 54.2% male	quantitative survey & CFA, SEM	perceived value; satisfaction		composite	destination-related	perceived value; satisfaction	
Jeong & Kim, 2020	Korea	N=311 63.7% male	quantitative survey & CFA, SEM	destination image; perceived value; satisfaction		composite	destination-related	destination image, perceived value, satisfaction	destination image, perceived value
Jeong et al., 2020	Korea	N=230 71.7% male	quantitative survey & CFA, SEM	emotional experiences; satisfaction		composite	destination-related	emotional experiences; satisfaction	emotional experiences
Jeong al., 2023	Korea	N=300 55.7% male	quantitative survey & CFA, SEM	natural soundscapes; memorable tourism experience; emotions		composite	destination-related	natural soundscapes; memorable tourism experience; emotions	natural soundscapes; memorable tourism experience
Jin et al., 2022	China	N=334 78.4% male	quantitative survey & EFA, CFA, regression analysis	experience quality; satisfaction	motivation	composite	event-related	motivation; experience quality; satisfaction	
Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007	USA	N=495/344 54% male	quantitative survey & CFA, SEM	destination image; past experience		behavioral	destination-related	destination image, past experience	
Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010	USA	N=112 70% male	quantitative survey & path analysis	attitude, satisfaction, destination image		behavioral	event-related	attitude, satisfaction	attitude, destination image
Kaplanidou et al., 2012	USA	N=2015 47.4% male	quantitative survey & EFA, regression analysis	destination image		composite	composite	destination image	
Kim & Jogaratnam, 2015	USA	N=1393 N/A	quantitative survey & CFA, SEM	satisfaction; performance of sport event; destination competitiveness		composite	composite	satisfaction	performance of sport event; destination competitiveness

Koo et al., 2014	USA	N=297 49.2% male	quantitative survey & CFA, regression analysis	event image; satisfaction		composite	event-related	event image; satisfaction	event image
Kouthouris & Alexandris, 2005	Greece	N=287 46.8% male	quantitative survey & regression analysis	satisfaction		behavioral	activity-related	satisfaction	
Kruger et al., 2016	South Africa/ German	SA: N=205 89% male GE: N=205 75% male	quantitative survey & EFA, regression analysis		motivation	behavioral	composite	motivation	
Liu et al., 2022	China	N=480 56.87% male	quantitative survey & PLS-SEM	awe; satisfaction		composite	activity-related	awe; satisfaction	
Ma & Kaplanidou, 2018	Taiwan, China	TW: N=573 46.3% male GR: n=228 56.1% male	quantitative survey & CFA, SEM	quality of life; regular exercise intention; service quality		composite	event-related	quality of life; regular exercise intention	service quality
Mason & Moretti, 2015	Italy	N=306 61% male	quantitative survey & CFA, SEM	quality; satisfaction		composite	composite	quality; satisfaction	
Nakphin et al., 2023	Thailand	N=761 51.1% male	quantitative survey & CFA, SEM	attitude; satisfaction		composite	composite	attitude; satisfaction	attitude
Newland & Yoo, 2021	USA	N=690 57.2% male	quantitative survey & CFA, SEM	event attributes; destination attributes		composite	composite	event attributes; destination attributes; event behavioral intentions	event attributes; destination attributes

Okayasu et al., 2010	Japan	N=287 87% male	quantitative survey & CFA, SEM	resource investments		attitudinal	event-related	resource investments	
Raggiotto & Scarpi, 2020	Italy	N=500 78% male	quantitative survey & CFA; Haye's Process macro		self-enhancement; risk-taking	behavioral	event-related	self-enhancement	risk-taking
Raggiotto & Scarpi, 2021	Italy	N=300 69% male	quantitative survey & CFA; Haye's Process macro		sensation-seeking; place attachment	composite	destination-related	sensation-seeking; place attachment	sensation-seeking
Rejón-Guardia et al., 2023	Spain	N=1098 91% male	quantitative survey & EFA; regression analysis	satisfaction with service	motivation	behavioral	event-related	satisfaction; motivation	
Sato et al., 2017	USA	N=328 61.9% male	quantitative survey & regression analysis	perceived value		composite	destination-related	perceived value	
Sato et al., 2018	USA	N=597 54.8% male	quantitative survey & EFA; CFA; SEM	satisfaction	pull motivations	composite	destination-related	pull motivation; satisfaction	pull motivation
Schwab et al., 2022	USA	N=107 36% male	mixed Methods & CFA; SEM		event attachment	composite	event-related	event attachment	
Su et al., 2018	Taiwan, China	N=294 87.8% male	quantitative survey & CFA; SEM; Haye's Process macro	satisfaction	place attachment	composite	composite	satisfaction; place attachment	satisfaction

Triantafillidou & Petala, 2015	Greece	N=250 58.4% male	quantitative survey & CFA; SEM	experience		composite	activity-based	experience	
Vegara-Ferri et al., 2018	Spain	N=236 78.4% male	quantitative survey & regression analysis	perception of destination; satisfaction		composite	composite	perception of destination; satisfaction	
Vegara-Ferri et al., 2020	Spain	N=236 78.4% male	quantitative survey & EFA; CFA; SEM	electronic word of mouth; satisfaction		composite	composite	electronic word of mouth; satisfaction	
Xiao et al., 2020	China	N=308 61.7% male	quantitative survey & SEM	service quality; satisfaction		composite	event-related	service quality; satisfaction	service quality
Yamashita & Takata, 2020	Japan	N=221 50.2% male	quantitative survey & CFA; SEM	destination reputation		composite	destination-related	destination reputation	
Yoo et al., 2021	USA	N=649 60.2% male	quantitative survey & CFA; SEM	event attributes; destination attributes; travel resources		composite	composite	event attributes; destination attributes; travel resources; event loyalty	
Zhang, 2022	China	N=466 79% male	quantitative survey & EFA; CFA; SEM	event attachment (event dependence)	event attachment (event identity)	composite	event-related	event dependence; event identity	

## **4.2 Results of examining loyalty of active sport tourists in a non-traditional event (Aim 2)**

### **4.2.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) employs a deductive approach, allowing researchers to test hypotheses and predict outcomes based on a theoretical framework (Meyers et al., 2006). This method specifies the variables and defines the relationships between the variables, guided by the theory.

Based on the criteria, the CFA results have shown an acceptable fit ( $\chi^2 / df = 392.365/191 = 2.054$ ,  $p < .001$ ; RMSEA = 0.076; TLI= 0.924; CFI = 0.937; IFI =0.938; SRMR= 0.061).

For item reliability, factor loading values of all dimensions were above 0.4 and Cronbach's Alpha of all dimensions was above the recommended score of 0.7. The CR values of all dimensions were above the recommended score of 0.7, indicating good reliability. Most of the AVE values were higher than 0.5 except for the 'Event Characteristics' dimension (AVE= 0.48) (Table 4.7), which could be considered acceptable as CR is higher than 0.6 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Lastly, discriminant validity was tested. Most of the squared correlations between dimensions were lower than their AVE values, except for event characteristics-destination characteristics. However, the statistical method to compare AVE and squared correlation has limitations when the two dimensions are theoretically correlated (Voorhees et al., 2016). Therefore, Heterotrait-Monotrait values were also checked, as shown in Table 4.8, and the values are lower than 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015). Thus, discriminant validity was established.

### **4.2.2 Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)**

Same as the criteria of the measurement model, the results ( $\chi^2 / df = 396.938/189 = 2.100$ ,  $p < .001$ ; RMSEA = 0.078; TLI= 0.921; CFI = 0.935; IFI =0.936; SRMR= 0.067) have shown an acceptable fit.

The estimated regression coefficient significance was analyzed to test the proposed theoretical framework hypotheses. Table 4.9 presents the structural paths, standardized coefficients, standard errors, t-values, probabilities, and the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ).

According to the results, hypotheses H1a ( $\beta = 0.484$ ,  $p < .01$ ), H2a ( $\beta = 0.682$ ,  $p < .001$ ), H3 ( $\beta = 0.327$ ,  $p < .001$ ), H4 ( $\beta = 0.211$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and H5 ( $\beta = 0.520$ ,  $p < .001$ ) were successfully confirmed, while H1b and H2b were rejected. The direct path coefficients are shown in Figure 4.3.

The mediating role of Satisfaction between Event Characteristics and Behavioral Intentions, Destination Characteristics and Behavioral Intentions, and Attitudes toward event and Behavioral Intentions were further tested. Table 4.9 also shows the bootstrapping test of the indirect effects. The results revealed a significant indirect effect of EC on BI ( $\beta = 0.345$ ;  $p < .01$ ; 95%CI = [0.168, 1.226]), which indicated a mediation effect, supporting H6a. AT was also found to be indirectly associated with BI through satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.078$ ;  $p < .01$ ; 95%CI = [0.064, 0.388]), supporting H7. H6b was rejected as there is no mediation effect of Satisfaction between Destination Characteristics and Behavioral Intentions.

Table 4.7 Convergent validity test

Dimension	Variable	Factor loadings	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha
Attitudes toward event	AT1 Unpleasant-Pleasant	0.83	0.66	0.88	0.89
	AT2 Boring-Exciting	0.81			
	AT3 Dull-Entertaining	0.74			
	AT4 Worthless-Valuable	0.86			
Satisfaction with event	SA1 Overall event experience	0.90	0.73	0.93	0.93
	SA2 Registration process	0.76			
	SA3 Administration of event	0.88			
	SA4 Quality of facilities	0.80			
	SA5 Overall event organization	0.91			
Event characteristics			0.48	0.78	0.78
	EC1 Status of the event	0.91			
	EC2 Level of competition	0.70			
	EC3 Registration fee	0.42			
	EC4 Value of the experience for the money	0.65			
Destination characteristics			0.54	0.85	0.85
	DC1 Likelihood of good weather	0.54			
	DC2 Destination of the event	0.61			
	DC3 Ease of travel	0.73			
	DC4 Pleasant atmosphere	0.89			
	DC5 Personal safety	0.83			
Behavioral intentions		0.47	0.60	0.85	0.86
	BI1 Return to the destination for vacation				

BI2 Participate in the event again 0.90

BI3 Recommend the destination 0.67  
to others

BI4 Recommend the event to 0.96  
others

Note: AT: Attitudes toward event; SA: Satisfaction with event; EC: Event Characteristics; DC: Destination Characteristics; BI: Behavioral intentions.

Table 4.8 Discriminant validity test

Fornell & Larcker											
	EC	DC	AT	SA	BI	HTMT	EC	DC	AT	SA	BI
EC	<b>0.69</b>						EC				
DC	0.84**	<b>0.73</b>					DC	0.77			
AT	0.68**	0.64**	<b>0.81</b>				AT	0.64	0.62		
SA	0.79**	0.66**	0.77**	<b>0.85</b>			SA	0.75	0.64	0.76	
BI	0.69**	0.60**	0.72**	0.79**	<b>0.77</b>	BI	0.63	0.56	0.68	0.75	

Note: 1. \*\* denotes  $p < .01$ . 2. Square root of AVE is shown in the diagonal and in bold.

Table 4.9 Hypotheses test

Hypotheses	Paths	Std. Estimates	Std. error	C.R.	p	Result
<b>Direct Effect</b>						
H1a	EC→AT	0.484	0.179	3.163	**	Accepted
H1b	DC→AT	0.159	0.160	1.066	0.286	Rejected
H2a	EC→SA	0.682	0.227	4.537	***	Accepted
H2b	DC→SA	-0.114	0.177	-0.894	0.371	Rejected
H3	AT→SA	0.327	0.088	4.791	***	Accepted
H4	AT→BI	0.211	0.059	2.992	**	Accepted

<b>H5</b>	SA→BI	0.520	0.079	4.290	***	Accepted
	<b>Indirect Effect</b>			<b>95%CI</b>		
<b>H6a</b>	EC→SA→BI	0.345	0.008	[0.168, 1.226]	**	Accepted
<b>H6b</b>	DC→SA→BI	0.242	0.005	[-0.609, 0.065]	0.197	Rejected
<b>H7</b>	AT→SA→BI	0.078	0.002	[0.064, 0.388]	**	Accepted

Note: 1 R2 values: AT =0.488; SA = 0.690; BI =0.668.

2 \*\*\* denotes p < .001; \*\* denotes p < .01.

3 The p-values for the indirect and total effects were obtained based on the results of bootstrapping.

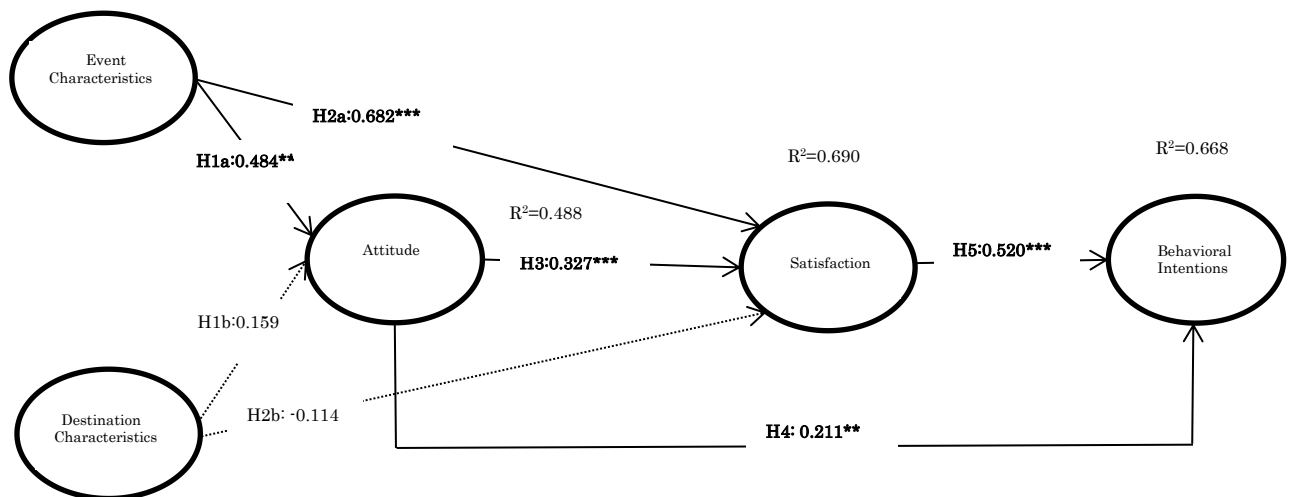


Figure 4.3 Results of the hypothesized model.

## 4.3 Results of examining loyalty of active sport tourists in winter sport tourism (Aim 3)

### 4.3.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

According to Table 4.10, most factor loadings of the items exceeded 0.40, while five items (MO6, MO7, MO8, MO21, MO23) from the ‘Escape’ and ‘Socialization’ dimensions were deleted due to low factor loadings. The Cronbach’s Alphas of all the dimensions were above 0.60 and the CRs of all dimensions were above 0.70.

Most of the AVEs were higher than 0.50 except for the ‘Self-expression’ dimension (AVE= 0.47), which could be considered acceptable when CR is higher than 0.60 although the AVE is below the threshold (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). All the squared correlations between dimensions were lower than their AVEs (See Table 4.11). The results of the measurement model have shown an acceptable fit ( $\chi^2 / df = 1822.91/870 = 2.10$ ,  $p < .001$ ; RMSEA = 0.06; TLI= 0.90; CFI = 0.91; IFI =0.91; SRMR= 0.07). Thus, reliability and validity were established.

### 4.3.2 Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

The results of the structural model have shown an acceptable fit ( $\chi^2 / df = 1256.33/578 = 2.17$ ,  $p < .001$ ; RMSEA = 0.06; TLI= 0.90; CFI = 0.91; IFI =0.91; SRMR= 0.08). The estimated regression coefficient significance was also analyzed to test the proposed hypotheses. Table 4.12 presents the structural paths, standardized estimates, probabilities, standard errors, t values, and coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ).

According to the results, H1<sub>abcdefg</sub> were partially confirmed (Escape:  $\beta=0.22$ ,  $p<.01$ ; Social Recognition:  $\beta=-0.16$ ,  $p<.05$ ; Enjoying nature:  $\beta=0.20$ ,  $p<.001$ ; Excitement:  $\beta=0.19$ ,  $p<.05$ ), which indicates that escape, enjoying nature, and excitement positively influence involvement while social recognition negatively influences involvement. H2<sub>abcdefg</sub> were partially confirmed (Escape:  $\beta=0.18$ ,  $p<.05$ ; Enjoying nature:  $\beta=0.17$ ,  $p<.01$ ; Skill development:  $\beta=0.26$ ,  $p<.05$ ), which indicates that escape, enjoying nature, and skill development positively influence subjective well-being. H4 ( $\beta=0.43$ ,  $p<.001$ ), H5 ( $\beta=0.34$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and H6 ( $\beta=0.56$ ,  $p<.001$ ) were also successfully confirmed that involvement positively influences subjective well-being, and subjective well-being and involvement positively influence loyalty. However, H3<sub>abcdefg</sub> were rejected that none of the motivations have a positive impact on loyalty. The direct path coefficients are shown in Figure 4.4.

The mediating roles of involvement and subjective well-being were further tested. Table 4.12 also shows the bootstrapping test of the indirect and direct effects. The results revealed significant indirect effects of four out of seven motivation

items through involvement on loyalty (Escape:  $\beta=0.12$ ;  $p<.01$ , 95%CI=[0.05, 0.28]; Social Recognition:  $\beta=-0.09$ ;  $p<.05$ , 95%CI=[-0.21, -0.02]; Enjoying nature:  $\beta=0.11$ ;  $p<.01$ , 95%CI=[0.03, 0.26]; Excitement:  $\beta=0.10$ ;  $p<.01$ , 95%CI=[0.02, 0.24]), and three out of seven motivation items through subjective well-being on loyalty (Escape:  $\beta=0.06$ ;  $p<.05$ , 95%CI=[0.01, 0.15]; Enjoying nature:  $\beta=0.06$ ;  $p<.05$ , 95%CI=[0.01, 0.15]; Skill development:  $\beta=0.09$ ;  $p<.05$ , 95%CI=[0.01, 0.21]), which indicated the mediation effects, partially supporting H<sub>7abcdefg</sub> and H<sub>8abcdefg</sub>. The serial mediation effects (motivation- involvement-subjective well-being-loyalty) were also verified that four out of seven motivation items (Escape:  $\beta=0.03$ ;  $p<.01$ , 95%CI=[0.01, 0.07]; Social Recognition:  $\beta=-0.02$ ;  $p<.05$ , 95%CI=[-0.07, 0.004]; Enjoying nature:  $\beta=0.03$ ;  $p<.01$ , 95%CI=[0.01, 0.07]; Excitement:  $\beta=0.03$ ;  $p<.01$ , 95%CI=[0.01, 0.07]) were tested as significant, thus partially supporting H<sub>9abcdefg</sub>.

Table 4.10 Reliability and validity test

Dimension /Mean&SD	Indicators	Factor loading	AVE	CR	Cronbach's Alpha	Skew ness	Kurto sis
Escape (M=5.17; SD=1.35)	MO1 To rest	0.48	0.54	0.85	0.84	0.02	-1.22
	MO2 To help release or reduce some built up tensions	0.87				-1.03	0.18
	MO3 To relax	0.73				-0.90	0.23
	MO4 To release or reduce tension	0.93				-1.10	0.36
	MO5 To have a change from your daily routine	0.55				-1.20	0.68
Social Recognition (M=2.16; SD=1.50)	MO9 To be recognized for doing it	0.84	0.80	0.94	0.95	1.32	1.02
	MO10 To show others I can do it	0.91				1.22	0.37
	MO11 To do something that impresses others	0.94				1.44	0.96
	MO12 To be seen by others doing it	0.89				1.54	1.64
Enjoying nature (M=6.12; SD=1.14)	MO13 To enjoy the nature	0.90	0.77	0.91	0.90	-1.67	3.11
	MO14 To be close to the nature	0.95				-1.57	2.60
	MO15 To view the scenery	0.77				-1.58	2.36
Excitement (M=4.38; SD=1.61)	MO16 To experience the risks involved	0.90	0.61	0.89	0.90	-0.52	-0.74
	MO17 To chance dangerous situations	0.80				0.15	-1.29
	MO18 To take risks	0.74				0.42	-1.13
	MO19 To experience excitement	0.67				-1.25	1.16
	MO20 To experience a lot of action	0.79				-0.57	-0.84
Socialization (M=3.70; SD=1.73)	MO22 To meet new people	0.83	0.70	0.87	0.87	-0.10	-1.10
	MO24 To see new faces	0.94				0.16	-1.09
	MO25 To observe other people in the area	0.72				0.53	-0.93
Skill development (M=5.46; SD=1.31)	MO26 To develop my skills and abilities	0.63	0.50	0.80	0.79	-1.27	1.37
	MO27 To see if I could do it	0.72				-0.58	-0.89
	MO28 To become better at it	0.57				-1.82	3.47
	MO29 To be challenged	0.88				-0.84	-0.34
Achievement (M=4.44; SD=1.88)	MO30 To increase my feelings of self-worth	0.94	0.82	0.93	0.92	-0.29	-1.10
	MO31 To develop a sense of self-pride	0.90				-0.35	-1.12
	MO32 To improve my self esteem	0.87				-0.24	-1.24
Attraction	IN1 Doing winter sports is important to me	0.82	0.71	0.92	0.91	-0.75	-0.28

(M=5.92; SD=1.16)	IN2 Doing winter sports interests me	0.83				-1.51	1.89
	IN3 Doing winter sports is one of the most enjoyable things that I do	0.89				-1.17	0.71
	IN4 Doing winter sports is pleasurable	0.82				-1.69	3.46
	IN5 I really enjoy doing winter sports	0.85				-2.12	5.03
Centrality (M=3.78; SD=1.96)	IN6 I find a lot of my life is organized around winter sports	0.95	0.85	0.95	0.95	0.22	-1.23
	IN7 Winter sports have a central role in my life	0.86				-0.13	-1.30
	IN8 I find a lot of my life is organized around winter sport activities	0.95				0.38	-1.11
Self-expression (M=4.09; SD=1.41)	IN9 When I participate in winter sports, I can really be myself	0.54	0.47	0.72	0.71	-0.8	-0.15
	IN10 You can tell a lot about a person by seeing them participating in winter sports	0.71				0.07	-1.07
	IN11 When I participate in winter sports others see me the way I want them to see me	0.79				0.25	-0.89
Subjective well-being (M=5.82; SD=0.97)	WE1 I am satisfied with life in general	0.55	0.50	0.79	0.83	-1.09	1.43
	WE2 Overall, I felt happy upon my return from the trip	0.81				-1.27	1.41
	WE3 I felt better physically and mentally	0.83				-1.28	1.52
	WE4 Although I have my ups and downs, in general, I feel good about my life	0.59				-0.86	0.37
Loyalty (M=5.59; SD=1.08)	LO1 I prefer to choose it first over other activities	0.58	0.56	0.79	0.64	-0.36	-0.87
	LO2 I will recommend it to other people	0.74				-1.51	2.23
	LO3 I will spread positive words to other people	0.90				-1.35	1.64

Note: MO=Motivation; IN=Involvement; WE=Subjective well-being; LO=Loyalty.

Table 4.11 Discriminant validity test

<b>Fornell &amp; Larcker</b>	Escape	Social Recognition	Enjoying nature	Excitement	Socialization	Skill development	Achievement	Self-expression	Attraction	Centrality	Subjective well-being	Loyalty
Escape	<b>0.73</b>											
Social Recognition	0.14	<b>0.89</b>										
Enjoying nature	0.21	-0.06	<b>0.85</b>									
Excitement	0.12	0.30	0.14	<b>0.78</b>								
Socialization	0.21	0.35	0.08	0.29	<b>0.84</b>							
Skill development	0.19	0.26	0.23	0.41	0.40	<b>0.71</b>						
Achievement	0.39	0.39	0.18	0.36	0.47	0.70	<b>0.91</b>					
Self-expression	0.25	0.46	0.09	0.31	0.43	0.28	0.38	<b>0.69</b>				
Attraction	0.26	-0.11	0.28	0.23	0.02	0.27	0.20	0.28	<b>0.84</b>			
Centrality	0.14	0.08	0.24	0.10	0.13	0.05	0.17	0.32	0.58	<b>0.92</b>		
Subjective well-being	0.35	-0.08	0.39	0.16	0.13	0.35	0.26	0.28	0.57	0.28	<b>0.71</b>	
Loyalty	0.33	-0.05	0.38	0.32	0.14	0.36	0.24	0.37	0.72	0.45	0.71	<b>0.75</b>

Note: Square root of AVE is shown in the diagonal and in bold

Table 4.12 Hypotheses test

Hypotheses	Paths	Std. Estimates	Std. error	t values	Result
<b>Direct Effect</b>					
H1a	ESC→INV	<b>0.22**</b>	0.07	3.21	<b>Accepted</b>
H1b	SOR→INV	<b>-0.16*</b>	0.08	-2.24	<b>Accepted</b>
H1c	ENJ→INV	<b>0.20***</b>	0.07	3.32	<b>Accepted</b>
H1d	EXC→INV	<b>0.19*</b>	0.07	2.48	<b>Accepted</b>
H1e	SOC→INV	-0.05	0.07	-0.68	Rejected
H1f	SKI→INV	0.09	0.15	0.80	Rejected
H1g	ACH→INV	0.07	0.14	0.64	Rejected
H2a	ESC→WEL	<b>0.18*</b>	0.08	2.76	<b>Accepted</b>
H2b	SOR→WEL	-0.11	0.06	-1.76	Rejected
H2c	ENJ→WEL	<b>0.17**</b>	0.07	2.87	<b>Accepted</b>
H2d	EXC→WEL	-0.08	0.08	-1.09	Rejected
H2e	SOC→WEL	0.03	0.06	0.41	Rejected
H2f	SKI→WEL	<b>0.26*</b>	0.11	2.44	<b>Accepted</b>
H2g	ACH→WEL	-0.06	0.10	-0.63	Rejected
H3a	ESC→LOY	0.04	0.03	0.82	Rejected
H3b	SOR→LOY	-0.03	0.03	-0.66	Rejected
H3c	ENJ→LOY	0.03	0.04	0.75	Rejected
H3d	EXC→LOY	0.05	0.03	0.73	Rejected
H3e	SOC→LOY	0.03	0.03	0.67	Rejected
H3f	SKI→LOY	0.15	0.10	1.71	Rejected
H3g	ACH→LOY	-0.13	0.04	-1.54	Rejected
H4	INV→WEL	<b>0.43***</b>	0.09	5.02	<b>Accepted</b>
H5	WEL→LOY	<b>0.34***</b>	0.12	3.99	<b>Accepted</b>
H6	INV→LOY	<b>0.56***</b>	0.16	5.33	<b>Accepted</b>
<b>Indirect Effect</b>				95% CI	
H7a	ESC-INV-LOY	<b>0.12**</b>	0.05	[0.05, 0.28]	<b>Accepted</b>
H7b	SOR-INV-LOY	<b>-0.09*</b>	0.05	[-0.21, -0.02]	<b>Accepted</b>
H7c	ENJ-INV-LOY	<b>0.11**</b>	0.06	[0.03, 0.26]	<b>Accepted</b>
	EXC-INV-LOY	<b>0.10**</b>	0.06	[0.02, 0.24]	<b>Accepted</b>

H7d	SOC-INV-LOY	-0.03	0.04	[-0.10, 0.07]	Rejected
H7e	SKI-INV-LOY	0.05	0.08	[-0.13, 0.20]	Rejected
H7f					Rejected
H7g	ACH-INV-LOY	0.04	0.09	[-0.08, 0.28]	
H8a	ESC-WEL-LOY	<b>0.06*</b>	0.04	[0.01, 0.15]	<b>Accepted</b>
H8b	SOR-WEL-LOY	-0.04	0.03	[-0.10, 0.002]	Rejected
H8c	ENJ-WEL-LOY	<b>0.06*</b>	0.04	[0.01, 0.15]	<b>Accepted</b>
H8d	EXC-WEL-LOY	-0.03	0.03	[-0.10, 0.02]	Rejected
H8e	SOC-WEL-LOY	0.01	0.02	[-0.03, 0.06]	Rejected
H8f	SKI-WEL-LOY	<b>0.09*</b>	0.05	[0.01, 0.21]	<b>Accepted</b>
H8g	ACH-WEL-LOY	-0.02	0.03	[-0.10, 0.04]	Rejected
H9a	ESC-INV-WEL-LOY	<b>0.03**</b>	0.01	[0.01, 0.07]	<b>Accepted</b>
H9b	SOR-INV-WEL-LOY	<b>-0.02*</b>	0.02	[-0.07, 0.004]	<b>Accepted</b>
H9c	ENJ-INV-WEL-LOY	<b>0.03**</b>	0.01	[0.01, 0.07]	<b>Accepted</b>
H9d	EXC-INV-WEL-LOY	<b>0.03**</b>	0.01	[0.01, 0.07]	<b>Accepted</b>
H9e	SOC-INV-WEL-LOY	-0.01	0.01	[-0.04, 0.01]	Rejected
H9f	SKI-INV-WEL-LOY	0.01	0.02	[-0.02, 0.07]	Rejected
H9g	ACH-INV-WEL-LOY	0.01	0.02	[-0.02, 0.06]	Rejected

Note: 1 ESC=Escape; SOR=Social Recognition; ENJ=Enjoying Nature; EXC= Excitement; SOC=Socialization; SKI=Skill Development; ACH=Achievement; INV= Involvement; WEL=Subjective well-being; LOY=Loyalty.

2 R<sup>2</sup> values: INV =0.22; WEL = 0.45; LOY =0.76.

3 \*\*\* denotes p < .001; \*\* denotes p < .01; \* denotes p < .05.

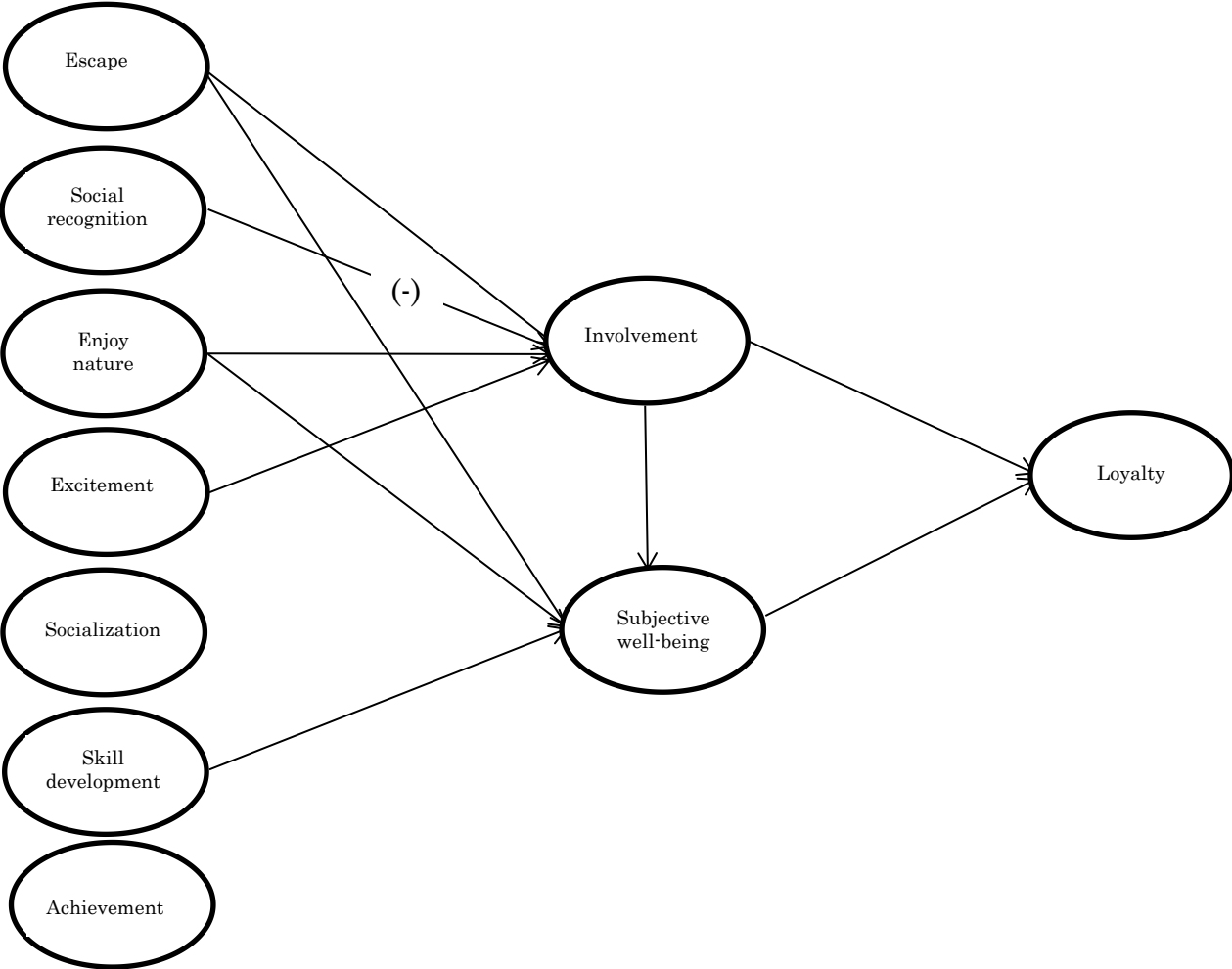


Figure 4.4 Theoretical model

Note: 1 Only significant direct relationships are presented in the figure.  
2 (-) in the figure represents a negative relationship between social recognition and involvement.

## CHAPTER 5

### General Discussion

## 5 General Discussion

This doctoral thesis aims to identify the key antecedents and outcomes of active sport tourist loyalty and to examine the relationships between these factors within the contexts of a participatory sport event and sport-related travel, using Spain as the study setting. Specifically, this thesis seeks to (a) understand the current state of knowledge regarding the antecedents and outcomes of loyalty in the active sport tourism context, (b) investigate the antecedents and outcomes of loyalty within a participatory sport event, and (c) investigate the antecedents and outcomes of loyalty in the context of sport-related travel.

To achieve these objectives, this thesis presents three complementary studies that deepen the understanding of active sport tourist loyalty while providing empirical evidence to support theoretical advancements in the field.

Specifically, the findings in Chapter 4.1 synthesize the existing knowledge on active sport tourist loyalty and establishes a theoretical framework by identifying common antecedents and outcomes in previous research. This chapter also categorizes appraisal-based antecedents and relational antecedents as two major types of loyalty determinants, while highlighting composite outcomes as the most frequently examined consequences in the active sport tourism literature. Additionally, the review highlights major themes, inconsistencies, and underexplored areas, serving as the foundation for the subsequent cross-sectional studies in Chapters 4.2 and 4.3. These two empirical studies address the research gaps identified in the review, emphasizing the importance of examining loyalty antecedents and outcomes across different sport tourism contexts, theoretical frameworks, and influencing factors. By applying appraisal-based antecedents in the participatory sport event setting and relational antecedents in the sport-related travel setting, these studies provide a theoretically grounded and empirically validated explanation of active sport tourist loyalty formation.

The main contribution of this doctoral thesis lies in its identification of gaps in the existing literature on active sport tourist loyalty and its effort to address these gaps through a multi-method approach. By integrating insights from a scoping review with empirical investigations across diverse contexts, this study not only enhances theoretical understanding but also provides a robust framework and empirical evidence for future research, offering valuable foundations for advancing knowledge in the field of active sport tourism.

This chapter provides a comprehensive discussion of the results from each study, limitations, and future research directions. It is structured into three main sections. The first section (Section 5.1) expands on the results presented in Chapter 4, offering a more detailed interpretation and contextualization of the results. Specifically, it examines the two case studies through both theoretical and practical lenses. The second section (Section 5.2) outlines the limitations of each study, as well as the broader thesis, acknowledging current constraints and areas for improvement. Finally, the third section (Section 5.3) discusses potential future research directions, highlighting opportunities for further exploration and development in the field of active sport tourist loyalty.

## **5.1 Discussion of the main findings**

### **5.1.1 Discussion on the antecedents and outcomes of active sport tourist loyalty (Aim 1)**

This study aims to bridge the existing knowledge gap in active sport tourist loyalty by conducting a comprehensive analysis of research trends. Despite the notable growth in active sport tourism research, there is a tendency towards homogeneity in research contexts, sampling, and methodologies, overlooking the distinctions in influencing factors. Hence, there is a necessity for a framework illustrating the antecedents and outcomes of active sport tourists. Such a framework will contribute to a deeper understanding of this niche market in its current stage according to the findings of this study.

The finding confirms that loyalty among active sport tourists can be influenced in various contexts, though most reviewed articles in this study have focused on sport events. Different types of active sport tourists and sports may yield different loyalty outcomes (e.g. Yoo et al., 2021b). For instance, endurance runners may prioritize the event itself over revisiting a destination (Aicher et al., 2020; Newland & Aicher, 2018). While others may be encouraged to return to the destination by local culture and tourism opportunities (Newland & Yoo, 2021). However, this study did not identify a clear pattern in how these contexts affect loyalty outcomes. This could be due to the prevalence of research focusing on running events in this field (Buning & Gibson, 2015). Therefore, other types of activities and events need more exploration (Takata & Hallmann, 2021).

In addition, most reviewed articles still focused on western countries, a trend also observed in sport tourism systematic reviews (e.g. Takata & Hallmann, 2021). Most of the conceptual and empirical schemes regarding active sport tourist loyalty were developed and tested using samples from developed societies and Western cultures, however, recent scholarly attention has shifted towards the Asian regions (Hinch et al., 2014; McIntosh et al., 1995). As noted by Weed and Bull (2012), sport tourism combines social, economic, and cultural phenomena that connect people, places, and activities. In other words, its nature of heterogeneity calls for the inclusion of diverse contexts in which sport tourism may occur. Hence, broadening research to include diverse cultural, political, geographical, and demographic contexts will enhance our understanding of active sport tourism.

Regarding the quantitative distribution of the theories, the adoption of theoretical perspectives is scattered due to the complexity rooted in the sport tourism and loyalty conceptualizations, which not only suggests an absence of a solid theoretical foundation but also a potential mismatch between some of the theories and the context (Takata & Hallmann, 2021; Weed, 2006). This underscores the necessity for a consistent and coherent body of theory within the sport and tourism literature (Gibson, 2017). Moreover, the exploration of the

applicability of certain theories presents both opportunity and challenge in the field of sport tourism (Pearce & Packer, 2013).

It is evident that quantitative research using a survey to collect data, along with a statistical data analysis is dominant in tourism, hospitality, sport, and leisure literature (Qi et al., 2023). Self-administered surveys were found to be the most preferred method (Hinch et al., 2014; Ulker-Demirel & Ciftci, 2020). Mixed-method approaches, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods, have gained attention in sport and tourism literature (Reis & Higham, 2009), however, it hasn't been observed in this study. Its limited application may be due to the complexity introduced by mixed typologies and research designs within sport and tourism literature (Khoo-Lattimore et al., 2019).

To explain active sport tourist loyalty, this section synthesized its main findings into a comprehensive framework, which examines the connections between various factors influencing loyalty, both directly and indirectly, within two primary active sport tourism contexts. The relationship is graphically illustrated based on the results of the present study as presented in Table 4.6. Indirect and direct antecedents include both appraisal-based and relational factors that can trigger loyal behaviors, whether through an attitudinal or a behavioral approach, or both. The inconsistency in literature and varying relationships presented in previous literature imply the multifaceted nature of the antecedent-loyalty link (Qi et al., 2023). It is important to understand that indirect antecedents are factors linked to direct antecedents, both of which ultimately influence loyalty as the outcome. While some studies show that these factors have a direct relationship with loyalty, their effects are more commonly mediated through other factors (Tanford, 2016). For example, the role of image stands out in influencing tourist loyalty through various mediating factors, aligning with previous research (Zhang et al., 2014). Notably, image not only exerts indirect effects but also directly impacts loyalty. Therefore, the complexity of image-loyalty relationships necessitates further exploration, particularly in the context of sport events. Destination plays an integral role in the sport event it hosts, with the concept of image transfer suggesting that sport event image may have an

impact on destination image, which calls for further consideration (Deng & Li, 2014; Hallmann & Breuer, 2010a). Similarly, factors such as perceived value and motivation, which also demonstrate both indirect and direct influences, need more investigation. Notably, satisfaction has been most frequently observed to impact loyalty among these direct antecedents, a trend consistent with findings in previous tourism and hospitality review articles (e.g. Gursoy et al., 2014; Tanford, 2016). The prevalence of satisfaction in the literature across sport, tourism, hospitality, and leisure underscores its significance in shaping loyalty, leading to calls to rethink its inclusion in future loyalty research given its well-established knowledge in the current literature (Tanford, 2016). Conversely, relational antecedents warrant further investigation due to the relatively limited research in this area, highlighting a need for further investigation into their role in understanding tourist loyalty (Tanford, 2016). Composite loyalty stands out as the most frequently measured loyalty outcome and appears to be more effective than other measures (Watson et al., 2015). However, there is uncertainty about whether behavioral intentions translate into actual behaviors (Wang & Li, 2022), particularly as existing research relies mainly on cross-sectional data. There is a necessity for more evidence on actual participation behaviors and the development of behavioral intention items for specific contexts, a gap also noted in this study (Finnegan et al., 2020). Therefore, the heterogeneous nature of active sport tourism underscores the importance of obtaining a more comprehensive understanding and a thorough interpretation of all aspects of the research.

### **5.1.2 Discussion on examining loyalty of active sport tourists in a non-traditional event (Aim 2)**

#### ***Theoretical Implications***

This study explores how appraisal-based antecedents influence active sport tourist loyalty by investigating the relationships among sport event image, attitudes toward event, satisfaction with event, and behavioral intentions,

highlighting the importance of integrating event attributes that active sport tourists pay attention to.

This study seeks to enrich existing loyalty literature by using data collected in a non-tradition event. The findings revealed a robust predictive capacity ( $R^2 = 66.8\%$ ) within the proposed theoretical framework regarding active sport tourists' behavioral intentions. Moreover, grounded in the TPB, this study extended empirical evidence by examining relationships among sport event image consisting of event characteristics and destination characteristics, attitudes toward event, satisfaction with event, and behavioral intentions, supporting the "cognitive-affective-conative" framework, which is one of the important contributions of this study.

This study contributes to the existing literature by shedding light on how non-tradition sport event image influences attitudes and satisfaction (H1-2). Particularly, event characteristics as one of the dimensions of sports event image, serve as a vital and positive predictor of active sport tourists' attitudes and satisfaction. These findings suggest that event related characteristics play an important role in shaping the emotions of active sport tourists. That is, the more favorable OCR participants consider the event characteristics, the more likely they are to have positive attitudes toward event and report higher levels of satisfaction. These results align with prior research, which has consistently shown that the event attributes have a positive correlation with the attitudes and satisfaction levels of sport tourists (Deng & Li, 2014; Koo et al., 2014). Moreover, previous research has focused on the interaction between destination image and event image, however, the event attributes seem to be more important than destination attributes in this context (Newland & Aicher, 2018). It is not surprising to find that active sport tourists are sensitive to event characteristics such as price and the level of competitiveness as previous studies discovered evidence on triathletes and marathon runners (Aicher et al., 2015; Kennelly et al., 2013). Newland and Yoo (2021) also addressed the predictable nature of event characteristics on active sport tourists' intentions to participate in the event again and recommend the events to others, further positively influencing their

behavioral intentions toward the host destination. On the contrary, the effect of destination characteristics, the other dimension of sport event image, on attitudes and satisfaction was not shown to be strong. There is an inconsistency with previous work that destination was an important determinant associated with active sport tourists' satisfaction and affective perceptions. This finding might relate to the sample of the study as evidence has been provided by Aicher and Newland (2018) that differences exist among different types of event participants. Runners have been found to show interest in revisiting the destination when guided tours, entertainment, and nightlife are offered. Whereas in this study, the host destination contains mainly natural environments, which conforms with the aforementioned characteristics of small communities that tourism resources are limited in the non-event season (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007). Moreover, considering the heterogeneous nature of active sport tourists, unlike traditional event runners, OCR participants have been found to seek novelty, fun themes, entertainment, teamwork, and challenges over other reasons in an event (Aicher & Newland, 2018; Maguire, 2017). Therefore, we argue that destination characteristics are not strong predictors of keeping active sport tourists with positive attitudes and satisfaction. Instead, the organization and management of sport events is the catalyst for fostering positive attitudes and elevating satisfaction levels.

The antecedent role of attitudes on satisfaction has been confirmed (H3), which supported Del Bosque and San Martín (2008)'s proposition that positive emotions evoke higher levels of satisfaction, although it contrasted with the finding on the antecedent role of satisfaction toward attitudes in the sport event context (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010). In addition, the positive influence of attitudes on behavioral intentions (H4) was consistent with previous studies (Cho et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2021) and aligned with the TPB which indicated attitudes as an effective and direct gateway to behavioral intentions in the non-traditional event setting (Ajzen, 2001). In this regard, we suggest that the more positive the attitudes active sport tourists may have, the more satisfied they are

and the more likely they will revisit and recommend the event and host destination.

The important role of satisfaction and its direct effect on behavioral intentions align with findings from previous studies (H5) (Tzetzis et al., 2014; Xiao et al., 2020). In addition, satisfaction functioned as a mediator, explaining why event characteristics influenced behavioral intentions positively (H6). This aligns with prior research in active sport event literature (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007) and supports the theoretical framework proposed by Chi and Qu (2008), which suggests a sequence of image-satisfaction-loyalty. Interestingly, the findings suggested that satisfaction with event plays a crucial role in mediating the impact of attitudes on behavioral intentions (H7). Behavioral intentions are shaped by individuals' attitudes as well as their overall satisfaction. While attitudes have consistently demonstrated their immediate and influential influence on intentions, it is clear that satisfaction plays a greater role in the decision-making process of active sport tourists (Chen et al., 2022). These results highlight the importance of prioritizing the enhancement of active sport tourists' satisfaction levels and ensuring the creation of positive and memorable experiences for them.

While previous research has provided quantitative findings regarding various factors influencing behavioral intentions, such as destination image (Kaplanidou et al., 2012), event image (Koo et al., 2014), attitudes (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010), service quality (Xiao et al., 2020), satisfaction (Tzetzis et al., 2014), and quality of life (Ma & Kaplanidou, 2018), no previous attempt has been made to integrate sport event image, attitudes, and satisfaction into a comprehensive framework to understand active sport tourist behaviors, particularly in the context of non-traditional event. Understanding the factors that influence active sport tourist loyalty is essential for event organizers and destination marketers, as it can significantly improve event success and foster destination loyalty (Kaplanidou et al., 2012).

### ***Practical Implications***

In general, the most important implication of the current study in active sport tourism is to stimulate and promote positive emotions in tourists (Prayag et al., 2017). The positive influence of event characteristics on attitudes and satisfaction is evident, and it also indirectly influences behavioral intentions regarding both event and destination. If event organizers could integrate event attributes that active sport tourists pay attention to into the event, active sport tourists may tend to perceive the event more positively. Thus, it would be interesting to consider what to carry out to develop the event portfolio to meet the demands of active sport tourists. For example, event managers should develop and promote its unique elements to distinguish it from other events and position it within the competition (Derom & Buning, 2022; Hallmann et al., 2015). Another approach to enhance satisfaction is to understand participants' profiles, such as participant type (Aicher & Newland, 2018) and the level of involvement with the activity (Buning & Gibson, 2016), which may lead to more effective strategies for offering activities and products, fostering positive attitudes among active sport tourists and ultimately enhancing their overall satisfaction. While destination characteristics may not be a significant predictor, the role of destination cannot be neglected, as outdoor events are always highly dependent on the choice of the destination (Kaplanidou et al., 2012). Integrating event portfolios into destination marketing can stimulate local tourism and boost the economy, contributing to sustainable tourism development (Daniels & Norman, 2003). To cultivate event loyalty among active sport tourists and, in turn, destination loyalty, destinations should host events regularly. Strategies, such as offering discounts for repeat attendance (Newland & Yoo, 2021), can be explored to understand how event loyalty impacts destination loyalty.

### **5.1.3 Discussion on examining loyalty of active sport tourists in winter sport tourism (Aim 3)**

#### *Theoretical Implications*

This study examines how relational antecedents influence winter sport tourist loyalty, which investigates how winter sport tourists' motivation predicts loyalty, with involvement and subjective well-being as mediators.

*1) Developing a new mechanism of understanding winter sport tourists' loyalty*

Considering the recognition of the significance of loyalty, there is a growing interest in examining active sport tourists' loyalty, particularly in the post pandemic era when domestic tourism plays an important role in driving economic growth (Godovykh et al., 2021). Grounded on SDT and Bottom-up & Top-down theories, this study explored how winter sport tourists' motivations impact their loyalty to winter sports. The findings of this study revealed that the motivations of winter sport tourists do not have a direct influence on their loyalty, but rather go through a process where their motivations are primarily translated into their psychological states. This process reinforces their involvement and subjective well-being levels, subsequently leading to an increase in their loyalty. These findings not only contribute to our understanding of SDT and Bottom-up & Top-down theories but also offer managerial insights into active sport tourism. This study also highlighted the roles of mediation variables between the pathway from motivation to loyalty, offering valuable information on potential factors that drive loyal behaviors. It concludes that escape, social recognition, enjoying nature, and excitement had no significant direct impact on loyalty but had an indirect effect through these two mediating variables. Furthermore, the results also indicated that involvement and subjective well-being also played separate mediating roles using motivation as an antecedent variable. These paths supported prior studies for their mediating roles between tourists' motivation and loyalty (Kim et al., 2015; Wong & Tang, 2016). Despite these notions on separate mediation effects of these factors, our understanding of how involvement and subjective well-being simultaneously play serial mediating roles of motivation on loyalty has not been documented. Therefore, this study provides a comprehensive perspective for understanding the antecedents of loyalty among active sport tourists. Contrary to the prior finding suggesting a positive relationship between motivation and loyalty (Jin et al., 2022), this study reveals no significant relationship between

motivation and loyalty. In other words, tourists won't display any preference to participate in winter sports and engage in word-of-mouth communication about it, only when they experience a sense of involvement in it and attain positive psychological outcomes.

## ***2) Differentiating the motivations of winter sport tourists***

This study has also enriched the empirical evidence of SDT by highlighting the relationships between motivation and loyalty in the context of active sport tourism. In specific, this study has examined the implications of SDT, focusing on the notion that various motivations can lead to distinct consequences (Deci & Ryan, 2008). In contrast to prior research that commonly examined motivation as a holistic concept, we delve into the specific motivations to explain their respective effects on behavioral and psychological outcomes. This approach fills the gap in the existing literature on understanding the mechanisms of winter sport tourists' motivation on loyalty. As prior research suggested, motivation has a positive relationship with both involvement and subjective well-being (Kim et al., 2015; Morris et al., 2018). Likewise, this study revealed that the motivations of escape, enjoying nature, and excitement positively influence involvement while escape, enjoying nature, and skill development positively influence subjective well-being. These findings demonstrate the crucial role played by intrinsic motivation in shaping decision-making processes (Gnoth, 1997). Similar findings were also provided in other outdoor recreation activities, such as camping (Kyle et al., 2006) and hiking (Kim et al., 2015). These findings indicated the importance that tourists found themselves associated with winter sports, for example, traveling to a winter destination allows tourists to temporarily escape the daily routine. Some of them may anticipate snowy landscapes, beautiful mountains, and a relaxing environment for their perfect getaway. While others may be triggered by feelings of adrenaline, as well as a desire to enhance their proficiency and skills in the sport (Alexandris et al., 2009; Bausch & Unsel, 2018). What is worth noting is that escape was the most influential factor affecting involvement while skill development was the most important factor for subjective well-being. These findings indicated that the greater the desire to

escape, the higher the level of involvement in winter sports is perceived. Similarly, the stronger the purpose to develop skills, the higher the level of well-being is perceived. However, this study reported a negative relationship between social recognition and involvement. This finding once again emphasized the significance of intrinsic motivations, strongly contributing to the commitment to engaging in physical activity. In other words, participation in winter sport activities is more likely to be sustained when driven by personal values, as these motivations tend to cultivate a sense of autonomy (Deci et al., 1981). Conversely, extrinsic motives such as seeking social recognition or external rewards, often prove less effective in sustaining long-term participation (Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2008). To conclude, these results further support prior studies on recreational skiers and hikers, in which escape, enjoying nature, excitement, and skill development are influential motivational factors while social recognition is the least important factor (Alexandris et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2015). It is essential to note that the feeling of escape, natural scenic spots, pursuit of excitement, and improvement of skills could help enhance involvement and subjective well-being.

### ***Practical Implications***

These findings may provide important implications for winter destination marketers that motivation is not the only factor to consider when developing strategies. What is equally important is to enhance the levels of involvement and subjective well-being. Emphasizing the positive impact of experience on the lives of individuals can be influential in the success of marketing campaigns as the pursuit of involvement and subjective well-being for individuals will continue throughout their lives (Baloglu et al., 2019). That's why winter destination marketers' efforts to associate activities and destinations with messages highlighting wellness when designing communication with consumers can help attract tourists. Although this study focuses on loyalty towards winter sports activities rather than the destinations, it nevertheless provides valuable insights for winter destination marketers. After all, tourists participating in such outdoor winter sports are like they go to winter destinations (Bausch & Gartner, 2020).

To enhance the overall appeal of destinations, it is crucial to focus on optimizing the overall experience. Factors such as slope quality, snow conditions, and accommodation quality could be improved (Richards, 1996), as these elements directly impact tourists' experiences and, consequently, their emotional connection to winter sports. Furthermore, the importance of creating a hedonically pleasing environment should be highlighted (Funk et al., 2004). This means not just meeting the basic requirements but also providing memorable and enjoyable moments for winter sport tourists. Since most respondents in this study prefer to stay at the destination for more than one day, recreational events such as apres-ski activities could be a marketing strategy to enhance the overall positive experience (Dawson et al., 2011).

It is also important to highlight that winter sport tourists have various motivations when deciding to go to a winter destination. Since escape was the most influential factor affecting involvement while skill development was the most important factor for subjective well-being, winter destination managers should create a relaxing and comfortable environment according to tourists' psychological needs. One effective approach could be creating designated rest zones within the natural surroundings along the skiing routes (Kim et al., 2015). A comprehensive winter sports training system could also be established with the introduction of ski training and educational programs (Wang et al., 2020). In general, marketing efforts aimed at retaining current customers and boosting their return rates should harness these motivations. For instance, promotional campaigns can highlight the tranquility and natural beauty of the resort, along with the exciting array of après-ski events and inclusive training sessions suitable for all skill levels.

## **5.2 Limitation**

Regarding each study, there are limitations associated with each aim that need to be addressed in future studies.

Regarding Aim 1, while this study provides valuable insights into current research on active sport tourism, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. First, the review is restricted to English-language articles from journals, potentially overlooking relevant information from other academic sources. Second, the search terms used in this study, although drawn from previous research as keywords, may have excluded some relevant terms. Third, the manual reading and coding of articles introduce the possibility of subjective bias, despite efforts to minimize it. Fourth, this study failed to account for important moderating factors, such as distinguishing between first-time and repeat active sport tourists, which are known to have distinct impacts on loyalty. Lastly, important factors in loyalty research, such as perceived value and motivation, which also exert both direct and indirect impacts, necessitate further investigations, owing to the complex nature of their conceptualizations.

Regarding Aim 2, First, while the items of sport event image were captured based on the literature, there is still no validated tool specifically for sport event image. This limits our understanding of how sport event image influence behavioral intentions, particularly within the group of non-traditional event participants. Therefore, future research could consider any other attributes that might have impacts on active sport tourists' behaviors and ensure the valid tool of sport event image that caters to different types of active sport tourists. The non-inclusion of more variables to investigate non-traditional event participants might be another limitation. Our theoretical model was largely based on existing literature on traditional sport events. Therefore, potential variables related to the uniqueness of this type of event should be discovered in future research. Furthermore, it is impossible for this study to generalize non-traditional sport events participants. There is more to discover regarding their behaviors within the background of the growing potential of this type of event and the paucity in academia. Future research could consider comparing different types of non-traditional sport events, such as color run and mud run, or participants of different countries and cultures in the same type of event (Maguire, 2017). Furthermore, segmenting participants using psychographic and behavioral

variables such as running distance, running experience, and personality traits and comparing their perceptions might also help us to better understand their perceptions and decision-making. The size of the sample in this study was also one of the limitations. Results cannot be generalized. Due to the short duration of the event and the overlaps of participants (the same participants competed in multiple competitions over two days), it was not possible to have a larger sample. It is advisable for future research to explore alternative strategies or different research methods for capturing real-time responses and thereby expanding the sample size. Additionally, the dominance of domestic tourists in the sampling has hindered an understanding of how destination characteristics may influence loyalty. Domestic and inbound tourists often have different perceptions influenced by their nationality and familiarity with the local culture (Elomba & Yun, 2018; Guerreiro et al., 2025). Therefore, further investigation into these dynamics is essential for future research. Lastly, it must be noted that, despite the adoption of several measures to alleviate method bias, survey responses might have been influenced by the emotional state of the participants during the event. Future research could consider the adoption of a different procedure for data collection, and/or even explore whether the situation in which the respondents fulfill the questionnaires might be a factor affecting their answers.

Regarding Aim 3, First, this study mainly focuses on a holistic concept of well-being, primarily examining subjective well-being. To provide a more comprehensive understanding, future studies should explore the various dimensions of well-being and their relationships with potential factors. Eudaimonia well-being could also be an important variable to investigate. Additionally, we acknowledge that this study gathered data on tourists' perceptions of subjective well-being retrospectively. This raises questions about how time may have influenced their evaluations, and future investigations could determine effective strategies to address this issue. Another limitation is that the sample in this study might not reflect the broader population of winter sport tourists. Future research should replicate this study with a more diverse sample. Finally, this study did not distinguish between the motivations of first-time

tourists and repeated tourists. To gain insights into whether and how these two groups' motivations impact behavioral and psychological outcomes, future research should analyze them separately. Such insights could significantly benefit the industry by providing strategies to retain current customers and effectively attract new ones.

To conclude, one of the limitations of this thesis is sampling. The generalizability of the findings exists because the current case study only allows for conclusions to be drawn about the specific sample population and event. Therefore, this thesis cannot guarantee the same results would be observed in other sport events or with different sample groups. Therefore, replicating the study with larger, more diverse samples and in different sporting contexts is recommended. The quantitative phase of the study might be limited by the inherent limitations of cross-sectional research. One potential issue is respondent fatigue due to the survey's length, which could affect the quality of responses. Additionally, for example, in the third study, participants were asked to reflect on their past winter sports experiences, introducing the possibility of memory bias, as they may struggle to accurately recall specific emotions or experiences associated with the activities. To address these limitations, a mixed-methods approach could effectively contextualize active sport tourist loyalty from multiple perspectives. For instance, incorporating a longitudinal design would allow for investigation of the effects of sport participation, or qualitative methods, such as ethnography or interviews, could provide an in-depth understanding into the psychological underpinnings of their consumption behaviors. Moreover, it is important to note that active sport tourist loyalty differs from loyalty observed in broader tourism research. Future studies could consider many other variables and dimensions related to various activities or sport events. Lastly, future research could benefit from segmenting active sport tourists by factors such as gender, age, and engagement levels. It would also be valuable to examine how contextual elements, such as country and culture, influence the formation of loyalty in active sport tourism.

### 5.3 Future research directions

Based on the findings, four types of research directions are identified including scope, theory, methodology, and phenomenon. First, the diverse nature of sport tourism requires further exploration of various cultural and demographic contexts. While few studies have identified characteristics among active sport tourists across various cultural backgrounds (e.g. Okayasu et al., 2016), it is important to acknowledge that much of the existing research primarily focuses on Western backgrounds. In fact, sport tourist loyalty varies across different markets, influenced by the distinct sports and cultural contexts of each market (Ito & Higham, 2020; Ma & Kaplanidou, 2021). Although the reviewed articles in this study did not address it, there has been an increasing scholarly interest in some heritage and cultural sport tourism activities, such as horse riding (Akhoondnejad, 2018) and dragon boat racing (Otoo et al., 2022). Therefore, future investigations should pay attention to cross-cultural research to gain a more holistic insight into the sport tourism phenomenon. Moreover, it is important to consider gender issues within sport tourism. Previous research indicates that males and females often travel differently (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). As highlighted earlier, the majority of active sport tourists are male, resulting in a bias towards male-centric findings. While there has been some exploration into female participation in activities such as mountaineering (Doran et al., 2018) and winter sports (Mirehie & Gibson, 2020), there is still a need for academic attention to delve into their experiences and provide a whole picture of female active sport tourists (Mirehie & Gibson, 2020). Overall, research efforts should expand their scope to include diverse types of sports and sports-related tourism, considering the impact of evolving social and environmental phenomena.

Additionally, the study of active sport tourist loyalty still lacks a solid theoretical underpinning. While researchers have attempted to draw from various disciplines, existing theories often fall short when applied to the sport tourism contexts. It is important to recognize that “sport tourism is no longer viewed as only a context in which to base theory, but as a unique field of study that reveals something hitherto unexplored about human experience and behavior” (Gammon

et al., 2017, p. 71). This prompts us to delve deeper into understanding why it exists and why further exploration is necessary, moving beyond merely explaining what it is and how it works (Gammon et al., 2017).

One notable gap in methodology lies in the prevalence of surveys dominating existing research. The imbalance in the research approach may limit further research exploration. To address this, future research is encouraged to adopt a mixed-method approach, allowing for an expansion of conceptual or theoretical frameworks but also providing empirical evidence. Additionally, to bridge the gap between behavioral intentions and actual behaviors, longitudinal research designs are very helpful, for instance, utilizing follow-up surveys or registration platforms in sports event contexts to capture the data (Finnegan et al., 2020; Wang & Li, 2022).

Lastly, the phenomenon of active sport tourism requires further investigation, particularly in exploring the factors that promote loyalty. As indicated by the findings of this study, relational antecedents that foster emotional commitment have been less explored compared to appraisal-based antecedents. Future research should focus on introducing more relational factors related to both destination and sport event brands, such as self-brand congruence (Qi et al., 2023). Additionally, assessing the antecedents and outcomes of long-term loyalty in active sport tourism offers a meaningful avenue for future research, as most existing studies tend to focus on a particular experience (Tanford, 2016).



## CHAPTER 6

### Conclusion

## 6 General Conclusion

### 6.1 Conclusions

The purpose of this thesis was to gain a deeper understanding of the relationships between the antecedents and outcomes of loyalty within the context of active sport tourism. To achieve this goal, I first conducted a scoping review to investigate the extant research on the antecedents and outcomes of active sport tourist loyalty. This review laid the foundation for addressing my research questions on what factors influence active sport tourist loyalty in the setting of participatory sport event and sport-related travel respectively. Given the findings from the scoping review, two empirical cross-sectional studies were designed and conducted. The second study adopted a quantitative approach guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to understand non-traditional sport event participants' loyalty. This study aimed to examine the relationships among sport event image, attitudes toward event, satisfaction with event, and behavioral intentions. Contributing to the existing literature, the theoretical model was tested in the context of non-traditional sport events for the first time, revealing that loyalty is linked with event characteristics only when positive attitudes and a higher level of satisfaction are perceived. In addition, only event characteristics significantly influence attitudes and satisfaction, highlighting the importance of event organization. In the third study, a quantitative approach was also applied to assess winter sport tourists' loyalty. This study enriches our knowledge of the winter sport market as limited empirical attention has been paid in recent years. This study explores the decision-making process on how winter sport tourists' motivations influence their loyalty to participating in winter sports, with a focus on the mediating roles of involvement and subjective well-being, which aligns with the SDT framework and Bottom-up & Top-down theories. Most importantly, subjective well-being as an important antecedent of loyalty has been first introduced to understand active sport tourist loyalty, which echoes the call for

including more relational antecedents in future work. The results showed that both appraisal-based antecedents and relational antecedents could influence tourist loyalty mediated by important factors such as attitudes, satisfaction, involvement, and subjective well-being.

To present the final conclusions of this thesis, each conclusion addressing each aim will be presented as followed.

**Aim1:** By conducting a scoping review of the literature on active sport tourist loyalty, the findings align with the previous studies and provide evidence for addressing the research questions. The findings demonstrate that research on active sport tourist loyalty is still in the “work in progress” stage (Gammon et al., 2017). Despite an increase in scholarly attention that is evidenced by a rapid increase in related publications in this field over the past five years, there is a tendency towards homogeneity in research contexts, sampling, and methodologies. Sport event participation is the most studied context, with marathon standing out as the focal point of the research. While most articles either cited or applied theoretical frameworks, their distribution across studies appears scattered, highlighting the need for a more coherent theoretical foundation. Quantitative methodologies, particularly surveys together with statistical analysis, dominate the current literature. The finding seems to support the idea in other previous tourism research that satisfaction and image play major roles in the antecedent-loyalty links, either directly or indirectly. Additionally, composite loyalty emerges as a more robust outcome measure in the current literature. A framework integrating contexts, indirect antecedents, direct antecedents, and outcomes of active sport tourist loyalty is proposed.

**Aim 2:** This study examined the relationships between sport event image, attitudes toward the event, event satisfaction, and behavioral intentions. Expanding on existing literature, it was the first to test this theoretical model by incorporating important antecedents of active sport tourist loyalty within a non-traditional event context. The findings emphasize the critical role of participants’ positive attitudes and high satisfaction levels in fostering their future behaviors.

This study contributes to the growing field of non-traditional sport events and offers valuable insights for both future studies and marketing strategies.

**Aim 3:** This study contributes to the growing popularity of the winter sports market, an area that has received limited empirical attention in recent years. It examines the decision-making process by exploring how winter sport tourists' motivations influence their loyalty to winter sports participation, with a particular focus on the mediating roles of involvement and subjective well-being. Grounded in the SDT theory and the Bottom-up and Top-down theories, this study provides robust empirical support for these theories within the context of active sport tourism. Additionally, the findings offer valuable implications for theoretical development and practical strategies in destination management in winter sport tourism.

## 6.2 Practical implications

In this section, the practical implications of this thesis are discussed from the perspective of destination management and marketing. The major findings of this thesis have important managerial implications for destination and event marketers. First, multiple factors that influence loyalty identified in this thesis provide destination marketers and local stakeholders important information to tailor products and services that address active sport tourists' needs and preferences. Second, the mediation effect of satisfaction, involvement, and subjective well-being highlights the significance of providing an enjoyable experience and triggering positive emotions for active sport tourists. The focus should extend beyond enhancing service satisfaction to improving tourism experience satisfaction, contributing to overall well-being and ultimately fostering their loyalty.

The two theoretical models proposed in this thesis can help event or destination marketers understand and identify the factors that influence the formation of active sport tourist loyalty. Recognizing the most critical antecedents of loyalty is an essential initial step, enabling managers to implement targeted practices that specifically address these factors, for example, as presented in the second study,

satisfaction is the major determinant of active sport tourist loyalty. This finding suggests that if active sport tourists are not fully satisfied with an event, they may choose not to return and could even engage in negative word-of-mouth communication. Therefore, event organizers must ensure that event-related services consistently exceed participants' expectations. This involves enhancing event-related services, such as optimizing complaint resolution processes to address issues promptly and providing service staff with training programs to improve service quality. By doing so, organizers can significantly elevate the overall participant experience (Gursoy et al., 2014). Moreover, as suggested in the third study, although motivation did not have a direct impact on active sport tourist loyalty, its indirect influence highlights the importance of developing tailored communication strategies that cater to individuals' specific needs. In this regard, a customer relationship management program that tracks the behaviors and preferences of tourists, particularly frequent participants, becomes crucial. Such a program would enable managers to identify shifts in customers' needs and wants. Additionally, creating rewards programs could also enhance their engagement (Tanford, 2016).

Although tangible benefits are important, marketers should also consider intangible benefits that are customized to the needs and characteristics of different customer groups. These personalized elements are essential for fostering emotional engagement and genuine loyalty (Tanford & Malek, 2015). In the context of active sport tourism, cultivating loyalty hinges on promoting positive emotions and delivering enjoyable experiences. This involves enhancing every aspect of the event or destination to create lasting memories, which not only enhance life satisfaction but also inspire long-term loyalty (Tuerlan et al., 2021). Designing memorable experiences can play an important role in achieving these outcomes by offering surprises, aligning with personal interests, and addressing individual needs. Additionally, strategic promotion and segmentation efforts should be considered. For example, active sport tourists often evaluate advertising materials differently, as their travel motivations are distinct. Therefore, destination marketers should adapt their messaging, utilizing

emotional appeal strategies to appeal to diverse market segments based on their specific goals (Hosany, 2012).

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# Annexes

## Appendix 1 Ethic Committee Approval (Aim 2)



UNIVERSIDAD  
POLITÉCNICA  
DE MADRID

### INFORME QUE EMITE EL COMITÉ DE ÉTICA DE LA UNIVERSIDAD POLITÉCNICA DE MADRID

A petición de la Vicerrectora de Investigación, Innovación y Doctorado de la Universidad Politécnica de Madrid,

D<sup>a</sup> Asunción Gómez Pérez, de un dictamen sobre los aspectos éticos del

Proyecto “Research about Understanding the Behaviors of OCR Participants: The Case of Madrid Trifecta Shield Weekend 2021”, con referencia DATOS-20211220-LMS-Research a, cuyo investigador principal es Lázaro Mediavilla Saldaña, de Estudios Sociales y Humanistas en Actividad Física y Deporte.

El Comité emite el siguiente informe:

*El solicitante declara conocer los principios éticos y las normas legales que rigen las actividades de investigación y se compromete a respetar estos principios y normas en el desarrollo del estudio propuesto. Igualmente, se compromete a no modificar los protocolos de investigación y a solicitar una nueva autorización en caso de modificación.*

*El solicitante declara conocer la legislación relativa a la protección de datos y se compromete a respetar la confidencialidad de los datos personales de este estudio, así como a hacer explícito este compromiso ante las personas que participan en el proyecto.*

*El solicitante declara conocer, en particular, el Reglamento (UE) 2016/679 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 27 de abril de 2016, relativo a la protección de las personas físicas en lo que respecta al tratamiento de datos personales y a la libre circulación de estos datos y por el que se deroga la Directiva 95/46/CE (Reglamento general de protección de datos), y se compromete a cumplirlo.*

*Igualmente, se compromete a no modificar los protocolos de investigación y a solicitar una nueva autorización en caso de modificación.*

Por lo tanto, no hay inconveniente en **informar favorablemente la propuesta**, recomendando el efectivo cumplimiento de los compromisos declarados.

Y para que así conste, firmo el presente informe en Madrid.

La Presidenta del Comité

08021020A ASUNCION  
DE MARIA GOMEZ (R)  
02818015F

Asunción Gómez Pérez

El Secretario del Comité

Firmado por DUEÑAS LOPEZ JUAN CARLOS  
- DNI 11802902S el día 10/01/2022  
con un certificado emitido por AC  
Juan Carlos Dueñas López

## Appendix 2 Ethic Committee Approval (Aim 3)



UNIVERSIDAD  
POLITÉCNICA  
DE MADRID

### INFORME QUE EMITE EL COMITÉ DE ÉTICA DE LA UNIVERSIDAD POLITÉCNICA DE MADRID

A petición de la Vicerrectora de Investigación, Innovación y Doctorado de la Universidad Politécnica de Madrid,

D<sup>a</sup> Asunción Gómez Pérez, de un dictamen sobre los aspectos éticos del

Proyecto “Research about understanding individuals’ outdoor leisure behaviors in Spain”, con referencia RAUIOLBISO-LMS-DATOS-20230419, cuyo investigador principal es Lázaro Mediavilla Saldaña, de Estudios Sociales y Humanistas en Actividad Física y Deporte.

El Comité emite el siguiente informe:

*El solicitante declara conocer los principios éticos y las normas legales que rigen las actividades de investigación y se compromete a respetar estos principios y normas en el desarrollo del estudio propuesto. Igualmente, se compromete a no modificar los protocolos de investigación y a solicitar una nueva autorización en caso de modificación.*

*El solicitante declara conocer la legislación relativa a la protección de datos y se compromete a respetar la confidencialidad de los datos personales de este estudio, así como a hacer explícito este compromiso ante las personas que participan en el proyecto.*

*El solicitante declara conocer, en particular, el Reglamento (UE) 2016/679 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo, de 27 de abril de 2016, relativo a la protección de las personas físicas en lo que respecta al tratamiento de datos personales y a la libre circulación de estos datos y por el que se deroga la Directiva 95/46/CE (Reglamento general de protección de datos), y se compromete a cumplirlo.*

*Igualmente, se compromete a no modificar los protocolos de investigación y a solicitar una nueva autorización en caso de modificación.*

Por lo tanto, no hay inconveniente en **informar favorablemente la propuesta**, recomendando el efectivo cumplimiento de los compromisos declarados.

Y para que así conste, firmo el presente informe en Madrid.

La Presidenta del Comité

08821929A ASUNCION  
DE MARIA GOMEZ (R)  
Q2818015F

Firmado digitalmente por  
08821929A ASUNCION DE  
MARIA GOMEZ (R)  
Fecha: 2023.04.24 09:47:37  
+0200

Asunción Gómez Pérez

El Secretario del Comité

DUEÑAS LOPEZ JUAN CARLOS - DNI \*\*\*0290\*\* with a  
certificate issued by/con un certificado  
emitido por AC Sector Público

Juan Carlos Dueñas López

UNIVERSIDAD POLITÉCNICA DE MADRID Vicerrectorado de Investigación, Innovación y Doctorado  
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## Appendix 3 Questionnaire (Aim 2)

Please select only one statement on the following questions:

### 1. Gender

Female  Male  Gender Non-Binary  Other

### 2. Which age category do you fall into?

under 18  18-25  26-35  36-45  46-55  56-65  above 65

### 3. What is your marital status?

Married or domestic partnership  Divorced  Single  Separated  Widowed

### 4. What is your occupation?

Full-time/ Part-time paid workers  Self-employed  Students  Retired  Unemployed  Other

### 5. What is your highest degree?

Doctor's degree  Master's degree  Bachelor's degree  High school graduate or the equivalent  Secondary education  Elementary education  Non-schooling

### 6. What is your annual household income?

Below€10,000  €10,001-€30,000  €30,001-€50,000  €50,001-€70,000  €70,001-€90,000  Above€90,001

### 7. Which region are you coming from?

Spain  Other country: \_\_\_\_\_

### 8. Including this race, how many Spartan Races have you attended?

1  2  3  4  5+

### 9. Which race did you participate in this time?

5-km with 20 obstacles  10-km with 25 obstacles  10-km with 25 obstacles

10. For me, attending an obstacle course race this time would be... (Please <b>select a response</b> for each statement below. For example, "1" represents "Unpleasant" and "7" represents "Pleasant")							
Unpleasant-Pleasant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Boring-Exciting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Dull-Entertaining	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Worthless-Valuable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. To what extent have the following items satisfied/ dissatisfied you? (Please <b>select a response</b> for each statement below. For example, "1" represents "extremely dissatisfied" and "7" represents "extremely satisfied")							
Overall event experience	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Registration process	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Administration of event	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Quality of facilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Overall event organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>12.</b> To what extent have the likelihood that you will do in the future? ( <i>Please <b>select a response</b> for each statement below.</i> For example, “1” represents “extremely unlikely” and “7” represents “extremely likely”)							
Return to the destination for vacation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Participate in the event again	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Recommend the destination to others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Recommend the event to others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>13.</b> To what extent have the following attributes affect you? ( <i>Please <b>select a response</b> for each statement below.</i> For example, “1” represents “extremely unimportant” and “7” represents “extremely important”)							
Status of the event	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Level of competition	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Registration fee	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Value of the experience for the money	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Likelihood of good weather	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Destination of the event	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ease of travel	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Pleasant atmosphere	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Personal safety	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## Appendix 4 Questionnaire (Aim 3)

### 【Declaración de consentimiento informado】

Soy una estudiante de doctorado en la Facultad de Ciencias de la Actividad Física y del Deporte-INEF de la Universidad Politécnica de Madrid. Quería pedirle su colaboración en mi proyecto titulado "Research about understanding individuals' outdoor leisure behaviors in Spain". Utilizaremos la información con fines académicos. Además, sus respuestas serán anónimas y confidenciales. Su apoyo en la investigación será de gran ayuda para poder llevar a cabo el estudio. Si tiene alguna pregunta, por favor póngase en contacto con shiyi.luo@alumnos.upm.es o el Comité de Ética de la Universidad Politécnica de Madrid.

Por favor seleccione una respuesta sobre la razón por la que quiere practicar esquí/snowboard para cada una de las siguientes afirmaciones. Por ejemplo, "1" representa "muy en desacuerdo" y "7" representa "muy de acuerdo".							
Descansar	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ayudar a liberar o reducir tensiones acumuladas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Relajarse	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Liberar o reducir tensiones	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cambiar la rutina diaria	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Alejarse un rato del bulicio de la ciudad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sentirse bien después de hacer ejercicio	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mantenerse en forma	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Para que me reconozcan por hacerlo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Demostrar a los demás que puedo hacerlo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hacer algo que impresione a los demás	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Para que otros vean que lo hago	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disfrutar de la naturaleza	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Estar cerca de la naturaleza	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Contemplar el paisaje	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Experimentar sensaciones de riesgo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Arriesgarse a situaciones peligrosas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Correr riesgos	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Vivir la emoción	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Experimentar aventuras fuertes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Hacer actividades con amigos o familia	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Conocer gente nueva	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Estar con mis amigos/familia	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ver caras nuevas	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Observar a otras personas de la zona	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Desarrollar mis habilidades y capacidades	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ver si puedo hacerlo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mejorar cómo lo hago	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ponerme a prueba	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Aumentar mi autoestima	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Desarrollar un sentimiento de orgullo propio	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mejorar mi autoestima	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Por favor seleccione una respuesta con respecto a sus experiencias con esquí/snowboard para cada una de las siguientes afirmaciones. Por ejemplo, "1" representa "muy en desacuerdo" y "7" representa "muy de acuerdo".

Cuando practico esquí/snowboard puedo ser realmente yo mismo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Se puede saber mucho de una persona viéndola practicar esquí/snowboard.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cuando practico esquí/snowboard los demás me ven como yo quiero que me vean.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Esquí/snowboard es importante para mí.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Me interesa practicar esquí/snowboard	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Esquí/snowboard es una de las cosas que más me gusta.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Esquí/snowboard es placentero.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disfruto mucho practicando esquí/snowboard.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Gran parte de mi vida gira en torno a esquí/snowboard.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Esquí/snowboard tiene un papel importante en mi vida.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Gran parte de mi vida gira en torno a las actividades de esquí/snowboard.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Por favor seleccione una respuesta con respecto a sus sentimientos con los viajes de esquí/snowboard para cada afirmación de abajo. Por ejemplo, "1" representa "muy en

desacuerdo" y "7" representa "muy de acuerdo".							
Estoy satisfecho con la vida en general.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
En general, me sentí genial al volver del viaje.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Me sentí mejor física y mentalmente.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Aunque tengo mis altibajos, en general, me siento bien con mi vida.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Por favor seleccione una respuesta con respecto a sus experiencias con esquí/snowboard para cada una de las siguientes afirmaciones. Por ejemplo, "1" representa "muy en desacuerdo" y "7" representa "muy de acuerdo".							
Lo antepongo a otras actividades.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
La recomendaré a otras personas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Difundiré palabras positivas a otras personas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

En general, cuando va a una estación de esquí,

¿Cuánto tiempo va a pasar en esta estación?

- Viaje de un día (más de 50 km)    Viaje de 2-3 días  
 Viaje de una semana    Viaje de más de una semana

¿Qué actividades realiza? (opciones múltiples)

- Esquí alpino o nórdico/snowboard    Excursión/raquetas de nieve     
Paseos/senderismo    Trineo/tobogán    Après-ski/entretenimiento

¿Quién le acompaña?

- Familia    Amigos (no socios del club)    Socios del club    Voy solo

En general, durante una temporada normal,

¿Cuántas veces aproximadamente practica esquí/snowboard? (por favor responda un número):

\_\_\_\_\_

¿Cuántos días aproximadamente dedica a practicar esquí/snowboard? (por favor responda un número): \_\_\_\_\_

¿En cuántas zonas/estaciones diferentes ha practicado esquí/snowboard? (por favor responda un número): \_\_\_\_\_

¿Cuántos años aproximadamente lleva participando esquí/snowboard (por favor responda un número): \_\_\_\_\_

A continuación, algunas preguntas sobre usted que nos ayudarán a interpretar sus respuestas.

Género: Mujer Hombre Género no binario Otros

Su edad (por favor responda un número): \_\_\_\_\_

Su estado civil

Casado/a o pareja de hecho Divorciado/a Soltero/a Separado/a Viudo/a

Su ocupación

Trabajador asalariado a tiempo completo/a tiempo parcial Trabajador por cuenta propia  
Estudiante Jubilado Desempleado Otro

Su nivel de estudios?

Doctorado Máster Grado o licenciatura Bachillerato o equivalente Menos de bachillerato Otro

Los ingresos anuales en su hogar?

Menos de 10.000€  10.001€-30.000€  30.001€-50.000€  50.001€-70.000€  70.001€-90.000€  
 Más de 90.001€  prefieren no mencionar

Su lugar de procedencia (Si es de España, por favor indique la provincia): \_\_\_\_\_

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## PhD candidate's publications and conference presentations

### Publications in scientific journals

**Luo, S.**, Mediavilla Saldaña, L., Alexandris, K., & Franco Álvarez, E. (2024). Predicting Behavioral Intentions of Active Sport Tourists in a Non-traditional Event: The Case of Obstacle Course Runners in Spain. *Leisure Sciences*, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2024.2411338>

Li X, Feng R, **Luo S**, Li C and Gómez-Ruano MA (2023). The associations of early specialization, sports volume, and maturity status with musculoskeletal injury in elite youth football players. *Front. Physiol.* 14:1183204. doi: 10.3389/fphys.2023.1183204

### Presentations at international conferences

**S. Luo** & R. Feng (2021). How to improve risk management in sport tourism: applying the AcciMap approach to examine Gansu ultramarathon incident. 6<sup>th</sup> World Research Summit for Hospitality and Tourism. (Oral Presentation)

**LUO, S.**, MEDIAVILLA, L., LI, J. (2022). The impacts of event service quality, attitude, and past event participation on OCR participants' behavioral intentions: the mediating roles of satisfaction. 27<sup>th</sup> European College of Sport Science Congress. (Oral Presentation)

**S. Luo**, E. F. Álvarez, L.M. Saldaña, K. Alexandris. (2023). Testing the Mediation effect of Subjective Well-being on the Relationship between Motivation and Loyalty among Spanish Winter Sport Tourists. 31<sup>st</sup> European Association for Sport Management Conference. (Oral Presentation)