PREDICTORS OF BEHAVIOURAL SUPPORT OF TANZANIA TOURIST DESTINATION BRANDING: DOES ENGAGEMENT OF LOCAL RESIDENTS MATTER?

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Abstract
Destination branding plays a cardinal role in building tourist sector competitiveness. However, while destination branding is considered an inclusive process, very little is known on how local residents can be motivated to offer support towards the inclusive successful destination branding. Therefore, this study adopts a supply-side perspective to explore the role of engagement in achieving inclusive successful destination branding while involving local residents. The study used structured questionnaires that were self-administered in gathering data from 302 respondents who are owners-managers of services organisations in the tourism sector and were analysed using Structural Equation Modelling(SEM). It is confirmed in this study that destination branding is an inclusive process; therefore, behavioural support is promoted through investing in local residents' engagement which builds destination identification. On top of that, behavioural support towards destination branding is an outcome of the exchange process between local residents and Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO), therefore, destination identification is a role-based identity expressed by local residents.

***Keyword*s:** *Tourism, tourist destination, destination branding, Tanzania, local residents*
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1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism sector is among the most competitive sector, and it contributes to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employment globally (Medway *et al.,* 2015). Therefore, tourist destinations adopt destination branding to build differentiation and identification to survive in competitive settings (Amani and Chao, 2021). However, although empirical evidence suggests destination branding as a tool for building differentiation and identification, few successful cases are available in the world of tourism (Wassler *et al.,* 2019). It is widely accepted that few successful cases in destination branding are due to the majority of tourist destinations that adopt branding approaches used to brand physical goods or products, which do not offer a holistic view about the branding of tourist destinations (Jeuring and Haartsen, 2017). Unlike physical goods and products, the tourist destination is an amalgam of different products and services requiring an inclusive approach that requires all key stakeholders, including local residents (Wassler *et*

al., 2019). Recent literature suggests that local residents should be considered the core process in building and translating the destination brand during encounters with tourists (Lichrou *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, destination branding as an inclusive process should be examined while giving attention to a supply-side perspective as the basis for achieving behavioural support (Hildreth, 2010; Medway *et al.*, 2015). Furthermore, it is widely accepted that destination branding is an internal branding process built under the conviction that branding cannot be effective unless it is well communicated internally before going externally (Cassinger and Eksell, 2017). This approach can help tourist destinations to minimise the substantial mismatch between local residents embody values and ideologies of the destination brand and tourists' expectations (Lichrou *et al.*, 2017).

Despite this view, scant empirical evidence examines behavioural support towards destination branding while viewing local residents as core to the process, i.e., supply-side perspective (Zhang and Xu, 2019). Zenker *et al.*, (2017) posited that, the most unresolved issues in both aspects, i.e., practical and theoretical, are how local residents as key actors can build behavioural support towards inclusive destination branding. Wassler *et al.*, (2019) discovered a weakness in the way scholars and practitioners in destination branding regarding how inclusive destination branding can be achieved among local residents. Literature on destination branding indicates that since the adoption of branding in tourism in the late 1990s, the scholarly focus has been on the demand-side perspective, i.e., destination brand image, with very little attention on supply-side perspective, i.e., how destination brand identity is constructed in the lens of local residents' perspectives (Zenker *et a*l., 2017). Zhang and Xu (2019) proposed that the study that examines how local residents can live or embody the destination brand deserves more attention, as external experience, i.e., tourist experience, depends on local residents' overall experience towards tourist destination. However, such experience to local residents cannot be realized unless local residents have perceived the process of building such a brand to be inclusive (Jeuring and Haartsen, 2017). Zenker *et al.*, (2017) cemented that the failure or inconsistent performance of many destination branding campaigns is due to a lack of understanding of factors that can promote inclusive destination branding as the essential determinant in promoting local resident support.

It is widely accepted that the demand side perspective does not explain how local residents can be involved to stimulate support towards inclusive destination branding (Zenker *et al.*, 2017). On top of that, evidence indicates that the demand-side emphasizes importing advertising messages that are incongruent with local residents' self-image and self-identity and fail to accommodate the ethnocentric identity of the tourist destination (Wassler *et al.*, 2019). Zhang and Xu (2019) state categorically that emphasizing the demand side in destination branding can lead to branding myopia, a situation in which the brand does not cater to the expectations of key potential actors, i.e., local residents. Therefore, local residents are responsible for delivering value to tourists, and have direct or indirect contact with tourists should be involved in determining the destination brand to promote behavioural support (Lichrou *et a*l., 2017; Zenker *et a*l., 2017). Social exchange theory suggests that local residents can develop commitment towards the destination programs if the benefits accrued outweigh the costs incurred to support the destination and its programs. Often, local residents consider their relationship with a tourist destination as a socio-political relationship that provides room to harvest benefits (Marcoz *et al.*, 2016; Lichrou *et a*l., 2017). Therefore, their commitment in the form of behavioural support towards inclusive destination branding can rise considerably if the tourist destination gives them the possibility for self-development, i.e., economic and social development (Strzelecka *et a*l., 2017).

Likewise, identity theory proposed that when the tourist destination offers the possibility for local residents to accrue benefits, they start to identify with the tourist destination by playing a role in building

inclusive destination branding (Saraniemi and Komppula, 2019). Thus, destination identification is a role-based outcome developed by local residents who feel congruence between tourist destination brand values and self-image or self-identity. It is widely accepted that to achieve behavioural support towards the inclusive destination branding; local residents should develop strong identification towards the tourist destination (Strzelecka *et a*l., 2017; Wassler *et a*l., 2019). Therefore, the contribution of this study is twofold, first to extend knowledge regarding destination branding through adopting a supply-side perspective that has not been given adequate attention in the literature. Second, the study examines the necessary and adequate conditions for achieving behavioural support towards inclusive destination branding, which is among the unresolved issues in destination branding (Zenker *et al*., 2017; Braun *et al*., 2013). The study theorises that successful inclusive destination branding cannot be realised unless local residents have been involved in the whole process of building and translating the destination branding.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Local Residents' Engagement

Local residents' engagement involves decisions and practices that consider local residents as partners in the destination brand value co-creation (Amani and Chao, 2021). Therefore, local residents' engagement involves partnership activities or practices between the tourist destination and local residents (Lee *et a*l., 2012; Molinillo *et al*., 2019). Practically, these partnership activities cover the willingness and readiness of local authorities in the tourist destination, such as DMOs, to involve local residents in decision making regarding tourist destination development and local residents' propensity to invest in the tourist destination(Medina-Muñoz *et a*l., 2016). Therefore, local residents' engagement can be further explained as an approach to ensure inclusivity of all stakeholders, including local residents such as service providers, indigenous, etc., to engage or participate in various tourist destination operations (Vollero *et a*l., 2018). Furthermore, Amani and Chao (2021) suggest that local residents' involvement is vital in achieving inclusive destination branding. Therefore, to achieve inclusive destination branding, a bottom-up approach is fundamental, as it ensures local residents participate in building inclusive successful destination branding.

It is widely accepted that local residents' engagement can offer several benefits to tourist destinations, including building sustainable tourism development (Lee *et a*l., 2012). On the same line of argument, Diedrich and García-Buades (2009) suggest that local residents' engagement is crucial in attaining tourist destination growth and development. Also, Canavan (2015) commended that local residents' engagement does not only ensure sustainable tourism development, rather it is very helpful in providing DMOs realising their goals and objectives. Therefore, local residents' engagement converts local residents as co-partners in managing the tourist destination, hence reducing management challenges to DMOs. On the other hand, evidence indicates that local residents who are not engaged in tourist destination management may develop brutality towards the destination, including sabotaging various tourist destination programs, including anti-branding campaigns, particularly in Web 2.0 technologies such as social media (Postma and Schmuecker, 2017). This behaviour can take the form of dis-identification with branding programs and their related outcomes. Therefore, in achieving successful inclusive destination branding, local resident engagement plays an important role. Furthermore, it provides room for having inclusion of local residents in building and translating destination branding.

2.2 Destination Identification

Evidence indicates that identification is a psychological state of mind expressed by an individual who feels happy to be defined with a particular thing that is their favourite (Hultman *et al*., 2015; Alrawadieh *et al*., 2019; Amani, 2021). Therefore, destination identification is emotional behaviour or psychological behaviour expressed by local residents with a strong connection with a tourist destination (Choo *et a*l.,

2011). It is emotional feelings expressed by local residents when there is congruence between their expectations and what the tourist destination delivers to them (Campelo *et a*l., 2014). Within the identity theory context, destination identification is a role-based psychological behaviour conveyed by local residents who reciprocate what the tourist destination does (Kumar and Nayak, 2019). Thus destination identification is a product of local residents' feelings that DMOs recognise their role as partners in the success of the tourist destination (Zenker *et a*l., 2017). Theoretically, when local residents develop destination identification, they are expected to express a strong commitment to inclusive destination branding by playing the role of key actors in the process.

Therefore, destination identification is portrayed as a sense of belonging to a particular group referred to as a tourist destination and willing to stay active and play a role in building inclusive successful destination branding (Jeuring and Haartsen, 2017). Empirical evidence indicates that the necessary condition for behavioural support towards inclusive successful destination branding is strong self-identification that local residents develop with the tourist destination (Zenker *et al.*, 2017). It is widely accepted that to achieve any form of behaviour support; there must be a strong connection between two parties who exchange things of value. Thus, local residents are expected to express commitment towards the inclusive destination branding as indicators of behavioural support when the probability of benefiting from the program is assured. The study theorises that two necessary and adequate conditions for realising behavioural support towards destination branding are the ability of local authorities, i.e., DMOs, to involve local residents in various tourism programs, including destination branding. Second, the propensity to invest in tourism can be another important and adequate condition for boosting behavior support towards destination branding. Therefore the key objective of this study was to examine the influence of local residents' engagement towards fuelling behavioural support towards destination branding. Considering the above-reviewed literature, it is hypothesised that:

> *Hypothesis 1: There is a significant and positive relationship between the ability of involvement by local authorities and destination identification.*

> *Hypothesis 2: There is a significant and positive relationship between local residents' propensity to invest in tourism and destination identification.*

2.3 Destination Branding

Literature suggests that destination branding should be perceived as an inclusive process (Lichrou *et al.*, 2017; Zhang and Xu, 2019). Therefore, as an inclusive process, destination branding adopted internal branding built on the idea that successful branding cannot be achieved unless the destination branding is well constructed, communicated, and internalised in the internal marketplace (Lichrou *et al.*, 2017; Wassler *et al.*, 2019). Theoretically, from a supply-side perspective, destination branding is a socio-political constructed phenomenon (Campelo *et a*l., 2014; Michelson and Paadam, 2016). In the socio-political context, destination branding is constructed by combining unique attributes of the tourist destination to form an ethnocentric identity (Lichrou *et al.*, 2017). Evidence indicates that the failure of most destination branding campaigns is due to the importation of advertising messages that are incongruent with local residents' identities (Lichrou *et al.*, 2017; Zenker *et al.*, 2017).

It is widely accepted that local residents are ready to support destination branding campaigns that reflect the tourist destination's unique attributes and accommodate their self-image or self-identity (Jeuring and Haartsen, 2017). In this view, it is believed that the basis for branding a tourist destination is the supply-side perspective instead of a demand-side perspective which has been commonly used in branding physical goods or products. Wassler *et al.*, (2019) argue that inclusive destination branding considers the

branding process as an internal process that requires combined efforts of all potential players, including local residents. This implies that destination branding cannot be successful unless local residents are fully engaged.

Therefore, from a supply-side perspective, inclusive destination branding is perceived by some scholars as an attempt to view destination branding as the process of building the unique identity of the tourist destination through the inclusion of all key actors, particularly local residents (Lichrou *et al*., 2017). Thus, behavioural support towards inclusive destination branding is the extent to which local residents are highly committed to branding programs to ensure that the tourist destination delivers value to its potential stakeholders consistently without compromising the values, interests and benefits of future stakeholders and the entire communities. However, to realise this, local residents should develop self-identification with the destination as the antecedent of behavioural support towards destination branding from a supply-side perspective. Therefore, it hypothesises that;

> *Hypothesis 3: There is a significant and positive relationship between destination identification and behavioural support towards destination branding.*

3. Theoretical Foundation

This study used two theories, namely Social Exchange Theory (SET) and identity theory, to inform the hypothesised relationship between local resident engagement and behavioural support towards destination branding. Theoretically, SET is categorised under a relationship-based theory, while identity theory is a role-based theory. The SET was first propounded by Blau (1964), who proposed that several dimensions exist in exchange behaviours, including solidarity, role integrity and mutuality. Therefore, the theory recommends that when a group of people faces a common problem, the best approach is to collaborate to address the issue through mutual exchange. SET suggests that collaboration as an element of social interaction provides room for realising a common solution, and hence mutual benefits are achieved between parties who collaborate in solving the problem(Blau, 2017). By adopting a common method in addressing the problem, parties in the relationship often develop a sense of solidarity and unification, allowing parties to address other issues requiring collaboration in the future. SET suggests that through a collaborative approach as an element of social exchange, parties create a sense of belonging and elicit behaviour such as commitment, attachment, readiness to share resources, etc. (Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2012).

On the other hand, identity theory proposes that an individual who agreed to take or assume a specific role identity is expected to behave in a manner that focuses on achieving the expectations of the role, negotiating and coordinating interaction with other role partners, and importantly, manipulating the situation to control the resources given the responsibilities of the role (Stets and Burke, 2000 pp 226). The theory proposed that negotiation, meanings, and role behaviour which are different but interrelated, can produce self-verification (role identity verification), which is very important in building a strong attachment to the group (Stryker and Serpe 1982). Therefore, through self-verification, an individual can develop a commitment towards an identity. In the view of Stryker (1980); Stryker and Serpe (1982), an individual will put more effort into enacting an identity if they have developed a very strong commitment to the identity. Identity theory suggests that individuals who strive for a role identity do not want to be similar to other role partners; rather, they want to be recognised as members of a specific social group due to their roles in a given task related to the social group.

4. *Hypothesised Model*

The study hypothesised four factors model, i.e., Local Residents' Engagement (*LRE*) presented by Ability of Involvement by Local Authorities (*AILA*) and Local Residents' Propensity to Invest in Tourism (*LRPIT*). In addition, Destination Identification (*DEI*) is a mediator variable presented by Identity Fit (*IDF*) and Behavioural Support towards Destination Branding (BSDB) as the dependent variable is represented by Brand Commitment (*BC*). The hypothesised model of the study is theoretically explained by social exchange theory (SET) and identity theory. Theoretically, inclusive destination branding is an exchange-based process involving sharing or resources, between actors, in the tourist destination. Furthermore, in the course of sharing resources, each actor plays a cardinal role in ensuring successful inclusive destination branding through role base identity. Therefore, each actor would love to be recognised based on their role, which each one plays in building inclusive destination branding, which influences the sense of destination identification.
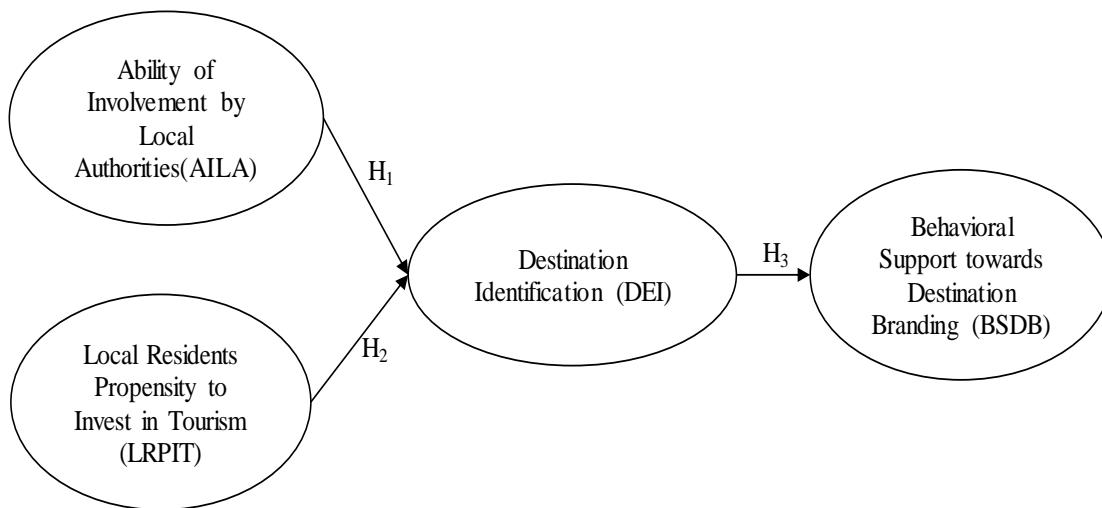

Figure 1: Hypothesised Model

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 The Study Area

This study was conducted in the Tanzania mainland, specifically in Arusha, Kilimanjaro, Dar-es-salaam and Zanzibar Island. These areas were selected because they are potential for the tourism business in Tanzania. The majority of major tourist attractions in Tanzania are found in Arusha and Kilimanjaro. Furthermore, 66% of Tanzania tourists enter the country through Arusha and Kilimanjaro (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2016). In addition, Dar-es-salaam was selected as it is the business hub of Tanzania. In addition, statistics indicate that 10% of tourists enter Tanzania through Dar-es-salaam (NBS, 2016). Finally, Zanzibar was selected simply because it contains unique attractions for beach tourism and 24% of tourists enter Tanzania through Zanzibar (NBS, 2016). The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. The approach was suitable because the intention of the study was not to monitor changes after the intervention(Casley and Kumar, 1987) and the collection of data was done in a wide geographical area from business firms in different sub-sectors in the tourism sector(Saunders *et al*., 2007). Additionally, the quantitative research approach was appropriate simply because the study's main objective was to establish a causal relationship between variables of the topic under the study.

5.2 Target Population and Sample Size

The sample size for the study was established by considering the demand for multivariate analysis notably Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The rule of thumb is that when SEM has to be used in data analysis, the sample size should not be less than 200 (Hair *et al*., 2006). Therefore, the study involved 302 respondents who were owners, supervisors, owner-manager of services organizations operating in the tourism sector in Tanzania. The study population was obtained from the Tourism Confederation of Tanzania (TCT). TCT is the umbrella organisation (apex body) representing various private business sectors (Sub-Sector Associations) operated in the travel and tourism sector in Tanzania. The study adopted the purposive sampling technique, a form of non-probability sampling in which the selection of study areas in the survey is based on the researcher's judgment (Saunders *et al*., 2008). It is an effective and valuable non-probability sampling technique when the researcher expects to study a given domain of knowledge that requires knowledgeable individuals or experts of the issues under investigation (Saunders *et al*., 2007). Additionally, respondents were chosen for the study using a stratified proportionate sampling technique, in which several strata within a population are established and the number of elements drawn from each stratum is proportional to the relative number of elements in each stratum.

5.3 Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

Data were gathered using structured questionnaires. However, before the data collection exercise, pilot testing was conducted to achieve the content validity of the instruments. After that, necessary improvements were made to the instruments to reduce vagueness, repetition, etc. In addition, prior informal and formal meetings were done with respondents to establish rapport and familiarise themselves with the sector. Thereafter, data were collected using research assistants recruited based on their knowledge and experience in the tourism sector in Tanzania. However, frequent feedbacks were obtained from the research assistants to ensure the accuracy of the data collected. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to analyse data. SEM is a multivariate data analysis technique that is more powerful in testing a series of relationships that exist between study constructs through modeling a regression structure for latent variables (Hair *et al*., 2010). In addition, it can accommodate unobserved or latent variables in causal models. This technique was suitable for this study because the hypothetical constructs used in the study were not directly observable and hence the constructs were measured indirectly by employing observed scores or indicators (Kline, 2015).

5.4 Measurement of Variables

The study variables were measured by adapting measurement scales from previous studies in tourism. To ensure the measure fit the study context, a minor modification in terms of rewording was done. All variables were captured by using 5-point liker scales 1-strong agree to 5 – strongly disagree. Local Residents' Engagement (*LRE*) has two variables, i.e., Ability of Involvement by Local Authorities (*AILA*) and Local Residents' Propensity to Invest in Tourism (*LRPIT*), and their measures were adopted from Presenza *et al*. (2013). On the other hand, to measure Destination Identification (*DEI*) which is explained by Identity Fit (*IDF*), scales from Bregoli (2013) and Zenker *et al*., (2017) were adopted. Finally, the construct Behavioral Support towards Destination Branding (*BSDB*) is defined by one variable, Brand Commitment (*BC*) and was measured using scales suggested by Sartori *et al*., (2012); Zhong *et al*., (2017); David (2019).

5.5 Common Method Bias (CMB)

The technique chosen and used in this research increases the probability of common method bias. As a result, Podsakoff *et al.,* (2003) the use of Harman's single-factor technique to screen for common method bias. When Harman's single factor approach is required, all items, i.e., latent variables being measured,

are put into a single common factor. As a general rule, if the overall variance for a single component is less than 50%, CMB has had no effect on your data. The findings of this research show that the first unrotated component accounted for just 35.7% of total variance, indicating that the common technique bias was not an issue in this study.

6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
The study intends to examine the predicting role of local residents' engagement in fuelling behavioural support towards destination branding. Furthermore, the study tested the mediating role of destination identification in explaining the relationship between local residents' engagement and behavioural support towards destination branding. The findings and discussion of the study were derived from or based on the hypothesised model as presented in figure 1. On top of that discussion of the findings focus on three study hypotheses and major findings of the study which were obtained from the result of the hypothesised relationships in table 4.

6.1 Psychometric Properties of the Measurement Model
The measurement model psychometric properties were checked through SEM using AMOS 21. As a result, all the value of goodness of fit indicators as presented in table 1 below falls within the threshold, indicating a perfect fit of the hypothesised model. Furthermore, the literature indicates that the value of Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Tucker-Lewis Coefficient (TLI), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Incremental Fit Index (IFI) should be > 0.9. In addition, the value for the ratio of chi-square and degree of freedom, i.e., x^2/df should be < 3, and the cut-off point for Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is < 0.1 (Hooper *et al*., 2008). Likewise, the value of standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is 0.07 below the acceptable level of < 0.08 (Henseler *et al*., 2014). On top of that, the value Parsimonious Comparative Fit Index (PCFI) and Parsimonious Normed Fit Index (PNFI) should be > 0.5(Hooper *et al*., 2008).

Table 1: Reliability and Validity of the Measures

Variables	Standardized Regression Weight	Cronbach's alpha coefficient (✸)	Composite Reliability(CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
lrpit1 ←LRPIT	0.667	0.773	0.775	0.54
lrpit2 ←LRPIT	0.811			
lrpit3 ←LRPIT	0.712			
aila1 ←AILA	0.714	0.749	0.750	0.50
aila2 ←AILA	0.719			
aila3 ←AILA	0.687			
idf1←IDF	0.680	0.700	0.701	0.501
idf2 ←IDF	0.611			
idf3 ←IDF	0.645			
brc1 ←BRC	0.700	0.702	0.760	0.515
brc2 ←BRC	0.679			
brc3 ←BRC	0.770			

Model fit Indicators: GFI = 0.974, AGFI = 0.957, NFI = 0.959, IFI = 0.998, TLI = 0.966, CFI = 0.988, x^2 = 49.753(p> 0.05, df = 48), x^2/df = 1.037, RMSEA = 0.058, PNFI= 0.7, PCFI= 0.8

On the other hand, loadings for all items presented in table 1 were > 0.3, indicating good convergent validity(Tabachnick and Fidell, 2012). Besides, all variables have the value of Cronbach Alpha Coefficient (◎) > 0.7, which implies good internal reliability and consistency of the constructs of the study (Pallant,

2000; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2012). Furthermore, all variables have the value of Composite Reliability (CR) Coefficient > 0.6 and McDonald Construct Reliability (MaxR (H) > 0.7, indicating that the instruments were reliable (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011; Santos and Reynaldo, 2013). On top of that, both variables have Average Variance Extracted (AVE) > 0.5, showing good convergent validity in the data (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). Therefore, overall the measurement items were confirmed as a good or true measure of the Local Residents' Engagement (LRE) construct.

Similarly, discriminant validity was checked by comparing the value of the square root of AVE and inter construct correlations between the variable and other variables and by comparing the value of AVE of each specific variable and its respective Maximum Shared Variance (MSV). Overall, the rule of thumb is that the square root of AVE should be greater than the value of inter construct correlation between the variable and other variables. In addition, the value Maximum Shared Variance (MSV), i.e., the variance it shares with other variables should be less than the value of AVE for a given variable. As shown in table 2, discriminant validity was attained since the square root of AVE was higher than the value of the inter-construct correlations between the variable and the other variables. (Said *et al*., 2011), and the value of each AVE is greater than their respective MSV (Fornell and Lacker, 1981).

Table 2: Discriminant Validity Using Fornell and Lacker Criterion

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	1	2	3	4
1.LRPIT	0.784	0.549	0.046	0.795	**0.741**			
2.AILA	0.750	0.500	0.349	0.750	0.123	**0.707**		
3.IDF	0.700	0.501	0.170	0.684	0.033	0.412	**0.646**	
4.BRC	0.760	0.515	0.349	0.766	0.214	0.591	0.123	**0.717**

Note: the square root of AVE is denoted by the bolded diagonal parameters.

6.2 Structural Model Analysis and Hypotheses Testing

Evaluation of the structural model and hypotheses testing were conducted through SEM using AMOS 21. The structural model of the study has three constructs, i.e., Local Residents' Engagement (*LRE*), Destination Identification (*DEI*), and the Behavioural Support towards Destination Branding (*BSDB*). Local Residents' Engagement (*LRE*) is explained by the Ability of Involvement by Local Authorities (*AILA*) and Local Residents' Propensity to Invest in Tourism (*LRPIT*). Similarly, Destination Identification (*DEI*) as a mediator variable is measured by Identity Fit (*IDF*), and the Behavioural Support towards Destination Branding (*BSDB*) is explained by Brand Commitment (*BC*). The findings indicate that the goodness of fit index for the structural model falls within the recommended ranges, as shown in Table 3 below, which paved the way for testing proposed hypotheses to establish the relationship between variables under investigation.

Table 3: Structural Model Goodness of Fit

The Goodness of Fit Index	Recommended Value	Actual Value	Comment
GFI	Close to 1	0.929	Good
AGFI	Close to 1	0.891	Satisfactory
NFI	Close to 1	0.875	Satisfactory
IFI	Close to 1	0.913	Good
TLI	Close to 1	0.887	Satisfactory
CFI	Close to 1	0.912	Good
x^2/df	$1 \leq x^2/df \leq 3$	2.974	Good
RMSEA	$0 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.1$	0.099	Good

6.3 Hypotheses Testing

The tested hypotheses as presented in Table 4 indicates that Local Residents' Propensity to Invest in Tourism (*LRPIT)* influences positively the Identity Fit (*IDF*) (β = 0.728; t >1.96; p < 0.05). Additionally, there is a positive relationship between the Ability of Involvement by Local Authorities (*AILA*) and Identity Fit (*IDF*) (β = 0.469; t > 1.96; p < 0.05). Therefore, both variables, i.e., Ability of Involvement by Local Authorities (*AILA*) and Local Residents' Propensity to Invest in Tourism (*LRPIT),* are the determinants of Destination Identification (*DEI*). In addition, Destination Identification (*DEI*) is the mediator of the relationship between Local Residents' Engagement (*LRE*) and Behavioural Support towards Destination Branding (*BSDB*). The findings show that, positive and significant relationship exist between Identity Fit (*IDF*) and Behavioural Support towards Destination Branding (*BSDB*) (β = 0.829; t > 1.96; p < 0.05).

Table 4: Path Analysis Output

Hypothesized Relationship		Estimate	S.E	t-statistics	P-value
H$_1$	AILA →IDF	0.469	0.074	6.345	***
H$_2$	LRPIT →IDF	0.728	0.092	7.882	***
H$_3$	IDF →BRC	0.829	0.091	9.140	***

*** Significant at P-value < 0.001

6.4 Testing of Mediation Effects

To test the strength of the mediator variable SOBEL test was conducted, and the results were interpreted by considering conditions for testing simple mediation as proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986). Thus, considering the conditions for testing simple mediation, Destination Identification (*DEI*) is a good mediator of the relationship between Local Residents Engagement (*LRE*) and Behavioural Support towards Destination Branding (*BSDB*). Specifically, the findings indicate that Destination Identification (*DEI*) is a partial mediator between Local Residents' Engagement (*LRE*) and Behavioural Support towards Destination Branding (BSDB).

Table 5: SOBEL Statistics

Variables	Coeff.	S.E	t-statistics	Sig(two)
LRE→BSDB	0.4584	0.0504	9.0913	***
LRE→DEI	0.3915	0.0209	8.7371	***
DEI→BSDB	0.9515	0.1283	7.4182	***
LRE→DEI→BSDB	0.0859	0.0684	1.2566	**

*** Significant at P-value < 0.001, ** Significant at P-value < 0.01

7. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study intended to examine the necessary and adequate conditions for boosting local resident behavioural support towards destination branding. Furthermore, the study intends to contribute to the existing gap in knowledge regarding the factors that can influence local resident support towards inclusive destination branding. Within the context of these study findings, it has been confirmed that destination branding is an inclusive process, and therefore its success depends on local residents' support. Furthermore, the study unveils that local resident engagement is necessary and adequate for ensuring local residents' support towards inclusive destination branding. However, the findings further indicate that such a condition requires support from destination identification to strengthen its impact on

behavioural support towards destination branding. Therefore, destination identification is an important condition to ensure local resident engagement boosting support of local residents towards destination branding. Specifically, the study discovered that the ability of involvement by local authorities and local residents' propensity to invest in tourism are the necessary and adequate conditions for building destination identification and mediator variables that influence behavioural support towards destination branding. Therefore, all three proposed hypotheses of the study were approved.

Thus, a plausible explanation regarding these findings indicate is that when local authorities, in this case, DMOs, have the power to involve local residents in the management of the tourist destination, it has a direct effect on the willingness of local residents to be identified or defined themselves with the tourist destination. Therefore, it is vital to ensure local authorities responsible for routine management of the tourist destination are given the power to engage local residents as co-partners in decisions about the growth and development of the tourist destination as necessary and adequate condition to promoting support towards destination branding. Local authorities must be given power through policies, laws, regulations, etc., which force them to engage local residents. Local authorities' willingness and abilities to engage local residents should ensure that local residents benefit by being involved in different tourism programs and the tourist destination benefits from engaging local residents in its development programs. This implies that mutual benefits exist between each part of the social exchange process. On top of that, each part should be identified with a specific role in designing and executing various tourism programs, including inclusive destination branding. This creates a role-based identity between parties that is very crucial in building destination identification.

Additionally, the findings unveil that local residents who are encouraged and empowered to invest in the tourism sector and its sub-sectors are necessary and adequate conditions to elicit very strong identification with the tourist destination. It is believed that, when local residents invest in the sector, they become co-investors with Government and its agencies, i.e., DMOs, hence it is likely that they will be ready to define themselves with the tourist destination. It offers preliminary conditions for achieving inclusive destination branding since local residents as co-investors can play a part in ensuring the branding process offers likelihood for them to be successful. When local residents invest in the tourist destination, they will be ready to defend the interest of the tourist destination by subduing their interests, particularly when there is a likelihood of benefiting from the tourist destination. Therefore, being co-investors implies social exchange between the tourist destination and local residents who have invested in the tourist destination. Given this, local residents as co-investors expect mutual benefits with other parties or investors who operate mutually in the sector. In this view, local residents' identification of the tourist destination depends on whether there are possibilities of accruing benefits due to their decision to invest in the sector. In addition, behavioural support towards destination branding depends on whether enabling environments have been established for local residents to invest and whether they have been recognised and empowered to invest as co-investors in the success and growth of the tourist destination.

Overall, DMO should expect local residents' support to various programs such as inclusive destination branding if a bottom-up approach instead of a top-down approach is employed. Therefore, in any tourist destination program, inclusive destination branding, local residents are recognised for their role in developing the destination identity. This role as co-investors prompts local residents' behaviour to identify themselves with the tourist destination and its programs. On top of that, the findings uncovered that when local resident develop strong identification towards the tourist destination, they tend to express commitment to destination branding, which create a favourable atmosphere for achieving behavioural support towards destination branding. This study has articulated that behaviour towards

destination branding is an expression of commitment that they are ready and able to offer towards realising inclusive successful destination branding. Hence, brand commitment indicates a strong connection local residents have to destination branding as an inclusive process and its results, i.e., destination identity. It is widely accepted that strong connection is outward behaviour expressed by local residents when they prefer to be defined in connection with the tourist destination and its programs. Therefore, in the milieu of the study findings, behavioural support towards destination branding cannot be realised if local residents have not been promoted or stimulated to develop identification towards the destination.

Similar findings can be deduced from Jeuring and Haartsen (2017) divulged that local residents engage themselves in positive recommendations if they were involved in building the brand. They argue that a specific role they play in realising the brand induces the sense of ownership, and hence they feel to have a stake in the brand and its outcomes. Besides, the findings are similar to Vollero *et al*., (2018), who discovered that a minimal level of local residents' involvement is the most critical challenge that hampers the destination branding process. Therefore, they suggest that policymakers consider an internal marketing campaign that ensures local residents' participation and commitment to destination branding. In addition, Zouganeli *et al*., (2012) have findings in line with the current study that the sustainability of destination branding is a role-based process that should be initiated by adopting a bottom-up approach. In their view, a bottom-up or inclusive approach categorises destination branding as an internal branding process that should start from within. They further argue that the bottom-up approach ensures the results of destination branding carry values, norms, culture, etc., of local residents, which is the basis for the sustainability of destination branding. On the other side, the results by Kalandides *et al*., (2012) share a similar view with the current study that investment in destination branding should consider local residents as central to the process to achieve inclusive destination branding.

8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION
8.1 Conclusion
It is high time for the Government through its respective DMOs to consider local residents as central of loyalty in destination branding. Empirical findings of the study show that destination branding programs that abandon local residents cannot yield sustainable results. Therefore, it is vital to ensure the legal and policy framework of the tourist destination creates or provides enabling environments for local residents to participate in planning and implementing different programs focusing on destination growth and development.

8.2 Recommendations
It is recommended that the Government give DMOs autonomous power through policies, regulations, and laws to involve local residents in the decision regarding the management of the tourist destination. It should be clear how DMOs should involve local residents in making decisions about the sector and tourist destination as a whole. In other words, the Government should ensure DMOs are willing and able through the legal and policy framework to involve local residents in every aspect that determines the fate of the tourism sector. In addition, as the tourism sector comprises many private organisations, the Government should encourage, support and empower local residents to invest in the tourism sector and its sub-sectors. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure enabling environments regarding policies, laws, and regulations for local residents to participate in the sector through local investment. The empirical findings confirm that this decision may boost local resident identification towards the destination and its programs.

Furthermore, empowerment programs should ensure local residents participate in the conservation and promotion of natural tourist attractions found in their locality. This can be achieved by encouraging local authorities to have local systems that ensure indigenous investment in the tourism sector through bylaws. Apart from tourist destination programs at the country level, behavioural support towards destination branding is realised when indigenous are given autonomous power to develop local programs that support the implementation of destination programs at the country level. This means there must be proper coordination between local programs and the programs at the country level to ensure harmony.

9. LIMITATION AND FUTURE STUDIES
This study employed a quantitative approach that does not allow exploring a naturalistic picture of the subject under the investigation. Further studies can explore the study topic by adopting a qualitative approach or a mixed approach. In addition, the study involves local residents who are service providers in various sectors and sub-sectors. As the tourism sector is an amalgam of different services and products, further studies can be done by extending the participation of other stakeholders who do not have direct contact with tourists.

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