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Integrating country and brand images: Using the product-Country image framework to understand travelers' loyalty towards responsible tourism operators

Makarand Mody, Jonathon Day, Sandra Sydnor, Xinran Lehto, William Jaffe. 2017. "Integrating country and brand images: Using the product-Country image framework to understand travelers' loyalty towards responsible tourism operators." *TOURISM MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVES*, Volume 24, pp. 139 - 150 (12).

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Abstract: While much research into loyalty has been conducted at the destination level, tourists' loyalty towards their intermediary has not been considered. To address this gap, the present study develops a model of tourists' loyalty towards responsible tourism operators by integrating two streams of literature. The first stream pertains to branding, consumer behavior, and international business, specifically Product-Country Image (PCI), while the second stream pertains to the extensive work concerning the concepts of destination image and destination loyalty in tourism. Data were collected using an Internet survey of domestic and international travelers to five responsible tourism operators in India. Results indicate that tourists' motivations to participate in responsible tourism and their perceptions of the destination and the operator's brand constitute the determinants of their attitudinal and behavioral loyalty towards their operator. The study advances the PCI framework in the context of tourism, thus contributing to the literature on image measurement and also extending place image theory. The findings have important product development and positioning implications for operators and destination marketers in India.