# The Role of Identity Salience in the Leisure Behavior of Film Festival Participants

The Case of the Busan International Film Festival

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## Abstract

This paper examines several central constructs regarding leisure behaviors and the dynamic relationships among these key variables to develop a social psychological model that explains participation at the Busan International Film Festival. Moreover, by examining identity salience (IS), this study develops a comprehensive socio-psychological model for film festival participation. Using data from the Busan International Film Festival participants, the study discloses the prominent role that IS plays in explaining behavioral loyalty toward a film festival. Further, the formative variables influencing IS, such as enduring involvement (EI), psychological commitment (PC), and social norms (SN) are tested simultaneously. Varying degrees of influence from EI on IS are found. PC and SN also prove to be significant precursor of IS, while both IS and PC concomitantly affect participants' loyalty toward the festival. IS is found to be a significant determinant of film festival participation as a leisure behavior, and the paper contributes to our understanding of how this behavior emerges and changes. By uncovering a complex motivational structure behind this behavior, the paper assists practitioners with insights into how participants may form and maintain their loyalty to their leisure interests.

**Keywords:** *leisure behavior, enduring involvement, psychological commitment* 

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#### Introduction

Watching movies is a popular leisure activity in many societies. According to one survey, watching movies is one of the most popular indoor leisure activities among Koreans, and respondents viewed 3.13 movies a year at movie theaters on average (Lee & Kim, 2008). Visiting a film festival can be a highly social occasion, a very personal event, or both. Participating in a film festival seems to be a highly involved leisure activity that marks self-identity, given the fact that postmodern consumption is a search for the self and symbolic reflection of it (Wattanasuwan, 2005). Film festivals, however, have not been extensively studied in leisure research. Observing enthusiastic fan behaviors among the participants in a film festival triggers an examination of the role of identity salience and psychological involvement as a foundation of the dynamics linked to behavioral outcomes.

The intensity of psychological involvement and devotion consistently found in attendees of the Busan International Film Festival (BIFF), a relatively new Asian film festival, enables investigation of identity salience (IS) among film festival participants. Thus, our study is set in Busan, the second largest metropolitan city in South Korea, located on the southeast end of the Korean peninsula. Busan has an ocean-front landscape and a well-built traffic infrastructure, including an express railway, international airport, several seaports, and an efficient inland freeway system connecting numerous major cities in the peninsula. Busan has annually hosted the BIFF, one of the most successful international film festivals in Asia, since 1996. The BIFF serves as a creative tourism destination and an important Asian film market. It hosts 534 companies from 42 countries at its trade venue (BIFF Organization Office, 2010). Due to its phenomenal growth, the city of Busan chose the BIFF as one of the main growth drivers to turn it into an Asia-Pacific hub for the film industry and cultural tourism. This study used data collected during the 2009 BIFF, which attracted 173,516 local and foreign visitors and showed 355 films from 70 countries in 803 screenings.

It is out of social relationships that a self-concept emerges, and identities exist only insofar as people are participants in structured social relationships (Stryker, 1968). In essence, social identity theory posits that individuals have relatively distinct social self-concepts for each role they play. Thus, this theory explains how and why individuals select certain identity-related activities given all of the possible alternatives (Serpe, 1987). Further, social identity theory suggests that an individual's choice of actions can be explained by the concept of identity salience. Stryker (1968) maintains that the self-behavior relationship is central to social identity. Behaviors, therefore, are ultimately the affirming and verifying process of self (Stets & Burke, 2003; Burke, 2003). As indicated by Colton (1987), leisure behaviors reflect the importance of meanings and symbols, and meanings are created in the process of socialization. In line with a social perspective of identity salience, leisure researchers have maintained that leisure behavior is motivated by 'self', and through the leisure behaviors an individual affirm the 'self' (Scott & Shafer, 2001: Stebbins, 2007). Thus, self-identity is an important motivating factor that drives people's pursuit of leisure activities (Green & Jones, 2005).

It must be recognized that postmodern consumers make consumption choices not only from products' utility but also from their symbolic meanings; thus, they seek to create the self through symbolic consumption (Wattanasuwan, 2005). As Wattanasuwan put it, people consume cultural meanings to live in this "culturally constituted world." This statement holds true within the context of leisure pursuits, as leisure identity is chosen and achieved easier than race, gender, and occupation (Green & Jones, 2005). By the same token, we can suggest that self-iden-

tity is an important motivating factor in the process of self-defining and self-affirming process in a leisure activity.

So, pursuing a leisure activity, such as film festival participation, is reflection of an individuals' self and self-searching project. As Dimanche and Samdahl (1994) suggest, self and identity play a central role as a principal in leisure research, enabling a deeper understanding of leisure behavior. Numerous researchers have rendered strong support for this belief (Burke, 2003; Burke & Stets, 2009; Callero, 1985; Jun & Kyle, 2011a; 2011b; Laverie & Arnett, 2000; Stets & Burke, 2003). Also, there are research examples in the leisure, sport, advertising, and marketing domains (e.g., Ahearne, Bhattacharya, & Gruen, 2005; Green & Jones, 2005; Marin, Ruiz, & Rubio, 2009; Jun, Kyle, Graefe, & Mannings, 2015; Marin, Ruiz, & Rubio, 2009; Thorbjørnsen, Pedersen, & Nysveen, 2007). However, examples where individuals' self-identity, especially the concept of identity salience, is examined in terms of its role as a key motivating factor and its complex interplay with other important variables in explaining leisure behavior are limited. As Jun et al. (2015, p. 426) maintain, "a theoretical framework related to self and identity has been underappreciated in specialization literature." Thus, the concept of identity salience in leisure settings requires rigorous examination.

In response to gaps in the literature, the present study aims to develop a more comprehensive leisure behavior model and explore its relevance in the context of a film festival. Reviewing literature on the motivation of leisure readily suggests the potential utility of the empirical model this study suggests. In an attempt to deepen understanding about how individual self-identity affects loyalty behaviors, we explore how IS is linked with enduring involvement (EI), psychological commitment (PC) and social norms. Specifically, this study examines 1) the effects of EI on three dimensions, namely, attraction/pleasure, centrality of life, and self-expression; 2) the effects of PC on IS; 3) the effects of social norms on IS in terms of social support and social negativity; and, finally, 4) the effects of IS on loyalty toward a film festival.

Existing literature on festivals helped us assess the sociocultural contribution of festivals and deepened our understanding of the motivations of both hosts and visitors. This study, however, goes beyond participant motivation to examine the psychological and social domains of film festival fans with respect to how their EI, IS, PC, and SN concomitantly work toward participation in a particular festival.

A film festival constitutes an excellent case for testing the proposed model due to its power to induce great enthusiasm and a high level of psychological involvement. Film viewing is an important leisure behavior, which is preceded by EI at an individual level, and it has the richness of social contextual meanings and symbols. Examining film festival participation behaviors provides both researchers and practitioners with insight into why and how individuals participate in film festivals or other types of event-created tourism destinations. Furthermore, many leisure theories have been applied mainly in First World areas (North America and Western Europe), leaving cases in less leisure-oriented societies, which are often recently developed countries such as the Republic of Korea, to be investigated further. This study contributes to filling these research gaps.

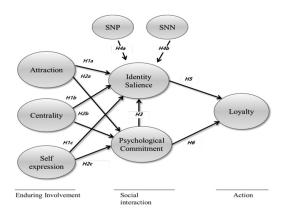
## Literature Review and Hypotheses

Every individual's self-concept emerges out of social relationships. Identities are essentially situated in social relationships (Stryker, 1968). Social identity theory posits that individuals have relatively distinct social self-concepts for each role they play. Thus, this theory explains how and why individuals select certain identity-related activities given all of the possible alternatives

(Serpe, 1987). The concept of IS determines the likelihood of a given identity being invoked in a variety of situations (Stryker, 1968); the higher an identity is in the salience hierarchy, the greater the probability that an individual will perceive a given situation as an opportunity to perform that identity. Accordingly, the probability that he or she will actively pursue opportunities to perform that identity will increase (Shamir, 1992).

Capitalizing on social identity theory, we propose a research model that specifies a connection between self, role, and society. Shamir (1992) supports this view, stating that social identity reveals a new aspect of the psychological dimensions of leisure that has not traditionally been considered in the mainstream of leisure research with its focus on "state of mind" dimensions. Clearly, IS theory is linked to more traditional leisure theories, such as "serious leisure" conceptualized by Stebbins (1982) and "state of mind" (e.g., freedom and pleasure as part of intrinsic motivations), theorized by Neulinger (1974) as key to leisure experiences. Thus, it is of particular importance to examine the relationship between leisure-related IS and EI, the intrinsic motivation tied to the state of mind variable (Shamir, 1992), and PC, a complementary view to Stebbins' conceptualization of serious leisure (Stebbins, 1982). Beyond its powerful theoretical value in analyzing society and individuals, the utility of the identity salience framework in leisure research lies in its close link to actual action and its emphasis on self-expression that reflects one's salient identities (Shamir, 1992). As Whitmarsh and O'Neill's (2010) empirical examination indicates, there is strong evidence that IS plays an important role in behavioral intention and actual behavior. Expanding on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) framework, they concluded that the variance in pro-environmental recycling behaviors were explained additionally by IS beyond the total variance explained by TPB model (Whitmarsh & O'Neill, 2010). Recent contributions building on self-identity related theories are expanding TPB and TRA by including self-identity as a predictor of intentions, which is independent of subjective norms (Armitage & Connor, 2001; Fekadu & Kraft, 2001; Fitzmaurice, 2005; Pierro, Mannetti, & Livi, 2003). The results of these studies provide evidence supporting the usefulness of broadening the TPB model by including identity as an influential precursor to behavior, showing additional explanatory power of the expanded model compared with TPB model.

The goal of IS in leisure research is to understand how and why individuals select and pursue certain identity-related leisure behaviors given all of the possible alternatives. Based on these theoretical considerations, the model shown below (Figure 1) explores the relationships amongst the following factors: (1) the level of EI in three facets: attraction, centrality to life, and self-expression; (2) IS; (3) PC; (4) social norms in terms of social norm positivity (SNP) and social norm negativity (SNN); and (5) loyalty behaviors toward the film festival.



**Figure 1.** Empirical Model of the Study

In the following section, the relevant theories and literature regarding the key variables and their inter-relationships in the suggested model are presented.

## **Enduring Involvement**

Involvement has been treated as a central component in explaining consumer and leisure behaviors. In the context of leisure, involvement is understood as "an unobservable state of motivation, arousal or interest toward a recreational activity or associated product" (Havitz & Dimanche, 1999, p. 123). It is a synonym for interest, enthusiasm, or excitement (Bloch, 1982). Involvement, in its own right, is viewed as a core concept in explaining participation in leisure activities (Lee, 2001; McIntyre & Pigram, 1992). It is connected with other important constructs, such as self-identity, PC, and loyalty toward leisure activities and program providers (Kyle, Absher, Norman, Hammitt, & Jodice, 2007; Kyle, Graefe, Manning, & Bacon, 2004; Kyle, Mowen, Absher, & Havitz, 2006). Facilitated by two of the most elaborate involvement scales developed by consumer behavior theorists, the Personal Involvement Inventory (PII) and Involvement Profile (IP) scales, EI has become one of the most widely applied variables in leisure context. For instance, McIntyre and Pigram (1992) empirically tested and found four heterogeneous subgroups among vehicle-based campers. Their multidimensional approach revealed that relationships between EI and leisure behavior could involve a more complex mechanism such as other mediators and/or moderators between the two variables. Kyle and Chick (2002) suggested that social aspect is one of the salient dimensions along with the other three dimensions of enduring involvement. More recently, Kyle et al. (2007) addressed the social nature of the construct by developing attraction, centrality, social bonding, identity expression, and identity affirmation as five correlated facets of EI among recreationists and anglers. Extending their understanding of the EI effect on leisure behaviors requires a comprehensive and theoretically sound model of the relationship that encompasses important mediators and moderators and in which EI plays a central role. Therefore, responding to these insights, this study formulated EI as a multidimensional construct with multiple facets (Kyle et al., 2004, 2007). In a context of film festival participation behavior these facets included importance/pleasure, sign or self-expression, and centrality to life as in previous research examples (Chang & Gibson, 2011; McIntyre & Pigram, 1992). Kyle et al. (2007) have suggested that there has been sufficient use and testing of the EI scale adopted by McIntyre and Pigram (1992).

To test the empirical model, we specified a relationship where EI affects IS positively based on numerous researchers' theoretical speculations and empirical evidence (e.g., Dimanche & Samdahl, 1994; Laurent & Kapferer, 1985; Laverie & Arnett, 2000). The essence of IS is the emblematic nature of self-expression. EI is believed to be related to the self-expressive nature of leisure behaviors (Dimanche & Samdahl, 1994), through its ongoing interest and specialization (Buchanan, 1985; McIntyre & Pigram, 1992). Thus, we postulated that EI is a precursor of IS (Hypothesis 1). Specifically, the nature of EI, based on self-expressiveness and ongoing interest in a film festival, is likely to establish an individual self-identity in relation to the film festival. EI is conducive to this identity's becoming part of the individual's identity hierarchy, which will lead to participation behaviors. Based on this rationale, we proposed the following hypotheses:

**Hypothesis 1:** The Enduring Involvement of film festival participation positively affects an individual's IS related to the BIFF.

Hypothesis 1a: The attraction factor of EI positively affects an individual's IS.

Hypothesis 1b: The self-expressive factor of EI positively affects an individual's IS.

Hypothesis 1c: The centrality to life factor of EI positively affects an individual's IS.

As for the effects of EI on PC, researchers tend to agree with Crosby and Taylor (1983, p. 415) that "EI often precedes PC in leisure behavioral settings." Numerous researchers have suggested that EI is often an important precursor to commitment to leisure activities and activity service providers (Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004; Kyle et al., 2006; Park, 1996). Empirical studies confirm the mediating role that PC plays in linking EI to behavioral outcomes, such as purchasing decisions and loyalty (Kelley & Davis, 1994; Warrington & Shim, 2000), persistent participation in a particular leisure activity, and loyalty toward activities and service providers (Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004; Kyle et al., 2006).

The theoretical foundations explaining the relationship between EI and commitment can be found in cognitive development theory (Thelen & Smith, 1994) and social judgment theory (Sherif & Sherif, 1967). Cognitive development theory suggests that as individuals develop more EI for leisure objects or activities, their knowledge related to the object or activity tends to increase accordingly (Funk & James, 2001). Social judgment theory states that in leisure contexts commitment to a service provider, or attitudinal stability, is a product of selective perception. That is to say, individuals with high levels of EI tend to protect their beliefs and attitudes regarding a service provider, whereas low levels of involvement condition individuals to be less resistant to arguments related to the attitude object (Crosby & Taylor, 1983). Numerous empirical studies have shown that a strong and positive correlation exists between EI and commitment. Siegenthaler and Lam (1992) found a strong and positive correlation between measures of involvement and commitment (r = .69). Park (1996) observed that respondents with high levels of involvement tended to have a stronger and more positive level of commitment. Among birdwatchers, Kim, Scott, and Crompton (1997) found a significant correlation (r = .31) between involvement and commitment to bird watching. Kyle et al. (2004) investigated a variety of leisure/ recreational activities (hiking, boating, and angling) with respect to psychological involvement and commitment measured by place identity and dependence. Adopting a multidimensional approach to EI and based on a thorough review of the related theories and empirical evidence, the following hypotheses for the relationship between involvement and commitment are derived:

**Hypothesis 2:** BIFF participants' EI positively affects their PC to the BIFF.

Hypothesis 2a: The attraction factor of EI positively affects PC.

Hypothesis 2b: The self-expressive factor of EI positively affects PC.

Hypothesis 2c: The centrality to life factor of EI positively affects PC.

#### Psychological Commitment

Commitment is defined as "the degree to which the person's relationships to specified sets of others depends on his or her being a particular kind of person, i.e., occupying a particular position in an organized structure of relationships and playing a particular role" (Stryker & Serpe, 1982, p. 207). Considering the social nature of "relationships," or the "organized structure of relationships (i.e., networks)," it is clear that commitment affects IS. Identity theory assumes a hypothetical relationship between commitment and IS. More specifically, commitment is hypothesized to directly affect IS (Serpe, 1987). There are a handful of examples where this relationship has been empirically suggested (Callero, 1985; Owens & Serpe, 2003; Serpe, 1987; Stryker & Serpe, 1982).

In more diverse behavioral contexts, Serpe (1987) used a Structure Equation Modeling (SEM) approach to examine the relationship between commitment and IS, and operationalized commitment into two independent categories, namely interactional commitment and affective commitment. Interactional commitment refers to the number of associated social relationships,

whereas affective commitment, operationalized as PC, refers to the intensity of the affect attached to the activities associated with a given identity. Serpe (1987) and Stryker and Serpe (1982) found that affective commitment has the strongest effect on IS in most behavior choices. Shamir (1992) tested nine different types of leisure activities and found evidence of a significant and positive effect of PC on IS. The effect of PC on IS in leisure research has garnered sporadic research interest in recent years. For instance, Laverie and Arnett (2000) and Park and Kim (2002) empirically examined the direct effect of emotions and attachment on IS among sports fans and found a positive, significant relationship between the constructs. In light of the above discussion and prior empirical findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3: PC positively affects the IS of BIFF participants.

#### The Influence of Social Norms on IS

Symbolic interactionism focuses on how social structure influences one's identity and behavior (Stryker, 1968; Stets & Burke, 2003). This social psychological tradition sees the self as emerging out of social interaction and the social interaction as forming the basis of social structure (Stets & Burke, 2003). Self is both social product and social force and is shaped by social interaction and shaping interaction (Rosenberg, 1990). Stebbins (2007) also concurred that social interaction is an integral part of forming individual leisure behavior and loyalty. He confirmed that the strong sense of identity with their chosen pursuit is one of the key characteristics of serious leisure participants, and argued that serious leisure participants are part of a social world, which is characterized by its own subculture or unique ethos comprising a set of values, attitudes, and norms (Stebbins, 1982; 2007). Stebbins maintained that "the unique ethos is the spirit of the community of serious leisure participants, as manifested in shared attitudes, practices, values, belief, goals and so on" (2007, p. 12). Gibson, Willming, and Holdnak (2002) found similar patterns among University of Florida football ("Gator") fans, such as strong identity with target object and behaviors, social world, social network, and distinctive social culture, as delineated in Stebbins (2007). In the leisure research tradition, motivational theories suggest that social norms play a significant role in explaining leisure behavior (e.g., Biddle & Mutrie, 2001; Carron, Hausenblas, & Mack, 1996; Courneya & McAuley, 1995; Courneya, Plotnikoff, & Hotz, 2000; Hausenblas, Carron, & Mack, 1997; Okun, Karoly, & Lutz, 2002; Okun et al., 2003). Also, Stebbins' studies and Gibson and her colleagues' study imply the existence of a link between social norms and IS, although not clearly configured in the form of an empirical model due to the qualitative nature of their studies.

In one of the most prominent frameworks that has demonstrated considerable predictive utility in explaining leisure behaviors, Ajzen's (1991) theory of reasoned action, SN is postulated as a precursor to belief and then behavioral intention. Tests for its effect, however, have yielded inconsistent results, and a relatively weak correlation with behaviors (Hausenblas et al., 1997; Okun et al., 2002; Okun et al., 2003). More recently, researchers have found that social support—positive effects of social norms saying, "one should do a target action"—and social negativity—negative effects of social norms saying, "one shouldn't do a target action"—are more reliable predictors of leisure behavior (Courneya et al., 2000; Okun et al., 2002; 2003) than the subjective norm that was used in Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) TRA model and operationalized as "weighted willingness to abide by others' opinion." The influence of social support and social negativity on behavior has been suggested by a few theorists and researchers in various behavioral settings. For instance, Okun and his colleagues (2002, 2003) found that social support and social negativity have a significant influence on exercise participation behavior.

Existing research evidence strongly indicates the need for testing the relationship between IS and social norms (SN) in a more comprehensive way based on a quantitative approach. Lack of more rigorous empirical tests of the effects of SN on IS calls for a systematic analysis. The empirical model specified in the present study tests the direct effect of SN on IS through the SEM approach. In the present study, SN is specified as social support and social negativity, as suggested by Okun et al. (2002, 2003). This specification of SN not only controls for its direct effect on IS, but also has an advantage of restricting the effect of social negativity to a social constraint, which may limit the amount of volitional choice in selecting a target action. Considering the potential influence SN may have on IS, we suggest the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 4: Social norm affects individuals' IS regarding BIFF participation.

Hypothesis 4a: SNP positively affects IS.

Hypothesis 4b: SNN negatively affects IS.

#### The Effect of IS on Loyalty

Generally speaking, self-identity serves as a behavioral guide for individuals (Burke, 1991). Identity connotes action, in that identities are realized and validated through actions (Callero, 1985). According to Stryker (1968), self-behavior relationship is central to social identity theory. Numerous researchers have lent strong support for this belief (Burke, 2003; Callero, 1985; Shamir, 1992; Stryker & Serpe, 1982). Using three independent sets of samples, Shamir (1992) found some significant and positive correlations between IS and diverse leisure activities in terms of time invested in leisure behaviors and continued commitment to those particular behaviors and behavioral loyalty. Interestingly, he also confirmed that, for the individuals in his study, leisure, rather than work or family, gave life the most meaning.

The theoretical tradition in connection with IS has not flourished in leisure research, except for a few sporadic instances. Testing the role that IS plays between EI and attendance behavior, Laverie and Arnett (2000) found that as EI increases it reinforces IS associated with a sports team. More importantly, as IS increases, individuals tend to attend more games of the team with which they associate themselves and also show stronger behavioral loyalty toward the team (Laverie & Arnett, 2000). Similarly, Gibson and her colleagues, in the study mentioned above, found a strong influence of IS on fan behavior associated with a college football team (Gibson, et al., 2002).

The current study attempts to open a new direction for this theoretical tradition in leisure research by incorporating the following hypothesis into our empirical model:

Hypothesis 5: Identity salience positively affects participants' loyalty toward the BIFF.

#### The Effect of PC on Loyalty

The importance of PC has been emphasized by numerous researchers in various settings as a key antecedent to behavior and a mediator linking formative variables, such as EI and motivation to a target action (Funk & James, 2001; Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004). In leisure research, a few researchers have investigated the effect of PC on participation behavior. Although limited to conceptualization, Iwasaki and Havitz (2004) delineated the significant role of commitment as a mediator between EI and consequent leisure behaviors. Further, some leisure researchers have tested the empirical role that PC plays in the relationship between EI and consequential behavioral outcomes. For instance, Kim et al. (1997) tested interrelationships among EI, PC, and behavioral intentions regarding participation in bird watching and found that PC is a significant

predictor of behavioral intentions. Similarly, Funk and James (2001) revealed the complex role that PC plays as a link between EI and subsequent behaviors in terms of sports team fandom. In support of their earlier conceptual suggestions, Iwasaki and Havitz (2004) empirically examined the mediating role of commitment between involvement and behavior loyalty at a recreation agency and found that PC is a significant antecedent to loyalty toward a leisure service organization among Appalachian Trail hikers.

As Li and Petrick (2010) argue, there is no consensus as to the constructs of psychological commitment and loyalty among leisure and consumer behavior researchers. Some use these constructs interchangeably (Buchanan, 1985), and other researchers suggest that commitment is a part of attitudinal loyalty (Park, 1996). A third view considers commitment to be an antecedent of loyalty (Dick & Basu, 1994; Oliva, Oliver, & MacMillan, 1992; Prichard, Havitz, & Howard, 1999) taking the view that commitment leads to loyalty based on the causal relationship between attitude and behavior (Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004; Jacoby, 1971; Lee, 2001). This study postulates that psychological commitment precedes behavioral loyalty, in light of the fact that psychological commitment is theoretically plausible as an antecedent to loyalty, even though these two constructs can have a high level of correlation.

PC is an important antecedent to leisure related behaviors and loyalty to service organizations. It also plays a significant role in mediating other formative variables of behavioral outcomes. In this study the key facet of the construct of commitment, namely psychological commitment, is used in testing the empirical model. We adopted the sociological approach suggested by Serpe, in which the affective aspect of commitment is viewed as the most salient (Serpe, 1987). A review of previous studies readily suggests the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 6: PC positively affects participants' loyalty toward the BIFF.

#### Methods

#### Measurements

For the data collection, self-administered questionnaires were distributed among BIFF participants at several cinemas throughout the entire period of the festival. The survey instrument consisted of multiple scales measuring key construct variables in this study's model, including EI, IS, PC, SN, and loyalty, as well as questions regarding basic demographic information.

The measurement of EI was operationalized using McIntyre and Pigram's (1992) modified IP of Laurent and Kapferer's (1985) original multi-dimensional conceptualization. The modified scale includes the three most salient dimensions in leisure settings, namely attraction (importance/pleasure), self-expression, and centrality to life dimension (Kyle et al., 2004; Lee, Scott, & Kim, 2008). The scale comprised 12 items measuring attraction ("Participating in a film festival is of great pleasure/importance to me"), self-expression ("Participating in a film festival says a lot about who I am"), and centrality to life ("I find that a lot of my life is organized around film festivals"). IS, a key predictor of leisure behavior, was measured using four items adopted from Shamir's (1992) leisure identity study and Callero's (1985) scale. Statements such as "I have strong feelings about BIFF" and "BIFF is an important part of who I am" were included. Considering this study's context, affective measurement of PC is also of great importance. We adopted the affective dimension of the commitment scale, as suggested by Allen and Meyer (1990), after adjusting the wordings to sensitize the scale to the local context. Four items were adopted for this study, including "I feel emotionally attached to the BIFF" and "The BIFF has a great deal of personal meaning for me." SN was operationalized as both positive (SNP) and negative (SNN) social norms, following Okun et al., (2002; 2003), measured by items such as "My family or friends think that I should participate in the BIFF" (SNP) and "I have serious conflict with my family or friends because of my participation in the BIFF" (SNN). Loyalty was measured by behavioral proxy variables represented by three measurement items: willingness to recommend to others, resistance to alternative events, and persistence to revisit the BIFF, as used in previous studies (Kim, Chung, Lee, & Kim, 2012; Oliver, 1999; Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996). All measurement items employed a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Before data collection, the survey instrument was back translated to ensure the accuracy of meanings in translating the original English written measurement scales. Prior to the actual survey, a pilot test was conducted to evaluate the appropriateness of the instrument on a student sample who had visited the BIFF. Based on the pilot results, some unclear and redundant wordings were deleted and corrected for the final survey.

#### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Data for this study were collected on site, where the festival was held. Several venues, including the main theater, were selected, and the authors of this paper and trained graduate students conducted on-site surveys during the entire period of the festival. Every 10th person exiting the theaters was approached and the purpose of the survey was explained to them. There were two selection criteria for the sample. First, respondents had to be 18 years old or older. Second, if they were visiting Busan their trip had to be for the purpose of attending the festival. Those willing to participate and meeting the criteria were given a self-administered questionnaire that took 7-10 minutes to fill out and a small souvenir from the film festival organization. A total of 587 individuals were approached, and 66 of them either refused to respond to the survey or did not meet the selection criteria. After 20 incomplete answers were discarded, 501 usable responses were collected for data analysis.

After coding, the data were analyzed by a Structure Equation Modeling technique using LISREL. First, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using LISREL for the measurement of each construct to evaluate its validity and reliability. The CFA procedure explored the construct reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), convergent validity, and discriminant validity of five constructs: EI, PC, IS, SN, and Loyalty (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). Second, a SEM model was specified for the structural relationship among the measured constructs, as shown in Figure 2, and the coefficients were estimated. The SEM procedure allowed for the simultaneous testing of a number of hypothesized relationships among latent variables with corresponding indicators, while controlling for multiple measurement errors.

#### **Respondent Profiles**

A profile of the respondents of this study is presented in Table 1 below. As the table shows, about 55% of the respondents were nonresidents who traveled from outside the Busan Metropolitan Area, and the other 45% were residents of the BMA. There were more female than male participants, 59% and 40%, respectively. A majority of the respondents (361 or 72%) had started or completed their education at a junior college or university. There were more single individuals than married, 74.6% and 24.2%, respectively. The household income for all respondents was more than 1 million but less than 5 million won a month. The respondents of this study were in white-collar jobs (22.4%), professional jobs (15.6%), or self-employed (12.6%). A large proportion of the respondents were students (33.7%). Other categories (8.4%) included housewife, military, farming/fishing, and other forms of employment. The demographics of the respondents are similar to the data collected by the BIFF organization (BIFF, 2010) in terms of age, gender, occupation, and education.

#### Results

#### **Assessment of the Measurement Model**

We investigated the psychometric properties of the measurement model utilized in the present study in multiple ways. First, to ensure the maximum internal consistency of each subscale, we examined the discrimination of each item belonging to the sub-scales. All the items showing an item-total correlation coefficient of 0.4 or below were removed from the item pool. Next, we performed a CFA to further examine the discriminant and convergent validity of each sub-scale (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Netemeyer, Burton, & Johnston, 1990) using the LISREL 8.8 program. The fit of the CFA measurement model was satisfactory (chi-square = 895.3, df = 322, NNFI= 0.97, CFI= 0.98, GFI= 0.95, RMSEA= 0.058).

Table 1

Profile of the Respondents (n = 501)

Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Residency		
Resident	225	45
Non-resident	276	55
Gender		
Male	206	40
Female	295	59
Age		
18 - 20	94	18.8
21 - 29	258	51.5
30 - 39	91	18.2
40 - 49	36	7.2
50 or older	22	2
Educational level		
High school or less	114	22.7
2-year college	169	33.7
University	192	38.3
Graduate school	26	5.2
Marital status		
Single or divorced	373	74.6
Married	121	24.2
No answer	7	1.4
Household Income (per month: KW/1KW=1.13USD)		
1 million or less	60	12.0
1 million - 2.99 million	142	28.3
3.00 million - 4.99 million	203	40.5
5 million - 9.99 million	68	13.7
10 million or more	12	2.4
No answer	16	3.2
Occupation		
Professional	78	15.6
White collar	112	22.4
Public officer	37	7.4
Student	169	33.7
Self-employed	63	12.6
Other	42	8.4

Table 2 presents the results of the psychometric investigations. As shown, the values of internal consistency as measured by Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.71 to 0.88. These values were deemed desirable considering the number of items belonging to each sub-scale (Nunnally, 1978). In addition, the standardized factor loadings were all significant, with the values ranging from 0.73 to 0.94. This suggests that all the indicator variables have sufficient power in their rep-

resentation of the corresponding factors (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Furthermore, we calculated the average variance extracted (AVE) and the composite construct reliability (CCR) values to examine the convergent validity of each sub-scale. AVE and CCR are measures of the degree to which constructs with similar theoretical orientations are related to each other (i.e., convergent validity). In general, an AVE value of 0.50 or above and a CCR value of 0.70 or greater are recommended by researchers as evidence of acceptable convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The reported AVE values ranged from 0.63 to 0.79, and CCR values ranged from 0.77 to 0.91, thereby confirming the convergent validity of each sub-scale in the measurement model.

 Table 2

 Assessments of the Baseline Model

Factors / Indicators	Standardized Factor Loadings (t values)	Alpha	AVE	CCR
EI: ATTRACTION	•	0.87	0.68	0.91
A1 Participating in BIFF is important for me	0.77 (18.69)**			
A2 Participating in BIFF is one of the most enjoyable things I do	0.76 (18.37)**			
A3 Participating in BIFF is great pleasure to me	0.77 (19.02)**			
A4 Participating in BIFF is like giving myself a gift	0.76 (18.62)**			
A5 Participating in BIFF is one of the most satisfying things I do	0.75 (18.14)**			
EI: CENTRALITY		0.87	0.74	0.90
C1I found a lot of my life is organized around BIFF	0.82 (20.56)**			
C2 I enjoy discussing BIFF with my friends	0.89 (23.31)**			
C3 Most of my friends are in some way connected with BIFF	0.78 (19.28)**			
C4 Some may say I am too much involved with BIFF	0.81 (20.39)**			
EI: SELF-EXPRESSION		0.80	0.73	0.84
SE1When I participate in BIFF I can really be myself	0.84 (20.10)**			
SE2 You can tell a lot about a person be seeing them in BIFF	0.87 (21.31)**			
SE3 Participating in BIFF says a lot about who I am	0.79 (18.14)**			
IS		0.84	0.72	0.89
IS1 I would feel at a loss if I were not allowed to participate in BIFF	0.84 (21.35)**			
IS2 I don't have any clear feelings about BIFF (reverse code)	0.85 (21.67)**			
IS3 BIFF is an important part of who I am	0.82 (19.56)**			
IS4 I really feel that I am part of BIFF	0.88 (18.69)**			
PC		0.88	0.76	0.91
PC1 I feel emotionally attached to BIFF	0.82 (20.69)**			
PC2 BIFF has a great deal of personal meaning for me	0.85 (21.90)**			
PC3 I feel a strong sense of belonging to BIFF	0.82 (20.72)**			
PC4 I have little, if any, emotional attachment to BIFF(reverse coded)	0.88 (23.34)**			
SNP		0.71	0.63	0.77
SNP1 My family/friends think that I should participate in BIFF	0.77 (17.39)**			
SNP2 My family/friends agree with me in that BIFF is worth my	0.81 (18.70)**			
time and interest				
SNN		0.79	0.75	0.85
SNN1 I have serious conflict with my family or friends because of	0.94 (20.92)**			
my participation in BIFF				
SNN2 I face with serious social constraints in participating in BIFF	0.78 (17.15)**			
LOYALTY		0.86	0.79	0.90
L1 I will participate in BIFF again next year	0.94 (26.14)**			
L2 I will continue participating in BIFF	0.92 (24.94)**			
L3 I will not give up participating in BIFF for other film festivals	0.74 (17.85)**			
L4 I will strongly recommend BIFF to others	0.73 (17.63)**			

Note. N = 501; Notes: All standardized factor loadings are significant at p < 0.01. CRs = critical ratios (*t*-values); (AVE) =  $(\Sigma \text{ squared standardized factor loadings})/(\Sigma \text{ squared standardized factor loadings})+<math>(\Sigma \text{ indicator measurement error})$ ; composite construct reliability (CCR) =  $(\Sigma \text{ standardized factor loadings})^2/(\Sigma \text{ standardized factor loadings})^2$ .

In order to evaluate the evidence of discriminant validity for each of the sub-scales in the measurement model, the AVE values of all the sub-scales were compared with the squared correlations among the sub-scales, as per the recommendation of Fornell and Larcker (1981). As shown in Table 3, all of the AVE values were higher than the squared correlations, suggesting that the measurement model has desirable discriminant validity.

Table 3

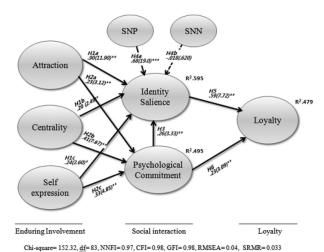
Discriminant Validity

Constructs	Descriptive statistics		Discriminant validity							
	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Attraction	3.43	0.73	0.68	0.17	0.31	0.40	0.24	0.29	0.02	0.30
<ol><li>Centrality</li></ol>	2.51	0.96		0.74	0.17	0.1	0.30	0.1	0.24	0.02
<ol><li>Self-expression</li></ol>	3.10	0.88			0.73	0.20	0.27	0.17	0.08	0.08
4. IS	3.58	0.69				0.72	0.24	0.42	0.02	0.35
5. PC	3.01	0.88					0.76	0.25	0.11	0.18
6. SNP	3.38	0.68						0.63	0.04	0.23
7. SNN	2.71	0.94							0.75	0.1
8. Loyalty	3.66	0.78								0.79

Notes: The squared values of the correlations between factors are presented in the upper diagonal. AVEs are presented in boldface type along the diagonal.

## **Results of SEM Analysis**

To examine the structural relationships among latent variables in the measurement model, an SEM model was developed in accordance with the conceptual model schematically presented in Figure 2. Since the original measurement model has a substantial number of observed or indicator variables (i.e., a total of eight factors with 28 corresponding indicator variables), a data reduction procedure was performed, consistent with the previous SEM literature (Lee, 2005).



Note: \*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01, \*\*\*p < 0.001.

**Figure 2.** Results of Structural Model Estimation and Hypotheses Test

Specifically, all of the indicator variables belonging to a sub-scale were randomly divided into two item groups. This created two new indicator variables for each factor, excluding those factors that already had two indicator variables (i.e., SNP & SNN). Next, the revised model with a total of eight factors and 16 corresponding indicator variables were submitted to SEM analysis. All parameters were calibrated via a maximum likelihood estimation procedure using covariance as the input matrix.

Table 4 shows the results of the SEM analysis. The fit of the model to the data was acceptable (chi-square= 152.32, df= 83, NNFI= 0.97, CFI= 0.98, GFI= 0.98, RMSEA= 0.04, SRMR= 0.033), indicating that the revised model adequately represents the covariance matrix among the sample data. As demonstrated by Table 4, except for the path linking SNN to IS, all the structural relationships among the eight factors were significant at the alpha level of 0.05.

Table 4

Results of SEM

Analysis Latent Variables	Latent Variables	Standardized Path Coefficients (t value)	Hypothesis test results
Attraction	IS	0.90 (11.90)**	Accepted
Centrality	IS	0.20 (2.49)*	Accepted
Self-expression	IS	0.24 (2.60)*	Accepted
Attraction	PC	0.23 (3.12)**	Accepted
Centrality	PC	0.41 (7.67)**	Accepted
Self-expression	PC	0.33 (4.85)**	Accepted
PC	IS	0.26 (3.33)**	Accepted
SNP	IS	0.68 (19.0)***	Accepted
SNN	IS	-0.018 (.62)	Rejected
IS	LOYALTY	0.59 (7.72)**	Accepted
PC	LOYALTY	0.23 (3.09)**	Accepted

All path coefficients are significant at \* p < 0.05, \*\* p < 0.01, or \*\*\* p < 0.001.

To be more specific, the three paths, connecting each EI dimension (e.g., ATTRAC, CENTRAL, and SELF) to IS, were all significant. This empirically validates the significant role of all three EI dimensions in explaining the BIFF participants' identity salience, thus leading to the acceptance of Hypotheses 1a-1c. These results suggest a significant positive relationship between identity salience (IS) and the degree of attraction one derives from participating in a film festival (ATTRAC), the mental and emotional responses BIFF participants attach to film festivals as a central element in life (CENTRAL), and the degree of self-expression one derives from film festival participation (SELF). These findings further indicate that the more pleasure one derives from film festival participation, the stronger his/her self-identity is based on BIFF participation ( $\beta$ =0.90, t value=11.90). Similarly, the more central film festivals were to their daily lives (CENTRAL), the more the participants' self-identity was associated with the BIFF ( $\beta$ =0.20, t value=2.49). Also, as hypothesized, the positive effect of the self-expression factor of EI (SELF) on IS was confirmed ( $\beta$ =0.24, t value=2.60). These three factors explained 53.2% of the total variance in the IS variable.

On the other hand, all three EI factors exerted a significant and positive effect on respondents' PC toward the BIFF, as hypothesized. Consistent with the findings of previous empirical research, the hypothesis tests showed a positive and significant relationship between EI dimensions and PC. In other words, the stronger an individual's EI in terms of attraction ( $\beta$ =0.23, t value=3.12), centrality to life ( $\beta$ =0.41, t value=7.67), and self-expression ( $\beta$ =0.33, t value=4.85) connected to film festival is, the stronger the person's psychological commitment to the BIFF is,

thus leading to the acceptance of Hypotheses 2a-2c. All together, these three factors explained 49.5% ( $R^2$ =0.495) of the total variance of PC. Regarding the relationship between PC and IS, a significant path coefficient confirmed that the effect of PC on IS was also positively significant. Thus, Hypothesis 3 was accepted. The total variance of IS accounted for by PC was 18.8%. However, the hypotheses to test the effect of SN on IS, measured by social norm positivity (Hypothesis  $4_a$ ) and social negativity (Hypothesis $4_b$ ) were supported partially. As expected, SNP and SNN each affected IS in the opposite direction. Whereas SNP had a positive effect ( $\beta$ =0.68, t value=19.0) on IS, SNN had no statistically significant effect on IS despite the beta has a negative value ( $\beta$  = -0.018, t value= -0.62). The variance of IS explained by the three factors EI, PC, SNP, and SNN together was 59.5% ( $R^2$ =0.595).

As for the effects of IS (Hypothesis 5) and PC (Hypothesis 6) on loyalty, both variables had significant path coefficients to loyalty, supporting Hypotheses 5 and 6. IS exerts the most influence on loyalty among the key antecedents to loyalty behaviors toward the BIFF ( $\beta$ =0.59, t value=7.72). The total variance of loyalty explained by IS and PC was approximately 48% ( $R^2$ =0.479).

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

Using a sample of participants at the Busan International Film Festival, this study empirically gauged the conceptual links among the key variables related to leisure behavior, such as EI, IS, PC, and SN. Previous leisure researchers have found that meanings form the basis for consequent behaviors related to leisure. This fact indicates that IS is directly related to consequent leisure behavior (Gibson et al., 2002; Laverie & Arnett, 2000; Park & Kim, 2002; Stebbins, 2007). Understanding the role IS plays in leisure provides a plentitude of insights for marketers and researchers regarding why and how people engage in leisure behaviors in diverse forms and experiences. Here, IS was the most influential predictor of loyalty behavior, as hypothesized. This result is supported by scholars who have emphasized the role of IS in leisure behavior and specialization (Callero, 1985; Green & Jones, 2005; Jun et al., 2015) and is consistent with the findings of previous research (e.g., Laverie & Arnett, 2000; Okun et al., 2002). The present study result reiterates that leisure is self-expressive in nature and, as numerous researchers maintain, leisure related behaviors exist as a reflection of self (Jun & Kyle, 2011a; 2011b; Jun et al., 2015; Laverie & Arnett, 2000; Stebbins, 2007).

In this study we demonstrate that self-identity is an important motivating factor in the self-defining and self-realization processes of a leisure pursuit. The findings support Shamir's (1992, p. 319) observation that "increased identity salience may be both *the cause* and *the result* of high levels of perseverance, effort, skill, and improvement" in a leisure pursuit. This assists researchers and festival organizers with insights into how and why individuals select certain identity related activities given the possible alternatives (Serpe, 1987). The results imply that understanding loyalty behavior requires a deeper level of knowledge about the psychological structure of individuals that is formed by social interaction. This point was empirically confirmed by the findings that showed a close link between IS and loyalty behaviors toward the festival. The more salient an identity is, the greater probability that a person will show stronger loyalty behaviors in terms of that identity. The present study's results also verify that meanings form the basis of consequent leisure behaviors, and they induce the direct links of IS with the consequent behaviors (Gibson et al., 2002; Laverie & Arnett, 2000).

The results extend recent research trends that give attention to the pivotal role of EI in leisure, in that they also indicate positive and significant relationships between EI and IS and

between EI and PC. Moreover, three prominent dimensions of EI exert significant and positive influences on IS and PC, but each dimension has a different path coefficient, as indicated by previous research (Kyle et al., 2004). The attraction/pleasure dimension played the most significant role in explaining IS, whereas the centrality of EI exerted the most influence on PC. By testing the one-to-one relationship between IS, PC, and EI at a dimensional level, we were able to collect more precise information on the multi-structural relationships among the key variables. The relationship between PC and IS was also positive and significant, as predicted by identity scholars (Burke & Stets, 2009), who have suggested a direct effect of PC on IS, which is consistent with existing literature (Cast, 2003; Laverie & Arnett, 2000). Identity theory assumes a relationship between commitment and IS. More specifically, commitment is hypothesized to directly affect IS (Serpe, 1987). In turn, IS affects behaviors that reflect identities. However, we may need to test the reciprocal relationship between the two, as suggested by Stryker and Serpe (1982). Consistent with previous research findings, the more psychologically committed respondents are to the film festival, the more loyal they tend to be to the BIFF. The importance of PC has been emphasized by numerous researchers as a key antecedent to behavior and a mediator, linking formative variables, such as involvement and motivation, to a target action (Funk & James, 2001; Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004). PC is a significant predictor of behavioral loyalty toward a recreation agency, and our results are in line with these previous research findings.

As confirmed by other identity scholars, IS is a socially embedded construct, and we also found that SN plays an important role in forming respondents' IS. For example, Thorbjørnsen and his colleagues' (2007) investigation on the mobile device use intention and identity salience based on TPB framework showed that self-identity exerted a stronger influence on behavior intention to use mobile multimedia messaging services than social norms. Likewise, in a metaanalytic review of 185 independent studies applying the theory of planned behavior (TPB), Armitage and Connor (2001) found the subjective norm construct to be a generally weak predictor of intentions. Although the weak effect of norms may partly be attributed to poor measurements, Armitage and Connor (2001) highlight the need to expand the subjective norm concept and add identity-related variables. Consequently, recent contributions building on self-identity-related theories have begun to expand TPB by including self- identity as a predictor of intentions, independent of subjective norms (Fekadu & Kraft, 2001; Fitzmaurice, 2005; Thorbjørnsen et al., 2007; Pierro et al., 2003). In this study the hypothesized relationships between the two held true, albeit in part, as a significant positive link was found between SNP and IS, whereas an insignificant negative coefficient was reported for the relation between SNN and IS. In essence, IS is formed in social interaction. Thus, the influence from social groups as well as the individuals belonging to the groups may exert a strong impact on an individual in forming the identity one holds. IS is not a static concept but a process in which a constant modification occurs in social dynamics. As identity scholars suggest, the nature of interaction between individuals and society is reciprocal.

In conclusion, this study provided practical insights for film festival organizers in several ways. First, it determined that behavior of a film festival participant is closely aligned with the participant's self-identity and is strongly influenced by psychological involvement, commitment, and social support. Thus organizers can build on-going relationships with participants between the annual events via diverse forms of social network services. Groups and organizations affiliated with film festivals or movies can be used as reference groups to exert a positive effect on self-identity. It is highly likely that people with strong IS toward the BIFF enjoy talking about it and meeting people with similar interests as they are prone to maintaining social connections with identity-related subjects. Further, souvenirs obtained during the festival may be good cues

to maintain and shore up their film festival related identity. Festival organizers can exploit this type of psychological trait among film festival fans. Second, our results point to the effect of social support on forming IS among festival participants. Thus, festival organizers can sponsor on- and off-line events for film festival participants and create a sense of community where identity forming and reinforcing processes can occur. They can reinforce participants' IS by creating social connections among the participants and between the participants and the film festival organization. By providing on-going stimuli, festival organizers can maintain and reinforce the participants' interest and encourage their psychologically enduring involvement with the festival. Finally, this paper has examined central constructs regarding leisure behaviors and the dynamic relationships among key variables to develop a model that explains film festival participation. It has established IS as a significant determinant of film festival participation as a leisure behavior and contributed to our understanding of how this behavior emerges and changes. By uncovering the complex motivating structure behind this behavior, the paper assists practitioners with insights into how participants may maintain their loyalty to their leisure interests.

The study had several limitations. First, it is used cross-sectional data; however, investigation of the entire process of developing certain leisure behaviors requires more than a one-time cross-sectional survey. Longitudinal data will shed more light on the current topic, since leisure related IS develops from social interactions with others but can be modified by the individual (Colton, 1987). Second, IS theory is incomplete in terms of its reconciliation between sociology and psychology, which take different stances regarding how an individual's self-identity is formed (Stryker, 1987). Third, using intention as a proxy measure for behavioral loyalty has limitations as McKercher and Tse (2012) point out. By examining secondary data collected by government agencies in multiple countries, they found out that intention is a weak predictor of actual behavior even though it has been used for a behavioral proxy measure most often in existing research. The need for a measure that is theoretically sound and accurately operationalized for the loyalty construct requires theoretical consensus and empirical rigor among researchers.

A few words are in order for future research directions. First, the differing roles that social identity and self-identity play in festival participation and in other leisure domains warrant further investigation. The two are closely related but may independently operate in explaining leisure behavior, as Pierro et al. suggest (2003). Second, examining why people with different levels of leisure specialization show differing psychological structure around their social-identity and self-identity merits further attention. For example, Individuals with high leisure specialization adhere to a set of norms, values, and behaviors of their 'subworld' (Crosset & Beal, 1997). The interplay of these dynamics among specialized and casual festival participants, and festival volunteers could be better understood.

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