



From Beans to Bonds: Motivations, Loyalty, and Product Purchases in Coffee Ecotourism

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ABSTRACT

In recent decades, ecotourism on coffee farms in Costa Rica has experienced increasing demand. Motivation and loyalty are the cornerstones of studies focussing on ecotourism, and this research seeks to delve deeper into these concepts throughout the three phases of the coffee farm visit: namely the pre-experience, the active experience and the post-experience. Thus, 30 travellers who have participated in this type of ecotourism experiences at the coffee farm of Café Monteverde in Costa Rica were the subject of this study. The findings of the interviews were analysed using Leximancer 5.0 software and then integrated into a map showing the customer journey. The results indicate that the pre-experience phase has little impact on the purchase of coffee products, since travellers look for experiences rather than products when they visit coffee farms. The active experience phase, with its sensorially appealing tour, tastings and shop assortment, has the greatest influence on customer loyalty. However, the results reveal that the post-experience phase presents the greatest challenges in terms of customer loyalty when it comes to coffee product purchases. The main barriers include missing consideration of the farm as an online coffee supplier, uncertainty about shipping and difficulties related to repeat purchase options. This study contributes to the literature by adding loyalty to the customer journey map in the post-trip period related to coffee farm ecotourism.

Keywords Coffee Ecotourism, Motivations, Loyalty, Product Purchases, Customer Journey, Costa Rica

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RESUMO

Nas últimas décadas, o ecoturismo nas plantações de café na Costa Rica tem experimentado uma crescente procura. Motivação e lealdade são pilares nos estudos de ecoturismo, e este trabalho de investigação procura aprofundar esses conceitos ao longo das três fases da visita à plantação de café: nomeadamente a pré-experiência, a experiência ativa e a pós-experiência. Assim, 30 viajantes que participaram neste tipo de ecoturismo às plantações de café na quinta do Café Monteverde, na Costa Rica, foram alvo deste estudo e os resultados das entrevistas foram analisadas com recurso ao software Leximancer 5.0 e posteriormente integrados num mapa com a jornada do cliente. Os resultados indicam que a fase de pré-experiência tem um impacto reduzido nas compras de produtos de café, uma vez que os viajantes procuram experiências em vez de produtos nas plantações de café. A fase da experiência ativa, com o seu passeio sensorialmente apelativo, as provas e o sortido da loja, tem a maior influência na fidelização dos clientes. No entanto, a fase pós-experiência apresenta desafios na fidelização do cliente em relação à compra de produtos de café. Obstáculos incluem a falta de consideração da plantação como fornecedora online de café, incertezas quanto ao envio e dificuldades nas opções de compra repetida. Este estudo contribui para a literatura acrescentando a fidelização ao mapa da jornada do cliente no período de pós-viagem relacionado com o ecoturismo nas plantações de café.

Palavras-chave: Café Ecoturismo, Motivações, Lealdade, Compras de produtos, Percorso do cliente, Costa Rica

Título: Dos grãos aos títulos: motivações, lealdade e compras de produtos no ecoturismo do café

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	I
RESUMO	II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	III
LIST OF FIGURES	V
LIST OF TABLES	VI
LIST OF APPENDICES	VII
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	VIII
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	3
2.1 ECOTOURISM.....	3
2.1.1 <i>The Niche of Coffee Ecotourism</i>	3
2.1.2 <i>Ecotourism in Costa Rica</i>	5
2.2 MOTIVATIONS FOR ECOTOURISM.....	6
2.2.1 <i>Motivations for Coffee Ecotourism</i>	7
2.3 POST-TRIP LOYALTY.....	8
2.4 DIRECT & ONLINE PURCHASES OF LOCAL PRODUCTS	9
2.4.1 <i>Motivations for Local Product Purchases</i>	9
2.4.2 <i>Barriers for Local Product Purchases</i>	10
2.5 CUSTOMER JOURNEYS IN COFFEE ECOTOURISM.....	11
2.5.1 <i>The Customer Journey Map Design</i>	12
2.5.2 <i>Activities & Interactions along the Customer Journey Map Design</i>	13
3 METHODOLOGY	14
3.1 RESEARCH APPROACH	14
3.2 DATA COLLECTION	15
3.3 DATA ANALYSIS	16
4 RESULTS	17
4.1 CONCEPT MAP 1: PRE-EXPERIENCE STAGE	17
4.2 CONCEPT MAP 2: ACTIVE EXPERIENCE.....	19
4.3 CONCEPT MAP 3: POST-EXPERIENCE	20
5 DISCUSSION	22
5.1 PRE-EXPERIENCE STAGE.....	22
5.2 ACTIVE EXPERIENCE STAGE	24
5.3 POST-EXPERIENCE STAGE.....	26
5.4 CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAP.....	28
6 CONCLUSION	32
6.1 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION	33
6.2 PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTION	34
6.3 LIMITATIONS.....	35
6.4 FUTURE RESEARCH.....	35
7 BIBLIOGRAPHY	36
8 APPENDICES.....	50

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: ECOTOURISM FRAMEWORK ADAPTED FROM FOSSGARD AND STENSLAND (2013)..... 6

FIGURE 2: THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY MODEL ADAPTED FROM YACHIN (2018)..... 12

FIGURE 3: CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAP TEMPLATE (KAPLAN, 2016)..... 13

FIGURE 4: PRE-EXPERIENCE MAP (LEXIMANCER OUTPUT 2023)..... 18

FIGURE 5: ACTIVE EXPERIENCE MAP (LEXIMANCER OUTPUT 2023)..... 19

FIGURE 6: POST-EXPERIENCE MAP (LEXIMANCER OUTPUT 2023)..... 20

FIGURE 7: COFFEE ECOTOURISM CUSTOMER JOURNEY (OWN ELABORATION 2023)..... 28

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE BASED ON LITERATURE (OWN ELABORATION 2023) 14

TABLE 2: PARTICIPANTS' DEMOGRAPHICS (OWN ELABORATION 2023)..... 17

TABLE 3: PRE-EXPERIENCE THEMES (LEXIMANCER OUTPUT 2023). 18

TABLE 4: PRE-EXPERIENCE CONCEPT SUMMARY (LEXIMANCER OUTPUT 2023)..... 18

TABLE 5: ACTIVE EXPERIENCE THEMES (LEXIMANCER OUTPUT 2023)..... 19

TABLE 6: ACTIVE EXPERIENCE CONCEPT SUMMARY (LEXIMANCER OUTPUT 2023)..... 20

TABLE 7: POST-EXPERIENCE THEMES (LEXIMANCER OUTPUT 2023). 20

TABLE 8: POST-EXPERIENCE CONCEPT SUMMARY (LEXIMANCER OUTPUT 2023)..... 21

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE INSPIRING QUESTIONS..... 50
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS (PARTICIPANTS: #5, #7, #8, #13, #19)..... 51

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Definition
ae	active experience
poe	post-experience
pre	pre-experience

1 INTRODUCTION

Coffee ecotourism is a tourism niche where travellers engage in first-hand educational experiences linked to the process of coffee production (Casalegno et al., 2020; Ma et al., 2020). As a forerunner in ecotourism (Guglielmi, 2023) and one of the top ten coffee-producing countries in Latin America (International Coffee Organisation, 2023), Costa Rica is experiencing an increase in travellers who are interested in coffee ecotourism activities (Clausen & Vargas, 2021). The difference from regular coffee tourism is that ecotourism experiences include the preservation of natural diversity, conservation of resources, knowledge acquisition about ecosystems and their wildlife, as well as the delivery of socio-economic benefits to local communities (T. H. Lee & Jan, 2019).

In the past, research on travellers' entire customer journey was scarce, in particular related to coffee ecotourism. Instead, research about ecotourism has mainly focused on travellers' general motivations and/or post-trip loyalty in the form of destination loyalty (Isa et al., 2019; Yoon & Uysal, 2005), recommendations (Campón et al., 2012; Tu & Chang, 2012), and niche loyalty (T. T. Li et al., 2021). However, recent literature pointed out a socioeconomic opportunity for ecotouristic sites that lies within the creation of activity-related goods for travellers (Carvache-Franco et al., 2022). Particularly, locations with a prominent culinary reputation were advised to offer local food and beverage products (Le et al., 2021). Consequently, ecotouristic coffee farms in Costa Rica started to sell coffee that was produced on their farms (Casalegno et al., 2020; Ma et al., 2020). This allows coffee ecotouristic farms to establish an additional layer of customer loyalty (Pan, 2023; Setiyorini, 2019) in the form of product purchases that may last beyond travellers' ecotouristic experiences. However, customer loyalty in the form of product purchases is identified as a big research gap in the coffee ecotourism literature. This research gap can be bridged by probing the entire coffee ecotourism customer journey, thereby greatly improving the current understanding of travellers' different motivations along the stages and their effect on customer loyalty as per product purchases.

This research had two main objectives. It sought first to identify the dominant concepts and narratives affecting motivations during the travellers' pre-experience, active experience, and post-experience. The second aim was to explore, in a customer journey map, how the different stages affect customer loyalty as per product purchases. Therefore, this study employed qualitative research in the form of thirty semi-structured interviews with coffee ecotourists' who have visited the farm of Café Monteverde in Costa Rica. The results prepared by Leximancer 5 were then analysed and further integrated into the customer journey framework, which was adapted from Kaplan (2016). The cited framework is particularly

relevant as it helps to graphically represent key activities between travellers and the coffee ecotouristic farm. This will help to answer the following underlying question: how do motivations throughout coffee ecotourism experiences in Costa Rica influence the customer journey?

This study has both theoretical and practical implications as it identifies the key motivators throughout the entire coffee ecotourism experience in Costa Rica and then explores the effect of each customer journey stage on customer loyalty as per product purchases. By doing so, the study enhances the existing body of knowledge on coffee ecotourism and provides recommendations to coffee ecotourism managers to increase their coffee product sales in the long run. This paper continues with a review of the relevant literature on the topic. Afterwards, the research methodology is introduced, and its results are presented. It follows the discussion of the Leximancer 5 findings and the customer journey map. The last part covers the conclusion, importance of these findings, limitations, and opportunities for future research.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Ecotourism

The tourism industry displays a significant reliance on climate, weather conditions, and natural resources, but its notable expansion in recent years is triggering natural depreciation (Hall, 2019). Consequently, new forms of tourism have emerged that aim to preserve the environment. One form is the demand-driven concept of ecotourism, which faces increasing motivations among travellers (Dolnicar & Leisch, 2008). According to T. H. Lee and Jan (2019), the so-called ecotourists actively seek to engage responsively with natural places that have experienced little human impact. The primary objectives of ecotourism include the appreciation of natural settings, the acquisition of information about flora and fauna, and the enjoyment of local cultures within authentic surroundings (Balmford et al., 2009). Simultaneously, ecotourism has gained significant traction among professionals in the fields of conservation and socioeconomic development, especially in developing countries (Stronza et al., 2019). By that, it is embracing the triple bottom-line framework of sustainability, including the three fundamental benefit parameters, namely economic, social, and environmental (Miller, 2020). This strategy resulted in a global ecotourism value for 2022 of 172.4 billion U.S. dollars (IMARC Group, 2021). The same research anticipates the industry to have a value of 374.2 billion U.S. dollars by the year 2028, exhibiting an average yearly increase (CAGR) of 13.9 percent. Consequently, ecotourism holds a significant opportunity for both long-term and short-term enterprises to make significant contributions to the local economy by offering new forms of value creation (Fennell, 2021; Griggio, 2015; S. W. Lee & Xue, 2020). On top of that, tourism experiences and learnings may affect travellers' motivations, which might result in behaviour changes over time (Ballantyne et al., 2011).

2.1.1 The Niche of Coffee Ecotourism

The Role of Coffee

Coffee is often regarded as one of the most popular drinks globally (Myhrvold, 2023). Every day, 2.5 billion cups of coffee are consumed globally, with an annual consumption reaching a remarkable 500 billion cups (Athanasopoulou & Wolf, 2021). Moreover, an observable phenomenon within the coffee industry is the increasing customer preference for specialty coffee (Grand View Research, 2023; Jolliffe, 2010; Wensma, 2023). Consumers are diligently seeking distinctive and superior coffee experiences as they indulge in the discovery of diverse flavour characteristics and origins (Boaventura et al., 2018; Bressani et al., 2021).

Besides, they express a desire to engage in the coffee-producing process (Casalegno et al., 2020; Charles, 2023; Hall, 2019), particularly by visiting coffee farms (Candelo et al., 2019). Consequently, a range of coffee-centric tourist activities emerged (Ross, 2023). Another development seen in the coffee industry is an increasing awareness among consumers about the ecological and social consequences associated with the production of coffee (Guevara & Benett, 2019). This means that consumers actively choose businesses that prioritise fair trade practices, advocate for sustainable farming techniques, and contribute to the well-being of coffee producers (Pipunic, 2022).

Global Demand vs. Cultivation Challenges in Costa Rica

As the level of global demand continues to rise, there is a noticeable trend of supply centralization occurring within a limited number of regions (Roney & Borwitzky, 2023; World Coffee Research, 2023). Latin America has an essential position in the global coffee industry since it is responsible for more than 60 percent of the world's coffee production and supplies around 80% of the world's arabica coffee (International Trade Centre, 2011). One of the countries within this area is Costa Rica, which, despite its relatively small size, ranks among the top 10 nations in terms of coffee production (International Coffee Organisation, 2023). Nevertheless, its coffee production has seen a variety of fluctuations in its growth and decline throughout time due to several factors such as dynamics in the market, meteorological occurrences, outbreaks of pests and diseases, and the volatility of coffee prices (Blackman et al., 2007; Flores de la Vega et al., 2002). Especially over the last twenty years, there has been a notable and rapid occurrence of biophysical transformations in coffee-growing environments (Harvey et al., 2021), leading to a shift in land use resulting in the abandonment of coffee fields and their subsequent replacement (Babin, 2020; Hagggar et al., 2013). Regarding these challenges faced by coffee farmers, it is important to recognise all the cultivation practices employed in coffee production (Jha et al., 2014). These include the selection and management of shade trees, the application of agrochemicals, and the implementation of soil conservation measures, which can have diverse and substantial effects on biodiversity preservation and ecosystem services (Perfecto et al., 1996).

The Solution of Coffee Ecotourism

Building on these ecological efforts, coffee ecotourism offers travellers the opportunity to gain firsthand knowledge about the practices of sustainable coffee farming, the many stages of coffee processing, and the craft of coffee tasting (Casalegno et al., 2020; Hall, 2019; Ma et al., 2020). This point of education could potentially change consumers' perspectives on coffee

and might influence future consumer choices. On top of that, by presenting travellers with the final product of coffee that is produced and sold by that farm, they are offering an immediate way for travellers to support their activities and apply their newly gained knowledge. In that sense, coffee ecotourism may contribute to the financial gains of millions of farmers, agricultural labourers, and other employees whose lives rely on coffee production, buying, and processing (CABI, 2018; Canet Brenes et al., 2016; Tew & Barbieri, 2012). In addition to the coffee tour and direct product purchases on the farm, some farms additionally offer their coffee products online, which creates new space for customer loyalty (Pan, 2023; Setiyorini, 2019).

2.1.2 Ecotourism in Costa Rica

Costa Rica is recognised for its notable dedication to environmental preservation and the safeguarding of its extensive array of national parks (Parker et al., 2023). With 25 percent of its landmass protected in national parks (Bolaños, 2022), the nation possesses roughly 6 percent of the global biodiversity, including various habitats and vegetation zones (Kappelle, 2016; Quesada-Román & Pérez-Umaña, 2020). Despite its richness in nature, Costa Rica is located in Central America, which is known as one of the most impacted tropical areas globally in terms of elevated temperatures and heightened unpredictability in weather conditions (Aguilar et al., 2005; The World Bank Group, 2021). Therefore, it is not surprising that Costa Rica, being a leading figure in the field of ecotourism, has taken the initiative to include the principles of environmental preservation with community advancement and economic expansion in response to the obstacles presented by climate change (Dimitrijević et al., 2022; Honey, 1999). Thus, the diversity in flora and fauna has had a significant impact on the country's economy (Ma et al., 2020). Previously, the economy was primarily based on agriculture (Little & Blau, 2020). However, with an increasing number of nature-enthusiastic travellers, tourism started to generate one-quarter of Costa Rica's export revenue (Braun et al., 2015). According to forecasts, this trend will expand significantly between 2020 and 2030, primarily due to rising consumer demand for unique and authentic experiential activities (Future Market Insights, 2022). One of the activities that may be seen is the integration of the agricultural and tourism sectors. This form of ecotourism enables farmers to create income via diverse farming-related activities, thus facilitating the preservation of rural livelihoods and creating novel prospects for newer generations (Barbieri, 2013). From an economic perspective, there exists an opportunity for the creation of employment. This can occur through direct hosting and the provision of extended services, as well as through the increased profit gained from selling local products directly to travellers. Additionally, there exists an opportunity to

protect traditional practices, enhance cultural pride, elevate the social status of farmers, and promote the advancement of women's societal position (McGehee & Kim, 2004). From an ecological standpoint, there are prospects for conserving indigenous ecosystems, diminishing the use of agricultural chemicals in favour of organic methodologies, and preserving valuable resources (Choo & Jamal, 2009).

2.2 Motivations for Ecotourism

Motivations include psychological needs and wants that encourage, guide, and regulate customer behaviour and activity (Pearce, 2013). In the context of tourism, travellers' motivations provide a valuable tool for understanding their behaviour and may also serve as an indicator for future actions (Huang & Hsu, 2009). Scholars have identified the following distinct motivational factors in the context of ecotourism: self-development, tourism as a personal reward, routine escape, ego-defensive social pressure, collective interactions, the building of personal ties, and ecological appreciation (Carvache-Franco et al., 2019; Iversen et al., 2016; S. Lee et al., 2014). Despite confirming these results, Xu and Chan (2016) added detail by splitting ecological appreciation into knowledge acquisition and scenic beauty appreciation. On top of that, they also emphasised accessibility, convenience, and an assortment of activities as motivators for ecotourism. In general, respondents emphasise the significant importance of preserving natural environments when travelling (Crouch et al., 2005; Dolnicar, 2004).

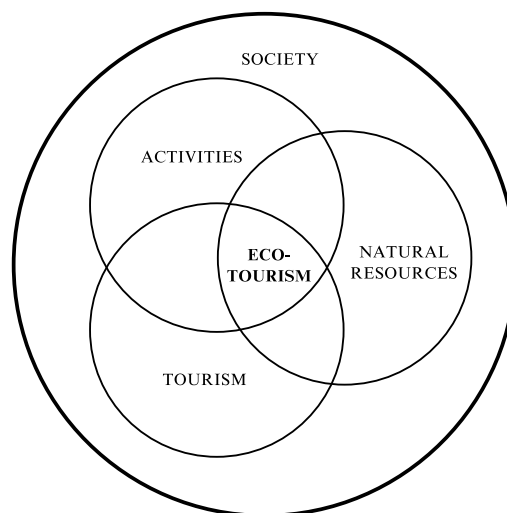


Figure 1: Ecotourism framework adapted from Fossgard and Stensland (2013).

From this pool of motivators, multiple scholars have tried to determine the primary incentives that drive travellers to participate in ecotourism activities. Following Holden and Sparrowhawk (2002), the primary motives of ecotourists are acquiring knowledge about nature,

engaging in physical activities, and socialising with those who have similar interests. Confirmation of this was provided by Panin and Mbrica (2014), who outlined the primary drivers for ecotourists as social interactions, physical and mental activities involving environmental and local experiences, as well as educational elements. Jeong et al. (2018) further decreased the key motivators via their investigation, in which they identified four dimensions: physical well-being, abilities, appreciation of nature, and knowledge acquisition. Nevertheless, research by Chow et al. (2019) simplified the primary factors that motivate ecotourism even more to include relaxing, taking a break from everyday routines, and promoting physical and mental well-being. A recent survey conducted in 2022 once again brought to light the primary motivators behind sustainable travel among individuals (Booking.com, 2022). The findings revealed that a significant proportion of participants, including 41 percent of the total respondents, expressed their motivation to engage in sustainable travel as a means of actively contributing to the reduction of their ecological footprint. Moreover, a notable segment of the participants, namely 33 percent, articulated their preference for pursuing a more locally relevant experience. Furthermore, it was found that 31 percent of participants expressed the view of demonstrating a higher level of consideration and respect towards the surrounding community (Booking.com, 2022).

2.2.1 Motivations for Coffee Ecotourism

It is important to acknowledge that some ecotourists engage in travel to acquire knowledge about a certain region or special interest topic (Bansal & Eiselt, 2004; Page & Dowling, 2002). Individuals often link goods with certain locations, which therefore inspires them to travel there (Verma, 2013). In the context of coffee ecotourism, there is an increasing number of individuals with the specific aim of enhancing their understanding of agricultural practices, flora and fauna, and local community engagement (Anderson, 2018). Based on that, one may infer that travellers choose ecotouristic venues based on their ability to fulfil their demands (Bansal & Eiselt, 2004). Novelli (2005) argues that coffee tourism itself, as an independent product, would only attract a limited demographic, namely passionate coffee consumers. Casalegno et al. (2020) provide indirect evidence supporting this assertion. They view coffee tourism as primarily driven by the array of activities that pique the curiosity of coffee enthusiasts about the complexity of coffee production. Yet, Smith et al. (2019) extended this knowledge and identified the primary drivers of coffee tourists as the desire to get direct experience in coffee cultivation and manufacturing, engage in local product purchases, and enhance their understanding of coffee via the guidance of local experts. Apart from that, Chen

et al. (2021) have shown that relaxation and novelty also play a crucial role in motivating travellers to engage in coffee tourism.

2.3 Post-Trip Loyalty

In the context of tourism, loyalty is commonly assessed as destination loyalty (Yoon & Uysal, 2005) by examining revisit intentions, which encompass the probability of returning, selecting the location for future vacations, and the intention to recommend the place to friends or family (Campón et al., 2012; Tu & Chang, 2012). Research has shown that growing customer retention by 5 percent potentially leads to a 25 to 75 percent lift in profits (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). Additionally, it is much more cost-effective for a company to keep existing customers loyal than to draw in new ones (Wills, 2009), as it helps to lower marketing expenses, cuts down on operational costs, and generates a steady flow of profits, all of which are crucial for achieving long-term success (Brunner et al., 2008).

According to Aaker (1991), re-patronage intentions, satisfaction, brand preference, price premium, switching cost, and brand commitment are all indicators of loyalty. Some studies have used refusal to change, good referrals, repurchase intention, and willingness to suggest as ways to measure destination loyalty (Morais et al., 2004). However, Isa et al. (2019) say that the most important measurements are the likelihood of returning, the likelihood of choosing the place for future vacations, the intention to share good factors. Additionally, numerous studies have assessed motivations related to nature and routine escape as the most accurate indicators for future actions (Adam et al., 2019; Carvache-Franco et al., 2022; Castaño et al., 2003; S. Lee et al., 2014; Shakoori & Hosseini, 2019; Vareiro et al., 2019). In that sense, ecotourism sites should provide travellers with favourable experiences that match their motives and satisfy them (Adam et al., 2019; Carpenter, 2008; Meng et al., 2011). Based on that, research has shown that satisfied travellers would not only have the desire to revisit but also propagate favourable referrals, which has the potential to impact the intent of future tourists to visit (Han et al., 2018; C.-W. Wu, 2016). On top of that, the ecotouristic experiences will help to shape the travellers' destination image and potentially product perception, which positively correlates with an increased likelihood of loyalty behaviour (Isa et al., 2019; T. T. Li et al., 2021). However, research found that many travellers only visit a location once, even if they are greatly satisfied with their experience (Dolnicar et al., 2015). This relates to their trip motivators of breaking away from the ordinary and discovering fresh experiences (Carvache-Franco et al., 2019; Xu & Chan, 2016). This statement applies to the context of ecotourism as well (Rivera

& Croes, 2010). Therefore, research started to evaluate loyalty in the ecotourism travel niche rather than in a particular destination (T. T. Li et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that customer loyalty for coffee ecotouristic farms could also appear as loyalty towards their coffee products. Despite this concept hardly being addressed in previous literature (J. Wu et al., 2022), research pointed out the socioeconomic opportunity for ecotouristic sites that lies within the creation of activity-related goods for travellers (Carvache-Franco et al., 2022). Particularly if the location has a prominent culinary reputation, it might encourage the acquisition of food and beverage products to remember the experience (Le et al., 2021). On top of that, the fact that ecotourists show a greater willingness to pay a premium for sustainable goods (Lu et al., 2016; Nickerson et al., 2016), as well as keep up pro-environmental behaviour at home (Dolnicar & Leisch, 2008; S. W. Lee & Xue, 2020), supports the necessity to deepen the overall understanding in this area.

2.4 Direct & Online Purchases of Local Products

Consumer purchases of local products in the context of this thesis refer to coffee packet purchases, both whole bean and ground, that are produced on the farm where travellers have previously participated in coffee ecotourism activities. These sales either appear as direct product purchases after the ecotouristic activity on the farm and/or as online purchases after the travellers return home. This direct linkage between the coffee product and the ecotouristic activity potentially leads to increased profits for farms and provides positive impacts to the local community (Pan, 2023; Setiyorini, 2019; Tew & Barbieri, 2012). However, despite being considered a rising demand-driven niche (Dolnicar & Leisch, 2008), coffee ecotourism farms face the challenge of establishing local product sales beyond travellers' visits (J. L. Vargas Leitón, personal communication, August 4, 2023).

2.4.1 Motivations for Local Product Purchases

Numerous studies have stated that motivations serve as the greatest indicator of travellers' intentions for their future behaviour (Shakoori & Hosseini, 2019; Vareiro et al., 2019). Thus, coffee ecotouristic venues seek to impact the purchasing intentions of travellers (Carvache-Franco et al., 2022). Previous studies have outlined eight key motivations that influence local product purchase behaviour: tourist demographics (Kim & Littrell, 2001; Wilkins, 2011), perceived value (C.-H. Lin & Wang, 2012; Wilkins, 2011), perceived cultural dissimilarity (J. Lin et al., 2018; L. Lin & Mao, 2015), destination image (Bernardo & Rodrigues, 2020; Papadopoulos & Heslop, 1986; Wong & Cheng, 2014), product attributes (L.

Lin, 2017), tourism motivators (Dresler, 2022; F. S. Li & Ryan, 2018; Swanson & Horridge, 2006), social surroundings (Yu & Littrell, 2005), and personal customs (Cheng et al., 2010; Hoffmann & Schlicht, 2013). In other words, in coffee ecotourism, the coffee product can be seen as a reflection of the travellers' whole experience on the coffee farm (Sedmak & Kociper, 2017). By encouraging them to actively engage in experiencing the process of coffee production and involving them in coffee tastings, the tendency to buy souvenirs in the end is heightened due to an amplified sentimental value (Adam et al., 2019; Anderson, 2018; Timothy, 2005). This might result in higher levels of authenticity perceptions that travellers project towards the coffee product (Fu et al., 2018; Masset & Decrop, 2021). On top of that, customer satisfaction with the prior ecotouristic experience adds another crucial determinant in influencing consumers' purchase decisions, intentions, and behaviours (Asplet & Cooper, 2000; Becker-Olsen et al., 2006; Brunner et al., 2008). When assessing the satisfaction of travellers, the quality of the experience is evaluated concerning the purpose of their visit (Neal & Gursoy, 2008). Additionally, when looking into coffee purchasing behaviour, customers' demand for convenience remains a major factor in the industry (Wensma, 2023). According to Brown (1989), the five components of convenience include time, location, acquisition, usage, and performance. This may apply to both direct and online purchases; however, research claims convenience to be the main motive for younger adults to engage in online product purchases (Ahuja et al., 2003). Additional motivators mentioned are saved time, better online prices, and more availability. Other studies enhanced that list by adding unique product access, sentiment nostalgia, 24/7 shop accessibility, support of local producers, and home delivery as motivators for online purchases (Barska & Wojciechowska-Solis, 2020).

2.4.2 Barriers for Local Product Purchases

Previous research mainly used the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen et al., 1980) and the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1985) to explain sustainable consumer behaviour (M.-F. Chen & Tung, 2014; Han & Kim, 2010; Oreg & Katz-Gerro, 2006). Nevertheless, these often showed a limited correlation between consumers' favourable attitudes towards buying ethical products and their genuine purchasing behaviour (Gleim et al., 2013; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2008; Wheale & Hinton, 2007). This discrepancy is commonly known as the attitude-behaviour gap and typically arises due to a cost and accessibility dilemma (Briz & Ward, 2009; Hemmerling et al., 2015; Padilla Bravo et al., 2013). Apart from that, Kollmuss and Agyemann (2002) identified the following obstacles: financial expenses, emotional engagement, and the prioritisation of obligations. Researchers found that price proved to be the main barrier to

sustainable-produced products, which resulted in customers having greater expectations for them (Gleim et al., 2013). Apart from that, Blake (1999) outlines individualism, accountability (Van Lange et al., 1992), and practicality as challenges for the purchasing behaviour of local coffee products. Apart from that, customers' location biases (Wolff et al., 2019) as well as loyalty to local shops (Gleim et al., 2013; Hempel & Hamm, 2016) were also identified as barriers that prevent travellers' purchasing behaviour towards local coffee products. Especially with coffee products, approximately 69 percent of customers express a higher inclination to purchase coffee when it is fresh (Charles, 2023; Han et al., 2018). These barriers may apply to both direct and online purchases; however, research has also found privacy/security issues, a lack of customer service and social interaction, as well as a missing opportunity to sensorically experience the product, as main barriers to online purchases (Ahuja et al., 2003). Other studies enhanced that list by adding availability issues, short expiry dates, the fear of receiving stale product quality, fraud, and no return policy as motivators for online purchases (Barska & Wojciechowska-Solis, 2020).

2.5 Customer Journeys in Coffee Ecotourism

The phrase "customer journey" often describes the step-by-step procedure that a customer undergoes to get or utilise a product or service provided by a firm (Følstad & Kvale, 2018). It diverges from conventional techniques such as service blueprints since it gives priority to the buyer's viewpoint in corporate processes (N. Bolton et al., 2014). Moreover, its relevance becomes undeniable when looking at the tourism industry. The interaction between travellers and ecotouristic sites becomes crucial when designing tourism experiences effectively (Kumar et al., 2010; S.-M. Tseng, 2009). Therefore, the coffee ecotouristic farm engages with travellers throughout the entire customer journey (Shaw & Williams, 2009; Voss & Zomerdijk, 2007). While more than 50 percent of the existing research on customer journeys has been published in recent years, there has been a lack of coherence due to its wide range of academic foundations (Tueanrat et al., 2021). Besides, the same research has also identified active experience, behavioural reaction, co-actions, channels, and technological interference as the fundamental topics dealt with in customer journeys.

The traveller's journey consists of three distinct stages: pre-experience, active experience, and post-experience (Ingram et al., 2017; Yachin, 2018). During the pre-experience stage, the traveller becomes interested in the touristic activity by developing motivations and expectations and by entering the booking process (Yachin, 2018). This stage also encompasses the period between the booking of the experience and the start of the genuine visit, in which

travellers anticipate and envision the approaching experience (Kruger & Saayman, 2017). The active experience stage is known to be the most intensive one, as value is generated via the active involvement of travellers on the tourist site (Yachin, 2018). In the end, recalling and thinking back on the earlier experience is what creates value during the final stage. This might trigger a decision-making process towards the online purchase of farm-produced coffee products. Nevertheless, research shows that the subject of after-trip activities has been the least researched among all other stages (Tueanrat et al., 2021).

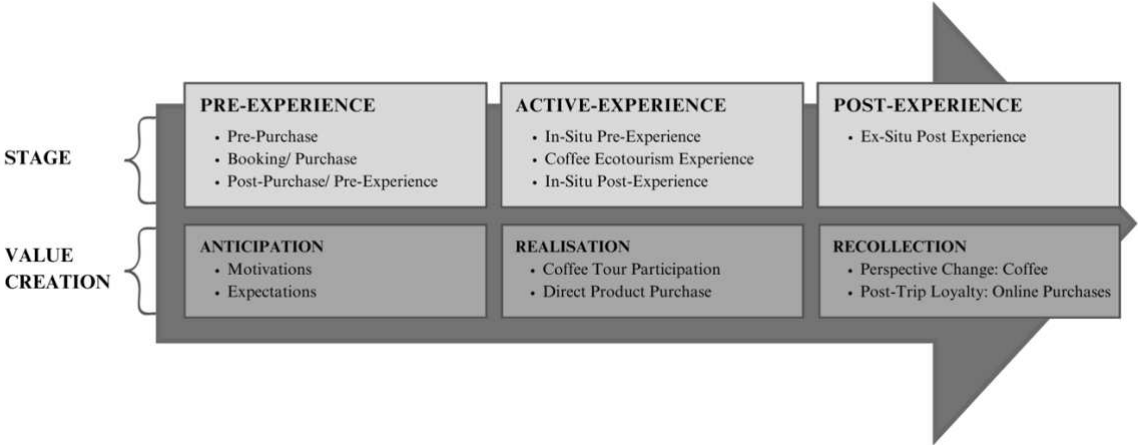


Figure 2: the customer journey model adapted from Yachin (2018).

2.5.1 The Customer Journey Map Design

Customer journey maps are a popular method to demonstrate customer journeys as they help to graphically represent key interactions and activities between travellers and the coffee ecotouristic farm (Kaplan, 2016). While the horizontal axis depicts a chronological sequence of the previously mentioned three stages, the vertical one is comprised of significant divisions that are derived from the primary points of interaction between the traveller and the ecotouristic farm. As these divisions play a vital role in determining the usefulness of the design, they need to be properly chosen (Rosenbaum et al., 2017). However, Kaplan (2016) claims storytelling and visualisation to be crucial for comprehensively capturing the traveller’s entire perspective. Hence, the author provides specific recommendations for a customer journey map design by introducing three distinct zones with the names A, B, and C. Zone A imposes limitations on the map by specifying the identity of the individual involved ("who") (1) and the specific situation to be analysed ("what") (2). As the central area of the map, zone B represents the visualised traveller’s experience, often organised into distinct parts of the journey (3). The traveller’s activities and interactions (4), opinions (5), and emotional state during the trip (6) can be enhanced by including statements from the interviews. Zone C must be reliant upon the corporate objective that the map serves. However, it might encompass the findings of valuable

insights and areas of concern, along with potential areas to prioritise in the future (7), as well as internal responsibilities (8).

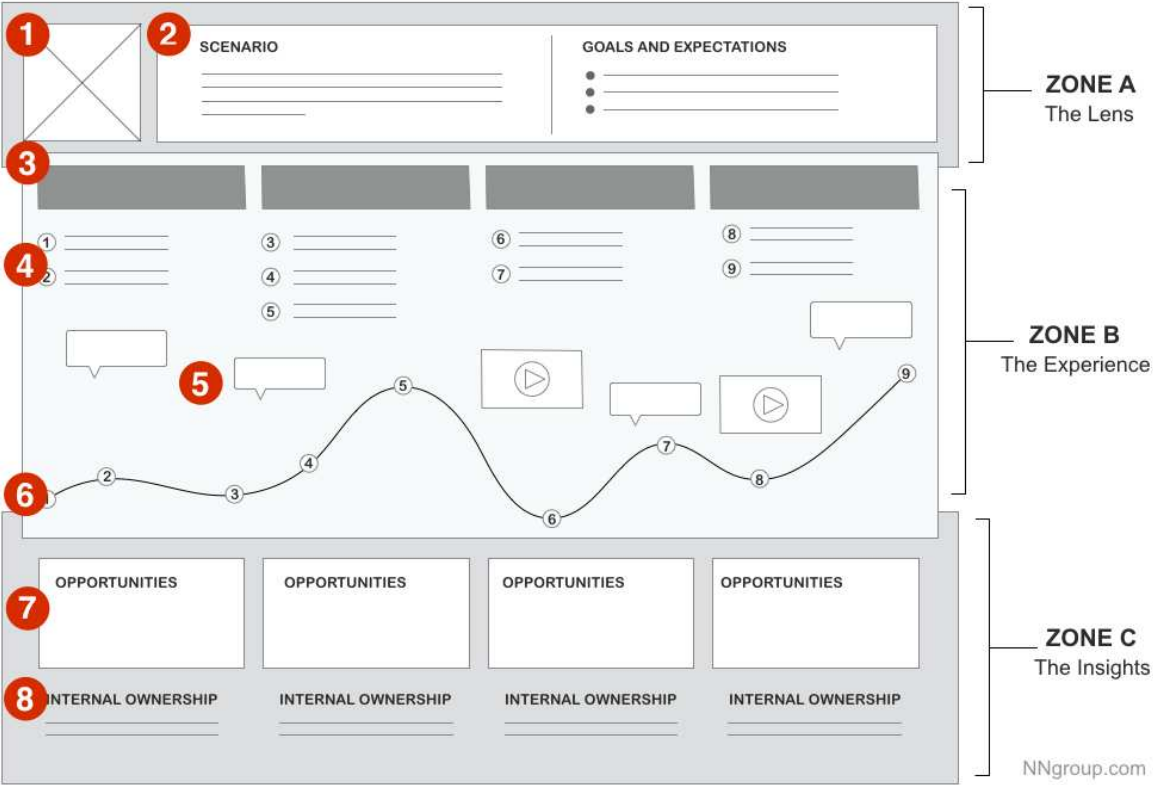


Figure 3: Customer Journey Map template (Kaplan, 2016).

2.5.2 Activities & Interactions along the Customer Journey Map Design

As previously mentioned, the horizontal axis (3) depicts a chronological sequence of three stages: pre-experience (pre), active experience (ae), and post-experience (poe). These three experiences can be broken down into six essential activities and interactions (4) that travellers encounter during their coffee ecotourism journey: motivation (pre), expectation (pre), tour (ae), direct purchases (ae), perspective changes (poe), and online purchases (poe). To discover the main motivators within the coffee ecotourism experience in Costa Rica, as well as their influence on customer loyalty as per product purchases, we need to carefully examine the three key stages. This helps to understand the different motivators throughout travellers' customer journeys that shape their loyalty as per product purchases. It also helps to discover barriers that stop travellers from engaging in coffee product purchases. This will eventually help coffee ecotourism managers build strategies in the future.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Approach

Given the exploratory nature of this study, a qualitative research approach was used to collect knowledge to investigate how motivations throughout coffee ecotourism experiences in Costa Rica influence the customer journey. This methodological decision is based on scholarly evidence that demonstrates the inadequacy of most quantitative methodologies when it comes to the comprehension of travellers' experience assessments (Hjalager & Nordin, 2011; Park & Vargo, 2012). Hence, the main data of this study was generated using the customer-centric approach of semi-structured interviews, which empower participants to openly express their standpoints while enabling the interviewer to shape the course of the conversation via a partially organised framework (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Harvey-Jordan & Long, 2001).

Interview Protocol and Procedure

The semi-structured interviews follow a pre-defined outline. Screening questions will determine the baseline measures of the participants. Then, warming-up questions aim to get participants comfortable in the interview situation, and lastly, the main questions will help to understand the travellers' customer journey. The third part is derived from the three key stages of a traveller's customer journey: pre-experience, active experience, and post-experience (Yachin, 2018). The questions are inspired by the literature review and scholars that emphasised their research on specific stages of the customer journey (see Appendix A).

Structure	Adapted Questions
Screening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demographics: Age, Gender, Country of Residence
Warm-Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Role of coffee in life & forms of loyalty in tourism
Coffee Ecotourism Customer Journey	<p>Stage 1: Pre-Experience (questions based on research by Chang (2007))</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What triggered your interest to visit a coffee farm in the first place? ▪ Why did you decide to engage in this specific coffee experience at Café Monteverde? ▪ What you were hoping to gain from your coffee ecotourism experience? <p>Stage 2: Active Experience (questions based on research by Lian Chan & Baum (2007); Tabaeian et al. (2023); Teng et al. (2022))</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Please briefly walk me through the entire experience. What were your highlights? ▪ What aspects could be improved? ▪ How satisfied were you with your overall coffee ecotourism experience at the farm? ▪ Please explain the reasons that encouraged or hindered you from purchasing coffee products on the farm directly after your experience? <p>Stage 3: Reflective Experience (questions based on research by Teng et al. (2022))</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How did the experience at Café Monteverde influence your perspective and purchasing behaviour of coffee? ▪ Why would you engage in online purchases from the farm and what is hindering you? ▪ How could this barrier be fixed? ▪ What would encourage you to overcome this barrier? ▪ Imagine you would be working on the farm and have the goal to increase product purchases in the long-run, how would you do it?

Table 1: Interview Guide based on literature (Own elaboration 2023).

Customer Journey Map Design

A customer journey map design is used as an underlying framework for the interviews to portray the entire scope of the coffee ecotourism experience. Based on the insights of the literature review, the horizontal axis was split into three key stages: pre-experience, active experience, and post-experience. Under those stages, the following activities and interactions were listed to further define them: motivation (pre), expectation (pre), tour (ae), direct purchases (ae), perspective changes (poe), and online purchases (poe). These six interactions were obtained from previous scholars (Sana et al., 2023) as well as my firsthand experiences on Café Monteverde's farm in Costa Rica. These interactions intend to aid participants in providing a more elaborate picture of their viewpoints and emotions throughout their customer journey (Bradley et al., 2021). In contrast, the vertical axis consists of the following five parameters: emotional journey, planned coffee purchases, encouraging factors towards purchasing, discouraging factors towards purchasing, and opportunity.

The initial component of the study uses a slope to depict the different levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction during each interaction within the ecotouristic coffee journey (Kaplan, 2016). The next component depicts travellers' willingness to engage in product purchases of Café Monteverde's coffee. Following that, encouraging and discouraging factors help to understand the reasons behind travellers' willingness to purchase. Encouraging factors aim to identify motivators that encourage purchases, while negative factors highlight issues that may hinder purchases of farm-owned coffee products. The opportunity component provides insights into improving those activities throughout the customer journey, which were proposed by participants, focusing on strategies to retain coffee purchases in the long run.

3.2 Data Collection

Past literature states that the recommended threshold for semi-structured interviews lies at a minimum of 15 interviews (Guest et al., 2006). Only after passing this minimum can a state of information saturation be reached. In this study, however, a total of 30 interviews with 60,327 words on more than 100 pages of transcript were conducted to answer the research question. Interviews were held with coffee ecotourists who had visited the farm of Café Monteverde in Costa Rica. This condition allowed us to have a deeper understanding of the motivations and behaviours of tourists, as they all went through a similar customer journey at the farm of Café Monteverde. In addition, all participants were mandated to currently reside in either the United States or Canada, as these countries hold the strongest customer base for the farm. Participants were recruited via social media, such as LinkedIn and Instagram, travel platforms, such as

TripAdvisor, and internal customer data from Café Monteverde. Depending on the platform, they were contacted via mail and/or direct messages.

3.3 Data Analysis

Following the completion of the 30 interviews, the audio recordings were transcribed, prepared as three files, each of them representing one of the three customer journey stages, and imported into the qualitative research software Leximancer 5. Leximancer is a computerised instrument that is specifically designed for unsupervised semantic mapping of conversational language (Pearce & Wu, 2016). It employs both relational and conceptual analysis. The textual data collected within the interviews generates a conceptual heat map consisting of many concepts, represented by grey dots, that will be grouped into broader colour-coded themes (C. Tseng et al., 2015). The most important themes are said to be represented in warmer colours, such as red, orange, and yellow, while the less important ones are represented with cooler colours, such as blue and purple (Leximancer Pty Ltd, 2023; Weber, 1990). Moreover, the proximity of themes and concepts to one another directly correlates to the strength of their connection. Each of the three produced concept maps additionally has two auto tags, represented in a red font, to study different factors within each stage. After analysing the results produced by Leximancer, the coffee ecotourism customer journey was visualised by combining the themes and concepts of the pre-experience, active experience, and post-experience stages with the earlier depicted customer journey map design.

4 RESULTS

Thirty interviews were conducted with coffee ecotourists who visited Café Monteverde in Costa Rica to investigate how motivations throughout coffee ecotourism experiences in Costa Rica influence the customer journey (see Table 1). Except for one outlier who was 70 years old, participants were between 20 and 59 years old. Above 50 percent of the participants were between 20 and 29 years old. The majority of the participants are currently based in the United States and are female. The following table gives an insight into the demographics of the interview participants:

#	Age	Gender	Country of Residence	#	Age	Gender	Country of Residence
1	24	male	USA	16	28	female	USA
2	26	female	USA	17	20	female	Canada
3	25	female	Canada	18	29	male	Canada
4	20	female	USA	19	24	male	USA
5	26	female	USA	20	70	female	Canada
6	21	female	USA	21	29	male	Canada
7	59	female	USA	22	30	female	USA
8	39	female	USA	23	28	male	USA
9	58	female	USA	24	48	male	USA
10	20	female	USA	25	38	female	USA
11	25	female	USA	26	25	female	USA
12	22	female	USA	27	54	male	USA
13	47	female	USA	28	30	female	USA
14	27	female	Canada	29	32	male	Canada
15	55	female	USA	30	44	male	USA

Table 2: Participants' demographics (Own elaboration 2023).

4.1 Concept Map 1: Pre-Experience Stage

The content analysis using Leximancer produced three concept maps demonstrating the most recurring themes and concepts within the 30 interviews held with coffee ecotourists. Three maps were created to effectively examine each stage of the customer journey and to better determine how each stage affects customer loyalty in the form of product purchases.

Within the pre-experience stage, Leximancer identified six themes regarding the motivation and expectation of coffee ecotourism experiences. We can denote “coffee” with 453 hits as the most relevant theme within the pre-experience stage, while “Caf Monteverde (coffee shop)” with 42 hits represents a less important theme. Moreover, the “coffee” theme shares the most boundaries with other themes, such as “visit”, “Monteverde”, and “different (aspects)”.

The sharing of boundaries reveals a close relationship between those themes. Apart from that, the strong overlap of the themes “coffee” and “visit” shows that they are closely connected.

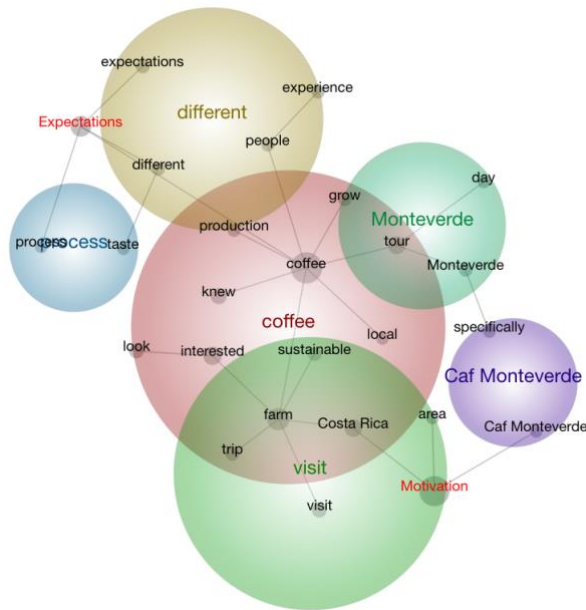


Figure 4: Pre-Experience Map (Leximancer Output 2023).

Theme	Hits	Percent	Concepts
coffee	453	54%	coffee, farm, interested, Costa Rica, tour, knew, look, sustainable, production, local
different	132	16%	different, expectations, people, experience
visit	84	10%	visit, trip, area
Monteverde	72	9%	Monteverde, grow, day
process	51	6%	process, taste
Caf Monteverde	42	5%	Caf Monteverde, specifically
Total	834	100%	

Table 3: Pre-Experience Themes (Leximancer Output 2023).

We can also see that the theme circles “visit”, “coffee”, and “Caf Monteverde (coffee shop)” are close to the tag “Motivation”. However, there are three concepts directly connected to the motivation tag: Caf Monteverde (7% relevance), area (4% relevance), and Costa Rica (18% relevance). On the other hand, the theme circles of “different (aspects)”, “coffee”, and “process” are close to the tag “Expectations”. Here, four concepts are directly connected to the expectation tag: (no) expectations (12% relevance), different (11% relevance), coffee (78% relevance), and process (9% relevance).

Concept	Count	Relevance Percentage	Concept	Count	Relevance Percentage
coffee	324	78	Monteverde	30	7
farm	138	33	Caf Monteverde	30	7
tour	99	24	trip	30	7
interested	87	21	grow	30	7
Costa Rica	75	18	people	27	6
knew	57	14	production	21	5
expectations	48	12	day	21	5
visit	45	11	area	18	4
look	45	11	specifically	18	4
different	45	11	taste	18	4
sustainable	36	9	local	12	3
experience	36	9	TAG:motivation	417	100
process	36	9	TAG:expectations	207	50

Table 4: Pre-Experience Concept Summary (Leximancer Output 2023).

4.2 Concept Map 2: Active Experience

Within the active-experience stage, Leximancer identified four themes regarding the tour and direct purchase motivations of coffee ecotourism experiences. We can denote “coffee” with 180 hits as the most relevant theme within the active-experience stage, while “buy” with 66 hits represents a less important theme. Moreover, the theme “beans” shares the most boundaries with themes such as “coffee” and “farm”, making it a key aspect within the active-experience stage. Notably, “buy” is relatively far away from the rest of the theme set, making it a less important theme at this stage.

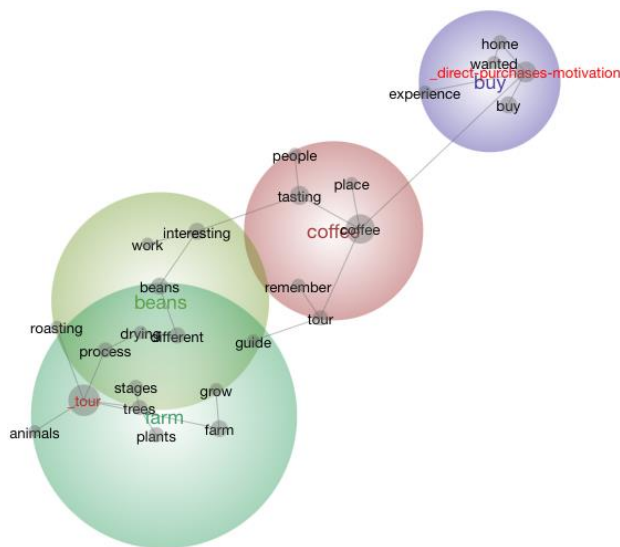


Figure 5: Active Experience Map (Leximancer Output 2023).

Theme	Hits	Percent	Concepts
coffee	180	39%	coffee, tasting, tour, remember, people, place
beans	118	26%	beans, interesting, different, process, drying, guide, roasting, work
farm	96	21%	farm, plants, trees, stages, grow, animals
buy	66	14%	buy, home, experience, wanted
Total	460	100%	

Table 5: Active Experience Themes (Leximancer Output 2023).

We can also see that the theme circles “farm” and “beans” are close to the “Tour” tag, which connects directly to five concepts: farm (23% relevance), process (12% relevance), trees (12% relevance), animals (6% relevance), and roasting (6% relevance). On the other hand, the theme circles of “buy” and “coffee” are close to the tag “Direct purchase motivations”. Here, four concepts are directly connected to the tag: coffee (67% relevance), buy (22% relevance), home (10% relevance), and experience (8% relevance). Apart from that, we can also detect a direct connection between the tour tag and the direct purchase motivation tag that crosses through the following concepts: process, drying, different, beans, interesting, tasting, and coffee.

coffee (91% relevance), changed (11% relevance), experience (7% relevance), behind (5% relevance), work (5% relevance), and product (3% relevance). On the other hand, the theme circles of “online” and “buy” are close to the tag “Online-purchases barriers”. Here, four concepts are directly connected to the tag: buy (38% relevance), online (18% relevance), shipping (11% relevance), and convenience (5% relevance).

Concept	Count	Relevance Percentage	Concept	Count	Relevance Percentage
coffee	121	91	expensive	10	8
buy	51	38	Starbucks	9	7
online	24	18	experience	9	7
order	20	15	sustainable	8	6
try	20	15	need	7	5
time	18	14	comes	7	5
local	17	13	convenience	7	5
purchasing	17	13	work	7	5
shipping	14	11	behind	7	5
changed	14	11	home	6	5
farm	13	10	product	4	3
different	13	10	origin	4	3
beans	12	9	aware	3	2
store	12	9	TAG:op-barriers	133	100
Costa Rica	11	8	TAG:perspective-change	129	97
Caf Monteverde	10	8			

Table 8: Post-Experience Concept Summary (Leximancer Output 2023).

5 DISCUSSION

The concept maps in Figures 4-6 address the first research objective by identifying the major themes that affect travellers' motivations during the pre-experience, active experience, and post-experience. A separate analysis of the tags within each stage will then help to explore the effects on customer loyalty as per product purchases, which will be presented in a customer journey map (Figure 7).

5.1 Pre-Experience Stage

Pre-Experience Stage affected by motivations

The main theme close to motivations (Figure 4) was "visits". Its close connection is mainly influenced by situational factors such as visits, trips, and its direct connection with the area. In other words, the location seems to be a main motivator for travellers' visits to an ecotouristic coffee farm. This contradicts the research of Verma (2013), who claimed the opposite, namely that the product inspires people to visit a certain location.

As expected, "coffee" is the strongest out of six themes in the pre-experience stage. Coffee enjoys wide popularity among society (Myhrvold, 2023) and plays a daily role for many consumers. The present study found that coffee ecotourists deem coffee, farm, and tour to be the most significant factors within their pre-experience that trigger their motivations to visit. However, the concept of Costa Rica holds the strongest direct connection to motivations within this stage. Furthermore, the theme strongly overlaps with the "visit" theme, which confirms the growing desire for farm visits (Candelo et al., 2019). On top of that, its close connection to the "Monteverde" theme supports the argument that the existing place-image of Monteverde as an area to grow coffee can also act as a motivator to visit the farm. The results also show that the concept of sustainability plays a relatively small role in the motivations of travellers at this stage. This contradicts most studies in the area of ecotourism (Crouch et al., 2005; Dolnicar, 2004). The ecotouristic factor of the farm seems to be interesting for travellers; however, the results show that it barely affects their motivations within the pre-experience stage (Grunert et al., 2014).

The last theme close to motivation is "Caf Monteverde". It also holds a direct connection to it and describes the two cafés in town as motivators for travellers to visit the farm. Travellers described how their positive experiences in the cafés triggered their motivation to visit the ecotouristic coffee farm. This theme is not covered in the literature of this study and opens up a distinct motivator that only works for the specific case of Café Monteverde.

Pre-Experience Stage affected by expectations

After showing the primary motivators for travellers to visit an ecotouristic coffee farm, we can determine a set of secondary motivators that are linked to the travellers' expectations and can, therefore, be classified as specific motivators. As the second most frequently mentioned attribute in this concept map (Figure 4) and the closest directly linked theme to expectations, "different" describes the travellers' desire to enhance their knowledge, learn new skills, and/or meet local people who live a completely different life from the travellers. This theme aligns with previous literature that stated that knowledge enhancement is a driver for ecotourists to visit a farm (Jeong et al., 2018; Xu & Chan, 2016). It also shows that many consumers already have a basic understanding of coffee but seek to indulge in its differences (Bansal & Eiselt, 2004; Page & Dowling, 2002). This confirms the growing customer preference for speciality coffee (Grand View Research, 2023; Jolliffe, 2010; Wensma, 2023) and consumers desire to discover diverse flavour characteristics and origins (Boaventura et al., 2018; Bressani et al., 2021). However, the closer connection to expectations than to motivations classifies them as secondary motivators that arise after the initial decision to visit an ecotouristic coffee farm.

Another theme connected to expectations is "coffee". It holds the strongest direct connection to expectations within the pre-experience stage, which shows that most travellers are expecting to generally enhance their coffee knowledge with a farm visit (Smith et al., 2019). However, specific eco-farming and production information are less important to them which contradicts previous ecotourism literature on motivations (Crouch et al., 2005; Dolnicar, 2004). This is supported by the less frequently mentioned attribute "process" which also has a direct connection to expectations. It refers to a more functionally oriented goal of understanding the details of the coffee production context. While "different" and "coffee" enhance people's general understanding of coffee-related topics, "process" can be classified as a special interest topic that appeals to people with a related professional background or related passions. This touches on Smith et al.'s (2019) research; however, an increase in interest cannot be determined in this study.

The main takeaway from this stage is the importance of location-based drivers as primary motivators for coffee ecotouristic farm visits, while coffee knowledge enhancement and local culture discovery can be classified as secondary motivators. Surprisingly, the ecotouristic characteristics of the farm did not play a huge role in travellers' motivations.

5.2 Active Experience Stage

Active-Experience Stage affected by the coffee tour

The main theme connected to the tour tag (Figure 5) is “farm” and it describes the travellers’ experiences related to farm activities, such as flora and fauna. It holds three direct connections, namely farm, trees, and animals. The strongest one relates to the scope of activities the coffee farm undertakes to ecologically farm coffee. This goes hand in hand with the second one, which travellers connect to their knowledge enhancement about the different growth stages of a coffee tree. This was often paired with the possibility of touching the trees and the growing cherries. According to coffee expert James Hoffmann, most people do not even realise that coffee starts as a fresh fruit that is growing on trees (Bartlett & Hoffmann, 2023). This would explain the strong connection between the tour tag and theme at this stage. The weakest direct connection between the tour tag and this theme circle is with animals. The results show that animals are related to travellers’ perceptions of the farm as a self-preserving ecosystem with its animals, plants, and organic pesticide production which supports Anderson's (2018) research. By having one of the weakest direct connections within the active experience stage, travellers seem to acknowledge and appreciate the observed effort in ecological coffee farming but do not perceive it as a main tour component. Instead, it rather seems to influence travellers’ brand trust towards Café Monteverde (Cromwell et al., 2023; Teng et al., 2022).

The second closest theme is “beans” which describes the travellers’ knowledge enhancement about the different processing and roasting ways the farm is exposing coffee beans to. Also, as the second most popular theme within the active experience stage, it highly impresses the majority of travellers by corresponding to their secondary motivations from the pre-experience stage (Neal & Gursoy, 2008). The direct connection from the tour tag to process and roasting confirms that travellers are more interested in experiencing novelty (L.-H. Chen et al., 2021). This is also true, as the process has a stronger direct relationship than roasting, which travellers might have experienced in their local coffee shops before. Moreover, by overlapping with “coffee” and “farm”, it appears to be the centre between the harvested cherries and the cup of coffee. Surprisingly, though, the main theme of coffee holds no direct connection to the tour tag; however, it has a connection to the “beans” theme, indicating that travellers do have a major interest in tasting the farm's coffee after having experienced their stages of production (Alonso et al., 2008).

Active-Experience Stage affected by direct purchase motivations

After outlining the major components that influence travellers during their coffee tours, we can now determine a set of direct purchase motivations for the farm's coffee products. The results of this study show that 93 percent of travellers engage in coffee product purchases directly after their tour. The main theme connected to the direct purchase motivation tag (Figure 5) is “buy”. It is the least important theme within the active experience stage and holds distance from the other themes. This is confirmed by Sedmak's and Kociper's (2017) research, which said that product purchases at the end of a tour are a reflection of the traveller's entire experience and therefore not an actual component of the tour. This theme holds three of the four direct connections with the tag: buy, experience, and wanted. As the strongest connection within this theme, buy describes travellers' willingness to bring the farm's coffee products home as gifts or personal souvenirs (Yeung & Yee, 2010). Apart from that, experience describes the participants' motivation to relive the experience again at home. This goes along with the connection to wanted which describes the willingness to purchase to share their newly gained knowledge and to compare the farm's coffee with their local brands (Hoffmann & Schlicht, 2013; J. Lin et al., 2018).

The most important theme within the active experience stage, which also holds the strongest direct connection to the direct purchase motivations tag, is “coffee”. It also builds the linkage between the direct purchase motivations tag and the other themes, which again shows that coffee is the central topic that connects everything in this stage. Coffee's strongest connection is towards the concept of tasting, showing that tastings act as a key motivator for travellers' willingness to purchase the product (Alonso et al., 2008). The concept tour within this theme describes their purchases as feedback on a great experience (Asplet & Cooper, 2000; Brunner et al., 2008; Neal & Gursoy, 2008). In other words, since they had a great experience with the tour, they want to support the farm by purchasing their coffee products. The results show that the desire for support relates to the personal interactions travellers had with the employees and guides on the farm (Yu & Littrell, 2005). Another connection lies between the concepts of coffee and place, which describes the sentimental value and trust travellers build with the farm. In other words, by having witnessed the farm in real life, the transparency of their products cannot get any higher, which plays an increasing role for coffee consumers (Guevara & Benett, 2019; Pipunic, 2022).

The main takeaway from this stage is that showing the scope of activities related to coffee production, especially regarding growth stages and drying processes, the tastings, and the development of personal relations with the guides of the farm are the key motivators that

influence direct product purchases. While these influence the motivation to buy the farm's coffee, travellers' key motives are mostly related to gift-giving or having personal souvenirs.

5.3 Post-Experience Stage

Post-Experience Stage affected by perspective changes

The main theme close to the perspective change tag (Figure 6) is “changed”. The majority of travellers feel that their perspective on coffee has been positively influenced by the coffee ecotouristic experience at Café Monteverde. Within this theme, there are three direct connections with the tag, which confirms the power of positive experiences on people's attitudes and future behaviours (Han et al., 2018; C.-W. Wu, 2016). After the experience, most people described being more aware of looking for specific product and origin information when selecting their coffee. Additionally, they describe that the experience has given them a whole new appreciation for coffee, a product that they have taken for granted. Lastly, they claimed to be more interested in looking behind the scenes and described their desire to enhance their knowledge even more. These findings support Ballantyne et al.'s (2011) argument that ecotourism experiences affect travellers' motivations, which might result in behaviour changes over time. Apart from that, the theme strongly overlaps with “work”, which also has a close relationship to the tag. However, it has an overall weaker importance within the post-experience stage. The “work” theme holds two of the weaker direct connections to the tag. They describe the fact that, after seeing all the work on the farm, travellers can understand the increasing prices of coffee products. It's fair to say that they still perceive them as high; however, they are more reasonable as they value the product higher than before (Fu et al., 2018; Masset & Decrop, 2021).

As expected, “coffee” is again the strongest theme in this stage. It holds the strongest direct connection to the perspective change tag and proves its position as the centre that holds everything together due to its three overlaps with other themes. The direct connection describes that the coffee ecotouristic experience has led to knowledge enhancement, which is now something that travellers use to evaluate coffee products among a large assortment. They claim to have previously chosen coffee products based on their package design, whereas now they can evaluate coffee products based on what they have learned. That is, why some have also claimed to have switched their coffee brand and/or bought new equipment after they returned home. However, this has not been covered in the literature for this study.

The last theme close to perspective change is “sustainable”. However, this is also the least important theme within this stage. Even if it holds no direct connection to the tags, it shows

a dilemma travellers encounter with Café Monteverde after their return to their home country. The results indicate that travellers question whether or not to purchase from Café Monteverde since the farm's mission of sustainability is not supported by individually shipping the coffee packages to each customer's house (Wolff et al., 2019).

Post-Experience Stage affected by online purchase barriers

The main theme close to the online purchase barrier tag (Figure 6) is “online”. It holds three of the four direct connections to the tag, emphasising that travellers do experience barriers that stop them from engaging in online purchases. This is confirmed by the results, as only 27 percent claim to have ordered online from the farm's shop before. However, the majority described being willing to engage in online purchases, supporting the attitude-behaviour gap argument (Gleim et al., 2013; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2008). Travellers identified their lack of awareness about the farm's online shopping option, the time, cost, and uncertainty related to the shipping of the coffee, and the fear of missing convenience as their main barriers to the concept. These results show that the farm faces ordering process-related barriers rather than product-related ones. Different from previous research, travellers do not see the online ordering process as convenient within the product category of coffee (Ahuja et al., 2003; Barska & Wojciechowska-Solis, 2020). However, the lack of awareness and experience with the ordering process seems to be the root of the problem, since the results also showed that people who have ordered before describe the process as easy and convenient. This supports Wensma's (2023) argument that convenience remains a major factor in the industry.

The second most important theme within this stage is “buy”, which holds the strongest direct connection to the tag. It describes customers' purchase habits of coffee by claiming that most people see coffee as a commodity that they buy as an add-on when they are doing groceries. In this context, the results also confirm the intense competition within the coffee industry between the big players and local roasters (Caldarelli et al., 2019). Individually ordering their coffee from Costa Rica is generally related to higher prices. However, the results also disprove previous research, as they are understanding of paying a higher price for the product (Gleim et al., 2013). In other words, product price is not seen as a dealbreaker.

Therefore, we conclude from this that even if the coffee ecotouristic experience itself might have shifted travellers' perceptions of coffee, by being back home, they are falling back into their old routines. Ordering coffee online in a farm-to-cup process is something that they might not be familiar with and takes time to establish as a new routine. The theme has two of

the strongest overlaps within this stage, indicating that breaking people’s purchase habits is the key to combining “coffee” and “online”.

5.4 Customer Journey Map

After identifying the dominant concepts that affect travellers’ motivations during the three stages, I will now demonstrate how the different stages affect customer loyalty as per product purchases (Figure 7). To thoroughly examine the customer journey, the concepts defined in the concept maps were deconstructed into more detailed sub-codes. Furthermore, each subcode denotes the frequency of responses among the 30 interview participants.

Coffee Ecotourism Journey						
Area	PRE-EXPERIENCE		ACTIVE EXPERIENCE		POST-EXPERIENCE	
Actions	Motivation	Expectation	Tour	Direct Purchase	Perspective Change	Online Purchase
Emotional Journey						
Planned Coffee Purchases	0/30	1/30	27/30	28/30	15/30	8/30
Encouraging Factors towards Purchasing	/	- prior digital experience (1)	- guide (19) - coffee tasting (13) - tree grow stages (10) - processing stages (6) - sustainability (4)	- taste of coffee (16) - souvenir/ gift (15) - reward (12) - transparency (8) - relive at home (5) - emotional connection (4) - share gained knowledge (3)	- greater product value (14) - increased expertise (11) - transparency (10) - emotional connection (5)	- support farm (5) - emotional connection (3) - order efficiency (2) - transparency (1)
Discouraging Factors towards Purchasing	- no need for coffee (30) - travellers' goal: local tourism activity (28)	- gaining knowledge (19) - experience seeker (16) - coffee tasting (6)	- no tours available (1) - travel budget (1)	- limited space in suitcase (2) - longer travel time (2) - no coffee drinker (1)	- no consideration (19) - rather local roasters (7) - existing brand loyalty (3) - sustainability (2) - price (1)	- shipping concerns (12) - convenience concerns (10) - assumed high costs (9) - old routines (5) - consumption planning (5) - no shop awareness (5) - no social interaction (3) - contradicts mission (1) - no sensoric experience (1)
Opportunity	/	/	- digital experience (4)	- subscription model (12)	- 20% mixed feelings towards online orders (6) - awareness campaign for online shop (6) - ease of order campaign (5)	- international presence in retailers/ roasters (6) - consumption reminder (5) - special offers (4) - loyalty program (3) - tree sponsorship (1)

Figure 7: Coffee Ecotourism Customer Journey (Own elaboration 2023).

Pre-Experience Stage on Coffee Product Purchases

Within the pre-experience stage, the results outline a comprehensible challenge that the farm faces. While the emotional journey of travellers at this stage is mostly high, there is almost no coffee purchase motivation. The reason for this is that travellers are primarily seeking to have an experience; coffee purchases are not a desire they wish to fulfil at this point (Teng et al., 2022). As pointed out in the concept map (Figure 4), travellers are primarily driven by location-based motivators, while coffee knowledge enhancement and local culture discovery can be classified as secondary motivators to visit a farm.

“Costa Rica is known for coffee, so obviously, choosing a coffee farm seemed like a good thing to do, you know, to be loyal to the area.” ~ #10

My expectation were that I wanted to learn; I wanted to have a better understanding of the coffee industry.” ~ #1

Only one participant claimed to have bought coffee products during the pre-experience stage since they engaged in an unofficial digital coffee tour. Fascinated by the mission and vision of Café Monteverde that were shared digitally, the participant got curious to try the coffee.

“I’ve never actually been to the farm, but I’ve experienced it through a run on my virtual app. And after, I immediately got on my computer to order some coffee from this place.” ~#13

Active Experience Stage on Coffee Product Purchases

At first glance, the results within the active experience of the customer journey map mark this stage as the strongest stage that is affecting product purchases. This stage confirms the argument that satisfied travellers are an indicator of future actions (L.-H. Chen et al., 2021; Han et al., 2018; C.-W. Wu, 2016). The sub-codes within the customer journey show the relation to the guide (Adhi & Yunus, 2022; Kwame Opoku et al., 2023) and the scope of activities related to coffee production, especially regarding the trees’ growth stages, the beans’ drying processes, and the coffee tasting, which are key parts of encouraging the purchase motivations.

“I think it was very interesting to see the complexity of, like, everything they do on the farm. (...) It was my first time that I saw coffee growing in nature. And it was incredible to be able to actually see it, touch it. You know, a product that I’ve had a passion on for so many years.” ~#29

“(...) You don’t expect that coffee from the tree is transforming into so many different smells and tastes. Like, tasting the end result of all these stages that it goes through, that’s really amazing.” ~#21

In contrast, no available tours and a limited travel budget keep people from visiting the farm.

“We travel as much as we can, but when we can’t, I’m on my treadmill and I go for a run in (virtually replicated locations all around the world).” ~#13

“I don’t recall that there were tours available. I just kind of remember going there and buying the coffee.” ~#27

Apart from that, results show that travellers’ key motives for purchasing coffee are mainly related to the taste of the coffee. As buying new coffee is often described as buying a black box, the tastings at the farm minimise the product-related uncertainty (Jürkenbeck & Spiller, 2021; Kovács et al., 2022).

“We all had this whole journey, and we finished it up with the final part of tasting the coffee and picking a favourite. So, of course, I bought coffee.” ~#16

Furthermore, personal souvenirs/gift giving (Yeung & Yee, 2010) and rewarding the experience are seen as additional key drivers for planned purchases at this point.

“I really wanted to take some home and give as gifts to people at home because I was gone for three months.” ~#10

“I wanted my parents and my family to taste the coffee because I was blown away, and I knew that if I was blown away, then everyone else is gonna be blown away.” ~#6

“They were so nice that we really wanted to buy something because we just had a good feeling with the overall experience.” ~#11

On the other hand, limited suitcase space, long travel time, and not being a coffee drinker hinder travellers from engaging in product purchases. However, the results show these factors to be rather insignificant. While the active experience stage takes care of short-term product sales, it marks the starting point of the customer retention challenge that Café Monteverde is facing (J. L. Vargas Leitón, personal communication, August 4, 2023).

Post-Experience Stage on Coffee Product Purchases

Within the post-experience stage, the results outline two possible challenges that are affecting customer loyalty as per product purchases. Firstly, the results in the customer journey map (Figure 7) show that the majority agrees that the experience at Café Monteverde has at least somehow positively impacted their emotional journey. However, their satisfaction decreases during online purchases. At the same time, half of the participants claim to be willing to rebuy the farm’s coffee. As the main motivators that influence their willingness to purchase, they name their newly gained appreciation for coffee, their increased expertise, and their desire for transparency.

“I came home and was like, I can't believe I'm only paying \$6 for coffee; I need to pay more for this.” ~#5

“Now, when I drink coffee, I have a larger body of knowledge to pull from when I evaluate whether or not I like a cup.” ~#8

“The biggest thing for me is that I know exactly where this coffee is coming from.” ~#1

The results further depict that 20 percent claim to be indecisive about engaging in another coffee purchase.

“I have mixed opinions. I think it's a great option (...). However, it kind of goes against the whole local, community aspect and kind of ruins the whole sustainability part.” ~#10

Apart from that, results show that the main barriers that are stopping them from making online purchases are the missing consideration of Café Monteverde as a coffee seller, local roaster preference, existing loyalty to competitors, sustainability issues, and price. However, price is not the biggest barrier, which contradicts previous research (Gleim et al., 2013).

“It's such a routine for me to buy it in the supermarket, or I buy it when I'm going to my local roaster. I have never ordered coffee online. That's something that I've never done in my life.” ~#16

“We're still buying the same coffee cuz we are satisfied with it.” ~#23

"I just feel that's pretty unsustainable. I mean, if I buy it from a roastery, then it's at least shipped in larger containers."

~ #22

"My assumption, and I could be wrong, is that purchasing a pound from there, and having it sent here would be expensive."

~ #8

The results show that the actual act of the online purchase seems to hold the biggest challenge, as the emotional journey is shown to be neutral and the planned purchases are further decreasing, confirming the attitude-behaviour gap (Gleim et al., 2013; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2008). While none of the encouraging factors can be seen as significant, it could be presumed that the stronger the relationship between traveller and farm, the higher the motivation to engage in online purchases (Teng et al., 2022; H.-C. Wu, 2017). On the other hand, the key discouraging factors for travellers not to engage in online purchases are said to be concerns related to shipping, order convenience, and assumed high costs related to the process.

"Shipping is really expensive, I guess. And just shipping two bags of coffee I'd feel bad. And also, with customs, I do not want to wait for weeks for something that I can buy in the supermarket." ~ #18

And you have to go out of your way to buy it online. But that's convenience (...)." ~ #5

"I feel like prices are more expensive on a local farm than if you went to a supermarket or something like that." ~ #26

These are followed by the barrier of falling back into old routines and consumption planning.

"I want to (order), but I don't do it. And if I try to logically think about why I don't, it's because I'm not organized enough."

~ #14

"I could see someone who wasn't that invested, they would just be like, well, that was great coffee, but I forgot to order."

~ #9

In summary, the three stages differently impact customer loyalty as per product purchases. Travellers show minimal motivation for coffee purchases in the pre-experience stage. The active experience emerges as a crucial driver for product purchases. The challenge, however, is to switch the short-term motives of souvenir purchases and gift-giving into long-term motives. A main opportunity proposed by participants to fix this issue could be the introduction of a subscription model that travellers already subscribe to at the farm. The post-experience stage consists of two challenges that affect product purchases. Firstly, the attitude-behaviour gap is triggered by awareness gaps, efficiency, and shipping concerns. The farm's goal should be to educate all travellers on the possibility and ease of ordering online. Secondly, the retention itself is triggered by a reluctance to change existing routines and the challenge of planning their consumption. Cooperation with other brands and consumption tracking are said to be opportunities to fix this. The success of the opportunities, however, needs to be further examined in future research, as this was not the goal of this study.

6 CONCLUSION

Coffee ecotourism has become a significant component of Costa Rica's tourism industry (Clausen & Vargas, 2021). As part of their holiday activities in the country, many travellers choose to engage in locally relevant experiences that allow them to look behind the scenes at coffee production. Based on thirty semi-structured interviews with travellers who have visited the ecotouristic coffee farm of Café Monteverde in Costa Rica, the present study was able to identify the dominant concepts and narratives affecting the travellers' motivations within coffee ecotourism experiences. Furthermore, exploring the effect of different customer journey stages on customer loyalty as per product purchases helped to answer the underlying research question.

Location-based drivers were identified as the main narratives that affect travellers' motivations in the pre-experience stage. In other words, their presence in Costa Rica is the main trigger for their motivation to visit a coffee farm, which is fuelled by their place-image of Costa Rica as a coffee-growing country. After that, coffee-related knowledge enhancement was identified as another narrative that affects travellers' motivations. Since coffee is a product that most people have an emotional connection with, their interest in looking behind the scenes is already higher than with a product they cannot relate to. However, results show that ecotourism is playing a rather insignificant role that is positively recognised but not a driver itself. The results also show that the effect of this stage on customer loyalty as per product purchases is low. Travellers have a desire for experiences rather than product purchases. An explanation for this is that most travellers are on holiday, staying in resorts, hotels, or hostels, which means that coffee is mostly provided for them. Consequently, there is no reason for them to intentionally buy coffee products.

The results of the active experience stage demonstrate that travellers perceive direct product purchases independently from the ecotouristic coffee tour, meaning that they do not feel forced to engage in product purchases after the tour. The different tree growth stages and the variety of production processes were identified as the main narratives that affect travellers' overall satisfaction during this stage. At this point, travellers seem to understand the scope of the ecotouristic farm, which contributes to their perceived farm authenticity. The results also show that the effect of this stage on customer loyalty as per product purchases is high, as almost everybody who participates in the coffee tour engages in direct purchases on the farm. Interestingly, the results identify coffee tastings as the main driver that influences travellers' motivation to engage in product purchases. While the tour itself corresponds to their initial experience-related motivator, the tastings seem to trigger a product-related motivator. Souvenir/gift-giving is also identified as a strong driver that affects travellers' motivation

towards product purchases. The results show that this desire is reinforced by the emotional connection that travellers feel towards the guide. This relationship is then projected onto the farm, which explains travellers' purchase motivation for rewarding/ supporting the farm. However, the ecotouristic character of the farm seems to indirectly influence their motivations.

Value perception change towards coffee was identified as the main narrative that affects travellers' motivations in the post-experience stage. The majority of travellers describe their value perception towards coffee as at least somehow positively influenced by the coffee ecotouristic experience in Costa Rica. This results in changed coffee purchasing behaviour, leaning towards local roasters, preparation system upgrades, or simply educated decision-making when evaluating coffee tastes. However, the results show that this stage marks a decrease in actual product purchases. While the results outline an emotional connection to the farm as the strongest motivator for people to engage in online purchases with Café Monteverde, we can observe the attitude-behaviour gap at this stage. The results outline the following key barriers that stop online product purchases: missing consideration as an online purchase option, uncertainties related to shipping and process convenience, and routine building. The results only show an insignificant relation to the ecotouristic aspect at this stage. However, surprising is the strong downfall of the emotional journey and purchase motivation compared to the active experience stage. Therefore, the farm should aim to transform travellers' short-term purchase motives into long-term motives. Results suggest the introduction of a coffee subscription model that travellers can subscribe to in the active experience at the farm when the emotional journey and motivation are still new and high. Additionally, results suggest that the farm should engage in online order awareness and explanation campaigns and consumption tracking technologies in the post-experience stage to keep the motivation and emotional journey high.

6.1 Theoretical Contribution

In the past, research about ecotourism has mainly focused on determining its motivational influence on travellers' post-trip loyalty. In this context, scholars have concentrated on the concepts of destination loyalty (Isa et al., 2019; Yoon & Uysal, 2005), recommendations (Campón et al., 2012; Tu & Chang, 2012), and niche loyalty (T. T. Li et al., 2021). However, research pointed out the socioeconomic opportunity for ecotouristic sites that lies within the creation of activity-related goods for travellers (Carvache-Franco et al., 2022). Particularly if the location has a prominent culinary reputation, it might encourage the acquisition of food and beverage products to remember the experience (Le et al., 2021). On top of that, especially coffee ecotourism has rarely been subject to academic research focusing on

customer loyalty as per product purchases. Instead, research on coffee ecotourism mainly deals with the scope of influences on the environment, the community, or the farmer (Hakim et al., 2022; Priminingtyas, 2021). However, the global popularity of coffee (Myhrvold, 2023) and the growing interest in coffee tourism in Costa Rica (Candelo et al., 2019; Clausen & Vargas, 2021) make it necessary for niche tourism researchers to understand the influence of motivations throughout coffee ecotourism experiences in Costa Rica on the customer journey. By identifying the motivators along the customer journey, this research explores their effect on customer loyalty as per product purchases, opening up an underrepresented research field related to post-trip loyalty.

This research helps to fill the recognised research gap by identifying the motivations of coffee ecotourists along the entire coffee ecotourism customer journey. By allowing participants to openly communicate their opinions, motivational drivers and barriers were identified that would encourage or discourage product purchases from the farm. Additionally, participants were asked about potential motivators that would help them overcome those barriers. The visualisation of the holistic customer journey helps to depict these areas, providing the main reasonings for customer behaviour in an easily understandable manner while expanding the existing literature on post-trip loyalty.

6.2 Practical Contribution

Beyond their theoretical contributions, the findings of this study offer several relevant practical implications for coffee ecotourism managers in Costa Rica. Exploring the motivations along the entire customer journey pointed out critical interactions that prevent travellers from engaging in product purchases. First, managers should enhance location-based marketing to reach potential visitors in key locations, emphasising the proximity and accessibility of the farm within the coffee-rich landscapes of Costa Rica. Additionally, by collaborating with local travel agencies, accommodation services, and businesses, they would amplify travellers' motivation to visit the farm in the first place.

Secondly, as personal relationships and tastings were identified as the main motivators for travellers to engage in purchases, managers could expand the tasting experience by organising regular events or workshops that focus on the diversity of coffee flavours, brewing techniques, and the art of coffee appreciation. By diversifying their service offerings on the farm, managers have the chance to build stronger relationships with the visitors, as they might attend multiple offerings. On top of that, managers should keep in mind that souvenir/gift giving is also a main motive for travellers to purchase coffee. By offering seasonal-themed gift

packages, managers could inspire travellers to consider the farm's products as gifts for the next event.

Lastly, after identifying the main barriers that keep people from making product purchases after they have returned to their countries, managers should establish a coffee subscription model that visitors would ideally subscribe to on the farm. That way, their concerns would be trumped by their emotional high and enthusiasm after the tour. Also, they would not need to worry about consumption planning or online order processes, as the process would go automatically. However, managers should also use onsite and online channels to create awareness about the online purchasing option and provide information about shipping and process convenience.

6.3 Limitations

This research provides valuable insights into the coffee ecotourism industry, but it has limitations. The framework used for defining the customer journey is broad and generalised, which may limit the depth and specificity of the findings. Although the findings are robust within the context of this study, their generalisability to broader populations or diverse settings may be constrained. The research is centred around Café Monteverde in Costa Rica, and the results and recommendations are tailored to this specific context. Care should be taken when extrapolating these findings to other coffee ecotourism settings, as unique contextual factors may influence outcomes differently.

6.4 Future Research

The study suggests that future research could improve the customer journey framework by adding context-specific components, using a larger sample, and conducting comparative studies across multiple ecotouristic coffee farms in Costa Rica. This would enhance the external validity of the findings, provide a more comprehensive understanding of coffee ecotourism dynamics, and enable the development of universally applicable recommendations. Additionally, future research should also look into travellers from other geographically relevant countries, as their perspective might differ from the one looked at in this study. Apart from that, future research should look at the proposed recommendations to test their possible impact on product purchases.

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8 APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Guide Inspiring Questions

Structure	Inspiring Questions
Screening	/
Warm-Up	/
Coffee Ecotourism Customer Journey	<p>Stage 1: Pre-Experience (questions Chang (2007))</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why and how did you join this Italian tour? - What were your purposes or motivations for joining this tour? - What did you expect or want from this tour? <p>Stage 2: Active Experience (questions by Lian Chan and Baum (2007); Tabaeian et al. (2023); Teng et al. (2022))</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What were the times when you felt exceptionally good or bad about your experiences during the visit (including both the ecolodge services and ecotourism activities in which you have participated)? - Overall, how satisfied are you with your visit to Kinabatangan River? - What were your opinions in general? What were your feelings about this tour? <p>Stage 3: Reflective Experience (questions by Teng et al. (2022))</p> <p>Quantitative Inspiration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The next time I need wine products, I would buy from the same winery. - Made me think of my lifestyle - I intend to buy other products from this winery.

Appendix B: Interview Transcripts (Participants: #5, #7, #8, #13, #19)

(total: 30 interviews, 101 pages of transcript, 60.327 words)

Interview: #5

A: Hi! Thank you for your time. I will now record this interview and anonymize your results. Do you agree with that?

B: Yes.

A: Can you please tell me where do you come from, how old are you, and what role does coffee play in your life?

B: I am originally from Savannah, Georgia, but right now I'm living in Boston, Massachusetts. So, the US, and I am 26, and coffee is something I drink every day. Like a cup or two in the morning.

A: Okay. What comes to your mind when you are thinking about customer loyalty in tourism? What forms can loyalty hold?

B: I feel that it's easier for me to buy a product whenever I see where that product comes from. And so, I am trying to like fly locally when I am here in Boston. But when we're going somewhere and touring around and seeing things, I try to experience where that product is coming from to have a deeper connection with it. And I felt pretty strongly after we did like the Café Monteverde tour, specifically after seeing the people that are harvesting, and the way that they're processing things. It was very meaningful and had a big impact on my perception of the product. And at first, I was like, oh coffee, yeah, I buy this for \$6 at Trader Joe's and if I'm feeling fancy, I go to the local store and get my local beans roasted but only on the weekends. But now I'm like, oh man, I should really buy nice coffee all the time because people are picking this and brewing it and there's so much care that goes into that.

A: We will now try to reconstruct your experience at Café Monteverde. First, can you please tell me, what triggered your interest to visit a coffee farm in the first place? Why did you decide to engage in this specific coffee experience at Café Monteverde? And could you please describe what you were hoping to gain from your coffee ecotourism experience?

B: So, I wanted to do a coffee tour just to get an idea of where coffee is coming from, like the lifecycle. I also really wanted to try all the coffee because I thought that sounded really cool. Because I don't really know much about coffee besides having the beans. But honestly I've never even had these before I just have ground coffee. So, I had very little experience and I wanted to gain some experience. And I don't know, I'm generally kind of interested in the way things work and how things are processed but coffee specifically because I have that every day. And honestly, I can't really remember why I chose this specific farm, I think I was just like searching online for coffee farms and it was probably on TripAdvisor, and I was, oh looks like a great coffee tour. But I know that I was really interested in it because it was touted that it was local and grown locally and not something that was a big operation. I wanted to really like see a farm. And yeah, I think I just wanted to learn more about the general process. And also try the coffees because I didn't know what any of them would taste like.

A: You quickly mentioned it already, but what role played the fact that Café Monteverde is a highly sustainable farm?

B: Yeah, I didn't know much about how sustainable it was before. But during the tour, learning about that, I was like, oh, this is awesome. And I'm glad we chose this. I think some of the other coffee tours that were marketed were also more individuals doing a tour and not a farm doing a tour. So that was another thing that impacted it.

A: Interesting to hear! And now moving on to the entire experience of the farm, could you briefly walk me through this experience. What were your highlights while there?

B: So, the first part of the tour we just sat down with our tour guide, and he told us the history of Cafe Monteverde, which was where I learned much more about Cafe Monteverde, and I was like, oh yeah, this place is really cool. And then we went out into the fields, and he picked actual coffee, and they're not berries, but the beans off the plant with all of the fruit encasement on it, and we got to taste them and put them in our mouths like with the fruits and so. And he told us a lot about his experience as an immigrant and a Nicaraguan coming to the farm. And as we went through the farm, we looked at the plants, we looked at the growing area, but the more we walked through, the more he was like, this is what we do every day. This is, how big the baskets that we pick out of are. This is how much money we make for that. And he also talked a lot about the organic pesticide practices that they do, and you know, pointing out the trees that were diseased and explaining, what they're trying to do. And then after that, he was just showing us all about the composting. And I thought it was really interesting to see all new composting practices that they're doing and he was talking about making a blend of the compost tea basically. I guess, I really liked hearing about, what they're doing to rejuvenate the soil and everything. And I don't know we learned a lot about different trees and the elevations. And also about which beans are good for what kind of roasting and then we got to see the drying processes, I think I've probably ever had like the washed coffee before. I didn't even know there were other ways you could dry coffee. So, seeing the honey dried and the natural dried. And then we went inside, and I saw them doing the roasting and the roasting machine and then we got to try it with coffee. So, it's been a long time. It was a two-hour tour I think, maybe even longer.

A: And if you must pick a highlight of your tour, what would this be?

B: Honestly, just getting to know the tour guide and his experiences, and then of course tasting the coffee. I really liked all of it, though. I mean, I think it was all really interesting.

A: And in your opinion, what aspects could be improved in the overall experience?

B: Um. That's a good question. I guess, I don't have enough experience in coffee tours to really have my two sides. But I don't know. I don't think there is something that Café Monteverde could do, but it would have been interesting to try something that wasn't an Arabica bean. But that's what they grow. So that's what they have.

A: Okay! So, how satisfied were you with your overall coffee ecotourism experience at the farm? How would you separately rate your experience of the tour over the farm, the tasting, and the social interactions with the staff?

B: I was extremely satisfied. I thought everything was really amazing. And I think the only thing on the tasting part I would have is that we were running low on time for our end. But I would have liked to stay there and drink more of the coffee. Because we did have a couple sips of each one. And I think I really could have sat down and tried to consume them more. But I was extremely satisfied with everything.

A: Alright. Please explain the reasons that encouraged or hindered you from purchasing coffee products on the farm directly after your experience?

B: Yes, we went out and we picked out our favorite coffee from the tasting and we bought it for us and for our neighbors also. And it felt really good to buy it, knowing that we were walking through the fields and knowing exactly where everything had come from. And also, it was like the tastiest coffee I've ever had. So it's like both.

A: That's great. Do you remember which kind of coffee it was like?

B: We bought the Natural processed coffee.

A: Great. Let's move on to you returning to your country. Now imagine that you would like to purchase coffee again. How did the experience at Café Monteverde influence your perspective and purchasing behavior towards coffee products?

B: I came home and was like, I can't believe I'm only paying \$6 for coffee; I need to pay more for this. And I went to the store, and I looked for ones that said what the drying process was, so that I could make an educated decision about what to buy. And I'd only bought ground coffee before, so now I buy whole bean coffee. And we grind it ourselves. Very fancy. And then yeah, I also look for ones that are like Fairtrade now.

A: Nice, thank you. How is your opinion towards the option of purchasing coffee online from the farm in Costa Rica? Why would you engage in those purchases from the farm? And what is hindering you to do so?

B: Yeah, we've definitely already talked about, how we're going to buy the coffee for everybody for Christmas that we tried in Costa Rica. Literally, we could try it but I don't think we'll buy it all the time because we do have a lot of local roasters, but I do want to buy it as much as I can.

A: Okay, okay. So, what would you think is your biggest barrier of buying it online?

B: Probably just shipping. But I think the biggest barrier is that I can buy other coffee here. And you have to go out of your way to buy it online. But that's convenience, convenience is the biggest factor.

A: How could this barrier be fixed? What would encourage you to overcome this barrier?

B: It's hard, they could email me more and then I would think about it more. I think it's also one of the things that slowly go to the back of your mind after a while. But honestly, I'm not sure there is something they could do more.

A: Interesting! Please, now, imagine you would be working on the farm and have the goal to increase product purchases in the long-run, how would you do it?

B: That's a really tricky question. I feel like I'm in an interview now. To increase the customer retention, a loyalty program. Like you know, you buy a certain number of bags and you're a member or something. Or a coffee subscription service where you prepay for a year, and then they mail different sets of coffees. That would be much more convenient than going and buying coffee in cafés.

A: Okay, thank you. Is there anything else that you consider relevant or want to let me know?

B: I don't think I have anything. But if you have more questions or need follow up, you could feel free to reach out. And maybe I'll give you my email so that you don't have to communicate to TripAdvisor.

A: That would be great. Thank you and thank you also for participating. The interview ends here!

Interview: #7

A: Hello, thank you for your time. I will now record this interview and anonymize your results. Do you agree with that?

B: Of course.

A: Perfect. Can you please tell me where do you come from, how old are you, and what role does coffee play in your life?

B: Okay, so I live in California in the San Francisco Bay area. And I've lived here for about 30 years. I'm originally from the Midwest. I'm 59 years old. And coffee plays a daily role in my life. Myself and my husband are regular coffee drinkers. So, I start every day with coffee. We have a pretty active lifestyle and being caffeinated is part of it.

A: What comes to your mind when you are thinking about customer loyalty in tourism? What forms can loyalty hold?

B: Good experiences, positive experiences with positive people. And when you're talking about tourism related to a product, I think that good experience is important but it's certainly that the quality of product is superficial. So the ideal is a combination of the two.

A: Okay perfect. We will now try to reconstruct your experience at Café Monteverde. First, can you please tell me, what triggered your interest to visit a coffee farm in the first place? Why did you decide to engage in this specific coffee experience at Café Monteverde? And could you please describe what you were hoping to gain from your coffee ecotourism experience?

B: So, we were in Costa Rica for different things like hiking and, you know, activities with our kids. We spent some time turning the forest, and the flora and fauna. And it was all very interesting. And while we were there, we went to a coffee plantation, and also some spice tourism, you know, we saw how vanilla was made, and other things like that. So, it was interesting to me to see products that we use and understand. And also, being in the Bay Area in California, you know, I spend time in the Central Valley and up in wine country and it's being close to the source of food. And understanding where your food comes from is really a pleasure. It just adds that dimension to your enjoyment. So, those were some of the drivers. But it just, it seemed hyperlocal in a way to understand, you know, what was special about that region.

A: Okay and why did you decide to go to Café Monteverde in particular?

B: So, there was a really nice coffee place in town. And all their coffee was good frankly, you know, it was just such a treat. And I like when you can drink really strong coffee without any milk or sugar or whatever, just because it's so balanced. You know, and all the coffee was good. But I had recently tried honey roasted coffee through another supplier before going to Costa Rica. I had ordered it in California and really liked that balance. And so, I was excited to see the honey roasted coffee there. And then we just brought much home too. And I believe at the time, they were just starting the mail order service. I think we were really front edge of it. I know the website was just starting or whatnot. So, I was just excited that we could order it too. So, mostly it was the proximity of that coffee shop.

A: Okay, and could you please describe what you were hoping to gain from your coffee ecotourism experience?

B: So, the main thing I was expecting or wanting to understand was just the freshness aspect, you know, the timeline, and how the cycles of coffee production and coffee roasting and coffee shipping, work with getting the coffee to your cup. Like understanding, how hyperlocal food delivery can be done. And farm-to-cup obviously is the general term, but I think that's kind of sloppily used. So, my expectation to get back to your question was to understand, how that does work and could work in a coffee setting. Because, even coffee that you pay a lot for, you pull off the shelf, and you just really don't know, what the freshness is. And sometimes that's really the top percentile of the quality, sometimes it's still pretty good. But the fresher, the better. And also, the value proposition, I wanted to understand, how you can support the farmers more than the middleman or the retailers or everything else.

A: Interesting to hear! And now moving on to the entire experience of the farm, could you briefly walk me through this experience. What were your highlights while there?

B: Well, it was quite a few years ago. Um, it was very much about seeing the plants, seeing maps of the plantation, understanding the calendar of the harvesting. I've mentioned, I was particularly interested in the honey roasted because I just think it's an interesting process, where the fruit is, you know, held on the beans for longer. So, that was all explained, we looked at some pretty basic equipment, but it was really interesting to see, how a lot of the equipment doesn't have to be super high-tech or super expensive. You know, it gets the job done. And understanding the roasting process. We did a lot of taste testing, and then just the people giving the tour, they were just so passionate. And, I'm guessing that when the clients are kind of into the tasting, they just treat it like wine tastings. You know, some people just want to try a few things and others want to keep diving in. So, they sort of followed you, in my opinion, they kept helping you understand sort of deeper and deeper the differences between the types of beans and so on. So, it's pretty comprehensive. It was also kind of small scale, which I appreciated too.

A: Thank you. And in your opinion, what aspects could be improved about the tour?

B: Maybe samples to take home? Yeah, I appreciated that there wasn't an emphasis on sales because, you know, it's kind of like an exit through the gift shop, right? When the thing is like, buy, buy, buy. It wasn't any of that which I appreciated. But I think, taking home samples or understanding how to order from there would be great. The Café Monteverde in town had a nice little flyer trifold about how to order. But as far as other things there, no, I think the coffee tour hit all of our expectations, and we enjoyed it. I think there's so much differentiation in the coffee market in between the types of products and the types of retailers. So, maybe like an overview of the world market or, or whatnot. You know, having that context would have been helpful.

A: So, how satisfied were you with your overall coffee ecotourism experience at the farm? How would you separately rate your experience of the tour over the farm, the tasting, and the social interactions with the staff?

B: Very satisfied, I think Costa Ricans are just really special people. I think there's a warmth, and, it's really impressive. The customer service attitude, it really seems like service and being of service is a high value there, which you don't always get in the States. And the people in Costa Rica I found extremely efficient, extremely smart, and just really, really helpful. And it seemed like they enjoyed being helpful. And I remember that as part of the coffee tour and our spice tour and our hotels.

A: Alright. Please explain the reasons that encouraged or hindered you from purchasing coffee products on the farm directly after your experience?

B: Yeah, at the front of the shop primarily in town, and we brought home not tons, but quite a few packages of coffee. Just whole bean coffee that we packed to go. We didn't have any shipped right away. We did that later. But I think we bought some as gifts and some I just wanted to really compare when I got home to the other coffee that we drink as well. So yeah, just souvenir, yeah. Pretty practical souvenir to use and enjoy.

A: Great. Let's move on to you returning to your country. Now imagine that you would like to purchase coffee again. How did the experience at Café Monteverde influence your perspective and purchasing behavior towards coffee products?

B: Um, I mean, I wouldn't say it changed. I was just interested in being able to get coffee directly from Costa Rica. I mean, we drank the same amount, ordered the same amount, probably spent about the same amount. I think right away, it was my recollection in placing an order. And then yeah, I'm not remembering the details, but I think the website was just barely up and running. But they worked with DHL, which has been great. It's super efficient. The tracking and the speed of delivery. Free shipping was a pretty big deal to me because my thought was like, how much is this gonna cost? But obviously they can do that because, I assume, they're taking out the middleman. But I'm obviously interested in a direct source and ordering directly.

A: Nice. We already touched on it but again, how is your opinion towards the option of purchasing coffee online from the farm in Costa Rica? Why would you engage in those purchases from the farm? And what is hindering you to do so?

B: Yeah, I mean, I might be one of the oldest customers. I don't know. At least since they started. And yeah, I, I've never been out of their coffee since then. I have a constant supply.

A: May I ask, what kind of coffee is your favorite?

B: Yeah, I love the honey roast. And I do blend it sometimes with a generic one. I don't know if generic is the right word to use. But I really like that blend, it also spreads out the price a little bit of the less expensive but good quality coffee with the high-end coffee with the notes. But we do drink the honey roast by itself too. I've gotten other coffees over the years, some of their gift packs, some of the special ones, which are great. I've enjoyed it but tend to go back. You might think honey is too sweet but it's not, it's just that different process that I think gives it a really unique flavor profile. It's got the high notes, but it's really in balance. And again, sometimes I do that half and half, just a really strong dark roast if I want it a little heavier as well. But I think that the high notes still come through. And it makes it really enjoyable.

A: The next question might not apply too much to you but in general, what do you think is the biggest barrier for people in the US to purchase the product?

B: Um, I've gotten some for friends over the years and talked about it. I think people need to understand, how easy the delivery is, that international shipping is no big deal. It's 2023. And, you know, it's a small company, but I think the website is pretty good and pretty well designed. The e-commerce portion is obviously an efficient third party, and the delivery process through DHL has just been really seamless. I've had twice where it was held up in customs. Once after COVID. And you know, it wasn't a big deal. You know, I usually order on Monday or Tuesday and I can sometimes have it by Thursday or Friday because I know they usually ship on Tuesdays. And I mean at that time, it got held up once or twice in a customs check for some reason. But I think to the barriers, that you have to make the value proposition, which is obviously cost and quality, and make sure that's understood. And I don't think that's hard for them to do frankly, compared to other high-end or third wave coffees. And then the ease of ordering both the e-commerce side and the delivery side. I mean it's far away, but it's just a plane flight, right? You know, wherever coffee comes from, it gets on a plane, from somewhere and in this case, it doesn't sit on a shelf or sit anywhere else. So, I think doing the customer education and those two parts. I don't think there's much barrier on understanding

the quality or the mean, you just have to try it and see that you like it. That's pretty straightforward. I think the story to tell about benefiting the farmers directly and fair trade and all of those ecological benefits of a sustainably ran operation. I think that story is pretty easy. Frankly, you know, you just have to tell it. I mean, I think it's easy to understand that, but then you think like, oh, what's it going to cost? And how am I going to get it? You know, that's the education part maybe.

A: And how would you feel about a coffee subscription model in which people can pre-define their frequency order over a certain period, that way they would not need to be reminded anymore?

B: In this case, that probably would work for me. I tend to be pretty hands on with my ordering, and know, when I want to get gifts or other things. So, I have the time and personally, sometimes subscription models feel like they're trying to lock me in my flexibility. You know, for whatever reason, you change credit card numbers, or whatever. So, I like being involved in the purchase, even if it's something I get every six weeks or so. But, I think offering a subscription model is a perfectly good option. And you know, some people may like it, I think with coffee and something that high-end, I don't know, there's something about, what if I want to try a different flavor. But it seems like a lot of people might like the subscription, especially if your coffee drinking is pretty regular, as it often is.

A: Interesting! Please, now, imagine you would be working on the farm and have the goal to increase product purchases in the long-run, how would you do it?

B: Well, there are things that we haven't touched on that I think they have done extremely well. They have, as you know, a very personal touch in their orders with their notes and cards. And, you know, I've gotten little Christmas presents, and very personal outreach and discounts. So, that personal touch has been, you know, I really appreciate it. I mean, I contend that it's all just icing on the cake, I would not buy the coffee, if I didn't love it. And even a good price, wouldn't keep me there if, if I didn't think the product was, what I wanted to buy. But I'm sure even with that declaration, I'm sure my customer loyalty is related to, the personal touch and the high level of service that they do. So, I think, keeping that to a degree that's scalable. I don't know, what their goals are, how much bigger they want to be. I mean, in the US, companies are always about growth, but sometimes, if you're hitting your mission and employing a certain number of people and making a certain amount of money, you don't need to grow. You know, you just need to stay so. But as far as retaining customers, again, the quality, the value proposition, education, and the ease of ordering and delivery, and then the personal touch goes along with it. I don't know if there's more like YouTube videos they could do, or social media that they can do. I've seen some on their website for sure. But just the details about the people and about the impact and about their sustainability goals and helping educate on that. I'm guessing that's done, but maybe that's something that could, you know, take a deeper dive, or work harder to get, get the news out there.

A: Okay, thank you. Is there anything else that you consider relevant or want to let me know?

B: No. Just that we enjoy their coffee a lot and that's, why we are being customers for so long already.

A: Perfect, then I will end the recording here. Thank you for participating.

Interview: #8

A: Hi, thank you for your time. I would now record this interview and anonymize your results. Do you agree with that?

B: Yes.

A: Perfect, let's start this off. Could you tell me where do you come from, how old are you, and what role does coffee play in your life?

B: Yeah, I am 39 years old. And I was born and raised in Sacramento, California. I now live in Boise, Idaho. And I drink coffee every day. And throughout my travels, I've tried to visit coffee production locations as much as possible. I know that it's worth, it's really something that's worldwide. And it holds a lot of meaning for a lot of people. And so yeah, I just really appreciate coffee.

A: Oh, so you have been to multiple coffee farms already?

B: Yeah, I spent some time in Ethiopia. And I went there to some coffee production locations, some farms. And in Bali, I went to some locations as well. Oh, yeah. Costa Rica. Um, where else have I seen and done things with coffee? Yeah. So, I feel like there's a couple more, but there you go.

A: Very involved. And what comes to your mind when you are thinking about customer loyalty in tourism? What forms can loyalty hold?

B: Well, for me, personally, I try to find really what's important to the local area. And I know that coffee can have a really big impact on a local environment. And so, that's why I try to visit when I can or when I'm in an area that produces it. And so, loyalty, I think, really, I guess it's kind of like a difficult question to answer. Because as a tourist, you can afford to go to a

certain place maybe once in your lifetime, right? And so for me, it means finding out as much as I can about the area, and then finding out, what's important to the people there and getting to know the local people there. And what type of industry drives them? I'm not sure if that really answers your question, but it feels loyal to a space for me when you go into it like that.

A: Okay, nice. We will now try to reconstruct your experience at Café Monteverde. First, can you please tell me, what triggered your interest to visit a coffee farm in the first place? Why did you decide to engage in this specific coffee experience at Café Monteverde? And could you please describe what you were hoping to gain from your coffee ecotourism experience?

B: Well, my partner and I, when we were planning our trip, we knew right away that we wanted to go to a coffee farm because Costa Rica is known for its coffee. And it just so happened that when we were researching the town that we were staying in that the coffee farm came up right away, when we looked for it. So, we found it through the internet. And about the expectations, we were expecting to taste coffee, and to go look at, how it was produced. My partner is very interested in farming and so that was of particular interest to him. And so, I love tasting coffee. He actually can't really drink coffee. It didn't stop us though.

A: And what role played the fact that Café Monteverde is a highly sustainable farm?

B: We did some research, we just looked into it and read about it online. And we liked what it said. And so, that's why we decided to go there. I can't remember if sustainability was a part of it. But in planning our trip to Costa Rica, we learned about, how Costa Rica in general is trying to make things more sustainable or was at that time. And so pretty much everything we did and looked at, we tried to approach it through that lens.

A: Interesting to hear! And now moving on to the entire experience of the farm, could you briefly walk me through this experience. What were your highlights while there?

B: Yeah. Okay, so we went in, we had a little introduction from our guide. And then we, I can't remember if we tasted coffee first, or if we tasted it afterward. But they led us all around the farm itself and showed us from seedling all the different stages of the growth of the bean. And we walked all around, it was absolutely amazing and beautiful. And they showed us some really old plants as well. And it was just, it was very interesting. I really appreciated, how it wasn't just here, some coffee plants, but that they showed us the progression of the growth of coffee itself. And first, they grow them in like the little, what are those little trays, and then they transplant them, and then they have to transplant them again, if I remember correctly. So, there are several stages. And it was just, it was beautiful to see the process from a very small plant all the way through. And then yeah, so then we came back. And we tasted all sorts of different types of coffee and talked about the significance of the different processes that they put the coffee beans through in order to produce different tastes. I think they have one that is very sweet. And it's like a neat process. Yeah, that was super interesting to learn about, that was definitely my favorite one.

A: Okay, perfect. That's great. And in your opinion, what aspects could be improved? Aspects, that would have made it better.

B: I don't think so. I think we came away from the tour feeling like, oh, that was a great experience. Um, I did note though, that their marketing could use some fleshing out and they could have maybe some more reading material on site. You know, they could really lean into their message of sustainability and, how, and what they do, and like profile different things on their website. I haven't looked at their website since we went but I do remember thinking that this is such an incredible place, they could do more with their marketing.

A: Okay! So, how satisfied were you with your overall coffee ecotourism experience at the farm? How would you separately rate your experience of the tour over the farm, the tasting, and the social interactions with the staff?

B: Totally satisfied. Totally. We even bought T shirts and lots of coffee, gave it to lots of friends when we came back. Yeah, it was great.

A: Amazing. That already play in my next question. Can you please explain the reasons that encouraged or hindered you from purchasing coffee products on the farm directly after your experience?

B: Yeah, yeah, we bought, I don't know, probably like, 12 bags of coffee and found a way to squeeze it into all of our luggage in different locations. And we bought T shirts there. We still wear ours. I thought their T shirts were great. And the design is really beautiful. It's like a big tree, I think it's so, so pretty. And yeah, I think I drunk everything that we didn't give away. So, in terms of motivation, to bring back gifts. Bringing back a taste of a place is such a beautiful thing to do, because it's a sensory experience for who you're giving it to. And not everybody can travel. So, it's just a special thing. I think we brought chocolate from there, too. Yeah, I feel like there was chocolate that we purchased from there as well. Just giving somebody an experience, like a little tiny window into, what we were able to experience is wonderful.

A: Sounds beautiful. Let's move on to you returning to your country. How did the experience at Café Monteverde influence your perspective and purchasing behavior towards coffee products?

B: I wouldn't say my purchasing habits changed. But what the experience gave me was a variety in tastes of coffees. So, it expanded my tastebuds. Now, when I drink coffee, I have a larger body of knowledge to pull from when I evaluate whether or

not I like a cup. I mean, coffee is such an experience, and it's more than just having a cup and taking it in. It's also a social experience, right? Because you can have a cup with a friend or meet a friend for coffee. And really, the point is for you to come together and share. Connection. And coffee is a part of it. It's like, having wonderful food and inviting friends over to eat dinner and connect and play games, right? You can connect over something that's warm and nourishing. And that's what coffee is.

A: Perfect. And how is your opinion towards the option of purchasing coffee online from the farm in Costa Rica? Why would you engage in those purchases from the farm? And what is hindering you to do so?

B: I wouldn't purchase coffee from Costa Rica online if it were more expensive than what I could get locally, right now. And that's an economic decision, you know? Otherwise, if I could afford super fancy, expensive coffee from wherever, I would totally do it. But, if I were to do it on a regular basis, it would have to be fast and financially feasible. And that's really the crux of the matter.

A: So, what would you say is stopping you from purchasing personally?

B: I wouldn't pay like \$20 for a pound of coffee. My assumption, and I could be wrong, is that purchasing a pound from there, and having it sent here would be expensive. Okay, there's nothing wrong with that. It's just, I'm not in that type of, I'm not in a bracket, where I can just afford to do that.

A: Okay, completely fair. How could this barrier be fixed? What would encourage you to overcome this barrier?

B: Well, their website would have to make it very easy to purchase and send. So again, I haven't gone on their website in a while, but I would need to be able to go onto their website, select the type of coffee, I want to purchase without it being very complicated. You know, having, like Apple Pay, Pay Pal. But you know what I mean, the ease of the transaction has a lot to do with it. So, really making sure that their website is easy to use, and then getting it shipped from there to here has to be fast. Because when people run out of coffee, that's problem. Maybe they could do things like subscriptions, you know, where you get sent a pound every two weeks, that kind of thing. I mean, that would be wonderful. So, having a gift basket to send to people. It's fancy, but it's nice. It's a little higher end. But it's something that would make me go like, oh that's so nice, they have gift baskets. And then if I have a friend who's having a hard time or something like that, I can send that to them.

A: Interesting! Please, now, imagine you would be working on the farm and have the goal to increase product purchases in the long-run, how would you do it?

B: Well, I would definitely have a way for them to sign up for a subscription right there, before they leave the farm. And having an option to have a certain amount of coffee delivered by the time they get home would be an interesting marketing angle. Some type of guaranteed shipping. Because, when people travel, there's definitely mistrust of like, I'm gonna purchase it and then will it really arrive? So some type of guaranteed shipping.

A: And what do you think is the biggest barrier in the United States for people who have already visited the farm when purchasing their products online?

B: Well, I mean, people here have a lot of access to coffee from a lot of different places, right? I can walk into the grocery store and purchase coffee from almost anywhere. So, and it's at a different price point. Because it's not like boutique. I mean for me, it's an economic thing.

A: Okay. No, that's really interesting. So, is there anything else that you would like to share?

B: No, no, not really. We really enjoyed our time there. And I don't know, if we'll ever go back to Costa Rica, but if we do, we'll probably visit the farm again.

A: That's great. Then thank you for participating. The interview ends here!

Interview: #13

A: Hello, thank you for your time. I will now record this interview and anonymize your results. Do you agree with that?

B: Yes, sure, no problem.

A: Perfect, could you tell me where do you come from, how old are you, and what role does coffee play in your life?

B: Oh, I love that question. Okay, so, I'm 47, I live in Boston in Massachusetts. I did not grow up around here. I grew up in Iowa. But I've been in the Boston area about 25 years now. So, it's home. I travel a lot. We are a family of travelers. So, we've been all over the place with our kids. They're seven and nine. What role does coffee play in my life? You know, like most Americans, or maybe most people in the world, it's my morning drink. And I don't, I don't want bad coffee. I want good coffee. I don't drink it all day, like a lot of Americans. But I do want one really terrific cup in the morning. I'm very picky about it. I also worry about, where it comes from a lot. I try to research that and I try to pay attention to it. So, I'm looking for provider that is aligned with my values and has a really good cup of coffee.

A: Okay, perfect. And what comes to your mind when you are thinking about customer loyalty in tourism? What forms can loyalty hold?

B: In tourism? That's a fascinating question. When my family travels, it's really important to us that we are experiencing the culture that we're spending time with. We don't want people to adapt around us, we want to adapt around them. Kind of a leave-no-footprint sort of approach down to even language. My husband always makes a point of trying to get at least a little basics with the language of wherever we happen to be going. And this is something that we do for our kids. So, I say all of that, because I think that loyalty and travel, we tend to come up with places we like to visit over and over again, because we get to know them. They become familiar, they become part of the stories our family tells about ourselves.

A: Great. We will now try to reconstruct your experience at Café Monteverde. First, can you please tell me, what triggered your interest to visit a coffee farm in the first place? Why did you decide to engage in this specific coffee experience at Café Monteverde? And could you please describe what you were hoping to gain from your coffee ecotourism experience?

B: So, here's the funny thing. I have never had the opportunity to visit it in person. I have only ordered the coffee. And so, the way I found it is kind of funny. So, I feel like I have visited even though I haven't visited. So, I use an app on my treadmill called I-Fit. It's really, it's really wonderful. So, it's integrated with the treadmill, or you can use it on a separate phone. But it has trainers who are filmed running or walking or hiking in an environment. We travel as much as we can, but when we can't, I'm on my treadmill and I go for a run in Portugal, I go for a run in Puerto Rico. So, I was doing a series that was in Costa Rica, and the trainer on this particular series, ran at the coffee farm. So, he did a little 30-minute run. He talked about the space, he talked about the values, I got to see it. So, I've never visited it, though I've been to Costa Rica three times. I've been to Monteverde with each of those visits. I've never actually been to the farm, but I've experienced it through a run on my virtual app. And after, I immediately got on my computer to order some coffee from this place.

A: That was super interesting. So, just for me to understand fully, you were running and basically getting a farm tour over the app?

B: Yeah. I'm on a treadmill, there's a 17 inch screen built into the treadmill, and I'm going between the coffee plants and I'm seeing the trees and it's yeah, it's terrific.

A: This sounds really great. Could you tell me, what did this virtual coffee tour experience make with you?

B: So, the trainer in particular was very enthusiastic about the company, talked a lot about the farm itself. And there was one part of the run, where it goes back into the woods. But there was a little project where they built something in the woods. But the point is, he takes you through it, he talks about the values of the company, you get to see it. Like, that it's very bird friendly, that it's worker friendly, that the coffee is great. So, it was like having a guided tour of the farm. I haven't been to Costa Rica since I watched that. But I've said to my husband, next time we go, we're absolutely going to see this in person.

A: Okay. So, do you feel like the trainer was fully informed about the farm? And was he talking about coffee as well?

B: He absolutely was, he absolutely was.

A: Could you briefly walk me through it please. What was he explaining to you?

B: So, what did he talk about? He talked about both from an environmental perspective, and from a sort of humanitarian perspective. So, he talked about, obviously, coffee has a huge environmental footprint. And so, he was indicating an attempt to grow the coffee among the trees, right? Don't take the trees down, grow the coffee with the trees. So obviously, we're not taking trees down in order to do that. And, you know, the birds still have habitat. I believe he mentioned that they were also composting their own materials. So, you're using the byproducts of the coffee making process in order to make more coffee. But he also talked about it from a humanitarian perspective. If I remember right, when you go out of the run, I think he said, I can't remember, what it was. Was it a program with a local prison or something that people got a chance to work on this project as part of their sort of rehabilitation? Okay, if I'm remembering this correctly, tomorrow morning, I'm going to do this again, and I'm gonna, I'm gonna see if I can remember at all.

A: Amazing. So, due to this tour, you decided to purchase their coffee?

B: Absolutely.

A: What were your motivations to purchase?

B: You know, sometimes you're watching TV and you see a tour of someplace and you think, oh I'm so motivated, I have to go check that out myself. I wish I could go everywhere in the world, but I can't go everywhere in the world. And so, sometimes I have to do a kind of virtual tour. And then, when it's something you can purchase, when it turns out to be a product that you can support and purchase that allows you to connect to it in a way. I can't go to it, but I can experience it by purchasing that thing. And so for me, I went on this tour, I got to experience it virtually. And to actually purchase the coffee and try it was sort of the end cap of that experience, it finished off the experience. At the same time, when you hear about a company that has that

same value set, you have, you want it. You want to vote with your dollars, right? So, it's on some level, even if it's not the best cup of coffee in the world, and it was fantastic by the way, you still are like, I want to support that thing. I want to make sure that that can still exist by giving money to it.

A: Oh, yeah. So, do you remember which coffee you bought?

B: I believe I bought four pounds. And I've been meaning to buy more by the way. So, what I'm going to do after talking to you is, I'm going to go buy more. But I believe I bought four pounds. And I specifically bought the one of the honey process because I was not familiar with that as a concept. And I was really excited, both, to try it to see what it tastes like but also the again smaller environmental footprint of that approach to coffee. I was really excited about it, and I really enjoyed the product.

A: Okay, so you bought the coffee mainly for yourself or for what did you purchase it?

B: I bought it for myself, but also my dad is a real fan of coffee. So, when I talked to him and I found out he was coming to visit me, he lives in a different part of the country and we see each other maybe twice a year, I was telling him about the coffee and he said, okay, you have to stop, and you have to save some for me. So, I made a point of being able to save some and share with him. He is where I get my passion for coffee. So, as I said, I grew up in Iowa, and in Iowa in the 80s coffee was something you drink, and you get it over with. Yeah, but my dad became really interested in good coffee. And I remember he was mail ordering, getting coffee through mail order in the 80s. And nope, nobody was doing that. It really was funny, he was into craft beers as well. So, we had all these products in our house that nobody in Iowa had any exposure to. And so, he's why I became interested in it. If you go to drink, then make sure it's really good quality, and you're not just pounding it down for the caffeine. I mean it's a beautiful moment in your day where you have something that you truly enjoy.

A: And after your experience, did you feel that your coffee purchasing behavior had changed or your attitude towards coffee?

B: I would say yes. So, as I said, I have always been interested in making sure that I'm having a really good cup of coffee. I also have been a person who really cares about my environmental footprint and making sure, I'm voting with my dollars. I do think that this was a connecting point for those two philosophies. And what I have done since then is, so my nearest coffee shop is a San Francisco based brand where, if I'm not ordering something fancy, that's where I go for my local beans. And they have a huge range of roasts. And I have found that since this, I began to ask them questions like, where did this come from, what's the story behind this particular one. And they do have a particular line that is called Tres Hermanas. It's a single origin from Nicaragua, its woman owned. And I like it. Now, I make that choice. I purchase that one.

A: Cool. So, since you already ordered online, what do you feel is your biggest barrier that keeps you from ordering online anymore?

B: That's a great question. For me personally, it's that there's a sweet spot of how much to order. So, I don't want to buy a lot and have it sitting around. I want to buy it at a reasonable amount that I'm going to drink in a reasonable amount of time. I keep my coffee in the freezer, before I drink it. I've only got so much room in my freezer. So, I need to work when to get it with when I'm actually going to consume it. And I am mindful of the fact that when I'm purchasing from there, I'm making a plane fly from Costa Rica, right? I mean, there's other stuff on the plane. I'm being silly, but I want to order enough that it's worth for it to come that way. But also, not so much that my husband is like, for real, why do you have so much coffee in the freezer? Because I am the only person in my house who drinks it.

A: And how could this barrier be fixed? What would encourage you to overcome this barrier?

B: Let's see, there are a few things. One is, I could see a coffee subscription, that would probably be appealing to me. If they didn't want to do a coffee subscription, because I don't know, if I mentioned this, but my job is web marketing, so, I know a little bit about this world. When you do a subscription, there are systems involved, right? You've got to have the systems to charge a credit card holder and charge them on a regular basis. So, if that's too challenging for them, a lighter way is, if they remind me. Like if they're not going to do a little roll subscription, they could do an email reminder and say, hey, you haven't ordered this in a while. Your freezer probably has room now. So, order from us. The third thing, and I don't know, how they would do this, but that perception I have that my footprint is large, when I'm having this coffee flown to me. I don't know how they get around it and I don't think that's the biggest thing that would keep me from it. But I would absolutely be happy to have the coffee come to me slowly if it's more friendly. I don't know, that one's more of a puzzle to me. It's really those first two. Like, do you want to just receive this every two months? Or do you want an email from us every two months? What I will say, again, I'm in web marketing, and I know the other side of this, but what they should not do is go too far with those emails. The companies, where I buy one thing, and then I get a daily email from them, I do not need a daily email. Think about how people drink coffee, how long does a person typically take to go through a pound? Tune your email reminders to that.

A: Okay. Interesting cause I wanted to ask you as well, how do you feel about subscription models as this has been suggested so many times already.

B: So, I think there is an emotional piece to a subscription. But I think to a lightweight way to go into it is not a subscription immediately, and that you're charging me constantly but again, to remind me. My hairdresser does that, my hairdresser knows the cadence that I come in on, and they will email me and say, hey, it's been seven weeks since we've seen you. Don't forget to make an appointment. And now they're helping me.

A: Interesting, thank you. So, what would you say is the biggest barrier for people who visited the farm and are back in the US to not buy from them? Like in general.

B: I think that's a great question. Um, one thing is that coffee is so pervasive in the US, and in particular, Starbucks is so pervasive, and there are a lot of people, I know, who simply don't make coffee at home anymore, because Starbucks is so pervasive. And there are some, thinking about my coworkers, in particular here, who's at-home coffee consumption, has largely become a weekend activity. So, it's a little more ritual on the weekend. So, I think I'm tuning into that ritual, like a marketing message of when you do make your own coffee, make it the best, the absolute best, right? Like, have that be a special thing. Um, I think the other thing is, Americans are a convenience culture. And that's one of the worst things about us. And so, I think some people just get in a habit of going to places where they can buy everything. We have these giant stores where you can buy underwear and hamburger, right? And then they pick up their coffee there, and things that you don't buy in those situations have to be really special. So there needs to be some kind of story and emotion that makes you say, no, I'm not just going to throw that into my little carriage at the store. I'm going to wait and I'm going to get it from that spot. Like, I'm going the extra mile to have something special.

A: Okay, thank you. Is there anything else that you consider relevant or want to let me know?

B: I think, we've covered it, but I'll sum it up. I think as I said, Americans are about, we're about culture, we're about saving money. Having said that, there is a segment in the US that is very passionate about voting with our dollar. And then within that segment, there are particular passion products. So, I mean chocolate is one, coffee is absolutely one, alcohol is probably one where you do you do take that extra, extra care. And I think the story and position of Cafe Monteverde is really aligned with that. So, if there's a way to kind of crack that awareness, I think it's the perfect company for that target market. It's just a matter of reaching it. So, I think Café Monteverde should really focus on that niche that really cares about the following things and find the right influencers or something like that. Then it's going to open things up really fast.

A: Okay perfect. Thank you. I will stop the recording now. It was a really insightful interview.

Interview: #19

A: Hello, thank you for your time. I will now record this interview and anonymize your results. Do you agree with that?

B: Definitely.

A: Awesome. So, could you please tell me, where do you come from? And how old are you? And what role does coffee play in your life?

B: Sure, so I'm from Utah in the US, and 24 years old. And I'd say normally I would drink coffee every other day, I would say it's quite an everyday thing for me, so every other day, and then, I normally have my drip coffee machine. I either do drip coffee, or I do French press. And so, over the last two months, my friend and I were in Costa Rica, we spent most of our time living in Santa Teresa. And then, it's funny because my friend is actually really into coffee. And so, he got a job in Santa Teresa working as a barista. So, he has this plethora of knowledge about coffee and just loves to get in all the new details of everything. And so, when we visited Monteverde, he was the big push for us to go and do this coffee tour, which I was like, of course I love coffee and want to learn more about it too. And so yeah, he was teaching me about coffee over the past two months, and then also the tour in Monteverde kind of expanded my knowledge about coffee a little bit more, which has been fun.

A: Sounds great. And what comes to your mind when you are thinking about customer loyalty in tourism? What forms can loyalty hold?

B: I would say like being there now in Monteverde, and having seen how much work goes into the process of making your little cup of coffee, and meeting some of the people that go along in that process, it seems like good work that specifically they're doing. Having seen how sustainable it is, and how much they care for the planet and want to give back to the land that they're actually growing their coffee on, it makes me want to support them or other companies that are doing things similar to them. And then, it also makes me not complain so much about paying a certain price for a cup of coffee. Before I had the experience, if a cup of coffee was \$8 and \$9, I'd be like, oh my god that's outrageous, I'm not paying that. But now, seeing everything that goes on to make that one cup of coffee, I could see paying that much for it.

A: Nice. We will now try to reconstruct your experience at Café Monteverde. First, can you please tell me, what triggered your interest to visit a coffee farm in the first place? Why did you decide to engage in this specific coffee experience at Café Monteverde? And could you please describe what you were hoping to gain from your coffee ecotourism experience?

B: Um, I think like I said, my friend influenced a lot of that, him being really interested in the coffee scene. But I think, whether you're in Costa Rica and Nicaragua or wherever in Central America, you kind of know that a lot of good coffee comes out of there. And you know, even people talking here in the US, they know that a lot of good coffee comes from there. And so, I think, I just wanted to go and experience it to its fullest. And then, how we ended up landing on Cafe Monteverde, I think had a lot to do with proximity to where we were staying in Monteverde. Our hostel was right next to the cafe in town. And so, we initially went and got coffee there. And they have their cool little layout of all the different little cup things that you can try. And so, we thought that was fun. And then, they have a little side right in the store where you can sign up for the tour. And so, we just signed up for that to do it the next day.

A: And could you please describe what you were hoping to gain from your coffee ecotourism experience?

B: I think, I was expecting to learn about the whole process. I mean once we were there, we actually got a lot of information on the soil and stuff, I guess, I was expecting to just learn about the plant to the bean, and then to the cup of coffee, and then of course, just get to try some different coffees.

A: Interesting to hear! And now moving on to the entire experience of the farm, could you briefly walk me through this experience. What were your highlights while there?

B: So, we had our tour with Hairo, and it was me, my friend and then Hairo, who was leading us through and that was it. So, it was basically like a personal, private tour, which is nice. But, yeah, we met with him, he initially took us just out into the actual farm. He started by just introducing us to the actual coffee plant itself. And then, we were looking at the beans. And then, he was explaining, what difficulties the farm deals with in general. And he's telling us the percentage of beans that they actually are able to get to the coffee stage. And it ends up being not as much as you would think. So maybe like 30 or 40%, not even that much. But not that many beans actually make it through. He said that climate has a big impact on the plants and a few other things that impact, how much they can produce. Oh, and fungus, the fungus was the other one that the farm is working to fight. And let's see. So, we did that. And then he kept giving us a tour, we went over to where all the animals are kept. And he let us feed the chickens, the goats, pigs. Then, he gave us a tour of the green house, and that was all very unexpected, because we didn't know that that was even there. We were here thinking that we were gonna get a tour of just this coffee plantation and all of a sudden, we were getting a tour of the entire farm. And he's saying, how cool it is for the people that work there, or maybe even some people in town, they get to come and just get fed these meals that are all grown right there on their land, whether it be the animals or the vegetables, and stuff. So that was really cool. And then he took us back into, where the big tubs of like sustainable fertiliser were. And they do soil science there. He walked us through all of that, and how they try to make them as these natural pesticides, as eco-friendly as possible. Yeah, so that was cool to see that whole side of things. And then, we looped back up into the main area where some of the coffee is sold. And he took us into that roasting area. And then, we just got to try a bunch of different kinds of coffee. He kind of sat us down on the other side of this table and we tried a lot of coffee.

A: Thank you. And, in your opinion, what aspects could be improved?

B: Um, I honestly don't think that they could improve anything. I think that was one of the big reasons to why I did the review on TripAdvisor. And it's funny because I've been meaning to do the review for so long, because it was such an amazing experience. But we did that tour way back in the middle of September. And then, when I came back to the US, I was like, I gotta write this, because I just wanted to help promote them, since it was such a cool experience. But no, I don't think anything could have been better. I think if anything, it just totally exceeded any expectations that we had.

A: Okay! So, how satisfied were you with your overall coffee ecotourism experience at the farm? How would you separately rate your experience of the tour over the farm, the tasting, and the social interactions with the staff?

B: I mean, I would, whatever scale it is, 5 out of 5, 10 out of 10, you know. Just the whole tour was amazing. Kind of how I said before, to get that full explanation from them, from the soil all the way to that cup of coffee, and to learn about, how they're making an impact, and how they're different from a lot of other coffee companies, and how they take so much appreciation for the land that they're on, and how they want to be able to sustain it and use it for generations to come. And kind of their philosophies that derive this whole thing were really cool. And then, to go above and beyond coffee, and get a tour of their whole farm and the greenhouse. To have the guide explaining, what goes into a good coffee, how to pour a good cup of coffee? What goes into that? And even to taste the differences of how you might taste it.

A: Alright. Please explain the reasons that encouraged or hindered you from purchasing coffee products on the farm directly after your experience?

B: Yeah, yeah, I got some, my favourite was the natural medium roasted coffee. So, I got some of that. And just the whole beans. And then, I got some chocolate covered coffee beans as well, because I'm a big chocolate fan, too. So, and then my friend got some coffees too. I mean, the coffee was good, I really did like the coffee. But I think even more than that, having gone through the whole process and seeing something like Cafe Monteverde, it makes you want to support them in their mission

and help them succeed. And so, I'm like, okay, I paid for this tour, maybe we tip Hairo but then, even more than that, we want to just support this business. I think, you can vote with how you spend your money. So, if we want to see more of these companies like Café Monteverde, we need to vote with our dollar, support them, instead of supporting McDonald's or the non-organic option.

A: Great. Let's move on to you returning to your country. Now imagine that you would like to purchase coffee again. How did the experience at Café Monteverde influence your perspective and purchasing behaviour towards coffee products?

B: Yeah, I think so. I've been thinking about that too, because now I just got back to the US earlier this week, and I still have my drip coffee machine and I'm trying to figure out, how I'm gonna go about coffee in the future. If I'm going to get a grinder and buy actual beans from somewhere. And also, if I'm going to get a pour over setup for whatever. I'm still figuring that out. But I can tell you, I went to the store the other day and I mean, they don't have coffee from Café Monteverde right in the store, but I am trying to find something similar.

A: How is your opinion towards the option of purchasing coffee online from the farm in Costa Rica? Why would you engage in those purchases from the farm? And what is hindering you to do so?

B: I would purchase coffee from them. I think that's something I got to think about, too. If I want to keep supporting them, even though it might take a little bit more time or planning rather than just being able to go to the grocery store and get whatever's there. In all honesty, I think the next time I buy their coffee it's more like a gift. Let's say, I want to get my dad some of their coffee for Christmas or something, I could order some of their coffee. And then because it would also come with a cool story of like, oh I did this tour in Monteverde. And here's some of their coffee, you know.

A: So, what is the biggest barrier to you?

B: I think it would just be like having the coffee shipped to me. Even though there is a little, maybe not even effort, I guess it's not the right word, because it would be getting shipped to you rather than having to just go to the grocery store when you're just doing all of your shopping. You know, rather than getting your coffee at the grocery store, taking the time to pop up your computer and order your coffee, and I don't know, maybe it gets there a week later.

A: How could this barrier be fixed? What would encourage you to overcome this barrier?

B: Um, I mean, if they're in the grocery stores, that would be the easiest option. But yeah, I think that's the only thing. Everything else would just be for me.

A: Interesting! Please, now, imagine you would be working on the farm and have the goal to increase product purchases in the long-run, how would you do it?

B: I guess I would just go back to the grocery store idea because once I'm kind of back into the swing of work and getting caught up in maybe a more busy schedule, you go to the grocery store, and that's where you're gonna get your food and drink. And if I saw Café Monteverde just there on the shelf, I think I would definitely go for it, especially given the experience that I had there and everything. And I don't know, I haven't even looked at the option of buying any of the things online. But I guess, for everybody nowadays, convenience, and ease is everything. And so, even, if it is ordering things online, maybe you'll only have to set it up once in your computer. And then it just keeps consistently getting sent to your house, maybe you get a shipment of Café Monteverde coffee once a month, or maybe you don't drink that much coffee. So once shipment comes every three months or something like that, but something consistent so that you don't have to take a lot of your interaction on the computer. It's kind of like, how you sign up for a Netflix membership. They keep getting your money every month, but you don't really have to think about it, or you don't have to keep going back and purchasing that. Instead the product just kind of shows up there. But then you really only set it up like once on the computer.

A: Okay. So, you are talking about a subscription model basically?

B: Yeah, yeah, I think, I think some people would be into that.

A: Interesting, thank you. So, what would you say is the biggest barrier for people who visited the farm and are back in the US to not buy from them? Like in general.

B: I think it would still be kind of what we talked about cause not many people that I know of get coffee orders online or get coffee delivered to them. And most people just get it at the grocery store. And so, I think they naturally just go with whatever's on the shelf.

A: Okay, thank you. Is there anything else that you consider relevant or want to let me know?

B: Um. No, I think, all is said. I just had a really amazing time there.

A: Okay, thank you for the interview then. I will stop the recording now.
