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Reexamination of the role of destination image in tourism: an updated literature review

Research on destination image has progressed quite significantly over the past decade. Analyzing these advancements was our main inspiration to create an updated literature review on destination image. In this paper, we update the literature reviews on destination image introduced in the former review papers (Chon, 1990; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Gallarza et al., 2002; Pike, 2002) and establish research gaps that have to be researched in the future. The goals were to execute an in-depth review of the relevant literature, to take a look at the current findings associated with the challenge of destination image and also to identify the methodological issues and implications of new information for potential research in the future. To achieve these goals, a detailed investigation of selected destination image research released from 1991–2011 was performed to review the latest findings. The result is a brief summary of the relevant literature developed on the subject of destination image, in the last 20 years.

Keywords: Literature review, destination image.

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Introduction

Destination image is consistently discovered to have major impacts on travel-related behaviors, for instance, choice of destination and upcoming travel intentions (Ekinci, 2003; Jun & Yan, 2015; Korstanje, 2009). For instance, empirical evidence supports the concept that destination image is a significant factor that greatly affects the choices that tourists make (Chaudhary, 2000; Chen, 2001; Liu, Li, & Yang, 2015). The research on destination image has obtained increasing attention by experts and researchers ever since the late 1970s. This significance of image studies has resulted in a lot of investigation on tourism destination image. Regardless of its significance, efforts to comprehend destination image as a more in depth theoretical platform are missing in the tourism field.

Chon (1990) researched 23 of the most popular quoted destination image studies and recognized the impact of the image of a holiday destination on tourists' attitude and behavioral motives toward a tourist's choice of destination. Echtner and Ritchie (1991) summarized and assessed the conceptualization and operability of 15 image studies and evaluated the advantages and disadvantages of the techniques utilized to establish and determine destination image. Gallarza, Saura, and García (2002) outlined the concept and description of destination image within an interdisciplinary marketing point of view, according to 25 scientific studies on destination image. Pike (2002) reviewed the main features of destination image studies from 142 papers published throughout 1973-2000. He discovered that there is not yet a concept approved to substitute for the multi-attribute models evaluating destination image.

Regardless of the significance of this research series, a number of authors determined that a more recent conceptual structure in terms of destination image is required (Li & Yang, 2014; Liu et al., 2015). In this paper, we update the literature review on destination image introduced in the former review papers (Chon, 1990; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Gallarza et al.,



2002; Pike, 2002) and determine the study gaps for future investigation. The reason for this study is to promote a better understanding of the destination image theory according to the latest findings and to determine methodological issues and the significance of new information for future research.

To accomplish the purpose, detailed research on destination image studies released from 1991 to 2011 was carried out. It is generally acknowledged by the academic circle that there is no solitary and definitive method which comes to the fore as a one-size-fits-all solution to rate papers (McKercher, Law, & Lam, 2006). But despite this, we have come across 18 prominent studies on the subject written in the last 20 years, by taking into cognizance the citation indices and also downloads from electronic sites and libraries (See Table 1). The papers were published in journals such as Annals of Tourism Research, Journal of Service Marketing, The Journal of Tourism Studies, Journal of Travel Research, and Tourism Management.



Table 1 Citation record of destination image studies 1991-2011

Authors (Year)	Title	Journal	Google Citations		
Chon (1991)	Tourism destination image modification process. Marketing implications.	Tourism Management	456		
Chaudhary (2000)	India's image as a tourist destination - a perspective of foreign tourists.	Tourism Management	222		
Chen & Hsu (2000)	Measurement of Korean Tourists' perceived images of overseas destinations.	Journal of Travel Research	238		
Litvin & Ling (2001)	The destination attribute management model: an empirical application to Bintan, Indonesia.	Tourism Management	77		
Baloglu (2001)	Image variations of Turkey by familiarity index: informational and experiential dimensions.	Tourism Management	321		
Leisen (2001)	Image segmentation: the case of a tourism destination.	Journal of Service Marketing	420		
Baloglu & Mangaloglu (2001)	Tourism destination images of Turkey, Egypt, Greece, and Italy as perceived by US-based tour operators and travel agents.	Tourism Management	491		
Chen (2001)	A case study of Korean outbound travelers' destination images by using correspondence analysis.	Tourism Management	161		
Beerli & Martin (2004a)	Factors influencing destination image.	Annals of Tourism Research	1159		
Lee et al., (2005)	Korea's destination image formed by the 2002 World Cup.	Annals of Tourism Research	359		
Castro et al., (2007)	The influence of market heterogeneity on the relationship between a destination's image and tourists' future behavior.	Tourism Management	376		
Chen & Tsai (2007)	How destination image and evaluative factors affect behavioral intentions?	Tourism Management	828		
Lin et al., (2007)	Examing the role of cognitive and affective image in predicting choice across natural, developed, and theme-park destinations.	Journal of Travel Research	174		
Chi & Qu (2008)	Examing the structural relationships of destination image, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty: An integrated approach.	Tourism Management	723		
Martin (2008)	Exploring the cognitive-affective nature of destination image and the role of psychological factors in its formation.	Tourism Management	343		
Alcaniz et al., (2009)	The functional-psychological continuum in the cognitive image of a destination: A confirmatory analysis.	Tourism Management	173		
Kim et al., (2009)	Tracking tourism destination image perception.	Annals of Tourism Research	26		
Qu et al., (2011)	A model of destination branding: Integrating the concepts of the branding and destination image.	Tourism Management	254		



Particularly, this paper offers a review and debate of the theory and measurement of destination image. The methodological processes for determining destination image are also scrutinized in an effort to help researchers to record and determine the destination image development over the years. The recent review was restricted to the following issues:

- a) What are the latest results of destination image research?
- b) How many recent studies used qualitative methods in the measurement of destination image or development of the image attribute list?
- c) What statistical approaches were adopted in data analysis by the recent quantitative image studies?

Conceptual framework of destination image

The conceptual delimitation of destination image is not unequivocal (Ali, Omar & Amin, 2013; Gallarza et al., 2002). Some of the existing definitions of destination image are presented in Table 2. In surveying these varied definitions, it is evident that the term of destination image is applied to multiple destinations, among them an area or a country. Generally, all authors agree that the concept usually corresponds to a global impression, auras and feelings incorporate the role of imagery, or holistic conceptualisations, in describing a destination's image (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991).



Table 2 Selected Definitions of Destination Image

Researchers	Definitions				
Crompton (1979)	It is a set of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that people have of a place or destination.				
	An expression of knowledge, impressions, imaginations, prejudices and emotional				
Lawson (1977)	thoughts an individual or group has of a particular destination.				
	Overall impression which is formed as a result of the evaluation of individual attributes				
Dichter (1985)	which may contain both cognitive and emotional components.				
	Ideas and conceptions that a person or persons hold about a place and image is				
Embacher (1989)	comprised of cognitive and evaluative evaluations.				
	Image is the mental construct developed by a potential tourist on the basis of a few				
Fakeye (1991)	selected impressions among the flood of total impressions.				
	The image of a place is the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person holds				
Kotler (1994)	of it.				
	Destination images are developed by three hierarchically interrelated components:				
Gartner (1996)	cognitive, affective, and conative.				
Santos Arrebola					
(1994)	Image is a mental representation of attributes and benefits sought of a product.				
	A favourable or unfavourable prejudice that the audience and distributors have of the				
Parenteau (1995)	product or destination				

In general, destination image means a set of beliefs and impressions formed on the basis of the long-term information obtained from various kinds of channels, which as a result lead to a psychological construct reflecting properties and benefits from a certain product or destination (Baggio, 2005; Crompton, 1979; Gartner, 1993; Gallarza et al., 2002; Mackay & Fesenmaier, 2000). It was widely accepted that destination image is an overall impression of cognitive and emotional assessment (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999).

Previous studies (Chon, 1991; Echtner &Ritchie, 1991; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Gartner & Shen, 1992) assumed destination image arose based on the consumer's sense of reasoning, coupled with emotional disposition that stemmed from interrelated components: perceptive/cognitive evaluations, which relates to the personalized knowledge and belief about the destination (an appraisal of perceived attributes of the destination), and affective assessments that pertain to one's perceptions with respect to the destination.

The cognitive assessment of destination image was analyzed in many studies with structured methods (Chon, 1991; Echtner &Ritchie, 1991; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991;



Gartner & Shen, 1992). Many elements were included widely, such as natural resources, infrastructure, social context, local atmosphere and value for money, etc. (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Chaudhary, 2000; Chen, 2001). Following a review of the attractions and attributes included in the existing scales, Beerli and Martin (2004) incorporated and classified the cognitive assessments of destination image into nine dimensions (see Table 3). On the other hand, four semantic differential dimensions (unpleasant–pleasant, sleepy–arousing, distressing–relaxing, and gloomy–exciting) are commonly applied to investigate the affective component of destination image. Furthermore, the bidimensional model proposes that cognitive image is an antecedent of affective image (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993).



Table 3 Dimensions/Attributes determining the perceived destination image

Natural Resources	General Infrastructure	Tourist Infrastructure
Weather Temperature Rainfall Humidity Hours of sunshine Beaches Quality of seawater Sandy or rocky beaches Length of the beaches Overcrowding of beaches Wealth of countryside Protected nature reserves Lakes, mountains, deserts, etc. Variety and uniqueness of flora and fauna	Development and quality of roads, airports and ports Private and public transport facilities Development of health services Development of telecommunications Development of commercial infrastructures Extent of building development	Hotel and self-catering accommodation Number of beds Categories Quality Restaurants Number Categories Quality Bars, discotheques and clubs Ease of access to destination Excursions at the destination Tourist centres Network of tourist information
Tourist Leisure and Recreation Theme parks Entertainment and sports activities Golf, fishing, hunting, skiing, scuba diving, etc. Water parks Zoos Trekking Adventure activities Casinos Night life Shopping	Culture, History & Art Museums, historical buildings, monuments, etc. Festival, concerts, etc. Handicraft Gastronomy Folklore Religion Customs and ways of life	Political & Economic Factors Political stability Political tendencies Economic development Safety Crime rate Terrorist attacks Prices
Natural Environment Beauty of the scenery Attractiveness of the cities and towns Cleanliness Overcrowding Air and noise pollution Traffic congestion	Social Environment Hospitality and friendliness of the local residents Underprivileged and poverty Quality of life Language barriers	Atmosphere of the Place Luxurious Fashionable Place with a good reputation Family-oriented destination Exotic Mystic Relaxing Stressful Fun, enjoyable Pleasant Boring Attractive or interesting



Research Findings

In Table 3, the dimensions or attributes that may determine the perceived destination image were listed (Beerli and Martin, 2004). The review of the more recent destination image literature reveals that both cognitive assessments and affective assessments were used to measure the destination image (Table 4). Cognitive assessments were most popularly used to measure the destination image.

Table 4 Cognitive and Affective evaluations of destination image

	Cognitive evaluations						Affective evaluations						
Authors	Natural resources	General infrastructure	Tourist infrastructure	Tourist leisure and recreation	Culture, history and art	Political and economic factors	Natural environment	Social environment	Atmosphere of the place	Unpleasant to pleasant	Sleepy to arousing	Distressing to relaxing	Gloomy to exciting
Chon (1991)				•	•	•	•	•					
Chaudhary (2000)		•	•	•	•	•	•						
Chen & Hsu (2000)	•		•			•	•	•	•				
Litvin & Ling (2001)	•	•	•	•									
Baloglu (2001)	•		•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•
Leisen (2001)	•			•	•		•						
Baloglu & Mangaloglu (2001)						•	•		•	•	•		
Chen (2001)	•		•			•	•	•	•				
Beerli & Martin (2004)	•	•	•		•		•		•	•			•
Lee et al., (2005)						•	•		•	•			
Castro et al., (2007)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•					
Chen & Tsai (2007)	•			•					•				
Lin et al., (2007)	•	•	•							•	•	•	•
Chi & Qu (2008)			•	•	•	•		•	•				
Martin (2008)		•	•		•		•	•		•	•		•
Alcaniz et al., (2009)	•		•	•	•	•	•	•					
Kim et al., (2009)			•	•	•	•	•	•	•				
Qu et al., (2011)			•	•			•			•	•	•	•

Survey methods adopted related to destination image showed that airports were widely utilized by researchers to collect data and information and the most popularly researched



destination type was countries, and then cities, states and resorts. More than a half of the identified papers were aimed at measuring the image of travelers at their destinations and several studies were targeted at measuring the perceptions of local people (Table 5). For the quantitative studies, statistical methods used to determine destination image mostly relied on factor analysis, followed by multiple regression, Log-linear analysis and t-tests (Figure 1).

Table 5 Summary of survey methods of destination image studies 1991-2011

Authors	Survey (Region)	Destination Type	Sample size	Sample Type
Chon (1991)	Airport	Country (Korea)	444	Visitors
Chaudhary (2000)	Airports & Hotels	Country (India)	200	Visitors
Chen & Hsu (2000)	Airport	Country (Korea)	320	Visitors
Litvin & Ling (2001)	Terminal ferry	Resort	679	Visitors
Baloglu (2001)	Turkey	Country (Turkey)	448	Local residents
Leisen (2001)	States, America	State (New Mexico)	923	Local residents
Chen (2001)	Airport	Country (Korea)	285	Visitors
Baloglu & Mangaloglu (2001)	Other	Country (Turkey, Egypt, Greece, and Italy)	313	Travel intermediaries
Lee et al., (2005)	Stadiums	Country (Korea)	412	Visitors
Beerli & Martin (2004)	Airport	Resort (Lanzarote)	616	Visitors
Castro et al., (2007)	Other	City (Spain)	1526	Visitors
Chen & Tsai (2007)	Kengtin	Resort (Taiwan)	393	Visitors
Lin et al., (2007)	Taichung	Resort (Taiwan)	857	Local residents
Chi & Qu (2008)	States, America	Eureka Springs	345	Domestic visitors
Martin (2008)	Other	North of Spain	807	Visitors
Alcaniz et al., (2009)	Towns, Beaches	Resort	380	Visitors
Kim et al., (2009)	Airport	Country (Australia)	450	Visitors
Qu et al., (2011)	Welcome centres	State, America	379	Domestic visitors



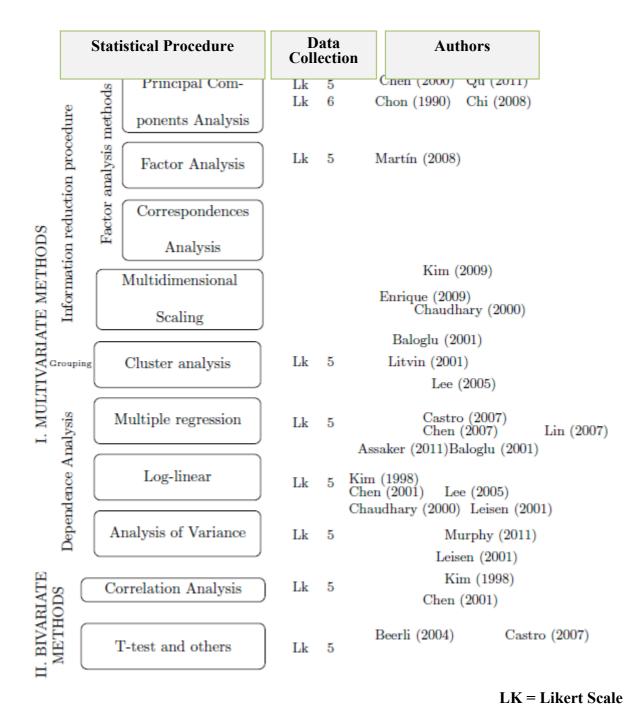


Figure 1 A review of statistical procedure for measuring destination image.



Discussion

Destination image plays a key role in successful tourism development and in the marketing of destinations, consequent upon the supply and demand forces that come into play, and has a huge impact on all aspects of marketing. Tourist destination image has become a valuable field of investigation over a period of almost three decades. Destination image theory has surfaced as a significant marketing tool and is growing in significance. Despite the ample amount of literature, a theoretical framework of the destination image construct has yet to emerge. Regardless of this significance and practical interest, destination image studies are criticized as being theoretical and missing a sound conceptual structure, although major recent efforts like Echtner and Ritchie (1991), Chon (1991), Pike (2002), and Gallarza et al. (2002) are more in-depth and useful for theoretical conceptualizations.

This study completed a detailed assessment of the destination image literature over the past 10 years, synthesizing literature with regards to the measurements, methods, and concepts. It also indicates that many issues are still not completely researched in the literature. First and foremost, the deluge of research on this subject of destination image has taken a different turn, as represented by the model, and yet several aspects of it are yet to be empirically ascertained. It is believed that destination image has a close tie with culture. Hence, culture must have a stronghold on destination image, and this should be investigated mainly because of the culturally distinctive natures of the focal destinations and the origins of the tourists being questioned. Cultural differences is a really critical factor in determining consumers' held images—especially conceived image after visitation—of a destination in terms of values, rules of social behavior and interaction, and also perception (Tasci & Gartner, 2007).

Second, additional factors should be considered. Future image research should examine moderating effects and carefully build hypotheses that can be tested empirically. For example, recent image studies showed that there also appears to be a moderator effect of



gender and travel arrangement on the strength of the relationship among image, attitude, and behavioral intentions (Jun & Yan, 2015; Liu et al., 2015). Future image studies need to recognize these moderating effects in developing image theory.

Finally, the reliability of findings needs extra attention concerning the reproduction of research in an identical research location/destination (Yang, Liu, & Li, 2015). For instance, throughout the last 30 years, both marketing academics and professionals have been fascinated by the connection between tourist satisfaction and destination image in the general destination (Yang, Liu, Jing, & Li, 2014). However, research on the connection between destination image of the casino and traveler satisfaction has stayed restricted, both in real numbers and in scope. Still, in the current setting of higher level of competition in the growing destination market, the managerial concern of improving traveler satisfaction also provides the research challenge of a more comprehensive understanding and a scientific prediction of this essential kind of gambling destination. The first step is to investigate if the destination type can further nuance the image-satisfaction-relationship.



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