

BEYOND THE MOTIVATION THEORY OF DESTINATION IMAGE

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Review
Received 28 April 2016
Revised 11 May 2016
23 May 2016
Accepted 13 July 2016
<https://doi.org/10.20867/thm.22.2.1>

Abstract

Purpose – The existing literature has accepted the view that the destination image can be explained by the motivation theory. According to this theory the destination image can be explained by either the internal motivation of tourists or the external motivation originating from the destination. The purpose of this paper is to critically review the literature to build an appropriate research framework for understanding the formation of destination image by international tourists.

Design, Methodology and Approach – The literature pertaining to destination image till recently can be divided into three evolutionary stages with stage boundaries marked by the seminal reviews by Echtner & Ritchie in 1991 and by Pike in 2002. The two main focuses of the destination image research are – measurement and theory of the destination image. The evolution of measurement and theory is reviewed, in this conceptual paper, through these stages justifying the proposed new research framework.

Findings – The existing theories do not take in to account some of the modern variables such as perceived risks of travel and the power of social networks that fuel word of mouth.

Originality of Research – All the conceptual discussions and views are original.

Keywords destination image, external motivation, internal motivation, word of mouth, perceived risks of travel

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an activity, wherein people of one place go to the other places with an intention of coming back. According to World Tourism Organization (WTO), the purpose of tourism could be leisure, sightseeing, business, education, health, study or even scientific research (UNWTO 2014).

WTO reports that tourism has become a major source of foreign exchange in many countries. The international tourist arrivals at 1087 million in 2013 showed a growth of 5% over 2012. WTO forecasts international arrivals to increase by 4% or more in 2014. This is based on the Confidence Index, which is compiled from the feedback from over 300 experts worldwide. According to World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), tourism is one of the most important global industries. In 2013, the total contribution to the global economy rose to 9.5% of global GDP when it crossed USD 7 trillion generating 266 million jobs (WTTC 2014). Tourism has become the backbone of economic progress in many countries (Remoaldo et al 2014).

International tourism has grown rapidly in recent decades and ranks second only to oil in world trade in importance (Walker & Walker 2011). This has created a huge interest among marketers in understanding the decision-making process of tourists, especially in the light of rising intense competition among destinations (Currie & Wesley 2008). The competition is fierce because number of destinations trying to attract international travelers (Remoaldo et al 2014). Subsequent discussion attempts to explore the concept of the destination in the tourism research.

The destination is defined by UNWTO (2007) as a place visited by tourists and is central to the decision to take the trip. Therefore, the tourist destination represents the ultimate end of tourism (Leiper 1979). Destination is the main reason of tourism and final product. It can be a place, region or a country. The definition also covers special places, which can be different from the everyday locations due to their cultural, historic, archaeological or natural significance (Urry & Rojek 1997). Berman (2005) also defines the destination as a country, state, region, city or town which is marketed or markets itself as a place for tourists to visit. Leiper's work had a considerable influence on the tourism literature. In his model, tourists are pushed towards destinations by the factors in the generating region. Then the destination is the final end of this tourism movement. These destinations try to attract travelers and the strategies were suggested by Leiper.

Destinations have certain features, which can be called destination attributes. These attributes can be classified as attractions, amenities and the accessibility. There are many types of destinations e.g. base destination from where tourists visit various attractions, centered destination which may have all the attractions within, urban destination, natural destination, man-made destinations, etc. The definition adopted by this research is that destination is a location which has attractions, tourism infrastructure and accessibility.

Product or service image is an important concept in consumer behavior research and the wider buyer behavior research. The main objective of the consumer behavior research is the choice of a product or service. Since the image of a product or service is an important factor in the selection choices related to any product, service, place or a person, therefore, in the context of tourism it is logical that the image of a destination plays the most crucial role in decision making (Kim, Hallab & Kim 2012). The importance of destination image for marketing can be gauged by a plethora of papers on the topic. Due to the rising competition among destinations, as highlighted in the previous sections, the need to create a distinctive image to differentiate from the competitors is more critical than ever before, for the destinations (Phau, Quintal, & Shanka 2014; Remoaldo et al 2014). Destination image is central in the destination selection (Baloglu & McCleary 1999).

Researchers often use the theory of planned behavior to investigate the travel decision making (Phau, Quintal & Shanka 2014). The central idea of this theory is that individuals can behave in a particular manner if they believe that their behavior will result in desirable outcomes (Ajzen 1991). Intentions to behave can be termed as planned or likely future behavior (Swan 1981).

Since the intentions result in behavior when there is an opportunity to act, therefore, intentions can be the best predictor of the behavior (Fishbein & Aizen 1975). Some recently conducted studies suggest that the destination image positively influences the intention to visit (Chen & Tsai 2007). Jeong et al (2009) suggest that both cognitive and affective images are the best predictor of visit intentions, rather than other variables e.g. sources of information and motivation to travel. Based on this it has been hypothesized that the destination image is a significant predictor of intentions to visit (Phau, Quintal and Shanka 2014).

The concept of the destination image was initially used as an explanatory variable of tourist behavior. It has been admitted (Gallarza, Saura & Garcia 2002; Page & Connell 2009) that the beginning of the destination image research can be traced to James Hunt, who tried to examine the image of four Rocky Mountain States - Colorado, Montana, Utah and Wyoming among the non-visitors from the other cities of USA (Hunt 1975). He used 20 attributes of image divided in to categories such as people, attractions, climate and temperature. The attractions related attributes were national parks, forest reserves, historical sites, winter skiing, boating, hunting, fishing, camping, cities, culture, shopping, museums, symphony orchestras, shows, night clubs and night life. The climate related attributes were winter snow and summer temperatures. His study demonstrates that the destination image has a strong impact on tourist behavior. He concluded that destination image is very crucial to the success of tourist destination.

Dr Ernest Dichter, known as father of motivational research, explained that the image is much more than the data or details of a product and it can be manipulated (Dichter 1985). He explained that a politician or an actor is able to change the personal image by simply wearing glasses. The person remains the same but the image changes. Therefore, controlling the image has been a central problem of marketing research.

1. DESTINATION IMAGE – ISSUES IN DEFINITION AND MEASUREMENT

1.1. Definition of Destination Image

However, in spite of so much attention to destination image in literature, it is not easy to define it. The early literature is summarized by Chon (1990) and Echtner & Richie (1991). Study by Echtner & Richie (1991) is more well known. They summarized about 15 studies and then followed it by another study (Echtner & Richie 1993). In post Echtner and Richie era, there were still many studies.

Pike (2002) reviewed 142 researches from the period 1973-2000 and came up with some interesting facts e.g. 73% studies were about North America and Europe followed by Asia (18%) leaving only 9% studies about the rest of the world. Over the years, various definitions have been provided – as seen in the Table 1, which is just a selective summary.

Table 1: Destination image definition over time

Source	Definition of destination image
Hunt (1975)	“An impression of people, places, climates and attractions”
Lawson and Baud Bovy (1977)	“A combined expression of all the emotional thoughts, knowledge and prejudices about a particular destination.”
Crompton (1979)	“A sum total of all impressions, ideas and beliefs associated with a destination.”
Fakeye and Crompton (1991)	“Accumulated Ideas, expectations, Impressions, beliefs and feelings towards a destination.”
Echtner and Ritchie (1993)	“Destination image is a multidimensional concept comprising of both symbolic and tangible features.”
Baloglu and McCleary (1999)	“The quality of experience, attractions, value/environment, relaxation/escape, excitement/adventure, knowledge, social and prestige.”
Berli and Martin (2004)	“The destination image consists of views about natural and cultural resources, general, tourist and leisure infrastructures, atmosphere, social setting and environment, sun & sand, knowledge, relaxation, entertainment, and prestige.”
Chen and Tsai (2007)	“The destination image consists of destination brand, entertainment, nature & culture, sun and sand. In effect, it is mental representation of knowledge, feelings and overall perception of a particular location.”
Kim (2014)	“.....a favourable image of a destination formed by a combination of the destination’s attributes (e.g., beautiful landscape, shopping opportunities, cultural exchange, infrastructure, safety, and activities)....”

Source: Reviewed Literature

Earlier researchers have referred to it as impressions, belief, prejudices, emotions, thoughts and ideas (Lawson & Baud Bovy 1977; Crompton 1979; Fakeye & Crompton 1991). In comparison, the researchers in post Echtner and Ritchie era defined destination image as the quality of experience (Baloglu & McCleary 1999), views about destination (Berli & Martin 2004) or perception about the destination attributes (Kim 2014). Chen and Tsai (2007) even referred to it as a destination brand.

It can be argued that the closest to reality could be the definition provided by Echtner and Ritchie (1991;1993) when they defined the destination image as a multidimensional concept. While, they summarized all the researches from 1975 till 1990, they also proposed a framework to understand destination image. Their framework tries to measure destination image in three dimensions represented by continuums. The first continuum is the type of image, which could be attribute-based image on one end or could be overall (meaning holistic) image on the other end. The second continuum is based on functional image, which consists of pieces of information, and psychological image based on perceptions and impressions.

The third continuum is based on the unique attributes e.g. Mt Everest for Nepal or common attributes like beaches for Phuket or Bali. They claimed these conclusions were based on earlier researches in the fields of psychology and consumer behavior. Their definition is the most comprehensive and the most cited. This was a good

contribution and one can see the link between this continuum and later studies which studies which talk about overall image and also subsets of destination images, such as primary, secondary, affective, cognitive, etc. (Moutinho 1987; Dobni & Zinkhan 1990; Stabler 1995; Baloglu & Brinberg 1997; Walmsley & Young 1998; Baloglu & McCleary 1999; Beerli & Martín 2004; Lin et al 2007).

Even then, there is a gap in terms of the lack of a general definition that could be adopted for future research. A universal definition accepted by all is still not available. The new definition should be universal enough to be understood and adopted by all. From the individual and psychological point of view it is a common fact that the perception and imagery are highly correlated. Therefore, perception of destination attributes and the emotional standpoint or feelings about these attributes could be the most plausible definition from the future research point of view.

1.2. Measurement of Destination Image

It was shown by Echtner & Richie (1993) that different researchers measured the destination image differently, which means that not only multidimensionality but also the complexities of the measurement. The **Table 2** expands on research summary provided by Echtner & Richie (1991).

Table 2: Number of Image Attributes taken by Researchers

Sr.	Authors	Number of Attributes
1	Hunt (1975)	20
2	Goodrich (1977)	10
3	Crompton (1979)	30
4	Pearce (1982)	13
5	Haahti & Yavas (1983)	10
6	Crompton & Duray (1985)	28
7	Phelps (1986)	32
8	Gartner & Hunt (1987)	11
9	Richardson & Crompton (1988)	10
10	Gartner (1993)	15
11	Echtner & Ritchie (1991)	34
12	Baloglu & McCleary (1999)	14
13	Beerli & Martin (2004)	23
14	Rodriguez del Bosque & Martin (2008)	22
15	Rodrigueq del Bosque et al.	18
16	Prayag (2009)	25
17	Chen & Phou (2013)	16
18	Chen, Chen & Okumus (2013)	19
19	Phau, Quintal & Shanka (2014)	15
20	Kim (2014)	43

Source: Literature Review

Note: The entries 5,6,8,9 are from Echtner & Ritchie (1993) but used here for comparison

The Table 2 shows that the destination image has been measured from as little as 10 attributes (Goodrich 1977) to as high as by 43 attributes (Kim 2014). From the research point of view, it does not provide a clear guideline for the future researchers. A ranking of these measurements on the basis of appropriateness could be useful for the future researchers. If a particular variable pertaining to the human or consumer behavior can be measured in so many different ways, it implies that something is not right. Since, the authenticity of the researchers can not be questioned, it implies that the different measurements have been a result of the different approaches taken by the researchers. The review of literature does indicate towards this possibility.

The literature mentions different approaches in which destination image can be classified and measured (Lee, Lee & Lee 2014). Phelps (1986) differentiated between the secondary image formed before the visit to the destination and the primary or main image formed after the visit. This dimension refers to the stages of destination image transformation, which can be further subcategorized (Tocquer & Zins 2004) e.g.

- a. Vague unrealistic image before visit based on available information, advertising and word of mouth (WOM);
- b. Distorted image due to more information collected while going on vacation;
- c. Refined image during vacation; and
- d. Resultant or final image as part of the memory

A slight deviation was proposed by Gunn (1988), who described destination image as being organic, induced and primary image. The organic image originates from the information gathered from the third party sources such as media, education and views of family and friends. Next, an induced image is formed from commercial sources of information such as brochures, agents and guidebooks. Gunn (1988) agrees with Phelps (1986) that primary image is formed after the destination visit and tends to be realistic, specific and complex.

The interrelationship of various image definitions proposed are summarized in Table 3 below:

Table 3: **Interrelationship of various definitions of the destination image**

Stage	Phelps (1986)	Gunn (1988)	Gartner (1993)	Tocquer & Zins (2004)
Pre-Visit Image	Secondary Image	Organic Image	Organic Image	Unclear Image
		Induced Image	Induced Image (Overt Inducement by Destination Marketing)	Clear Image
			Induced Image (Covert Inducement by Word-of-mouth)	Improved Image
Post-Visit Image	Primary Image	Primary Image	Complex Image	Final Image

Source: Literature Review

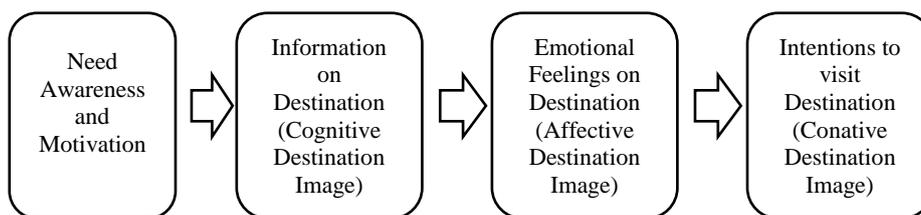
Gunn (1988) also provided explanation on how these images are formed during 6 stages of travel experience. This model has been popular and has been basis of many studies (Lopes 2011; Chen, Chen & Okumus 2013; Lee, Lee & Lee 2014). The 6 stages are:

1. Mental impression about destination (organic image)
2. Modification of destination image by further information (formation of induced image)
3. Decision to make a visit (modification of induced image)
4. Travel to destination
5. Visit experience at destination
6. Return home with recollections and memories (primary image – realistic and complex)

The recent tourism literature seems to agree with the destination image analysis by Dann (1996), which differentiates between cognitive, affective and conative destination images. The cognitive destination image refers to the beliefs, impressions and knowledge about the attributes of destination whereas the affective image refers to the feelings and emotions towards the destination (Beerli & Martin 2004; Martin & Rodriguez del Bosque 2008). The cognition is based on the rational thinking or decision making whereas the liking is based on emotions and feelings evoked in the tourist by the destination features (Baloglu & Brinberg 1997; Walmsley & Young 1998; Baloglu & McCleary 1999). But the later studies do conclude that both cognitive and affective image explain the destination image better than just the physical attributes of the destination (Baloglu & Brinberg 1997; Walmsley & Young 1998; Hosany, Ekinci & Uysal 2007; Martin & Rodriguez del Bosque 2008; Guzman et al 2012).

The conative component is the third component, which is the intent or action component (Pike 2004). Conation can be understood as the probability of the visit to a destination within certain time period. This is equivalent to the intentions to visit. The explanation provided by Pike (2004) can be shown graphically through the following Figure 1.

Figure 1: **Relationship between Cognition, Affection and Conation**



Source: Adapted from Pike (2004)

The explanation provided by Pike (2004) is quite logical and testable but it still leaves the dilemma of use of destination image as a single variable or as a set of variables.

Destination image research is the most explored topic in the tourism research. Still, there is no unanimity in the classification and the measurement. There are researches, which talk about destination personality. It means that destinations can have personality traits like individuals (Hosany, Ekinci & Uysal 2007). The research question is whether it is possible to have multiple images of a destination and what is the ideal number of attributes of the destination image. It has been admitted that the destination image is a complex and multidimensional concept (Echtner & Ritchie 1991). It remains to be seen whether it is possible to evolve a measurement scale on the lines of scales developed in service quality research.

The research gap regarding the definition and the measurement of the destination image is still wide open. The determinants and impact of destination image study will be meaningful only after an acceptable measurement. It is critical to measure, accurately, the destination image variable so that it can be linked to other variables in the same manner across the studies.

2. MOTIVATION THEORY OF DESTINATION IMAGE

It would have been safe to presume that a variable which is so complex to define and measure would have equally complex explanation. But it appears that most of the research so far is not really concerned. The researchers have been more concerned with using destination image to explain tourist behaviour, the loyalties, satisfaction and so on rather than finding out what influences the destination image.

The number of studies where destination image is taken as a dependent variable are limited (Lopes 2011), maybe due to the trust in capability of the motivation theory to explain. It was assumed that the tourist motivation is the only factor that determines the destination image. It is a hypothesis worth testing again. The fact that the destination image has been used mostly as an independent variable even in recent literature can be seen in the Table 4.

Table 4: The recent research on Destination image (DI)

Authors	DI Definition & Measures	DI Usage in Hypotheses Tested
Bigne, Sanchez, & Sanchez (2001)	Multiple attributes from Echtner & Ritchie, 1991	DV – Loyalty (Return, Recommendation) IV – Destination Image MV – Perceived Quality, tourist satisfaction
Chen & Tsai (2007)	Destination brand-5, Entertainment -4, Nature and Culture -3, Sun and Sand -2	DV- Behavioral intentions (word-of-mouth, Revisit) IV- Destination Image MV – Perceived Value, Perceived Quality
Martin & Rodriguez del Bosque (2008)	Cognitive image-18, Affective Image-4	DV- Loyalty MV- Expectation, Satisfaction IV – Destination Image
Prayag (2009)	25 attributes from various sources	IV – Destination Image, satisfaction MV- Overall Destination Image DV- Behavioral Intentions

Authors	DI Definition & Measures	DI Usage in Hypotheses Tested
Rodriguez del Bosque, Martin, Collado, & Salmones (2009)	22 attributes in 5 groups – infrastructure, atmosphere, natural-cultural environment, affective image	DV-Tourist expectations IV- word-of-mouth, Destination Image, Past Experience, Information on Destination
Chen & Phou (2013)	Destination Brand-4, Atmosphere-3, Cultural Environment-3, Natural Environment-3, Entertainment-3	Stage I (Cognitive Knowledge) MV- Destination Satisfaction, Destination Trust IV- Destination Image, Destination Personality Stage II (Affective Outcomes) DV— Destination Attachment Stage III (Behavioral/ Conative Outcomes) DV- Destination Loyalty
Kim, Holland & Han (2013)	Destination atmosphere-6, Travel information-3, Travel environment-4, Shopping-3, Community attitude-3	DV-Satisfaction, Loyalty IV-Destination Image MV- Perceived Service Quality, Perceived Value

Source: Literature review

Note: The abbreviations used are DV (dependent variable), IV (independent variable) and MV (moderating/mediating variable)

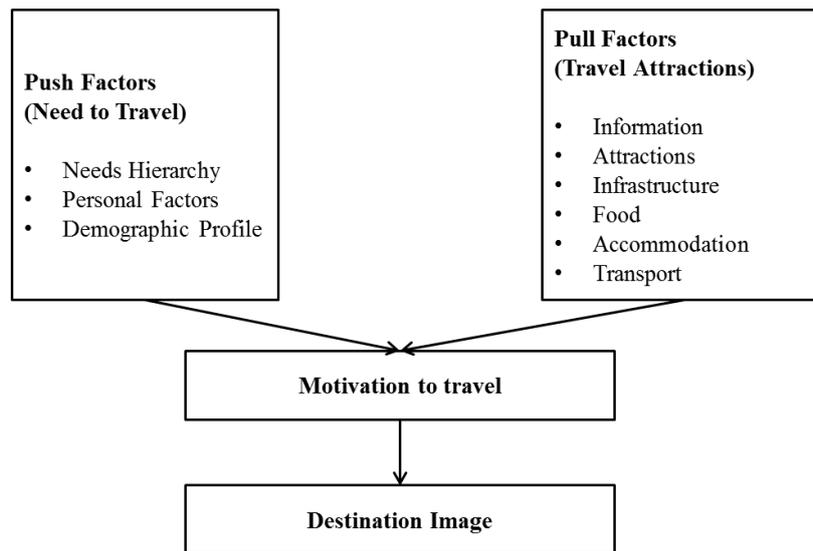
Dichter (1985) compared image with musical symphony which is the sum total of the work of music composer, conductor and various musicians playing various musical instruments. In similar lines, Echtner & Richie (1991) explained that it is not a single source that is responsible for the formation of destination image but several like media, references, friends and associations. Also, it is possible to form an image even though the tourist may not have visited the destination. In short, all kinds of education, historical information, political news, and other sources of information received by the tourist is responsible for the image building.

However, there are a few empirical studies trying to find determinants of the destination image (Baloglu & McCleary 1999; Beerli & Martin 2004). In these studies, it has been recognized that the two main antecedents of destination image are characteristics of tourists or the internal motivation of the tourists and the stimulus factors or the external motivation such as information sources, previous experience or opinions of the family and friends (Baloglu & McCleary 1999; Martin & Rodriguez del Bosque 2008).

This view originates from the motivation theories (Lopes 2011). Motivation is the driving force behind behavior or behavioral intentions (Mayo & Jarvis 1981). The internal needs create a tension or discomfort level in the mind and body of an individual, who tries to act to satisfy these needs to reduce the tension (Chen, Bao & Huang 2014). A majority of studies that emphasize the important of tourists' motivation based on the concept of push motivation (psychological needs) and pull motivation (attraction of the destination) in choosing vacation destination choices have been generally accepted (Kim, Holland & Han 2013).

The motivation theory is summarized by the Figure 2, which is adapted from Lubbe (1998) and Lopes (2011).

Figure 2: **Internal and External Motivation as push and pull factors.**



Source: Adapted from Lubbe (1998) and Lopes (2011)

A wide acceptance of the motivation theory is due to its convenience from marketing point of view. The type of motivation, especially, the internal motivation can be used to segment the tourists and, consequently, more customized marketing campaigns can be designed to attract the tourists.

Therefore, the travel motives can be further classified (Van der Merwe, Slabbert, & Saayman 2011) into:

- a. Leisure travel motives
- b. Events or festival travel motives
- c. Shopping travel motives;
- d. Relaxation travel motives; and
- e. Nature or heritage travel motives

These motivations are the push motivations, which are used for classification of travelers and are linked with the kind of images that are formed. According to Chon (1991), the construction of primary destination images based on push factors associated with the destination relates to the Maslow's hierarchy of needs. In comparison, the pull factors are described as the attractiveness of a region and its various elements and help formation of the destination image. Most tourism studies agree that at the pre-visit stage, motivation plays a major role in determining tourists' decisions regarding when, where and what type of tourism to pursue (Pizam & Milman 1993).

3. BEYOND THE MOTIVATION THEORY OF DESTINATION IMAGE

Although Chon refers to the co-existence of the 'push' and 'pull' factors in the construction of a primary image, he does not state that specific 'push' factors are linked with specific 'pull' factors, or that an organic, induced or secondary image must be present before a primary image can be constructed, and thus it remains a complex set of associations which is not easily explained. This is actually the research gap which has not been bridged by later studies (Goosens 2000; Lopes 2011; Kluin & Lehto 2012; Chen, Bao & Huang 2014). The 'pull factors' fall into three categories:

1. Static factors, which include the natural landscape, the climate, historical and cultural attractions;
2. The dynamic factors, which include accommodation, catering, entertainment, access, political conditions and trends in tourism; and
3. The current decision factors, which include the marketing of the region and prices in the destination, as well as in the country of the origin.

The influence of each of the static, the dynamic and the current pull factors could be different. The gap in theory is that there has been no effort to segregate the external motivation resulting from the destination marketing from the destination attributes. Research does not separate out the effect of destination marketing from the motivation from destination attractions.

Destination attributes are essential to the tourism industry and tourist's decision process as they often are the reason to visiting a particular place or a destination (Goh 2012; Solnet et al 2014). However, this is also a fact that destination attributes in absence of advertising or marketing may not be able to attract tourists. The destination marketing, which Gartner (1993) called overt inducement or first level change from organic image to induced image, is an essential part of the destination image formation process. The essential impact of marketing is that it makes the information available to the tourists, primarily, to arouse the specific needs of the tourists.

With the progress of digital world, so much information is available to the tourists that it is safe to presume that the tourists should be wanting to validate or confirm the information. The marketing talks about the existence of an influencer. Word of mouth (WOM) from the influencers, in the form of interpersonal communication, who are the people tourists trust could exercise a strong influence. WOM may be positive or negative. A positive WOM can create a favorable image whereas the negative WOM can have damaging effects on the destination image and the intentions to visit (Zhang, Zhang & Law 2014). The studies have shown that WOM received before making a purchase can enhance or reduce perceived trust and perceived risk (Lu, Wu & Chen 2016). In the context of rising popularity of social networking, the importance of WOM becomes larger (Kim & Hardin 2010). A study of US student travelers to Europe showed that social motivation was the the most powerful factor to influence destination image (Nyaupane, Paris & Teye 2011).

Another drawback is that antecedents based on motivation theory have undergone change in the recent times. After the terrorist attack in America on September 11, 2001, the world has changed, especially the tourism and aviation industries. The 2004 train

bombing in Spain, the July 22, 2011 attack in Norway on the summer camp travelers and many such events have prompted researchers to consider perceived travel risks as one on the key variables in the tourism research (Wolff & Larsen 2014). The risk perception is considered seriously (Floyd & Gray 2004). The Malaysian tourism industry has been affected by the very recent MH370 (8th March, 2014) and MH17 (17th July, 2014) tragedies.

In a survey of 500 international tourists Sonmez and Graefe (1998) found that perception of the risk associated with travel or avoidance of a particular destination was a good predictor of destination image compared to the intentions to visit one. Attempt has been made to measure the perception of risks like health, political instability, war, terrorism, food, religion based intolerance, cross cultural differences and crimes among tourists classified under gender, travel experience and tourist role categories (Lepp & Gibson 2003). It is important to distinguish constraints from the perception of risk, though the effect might be same (Chen, Chen & Okumus 2013).

In the tourism sector, many scholars suggest three to seven risk dimensions including physical risk, psychological risk, financial risk, social risk, time risk, equipment risk and satisfaction risk. Furthermore, many previous studies focused on a particular detail dimension such as terrorism, political instability, crime, pollution, health concerns and so on (Ching Wang et al 2010). The impact of the risk perception on the destination image needs further empirical studies.

4. NEW FRAMEWORK TO STUDY DESTINATION IMAGE

In conclusion, a checklist of the antecedents based on motivational model should be enhanced considering changes in technologies including social networking and considering the increase in terrorist activities to include WOM and risk perceptions. In nutshell, the identified antecedents of destination image identified could be:

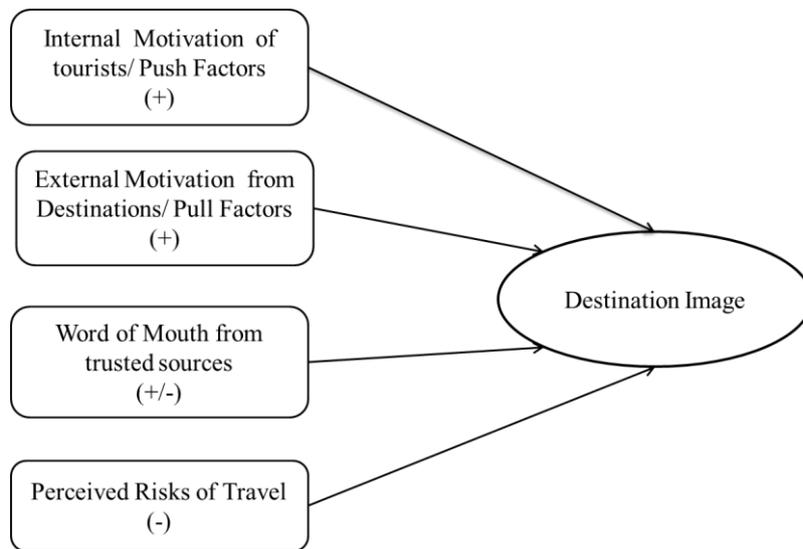
1. External motivation in terms of commercial information
2. Internal motivation inherent in the personality of tourists
3. Word of mouth from family, relatives and social networks
4. Risk perception profile of the destination

It is important to validate the antecedents of the destination image because it is well accepted by the researchers and practitioners of tourism that the destination image plays a crucial role in decision making leading to the choice of destination (Kim, Hallab & Kim 2012). The research question is whether motivation alone can explain the variation in destination image. The roles of perceived risks of travel and word of mouth need to be ascertained along with the role of motivation. Therefore, the research questions are:

1. How strong is the impact of internal motivation (needs) of the tourists on their image?
2. How strong is the impact of external motivation (marketing and advertising) on the destination image?
3. How strong is the impact of WOM on the destination image?
4. How much is the impact of risk perception of the tourist on the destination image?

The research questions mentioned above can be converted in to four testable hypotheses, as shown in the Figure 3.

Figure 3: **Suggested Framework for Destination Image Research**



H1: *Stronger internal motivation of the tourists will have a positive impact on the destination image.*

It is hypothesized that stronger the internal needs, stronger will be the internal motivation. It is presumed that the tourist who is in an urgent need of thrill seeking would have a stronger motivation to seek destinations offering adventures. A tourist with stronger internal motivation is likely to have a more positive destination image.

H2: *Stronger external motivation of the tourists will have a positive impact on the destination image.*

The H2 attempts to test the hypothesis that a stronger external motivation due to good marketing will have a positive influence on the destination image.

H3: *Word of mouth has strong linear influence on destination image. A positive word of mouth will have a positive impact on destination image whereas a negative word of mouth will have a negative impact on destination image.*

The H3 signifies that opinions of friends, relatives and the people tourists trust, in form of word of mouth, could change the direction of destination image.

H4: *Perceived risks of travel have negative impact on the destination image.*

The H4 attempts to test the hypothesis that a perception of the risks involved in foreign destinations could have a negative impact on destination image. The risk perception has not been studied well even though world is affected by incidents like September 11, 2001 incident.

CONCLUSION

Image of a product or service is an important factor in the selection choices related to a product, service, place or a person. Therefore, in the context of tourism, the destination image is a very important factor in the choice of destinations by the tourists. The destination image is one of the most explored topics in tourism research despite path breaking work by likes of Hunt (1975), Dichter (1985), Echtner and Richie (1991) and Pike (2002). This paper has critically reviewed the literature on the definition, measurements and antecedents of destination image. The conclusion is that there is need to find standardised definition, measurements and a comprehensive explanation of destination image formation beyond the motivation theory. In absence of a unique definition and measurement, researchers seem to have taken refuge in the motivation theory and went ahead with using destination image to explain a host of other things like behavior, intentions, satisfaction, and so on. This paper also suggested a conceptual framework to test the significance of various individual factors in the image formulation. Based on the literature review, this paper proposes a framework to test the strength of relationship between the destination image and the antecedents such as internal motivation of the tourists, external motivation in the form of marketing information, word-of-mouth and perceived risks of travel.

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Please cite this article as: Madden, K., Rashid, B., Zainol, N.A. (2016), Beyond the motivation theory of destination image, Tourism and Hospitality Management, Vol. 22, No. 2, pp. 247-264, <https://doi.org/10.20867/thm.22.2.1>



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