

Impact of Cognitive and Affective Image on Tourists' Travel Motivation

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Abstract

This empirical research paper was an extract from a major research work on understanding the image and personality of a destination. The research was conducted in Coimbatore – a potential and competing destination in Tamil Nadu, India between 2018 and 2019. Burgeoning global competition, emerging tourism-based business avenues, elevating foreign direct investments were the fundamental motives for this research. The objective of this research was to identify and validate a tourist motivation model inculcating the primitive factors such as destination image (cognitive and affective) and tourists' motives to travel. Literature review found that perceived cognitive and affective image had a significant impact on the tourists' travel motivation. Thus, these three factors were modeled conceptually. To validate the model, a structured questionnaire containing the necessary constructs measuring the required responses was floated to 570 tourists who visited the destination. However, the sample size was fixed to 448 after excluding the improper responses. Structural equation modeling was employed using SPSS AMOS software to validate the model hypothetically. The model fit was identified, and this study confirmed that both Cognitive Image and Affective Image had a significant impact on Tourists' Travel Motivation. Destination marketers are suggested to formulate marketing strategies that induce the existing belief about the destination in tourists' minds and experience being gained in the destination because belief and experience are related to motivation. Researchers are suggested to use this model as a base for further research by inculcating other constructs measuring the image aspects of the destination.

Keywords : destination, branding, tourists, motivation, cognitive image, affective image

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Being one of the world's largest economic sectors, the Indian tourism industry is at the upper crust, expecting 30.5 million tourists by 2028. Destination branding, though is an evolving colossal concept across the world, is the critical strategy to compete in the global market as it differentiates one destination from another and formulates the identity of the destinations in tourists' perceptions. Destination branding, being a strategic process, helps the countries in boosting their local economies, increasing foreign direct investments, and conceiving new business avenues, etc. In this context, academic research paves the way for marketers, governments, and other stakeholders to strategize branding their destinations by providing insights through the research findings. Numerous studies have been conducted in this arena (Kim & Lee, 2015) and benefitted the stakeholders on marketing, (re) branding, promoting, and sustaining the destinations in the global tourism market. Though there has been extensive research on destinations' brand image, destinations' brand personality (Chen & Phou, 2013), tourists' destination choice behavior (Byon & Zhang, 2010), and other determinants of branding destinations, the primary focus of effective branding has been on tourists' motivation to tour a destination (Tkaczynski, Rundle - Thiele, & Beaumont, 2009). This research paper is an extract from a major research work

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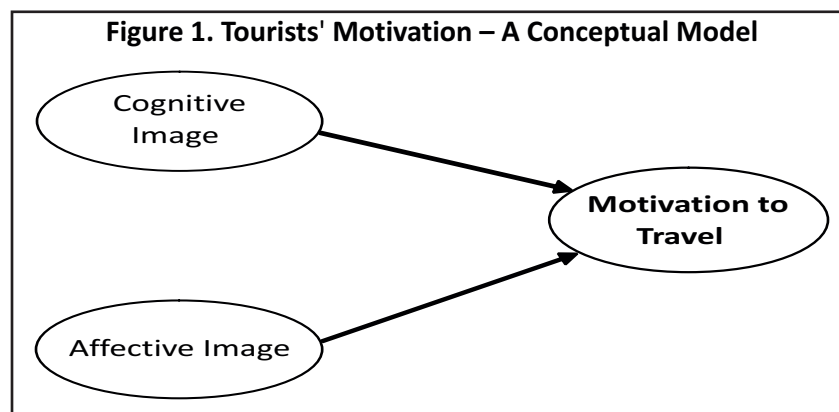
carried out in the arena of destination branding and focuses on identifying and validating a model on how the cognitive image and affective image as the influencing factors motivate tourists to tour a destination.

Review of Literature

This study primarily focuses on the relationship between the two predominant factors such as, destination image (cognitive and affective) and tourists' motivation. Cognitive image has been one of the most sought-after aspects of destination image, but an understanding of holistic image would not be complete without the affective aspect (Walmsley & Young, 1998). However, tourists' motivation has also been considered as the most pertinent factor in branding destinations (Dolnicar, Crouch, & Long, 2008). The following review supports the objective of this research work with extensive findings and conceptualization.

Being a highly researched arena in tourism marketing, destination image has been considered as the most influencing force for understanding the tourists' motivation and decision-making process (Beerli & Martin, 2004). Destination image was defined as the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination (Bigné, Sánchez, & Sánchez, 2001) that consists of cognitive and affective evaluation. Cognitive image means to describe the basic belief about a destination in tourists' perceptions (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996) and is considered as the most studied factor in tourism research than the affective image (Hosany, Ekinici, & Uysal, 2006). Affective image means to describe the image, feelings, or impressions being formed during the stay in the destinations (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). However, research studies have revealed that cognitive image stays longer in tourists' mind than the affective image. Attributes such as quality of experience, attractions, environment, intensity such as shopping, spiritual, and religious, etc. were considered relevant in understanding cognitive image ; whereas, attributes such as physical atmosphere, accessibility, and experience were considered for affective evaluation (Shankar, 2019b). Research findings of a study conducted on understanding a country's image stated that perception of these attributes about the destinations differed from tourists to tourists (Nadeau, Heslop, O'Reilly, & Luk, 2008). Also, tourism attributes were found to be significant in tourists' revisiting intention (Bandaru & Venkateshwarlu, 2020). In marketing terms, consumers' socio-demographic characteristics were found to be impactful on their behavior (Kumar & Kaushal, 2019) and this would apply to tourists' behavior eventually. Tourists of distinct socio-demographics perceived these cognitive attributes differently (Beerli & Martin, 2004 ; Baloglu & Love, 2005). One of the recent research studies by Shankar (2019b) found that the images perceived in tourists' perceptions tend to differ based on their socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, age categories, education, occupation, monthly income, marital status, and nationality. In most of the research and marketing cases, cognitive image was considered as the jolting factor in branding the destinations because belief had been considered as a complex and time-consuming factor in its formation process.

Despite the demographic characteristics, perhaps, information sources and types also impacted the cognitive beliefs (Kladou & Mavragani, 2015). Further, studies revealed that the image aspects in the tourists' perception significantly impacted the tourists' motivation to tour the destination (Tasci & Gartner, 2007). Motivation, in simple terms, is defined as the inducement for a particular behavior (Hawkins, Mothersbaugh, & Best, 2007). Tourists' motivation would also be classified as socio-psychological factors. For example, it was found that tourists tour for exploring new places and environments (Kale & Weir, 1986) ; new cultures, traditions, and lifestyles (Chaudhary, 2000) ; prestige (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2007) ; relaxation, experiencing new climate, meet people, and gurus (McNamara & Prideaux, 2010). Tourists' motivation was also classified based on their need to relax, leisure, participate in festivals & events, shop for peculiar products, enjoy country-based services, explore nature, heritage, & places, etc. (Van der Merwe, Slabbert, & Saayman, 2011). In spite of psychological and generic aspects, tourists' motivations were broadly viewed at two different levels (Klenosky, 2002) and those were push factors and pull factors (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996). Push factors were identified as internal forces, which



influence tourists to travel, and these forces were found to be associated and characterized with the cognitive image (Kim & Lee, 2002 ; Klenosky, 2002). Contrastingly, pull factors examined the external forces which impact the tourists' intention and attitude towards a destination (Cha, Mccleary, & Uysal, 1995) and were significant with the affective image.

Tourists' motivation has been contemplated as an imperative factor for marketers in understanding the tourists' perceptions, decision making processes and satisfaction, and thus, would help in strategizing the tourists' market offerings (Park & Yoon, 2009 ; Tkaczynski et al., 2009). Factually, researchers found that tourists' interest and motivation to travel started from the existence of image about the destinations (Jang & Wu, 2006). On the other hand, evidence from the literature, though limited in number, found that experiencing the destinations' features & attractions impacted their motivation to revisit a destination (Chen & Tsai, 2007).

Thus, the literature strongly supports for the creation of tourists' motivation model where the cognitive image and affective image are the primitive factors. Hence, the model depicted in Figure 1 has been formed conceptually and the hypotheses have been framed.

Hypotheses

- **H1**: Cognitive image significantly influences tourists' motivation.
- **H2**: Affective image significantly influences tourists' motivation.

Research Methodology

The research was conducted in Coimbatore District (a potential destination consisting of various tourists attractions) in Tamil Nadu, India and the duration of the research was from November 2018 – May 2019. Empirical approach was used in this research. Since the research is based on tourists' insights, the data were amassed through a structured questionnaire which was floated to 570 tourists. The sampling unit consisted of tourists who visited the destinations in Coimbatore and the sample size was rounded to 448 after excluding the improper responses. Convenient sampling technique was adopted. Including the socio-demographic enquiry such as gender, age, education, occupation, monthly income, marital status, and nationality, the questionnaire contained three major factors, that is, Cognitive Image, Affective Image, and Tourists' Motivation.

- **Cognitive Image** : Quality of experience (7 constructs), attractions (2 constructs), value (1 construct), environment (2 constructs), and intensity (4 constructs).

↳ **Affective Image** : Experience (4 constructs), physical atmosphere (4 constructs), and accessibility (4 constructs).

↳ **Tourists' Motivation** : Relaxation/escape (6 constructs), excitement/adventure (2 constructs), knowledge (3 constructs), social (4 constructs), and prestige (2 constructs).

Cognitive Image and Tourists' Motivation were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ; whereas, Affective Image was measured on a 5-point semantic differential scale ; .832, .862, and .839 were the reliability values of Cognitive Image, Affective Image, and Tourists' Motivation scale, respectively and were found to be highly consistent.

Since this study primarily aims at identifying and validating the model, and attempts to find the structural relationship between the factors, exploratory factor analysis (for data reduction), confirmatory factor analysis (to confirm the existence of the model in each factor), and structural equation modelling (to prove the model hypothetically and validate it) have been employed using SPSS AMOS.

Analysis and Results

Since the primary object of this research is to validate the conceptual model and understand the relationship, the three stage analysis method has been employed. However, the descriptive analysis for understanding the tourists' socio - demographic characteristics has also been executed.

(1) Descriptive Analysis : Among the tourists who participated in this study, the highest percentage (53.3%) of the tourists were male ; whereas, 46.7% of the tourists were female respondents. In terms of their age categories, 42% of the respondents fell under the age category between 25 – 34 years ; 29.9% and 24.1% of the tourists belonged to the age categories of 16 – 24 years and 35 – 44 years, respectively. Pointing to their educational profile, the highest percentage of tourists (34.2%) were postgraduates and the second highest percentage (22.8%) were undergraduates. On analyzing their occupation profile, the highest percentage of the respondents (44.2%) were private sector employees and 21.7% were government employees. According to their nationality, 63.6% were Indians ; whereas, 36.4% were nationals from other countries. Considering their income levels, the highest percentage (26.3%) of the respondents earned more than ₹ 65,000 per month (Indian) and more than \$4,000 per month (foreigner) and the next highest percentage of respondents (22.1%) earned between ₹ 51,000 – ₹ 65,000 (Indians) and \$ 3,001 – \$4,000 (foreigner). Also, 52% of the tourists were married and 48% were unmarried.

(2) Model Validation : The model validation is a three - step process which involves exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modeling.

↳ **Step 1 : Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)** : The first step is the data reduction process which facilitates to create the new factor variables for further analysis. Though the model has been diagnosed from the literature, the constructs measuring those factors of the model have not been found as there are variant results from numerous research studies on producing a model for destination image. Thus, EFA has been performed for Cognitive Image, Affective Image, and Tourists' Motivation.

Findings from the EFA using varimax with Kaiser normalization rotation have provided the factored variables for further factor-based models. From Table 1, among the 17 constructs, the highest loading constructs such as good infrastructure, appealing local food, spiritual destination, and adventure/fun with loaded values of 0.817, 0.835, 0.760, and 0.758, respectively have been grouped and named as Cognitive Image for further steps. Similarly, from Table 2, among the 16 constructs measuring the Affective Image, high loading constructs such as

Table 1. EFA – Factor Loadings of Cognitive Image

Cognitive Image	Loadings
Adventure / Fun	.758
Good climate	.753
Beautiful scenery and natural attractions	.729
Good nightlife and entertainment	.541
Good infrastructure	.817
Standard hygiene and cleanliness	.739
Offers personal safety	.664
Spiritual destination	.760
Religious destination	.740
Cultural / Historical attractions	.577
Appealing local food	.835
Suitable accommodations	.734
Interesting and friendly people	.744
Shopping destination	.740
Low cost city	.756
Good value for money	.725
Unspoiled / unpolluted environment	.512

Table 2. EFA – Factor Loadings of Affective Image

Affective Image	Loadings
Sparse	.799
Quiet	.797
Innocent	.718
Arousing	.681
Relaxing	.769
Pretty	.766
Pleasant	.757
Exciting	.618
Easily Accessible	.764
Friendly	.732
Interesting	.575
Lively	.573

Table 3. EFA – Factor Loadings of Tourists' Motivation

Travel Motivation	Loadings
Relieving stress and tension	.602
Getting away from routine life	.597
Getting away from crowds	.570
To enjoy shopping with friends / family / others	.662
To experience peace and harmony	.823
Explore new culture and people	.587

Adventure, entertainment, and fun	.912
Exploring new night life	.728
Experience new weather	.894
Learning new things	.709
To add knowledge about new places	.565
Meeting people with similar interest	.821
Developing close relationships	.829
To meet gurus and spiritual leaders	.423
Acquaint with new community	.667
Go to places where friends have not been	.930
Tell friends about the trip	.915

sparse, quiet, relaxing, and pretty with the values of 0.799, 0.797, 0.769, and 0.766, respectively have been grouped and named as Affective Image. Based on the results of Table 3, among the 16 motivation variables, the high loading constructs such as going to places where friends have not been ; tell friends about the trip ; adventure, entertainment, & fun ; and exploring new weather with the values of 0.930, 0.915, 0.912, and 0.894, respectively have been collated and named as Tourists' Motivation. The new modulated factors are re-formed and grouped by excluding the variables which have the lowest loadings for the purpose of clear picturization.

➤ **Step 2 : Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)** : This step involves a multivariate technique which confirms the measurement model. CFA is used to test the relationship between observed variables and latent constructs. The analysis uses some components' value to assess the fitness of all the measurement models and those are absolute model fit, incremental model fit, and parsimonious model fit indices. The acceptable values of those components have been listed in Table 4.

Absolute model fit indices consist of root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and goodness of fit index (GFI). Incremental model fit consists of adjusted goodness of fit (AGFI), comparative fit index (CFI), Trucker – Lewis index (TLI), and normed fit index (NFI). Parsimonious fit indices consist of chi - square value divided by degrees of freedom (CMIN/df). These fit indices are important not only for the CFA, but also for structural equation modeling. However, the analysis is claimed to be valid when the outcome values are met (Kenny & McCoach, 2003).

Based on Step 1, CFA has been carried out for the three factors such as Tourists' Motivation (TM), Cognitive Image (CI), and Affective Image (AI). From Table 5, it has been found that the values of RMSEA, GFI, AGFI, CFI,

Table 4. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) – Acceptable Values

Components	Acceptable Values	Authors
RMSEA	less than 0.08	Browne & Cudeck (1993)
GFI	Close to 1	Byrne (1994)
AGFI	Close to 1	Tabachnick, Fidell, & Ullman (2007)
CFI	Close to 1	Byrne (1994)
NFI	Close to 1	Byrne (1994)
TLI	Close to 1	Marsh, Balla, & McDonald (1988)
CMIN/df	Less than 5	Schumacker & Lomax (2004)

Table 5. CFA Results for Cognitive Image, Affective Image, and Tourists' Motivation

Components	CI	AI	TM	Acceptable or Non-Acceptable
RMSEA	.000	.000	.000	Acceptable
GFI	.999	.999	.999	Acceptable
AGFI	.993	.989	.993	Acceptable
CFI	1.000	1.000	1.000	Acceptable
NFI	.981	.996	.999	Acceptable
TLI	1.000	1.000	1.000	Acceptable
CMIN/df	.587	.974	.605	Acceptable

Note. CI – Cognitive Image, AI – Affective Image, TM – Tourists' Motivation

NFI, TLI, and CMIN/df of CI, AI, and TM are acceptable. Hence, a model exists in each factor which qualifies for the further SEM analysis.

The factors were derived based on the iterations done through modification indices and reliability values. The CFA models on these factors have perfect absolute, incremental, and parsimonious fit. Covariances were drawn to make the models fit.

↳ **Step 3 : Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) :** SEM is used to test the hypothetical structural relationship between factors which have been framed based on the literature (identified conceptual model). Since the primary objective of this study is to identify and validate a model on Tourists' Motivation, inculcating the destination image (Cognitive and Affective) aspects, the structural relationship between these factors have been identified. Based on the iterations performed in CFA and reliability values, some variables in the factors have been funneled down by removing some constructs. Cognitive Image constructs such as spiritual destination and adventure/fun, Affective Image constructs such as relaxing and pretty, and motivation constructs such as adventure, entertainment, & fun, and exploring new weather have been removed for SEM as they impact the reliability and model fit values.

However, the constructs such as 'going to places where friends have not been' and 'tell friends about the trip' have been considered for the final modelling. Both these construct statements measure the prestige aspect of motivation. Constructs such as 'good infrastructure' and 'appealing local food' which measure the quality of experience aspects of the existing belief have been considered as the variables of Cognitive Image. Also, Affective

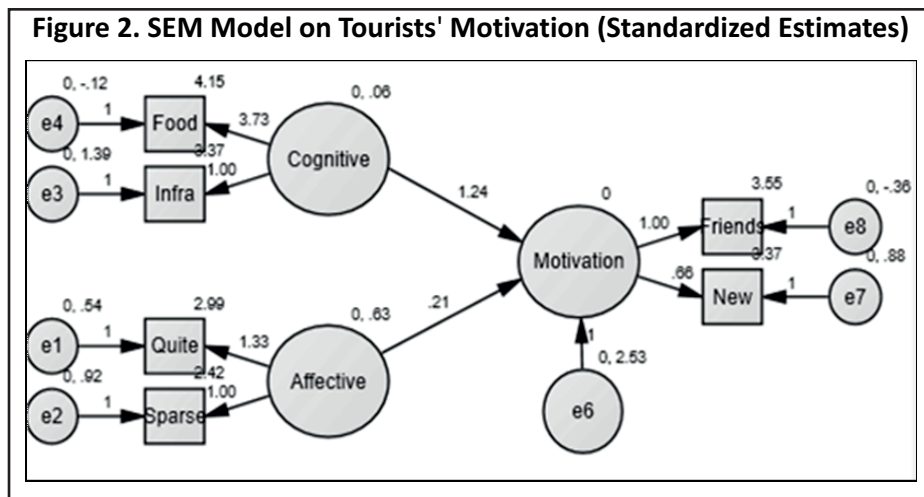


Image constructs such as quiet and sparse environment have been placed as the variables measuring the tourists' motivation. These factors have been structurally related and found to be valid. The proven hypothetical model has been depicted in Figure 2. The model has been validated as the model fit values are RMSEA : 0.76, GFI : 0.954, AGFI : 0.961, CFI : 0.966, NFI : 0.956, TLI : 0.926, and CMIN/df : 4.321. Hence, the model has perfect absolute, incremental, and parsimonious model fit. In terms of the structural relationship, Cognitive Image and Affective Image significantly impact the Tourists' Motivation as the p - values are less than 0.05, and hence, H1 and H2 are accepted.

Managerial Implications

This research work has proven that the existing beliefs about destinations and the experience acquired in the destination have significant influence on tourists' motivation to tour or revisit the destinations. This finding supports the research outcome of Chen and Tsai (2007). However, this study has modelled the structural relationship between the factors, that is, destination image (cognitive and affective) and tourists' motivation. It is decisive for the destination marketers to understand the factors that influence the belief aspects of tourists because formation of beliefs in consumers' mind is complex. However, the belief formation process could be formulated by lucrative and interesting branding and advertising strategies, respectively. Brand elements on tourism aspects such as brand logo, brand mantra, sonic branding, and projecting these elements with destination attributes through creative advertising would impact the tourists' belief formation process positively. Also, it is critical for the other stakeholders than destination marketers to enhance their tourists' experience in the destinations. Pleasant or unpleasant experiences acquired in the destinations would significantly impact the tourists' motivation or revisiting intention. The stakeholders include residents, travel agencies, tourism-based business avenues, governments, other bodies, and entities that directly or indirectly affect the tourists' affective behavior. Hence, to accumulate tourist inflow, increase the investments, generate revenues, and open new entrepreneurial avenues, the primary focus of thereof is to understand their market's (tourists') perception – the image perceived about the destinations and motivation to tour the destinations and the model found and validated facilitates in performing such processes.

Conclusion

Though this research is a model foundation and validation study, the outcomes have compelling effect on the branding process. Also, the study has indicated the marketers' pre-requisite to understand their target tourists' motivation, perception, decision making behavior, and attitude toward the destinations. This enumerates the marketers with exploring opportunities to (re) brand and position their destinations in the global competitive arena (Shankar, 2019a) so as to attract tourist inflow. Also, upscaling of further research outcomes facilitates the policy makers and government entities on positing and directing their destinations (Ramakrishna, 2011). As the major findings, the study enumerates that existing beliefs about destinations and the experience gained during the stay in the destination impacts tourists' motivation to visit a destination and influence tourists' post tour experience such as spreading positive word of mouth. With the evolving competitive outset, it is imperative for the marketers in addressing the global tourists' motives by delivering the bestowed tourism attributes, and the model executed in this research would help in conceiving a sound marketing strategy to capture the global tourism market.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Further Research

This study was conducted in a district in Tamil Nadu, India. However, application of the same conceptual model on other destinations may have different results. Also, the results attained from the analysis were restricted to the

sample size of 448 respondents, and thus, the results tend to be distinct if the sample size revamps. The final model executed consists of constructs that were derived from the iterations through EFA and CFA. Hence, the reliability values of constructs may differ when the research is conducted in different geographical locations and based on tourists' responses. Since there is no clear definition on the list of constructs measuring the factors such as destination image and motivation, this paves the scope for further studies in this area. In spite of many models being found and validated, the tourism arena requires colossal evidence from offbeat perspectives for industry betterment.

Author's Contribution

This research work has been solely executed by Dr. Sabari Shankar R. The ideation of the topic, data collection, analysis, and written aspects have been solely carried out by the author.

Conflict of Interest

The author certifies that he has no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest, or non-financial interest in the subject matter, or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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