

The Meaning and Measurement of Destination Image

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Abstract

Although product image has long been postulated in the marketing literature to have a powerful influence in the purchasing process, it is only relatively recently that those in the tourism field have attempted to understand the role of image in the travel decision process and to measure destination images. The purpose of this paper is to examine the concept of destination image. Previous research in the field is summarised and reviewed and, in the process, the strengths and deficiencies of the methods used to define and measure destination image are assessed. As a result, suggestions for enhancing the manner in which destination image is conceptualised and measured are proposed. These suggestions have both managerial and theoretical implications.

Introduction

The unprecedented growth in the tourism industry during the last fifty years has created major challenges in tourism marketing. As more and more areas of the world are developed for tourism, the destination choices available to consumers continue to expand. Furthermore, today's consumers, facilitated by increased leisure time, rising levels of disposable income and more efficient transportation networks, have the means to choose from among this much larger variety of destinations. As a result, tourism marketers are now faced with influencing consumer decision making in an increasingly complex and competitive global marketplace.

One of the most significant marketing challenges arising from this situation is the need for an effective destination positioning strategy. In order to be successfully promoted in the targeted markets, a destination must be favourably differentiated from its competition, or positively positioned, in the minds of the consumers. A key component of this positioning process is the creation and management of a distinctive and appealing perception, or image, of the destination (Calantone, Di Benetto, Hakam & Bojanic, 1989).

The study of destination image is a relatively recent addition to the field of tourism research. However, several studies have illustrated that destination images do, indeed, influence tourist behaviour (Hunt, 1975; Pearce, 1982). In essence, the research suggests that those destinations with strong, positive images are more likely to be considered and chosen in the travel decision process (Goodrich, 1978; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). As a result, destination image has an important role in the various models of travel decision making developed to date (Schmoll, 1977; Moutinho, 1984; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). Once at the destination, satisfaction largely depends

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upon a comparison of expectations based on previously held images and the actual reality encountered at the destination (Chon, 1990).

The important role of destination image, both in terms of understanding travel behaviour and in designing effective tourism marketing strategies, underscores the need to develop methodologies to comprehensively and accurately measure this concept. To accomplish this task, tourism researchers have the benefit of accessing the methodologies which have been developed to measure product image in general. However, because of the more complicated and diverse nature of the tourism product, it may be necessary to develop more specific and more complex conceptual frameworks and methodologies in order to reliably and validly measure destination image.

Numerous studies have already been undertaken to measure the images of destinations, such as states, regions, and countries. However, to date, there has been no serious effort to critically examine this research in terms of its effectiveness in defining and measuring the concept of destination image. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to review previous destination image research with the goals of enhancing the current understanding of the concept of destination image and of designing more appropriate and rigorous techniques for its measurement. The term 'destination', in the context of this review, is limited to the study of large entities, such as countries, regions and major cities, rather than individual attractions or resorts.

The discussion which follows identifies some of the more important concerns with respect to the present knowledge base on destination image measurement. Three major topics are covered. First, the literature concerning

the process of destination image formation is summarised. Second, the existing definitions, or conceptualisations, of destination image are presented and discussed. Finally, the methodologies used to measure, or operationalise, destination image are examined. As a result of these overviews, several issues in the conceptualisation and measurement of destination image are identified.

The review of the literature is limited primarily to empirical studies in tourism which relate to destination image. It is recognised, however, that significant study of image has been undertaken. In several other disciplines, including psychology, environmental planning, marketing and geography (for example, Downs & Stea, 1977; Saarinen, 1976; Ashworth & Goodall, 1988; Lynch, 1960). While a complete review of these extensive bodies of literature is beyond the scope of this paper, certain pertinent findings related to imagery and product image from these fields are outlined in order to understand the fundamental concepts and basic issues of image definition and measurement.

The process of destination image formation

The formation of image has been described by Reynolds (1965) as the development of a mental construct based upon a few impressions chosen from a flood of information. In the case of destination image, this 'flood of information' has many sources including promotional literature (travel brochures, posters), the opinions of others (family/friends, travel agents) and the general media (newspapers, magazines, television, books, movies). Furthermore, by actually visiting the destination, its image will be affected and modified based upon first hand information and experience.

The influence of these various

sources of information and their role in destination image formation have been put into context by Gunn (1988) in his model of the seven phases of the travel experience:

1. Accumulation of mental images about vacation experiences
2. Modification of those images by further information
3. Decision to take a vacation trip
4. Travel to the destination
5. Participation at the destination
6. Return home
7. Modification of images based on the vacation experience.

Using this model, three states of destination image formation can be identified at Phases 1, 2 and 7. In Phases 1 and 2, destination images are formed based upon secondary sources of information, whereas in Phase 7, actual first hand experience is used to modify the destination's image.

Gunn labels the destination image formed in Phase 1 an organic image. At this stage, the image is based primarily upon information assimilated from non-touristic, non-commercial sources, such as the general media (news reports, magazines, books, movies), education (school courses) and the opinions of family/friends. It is only in Phase 2 that more commercial sources of information, such as travel brochures, travel agents and travel guidebooks, are used. As a result of accessing these additional sources of information, the organic image (Phase 1) may be altered. This modified image, which occurs in Phase 2, is labelled an induced image.

It is interesting to note that for the majority of products and services, information sources are for the most part commercial. In other words, the role of the general media and school courses in formulating most product images is very limited. Destination images, however,

seem to be derived from a much wider spectrum of information sources. This is because there is a link between a country's tourist image and its national image (World Tourism Organization, 1980; Kotler, 1987). This means that the information gleaned from non-commercial sources concerning various historical, political, economic and social factors is incorporated into destination image. Therefore, the distinction between organic and induced images, as identified by Gunn, is quite unique to the formation of destination images.

In the final phase of destination image formation, Phase 7, actual experience is used to modify the destination's image. Research

indicates that as a result of visiting the destination, images tend to be more realistic, complex, and differentiated (Pearce, 1982; Murphy & Hodel, 1980; Phelps, 1986; Chon, 1987).

The process of destination image formation highlights two important points. Firstly, it suggests that individuals can have an image of a destination even if they have never visited it or even been exposed to more commercial forms of information. In designing marketing strategies, it would be useful to measure these base images. In this manner, the various strengths, weaknesses, accuracies and inaccuracies of the existing destination image could

be more effectively addressed in the design of the promotional strategy. Secondly, since there are changes in destination image before and after visitation, it is desirable to separate the images of those individuals who have visited and those who have not. This can be accomplished when measuring image by either controlling for or monitoring those individuals that have visited the destination.

The meaning and conceptualisation of destination image

Imagery, perceptions of attributes and product image

The study of destination image may be viewed as a subset of the more general field of image measurement. At the most fundamental level, image formation and measurement relate principally to the study of imagery in the field of psychology and, therefore, a brief examination of this concept is useful at this point.

Imagery has been defined by psychologists as a distinct way of processing and storing multisensory information in working memory. In essence, 'imagery processing' depends upon more holistic, or gestalt, methods of representing information. This is often described as mental picturing, although sight is not the only sensory dimension that can be incorporated into imagery processing. Imagery can include any or all of the senses - smell, taste, sight, sound and touch. This is contrasted with 'discursive processing' which is characterised by pieces of information on individual features or attributes of the stimuli rather than more holistic impressions (MacInnis & Price, 1987).

The relationship between imagery processing and consumer behaviour has been examined by MacInnis and Price (1987). They suggest that product information is likely processed using a

Table 1: Selected Definitions of Product, Store and Corporate Image

Product(Brand)

- * "The brand image consists of everything people associate with the brand" (Newman, 1957)
- * "The sum total of the impressions a consumer receives from many sources" (Herzog, 1963)
- * "An image is not individual traits or qualities but the total impression an entity makes on the minds of others" (Dichter, 1985)
- * "An abstract, subjective, multidimensional concept consisting of a person's total impressions and experience with a service or product" (Hampton *et al.*, 1987)

Store

- * "The way in which the store is defined in the shopper's mind, partly by its functional attributes and partly by an aura of psychological factors" (Martineau, 1958)
- * "A complex of meanings and relationships serving to characterize the store" (Arons, 1961)
- * "A composite of dimensions that consumers perceive as the store" (Marks, 1976)
- * "A summary of the characteristics ... and impressions of the store ... and feelings toward it" (Jain and Etgar, 1976)
- * "The perception of store attributes" (Assael, 1987)

Corporate

- * "The sum total of perceptions of the corporation's characteristics" (Spector, 1961)
- * "A commonly held mental conception of a business or product" (Stell and Fisk, 1986)

combination of discursive and imagery modes. In other words, products are perceived both in terms of individual attributes and holistic impressions. It is further proposed that both imagery and discursive information are used in evaluating the product during the consumer's decision making process. For example, MacInnis and Price suggest that the consumer may use discursive processing to evaluate product attributes and reduce the number of alternatives. Following this, holistic impressions may be used to compare the few choices that remain. However, the opposite process would seem equally likely. That is, holistic impressions may be used to reduce the number of alternatives, with the remaining choices compared using certain product attributes.

Although MacInnis and Price examine imagery processing, they do not define product image in the course of their discussion. In turning to more general marketing literature for an established definition of product image, it quickly becomes apparent that the term is mired in ambiguity. To facilitate an

examination of the many and varied ways that the term 'image' is used in marketing, some of the existing definitions of product, brand and store image are presented in Table 1. In surveying these varied definitions, it is evident that the term image is used to describe both the discursive and imagery modes of information processing - albeit rarely in the same definition. The references that are made to the perceptions of individual characteristics, dimensions and attributes of product image relate to discursive forms of information processing. On the other hand, the mention of total impressions, auras and feelings incorporate the role of imagery, or holistic conceptualisations, in describing a product's image.

Furthermore, in examining the contents of the image definitions in Table 1, it should be noted that Martineau (1958) makes a distinction between the functional and psychological components of image when considering an entity such as a retail store. Functional characteristics are defined as directly observable or measurable

(for example, prices and store layout) whereas psychological characteristics cannot be directly measured (friendliness, atmosphere). In his article "The Personality of the Retail Store", Martineau stresses that both of these components play a critical role in determining the image of a store.

While arguments can be made as to the virtues of measuring holistic impressions versus individual attributes or functional versus psychological characteristics, there is some merit in examining a conceptualisation that could more completely capture all of these components of image. In this scenario, image would consist of perceptions of individual product attributes, as well as, total, holistic impressions (that is, both discursive and imagery processing). A definition encompassing both of these components of image can be provided by adding two words to the definition proposed by Dichter (1985) - an image is not only individual traits or qualities but also the total impression an entity makes on the minds of others. Furthermore, either of these types of images could be based on the functional or the psychological characteristics of the product. A conceptualisation of image encompassing all of these components is provided in Figure 1, which uses the measurement of the image of a retail store as an example. As illustrated in the figure, the measurement of image would involve methodologies to capture perceptions of individual functional attributes (such as price levels, amount of parking), as well as psychological attributes (friendliness of staff, ease of product exchange). In addition, more holistic impressions would need to be measured. Functional holistic images are based on physical or measurable characteristics, such as a mental picture of the store front and layout. Psychological holistic images concern feelings

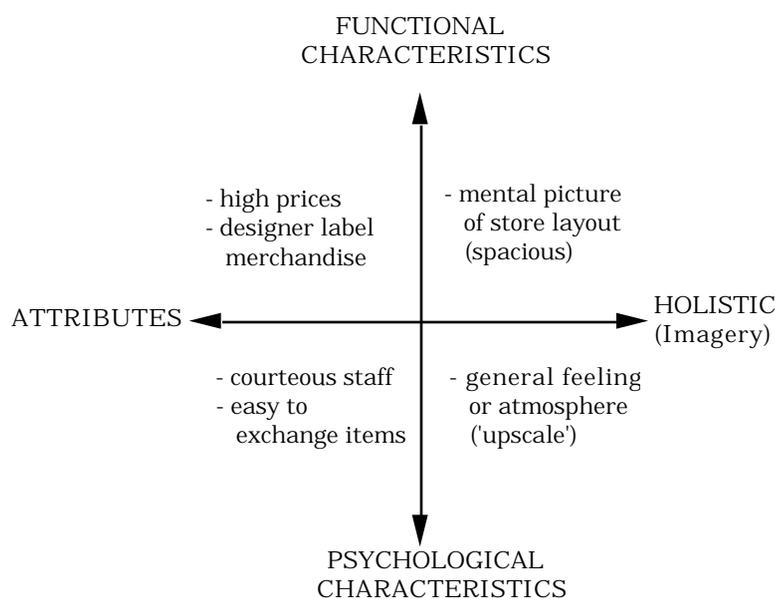


Figure 1: An illustrative example of four components of image (Retail Store)

Table 2: Definitions Used by Destination Image Researchers

Reference	Objective	Definition of Image
Hunt (1975)	To measure the images of four states; Utah, Montana, Colorado, Wyoming	"Perceptions held by potential visitors about an area"
Crompton (1977)	To measure the image of Mexico	"Organized representations of a destination in a cognitive system"
Goodrich (1977)	To measure the image of nine destinations: Florida, Hawaii, Mexico, California and five Caribbean Islands	Not defined
Crompton (1979)	To measure the image of Mexico in different States of the United States	"Sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination"
Pearce (1982)	To measure and compare the pre-travel and post-travel images of seven countries	Not defined
Haahti & Yavas (1983)	To measure the image of Finland (twelve countries included in the survey)	Not defined
Crompton & Duray (1985)	To measure the image of Texas (while testing alternative approaches to importance-performance analysis)	Not defined
Kale & Weir (1986)	To measure the image of India	Not discussed
Phelps (1986)	To measure pre-travel and post-travel images of Menorca	"Perceptions or impressions of a place"
Tourism Canada (1986-1989)	To measure the image of Canada in various major tourism generating markets	"How a country is perceived relative to others"
Gartner & Hunt (1987)	To measure the change in Utah's image over a 12 year period	"Impressions that a person ...holds about a state in which they do not reside"
Richardson & Crompton (1988)	To explore differences in images held of USA and Canada between French and English Canadians	"Perceptions of vacation attributes"
Gartner (1989)	To measure the images of four states: Utah, Montana, Colorado, Wyoming (utilising multidimensional scaling techniques)	"A complex combination of various products and associated attributes"
Calantone, <i>et al.</i> (1989)	To measure the images of eight Pacific Rim countries held by tourists from various countries of origin	"Perceptions of potential tourist destinations"
Reilly (1990)	To measure the image of Montana	"Not individual traits ... but the total impression an entity makes" (ref: Dichter)

about the overall impressions of the atmosphere or mood of the store.

While Figure 1 appears to divide the concept of image into four distinct components, it should be recognised that there are obvious overlaps between the four parts. In other words, holistic impressions are based on combinations and interactions of attributes and, in turn, the perceptions of individual attributes may be influenced by overall impressions and feelings. Furthermore, the dividing line between functional and psychological characteristics is not clear. For example, is the perceived cleanliness of a store a functional or psychological attribute? However, in order to

focus on the conceptualisation of each of the components of image, they have been presented separately in Figure 1.

Destination image

Although many researchers in the tourism field make frequent usage of the term 'destination image', a precise definition of it is often avoided. In fact, at least one tourism researcher has lamented that "... image is one of those terms that will not go away ... a term with vague and shifting meanings" (Pearce, 1988, p. 162).

A comprehensive survey of the definitions provided in the major destination image measurement studies conducted to date is given

in Table 2. Upon examination of the list, it is apparent that many of these definition are quite vague, and in several cases, are not even explicitly stated. Destination image is frequently described as simply "impressions of a place" or "perceptions of an area". From the definitions, there is no concrete indication of whether the researchers are considering the attribute-based or the holistic components of image, or both. However, in examining the methodologies used to measure destination image (refer to Table 3), it becomes evident, that, in fact, the majority of these researchers are conceptualising destination image in terms of lists of attributes, and not in terms of holistic impressions.

Table 3: Methodologies Used by Destination Image Researchers

Reference	Type of Methodology	Technique for the Generation of Attributes
Hunt (1975)	Structured: - 20 Attributes - 7 and 5 point Sem. Diff. Scale	- Tourism experts - Researcher's judgement.
Crompton (1977)	Structured: - 18 Attributes - 7 point Sem. Diff. Scale	- General reading material/brochures - Consumer interviews (N=36)
Goodrich (1977)	Structured - 10 Attributes - 7 point Likert Scale	- Tourism experts - Travel brochures
Crompton (1979)	Structured - 30 Attributes - 7 point Sem. Diff. Scale	- General reading material/brochures - Consumer interviews (N=36)
Pearce (1982)	Structured - 13 Attributes - 6 point Likert Scale	- Modified Kelly Repertory Grid technique (N=10)
Haahti & Yavas (1983)	Structured - 10 Attributes - 9 point Likert Scale	- Literature review - Focus group of travel agents
Crompton & Duray (1985)	Structured - 28 Attributes - 5 point Sem. Diff. Scale	- General reading material/brochures - Consumer interviews (N=100)
Kale & Weir (1986)	Structured - 26 Attributes - 7 point Likert Scale	- Not discussed
Phelps (1986)	Structured - 32 Attributes - Check list of attributes	- Researchers' judgement?
Tourism Canada (1986 - 1989)	Structured - 29 Attributes - 5 point Likert Scale	- Not Discussed
Gartner & Hunt (1987)	Structured - 11 Attributes - 5 point Sem. Diff. Scale	- Tourism experts - Researchers' judgement
Richardson & Crompton (1988)	Structured - 10 Attributes - 4 point Comparative Scale	- Used attributes from Tourism Canada Vacation Patterns Survey
Gartner (1989)	Structured - 15 Attributes - 5 point Likert Scale	- Not Discussed
Calantone, et al. (1989)	Structured - 13 Attributes - 7 point Likert Scale	- Not Discussed
Reilly (1990)	Unstructured - open-ended questions	- Not Applicable

However, there has very recently been some mention in the tourism literature of the importance of the holistic component of destination image. Um and Crompton (1990) describe destination image as a gestalt or holistic construct. Reilly (1990) emphasises the total impression a place makes on the minds of others. Pearce (1988, p. 163) points out the strong visual component, or imagery, inherent in destination image - image "... implies a search of the long term memory for scenes and symbols, panoramas and people". He indicates that the term image is often used to describe an overall mental picture - a destination stereotype. In other words, while each individual can have a somewhat unique mental picture of a destination, there also exists a publicly held common mental picture of that destination, or stereotype.

In effect, then, it appears that destination image could be considered in terms of both an attribute-based component and a holistic component. In addition, some images of destinations could be based upon directly observable or measurable characteristics, (scenery, attractions, accommodation facilities, price levels), while others could be based on more abstract, intangible characteristics (friendliness, safety, atmosphere). Therefore, the notion of functional and psychological characteristics, as suggested by Martineau (1958), could be applied to destination images.

The framework of image presented in Figure 1 could be used as a basis for conceptualising destination image. Figure 2 presents this conceptualisation using the country of Nepal as an example. In this scenario, the image of Nepal as a travel destination is not only based on the perceptions and ratings of various functional and psychological attributes but also

on the more holistic mental pictures, or imagery, evoked.

There is, however, one additional dimension of destination image that has been largely overlooked in previous research. As indicated in Figure 3, images of destinations can range from those based on 'common' functional and psycho-logical traits to those based on more 'unique' features, events, feelings or auras. In other words, on one extreme of the continuum, the image of a destination can be composed of the impressions of a core group of traits on which all destinations are commonly rated and compared. For example, a destination's image can include ratings on certain common functional characteristics, such as price levels, transportation infra-structure, types of accommodation, climate, etc. The destination can also be rated on very commonly considered psychological characteristics: level of friendliness, safety, quality of service expected, fame, etc. On the other end of the continuum, images of destinations can include unique features and events (functional characteristics) or auras (psychological characteristics).

Examples of truly unique features are easy to provide. For instance, India may evoke an image of the Taj Mahal, California of Disneyland, Brazil of the Amazon Jungle or the Carnival in Rio, and, in the case of the example provided in Figure 2, Nepal of Mt. Everest. The important role of the unique functional aspect of destination image has been suggested by Pearce (1988) in his mention of symbols as a component of destination image, and by MacCannell (1989) in his discussion of 'marker' or must-see sights.

On the other hand, instances of truly unique auras are much more difficult to provide. One example is the aura of the Vatican, which is special to that

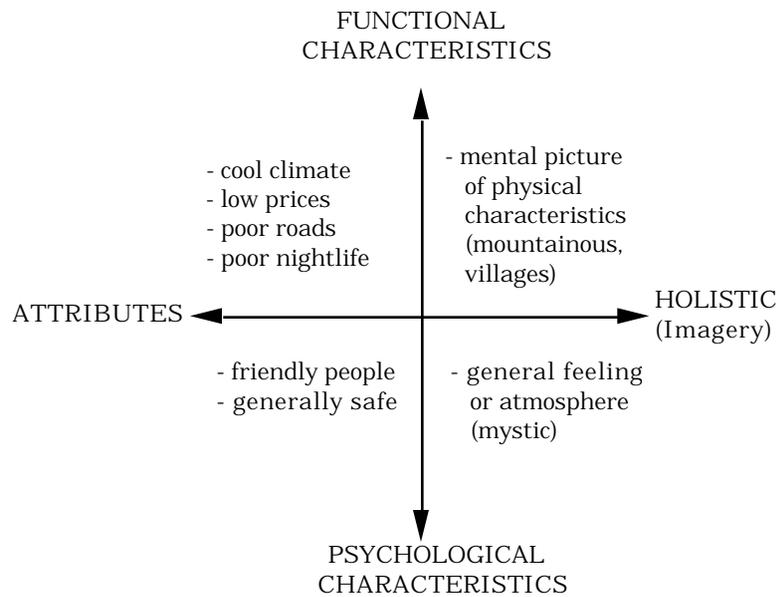


Figure 2: An illustrative example of four components of destination image (Nepal)

particular location and its associated set of values. However, many destinations may be distinguished by special atmospheres. For example, Paris may be perceived as being romantic, Mexico as slow-paced, Nepal as mystic, etc.

Based on this conceptual framework, destination image is

defined as not only the perceptions of individual destination attributes but also the holistic impression made by the destination. Destination image consists of functional characteristics, concerning the more tangible aspects of the destination, and psychological characteristics, concerning the more intangible aspects.

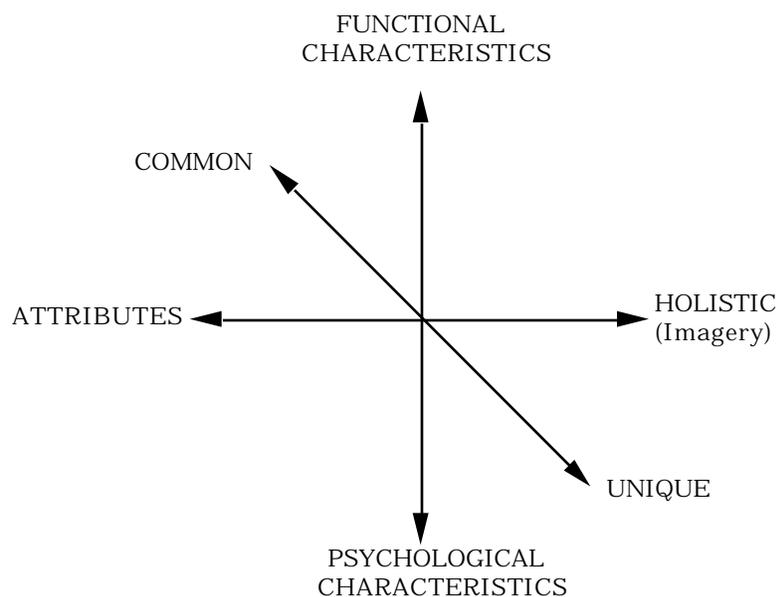


Figure 3: The components of destination image

* This figure should be envisaged in three dimensions.

Furthermore, destination images can be arranged on a continuum ranging from traits which can be commonly used to compare all destinations to those which are unique to very few destinations.

There is a relationship between the system of measurement used and the ability to capture the various components of destination image. This will be explored in the following section, which deals with techniques for measuring image.

The measurement and operationalisation of destination image

The proposed definition of destination image suggests that a complete operationalisation involves measuring both attributes and holistic impressions. Each of these components should be measured in terms of functional and psychological characteristics. Furthermore, in the process of measuring destination image, consideration should be given not only to obtaining information on traits common to all destinations but also to capturing those unique features or auras which distinguish a particular destination.

This section examines the methodologies used by tourism researchers to date in destination image measurement. However, before focusing on the destination studies, it is useful to briefly review the techniques commonly used in more general image measurement research.

General techniques for measuring image

A review of the techniques used in the past for research on product image measurement revealed two basic approaches; structured and unstructured.

In a structured methodology, various common image attributes are specified and incorporated into a standardised instrument,

usually a set of semantic differential or Likert type scales. A product (or products) is rated by the respondent on each of the attributes included in the measure and an 'image profile' is derived from these ratings (Ferber, 1974).

Because structured methodologies use standardised scales, they are easy to administer, simple to code and the results can be analysed using sophisticated statistical techniques (Marks, 1976). Structured methodologies also facilitate the comparison of several products across each of the attributes included as scale items.

Structured methodologies are attribute focused. In other words, they force the respondent to think about product image in terms of the attributes specified by the scales. Although holistic impressions may be referenced by the respondent when completing the scale items, there is no direct opportunity to describe these holistic impressions. Furthermore, scale items are not designed to measure the unique characteristics of the product. Rather, they force the respondent to rate the product on more general, common traits.

The completeness of structured methodologies can be highly variable depending upon the procedures used to elicit the attributes of image included in the scales (McDougall & Fry, 1974). Where the attribute components are likely to be numerous and diverse, as is the case for destination image, it may be necessary to conduct extensive research to ensure that all have been uncovered (Hooley, Shipley & Krieger, 1988). In particular, according to the image conceptualisation proposed in the previous section, the most complete measurements would have to address both the functional and psychological characteristics of product attributes.

Unstructured methodologies are the alternate form of measurement used in product image research. Unstructured methodologies use free form descriptions to measure image (Boivin, 1986). Using this approach, the attributes of image are not specified at the onset of the research. Rather, the respondent is allowed to more freely describe his/her impressions of a product. Data is gathered from a sample of respondents through such methods as focus groups or open-ended survey questions. Content analysis and various sorting and categorisation techniques are then used to determine the image dimensions. In this manner, unstructured methodologies are more conducive to measuring the holistic components of product image and also to capturing unique features and auras.

However, the level of detail provided by unstructured methodologies is highly variable as it depends upon the verbal and/or writing skills of the individuals used in the study, their willingness to provide multiple responses and their knowledge base of the product (McDougall & Fry, 1974). Furthermore, because of the qualitative nature of the data, statistical analyses of the results are limited. In particular, comparative analyses across several products are not facilitated by unstructured methodologies.

Measurement techniques used by tourism researchers

The methodologies that have been used in the major destination image studies conducted to date are summarised in Table 3. As the second column of the table indicates, destination image researchers have a strong preference for structured methodologies. In fact, almost all have used either semantic differential or Likert type scales in the measurement of destination image. Therefore,

because of the nature of structured methodologies, the majority of destination image measurement studies have focused on the common, attribute-based component of destination image and have not addressed the more holistic and unique components.

Even in terms of measuring the attribute component of destination image, previous studies exhibit some shortcomings. As mentioned previously, unless considerable effort is expended in the initial design stages, attribute lists may be incomplete by failing to incorporate all of the relevant functional and psychological characteristics of the destination image. Ideally, to combat this problem, fairly extensive research should be conducted in the primary stage of scale construction. For example, qualitative research in the form of focus groups is very useful to uncover a more complete list of attributes that are relevant and salient to consumers (Lindquist, 1974; Hooley *et al.*, 1988). However, as the third column of Table 3 indicates, only a few of the researchers to date (Crompton, 1977; Pearce, 1982; Crompton & Duray, 1985) have used consumers (and even then only to a limited extent) to identify and generate the lists of destination image attributes. The remaining researchers have relied on secondary sources of information (literature reviews, brochures) and the opinions of "experts" (travel agents, others in the tourism industry). While it is recognised that qualitative research with consumers is expensive and time consuming, it is difficult to design a valid and complete set of destination image attributes without such input.

To illustrate this point, Table 4 presents a summary of the attributes of destination image used to date in the studies employing structured methodologies. This list was derived by grouping the attributes used

by the various researchers into categories; for example, included under the attribute of scenery, is Calantone *et al.*'s attribute of "beautiful scenery", Crompton's attribute of "physical geography", Kale and Weir's attribute of "scenic beauty", etc. The master list of attributes has also been arranged within the functional/psychological continuum. Certain items (such as costs/price levels) are quite functional, others are distinctly psychological (for example, friendliness), while some could be argued to be either and, therefore, lie near the middle of the continuum (cleanliness).

Of interest is the number of studies measuring each of the attributes. Very few of the researchers have succeeded in incorporating the majority of these attributes into a measurement instrument. Furthermore, the emphasis in existing research has obviously been on the more functional attributes of destination image. The only psychological attribute measured by the majority of researchers is "friendliness".

While previous research has almost exclusively focused on the use of structured methodology, there has been one recent

Table 4: Attributes Used by Researchers to Measure Destination Image

	Number of Studies Measuring the Attribute **
FUNCTIONAL (physical, measurable)	
Scenery/Natural Attractions	13
Costs/Price Levels	9
Climate	8
Tourist Sites/Activities	8
Nightlife and Entertainment	8
Sports Facilities/Activities	8
National Parks/Wilderness Activities	7
Local Infrastructure/Transportation	7
Architecture/Buildings	7
Historic Sites/Museums	6
Beaches	6
Shopping Facilities	5
Accommodation Facilities	5
Cities	4
Fairs, Exhibits, Festivals	2
Facilities for Information and Tours	1
Crowdedness	4
Cleanliness	4
Personal Safety	4
Economic Development/Affluence	3
Accessibility	2
Degree of Urbanisation	1
Extent of Commercialisation	1
Political Stability	1
Hospitality/Friendliness/Receptiveness	11
Different Customs/Culture	7
Different Cuisine/Food and Drink	7
Restful/Relaxing	5
Atmosphere (Familiar versus Exotic)	4
Opportunity for Adventure	3
Opportunity to Increase Knowledge	2
Family or Adult Oriented	1
Quality of Service	1
Fame/Reputation	1
PSYCHOLOGICAL (abstract)	

** Total number of studies referenced is 14

and notable exception. Reilly (1990) used open-ended questions to allow respondents to describe, in their own words, images of the state of Montana. By combining the most common descriptions, a mental picture, or stereotypical holistic impression, was drawn of Montana. Included in this image were scenic beauty, openness, mountains, cold weather and big, blue sky. While some of these attributes, such as scenery and weather could have been rated using a set of scales, such a standardised format would have eliminated some of the unique imagery (blue sky, openness) produced by the open-ended questions.

Conclusions

This paper has endeavoured to provide a more thorough understanding of the concept of destination image. It is evident that in order to capture the components of destination image as conceptualised in Figure 3, the methodologies used cannot be exclusively structured or unstructured. The most complete measure of destination image should include both types of methodologies; for example, standardised scales to measure the perceptions of functional and psychological attributes, in conjunction with open-ended questions to determine the holistic impressions and to capture unique features and auras.

A critical examination of previous destination image studies has revealed that researchers have not been successful in completely conceptualising and operationalising destination image. Researchers to date have relied heavily on the use of structured methodologies. As a result, they have been unable to capture the more holistic and unique components of destination image. Furthermore, the psychological characteristics of destination image have not been adequately measured in the majority of the studies.

In the design of future destination image research, the conceptualisation developed in this discussion should be considered. In other words:

*** Destination image should be envisioned as consisting of two main components; those that are attribute based and those that are holistic.**

*** Each of these components of destination image contains functional, or more tangible, and psychological, or more abstract, characteristics.**

*** Images of destinations can also range from those based on 'common' functional and psychological traits to those based on more distinctive or even unique features, events, feelings or auras.**

*** In order to capture all of these components, a combination of structured and unstructured methodologies should be used to measure destination image.**

A focus on any component of destination image at the exclusion of the other components results in an incomplete measurement. By providing a framework for the measurement of destination image, this paper hopes to draw attention to the need to address all components of destination image, both in future research and in managerial decision making. In terms of research, an empirical study designed to test the ideas outlined above has just been completed (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). An assessment of the managerial implications of the framework presented in this paper and the results for the empirical research is currently underway.

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