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## Factors Influencing Destination Image Formation: A Review

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### ABSTRACT

*Destination Image research has been progressing in the recent years. Many empirical evidences and models have been executed and tested in imbibing effectiveness and creating destination image. This paper attempts to convey the factors that influence the formation of destination image from literary perspective. Research papers and magazines have been reviewed for this purpose and insights were derived. The Baloglu and McCleary's model of destination image creation has been used as a primary review and insights gathered from the research which used the essence of this model. Also, researches which have been executed in destination image creation have been reviewed.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Baloglu and McCleary's model, Destination Image, Motives, Cognitive Evaluations, Affective Evaluations.*

### INTRODUCTION

Destination Image has become an important factor in tourism industry which has greater impact on individual's subjective perception and behaviour (Chon 1990, 1992; Echtner and Ritchie 1991; Stabler 1988; Telisman-Kosuta 1989). Despite the tourism industry's growth, relative inputs from various research activities contribute to the literature of destination image. This arena of study not only concentrates on destination image but also focuses on human behaviour in forming destination images (Selwyn 1996). Many studies have investigated the effective destination positioning (Carmichael 1992; Crompton, Fakeye and Lue 1992; Echtner and Ritchie 1991; Eizaguirre and Laka 1996; Reilly 1990) and on destination selection process (Goodrich 1978; Gunn 1972; Hunt 1975; Oppermann 1996a). Also, studies on destination image on various perspectives have been conducted. This paper intends to conceptualize the factors that influence formation of destination image from literary perspective.

### DESTINATION IMAGE

According to Lawson and Baud Bovy (1977) destination image is "the expression of all objective knowledge, prejudices, imagination and emotional thoughts of an individual or group about a particular location". From the studies of (Crompton, 1979; Kotler, Haider and Rein, 1993) destination image has been viewed as "the sum of all beliefs, ideas and impressions that people associate with a destination". From customer's perspective Valls (1992) defined destination image as "the brand image of a country as a set of consumer perceptions". Apart from these definitions, Bigné, Sánchez and Sánchez (2001) defined destination image as "the subjective interpretation of reality by the tourist", which indicates that images perceived by tourist of a

destination is broadly subjective because subjectivity is derived from the tourists perceptions about destinations

Studies by Baloglu and Brinberg 1997; Baloglu and McCleary 1999a, 1999b; Gartner 1993; Walmsley and Young 1998 revealed that image as a concept composed by consumer’s reasoned and emotional interpretation. These two components perhaps called as perspective/ cognitive and affective attitudes. Cognitive evaluation referred as individual’s knowledge and belief about an object and Affective attitude referred as individual’s feeling towards an object. In a conceptual perspective, cognitive component is an antecedent of affective component where the evaluation of consumer response arises from their knowledge about the objects (Anand, Holbrook and Stephens 1988; Holbrook 1978; Russel and Pratt 1980; Stern and Krakover 1993). Comination of these two components inturns create an image of the object. In the context of tourism research, these two components impacts the destination image formation process.

From a literature review it has been found that a model proposed by Stern and Krakover (1993) which indicates a set of factors that influence destination image. The factors involve information obtained from variety of sources and characteristics of individuals. According to this model, the characteristics of information sources and individuals have a significant effect on producing a compound image. The well known contribution by Baloglu and McCleary (1999), through the reseach “A Model of Destination Image Formation” it has been revealed that cognitive and affective evaluation have significant influence in formation of destination image.

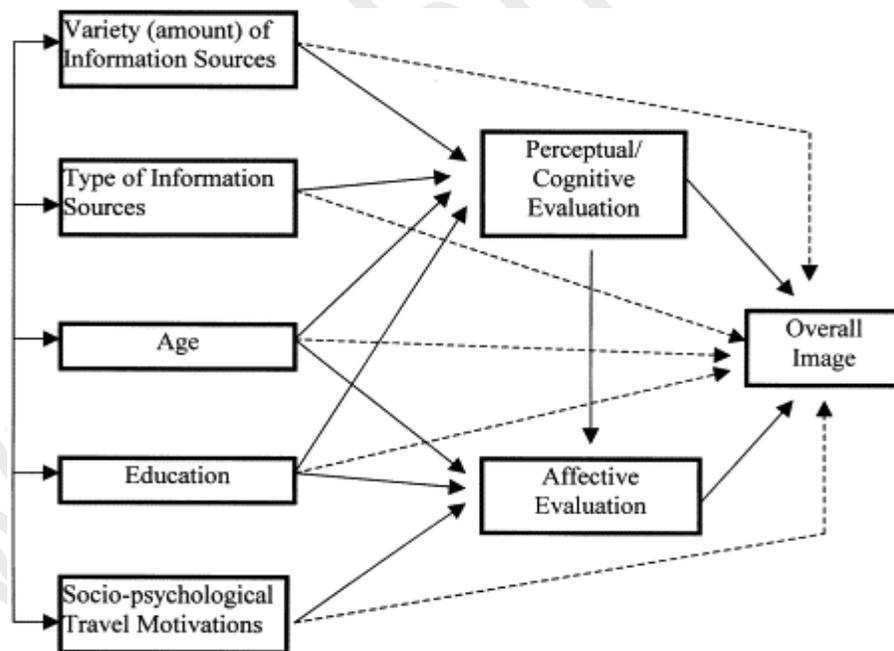


Fig: 1, Baloglu and Mcclary’s model of destination image formation

The model depicts the influence of demographics, information sources and socio-psychological travel motivations on cognitive and affective evaluations and the impact of these two components on creating destination image.

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## **INFORMATION SOURCES**

Information is the primary factor which influences the destination image. It is also known as stimulus factor which stimulates consumers to tour. Gartner (1993) states that information sources are image formation agents which influences the perception. Information sources could be described as variety of information, word of mouth, opinion leader, tourism industry advertisements and promotions, movie scenes, travel magazines, news about destinations, and other factors. Information derived from social groups and people of different contacts are considered as information sources. These information sources are exposed to consumers and determine to make decisions on touring destinations. According to Gartner (1993), there are different agents of information sources. They are over induced – stimulates touring interest through mass media advertising by tour operators, Convert induced – celebrity endorsement as a promotional strategy, autonomous – inculcation of mass media, Tv, movies, and documentaries etc., Organic – information from friends, relatives and family members, and visiting a destination as an end consumption process. Gartner and Hunt (1987), Pearce (1982) and Phelps (1986) enumerate that image formed after visiting destination would be more realistic, complex, and different. The marketers have to create new strategies for extending the sources of information which impacts the destination image creation process. As new marketing strategies such as social media marketing, buzz marketing and other innovative strategies could also be trailed on branding destinations and so as on destination images development.

## **PERSONAL FACTORS**

Tourists individual characteristics and internal factors affect the destination image formation Crompton (1990). Beliefs and intentions about the attributes of destination created in consumers mind also impact destination image formation. The nature of individuals beliefs vary according to the individual internal factors. Consumers own needs, preferences, motivations, knowledge, and other characteristics are predominant factors which impacts destination image formation. Tourist perceive image about a destination on the basis of their individual characteristic and personal factors such as gender, age, education, occupation, income, family life cycle, social class, and dependents. The destination choice of a youngster would be different from the elder nest couple and applies the same on the image created about a destination. Individuals motivations to travel to destinations differ on various purpose and factors. Spiritual tour, religious tour, official tour and tour for other purposes intend creative motive to travel to destinations. Personal factors of individuals affect one's cognitive perceptions and so as destination image.

## **TRAVEL MOTIVATIONS**

From the studies of Baloglu and McCleary 1999; Stabler 1995; Um and Crompton 1990, it has been found that motivations influence the destination image formation process and choice of destination. Studies of Baloglu (1997), Dann (1996) and Gartner (1993) found that motivations have greater influence on its affective component. Affective image is the feeling aroused by a place and value perceived by consumers according to their motivations. Recent research has evidenced that spirituality in tourism has been increased. Stress in work life, increase of tension

due to internal and external forces and other motives pave the way for touring spiritual destinations to acquire peace of mind and relaxation. Even families are heading to religious destinations to acquire religious experience and rest. From the studies in destination image formation the following common motivations to tour a destination has been listed below.

1. Exploring new culture and types of people
2. Improving intellectual thought process
3. Seeking adventure and new ambience
4. Acquire new experiences of cultural events, festivals and occasional programs
5. Rest and relax
6. Put out stress and escape from routine life
7. Seeking entertainment, excitement and recreation
8. Spirituality and religious motives
9. Be an opinion leader and could explain about traveling experience
10. Visiting places of greater importance and renowned on attributes and features.

### **COGNITIVE AND AFFECTIVE EVALUATION**

Any type of behaviour of consumers is based on their cognitive and affective attitude. The belief about an object is always a greater perspective in decision making process. The feeling being created by experiencing is routed through the cognitive evaluations. Many researches are still being progressed on these two factors which have greater significance and impact of consumer behaviour. From the studies of Echtner and Ritchie (1993), it has been found that destination which are more familiar are holistic, psychological and unique whereas destinations which are less familiar have images more according to attributes, functional aspects and common features. Empirical studies of Baloglu and Mangalolu (2001), Chon (1991), Fakeye and Crompton (1991), Hu and Ritchie (1993), Milman and Pizan (1995), Phelps (1986) found that familiarity of destination, number of visits and length of stay influence perceived image of destination.

According to Hunt (1975), Phelps (1986), Fakeye and Crompton (1991), Echtner and Ritchie (1993), Walmsley and Young (1998), Chaudhary (2000), Alcaniz, Garcia and Blas (2009), the formation of destination image has been impacted by cognitive factors. From the literature it has been found that there are three primary factors such as the perception of tourist experience quality, the perception of the tourism attractions and perception of the environment and value – create cognitive perception. The formation of cognitive image is based on the individual features and sources (Jakeljić, 2010). Affective evaluation is highly dependent on cognitive evaluation as consumers may develop a positive image about a destination on the basis of their belief and motive towards a destination. Cognitive component has been derived out of the knowledge sources and personal factors of individuals including the travel motivation and values whereas affective components are the feeling created by the cognitive factors.

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## CONCLUSION

Many research studies have added both qualitative and quantitative insights to the literature of destination image. Even then this arena is not only in need for many models through research supporting destination image but also to benefit the people with interest in destination image. Exploration and advent of many tourist destinations in India requires an phase to project their destination with certain identity. Some destinations are identified as spiritual destinations and religious destinations whereas some are identified as entertainment, exploration, adventure, holiday location etc. In this scenario, creating an image of destination requires and in depth understanding about the influencing factors and evidence from research. Thus the factors affecting destination image creation have to be viewed in holistic view so as to enhance optimum tour destination experience, ambience and image.

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