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Cognitive Destination Image, Destination Personality and Behavioral Intentions: An Integrated Perspective of Destination Branding

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ABSTRACT

Firmly based on the psychological rationale, the study hypothesizes that cognitive destination image is the antecedent of destination personality, which in turn affects tourist' behavioral intentions towards the destination. Structural equation modeling suggests that socially responsible environment and local people positively affect destination personality, and sophistication and competence are important in driving behavioral intentions. A theoretically logical and empirically valid link of cognitive destination image --- destination personality --- behavioral intentions has been identified. A holistic roadmap for managerial practice is readily visible.
Keyword: Cognitive Destination Image, Destination Personality and Behavioral Intentions

INTRODUCTION

There has been increasing concern internationally about how to brand destinations at the time they are becoming highly substitutable and increasingly parity (Morgan and Pritchard, 2002). Particularly, the harsh economic situation is pushing DMOs to position a unique and competitive destination identity in aid to economic benefits. A key component of this positioning process is the creation and management of a distinctive and appealing destination personality (Ekinci, 2003). According to Fournier (1998), consumers endow inanimate products with qualities of human personality. Defined as "the set of human characteristics associated to a tourism destination" (Hosany, Ekinci and Uysal, 2006), destination personality brings the destination live and intimate, and thus forms a clear identify in tourists' mind. Also, destination personality appears to be emerging as a compelling tool to differentiate the destination from its rivals (Murphy, Benckendorff and Moscardo, 2007). Top destinations are increasingly basing their brand identities on rich and distinct personalities (Blain, Levy and Ritchie, 2005), and successful implementations have been found in Spain (Gilmore, 2002), Wales (Pride, 2002) and Britain (Hall, 2004).

Although the importance of destination personality has been fully acknowledged, much ambiguity surrounds its relationship with other key variables proposed for the destination branding (Bigne, Sanchez and Sanchez, 2001; Lee, Lee and Lee, 2005; Milman and Pizam, 1995; Murphy et al., 2007). First, there is no consensus of delineating destination personality from its plausibly interchangeable concept of destination image (Hosany et al. 2006). Second, there is sparse holistic vision of investigating the specific antecedent and consequence of destination personality. Third, though fortunately the impact of destination personality on tourists' behavioral intentions is documented in quite a few admirable studies, finding are not without inconsistency. For example, Ekinci and Hosany (2006) contend that destination personality

positively influences tourists' behavioral intentions, specifically intentions to recommend. Murphy et al. (2007) argue that destination personality, even though associated with high levels of self-congruity, fails to predict strong revisit intention. Fourth, a handful of studies contribute to the exploration of multifaceted concept of destination personality (see Aaker, 1997; Caprara, Barbaranelli and Guido, 2001; Johar, Sengupta and Aaker, 2005; Siguaw, Mattila & Austin, 1999; Venable, Rose, Bush & Gilbert, 2005). However, there is a lack of detailed view to identify which destination personality is more powerful in influencing other variables.

Moreover, destination personality, incubated in brand personality, appears to show great uncertainty when generalized to cross-cultural contexts (Pitt, Opoku, Hultman, Avratt and Spyropoulou 2007). For example, the past decades have witnessed diverse application of five-dimensional Aaker's (1997) Brand Personality Scales in addressing cross-cultural issues (e.g., Aaker, Benet-Martínez and Garolera, 2001, for Japan and Spain; Bosnjak, Bochmann and Hufschmidt, 2007, for German; Ferrandi, Valette-Florence and Fine-Falcy, 2000, for France; Smit, Berge and Franzen, 2003, for the Netherlands). While considerable studies about destination personality virtually exist in western context, there is a surprising dearth of case studies in rising destinations in eastern world.

Inspired to clear the above ambiguities and bridge our knowledge gap, this study aims to fully understand destination personality and its role in collaborating with other key variables of destination branding. In view of case limits in existing literature, this study conducts a case study in the less focused but rising destination of eastern Beijing, capital city of China and the gateway city of inbound tourism, a spotlight city that recently hosted the 2008 Olympics. The findings are expected to shed light on managerial practice of destination branding so as to elevate destination competitiveness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cognitive Destination Image

The topic of cognitive destination image has received substantial attention in tourism research (Chen and Hsu 2000; Gartner and Hunt, 1987; Oppermann, 1996). However, due to its nature of complexity (Smith, 1994), multidimensionality (Gartner, 1989), subjectivity (Gallarza, Saura and García 2002), and elusiveness (Fakeye and Crompton, 1991), so far no consensus has been reached for an universally accepted and reliable scale in different respondents and different scenarios (Beerli and Martin, 2004). The reason to look at cognitive destination image, rather than affective destination image, is because it is directly observable, descriptive and measurable (Walmsley and Young, 1998), and thus may provide more concrete and interpretive meaning regarding uniqueness of a destination. Therefore cognitive destination image received support from an increasing number of scholars on its priority in characterizing the destination (Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997; Dann, 1996; Echtner and Ritchie, 1991). According to Dibb, Simkin and Bradley's (1996) product theory, cognitive destination image has been split across images of "natural environment", "built environment", "socially responsible environment", plus "local people" to thread the ring. The four-facet cognitive destination image adapts concepts developed for consumer products and is in line with research interests of this study.

Linking Cognitive Destination Image to Destination Personality

Destination personality is an affective construct because its definition is consistent with the

meaning of affection. For example, Biel (1993) interprets destination personality to be tourists' emotional attachment to the destination. Caprara, Barbaranelli and Guido (2001) also indicate that a well-established destination personality projects strong affection of tourists. According to Weiner (1986), cognitive knowledge induces affective response. Hence, cognitive destination image is conceived to directly affect the affection-based destination personality. This posit gains credibility in Ekinci and Hosany's (2006) work where a distinctive and emotionally attractive destination personality is found to be reflected by perceived cognitive image of a place and in turn leverage it.

Hypothesis $1a_{1-i}$ (H1a): Natural Environment is positively related to Destination Personality dimensions$_{1-i}$.

Hypothesis $1b_{1-i}$ (H1b): Built Environment is positively related to Destination Personality dimensions$_{1-i}$.

Hypothesis $1c_{1-i}$ (H1c): Socially Responsible Environment is positively related to Destination Personality dimensions$_{1-i}$.

Hypothesis $1d_{1-i}$ (H1d): Local People is positively related to Destination Personality dimensions$_{1-i}$.

Behavioural Intentions
Customer loyalty is viewed as the strength of the relationship between an individual's relative attitude and repeat patronage (Dick and Basu, 1994). Although the effectiveness of loyalty is often gauged only by the actual behavior (Baloglu, 2002), behavioral intentions are very accurate predictors of social behaviors (Fishbein and Manfredo, 1992) when properly measured. Without an understanding of the attitudinal propensity towards the act of patronage, it would be difficult to know what exact behavior tourists would draw off. Behavioral intentions represent high attitudinal probability of the subsequent behaviors and are likely to reflect consumer loyalty as accurate predictors (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980; Baker and Crompton, 2000). Quite often behavior intentions are measured using repurchase intentions, word of mouth intentions and willingness to pay more (Anderson, Fornell and Lehmann, 1994).

Linking Destination Personality to Behavioural Intentions
A well-established destination personality is believed to directly influence tourists' preference and patronage (Malhotra, 1988; Sirgy, 1982) and develop strong trust and loyalty with the destination (Fournier, 1998). This finding is grounded in the idea that behavioral intention is a function of cognition and affection (Bagozzi, 1978; Breckler, 1984). Tourists perceive cognitive destination image and echo to their favored type of affective destination personality before reaching behavioral intentions. A handful studies lent support by showing that, when there is a fit between destination personality and a tourist's self-expression, the tourist may consider a destination as a person, or even a companion (Kim, Han and Park, 2001), and thus will be likely to participate in those situations or environments (Frew and Shaw, 1999).

Hypothesis $2a_{i-1}$ (H2a): Destination Personality dimensions are positively related to Word-of-Mouth Intentions.

Hypothesis $2b_{i-2}$ (H2b): Destination Personality dimensions are positively related to Willingness to Pay More.

An Integrated Model
Based on the aforementioned literate review, an integrated model that incorporates multiple measures of cognitive destination image, destination personality and behavioral intentions is developed (see Figure 1). Specifically, destination personality is hypothesized to be the consequence of cognitive destination image and the antecedence of behavioral intentions. The study is interested in how cognitive image characterizes the destination personality and how destination personality impacts behavioral intentions. The model makes logically consistent predictions. Unique destination personality should be perceived from cognitive destination image and thus drive tourists' behavioral intentions.
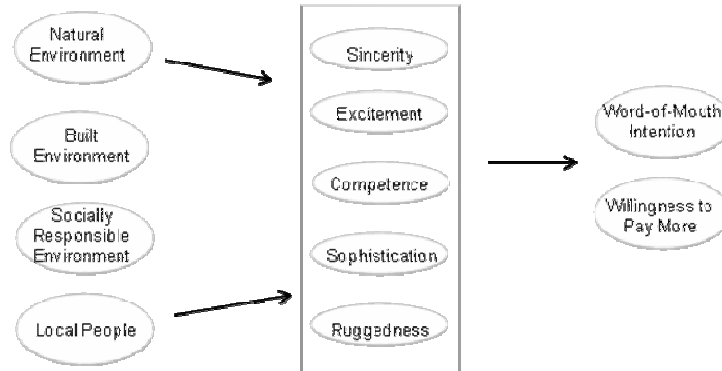

Figure1 Research Model

METHODOLOGY

Instrument Development
This study follows Churchill's (1979) rigorous flow chart of instrument development.To triangulate a reliable and validate research instrument, a mixed approach is adopted. An extensive review of relevant literature reveals a pool of critical measures for constructs of research interest. The measure pool is sent to experienced scholars for opinion seeking, which is then commented by the expert panel from local destination marketers. The finalized measures are included into a fatigue-free two-page questionnaire where a seven-point Liker scale ranging from strongly agree (7) to strongly disagree (1) is used. A pilot study is conducted to test the reliability and validity of the measurers and to ensure the questionnaire really works out on site.

Data Collection
A main survey is carried out in Beijing from July to September, 2009 at three must-go attractions favored by foreigner leisure tourists. Convenience sampling method, which is widely used in roadsides or other easily accessible spots (Rey, 1983) with the advantage of time and cost effectiveness, is adopted in this study. 589 questionnaires were distributed and 550 questionnaires were collected, representing a response rate of 93.4%. Ultimately 497 questionnaires were regarded to be secure and ideal after careful screening on missing value, normality and outliers.

Sample Profile
Respondents consist of more male tourists (51.3%) than female tourists (48.7%). The majority are between the ages of 21-30, accounting for 44.7% of the total respondents. Most of them hold a degree of bachelor (33.6%) or master (30.6%). A dominating percentage of respondents are

from long-haul countries of U.S.A (12.9%) and U.K. (12.3%), and more than half of the respondents originate from Europe (71%). 28.6% of the respondents are first-timers in Beijing, and most of them prefer to stay three nights (33.6%) or one week (34.8%), guaranteeing that they have sufficient understanding about the destination.

RESULTS

Dimensionality of Destination Personality

Given the exploratory nature, this study uses principle components factor analysis with varimax rotation to check the underlying dimensions of destination personality. An eigenvalue of 1.0 is adopted to determine underlying factors with a cutoff factor loading of 0.4. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (.82) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p < .001$) confirm the appropriateness of exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Items cross-loading on two or more factors are deleted one by one until a clean and rigid factor structure emerges. A four factor solution is finally retained. The acceptable eignvalues (>1) and satisfactory total amount of variance explained (61.99%) provide strong evidence of construct validity (Churchill, 1979). The four factors are labeled competence, excitement, sophistication and ruggedness, theoretically meaningful in accordance with their item loadings (See Table 1).

Table 1 Exploratory Factor Analysis of Destination Personality

	Factors and Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
	Competence				
C1	Reliable	0.76			
C2	Responsible	0.85			
C3	Dependable	0.65			
C4	Efficient	0.75			
	Excitement				
E1	Daring		0.73		
E2	Spirited		0.78		
E3	Imaginative		0.76		
	Sophistication				
S1	Glamorous			0.72	
S2	Charming			0.70	
S3	Romantic			0.83	
	Ruggedness				
R1	Strong				0.54

R2 Outdoorsy				0.85
R3 Rugged				0.70
Eigenvalue	2.44	2.06	1.95	1.61
% Variance	18.80	15.86	14.98	12.36
Cumulative % Variance	18.80	34. 65	49.63	61.99

Note: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (0.82), Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p<.001$).

Reliability and Validity

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is subsequently used to test the overall measurement model prior to the overall structural model according to Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step technique of structural equation modeling (SEM). As presented in Table 2, composite reliability close to or beyond the cut-off point 0.7 is reasonably acceptable (Nunnally, 1978). Convergent validity is supported by the fact that all average extracted (AVE) exceeds 0.5. The confirmatory factor analysis further supports the convergent validity of the measures because the estimated loadings for all indictors are significant at $p<0.001$ (see Table 3). Additionally, the AVE for each constructs is greater than the squared correlation coefficients for the corresponding inter-constructs, and this confirms discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Goodness fit of both measurement model and structural model reveal a robust goodness of fit to the data. The explained variance in endogenous constructs is 51% for excitement, 50% for sophistication, 61% for competence, 27% for ruggedness, 43% for word-of-mouth intentions and 23% for willingness to pay more.

Table 2 Reliability and Validity of the Overall Measurement Model

	NE	BE	SRE	LP	E	C	S	R	WOM	WPM
NE	1									
BE	.31(.10)	1								
SRE	.26(.07)	.25(.06)	1							
LP	.30(.09)	.47(.22)	.34(.11)	1						
E	.34 (.11)	.45(.20)	.26(.07)	.41(.17)	1					
C	.29(.09)	.48(.23)	.43(.18)	.56(.31)	.39(.15)	1				
S	.36(.13)	.27(.07)	.33(.11)	.31(.10)	.45(.20)	.37(.14)	1			
R	.26(.07)	.15(.02)	.16(.03)	.19(.04)	.34(.12)	.20(.04)	.34(.12)	1		
WOM	.37(.14)	.32(.10)	.21(.04)	.51(.26)	.42(.18)	.41(.17)	.41(.17)	.22(.05)	1	
WPM	.13(.02)	.18(.03)	.29(.08)	.31(.10)	.30(.09)	.36(.13)	.30(.09)	.20(.04)	.45(.20)	1

AVE	0.40	0.41	0.55	0.56	0.50	0.48	0.46	0.36	0.72	0.64
Reliability	0.65	0.73	0.82	0.79	0.78	0.75	0.71	0.58	0.88	0.84
Mean	5.06	5.26	3.32	5.00	4.92	4.64	4.40	4.46	5.68	3.92
Std. Dev.	0.96	0.84	1.15	1.17	1.02	0.98	1.08	0.89	1.12	1.30

Note: a. The figure in the parentheses denoted squared correlation estimations with robust *t*-value.
b. NE (natural environment), BE (built Environment), SRE (socially responsible environment), LP (local people), C (competence), E (excitement), S (sophistication), R (ruggedness), WOM (word-of-mouth intentions) and WPM (willingness to pay more)
c. All factors are significant at 0.01.

Table 3 Overall Measurement Model

	Latent and Observed Variables	Std. F.L	*t*-Value
CDI1	Cognitive Destination Image Factor 1: Natural Environment		
NE2	Beauty of lakes	0.56	9.74
NE3	Charm of mountains	0.51	9.06
NE4	Overall scenic beauty	0.79	N/A
CDI2	Cognitive Destination Image Factor 2: Built Environment		
BE3	Local infrastructure	0.66	10.91
BE4	Variety of cultural activities	0.64	10.67
BE5	Economic development	0.63	10.58
BE6	Local transportation	0.62	N/A
CDI3	Cognitive Destination Image Factor 3: Socially Responsible Environment		
SRE1	Rights and freedom	0.66	11.86
SRE2	Energy conserving	0.82	13.78
SRE3	Environmental awareness of local residents	0.84	13.86
SRE4	Control of emissions	0.62	N/A
CDI4	Cognitive Destination Image Factor 4: Local People		
LP2	Honesty and trustworthiness of local people	0.70	15.03
LP3	Local people' willingness to help tourists	0.74	15.78
LP4	Friendliness and courteousness of local people	0.80	N/A

DP1	Destination Personality Factor 1: Competence		
C1	Reliable	0.76	N/A
C2	Responsible	0.81	16.68
C3	Dependable	0.55	11.37
C4	Efficient	0.64	13.32
DP2	Destination Personality Factor 2: Excitement		
E1	Daring	0.62	N/A
E2	Spirited	0.74	12.12
E3	Imaginative	0.75	12.17
DP3	Destination Personality Factor 3: Sophistication		
S1	Glamorous	0.61	N/A
S2	Charming	0.71	11.16
S3	Romantic	0.70	11.09
DP4	Destination Personality Factor 3: Ruggedness		
R2	Strong	0.40	6.61
R3	Outdoorsy	0.76	8.06
R4	Rugged	0.57	N/A
BI1	Behavioural Intentions Factor 1: Word-of-Mouth Intentions		
WOM1	I will encourage friends and relatives to visit Beijing	0.81	N/A
WOM2	I will say positive things about Beijing to other people	0.86	21.36
WOM3	I will recommend Beijing to anyone who seeks my advice	0.88	21.87
BI2	Behavioural Intentions Factor 2: Willingness to Pay More		
WPM1	I will pay higher price to visit Beijing, despite other competing destinations' price being lower	0.70	N/A
WPM2	It is acceptable to pay more for travelling in Beijing	0.82	15.99
WPM3	I am willing to pay more for visiting Beijing	0.88	16.37

Note: Parameter fixed at 1.0 for the maximum-likelihood estimation. Thus, t-values are not obtained for those fixed to 1 for identification purpose. All factor loadings are significant at $p<0.000$.

Hypothesis Testing

As presented in both Figure2 and Table 4, local people positively affects excitement (γ_{41}=0.26, t-value=3.41), sophistication (γ_{43}=0.25, t-value=3.02) and competence (γ_{42}=0.43, t-value=6.21), supporting H1d$_{-1}$, H1d$_{-2}$ and H1d$_{-3}$. Natural environment embraces direct and positive relationships with destination personalities and specifically arouses tourists' personality congruence with excitement (γ_{11}=0.37, t-value=5.03), sophistication (γ_{13}=0.55, t-value=6.10) and ruggedness (γ_{14}=0.50, t-value=4.95), thus H1a$_{-1}$, H1a$_{-2}$ and H1a$_{-4}$ are supported. Socially responsible environment is the direct input of the centric destination personalities of sophistication (γ_{33}=0.14, t-value=2.29) and competence ($\gamma_{32=}$0.26, t-value=5.13), indicating that H1c-$_2$ and H1c-$_3$ are supported. Although the effect is not quite as strong, two significant paths are found between built environment and excitement ($\gamma_{21=}$0.24, t-value=3.00) and competence ($\gamma_{22=}$0.25, t-value=3.58). H1b$_{-1}$ and H1b$_{-3}$ are thus supported. It is also found that excitement (γ_{51}=0.25, t-value=4.09), competence (γ_{61}=0.25, t-value=4.39) and sophistication (γ_{71}=0.31, t-value=4.83) are all significantly related to word-of-mouth intentions. As a result, H2a$_{-1}$, H2a$_{-2}$ and H2a$_{-3}$ are supported. Competence (γ_{62}=0.29, t-value=4.63) and sophistication (γ_{72}=0.18, t-value=2.69) exert positive impact on willingness to pay more, consistent with H2b$_{-2}$ and H2b$_{-3}$.
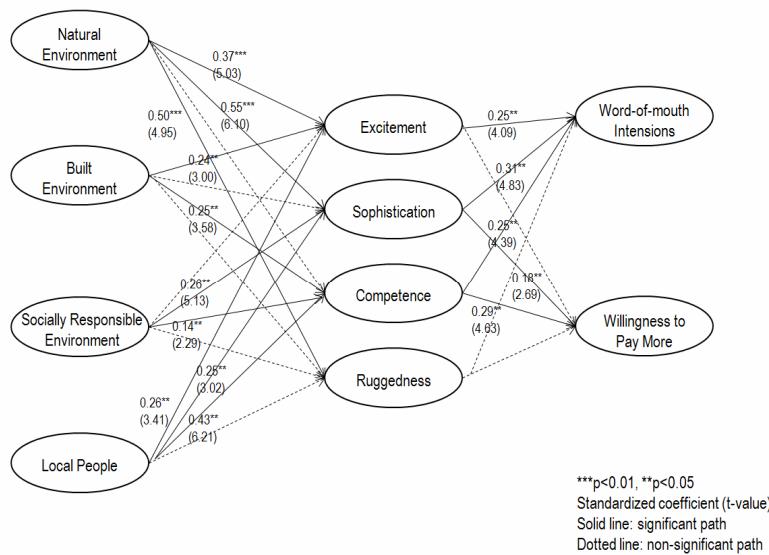

Figure 2 Estimates of the Structural Model

Table 4 Standardized Parameter Estimates

Hypothesis	Path	Std. Coefficient		t-value
H1a$_{-1}$	NE→Excitement	γ_{11}	0.37	5.03***
H1a$_{-3}$	NE→Competence	γ_{12}	0.03	0.57
H1a$_{-2}$	NE→Sophistication	γ_{13}	0.55	6.10***
H1a$_{-4}$	NE→Ruggedness	γ_{14}	0.50	4.95***
H1b$_{-1}$	BE→Excitement	γ_{21}	0.24	3.00***

H1b$_{-3}$	BE→Competence	γ_{22}	0.25	3.58***
H1b$_{-2}$	BE→Sophistication	γ_{23}	-0.11	-1.24
H1b$_{-4}$	BE→Ruggedness	γ_{24}	-0.14	-1.52
H1c$_{-1}$	SRE→Excitement	γ_{31}	0.00	-0.02
H1c$_{-3}$	SRE→Competence	γ_{32}	0.26	5.13***
H1c$_{-2}$	SRE→Sophistication	γ_{33}	0.14	2.29**
H1c$_{-4}$	SRE→Ruggedness	γ_{34}	0.04	0.64
H1d$_{-1}$	LP→Excitement	γ_{41}	0.26	3.41***
H1d$_{-3}$	LP→ Competence	γ_{42}	0.43	6.21***
H1d$_{-2}$	LP→Sophistication	γ_{43}	0.25	3.02***
H1d$_{-4}$	LP→Ruggedness	γ_{44}	0.14	1.58
H2a$_{-1}$	Excitement→WOM	γ_{51}	0.25	4.09***
H2b$_{-1}$	Excitement→WPM	γ_{52}	0.10	1.50
H2a$_{-3}$	Competence→WOM	γ_{61}	0.25	4.39***
H2b$_{-3}$	Competence→WPM	γ_{62}	0.29	4.63***
H2a$_{-2}$	Sophistication→WOM	γ_{71}	0.31	4.83***
H2b$_{-2}$	Sophistication→WPM	γ_{72}	0.18	2.69***
H2a$_{-4}$	Ruggedness→WOM	γ_{81}	0.02	0.42
H2b$_{-4}$	Ruggedness→WPM	γ_{82}	0.04	0.60

Note: ***$p<0.01$, **$p<0.05$, *$p<0.10$

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study provides a complete insight into the application of brand personality in the context of cross-cultural destination. The evidence of a four-factor rather than a five-factor solution echoes with Caprara, Barbaranelli and Guido's (2001) assertion that it may be possible to describe brand personalities using only a few factors. The findings demonstrate that Aaker's "penta-facotrial" BPS cannot, however, be fully replicated. Instead, it needs adaptation as some dimensions may be less relevant and others may flourish in specific tourism destinations. The finding in this vein is consistent with theories in consumer behavior literature which indicates that the creation of certain meanings relative to brand personality is culturally specific (McCracken, 1986), and the symbolic or value-expressive functions associated with a brand tend to vary to some degree

because of the variation of individuals' needs and self-views and socialization (Sung and Tinkham, 2005).

Importantly, socially responsible environment and local people are critical in driving tourists' congruent personality with the destination. Local people are immediate interface and intimate ambassadors of the destination, directly showcasing the unique and attractive human landscape of the destination. It is also true that without the social commitment the destination would never be acknowledged as competently strong and sophisticatedly attractive. The findings echo to Hosany et al.'s (2006) assertion that cognitive destination image and destination personality are related concepts. At least some dimensions of cognitive destination image (e.g. local people, socially responsible environment) exert significant and positive effects on most destination personality dimensions. This study also lends support to Konecnik and Frank's (2008) contention that any investigations of tourism destination branding should primarily be conducted from a perceived image perspective.

Accounting for most of the variance, competence and sophistication are overwhelming indicators of tourist' behavioral intentions, however, tourists appear reluctant to pay more for the exciting experience. Of particular note is that there is no effect of ruggedness on behavioral intentions, implying the fact that strong, outdoorsy and rugged destination is less effective in attracting the general public and thus could not be a strategic positioning of Beijing. In general, although destination personality is a reasonable antecedent of behavioral intentions, direct and positive links are mainly found from competence and sophistication, and the impact magnitude of destination personality as a whole on word-of-mouth intentions doubles that of willingness to pay more. The finding is important because it clarifies much confusion about the nature of the relationship between brand personality and the consequent behavioral intentions superficially discussed in previous studies (Aaker et al. 2001; Fournier, 1998; Kotler and Gertner 2002).

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the study would draw noteworthy theoretical and managerial implications. Theoretically it validates the role of destination personality as the bridge linking situational input of cognitive destination image to psychological output of behavioral intentions. Although previous destination image literature has stressed the importance of cognitive image perception in predicting tourists' behavioral intentions (Bigne, Sanchez and Sanchez, 2001; Lee, Lee and Lee, 2005; Milman and Pizam, 1995), this study demonstrates emotionally congruent destination personality to be a closer measurer. Perhaps the most significant finding could therefore be concluded as a theoretically logical and empirically validated link: cognitive destination image --- destination personality --- behavioral intentions, which not only firmly validates and develops the psychological behavior sequence of belief – attitude – intentions-- behavior (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) and cognition—affect---conation (Bagozzi 1978; Breckler 1984) in tourism context, but also serves as an especially applicable and suitable approach for analysis of destinations because we are able to observe all important aspects tourists perceive and consider for a favored destination.

Quite a few managerial implications for destination marketers are readily available. Local people are the key communicators of destination personalities and play an important role in attracting and retaining tourists. It is evident that an important motive for tourists going on a pleasure

vacation is to meet local people and see their local culture, even some travelling are people oriented rather than placed oriented (Crompton, 1979). Destination marketers could develop unique programs and events with elements of host-tourist interaction, which not only enriches the travel experience of foreign tourists, but also opens a window to introduce the destination culture and spirit. However, considering the missing destination personality dimension of sincerity which is highly relevant to local people, destination marketers may wish to internally launch considerable educational campaigns to correct inappropriate public manners especially at the time China is ambitious to host spotlighted mega-events such as Olympic Games and the World Expo. It is also suggested that paramount emphasis be placed on shaping the positive image of social fairness and environmentally friendly. Destination marketers should boost the green image of Beijing by emphasizing the importance of various environmental issues to prospective tourists in the green promotion campaigns. Destination marketers should seize the appropriate opportunities to promote the environmentally friendly image. For instance, destination marketers could advertise ecological practice in Beijing (e.g., recycling, control of emission, energy conservation) to prospective tourists using web-based communications. In addition, as a Third World destination whose destination image is shaped by conflicting ideological forces in western media's report, Beijing should resist those negative representations and make its own versions of the story to be told. It is recommended that Beijing firmly implementing the social reform in human care, political stability, respect for social justices and individual rights, safety and sanitation, and more importantly, use multiple information channels to spread these improvements.

LIMITATION AND FUTURE STUDY

To some extent, findings from this study may be generalizable, but limitations should be fully noted when applying the results. First, this study examines the formation of tourist behavioral intention mainly employing few core constructs and simplifies the decision-making process. Other psychological factors (e.g., motivations, values, quality, satisfaction, trust, level of self-congruence) and situational factors (e.g., types of vocations, tour products) that are known to exist and may affect tourists' intention outcomes have not been included in the study. Even for the individual constructs under study, the questionnaire survey method adopted in this study entails some limitations on the number of items to avoid making the survey discouragingly long. Therefore, it would be a good supplement to this study to undertake further research that enriches the current research framework with more variables or employ other advanced research instruments. Second, the finding suggests that tourists buy the particular destination personality that matches, or are congruent with, their own. Obviously, any single destination branding its own unique destination personality may not target the entire tourist segments, but it is exactly the way how positioning strategies of differentiation works out. Destination marketers therefore may wish to match their branding strategies in accord to the target markets. Finally, given the fact that mega-events are considered potential "quick fix" solutions to city image problems (Quinn 2005), arguably tourists' perceived cognitive destination image of Beijing has been impacted by this mega-event, which in turn influences their identification of destination personalities. A stable pattern of destination personalities could only be confirmed in a longitudinal research and future studies in this regard will be helpful to accurately capture the destination personality and thus are encouraged.

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