



Testing the role of country and destination image effect on satisfaction and revisit intentions among Western travellers

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Abstract

Image is significant when tourists choose select their destination. Country and destination image are two concepts of image in the tourism industry which are important. However, only a few studies investigate the relationship between them and their effects. This paper examined such influential factors that include country image, destination image, overall satisfaction, and tourist revisit rates. A questionnaire survey was used for 409 western tourists traveling in Phuket, Thailand. Structural equation modelling was used to test the hypotheses. The findings of this study showed that the measurements of country and destination image were different constructs and that country image directly affected destination image. Moreover, country image did not directly impact the intention to revisit but it did have an indirect effect on intention to return through destination image and overall satisfaction. Several managerial implications are presented in the paper.

Keywords: Country image, destination image, satisfaction, revisit, Western traveler.

Introduction

Tourism is a service industry with great importance to destinations because it influences positively on the economy, employment, and investment (De Nisco, Mainolfi, Marino & Napolitano, 2015; Thanvisitthpon, 2016). According to the Department of Tourism in Thailand (2019), Thailand's international receipts were 4th in the world. In 2018, a total of 38.27 million international tourists arrived in Thailand and more than 2.01 billion Thai Baht (US\$ 0.07 Billion) was obtained. Moreover, Phuket is a popular destination in Thailand because of the beautiful beaches, night entertainment, food and more. International tourists are quickly increasing in number, and local incomes have risen continuously, both the number of tourists and revenues were higher than in previous years (Department of Tourism in Thailand, 2018). In order to continue having such a high number of tourists and revenue, the key stakeholders need to understand the characteristics of destination and tourists' behaviour.

In the new global economy, country image and destination image have become central issues in order to develop destinations. Furthermore, country and destination image play an important role for destination managers as a travel destination is sought (R. Lee & Lockshin, 2012; Martinez & Alvarez, 2010). Destination managers must determine an image for Thailand's tourism industry as a country, including what perceptions potential tourists have about Thailand as a tourist destination (McDowall & Choi, 2010). A key aspect of Henkel, Henkel, Agrusa, Agrusa and Tanner (2006), is that if the tourist's perceived destination image is the same as the country's image, tourists will more easily decide which destination to visit. In contrast, if a tourist's perceived destination image is dissimilar to the country image, tourists



might be confused when selecting a travel destination. The concept of tourism image has also been considered. The tourists perceived image of a place is a parameter to forming expectations before traveling (C.-F. Chen & Tsai, 2007). If the image in any destination is dissimilar to the country's image, it can affect tourists, especially international tourists who have visited or not visited a destination.

However, while some research has been carried out on country image or destination image, there is very little empirical investigation into the relationship between country and destination image (Martinez & Alvarez, 2010; Palau-Saumell, Forgas-Coll, Amaya-Molinar & Sanchez-Garcia, 2016). In the literature on country image, the relative importance of destination image has been the subject of considerable debate. Moreover, in the literature, country and destination image are different concepts that need to be inspected. Little is known about image and it is not clear as there remain some gaps that call for further research. This article was designed on two themes namely, image, and understanding of results which is key to research in the tourism sector.

Recently investigators have examined the effects of image on satisfaction and revisit rates. Image has been examined as an antecedent of tourists' satisfaction in tourism research and it supports tourists to return to the destination (Chew & Jahari, 2014; Giraldi & Cesareo, 2014; Qu, Kim & Im, 2011; Stylos, Vassiliadis, Bellou & Andronikidis, 2016; Tan & Wu, 2016; Tosun, Dedeoglu & Fyall, 2015) as well as to recommend it to their family and friends (Jalilvand, Samiei, Dini & Manzari, 2012; Kock, Josiassen & Assaf, 2016; Park & Njite, 2010; Whang, Yong & Ko, 2016). Half of the studies evaluated failed to specify whether image affected satisfaction or revisit rates. Previous studies have indicated that image positively and directly affected upon tourist revisit intentions (Chew & Jahari, 2014). On the other hand, a few studies reported that indirect effects of image on revisit intention through a mediator (Stylidis, Shani & Belhassen, 2017). This indicates a need to understand the various perceptions of a country and a destination that exist among tourist revisit intentions. At present, it could be argued that the overall understanding between the relationship of the sequence country and destination image affects overall satisfaction and this in turn affects tourists' revisit rates.

The aim of this study was to shine new light on the debate through an examination of the relationship between country image and destination image. Moreover, this research seeks to contribute to this growing area of research by exploring consequences between image, satisfaction and intention to revisit. These major results have important managerial implications for the key stakeholders. The public and private sectors can generate strategies for improving destinations. National committees can plan marketing strategies to Thailand as a country context. Furthermore, the model tested can make advances and fill the academic gap of tourism scholars.

This paper has been divided into four parts. The first section of the paper deals with literature review regarding concepts of country and destination image. Furthermore, the tourist satisfaction and intention to return concepts are also briefly discussed in the first section. Then, the second section explains the research method. In the third section, the result and hypotheses testing are shown. Finally, the conclusion including discussion, limitations, and suggestions of the research are presented in the fourth section.

Literature review

A considerable amount of literature has been published on tourism image stating that country and destination image both significantly affect tourists' decisions. If the images are good, they can attract tourists to visit. Destination image can illustrate numerous levels including town, region and country. When the destination is a country, such as the Vatican City, Monaco, Singapore, Maldives, can the destination image be replaced by the country image? Destination image has been conceptualised by several means, as soon as destination image



in a country context has not been independently defined in the academic area (Zhang, Xu, Leung & Cai, 2016). Moreover, destination image and country image are two different paradigms but with many overlapping concepts especially when a country is a destination (Nadeau, Heslop, O'Reilly & Luk, 2008; Zhang et al., 2016).

In recent years, a growing body of literature has investigated, theoretically discussed and empirically tested the relationship between country and destination image and concluded that these two constructs are usually linked but are different (Martinez & Alvarez, 2010; Nadeau et al., 2008; Zhang et al., 2016). On the one side, the two are consistent in the spatial measure of image object (i.e. country) and overlap in measurement. Despite the accepted significance of destination image, country image has not been well investigated and affirmed in different countries and different destination contexts (Martinez & Alvarez, 2010).

Destination image has become a broadly visited topic throughout the tourism industry (Kislali, Kavartzis & Saren, 2016) and is normally agreed upon as a key factor in effective tourism management (Camprubi, Guia & Comas, 2013; Sun, Chi & Xu, 2013). It has been stated, "As the perception of individual destination attributes and the holistic impression made by the destination" (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). Moreover, destination image encourages tourists in decision-making, destination managers need to recognise the tourists' opinion of a destination image in order to be able to communicate the actual product to tourists (Chew & Jahari, 2014; De Nisco et al., 2015; Frias, Rodriguez, Castaneda, Sabiote & Buhalis, 2012; Jalilvand et al., 2012).

However, much of the scope of the study on destination image has examined content such as attraction, city, state, and country, where a complex image was supported to modify by autonomous destination image formation (Tasci & Gartner, 2007). An amount of studies has investigated tourism at different levels, from a tourist attraction level (Iordanova, 2014; S. Lee & Bai, 2016), a city level (Stylos et al., 2016), a state level (Tan, 2016; Tan & Wu, 2016), and a country level (Ketter, 2016; Kock et al., 2016; Pike, 2016).

Numerous studies have found that country image was used to investigate a model in research into the tourism area (Palau-Saumell et al., 2016; Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009). Country image is advocated as the "impact that generalizations and perceptions about a country have on a person's evaluations of the country's products and/or brands" (Nebenzahl, Jaffe & Lampert, 1997: 28). Recently, the study of De Nisco et al. (2015) supported the existence of a "hierarchical relationship" between the constructs of the general image of a country, with the prior being a significant antecedent of the latter. Cognitive and affective country image have been identified as major contributing factors for this study. The cognitive country image meant education level, quality of life, wealth, and technology level. Whilst, the affective country image meant a safe environment, pleasant place, and friendly and trustworthy people (De Nisco et al., 2015; Elliot, Papadopoulos & Kim, 2011).

In terms of global competitive destinations, country image is one of the most important factors of consideration when tourists choose a destination (Park & Njite, 2010; Stepchenkova & Mills, 2010). Country image needs to have positive features because a more general country image can lead to improved tourists' perceptions of the country (Martinez & Alvarez, 2010). According to the Ministry of Tourism and Sport in Thailand (2015), the campaign "Amazing Thailand (Rebranding)" was launched to promote the tourism industry that focuses on a unique local experience, authenticity, content marketing, and preferred destination. Thailand is the second biggest country in South East Asia and geographically divided into four regions: 1) Northern region which focuses on culture attractions and the creative Lanna intellect; 2) North Eastern region which focuses on the modern way of life and Mekong River tourism; 3) Central region which focuses on history and culture tourism and world heritage sites; and 4) Southern region which focuses on world class destinations based on internationalism variety area and active beaches. A few of studies have examined country and destination image in Thailand.



An example of analysis of the destination image in Thailand was carried out by Tavitiyaman and Qu (2013). They examined tourists' behaviour of those who visited the capital city of Thailand, Bangkok. Detailed examination of the dimensions of the destination image showed as follows in importance: cultural and natural attractions, convenience and transportation, local and shopping facilities, and the quality of hotels and restaurants. They found that only cultural and natural attractions and quality of hotels and restaurants significantly influenced overall satisfaction. To better understand the dimensions of the image of Thailand, destination images are a mixture of both positive and negative images; if Thailand is linked with destinations that are viewed equally attractive to the tourists, the one that has negative images will possibly be the one that they kept away from (Henkel et al., 2006; McDowall & Choi, 2010; Tavitiyaman & Qu, 2013). Moreover, the image represents the destination that is attractive to a tourist, Thailand should consider the various areas in Thailand that affect the destination image. There are many areas in Thailand that academics need to consider regarding the measurements of country and destination image in the context of Thailand.

There is no consensus among country and destination image. Nadeau et al. (2008) investigated the relationship between country and destination image within the broader country image context. The country and people character dimensions were defined as the tourist's opinions regarding the country and its citizens, this categorized a direct relationship of people and country character with destination image. In the study of Elliot et al. (2011), they identified integrated models of country and destination images. Their results exposed that destination was positively affected by cognitive country image. Zeugner-Roth and Zabkar (2015) developed a model of country and destination image to assess the relative importance of tourists' behavioural intention.

By drawing on the concept of country and destination image, there is an ambiguous relationship between country and destination image. When the country is a tourist destination, the situation becomes more complicated. One study by Palau-Saumell et al. (2016) used country image: country character and people character dimensions, to describe the relationship between country and destination image. They identified that people and country character positively affected destination image. Moreover, the difference between countries demonstrated the difference of the outcomes. In Spain, the peoples' character leads to destination image, while country character did not affect destination image. This was dissimilar to the Mexico where people and country character affected the destination image together.

Country and destination image are important factors in the tourism sector that tourists', especially international tourists, will determine when selecting a destination. Nevertheless, while there is a lot of literature on destination image, there are not many studies regarding country and destination image (Martinez & Alvarez, 2010; Palau-Saumell et al., 2016). Therefore, as a final set of relationships, we propose the following hypothesis:

H₁. Country image directly and positively influences destination image.

To better understand the relationship of image and its effects, Palau-Saumell et al. (2016) Palau-Saumell et al. (2016) analysed and found that the image was positively linked with both satisfaction and behavioural intention. Several attempted but few have related destination image and overall satisfaction (Maghsoodi Tilaki, Hedayati Marzbali, Abdullah & Bahaiddin, 2016; Palau-Saumell et al., 2016; Wu, 2016). The results substantiated influences in the earlier studies on the similar topic that destination image is closely connected to satisfaction. If the destination had a good image, tourists' satisfaction and intention to return would increase (Cheng & Lu, 2013; Chiu, Zeng & Cheng, 2016; Kani, Aziz, Sambasivan & Bojei, 2017; Phillips, Wolfe, Hodur & Leistriz, 2013). Based on the above arguments and empirical finding, we set the following hypotheses.

H₂. Country image directly and positively influences overall satisfaction.

- H₃. Country image directly and positively influences revisit intention.*
H₄. Destination image directly and positively influences overall satisfaction.
H₅. Destination image directly and positively influences revisit intention.

The relationship between satisfaction and return to destination has been widely investigated (S.-H. Kim, Holland & Han, 2013; Puig & Ming, 2017; Wang & Hsu, 2010). If tourists are satisfied, they will be encouraged in revisiting the destination and recommend it to others. This view supported by C.-M. Chen, Lin, and Chiu (2016) reported that there is no significant difference in effect between overall satisfaction and intention to return. They described the role of satisfaction as a defining tourist loyalty towards the destination about international tourists that visited South Korea. A study with an aim to examine behaviours of tourists travelling by Maghsoodi Tilaki et al. (2016) and Su, Hsu and Swanson (2017) explained that tourist satisfaction directly and significantly affects their revisit. Thus, as a final set of relationship, we propose the following hypothesis:

- H₆. Overall satisfaction directly and positively influences revisit intention.*

Overall, these studies highlight the need for developing the causal relationship. This study is designed to examine the direct effect and the mediating roles of satisfaction on the relationships between country and destination image and intention to return a destination (See Figure 1).

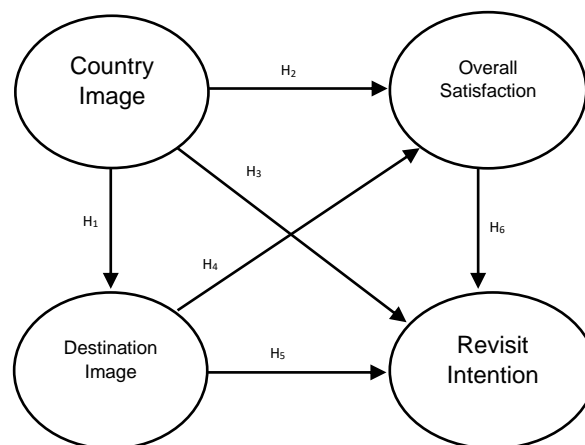


Figure 1. Research model
(Source: Author, 2019)

Methods

Based on the aim of this research, the target population was western travellers visiting Phuket. The data that was retrieved from the Department of Tourism in Thailand website, and it exposed that Phuket had 1,459,743 travellers comprising travelers from three key countries: Germany, Australia, and the UK, in 2018 (Department of Tourism in Thailand, 2018). The number of the population studied constituted over half of the total number of western travellers visiting Phuket. Furthermore, random systematic sampling was applied. A survey was collected in front of the arrival gate at Phuket International Airport with every fifth tourist (n+5) waiting in the departure area before leaving Phuket. However, to ensure diversity, data was collected from not more than 30 passengers from the same flight. The survey was made over one month from November 15 to December 15, 2018. Overall 500 questionnaires were carried out and 500 of them were returned on-site. After removing missing answers, a total of 409 questionnaires were coded for data analysis. The number of selected questionnaires was



deemed sufficient and effective for with structural equation model analysis (Hair, Anderson, Babin & Anderson, 2010). The traveller's information of respondents is shown in Table 1.

The design of the questionnaires was based on English and German versions for this study. Back-translation is also referred to as double translation. This process requires the use of at least two bilingual interpreters, who work in the tourism and hospitality industry. The original version and translated version were checked for discrepancies. Any incongruities identified are discussed with the interpreters, and a consensus was reached. The research instrument to measure each variable was adapted from previous studies. It has been acknowledged that country image has both people's characteristic dimensions and the country's characteristic dimensions. We measured the people's characteristic component using six items that were developed by Nadeau et al. (2008). For the country characteristic dimension, six items were adapted from Nadeau et al. (2008). Destination image was measured through six items based on research conducted by Prayag and Ryan (2012), Park and Njite (2010) and D. Kim and Perdue (2011). Overall satisfaction was measured through three items that were borrowed from Su et al. (2017). Intention to return was measured through a total three items on the basis of contributions provided by Wang and Hsu (2010) and Tosun et al. (2015). All scale items were measured with seven-point Likert-type scales ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Table 1 Traveller's information

	Frequency (n = 409)	Percentage
Nationality		
Australian	132	32.3
United of Kingdom	151	36.9
German	126	30.8
Gender		
Male	205	50.1
Female	204	49.9
Age		
18 - 27 years old	94	23.0
28 - 37 years old	120	29.3
38 - 47 years old	82	20.0
47 - 57 years old	69	16.9
Over 57 years old	44	10.8
Education		
Lower than Bachelor's Degree	66	16.1
Bachelor's Degree	189	46.2
Master Degree	120	29.3
More than Bachelor's Degree	34	8.3
Occupation		
Government	39	9.5
Business owner	106	25.9
Employee	219	53.5
Other	45	11.0
Marital status		
Single	177	43.3
Marriage	195	47.7
Other	37	9.0

The researchers then carried out an analysis on descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation coefficient. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to identify the dimensionality and internal consistency for each construct. Reliability and validity of the instruments were tested. Next, the structural equation modelling approach was examined to test the empirical data of this study as well as the results concerning direct, indirect, and overall effect. The maximum likelihood technique was used to evaluate the measurement model and structural model. Commonly used model fit indices were investigated for model fit.



Results

The confirmatory factor analysis ensured construct reliability and validity. Model fit adequacy was evaluated by various fit indices as suggested by Hair et al. (2010). The results obtained from the preliminary analysis of CFA are presented: $\chi^2 = 648.772$ (p-value < .001), $df = 242$, CFI = 0.913, TLI = 0.901, RMSEA = 0.075, SRMR = 0.047. The measurement model of fit indices showed reasonably well, as values of the fit indices were above the model standard suggested by Hair et al. (2010) ($\chi^2/df < 3$, CFI > .90, TLI > .90, RMSEA < .07). Table 2 presents the summary statistics for CFA. Moreover, all factor loading coefficients of each item were above 0.50. Cronbach's α ranged from 0.807 to 0.913, suggesting that all latent measures were adequately reliable.

Results from the average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR) which ranged from 0.40 – 0.71 and 0.80 – 0.89, respectively also indicated the convergent validity of the constructs. According to Hair et al. (2010), acceptable CR must be over 0.70, and AVE over 0.50. Even though it was revealed that AVE of the destination image was equivalent to 0.40 which is out of the acceptable range, AVE of less than 0.50 but more than 0.40 with CR of more than 0.60 are still in accordance with the acceptable value, confirming adequate convergence validity of the variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Based on the above results, it was determined that the scales were necessarily reliable and valid. In addition, table 3 shows an overview of mean, standard deviation, and Pearson's correlation. There existed a positive correlation between all constructs at a significance level of 0.001. While Pearson's correlation coefficient ranged from 0.493 to 0.755, the square correlation coefficient between any pair of constructs was not greater than 0.85 therefore it was meaningful that there was no sign of multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 2 Confirmatory factor analysis

Variable	Factor loading	Cronbach's α	AVE	CR
Country image : People's characteristic		0.913	0.58	0.89
1. well-mannered	0.763			
2. reliable	0.741			
3. smiling	0.775			
4. service-mind	0.782			
5. polite	0.755			
6. welcoming	0.744			
Country image : Country's characteristic		0.906	0.56	0.89
1. right and freedoms	0.717			
2. amazing	0.752			
3. economic stability	0.750			
4. control of environment	0.770			
5. technology for travel and tourism	0.786			
6. political stability	0.735			
Destination image		0.807	0.40	0.80
1. beautiful beaches	0.642			
2. enjoyable water sports	0.653			
3. appetizing local cuisine	0.612			
4. decent accommodations	0.664			
5. various shopping options	0.597			
6. proper nightlife and entertainment	0.632			
Satisfaction		0.892	0.71	0.88
1. Experience in Phuket has fulfilled my expectation.	0.829			
2. At the moment, I am satisfied with my visit to Phuket.	0.896			
3. Overall, I am satisfied with my visit to Phuket.	0.805			
Revisit intention		0.814	0.51	0.75
1. I will visit Phuket again in the future.	0.838			
2. I will visit Phuket more often.	0.722			
3. Phuket will be my most preferred destination.	0.548			



Table 3 Mean, standard deviation, and Pearson's correlation

		Mean	S.D.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(1)	People's characteristic	5.82	0.974	1			
(2)	Thailand's characteristic	5.60	0.950	.755***	1		
(3)	Destination image	5.67	0.794	.581***	.658***	1	
(4)	Satisfaction	5.77	1.100	.718***	.608***	.580***	1
(5)	Revisit intention	5.44	1.144	.502***	.524***	.493***	.637***

As the structural model was tested, the overall fit of the structural model presented as follows: $\chi^2 = 648.772$ ($p < .001$), $df = 242$, $\chi^2/df = 2.68$, CFI = 0.913, TLI = 0.901, SRMR = 0.047, RMSEA = 0.075. These fit indices suggested that the structural model was acceptable and encouraged a well model fit (Hair et al., 2010). Table 4 and Figure 2 provided the results obtained from the causal path analysis. The parameter estimates from structural model showed a significant causal relationship of the proposed model. Namely, country image played a significant role to destination image and overall satisfaction; that is, empirical findings reported strongly related destination image ($\beta = 0.766$, $p < .001$) and overall satisfaction ($\beta = 0.675$, $p < .001$), providing support to H₁ and H₂. The effects between country image and intention to return found that country image did not directly affect revisit intention ($\beta = -0.117$, $p > .05$). For this reason, the third hypothesis was rejected. The path between destination image and overall satisfaction was not significant ($\beta = 0.142$, $p > .05$) but the causal relationship between destination image and revisit intention was significant ($\beta = 0.263$, $p < .01$). The fourth hypothesis was rejected, whereas the fifth hypothesis was supported. Finally, overall image highly impacted on revisit intention ($\beta = 0.739$, $p < .001$). Therefore, the sixth hypothesis was supported.

The mediating effects in this were considered as the products of standardised path coefficients of the predictor – mediator - outcome path. The paths from country image to overall satisfaction mediating destination image was not significant (pathway: country image – destination image – overall satisfaction) ($\beta = 0.109$, $p > .05$). Results showed that destination image positively mediated the relationship between country image and revisit intention (pathway: country image – destination image – revisit intention) ($\beta = 0.201$, $p < .01$). Moreover, the path from country image to intention to return via overall satisfaction was significant (pathway: country image – overall satisfaction – revisit intention) ($\beta = 0.499$, $p < .01$). However, destination image and overall satisfaction did not mediate the relationship between country image and revisit intention (pathway: country image – destination image – overall satisfaction – revisit intention) ($\beta = 0.081$, $p > .05$). Finally, the study was not found to have an indirect effect between destination image and revisit intention (pathway: destination image – overall satisfaction – revisit intention) ($\beta = 0.105$, $p > .05$). Regarding the R₂, they were rather high for the three constructs (respectively 58.7%, 62.3%, and 70.3%)

Table 4 Direct, indirect, and total effects

Independent	Dependent		
	Destination image	Overall satisfaction	Revisit intention
Country image	DE	0.766***	0.675***
	ID		-0.117
			0.201** ¹
Destination image		-	0.499** ²
	TE	0.766***	0.081 ³
	DE		0.664
	ID		0.263**
Overall satisfaction	TE		0.142
	DE		0.368***
	ID		0.739***
	TE		-
			0.739***
R ²	0.587	0.623	0.703

Model fit: $\chi^2 = 648.772$ ***, $df = 242$, CFI = 0.913, TLI = 0.901, SRMR = 0.047, RMSEA = 0.075

Remark: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

1 = Destination image, 2 = Overall satisfaction, 3 = Destination image and Overall satisfaction

DE = Direct effect, ID = Indirect effect, TE = Total effect

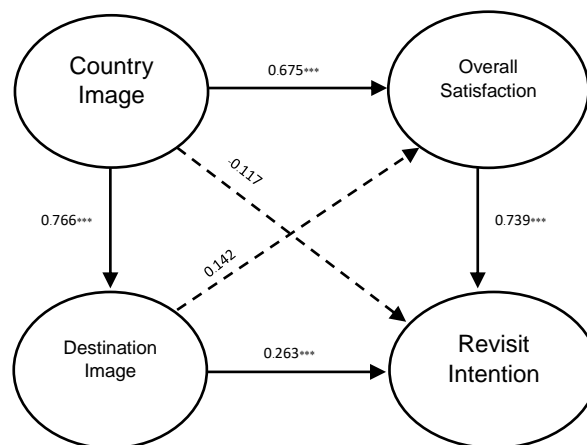


Figure 2. Results of the structural model
(Source: Author, 2019)

Conclusion and discussion

The importance of image in a country as a destination is supported by tourists' decisions. The good image of a country can lead tourists to a destination. Moreover, country and destination image can significantly provide a good experience in a destination. This study set out with the aim of assessing the importance of country and destination image and its effect in Phuket as a destination in Thailand as a country context.

From this analysis, there were two concepts of image. There were significant differences between country image and destination image. This study confirmed Nadeau et al. (2008) and Elliot et al. (2011), who explained the difference in constructs between country image and destination image. Moreover, the observed dissimilarities between country and destination image in this research was significant. The country image positively affected destination image, which supports the prior study by (Palau-Saumell et al., 2016). The country image influenced destination image. Additionally, the country and destination images are crucial factors to attracting tourists (Palau-Saumell et al., 2016). It is encouraging to compare this result with that found by Zhang, Wu and Buhalis (2018) who found international tourists perceived a variety of characteristics of a country destination, which relate to the expectations that tourists have. For a better understanding, country and destination image represent a strong correlation between country and destination characteristics with tourist needs. Both the images could regard tourists' experience and tourists' perception about the ability of country destination to converge with their expectation. So, country image and destination image were correlated in an international tourism context.

Further analysis provided unexpected results and showed that country image was not directly significant on revisit intention but found that it indirectly affects it through mediators. Some previous research concluded that country image or destination image directly affected intention to revisit while others shown indirect effect between the images and tourists return to a destination. These results showed that destination image mediated the relationship between country image and revisit intention. Moreover, overall satisfaction mediated the indirect relationship between country image and revisit intention. These findings are in agreement with Chew and Jahari (2014) which showed that destination image is as a key mediator. Destination image, a significant mediating role, can exert better play on tourist behaviours. Comparable results were proposed by tourism scholars, which reported that overall satisfaction is the key mediating variable to lead tourist revisit intention (Maghsoodi



Tilaki et al., 2016; Wu, 2016). Such results suggested that overall satisfaction induced the actions of tourists' to return and recommend the destination to others (Chew & Jahari, 2014; Giraldi & Cesareo, 2014; Qu et al., 2011; Stylos et al., 2016; Tan & Wu, 2016; Tosun et al., 2015).

This study contributes in completing existing research gaps, specifically to better understanding of the body of knowledge in tourism by investigating the influence of country and destination images and its effects. The research has analysed the sequence between images, satisfaction and tourists' revisit intention. This process concludes in more precise and positive destination perceptions, which meet the tourists' expectations and characteristics of destination. The theoretical implication confirmed that the construct of country image and destination image are different and that they need to be thoroughly considered by tourism scholars. The country image can provide good experience for international tourists that might lead to return to a destination.

According to the study, destination image is an important mediator, which has been understood. Destination image plays a mediating role in the relationship which still suffers from a limited number of studies. Moreover, the investigation showed the relationship between satisfaction and revisit intentions. It was a surprise when it was seen that overall satisfaction can lead a country image to revisit intentions. This is the first time that country image has been used to explain as a predictor on tourists' future behaviour. It can clearly help academics understand the relationship between tourists and destination. These outputs make a key contribution to practical implications in private and public sectors in Phuket as a destination and Thailand as a country.

This research has key practical applications regarding country image and destination image. They are justified to be significant factors that affect the international tourism context. Firstly, some destinations have only one organisation to respond to their image, but this is not the case in Thailand. It points to not only the National Tourism Marketing Organization, namely Tourism Authority of Thailand - TAT, that manage country image, but also Destination Marketing Organization, namely Tourism Development Committee for Andaman Tourism Development Area that manage destination image. They need to cooperate with the level of image in the same way. Coordinating with the marketing organisations may find campaigns that focus on repeat tourists more effective than first-time tourists.

Secondly, country image and destination image are established to be considerable factors to promote destination in Thailand. The TAT's attempts and ability of the country are also advantageous to design a good country image with international tourists in mind. There are many branches of TAT located in western countries. Each office could help each other to communicate the destinations in Thailand. Moreover, destination marketers can promote the image in the area. There are good opportunities to be a choice for tourists. Therefore, TAT and destination marketers should advertise tourism by not only improving the country image, but also the destination image that characterizes Thailand as a unique country.

Thirdly, there is a strong causal relationship between country image, overall satisfaction and revisit intention. Destination management organisations like TAT should not only remain concerned with country image, but rather emphasize overall satisfaction, especially for those destinations relying on revisit tourists. It is crucial to appoint tourists' satisfaction that can help a destination manager to develop the tourism products and services. At the same time, the destination manager should focus on the tourists' experience. This can indicate destination management organizations managing the overall tourists' satisfaction. In the tourism sector, the predictors of tourists' revisit intention might be dissimilar from common marketing because they hope to sightsee new destinations. Although if they are extremely satisfied with the destination, they will come back to the original destination.



The current research was specifically designed to evaluate western travellers and other cultures were not considered and the results were thus limited to the context. The study did not assess the frequency of people visiting Thailand and the destinations as these factors affected the country and destination image or the causal model. This study tested overall satisfaction as a mediator. However, more research on this topic needs to be undertaken before the association between image in tourism and behavioural intention is more clearly understood. In future investigations, it might be possible to use different mediators to examine the relationship between country and destination image to revisit intention. The results can help us to better understand the process of tourists' decision to revisit. Moreover, western tourists were the significant target group in Phuket, Thailand. Future studies on the current topic, could be interesting if a new market whose national backgrounds are diverse and thus different from the informants in this study.

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