The Measurement of Destination Image: Scale Development and Validation

Ajit Kumar Singh
Associate Professor, UITHM Chandigarh University, India
Email: ajitkumar.uithm@cumail.in
Pankaj Kumar Tyagi
Assistant Professor, AITT Amity University Uttar Pradesh, India
Email: pankajtyagi@amity.edu
Alka Maheshwari
Associate Professor, AITT Amity University Uttar Pradesh, India
Email: amaheshwari@amity.edu

Abstract:

Image plays an important role while selecting tourist destinations. This research aims to examine destination image , in order to construct a scale to measure destination image. Data was collected through two different surveys from the respective sample size of 195 each. It revolves around a process of meticulous scale development, two-dimensional 20 item model is developed. Overall fit statistical indices depicts how the probable model is statistically significant and reproduces the sample covariance matrix reasonably well.

Keywords: Destination , Image, Scale development, Validation, Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

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Introduction

Over the last few years , tourism industry has become an important sector of the global economy, not only because of its significant contribution to the GDP , but also because of the employment generation (Lopes, 2011). Dichter,(1985) , suggested that " image is not only a person's qualities or traits but also the total impression an entity makes on the minds of others." How a tourist destination is perceived in the market is a factor which is capable of highly influencing the decision of tourists while choosing a destination (Lopes, 2011). Although the product image is always been a powerful tool for the purchasing process, it is only in recent times that the tourism industry has understood its role & importance in the travel decision process (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). The primary aim of the paper is simply to establish a reliable as well as valid scale which measure destination image from specific tourism market. This paper tends to identify different factors and variables which are associated with destination image , and secondly to develop a measurement scale which gives consistent result.

Literature Review

Destination image plays an integral factor for the selection of any tourist destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). It is a multidimensional concept (Hallmann et al., 2015) , and considered an important for efficient tourism destination development and marketing (Tasci & Gartner, 2007). Destination branding is significant in industry & academia. However, literature on this concept is fairly restricted (Qu et al., 2011). The reason for visiting any destination is best determined through the salience perception of any destination instead of how the destination is generally perceived (C. C. Chenet al., 2015). The destination image can positively influence a tourists behavioral intentions too. (Byon & Zhang, 2010a). Stylos examined the relation that exists between the tourists behavioral intention and the destination image. A study indicated that there is

definitely a correlation between holistic destination image with someone choosing to revisit to a destination.

For measurement of destination image, there are several components which must be considered are holistic impressions, along with attributes such as based images and functional, psychological, unique and common characteristics (Ritchie, 1993). Factors such as Heritage Attractions, Destination Safety & Cleanness, Infrastructure & Facilities, Atmosphere, Natural Made Attractions, Rejuvenation, Service Price and Affordability, Friendly Local Community & Clam (Rajesh, 2013) are known to have an impact on destination image. Tourist behavior is majorly influenced by a combination of unique, cognitive and affective components of the destination instead of distinct image components (Qu et al., 2011). Destination personality & image are interrelated concepts (Hosany et al., 2006), therefore a destination for tourists must establish a strong brand image among the people (Qu et al., 2011). This will lead to attract new tourists and also increase repeat visitors (Qu et al. 2011).

Zhang et al. (2014), proposed a framework in which 14 different hypothesis were developed. Study depicts how an image of a tourist destination can impacts a tourist's loyalty in a way which is significant, cognitive as well as affective image of a destination.

C. F. Chen & Tsai, (2007) , found in a study that destination image directly or indirectly impacts the tourist's behavioral intentions.

Byon & Zhang, (2010) , develop a four factor , 18 item destination image scale assess tourist destination image which affects consumption related to tourism. They used four steps for developing this model : literature review , formulating a scale that is preliminary, analyzing a factor that is confirmatory , and examination of predictive validity via modeling analysis using structural equation.

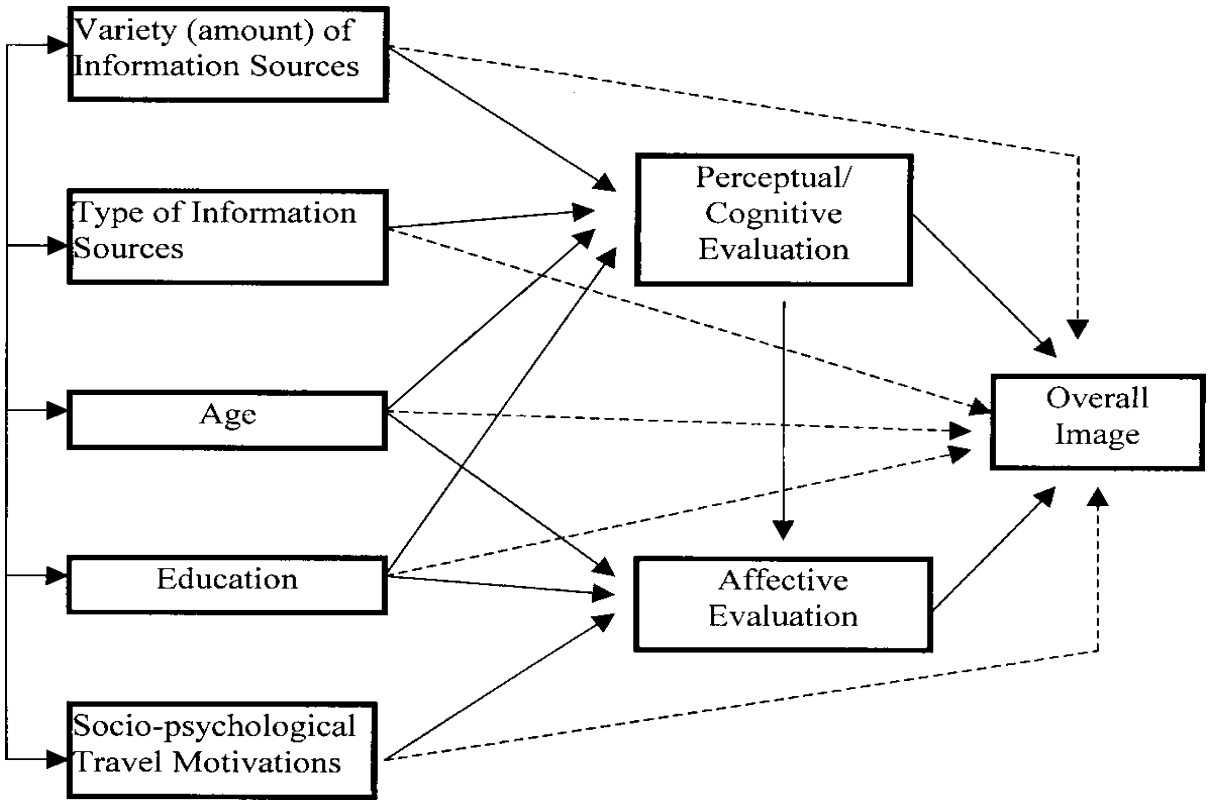
Tsaur et al.(2016) , developed a scale and identified five constructs to measure brand identity i.e. destination image, quality, awareness, personality, and culture.

Kumar & Nayak, (2018) , developed a scale to measure destination personality in India. Atwo stage study was conducted after which six factors were identified for destination personality. These factors are vibrancy, courteousness, conformity, viciousness, liveliness, and tranquility.

Stylidis et al., (2014) , considered the cognitive as well as effective components which were used to evaluate images of any destination. The component of cognition refers to person's beliefs knowledge regarding a place that help in formulation of an internally acceptable imaginative picture of a destination (Baloglu & Mccleary, 1999 ; Pike & Ryan, 2004). Affective component is an individual's emotional response & feelings regarding a destination (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997 ; Shani & Wang, 2011) .

Baloglu and Mc Cleary, (1999) , proposed a model which included various determinants of a tourism destination image shown in Fig 1**.** The straight lines which are connecting the exogenous to endogenous variables are used to denote paths which are not only hypothesized but tested as well, the dashed lines signify paths (effects) which are tested and not hypothesized to examine the overall pattern of the model. They also conclude that countries which seek to enhance tourism should consider the characteristics of the market segment and personalise their image development.

Figure 1 : Path model of the determinants of tourism destination image.



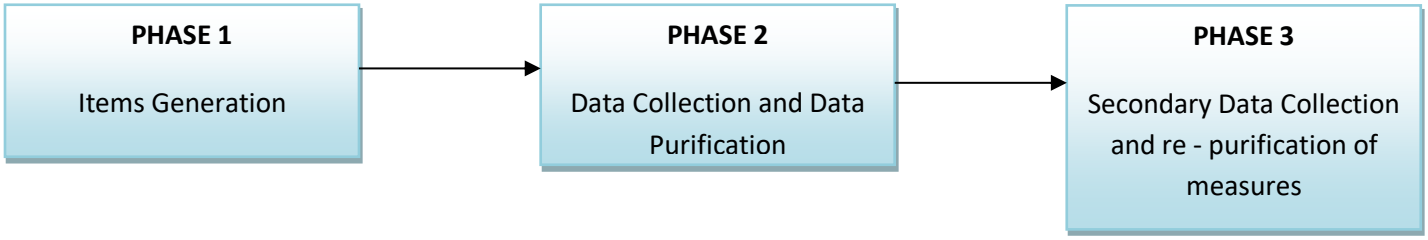
Source: Baloglu, S. and McCleary, K.W. (1999) A Model of Destination Image Formation Annals of Tourism Research, 26, P- 871, 868-897.

A review of literature show an image is an important factor , and plays and vital for the selection of tourist destinations. However, there is limited literature available, which resulted in the development of a valid scale which is used to measure destination image of a tourist destinations.

Research Methodology

Developing a scale and validation guidelines were adopted which was first recommended by Churchill, (1979) and Tsaur et al.,(2010) . The overall process involves developing and validating tourist perception which is divided into three phases. Phase one is generating items, the next phase involves data collection & purification , finally phase three includes secondary data collection and re-purification. Three phases in tourist perception scale development is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Flow chart of scale development.



Source: Partially adopted from Churchill, 1979

IBM- SPSS Version 20 and IBM - AMOS Version 20 are used to conduct data analysis. Qualitative as well as quantitative methods are used for developing our scale. In the first phase, we have collected our first sample and the items went through assessment to validate content. Secondly, EFA or exploratory factor analysis and reliability test was performed. In the third phase, CFA or confirmatory factor analysis & validation test was conducted for other samples to finalize the model of measurement.

Integration of item and assessment of content validity

The literature review resulted in the generation of initial pool of 23 suitable items. Items were assessed for validity of content through two separate panels. The first panel comprised of 12 tourism industry professionals who were requested to correlate every item with one construct that the item best indicated. Secondly, construct was put in front of 08 eminent faculty members of tourism and hospitality to review how well the construct is defining each item. Based on comments given by the panel there were three items were not included in the pool of items which resulted in total of 20 items.

Purifying measures and collecting data

Data for research was collected through convenience sampling method in between 17 - 24 October 2019. Tourists of Bodhgaya, Rajgir, Nalanda, Patna and Vaishali region of Bihar (India) were approached and requested to be part of the study to participate in the study. For the cognitive component of a tourist destination five point Likert scale (1 represents Very Poor , 2 represents Poor , 3 represents Fair , 4 represents Good , 5 represents Very Good) is used for affective component , Semantic differential scale (Boring - Lively , Sleepy - Lively , Unpleasant - Pleasant , Distressing - Relaxing) is used. Near about 312 stakeholders were contacted in total, 227 said yes to participating in the study. After removing 22 unfinished questionnaire, 195 questionnaires were taken under consideration, resulting an average response rate of approximately of 62.5 %. The respondents profile (Sample one) are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 : Profile of Participants - Sample One and Two		
VARIABLES	**Sample One (n= 195)**	**Sample Two(n= 195)**
Gender		
Male	158	138
Female	37	57
Age		
18-25	172	121
26-35	11	29
36-45	6	14
Above 45	6	31
Educational Qualification		
Undergraduate	156	132
Graduate	15	35
Post Graduate	18	23
Doctoral degree and above	6	5
Occupation		
Servvice	20	67
Business	7	29
Self employed	7	32
Other	161	67
Total Annual Income		
Less than 250000	135	98
Rs 250001 - 500000	26	56
Rs 500001- 1000000	11	24
More than Rs 1000000	23	17
Nationality		
Indian	193	189
Other than Indian	2	6

To measure whether the sample size is adequate and appropriate we performed Exploratory Factor Analysis , Kaiser Mayer Olkin (KMO) (Kaiser, 1970). The result depicts that KMO value is .957 and Bartlett's Sphericity Test is .000, which shows sampling adequacy for our study and significant relationship between our variables. Principal Component method in Exploratory Factory Analysis and Eigen value is greater than 1 is used to extract our factors. Figure 2, shows two factors whose Eigen value is greater than 1 and, Principal Component Matrix shown in Table 2 , depicts that these two factors are explaining 65.52 percentage of variance in the study.

Figure 2: Scree Plot showing Eigen value and component number

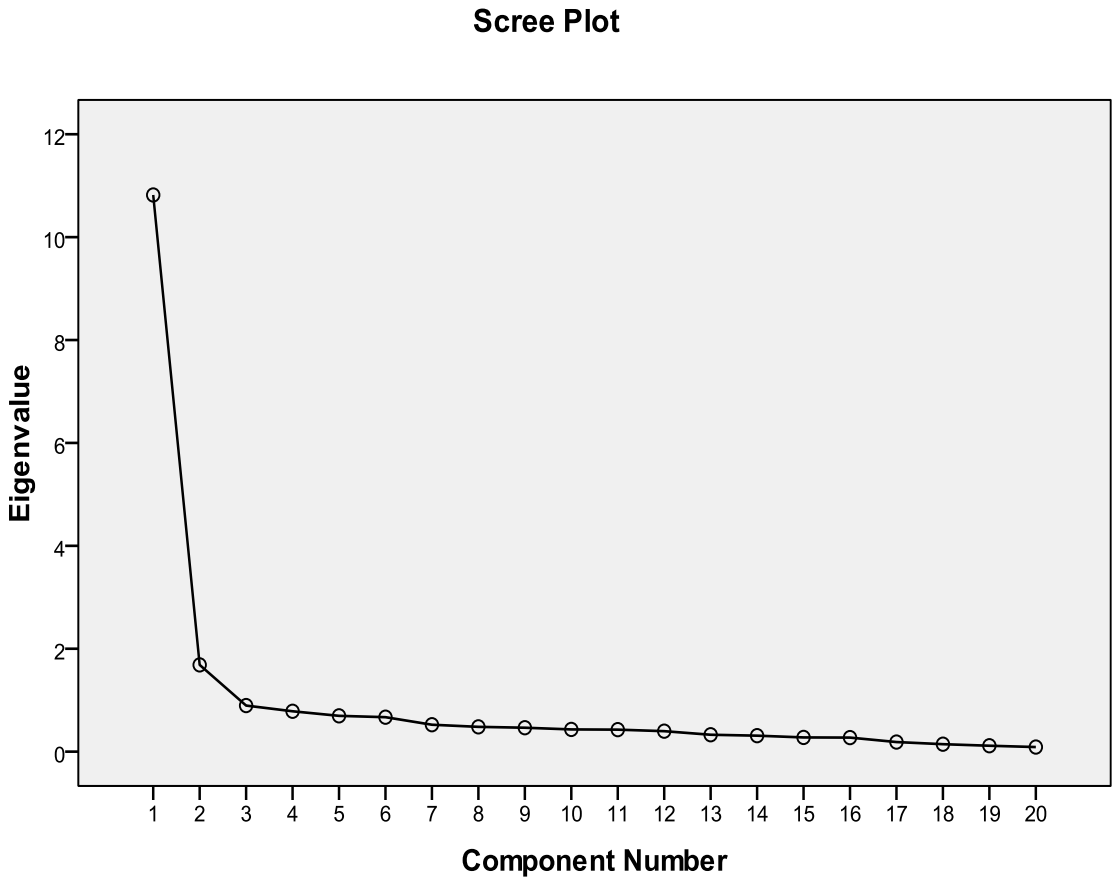


Table 2 : Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings[a]
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	10.819	54.096	54.096	10.819	54.096	54.096	10.173
2	1.686	8.430	62.526	1.686	8.430	62.526	8.046
3	.896	4.478	67.004				
4	.785	3.923	70.926				
5	.696	3.479	74.405				
6	.670	3.348	77.753				
7	.523	2.615	80.369				
8	.482	2.409	82.777				
9	.465	2.324	85.101				
10	.432	2.159	87.260				
11	.427	2.137	89.397				
12	.398	1.989	91.386				
13	.328	1.641	93.028				
14	.310	1.552	94.579				
15	.276	1.381	95.960				
16	.273	1.365	97.325				
17	.186	.932	98.256				
18	.145	.724	98.981				
19	.115	.574	99.554				
20	.089	.446	100.000				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. When components are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

Table 2 : Total Variance Explained

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In order to avoid cross- loading variables we have done Promax (Oblique) rotation. The item which showed a loading score less than .40 were not included in the analysis (Ford et al., 1986) . On the basis of rotation matrix and value of factors loading, 20 variables and two factors are extracted. Factors are having Cronbach's Alpha Value more than .70.

Secondary Data Collection and re - purification of measures

Churchill, recommended in his study that if a secondary questionnaire is conducted then prior to that there should be simplifying and analysis of items with different set of samples. Data was collected through convenience sampling method in 01 - 11 December 2019. Tourist from Bodhgaya, Rajgir, Patna, Nalanda and Vaishali region of Bihar (India) , were approached . 298 stakeholders were approached in total, and 248 said yes to participating in the study. After removing 53 incomplete questionnaire, 195 were taken under consideration, resulting an average response rate of approximately of 65.4 %. The respondents profile (Sample two) are shown in Table 1. Used for the verification of construct validity and reliability of the model, Confirmatory Factor Analysis is used for parameter estimation (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1993) . Reliability of variables within each factors are calculated with the help of Cronbach's alpha. Alpha value more than .7 shows internal consistency of variables within each factor. For convergent validity we have computed Average Variance Extracted (AVEs) and Composite Reliability . AVEs value above .5 and CR value above .7 indicates Convergent Validity. Table 2 depicts the 2 dimension , 20 items,confirmatory factor analysis results of sample 2. Table 3, shows component correlation matrix. This matrix is used to calculate Discriminant validity. In this case the AVE or average variance extracted value is larger than square of inter constructs correlation, which shows Discriminant validity . Figure 2, shows the overall covariance measurement model of our scale.

Table 3 : Component Correlation Matrix

Component	1	2
1	1	0.658
2	0.658	1

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

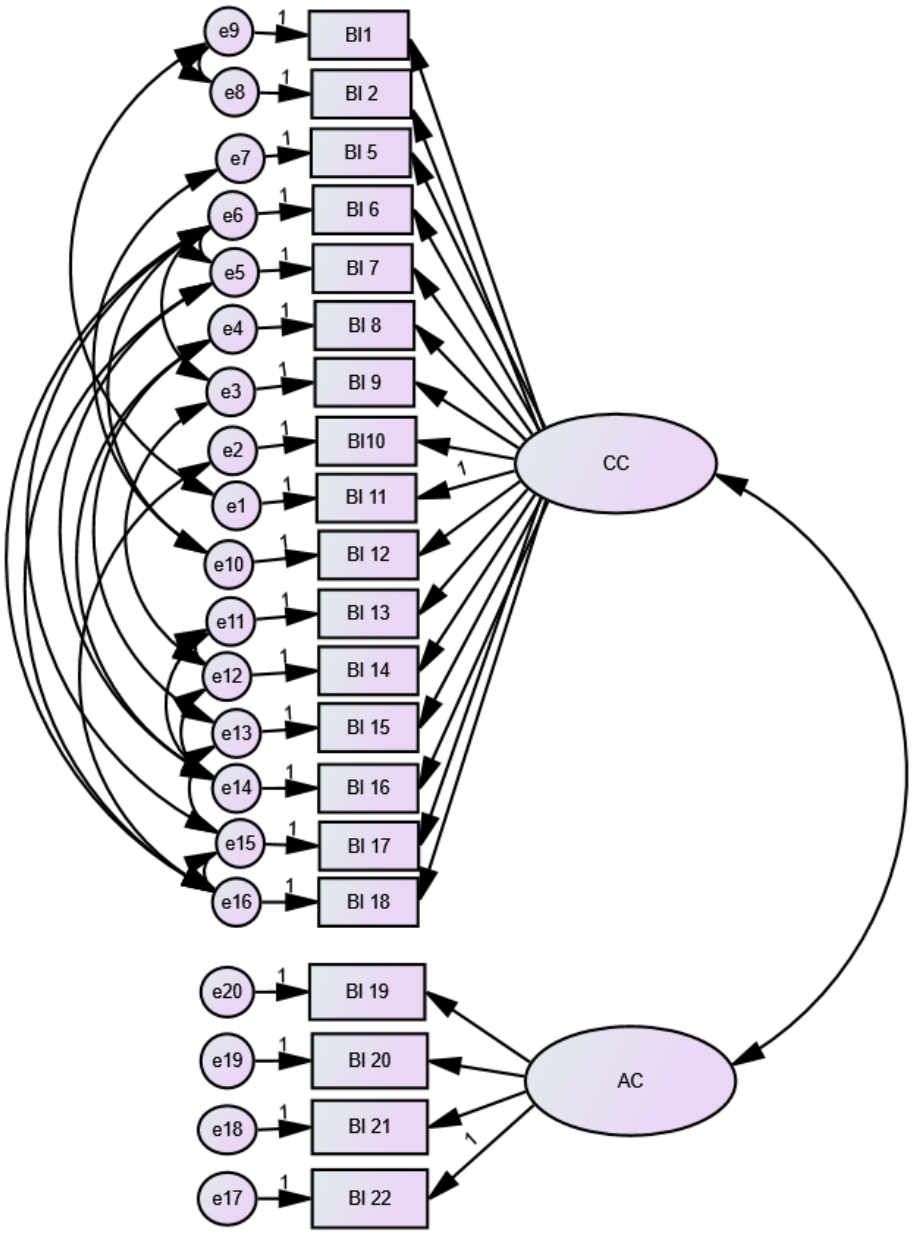
Table 2: CFA , Convergent Validity and Reliability (Sample 2)

Factors Extracted	Variables	Factor loading (λ)	λ*λ	(1 - λ square)	AVE*	CR**	α***
COGNITIVE COMPONENT (CC)	BI 9 - Service quality of stakeholders (Hotels ,Travel agents , Tour operators etc.)	0.866	0.749956	0.250044	**0.49**	**.93**	**0.94**
	BI 6- Local transportation service	0.863	0.744769	0.255231			

	BI 5- Behavior of local people towards tourist	0.778	0.605284	0.394716			
	BI-2 Climate conditions	0.767	0.588289	0.411711			
	BI 16- Condition of Public Utilities	0.765	0.585225	0.414775			
	BI - 8 Overall cleanliness of the tourist destination	0.742	0.550564	0.449436			
	BI 12- Night life and entertainment	0.71	0.5041	0.4959			
	BI 11-Value for money	0.706	0.498436	0.501564			
	BI 7- Destination connectivity	0.706	0.498436	0.501564			
	BI 17 - Availability of tourist places for Eco tourism	0.693	0.480249	0.519751			
	BI 15- Quality of accommodation (Hotels , Motels, Resorts etc.)	0.68	0.4624	0.5376			
	BI 18 - Availability of tourist places for Adventure tourism	0.592	0.350464	0.649536			
	BI 13-Shopping facility	0.584	0.341056	0.658944			
	BI-1Personal safety and security	0.579	0.335241	0.664759			
	BI 10 - Availability of tourist recreational and leisure activities other than main attraction	0.576	0.331776	0.668224			
	BI 14 - Offer of local cuisine as compare to other states .	0.478	0.228484	0.771516			
AFFECTIVE COMPONENT (AC)	BI 21- How you feel when on thinks of BIHAR as a tourist destination (Boring ------Lively)	0.995	0.995025	0.004975062	**0.96**	**0.99**	**0.96**
	BI 20 - How you feel when one thinks of BIHAR as a tourist destination (Sleepy - lively)	0.98	0.980396	0.019603947			
	BI -22 - How you feel when one thinks of BIHAR as a tourist destination (Unpleasant - Pleasant)	0.944	0.947051	0.052948573			
	BI 19 - How you feel when one think s of BIHAR as a tourist destination . (Distressing -- Relaxing)	0.943	0.94616	0.053840125			

Note : * AVE is Average Variance Extracted , ** CR = Convergent Reliability , *** α is Cronbach's α

Fig 2 : Covariance Measurement Model of Destination Image



Source : Author's proposed model of tourist perception

Regression weights (Table 3), shows that relationship between constructs and items are significant. The indexes of the model provide a reasonably a good model fit $\chi 2$ / df = 1.22 (Table 4) , GFI = .916 (Table 7), AGFI =.883 (Table 7) , NFI = .941 (Table 8) , CFI = .989 (Table 8) , RMSEA = .034 (Table 5) , RMR = .064 (Table 7) (Hu & Bentler , 1998). The average variance extracted (AVE) for our measurements ranged from .49 to .96 (Formell & Larcker , 1981 ; Bagozi & Yi , 1988) supporting convergent validity.

Table 3

Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
BI11	<---	CC	1.000				
BI10	<---	CC	1.031	.118	8.734	***	par_1
BI9	<---	CC	1.045	.112	9.360	***	par_2
BI8	<---	CC	1.252	.136	9.178	***	par_3
BI7	<---	CC	1.041	.114	9.111	***	par_4
BI6	<---	CC	1.125	.123	9.142	***	par_5
BI5	<---	CC	1.126	.134	8.407	***	par_6
BI12	<---	CC	1.135	.134	8.489	***	par_7
BI13	<---	CC	1.107	.121	9.117	***	par_8
BI14	<---	CC	1.058	.126	8.392	***	par_9
BI15	<---	CC	1.167	.121	9.668	***	par_10
BI16	<---	CC	1.185	.123	9.661	***	par_11
BI22	<---	AC	1.000				
BI21	<---	AC	1.033	.042	24.446	***	par_12
BI20	<---	AC	1.014	.045	22.386	***	par_13
BI19	<---	AC	.982	.045	21.611	***	par_14
BI18	<---	CC	1.239	.134	9.212	***	par_16
BI17	<---	CC	1.244	.128	9.693	***	par_17
BI1	<---	CC	.900	.137	6.593	***	par_18
BI2	<---	CC	.753	.103	7.297	***	par_19

Table 4
CMIN

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	60	182.979	150	.035	1.220
Saturated model	210	.000	0		
Independence model	20	3110.530	190	.000	16.371

Table 5
RMSEA

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	.034	.010	.050	.956
Independence model	.281	.273	.290	.000

Table 6
FMIN

Model	FMIN	F0	LO 90	HI 90
Default model	.943	.170	.015	.368
Saturated model	.000	.000	.000	.000
Independence model	16.034	15.054	14.142	16.005

Table 7
RMR, GFI

Model	RMR	GFI	AGFI	PGFI
Default model	.064	.916	.883	.655
Saturated model	.000	1.000		
Independence model	.917	.161	.073	.146

Table 8
Baseline Comparisons

Model	NFI Delta1	RFI rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI
Default model	.941	.925	.989	.986	.989
Saturated model	1.000		1.000		1.000
Independence model	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Conclusion :

The analysis of structural relationship depicts that destination image will be an important factor for a tourist destination. Images of tourist destinations have always been an important factor in decision making in tourism. Despite its importance, there are limited scale available for measuring image of a tourist destination. Also, there are concerns on their validity and reliability. Based on literature review , and rigorous data analysis of a two dimension (cognitive component and affective component) twenty item scale for measuring destination image is proposed. The affective component involves a person emotion and feeling ,the cognitive component includes an individuals knowledge and attitude regarding a destination. Scale validity was assured via construct , content, discriminant , and convergent validity. The result of CFA indicates that proposed scale is deemed a reasonably good model fit , and is suitable for further examination. Overall fit statistics show that the estimated model will reproduce the sample covariance matrix considerably well. However, tourist destination is our study is Bihar, India. This state is well known for its cultural and pilgrimage tourism. Therefore , expected result of the proposed scale may be limited for similar kind of destination, and requires further testing for the other destination .

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