

## 研究論文

**Tourism Destination Image: Lessons learned and ways forward**李 思羽<sup>1</sup>、佐野 楓<sup>2</sup>

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**Abstract** :

As one of the most critical concepts in tourism research, destination image has been discussed for several decades. This study examines the theoretical foundation of destination image and the interrelationships between destination image and other factors by reviewing 74 articles published in the three journals from the highest-impact journal category in tourism from 2000 to 2020. It aims to provide a comprehensive overview of destination image studies, including the theoretical foundation of destination image, the image formation process, and the effect on tourist behavior and destination branding. This study also concerns the changes in destination image formation brought about by user-generated content. Content analysis of the examined articles from both tourists' and Destination Management Organizations' (DMO) perspectives shows that tourist-centric studies generally focus on how destination image influence tourists' decision-making process, whereas DMO-related studies have concentrated closely on marketing strategies, such destination branding and promotion. This study contributes to academia and industry by identifying research voids in extant research and by providing an up-to-date view of destination image studies.

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**I. Introduction**

As one of the key concepts in tourism studies, destination image has attracted attention from both academic scholars and industry practitioners for decades (Gallarza et al., 2002; Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000). As early as the 1970s, destination image was recognized as an essential element that directly influences the success of a tourism destination (Hunt, 1975) and was defined as “the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination” (Crompton, 1979, p. 18). In the 1980s, research began to focus increasingly on the interrelationship between destination image and tourist behavior, with particular attention to how destination image influences the decision-making process of potential tourists (Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). During the 1990s, destination image was believed to be a multifarious concept, which included a cognitive component—tourists' knowledge of a destination—and an affective component—tourists' feelings about a destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Gartner, 1993). In addition to the theoretical approach, destination image research has begun to emphasize practical implications in destination management against a general background in internet development and the growth of tourism-related online

virtual communities since 2000 (Tham et al., 2013).

Until 2000, the focus of destination image research was on how destination image affects tourists' decision-making processes and how destination image is formed (Pike, 2002). Destination image is regarded as an essential factor in better understanding consumers' decision-making process because of its direct influence on consumer behavior during the pre-trip, trip, and post-trip stages (Tasci & Gartner, 2016). Pike (2002) observed that there was a heavy focus on the role of destination image in consumer behavior and satisfaction in a review of 142 papers published between 1973 and 2000. In their review of 86 academic articles on destination image, Dolnicar and Grün (2013) analyzed the survey approach used in destination image research in mainstream tourism journals and provided an applicable method for destination image research. A review by Lai and Li (2016) delved into 71 representative definitions of destination image in mainstream tourism literature to provide an applicable definition of destination image based on definition theory. Despite the significant contributions of past review studies, gaps still exist in the destination image literature.

First, as destination image is a complex concept

(Gallarze et al., 2002), it is necessary to clarify how destination image has been approached theoretically (Lai & Li, 2012). However, few previous studies provide clear descriptions of theories used to define and approach the destination image formation process and impact on customer decision-making processes. Second, although numerous variables have been examined in relation to destination image, few studies have discussed the mechanism of destination image from both consumer and management perspectives. Third, given that consumer-to-consumer (C2C) communication channels have become a new way to transmit information and are widely utilized in the tourism industry, research to date has paid insufficient attention to this mega trend in destination image formulation in the period after 2010.

Against this background, this study provides a review and critical analysis of studies relating to destination image published in leading tourism journals between 2000 and 2020. Research journals are a critical resource of up-to-date knowledge that offer practitioners a means to apply the research implications to enhance business competitiveness (Leung et al., 2013). Indeed, reviewing prior studies can assist both academic scholars and business practitioners in appreciating historical patterns and predicting future trends in research fields (Line & Runyan, 2012). In view of the essential role that destination image plays in tourists' decision-making and in destination development, as well as the changes in tourist behavior and destination promotion caused by recent communication technologies, it is necessary to better understand how destination image has been formed and approached in the last two decades.

## II. Methodology

The data collection was conducted in April–May 2020 in the following steps. First, the impact factors of journals in the tourism field were identified because a journal's impact factor reflects citation indices and journal rating (Jamal et al., 2008). A major impetus for citation-based journal ranking came from the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) Journal Citation Report (JCR) of the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), which commenced in 1979 (Jamal et al., 2008). The JCR impact factor is calculated by the ratio of citations to recent citable items published, which shows the journal's impact within the related field. Thus, a journal's impact factor was used as a criterion to select high-impact journals for the current study. According to the JCR published in 2019, the five-year impact factors of *Tourism Management* (TM), *International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology* (IRSEP), *Annals of*

*Tourism Research* (ATR), *Journal of Travel Research* (JTR), and *International Journal of Hospitality Management* (IJHM) were 9.238, 8.446, 8.120, 7.810, and 7.780, respectively, ranking them as the top five journals in the hospitality, leisure, sport, and tourism fields. However, as IRSEP aims to publish critical reviews of research literature in sport and exercise psychology (IRSEP, n.d.) and IJHM focuses on the hospitality industry (IJHM, n.d.), they were excluded from the present study, and TM, ATR, and JTR were selected as resources for reviewing destination image-related articles published from 2000 to 2020.

Second, to provide a comprehensive overview of findings and discussions in the tourism literature on destination image, the keywords “destination image,” “tourism,” and “travel” were used to search for relevant articles published in the three journals. As Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.co.jp/>) is one of the largest and popular online databases and search engines (Leung et al., 2013), it was used for the literature search. Like other review studies on destination image (e.g., Dolnicar & Grün, 2013; Lai & Li, 2016), only full-length articles were analyzed. Once the database search was concluded and the articles read, 55 published studies were deemed relevant. Moreover, to ensure that all destination image-related articles were included, the authors carefully searched for articles listed on the websites of TM, JTR, and ATR from 2000 to 2020. Consequently, 19 articles were added, and a total of 74 published studies were included in the analysis. Regarding the distribution of the analyzed literature by year, the numbers of destination image-related studies published during the past two decades were stable. The statistics confirm that attention to destination image has remained high since the 1970s.

To ensure the accuracy and objectivity of the article assignment, the authors carefully judged all 74 selected articles and assigned them to two research streams – tourist-centric and DMO-centric. Studies that discussed destination image in several ways were assigned to more than one stream if their focuses were multifaceted (Leung et al., 2013). The classification results were input and checked by the authors to ensure consistency. In the subsequent section, the key findings and discussions in the analyzed works are presented according to research streams. In addition to reviewing the content of these studies, this paper demonstrates the contributions of the prior studies and identifies managerial implications.

### III. The trends of 74 published articles in destination image studies

#### 1. Keyword frequency of destination image studies

Keyword frequency is a useful and effective method to deal with huge quantities of textual data because as a tool for measuring the similarity of texts, keyword frequency can reflect the main features, concepts, and themes of articles (Siddiqi & Sharan, 2015). Therefore, this study analyzed keywords from each article to examine the most important variables related to destination image. During the time frame, this study has progressed the 74 articles and generated 259 keywords. Table 1 displays the results of the keyword frequency analysis. "Destination image" was the most frequently used keyword, followed by "loyalty," "content analysis," "destination branding," "behavioral intentions," "destination marketing," "image," and "affective image." These results indirectly reflect the fact that destination image has been examined in the contexts of branding, tourist behavior, and marketing. Additionally, the frequency of "content analysis" highlights the predominance of qualitative research methods in the study of destination image. These results indicate the interests of destination image related academic work and the role of destination image plays in tourist decision making process as well as destination management.

Table 1. Keyword frequency

Keyword	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)
destination image	52	13.94
loyalty	7	1.88
content analysis	5	1.34
destination branding	5	1.34
behavioral intentions	4	1.07
destination marketing	4	1.07
image	4	1.07
affective image	3	0.80
attitude	3	0.80
country image	3	0.80
destination image formation	3	0.80
popular culture	3	0.80
satisfaction	3	0.80
tourist satisfaction	3	0.80
user	3	0.80

Note: Only more than three times counted keywords were presented in Table 1.

#### 2. Number of destination image studies in the past 20 years

The years 2012 and 2013 represent the time when the highest number of the articles were published, followed by 2007 and 2016. TM published the most destination image-related articles (40 articles), followed by JTR (23 articles), and ATR (11 articles; Figure 1). TM has been a leading contributor to research in destination image during our study period. As an international journal focused on tourism and management, TM deals with current issues and real cases throughout the world, with articles including both academic and practical

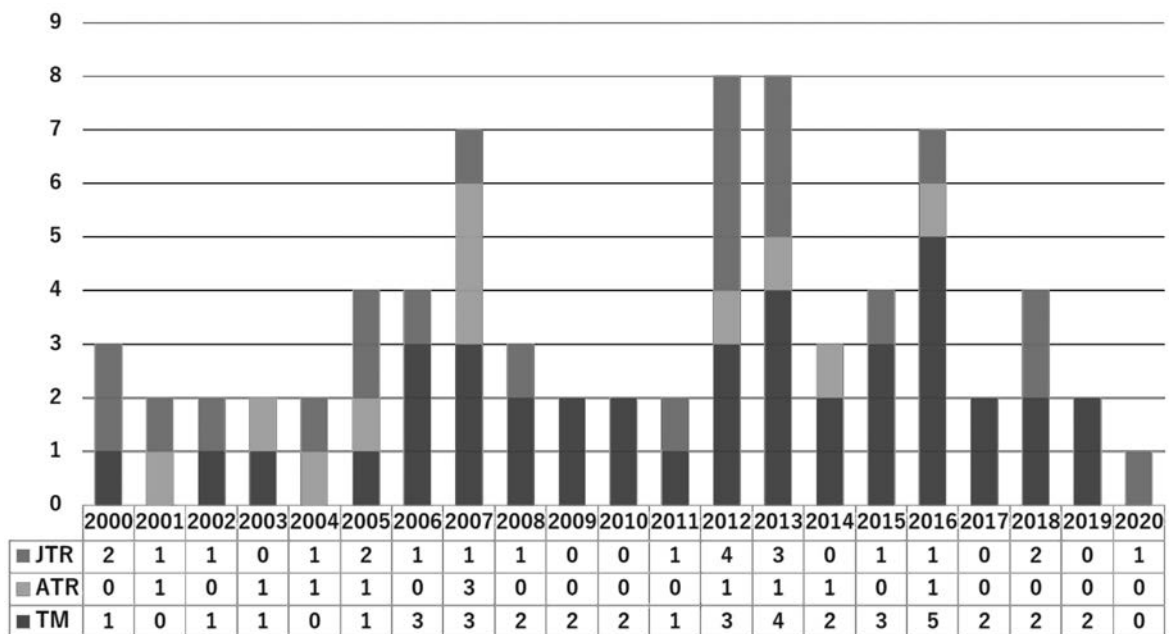


Figure 1. Frequency of destination image-related articles

Note: JTR means Journal of Travel Research; ATR means Annals of Tourism Research; TM means Tourism Management

perspectives. As TM has published the most destination image-related articles in the past two decades, one can infer that the concept of destination image has been approached and examined from not only a theoretical but also a practical perspective. In other words, the question of how to apply destination image in destination management and marketing has received significant attention in the last 20 years.

### 3. Research methods of destination image studies

Pike (2002) reviewed 142 destination image studies published between 1973 and 2000 and concluded that most of the articles employed quantitative methods to measure destination image (114 quantitative articles among all 142 studies). However, based on the current review of the three top journals in the tourism studies field, qualitative approaches appear to be predominant for exploring and examining the effect of destination image. Moreover, this study finds that the number of qualitative and quantitative studies are similar (Figure 2), as advancements in the computerization of qualitative analysis made it possible to handle large volumes of qualitative data (Bazeley, 2004). The primary strengths of quantitative methods are that numerical data are reliable and objective and that surveys can be administered to collect such data in a time-efficient manner. Compared with quantitative methods, qualitative methods are regarded as effective for observing the underlying values, beliefs, and assumptions of a population, but collecting qualitative data costs substantial time (Choy, 2014). Ryan (2000) noted the strength of qualitative methods in the academic field of destination image studies,

observing that qualitative methods are ideal for understanding the true image of destination. As destination image studies have come to be essential since 1970s, the theoretical foundation has been formed which made it possible for scholars to examine the effect of destination image empirically. However, with the increasing understanding of destination image in the tourism study, it is not enough to explore the inter-relationship between destination image and other variables through quantitative methods only, but also needs the qualitative methods to deepen and interpret the empirical results.

### 4. The different perspectives of destination image studies

In addition to the number of published articles and applied methods, this study involved classifying destination image studies according to different perspectives. Of the 74 reviewed articles, 38 approached destination image from the tourist's perspective, 31 from the DMO perspective and five from both. According to Pearce and Packer (2013), understanding different stakeholders' thoughts or ideas (e.g., attitudes of tourists and residents or plans authorized by a DMO or government) in the tourism industry is an essential topic in tourism studies. Except five articles which focused on the theoretical exploration in destination image studies, the 38 tourists-centric and 31 DMO-centric articles were classified accordingly as the two research streams.

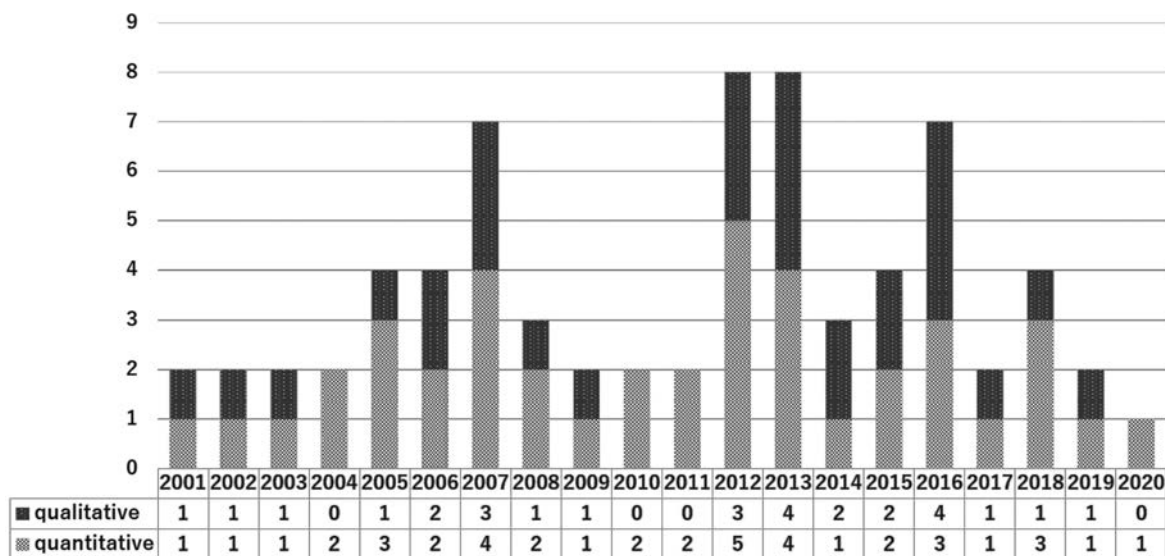


Figure 2. Research methods used in destination image-related articles

#### IV. Tourism destination image from the tourists' perspective

##### 1. Self-congruity as the main theory applied in tourists-centric articles

Self-congruity theory is one of the most applied theories used to explain the destination image effect on the tourist decision-making process. While originally generated in the marketing context, self-congruity theory has been applied in various fields. According to Grubb and Grathwohl (1967), who pioneered the self-congruity theoretical approach, self-congruity means the congruity of individual identity and the perceived value of products and can determine customer motivation and establish brand loyalty. Reflecting the relationship between customer and brand, Grubb and Grathwohl (1967) defined self-identity as the total sum of how people think about themselves from both physical and mental perspectives. Later, Usakli and Baloglu (2011) described self-congruity theory in terms of customers tending to choose products or brands that correspond to their self-concept, and the higher the congruity, the stronger the purchase intention. It can be partly confirmed that consumer behavior is determined by self-concept.

Self-congruity theory is also very useful in explaining how tourists decide on their travel destinations. For example, Chon (1992) found that the higher the congruity between self-concept and destination image, the easier it would be for the tourist to find satisfaction while traveling (Chon, 1992). Even since 2000, self-congruity theory has continued to be used as a theoretical foundation for how tourists select destinations based on perceived images. Sirgy and Su (2000) suggested that a match between self-concept and destination image leads to tourist satisfaction, while tourist satisfaction can reinforce a positive destination image. With a much deeper understanding, self-congruity theory can be used to explain the behavioral intention of tourists, such as repeated visits and intention to recommend, as well as to explain how destination image is formed in the mind (Kastenholz, 2004). Beerli et al. (2007) showed that the congruity between self-concept and destination image translates to a positive tendency for tourists to visit a certain destination—a conclusion that certainly has practical implications for businesses in capturing potential tourists (Beerli et al., 2007). Similar to Kastenholz (2004), Usakli and Baloglu (2011) confirmed that self-congruity theory is a partial mediator between destination image and tourist behavior. Moreover, if the destination image and self-concept match greatly, it is easy for tourists to form a positive image.

##### 2. Destination image formation and influence from the tourist perspective

From the tourist perspective, the research focus is on how tourists form their perceived image toward destinations and how the destination image affects their decision-making process. Hence, information sources, including primary and secondary sources, and personal factors are regarded as the two main predictor variables of destination image (Beerli & Martín, 2004a). Information sources include primary and secondary sources. Phelps (1986) clarified that a primary source is the image built after visiting a destination and a secondary source is the image built before visiting a destination. Accordingly, primary sources are much more realistic than secondary sources (Gartner & Hunt, 1987). The primary source formed by an individual experience has been found to be a critical part of the perceived image of a destination and depends on the number of visits to and degree of involvement with the destination (Beerli & Martín, 2004a). Secondary sources, however, such as tourist photographs, seem to play a more important role in the destination image formation process (Kim & Stepchenkova, 2015).

Personal factors are also regarded as essential variables that can affect destination image. Based on the 74 articles, personal factors can be summarized as sociodemographic characteristics (MacKay & Fesenmaier, 2000; Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000), motivation (Beerli & Martín, 2004b), and experience (Shi et al., 2019). Tapachai and Waryszak (2000) suggested that sociodemographic characteristics (for example, gender, age, and social class) can influence the destination image that tourists form. Besides tourists' sociodemographic characteristics, motivation has been found to be a key variable that can influence affective destination image directly (Beerli & Martín, 2004b). Shi et al. (2019) also underscored the importance of providing an experience for travelers, as enhancing tourists' personal experiences during travel can assist them in forming a positive destination image.

The destination image influences in the 74 articles were tourist loyalty (Chen & Phou, 2013; Chi & Qu, 2007; Deng & Li, 2013; Qu et al., 2010), tourist recommendation behavior (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000; Zhang et al., 2014), tourist satisfaction (Assaker et al., 2011; Castro et al., 2007; Chen & Li, 2018), and tourist attitude (Nadeau et al., 2008). Understanding how destination image affects tourists' decision-making process can help practitioners in the tourism industry satisfy the different needs of tourists (Castro et al., 2007). Undoubtedly, a good destination image can not only positively affect the tourist decision-making

process but also increase tourist loyalty and satisfaction (Chi & Qu, 2008). According to Baloglu (2001), tourist loyalty is an extension of consumer loyalty in the marketing field, and it can be conceptualized as having two components: attitudinal loyalty and behavioral loyalty (Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978). Attitudinal loyalty refers to the psychological perception of tourists, such as the intention to recommend (Yoon & Uysal, 2005), while behavioral loyalty refers to behavioral outcomes, such as repeated visits (Zhang et al., 2014). Moreover, a desirable destination image has been shown to enhance tourists' recommendation intention (Assaker et al., 2011; Chen & Phou, 2013; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chi & Qu, 2007; Deng & Li, 2013; Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Qu et al., 2011). For many decades, therefore, destination image studies have highlighted the relationship between tourists' decision-making behavior and satisfaction (Pike, 2002), and this tendency still can be observed in the last 20 years.

### 3. The effect of social media on tourist behavior

With the development of Web 2.0, tourists have shown a growing preference for sharing their travel experiences via social media, which indirectly affects destination image (Deng & Li, 2018; Fu et al., 2016; Hunter, 2016; Mercille, 2005; Pan, 2011). This behavior in online social communities significantly influences potential tourists' perceptions of destination image (Hunter, 2013). According to Gilbert and Hancock (2006), social media allows individual tourists' posts on social media platforms to form a destination image. The birth and growth of social media changed destination image formation from a basis in Business-to-Consumer (B2C) to C2C. Such UGC helps tourists easily obtain useful information about destinations. Compared with traditional B2C communication channels, such as the information created by DMO, tourists tend to rely on the information from C2C communication channels because it is free from business intentions. However, as social media has a significant effect on destination image formation, overload and unreliable information from online platforms can result in the formation of a negative image before travel occurs. Previous research has also drawn attention to the obvious gap between the image created by DMO and that formed through online social communities (Marine-Roig & Ferrer-Rosell, 2018). For example, in the case of Peru, the official Peruvian tourism website presents the geographical regions of Peru, while UGC from the word-of-mouth (WOM) platform Flickr reflects the interest of tourists in Peruvian people's lifestyles (Stepchenkova & Zhan, 2012).

Among the 74 reviewed articles, 16 published after 2010 discussed the effect of social media on destination image formation. Kim and Stepchenkova (2015) conducted a content analysis of photographs of Russia taken by American and Korean tourists. According to their results, although tourists' photographs can significantly reflect attitudes toward destinations, in this case, the photographs did little to produce a positive destination image or stimulate a desire to visit Russia. The content represented on blogs was also found to be meaningful for destination image formation among non-visitors and provided insight into whether bloggers can clarify a destination image (Tseng et al., 2015). Analyzing 630 blogs in different languages, Tseng et al. (2015) revealed that the blogs had made China's image as an international destination more positive. Assaker and O'Connor (2020) identified another merit of UGC, suggesting that the WOM on C2C platforms can mitigate perceived risk due to political instability and reverse a negative destination image, as in the case of Lebanon.

## V. Tourism destination image from the DMO perspective

### 1. The main theory applied in DMO-centric articles

Defining a core concept in the marketing field, Bennett (1995) described marketing segmentation theory as a "process of subdividing a market into distinct subsets of customers that behave in the same way or have similar needs" (p. 165). Thereby, the fundamental idea of segmentation theory is to identify a group of customers who share the same characteristics and have similar intentions, such as tourist behavior or travel motivations (Pesonen, 2013).

Destination image is an important aspect of tourism development because the impact of destination image can influence both the enterprise and consumer sides in the marketing field (Tasci & Gartner, 2007). However, compared to in the marketing field, segmentation theory was seldom utilized in the tourism literature before 2000 (Kotler et al., 2018). In the last 20 years, many researchers have realized the importance of segmentation theory and approached destination image with theories from the marketing field. For example, Mykletun et al. (2001) confirmed that tourists from different countries hold different images of the same destination; therefore, nationality can be regarded as a significant criterion when performing segmentation in the case of the Baltics. Therefore, segmentation of the market is essential for designing marketing strategies in tourism literature (Decrop & Snelders, 2005). As well as for demographic aspects, segmentation theory has also

been used to confirm the psychographic features of tourists, which greatly influence their perceived image of a certain destination (Castro et al., 2007). As segmentation theory is often applied to marketing strategies, the idea of segmentation is meaningful to DMO because segmentation guides decision-making and assists tourism operators in targeting more types of tourists, which can contribute to their positive destination image and increase their repeat visits (Tkaczynski et al., 2010).

## 2. Destination image formation and influence from the DMO perspective

Studies that examine destination image from the DMO perspective tend to focus on how destination image has been formed naturally and can be used to attract tourists. Compared with the individual tourist's perspective, the research focus of destination image from the DMO perspective is on marketing strategies.

Destination uniqueness (or destination identity) is an essential predictor variable of destination image (Chen et al., 2016; Lin & Kuo, 2018). According to Chen et al. (2016), destination uniqueness, which consists of an appealing culture, history, natural scenery, and attractions, has a distinct influence on the tourist's affective and cognitive image. Thus, destination uniqueness affects both visitors and non-visitors. Moreover, identifying destination uniqueness for international tourists can assist in destination image formation because destination uniqueness can contribute to destination identity and differentiate a destination from its competitors (Lin & Kuo, 2018). The effect of big events is also regarded as another predictor variable that can contribute to destination image formation (Alvarez & Campo, 2014; Deng & Li, 2013). For example, Deng and Li (2013) verified that big events have direct and positive influences on the formation of or changes to destination image through the case of the 2010 Shanghai World Expo. In contrast, a destination with high perceived risk creates a negative destination image. Alvarez and Campo (2013) measured the destination image of Israel among Turks, finding that it tended to be negative because of Israel's political conflicts. Furthermore, Chew and Jahari (2014) confirmed a rapid rise in the perceived sociopsychological and financial risks of visiting Japan after the 2011 disaster, which certainly had a negative effect on the overall destination image among tourists.

The influence of destination image from the DMO perspective has also attracted attention from scholars because it provides essential practical implications and directions for destination management. In 1998, destination branding was a

focal topic of the Travel and Tourism Research Association's annual conference, and since then, more and more DMO have realized its importance (Blain et al., 2016) and the necessity of constructing a destination brand by using the destination image. Blain et al. (2016), Konecnik and Gartner (2007), and Qu et al. (2010) concluded that destination image is crucial for constructing the brand value of a destination, but it is not the only element that should be considered in destination branding. Ekinci and Hosany (2006) also pointed out that destination image plays a vital role in forming brand value by identifying the destination personality and in creating effective positioning and differentiation. They suggested that a distinctive destination image can build and enhance the destination brand by creating a sense of uniqueness in tourists' minds (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006). In summary, these articles attached importance not only to the role of destination image in constructing the core destination brand but also to other dimensions, such as service quality, consumer relationships, and promotions. Moreover, Ekinci and Hosany (2006) argued for the importance of destination identity generated by destination image that can be regarded as an effective way to contribute to the destination brand.

From the DMO perspective, it is important to implement the correct marketing strategy to attract tourists. By constructing a unique destination image, DMO can achieve their goals of increasing the number of tourists and generating higher profits from tourism. Building a unique destination image through marketing activities can assist in differentiating destinations and subsequently avoiding price competition (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006). Many articles have mentioned the important role of destination image in devising strategies from the DMO perspective. For instance, Frías et al. (2008) argued that understanding the factors of destination image enables DMO to identify where and how to act to enhance the image of a tourism destination. Bigné Alcañiz et al. (2009) also observed the importance of strategy-making in the destination research, pointing out that understanding the components of destination image helps tourism institutions develop promotional strategies targeting particular segments. Lin and Kuo (2018) further argued that a distinctive destination image strengthens destination identity and facilitates designing a differentiation strategy. Therefore, understanding the destination image among tourists provides a practical way for DMO to approach strategy-making.

### 3. The effect of social media on destination branding and promotion

Govers et al. (2016) found that tourism promotion materials from DMO did not have a marked influence on tourists' perceptions compared with travel information generated by tourists. Nevertheless, Deng and Li (2018) indicated that DMO can create projected images online and attract (potential) tourists by utilizing suitable photos. They also suggested that photographs created by travelers and presented on C2C channels can help DMO undertake promotion online. Pan (2011) examined the role of visuals in television commercials in the destination image formation process using the real case of New Zealand. The results showed that the visuals had a positive effect on creating the desire to visit, especially when tourists had limited knowledge of the destination, but the influence of social media seemed to be more obvious.

Some articles explored the differences between media sources. For instance, Frías et al. (2008) examined the difference between information from tourists and travel agencies. According to their study, compared with using information from travel agencies, tourists who used the internet to search for travel information developed a worse destination image because information from the internet may be unrealistic and the process may lead to information overload. Finally, using Catalonia as a case study, Marine-Roig and Ferrer-Rosell (2018) also confirmed the existence of a gap between information from tourists and DMO.

The information from tour operators or travel agencies has also been confirmed to be a vital source for pre-visit tourists (especially international tourists) and to significantly influence destination image formation (Frías et al., 2008). Mercille (2005) examined how movies and guidebooks created by travel agencies affect tourist destination image formation, showing that the destination image created by travel agencies roughly corresponded to that conveyed by tourists, indicating that information from travel agencies has a substantial effect on tourist destination image. However, in the case of Seoul, Hunter (2016) identified an obvious gap between the destination image in print brochures and guidebooks and online images, concluding that the traditional projected destination image failed to promote the realistic social atmosphere of the destination. In summary, it seems that the status of travel agencies in shaping destination image gradually as the power of social media increased.

### VI. Conclusions and implications

Destination image, one of the most critical concepts in tourism research, has been discussed for several decades. By reviewing the theories used in destination image research over the past two decades, this study fills the gap that Lai and Li (2012) highlighted regarding the unconvincing theoretical foundation underpinning destination image studies. It clarifies that self-congruity theory and segmentation theory have been the most common theories adopted in destination image studies. As an extension of the tourism field, marketing theory is also shown to be useful for explaining tourist behavior and identifying tourist segmentation targets. Moreover, the authors hold the view that self-congruity theory is a useful tool for explaining destination image because tourists act as consumers in the tourism industry. Tourists' decision-making processes before visiting a destination resemble consumer purchase behavior. Hence, the self-congruity theory from the marketing field offers a reasonable approach for explaining destination image.

Based on the results of the keyword frequency and methodology analysis of the 74 articles, destination image formation and influence were found to be the core of this field. Regardless of the importance of this research core, few studies summarized the factors that closely relate to destination image from both the tourist and DMO perspectives (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2007). Of the 74 reviewed articles, 55 examined the interrelationship between destination image, predictor variables, and response variables. The merit of analyzing variables is threefold: Analyzing variables can improve prediction performance, help scholars make a cost-effective prediction, and generate more accurate data (Guyon & Elisseff, 2003). For the purpose of clarifying the mega trend in destination image research over the last 20 years, it is necessary to clarify the variables from each subject's perspective and analyze them. This study has discussed destination image and related factors from the perspectives of both tourists and DMO. As mentioned above, studies of destination image formation and influence from the perspective of the individual tourist tend to focus on the consumer decision-making process, whereas the DMO perspective tends to emphasize marketing strategies.

In the twenty-first century, the development of social media has rapidly changed the tourism industry and brought about new trends in destination image research (Gilbert & Hancock, 2006). In tourism internet based social communities have greatly expanded recently as a result of Web 2.0 technologies' development. Tourists use the Internet to obtain



information on trips, and share experiences related to their trip before, during and after their vacation which significantly influence the destination image formation. Among the reviewed destination image studies published in the past 20 years, very limited articles present how the post or content in social media affect the subjective image formation of destinations. Nevertheless, when the behaviors such as sharing photos and videos, writing travel experiences in blogs and microblogs, ranking travel destinations and posting opinions on social forums have becoming generalized, the studies related to the great effect of social media on destination image formation attract the attentions from both scholars and practitioners. Considering the essential role that UGC plays in destination image, it is important for DMO to portray destination image online as part of their promotion strategy (Deng & Li, 2018). Studies before 2010 suggested that travel agencies were regarded as a vital source for pre-visitors forming a destination image (Frías et al., 2008; Mercille, 2005). However, with the advent and further development of social media and online travel-related communities, tourists have begun to rely on C2C communication channels rather than traditional B2C channels, such as travel agencies and DMO-produced information.

This study has some implications. First, the findings can help tourism marketers deepen their understanding of tourists' decision-making processes and establish correct marketing strategies aimed at different types of tourists. Second, it also confirms the critical role of destination image in tourists' decision-making process. This implication can help tourism marketers reinforce the characteristics of a destination while developing a marketing policy. Furthermore, although the effects are different, the information from social media was found to be influential in destination image formation. Hence, the content in social media has been regarded as a predictor variable in destination image formation since the year 2000. Although the information on social media is sometimes unrealistic, tourists rely heavily on it during both the pre-visit and post-visit stages (Leung et al., 2013). Therefore, it is critical to effectively employ social media in building an ideal destination image.

As with all research this study has limitations that must be considered. A potential limitation concerns the nature of the sample used in this analysis. Although, the current study focuses on the three high impacted journals of this field which present good representation of the destination image study trends, these findings can be only generalized to the main streams. Thereby, it is worth noting that the future studies examine the related papers published in a wider range of

journals and fields.

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