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Testing an integrated destination image model across residents and tourists

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HIGHLIGHTS

- The need to confirm the applicability of an integrated destination image model to local residents is highlighted.
- The hypothesized relationships were tested using local residents and tourists in the resort city of Eilat.
- The cognitive, affective and the overall image evaluations positively affect intention to recommend.
- Among tourists, the affective component exerted a greater influence than the cognitive on overall image and behavior.
- Thefindings help explain how differences between the respective images of each group arise.

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ABSTRACT

Tourism research has yet to confirm whether an integrated destination image model is applicable in predicting the overall destination image and behavioral intentions of local residents. This study examines whether the cognitive, affective and overall image - hypothesized to be predictors of behavioral intentions - are applicable to residents and tourists in the resort city of Eilat. The proposed model allowed for the distinct effect of each image component on overall image and behavior to be closely examined. The findings support the applicability of the model to local residents and also showed that among tourists, the affective component exerted a greater influence than the cognitive on overall destination image and future behavior. These findings have theoretical and practical implications for research on destination image.

1. Introduction

Destination image has been one of the most investigated topics in the marketing scholarship in tourism studies (Cherifi, Smith, Maitland, & Stevenson, 2014; Fu, Ye, & Xiang, 2016; Stepchenkova & Li, 2013; Sun, Ryan, & Pan, 2015). There is a growing body of research within this context that recognizes the significance of examining the image that local residents have of the place (i.e., city, town) where they live (Henkel, Henkel, Agrusa, Agrusa, & Tanner, 2006; Schroeder, 1996; Stylidis, Sit, & Biran, 2016). In line with this research agenda, residents' image of the destination where they live is valuable for understanding their attitudinal and behavioral intentions, such as their support for tourism development in their area (e.g., Ramkissoon & Nunkoo, 2011; Schroeder, 1996; Stylidis, Biran, Sit, & Szivas, 2014) or their intention to recommend their town or city as a viable tourist destination (e.g., Bigne, Sanchez, & Sanz, 2005). Moreover, residents' image and their corresponding behavioral intentions are known to considerably affect tourists' image formation, decision making and buying behavior, due to residents' key role as advocates and marketers of their place to others (e.g., Bigne et al., 2005; Leisen, 2001; Schroeder, 1996; Walls, Shani, & Rompf, 2008).

A common bias, however, within tourism marketing literature is its preoccupation with the examination of the cognitive and affective components that construct the image tourists have of destinations, perceived to be critical factors in determining the success of a tourism destination. There is empirical evidence that, like

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among tourists, the overall image residents have is determined by cognitive and affective components with a notable theoretical emphasis on the important role of the cognitive component in influencing the overall image residents have of the destination (e.g., Henkel et al., 2006; Schroeder, 1996; Sternquist-Witter, 1985; Stylidis et al., 2016).

Accordingly, the current study aimed to examine whether a) an integrated destination image model - considering both the affective and cognitive components of image - is applicable in predicting the overall destination image and behavioral intentions of local residents, and b) use the proposed model to juxtapose the results on the cognitive, affective and overall image across residents and tourists of a destination. The application of the model to study residents and tourists at one popular tourist destination allowed for the distinct effect of each image component on overall image and behavior to be closely examined among the two groups. The proposed model, in particular, was tested on residents and tourists in the Israeli resort city of Eilat, which was selected as the setting of this study for several reasons. First, research on the image of tourist destinations in the Middle East has been limited, and Eilat is a key destination in the region. Second, Eilat enjoys a high rate of repeat visits by Israeli tourists, and an in-depth understanding of the images that both tourists and residents have of Eilat is important to maintain such a high rate of repeat visits. Next, while tourism is a major contributor to the local economy, the city faces intense competition from the nearby resort towns of Aqaba in Jordan and Taba in Egypt. It is therefore necessary to investigate how some of the key stakeholders' (i.e., residents and tourists) overall image of Eilat as a tourist destination is formed and plan to improve the competitive positioning of the destination. Finally, the planned relocation of the city's airport is expected to double the volume of air passengers over the next 25 years, and it will also free up a large area in the center of Eilat for residential and hotel development (Ergas & Felsenstein, 2012). This study, therefore, will also benefit the planning process vis-à-vis tourism in Eilat, which is gradually expanding.

2. Theoretical background

Given the purpose of this study, stakeholder theory seemed the most suitable conceptual framework. Freeman (1984, p.46) defines a stakeholder in an organization as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives.” When applied to the tourism context, stakeholder theory asserts that attention should be paid to the interests of all those who affect or are affected by tourism development. Critical stakeholders in tourism are considered the tourists, tourism sector, residents, and local government officials (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2009). Stakeholder theory has been widely applied in the tourism literature, including collaboration on tourism planning (e.g., D'Angella & Go, 2009) and understanding residents' attitudes toward tourism (e.g., Byrd, Bosley, & Dronberger, 2009). However, limited application of the theory has been seen within the body of knowledge on destination image, namely concurrently investigating how local residents and tourists perceive a tourist destination. Researchers emphasize on the need for additional studies to embrace residents' values and perceptions into the tourism planning and marketing process (Sharpley, 2014).

Destination image is generally defined in the literature as the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions a person has of a destination (Crompton, 1979; Kotler, Haider, & Rein, 1993). Lawson and Baud Bovy (1977) supported that destination image is “the expression of all objective knowledge, impressions, prejudice, imaginations, and emotional thoughts an individual or group might have of a particular place” (p.10). Dichter (1985, pp.4–5) further suggested that “image is not only the individual traits or qualities but also the total impression an entity makes on the minds of others” (see also Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). These definitions reveal the complexity of this concept and the need to consider both the cognitive and affective components involved in the formation of the overall image of a destination.

The distinction between the cognitive and affective component is a methodological and conceptual tool that facilitates careful examination of the image (e.g., Chew & Jahari, 2014; Lin, Morais, Kerstetter, & Hou, 2007; Martin & del Bosque, 2008; Wang & Hsu, 2010). The cognitive component of the image refers to a person's beliefs and knowledge about a destination and its attributes, which together help form an internally accepted mental picture of the place (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Pike & Ryan, 2004). It also includes a set of attributes that mainly correspond to the resources of a tourist destination (Stabler, 1995). Those resource attributes involve, among others, the scenery, climate, accommodation facilities, restaurants, and historical and cultural attractions. All these can induce an individual to visit a specific destination.

On the other hand, the affective component of the image denotes a person's feelings toward and emotional responses to a destination (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Shani & Wang, 2011). According to Gartner (1993), it becomes operational during the evaluation stage of destination selection. The notion that the two components should be studied separately is supported by a number of studies in environmental psychology (e.g., Holbrook, 1981; Walmsley & Young, 1998; Ward & Russel, 1981). As geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1974, 1977) pointed out, any conceptualization of a place should include the meanings and values that people ascribe to it. Likewise, the study of Yuksel, Yuksel, and Bilim (2010) also exemplified the need to incorporate both cognitive and affective evaluations when examining the destination image. To capture the affective component of the image, four semantic differential scales (unpleasant-pleasant, sleepy-arousing, gloomy-exciting, and distressing-relaxing) have commonly been used (e.g., Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Chew & Jahari, 2014).

In line with a stream of researchers, the first level of response to a place is affective and this governs subsequent actions toward that place (Ittelson, 1973, pp. 1–19; Walmsley & Young, 1998). Studies in environmental psychology, for example, have empirically confirmed that higher levels of affection lead to more positive cognitive evaluations of a place's attributes (e.g., Billig, 2006; Rollero & Piccoli, 2010). For the vast majority of researchers, though, people's affective evaluation of a place largely depends on their knowledge of that place (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Boo & Busser, 2005; Russel & Pratt, 1980). Indeed, this hypothesized direction of the relationship between the cognitive and affective components has been empirically documented in previous destination image models (e.g., Beerli & Martin, 2004; Li, Cai, Lehto, & Huang, 2010; Lin et al., 2007). Lin et al. (2007), for instance, reported that tourists develop feelings about a destination after they have cognitively evaluated it. Similarly, therefore, to past research the cognitive component of destination image is hypothesized in this study to exert an influence on the affective component of image.

Researchers also agree that a place has an overall image, a notion that refers to people's holistic impressions of a destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). Akama and Kieti (2003) suggested that the success of a destination in attracting tourists may depend more on the overall image than on any specific image characteristic. The findings of tourism studies have provided enough evidence to support a) that both the cognitive and affective evaluations have direct impacts on the overall image, and b) the mediating role played by the affective component between the cognitive component and the overall image of a tourist

destination (e.g., Beerli & Martin, 2004; Fu et al., 2016; Lin et al., 2007). Thus, overall image can be conceptualized as an umbrella term that includes both the cognitive and affective components (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991). Accordingly, the first three hypotheses of the study are as follows:

H1: The cognitive component is positively related to the affective component.
H2: The cognitive component is positively related to the overall image.
H3: The affective component is positively related to the overall image.

The overall destination image influences not only the destination selection process, but also tourists' behavioral intentions (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Qu, Kim, & Im, 2011; Wang & Hsu, 2010). The variables most often used to capture tourists' behavioral intentions related to the destination include the 'intention to revisit the destination' and the 'intention to recommend it to others' or 'word of mouth' (e.g., Chi & Qu, 2008; Prayag & Ryan, 2012). Positive word of mouth, a credible source of information for potential tourists (Yoon & Uysal, 2005), is particularly useful in the tourism industry, which relies heavily on the opinions of previous travelers (Williams & Soutar, 2009; Zhang, Fu, Cai, & Lu, 2014). Intention to revisit is also crucial as it indicates customer loyalty, which is a key indicator of successful destination development and helps in increasing the competitiveness of tourist destinations (Chen & Phou, 2013; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Therefore, an understanding of the antecedents of residents' and tourists' destination image and behavioral intentions offers destination managers additional opportunities to enhance these stakeholders' image of the destination (Chi & Qu, 2008; Yuksel et al., 2010; Zhang et al., 2014). It will also assist local authorities more efficiently allocate scarce resources to achieve positive word-of-mouth and repeat visits (Prayag & Ryan, 2012).

Several studies have reported that destination image influences both tourists' intention to revisit the destination and their willingness to recommend it to others (e.g., Chi & Qu, 2008; Choi, Tkachenko, & Sil, 2011; Ramkissoon, Uysal, & Brown, 2011). Taking an integrated approach, Wang and Hsu (2010) and Qu et al. (2011) showed that both the cognitive and affective components influence tourists' overall destination image, which, in turn, influences their behavioral intentions. Chew and Jahari (2014) further confirmed that both the cognitive and the affective components of the image directly affect tourists' behavioral intentions (e.g., to recommend the destination to others, to revisit in the future). Because the suggested model also takes local residents into consideration, here behavioral intention refers to 'an intention to recommend the destination to others.' Accordingly, three additional hypotheses are examined:

H4: The overall image is positively related to the intention to recommend the destination.
H5: The cognitive component is positively related to the intention to recommend the destination.
H6: The affective component is positively related to the intention to recommend the destination.

In sum, in the proposed model, the cognitive component influences the affective component, and both are antecedents to the overall destination image. Additionally, the cognitive component, the affective component, and the overall image have a direct effect on the intention to recommend the destination (Fig. 1).

As previously mentioned, very few studies have compared the images of tourist destinations formed by the local residents to those held by tourists (e.g., Henkel et al., 2006; Sternquist-Witter, 1985).

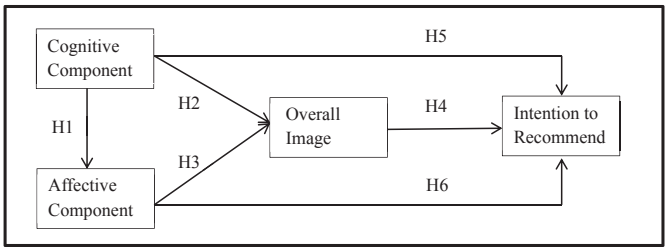


Fig. 1. An integrated model of destination image.

Nevertheless, residents have an important role in destination image formation among potential and actual visitors (Hudson & Hawkins, 2006; Leisen, 2001; Schroeder, 1996; Walls et al., 2008). Sternquist-Witter (1985), who also acknowledged the importance of examining the gap between how locals and tourists perceive a destination, measured the image that tourists and local retailers formed of Traverse City, Michigan. That study showed that local retailers assessed the place more favorably than visitors in regard to six out of ten attributes. Similarly, Henkel et al. (2006) found significant differences between residents' and international tourists' images of Thailand as a tourist destination. The aforementioned studies, however, were largely descriptive, and as such, they did not investigate how such differences in destination image among the various stakeholder groups developed. Therefore, examining the image formation process of residents and tourists will not only benefit our understanding of how these stakeholders' images are shaped but also of how potential differences in the image arise.

Other studies have examined the role of residents' destination image in influencing their behavioral intentions (Schroeder, 1996; Stylidis, 2016). Schroeder (1996), for instance, examined the inter-relationships between residents' image of North Dakota as a tourist destination, their support for tourism development and their travel behavior in North Dakota. His findings indicate that the local residents who had a more favorable image of North Dakota demonstrated a higher level of support for tourism (greater disposition towards state funding for tourism development) as well as more positive behaviors, such as the intention to recommend the destination to others. In a similar vein, Bigne et al. (2005) reported a positive relationship between residents' overall destination image and intention to recommend their place of residence for a visit.

In summary, the results of previous studies have consistently indicated a link between residents' image of their town or city as a tourist destination and their intention to recommend it to others. In addition, it seems that the images of a typical tourist destination differ markedly between local residents and tourists. Previous studies have explained such differences in perceived image based on tourists' previous experience or familiarity with a place (Ahmed, 1991; Baloglu, 2001; Chon, 1991; Hu & Ritchie, 1993; Milman & Pizam, 1995). Using a comprehensive measurement of familiarity, Baloglu (2001), for example, confirmed that the higher the familiarity with a destination the more favorable the perceived image. Building on this line of research, local residents' image might differ to tourists', as residents tend to have more accurate perceptions of their place or develop stronger levels of attachment due to their life experiences at the place (Stylidis et al., 2016). Despite emphasis placed on familiarity in the past, the roles of the cognitive and affective image components in the formation of residents' overall image and in shaping their behavioral intentions, is little understood. As previous research suggests, the destination image components might be perceived differently by groups and also deserve special attention (Ahmed, 1991). Testing of the integrated destination image model not only on tourists (Fig. 1), but also on

residents will enrich marketing scholarship on destination image by providing empirical data on the differences in stakeholders' images. It is possible that each image component (i.e., the cognitive vs. the affective) may have a different level of effect on formation of the overall image and on the future behavior of each group. This study, which extends the application of stakeholder theory in the tourism context, will help explain a) how residents' destination image is formulated, b) how the differences in residents' and tourists' overall image develop, and c) it will contribute to identifying the relative importance of image components across the two groups in order to implement an effective positioning strategy for the tourist destination (Pike & Ryan, 2004). In addition, the study will also provide local councils and tourism authorities with the information needed to enhance the image of the tourist destination formed by the two groups (residents and tourists) and their corresponding intention to recommend the destination to others.

3. Study methods

3.1. Study setting

Israel's southernmost city, Eilat (population 47,500), is situated at the northern end of the Red Sea on the Gulf of Eilat/Aqaba. It is a well-known tourism destination in the Red Sea region and is Israel's most highly developed sea, sun and sand resort. In 2011, international tourists spent 1,084,000 nights and domestic tourists spent 5,671,000 nights in Eilat (50% of all Israeli domestic tourism nights), making it the most popular domestic tourism destination in Israel. Currently, the city has 10,956 hotel rooms, almost one-quarter (24.6%) of the total hotel room supply in Israel (Israel Ministry of Tourism, 2012).

3.2. Sampling

Independent samples for each group (tourists and residents) were compiled in this study. Following Chen, Lin, and Petrick (2013), a questionnaire was personally administered to the respondents who were approached mainly in selected public areas (i.e., shopping areas and neighborhoods) using a random day/time/site pattern (Bonn, Joseph, & Dai, 2005). The first sample consisted of adults (over the age of 18) who are permanent residents of Eilat. Residents were approached in their neighborhoods or in the center of the city and asked to participate in the study. Tourists were approached in the main tourist zone along the waterfront, where the vast majority of Eilat's hotels, shops and restaurants are located. Numerous studies on destination image have used a similar non-probability method for sampling tourists (e.g., Chen & Tsai, 2007; Stepchenkova & Li, 2013), mainly due to a lack of accurate data regarding the size of the tourist population and the absence of a sampling frame (Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Stepchenkova & Li, 2013). While the sampling procedure followed is helpful in achieving a balanced composition of respondents, it may limit the generalizability of the findings to other destinations, as is further discussed in the limitations section. The data were collected between November 2012 and March 2013 using self-administered questionnaires that were distributed by four trained research assistants. The process was closely supervised and monitored by one of the authors. Of the 600 stakeholders approached in total, 450 agreed to participate in the study. After discarding 10 incomplete questionnaires, the final number of usable questionnaires was 440 (240 tourists and 200 residents of Eilat), resulting in an average response rate of 73.3%.

3.3. Study instrument

A single questionnaire comprising three sections was developed to investigate the four latent constructs of the proposed model, namely the cognitive, affective and overall image residents and tourists have of Eilat as a tourist destination, and their corresponding behavioral intentions. The first section aimed to measure the cognitive, affective and overall destination image. Tourists' on-site image was preferred, as a direct experience with a destination results in an organic or primary image of that destination, and researchers agree that visitors hold more accurate or realistic images (Chon, 1991; Milman & Pizam, 1995; Tasci, 2006), and/or more affective responses in comparison to non-visitors, due to first-hand experience (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). In line with previous destination image research, a multi-item measure of the cognitive and affective image was utilized. The multi-item scale was preferred to a single measurement, because past research has delineated a number of destination image dimensions and concluded that image is a complex and multifaceted concept (e.g., Beerli & Martin, 2004; Bonn et al., 2005; Lin et al., 2007). First, a pool of attributes related to each image dimension was developed, based on a review of the previously used items in measuring destination image (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chi & Qu, 2008; Wang & Hsu, 2010). These items covered place attributes such as scenery, natural attractions, climate, friendliness of the locals, nightlife, appealing cuisine, shopping and accommodation facilities, safety and tourist activities. Given the great variety of attributes in the literature, attention was given to 'universal attributes' (i.e., scenery, weather, accommodation), excluding attributes that did not fit to the context of Eilat (i.e., ski facilities). Second, the items were further revised based on a number of discussions with residents and tourists to ensure their relevance to the locality (Poudel, Nyaupane, & Budruk, 2016). Finally, a pilot study was conducted using a sample of residents and tourists (see below). Overall, the list of attributes was developed with the assumption that they best represented the core image of Eilat (see Prayag & Ryan, 2012). Cognitive image, in particular, was measured using a multi-dimensional scale that covered 17 items measuring five dimensions of image, namely natural environment, amenities, attractions, accessibility and social environment. Each of the five dimensions was captured using three to four items (see Table 1). In line with past research on destination image, a 7-point Likert-type scale was used, with responses ranging from '1' (strongly disagree) to '7' (strongly agree) (e.g., Chi & Qu, 2008; Lee, 2009). An inspection of cognitive image factor reliability (see Table 3) revealed that in all but one case (natural environment, in the tourists' sample) values of the Cronbach alpha exceeded the recommended benchmark of 0.6 (Peterson, 1994). The lower reliability observed in the natural environment factor is close to the cut off of 0.50 suggested by Pedhazur and Schmelkin (1991) for factors with only a few items.

Drawing on previous studies, the affective component of image was evaluated using four affective image attributes on a 7-point semantic differential scale (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Kim & Richardson, 2003; Martin & del Bosque, 2008; Wang & Hsu, 2010). These attributes were: distressing-relaxing, unpleasant-pleasant, boring-exciting, and sleepy-lively.

In line with Echtner and Ritchie (1991), the operationalization of destination image should incorporate apart from attributes also holistic impressions. A single measure was chosen because an average of the attribute scores is not considered an adequate measurement of overall image (Bigne et al., 2005). Following Beerli and Martin (2004), Bigne et al. (2005), and Wang and Hsu (2010) who tested a model of destination image formation using a single-item overall image scale, the overall image of Eilat as a tourist destination was measured on a 7-point scale ranging from '1' (very unfavorable) to '7' (very favorable). Lastly, similar to Chi and Qu (2008), Prayag and Ryan (2012) and Qu et al. (2011),

Table 1
Measurement scales and literature sources.

Constructs	Source
Cognitive Component (17 items)	
Natural Characteristics/Environment	Beerli & Martin, 2004; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Lin et al., 2007; Martin & del Bosque, 2008
Scenic beauty	
Climate	
Beaches	
Amenities/Tourist Infrastructure	Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chi & Qu, 2008; Lin et al., 2007; Martin & del Bosque, 2008; Wang & Hsu, 2010
Restaurants	
Accommodation	
Shopping facilities	
Service quality	
Attractions	Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Chi & Qu, 2008
Cultural/historic attractions	
Watersports	
Tourist Activities	
Social/Travel Environment	Beerli & Martin, 2004; Chen & Phou, 2013; Chi & Qu, 2008; Wang & Hsu, 2010
Safe Friendly	
Clean	
Value for money	
Accessibility/supporting infrastructure	Chi & Qu, 2008; Wang & Hsu, 2010
Access	
Infrastructure	
Transportation	
Affective Component (4 items)	
Distressing - Relaxing	Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Kim & Richardson, 2003; Martin & del Bosque, 2008; Qu et al., 2011
Unpleasant - Pleasant	
Boring - Exciting	
Sleepy - Lively	
Overall Image (1 item)	Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Bigne et al., 2005; Qu et al., 2011
Intention to Recommend (1 item)	Bigne et al., 2005; Chi & Qu, 2008; Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Qu et al., 2011

behavioral intention was estimated by asking local residents and tourists to express their intention to recommend Eilat to others as a tourist destination on a scale of '1' (very unlikely) to '7' (very likely). The third section of the questionnaire contained questions about the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including gender, age, educational level, marital status and income (the second section is not relevant to this study).

Prior to main data collection, a pilot test was conducted among 30 tourists and residents of Eilat to ensure the clarity, relevancy and suitability of the research instrument. Aside from a few wording problems that were corrected, no other substantial changes were required. The pilot study, therefore, enhanced both the instrument's face validity and the intelligibility of the questions. Originally written in English, the questionnaire was translated into Hebrew by a professional translator for the benefit of the residents and Hebrew-speaking tourists and then reviewed by a language editor to ensure the reliability of the translated version. To further verify the accuracy of the translation, the back-translation technique was used (Brislin, 1976). Finally, the use of surveyors with a command of both Hebrew and English minimized the risk of response problems due to language barriers (Bonn et al., 2005).

3.4. Data analysis

A preliminary data analysis was conducted before performing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Several missing values were identified, but they were deemed as trivial and thus no corrective action was needed. Namely, the number of missing values per variable was below 5%, and the Little's MCAR test was not significant, indicating that the missing values occurred on a random basis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Additionally, the skewness and kurtosis values (see Appendix B) indicated no major issues with regard to the normality distribution. In particular, slight to medium departures from normality are not considered a serious threat when the sample size is large as in the current study (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2014). In terms of the impact of non-normality on SEM's estimation technique, researchers who tested each technique's robustness with averagely non-normal data, support the use of the Maximum Likelihood (ML) method, as it is quite robust against the violation of normality (e.g., Chou & Bentler, 1995). Accordingly, the ML method was used in this study.

After the preliminary data screening and review of the descriptive statistics, the analysis consisted of three stages. First, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to separately evaluate the measurement model for its reliability and validity among the group of residents and tourists. Second, a Multi-Group Confirmatory Factor Analysis (MCFA) was conducted to test for measurement invariance across the two groups simultaneously (see Muthen & Muthen, 2012; Poudel et al., 2016). Several fit indices (e.g., CMIN/DF, CFI, GFI, and RMSEA) were employed to assess the degree to which the measurement model fit the observed data, as suggested by Hair et al. (2014) and Tabachnick and Fidell (2013). The cut-off criteria employed in this study were: 3 to 1 for the ratio of χ^2 to the degrees of freedom (CMIN/DF) (Bollen, 1989); values greater than 0.90 for the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) (Blunch, 2008; Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000; Kline, 2011); and values less than 0.08 for Root Mean Square of Approximation (RMSEA) (Hair et al., 2014). Lastly, the structural relationships between the cognitive component, affective component, overall destination image and intention to recommend were tested. Prior to commencing the CFA, five composite variables were created based on the cognitive image factors' mean scores (natural environment, amenities, attractions, social environment, and accessibility) and then used in the subsequent SEM analysis as indicators to measure the latent construct "cognitive image" (see also Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chi & Qu, 2008; Lin et al., 2007; Qu et al., 2011). This approach is commonly used in structural equation modeling to mitigate the potential for multicollinearity among indicators and to reduce model complexity, both of which may undermine its goodness of fit (Bollen, 1989; Chen & Phou, 2013; Hair et al., 2014).

4. Findings

4.1. Socio-demographic characteristics

The research was based on a sample of 440 individuals, including tourists (N = 240) and residents (N = 200) of Eilat. Within the sample of local residents (N = 200), women accounted for 59% and men for 41% of the respondents (Table 2). The majority of the local residents were single (57%), under 34 years old (67%), employed full-time (45%) and had an academic degree (45%). Finally, 41% of the residents stated that they had lived in Eilat for over 10 years. According to the Eilat Census (2003), 57% of the actual population are under the age of 34, and 72% are under the age of 44. Also, historically Eilat has had a rather transient population, with about 70% of the total population living in Eilat for less than 10 years. Overall, based on the gender and age profile of Eilat residents, it appears that the sample of residents used was generally representative of the city's population. In the sample of tourists (N = 240), men (51%) and women (49%) were almost equally represented. In contrast with residents, most tourists were married (48%). About half of the tourists had an academic degree (53%) and were employed full-time (59%). The vast majority of the tourists had visited Eilat in the past (68%).

Table 2
Respondents' profile.

Variable	Residents (N = 200)		Tourists (N = 240)	
	N	%	N	%
Gender				
Male	82	41.2	121	51.3
Female	117	58.8	115	48.7
Marital status				
Single	108	56.5	104	44.1
Married	71	37.2	113	47.9
Other	12	6.3	19	8.0
Age				
18–24	56	28.1	63	26.5
25–34	77	38.7	99	41.5
35–44	36	18.1	33	13.9
45–54	17	8.5	26	10.9
55+	13	6.6	17	7.2
Level of education				
High school	13	6.7	18	7.6
GED or other	67	34.5	56	23.7
Prof. diploma	26	13.4	36	15.3
Academic degree	88	45.4	126	53.4
Occupation				
Full-time employee	89	45.4	139	58.6
Part-time employee	24	12.1	30	12.6
Military service	7	3.6	14	5.9
Self-employed	8	4.1	21	8.9
Unemployed	11	5.6	13	5.5
Retired	5	2.6	7	3.0
Student	47	24.0	5	2.1
Other	5	2.6	8	3.4
Years lived in Eilat				
Up to 1 year	23	11.7		
1-4 years	63	32.0		
5-10 years	31	15.7		
10+	80	40.6		
Income (in NIS)				
Much lower than 8000	71	37.2	48	20.2
Lower than 8000	64	33.5	48	20.2
Equal to 8000	31	16.2	57	23.9
Higher than 8000	16	8.4	52	21.8
Much higher than 8000	9	4.7	33	13.9
Visits				
First time			76	32.5
Repeat visit			158	67.5

4.2. Descriptive statistics

Two tourism stakeholder groups (residents and tourists) were asked to indicate their levels of agreement/disagreement with a number of attributes used to describe Eilat as a tourist destination (Table 3). Local residents appeared to have less positive images of Eilat as a tourist destination than tourists, who reported favorable perceptions of many attributes. In sum, most respondents had relatively favorable (mean score over 5) images of Eilat in terms of several aspects, including scenery, quality of the hotels, climate, restaurants, beaches and friendliness of the locals. On the other hand, local residents expressed slight disagreement with the notion that Eilat's transportation system and local infrastructure were good. In terms of the affective image, the stakeholders (residents and tourists) evaluated Eilat as pleasant, relaxing, lively and, to a lesser extent, exciting. The overall image of Eilat as a tourist destination was favorable, but the tourists rated Eilat more favorably than the residents (residents M = 5.16, tourists M = 5.84; independent samples *t*-test: t = −6.16, p < 0.001). Similarly, tourists expressed a greater intention than locals to recommend Eilat to others as a tourist destination (residents M = 5.36, tourists M = 6.15; independent samples *t*-test: t = −6.19, p < 0.001).

4.3. Measurement model: Multi-Group Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Given that the purpose of this study was to analyze and compare two different groups (residents and tourists), a MCFA was considered the most appropriate tool to test for the reliability and validity (convergent, discriminant) of the study's latent constructs (cognitive and affective image components) and to examine potential differences between similar models estimated for the two groups under investigation (Joreskog, 1971). Starting with the most unconstrained model and adding between-group constrain is the common approach in MCFA to test for model invariance across groups (Byrne, 2001). If adding a constraint does not significantly increase the model fit, then invariance for that relationship in the model can be assumed (Hair et al., 2014). As the focus of this study is to test for the invariance of the measuring instruments and of the relationships between the constructs, the process included testing for a) configural invariance, b) invariance in the factor-loading paths, and c) invariance in the factor covariances (Byrne, 2004; Hair et al., 2014). The initial measurement model tested included five composite indicators (natural environment, amenities, attractions, accessibility and social environment) for cognitive image and four indicators (distressing-relaxing, unpleasant-pleasant, boring-exciting and sleepy-lively) for affective image. Its adequacy was assessed based on a number of goodness-of-fit indices, construct reliability, and the convergent and discriminant validity of the two latent constructs.

4.3.1. Establishing configural invariance

The first step in the MCFA is to test for configural invariance, namely that a) the same basic factor structure (number of constructs and items) can be applied to both residents and tourists, and b) each group's measurement model demonstrates acceptable model fit. The results suggested that the initial measurement model did not fit the data well in the sample of tourists, with $\chi^2_{(26)} = 87.98$ ($p < 0.001$), CMIN/DF = 3.38, CFI = 0.86, GFI = 0.93, and RMSEA = 0.10. Similarly, initial testing of the hypothesized model for residents yielded only a marginally good fit to the data: $\chi^2_{(26)} = 162.75$ ($p < 0.001$), CMIN/DF = 6.26, CFI = 0.73, GFI = 0.83, and RMSEA = 0.16. Based on the findings that three items – namely, one indicator of cognitive image (accessibility) and two indicators of affective image (relaxing and pleasant) – were problematic in fitting the model to the data for residents and tourists, a modified version of the model that excluded these items was proposed. The revised measurement model was then re-estimated and the results demonstrated a good fit with the data for tourists: $\chi^2_{(8)} = 16.26$ ($p < 0.05$), CMIN/DF = 2.03, CFI = 0.97, GFI = 0.98, and RMSEA = 0.07; and residents: $\chi^2_{(8)} = 18.75$ ($p < 0.05$), CMIN/DF = 2.34, CFI = 0.97, GFI = 0.97, and RMSEA = 0.082.

After measurement model re-specification, the cognitive and affective image constructs were evaluated for the sample of tourists. The *construct reliability* estimates for both the cognitive and affective construct exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.60, indicating measure reliability (Peterson, 1994). In terms of *convergent validity*, all standardized coefficients were close or above 0.5, and the *t value* associated with each loading was significant at the 0.01 level (Table 4) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). These results showed that all variables were significantly related to their specified constructs, thereby verifying the posited relationships between indicators and constructs (Hair et al., 2014). The average variance extracted (AVE) values, which reflect the amount of variance captured by the construct relative to the amount of variance due to measurement error, were above 0.4 (this is further discussed in the Limitation section). *Discriminant validity* was examined by comparing the AVE values (0.42 for cognitive and 0.55 for affective)

Table 3
Descriptive statistics.

Variable	Residents (N = 200)			Tourists (N = 240)		
	M	SD	Cronbach α	M	SD	Cronbach α
Cognitive Component	4.49	0.863	0.86	5.23	0.615	0.85
Natural Environment			0.63			0.47
Scenic beauty	6.28	0.942		6.22	0.845	
Pleasant weather	5.39	1.36		5.82	1.03	
Nice beaches	5.13	1.53		5.66	1.22	
Amenities			0.84			0.73
Quality hotels	5.29	1.50		6.03	0.952	
Appealing restaurants	5.16	1.41		5.92	0.888	
Excellent service quality	4.36	1.61		5.45	1.12	
Variety of shops	4.66	1.80		5.44	1.32	
Attractions			0.71			0.61
Watersports	5.19	1.43		5.80	0.97	
Well-known attractions	4.08	1.67		4.94	1.19	
Variety of tourist activities	4.39	1.51		5.18	1.07	
Accessibility			0.67			0.72
Convenient transportation	3.12	1.97		4.25	1.31	
Developed infrastructure	3.17	1.64		4.56	1.19	
Ease of access	4.07	1.69		4.53	1.51	
Social Environment			0.71			0.64
Personal safety -security	4.80	1.45		5.32	1.05	
Friendly local people	4.79	1.60		5.38	1.13	
Good value for money	3.95	1.71		4.93	1.27	
A clean environment	3.92	1.76		5.33	1.18	
Affective Component	4.92	1.04	0.69	5.42	0.833	0.57
Distressing - Relaxing	5.36	1.34		5.21	1.19	
Unpleasant - Pleasant	5.42	1.37		5.92	1.09	
Boring - Exciting	4.14	1.48		4.86	1.22	
Sleepy - Lively	4.72	1.56		5.74	1.25	
Overall Image	5.16	1.32		5.84	0.987	
Intention to recommend	5.36	1.55		6.15	1.09	

Table 4
Measurement model (Tourists).

Constructs/indicators	Item loadings	*t*-value	Construct reliability	AVE
Cognitive Component			0.73	0.42
Natural environment	0.54	8.05*		
Amenities	0.89	13.57*		
Social environment	0.59	9.01*		
Attractions	0.48	7.16*		
Affective Component			0.69	0.55
Boring - Exciting	0.92	6.99*		
Sleepy - Lively	0.50	5.59*		

*p < 0 0.001.

Table 5
Measurement model (Residents).

Constructs/indicators	Item loadings	*t*-value	Construct reliability	AVE
Cognitive Component			0.73	0.41
Natural environment	0.47	6.11*		
Amenities	0.82	11.59*		
Social environment	0.68	9.36*		
Attractions	0.53	7.26*		
Affective Component			0.78	0.64
Boring - Exciting	0.72	9.08*		
Sleepy - Lively	0.87	10.50*		

*p < 0 0.001.

with the squared correlation between the cognitive and affective image constructs (0.19). The AVE estimates were higher than the inter-construct squared correlation, indicating that each construct differed from the other (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Regarding *construct reliability* in the sample of residents, both image constructs surpassed the threshold value of 0.60 (Peterson, 1994) (Table 5). Additionally the loadings of all indicators were over 0.5 and significant (*t*-values > 2.56), providing evidence of *convergent validity* in explaining the theorized constructs (Hair et al., 2014). AVE values were 0.41 and 0.64 for the cognitive and affective image components, respectively. These findings showed that the indicators for both constructs were sufficient in terms of how the measurement model was specified. Regarding *discriminant validity*, the AVE values for the cognitive (0.41) and affective (0.64) latent constructs were greater than their squared correlation (0.33) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

The last step of establishing configural invariance involved examining the validity of the structure of the multi-group measurement model. The difference from the previous analysis is that the former tests were conducted separately for each group, whereas in this case the same parameters are estimated, but within the framework of a multi-group model (i.e., across the two groups simultaneously) (see Byrne, 2001). The chi-square value of the two-group unconstrained model is 35.01, with 16 df ($p < 0.05$). The CMIN/DF = 2.19, CFI = 0.97, GFI = 0.97, and RMSEA = 0.05 values indicated that the model represented a good fit across residents and tourists. Therefore, the model is identically specified for each of the two groups studied here and can serve as the baseline model, namely its fit provides the baseline value against which all subsequently specified models are compared (Byrne, 2004).

4.3.2. Testing for metric and factor covariance invariance

The second step in the MCFA involved testing for the equivalence of all factor loadings across groups (metric invariance). Although the loadings were set equal across the two groups, each variable has its own unique loading estimate (Hair et al., 2014). First, all parameters associated with factor loadings were labelled to represent equality-constrained parameters. The model fit was then assessed and produced a $\chi^2_{(20)}$ value of 46.20. When compared with the baseline model there is a $\Delta\chi^2$ value of 11.19 with

4 df, which is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). In line with past research, full invariance is generally difficult to achieve in complex models (Byrne, 2004; Horn, 1991, pp. 114–125). In cases where full measurement invariance is unattainable, researchers recommend proceeding with the evaluation of partial measurement invariance (Byrne, Shavelson, & Muthén, 1989; Schmitt & Kuljanin, 2008). Partial invariance - a less conservative standard - is accepted when at least several parameters per construct are found to be equivalent across groups and the process can continue to the next stage (Hair et al., 2014). Testing for partial invariance involves identifying and then freeing the constraints contributing to model misfit (Byrne et al., 1989). This process (see Table 6) revealed that the previously reported significant increase in the chi-square value was due to a lack of invariance of one factor loading (lively). After eliminating the equality constraints in this path (affective image to lively), the comparison of this model with the baseline model revealed no significant differences ($\Delta\chi^2 = 3.19$, df = 3, $p > 0.10$), demonstrating adequate evidence of partial invariance in the factor loadings across residents and tourists.

Lastly, the model was checked for factor covariance invariance by testing whether the constructs are related to each other similarly across the two groups. The model fit did not change significantly ($\Delta\chi^2 = 7.79$, df = 4, $p > 0.10$), verifying the invariance in the factor covariance across the group of residents and tourists (Table 6). Overall, the MCFA process indicates that the two latent constructs used in the measurement model meet the criteria for configural invariance, factor covariance invariance and partial metric invariance. Therefore, valid group comparison can be made when examining the structural relationships between residents and tourists 'without concern that the differences are due to differing measurement properties between the two groups' (Hair et al., 2014, p.763).

4.4. Structural model

After establishing the validity and partial invariance of the measurement model, multi-group SEM (maximum likelihood estimation method) was used to test whether the hypothesized structural relationships between the study's four constructs (cognitive, affective, overall image, intention to recommend) vary across the two groups. The baseline model was examined first, without specifying equality constraints in the parameters of the structural part across the two groups (however, all factor loadings but one – lively – held equal across groups). All the fit indices supported the fit of the baseline model: $\chi^2_{(35)} = 93.6$ ($p < 0.001$), CMIN/DF = 2.67, GFI = 0.95, CFI = 0.95, and RMSEA = 0.06.

Given that both the measurement and structural models were well within the acceptable cut-off criteria, estimates of the structural coefficients (paths) were used to examine the hypothesized relationships between the four constructs. The standardized path coefficients for the baseline model are presented in Table 7. In both samples, the six hypothesized relationships (paths) were significant in the expected direction. As such, all hypotheses were accepted (see Fig. 2), and their implications for tourism development theory and practice are discussed in the next section.

Finally, to test for the invariance of the structural model across residents and tourists, all the six path estimates in the structural part were constrained to be equal in both groups. The constrained model demonstrated a good fit: $\chi^2_{(41)} = 98.8$, p < 0.001, CMIN/DF = 2.41, GFI = 0.95, CFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.057. Additionally, the chi-square difference test between the baseline and the constraint models ($\Delta\chi^2 = 5.2$, df = 6, $p > 0.10$) indicated that constraining the path regression estimates to be equal across the two groups did not deteriorate model fit. Therefore, the six hypothesized relationships of the structural model are not invariant across residents and tourists (Table 7).

5. Discussion and implications

The purpose of this study was to a) test the applicability of an integrated model -considering the relationships between the cognitive, affective and overall image components of destination image and the intention to recommend a given tourist destination - to the local residents of a tourist destination and b) use the model to juxtapose the results on the cognitive, affective and overall components of image across residents and tourists of that destination. Overall, the findings revealed (a) that the proposed image model can be applied to the local residents; and that in both groups: (b) cognitive and affective evaluations are important antecedents of overall destination image, (c) the affective component is also a mediator of the relationship between the cognitive component and overall destination image, and (d) the cognitive and affective components and the overall image positively affect intention to recommend. Additionally, the nature of the

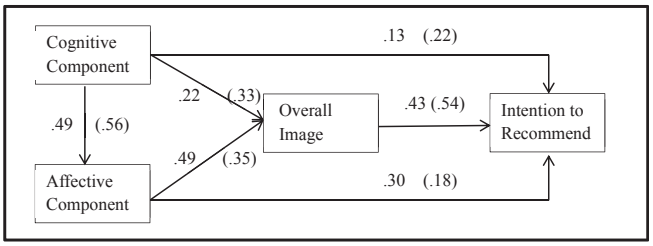
Table 6
Multiple-Group confirmatory factor analysis.

	χ^2	df	*p*	RMSEA	CFI	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	*p*
Baseline model	35.01	16	<0.05	0.05	0.97	–	–	–
Scalar invariance	46.20	20	<0.05	0.06	0.96	11.2	4	p < 0.05
Scalar invariance but freeing: Affective - > lively	38.20	19	<0.05	0.05	0.97	3.19	3	p > 0.10
Factor covariance	42.80	20	<0.05	0.05	0.96	7.79	4	p > 0.10

Table 7
Estimated standardized coefficients for the baseline and constraint models.

Hypothesized Relationship				Baseline Model				Constraint model			
				Tourists		Residents		Tourists		Residents	
				Estimate	*t*-value	Estimate	*t*-value	Estimate	*t*-value	Estimate	*t*-value
H1	Cognitive Component	>	Affective Component	0.49*	4.70	0.56*	5.37	0.46*	7.06	0.58*	7.06
H2	Cognitive Component	>	Overall Image	0.22*	2.61	0.33*	3.60	0.26*	4.47	0.30*	4.47
H3	Affective Component	>	Overall Image	0.49*	4.64	0.35*	3.89	0.43*	6.15	0.39*	6.15
H4	Overall Image	>	Intention to recommend	0.43*	5.96	0.54*	9.26	0.48*	11.03	0.50*	11.03
H5	Cognitive Component	>	Intention to recommend	0.13**	1.80	0.22*	3.05	0.17*	3.62	0.20*	3.62
H6	Affective Component	>	Intention to recommend	0.30*	2.96	0.18*	2.63	0.23*	3.90	0.22*	3.90

*p < 0.001, **p < 0.10.



Note: Numbers outside the brackets are the path coefficients for tourists, inside the brackets for residents

Fig. 2. The integrated model of destination image tested across residents and tourists.

relationships between the constructs of the integrated image model did not appear to change in the two groups. Therefore, it can be concluded that an integrated destination image model, as developed here, can be applied to local residents of a tourist destination apart from tourists. Therefore, in contrast to most resident image studies that have limited their focus exclusively to the cognitive component of the image, the proposed model sheds light on the image formation process of residents by incorporating both the cognitive and the affective components of image. However, evidence suggests that the magnitude of the relationships between the constructs was different across the residents and tourists. As such, the study helps researchers understand how differences in the overall image and future behavior of the two groups (residents and tourists) develop. The model also assists destination practitioners by providing recommendations for the development of different marketing strategies to achieve a suitable positioning for each stakeholder group.

The cognitive component, in particular, had a significant positive effect on the affective component and overall image, thus providing support for H1 and H2. These findings are in line with studies that identified a positive link between the cognitive and affective image component (Li et al., 2010; Lin et al., 2007; Wang & Hsu, 2010); and between the cognitive and overall image (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Qu et al., 2011; Wang & Hsu, 2010). Similarly, the path from affective to overall image (H3) was positive and statistically significant. This supports the findings of studies conducted by Baloglu and McCleary (1999), Beerli and Martin (2004), Lin et al. (2007), and Qu et al. (2011), which reported a positive link between affective and overall image.

This study also found that among the sample of tourists, the affective component exerted a greater influence on overall image than its cognitive counterpart. Research supports that the affective image becomes pivotal when tourists become familiar with the destination (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997). This is especially true for Eilat, where the vast majority of the tourists in our sample (68%) were return visitors and where the visiting friends and relatives (VFR) phenomenon is exceptionally widespread (Shani & Uriely, 2012). Another tenable explanation for this finding could be the context of the study. Lin et al. (2007) reported that the relative importance of the components of destination image differ across different types of destinations, namely, the cognitive image was the strongest determinant of overall image for natural destinations, whereas the affective image was critical for developed destinations like Eilat. In contrast, when the model was applied in this study to the sample of residents, the cognitive and affective image components exerted almost equal effects on the overall image, possibly because residents are familiar with what the local area has to offer (Gitelson & Kerstetter, 1994) and have developed some level of psychological bond with the place (Choi & Murray, 2010). In the case of Eilat, however, whose population is relatively transient, its residents did not express a strong bond to the city (Mansfeld, 1992).

Overall destination image was found to influence intention to recommend a tourist destination (H4). This result confirms previous research on the images formed of tourism destinations by tourists (Qu et al., 2011) and by residents (Bigne et al., 2005), studies that also found a positive relationship between overall image and intention to recommend the destination to others. On the other hand, our finding about the influence of overall destination image on intention to recommend contradicts the results of Wang and Hsu (2010), who did not find a link between overall image and tourists' intention to recommend a tourist destination in China. Moreover, the results also offered support for the statistically significant relationships between both cognitive and affective image evaluations and intention to recommend (H5 and H6). These findings are partially consistent with those from the study of Li et al. (2010), which established a direct relationship between the affective image and behavioral intentions, but failed to confirm a link between the cognitive image and behavioral intentions. On the other hand, our findings contradict those of Qu et al. (2011), who reported that intention to recommend is affected only by the total impressions formed for the destination rather than by distinct image components. Thus, some studies (Bigne et al., 2005; Qu et al., 2011) reported that only the overall image directly influences future behavior, while others (Chew & Jahari, 2014; Li et al., 2010) revealed the direct effect of the cognitive and/or affective images on future behavior. This study, in contrast, found that in both samples (residents, tourists) all three image evaluations (cognitive, affective, overall) influence future behavior (intention to recommend). This finding is line with Zhang et al. (2014) meta-analytic study results that overall image has the greatest impact on tourist loyalty, followed by affective image and cognitive image.

This study contributes to tourism theory and consumer behavior in several ways. By validating the applicability of the proposed image model to a sample of residents, the study sheds light on image formation theory regarding residents, empirically demonstrating that the image residents have of their town or city as a tourist destination is also multi-dimensional. Like tourists, residents' cognitive and affective images are antecedents to the overall image they form, thereby providing support for the researchers' postulation that to capture destination image, both cognitive and affective evaluations are needed, along with a holistic component (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). The study also contributes to the body of knowledge on destination image and consumer behavior by revealing that for tourists, although the affective image has greater influence than the cognitive one in their forming of an overall image, this is not necessarily true for residents, for whom the affective and the cognitive image components have equal effects on the overall destination image. The study thus lends empirical support to the notion that the images of all the relevant stakeholders must be considered prior to engaging in any planning and promotion related to tourist destinations (D'Angella & Go, 2009; Shani & Pizam, 2012).

This research also adds to the existing knowledge by providing evidence for the image elements that contribute to the formulation of residents' and tourists' behavioral intentions. Tourism researchers have thus far overlooked the complexity of the relationship between the image —and future behavior. Although studies have acknowledged the multidimensional nature of destination image, relatively little research has integrated these evaluations (cognitive, affective) to examine the linkage between destination image and tourist behavior. This study confirmed the relationship between the three image evaluations (cognitive, affective, overall) and the intention of the two groups (residents, tourists) to recommend the destination, such that the components were shown to demonstrate varying degrees of effect. In particular, effect on behavior was strongest by overall image and weakest by

cognitive image. Another key finding is the unveiling of the overall destination image as a mediator between image components and stakeholders' intention to recommend the destination. Although past research has markedly increased our understanding of destination image, the mediating role of overall image has scarcely been investigated. This study shows the hitherto unrecognized importance of the overall image, supporting its influential role both in destination selection and in determining future behavior (Gartner, 1993; Lin et al., 2007).

Finally, the study addresses methodological issues in the measurement of destination image. The nature and number of attributes used to capture destination image thus far in the literature has varied widely, suggesting that not only is the notion fraught with complexity, but also that there is a lack of agreement about its measurement. Accordingly, "the results are hard to compare and generalizations are few, as the conceptualization, and subsequent operationalization of the construct has been problematic" (Deslandes, Goldsmith, Bonn, & Joseph, 2006, p. 144). Building on past research, the current investigation provides a more comprehensive framework for measuring the cognitive image in future studies. This framework comprises five dimensions: a) natural characteristics/environment, b) amenities/tourist infrastructure, c) attractions, d) social/travel environment, and e) accessibility/supporting infrastructure. It is suggested that to advance destination image research further, scholars should work to develop a common framework for its measurement.

5.1. Managerial implications

The study provides some useful implications for tourism practitioners. First, given that the proposed image model was successfully applied to local residents, it can be used by destination marketers as a framework for the design of marketing campaigns aiming to enhance the image and word-of-mouth recommendations of this stakeholder group. However, the results also indicate that the magnitude of the relationships between the constructs of the model differed across residents and tourists groups. Taken together with empirical evidence supporting the need to segment the critical stakeholders of a place (Pike & Ryan, 2004), this finding calls for the development of specialized marketing strategies based on the needs of residents and tourists. Specifically, the most important antecedent of overall image for tourists was the affective component, whereas both cognitive and affective images were equally important for residents. This result suggests that the selection of Eilat by tourists appears to be principally driven by its emotional appeal as opposed to its physical attraction. The affective image can thus be used to position marketing strategies for tourists in Eilat (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997). In particular, the promotion of Eilat as a tourist destination to domestic tourists should emphasize, apart from its scenic beauty, pleasant climate and quality accommodation, its relaxing, pleasant and lively atmosphere. In contrast, marketing of Eilat to its local residents should focus on both its cognitive (scenery, climate, beaches, restaurants) and affective image attributes (relaxing, pleasant), which will enhance the residents' intentions to act as ambassadors of their city/region (Leisen, 2001; Schroeder, 1996).

Second, in line with researchers' belief that to understand the behavioral processes at work in tourism it is critical to recognize how the components of image condition the future behavior of the stakeholders (Chew & Jahari, 2014; Zhang et al., 2014), the study provides destination marketers with critical knowledge related to what drives behavioral intentions (i.e., intention to recommend) of residents and tourists. The study, in particular, emphasized the pivotal role overall image exerts on the intention of residents and tourists to recommend Eilat as a tourist destination to others. Given the significance of the overall image in influencing future behavioral intentions, stakeholder-specific marketing strategies must be developed to promote that component of the destination image. In line with Baloglu and McCleary (1999), the development of a positive overall image is a pre-requisite for any potential destination to experience success in the tourism industry. Tourist destinations should therefore formulate a positive image, derived from the cognitive and affective image evaluations, to increase word of mouth and to attract new tourists to the destination (Qu et al., 2011).

Finally, the study also corroborates previous research, which argued that residents who have positive images of their area will be motivated to act as ambassadors of that area as a viable tourist destination (Leisen, 2001; Schroeder, 1996). Word-of-mouth communications are recognized as a type of promotion that can amplify destination marketing efforts (Hanlan & Kelly, 2005). In the case of Eilat, however, residents appear to harbor an almost indifferent image of the city, a fact that poses a threat to its success and sustainability as a tourist destination (DiPietro, Wang, Rompf, & Severt, 2007). Internal campaigns and educational programs should be developed targeting residents of Eilat, who should be actively involved in the process of honing its image as a tourist destination. For example, they could take part in selecting a new logo for the city, as was done for Syracuse in the US (e.g., Short, Benton, Luce, & Walton, 1993).

This study is not free from limitations. First of all, analyzing tourists and residents within the same framework poses challenges as these groups tend to differ in terms of their level of experience, meaning ascribed to the place, etc.; so this study should be perceived as a first exploratory attempt to enhance our understanding on the differences between locals and tourists with regards to their cognitive, affective and overall images of a place. Similarly, the set of items included in the measurement tool may not be totally relevant or complete for residents in order to measure the relationships proposed in the model, but a common measurement tool was deemed necessary to allow for the comparison of local residents' and tourists' images. Future research should exclusively focus on developing a place image model applied to residents by considering also their level of involvement, meaning ascribed to the place and their life experiences there. Research in the future should also utilize a multi-item measure in order to gain a more in-depth understanding of the overall destination image and intention to recommend constructs. Additionally, the AVE estimates of the cognitive image construct indicate that this study may have excluded some attributes or dimensions, whose inclusion may have better explained this construct. Studies should extend the cognitive image measure to involve additional functional and psychological attributes. Next, considering the sampling technique used for the tourists, while this procedure is helpful in achieving a balanced composition of respondents, caution should be exercised in generalizing the results to other destinations, i.e. the external validity of the study will have to be established. Moreover, apart from the three image evaluations examined in the model, other antecedents of intention to recommend (e.g., perceived value, satisfaction) may exist and should be incorporated in the future. Lastly, tourists' image was measured *ex post facto*; future research should consider also tourists' pre-trip image and segment visitors into groups according to their level of experience/familiarity with the destination (i.e., first time vs. repeat visitors), since destination image may differ across the two tourist groups.

The analysis of the model also indicates a possible direction for future research on destination image that will integrate several stakeholders such as residents, tourists, the tourism sector and local authorities. Additionally, although destination image studies

point to a hierarchical relationship between the cognitive and the affective components of image, for some people the initial point in the process of destination image formation can be initiated by an affective occurrence (i.e., after being exposed to a picture or movie, see Pan, Lee, & Tsai, 2014), which can in turn lead to seeking more information about the destination (cognitive image component). Future research should, therefore, explore in depth the association between the cognitive and the affective image components and their impact on overall image and tourist behavior. Lastly, the model could be applied to enhance our understanding with respect to potential image differences between visitors and non-visitors, international and domestic tourists, or between first-time and repeat visitors, considering also previously established influential variables such as familiarity with the destination and/or place attachment.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data related to this article can be found at http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2016.10.014.

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