

The Effect of Destination Image, Travel Experience, and Media Exposure on Tourism Intentions

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Abstract—Destination image refers to the overall impression that people have of a particular place or destination, based on their preconceived notions, previous experiences, and what they have heard or read about it. It is essentially the mental image or perception that individuals have of a destination, which can influence their decision to visit or not. Travel experience, which is a significant factor in tourists' evaluations of a destination, is the other factor that may have an impact on tourism intentions. Negative travel experiences decrease travelers' behavioral intention to return, while positive travel experiences increase word-of-mouth and intention to revisit. Media exposure is the final factor. Due to technological advancements, tourists no longer rely on traditional media outlets for information; instead, they consult other tourists on various online platforms. Among them, social media has become a popular platform that actively tracks the footprints of millions of users, providing insightful information about the habits of tourists. The goal of this study is to examine how media exposure, travel experiences, and destination perceptions affect travel intentions. Data on 520 Thai tourists visiting Hua-Hin, Prachuap Khiri Khan, Thailand were gathered, and after data analysis using a structural equation model, it was discovered that media exposure, travel experiences, and the destination image all influence travelers' intentions to travel. This study improves our understanding of how tourists' intentions to visit or return are influenced by their perceptions of the destination image, their actual travel experiences, and the media's bias.

Keywords—destination image, travel experience, media exposure, tourist, Thailand

I. INTRODUCTION

The definition for tourist destination image most commonly cited in research is that by Crompton (1979) "the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination". According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the destination image should offer details that influence behavioral intention (Nazir *et al.*, 2022). In addition, travel experience has a favorable effect on the intention to visit, according to research by Antón *et al.* (2019) and Wong and Li (2015). Moreover, while Choi *et al.* (2018) discovered that modality and navigability have positive effects on the virtual travel experience, improving tourists' behavioral intention, Yasin *et al.* (2017) noted that travel experiences and website information are frequently used to choose a destination.

Hua Hin district in Prachuap Khiri Khan province has a densely populated urban environment. Due to its stunning geography and abundance of tourist attractions, such as beaches with white sand and clear sea water, and fresh air, it has become a significant global tourist destination. It typically receives 8,000 million Baht (260 million USD) in revenue each year from 1.9 million tourists. The circumstances lead to the establishment of numerous hotels,

resorts, restaurants, and other tourist-related businesses, and they tend to grow yearly in line with the government's promotion of tourism. The ongoing policies on tourism cause many businesses to develop and expand tourism activities. There are additional tourist-related services available, such as lodging, dining, and landscape enhancement (Mongkolmafai, 2018).

In conclusion, this research has a goal to construct a conceptual model and test hypotheses that connect the destination image, media exposure, travel experience, and behavioral intention of tourists to Hua-Hin, Prachuap Khiri Khan, Thailand, by using quantitative research with a questionnaire as research instrument.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The destination image has always been a crucial consideration for destination management organizations, researchers, and professionals because human behavior is more susceptible to an image than to reality. Crompton (1979) defined destination image as the tourists' perceptions of a place as their beliefs, feelings, impressions, and ideas. Similar to this, Fridgen (1987) and Assael (1984) proposed destination image as tourists' beliefs, concepts, ideas, and mental representations about a place they haven't visited in person developed from various information sources (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999).

Travelers frequently have an idea of their destination in their head. Their post-visit image would be more favorable than their pre-visit image if a destination's attributes match the pre-visit image they had imagined. Notably, the destination image may change from positive to negative or vice versa during the pre-visit, during the visit, and after the visit phases. For instance, visitors may have a positive initial impression of the destination, but after encountering misleading marketing tactics while traveling, their post-destination image may be negative (Martín-Santana *et al.*, 2017; Ozretic-Dosen *et al.*, 2018).

The quality of the trip is a key factor in how tourists judge a place (Veasna *et al.*, 2013). Antón *et al.* (2019) discovered that travel experiences have a favorable effect on word-of-mouth and the desire to return. Experience has a significant impact on desire to return, and it moderates the effects of a destination's political climate, natural resources, and social incentives (Kim *et al.*, 2012). In contrast, bad travel experiences make visitors less likely to want to go back; this connection is mediated by destination image (Pavesi *et al.*, 2016). Sahin and Güzel (2020) conceptualized the destination experience around eleven factors that had a significant impact on Turkish tourists' memorability and emotional arousal. They also noted the beneficial effects of

satisfaction, memorability, and emotional arousal on behavior following an experience. Additionally, the caliber of an experience significantly influences behavior intention, place attachment, and nostalgia (Tsai *et al.*, 2020).

Tourist satisfaction is increased by the accessibility, usefulness, and quality of media information about a destination, which in turn increases travelers' intent to travel there (Liberato *et al.*, 2018). By raising tourists' awareness of a destination and motivating them to travel there, this online information, which includes electronic word-of-mouth, has been found to significantly improve tourists' attitudes and behavioral intention to travel (Amalia *et al.*, 2019). Tourists also show a stronger desire to visit locations hosting events (Kim and Jun, 2016), featured in reality television series (Fu *et al.*, 2016), and endorsed by social media influencers (Chatzigeorgiou, 2018) all support the idea that media plays a part in how people behave.

Nazir *et al.* (2022) studied in Pakistan and found that destination image, media exposure, and travel experience has a positive effect on behavioral intention. In all hypotheses, it can be explained by co-branding theory (Liang *et al.*, 2020), social exchange theory (Akarsu *et al.*, 2020), and self-image congruity (Han *et al.*, 2019).

Based on the above discussion, the following 3 hypotheses were proposed:

H1: Destination image has a positive effect on behavioral intention.

H2: Media exposure has a positive effect on behavioral intention.

H3: Travel experience has a positive effect on behavioral intention.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Tourists who had previously visited Hua-Hin Prachuap Khiri Khan and were at least 18 years old were the study's target population. According to the requirements of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) for a model with fewer than seven constructs, a sample size of at least 300 respondents was identified (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Convenience sampling was used to choose the sample, and a research assistant used a Thai language questionnaire to gather the data around Hua-Hin town. Each family had one person who provided the data. The final sample consisted of 540 people.

The Thai language questionnaire comprised three main sections. The first section pertained to general data, including gender, marital status, age, occupation, education level, household income, previous travel to Hua-Hin experience, and people accompanying to go travelling. The second part measured destination image, media exposure, and travel experience, using a Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The 5 factors to measure destination image were adapted from Park *et al.* (2016), the 5 factors to measure media exposure were adapted from Parrey *et al.* (2018), and the 5 factors to measure travel experience were adapted from Sangpikul (2018). The third part measured behavioral intention using a Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), and it comprised 3 factors modified from Nazir *et al.* (2022).

Three experts in tourism and marketing evaluated the questionnaire to test its validity. Each question was carefully chosen based on an Index of Item Objective Congruence

(IOC) of more than 0.5 after receiving some validity recommendations. For reliability, thirty people who used to visit Hua-Hin, Prachuap Khiri Khan were used in a pilot test. Cronbach's coefficient alpha for destination image was equal to 0.894, media exposure was equal to 0.901, travel experience was equal to 0.884, and behavioral intention was equal to 0.919. The questionnaire was thought to have high internal consistency because the alpha was closer to 1. (Cronbach, 1951). As a result, the final samples were used with the questionnaire.

After checking for missing values, descriptive statistics were computed for the general data. Afterward, the relationships among destination image, media exposure, travel experience, and behavioral intention were tested using a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used to examine the effect of destination image, media exposure, and travel experience on behavioral intention. All analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 22 and IBM SPSS AMOS22 trial version. Model fit was assessed using the following six indicators: χ^2/df , Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). bullet.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. General data of the sample

Demographic		Frequency (N = 540)	Percentage
Gender	Female	292	54.07%
	Male	248	45.93%
Marital Status	Single	411	76.11%
	Married without Children	71	13.15%
	Married with Children	47	8.70%
	Divorce/Widow	11	2.04%
Age	18–21 years old	132	24.45%
	22–25 years old	221	40.93%
	26–30 years old	74	13.70%
	31–35 years old	62	11.48%
	More than 35 years old	51	9.44%
Educational Level	Lower Bachelor's Degree	70	12.96%
	Bachelor's Degree	324	60.00%
	Upper Bachelor's Degree	146	27.04%
Monthly Income	Lower than 20,000 THB	60	11.11%
	20,000–30,000 THB	114	21.11%
	30,001–50,000 THB	211	39.08%
	50,001–100,000 THB	97	17.96%
	More than 100,000 THB	58	10.74%
Occupation	Student	187	34.63%
	Private Officer	132	24.44%
	Self-employed	101	18.70%
	Public Officer	88	16.30%
	Other	32	5.93%
Had Travel to Hua-Hin	Experienced	501	92.78%
	First-time	39	7.22%
	Experienced		
People accompanying to go travelling	Couple	202	37.41%
	Family	170	31.48%
	Friend	158	29.26%
	Alone	10	1.85%

Most of the participants of this study were female (54.07%), were single marital status (76.11%), were aged 22 years–25 years (40.93%), had a bachelor’s degree (60.00%), had a monthly income of 30,001–50,000 THB (about 869 USD–1,449 USD) (39.08%), were student (34.63%), had travel to Hua-Hin experienced (92.78%), and were going to Hua-Hin with couple (37.41%). The detail was shown in Table 1.

The next phase of analysis examined the measurement model using CFA with the maximum likelihood estimation method. Additionally, the reliability and validity of the questionnaire was assessed using Composite Reliability (CR). A CR score higher than 0.70 is considered to indicate high reliability (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). Further, factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were used for validity measurement. Table 2 shows that all the factor loadings were above 0.5 (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The AVE values have also been presented in Table 2. The measurement model had CMIN/DF = 6.033, CFI = 0.990, GFI = 0.967, RMR = 0.016, and RMSEA = 0.023, which were acceptable values (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

Table 2. The measurement model

Variables	Loading	Mean	S.D.
Destination Image (CR = 0.872 and AVE = 0.577)			
Hua-Hin has a pleasant climate.	0.769	4.25	0.73
Hua-Hin is a secure city.	0.754	4.27	0.74
Hua-Hin has delicious regional food.	0.767	4.31	0.75
There are many distinctive attractions in Hua-Hin.	0.741	4.28	0.73
The people of Hua-Hin are interesting and welcoming.	0.768	4.27	0.68
Media Exposure (CR = 0.806 and AVE = 0.454)			
When choosing a vacation destination, you take media opinion into account.	0.704	4.25	0.69
When selecting a destination, you take media images and videos into account.	0.726	4.31	0.69
You consider the media to be a reliable information source for organizing a trip.	0.672	4.27	0.71
Your opinion of a vacation spot can change in response to media reports.	0.605	4.30	0.68
You significantly alter your original vacation schedule considering media usage.	0.656	4.33	0.69
Travel Experience (CR = 0.829 and AVE = 0.493)			
Hua-Hin was reachable with ease.	0.681	4.27	0.73
The Hua-Hin's activities were enjoyable.	0.719	4.27	0.65
Hua-Hin was the most enjoyable experience.	0.721	4.28	0.74
The food was clean.	0.738	4.30	0.72
The cost of the trip to Hua-Hin was justified.	0.649	4.32	0.72
Behavioural Intention (CR = 0.811 and AVE = 0.589)			
You intend to revisit Hua-Hin.	0.778	4.21	0.85
You intend to recommend Hua-Hin to others.	0.784	4.24	0.85
You plan to revisit Hua-Hin.	0.739	4.25	0.85

The hypothesized relationships among the study’s constructs were tested in the structural model with maximum likelihood estimation. The results indicated the adequacy of the structural model, with $\chi^2 = 155.717$ (sig. = 0.000), CMIN/DF = 1.226, CFI = 0.992, GFI = 0.969, RMR = 0.016, and RMSEA = 0.020 (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

These findings indicate that the hypothesized model had a good fit with the empirical data. As seen in Table 3, standardized coefficients of the three hypothesized

relationships were significant in the expected direction.

Table 3. Standardized Coefficients for all the Study Hypotheses

Hypothesis Relationship			S.Est.	t-stat
H1:	Destination Image	→ Behavioral Intention	0.621	12.364***
H2:	Media Exposure	→ Behavioral Intention	0.129	3.126**
H3:	Travel Experience	→ Behavioral Intention	0.309	6.831***

Note: *** sig. at 0.001, **sig. at 0.01, *sig. at 0.05

V. CONCLUSION

The This study revealed that destination image has a positive effect on behavioral intention. It was also shown that media exposure has a positive effect on behavioral intention. In addition, travel experience has a positive effect on behavioral intention.

The findings of the studies conducted by Smith *et al.* (2015) and Nazir *et al.* (2022) are supported by the current finding that destination image has a positive impact on behavioral intention. The findings of Chulmo *et al.* (2016) and Chung *et al.* (2015) were supported by the finding that media exposure and behavioral intention have a positive relationship. The findings of Yasin *et al.* (2017) and Nazir *et al.* (2022) that travel experience positively influences behavioral intention are also supported by the current findings.

This study has numerous limitations. First, both negative and positive aspects of media exposure should be studied. Second, only three factors were identified by this study as influencing behavioral intention; however, other factors, such as venue quality or administrative quality, may also have an impact. Finally, because data for this study were only gathered in Hua-Hin, Prachuap Khiri Khan, Thailand, no generalizations about other Thai cities are possible.

To create a generalized body of knowledge about Thailand’s destination image and behavioral intentions, further research in other tourism-related fields should be done. Because tourists with various lifestyles or life attitudes may behave in various ways based on destination image, the other researchers can apply the concepts of individualism and collectivism to this study. The effects of demographics on destination image and behavioral intention were not mentioned in this study, but they may be examined in subsequent studies.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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