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Research Paper

Destination image mediated by experience quality-the residents' perspective

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Abstract

As consumers increasingly seek experiences, this study employs experience quality as a mediator between cognition and affection in the well accepted cognition-affection-overall image framework. Compared with previous studies of destination image which carries the double identity of residents being visitors and people living in the destination, this study takes them as local visitors for pleasure. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were applied and this was followed by a disjointed two-stage approach in PLS-SEM. Findings verified the mediating effect of experience quality on destination image in Qingzhou City, China. For each cognitive attribute, the evaluation of its on-stage experience is conceptualized as experience quality, which makes experience quality measurable. Thus, from the perspective of resident visitors, this study contributes to the theoretical framework of destination image by introducing a mediator; and it makes the proposed framework measurable. The findings can empirically guide the practices of destination image perception management for resident visitors, which may different with that of tourists.

Keywords: Destination image, Experience quality, Cognition, Affection, Qingzhou, PLS-SEM

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Introduction

Image is of great significance to destinations. Image can have a 'pull' effect leading to diversified demands (Fletcher et al., 2017). The way visitors perceive a destination's image will influence the behavioral intentions of re-visitation (Qu et al., 2011; Lv et al., 2020). Destinations must pay attention to visitors' image perception. Extensive literature has established that destination image is composed of both cognitive and affective aspects, encompassing both functional cognition and emotional affection (Bagozzi, 1982; Guan et al., 2023). The well accepted cognitive-affective attitude theory by Bagozzi (1982) was adopted in this study.

In experience economy era, the idea of staging experiences to leave a memorable and lucrative impression is now more relevant than ever (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). In tourism industry, customers are increasingly seeking experiences (Dodds & Jolliffe, 2016; Hung et al., 2016). Thus, it is incommensurate for the tourism sector to focus on purely attribute-based components, as experiential benefits remain critical of the evaluation process (Otto & Ritchie., 1996). The evaluation of on-stage experience of each cognitive attribute is conceptualized as experience quality (Ma, 2019a; Ma, 2019b).

Besides extensive destination image perception studies from the perspective of tourists, residents' destination image plays a pivotal role in sustainable tourism development. Previous tourism studies have focused on residents' place image as a place for pleasure, as well as a place to live (Merrilees et al., 2009; Stylidis, 2018). This study takes residents as consumers who search for pleasures like tourists in a destination setting and it accordingly adopts the tourists' destination image model and scale as suggested (Sternquist-Witter, 1985; Henkel et al., 2006).

From the perspective of resident visitors, this study contributes to the theoretical framework of destination image by introducing a mediator of experience quality; and it makes the proposed framework measurable. Non-resident tourists come and go, whereas resident visitors remain at the destination. Hence, experience quality, cognition and affection of resident visitors should be cared of in an experience economy era as to obtain a well-perceived destination image.

Literature Review

Destination Image

Destination image is commonly defined as the sum of the beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination (Kotler et al., 1993; Kim & Richardson, 2003). Attitude theories, such as Bagozzi (1982) cognitive-affective attitude theory, are widely applied in destination image perception, defining destination image as an attitudinal outcome resulting from beliefs about pertinent attributes of a destination (cognition) and the positive or negative feelings associated with those attributes (affection). Cognition is the evaluation generated from stimulation in the surrounding environment (Neisser, 1976) and it is the way a person processes and evaluates internal information (Sternberg & Sternberg, 2009). The cognitive process is initiated from the bodily interaction with the environment (Nakashima et al., 2006). Affection is, however, the general positive or negative emotional state or mood (e.g., amazing or not,

joyful or not and lovely or not) (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Otoo et al., 2021) towards no specific given object (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000), which is a consequence of the comprehension of the cognition of the destination (Stylidis et al., 2017). Therefore, the destination image perception is dominantly researched through three components: cognition, affection, and overall image. Here, cognition and affection both directly influence the overall image, while cognition directly influences affection (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Carballo et al., 2021).

Experience Quality

Visitors' experience quality is currently drawing more attention from scholars. Customers in the tourism industry are increasingly seeking experiences and being actively involved in co-creating value (Dodds & Jolliffe, 2016; Hung et al., 2016). Experience quality can be defined as the subjective, emotional, and personal feedback towards different aspects of a service, which results in a person's overall satisfaction (Otto & Ritchie, 1995). To go a further step, it is the feedback to the personally desired social-psychological benefits (Chan & Baum, 2007). Experience quality can be articulated by visitors' fun and fantasies about the attraction (Cetin & Bilgihan, 2016; Dodds & Jolliffe, 2016).

Experience quality is not a new construct. The quality of experience refers to the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction experienced by a user of an application or service in response to specific stimuli (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020). It is determined by the degree to which the user's expectations regarding the utility and/or enjoyment of the application or service are met, considering the user's personality and current state (Guan et al., 2023). Recreational experience quality refers to the realization of intrinsic outcomes resulting from engagement in recreational activities and is a psychological or emotional response based on the attributes provided and the visitor's own expectations (Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987). Experience quality is an emotional evaluation that demonstrates the service quality, as well as the attributes experienced by consumers or visitors in a destination (Ma, 2019a; Ma, 2019b). It includes experiencing the tangible/physical and intangible/social environment at a destination, which will result in four feelings such as experience: escapism, relaxation, enjoyment, and involvement (Aliedan et al., 2021). Thus, this study generated items of experience quality by taking them as the evaluative outcome of the experienced cognitive attributes by visitors at the destination.

Resident Visitors' Destination Image

Destination image perception involves stakeholders such as tourists, resident visitors, etc. By considering the concerns of diverse visitors, destination managers can increase the likelihood of successful tourism development (Merrilees et al., 2012; Stylidis et al., 2017). While tourists are often the focus of research on destination image perception (Merrilees et al., 2012), it is important to consider the perceptions of resident visitors. Tourists come and go; resident visitors live and work in the destination and they make an indispensable group of pleasure-seeking consumers in the destination. In addition, their insights are valuable in designing effective tourism development strategies (Hateftabar & Chapuis, 2020), and they often possess a deeper understanding of the destination than tourists (Stylidis, 2022). The perceptions of resident visitors can also influence the image that tourists have of the destination (Gallarza et al., 2002; Lai et al.,

2021). Residents thus play a crucial role in sustaining the tourism development of a destination.

There is a trend to view them as local visitors for pleasure in the destination. Scholars proposed to apply the tourists' destination image model and the scale to resident visitors. Sternquist-Witter (1985) used Goodrich's (1978) ten tourist attracting attributes such as water spots, golf and tennis, culture and history, etc. to compare tourists' and retailers' perception towards a resort. Henkel et al. (2006) adopted Echtner and Ritchie's (1991) attribute-based and holistic component measurement for tourists to study the perceived image of international visitors and Thai residents. Stylidis et al. (2015) adopted the same scales to address the images across three stakeholders: residents, tourists, and the tourism sector. Stylidis et al. (2017) confirmed the consistency of the destination models and the scales between tourists and residents in the study of the resort city of Eilat. In this way, the tourists' destination image model and the measurement scale can be applied.

Research Framework and Hypotheses Development

In line with cognitive-affective attitude theory of Bagozzi (1982), the two components of cognition and affection separately initiate direct influence on attitude besides the uni-dimensional relationship from cognition-affection-attitude. The cognitive and affective components of destination image should be studied separately, because each has unique contributions to the overall destination image (Qu et al., 2011; Stylidis et al., 2017). The affective dimension of the destination image emerges from cognitive dimension and largely depends on cognition, with the cognitive component being an antecedent to affective component (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martín, 2004; Carballo et al., 2021). The positive influence of cognition on affection, the positive influence of affection on the overall image perception are verified in many previous studies (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Deng et al., 2019; Marques et al., 2021). Consequently, we develop the following three hypotheses:

H1 Residents' cognition positively influences destination image.

H2 Residents' affection positively influences destination image.

H3 Residents' cognition positively influences affection.

Cognition is the personal knowledge and belief in the object. Cognitive assessment depends on experience quality as an emotional assessment (Zins, 2002). The attributes of the physical environment (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1994) and intimate service (Otto & Ritchie, 1996) afford opportunities to elicit personal emotional feedback. During the staging process of activity/physical support/social interaction, consumers will use all of their senses (Schmitt, 1999) to appraise the cognitive attributes and elicit emotion. Benefits in travel start with the available raw resources or destination attributes (Brown, 1988; Cole & Scott, 2008). The subjective ratings of the attributes' performance in personal experience produces emotional outcomes (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Cole et al., 2002). Thus, the cognitive perception of a destination is the evaluation of the attributes' performance considering the functional or utilitarian standards whereas experience quality is the subjective favourability judgement on the attributes' performance after experiencing the attributes' function. In this study, we hypothesize

that experience quality is positively affected by cognition in the destination image perception of the residents.

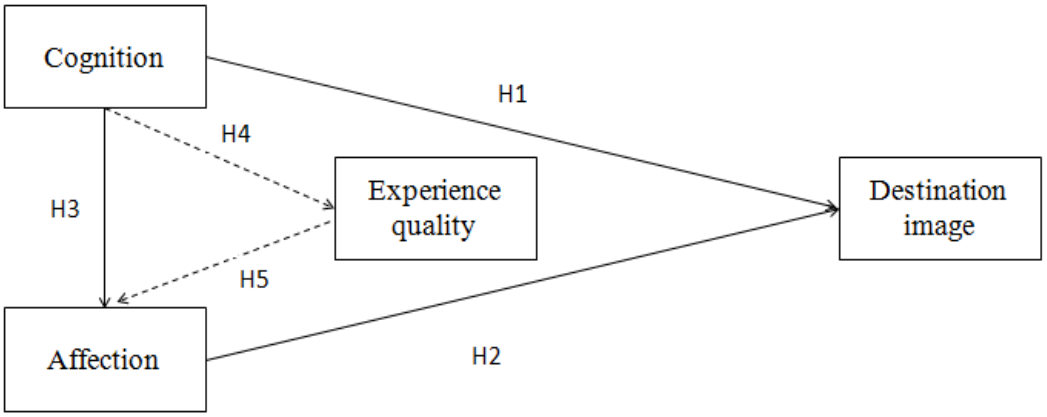
H4 Residents' cognition positively affects experience quality.

Affection and experience quality are both emotional evaluations from the in-situ visitation. However, experience quality is the psychological evaluation of benefits, favors and interests evolving from the experience of attributes, whereas affection is the overall emotional outcome of appraising (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Carballo et al., 2021). Experience quality positively interacts with affective emotions (Zins, 2002; Beerli & Martín, 2004). Studies reveal that direct experience will modify affection (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997; Hu, 2018). Consequently, we derive our next hypothesis.

H5 Residents' experience quality positively affects affection.

Therefore, we examined destination image perception by taking experience quality as a mediator between cognition and affection which lead to overall image (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Framework of destination image with experience as a mediator



Methodology

Study Setting

Qingzhou is a historical city located in Shandong Province, China. The city has a rich cultural heritage, with influences from various ethnic groups, ancient relics, and long-standing religious traditions (Cui, 2010). Its cultural significance has been recognized by the Chinese government, as it has been designated as a National Famous Historical and Cultural City (National State, 2013) and an AAAAA National Tourist Attraction - the highest rating given to tourist sites in China (National Tourism Administration, 2017). Over the past decade, Qingzhou has emerged as a popular tourist destination, with a significant increase in tourist arrivals and revenue (Qingzhou Statistical Bureau, 2012-2022).

Questionnaire Development

Previous research has delineated numbers of destination image dimensions and concluded that destination image is a complex and multifaceted concept (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Lin et al., 2007). Originally, items of this study (Appendix 1) include 33 cognitive items, 33 experience quality items, three affective items and one overall image items. Among the 33 cognitive items, 23 were adopted from the existing literature, while the others were generated in the context of Qingzhou (Cui, 2010). A focus group discussion was conducted on June 6, 2022, with a carefully selected group of 15 residents, considering their age, gender, income, and neighborhood. This session was handwriting recorded, transcribed, and analyzed by the first author and an assistant. Focus group showed the 33 attributes are covering. Accordingly, the 33 attributes will be simultaneously used to measure experience quality by asking respondents their evaluation of experience on each of the attributes. The three affective items such as amazing, joyful, and lovely and the item of overall image were adopted from previous studies. Two global single items are created by following Cheah et al. (2018b), which will suffice in the redundancy analysis.

A questionnaire-based survey was undertaken, and back-translation was utilized to ensure the accuracy of items in Chinese. All variables were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree (Appendix 1). Multiple statements were used for adjustment of the measurement error and provide reliability and predictive validity for the data (Hair et al., 2014).

Then in the last week of June 2022, in-depth interviews with 15 experienced tourism managers from the destination were conducted to examine the clarity, relevance, and representativeness of the items, which resulted in 31 items by dropping two self-created items such as Muslim culture and religion diversity (Appendix 1). A pretest was processed by using print copies in the first weekend of July 2023, which ensured the usability of the questionnaire and to check the comprehensibility of all the statements by the respondents (Hunt et al., 1982). Before the actual data collection process, a pilot test using print copies was conducted on 30 randomly selected respondents in second weekend of July 2023. Piloting identified no practical problems since all the respondents can got the meaning of the questions.

Sampling and Data Collection

The questionnaires were in person administrated to the residents from major communities and parks around Qingzhou City in August and September 2022, when Covid-19 epidemic is not as severe as before (United Nations, 2022). Neighborhoods in Qingzhou were not locked down and there were no other social distancing measures than a mask wearing. Interviewees acquiesced to interviewers who were glad that someone came to talk about leisure with them and require the respondents to anonymously finish the well tested questionnaire. Being present for one year or more in a territory or intending to do so is enough to qualify as residents there (UNWTO, 2008). Thus, respondents who lived in the city for less one year were rejected by using a screening question ‘Are you present in Qingzhou for one year or more?’.

Data from 586 respondents were collected. The dataset was processed and cleaned to assess missing values, normality, and outliers. This resulted in a final dataset of 542

observations. Our dataset met the basic sample size required by the post hoc power analysis with an effect size of 0.15 and a power of 0.95 (Faul, 2007). These criterions were set by Hair et al. (2010).

Results

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted on cognition and experience quality (Floyd & Widaman, 1995; Cham et al., 2020) using SPSS Version 26. It was coupled with a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) by using SPSSAU, which affirmed the results of EFA (Hair et al. 2010; Cham et al., 2020). Structural equation modelling (SEM) was performed to examine the measurement and structural models using SmartPLS Version 4.0.8.4. There are two widely used methods of SEM: Covariance based Structural Equation Modeling (CB-SEM) and Partial Least Squares based Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). CB-SEM is known for theory testing and affirmation without variance clarifying. Specifically, CB-SEM focuses on the goodness-of-fit between theoretical matrix and empirical covariance matrix (Hair et al. 2017). While PLS-SEM functions similarly to multiple regression but has several advantages, such as better estimation of the measurement model and an ability to check the structural model simultaneously with a predictable power (Hair et al., 2017). PLS-SEM approach was adopted by this study since it can cover complex and broad scope of a research investigation and explore the theory sufficiently and practice it in every field of the study (Wold, 1985). Thus, the chosen analytical packages suit the study well and can sufficiently explore the potential mediating role of experience quality between cognition and affection and predict the model.

The dataset was split into two subsets: S1 and S2 (each with 271 samples). S1 was used in EFA. S2 was used in CFA and PLS-SEM to confirm the EFA result of S1 and test the hypotheses.

Common Method Variance Test

Cross sectional survey data highly demands a common method variance (CMV) check (Akter et al., 2011). The Harman-Single Factor test showed that the largest variance explained was 33.076 percent (< 50%) (Hair et al., 1998) for the 542 samples. This result confirms that CMV appears to be of no concern, and thus, the data would not distort the meaning involved in the survey measurements.

EFA of Cognition and EFA of Experience Quality

S1 was used for the EFA of 31 cognition items, as well as that of 31 experience quality items. As for the cognition items, the results showed a value of 0,969 for Cronbach's Alpha (CA), a value of 0.959 (> 0.7) for Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and a p-value of <0.001 for Bartlett's Test. As for the experience items, the CA value, KMO value and p-value for Bartlett's Test are 0.972, 0.961, and < 0.001, respectively. Hence, the data is appropriate for EFA.

Under method of principal components, EFA of S1 developed three dimensions from 31 cognition attributes with an eigenvalue larger than one. Attributes with factor loadings greater than 0.4 in two or three dimensions were eliminated (Kim et al., 2012).

Thus, by removal of three items (Historical figures, Traditional village and Various attractions), 28 cognitive attributes were retained under three dimensions (Table 1): facilitating supply (loaded on by 16 items from night life to safety), intangible attraction (loaded on by six items from Buddhism to Christianity) and intangible attraction (loaded on by six items from service quality to flowers). In the same approach, EFA of 31 experience quality items of S1 raised the same three dimensions with that of cognition and each covers the same attributes of that of cognition.

Table 1: Factor analysis of cognition attributes and experience quality attributes

Item	Dimen 1 C/E factor loading	Dimen 2 C/E factor loading	Dimen 3 C/E factor loading	Eigen	Pct. Variance explained (cumulative)
Facilitating Supply				16.990/ 16.468	54.808/ 53.124
Nightlife	0.613/ 0.657				
Shopping	0.649/ 0.598				
Entertainment	0.676/ 0.708				
Festivals	0.701/ 0.763				
Food	0.711/ 0.682				
Price	0.727/ 0.766				
Art	0.732/ 0.754				
Participation	0.735/ 0.762				
Ecology	0.738/ 0.730				
Government	0.742/ 0.678				
Hotel	0.753/ 0.725				
Information	0.753/ 0.737				
Cleanliness	0.761/ 0.688				
Transportation	0.763/ 0.781				
Residents	0.778/ 0.718				
Safety	0.787/ 0.748				
Intangible Attraction				2.118/ 2.318	61.640/ 60.600
Buddhism		0.711/ 0.752			
Han folklore		0.775/ 0.740			

Imperial exam	0.779/ 0.765			
Hui folklore	0.805/ 0.770			
Man folklore	0.806/ 0.798			
Christianity	0.816/ 0.785			
Tangible Attraction			1.828/ 1.954	67.535/ 66.905
Service quality		0.712/ 0.732		
Waters		0.735/ 0.785		
Buildings		0.741/ 0.804		
Forests		0.765/ 0.791		
Relics		0.775/ 0.736		
Flowers		0.803/ 0.724		

Note: C, cognition; E, experience quality; and Dimen, dimension.

CFA of Cognition and CFA of Experience Quality

S2 was used to conduct CFA on the 28 attributes of cognition and experience quality. For the 28 cognition items, CA, KMO and p-value for Bartlett's Test are 0.915, 0.924, and < 0.001 and that of 28 experience quality items are 0.937, 0.947, and < 0.001, respectively. Hence, the data has acceptable reliability and is appropriate for the EFA.

Table 2 shows the constructs are reliable and consistent with a value of composite reliability (CR) above 0.70 (Hair et al., 2017). The values of average variance extracted (AVE) are greater than 0.708 (Hair et al., 2010) or 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), ascertaining convergent validity as well.

Table 2: CFAs of cognition (C) and experience quality (E)

Item under dimensions	Coefficient	Std. error	p-value	CR	AVE
Tangible Attraction					
Service quality	1.000/1.000	-	-	0.942/0.940	0.732/0.723
Waters	0.980/1.100	0.056/0.060	< 0.001/< 0.001		
Buildings	0.951/1.142	0.051/0.064	< 0.001/< 0.001		
Flowers	1.082/1.075	0.059/0.061	< 0.001/< 0.001		
Mountains	0.973/0.882	0.053/0.053	< 0.001/< 0.001		
Relics	0.923/1.080	0.051/0.059	< 0.001/< 0.001		
Intangible attraction					
Hui folklore	1.000/1.000	-	-	0.935/0.926	0.707/0.677
Man folklore	1.113/1.075	0.066/0.064	< 0.001/< 0.001		
Buddhism	0.970/0.855	0.059/0.055	< 0.001/< 0.001		
Han folklore	1.030/0.975	0.060/0.060	< 0.001/< 0.001		
Christianity	1.154/1.029	0.067/0.064	< 0.001/< 0.001		

Imperial exam	1.022/0.969	0.062/0.061	< 0.001/< 0.001		
Facilitating Supply					
Government	1.000/1.000	-	-	0.963/0.970	0.616/0.666
Festivals	0.943/1.009	0.062/0.057	< 0.001/< 0.001		
Participation	0.880/0.982	0.063/0.058	< 0.001/< 0.001		
Transportation	0.936/1.015	0.064/0.061	< 0.001/< 0.001		
Food	0.945/0.957	0.064/0.059	< 0.001/< 0.001		
Hotel	0.914/1.061	0.062/0.061	< 0.001/< 0.001		
Entertainment	0.987/1.033	0.067/0.057	< 0.001/< 0.001		
Nightlife	0.942/1.014	0.063/0.060	< 0.001/< 0.001		
Price	0.899/0.995	0.062/0.059	< 0.001/< 0.001		
Information	0.918/1.038	0.063/0.059	< 0.001/< 0.001		
Art	1.003/0.943	0.064/0.060	< 0.001/< 0.001		
Ecology	0.925/0.977	0.059/0.058	< 0.001/< 0.001		
Shopping	0.941/0.934	0.062/0.059	< 0.001/< 0.001		
Residents	0.889/0.804	0.059/0.052	< 0.001/< 0.001		
Safety	1.003/0.880	0.062/0.055	< 0.001/< 0.001		
Cleanliness	1.035/0.956	0.064/0.055	< 0.001/< 0.001		

Furthermore, Table 3 shows Square Root of AVE of a certain construct (e.g., 0.855/0.850, 0.841/0.823, 0.785/0.816) is greater than the correlation Coefficients of the construct with all other constructs. This illustrates an accepted discriminant validity of the constructs of experience quality (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Hence, the results of EFA for cognition and experience quality are supported by their CFA and the experience quality is confirmed as being the corresponding partner for cognition.

Table 3: Discriminant validity: Pearson correlation coefficient and square root of AVE of cognition (C) and experience quality (E)

	Tangible attraction	Intangible attraction	Facilitating supply
Tangible attraction	0.855/0.850		
Intangible attraction	0.040/0.092	0.841/0.823	
Facilitating supply	0.037/0.139	0.140/0.031	0.785/0.816

Model Estimation

According to Sarstedtet al. (2019) and Cheah et al. (2019), the disjoint two-stage approach in PLS-SEM involves testing of HOCs were used in this study: 1) measurement model assessment and 2) structural model assessment. This approach can show better parameter recovery of paths pointing in the path model 1) from the exogenous constructs to a higher-order construct, and 2) from higher-order construct to the endogenous construct (Sarstedtet al., 2019).

Reflective Measurement Model

Three key indicators (i.e., internal reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity) in the reflective measurement model (Cheah et al., 2018a) are analyzed.

The values for CA, CR, and Dijkstra Henseler (rho-A) are all above 0.70 (Hair et al.,

2017), which indicates that the reflective constructs are all reliable and consistent. The values of the loadings and AVE are greater than 0.708 (Hair et al., 2010) and 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Thus, the convergent validity of the reflective measurement is ascertained (Table 4).

Table 4: Assessment of reflective measurement models for C/E

Construct	Dimen	Item	Loading	CA	rho_A	CR	AVE
Cognition	Tangible	Flowers	0.883/0.889	0.932/0.934	0.933/0.936	0.946/0.948	0.746/0.752
		Mountains	0.876/0.848				
		Relics	0.872/0.877				
		Service quality	0.849/0.838				
		Waters	0.844/0.880				
		Buildings	0.858/0.869				
	Intangible	Hui	0.863/0.866	0.937/0.933	0.937/0.935	0.950/0.947	0.759/0.749
		Man	0.881/0.884				
		Buddhism	0.860/0.849				
		Han	0.880/0.858				
		Christianity	0.873/0.868				
		Imperial exam	0.871/0.865				
	Facilitation	Government	0.825/0.829	0.964/0.969	0.964/0.969	0.967/0.972	0.649/0.684
		Transport	0.803/0.838				
		Food	0.803/0.821				
		Hotel	0.815/0.854				
		Entertainment	0.794/0.852				
		Nightlife	0.773/0.818				
		Shopping	0.773/0.781				
		Residents	0.803/0.787				
		Safety	0.829/0.818				
		Cleanliness	0.833/0.829				
		Festivals	0.810/0.856				
		Participation	0.783/0.841				
		Price	0.786/0.822				
		Information	0.813/0.853				
		Art	0.828/0.816				
		Ecology	0.814/0.817				
Affection		Amazing	0.889	0.855	0.856	0.912	0.775
		Joyful	0.865				
		Lovely	0.887				

The values of the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio correlation criteria are all less than the threshold of 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015), suggesting satisfactory discriminant validity (Table 5).

Table 5: Assessment of discriminant validity using HTMT

Reflective construct	A	FC	FE	IC	IE	OI	TC	TE
Affection (**A**)								
Facilitation cognition (**FC**)	0.505.							
Facilitation experience quality (**FE**)	0.575	0.569						
Intangible attraction cognition (**IC**)	0.527	0.389	0.334					
Intangible attraction experience quality (**IE**)	0.424	0.330	0.341	0.582				
Overall image (**OI**)	0.439	0.430	0.287	0.317	0.227			

Tangible attraction cognition (**TC**)	0.468	0.304	0.360	0.292	0.327	0.365		
Tangible attraction experience quality (**TE**)	0.466	0.383	0.381	0.279	0.358	0.223	0.500	

Reflective-Formative Second-Order Constructs

The two-stage approach in PLS-SEM, which covers the higher order constructs (HOCs) test (Cheah et al., 2019), is adopted in this study. Cognition and experience quality are both reflective-formative higher order constructs. And in this study, cognition and experience quality are both verified to cover three lower order constructs (LOCs) such as tangible attraction, intangible attraction and facilitation.

By using a redundancy analysis, the convergent validity of the two higher order constructs was assessed (Hair et al., 2017) since the convergent validity (CV) values such as 0.773 for cognition and 0.714 for experience quality, are larger than the threshold of 0.70 (Cheah et al., 2018b). Variance inflation factor (VIF) is tested to be less than a threshold of 5, which indicates no collinearity problem (Hair et al., 2011). Furthermore, the p-values of the outer weights (OW) of all the sub-dimensions are proved to be significant at < 0.001. Thus, the validity of higher order construct is established (Table 6).

Table 6: Assessment of HOC

HOC	Dimension	CV	OW	VIF	p-value
Cognition (C)	Tangible attraction cognition (TC)	0.773	0.434	1.131	< 0.001
	Intangible attraction cognition (IC)		0.388	1.200	< 0.001
	Facilitation cognition (FC)		0.532	1.213	< 0.001
Experience quality (E)	Tangible attraction experience quality (TE)	0.714	0.367	1.227	< 0.001
	Intangible attraction experience quality (IE)		0.377	1.190	< 0.001
	Facilitation experience quality (FE)		0.578	1.218	< 0.001

Structural Model Assessment

The structural model is assessed with a five-step approach. In Step 1, the collinearity issue is not posed, since the inner VIF are all valued below a threshold of 3.33 (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2006). In Step 2, the hypotheses are checked with the bootstrapping technique (5,000 resampling). The output (Table 7) indicates that cognition (H3: β=0.373, $p < 0.001$) and experience quality (H5: β=0.337, $p < 0.001$) both have a positive effect on affection; cognition (H4: β=0.703, $p < 0.001$) has a positive effect on experience quality; and cognition (H1: β=0.398, $p < 0.001$) and affection (H2: β=0.163, $p < 0.05$) both have a positive effect on the overall destination image. Thus, the five hypotheses are all supported. In Step 3, the output (Table 7) reveals that the predictors (R^2) explain 42.9%, 49.4% and 26.4% of the variance in affection, experience quality and overall image, respectively. In Step 4, the effect size (f^2) was administered; the three levels of the effect size recommended in Cohen (1988) were used as the criteria, where the large level ≥ 0.35, medium level ≥ 0.15 and small level ≥ 0.02. In particular, the cognition-experience quality (H1: $f^2 = 0.976$) exhibits a large effect size, while the others reveal a small effect size. In Step 5, the predictive relevance (Q^2) was raised by blindfolding execution. The Q^2 values of 0.242, 0.364 and 0.484 for the endogenous variables such as overall image, affection and experience quality are all found to indicate a predictive power for the model as recommended (Hair

et al., 2017).

Table 7: Assessment of the structural model

Hypo	Relationship	Std. Beta	p-value	R^2	VIF	f^2	Q^2
H1	Cognition -> Overall image	0.398	< 0.001	0.264	1.592	0.135	0.242
H2	Affection -> Overall image	0.163	< 0.050		1.592	0.023	
H3	Cognition -> Affection	0.373	< 0.001	0.429	1.976	0.123	0.364
H5	Experience quality -> Affection	0.337	< 0.001		1.976	0.101	
H4	Cognition -> Experience quality	0. 703	< 0.001	0.494	1.000	0.976	0.484

Assessment of the Mediating Effect

The mediating analysis is examined using the approach in Nitzl et al. (2016) by bootstrapping the indirect effect (Table 8). Experience quality is observed to be a mediator between cognition and affection ($\beta = 0.237$, $p < 0.001$). Affection mediates the cognition and overall image ($\beta = 0.055$, $p < 0.05$), as well as experience quality and overall image ($\beta = 0.061$, $p < 0.05$). There is a sequential mediating effect among the cognition-experience quality-affection-overall image ($\beta = 0.039$, $p < 0.05$).

In particular, the experience quality of facilitation can mediate cognition and affection ($\beta = 0.149$, $p < 0.001$); similarly, the experience quality of tangible attraction is confirmed to mediate cognition and affection ($\beta = 0.060$, $p < 0.05$). The results demonstrate that the experience quality of intangible attraction as a mediator ($\beta = 0.015$, $p > 0.1$) between the cognition and affection is so trivial with non-significance.

Table 8. Mediating effect assessment

Mediating effect	Original sample	p-value
FC -> FE -> A	0.149	< 0.001
TC -> TE -> A	0.060	< 0.050
IC -> IE -> A	0.015	> 0.100
C -> EQ -> A -> OI	0.039	< 0.050
E -> A -> OI	0.055	< 0.050
C -> E -> A	0.237	< 0.001
C ->A -> OI	0.061	< 0.050

At the subdimension level (Table 9), β values of FC -> FE, TC -> TE and IC -> IE are 0.552, 0.467 and 0.547 respectively and they are all proved to be significance ($p < 0.001$). Furthermore, FE -> A is significant ($p < 0.001$) with a β value of 0.269 and TE -> A is significant (< 0.05) with a β value of 0.129. While the β value of 0.027 for IE -> A is trivial with $p > 0.1$, illustrating IE does not significantly affect A.

Table 9. Direct effects at dimension level

Direct effects	Original sample	p-value
FC -> FE	0.552	< 0.001
TC -> TE	0.467	< 0.001
IC -> IE	0.547	< 0.001
FE -> A	0.269	< 0.001
TE -> A	0.129	< 0.050
IE -> A	0.027	> 0.100

Discussion

Relationships Between Among Cognition, Affection, and Overall Image in Literature are Supported from The Perspective of Resident Visitors

As local visitors, residents' cognition and affection both influence overall image positively. Cognition, as the belief of attributes of destination image, is confirmed to be very essential in the framework and it directly influences affection. The framework, studied usually from the perspective of tourist arrivals, where cognition positively influence affection, and they both influence overall image positively (Wang & Huang, 2010; Stylidis et al., 2017) are confirmed in the group of residents. It is noteworthy that the path coefficient of cognition to overall image is apparently greater than that of affection to overall image, which is unlike the studies conducted by Wang and Huang (2010) and Stylidis et al. (2017), where the latter path coefficient is greater than that of the former; the reason may possibly be that the mediating effect of experience quality between cognition and affection decrease the path coefficient of affection to overall image; or possibly be the varied stakeholder's (Stylidis et al., 2017).

Mediating Role of Experience Quality is Verified

In this study, it is affirmed that the relationship between cognition and affection is mediated by experience quality. The direct effect of cognition to affection is uncovered to be still resultful, not dissolved completely by experience quality and its mediating effect. At the level of three dimensions such as facilitation, tangible attraction, and intangible attraction, the first two's experience quality(s) are revealed to be mediator; facilitation experience quality has larger mediating effect than that of tangible attraction experience quality. However, the intangible attraction experience quality plays no significant mediating role between the intangible cognition and affection. To be specific, what cognitively perceived by residents in terms of the three dimensions are well experienced by residents; subsequently, experience quality of the former two (facilitation and tangible attraction) can effectively stimulate affection whereas intangible attractions' experience quality cannot. In this way, although experience quality can play an overall mediating role between cognition and affection, the stories of the three sub-dimensions are different.

Differences Between Tourists' Perception and Residential Visitors' Perception

Compared with the study by Guan et al. (2023) who used the same structure model to study tourists' perception of Qingzhou, the tourists prioritize facilitation than that of resident visitors, while resident visitors prioritize tangible attraction and intangible attraction than that of tourists, which indicates the primary role of facilitation in tourist' visiting process. Compared with the results in Guan et al. (2023), the assumed positive relationships such as cognition -> overall image, experience quality -> affection, cognition -> experience quality, affection -> overall image, and cognition -> experience quality -> affection for resident visitors are less vigorous than that of tourists while relationship between cognition -> affection for resident visitors is stronger than that of tourists. This unveils the more sensitiveness for most of the assumptions for tourists than that of resident visitors.

Practical Implications for Asian Business

Practitioners must take great consideration of destination image perception, and cognitive image is especially significant since destination image essentially evolves from the belief of involved attributes or the cognitive image. Asia owns abundant and distinguished tourist attractions whose authentic and outstanding attributes should be experienced by the visitors. Destinations must understand the destination's culture, history and environment, and provide more nuanced attributes to be cognitively perceived by consumers according to their preferences, which will make fulfilled emotional feedback that leave heartfelt admiration for the destination. Asian destinations will benefit from careful consideration of the fashionable images perceived by visitors, since they can meet visitors' needs and wants and increase their interests in visiting the destinations. Indeed, there are destinations where wonderful first-class attractions or dominant sites in a certain market are found can try a resource directed approach whereas most destinations in Asia can possibly go a consumer directed way in light of the study by Fletcher et al. (2020).

To create lasting and profitable impressions, the concept of staging experiences has become increasingly relevant and can significantly boost the growth of the economy (Pine & Gilmore, 2011). As a post evaluation of the experience cognitive attributes, experience quality is crucial for building a well perceived destination image. The service quality provided by the supply side may be incongruous with what visitors perceived after visiting. According to Beerli and Martin (2004), we should offer services and facilities in destinations which meet or exceed visitors' expectations, with an emphasis on factors such as tourists' contact or interaction with locals and the length of their stay, Asia is not exclusive. In addition, to improve experience quality, it is necessary to offer an authentic experience for visitors or making the destination fashionable (Fletcher et al., 2017). Thus, strategies such as enriching authenticity and fashionability of versatile attractions in the destinations in Asia would help visitors achieve qualified experience quality and enhance the competitiveness of the destinations in Asia.

Considering the concerns of all stakeholders involved in the tourism industry is crucial for the successful development of a destination (Stylidis et al., 2017; Stylidis, 2022). Image perception of resident visitors as well as external tourists in destinations of Asia should be specially managed since Asia is a densely populated region overall. In planning and decision-making processes, destination managers in Asia should gather feedback of destination perception from resident visitors since they perceive the destination differently with the external tourists. This can help develop different marketing strategies and achieve a suitable positioning for each stakeholder group. Further, figuring out residents' perception is to consider their ambassadorship to non-residents, which influence tourists' destination image, travel decision making, and on-site experience (Gallarza et al., 2002; Lai et al., 2021), and destinations in Asia will definitely gain power in marketing by following this idea.

In conclusion, effectively reputation management of image perception by offering enriched experience is crucial for the success and growth of destinations in Asian. It is obliged for the destination operators to emanate the glamour of Asia and to share the attractiveness of Asia with different stakeholders such as resident visitors and tourists.

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Appendix

No.	Cognition	Source
1	Service quality	Gallarza et al. (2002); Stylidis et al. (2017).
2	Waters	Beerli and Martı´n (2004).
3	Buildings	Beerli and Martı´n (2004); Stylidis et al. (2015).
4	Flowers	Beerli and Martı´n (2004).
5	Forests	Beerli and Martı´n (2004).
6	Relics	Echtner and Ritchie (1993); Stylidis et al. (2015).
7	Hui folklore	1.Justified by in depth interview, pretest and pilot test.
8	Man folklore	2.Statistically double assured by EFA, CFA and two-

9	Buddhism	stage approach in PLS_SEM involving test of higher
10	Han folklore	order constructs (HOCs) in data analysis.
11	Christianity	
12	Imperial exam	
13	Historical figures	
14	Traditional village	
15	Various attractions	Echtner and Ritchie (1993); Wang and Huang (2010).
16	Responsible government	Beerli and Martı´n (2004).
17	Transportation	Beerli and Martı´n (2004); Stylidis et al. (2017).
18	Food	Wang and Huang, (2010); Marques et al. (2021).
19	Hotel	Stylidis et al. (2017); Marques et al. (2021).
20	Entertainment	Echtner and Ritchie (1993); Beerli and Martı´n (2004).
21	Nightlife	Gallarza et al. (2002); Stylidis et al. (2015).
22	Shopping	Beerli and Martı´n (2004); Stylidis et al. (2017).
23	Friendly residents	Stylidis et al. (2015); Stylidis et al. (2017).
24	Safety	Beerli and Martı´n (2004); Stylidis et al. (2017).
25	Cleanness	Beerli and Martı´n (2004); Stylidis et al. (2017).
26	Festivals	Beerli and Martı´n (2004).
27	Participation/activities	Beerli and Martı´n (2004); Stylidis et al. (2017).
28	Price	Gallarza et al. (2002); Marques et al. (2021).
29	Information	Beerli and Martı´n (2004); Gallarza et al. (2002).
30	Art	Beerli and Martı´n (2004); Wang and Huang (2010).
31	Ecology	Beerli and Martı´n (2004); Stylidis et al. (2017).
Affection		
1	Not amzing - amazing	Hosany and Gilbert (2010); Otoo et al. (2021).
2	Not joyful - ioyful	
3	Not lovely - lovely	
Global item 1: General view of Qingzhou		
Global item 2: General experience quality of Qingzhou		
Overall destination image		Beerli and Martı´n (2004); Stylidis et al. (2017).

Appendix 1. Measurement items

Note: “Muslim culture” and “religion” are both deleted before the data collection.