DESTINATION IMAGE ANALYSIS AND ITS STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS: A LITERATURE REVIEW FROM 1990 TO 2019

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: "Image" not only exists in the market of consumption goods as well as tourism but also is the criteria usually used by consumers to make decisions. However, little literature is concerned with a comprehensive analysis of its development trajectory, application domains, and strategic implications. This study aims at conducting an extensive review of DI's current literature to examine the key concept of consumer behaviors.

Methodology: Based on Scopus, this paper surveys the development trajectory of destination image using a literature review with the solo keyword "destination image" from 1990 to 2019.

Main findings: The findings indicate that the development of destination image begins in 1995 and the overall growth is steady and strong. There are three development waves, such as 2002-2007, 2008-2013, and 2015-2019. These 908 articles were scattered across 182 different journals. Besides, all these keywords related to counties/areas are mostly equipped with tourism competitiveness as well.

Applications of this study: This study reveals five problem domains of destination image including environment and government, destinations, tourists, culture, and others, respectively. This would call the attention of the executives and authorities concerned with environmental sustainability, adaptability/responsiveness of strategies, destination competitiveness, capabilities development, resource allocation, and tourist behavior (e.g., decision-making and post-purchase intention).

Originality/Value: Based on the nexus between "environment-destination-tourist", this study proposed a strategic map of DI to future researchers and field workers of great interests to operationalize and conceptualize its coverage.

Keywords: Destination Image (DI), Application, Strategic Implication, Strategic Blueprint, Literature Review.

INTRODUCTION

Destination image (DI)

"***Image***" is a decisive factor that drives consumers' decisions in the selection of a multitude of information. In the field of marketing, it is commonly known as "***brand image***" and "***destination image** (hereinafter DI)*". Brand image refers to an overall impression that consumers have of a brand or a product, including cognition, emotion, and attitude (Levy, 1978). On the other hand, DI refers to one's knowledge, beliefs, and feelings about a particular destination (Crompton, 1979; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Baloglu & McClery, 1999b). Clearly, DI can exist in both the market of consumption goods and of tourism. In the early 1970s, DI was first introduced into the field of tourism by Hunt (1971) and has become an emerging research area (Stepchenkova & Mills, 2010; Gallarza et al., 2002). DI is a complex and subjective concept (Wang, 2000) and an important category that differentiates markets. Each destination competes through its own images to attract consumers to travel. In other words, if a tourist has more favorable images of a destination, s/he will be more likely to return to the same destination for a trip (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Chon, 1990, 1992). In short, DI is an essential factor for tourists that influence their decision-making process about vacation and leisure activities (Mayo, 1975; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a; Buhalis, 2000; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Chen & Tsai, 2007).

The purpose of this study -- Why we do this?

Systematic literature review of DI has been scarce, including Chon (1990), Echtner and Ritchie (1991), Pike (2002, 2007), Gallarza et al. (2002), Stepchenkova and Mills (2010), and Li et al. (2015), etc. Prior research in Chon's (1990) review of 23 frequently-cited articles found that a vast majority of research focuses on the effect of DI on tourist behaviors and satisfaction. Echtner and Ritchie (1991) addressed that future researchers can have more explorations on operational and conceptual definitions of DI when they reviewed 15 articles that mainly chose quantitative methodology to conduct research. Stepchenkova and Mills (2010) include 152 papers published during 2000 and 2007 for a more thorough investigation in DI research topics, questions, methodology, and instruments. Basically, there are some limitations on the previous literature research, such as duration, sampling, number of articles, classification, etc. In view of this, in order to

provide a more comprehensive and in-depth insight than previous studies, this study aims at conducting an extensive review of DI's current literature to examine the key concept of consumer behaviors.

In addition to providing a multifaceted and comprehensive review of DI literature to researchers and practitioners of great interests, this study, most importantly, draws attention to a proposed strategic map based on the analytical results. Therefore, the ultimate objectives of this study can be summarized as follows:

- Compared with earlier studies, this study would make a more comprehensive review and analysis of DI;

- Based on analytical evidence in the review, this study would develop some propositions for future researchers who are interested in further empirical validations in the field of tourism;

- To highlight the "environment-destination-tourist" chain, this study would propose a strategic map that can benefit the executives and/or authorities concerned who manage and/or market the destination sites.

METHODOLOGY

The research method can be seen as a way to systematically answer or solve the research problem. The term "research" is the process of seeking information and knowledge on a specific topic or subject. In other words, research is an art of scientific and systematic investigation through the search for facts in any unknown field (Mishra & Alok, 2017). Nowadays, many academic publishers provide researchers their needed reference materials and resources, for example, *Taylor & Francis*, *Elsevier*, *SAGE*, *Emerald*, *Wiley*, and so on. Due to the restricted time and energy, this study searches relevant literature in Scopus, the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature. *Scopus*, *WOS* (*Web of Science*), and *Google Scholar* are the TOP 3 indexed databases. A study by Utrecht University Library (2006) in the Netherlands shows that Scopus gathers more literature, has a clearer and user-friendlier searching interface, and is more likely to be used by students and researchers in social science and scientific field than WOS.

In the first phase, 917 articles are retrieved by searching the string of "***destination image***" for the publication period from 1990 to 2019 (thirty years in total) in late April and early May 2020. Next, the exact keyword of "***destination image***" filters out 908 articles. The use of keywords, rather than the use of strings, for searching in the online database can assist researchers in establishing a research framework that well covers three aspects: research questions, theories, and methods (Liao & Wen, 2007). Three selection criteria are as follows:

- To capture the most appropriate venue of DI, only those published in Tourism, Hospitality, Business, Marketing and Management journals are selected into the analysis;

- According to Nord and Nord (1995), journals undergo a meticulous peer-review process that is considered the highest quality of research selection. This study includes journal articles into analysis only and excludes conference papers, working papers, master thesis/doctoral dissertation, and textbooks;

- Given that this study uses the keyword of "destination image" to filter out relevant articles in the Scopus, articles without a keyword are not included in the analysis.

It is known that image is a useful and direct tool for consumers to make decisions. DI is an even more complex concept involving interactions of environment, destination, and tourists. To understand the dynamics of DI formation, the method of the literature review should be capable of clearly depicting the interrelations of environment, destinations, and tourists and thus organizing the static information into a strategic map.

Basically, all our findings in this study are based on the scope of 908 selected articles. This analysis provides a comprehensive and systematic review and the outlines are as follow: (1) Overall analysis—including journal publication trends, publication sources, and the focuses of countries/areas; (2) Advanced analysis—using keywords to illustrate and construct a strategic map for DI; and (3) Comparative analysis—including a comparison with Pike's (2002, 2007) to propose new insights.

RESULTS/FINDINGS

Overall analysis

Outlets by journals

The 908 articles selected in this study are distributed across 182 different journals. Among these journals, the TOP 10 are *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *Tourism Management*, *Journal of Travel Research*, *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, *Tourism Analysis*, *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*,

Current Issues in Tourism, *International Journal of Tourism Research,* and *Annals of Tourism Research*. These TOP 10 journals contain "***Destination***," "***Travel***," "***Tourism***," "***Vacation***," and "***Tourism/Hospitality***" in the journal title and publish 45.7% (415/908) of the selected DI literature. Over two-thirds (67.4%, 612/908) of the selected DI literature are published in the TOP 25 journals. This means that if researchers are interested in reading DI literature, the TOP 25 journals should harbor most of them.

In this study, 753 out of 908 (82.9%) selected articles are published in the top nine publishers, namely, *Taylor & Francis*, *Elsevier*, *SAGE*, *Emerald*, *Cognizant Communication Corporation*, *Wiley*, *InderScience*, *Springer*, and *Palgrave*. However, among the TOP 25 journals where the vast majority of DI literature has published, six journals that cover 11.4% (70/908)of publications are not provided in these nine major publishers, meaning that if researchers only include the journals covered by these nine major publishers, the overall analysis will be biased.

In addition to five scopes in the TOP 10 journals, this study discovers that the DI concept also appears in various aspects, which is worthy of continued attention. They are (1) ***Specific target***- for example, *Journal of Place Management and Development* (place), *International Journal of Tourism Cities* (city), *British Food Journal* (food), *Sport Management Review* and *Journal of Convention and Event Tourism* (sport/exhibition), *Journal of African Business* and *Journal of Business Research* (business), *Journal of Product and Brand Management* (product/brand), *Journal of Heritage Tourism* (heritage tourism), *Asian Geographer* and *Geographical Research* (geography), etc.; (2) ***Marketing***- for example, *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, *Journal of Islamic Marketing* and *Australasian Marketing Journal*; (3) ***Sustainability and environmental education-*** for example, *Environmental Education Research*, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, and *Sustainability*; (4) ***Culture-*** for example, *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, and *Journal of Cultural Geography*; (5) ***Information technology-*** for example, *Behaviour and Information Technology*, and *Information & Management*; and (6) ***Others***-for example, *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism* (quality), *Local Economy* and *Tourism Economics* (economy), and *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* (retailing). In short, the concept of DI should not be limited to the destination only but underlies various elements. In this sense, tourists' perception of DI is holistic, not fragmented or divided.

Development trends

Figure 1 illustrates that the development of DI literature began since 1995 and gradually grows year by year. Three waves of DI literature blossom: 2002-2007, 2008-2013, and 2015-2019. In 2020, 32 articles are published as of the end of April and the total amount of publications for the entire year is expected to exceed 100 and reach a new high. Among the nine major publishers previously mentioned, Taylor & Francis covers the largest portion of DI publications in the Scopus database, followed by Elsevier. Palgrave and Springer have the least amount of DI publications. SAGE is the first publisher publishes DI articles while Cognizant Communication Corporation is the latest one.

In this study, 679 out of 908 (74.8%) selected articles are found in the traditional five major publishers: Taylor & Francis (253), Elsevier (185), SAGE (134), Emerald (80), and Wiley (27). A total of 155 (17.1%) articles are found outside of the above five publishers but in the university journals or reports from other academic institutes, such as *Sustainability* of MDPI, *European Journal of Tourism Research* of Varna University of Management, and *e-Review of Tourism Research* of Texas A&M University, etc. Therefore, it is suggested that future researchers need to pay attention to these five publishers, especially Taylor & Francis, Science Direct, and SAGE, but simultaneously expand the scope of literature searches.
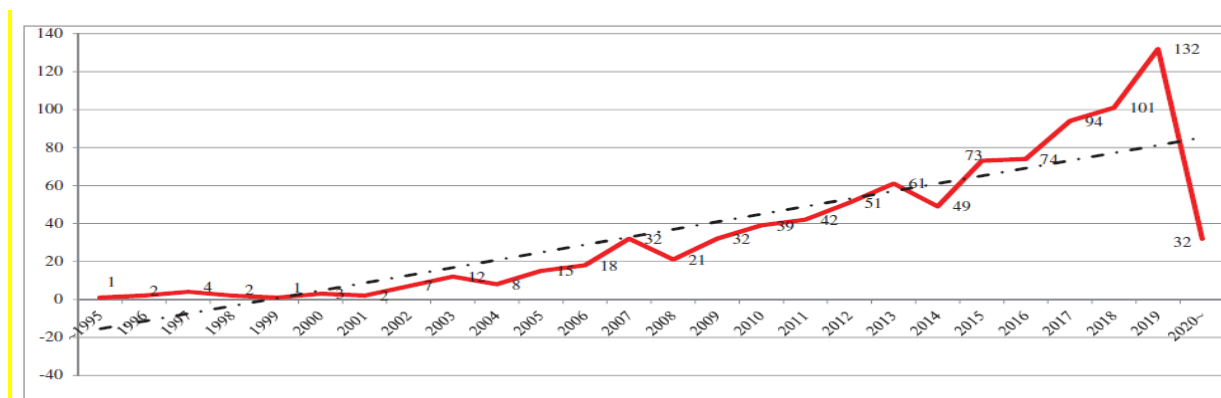

Figure 1: Trend of DI publication by a number of articles (1990-2019)

Source: This study

Table 1: DI and keywords related to countries/areas

Countries/Areas (frequency)				
Asia (202)	Taiwan (16)	Malaysia (13)	Qatar (1)	Hongkong (10)
	Thailand (4)	Japan (11)	South Korea (15)	Philippines (1)
	China (44)	Vietnam (7)	Israel (4)	Iran (11)
	Palestine (1)	Kazakhstan (1)	Kyrgyzstan (1)	India (15)
	Macao (11)	Afghanistan(1)	Jordan (1)	Turkey (16)
	UAE (7)	Kuwait (1)	Myanmar (1)	North Korea (1)
	Indonesia (3)	Kashmir (1)	Brunei (1)	Singapore (3)
Europe (77)	Netherlands (1)	Czech (1)	Greece (11)	Austria (4)
	Spain (11)	Denmark (1)	Russia (3)	Germany (2)
	Poland (2)	Norway (1)	Cyprus (3)	Swiss (1)
	Bulgaria (1)	Portugal (10)	Italy (2)	France (4)
	Iceland (2)	UK (10)	Serbia (2)	Sweden (1)
	Ukraine (1)	Romania (2)	Slovakia (1)	
Africa (26)	Botswana (1)	Tanzania(2)	Tunisia (1)	Cameroon (1)
	Uganda (1)	Mauritius (5)	Rwandan (1)	Zimbabwe (2)
	South Africa (6)	Kenya (1)	Nigeria (3)	Egypt (2)
Oceania(25)	Australia (15)	New Zealand (10)		
America (35)	Grenada (1)	Jamaica (2)	Cuba (4)	Peru (2)
	USA (18)	Brazil (5)	Canada (2)	Mexico (1)

Source: This study

DI and keywords with targeted countries/areas

Countries/areas listed in the 3,953 keywords from the scope of 908 DI articles have two meanings: firstly, *destination*, and secondly, *country of origin of tourists*. There are 365 keywords in terms of country/area (covering 73 countries/area); among them, China (including Hong Kong and Macau) appears most frequently (65); United States is the next (18); Taiwan and Turkey rank third (16); Australia and South Korea tie for fourth (15); the fifth is India (14); Malaysia ranks sixth (13); Japan/Spain/Iran/Greece ranks seventh (11 each); New Zealand/Portugal/UK (including England, Ireland, and Wales) rank eighth (10 each); the United Arab Emirates and Vietnam rank ninth (7 each); and South Africa ranks tenth (6) (see Table 1).

Table 2: Top 10 of countries and their competitiveness (WEF) in this study

Rank	Countries	frequencies	The rank of WEF competitiveness (2019)
1	China	44	28
2	USA	18	2
3	Taiwan	16	12
3	Turkey	16	61
4	Australia	15	16
4	South Korea	15	13
5	India	13	68
6	Malaysia	13	27
7	Japan	11	6

7	Spain	11	23
7	Iran	11	99
7	Greece	11	59
7	Macao	11	--
8	New Zealand	10	19
8	Portugal	10	34
8	UK	10	9
8	Hong Kong	10	3
9	United Arab Emirates	7	25
9	Vietnam	7	67
10	South Africa	6	60

Sources: This study

Interestingly, the top 10 countries/areas listed in the 3,953 keywords from the scope of 908 DI articles are also chosen in the top 30 countries/areas of the highest level of competitiveness in the *Global Competitiveness Report* of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in 2019. In this report, the second-highest level of competitiveness country/areas is United States (2nd in this study), the Hong Kong (3rd) and Mainland China (28th) are ranked the first in this study, Japan (6th) and Spain (23th) are ranked in the 7th in this study, UK (9th) and New Zealand (19th) are ranked in the 8th in this study; Meanwhile, Taiwan (12th) is the 3rd in this study, Australia (16th) and South Korea (13th) are ranked in the 4th in this study, Malaysia (27th) is the 6th in this study, and the United Arab Emirates (25th) is the 9th in this study. Other WEF TOP 10 countries/areas, such as Singapore (#1), Switzerland (#5), Germany (#7), Sweden (#8), and Denmark (#10), also appear in this study but are left out due to the small amount of publications (see Table 2). In summary, those countries/areas listed in DI research have a higher level of competitiveness in general and specifically in tourism. Those who have more competitiveness in tourism are more attractive to tourists.

In addition, a large number of "inbound/outbound" strings for students (e.g., Park et al., 2017) and business people (e.g., Rezaei et al., 2018) are shown in DI keywords. Basically, the terms of "inbound/outbound" can be further divided into the following categories: (1) inbound travelers→China (e.g., Deng et al., 2019); (2) inbound travelers→Taiwan (e.g., Liu, 2014); (3) inbound travelers→other countries/areas (e.g., Jani & Nguni, 2016); (4) Chinese travelers→Taiwan (e.g., Lin et al., 2012) and (5) Chinese travelers→other countries/areas (e.g., Stepchenkova & Li, 2012).
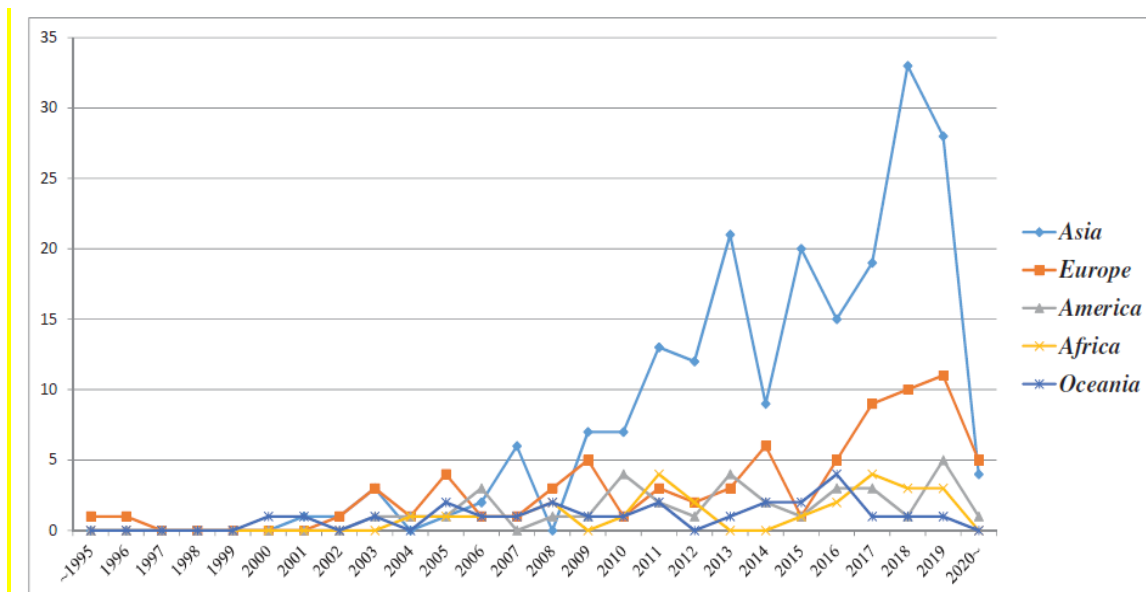

Figure 2: Trend of DI publication by continents (1990-2019)

Source: This study

It is noteworthy that the travel behaviors of Chinese tourists has become a popular research subject in existing DI literature. It is because, since 2012, China has become one of the world's largest overseas tourism markets as well as domestic tourism markets. If we look at the overall DI research trend from an intercontinental perspective, we find that: the number of countries/areas listed in DI research before 2000 (included) is relatively small and is limited to Europe (UK) and Australia (Oceania); since 2002, Europe is the only area where DI-related research has been published every year; and "Asian issues" mainly have three development periods: 2004-2007, 2008-2013, and 2014-2018. Obviously, China (including Hong Kong and Macau) is a research focus in any range, followed by Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea. In Central Asia, Turkey and Iran were concentrated in 2008-2013 and 2014-2018, respectively; India attracted more research attention in 2014-2018. The development of "European issues" is quite stable, with the main breakthroughs in the five years 2015-2019: Spain and Portugal are the representatives. The development of "African issues" is more prominent in the period 2004-2018: Tanzania, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Egypt are the foci. The development of "Americas' issues" is at high points in 2006, 2010, 2013, and 2019, mainly concentrated in the United States, Cuba, and Brazil. The development of "Oceania Issues" is more significant in 2012-2016 and the main focus is on Australia and New Zealand.

Advanced analysis

Examining 3,953 keywords in the scope of 908 articles, DI is related to the following four aspects: (1) *Problem domains-* Every research aims at solving problems defined; (2) *Destination attributes-* Each destination has its own significance of tourism, e.g., country/area, heritage tourism (historic sites), or sporting events (Olympics), etc.; (3) *Marketing and destination management-* The former refers to the pull, while the latter refers to the push. Good marketing strategies and quality destination management can impress visitors and (4) *Tourist behaviors-* Visitors transform all destination-related information and perceptions into experiences that subsequently influence their travel behaviors when they travel between countries/regions.

DI and problem domains

Given that keywords can provide the image of research questions, methodology, and findings of each research (Chang & Katrichis, 2016, p. 793), this study scrutinizes keywords from the scope of 908 selected DI literature and found that their research questions cover 18 different aspects that can be categorized as five major areas: (1) *Environmental uncertainty and government actions*: sustainability, political stability, crisis management, and government actions; (2) *Destination management*: brand building, media application, service quality, and competitiveness; (3) *Tourist behavior*: motivation, experience value, satisfaction and loyalty, familiarity, identification and attachment, and willingness to revisit: (4) *Cultural factors*: cultural differences (impact) and effects of countries of origin; and (5) *Others*: image measurement and destination selection. In short, DI is mainly dealing with the problems of the "environment-destination-visitor" nexus. According to Boulding (1956), image is a combination of people's subjective values and knowledge, which is an influential tool in decision-making and in communicating with their external environment. Basically, tourists use DI to evaluate the environment, safety, tourism quality, and other travelers' comments in the selection of travel destinations. Managers of tourist sites and researchers use "cultural factors" to explain consumer behaviors (Ozdemir & Yolal, 2016). Prior research also suggests that destination culture can affect tourists' behaviors (Pizam & Sussmann, 1995; Liu, 2014).

Moreover, as tourists' preferences change and new destinations become more competitive, TQM plays a more crucial role in the tourism industry (Camison, 1996). Pine and Gilmore (1999) emphasize that consumer experiences can capture consumers rather than products and services. Therefore, destination managers should well maintain the facility, human resources, and other consumer behaviors to provide pleasant customers experiences (Ali et al., 2018). However, these factors may have interaction effects. For example, tourists' decision-making process can be impacted by media effects under the circumstance of political instability and terrorist attacks (Kapuściński & Richards, 2018). Service quality can affect customers' perceptions, which in turn affect subsequent behavioral intentions (Dubey & Sahu, 2019). Furthermore, the level of familiarity with destinations can influence tourists' image, emotional attachment, and loyalty (Stylidis et al., 2020).

DI and attributes

Kotler and Gertner (2002) define DI as the sum of beliefs and impressions that people hold about a place. DI revolves around information related to the destination, including: the destination itself, activities and events that occur in that place, etc. In this study, destination attributes associated with DI include: (1) **Country/Area**—e.g., country or state (Palau-Saumell, et al., 2016; Pike et al., 2018b) and country/city (Li et al., 2010; Zhang et al., 2019); (2)**Activities/Events**—e.g., Olympics (Nadeau et al., 2013; Potwarka & Banyai, 2016), World Cup (Florek et al., 2008; Swart et al., 2018), and MICE/conferences (Go & Govers, 1999; Gomba et al., 2018); (3) **Tourist attractions**—e.g., National Parks (Cini & Saayman, 2013; Lee & Jeong, 2018) and geoparks (Chan & Zhang, 2018); (4) **Tourism**—e.g., cruises (Whyte, 2018; Whyte et al., 2018), wine (Madeira et al., 2019), and food (Choe & Kim, 2018; Cardoso et al., 2019); (5) **Culture**—cultural differences/distance factors do affect tourist behaviors and motivations (Lee et al., 2018; Zenker et al., 2019); e.g., Islam (Nassar et al., 2015; Khan et al., 2013), Persia (Khodadadi & O'Donnell, 2018), or Taiwan (Liu,

2014); and (6) **Crisis**—e.g., earthquake (Tang, 2014; Ketter, 2016), terrorist attack (Henderson, 2003), and airport closures (Voltes-Dorta et al., 2017). In sum, tourists eventually tie their image to the destination (country/area) where activities/events/cultural events/crises would occur in that place.

DI and destination management

Each tourist destination represents its brand that can transform and communicate the unique nature of the territory, resulting in a value proposition that involves a series of functional, emotional, and intangible benefits (Martins, 2015). Basically, destination management is integrated management, which includes: marketing management, technology management, human resource management, resource management, quality management, and crisis management. In other words, all the nexus that tourists may encounter during their travel should be under control and well managed. The following section is an illustration of different aspects of destination management.

- *Marketing*

Recent DI studies tend to focus on emerging markets, such as Turkey (e.g., Atadil et al., 2015), India (e.g., Josiam et al., 2015), Vietnam (e.g., Bui & Le, 2016), and Iran (e.g., Zamani-Farahani & Fox, 2018). Destination branding requires marketing processes, including differentiation (e.g., Dolnicar et al., 2000), positioning (e.g., Pike et al., 2018a), and media communication (e.g., Kladou & Mavragani, 2015). Competent marketers should be capable of developing the "Unique Selling Propositions" (USP) in the markets. During the media communication processes, destination marketing organization (DMO) (e.g., Pike & Page, 2014; Kong et al., 2015), advertising (e.g., Gong & Tung, 2017), specific promotion (e.g., Ji & Wall, 2015), and DI features (e.g., Stylidis & Cherif, 2018) play an essential role. Sometimes, spokespersons are used to promoting travel destinations (Glover, 2009). The purpose of these marketing strategies is to change (or stimulate) tourists' behaviors or intentions (e.g., Stylidis et al., 2017b; HeydariFard et al., 2019), especially when the crisis (e.g., Li et al., 2018) or poor resident-tourist interaction exists, and eventually improve DI holds by future tourists (e.g., Liu & Tung, 2017) and further gain their identification and emotional attachment (e.g., Ooi, 2004; Silva et al., 2013).

- *Technology management*

Online travel media can enable the sources of online travel information to be conceptualized in terms of specialization, endorsement, and other users' star rating, which reflecting technological functions and psychological effects (e.g., Choi et al., 2018). When tourists search online travel information, the demands for the WOM channel are varied (e.g., Tan, 2017). The channels that can create interest and promote the best possible image of a local destination by each country/area include travel agencies, brochures, tourism websites, and radio and television (e.g., Ahmed et al., 2019).

- *Human resource management*

Environmental factors from internal and external interfaces can impact the overall human capital management and allocation in the tourism industry (Cave & Brown, 2012).

- *Crisis management*

Tourism is one of the most vulnerable industries to crises and disasters (Santana, 2004). The crises range from terrorist attacks, infectious diseases (e.g., SARS and COVID-19), natural disasters (e.g., hurricanes), to accidents (e.g., economic crises, refugee surges, airport closures). Most importantly, post-crisis recovery strategies from the unit concerned are influential in rebuilding DI and promoting future travel business (e.g., Ryu et al., 2013; Avraham, 2016; Avraham & Ketter, 2017).

- *Resource management*

Successful destination management depends on an integrated tourism sector effort, for which the authorities adopt a holistic approach to manage the supply and demand and to formulate sound policies and regulations (Koufodontis & Gaki, 2020). Government agencies should support sustainable tourism. Environmental damage and degradation can lead to negative travel experiences and perceptions, and thus impact tourists' revisitation. On the other hand, the authorities should effectively integrate resources to promote sustainable destinations based on trends, preferences, evaluations, and opinions from demand-side tourism (Salvatierra & Walters, 2015).

- *Quality management*

Tourism is a continuous, sequential process through which the entire supply chain and on-site services at the destination are designed to satisfy the tourists. Destination quality and reputation can attract consumers' attention and influence their decision-making (Andriyansah et al., 2019). As the tourism markets are increasingly competitive, quality becomes a key factor in the tourism industry and in the selection of travel destinations (Sharpley & Forster, 2003). When tourists experience high-quality travels, they form better perceptions around destination (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Jin et al., 2013), increased levels of satisfaction and loyalty (Stylidis et al., 2017a; Jeong & Kim, 2019), word spreading (Shahijan et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2019), and willingness to revisit (Cervera-Taulet et al., 2019). Given that high-quality travel experiences can impress tourists, trust between tourists and destinations can be established (Su et al., 2017), and thus the relationship of the "customer-brand" model similar to the B2B market than can be built up (e.g., Yen & Chung, 2014).

DI and tourist behavior

Tourist behaviors associated with DI include three phases – before, during, and after the occurrence. Before travelling, tourist behaviors involve: (1) intention (e.g., Lee & Jeong, 2018; Elahi et al., 2020), prior experience (e.g., Gabbioneta & De Carlo, 2019), and engagement(e.g., Regan et al., 2012; Ninomiya et al., 2019); during travelling, tourist behaviors involve: (2) perception/experience (e.g., Chen & Tsai, 2007; Liu et al., 2015), emotion (e.g., Sharma & Nayak, 2018), attitude/preference (e.g., Deng & Li, 2014; Al-Kwifi, 2015), and attachment (e.g., Veasna et al., 2013); and after travelling, tourist behaviors involve: (3) satisfaction/loyalty (e.g., Toudert & Bringas-Rábago, 2016; Albaity & Melhem, 2017), WOM/eWOM and behavioral intention (e.g., Papadimitriou et al., 2015; Tan, 2017).

Over the past 30 years, researchers have shifted the attention to environmental and sustainable tourism (e.g., Line et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2019b; Mohaidin et al., 2017; Marine-Roig, 2019). People act differently when traveling (Dolnicar & Leisch, 2008; Miao & Wei, 2013) and even when they visit different destinations. For example, people are more likely to perform eco-friendly behaviors when visiting eco-tourism destinations (Line & Hanks, 2016). Findings from another study indicate that those who are willing to recycle the wastes at home may not actively participate in eco-friendly activities on their vacation (Miao & Wei, 2013).

Other analyses

DI and theoretical foundations

This section focuses on theory, methodology, and dedicated researchers in the DI research field. In general, a theory is a generalized phenomenon, which is the result of discovery obtained through specific research experiments or systematic observation over a long period of time. But a phenomenon can be extended to different theoretical domains for different research questions. There are 44 keywords in terms of "theoretical foundations" are shown in prior literature. Theories that are frequently adopted in the DI field include: "*Response Hierarchy Theory*," "*Personal Construct Theory*," "*Stakeholder Theory*," "*Theory of Planned Behavior*," and "*Image Recovery Theory/Situational Crisis Communication Theory*".

Table 3: DI and keywords related to research methods

Keyword index	Context	Researchers
Content analysis	Country of origin	Lu et al. (2016)
	Destination attractiveness	Pike & Kotsi (2018)
	Perceptual mapping	Chan & Marafa (2016)
	Branding	Költringer & Dickinger (2015)
SEM	Tourist behavior	Kim et al. (2018); Josiam et al. (2015)
	Motivation	Almeida-García et al. (2020)
	Country of origin	Elliot et al. (2011)
Correspondence analysis	Branding	Költringer & Dickinger (2015)
	Perceptual mapping	Pratt (2013)
Repertory grid analysis	Destination attractiveness	Pike & Kotsi (2018)
	Destination attribute	Pike (2003); Whyte (2018)
Social network analysis	Psychological distance	Tan (2017)

	Image retrieval	Wang et al. (2018)
	Tourist behavior	Park et al. (2019)
Data/Text mining	Branding	Költringer & Dickinger (2015)
	Tourist attractions	Nowacki (2019)
	Positioning	Lin & Huang (2009)
Cluster analysis	Destination choice	Rezende-Parker et al. (2003)
	Tourist behavior	Assaker & Hallak (2013)
CATPAC/CATPAC II	Place attachment	Prayag & Ryan (2011)
	Tourist behavior	Banyai & Potwarka (2012)
Visual method	Social distance	Tasci (2009)
	Social media	Önder & Marchiori (2017)
User-generated contents	Tourist attractions	Ren & Hong (2017)
	Business intelligence	Marine-Roig (2017)
Big data	Inbout tourism	Deng et al. (2019)
	Social media	Wang et al. (2019)
IPA	Destination attractiveness	Pike & Kotsi (2018)
	Positioning	Liu (2010)

Source: This study

DI and research methods

Among the 63 keywords related to "research methods," the most common research methods used in DI research are: content analysis, structural equations, visual research, user-generated content, correspondence analysis, importance-performance analysis, and data/text exploration, etc. In the past three years, big data and social networks have both become popular. Interestingly, since 2006, DI-related studies have largely applied computer programming/applications, including MATLAB (e.g., Tang et al., 2011), CATPAC/CATPAC II (e.g., Choi et al., 2007; Stepchenkova et al., 2009), and WORDER (e.g., Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2008; Tang et al., 2011) for data analysis, data visualization, and numerical calculations. The data are collected from online platforms.

Besides, as mentioned earlier that DI studies usually aims at solving some identified problem. Table 3 shows that research methods that are utilized by researchers can solve the problems that are identified in the respective research (i.e., multiple methods can be utilized at the same time for the same research question).

DI and authors

Among the 908 DI articles, the top five contributing authors are: Tasci, ADA. (16 articles), Pike, S. (15 articles), Cai, L.A. (13 articles), Stepchenkova, S. (12 articles), and Prayag, G. (9 articles).

Comparisons between Pike' and this study

Pike (2002, 2007) completes the most remarkable Di literature review in 2002 and 2007. One article screened 142 DI articles published from 1973 to 2000 (28 years), while the other selected 120 DI articles published from 2001 to 2007 (7 years). Pike simply organized literature into several categories: evidence-based or non-evidence-based, quantitative or qualitative, targeted countries/areas, etc. Compared to his reviews, the duration of publications selected in this study is shorter (from 1990 to 2019) but the amount of publications included in the analysis is nearly 2.5 times. While Pike does not explicitly elaborate on the selection of literature, this study provides a clear explanation of which data sources (Scopus) were used. Furthermore, this study systematically reviews DI literature in three phases- overall analysis, advance analysis, and comparative analysis, which provides a better understanding of DI development and implications for fieldwork and future research.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Discussions

According to Chang and Katrichis (2016), the five major issues in the tourism management are: *environmental impact*, *crisis management*, *destination management*, *organizational capacity*, and *tourist management*. In comparison, the nexus between "environment-destination-tourist" revealed in this study is generally consistent with the five major problem domains of DI. Based on the aforementioned 908 articles and 3,953 keywords, we propose a strategy map of DI (Figure 3). From the figure, DI can be categorized into four aspects as below.

- *Environmrnt-Destinations—"adaptability/responsiveness"*

The environment can be narrowly defined as a natural or man-made geographical environment while it can broadly include other elements such as culture and technology (Inskeep, 1991, p. 339; Mathieson & Wall, 1996, p. 3). Notably, environmental quality is regarded as a vital attribute to tourism destinations (Mihalic, 2000). As tourism is human activities which encompass interaction with environments, any environmental degradation such as severe weather condition, pollution, political turmoil, or terrorist activities can affect tourists willingness to visit the destinations and further impact the development of local tourism. Therefore, in order to perform the successful destination management, local government agencies should be responsive to environmental damage and field workers should know to cope with (resolve) the hardship.

- *Environment-Tourists—"relationships building/education for sustainability"*

Drucker (1954) declares that the only purpose of a business is to create a customer. In order to achieve the purpose, marketing can give a business a competitive advantage in the market to communicate with consumers and to create product differentiation (Weerawardena, 2003; Kotabe et al., 2002). Given that DI is an individual's overall feeling, perception, and impression of a destination (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Mansfeld, 1992), environmental factors around destinations can swing tourists' impressions. If field workers provide due diligence (such as convenience, quality, and safety) in every segment of services, visitors can receive the best possible experiences. Yoon and Uysal (2005) argue that in an increasingly saturated tourism market, the success of a destination would rely on positive interaction (relationship-oriented) with customers, among tourists, and with residents in the host destination. This topic has drawn more attention from other researchers in the last several years (e.g., Yang, 2016; Stylidis, 2018).

The notion of "marketing" is literally "market + ing," and "ing" means "in progress"; therefore, marketing is the profession that deals with dynamic markets. With the rise of the experience economy and homogeneous competitive market, marketing becomes more indispensable in the tourism industry in which marketing can promote destinations to consumers/tourists. The higher the revisitation rate is, the more profits a business can make. However, the revisitation rate is highly associated with tourist's experience and levels of satisfaction and loyalty. How to increase the level of customer satisfaction? As Drucker (1973) said, "marketing aims to make selling superfluous." Marketing strategies, such as advertisement in traditional media or on the internet, can extensively increase destination exposure and attract inbound tourists to visit physical or online stores. In the store, customized products and catalogs can further promote a better image of the destination.

Taiwan has rich and diverse natural and cultural tourism resources to attract a large number of domestic and foreign travelers. However, most tourists have relatively weak and insufficient awareness of environmental protection, and often inadvertently create environmental damage, such as oil pollution, waste, the ecological impact of diving on coral reefs, and even cause an imbalance in the environmental supply chain (Chang & Katrichis, 2016, p. 796). In fact, it is foreseeable that there is an imbalance of economic growth and environmental conservation. In recent decades, "sustainability" has become popular in the tourism industry. The ultimate goal of tourism is sustainability (Huang et al., 2019). Empirical evidence shows that there is a positive correlation between the sacrifice of economic growth and environmental protection (Hedlund, 2011). In light of this, many destinations have begun to assess and apply "carrying capacity" (Lobo et al., 2013; Vousdoukas et al., 2009) to prevent over-utilization of the destination and ensure ecological and environmental sustainability.

- *Destinations-Tourists—"decision reference and choice"*

DI affects a tourist's decision-making behaviors, levels of satisfaction, and experiences around the destination; hence, DI can be regarded as the basis of a tourist's assessment and selection (O'Leary & Deegan, 2003). Destination selection is an important step in tourists' travel decision-making behavior (Wu et al., 2012). Fawzi et al. (2018) indicated that DI is also associated with motivation, demographics, sources of information, prior experiences, and culture. Previous literature shows that cultural distance affects destination selection. Most tourists choose destinations where the people have a

cultural background similar to their own (Jackson, 2000; Ng et al., 2007, 2009; Yang & Wong, 2012). Smaller cultural differences give tourists a sense of confidence and comfort (Martín & del Bosque, 2008). On the other hand, curiosity can be a prime driving force that motivates some tourists. The greater the cultural distance is, the more curious a tourist is about the destination, and the more likely s/he is to choose that destination (Crompton, 1979).

Also, in the marketing, images of a country/area correlate positively with images of a product in that country/area (Dinnie, 2004). Consumers are more likely to appreciate consumption goods from a country where they have a good impression (Stepchenkova, 2015). In addition, since tourism is exposed and vulnerable to environmental impact, how dangerous/safe a destination is can influence tourist destination choices, especially when traveling overseas (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005). People are more likely to avoid traveling to high-risk destinations (Sönmez & Graefe, 1998). Due to the advent of technology, tourists can make decisions with reference information about the chosen destination that is widely available online. In Taiwan, for example, the Bureau of Consular Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (https://www.boca.gov.tw/sp-trwa-list-1.html) has constantly provided travel alert signals as a reference for travelers to go abroad.
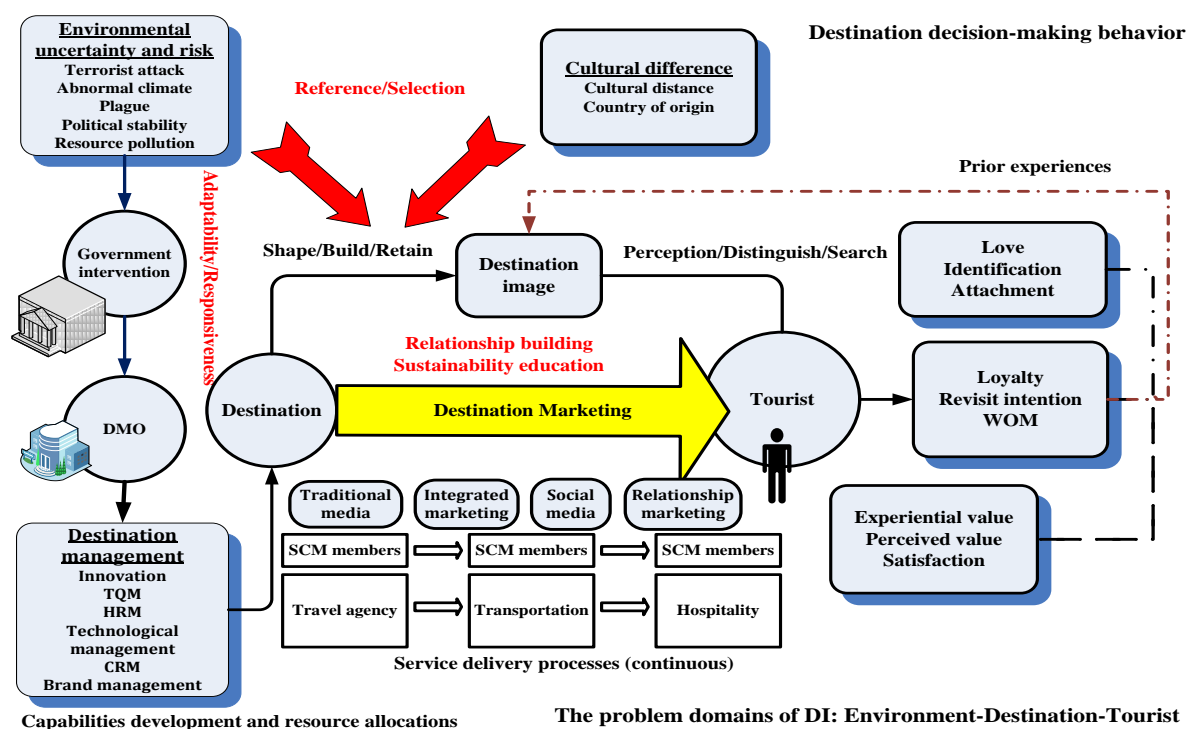

Figure 3: Strategic mapping of DI

Source: This study

- *Destination and its management—"capability development/resource allocations"*

DI has long been considered to be a key element of tourist decisions. Typically, positive image perceptions of a destination are more likely to attract tourists (Martins, 2015, p. 5). Pike (2008) applied Leiper's (1979) model and found that DMO plays a pivotal role in promoting a tourism destination, stabilizing the supply and demand, and maximizing tourism resources. Destination management should focus on how to quickly respond and enhance competitiveness in the changing business environments. It should carry out a defined tourism strategy and plan that can technically coordinate and integrates all of the elements of the destination mix, such as attractions, events, facilities, infrastructure, transportation, and hospitality resources (Mill & Morrison, 2012). In other words, proper operational due diligence enables the tourists to have remarkable experiences around destinations. In addition, the essence of management is the management of change (Liao & Chang, 2011, p. 259). Managers should engage with developing capacity and human talent and effectively allocating resources to achieve the organization's objectives in the context of a changing tourism environment.

The tourism and hospitality industry is a service business that involves a vast array of people, including customers and employees. Managers should work hard to understand and meet their needs. Meanwhile, technology innovations are vital for todays' competitive tourism industry. Online platforms that can boost community engagement and interactivity include social media (e.g., Facebook, IG, and Twitter) where real-time information can be constantly posted, and famous bloggers who promote destinations through individual experience and style. Once consumers are attracted to these online platforms, their trust and identification are gradually built up. Eventually, they may open to sharing their own experience and spread

the word about the destination and the brand (Chung et al., 2017, p. 261). Additionally, Baum (2002) concludes that the relationship between people and tourism/destinations can be classified into three categories: (1) *people can be tourists and consumers*—this part can be classified as destination marketing; (2) *people can be service providers*—this part can be classified as supply chain management, and (3) *people can be an integral part of the tourism product and experience*—this part can be classified as destination management. Hence, Figure 3 can be used as corroboration and reference for Baum's argument.

Propositions development

Based on Figure 3, this study offers several propositions for the subsequent empirical studies in DI.

4.2.1 Role of environmental variables--Antecedents

- The greater the environmental uncertainty, risk, or cultural differences of the destination, the greater the demand for destination management capabilities (innovation/TQM);

- The greater the environmental uncertainty, risk, or cultural differences of the destination, the greater the destination's demand for market orientation;

- The greater the environmental uncertainty, risk, or cultural differences of the destination, the greater the impact of DI on tourists;

- The greater the environmental uncertainty, risk, or cultural differences of the destination, the greater the impact on the experience value of tourists and on the subsequent tourist behaviors.

4.2.2 Role of environmental variables--Moderator

- The environmental uncertainty, risk, or cultural differences of the destination will significantly strengthen/weaken the DI of the tourists regarding their behavioral intentions;

- The environmental uncertainty, risk, or cultural differences of the destination will significantly strengthen/weaken the overall competitiveness of the destination in terms of destination management.

Role of experiential value--Mediator

- The tourists' DI perception will affect their behavior intentions through quality experiences;

- The overall perception of service quality will affect tourists' behavior intentions through quality experiences.

Role of marketing media--Mediator

- DI can influence tourists' behaviors through advertising/social media applications

CONCLUSION

This study aims to provide researchers, tourism authorities, and field workers a comprehensive understanding of the development trajectory, application domains, and strategic implications of DI. This study conducts a systematic literature review by using a single keyword "***destination image***" in Scopus academic databases from 1990 to 2019 and screens out 908 papers and 3953 keywords. The findings show that the development of DI literature began in 1995 and gradually grows year by year. These articles are scattered across 182 different journals but a vast majority (67.4%) can be found in the Top 25 journals. Prior researchers are interested in the areas surrounding "environment-destination management-tourist behavior". Interestingly, countries/areas listed in the DI research largely overlap with those listed in the *Global Competitiveness Report*, suggesting that all these countries/areas are in the high levels of competitiveness to attract tourists. According to the four aspects of (1) destination problem domains, (2) destination attributes, (3) destination management, and (4) tourist behaviors, this study provides a strategic map and implications for future researchers and field workers to operationalize and conceptualize the coverage of DI.

LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

There are several limitations in this study. First, this study conducts a keyword search in the online Scopus database. The articles selected are written in English and may not represent all of the evidence. Excluding those without a keyword and

languages other than English may introduce a bias and lead to erroneous conclusions. Secondly, this study aims to examine the applications of DI in the tourism industry. A detailed analysis of a theoretical model and components of DI formation is not carried out. Based on these limitations, suggestions are provided as follow:

- *New searching ways*-It is time-consuming and laborious to collect and compile data by keywords. Future research can consider data-mining/text-mining or introducing VOSVIEWER application software to assist in classification;

- *Introduction of other classifications*-This study groups existing DI content into five categories: problems, attributes, destination management, marketing, and tourist behaviors. Future research can add other categories to enrich the analysis, such as: using other (qualitative/quantitative) analytical methods or techniques, adding other categories (human resources, technology, etc.), or finding the link between the first author and his/her nationality and the degree of association between the first author and co-authors;

- *Comparative analysis of tourist behavior based on differences between prior/post DI*- Future research can pay more attention to DI perceived in the different phases of a journal. The tourist journey can be divided into three phases: pretrip experience, en-route trip experience, and destination on-site experiences (Chen & Tsai, 2007). Researchers have called for attention to the variations of DI perceived before and after the trip (Lim et al., 2013; Wang & Davidson, 2010; Yilmaz et al., 2009).

- *Incorporation of theoretical foundation to increase readability*- To some extent, DI is the knowledge in terms of "environment-destination management-tourist behavior". From another perspective, DI can be regarded as the "O" of "S-O-R" (stimulus-organism-response) theory from Belk's (1975), or destination management can be constructed on the ESCAPE model proposed by Chang et al. (2008). To be able to create excellent destination performance, TQM and innovation are indispensable.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

R.-Y.H. and W.-J.C. brainstormed and developed the idea presented. W.-J.C. designed the research method, completed the initial research analysis, and drafted the manuscript. All authors then discussed the results, giving inputs on the intellectual contents, and contributed to writing the manuscript of the first submission. W.-J.C. and C.-Y.C. contributed to revising the manuscript of the resubmission.

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