

The Application of Stimulus-Organism-Response Paradigm: The Role of Social Media in Thailand's Destination Image and Behavioral Intentions

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Abstract

Online and social media have had a huge impact on all industries; tourism is no exception. The ever-increasing digitization of society enables international tourists to research, plan, review, and make deals for their trip prior to their actual site visitation. This paper investigates the impact of tourism information quality provided on social media with regard to Thailand's destination image and behavioral intentions. This quantitative research was conducted by surveying 214 international tourists throughout Thailand. A Multiple Regression Analysis was employed to test the hypothesized relationships. The empirical results indicate that some dimensions of information quality are significantly associated with perceived destination image and also result in favorable behavioral intentions. The findings help related industries to effectively use and manage the tourism content provided in social media and ensure that that sustainable tourism success is achievable in today's digital world.

Keywords: S-O-R model, Social Media, Destination Image, Behavioral Intention, eWOM.

1. Introduction

The tourism industry has become one key global economic driver. It has been growing healthily worldwide (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2017). One country where in the past decades, the popularity of tourism has been steadily increasing is Thailand. The Kingdom has become one of the world's key players when it comes to tourism and hospitality. Thanks to its enormous appeals, which ranges from friendly locals to a tropical climate, gourmet dishes, rich customs, to a beautiful flora and fauna and adventurous sites, the number of international tourists has been going up year after year. International arrivals increased from 15.9 million in 2010 to 26.5 million in 2013 (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2016). There were, however, some hiccups in 2014, when tourism was heavily threatened by a military coup (the number of foreign tourists suddenly dropped by 20%). The number of arrivals soon recovered, though, and almost doubled to 32.6 million in 2016 (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2016). To date, a positive forecast is still expected.

Needless to say, the Thai tourism industry is quite capable of competing with other destinations of choice in the growing global tourism market as evidenced by its increasing market share in terms of international headcounts. That said, some difficult times may be ahead for Thailand, which may have to contend with a rising number of new destinations in the region and elsewhere and a change of travelers' behavior. These challenges make maintaining sustainable success a higher order. With globalization, social media has had a huge impact on every industry. Tourism is no exception. Together with the information-sensitive nature of the tourism industry, travelers put a great importance on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Zeng

& Gerritsen, 2014). Many social platforms such as, for example, Facebook and Instagram enable customers to share their travel experience with those who have the same interest in researching, planning their trip, finding deals, and so forth. It therefore makes sense to say that, consumers are now becoming the media themselves, while destination marketing organizers (DMOs) have less control over messages, which can be hugely valuable when positive and conversely extremely detrimental when negative.

Additionally, social media is playing a critical role in shaping how visitors perceive a destination, especially for first time visitors, who solely base their judgments on the information that they are exposed to in the virtual world since obviously actual site visitation has not yet taken place (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Social media is even more important to the tourism industry as its penetration rate is ever increasing globally. The implication is that travelers are internet-savvy, forever connected and social-media obsessed (Wong, 2016). The utilization of social media, though, is not limited to consumers. It has been used as an effective marketing tool in pushing a destination forward to global audiences. Social media allows DMOs to market a destination and deliver its favorable destination image to travelers. From this perspective, social media will continue to be a significant antecedent of travelers' attitude towards a destination.

The rising number of new destinations has brought tensions to the industry since there are more and more competitors sharing a piece of the same pie. This has put repeat travelers, those who are willing to return to a destination again in the future, in the limelight. A destination not only benefits from reduced advertising costs in attracting newcomers, but several studies have also found that repeated visitors tend to spend a lot more money as compared to first time travelers (e.g. Thomas, 1994). This is precisely why the retention of returning visitors always receives considerably attention from policymakers and practitioners as far as the development of tourism industry is concerned.

This research aims to address the influence of social media on perceived destination image, and behavioral intention. This paper contributes to the expansion of destination image literature. It also provides a holistic outlook and extends theoretical knowledge related to the constructs studied. By addressing the images held by travelers, the images of Thailand's destinations can be altered to ensure that they correctly highlight tourists' demand. This paper therefore also provides tourism organizations and agencies with a destination image strategy that can contribute to making Thailand tourism sustainably successful. Additionally, understanding behavioral intentions and destination images makes it possible for Thailand, as a destination, to create lifelong relationships with repeated visitors and in turn leads to further visitation and loyalty. Lastly, communication technology and social media can be effectively utilized as it is supported by governmental institutions (Thailand 4.0 initiatives) thereby the government tries to push innovation and creativity in driving the national economy. A combination between maintaining strengths from within (i.e., natural resource, culture, customs and tradition) and connections to the global marketplace would lay a successful path for the tourism industry as proposed in the Thailand 4.0 roadmap.

2. Literature Review

- The Theory of Stimulus-Organism-Response

The theoretical foundation of this study is grounded in the application of the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) paradigm developed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974). Originally rooted in environmental psychology, the stimulus-organism-response framework was expanded to behaviorism (Moore, 1996). The original model of behaviorism study discovered that the learning process occurred through the combination between the stimulus and response of animals' simultaneous reaction. From a S-R perspective, such resulting

behavior can be arose by certain stimuli without any intervention (thinking and feeling for instance). This received much critique given the complexity of human's mental activities and was disregarded within the S-R framework. The extension of human internal mental evaluation led to the development of the S-O-R paradigm. The S-O-R model suggested that the external inputs from an exposed environment (stimulus) triggers internal emotion (organism) and lead to resulting behavior (response). Consumers may respond in a different way to the given cues based upon their internal primary emotional reactions.

- Social Media as a Stimulus

Recently, there has been a growing awareness of the importance of social media, yet little is known about how social media is effectively used when it comes to the tourism sector. Due to the inability to access information quality, destination marketing organizations cannot evaluate their organizational information quality and examine its continual improvement (Y. W. Lee et al., 2002). One efficient way to define information quality in the social media context is to define it as the degree to which information is suitable for doing a specified task by a specific user, in a certain context (Fahame et al., 2013). It is therefore necessary to investigate the attributes of tourism information in social media and its effects on destination image.

Information quality is divided into four quadrants; intrinsic quality, contextual quality, representational quality, and accessibility quality (R. Y. Wang & Strong, 1996). It is also worth pointing out that different sub-dimensions of information quality are used depending on the context and purpose. Intrinsic quality, independent of any context, implies that tourism information has quality in its own right. It is the degree to which information is accurate, believable, reliable, and presented by creditable sources. Contextual quality is the extent to which information is value-adding, relevant, timely, complete, and sufficient. Representational quality covers the consistent and concise representation of information. Accessibility quality emphasis how information is accessed and secured (R. Y. Wang & Strong, 1996).

Derived from social media distinctive features (borderless accessibility, global audience reach, and ease of use), information quality slightly differs from traditional information systems (Agarwal & Yiliyasi, 2010; Baeza-Yate, 2009). Since evidence shows the lesser relevance of accessibility quality in the social media context, only three dimension remains in the social media context; intrinsic quality, contextual quality; and representational quality. However, accessibility was not totally excluded from the model but rather put under the umbrella of representational quality. Although, it is included in the information quality framework, the social quality dimension is considered as an influential factor as far as social media is concerned.

Even more important, the enhancement of information reliability can be increased through real-time interaction among social media users and businesses as well. Therefore, social relationship-related variables partially advance information quality management towards success. Based on the study of P. Wang et al. (2017), two constructs have been included in social quality; social presence and social interaction. Information quality and its description in the social media context is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Information Quality in the Social Media Context

Dimension	Indicators	Description: Degree to Which Information is
Intrinsic quality	Accuracy	correct and free of errors
	Completeness	of sufficient breadth and depth
	Objectivity	unbiased
	Reliability	trustable and coming from a good source
	*Originality	new and not copied from other sources
Contextual quality	Amount of data	presented in appropriate quality or amount
	Relevancy	applicable to the task in hand
	Timeliness	sufficiently up-to-date
	Ease of understanding	Clear, without ambiguity, and easy to comprehend
	Value added	beneficial and providing advantages to users
Representational quality	Conciseness	compactly represented without being overwhelming
	Consistency	presented compatibly in the same manner
	Accessibility	easily and quickly retrievable
*Social quality	*Social interaction	allowing a user to create active communication
	*Social presence	allowing a user to experience others as being psychologically present

Source: Based on R. Y. Wang & Strong, 1996.

Destination Image as an Organism

The most cited definition of ‘destination image’ was given by Crompton (1979) who defined it as “the sum of all beliefs, ideas and impressions that people associate with a destination” (p. 410). Later, Baloglu and McCleary (1999) determined that the formation of destination image held by individuals was also shaped by the characteristics of a person. Having established that personal characteristics and beliefs are an uncompleted but significant antecedent of destination image makes it clear that images in a traveler’s mind are different from one person to another based on their way of thinking.

Some scholars, however, believe that destination image is a mental depiction of a destination (Alhemoud & Armstrong, 1996; Seaton & Bennett, 1996). From this viewpoint, it could be reasonably concluded that people are likely to have the image of a destination exhibited in their cognizance even before an actual visitation has been made. Destination image is also derived from the cognitive and affective evaluation of a person. A cognitive evaluation refers to what one knows and an affective evaluation to how one feels. Applying this concept to a holiday destination, this means that a cognitive image refers an interrelated set of beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, and understanding of individuals towards an object, in this case a destination. A cognitive image is then evaluated based on the attributes and resources of a tourist attraction (Goodall & Ashworth, 1995). The criteria for a cognitive evaluation are attractiveness, characteristics of locals, monetary worthiness, and gastronomy.

On the other hand, an affective image represents how people feel or how feelings and emotions are created by tourist destinations (Keller, 1993). Pleasure and arousal are samples of the latter variable. If a head were an analogy of such cognitive image, heart would be well described for the affective image. Cognitive components were proven to have a considerable influence on and in relation to affective images (Lin et al., 2007; Ryan & Cave, 2005). Therefore, in order to gain in-depth understanding on how people assess a destination, cognitive and affective components should be distinctly investigated (Russell & Pratt, 1980). In line with this notion, it is only recently that a research approach enabling the investigation of the effect of both cognitive and affective dimensions of destination image has been adopted (Martín & Bosque, 2008).

Relationship between Social Media and Destination Image

A number of studies focus on the significant relationship between these two variables from different perspectives. For example, Xiang and Gretzel (2010) revealed that a lot of travel information is derived from social media and search engines likely to escort travelers to social media sites. Information provided in social media is considered more comprehensive. Today, social media is being used as an effective mechanism to create positive destination image and has become more popular as a primary online source of travel information. Lim, Chung, and Weaver (2012) qualitatively investigated Las Vegas destination perceived image by textually analyzing electronic video contents in YouTube generated by both consumers and destination brands. The results indicate that consumer-generated content is significantly influenced by destination image as much as content delivered by marketers. However, consumer-generated content is better to draw attention from the public than content generated by marketers. In the same vein, Tham, Croy, and Mair (2013) found that eWOM in social media platforms play an essential role in strengthening the credibility of information since it disseminates content from multiple perspectives, which in turn enhances the visibility of destination image. Therefore, four hypotheses are proposed as follows:

- H1:** *The intrinsic quality of tourism information in social media is positively associated with the cognitive/affective image of a destination.*
- H2:** *The contextual quality of tourism information in social media is positively associated with the cognitive/affective image of a destination.*
- H3:** *The representational quality of tourism information in social media is positively associated with the cognitive/affective image of a destination.*
- H4:** *The social quality of tourism information in social media is positively associated with the cognitive/affective image of a destination.*

Relationship between Cognitive Image and Affective Image

Having determined that the overall image of a particular destination was established by a combination of cognitive and affective images, cognitive images also lead to the affective evaluation of an individual. Even though these two concepts are distinct, they are hierarchically related. Research papers found that cognitive attributes engage in affective reaction (Gartner, 1993; Russell & Pratt, 1980). This notion has been used as ground for literature these days. As debated by S. E. Kim et al. (2014), the relationship between cognitive and affective evaluation also exists in the tourism social media context. It is generally accepted that cognitive images are formed prior to affective ones. Based on the social media context and image formation, it is possible that users establish destination images while they are exposed to travel and destination information available in social media platforms (Martín & Bosque, 2008). Later on, feelings towards a destination are created and, if positive feelings are aroused, this leads to actual behavior. Therefore, the following hypotheses can be developed:

- H5:** *Cognitive images are positively related to affective images of a destination in social media.*

Behavioral Intention as a Response

Schiffman and Kanuk (2007) described behavioral intention as the perceived likelihood that an individual will engage in a certain way in the future. The significance of behavioral intention has long been acknowledged as it allows businesses to predict consumers' behavior and develop corresponding marketing strategies. Central to the tourism context, behavioral intention turns out to be a critical element for sustainable tourism success, especially in mature holiday destinations (Papadimitriou, Kaplanidou, & Apostolopoulou, 2015). Repeat visitations are crucial for such places. In Thailand, for instance, over 65% of international tourists are

repeat visitors (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2017). At the operational level, revisit intention and recommendation intention are commonly used to measure destination loyalty (Oppermann, 2000). Each of these dimensions is separately discussed next.

- *Revisit intention*: It is the desire or willingness to make a repeat visit to a site in the future (Cole & Scott, 2004). Research conducted by Thomas (1994) reveals the outstanding financial benefits of marketing existing customers over acquiring new clients. The expenditure required for maintaining current customers is five times lower than obtaining new ones. A 5% increase on customer retention rate will increase company profit from 25% up to 95% across a variety of tourism-related industries. Specifically, repeat visitors are a highly desired market because at the destination to which they return, they are likely to have a longer stay, create positive WOM, and be intensively involved in consumption activities (Lau & McKercher, 2004; Oppermann, 1998). Moreover, the stronger the intention a person has, the higher the likelihood to actually adopt that behavior in the future. Therefore, the underlying significance of revisit intention makes tourism-related businesses give priority to it since it is considered a major source of long-term profitability for them.

- *Recommendation Intention*: Westbrook (1987) defines Word-of-Mouth (WOM) as “informal communication directed at other consumers about the ownership, usage, or characteristics of particular goods and services and/or their sellers” (p. 259). In the tourism context, traveler consumers who have visited a destination are likely to act as free word-of-mouth advertising agents by informally communicating with their peers and possibly bringing potential consumers to a product and service in future (Boo & Kim, 2013). Given the high credibility people have on this referral marketing, the power of interpersonal communication has been well recognized in the marketing field (Ishida, Slevitch, & Siamionava, 2016). Based upon the intangible nature of tourism products, it creates difficulties and ambiguities in consumers’ decision making process. Therefore, the tourism industry relies on the competence of WOM more heavily than other industries (Ishida et al., 2016).

Apart from traditional WOM, through which informal communication among people occurs, face-to-face electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) has gained prominence due to the emergence of communication technology (Sohn, 2009). The major difference between WOM and eWOM lies with the media used; eWOM, unlike traditional WOM, is hosted online through cyberspace for instance instant messages, websites, blogs, online communities, reviews sites, social networking sites (Ishida et al., 2016). EWOM is more desirable than traditional WOM in terms of span and speed of information dissemination as well as the size of global audience reached, therefore yielding a higher impact on the decision making process than the traditional one (Jeonga & Jang, 2011). In spite of all the benefits eWOM bring, it does not completely elude face-to-face communication. Traditional WOM continues to receive higher creditability than both government-sponsored contents and eWOM since interactions among friends, colleagues, family and relatives bear stronger ties (Cox et al., 2009). Thus, in studying the aftereffects of destination image on recommendation intention, the combination between tradition WOM and eWOM should be investigated together.

Relationship between Destination Image and Behavioral Intention

The interrelationship between destination image and behavioral intention is strongly documented. Court and Lupton (1997), for example, conducted a quantitative study with 903 local tourists in the States of New Mexico in the United States and concluded that a favorable image of a tourist destination was a byproduct of direct experiences that positively influenced intention to revisit. Simply put, people who have visited a tourist place and have a positive travel experience, given the chance, are more likely to return. The path of “destination image-trip quality-perceived value-satisfaction-behavioral intentions” was investigated in the context

of Taiwan by C. F. Chen and Tsai (2007, p. 1117). This quantitative research collected data from local tourists in 2004. It determined that all four destination images of Taiwan (destination brand, entertainment, nature and culture, and sun and sand) had a direct impact on behavioral intentions, i.e., revisit intention and recommendation intention. It is clear that the role of destination image is not only limited to the traveler's decision making process, but also affect the post-purchase behavior of tourists as well (Fox & McEwan, 2017).

Many research studies from different countries have shown the direct and indirect effect of destination image on destination loyalty (e.g.). In this sense, destination image is recognized as an antecedent of destination loyalty that is capable of explaining the post-purchase behavior of tourists, including intention to revisit and WOM. Therefore, the following hypotheses have been developed:

H6: *The cognitive image of a destination is positively associated with revisit intention/WOM/eWOM.*

H7: *The affective image of a destination is positively associated with revisit intention/WOM/eWOM.*

3. Research Methodology

Regarding the research design of this quantitative study, the primary data was collected through a questionnaire. This instrument enables a researcher to gather quintessential data from a big population pool in a shorter time at a relatively low cost. To get answers relevant to the research questions, the questionnaire was designed to ascertain the respondents' perception of social media, destination image as well as behavioral intentions.

- Construct Measurement

In constructing the questionnaire for this research, measurement items used in existing studies were applied (Boo & Kim, 2013; Fox & McEwan, 2017; Haridakis & Hanson, 2009; Kaur, Chauhan, & Medury, 2016; S. E. Kim et al., 2014; Y. W. Lee et al., 2002). In so doing, reliability and validity were preliminary verified. The information quality of social media was evaluated by using the items developed by several scholars (e.g. Mercanti-Guérin, 2008; P. Wang, 2015).

The second part of the questionnaire aims to determine Thailand's destination image by investigating both the cognitive and affective perceptions held by international tourists. The cognitive image is measured based on studies from Chen and Tsai (2007), Kaur et al. (2016), and Martín and Bosque (2008). Affective image, on the other hand, is measured by seven pair of attributes representing the respondents' emotional state of mind towards a destination. The construct measurements were based on Stylos et al.'s (2016) research study. Behavioral intention is operationalized by three sub-constructs, intention to revisit, WOM intention and e-WOM intention. The measurement of intention to revisit and intention to recommend are adapted from Stylos et al. (2016), and Papadimitriou et al. (2015). In addition, eWOM is measured using the questionnaire originally developed by Lo and Lin (2017) and Sohn (2009).

A six-point Likert scale (there is no neutral answer) is used for measuring the information quality of social media. This is also the case with destination image and behavioral intentions. Following Garland's (1991) research that focuses on the occurrence of social desirability, whereby a socially desirable response is falsely given as it is viewed positively by others, this ensures that this can be minimized as a mid-point response and that the selected answers truly reflect individual perceptions. Cultural differences also play an important role in the responses to the Likert scale. For instance, midpoints are more frequently selected by Chinese and Japanese than by Americans when positive and negative emotions are indicated (J. W. Lee et al., 2002). It is suggested that construct validity is improved when an even response scale is

used (J. W. Lee et al., 2002). Therefore, a six-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree, is employed in this study.

- Sampling and Data Acquisition Method

To ensure that the population studied is well represented, quota sampling was used. International tourists were divided into strata, based on the regions visited, and then proportions were given to mutually exclusive subgroups. It is worth pointing out that Thailand itself is variably divided into different sets of regions based on purpose and responsible agencies. However, this study follows the clustering established by the Department of Tourism since it provides sufficient tourism statistics (Department of Tourism, 2017). The sample size for this study is based on the simplified formula suggested by Yamane (1967). Applying the formula means that 400 respondents are to be polled. The number of international tourists as of 2016 is separated by region visited as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: International Tourists by Regions

Region	International Tourists	Percentage (%)	Sample size
Bangkok	20,689,273	31.07 %	124
Central	3,909,969	5.87 %	23
North	4,595,317	6.90 %	28
North East	1,475,492	2.22 %	9
East	10,100,950	15.17 %	61
West	1,987,325	2.98 %	12
South	23,841,182	35.8 %	143
Total	66,599,508	100 %	400

The questionnaires were handed to international tourists at popular tourist attractions across the Kingdom. These sites were selected based on the number of international visitors to these destinations in 2016 as per the latest available statistics from the Ministry of Tourism and Sport, recommendations of the Tourism Authority of Thailand and well-known travel website companies, including TripAdvisor and Expedia. Since destination image is complex, diverse types of tourist attractions must be taken into consideration. Therefore, the questionnaires were distributed in different destination categories ranging from cultural heritage to nature and wildlife, from places of worship to recreational and entertainment areas and from educational places to shopping venues, and from spas and wellness centers to suburban living.

- Data Analysis

Out of 550 distributed questionnaires throughout the Kingdom, 214 gave valid responses (response rate = 39%). 53 percent (n=113) of these participants were females and the majority (63%) of the survey participants were aged between 20-39 years old. Additionally, 57 percent of the respondents were employed while another 29 percent were studying. In terms of nationality, the respondents included Europeans, Chinese, East Asians (Japan, Hong Kong, Korea), Southeast Asians, Americans, Middle Easterners, and Africans, respectively. Most of the respondents had a monthly income higher than USD 3,000 (27.6%), those with an income between USD 500-2,000 amounted to 40.2 percent. Regarding their travel experience, 116 participants (54.2%) have visited Thailand more than once (repeat visitors).

Personally arranged or do-it-yourself (DIY) were found to be the most selected travel arrangement methods (64%), followed by personal group tours (19.6%), and group package tours (11.7%). Table 3 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Measure	Item	n	%
Gender	Female	113	53.8
	Male	101	47.2
Age	Below 20	19	8.9
	20-29	84	39.3
	30-39	49	22.9
	40-49	26	12.1
	50-59	16	7.5
	60 and above	20	9.3
	Occupation	Student	61
Employee		92	43
Self-Employed		30	14.1
Retired		17	7.9
Other		14	6.5
Nationality	Southeast Asian	8	3.7
	China	77	36
	Europe	80	37.4
	Others in East Asia	24	11.2
	South Asian	4	1.9
	American	9	4.2
	Oceanian	6	2.8
	Middle Easterner	3	1.4
	African	3	1.4

Measure	Item	n	%
Income	<500 USD	26	12.1
	500-1,000 USD	39	17.8
	1,000-2,000 USD	48	22.4
	2,000-3,000 USD	33	15.4
	>3,000 USD	59	27.6
	N/A	10	4.7
Travel Experience	First time visitor	98	45.8
	Repeat visitor	116	54.2
Travel Arrangement Method	Personal group tour	43	20
	Group package tour	25	11.7
	Personally arrange/DIY	137	64
	Other	9	4.2
Note: Total n = 214			

- Validity and Reliability Test

The questionnaire validity and reliability was tested through a factor analysis and reliability test. As shown in Table 4, Cronbach’s alpha is higher than 0.7 for all the variables, internal consistency is therefore verified. Additionally, a factor analysis was conducted to report factor loading by using the Maximum Likelihood method. The items below the threshold value of 0.5 were removed. Overall, the factor loading ranged between .978 and .607, thereby satisfying the validity. Additionally, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) in the regression analysis was also examined and favorable results were obtained since all VIF values were below 10. The highest VIF value for this model is 3.330, therefore proving the nonexistence of multi-collinearity problem in this study.

Table 4: Reliability Test

Construct	Item	Cronbach Alpha	Factor Loading
Information Quality			
Intrinsic quality	18	.921	.967-.689
Contextual quality	16	.938	.964-.615
Representational quality	10	.901	.945-.651
Social quality	7	.886	.923-.685

Destination Image			
Cognitive image	25	.921	.978-.607
Affective image	7	.943	.932-.649
Behavioral Intentions			
Revisit intention	3	.857	.930-.616
Word-of-mouth	3	.922	.902-.885
Electronic word-of-mouth	3	.842	.962-.697

4. Results and Discussion

In order to test the proposed hypotheses, the Multiple Regression approach was employed. Table 5 and Figure 1 report the correlation coefficient (β), levels of significance (t-value), and significance effects. Out of 7 hypotheses, three are fully supported, two are partially supported and another two are not supported. In terms of information quality in the social media context, both the contextual ($\beta = .172, t = 2.072^*$) and representational quality ($\beta = .318, t = 3.680^{***}$) were significantly associated with cognitive image.

However, only representational quality ($\beta = .343, t = 2.383^*$) significantly influences affective image. No significant relationship between intrinsic/social quality and cognitive/affective image is exhibited. Therefore, H2 and H3 are partially and fully supported, respectively. Additionally, cognitive image is positively associated with affective image ($\beta = .602, t = 6.655^*$). As expected, cognitive image is significantly associated with all behavioral intentions; revisit intention ($\beta = .688, t = 8.286^{***}$), WOM ($\beta = .667, t = 8.594^{***}$), and eWOM ($\beta = .637, t = 6.054^{***}$). In the meantime, affect image is only significantly associated with revisit intention ($\beta = .140, t = 2.449^*$), and WOM ($\beta = .120, t = 2.241^*$).

No relationship between affective image and eWOM was found. Therefore, H6 is strongly supported, and H7 is partially supported. Additionally, the results reveal that the representational dimension of information quality is the most influential factor impacting perceived destination image since it has the highest beta coefficients ($\beta = .318, .343$). Cognitive image is a stronger antecedent to behavioral intentions (revisit intention, WOM and eWOM intention) than affective image.

Table 5: Results of Hypotheses

H#		β	t	p	Result
H1	Intrinsic quality \rightarrow Cognitive image	-.025	-.307	.759	Not supported
	Intrinsic quality \rightarrow Affective image	-.181	-1.360	.175	
H2	Contextual quality \rightarrow Cognitive image	.172	2.072	.040*	Partially Supported
	Contextual quality \rightarrow Affective image	.097	.706	.481	
H3	Representational quality \rightarrow Cognitive image	.318	3.680	.000***	Supported
	Representational quality \rightarrow Affective image	.343	2.383	.018*	
H4	Social quality \rightarrow Cognitive image	.019	.370	.712	Not supported
	Social quality \rightarrow Affective image	.014	.163	.871	
H5	Cognitive image \rightarrow Affective	.602	6.655	.000***	Supported
H6	Cognitive image \rightarrow Revisit	.688	8.286	.000***	Supported
	Cognitive image \rightarrow WOM	.667	8.594	.000***	
	Cognitive image \rightarrow eWOM	.637	6.054	.000***	
H7	Affective image \rightarrow Revisit	.140	2.449	.015*	Partially Supported
	Affective image \rightarrow WOM	.120	2.241	.026*	
	Affective image \rightarrow eWOM	.049	.678	.498	

Notes: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.000$

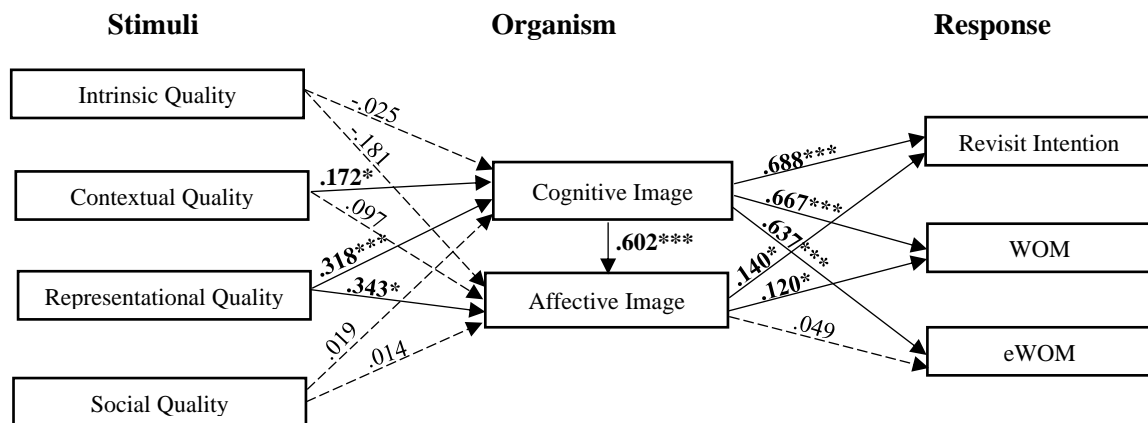


Figure 1: Multiple Regression of Research Model

The fact that the contextual and representational dimensions of tourism information quality positively affect perceived cognitive image implies that destination marketing organizer (DMOs) should bear in mind the importance of the amount of data as well as their relevancy, timeliness, ease of understanding, and value added. They should also pay attention to the conciseness, consistency, and accessibility of tourism information provided through social media since the image of Thailand held by international tourists is likely to be increasingly shaped by this projected information. It is important, though, to distinguish the cognitive and affective images formed. The extent to which tourist information provided in social media is (i) presented in appropriate quality and amount, (ii) relevant to a trip's purpose, (iii) up-to-date, (iv) easy to understand and clear, and (v) beneficial to users, (vi) presented without being overwhelming, (vii) consistently presented, and (viii) easily retrievable therefore play a critical role in forming cognitive destination image.

Yet, only the representational dimension in social media has a considerable impact on affective image. It makes sense to say that the affective destination image is more favorably formed by those who are exposed to such information (i.e., tourists who have experienced those destinations) as the information they provide can be perceived as more reliable. This is especially the case if the tourist information is concise, consistent and accessible. In short, the representational dimension could substantially help tourists develop positive feelings towards visiting Thailand. As this study shows, there is a strong association between cognitive and affective destination image. It implies that the positive acknowledgement of tourism attributes in Thailand (cognitive image) is capable of generating pleasant feelings when visiting Thailand (affective image). Finally, the strong influence which destination image has on tourists' revisits, WOM and e-WOM intention underline the fact that tourist intentions are likely to increase once one has a positive understanding of and perception towards Thailand (as a destination), and pleasant feelings as a result. Obviously, the happier tourists are when vacationing at a particular destination, the more likely they are to return to it and spread the good words about it, whatever the form these recommendations may take.

However, one critical finding in this research is that affective image has no association with eWOM intentions. This result contradicted the hypothesis since it was originally hypothesized that affective image is positively associated with eWOM. It can thus be inferred that tourists are more likely to share their travel experiences (i.e. what to do and where to go) online rather than discuss their feelings (either positive or negative ones) about the destination. In short their accounts are far more factual than emotional.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The interrelationship among information quality in the social media context, perceived destination image, and tourists' behavioral intentions was investigated. The results indicate that some aspects of information quality are significantly associated with perceived destination image, both cognitive and affective. In today's highly digitized environment, in order to beat competitors (i.e., tourist destinations in other countries), online promotion and social media monitoring are no longer an option. People-in-charge, be they policymakers, destination marketing organizations (DMOs) or any other responsible authorities must make good use of those digital tools. This paper provides managerial insights and enable all these stakeholders to develop a better understanding of social media as a powerful marketing tool. But it is not only critical for them to use social media, they must also use them effectively so that they keep attracting tourists and make Thai tourism sustainably successful. This has several managerial implications which can summarized as follows.

First of all, since the results validate the influence of tourism information quality provided on social media on tourists' perceived destination image. All those involved in the shaping of images need to be sure that the information provided is of the highest quality. This is especially true of the contextual and representation quality dimensions. The way information is displayed is equally important. It should be presented in the easiest possible way in simple clear language and be regularly updated. It should also be concise, straight to the point, and not be overwhelming. Moreover, it should be easily accessed and viewable anytime. Providing high-quality reliable, and believable tourist information will go a long way in catching the eyes of viewers. Effective social media destination marketing is a must and a major component of the efforts to form a favorable destination image in the eyes of potential tourists. Since the empirical findings in this study clearly indicate that both the positive cognitive and affective dimension of destination image largely account for tourists' behavioral intentions, they should be the main focus.

To this end, various categories of tourism attributes of Thailand should be positively presented on a regular basis. Moreover, they should also be designed to touch on the emotional chords of social media users. This implies among others that tourism product quality should be provided and talked about so as to arouse pleasant feelings towards a destination (in other words, create affective images). In so doing, Thailand, as a destination, will be considerably well positioned in terms of tourists' behavioral intentions. It also means that a sizable number of those visitors will become repeat visitors, and, given their enthusiasm with Thai tourist destinations, be quite willing to share their positive experiences with potential tourists either in person or through online platform, or most likely both ways.

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