

The relationship between destination image and satisfaction: visits to Macao World Heritage as a moderator

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Abstract

Destination image has increased its prominence in the marketing. Macao has always been referred to as “Oriental Monte Carlo” and people would always connect negative comments with gaming although gaming operators in Macao work very responsibly and combine casinos with many entertainment elements. To improve the image of Macao, the research has tried to measure the destination image of Macao and investigate the effect of Macao World Heritage on the relationship between perceived destination image and satisfaction. This research has employed quantitative methods to measure the functional and psychological attributes of the destination image. The questionnaire has been developed based on the previous researches and the unique characteristics of Macao. The data has been collected around a few sites of Macao World Heritage and Macao Border Gate. The results have revealed that the perceptions of destination image vary among people and Macao World Heritage could only have part moderation effect on the relationship between destination image and satisfaction. The results would be useful for destination officers and tour operators to have a new understanding of Macao World Heritage.

Keywords: World Heritage, Macao, destination image, satisfaction, moderator.

1 Introduction

Companies always consider customer satisfaction is the primary objective of the business [1]. However, a high churn rate is noticeable among customers with high satisfaction [2]. Although customer satisfaction measurement is still very important, customer loyalty is a better measurement to predictor customer



behaviour [1]. The benefits of measuring customer loyalty are illustrated both by the cost of acquiring strange customers and the potential profits among old customers. The cost of attracting new customers is five times the costs of retaining the existing the customers. Additionally, researches have proved that 5% increase in the customer retention can result in 25%–29% increase in the profit [3]. It has also been proved that loyal customers will generate free word of mouth and introduce their friends, relatives and other potential consumers to a product/service [4]. Based on so many virtues, retaining customers becomes an indispensable strategic component for a company [1].

The situation is also applied to destination level in tourism industry. Tourist satisfaction of travel experience is associated with destination loyalty. Positive satisfaction would generate repeat visits and positive recommendations to friends and relatives [5]. Considering the benefits of positive satisfaction, scholars have also explored factors contributing to the satisfaction. Destination image is an antecedent of satisfaction [6–8]. Perceived destination image varies among consumers and Positive destination image would improve satisfaction. Flood of information can build the initial destination image even if tourists have never visited the destination [9]. The information includes both commercial and non-commercial information [10]. Commercial information refers to magazines, brochures and advertisements alike. Non-commercial information could come from friends, relatives and schools [11]. Upon tourists have made their choice and paid the real visit to the destination, the initial destination image would be further modified by the experience. Acquired experience in the destination would further influence assessments of the trip and future intentions [12]. Destination is a multi-dimensional concept encompassing both the functional characteristics and psychological characteristics of the destination [13]. Functional characteristics include climate, cost/price levels, scenery/natural attractions. Psychological characteristics are usually abstract and concern about atmosphere and feelings [11]. Results have also indicated that destination image is composed of common traits, which are commonly shared by almost all the destination, and some unique features, for instance, Taj Mahal in India, Disneyland in California and Amazon Jungle in Brazil. Macao is also distinct for the coexistence of casinos and world heritage sites. The unique features of the destination are suggested to be incorporated.

Macao world heritage sites, also known as historical centre of Macao. Macao once worked as an attractive port in the development of international trade and was under Portuguese administration for more than three hundred years. Its outstanding value and authenticity mostly lie in the historical street, residential, Portuguese and Chinese buildings. Its well-preserved legacy has witnessed the encounters between China and West in terms of aesthetic, cultural, architectural and technology. Considering the differences in the destination image, it is necessary to explore the contributions of the unique features to the destination image. The relationship of destination image, satisfaction and tourist intention is also worth examination for the distinctness of the Macao. To elaborate the relationship among destination image, satisfaction, tourist intention, and the uniqueness of Macao, a research model was suggested and tested. The empirical

data was collected in historical centre. The data and the relationship were tested using factor analysis.

2 Conceptual background and hypotheses

Scholars [7–10] have paid keen attention to destination image for the construct is closely connected with destination preference, tourist satisfaction and post-trip behaviour. The difficulties in measuring destination image are mostly due to the limit of understanding the concept of destination image [11]. Being familiar with the image formation process would help understand the nature of destination image. The understanding of destination image was developed from the product image. Both discursive and imagery modes of information were applied to explain the difference in the varied definition of destination image [12, 13]. Discursive information dealt with pieces of information about the product attribute. Imagery information concerned about holistic impression of the product. Consumers employ both modes of information to help them reduce the alternatives and make the final choice [14]. It highlights the function of formation process concerning the final decision making. The similar rules apply to destination image [15, 16].

Destination image formation is a dynamic process and destination image is a multi-dimensional construct [17]. Scholars initially suggested that a functional-psychological dimension of destination image be considered. Functional characteristics are directly observable or measurable while psychological characteristics are intangible, which could only detected by sensory [18, 19]. However, obvious overlaps are between functional-psychological components and individual-holistic features. A comprehensive definition of destination image should not only reflect the functional and psychological characteristics but also the holistic mental pictures [20, 21]. Based on the advents of more destinations, the common-unique dimension of destination image has been proposed. The advocate of the common-unique dimension is reasonable to supplement the common functional and psychological characteristics of the destination. Common features are about the price level, transportation infrastructure, accommodation, climate, level of friendliness, safety, and quality of service experienced [22, 23]. Image is built on the unique features and events, such as the Grand Prix, casinos and historical centre in Macao. The uniqueness of the destination image is also determinant factors in the process of destination choice [18].

Destination image could affect destination selection process and a more favourable destination image could influence satisfaction [24]. Destination image directly affects attribute satisfaction. Both the destination and the attribute satisfaction work as the direct the antecedents of the overall satisfaction [25]. The theme of the study is to investigate the effect of the uniqueness of Macao's image on satisfaction and loyalty. Whether the distinctness of Macao can capture tourist impression and have a positive effect on satisfaction is under investigation.

Customer satisfaction has gained much attention in the marketing aspect. Satisfaction is defined as customers' judgments about products or service fulfilment [26, 27]. One of the key elements of destination marketing success is tourist satisfaction because it influences the choice of destination and the decision

to revisit. It is therefore important to examine the concept of image and its relation to the satisfaction. Therefore, it would be postulated that:

H1: Destination image is positively associated with satisfaction.

It is necessary to distinguish the difference between attribute satisfaction and the overall satisfaction. Attribute satisfaction is based on the individual component of destination and usually refer to the hotels, restaurants, shops, attractions, etc. [28, 29]. Overall satisfaction is based on the individual attribute satisfaction along with other components contributing to the experience, for instance the natural environment and social environment [30, 31]. Considering the uniqueness of Macao, it is reasonable to suggest that Macao World Heritage can have moderate effect on the relationship between destination image and satisfaction [32, 33].

H2: Visit to Macao World Heritage can have moderation effect on the relationship between destination image and satisfaction.

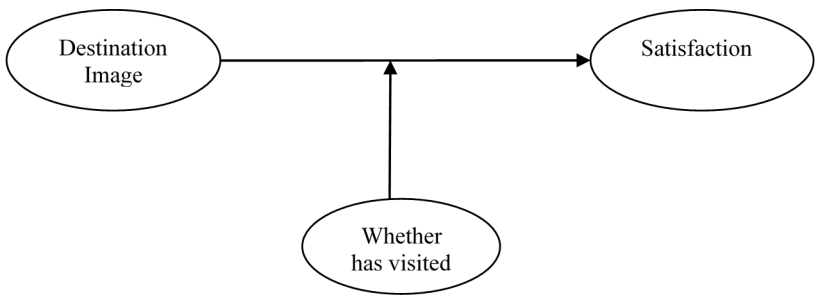


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of destination and satisfaction.

3 Methods

3.1 Questionnaire design

This research has applied quantitative method to investigate the proposed relationship of the constructs. The detailed questions were developed based on the common and unique features of Macao. Among the 25 items measuring destination image [6–8, 11], five items representing the uniqueness of destination image were developed based on the characteristics of Macao, for instance, the customs, architectures, religions, local food and cultural events in historical sites. The rest items of destination image are common functional and psychological features, for instance, the climate, natural scenes, friendliness of local people and exotic feelings. 8 items concerning tourist satisfaction were extracted from previous researches [29, 30, 33]; Respondents were asked to indicate their degrees of agreement with each item by the 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). Demographic information including gender, marital status, provenance, age, occupation, monthly income and educational level was collected by using the categorical scale. Pilot test was conducted among 26 tourism management master and bachelor students. Revisions were made accordingly prior to final distribution.

3.2 Data collection and data analysis

The study was conducted around a few attractions in Macao World Heritage sites in “Leal Senado Building”, “Senado Square”, “Ruins of St. Paul’s” and “Mount Fortress”. For the convenience, the research also was carried out in the Macao airport and Border gate. Applying the convenient sampling technique, a total number of 514 were distributed to the tourists over the age of 18 who are considered qualified respondents. A total of 381 usable samples were obtained, resulting in a response rate of 74%.

4 Results and analysis

4.1 Frequency analysis

The study was conducted among tourists who are Chinese, originating from Macao (1.8%), mainland China (75.1%), Hong Kong (5.8%), Taiwan (10.0%) and overseas (7.9%). The percentage of females (52.5%) was greater than males (47.5%). The majority (55.9%) of the respondents were between the age group “25–44”. Respondents of “18–24” and “45–59” accounted for 22.0% and 16.8% respectively. Most respondents (46.2%) held bachelor degree. Respondents whose educational degree lower than bachelor degree accounted for (41.2%). 12.3% of the respondents held master degree and above. 93.4% of the respondents indicated that they have visited tourist attractions of Macao World Heritage. The detail information regarding whether tourists have visited particular tourism attraction of Macao World Heritage was shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Visit frequency of tourism attraction in Macao World Heritage sites.

	Tourism attraction	Percentage		Tourism attraction	Percentage
1	Ruins of St. Paul’s	90.3	14	Mandarin’s House	7.3
2	Mount Fortress	45.7	15	St. Anthony’s Church	7.3
3	A-Ma Temple	45.1	16	St. Lawrence’s Church	6.8
4	‘Leal Senado’ Building	42.8	17	St. Joseph’s Seminary and Church	6.6
5	Senado Square	34.1	18	Protestant Cemetery	6.6
6	St. Dominic’s Church	19.2	19	Sir Robert Ho Tung Library	6.3
7	Cathedral	15.5	20	Dom Pedro V Theatre	6.3
8	Guia Fortress (including Guia Chapel and Lighthouse)	15.2	21	Lilau Square	6.2
9	Holy House of Mercy	14.7	22	St. Augustine’s Square	5.8
10	Moorish Barracks	11.8	23	Sam Kai Vui Kun (Kuan Tai Temple)	5.2
11	Na Tcha Temple	11	24	Section of the Old City Walls	4.5
12	Lou Kau Mansion	10.8	25	St. Augustine’s Church	3.7
13	Camões Garden	7.6	26	Casa Garden	2.9



The visit frequency of tourism attraction of Macao World Heritage was listed based on the visit frequency order in Table 1. 90.3% of the respondents indicated that they have visited the Ruins of St. Paul's. The percentage is almost the same as the percentage of respondents who have visited Macao World Heritage sites (93.4%). The second popular tourism attraction is Mount Fortress (45.7%). It is noticeable that more than half of the tourism attractions of Macao World Heritage sites were visited only among less than 10% of the respondents.

4.2 Reliability and validity test

Exploratory factor analysis was used to explore the dimensions underlying the destination image. Principal components factor analysis was employed with Varimax rotation. Factor loadings less than 0.5 were considered the variance explained by the factor is low and were suggested to be deleted. Remained factor loadings and the eigenvalue have explained 55.96% of the variance of destination image scale. The value of KMO measure (0.920) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi^2=3706.255$, $p=0.000$) have confirmed the adequacy for factor analysis. Table 2 illustrated the results of factor analysis. Five components were extracted, namely "destination environment" (four items, $\alpha=0.775$, eigenvalue=8.62, variance explained=14.42%), "entertainment & leisure" (four items, $\alpha=0.804$, eigenvalue=1.64, variance explained=11.89%), "destination culture" (four items, $\alpha=0.798$, eigenvalue=1.36, variance explained=11.03%), "Destination common service" (six items, $\alpha=0.812$, eigenvalue=1.3, variance explained=10.14%) and others (three items, $\alpha=0.435$, eigenvalue=1.1, variance explained=8.48%). Reliability test was conducted. Cronbach's α of each factor ranged from 0.435 to 0.812. The same tests were performed to explore the dimensions of tourists experience satisfaction. The results of KMO (0.789) and Bartlett's Test ($\chi^2=556.870$, $p=0.000$) have ensured the factor analysis of experience satisfaction. Only one factor loadings was less than 0.5. Factor loadings and the eigenvalue have explained 55.14% of the variance of experience satisfaction. The factors were reliable with Cronbach's α coefficients ranging from 0.751 and 0.780 respectively.

To explore the variance of tourists' perception of destination image and satisfaction, Independent T-test and one way ANOVA were performed. The results were presented in Table 3. Female perceived better than male in terms of entertainment and leisure, destination culture as well as satisfaction of entertainment and events. Only tourists' perceptions of destination culture differed greatly by educational degree. For the satisfaction, both dimensions varied greatly by educational degree.

4.3 Hypothesis test

Pearson correlations were performed prior to liner regression. Simple regressions were performed to investigate the relationship between each dimension of destination image and overall satisfaction. The results were presented in Table 5. All the values of Pearson correlation were significant as indicated in the table, which means that a strong relationship is between each factor of destination image and overall satisfaction. For the regression analysis

Table 2: Factor analysis of destination image, satisfaction.

Factor/item	Factor loading	Variance explained (%)	Eigenvalue	Cronbach's α
Destination image				
Destination environment		14.42	8.62	0.775
Clean and neat environment	0.739			
Agreeable climate	0.694			
Safe environment	0.714			
Friendly host community	0.632			
Entertainment and leisure		11.89	1.64	0.804
Colorful nightlife	0.610			
Entertainment activity	0.777			
Exhibition	0.677			
Festival	0.660			
Destination culture		11.03	1.36	0.798
Distinct architecture	0.629			
Abundant history	0.778			
Local customs	0.712			
Different religions	0.563			
Destination common service		10.14	1.3	0.812
Convenient transportation	0.506			
Wide variety of accommodation	0.602			
Wide shopping selection	0.709			
Accessibility of tourism information	0.610			
Adoption to local community	0.534			
Massage & spa	0.591			
Price and value		8.48	1.1	0.435
Reasonable commodity price	0.638			
High price-performance ratio	0.628			
Exciting adventure tourism activity	0.602			
Satisfaction of experience				
Entertainment and events satisfaction		39.88	2.79	0.751
Shopping experience satisfaction	0.773			
Lodging experience satisfaction	0.709			
Events experience satisfaction	0.704			
Tourism attraction experience satisfaction	0.775			
Travel environment satisfaction		15.26	1.07	0.780
Environment and atmosphere experience satisfaction	0.728			
Food experience satisfaction	0.881			

Table 3: Variance analysis of destination image by gender.

	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Conclusion
Destination environment	0.448	0.134	No significant difference
Entertainment and leisure	0.023	-2.305	Perceptions by female are higher
Destination culture	0.065	-0.155	Perceptions by female are higher
Destination common service	0.194	0.088	No significant difference
Others	0.193	-0.089	No significant difference
Entertainment and events satisfaction	0.031	-0.192	Perceptions by female are higher
Travel environment satisfaction	0.222	-0.079	No significant difference

Table 4: Variance analysis of destination image by educational degree.

	Sig.	Conclusion
Destination environment	0.963	No significant difference
Entertainment and leisure	0.207	No significant difference
Destination culture	0.027	Significant difference
Destination common service	0.609	No significant difference
Others	0.140	No significant difference
Entertainment and events satisfaction	0.350	Significant difference
Travel Environment satisfaction	0.993	Significant difference

between each factor and overall destination image, destination environment ($R^2=9.5\%$, $F=39.731$, $p=0.000$), entertainment and leisure ($R^2=7.1\%$, $F=28.842$, $p=0.000$), destination culture ($R^2=8.1\%$, $F=34.717$, $p=0.000$) as well as price and value ($R^2=4.7\%$, $F=18.71$, $p=0.000$) can predict the overall satisfaction well except for the destination common service ($R^2=12.8\%$, $F=6.31$, $p=0.012$).

Table 5: Results of hypothesis test.

		Model Summary		ANOVA		Coefficient		
Model	Pearson Correlation	R ²	Sig.	F	Sig.	B	t	Sig.
H ₁₋₁	0.308**	0.095	0.000	39.731	0.000	Constant 4.168	118.535	0.000
						0.222	6.303	0.000
H ₁₋₂	0.266**	0.071	0.000	28.842	0.000	Constant 4.168	116.984	0.000
						0.192	5.370	0.000
H ₁₋₃	0.290**	0.081	0.000	34.717	0.000	Constant 4.168	117.823	0.000
						0.209	5.892	0.000
H ₁₋₄	0.128*	0.016	0.012	6.310	0.012	Constant 4.168	113.706	0.000
						0.092	2.512	0.012
H ₁₋₅	0.217**	0.047	0.000	18.710	0.000	Constant 4.168	115.522	0.000
						0.156	4.325	0.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)



A multiple regression model was tested to investigate whether the relationship between destination image and overall satisfaction depends on the visit of Macao World Heritage. It was hypothesized that the effect of destination image on overall satisfaction was moderated by tourists visit to attraction in historical centre. Table 6 showed the results of moderator analysis by each factor of destination image. The significance value of the coefficients indicated that visits to Macao World Heritage could only exercise the moderator effect on the relationship between destination environment and overall satisfaction. Relationship between the remaining destination factors and overall satisfaction could not be moderated by the visits to Macao World Heritage sites.

Table 6: Moderator effect analysis.

Model	Model Summary		ANOVA			Coefficient			
	R ²	Sig.	F	Sig.		B	Beta	t	Sig.
H2-1	0.143	0.003	20.945	0.000	Constant	4.642		30.498	0.000
					Destination environment	0.793	1.026	4.913	0.000
					Interaction effect	-0.132	-0.743	-3.558	0.000
					Whether has visited	-0.418	-0.144	-3.011	0.003
H2-2	0.095	0.010	13.175	0.000	Constant	4.579		29.239	0.000
					Entertainment and leisure	0.548	0.760	2.708	0.000
					Interaction effect	-0.089	-0.514	-1.830	0.000
					Whether has visited	-0.369	-0.127	-2.585	0.000
H2-3	0.111	0.018	16.850	0.000	Constant	4.552		29.445	0.000
					Destination culture	0.708	0.983	3.971	0.000
					Interaction effect	-0.124	-0.719	-2.908	0.004
					Whether has visited	-0.336	-0.116	-2.374	0.018
H2-4	0.043	0.002	5.686	0.001	Constant	4.664		29.003	0.000
					Destination common service	0.307	0.427	1.479	0.140
					Interaction effect	-0.051	-0.297	-1.029	0.303
					Whether has visited	-0.461	-0.159	-3.141	0.002
H2-5	0.070	0.005	9.415	0.000	Constant	4.599	0.158		0.000
					Price and value	-0.034	0.173	-0.047	0.846
					Interaction effect	0.048	0.044	0.263	0.276
					Whether has visited	-0.412	0.145	-0.142	0.005

5 Conclusions

This research has tried to explore the effect of Macao World Heritage on the relationship between destination image and tourist overall satisfaction. Both



destination image and overall satisfaction are two prominent factors in the marketing. The results have proved that perceived components of destination image, such as destination and culture as well as entertainment and leisure, differed significantly by genders. Tourists in different educational groups perceived destination cultural differently. There is also a two polar trend of the tourism attractions of Macao World Heritage. Almost every tourist has visited Ruins of St. Paul's. However, only 3% of the respondents have confirmed the visit to St. Augustine's Church and Casa Garden. The answers of the inequality distribution were probably due to the shortages of destination promotions. Macao World Heritage sites have been proved to have moderation effect partly on the relationship between destination image and overall satisfaction. Future researches could be developed to investigate the explanations of the insignificant moderation effect on other destination components.

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