Destination image and tourist behavioural intentions: A meta-analysis

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to understand the relationship between destination image and tourist's behavioural intention. In this study, we used a meta-analysis to synthesize the effects of destination image from 87 studies. The results reveal that destination image plays significant role in predicting tourist's intentional behaviour, in different magnitudes. To be more precise, overall and affective images have the greatest impact on behavioural intention, followed by cognitive image. Of the different dimensions of behavioural intentions, destination image has the greatest impact on intention to recommend. Implications are provided for destination management and tourism researchers based on meta-analysis.

1. Introduction

As the global tourism industry becomes more competitive, investigating future behavioural intentions of international travellers is the subject of interest in tourism which plays a vital role in destination development (Chen & Tsai, 2007). Generally, behavioural intention has been considered a dependent variable and the aim of managerial implications, influenced theoretically and statistically by destination image (Lee, Lee, & Lee, 2005).

At the same time, destination image is widely recognized as a powerful managerial tool in today's dynamic and competitive global environment to empower the tourism industry in the market. The concept of destination image was first introduced in the tourism industry by Gunn (1972), Hunt (1971) and Mayo (1973). It has since been the subject of numerous academic studies (Beerli & Martín, 2004) showing the effect of image considerations as a pivotal factor (Stylidis, Belhassen, & Shani, 2015) on behavioural intentions including intention to recommend (Prayag, Hosany, Muskat, & Del Chiappa, 2017), intention to revisit (Loi, So, Lo, & Fong, 2017), and intention to visit (Molinillo, Liébana-Cabanillas, Anaya-Sánchez, & Buhalis, 2018). Although the effect of destination image on behavioural intentions is widely documented, the magnitude and the quality of these effects are unclear from a large number of sources. In some cases, researchers and tourist managers may face contradictory results. To elaborate, many studies have analysed the effect of destination image on tourists' decision-making processes, future behavioural intentions, and destination preferences (Bigné Alcañiz, Sánchez García, & Sanz Blas, 2009; Tan & Wu, 2016). They have yet to come to a consensus. Some found the positive impact (direct or indirect) of

destination image on tourists' intentions (Chaulagain, Wiitala, & Fu, 2019; Kani, Aziz, Sambasivan, & Bojei, 2017), and some revealed no relationship (Kock, Josiassen, & Assaf, 2016; Mun, Aziz, & Bojei, 2018; Pratt & Sparks, 2014; Whang, Yong, & Ko, 2016). Despite the bulk of publications on the consequences of destination image, the results of these studies are very heterogeneous. The results vary in terms of direction, magnitude, and statistical significance due to variety of the research context, research approach, research strategy, sampling method, and methods for measuring different components of destination image (Stepchenkova & Mills, 2010). In addition, the formation of destination image is controversial. Over the last decade, meta studies and review papers tried to summarize the multiple definitions of destination image (Stepchenkova & Mills, 2010; Tasci, Gartner, & Tamer Cavusgil, 2007; Zhang, Fu, Cai, & Lu, 2014). Using the associative network memory model, Kotler and Keller (2012) defines the image as the sum of associations held in a consumer's memory. In the context of tourism, the image is defined as "a sum of associations and pieces of information connected to a destination, which would include multiple components of the destination and personal perceptions" (Murphy, Pritchard, & Smith, 2000). Destination image is considered a multi-faceted and composite construct (Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2006) followed the three-element attitude model including cognitive, affective, and conative elements (Michael, James, & Michael, 2018). Although some researches (San Martín & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2008) are willing to regard destination image as a two-dimensional construct (cognitive and affective), some claim that tourism researchers have completely neglected the third dimension of destination image, which is the conative aspect (Stylos, Vassiliadis, Bellou, & Andronikidis, 2016). During the last decades, destination image has been

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limited to studies dealing with its perceptual or cognitive component Tasci et al. (2007) and Zhang et al. (2014). In response to this finding, more and more researchers are recently inclined to acknowledge the role of affective dimension of destination image. This can be manifested in the 24 identified papers analysing affective image of various tourist destinations. However, analysing the role of conative image by only four studies shows that conative aspect of destination image is now suffering negligence in contrast with two other aspects as reported 40 years ago (Hilgard, 1980). Hence, reviewing researchers' tendency to operationalize destination image and its relationships with behavioural intentions in different models over a period with the help of meta-analysis techniques gave an in-depth insight into the scientific community. In this way, managers know confidently which one of the mentioned intentions is more affected by which destination image constructs.

Therefore, considering the concept of scientific progress in Scientific Realism (Hunt, 2003), this paper tries to appraise and then synthesize results from a series of studies collected systematically on the relationship between destination image dimensions and tourists' behavioural intentions and analyse the researchers' approaches to operational definition of destination image. In accordance with the reduction aspect of scientific progress (Hunt, 2003), the accumulation of estimated effect size may help reach a more reliable theory in tourism. Results are also expected to help destination managers in terms of planning and offering competitive destination attractions, experiences, and services and have to strategize relative marketing aspects to attract and maintain their tourists and probably influence their future behaviour. For this purpose, a detailed review was conducted on quantitative papers in major journals that analysed the impact of destination image on tourist intention. The search was limited to both English and Persian languages.

2. Literature review

From four to five decades ago, studies focusing on country image and destination image were intense. Several review papers and meta-analyses were published on the topic of destination image research from 2002 to 2014 (Pike, 2004; Stepchenkova & Mills, 2010; Tasci et al., 2007; Zhang et al., 2014). Since the primarily aim of this study is to identify the relationship between destination image and tourist behavioural intention, review of the construct definition and measurements is presented below.

2.1. Destination image

Destination image is defined as a subjective interpretation of a place held in a tourist's mind, which affects the tourist's behaviour during three stages including priori, loco, and posteriori (Agapito, Oom do Valle, & da Costa Mendes, 2013). There have been different approaches to the conceptualization of destination image. Echtner and Ritchie (1991) clarified the three-continuum-component approach covering attribute-holistic, functional-psychological, and common-unique. Gartner (1994) simplified this conception by proposing that destination image consists of cognitive, affective, and conative components. Zhang et al. (2014) classified previous studies based on the definition of overall image, cognitive image, affective image, cognitive–affective joint image, and self-congruity. Some believe that destination image has only two components, namely cognitive and affective (Stylidis, 2016). In a broad sense, all of these studies highlighted the complexity of this construct. Most of studies have seen destination image as an abstract formed object (Rossiter, 2002) and adopted the two- or three-component approach (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Gartner, 1994; Lin, Morais, Kerstetter, & Hou, 2007; Sönmez & Sirakaya, 2002). In spite of defining destination image as a two- or three-dimensional construct, researchers have tendency to highlight the composite and formative nature of destination image by calling it overall image. With this in mind, overall image is the holistic perception of a tourist destination (Stylidis,

Belhassen, & Shani, 2017) that integrates both cognitive and affective images (Papadimitriou, Apostolopoulou, & Kaplanidou, 2015) or is affected by cognitive, affective, and conative images (Stylos, Bellou, Andronikidis, & Vassiliadis, 2017). Overall image was also identified as the third image component similar to cognitive and affective images (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999), however; we follow Josiassen, Assaf, Woo, and Kock (2016) and use the label 'overall image' as the same as destination image construct, defined as an individual's overall evaluative representation of a destination. In other words, destination image (or overall image) is an abstract dimension or higher-order construct (HOC) consisting of three or more concrete sub-dimensions (cognitive, affective, and conative) referred to as lower-order constructs (LOC). Despite the multi-faceted nature of destination image, some researchers recommend analysing its components separately. For instance, Lin et al. (2007) argued that the importance of cognitive and affective images varied in different destinations, which should be studied distinctively when destination image is investigated (Stylidis, Belhassen et al., 2017). The cognitive component of the image refers to a person's beliefs and knowledge about a destination and its attributes, which together help create a mental picture of the place (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Pike, 2004). The affective component of the image explains individual's emotional responses and feelings towards a destination (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; King, Chen, & Funk, 2015). Finally, the conative component of destination image is the active consideration by tourists of a destination as a potential place for travel (Gartner, 1994). The conative aspect has been defined as behavioural tendency (Bagozzi, 1992) and related to the possibility or tendency that one will behave in a particular way towards the object (White, 2014). According to Bagozzi (1992), conative process is the antecedent of intention to pursue a goal; however, unfortunately, conation similar to desire and intention with no justification have been used interchangeably (White, 2014). Based on the abovementioned approaches and definitions, studies are classified into overall image, cognitive image, affective image, and conative image, as displayed in Table 1. In earlier studies (Zhang et al., 2014), the focal point of investigations was cognitive image, followed by overall image and affective image. More researches have recently become aware of the importance of affective image, which has changed the trend. Apparently, more researchers accept the destination image or overall image as a HOC. As depicted in Table 1, the majority of studies examined overall image (63 articles) followed by affective image (24 articles) and cognitive image (18 articles). Echtner and Ritchie (1991) assert that destination image is not properly defined in the literature, nor are its components. Some studies measure destination image as a unidimensional construct (Bui & Le, 2016; Sharma & Nayak, 2019b), and others refer to it as a multidimensional construct which is measured by cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions (Assaker & Hallak, 2013; Mun, Lee, & Jeong, 2018; Wang & Hsu, 2010). The classification of selected studies based on destination image dimensions are summarized in Table 2. In some studies, image is conceptualized in terms of the cognitive or affective component as a unidimensional construct as the table shows. Referring to the root disciplines of image concept, measuring image only by its attribute lists or focusing on any component of destination image would not result in a complete measurement (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991); however, defining destination image as a multi or unidimensional construct depends on the research purpose.

2.2. Behavioural intentions

Since behavioural intentions have become a basic strategic metric to assess the success of a tourism destination, research on this topic remains an important subject in marketing and tourism field (Prayag, Hosany, & Odeh, 2013). Researchers have highlighted the influence of destination image on behavioural intentions (Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2006). Ajzen (1991) claimed that behavioural intention is the tendency to keep conducting a particular behaviour in the future.

Table 1
Destination image dimensions and classification of studies.

Destination image	Studies
Overall image	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41, 44, 46, 47, 48, 43, 50, 51, 52, 54, 55, 57, 58, 61, 62, 64, 65, 67, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 78, 79, 80, 81, 83, 84, 85
Cognitive image	9, 12, 16, 21, 22, 23, 25, 28, 53, 57, 63, 66, 69, 71, 73, 80, 82, 86
Affective image	9, 12, 16, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28, 30, 31, 35, 44, 53, 63, 66, 68, 69, 71, 73, 80, 82, 86, 87
Conative image	9, 22, 23, 53

Note: 1. Kim and Kerstetter (2016); 2. Bui and Le (2016); 3. Chaulagain et al. (2019); 4. Sharma and Nayak (2019b); 5. Campo-Martínez, Garau-Vadell, and Martínez-Ruiz (2010); 6. Wang (2015); 7. Jin, Lee, and Lee (2015); 8. Cervera-Taulet, Pérez-Cabañero, and Schlesinger (2019); 9. Taghipourian, Yazdani, and Aghaifar (2019); 10. Choe and Kim (2018); 11. Foroudi et al. (2018); 12. Fu, Ye, and Xiang (2016); 13. Heidarzadeh, Najafi, and Hosseini (2018); 14. Kani et al. (2017); 15. Kock et al. (2016); 16. Zare, Poursaeid, and Soltani (2017); 17. Loi et al. (2017); 18. Qu, Kim, and Im (2011); 19. Reza Jalilvand, Samiei, Dini, and Yaghoubi Manzari (2012); 20. Sharma and Nayak (2018); 21. Stylidis, Shani, and Belhassen (2017); 22. Stylos et al. (2016); 23. Stylos et al. (2017); 24. Tan (2017); 25. Tan and Wu (2016); 26. Tosun, Dedeoğlu, and Fyall (2015); 27. Akhoondnejad (2015); 28. Whang et al. (2016); 29. Wang and Hsu (2010); 30. Akgün, Senturk, Keskin, and Onal (2019); 31. Han, Al-Ansi, Olya, and Kim (2019); 32. Moon, Ko, Connaughton, and Lee (2013); 33. Jeong and Kim (2019); 34. Hasan, Abdullah, Lew, and Islam (2019); 35. Regan, Carlson, and Rosenberger (2012); 36. Hsu, Yen, Chang, and Woon (2016); 37. Jalilvand and Heidari (2017); 38. bumm Kim and Lee (2015); 39. Leong, Yeh, and Chang (2015); 40. Hamidizadeh, Ghareche, Hadizadeh, and Salimipour (2017); 41. Eid, El-Kassrawy, and Agag (2019); 42. Assaker and Hallak (2013); 43. Mousapour, Esfidani, Rahmati, and Ardekani (2016); 44. De Nisco, Mainolfi, Marino, and Napolitano (2015); 45. Kastenholz, Eusébio, and Carneiro (2013); 46. Kim (2018); 47. Liu, Li, and Yang (2015); 48. Papadimitriou et al. (2015); 49. Papadimitriou, Kaplanidou, and Apostolopoulou (2018); 50. Prayag et al. (2017); 51. Stylos and Bellou (2019); 52. Wu, Li, and Li (2018); 53. Loureiro and Jesus (2019); 54. Emami, Ranjbarian, and Fathi (2014); 55. Liu, Li, and Kim (2017); 56. Chung and Chen (2018); 57. de la Hoz-Correa and Muñoz Leiva (2019); 58. Jin, Lee, and Lee (2013); 59. Kim, Hallab, and Kim (2012); 60. Kim, Park, and Kim (2016); 61. Deng and Li (2014); 62. Park, Hsieh, and Lee (2017); 63. Nghiêm-Phú (2016); 64. Palau-Saumell, Forgas-Coll, Amaya-Molinar, and Sánchez-García (2016); 65. Liu and Huang (2019); 66. Song, Kim, and Yim (2017); 67. Stylidis, Belhassen et al. (2017); 68. Xu, Chan, and Pratt (2018); 69. Yamaguchi, Akiyoshi, Yamaguchi, and Nogawa (2015); 70. Zhang, Xu, Leung, and Cai (2016); 71. Khan, Chelliah, and Ahmed (2017); 72. Pratt and Sparks (2014); 73. Sharma and Nayak (2019a); 74. Li and Yang (2015); 75. Gretzel et al. (2016); 76. Isa and Ramli (2014); 77. Nassar, Mostafa, and Reisinger (2015); 78. Kharazmi and Ebrahimi (2017); 79. Allameh, Pool, Jaberi, Salehzadeh, and Asadi (2015); 80. Baloglu, Henthorne, and Sahin (2014); 81. Hallmann, Zehrer, and Müller (2015); 82. Li, Cai, Lehto, and Huang (2010); 83. Mohaidin, Wei, and Ali Murshid (2017); 84. Morais and Lin (2010); 85. Phillips, Wolfe, Hodur, and Leistritz (2013); 86. Wang and Fu (2015); 87. Alvarez and Campo (2014).

Table 2
Classification of studies based on destination image dimensionality.

Destination image dimensionality	Studies
Uni-dimensional	2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20, 26, 27, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 41, 42, 45, 46, 50, 51, 52, 55, 56, 58, 62, 63, 64, 65, 75, 76, 79, 83, 85
Multi-dimensional	1, 3, 6, 9, 12, 16, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 29, 30, 31, 37, 40, 43, 44, 47 48, 49, 53, 54, 57, 59, 60, 61, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 77, 78, 80, 81, 82, 84, 86, 87

Note2 : Same as Table 1.

According to Perugini and Bagozzi (2004), behavioural intention as a partial planning involves some forms of commitment and are predicted by pre-intention variables such as affective or conative aspects of image (White, 2014). However, Chen, Lai, Petrick, and Lin (2016) claimed that intention or conation refers to an act based on an individual's cognition and affection. Therefore, behavioural intention as a dependent variable seems to be an important concept in understanding tourist selection of destinations and future motives and behaviour. From this view, any attempt to perceive behavioural intention will bring further contribution to the tourism knowledge base. The most favourable indicators of pre-visit and post-visit behavioural intentions for tourism researchers and managers are intention to revisit (Loi et al., 2017), intention to recommend (Prayag & Ryan, 2012), intention to visit (Fu et al., 2016). Since behavioural intention is a multi-dimensional construct, this study attempts to investigate the impact of destination image on behavioural intentions and its different dimensions.

2.3. Research framework and hypotheses

The vast majority of previous studies highlighted the role of destination image in consumer attitude and behavioural intentions (Chew & Jahari, 2014; Hosany, Ekinci, & Uysal, 2006; Kim & Yoon, 2003; Yüksel & Akgül, 2007). Current tourism literature suggests that destination image can affect not only the selecting process of individuals but also destination evaluation in addition to tourist's future intentions (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Crompton & Ankomah, 1993; Hsu, Huang, & Swanson, 2010; Prendergast & Man, 2002). These studies vary in terms of the considered approaches of measuring the destination image and its impact on behavioural intentions. Most studies considered only one or two dimensions of destination image and behavioural intention constructs. Therefore, we included both unidimensional and multidimensional studies on each construct. Fig. 1 shows the proposed framework based on existing literature.
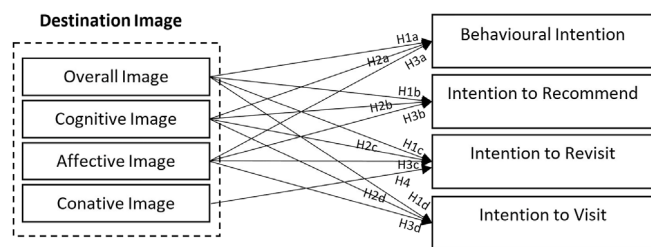
Destination Image

Fig. 1. Proposed framework.

2.3.1. Overall image and behavioural intentions

Previous studies have proposed that behavioural intention can be influenced by overall image (Qu et al., 2011; Stylidis et al., 2015). In a study on travellers of Macau, (Liu et al., 2015) revealed the direct impact of destination image on behavioural intentions and concluded that behavioural intentions become more positive as the perceived destination image rises. Similarly, by studying visitors of the UAE, (Eid et al., 2019) discovered that destination image had a strong effect on tourist satisfaction and intention to recommend. Finally, Papadimitriou et al. (2018) studied the intentions of both past visitors and non-visitors of Athens and included the urban destination and found significant relationship between overall image and intentions of tourists to visit and revisit of the destination. Thus, the following hypotheses are tested using the meta-analysis:

H1. Overall image has a positive effect on tourist behaviour. (a) Specifically, destination image positively relates to behavioural intention, (b) intention to recommend, (c) intention to revisit, and (d) intention to visit.

2.3.2. Cognitive image and behavioural intentions

Several studies have demonstrated that cognitive image of a destination significantly affects behavioural intentions (Wang & Fu, 2015; Whang et al., 2016). Conducting a study on visitors of a yoga tourism destination in India, (Sharma & Nayak, 2019b) revealed that cognitive image had a significant impact on behavioural intentions. In a study on tourists and residents of Eilat, (Stylidis, Belhassen et al., 2017) found support for the statistically significant relationships between both cognitive and affective image evaluations and intention to recommend. Tan and Wu (2016) reported that the revisit intention was positively affected by cognitive destination image. de la Hoz-Correa and Muñoz Leiva (2019), conducted a survey using a panel of internet users from six different countries and discovered that cognitive image had a positive impact on intention to visit. Therefore, the following hypotheses are formulated for this relationship:

H2. Cognitive image of destination has a positive effect on tourist behaviour. (a) In particular, cognitive image positively relates to behavioural intention, (b) intention to recommend, (c) intention to revisit, and (d) intention to visit.

2.3.3. Affective image and behavioural intentions

Affective image plays a determinant role in influencing people's behavioural intentions (Lee, Scott, & Kim, 2008; Yang, Yuan, & Hu, 2009). In a study on Australian citizens planning to attend, and travel in a group to a major social event, Regan et al. (2012) found that affective destination image had a significant impact on travel intention. Han et al. (2019) conducted a study about identifying possible halal-friendly attributes at a non-Muslim destination and revealed that affective destination image had a significant and positive impact on recommend intention. Similarly, intention to recommend and intention to revisit were also highly influenced by affective destination image, as reflected in a study conducted by Akgün et al. (2019) on tourists of Istanbul. The

direct and positive impact of affective image on visit intention was also supported in a research on female students in Malaysia (Khan et al., 2017). Based on these findings, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

H3. Affective image of destination has a positive effect on tourist behaviour. (a) In particular, affective image positively relates to behavioural intention, (b) intention to recommend, (c) intention to revisit, and (d) intention to visit.

2.3.4. Conative image and behavioural intentions

Although many scholars found the conative destination image as synonymous to intention (King et al., 2015; Pike, 2004; Prayag, 2009), there is proof that intentions and conative destination image are different constructs (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2004; White, 2014). Loureiro and Jesus (2019) carried out a study on tourists who visited Rio de Janeiro. They revealed that conative image had a significant and positive effect on revisit intention of tourists. In a study on tourists of Mazandaran (Northern city of Iran), (Taghipourian et al., 2019), found that conative image had a significant effect on the intention of visitors to recommend and revisit the place. Similarly, Stylos et al. (2016) conducted a study on tourists departing from the largest Northern Greece airport. The results revealed the positive direct effect of conative image on revisit intention of tourists. However, studies of the relationships between conative image and behavioural intention, intention to recommend and intention to visit were not sufficient for meta-analysis. Consequently, one more hypothesis was proposed:

H4. Conative image positively relates to intention to revisit.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data collection and coding procedure

To identify the studies on tourist intention towards a destination, online reviews of major academic databases were conducted on Elsevier, Emerald, SAGE journals, Online Wiley Library, and Taylor & Francis. Studies written in Farsi were searched in Iranian academic databases. The studies were selected through a two-step process. First, the papers were reviewed by titles and abstracts from major academic databases, and 246 studies were selected. Then with a more detailed review, a total of 87 papers were eligible for meta-analysis.

The study was expected to have the following criteria in order to be included in our meta-analysis. (1) It was expected to be conducted or published between 2010 and 2019. This date was selected as a starting point for increase in the number of affective image studies, as claimed by Zhang et al. (2014) and also because they covered the studies published between 2000 to 2012. We made sure to have minimum overlap in the selected papers and periods. (2) It was expected to be published in peer-reviewed journals. (3) It was expected to measure the relationship between destination image components and behavioural intentions. We allowed for variations in the destination image definition, since it had different labels as destination image, country image, global image, and city image. (4) It was expected to be a quantitative study that reported correlation coefficients, path coefficient, or regression coefficients and also the sample size of respondents.

Our preliminary coding procedure consisted of collecting data on each selected article with different information including the article's citation, publication type, source of article (database) and type of study, sample size and demographics about participants, the country where the sample was collected, correlation, standardized regression coefficients, t-value, p-value, and independent and dependent variables. Studies with different sources of samples were coded as independent studies. This resulted in 87 studies. Every coded effect was checked at least once. According to the coding sheet, the sample sizes and correlations for each of the independent samples were entered into the software.

3.2. Publication bias

Several researchers have discussed the existence of publication bias against statistically irrelevant results in peer-reviewed journals (Orwin, 1983; Rosenthal, 1979). Since this study was limited to peer-reviewed articles and a specific period of time, this might cause potential publication bias in the meta-analysis results. Two approaches were adopted in this study to deal with this potential publication bias in meta-analyses through CMA 2.0 program. Publication bias for studies with small sample size were not conducted. First, the funnel plot was plotted with the effect size and the sample size to show the distribution pattern of studies around the weighted mean effect. A funnel plot showed that the studies were more or less equally distributed around the mean (Duval & Tweedie, 2000). It means that there are some missing studies that could be included in meta-analysis.

Second, a "Classic Fail-safe N" test was conducted to determine the stability of meta-analysis results by computing how many missing studies would be required to retrieve and incorporate in the analysis before the p-value became non-significant (Begg & Mazumdar, 1994; Rosenthal, 1979). Using a criterion trivial level of 0.05, all of these numbers exceed the suggested thresholds with 5N + 10 (Carson, Schriesheim, & Kinicki, 1990). This shows that publication bias was not an issue in the study.

3.3. Analysis

The Comprehensive Meta-analysis (CMA) 2.0 was employed to compute the effect size of each variable. This method was viewed as an analysis of outcomes of statistical analyses for individual studies (Hedges & Olkin, 2014) and was utilized to combine different effect sizes from multiple quantitative studies to assess the magnitude and direction of the construct's relationship.

There are three measures for the primary effect size: correlation coefficients r, standardized mean differences (Cohen's d), and discrete data log odds ratios (Borenstein, 2009). Since most studies used correlation data or regression-based methods, it was decided to employ t-value, P-value, β value and Pearson r correlation as metric variables to measure the effect size on the variables in the research scope. Both random-effect model and fixed-effect model were then generated. In order to calculate a proper correlation, variables were only selected if the relationship between each pair of variables had been analysed by previous studies at least three times.

The heterogeneity of the effect sizes across studies was investigated with three statistics. We implemented a Q test (Hedges & Olkin, 2014) to evaluate the homogeneity of effect sizes. We computed an I^2 statistic showing the ratio of between-group variance to the total variation across effect sizes to reflect the amount of variation in effect sizes due to the differences between studies. Increasing values show increasing heterogeneity, with values of 0% reflecting no heterogeneity, 50% reflecting moderate heterogeneity, and 75% reflecting high heterogeneity (Higgins, Thompson, Deeks, & Altman, 2003). The significant results of heterogeneity tests for the effects of destination image on tourist intention (see Table 3) indicated that there were significant variabilities among studies; thus, this study utilized a random effect model.

4. Result

Table 4 shows the direct effect of different dimensions of destination image on tourist intentions. The total N shows the number of effects as the number of independent samples, which is usually the number of studies (including studies with two separate samples). The combined sample size of all studies, used to calculate the effect, is reflected as sample size. The point estimate is the estimated effect size for each independent variable with the effect size and weighting taken into account. The lower and upper limits show the confidence interval, which reflects the range within which the actual effect lies. The p-value

and z-statistic reflect statistical significance. Cohen's (1992) guideline was implemented to evaluate the effect sizes. Correlations of 0.10, 0.30, 0.50 and 0.70 are considered small, medium, large, and very large effects, respectively. The meta-analysis revealed that overall image had a positive and significant correlation with behavioural intention ($r = 0.327$, $P < 0.000$) with 20 observations, generating a sample of 9576. The existing relationship between overall image and intention to recommend was positive and the most significant ($r = 0.457$, $P < 0.000$) with 21 observations and a sample of 6911. For the relationship between overall image and intention to revisit, 30 studies were analysed. They generated a total sample of 15,546. These calculations revealed a positive and significant relationship ($r = 0.266$, $P < 0.000$) between this construct and intention to revisit. The relationship between overall image and intention to visit was significant and positive ($r = 0.234$, $P < 0.000$), with 17 relationships that generated a sample of 7793. Therefore, Hypotheses H1(a), H1(b), H1(c), and H1(d) were supported. The measurement of the relationship between cognitive image and behavioural intention produced a positive and significant value ($r = 0.313$, $P < 0.05$). In this case, four relationships were analysed. They generated a total sample of 1260. From six observations and a total sample of 1314, the results showed that cognitive image had a positive and significant impact on intention to recommend ($r = 0.396$, $P < 0.05$). The relationship between cognitive image and intention to revisit was measured with four observations and a sample of 1420. The results revealed a significant correlation ($r = 0.126$, $P < 0.05$). In the case of cognitive image and intention to visit, the correlation was significant and positive ($r = 0.197$, $P < 0.05$). For this relationship, four effects were analysed, totalling a general sample of 1420. More precisely, cognitive image had the largest effect on intention to recommend among other behavioural intentions. Thus, Hypotheses H2(a), H2(b), H2(c) and H2(d) were confirmed. The affective image had a positive and significant impact on behavioural intention ($r = 0.299$, $P < 0.001$). In this case, six observations were analysed, totalling a sample of 1643. For the affective image and intention to recommend, we evaluated 8 observations, generating a sample of 2004. This relationship had a positive and significant correlation with intention to recommend ($r = 0.435$, $P < 0.05$). The relationship between affective image and intention to revisit was also significant and positive ($r = 0.361$, $P < 0.05$). For this relationship, 15 observations were analysed. They generated a total sample of 7756. The impact of the overall image on intention to visit was significant and positive ($r = 0.189$, $P < 0.000$). Interestingly, affective image had also its greatest impact on intention to recommend. Therefore, Hypotheses H3(a), H3(b), H3(c) and H3(d) were supported. Studies on conative destination image had minor interest among researchers. There were only 6 studies. According to 5 observations and a total sample of 4561, the relationship between conative image and intention to revisit was positive and significant ($r = 0.146$, $P < 0.000$). Thus, the Hypothesis H4 was confirmed.

5. Discussion of the results

Over the past decade, the effect of destination image on tourist's behavioural intentions has been fiercely debated. Some studies suggest that although the relationship between destination image and tourists' behavioural intentions was empirically supported by various studies, different patterns and magnitude may exhibit in certain destination dimensions (Choi, 2015). This study makes an important contribution to the literature by synthesizing previous studies into one individual study through a meta-analysis. It has to be stated that the proposed framework relies on related theories and statistical findings of previous studies on the relationship between destination image and behavioural intentions. By reviewing 246 studies published in major academic databases, the total number of 87 studies were systematically selected and included in the meta-analysis. Thirteen hypotheses were proposed and tested. The result shows support for the significant impact of overall image and dimensions of destination image on tourist's intentions, except for conative image that influences only the intention to revisit.

Table 3
Heterogeneity test results.

Image variables	Behavioural outcomes	Q-value	$df(Q)$	P-Value	I-Squared	Fail safe N
Overall	Behavioural intentions	1370.061	19	0.000	98.613	5876
	Intention to recommend	1149.377	20	0.000	98.260	8809
	Intention to revisit	882.91	29	0.000	96.715	6343
	Intention to visit	363.316	16	0.000	95.596	1951
Cognitive	Behavioural intentions	70.308	3	0.000	95.733	153
	Intention to recommend	121.486	5	0.000	95.884	314
	Intention to revisit	242.245	11	0.000	95.459	166
	Intention to visit	40.278	3	0.000	92.552	56
Affective	Behavioural intentions	73.880	5	0.000	93.232	262
	Intention to recommend	386.873	7	0.000	98.191	1042
	Intention to revisit	1897.866	14	0.000	99.262	2826
	Intention to visit	14.721	5	0.012	66.034	95
Conative	Intention to revisit	24.829	4	0.000	83.890	96

Table 4
Heterogeneity test results.

Image variables	Behavioural outcomes	N	Sample size	Point estimate	Lower limit	Upper limit	Z-value	P-value
Overall	Behavioural intentions	20	9576	0.327	0.166	0.471	3.874	0.000
	Intention to recommend	21	6911	0.457	0.302	0.588	5.325	0.000
	Intention to revisit	30	15546	0.266	0.182	0.346	6.028	0.000
	Intention to visit	17	7793	0.234	0.130	0.334	4.329	0.000
Cognitive	Behavioural intentions	4	1260	0.313	0.052	0.534	2.334	0.020
	Intention to recommend	6	1314	0.396	0.143	0.600	2.993	0.003
	Intention to revisit	12	6528	0.126	0.006	0.242	2.057	0.040
	Intention to visit	4	1420	0.197	0.004	0.375	2.004	0.045
Affective	Behavioural intentions	6	1643	0.299	0.118	0.460	3.190	0.001
	Intention to recommend	8	2004	0.435	0.134	0.663	2.758	0.006
	Intention to revisit	15	7756	0.361	0.110	0.568	2.773	0.006
	Intention to visit	6	1891	0.189	0.111	0.265	4.706	0.000
Conative	Intention to revisit	5	4561	0.146	0.071	0.219	3.795	0.000

The research has some theoretical contributions. First, this study provides insights into the dimensions of destination image currently in use. According to Table 1, previous studies used a variety of dimensions to measure destination image. In this study, 41 out of 87 studies defined it as a unidimensional construct, and 46 studies considered it a multidimensional construct or rather a HOC. However, Stern, Zinkhan, and Jaju (2001) considered three problematical attributes including ontology (locus), nature (state or process), and number (dimension) of marketing images and claimed that image should be seen as a multi-dimensional construct. Defining image as a HOC provides three privileges including reducing the number of path model relationships, overcoming the bandwidth-fidelity dilemma, and reducing collinearity (Sarstedt, Hair, Cheah, Becker, & Ringle, 2019). Moreover, some researchers consider overall image a separate dimension affected by cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions of destination image (Stylos et al., 2016). In this way, all dimensions, which present a specific phenomenon, have their own questions increasing collinearity. Although the operational definition and measurement of destination image depend on research aim and considering one dimension or the relationship between dimensions is sometimes the subject of study, for those who deal with it as a HOC and test it through structural equation modelling (SEM), in accordance with Sarstedt et al. (2019), four types of measurement models were suggested in Fig. 2. It is worth mentioning that the relations in the models should not be seen as path relationships.

Second, this study proposed and confirmed a comprehensive framework based on a thorough review of previous studies considering all dimensions of destination image and most applied dimensions of behavioural intentions including intention to recommend, intention to visit, and intention to revisit. The selected behavioural intentions consider past and pre-visit intentions of tourists that are among topics of interest for researchers. Although the results of some previous studies testing thirteen hypotheses of this research had reported different magnitudes or were not even statistically supported, all of them were supported through a rigorous meta-analysis procedure here. Hence, not only do researchers know that presented relationships in a body of data does work, but they also know how well they work. In other words, according to the reduction aspect of scientific progress, the statistical synthesis of previous studies unlike narrative review provides researchers and readers with a transparent, objective, and replicable framework. Third, the findings revealed that overall image and affective image were identified as more powerful predictors of tourist's intention. Previous studies showed overall image as the most important predictor of tourist loyalty and encouraged future researches to investigate the impact of affective image with increased sample sizes (Zhang et al., 2014). With the increase in the number of studies on affective image in recent years, showing its growing interest in academia, more studies on affective image have been included. The results showed a considerable increase in total effect size. This implies the increasing importance of focusing on affective image dimension of destination image for tourism managers and researches. However, the impact of conative image on intention to revisit was shown to be relatively weaker than other dimensions. Due to limitation in the number of studies, the impact of conative image on intention to recommend, intention to visit, and behavioural intention were not examined that calls more efforts in this subject. Clearly, there is a lack of documentation and investigation of the relationship between conative image and behavioural intentions. As far as it is concerned, one reason for addressing this issue could be the perceptions of nominal definition of conative image, when researchers deal with it as a potential intention for travel (Gartner, 1994), or as a synonym to intention (King et al., 2015; Pike, 2004; Prayag, 2009). However, there is proof that intentions and conative image are different constructs (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2004; White, 2014). To elaborate, the example mentioned by White (2014) clarifies that conation does not mean intention. Statements like "I would like to visit that place someday" indicates a favourable evaluation (White, 2014), a behavioural tendency (Bagozzi, 1992), or a desire (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2004) that should be considered a pre-intention instead of intention (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001). Similar to emotion, the conative process is antecedent of intention (Bagozzi, 1992), that is not considered in the theory of planned behaviour, which is widely applied by researches (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001).
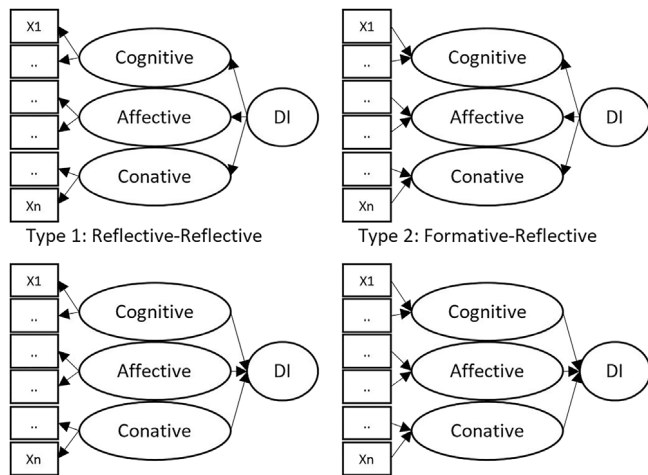
Fig. 2. Proposed types of measurement models for destination image.

Fourth, findings reveal that affective image has larger effects than cognitive image on behavioural intentions. It means that feelings are better predictors of intentions. Contrary to the claim that cognitive image impacts affective image (Gartner, 1994), there is also a theory that emotions and feelings are formed in "proto-self", whereas thoughts are shaped in the "core consciousness" (Hudson, Roth, Madden, & Hudson, 2015). According to this theory, activities in the proto-self always precede activities in the core consciousness giving the insight that there is a possibility in contrast to classical hierarchy (cognitive–affective–conative) that affective image impacts cognitive image because it has a larger effect size than cognitive in the systematic review of previous studies.

6. Managerial implications

This study aimed to stimulate a new mindset and promote new research on the impact of destination image on tourist's behavioural intention in addition to introducing a comprehensive framework for managers to apply. Tourism managers are often concerned with answering questions to understand how to better attract tourists and to predict their behavioural intentions towards a destination. Instead of narrative review or rather subjective and random review of papers of one decade in major journals, managers and destination marketers can come to conclusion by reviewing the findings of this study in which a systematic review was adopted. Findings revealed that destination image had the greatest effect on the intention to recommend. This proposition confirms the claim that, among all loyalty metrics, intention to recommend is the best predictor compared to the rest (Mun, Aziz et al., 2018). In other words, managers and destination marketers can increase tourist's intention to recommend by shaping the proper image of a destination.

Moreover, apart from the overall image, affective image has the largest effect size than other destination image dimensions. It means that focusing more on affective image dimension or rather affective associations puts managers a step further in order to control behavioural intentions, since apparently tourist decision-making is more directly predicted by feelings and emotions rather than beliefs or acting. In this context, Damasio (2003) claims that feelings will always be formed pre-cognitively before any information processing takes place (Hudson et al., 2015). It is worth noting that researchers claim that the affective aspect of image influenced by cognitive dimension (Gartner, 1994), which theoretically implicates that cognitive aspect indirectly affects behavioural intentions through affective image. All in all, referring to Gartner's claim, considering affective destination image a mediator variable, considering it a predictor of cognitive image according to

Damasio's theory, and considering it an inseparable part of destination image as a HOC can reveal its clinical nature in tourism.

Tourists can also positively affect their friends and relatives by creating positive word of mouth, which is a reliable way to influence tourists' selections and their future behavioural intentions through direct or indirect effects of affective image. In conclusion, in the case of lack of budgeting, destination managers should focus more on shaping affective image as a critical variable.

7. Limitations and future research

Meta-analyses are strong in different ways; however, they also have inherent limitations. This study is also subject to certain limitations. First, the majority of studies included in the meta-analysis were reported in English and some in Persian languages. Thus, a language bias may exist. Future studies that are published in other languages can be conducted to increase the generalizability of the findings. Second, since the meta-analysis findings are the aggregated results of the primary studies, the quality of meta-analysis depends largely on the quality of data reported in the individual studies (Lim, 1999). This creates a need for a more comprehensive conceptualization and analytical framework in order to conduct primary studies.

The heterogeneity test provides support for the existence of moderating factors that determine the magnitudes of effect sizes. Since this study did not analyse the mediating and moderating roles of variables, future studies can be conducted to determine how the effect size would be influenced by including these variables. Future researchers could focus more on the conative aspect of destination image and distinguish it from behavioural intentions. It is also suggested that major journals invite submissions to special issues that focus on conative aspect of destination image in order to draw research attention.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Mona Afshardoost: Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Investigation, Data curation, Writing - original draft, Visualization, Project administration, Software. **Mohammad Sadegh Eshaghi:** Conceptualization, Writing - reviewing & editing, Supervision, Methodology, Software, Data curation.

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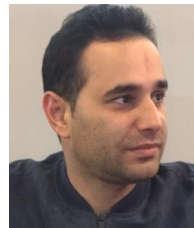
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