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A STUDY ON COUNTRY- DESTINATION IMAGE AND TRAVEL INTENTION: THE MODERATING EFFECT OF COUNTRY FAMILIARITY

The Graduate School of the University of Ulsan

Department of Business Administration

DO THI THANH HIEN

A STUDY ON COUNTRY- DESTINATION IMAGE AND TRAVEL INTENTION: THE MODERATING EFFECT OF COUNTRY FAMILIARITY

Advisor: Professor Kim Doyle

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Do Thi Thanh Hien

Department of Business Administration

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This certifies that the master thesis
of Do Thi Thanh Hien is approved

Professor. Doyle Kim

Committee Member

Professor. Park Jong Hee

Committee Member

Professor. Park Jusik

Committee Member

Department of Business Administration

Ulsan, Korea

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ABSTRACT

Building on international marketing research on the country-of-origin image and tourism destination image effect, this research examines how people perceive a culturally familiar country as a tourist destination by proposing an integrated approach. The model included country image, destination beliefs, attitude toward destination as the major determinants of the tourist's travel intention. In addition, the moderating effects of country familiarity on the relationship between the two types of image were also examined in order to generate new knowledge in tourism research. An online survey was distributed to Vietnamese residents who do not have prior experience about Jeju Island, South Korea. Reliability and validity of the measurement scale were established through average variance extracted, Cronbach's Alpha analyses, and inter-correlation analyses. A structural equation model test with maximum likelihood estimation was performed to test the relationship among research variables using 293 participants. In addition, by using AMOS, the possible influence of country familiarity on research variables was analyzed. The empirical results from the structural model suggested that: (1) tourist intention to a destination is positively influenced by perceived image of that destination and their attitude toward it; (2) perceived image of a country positively affects only destination beliefs but not influences tourist attitude toward destination, and (3) destination beliefs had a significant relationship with attitude toward destination. Moreover, a moderating effect of country familiarity on the relationship with either type of image was not supported in this research. From these findings, the study concludes with recommendations for destination marketing in the context of international tourism. The empirical evidence obtained supports the proposition that DMOs should focus

their marketing efforts on fostering both country and destination image for international tourists. Doing so would require greater stress on communication and promotion campaigns. One limitation is related to the fact that this research focuses on a specific regional destination (Jeju Island) and a country destination (South Korea), it could limit the generalization of the results. It would be very interesting to replicate the study in other countries and regions with different composition of the sample in terms of nationality of the tourists.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background

Tourist destinations such as cities, regions, and countries are the core elements of the tourism system. The aim of any tourist destination is to attract tourists through range of attractions and activities. However, as tourists are increasingly sophisticated and the destinations have become more substitutable than ever before, succeeding in this mission is harder than ever (Ekinci & Hosany, 2006). It is obvious that the destinations aiming at winning in this competition must differentiate themselves from their competitors (Pike & Ryan, 2004). Thus, it is not surprising that tourist destinations all around the world are now looking for more effective destination management and marketing approaches to attract potential visitors (see, e.g., Trembath, Romaniuk, & Lockshin, 2011).

In general, as Dhiman and Kumar (2016) point out, "destinations mainly compete based on their perceived images relative to competitors in the marketplace". Everyone who is involved in the destination management and marketing is well aware that if tourists have a weak or even neutral image of the destination, they will likely not consider it worth the visit. In fact, empirical evidences clearly support this: Destination image is an important predictor that influences the destination choice or behavioral intention of tourists (Byon & Zhang, 2010; Nadeau, Heslop, O'Reilly, & Luk, 2008; DeNisco, Mainolfi, Marino, &Napolitano, 2015). For example, destination image is found to have a significant effect on consumers' past experiences or their behavior prior to the visit (Chen and Tsai,2007; Agapito, Oom de Valle, & da Costa Mendes, 2013); during the visit (Kim & Perdue, 2011), and the post visit behavior (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004a, 2004b; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991). All

in all, the destination image is argued to be one of the most researched topics in the travel and tourism literature (Agapito et al., 2013; Kim & Perdue, 2011).

There are many different types of destination, ranging from a city/countryside, to a region or even a country. When the destination is an entire country, country/nation image may be an important factor to influence international tourist perceived destination image and destination choice (Nadeau, Heslop, O'Reilly, & Luk, 2008; Zhang et al., 2016). According to Elliot, Papadopoulos, and Kim (2011; Elliot, 2008), two approaches deal extensively with the concept of country image: tourism destination image (TDI) and country- of- origin image (COI; Nadeau et al., 2008; Papadopoulos, 2004; De Nisco et al., 2015). In short, TDI is typically defined as the beliefs that a person has of a particular destination such as certain country, whereas COI refers to of people's overall impressions of a country to evaluate the quality products made in the country (Laroche et al., 2005; Papadopoulos & Heslop, 1993; Nadeau et al., 2008; Elliot, et al., 2011; Papadopoulos et al., 2013). Although the development of these research areas has generally occurred separately, both streams investigate complex perceived images about places and how these affect consumer decisions. They have many overlapping and related interests and constructs. One of the focuses in this paper is how COI constructs can contribute to tourism destination research. These two approaches (COI and TDI) have evolved separately through distinct literature and research groups, yet insights and conceptualizations in the former can contribute significantly to the latter (Nadeau et al., 2008). In fact, extant studies in general international trade and marketing indicate that the combination of two fields together has recently been exhibited (Lee & Lockshin, 2012; Zhou & Zhou, 2013). For example, Elliot's (2008) study conceptualized the relationships among COI and TDI constructs and measured empirically their relationships. Richard al. (2011)

proposed and tested a model that focused on the overlapping areas of COI and TDI within the broader country image context. Also Elliot et al. (2011) combined elements from TDI and COI in their model. In similar vein, John Wiley & Sons (2015) analyzed the relationship between cognitive and affective components of country image (COI) and destination image (TDI).

1.2   Problem statement

Although studies drawing from both COI and TDI have emerged, researchers call for more studies in order to test deeper their relationships in international tourism context. Particularly, integration of COI and TDI through empirical research is still very limited (Elliot et al., 2011; see also Elliot, 2008; Papadopoulos et al., 2013). According to Lee & Lockshin (2012), Papadopoulos et al. (2013), there is no systematic structure that defines and operationalizes the relationship between destination image and behavioral intentions. While, Amaya et al. (2016) argues, one very specific shortcoming in the current literature is that there is a lack of an integrated model to investigate COI - TDI relationships, and reveal the mechanism of how these relationships influencing future behaviors. This creates a vague picture of these constructs in the research community (DeNisco at el, 2015).

Even though the COI effect has been well documented in the international marketing literature, a majority of studies on country image only examined electronic and agricultural products (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009). More recently with the growing importance of tourism in the global economy, a few studies in tourism have also examined the COI effect in the tourism context (Elliot et al., 2011; Nadeau et al., 2008). For example, Nadeau and colleagues (Nadeau et al., 2008) were among the first to apply the concept of country image in tourism. Their research demonstrated that country image is an important factor influencing

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destination. Based on these findings, there are rapidly growing literature on this issue, Elliot, Papadopoulos, & Kim, (2011); Martínez & Alvarez (2010); Amaya et al. (2016) agree that the COI effect have demonstrated that country image has direct and indirect (through destination perceptions) effects on overall evaluations of destinations. However, the extent to which tourists' desire to build on relationships with the destination country influences their touristic responses has not been examined. It is proposed that country image might affect destination differently when potential tourists have different levels of familiarity with the country. Examining the context of high familiarity with country could be particularly useful to practitioners as potential tourists might use their overall impressions of a country to evaluate destination placed in that country.

1.3 Objectives

In light of previous researches, this study proposes to: (1) fill the gap by proposing an integrated model to explore the relationship among country image (COI), destination beliefs and attitude toward visiting destination (TDI), and visit intention; (2) to examine the moderating effect of country familiarity on country image, destination beliefs and tourist attitudes.

This study is expected to contribute to current theories of travel and tourism research. In particular, the study will contribute to the body of knowledge that investigates the links between COI and TDI derived measures, that is, country images, destination beliefs and attitudes, and travel intentions. As a practical benefit, this study helps the destination marketers to strengthen their image-based marketing strategies. The insights provided in the present study help destination marketers to identify the role of familiarity when building an

attractive destination in consumers' minds. Furthermore, the study provides tools for utilizing the current image to create compelling narratives in the future.

1.4 Outline of the thesis

This article is organized as follows: First, I review prior theory and research related to COI and TDI. Then I develop hypotheses about the relationships between the country images, the destination beliefs and tourist attitudes, country familiarity and travel intentions. Following the hypotheses section, I provide the details of the sample, measures, and methods of analysis. Using structural equation modeling (SEM), I test my hypotheses with a survey sample from Vietnam. The survey measures the Vietnamese's opinions and beliefs on South Korea and Jeju Island – a potential tourist destination and share similar cultural with Vietnam. Next I conclude by making the theoretical and managerial implications. Last, recommendations for further research are made.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Country Image

More recently with the increasing development of the global economy, consumers have more purchasing alternatives and can choose between local and international products and brands. From the mid- 1960s, scholars began paying greater attention to the concept of country of origin and it became a popular topic of international marketing research. Unfortunately, from a review of the recent literature on country image, there is an universal definition of the concept (Zhou & Zhou, 2013).

The definition of country image can be based on the definition of place image, namely "the sum of beliefs and impressions people hold about places" (Kotler & Gertner, 2002, p. 251). The concept of country image has been frequently discussed in the international marketing literature (Knight & Calanton, 2000; Laroche et al., 2005). These studies have found that how people evaluate a country and its people affects their decision making about products that are related to the country (i.e. "made in", "designed in", "located in") (Elliot et al., 2011), which influences not only individuals' evaluations of the country's products and brands but also organizations' marketing and investment strategies (Nadeau et al., 2008). This COI effect suggests that customers would heavily rely on their overall impressions of a country to evaluate the quality of products made in the country (Laroche et al., 2005). Therefore, positive country images would facilitate the selling of products made in this country in the global market, while negative country images might become barriers to selling the products. Although previous research has shown that a product's country of origin is related to individuals' product evaluation and choice, findings regarding the actual impact appear to be

inconsistent (Li, Wang, Jiang, & Zhang, 2014). Therefore, as Li et al. (2014) argue, there is a need for further studies to explore the antecedents, nuances, and conditions in which country of origin can influence individuals' behavior.

2.2 Destination as a Product

As with the research on country image, destination image has been one of the most popular topics in tourism research (Pike, 2002). Researchers have offered various definitions of destination image based on different dimensions (Gallarza, Saura, & Garcia, 2002). It is interesting to note that the most frequently cited definitions of destination image are quite similar to the definition of country image. For example, one broadly cited destination image definition by tourism scholars is from Crompton (1979, p. 18): "the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination" (C. F. Chen & Tsai, 2007; Choi, Lehto, & Morrison, 2007; Hosany, Ekinci, & Uysal, 2006; C. K. Lee, Lee, & Lee, 2005). Recently, Zhang et al., (2016) state that in COI literature, country/destination image is often operationalized through the following three components (Laroche et al., 2005; Papadopoulos, 1993; Papadopoulos et al., 2013; Li et al., 2014; Koubaa, Methamem, & Fort, 2015):

1. a cognitive component, which refers to consumers' beliefs about the destination's industrial development, education level, and technological advancement;

2. an affective component, which refers to consumers' affective responses toward a destination, including its culture and people; and

3. a conative component, consisting of consumers' desired level of interaction with the destination.

It is very similar to Kotler et al.'s (1993) definition of country image. Both definitions emphasize the cognitive images that individual people have of particular places. However, researchers mainly focus on the cognitive attitude component, referring to beliefs and knowledge about a destination. The notion that tourists' cognitive images positively influence their corresponding affective images was supported by De Nisco et al. (2015). However, earlier research by Elliot et al. (2011) failed to find a relationship between these constructs. As a result, there remain partly mixed results in the literature concerning the hypothetical cognitive/affective country image relationship.

Although both COI and TDI studies are applications of attitude theory, theory building concerning TDI is a bit looser than COI, and much of the existing research is descriptive (Beerli & Martin, 2004a, 2004b; Elliot et al., 2011). Generally speaking, TDI focuses on the effects of beliefs that a person has of a particular destination (Beerli & Martin, 2004a, 2004b; Elliot, 2008; Elliot et al., 2011; Kim & Perdue, 2011; Ye & Tussyadiah, 2011; Regan, Carlson, & Rosenberger, 2012; Chen, Hua, & Wang, 2013). A key assumption of TDI is that destination image (or, alternatively, destination beliefs) influences travel destination choice (e.g., Elliot, 2008; Agapito et al., 2013). Byon and Zhang (2010) state that there are three types of destination images that people might hold (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Gunn, 1972): (a) an organic image, which arises from non-tourism information (e.g., documentaries or magazine articles); (b) an induced image, which arises from tourism-specific information (e.g., destination sales brochure or vacation website); and (c) a complex image is derived as a result of direct experience of the destination. Denisco et al. (2015) argue that destination image can be considered the consequence of the cognitive evaluations and affective appraisals, or as

Byon and Zhang (2010) formulate, the destination image is a collection of an individual's beliefs and feelings.

In summary, with the above review, it is obvious that COI and TDI have a lot to offer to each other, although approaches are developed independently (Papadopoulos et al., 2013). Both approaches have a common object of interest (i.e., perceived images about places and how these affect consumer decisions), and their conceptualizations overlap each other (Nadeau et al., 2008; Elliot et al., 2011). Nadeau et al. (2008) concluded their study by stating that it is evident that further research on destination images should include country-image constructs, and the country context is an important factor affecting the outcome of destination image. Generally speaking, our understanding of actual relationships between COI and TDI has just start to evolve, and our overall understanding of the role of images in behavioral intentions in the area of tourism is still fragmented (Elliot et al., 2011).

2.3 Destination Beliefs

Destination beliefs refer to an individual's thoughts and beliefs about the destination attributes in terms of how they benefit tourists, which can be regarded as the cognitive component of destination image. The study was built upon Echtner and Ritchie's (1993) conceptual framework of destination image, which suggests that images of a tourist destination should be perceived in terms of three continua, including (1) attribute – holistic, which ranges from individual features of a destination to an overall impression of the destination; (2) continuum – functional, including observable functional characteristics as well as psychological characteristics which are difficult to measure; and (3) common – unique, ranging from common perceptions to unique perceptions of a tourist destination. Based on this framework, Echtner and Ritchie (1993) further argued that a majority of studies on destination

image only captured common and functional attributes, which have universal importance for any tourist destination, while most studies on destination image failed to capture unique attractions and distinct atmospheres of a destination (Hu & Ritchie, 1993).

2.4 Attitude toward visiting destination

Attitudes, which are relatively permanent and stable evaluative summaries about an item, are an important psychological construct because they have been found to influence and predict many behaviors (Kraus, 1995). Theory of planned behavior defines attitude toward a behavior as "the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of the behavior in question" (Ajzen, 1991, p. 188). In general, the more favorable the attitude toward the behavior, the stronger will be an individual's intention to perform the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In this case, the target behavior is the intention to travel, and the attitude is that toward visiting Jeju Island.

Tourist attitude describes the psychological tendencies expressed by the positive or negative evaluations of tourists when engaged in certain behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Schiffman & Kanuk, 1994; Kraus, 1995). Tourist attitude comprises cognitive, affective and behavioral components (Vincent & Thompson, 2002). The cognitive response is the evaluation made in forming an attitude, the affective response is a psychological response expressing the preference of a tourist for an entity and the behavioral component is a verbal indication of the intention of a tourist to visit or use that entity. Attitude predisposes a person to act or perform in a certain manner as shown in studies of household recycling behavior (Vining & Ebero, 1990), pro- environmental behavior (Steel, 1996), and tourism behavior (Hrubes, Ajzen, & Daigle, 2001; Lee, 2007; Sparks, 2007). Tourist attitude is an effective predictor of tourist decision for traveling to a certain destination (Ragheb & Tate, 1993; Jalilvand & Samiei,

2012b). According to the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), behavioral intention is affected by attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral controls toward behavior. The intention behind an attitude can affect external behaviors (Ajzen, 1991; Lee, 2007). The more favorable the attitude toward the behavior, the stronger will be an individual's intention to perform the behavior (Ajzen, 2001). Um and Crompton (1990) found that attitude is influential in determining whether a potential is selected as part of the evoked set and in selecting a final destination.

2.5 Country Familiarity

Familiarity has been applied and tested in many product country image studies (Ahmed & Astous, 2007; Alba & Marmorstein, 1987; Han, 1989; Laroche et al., 2005; Orbaiz & Papadopoulos, 2003), and its potential importance to destination marketing is increasingly being recognized by scholars. Recent studies have examined country familiarity as a context (see for example Huang et al., 2013; Prentice, 2004) or as a variable (see for example Baloglu, 2001; Chen & Lin, 2012; Prentice, 2004). For example, Prentice (2004) emphasized the importance of relationship-building between destinations and visitors in the context of a destination where tourists may experience a similar culture. Similarly, Huang et al. (2013) argued that cultural proximity is an important factor in bilateral tourism flows between two neighboring countries. On the other hand, several studies (see for example Baloglu, 2001; Chen & Lin, 2012; Prentice, 2004) have attempted to define and operationalize destination familiarity based on the marketing concept of product familiarity, which refers to the amount of product-related experience accumulated by a consumer (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987). Therefore, country familiarity has frequently been operationalized as the sum of informational familiarity (the degree to which a person has been exposed to information related to a

destination) and experiential familiarity (the number of actual visits to a destination (Baloglu, 2001; Chen & Lin, 2012; Prentice, 2004).

Despite the varied conceptualizations, almost literature agree that familiarity influences aspects of destination marketing, including destination image (Seo, Kim, Oh, & Yun, 2013), intentions to visit destinations (Yang, Yuan, & Hu, 2009), destination choice (Lee & Tussyadiah, 2012), and tourists' satisfaction and destination loyalty (Mechinda, Serirat, & Gulid, 2009; Toyama & Yamada, 2012). Recent studies have demonstrated more specific mechanisms on how familiarity influences consumer decision making. The moderating role of familiarity was not only found in product country image (PCI) research (Ahmed & Astous, 2007; Jiménez & San Martín, 2010; Josiassen, Lukas, & Whitwell, 2008) but also in tourism destination research. Maestro, Muñoz Gallego, and Santos Requejo's (2007) research analyzed the moderation effect on the relationship between attitude and perceptions of quality, and showed that more experienced tourists had less altered evaluation results. Hong, Liu, Chou, and Tsai (2012) found that familiarity positively moderated the effect of brand loyalty and perceived quality on travel intentions in culinary tourism. And a negatively moderating effect of familiarity on product beliefs and destination beliefs was also found by Lee and Lockshin (2012).

CHAPTER 3. HYPOTHESES AND RESEARCH MODEL

3.1 Hypotheses development

This research proposed that country image should have positive effects on destination beliefs and attitudes toward destination. As mentioned previously, in the international marketing literature (Knight& Calanton, 2000; Laroche, Papadopoulos, Heslop, & Mourali, 2005), people's overall impressions of a country would influence how they evaluate products made there. Arguably, the concept of country image is relevant and applicable in tourism (Nadeau et al., 2008). The proposed effects of country image on destination beliefs and attitudes toward destination at can be explained by Gunn's (1972) stage theory of destination image, which postulates that the formation of destination image has three stages. In the first stage, an organic image is formed based on non-commercial information sources, while the image is further induced by commercial sources and modified by actual visiting experiences in the second and third stages. According to Gunn (1972), in the process of destination, as people tend to consider information from non-commercial sources as credible knowledge, organic images have a strong influence on how people evaluate a tourist destination image (Chung, Chen, & Lin, 2016). Building on Gunn's (1972) stage theory of destination image, Chen, Lai, Petrick, and Lin (2016) proposed to examine whether and how people's stereotypical images of a country influence their beliefs and evaluations of the country. The results showed that stereotypes held by people about a hostile or divided country have a strong and negative impact on their perceptions of the foreign country as a tourist destination. Based on the idea that country- of- origin image effects on the tourism destination image, the following hypotheses are thus proposed:

H1. *Country image has a positive effect on destination beliefs.*

H2. *Country image has a positive effect on attitudes toward visiting destination.*

Past researches on the outcome of country image revealed that country image is an important predictor that influences the destination choice or behavioral intention of tourists (Byon & Zhang, 2010; Nadeau, Heslop, O'Reilly, & Luk, 2008; DeNisco, Mainolfi, Marino, &Napolitano, 2015). For example, country- destination image is found to have a significant effect on consumers' past experiences or their behavior prior to the visit (Chen and Tsai,2007; Agapito, Oom de Valle, & da Costa Mendes, 2013); during the visit (Kim & Perdue, 2011), and the post visit behavior (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004a, 2004b; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991). All in all, the country image has influential effects on overall image, and intention to visit and recommend (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Nadeau, Heslop, O'Reilly, & Luk, 2008). Therefore, the following hypothesis thus is postulated:

H3. *Country image is positively related to travel intentions.*

As noted earlier, destination beliefs refer to an individual's thoughts and beliefs about the destination attributes in terms of how they benefit tourists, which can be regarded as the cognitive component of destination image. According to Kim and Richardson (2003), destination beliefs affects tourism related attitudes and behaviors variously, by confirming/reinforcing existing, creating new, and changing them. Woomi and Soocheong (2008) showed that perceived image of a particular destination influences tourist attitude toward tourist destination. Thus, the following hypothesis is offered as follow:

H4. *Destination beliefs have a positive effect on attitude toward visiting destination.*

The relationship between destination beliefs and travel intentions is relatively well established in TDI research (Elliot, 2008; Kim & Perdue, 2011; Agapito et al., 2013). For example, Byon and Zhang (2010) made an extensive literature review on the effects of destination image (under two dimensions – cognitive and affective) and agreed with previous research findings about the effects of destination image on behavioral intentions. Also Byon and Zhang's (2010) SEM analysis revealed that the destination image is positively predictive of tourism behavioral intentions. Similarly, Elliot et al. (2011) state that tourism researchers agree that TDI has effect on the travel-related behavior, with behavior ranging from destination preference and travel intentions, to actual choice, satisfaction, and repeat visits (Kim & Perdue, 2011; Agapito et al., 2013). Lee (2009) also found that tourist attitude affects future tourist behaviors. Thus, two research hypotheses can be formulated:

H5. *Destination beliefs are positively related to travel intentions.*

H6. *Attitude toward visiting destination are positively related to travel intentions.*

This research also examined the moderating role of country familiarity in the model of country-destination image (H1–H3). This model can be explained by taking the Information Processing Theory. Specifically, Park and Lessig (1991) establish that familiarity with a brand helps the consumer to be more confident about the brand in the decision making processes. This argument can be used in the specific field of tourist destinations: in a context of high familiarity, where individuals have a wide knowledge of the country, it is likely that they perceive as more precise and reliable their information about the tourism options and opportunities of the country (Han, 1989). In a similar way, according to the Theory of Attitude Stability, several studies establish that as the number of experiences and the amount of

information in relation to an object (for example, a country) increases, so the individual's attitudes towards the object (for example, images of the country) will be stronger and will have a higher influence on their perceptions and behaviors (Priester, Nayakankuppam, Fleming, & Godek, 2004). Following both theoretical approaches, it is further proposed that country image should influence destination beliefs and tourist attitude toward destination differently when people have high or low levels of familiarity with the country. The following hypotheses thus are postulated:

H7. *The stronger an individual is familiar with a country, the stronger the influence of country image on destination beliefs is.*

H8. *The stronger an individual is familiar with a country, the stronger the influence of the country image on the tourist attitude toward visiting destination is.*

3.2 Research Model

As described earlier, this research proposed to examine the effects of country image on destination beliefs, tourist attitude and travel intention, as well as the moderating effect of destination familiarity. **Figure 1** shows the research model.
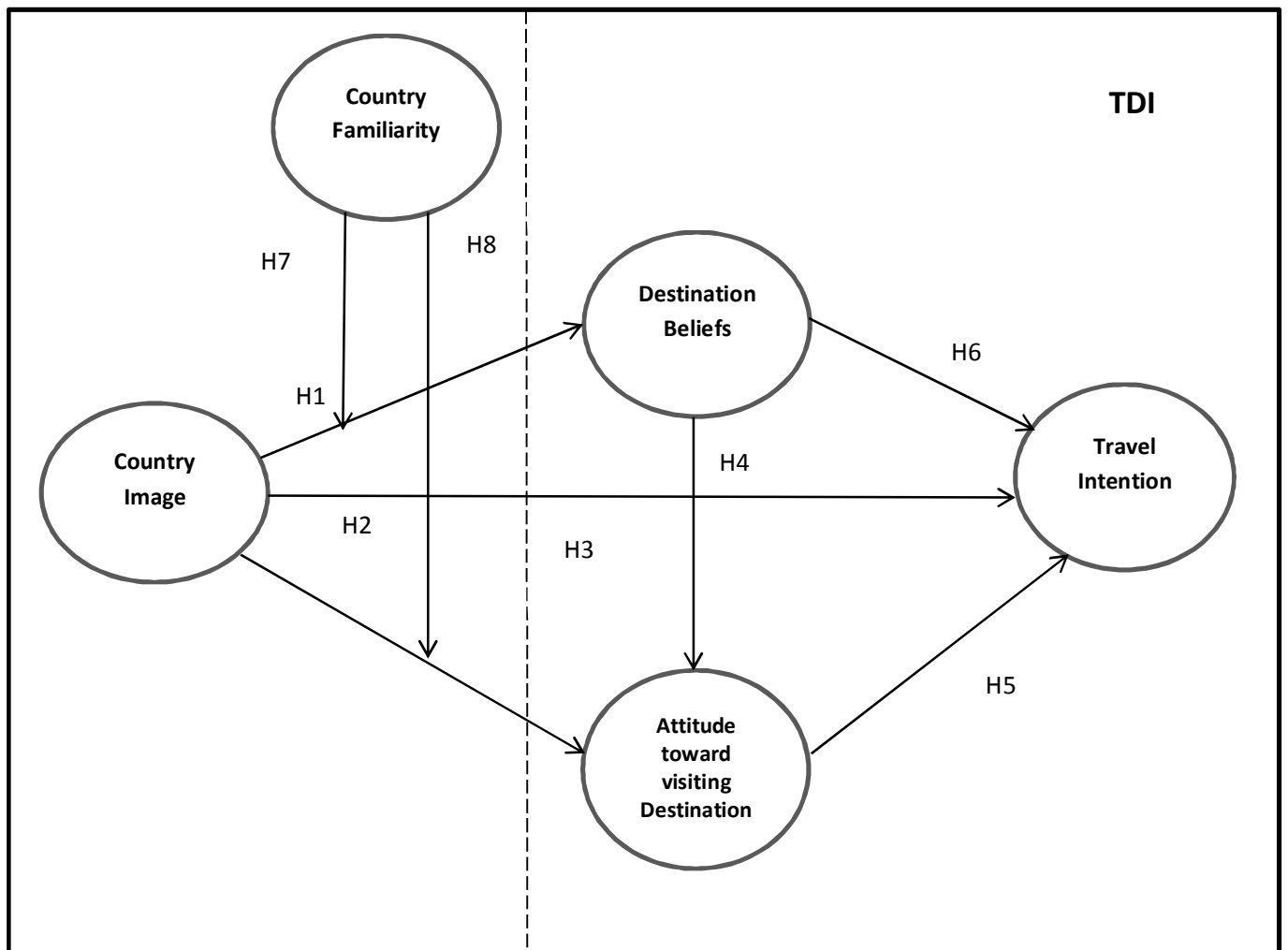

Fig.1 Research Model

CHAPTER 4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Sample design and Data collection

The target population of the study consisted of Vietnamese users of the social media website who had never visited Jeju Island, South Korea. Because of sharing similar cultures, South Korea has been chosen as a host country (country image) to operationalize the concept of country familiarity. According to The Visa Global Travel Intentions (2018), South Korea ranked second in the top five most visited countries of Vietnamese traveller after Thailand. Jeju Island also has been chosen as a host destination of South Korea because of several reasons. Firstly, known as the "Island of the Gods", Jeju is one of the leading tourist destinations in Southeast Asia and also a popular vacation spot for Vietnamese. Secondly, since 2017 citizens from Vietnam are allowed to enter Jeju Island without Korean visa issuance for the purpose of transit and tour, Jeju therefore undoubtedly became a must-visit offshore island for many Vietnamese travellers.

However, prior research on country image (Baloglu, 2001; Papadopoulos & Butt, 2005; Elliot et al., 2011; Lee & Lockshin, 2012) showed that travelers with a prior experience in a destination tend to have a more positive image. In order to isolate any potential bias on the intention to travel to South Korea and Jeju Island, the questionnaire was prepared to select the respondents who had no prior travel experience in South Korea also Jeju Island (See Appendix 1).

The questionnaire was initially prepared in English, translated to Vietnamese then launched through some social media channel such as Facebook and Instagram for approximately 1 week in October, 2018. Through this process, I obtained 367 responses. Some poor-quality

questionnaires (e.g., more than 50% missing values) were excluded, finally resulting in a sample of 293 valid respondents.

Of the satisfactorily completed questionnaires, 57% of the sample was female respondents while 43% of the sample represented male respondents. The sample profile is displayed in **Table 1.** In regards of education level, 8.9% of the respondents were in high school or less; 68% of the respondents were in college or university and 22.2% were in or above master level. Further, the vast of majority of the respondents were young; with 61.8% between 21 and 30; 23.2% between 31- 40. The research project was conducted employment status with the most responses being employed (76.8%). In terms of monthly income, the largest proportion of the respondents had $400- $799 per month (44.7%); while 41.3% less than $400 and 23.9% got more than $800/month. Finally, 49.5% respondents reported that they were married and 41.3% were in single status.

Table 1. The Demographic Characteristic of the participant.

Measure	Items	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	126	43.0
	Female	167	57.0
Age	Less than 20	15	5.1
	21- 30	181	61.8
	31 - 40	68	23.2
	41 – 50	12	4.1
	51 - 60	17	5.8
	Above 60	0	0
Education	High school or less	26	8.9
	Bachelor (2 years or 4 years)	202	68.9
	Master or above	65	22.2
Employment status	Student	58	19.8
	Employed	225	76.8
	Unemployed	10	3.4
Monthly income	Less than $400	92	31.4
	$400- $799	131	44.7
	$800 or more	70	23.9
Marital status	Single	121	41.3
	Married	145	49.5
	Others	27	9.2

N= 293

4.2 Questionnaire design

This research proposed to examine the effects of country image on destination beliefs and attitude and travel intention, as well as the moderating effect of destination familiarity. In order to do so, I modified the existing scales. The questionnaire was in four parts: a first part with questions about country image and country familiarity; a second part with questions about destination beliefs and attitude toward destination; the third part capturing travel intention, and fourth part to identify the sample's socio-demographic characteristic. Socio-demographic information of research participants was obtained by items including age, gender, education level, monthly income, employment and marital status. The concepts of country image, destination beliefs, and destination evaluations were measured with five-point Likert scales. All of the measures used in this study were drawn from existing literature.

The measurement of country image refers to the dimensions and scales of country image in international trade and marketing. It includes three domains and nine items: namely country characteristics- competence, people characteristic- competence, and the relationship between countries. These dimensions are consistent with the conceptualization of country image and has also been used and confirmed by previous studies (Heslop, Papadopoulos, Dowdles, Wall, &Compeau, 2004; Nadeau et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2012). Likewise, the items measuring destination beliefs were adapted by using three items (scenery, attractions, and activities) proposed and tested, by Elliot et al. (2011). Attitude was measured by using modified scales developed by Gamble, Juliussson, and Garling (2009). Items included were very bad/ very good, very worthless/ very valuable and very unpleasant/ very pleasant. In addition, to measure outcome variable "travel intention", I modified and uses a scale with five items

developed by Kassem, Lee, Modeste and Johnston (2010) to measure respectively to South Korea and intention to recommend to friends.

Regarding destination familiarity, familiarity is a broad concept and can be defined and operationalized in different ways (Spotts & Stynes, 1985). Familiarity could be the outcome of previous experiences, self- rate knowledge, information gathered, or educational and cultural backgrounds. In this study, the concept of destination familiarity was operationalized as a self- rate knowledge of destination that developed by Cheron & Ritchie (1982) and Cho (2001). The wording of the questions was modified for this study.

The final questionnaire included a total of 24 items and the format was a five- point Likert type scale ranging from strongly disagrees (1) to strongly agree (5).

Table 2: Scales Measuring Dimensions Identified in the Literature

Variables	Dimensions	Items
Country Image (Heslop, Papadopoulos, Dowdles, Wall, & Compeau, 2004; Nadeau et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2012)	Country characteristic – competence	(CI1) South Korea is politically stable. (CI2) South Korea is a wealthy country. (CI3) South Korea has advanced economy development. (CI4) There is a high quality of life in South Korea.
	People characteristic - competence	(CI5) South Korea people are friendly (CI6) South Korea people are trustworthy. (CI7) South Korea people have a high level of education level.
	The relationship between Vietnam and South Korea	(CI8) Vietnam has a good relationship with South Korea. (CI9) There is similar cultural tradition between Vietnam and South Korea.
Country Familiarity (Cheron & Ritchie, 1982); Cho, 2001)		(CF1) How familiar are you with South Korea as a vacation country? (CF2) How interested are you in South Korea as a vacation country? (CF3) How much do you know about South Korea as a vacation country? (CF4) How knowledgeable are you about vacation travel to South Korea relative to other people from your country?
Destination beliefs (Elliot et al., 2011)		As a tourism destination of South Korea, I think: (DB1) Jeju Island has a lot of attractive scenery. (DB2) Jeju Island has a variety of activities.

		(DB3) Jeju Island has plenty of attraction.
Attitude toward visiting destination (Gamble, Juliussson, and Garling, 2009).		All things considered, I think visiting Jeju Island would be: (ATD1) Very bad/Very good (ATD2) Very worthless/Very valuable (ATD3) Very unpleasant/Very pleasant
Travel Intention (Kassem, Lee, Modeste and Johnston, 2010)		(TI1) I would like to travel to Jeju Island rather than any other destination of South Korea. (TI2) I would like to travel to Jeju Island rather than any other destination in the world. (TI3) I would like to visit Jeju Island for vacation in the next 1-2 years. (TI4) I will say positive things about Jeju Island to others. (TI5) I would like to recommend Jeju Island for my friends and my family as a vacation destination.

4.3 Data analyses

After the scanning step, totally 293 of appropriate questionnaires were used in analyzing process including three separated parts. In the first part, as country image is a multidimensional concept, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to identify the dimensions associated with country image. Subsequently, a measurement model with all constructs/dimensions was established to assess the fits of the measures using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Specially, in order to test reliability and validity, internal consistency

measures (i.e. Cronbach alpha and average variance extracted (AVE)), convergent validity and discriminant validity were test. Alpha reliability coefficients (Cronbach, 1951) were calculated for the identified factors. Cronbach's alpha values greater than 0.07 are acceptable and deemed to be adequate (Nunnally & Berstein, 1994). AVE values above 0.50 are considered to be adequate (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). Discriminant validity is established when the estimated correlations between factors is below 0.85 (Kline, 2005). Additionally, Fornell and Larcker (1981) suggested that discriminant validity is evident when the square correlations between one construct and any others are lower than the AVE for each construct.

In the third part, the structural equation model (SEM) test with the maximum likelihood estimation was employed to test the interrelationships among the research variable using AMOS 22.0. Several goodness of fit indices were evaluated including chi-square statistic (χ^2), normed chi-square statistic (χ^2/df), standardized root means square residual (SRMR), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), goodness- of- fit (GFI), and comparative fit index (CFI). The cut-off value of normed chi-square statistic (χ^2/df) is less than 3.0 (Hu& Bentler, 1999). The SRMR value should be less than 0.05 in a well- fitting model (Byme, 1998). The RMSEA value below 0.05 indicates an excellent fit (Staiger, 1989) and values below 0.06 indicate a good fit (Hu& Bentler, 1999). The GFI is an absolute index and measures the relative amount of variance and covariance in the sample data (Byme, 1998). The CFI value takes sample size into account and should be the index of choice (Bentler, 1999), and values equal to or greater than 0.9 are indicative or good- fitting model. (Hu& Bentler, 1999). In the following discussion, a list of the statistics that were used was overviewed, then the specific statistics employed to address each hypothesis were identified.

Lastly, analyzing the demographic characteristics was regarded as the final step of data analyses.

CHAPTER 5. RESEARCH RESULTS

5.1 Dimensions of Country Image

The first step of data analysis involved using EFA to uncover the underlying factor structure of Country Image. To do so, the Alpha reliability coefficients were tested firstly to calculate for the identified factors. Since this factor included four items associated with the perception of South Korea, this factor was labeled "Country characteristic – competence" (CI1- CI4). Cronbach's alpha value of this first factor was 0.78. Three next items were labeled "People characteristic – competence" (CI5- CI7) that had Cronbach's alpha above 0.8, also archived reliability test. Two last items (CI8, CI9) related to "the relationship between Vietnam and South Korea" were tested and loaded under 0.5 alpha value. A low value of alpha could be due to a low number of questions, poor inter-relatedness between items or heterogeneous constructs. Thus, to increase the index of country image, those low correlation items – CI8, CI9 were removed. Overall, seven satisfied items were used in the following analysis techniques.

Thereafter, these items were analyzed by exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Since the factors of perception of a country should be correlated with each other, the method of Principal Axis Factoring with PROMAX rotation was used (Netemeyer, Bearden, & Sharma, 2003). Moreover, based on Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black's(1998) recommendations, the latent root criterion of 1.0 was used for factor extraction. Regarding the criteria for item inclusion, Hair et al. (1998) suggested a factor loading of .50 to be considered as significant.

The results of EFA yielded a total of two factors with 67% of variance explained. The assumptions in EFA were met as the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value for the analysis was

higher than 0.80 (KMO = 0.864) and the Bartlett test of sphericity was significant at 0.001 level. The results of reliability analysis indicated high internal consistency for both Country and People characteristic- competence (Cronbach's alpha = .80).

5.2 Measurement model

Reliability and Validity

All of five variables had the Cronbach's alpha above 0.8, thus they achieved reliability test. Thereafter, they were analyzed by exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The results presented that six factors were extracted from measurement scales with extraction sum of squared loadings being about 69% (greater than 50%). The KMO index was significant at 0.831 and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity had chi- square = 2967.651, df = 231 and sig = .000 (see **Table 3**)

Table 3 The results of exploratory factor analysis

Factors	Items code	Factor loading	Eigen value	Cumulative Explained Variance (%)	Cronbach's Alpha
Country Image (CI)	CI1	0.75	1.96	48.6	0.81
	CI2	0.82			
	CI3	0.78			
	CI4	0.72			
	CI5	0.82	1.33	69.6	0.79
	CI6	0.81			
	CI7	0.80			
Country Familiarity (CF)	CF1	0.77	2.68	39.7	0.83
	CF2	0.73			
	CF3	0.80			
	CF4	0.78			
Destination Beliefs (DB)	DB1	0.85	1.77	56.7	0.86
	DB2	0.85			
	DB3	0.83			
Attitude toward visiting destination (ATD)	ATD1	0.73	1.49	63.5	0.82
	ATD2	0.86			
	ATD3	0.87			
Travel Intention (TI)	TI1	0.74	6.08	27.6	0.86
	TI2	0.73			
	TI3	0.80			
	TI4	0.80			
	TI5	0.80			

In the second step, the fits of measures were assessed using CFA. In this research, model fits were evaluated by the comparative fit index (CFI), the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), the normed fit index (NFI), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). Based on Byrne's(1998) and Bollen's (1989) suggestions, a model is regarded as acceptable if CFI exceeds .93, NFI and GFI exceed .90, and RMSEA is less than .80. The resulting measurement model had acceptable fit indices (n = 293, $\chi 2$ = 368.897, df = 198, CFI = 0.94, GFI = 0.89, NFI = 0.88, and RMSEA = .058).

Subsequently, two diagnostics, composite reliability and average variance extracted estimate (AVE), were used to assess the convergent validity of the measures. **Table 4** shows indicator loadings, AVE values and composite reliability for each factor. All of the indicator loadings were greater than 0.5 threshold, ranging from 0.55 (ATD1) to 0.91 (ATD3). The values of composite reliability for Country Familiarity (CF), Destination Beliefs (DB), Attitude toward Destination (ATD), Travel Intention (TI) were 083, 0.86, 0.82 and 0.86 respectively. All the values were higher or slightly lower (country image) than the suggested value of 0.70 (Netemeyer et al., 2003). In addition, the AVE values of the factors were greater than the suggested value of 0.5, ranging from 0.53 (country image) to 0.68 (destination beliefs). Generally, these numbers adequately proved the convergent validity requirements. The detailed results of convergent validity test were presented at **Table 4**.

Table 4 Composite Reliability and AVE results

Factors	Items code	Factor loading	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Country Image (CI)	CI1	0.63	0.801	0.53
	CI2	0.83		
	CI3	0.77		
	CI4	0.64		
	CI5	0.76	0.795	0.56
	CI6	0.73		
	CI7	0.74		
Country Familiarity (CF)	CF1	0.74	0.83	0.54
	CF2	0.68		
	CF3	0.81		
	CF4	0.74		
Destination Beliefs (DB)	DB1	0.79	0.86	0.68
	DB2	0.79		
	DB3	0.85		
Attitude toward visiting Destination (ATD)	ATD1	0.55	0.82	0.61
	ATD2	0.86		
	ATD3	0.91		
Travel Intention (TI)	TI1	0.68	0.86	0.56
	TI2	0.66		
	TI3	0.78		
	TI4	0.81		
	TI5	0.80		

(1) *All factor loadings were significant at the .001 levels.*

(2) *Model fit indices: n = 293, χ2 = 368.897, df = 198, CFI = 0.94, GFI = 0.89, NFI =0.88, and RMSEA = 0.058.*

Furthermore, the discriminant validity of the measures was assessed by comparing the square of the correlation between each pair of factors and their AVEs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). **Table 5** was shown the discriminant validity index based on the correlation coefficients between five factors. Since the square root value of AVE higher than

corresponding correlation values with other variables (Hair et al., 2014) because of its sensitivity to overestimate indicator/item loading (Hui and Wold 1982; Lohmöller 1989), the discriminant validity was considered to be acceptable.

Table 5 Correlation among variables.

	ATD	CF	CI	DB	TI
ATD	**0.781**				
CF	0.366	**0.737**			
CI	0.173	0.591	**0.681**		
DB	0.383	0.350	0.447	**0.825**	
TI	0.349	0.393	0.418	0.388	**0.745**

Note: The square root of AVE is denoted in bold.

ATD = Attitude toward destination; CF = Country familiarity; CI = Country image; DB = Destination beliefs; TI = Travel intention

Results of structural equation model (SEM) test

Estimation of the Model

As a next step, H1- H5 was tested by SEM. As shown in **Table 5**, the result of maximum likelihood estimation suggested that the model fit to the data well (n = 293, $\chi2$ = 220.534, normed chi- square =1.69, p<0.001, df = 129, CFI = 0.96, GFI = 0.93, NFI = 0.91, SRMR = 0.04 and RMSEA = 0.05). The normed chi-square below 2 was acceptable and GFI, TLI, CFI indices also achieved the recommendation which exceeded 0.9. Finally, RMSEA and SRMR adequately satisfied the cut-off suggestions of 0.05.

Table 6 also shows the structural path results. The structural finding indicates that four of five hypotheses were significant and positive. Consequently, hypotheses H1, H3, H4, H5 were supported. Specially, country image was significantly and positively associated with destination beliefs (H1: β = 0.462, t = 4.793, p < 0.001), whereas not a significant predictor of tourist's attitude toward destination (H2: β = 0.005, t = 0.047, p = 0.962). Further, destination beliefs exerted a positive and significant effect on attitude toward destination (H3: β = 0.382, t = 4.590, p < 0.001) and travel intention (H4: β = 0.311, t = 4.446, p < 0.001). Finally, as predicted by H5, tourist attitude toward destination was positively and significantly related to their travel intention (H6: β = 0.229, t = 3.271, p < 0.001); supporting H5.

Fig. 2 shows the specified relationship among model constructs (see also Appendix 2).

Table 6. Maximum Likelihood Estimates for research model (n = 293)

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Estimate	Standardized estimate	Standard error	t- statistic	*p*
Country Image	Destination Beliefs	0.781	0.462	0.161	4.793	0.000
Country Image	Attitude toward destination	0.007	0.005	0.145	0.047	0.962
Destination Beliefs	Attitude toward destination	0.341	0.382	0.073	4.590	0.000
Destination Beliefs	Travel Intention	0.319	0.311	0.086	4.446	0.000
Attitude toward destination	Travel Intention	0.263	0.229	0.081	3.271	0.001
Country Image	Travel Intention	0.533	0.308	0.173	3.072	0.001

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Structural Model

Model fit statistics

Chi- square = 220.534

df = 129

Normed chi- square = 1.69

GFI = 0.93

CFI = 0.96

SRMR = 0.04

RMSEA = 0.05
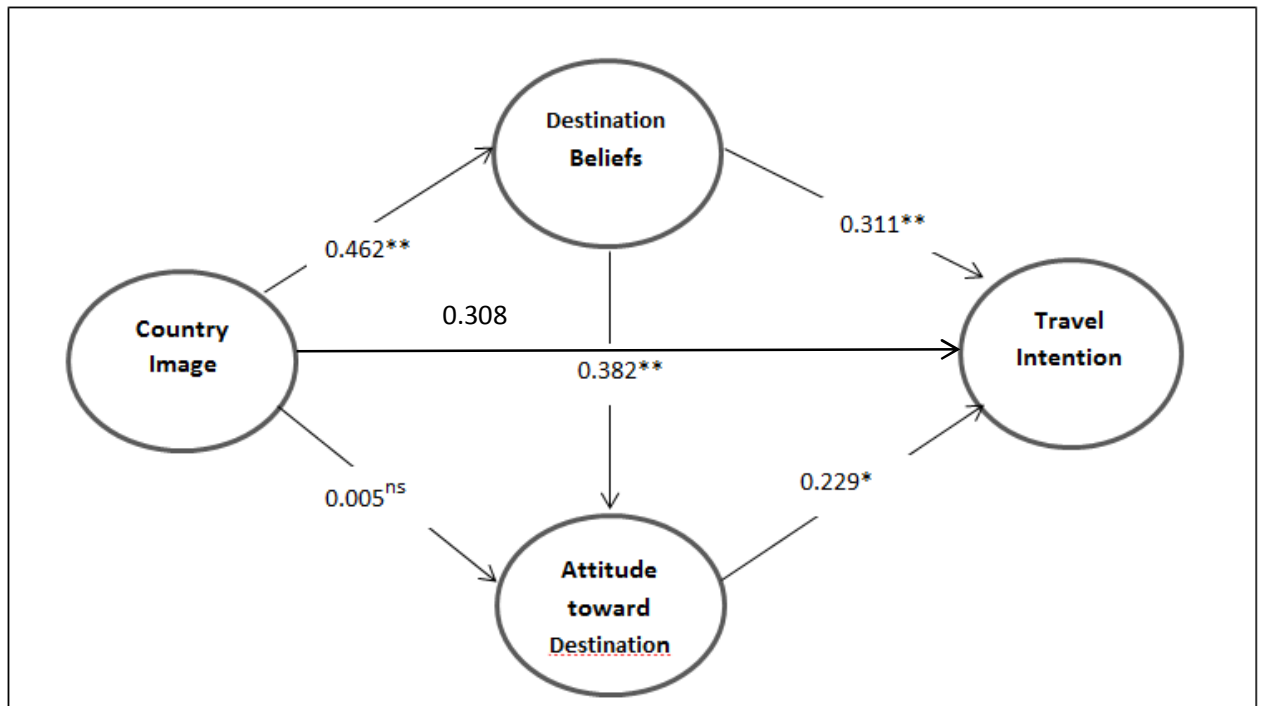
** *p < 0.001; * p < 0.01; ns = non – significant.*

Fig.2. Results of structural equation model (N = 293)

Testing the moderating effect of country familiarity

Following to Ro (2012) and Kim, Murrmann, and Lee (2009), the analysis of the moderating effect of country familiarity on the relationship between country image and destination beliefs and was based on a multi-step hierarchical multiple regression, which included the following steps: first, the independent variable (country image) and the moderator variable (country familiarity) were entered into the model as predictors of the dependent variables (destination image and attitude toward destination). Second, an interaction term, which is the product of the independent and moderator variables, was entered into the regression model in order to represent the moderator effect. It was signed as CII_CFF in this study. The results of the estimates using the program AMOS are summarized in **Table 7** (each variable included in the statistical software is based on the average of its items). As observed

in Step 1, the model testing indicated slightly acceptable fit between the data and the model as displayed in **Figure 3** ($\chi2/df$ = 23; p value = .000; CFI=.882; SRMR = 0.067; and RMSEA=0.281). The GFI, CFI achieved the standard of above 0.9. RMSEA and SRMR fulfilled the cut-off value of 0.5. The result also shows only the country destination image had a significant influence on destination beliefs with β = 0.21 at p < 0.001. **Figure 3** shows the results of research model with the path and the estimates of standardized regression weights.

Fig.3 The SEM results of research model with moderating effect.
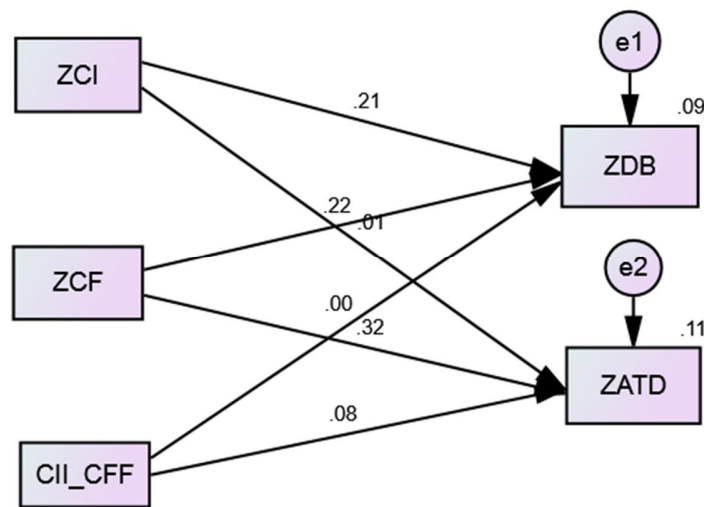
In Step 2, **Table 8** shows that country familiarity does not significantly moderates the relationship between country image and destination beliefs. Hence the finding reveals that country familiarity also does not significantly moderate the relationship between country image and attitude toward destination. Therefore, two hypotheses H6, H7 were not supported.

Table 7 Hierarchical regression analysis for testing the moderating effect

	Step 1		Step 2	
	Destination Beliefs	Attitude toward visiting destination	Destination Beliefs	Attitude toward visiting destination
Country Image	0.208***	-.014 (n.s)	0.208***	0.013 (n.s)
Country Familiarity	0.213***	0.299***	0.213***	0.318***
Country Image*Country Familiarity			0.001 (n.s)	0.084 (n.s)

***$p < 0.001$; (n.s): non- significant.

Table 8 Summary of Hypothesis test results

Hypothesis	Description	Result
H1	Country image has a positive effect on destination beliefs.	Accepted
H2	Country image has a positive effect on attitudes toward visiting destination.	Not accepted
H3	Country image is positively related to travel intentions.	Accepted
H4	Destination beliefs have a positive effect on attitude toward visiting destination.	Accepted
H5	Destination beliefs are positively related to travel intentions.	Accepted
H6	Attitude toward visiting destination are positively related to travel intentions.	Accepted
H7	The stronger an individual familiar with a country, the stronger the influence of country image on destination beliefs.	Not accepted
H8	The stronger an individual familiar with a country, the stronger the influence of the country image on the tourist attitude toward visiting destination.	Not accepted

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Summary of findings

This study attempted to identify the travel intention to a destination in the context of tourist familiar with country by proposing an integrated approach. The model included country image, country familiarity (COI); destination beliefs, attitude toward destination (TDI) as the major determinants of the tourist's travel intention. The impact of COI effects were then hypothesized and validated with four different cases: (1) country image impact on destination beliefs, (2) country image impact on attitude toward destination and country familiarity moderate the effect of country image on (3) destination beliefs and (4) attitude toward destination. The influence of destination beliefs on tourist attitude also was considered. Further, I proposed two hypotheses about the impact of destination beliefs and tourist attitude on travel intention. For collecting data, a self- administered online survey was conducted. Two-hundred and ninety- three responses from a survey were analyzed using SEM. Finally, four of seven hypotheses were supported as summarized in **Table 7**. Congruent with previous findings, results indicated that country image may effect on destination beliefs but not impact on attitude toward destination. Specially, the moderating effect of country familiarity on the relationship between the two types of image was also examined that non-significant. These findings expectedly may generate new knowledge in tourism research.

6.2 Discussion

Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 4 posited that foundation beliefs about the country and its people are directly relevant to destination beliefs and indirectly to travel intention. This finding adequately fits with previous studies. Nadeau (2008) stated that this was an important result because it situates tourist's intentions in the greater context of the host destination and

broader country – image beliefs, evaluation, interest, and intention. However, an interestingly finding in Hypothesis 2 examined that country image was not related to attitude toward destination of travelers. In fact, some recent work in the literature has similarly cast doubt on the existence of an attitude/country image relationship. Lee and Lockshin (2012) studied the link between tourists' destination image on their attitude toward domestic products and found the linkage was not supported. Phillips et al. (2013) also examined the effect of the country image of South Korea for U.S. consumers and found it not induce a positive attitude toward cuisine. In line with the findings of many studies, the results also confirm that country image did not affect consumers' attitudes toward destination. That is to say, in the current study, even when an individual perceived South Korea as a country and its people positively, it would not a strong predictor of their attitude toward Jeju Island as a vacation destination.

In addition, in support of Hypotheses 5, tourist attitude toward destination has a positive significant impact on future visit intentions. This result was consistent with previous research (e.g., Chen & Tung, 2014), and contribute to the literature in this area. However it did not fit my initial expectation that travel intention is positively influenced by the attitude toward destination, which in turn is directly influenced by country image and destination beliefs. In other words, while country image was not a crucial part of customer's decision process to a destination, the relationship of country- origin- image (COI) and tourism destination image (TDI) was not well defined.

Destination beliefs, regarded as cognitive dimension of destination image, had a significant impact on tourist attitudes in Hypothesis 3. This finding aligned with previous studies results. According to Kim & Rechardson (2003) and Woomi & Soocheong (2008), the perceived image of a particular destination influences variously tourist attitudes and behaviors.

In terms of Hypotheses 6 and 7, the findings of this study regarding the moderating effect of familiarity was found to be unrelated to the relationships between country image, destination beliefs and tourist attitude. This may be because, in a context where there are many famous destination to travel in South Korea (i.e. Seoul, Busan), being familiar with a country does not necessarily imply a more elaborate and precise knowledge of the different destinations located in that country. The result could also be explained by the distinctive characteristics of Jeju Island as tourist destination, which are mostly related to the sun and beach tourism that is only one of predominant tourism trend in South Korea in Vietnamese perspective. Hence, tourists with a stronger familiarity with the country will therefore not necessarily make a stronger association between country and region in their minds.

6.3 Implications and Limitation

This study contributes theoretical and practical implications within the hospitality and tourism contexts. In the context of prior researches in travel destination image (TDI) and country-of-origin image (COI) have developed independently, there is a lack of study to concern how perceived images of a country may influence consumer behavior in both concepts. Therefore, first and foremost, my research provided an integrated model to investigate COI - TDI relationships, and reveal the mechanism of how these relationships influencing tourist's future behaviors. For example, to the certain extent the results confirmed that perceived images of a destination are built on the basis perceptions of the country that destination is located. In addition, the present research demonstrated that people tend to rely on their overall country image to indirectly (through destination beliefs) expose their attitudes and intention to visit. Therefore, although the level of familiarity with a destination is low or high, country image still serves as the source of stereotypical beliefs (Chen, Lee, & Petrick, 2013).

Besides specific contributing to theory building, the results also have some practical implications for tourism policy makers and tourism managers. The research results support the importance of promoting tourism in other countries, especially tourist generating countries with cultural ties to the host country. Thus, it also suggests that tourism and travel professionals should design their destination marketing materials and brochures that focus on the uniqueness of the destination (e.g. local attraction). They may also want to include some general information about the country and its people as the study results show that the information helps to build a positive beliefs of the country and reinforce the image of tourist destinations located in that country. Linking a destination to a country destination and vice versa would help to international tourists better understand and evaluate such a destination, which would lead to a better overall image and strengthen the national touristic demand. This is especially recommended if both the country and the destination have valuable attributes in common (for example, Jeju Island and South Korea). International tourists with less knowledge of a regional destination may therefore have a better perception of that destination if they associate it with the country and vice versa.

It is important to highlight that this study has several limitations. The first limitation is that by very complex and holistic nature of country images, there are some measurement items that had to be left out of my model. In particular, country image could be measured by a great number of different kinds of items (e.g., Beerli & Martin, 2004a, 2004b; Agapito et al., 2013; Kim & Perdue, 2011; Byon & Zhang, 2010). In this study, I decided to measure the destination beliefs by adapting by adapting 9 items from 3 sub dimension (country – people competence, and the relationship between two countries) on the basis of the existing literature (Elliot et al., 2011). In the further studies, more items could be added to the model. Secondly, the fact that this research focuses on a specific destination (Jeju Island) and a country

destination (South Korea), could limit the generalization of the results. It would be interesting to replicate the study in other countries and destinations with different degrees of similarity between their images in tourism. Another limitation concerns the scope of this study. Based on a widespread literature review, familiarity could be an important factor in explaining the propensity to use country –of- origin information and its effects on other variables (Ahmed and d'Astous, 2008; Tam, 2008). Previous studies also examined country familiarity as an antecedent of COI. It was found that country familiarity significantly correlated with COI (Ahmed et al., 2004). However, because of the limitation of the scope of this study, only the moderating role of country familiarity in the model of country-destination image was examined. Future studies can take into account other aspects of familiarity that might influence country - destination image. In addition, with the purpose of generating evidence about the robustness of the model, it should be examined the role of different socio-demographic or behavioral characteristics of tourists as control variables. Another limitation of this study is related to the composition of the sample in terms of nationality of the tourists (my sample was formed mainly of tourists from Vietnam). It would be very interesting to develop similar studies examining tourists from countries with very different preferences and cultures. Finally, country image is an important factor in influencing evaluations of destinations, whenever potential tourists are familiar with the country as a tourist destination or not, country image is difficult to change by means of destination promotional materials and even actual visits. Therefore, future research may focus on how to change or improve the image of a country, especially when people in the tourist-generating countries have a negative view of it.

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APPENDIX 1: SURVEY (ENGLISH)

Dear Respondents,

I am Hien Do. As my part of my MBA research thesis at Ulsan University, South Korea. I am conducting a survey that investigates "the travel intentions of Vietnamese to Jeju Island, South Korea as a vacation destination".

I sincerely invite you to take the time to complete all questions. Your help is essential for my Master thesis which brings me close to graduation. I deeply appreciate your kind cooperation!

*Your answers will be used for this research only and be kept confidential.

* Advisor: Professor Doyle Kim.

Please place a tick in the box ☑ for the following question.

Have you visited South Korea? ☐ Yes ☐ No

(if "Yes", thank you for your time, you can log out of this survey)

Part 1. Country Image

How do you perceive South Korea as a country? Choose the option that reflects your personal opinion:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. South Korea is politically stable.	1	2	3	4	5
2. South Korea is a wealthy country.	1	2	3	4	5
3. South Korea has advanced economy development.	1	2	3	4	5
4. There is a high quality of life in South Korea.	1	2	3	4	5

5. South Korea people are friendly	1	2	3	4	5
6. South Korea people are trustworthy	1	2	3	4	5
7. South Korea people have a high level of education level.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Vietnam has a good relationship with South Korea.	1	2	3	4	5
9. There is similar cultural tradition between Vietnam and South Korea.	1	2	3	4	5

Evaluate how familiar are you with South Korea as a vacation country. Choose the option that reflects your personal opinion:

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
10. How familiar are you with South Korea?	1	2	3	4	5
11. How interested are you in South Korea?	1	2	3	4	5
12. How much do you know about South Korea?	1	2	3	4	5
13. How knowledgeable are you about vacation travel to South Korea relative to other people from your country?	1	2	3	4	5

Part 2. Destination Image

Jeju Island is a tourism destination of South Korea. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

"As a tourism destination of South Korea, I think that: ……."

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
14. Jeju Island has a lot of attractive scenery.	1	2	3	4	5

	1	2	3	4	5
15. Jeju Island has a variety of activities.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Jeju Island has plenty of attractions.	1	2	3	4	5

"All things considered, I think visiting Jeju Island would be…."

Very bad   □ 1   □ 2   □ 3   □ 4   □ 5   **Very good**

Very worthless   □ 1   □ 2   □ 3   □ 4   □ 5   **Very valuable**

Very unpleasant   □ 1   □ 2   □ 3   □ 4   □ 5   **Very pleasant**

Part 3. Travel Intention

To what extent are you likely to travel to Jeju Island?

:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
20. I would like to travel to Jeju Island rather than any other destination of South Korea.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I would like to travel to Jeju Island rather than any other destination in the world.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I would like to visit Jeju Island for vacation in the next 1-2 years.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I will say positive things about Jeju Island to others.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I would like to recommend Jeju Island for my friends and my family as a vacation destination.	1	2	3	4	5

Part 4. Demographic Information

Lastly, please tell me a little about you.

1. What is your gender?

a. Male

b. Female

2. Your age?

a. Less than 20

b. 21 - 30

c. 31 - 40

d. 41 - 50

e. 51 - 60

f. Above 60

3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

a. High school or less

b. Bachelor (2 years or 4 years)

c. Master or above

4. What is your employment status?

a. Student

b. Employed

c. Unemployed

5. What is your total monthly personal income?

a. Less than $400

b. $400- $799

c. $800 or more.

6. What is your marital status?

a. Single

b. Married

c. Others.

d. ***Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.***

APPENDIX 2

The SEM result of research model without moderating effect