AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF DESTINATION

BRANDING FOR THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview of the Tourism Industry in the State of Oklahoma

Highlights of the Oklahoma Travel and Tourism Industry

Travel and tourism has become one of Oklahoma's three top industries in terms of economic impact on the state. According to the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department (OTRD, 2002), it generated $3.8 billion from domestic travel expenditures in Oklahoma in 2000, a 5.2% increase over 1999, ranking 34th in domestic travel expenditures among all 50 states and the District of Columbia in the year 2000. Total domestic travel receipts have created multiplier effects on the local economy by creating 71.7 thousand jobs with $1.5 billion in wage and salary income and $682.6 million in federal, state, and local taxes in 2000 (OTRD, 2002).

In 2000, the estimated number of person-trips (including destination/overnight stay and pass through) was 20 million, a 2% increase from 1999 (OTRD, 2001). The top two purposes of the trip to Oklahoma were visiting friends or relatives (49%) and business (23%). With regard to the types of activities, shopping was the most popular activity (21%), followed by outdoor activities (11%), visiting historical places/museums (9%), and national/state parks (7%). The majority of the visitors (71%) were involved in

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one or two activities while staying in Oklahoma and their average trip duration was 5.5 nights. More than 34% of the visitors stayed at a private home, a 14% increase from 1999, followed by hotel/motel/bed and breakfast (B&B) (33%). Of all the households that traveled in Oklahoma, about 45% of the person trips were with a party size of one and 44% traveled without children while 22% were accompanied by two children. With regard to the travelers' demographic profile, the majority of the travelers to Oklahoma was in the age group of 25-44 with no children, and had a full-time job with an annual income ranging from $30K to $50K. They also had obtained a college degree or some college education and were in the "young and middle parenthood" lifestyle. The top five feeder markets for Oklahoma in 2000 were Texas (25%), Kansas (5%), Arkansas (5%), Missouri (3%), and California (2%) (OTRD, 2001).

The Satisfaction Index

The 1999 American Traveler Survey (ATS), an annual survey conducted by Plog Research (1999a), provided extensive information on the positioning of Oklahoma as a travel destination in terms of traveler demographics, psychographics and the travel characteristics of vacationers to Oklahoma. According to the survey, travelers considered that Oklahoma did not do an optimal job of satisfying travelers' needs, placing it in the bottom quartile, 39th among the 50 U.S. states and Washington, D.C. This was based on the satisfaction index, which was developed by Plog Research in order to measure the percent of persons who have visited a place and especially liked it. Hawaii ranked as the number one state on its ability to satisfy travelers' needs. Another measure available from the ATS data was the potential for growth. This made it possible to determine the

potential of each destination by asking respondents to list the places they planned to visit in the next three years. Oklahoma ranked 43rd among the 50 U.S. states and Washington, D.C. in terms of growth potential, indicating that respondents did not show a strong interest in future travel to Oklahoma.

Demographic Characteristics of Oklahoma Visitors

Overall findings indicated that Oklahoma was successful in attracting travelers who were more upscale than the average U.S. adult (Plog Research, 1999a). They had higher household incomes and were more likely to be college graduates. Compared to average U.S. adults, visitors who have been to Oklahoma ("Oklahoma visitors") tended to be older, more likely retired, and less likely to have children living at home. Geographically, nearly six in ten (57%) Oklahoma visitors resided in the South, especially Texas (20%) or Oklahoma (12%).

In comparing the characteristics of travelers within the inbound market area that includes Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas, visitors to Oklahoma earned higher household incomes than those who have never been to Oklahoma ("Non-Oklahoma visitors"), had a somewhat higher educational attainment, were more likely to hold executive/managerial positions and were less likely to be retired (Table 1).

TABLE 1

DEMOGRAPHICS OF VISITORS TO OKLAHOMA (OKLAHOMA VISITORS VS. U.S. ADULTS AND RESIDENTS OF INBOUND MARKET AREA*)

	U.S. Adults	Total Oklahoma Visitors	Total Inbound Market Area*	Inbound Markets	
				Been to Oklahoma	Never Been to Oklahoma
Age (Median)	48	52	50	50	50
Household Income (Median)	$36,600	$47,400	$37,600	$43,900	$36,700
Occupation					
Executive/Manager (%)	12	14	11	19	9
Professional (%)	13	15	9	8	9
Teacher/Professor (%)	4	5	4	7	4
Technical/Sales/Admin. (%)	13	8	11	11	11
Skilled worker/Service (%)	12	12	11	11	11
Retired (%)	22	25	29	21	30
Others (%)	24	21	22	23	26
College Graduate (%)	30	35	25	26	24
Any Children at Home (%)	42	35	37	39	36
Southern Resident (%)	36	57	82	77	82
Texas Resident (%)	8	20	59	44	61
Oklahoma Resident (%)	2	12	14	26	13

Note: * Inbound market area includes Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas.

Source: Plog Research (1999a).

Travel Characteristics of Oklahoma Visitors

The Plog study (1999a & 1999b) revealed that Oklahoma visitors traveled more than the average U.S. adults (Table 2). Compared to the average U.S. adults, Oklahoma visitors, annually tended to travel more frequently for leisure (4.8 trips vs. 2.4), enjoy more short getaways (2.7 vs. 1.7), take more vacations/holidays (1.4 vs. 1.0), and spend more nights away for leisure (19.5 vs. 14.5). Within Oklahoma's inbound market area, those who traveled to Oklahoma took a greater number of trips for leisure purposes and spent more nights away from home than non-Oklahoma visitors.

TABLE 2

TRAVEL CHARACTERISTICS (OKLAHOMA VISITORS VS. U.S. ADULTS
AND RESIDENTS OF INBOUND MARKET AREA*)

	U.S. Adults	Total Oklahoma Visitors	Total Inbound Market Area*	Inbound Market Area	
				Been to Oklahoma	Never Been to Oklahoma
U.S. Leisure Trips: Total (#/year)	2.4	4.8	2.2	5.0	1.9
U.S. Leisure Trips by Car (#/year)	1.7	3.0	1.6	3.5	1.3
U.S. Leisure Trips by Air (#/year)	0.5	0.9	0.4	0.8	0.4
International Leisure Trips (#/year)	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1
Nights Away for Leisure (#/year)	14.5	19.5	14.1	18.6	13.5
Short Gateways for Leisure (#/year)	1.7	2.7	1.8	3.0	1.5
Vacations/Holidays (4+ days/year)	1.0	1.4	1.0	1.1	0.9
Trips to Visit Friends/Relatives (#/year)	1.3	1.8	1.5	2.3	1.4

Note: * Inbound market area includes Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas.

Source: Plog Research (1999a).

Travel Spending of Oklahoma Visitors

Overall, Oklahoma visitors spent more on travel than the average U.S. adults. On the average, those visiting Oklahoma had spent $1,347 on their last leisure trip (to any destination, not just Oklahoma), which is slightly higher than the average of $1,230 among U.S. adults. Since Oklahoma visitors took more trips, their average annual travel expenditures were also higher ($2,969 vs. $2,318) (Figure 1). Within the targeted inbound market area, Oklahoma visitors spent more than non-visitors for both their last vacation and leisure travel in the past year.
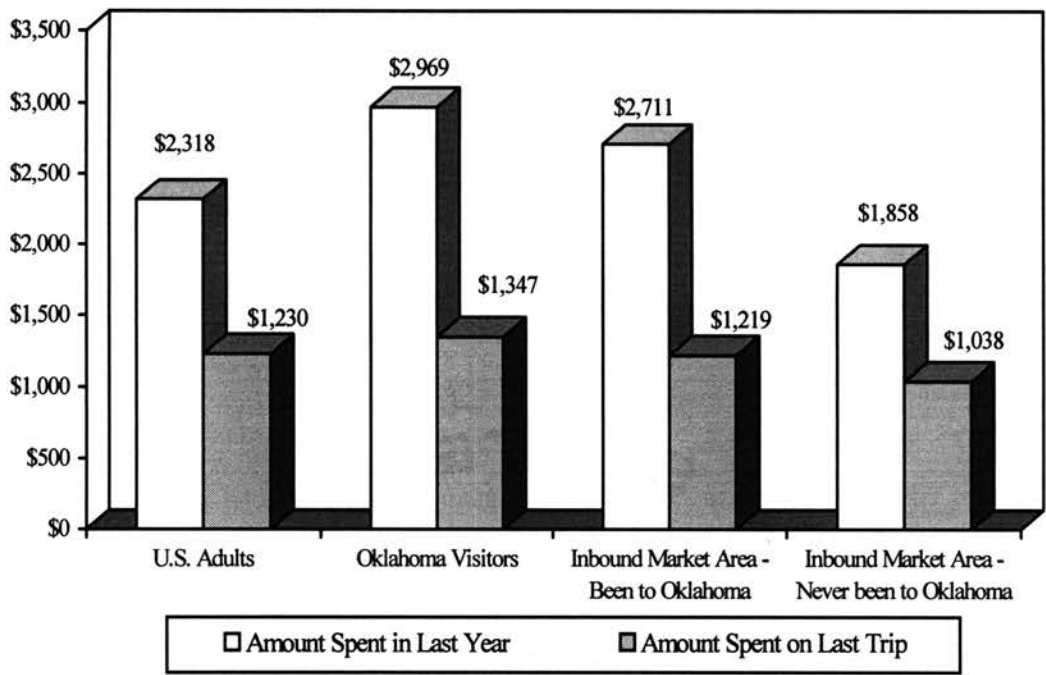
Note: *Inbound market area includes Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas.

Figure 1. Average Amount Spent on Leisure Trips (Source: Plog Research, 1999a).

Reasons to Take Vacations

In response to reasons to take vacations, more than half of the respondents who were visiting Oklahoma reported that the primary reason they took vacations was to "see things" and "have new experiences" (Table 3). They also placed higher importance on "chance to relax," "get rid of stress," "travel makes me feel alive and energetic," and "it enriches my perspective on life." Compared to non-Oklahoma visitors, residents of the inbound market area who have visited Oklahoma placed higher importance on "travel enriches my perspective on life" and were more likely to consider "travel an important part of my life."

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TABLE 3

WHY VACATIONS ARE IMPORTANT (OKLAHOMA VISITORS VS. U.S. ADULTS AND RESIDENTS OF INBOUND MARKET AREA*)

	Index**			Inbound Market Area	
	U.S. Adults	Total Oklahoma Visitors	Total Inbound Market Area*	Been to Oklahoma	Never Been to Oklahoma
Chance to relax, get rid of stress	100	100	100	100	100
See new things/have new experiences	93	104	95	98	95
No schedules/do what I want when I want	97	97	98	95	98
Spend more time with spouse/family	90	93	90	90	90
Feel alive and energetic	79	85	78	80	78
Enriches perspective on life	75	85	74	80	72
Gain knowledge about history/cultures	66	75	69	70	68
Travel is an important part of my life	58	75	55	65	53
Others wait on me	63	59	63	64	63
Vacations are romantic time	60	61	58	61	58
Spend more time with friends	62	58	62	56	63
Seek solitude/isolation	51	49	55	50	55

Note: * Inbound market area includes Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas.
** Index: Base = 100.

Source: Plog Research (1999a).

Attributes That Contribute to Destination Choice

When selecting a vacation destination, Oklahoma visitors considered a beautiful/scenic place as the most important attribute, followed by the availability of many things to do, previous experience visiting the destination, and good weather (Figure 2). Compared to non-Oklahoma visitors living in the inbound market area, Oklahoma visitors were more likely to choose a location based on having beautiful scenery (52%), offering many things to do (53%), and historical and educational significance (37%). They also showed more interest in visiting places that had a clean/unspoiled environment (36%), good weather (45%) and where they had friends (32%).
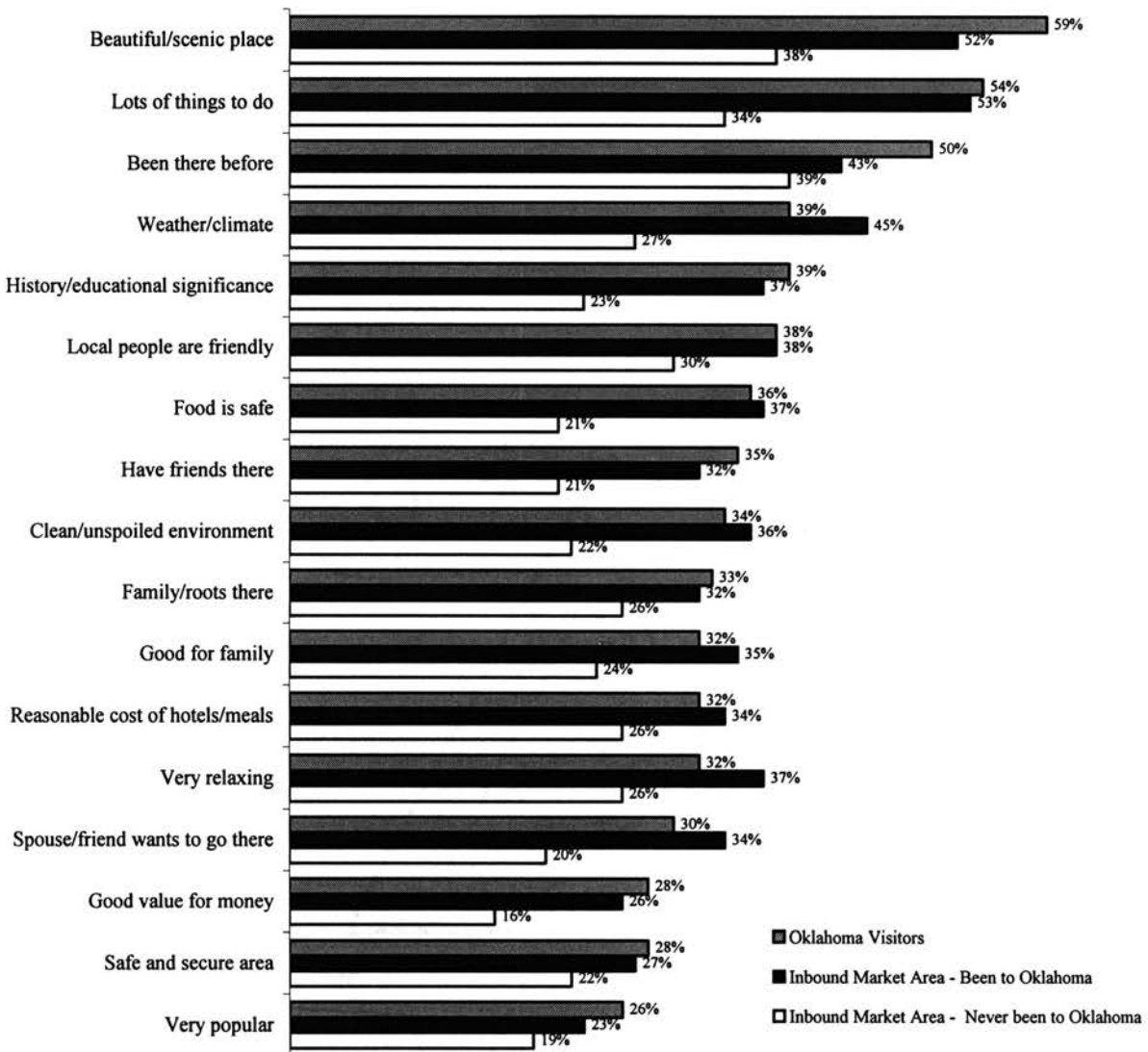
Note: *Inbound market area includes Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas.

Figure 2. Attributes to Choice of Last Vacation Destination (Oklahoma Visitors vs. U.S. Adults and Residents of Inbound Market Area*) (Source: Plog Research, 1999a)

Attributes That Detract from Vacations

With regard to attributes that made trips to be less enjoyable, Oklahoma visitors and non-Oklahoma visitors within the inbound market area expressed concerns about hotels' being dirty (9.0%), unsafe environment (8.5%), or unsafe for health (8.4%) (Figure 3). Among market area residents, visitors are less put off by poor airline safety

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processes (7.7% vs. 8.2%), poor hotel service (7.5% vs. 8.2%), being very expensive (7.2% vs. 7.9%), tourist traps (6.8% vs. 7.4%), poor weather (6.3% vs. 7.1%) and lack of the comforts of home (4.8% vs. 5.4%) than non-visitors.

Activities in Oklahoma

In terms of the types of activities in which Oklahoma travelers participated on their last vacation, the results revealed that Oklahoma visitors typically enjoyed a variety of activities while on vacation (Figure 4). Overall, they engaged in a greater number of activities than the average U.S. adults (4.8 vs. 3.6). The most popular vacation activities for Oklahoma visitors included shopping (64%), visiting historic sites and churches (51%), fine dining (38%), visiting museums and art galleries (36%), and visiting old homes and mansions (36%). Oklahoma vacationers residing in the inbound market area were more likely than non-Oklahoma visitors to enjoy visiting historic sites and churches (54% vs. 33%), museums and art galleries (31% vs. 25%), old homes and mansions (31% vs. 20%), participating in nature travel/ecotouring (29% vs. 14%), and hiking/ backpacking/camping (20% vs. 9%). However, they were less interested in theatre/ drama (4% vs. 12%), slightly less interested in parks (14% vs. 17%), and shared about the same level of interest in fine dining (36% vs. 34%), nightclubs (10% vs. 12%), and stage shows (10% vs. 12%).

Hotel is dirty			9.0% / 8.9% / 9.0%
Dirty everywhere			8.5% / 8.1% / 8.4%
Destination seems unsafe, not secure			8.4% / 8.2% / 8.4%
You can get robbed			8.3% / 8.3% / 8.4%
Food/water unsafe			8.3% / 8.1% / 8.4%
Locals steal from you, try to rip you off			8.1% / 7.9% / 8.1%
Poor safety process of airline			7.8% / 7.7% / 8.2%
Poor hotel service			7.7% / 7.5% / 8.2%
Very expensive			7.4% / 7.2% / 7.9%
Too many tourist traps			7.1% / 6.8% / 7.4%
Poverty evident			7.1% / 6.9% / 7.0%
Unfriendly local people			6.9% / 6.8% / 7.1%
Too much commercial development			6.6% / 6.3% / 6.2%
Rainy, cold, bad weather			6.5% / 6.3% / 7.1%
Lacks comforts of home I expect			4.7% / 4.8% / 5.4%

☐ Inbound Market Area - Never been to Oklahoma ■ Inbound market Area - Been to Oklahoma ▨ Oklahoma Visitors

*Inbound market area includes Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas.

Figure 3: Attributes That Make Vacations Less Enjoyable (Oklahoma Visitors vs. U.S. Adults and Residents of Inbound Market Area*) (Source: Plog Research, 1999a)

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Shopping	61% / 70% / 64%	
Visit historic sites/churches	33% / 54% / 51%	
Fine dining	34% / 36% / 38%	
Visit museums/art galleries	25% / 31% / 36%	
Visit old homes/mansions	20% / 31% / 36%	
Nature travel/ecotouring	14% / 29% / 23%	
Visit beach resort	14% / 21% / 23%	
Visit casino/gamble	13% / 25% / 22%	
Visit theme parks	17% / 14% / 22%	
Hiking/backpacking/camping	9% / 20% / 18%	
Nightclub/stage shows	12% / 10% / 12%	
Fresh/saltwater fishing	9% / 19% / 12%	
Golfing	4% / 8% / 10%	
Wine tasting/winery tour	4% / 7% / 10%	
Theatre/drama	12% / 4% / 6%	

☐ Inbound Market Area - Never been to Oklahoma
■ Inbound Market Area - Been to Oklahoma
▨ Oklahoma Visitors

*Marketing area includes Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas.

Figure 4: Activities on Last Vacation (Oklahoma Visitors and Residents of Inbound Market Area*) (Source: Plog Research, 1999a)

Visitor's Perceptions of Oklahoma as a Travel Destination

Travelers' awareness and perception of Oklahoma as a travel destination have been measured as opposed to other states including Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Texas, California, and Florida (Plog Research, 1999b). The results indicated that unaided awareness of Oklahoma as a leisure destination was very low (2%) compared with states such as Florida (33%), California (28%), and Colorado (20%). With regard to appeal as a leisure destination, Oklahoma ranked 3.96 on 1-10 scale (1 = not at all appealing; 10 = extremely appealing). Colorado and Texas earned 7.39 and 7.32, respectively, on the same scale. For repeat visitation, half of the respondents (50%) who had visited Oklahoma in the past 12 months indicated that they would probably revisit Oklahoma in the next 12 months. The attributes that drove the likelihood to visit Oklahoma included lots of lakes, good shopping, and a good value for the money. The image and impressions of Oklahoma revolved around the lakes and outdoor activities for those planning to visit Oklahoma, whereas those not planning to visit mentioned flat lands and bad weather as their image of Oklahoma. In the comparison of unaided awareness with advertising awareness, the study revealed that the intent to visit and the awareness of Oklahoma attractions became higher among respondents who had seen any kind of advertisements about Oklahoma tourism.

Background of the Problem

The fundamental product in tourism is the destination experience, and competition therefore, centers on the destination (Ritchie and Crouch, 2000). Image has been acknowledged as a critical stimulus in destination marketing, since it affects the individual's subjective perception and consequent behavior and destination choice (Cai, 2002; Chon, 1992; Echtner and Ritchie, 1993; Um and Crompton, 1990). It is agreed among many tourism researchers and practitioners that the more positive and favorable the image of tourism destinations, the greater the likelihood that potential travelers will visit them (Goodrich, 1977).

In this context, the challenge that Oklahoma's tourism industry is facing now is its unclear image as perceived by the general public. From the 1890s through the 1920s, Oklahoma was considered the land of opportunity because of oil. People came from all parts of the world to seek their fortunes in Oklahoma's teeming oil fields (Kurt, 1999). Several decades later, however, the perception of the state's history became deteriorated and the tourism industry is still battling an image rooted in the state's past 100 years. The basic view of people about Oklahoma is that it is flat, dusty, and windblown (Kurt, 1999). The state's tourism promoters have begun to recognize the important role of the image of Oklahoma in boosting the state's tourism industry, and it became a cash cow generating employment, wages, and state and local tax revenues. This has driven the state to launch and implement the $4 million "Oklahoma Native America" advertising campaign to increase awareness of Oklahoma as a travel destination in the minds of visitors (OTRD, 2003). Despite Oklahoma's advertising campaign in an effort to gain its market share in the tourism market, a new poll indicated that few vacationers would pick Oklahoma as

their leisure destination (Putthoff, 1999). According to the telephone survey conducted by OTRD, only 4% of the respondents would consider Oklahoma as a leisure destination and only 2% said the state comes to mind as a vacation spot. With regard to advertising awareness, only 13% of those surveyed said they remembered seeing advertisements about Oklahoma in the last six months while those who remembered advertisements about Texas and Arkansas were 26% and 25%, respectively (Putthoff, 1999). The survey also revealed that the dry, dusty, and 60-year "Grapes of Wrath" image is still a problem.

One important task to this problem is to build a unique and positive image of Oklahoma in the minds of visitors. To accomplish this, state tourism officials need to know more about the nature of in-state and out-of-state visitor characteristics and how actual and potential visitors perceive local destinations (Uysal, Chen, and Williams, 2000). In doing so, marketing research is of paramount importance in developing various destination marketing strategies including identification of the different types of visitors and development of the tourism product and distribution channel (Buhalis, 2000). Destination image also can be developed through marketing research, which guides promotional activities towards branding and amending the brand values of the region. Despite its critical role, very few studies, however, have been conducted to identify and define the current image of Oklahoma as a travel destination among visitors who actually have visited the state. Conducting an extensive image study of Oklahoma as a travel destination is a critical step to help Oklahoma tourism marketers to improve the image problem and to reposition Oklahoma as a unique and favorable travel destination as opposed to its competitors. This could be done by clearly understanding the current

destination image of Oklahoma as perceived by the visitors and this need led to conduct this study.

Oklahoma must overcome both its lack of image awareness as a travel destination and growing competition among state dentations. Competition is not necessarily limited to different industry segments such as airlines, tour operators, hotels, and other tourism services. As the tourism industry has become globalized, nations, states, cities, and regional areas are taking their role as tourist destinations very seriously, putting considerable effort and funds toward enhancing their touristic image and attractiveness (Ritchie and Crouch, 2000). While the competition among numerous destinations worldwide is escalating, the tourism industry's growth rates display a general decline as the industry matures. This indicates that many destinations will have to secure their own share of the market, a market which is now expanding more slowly (Ritchie and Crouch, 2000). As a result, the need for destinations to create a unique image is more critical than ever. Creating a differentiating destination image has become the basis for survival within a globally competitive marketplace where various destinations battle against one another for luring potential tourists to visit one place instead of another (Morgan and Pritchard, 2001).

Although destination image is a critical stimulus in motivating the tourist, destination image alone cannot be a problem solver to the intensive competition from others. To promote a place to become a recognized destination, remain competitive, and increase its visitation market share, a destination image study should go one step further by combining image building and branding strategies to create a destination branding (Cai, 2002). As such, it can provide a more intensive and rigorous framework for

managing the total reputation, or "identity" of a destination and the manner in which this reputation influences the ability of a destination to attract visitors (Morgan and Pritchard, 2001). In the highly competitive and dynamic global tourism environment, only those destinations which have a clear identity, or "brand" with the core strengths and personality of its product, will remain at the top of consumer minds when they book their holidays (Crockett and Wood, 1999). As Morgan and Pritchard (2001) stated, "in today's highly competitive tourism market, many destinations – from individual resorts to countries – are adopting branding techniques in an effort to differentiate their identities and to emphasize the uniqueness of their product" (p. 11). Destination branding is a relatively new concept and tourism practitioners and academics are still arguing that places are too complex (e.g., too many stakeholders and too little management control) to include in branding discussions (Morgan, Pritchard, and Pride, 2001a). And yet, places are potentially the world's biggest tourism brands and destination brand is becoming one of today's hot topics among destination marketers (Morgan et al., 2001b).

To survive in this competitive tourism market, Oklahoma should recognize the essential value of destination branding as an integrated process of building a unique and strong destination brand, which enables Oklahoma to be positioned differently from its competitors. To brand a destination, an image must be incorporated with various brand associations, which creates a unique brand identity. This brand identity, then, is strengthened by effective marketing activities. Very few studies, however, have attempted to conceptually and empirically investigate this relatively new concept.

To address this problem, this study is designed to develop a model of destination branding by adapting traditional branding theory and practices to the tourism field and

propose a conceptual model of destination branding for the use of branding theory in a tourism destination context. For this purpose, this study is designed to explore the potential of the state of Oklahoma as a successful destination brand. First, to brand Oklahoma as a unique and favorable destination, the current image of Oklahoma as a travel destination must be identified. The building of an image is frequently regarded as one of the main purposes of branding because the image reflects not only the physical/tangible experience of the product or location, but also the intangible value-based attributes (Hankinson, 2001). The components of image to be identified in this study are perceptual/cognitive, unique, and affective images. Equipped with identified destination image and destination brand associations, the next step is to examine how these image associations should be interacted with various marketing activities in order to reposition Oklahoma in the tourism market.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to develop and test a conceptual model, which represents the elements contributing to the building of destination brand. The purposes of the study are two-fold:

(1) To analyze the key elements of the destination brand of Oklahoma (destination brand image and destination brand associations) that a visitor associates with the perception of Oklahoma as a travel destination.

(2) To study the influence exerted by each of these dimensions on a visitor's likelihood of a revisit to Oklahoma and one's willingness to recommend Oklahoma for a future visit to others.

The more specific objectives of this study are to:

1. Identify the underlying dimensions of the destination image of Oklahoma in terms of perceptual/cognitive and unique images perceived by visitors;

2. Explore causal relationships among destination brand images (perceptual/cognitive, unique, and affective images) and the mediational role of overall image on the visitor's behaviors (intentions to revisit Oklahoma and recommend it to others);

3. Determine whether there is a significant difference in perceived destination images (perceptual/cognitive, unique, and affective images) between first time and repeat visitors to Oklahoma;

4. Assess the relationships between different destination brand dimensions (perceptual/cognitive, unique, and affective images) and visitor's demographic profiles;

5. Identify the competitiveness of the image of Oklahoma versus its neighboring states such as Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas by determining the relative strengths and weaknesses in terms of Oklahoma's possessive image in the minds of visitors as opposed to other states; and

6. Propose a destination branding strategy for building a strong, unique, and favorable destination brand for the state of Oklahoma.

Theoretical Contribution

This study contributes to the theoretical advancement in the field of tourism by proposing and empirically testing a structural model to develop a concept of destination branding. It adds to the existing knowledge by creating a model which explains the connections between destination image components and brand structure to investigate destination branding. Its uniqueness lies in creating a practical branding strategy by integrating destination image and associations and the branding concept.

Practical Contribution

From a practical standpoint, the findings of this study are of empirical value in planning strategic marketing programs for Oklahoma as a travel destination. The top priority issue of destination marketing is to understand what determines a place's image (Kotler, Hamlin, Rein, and Haider, 2002). A substantial effort in the tourism industry is aimed at informing prospective tourists and creating a favorable image of a particular tourism destination. Understanding the factors contributing to the destination image of Oklahoma will help design and implement marketing programs for creating, correcting and enhancing destination images and enable destinations to manage their limited resources more effectively in this endeavor. Specifically, the results of the study will aid tourism practitioners in Oklahoma in designing advertising and promotional programs, tailoring images for specific target markets, and positioning tourism destinations.

Definition of Terms

Affective and Cognitive Image: In this study, affective image refers to how an individual judges and evaluates places or things whereas the cognitive image refers to beliefs and knowledge about a place or an object.

Brand Equity: Brand equity is a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, and that add to or subtract from the value provided by products or services to a firm and/or to that firm's customers (Aaker, 1991, p. 15).

Brand Identity: Brand identity reflects the contribution of all brand elements to awareness and image (Keller, 1998). In other words, brand identity provides direction, purpose and meaning for the brand and its centrality for the brand's strategic vision and the driver of brand associations, which are the heart and soul of the brand (Aaker, 1996).

Destination Branding: Destination branding is "selecting a consistent brand element mix to identify and distinguish a destination through positive image building (Cai, 2000).

Induced and Organic Image: An induced image is formulated through exposure to information such as reports in newspapers, periodicals, and television. On the other hand, the organic image is formulated through exposure to persuasive information such as advertisements, promotional campaigns, and news releases.

Unique Image: In this study, unique image provides the destination with a sustainable competitive advantage or unique selling proposition that gives consumers a compelling reason why they should select that particular destination.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 presents an overview of the study and includes a background of the problem, research objectives, and significance of the study. In chapter 2, an interdisciplinary review of the literature pertaining to the concepts of destination image and branding is presented, followed by an introduction of the hypotheses of this study. Chapter 3 provides a summary of methodology including the research design, the survey instrument, the sampling plan, the survey procedure, and various data analyses to be performed. Chapter 4 reports results of the data analysis and hypotheses testing. Chapter 5 presents a summary and discussion of the findings as well as the implications of the results. Theoretical and practical implications of the findings followed by limitations of the study are discussed next. Finally, the chapter concludes with suggestions for future research and concluding comments.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Destination Image Studies

Research of the past two decades has demonstrated that image is a valuable concept in understanding the destination selection process of tourists. A particular research stream investigated the impact of previous visitation (actual behavior) or familiarity on destination image (Ahmed, 1991a; Chon, 1990; Dann, 1996; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991). Some studies examined the relationship between tourists' geographical location (distance) and destination image change over time (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1996; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991). It is generally assumed that distance has an important role in the image formation process. The influence of time, often investigated along with the influence of space, can be categorized into three kinds of studies: first, those which study the influence of length of stay in the image destination (Fakeye and Crompton, 1991); second, works that repeat, after a period of time, previous studies on the same destination (Gartner and Hunt, 1987); and third, those investigating the effect of previous visitation on image formation (Dann, 1996). The correct way of assessing the influence of time on image formation should not be the comparisons of different samples, but longitudinal sampling studies, although this kind of research is

difficult in tourism (Gallarza, Gil, and Calderon, 2002). Table 4 summarizes various

topics covered in the study of tourism destination image.

TABLE 4

LITERATURE REVIEW ON TOURISM DESTINATION IMAGE

Topics Covered	Authors[a]
• Components/dimension of destination image	1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 26, 31, 33, 38, 50
• Destination image formation process	1, 4, 10, 12, 19, 26, 30, 31, 50
• Destination choice process	18, 19, 21, 48, 62, 71
• Variations in the perceptions of image	10, 12, 22, 26, 28, 32, 34, 44, 47, 65
• Positioning of tourism destinations	2, 5, 13, 15, 22, 23, 25, 27, 37, 39, 40, 43, 45, 51, 54, 56, 57, 59, 61, 64, 67, 68, 69
• Measurement of destination image	2, 3, 5, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 29, 30, 33, 34, 38, 41, 42, 44, 50, 53, 55, 63, 64, 66, 67

[a] 1) Gunn (1972); 2) Anderseen & Colberg (1973); 3) Mayo (1973); 4) Hunt (1975); 5) Goodrich (1977); 6) Russel (1980); 7) Russel & Pratt (1980); 8) Russel, Ward, & Pratt (1981); 9) Ward & Russel (1981); 10) Pearce (1982); 11) Keown, Jacobs, & Worthley (1984); 12) Phelps (1986); 13) Haahti (1986); 14) Russel & Snodgrass (1987); 15) Calantone, Benedetto, Hakam, & Bojanic (1989); 16) Embacher & Buttle (1989); 17) Gyte & Phelps (1989); 18) Woodside & Lysonski (1989).

19) Chon (1990 & 1992); 20) Reilly (1990); 21) Um & Crompton (1990); 22) Ahmed (1991a & 1991b); 23) Chon, Weaver, & Kim (1991); 24) Chon & Olsen (1991); 25) Crompton, Fakeye, & Lue (1992); 26) Fakeye & Crompton (1991); 27) Hawes, Taylor, & Hampe (1991); 28) Gartner & Shen (1992); 29) Javalgi, Thomas, & Rao (1992); 30) Echtner & Ritchie (1993); 31) Gartner (1993); 32) Hu & Ritchie (1993); 33) Walmsley & Jenkins (1993); 34) Milman & Pizam (1995); 35) Cha, McCleary, & Uysal (1995); 36) Selby & Morgan (1996); 37) Waitt (1996); 38) Baloglu & Brinberg (1997); 39) Court & Lupton (1997); 40) Faulkner (1997); 41) Go & Zhang (1997); 42) MacKay & Fesenmaier (1997); 43) McWilliams & Crompton (1997); 44) Oppermann (1997); 45) Pearce (1997); 46) Butterfield, Deal, & Kubursi (1998); 47) Oppermann (1998); 48) Sonmez & Graefe (1998); 49) Walmsley & Young (1998); 50) Baloglu & McCleary (1999); 51) Botha, Crompton, & Kim (1999); 52) Chen & Kerstetter (1999); 53) Choi, Chan, & Wu (1999).

54) Buhalis (2000); 55) Coshall (2000); 56) Go & Govers (2000); 57) Kim, Crompton, & Botha (2000); 58) Mihalic (2000); 59) Murphy, Pritchard, & Smith (2000); 60) Oppermann (2000); 61) Sirgy & Su (2000); 62) Tapachai & Waryszak (2000); 63) Uysal, Chen, & Williams (2000); 64) Baloglu & Mangaloglu (2001); 65) Chen & Gursoy (2001); 66) Kotler, Bowen, & Makens (2001); 67) Mykletun, Crotts, & Mykletun (2001); 68) Rittichainuwat, Qu, & Brown (2001); 69) Seddighi, Nuttall, & Theocharous (2001).

Components/Dimensions of Destination Image

Cognitive and Affective Components of Image

Several studies suggested that the image has two components, "cognitive" and "affective" evaluations (Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Gartner, 1993; Walmsley and Jenkins, 1993; Ward and Russel, 1981). Cognitive evaluation refers to beliefs and knowledge about an object whereas affective evaluation refers to feelings about the object (Baloglu and Brinberg, 1995; Gartner, 1993; Walmsley and Jenkins, 1993; Ward and Russel, 1981). Russel and Snodgrass (1987) maintained that people develop affective appraisal or affective quality of places before entering the environment, in the environment, and after leaving the environment, suggesting that affective appraisal is how an individual judges and evaluates places or things as pleasing, exciting, boring, or relaxing to describe the affective quality of places. Russel and his colleagues (Russel, 1980; Russel and Pratt, 1980; Russel and Snodgrass, 1987; Russel, Ward, and Pratt, 1981) proposed a structure that can represent a wide variety of affective responses on physical environments (places). They argued that the affective component should be separated from the perceptual/cognitive component to better understand how people assess environments and places.

Russel and Pratt (1980) conceptualized affective image as a two-dimensional bipolar space that can be defined by eight variables falling in a circumplex (Figure 5): pleasant (arbitrarily set at 0°), exciting (45°), arousing, (90°), distressing (135°), unpleasant (180°), gloomy (225°), sleepy (270°), and relaxing (315°). They suggested that the affective quality of places (environmental perception) can be alternatively defined by two orthogonal bipolar dimensions of pleasant-unpleasant and arousing-sleepy

or exciting-gloomy and relaxing-distressing. Among these dimensions, only two of the scales (pleasant-unpleasant and arousing-sleepy) were theoretically needed to adequately represent the affective space and images (Russel and Pratt, 1980). This was confirmed by several studies, which demonstrated that two dimensions (arousing and pleasant) provided stable and consistent results over samples, different languages, and cultures (Hanyu, 1993; Russel, Ward, and Pratt, 1981; Walmsley and Jenkins, 1993).

Arousing

Distressing   Exciting

Unpleasant   Pleasant

Gloomy   Relaxing

Sleepy
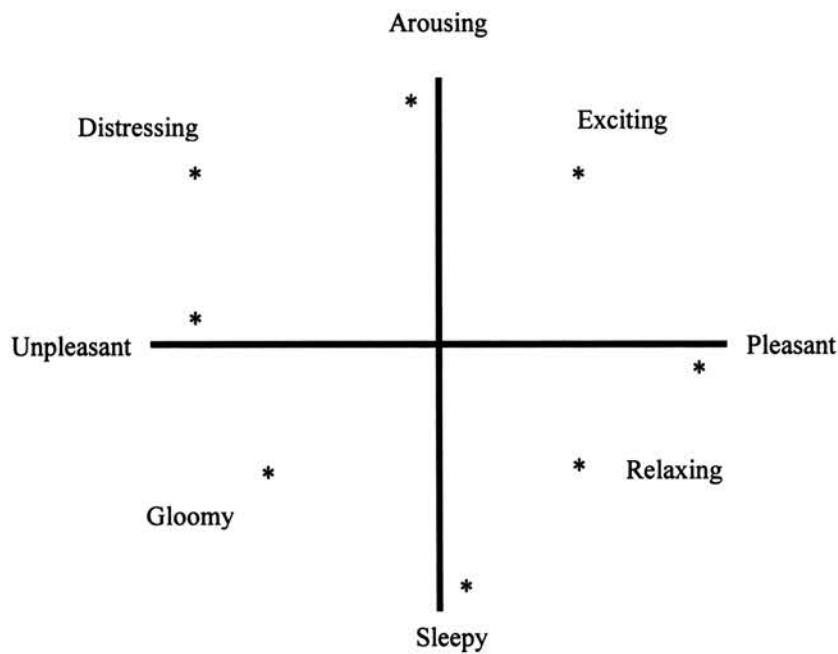
Figure 5: Two Dimensional Representation of a Circumplex Model of the Affective Quality (Appraisal) Attributed to Places/Environments (Source: Russel and Pratt, 1980, p. 313).

The applicability of Russel's (1980) two dimensions of pleasant and arousing was examined by several researchers. Walmsley and Jenkins (1993), for instance, confirmed Russel's (1980) two dimensions as a fundamental mode of environmental evaluation in their image study. The study applied personal construct theory using a repertory grid

technique to identify the appraisive images of the north coast of New South Wales. Another example can be found in Baloglu and Brinberg's (1997) image study of Mediterranean countries. The authors measured the affective quality attributed to 11 Mediterranean countries by adopting Russel's two-dimensional bipolar space. Respondents were asked to evaluate 11 countries as a tourism destination on each of Russel and Pratt's (1980) four adjectives (pleasant-unpleasant; relaxing-distressing; arousing-sleepy; and exciting-gloomy) on a 7-point bipolar scale with 1 as pleasant and exciting, 7 as unpleasant and gloomy. The results supported that Russel and his colleagues proposed affective space and image structure can be applied to the tourism destination countries by identifying distinctive affective images of each country in the study. Egypt and Morocco, for instance, fell between the arousing and exciting dimensions suggesting that respondents perceive these places as arousing and exciting. The authors concluded that both negative and positive affective image space along with cognitive components of the image can be used as a marketing tool to correct or modify the negative affective image and enhance the positive affective image as a unique positioning of the place.

Designative and Appraisive Images

Two types of image, "designative" and "appraisive" images have commonly been drawn in geography literature. Walmsley and Jenkins (1993) made a distinction between these two images by drawing the fact that the former refer to an individual's knowledge about a place or environment while the latter are concerned with how individuals feel about various places in the environment. In this sense, designative images are similar to

the notion of perceptual/cognitive component of image which involves the knowledge about the place's objective attributes. Appraisive images, on the other hand, correspond to a definition of affective component of image which suggests an individual's feelings about an object or environment. In their study, Walmsley and Jenkins (1993) identified six key evaluative constructs derived from appraisive images held by tourists visiting the North Coast of New South Wales. The six evaluative constructs identified in the study are commercialized–not commercialized, appealing/attractive–unappealing/unattractive, quiet–busy, trendy–not trendy, boring–interesting, and relaxed pace of life–fast pace of life. These constructs were used in the study of Walmsley and Young (1998) who attempted to investigate the applicability of two components of image, arousing-sleepy and pleasant-unpleasant, at the international and local levels. The study found a similar result as identified by Walmsley and Jenkins' study in 1993 in the case of international places but less resemblance for local places. The authors accounted for these results by inferring that the application of two components of image would work much more profitably when used in larger scales (international places) rather than at local level to show the image differences in various destinations. They concluded that there exists a common structure or schema of evaluations that can be used to differentiate between tourism destinations at the regional and international levels (except at the local level).

Destination Image Formation Process

Understanding how touristic images are formed can assist destination promoters in developing appropriate destination images for selected target markets (Gartner, 1993). Gartner (1993) further argued that destination promoters without an image formation

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strategy will find it increasingly difficult to maintain, increase, or develop their unique share of the tourism market. Fakeye and Crompton (1991) conceptualized destination image formation as evolving from an organic image, through an induced image, to a complex image which was based on Gunn's (1972) seven phase of a travel experience along with organic and induced images (Figure 6). The model identified the relationships between organic, induced and complex images and their roles in destination selection. According to the model, a prospect visitor develops organic images of potential destinations and if a desire to take a vacation emerges, he or she involves in an active information search. As a result of this process, induced images are then developed which moves the visitor on to the next stage of evaluating alternative destinations benefits and images before the final decision on choice of destinations. A more complex image arises resulting from actual visitation to the area.
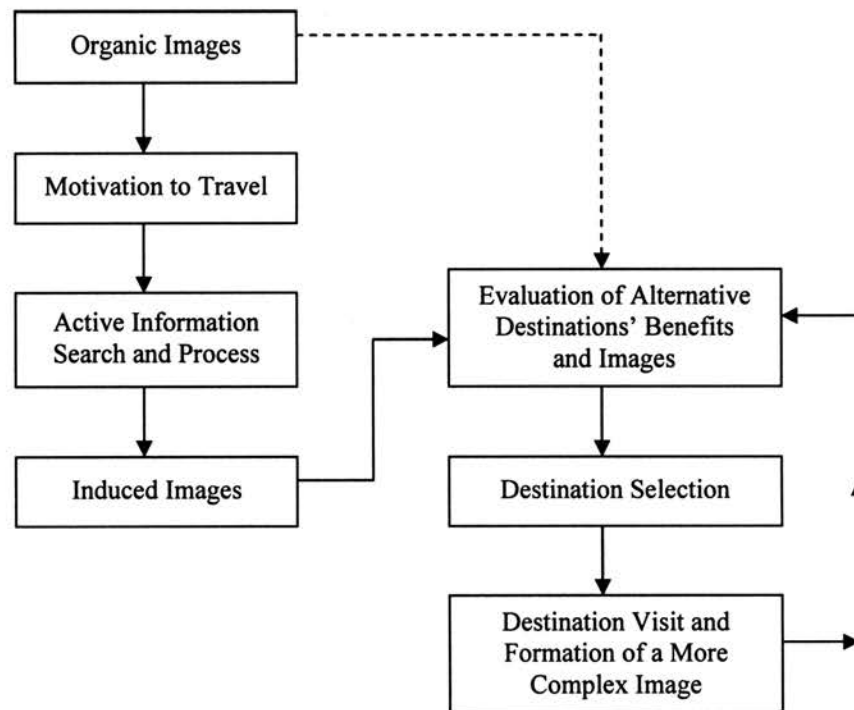
Figure 6: A General Framework of Destination Image Formation Process (Source: Fakeye and Crompton, 1991, p. 11).

Echtner and Ritchie (1993) proposed the conceptual framework for destination image consisting of three continuums: (1) attribute-holistic; (2) functional-psychological; and (3) common-unique. The authors maintained that the attribute-holistic continuum in the context of destination image is composed of perceptions of individual attributes (e.g., climate, accommodation facilities, friendliness of the people) as well as more holistic impressions (mental pictures or imagery) of the place. Each of these components may include functional (tangible and directly observable) attributes such as historical sites, beaches, infrastructure and psychological (abstract) attributes such as friendliness, safety, culture, relaxing, and general feelings. These functional and psychological characteristics may be perceived as individual attributes or as more holistic impressions.

Gartner (1993) viewed the image formation process as a continuum of separate agents that act independently or in some combination to form a destination image unique to the individual. The eight image formation agents identified by Gartner (1993) are *overt induced I, overt induced II, covert induced I, covert induced II, autonomous, unsolicited organic, solicited organic,* and *organic.* The first five agents including overt induced I/II, covert induced I/II, and autonomous are formed from sources not directly associated with a destination area such as TV/radio/print media advertising (overt induced I), tour operators/wholesalers (overt induced II), celebrity/spokesperson (covert induced I), articles/reports (covert induced II), and documentaries/movies/news articles (autonomous). The latter three agents, unsolicited/solicited organic and organic, are derived from individual contact on a regular basis. Examples include dinner with friends or discussions during business meetings (unsolicited organic), word-of-mouth advertising (solicited organic), and information from individuals based on previous travel to the area

(organic). The organic image formation has the highest credibility as it is based on personal experience (Gartner, 1993). In an attempt to conceptualize the factors that influence its image formation, Baloglu and McCleary (1999) provided a framework of destination image formation by proposing relationships among the different levels of evaluations within its structure (cognitive, affective, and global). The general framework presented by the authors illustrated influences of personal (psychological/social) and stimulus (information sources/previous experience/distribution) factors on destination image (perceptual/cognitive, affective, and global). The path analysis revealed that perceptual/cognitive evaluations are influenced by variety (amount) of information sources, type of information sources, age and education. In addition, sociopsychological tourism motivations are also bound to be significant impact on affective evaluations.

Destination Choice Process

The process of how individuals make actual destination choices has been of particular interest by some researchers with emphasis on traveler's behavior such as consumer perception, consumer attitude, and consumer satisfaction (Chon, 1990, 1992; Um and Crompton, 1990; Woodside and Lysonski, 1989). Um and Crompton (1990) conceptualized a cognitive model of pleasure travel destination choices with respect to the role of traveler's attitudes in the pleasure travel destination choice. The model in Figure 7 describes a two-stage process: the first stage as the evolution of a evoked set of destinations from an awareness set and at the second stage, a travel destination is selected from the alternative destination in the evoked set. The three concepts in the model are external inputs, cognitive constructs, and internal inputs. External inputs are consisted of

travel information from print media (symbolic stimuli), word-of-mouth from friends or relatives (social stimuli), and actual visitation to the destination (significative stimuli). Internal inputs are derived from sociopsychological sets of a potential traveler such as sociodemographics, values, and motivations. These external and internal inputs are then integrated into the awareness set of destinations, which are represented as cognitive constructs. It is concluded that attitude influenced traveler's selection of a final destination.
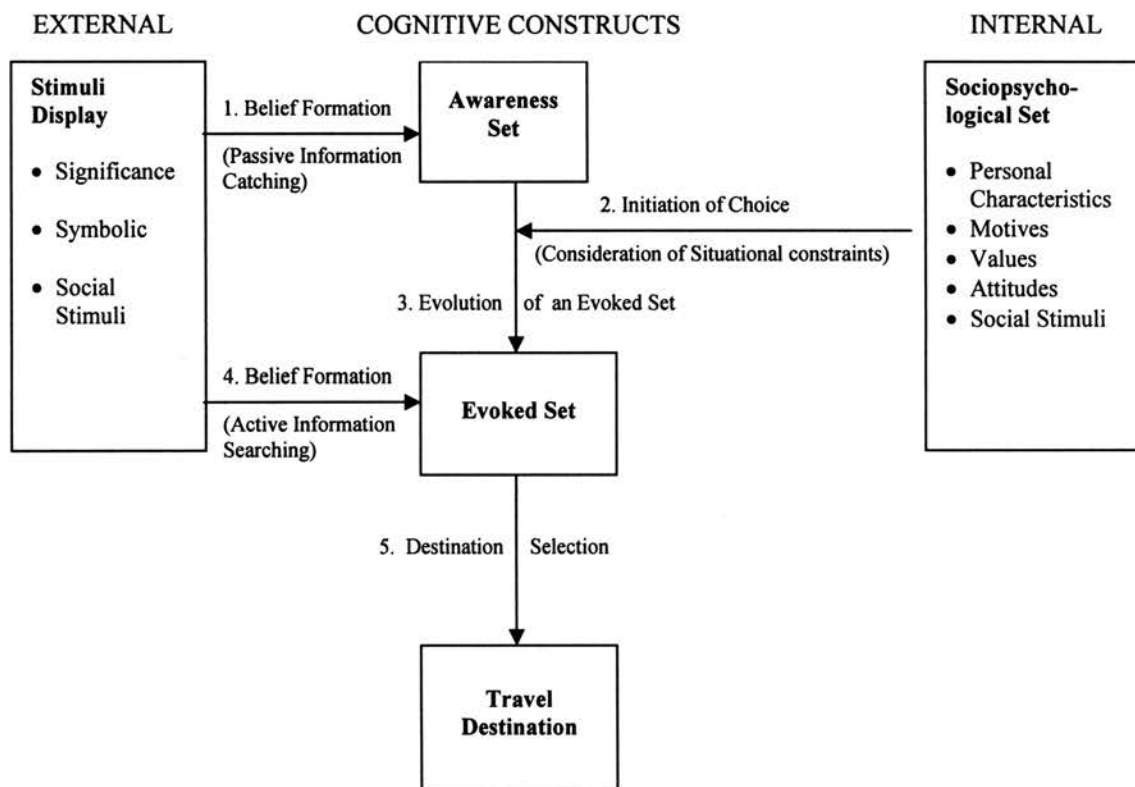
Figure 7: A Model of the Pleasure Travel Destination Choice Process (Source: Um and Crompton, 1990, p. 435).

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Woodside and Lysonskin (1989) presented a general model of traveler leisure destination awareness and choice (Figure 8). According to the model, traveler's awareness is influenced by various marketing activities (e.g., product design, pricing, advertising/personal selling, and channel decisions) and traveler's characteristics (e.g., previous destination experience, demographic profiles, lifestyles, and value system). Depending how travelers form awareness of a destination, the specific feelings (affective associations), positive and negative, linked with the destination are considered by travelers. These affective associations lead to traveler's destination preferences, which have been found to be associated strongly with the traveler's perceived likelihood of visiting a specific destination within a specific time period (intention to visit). Actual destination choice is then affected by both intention to visit and situational variables.
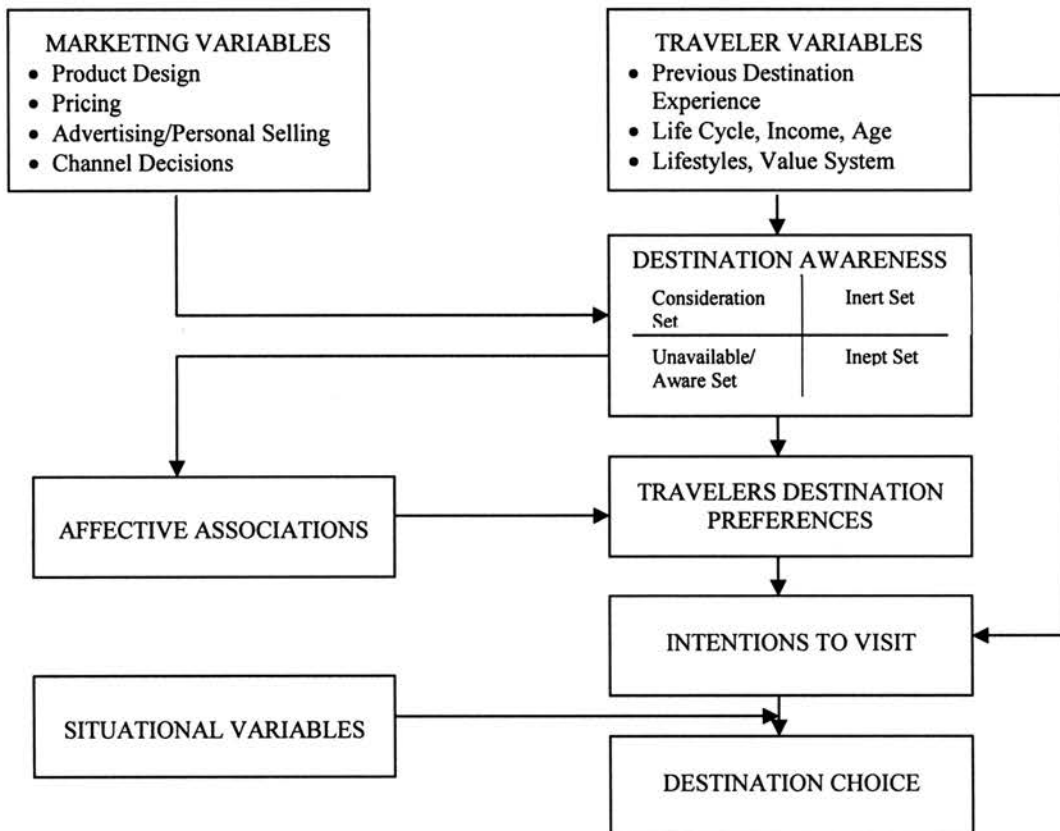
Figure 8: General Model of Traveler Leisure Destination Awareness and Choice (Source: Woodside and Lysonski, 1989, p. 9).

Chon (1990) made contributions to the understanding of traveler's destination choice process by presenting an integrated model of destination image and the traveler buying process based on an interrelationship of destination image, traveler buying process, traveler satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and the evaluative congruity approach (Figure 9). Travel motivation driven from "push" and "pull" factors is the top of the model. A primary image of the destination is constructed at the point when the push and pull factors co-exist. It is argued that the individual traveler's initial decision to travel to the destination is made based on two elements: the attractiveness of the destination perceived by the individuals and the perceived beliefs and likelihood of accomplishing individual's needs and wants (Chon, 1990). The individual's accumulated images of the destination can be further modified through an extensive information search process which can be obtained through various information channels (e.g., travel literature, advertising, media, and word-of-mouth from friends). This process can influence determining his/her performance expectancy of the destination. For example, negative performance expectancy is more likely to abort the initial decision to take a trip to the destination than positive performance expectancy. The traveler's previous image of the destination will be restructured at the recollection stage through the process of evaluating his/her experience of the actual visitation to the destination. Depending on the degree of satisfaction and dissatisfaction resulting from the evaluation process, the visitors may reinforce his/her general images about the destination as positive or negative.

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┌─────────────────────────┐         ┌─────────────────────────────┐
│  "Push" to Travel       │         │  "Pull" to Travel           │
│  • Different Needs       │         │  • Attractiveness of        │
│                         │         │    Destination              │
└─────────────────────────┘         └─────────────────────────────┘
                         │          │
                         └────┬─────┘
                              ▼
              ┌───────────────────────────┐
      ┌──────▶│     Travel Motivation     │
      │       └───────────────────────────┘
      │                   │
      │                   ▼
      │       ┌───────────────────────────┐
      │       │    Construction of        │
      │       │    Primary Image          │
      │       └───────────────────────────┘
      │                   │
      │                   ▼
      │       ┌───────────────────────────┐
      │       │    Tentative Decision     │
      │       │       to Travel           │
      │       └───────────────────────────┘
      │                   │
      │                   ▼
      │  ┌──────────────────────────────────────────┐
      │  │ Anticipation:   Accumulated Images        │◀──┐
      │  │                 Information Search         │   │
      │  │                 Modification of Image      │   │
      │  │                 Performance Expectancy     │   │
      │  └──────────────────────────────────────────┘   │
      │                   │                              │
      │                   ▼                              │
┌──────────────┐  ┌───────────────────────────┐         │
│ Consider     │◀─│     Decision to Travel     │         │
│ Alternative  │  └───────────────────────────┘         │
│ Destination  │              │                          │
└──────────────┘              ▼                          │
              ┌───────────────────────────┐              │
              │        Travel to           │              │
              └───────────────────────────┘              │
                          │                               │
                          ▼                               │
              ┌───────────────────────────┐              │
              │      Participation         │              │
              └───────────────────────────┘              │
                          │                               │
                          ▼                               │
              ┌───────────────────────────┐              │
              │      Return Home           │              │
              └───────────────────────────┘              │
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                          ▼                               │
    ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────┐    │
    │ Recollection: Evaluation of Performance Outcome│    │
    └──────────────────────────────────────────────┘    │
                          │                               │
                          ▼                               │
    ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────┐    │
    │ Evaluative Congruity: Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction│  │
    └──────────────────────────────────────────────┘    │
                          │                               │
                          ▼                               │
    ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────┐    │
    │      Further Modification of Image            │◀───┘
    └──────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Figure 9: A Model of Destination Image and Traveler Buying Behavior (Source: Chon, 1990, p. 6).

Variations in the Perceptions of Image

Familiarity (Previous Visitation)

Some empirical image studies have presented a considerable number of variations in the perceptions of destination image. These variations include actual or previous visitation (familiarity) (Baloglu, 2001; Dann, 1996; Hu and Ritchie, 1993; Milman and Pizam, 1995; Pearce, 1982; Phelps, 1986), the amount of touring experience (Ahmed, 1991), geographical location or distance (Hu and Ritchie, 1993; Hunt, 1975), image differences between prospective, first-time, and repeat visitors (Ahmed, 1991a, 1991b; Chon, 1990; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Hu and Ritchie, 1993; Milman and Pizam, 1995; Oppermann, 1998), and image changes over time (Gartner and Hunt, 1987; Gartner and Shen, 1992).

Due to its important role in the tourist destination selection process, the concept of familiarity with a destination has been of particular interest in destination image studies. Familiarity with a destination is influenced by various factors such as geographic distance, previous personal visitation experience, and the level of overall knowledge about a destination (Hu and Ritchie, 1993). Hu and Ritchie (1993) measured the influence of an individual's familiarity with each destination (Hawaii, Australia, Greece, France, and China) with the perceived attractiveness of the destination. In this study, they identified previous visitation as one major determinant of familiarity with a destination by providing the results of people who have previously visited the destination. The results indicated more favorable perceptions and impressions about various attributes than those who did not have previous visitation experience. Milman and Pizam's study in 1995 supported this result that people who have previously visited Central Florida and

became familiar with the place had a more positive image of the destination, were more interested, and likely to revisit it than those who have not been to Central Florida. Gyte and Phelps (1989) also confirmed that a previous visit played a critical role in attracting tourists to revisit the destination. Oppermann (1998) extended the notion of repeat visitation as an indicator of the current position of the destination on the life-cycle curve by presenting the concepts of destination threshold potential (TP) and cumulative travel experience (CTE). Unlike other researchers who have commonly used previous visitation as a major dimension of measuring familiarity with a destination (Ahmed, 1991a; Dann, 1996; Milman and Pizam, 1995), Baloglu (2001) introduced a destination familiarity index, which incorporates not only experiential (previous experience) but also informational familiarity dimension. The findings supported a positive relationship between the level of familiarity and perceptions of destinations, which was also demonstrated by other similar studies.

Pre- and Post-Trip Experiences

Several researchers have attempted a longitudinal approach by comparing previous visitation as travelers' pre- and post-trip experiences (Chon, 1990; Phelps, 1986; Pearce, 1982). Chon (1990) examined the modification process of travelers destination image through the analysis of travel to and return travel of American tourists traveling to Korea. The findings indicated that post-visit American tourists (return travel) had more favorable perceptions of Korea than the image held by American tourists traveling to Korea. The results also suggested that significant destination image modifications occurred as a result of the traveler's visit to that destination. Phelps's study (1986) also

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showed a similar result as discussed by Chon (1990), indicating that a perceptual change took place after actual visitation to the destinations. Fakeye and Crompton (1991), on the other hand, compared the image differences between prospective (nonvisitors), first-time, and repeat visitors to the lower Rio Grande Valley. The study found significant differences among the three subsamples on six image factors including social opportunities and attractions, natural and cultural amenities, accommodations and transportation, physical amenities and recreation activities, and bars and evening entertainment. In addition, the study identified that the length of stay of visitors between first-timers and repeaters had an impact on two of the image factors, social opportunities and attraction factor and infrastructures/foods/friendly people factor. The impact of distance on image between those groups, however, was not found in the study. Another study conducted by Oppermann (1997) further elaborated insights of repeat visitation by analyzing different visitation patterns of first-time and repeat visitors to New Zealand. The results indicated significant differences with regard to composition and travel behavior of first-time and repeat visitors. For example, first-time visitors were more likely to engage in more activities and explore more places during their stay in New Zealand than did repeat visitors. On the contrary, repeat visitors were visiting considerably less destinations and attractions despite their longer stay in New Zealand, leading to a conclusion that the impact of repeat visitors was more concentrated on few locations and attractions than the ones of first-time visitors.

Image Change Over Time

A few researchers investigated the elements that cause image (perceptions) change of a destination in the minds of visitors. To determine whether any image change had occurred over time, Gartner and Hunt (1987) analyzed changes in the state of Utah's image between 1971 and 1983 by replicating a 1971 study conducted by Hunt. As a whole, nonresident's images for recreational activities and attractions offered by the state of Utah were improved compared to the results of 1971 study. The authors attributed the general image improvement of Utah over the 12-year period to advertising and promotion, and the overall improvement in image of the West as a preferred living environment during the last decade. Image also can be changed by second-party sources (e.g., media) which has been termed autonomous change agent. The autonomous change agent which is not under the direct control of the destination may be the only agent capable of changing an area's image dramatically in a short period of time (Gartner and Shen, 1992). The People's Republic of China (PRC), for instance, has once experienced a dramatic drop in tourism due to the Tiananmen Square conflict. The assessment of image change of PRC held by visitors resulting from this conflict was documented by Gartner and Shen (1992). The results found a significant decline in China's tourism image on some attraction and service attributes as a result of the conflict but not all components of the PRC's image changed equally.

Positioning of Tourism Destinations

As international tourism markets have continued to grow and competition among various destinations has become intense, the concept of positioning has frequently

articulated in destination image study in the context of identifying strong and unique image to differentiate a destination from competitors to meet target visitor's needs (Botha et al., 1999; Buhalis, 2000; Calantone et al., 1989; Chon et al., 1991; Crompton et al., 1991; Go and Govers, 2000; Mihalic, 2000; Mykletun, Crotts, and Mykletun, 2001; Uysal et al., 2000). Crompton et al. (1991) described a six-stage process that was used to develop a position for the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas as a long-stay winter destination. The six-stage process proposed by the authors is as follows:

1) Identify the competitive destinations;

2) Identify potential visitor's perceptions of the destination of interest's strengths and weaknesses;

3) Identify the benefits sought by potential visitors in the target market;

4) Identify potential visitor's perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of preferred competitive destinations;

5) Determine how potential visitors perceive the destination relative to its competitors; and,

6) Select the optimum position for the destination.

Through this six-stage process, the study identified two positioning attributes such as low cost of living in the area and opportunities for socially interacting with other people, which may differentiate the Valley from other competitors in the minds of visitors. The authors concluded that effective positioning can be accomplished by matching benefits provided by a destination with benefits sought by a target market.

By using correspondence analysis, Calantone et al. (1989) examined positions of Singapore and other Pacific Rim countries and how these differed across places of origin.

The analysis revealed that respondents from both America and Japan perceive Hong Kong as offering a usual cultural experience and entertaining night life whereas Bali and Taiwan are perceived as offering good shopping and tourist facilities but less night life. It is suggested that positioning strategy of a tourism destination should be tailored to different tourist generating markets.

Uysal et al. (2000) attempted to identify positioning of Virginia in the domestic tourism market as opposed to competitive states in the Mid-Atlantic region of the USA by determining Virginia's relative strengths and weaknesses, and unique, differentiating characteristics of Virginia. To accomplish this, the authors created a "perceptual map" which reveals the similarities and differences in how 10 states including Virginia were rated on the 48 destination attributes. It was revealed that Virginia stands out among other competitive states in the quality of its natural resources, and historical heritage, and has a favorable reputation as a clean, attractive state with high quality services and well-maintained facilities.

The market segmentation process is a critical component of positioning tourist destinations in order to market distinct groups of visitors that best maximize value to the destination. This has been evaluated by several researchers (Cha et al., 1995; Kotler et al., 2001; Mykletun et al., 2001). Market segmentation involves dividing the market into distinct and homogenous groups in terms of geographic, sociodemographic, psychographic and/or behavioral characteristics (Kotler et al., 2001). Nationality, household income, education, age, travel party composition and trip purposes are often selected as alternative approaches to market segmentation to predict visitor spending patterns, visitor satisfaction and probability to repeat visitation measures (Mykletun et al.,

2001). Mykletun et al. (2001) identified the importance of market segments coming to the island of Bornholm in the Baltic Sea on the basis of information such as perceptions of Bornholm as a travel destination, the amount of money spent per person, the evaluation of value for money, and the probability of repeat visit.

Botha et al. (1999) attempted to integrate a positioning approach into a model of the tourist's destination choice decision process in the context of Sun/Lost City, South Africa. Central to a positioning model presented by the authors is the concept of a choice set comprised of *awareness set, initial consideration set,* and *late consideration set.* Three types of criteria, including personal motivations (push factors), destination attributes (pull factors), and situational inhibitors, are then used to make decisions at each point as to which destinations should filter through to the subsequent choice set stage, based on the growing information base (passive information acquisition and active information search) that accrues as the decision process evolves. The differentiating personal motivators identified in the study were socialization/bonding and escape from crowds and the unique destination attributes were entertainment, gaming, indoor recreational activities, and golfing. The situational constraints that most inhibited visitation to the ideal destination and to the primary competitor destinations of Sun/Lost City were found to be the cost of traveling to host destinations and the difficulty of synchronizing schedules with companions to go there. These constraints represent elements of competitive advantage for Sun/Lost City. Finally, the authors suggested that destination marketers should formulate these key positioning elements for positioning strategy of Sun/Lost City focusing on a small number of attributes and consistently reiterating them.

Measurement of Destination Image

Unstructured Measurement Techniques

Echtner and Ritchie (1993) used unstructured methodologies to capture the holistic components of destination image along both functional and psychological dimensions. Based on previous research in the image study, a series of open-ended questions was developed to measure the holistic and unique components of image. One example of their open-ended questions described as "What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of XXX as a vacation destination? (functional holistic component)" (Etchner and Ritchie, 1993, p. 5). The results indicated that the responses to open-ended image questions provided the more holistic functional and psychological characteristics of the destination image as opposed to the scale items, which focused attention on the common, attribute-based functional and psychological components of the image. They argued that a combination of structured (e.g. scale items) and unstructured methodologies (e.g., open-ended questions) must be used to fully capture the components of destination image – attribute, holistic, functional, psychological, common, and unique. Reilly (1990) proposed a technique of free elicitation of descriptive adjectives as an alternative technique of the multidimensional scaling (MDS) and semantic differential scaling (SDS). He maintained that compared to the more complicated image measurement methods in previous studies, free elicitation data collection and analysis procedures provides a relatively simple and inexpensive way to determining the image that customers or potential customers hold of a tourist product.

Several researchers demonstrated the appropriateness of repertory grid technique as an alternative to overcome the obstacle of the use of structured questionnaires for

image research (Coshall, 2000; Embacher and Buttle, 1989; Walmsley and Jenkins, 1993). In their article, Embacher and Buttle (1989) adopted repertory grid technique to investigate Austria's image as a summer vacation destination for English tourists. The pattern of responses showed that the respondents discriminated summer vacation destinations along with the constructs they used. The method suggested that while some potential tourists viewed Austria favorably (impressive scenery, fresh air, excellent food, etc.), others viewed the country more negatively (lack of beach facilities, insufficient activities for children, cost, etc.). The authors concluded that the repertory grid is a more appropriate methodology for identifying salient image constructs and to study images of destinations in detail. Likewise, Coshall (2000) presented that the repertory grid technique as a tool for eliciting pertinent components of tourist's images of London's museums and art galleries by permitting respondents to use their own language to describe what image components are relevant to them. In this article, the author stressed the advantage of using repertory grid analysis over other structured techniques (e.g., bipolar scales and Likert-type scales) by arguing that repertory grids enable the researcher to see the constructions of the environment that are personally relevant to the survey respondents and therefore, that are meaningful criteria for analysis of individual's decision making. Similarly, Walmsley and Jenkins (1993) utilized personal constructs (repertory grid) to assess appraisive (affective) images of a coastal region in Australia. The principle component analysis of responses delineated two major evaluative constructs: pleasing and arousing.

Structured Measurement Techniques

The most commonly used structured techniques for measuring destination image are either a semantic differential scale (Ahmed, 1991a, 1991b; Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Crompton, 1979; Driscoll, Lawson, and Niven, 1994; Gartner, 1989; Goodrich, 1977) or a Likert-scale (Calantone et al., 1989; Echtner and Ritchie, 1993; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Javalgi et al., 1992; Milman and Pizam, 1995; Pearce, 1982; Phelps, 1986). Semantic differential scaling (SDS) in measuring destination image uses respondent's ratings of various destinations on bipolar scales. These results are then combined into a profile where the means of each destination are compared on each of the dimensions. The resultant profile is used to give the analyst a picture of the relative strong and weak points of the destination of interest (Reilly, 1990). Baloglu and Brinberg (1997) adapted four bipolar scales (arousing-sleepy, pleasant-unpleasant, exciting-gloomy, and relaxing-distressing) originally developed by Russel and his colleagues (1981) to compare U.S. international pleasure traveler's affective image of four Mediterranean destinations – Turkey, Egypt, Greece, and Italy. Reilly (1990), on the other hand, pointed out several shortcomings of the SDS approach. He maintained that the SDS involves the complex data collection by requiring ratings of each destination on each scale. Another disadvantage is that the image dimensions revealed may be those imposed by the researcher rather than those that are salient to the respondent.

In summary, structured measurement techniques are frequently used because they are easy to administer, simple to code, and results are easily analyzed using sophisticated statistical techniques. The drawback is they do not incorporate holistic aspects of image and due to focusing on attribute dimensions of image, it tends to force the respondent to

think about the product image in terms of the attributes specified (Jenkins, 1999). Unstructured measurement techniques, on the other hand, are appropriate when capturing the holistic components of destination image and reducing the likelihood of missing important image dimensions or components. The downsides of these techniques are level in detail provided by respondents is highly variable while statistical analyses of the results are limited (Jenkins, 1999). To overcome disadvantages of the two measurement techniques, many researchers agree upon the use of a combination of structured and unstructured methodologies to capture the complex nature of destination image (Baloglu and Mangaloglu, 2001; Choi et al., 1999; Dann, 1996; Echtner and Ritchie, 1993; Embacher and Buttle, 1989; MacKay and Fesenmaier, 1997; Milamn and Pizam, 1995; Reilly, 1990; Tapachai and Waryszak, 2000).

Multivariate Statistical Techniques

In general, multivariate techniques have predominated in destination image study because they allow for determination of the latent multidimensional structure of the destination image (Gallarza et al., 2002). From all the multivariate methods, the most commonly employed for measuring destination image are information reduction techniques: Multidimensional scaling and factor analysis (Gallarza et al., 2002). Factor analysis (including principal component analysis) has commonly been used to combine the various attributes of image into a smaller set of factors that are deemed to represent the underlying image dimensions of a place (Ahmed, 1991a; Crompton et al., 1992; Echtner and Ritchie, 1993; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Javalgi et al., 1992; Pearce, 1992; Walmsley and Jenkins, 1993; Walmsley and Young, 1998).

Multidimensional scaling (MDS) is a global or generic name for a series of computer-based statistical techniques that attempt to display graphically the underlying structure or dimensions of empirically obtained data (specifically, perceptual and/or preference data) (Goodrich, 1977). In particular, the MDS approach has frequently been used to evaluate positioning of multiple tourism destinations in order to help assess the effectiveness of product positioning efforts (Anderseen and Colberg, 1973; Baloglu and Berinberg, 1997; Gartner, 1989; Goodrich, 1977; Haahti, 1986; Mayo, 1977). Through MDS analysis, Gartner (1989) compared the image nonresidents held of various recreation products and activities available within the states of Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, and Montana. The results indicated that the image nonresidents have of Montana and Wyoming is remarkably similar and interchangeable with respect to the activity and attraction stimuli these two states provide. Colorado, on the other hand, appeared to have more of a multidimensional image than either Wyoming or Montana. The author concluded that MDS analysis is a useful tool for destination marketers to develop more sophisticated promotional campaigns by tailoring comparative advantages for specific products and helping to identify themes or messages that support underlying product attributes.

Several researchers have applied importance-performance analysis (IPS) to determine competitiveness of a place versus other destinations by examining its relative strengths and weakness, unique and differentiating characteristics of the destination in the form of importance-performance grids (Uysal et al., 2000; Chon et al., 1991). Using IPS approach, Chon et al. (1991) demonstrated as to how the IPA method helped Norfolk discover the features that were important to Virginia travelers as a group. They

concluded that IPA is a valuable function of showing the differences in the various markets within the state and thus can be utilized as a detailed market segment analysis.

Recently, a path analysis has been used in the tourism studies to test causal relationships among various variables with respect destination image. Chen and Gursoy (2001) conducted a path analysis to examine causal relationships between past trip experience and tourist's decision-making behavior such as the use of choice preferences. By using path analysis, Baloglu and McCleary (1999) demonstrated causal relationships between different variables including among and type of information sources, age and education, and perceptual/cognitive evaluations. Other multivariate analytical approaches used include discriminant analysis (Javalgi et al., 1992; Phelps, 1986), correspondence analysis for analyzing positioning of tourist destinations across different origin segments (Calantone et al., 1989), and cluster analysis (Embacher and Buttle, 1989). Figure 10 illustrates a classification of empirical studies of destination image with various multivariate analytical approaches.

Measurement Tools	Analytical Tools

Unstructured Measurement Technique

Free Elicitation / Open-ended

Baloglu & Mangaloglu (2001)
Choi, Chan, & Wu (1999); Dann (1996)
Echtner & Ritchie (1993)
Embacher & Buttle (1989); Reilly (1990)
MacKay & Fesenmaier (1997)
Tapachai & Waryszak (2000)

Focus Groups

Echtner & Ritchie (1993)
Fakeye & Crompton (1991)
Milamn & Pizam (1995)

Repertory Grid

Coshall (2000); Embacher & Buttle (1989)

Structured Measurement Technique

Semantic Differential Scaling (SDS)

Ahmed (1991); Baloglu & Brinberg (1997); Crompton (1979); Driscoll et al. (1994); Gartner (1989); Goodrich (1977)

Likert Scaling

Calantone et al. (1989); Echtner & Ritchie (1993); Fakeye & Crompton (1991); Javalgi et al. (1992); Milman & Pizam (1995); Pearce (1982); Phelps (1986)

Principal Components Analysis

Ahmed (1991); Baloglu & McCleary (1999); Crompton (1979); Crompton, Fakeye & Chi-chuan (1992); Echtner & Ritchie (1993); Fakeye & Crompton (1991); Opperman (1997); Pearce (1992); Javalgi, Thomas & Rao (1992); Walmsley & Jenkins (1993)

Multidimensional Scaling (MDS)

Anderseen & Colberg (1973); Baloglu & Brinberg (1997); Haahti (1986); Gartner (1989); Goodrich (1977)

Discriminant Analysis

Javalgi et al. (1992); Phelps (1986)

Correspondence Analysis

Calantone et al. (1989)

Cluster Analysis

Embacher & Buttle (1989)

Importance-Performance Analysis

Chon, Weaver, & Kim (1991);
Go & Zhang (1997)

Path Analysis

Baloglu and McCleary (1999)
Chen & Gursoy (2001)

Figure 10: Review of Various Techniques for Measuring Destination Image

Brand and Brand Equity

The Concept of "Brand" and "Brand Equity" in Marketing Literature

The way consumers perceive brands has become a key determinant of long-term business-consumer relationships, branding and brand management have been one of the leading areas of focus for both marketing academics and practitioners (Erdem, 1998; Fournier, 1998; Hankinson, 2001; Kirmani, Sood, and Bridges, 1999; Low and Lamb, 2000; Morris, 1996). Brands as we think of them today were not a product of the 20th century but they actually evolved out of the Industrial Revolution as a means for a manufacturer to identify itself as the maker of a certain product (Gilmore, 2002a; Slater, 2002). The brand then became the identifier to distinguish the goods of one producer from those of another.

According to Keller (1998), the value of brands results from the different roles that brands play to both consumers and firms. To consumers, brands help consumers to simplify their product decisions by identifying the source or maker of numerous products in the market. It generates lower search costs for products by reducing additional thought or processing of information to make a product decision. The meaning of brands embeds quite profound promise, bond or pact between consumers and the maker of product. By purchasing the brand, consumers offer their trust and loyalty with the implicit understanding that the brand will provide them utility through consistent product performance and appropriate pricing, promotion, and distribution programs and actions. Other values of brands are risk reducer, symbolic device, and signal of quality. In summary, brands take on unique, personal meanings to consumers that facilitate their

day-to-day activities and enrich their lives (Keller, 1998, p. 9). The meaning of brands is also valuable to firms in various ways. First of all, brands are functioning as an identifier by simplifying product handling or tracing for the firm. Given that the brand name can be protected through registered trademarks, a brand offers the firm legal protection for unique features or aspects of the product. Another important value is brands can create loyal consumers, who become satisfied with a level of quality endowed by the brand and as a result, those loyal consumers are likely to continuity to buy the product. This brand loyalty can be a powerful means to a competitive advantage over other competing brands which makes it difficult for other firms to enter the market (Keller, 1998). In addition, the brand is used primarily as a statement of consistent quality, which the producer is prepared to guarantee (de Chernatony and McWilliam, 2001).

Aaker (1991) defines a brand as "a distinguishing name and/or symbol (such as a logo, trademark, or package design) intended to identify the goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers, and to differentiate those goods or services from those of competitors" (p. 7). The key to branding then is that consumers perceive difference among brands in a product category. In today's aggressive marketplace, brands are not just goods or service. As Clifton and Maughan (2000) pointed, "everything and everyone is capable of becoming a brand." Examples include physical goods (e.g., IBM, Coca-Cola, Kodak, and Nescafe), services (e.g., Hilton Hotels, British Airways, and Anderson Consulting), and retailers and distributors (e.g., Sears and Roebuck & Co.) (Keller, 1998). Public figures such as politicians, entertainers, or professional athletes also can be viewed as brands as well as organizations (e.g., American Red Cross and UNICEF). In addition, geographical locations (e.g., cities, states, regions, and countries), like

products and people, can also be branded. In this case, the brand name is relatively fixed by the actual name of the location.

In association with a brand "brand equity" is used to summarize all of the various assets that are part of a brand (Caldwell and Coshall, 2002). It is generally accepted that brand equity is added value endowed by the brand to the product (Aaker, 1991, 1996; Keller, 1993, 1998; Farquhar and Herr, 1993). An understanding of elements of a brand's equity for the firm's and competitors' brands is highly essential for a brand manager to enhance the brand's equity relative to those of competitive brands (Myers, 2003). In relation to brand equity and its attributes, an interesting question has been raised by Myers (2003) as to who creates the intangible attributes, brand marketers or consumers. In other words, do the brand marketers create the intangible attributes through various marketing activities (e.g., brand design, positioning and promotions) or are the intangible attributes ascribed to the brand by the consumer in response to varied market signals? (Myers, 2003). According to the author, the answer to this question is still debatable, lying somewhere between the two extremes.

The concept of brand equity has been conceptualized by two marketing researchers, Aaker (1991, 1996) and Kelly (1993, 1998). Aaker (1991) defined brand equity as "...a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers" (p. 15). Aaker (1991) further explained that assets can be grouped into five categories: brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, brand association, and other proprietary brand assets (e.g., patents, trademarks, and channel relationships). From a customer-based perspective, Keller (1993) defined brand equity as the differential

effects that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of that brand. Customer-based brand equity occurs when the consumer is familiar with the brand and holds some favorable, strong, and unique brand associations in memory. In conceptualizing brand equity from this perspective, Keller (1993) used brand knowledge, a network of nodes and links where the brand node memory has a variety of associations or simple unique association linked to it. In measuring brand equity, Myers (2003) focused on tangible-based (measurable) and intangible-based components of brand equity. The tangible-based component of brand equity captures the impact of brand-building activities on consumers' attribute perceptions. The intangible-based based equity suggests brand associations unrelated to product attributes (images, feeling, etc.) (Myers, 2003). The findings revealed that both tangible and intangible attributes are important contributors to brand equity and brand preference.

Brand Associations

It is generally agreed that brand associations are a key element in brand equity formation and management (Aaker, 1991, 1996; del Río, Vázquez, and Iglesias, 2001; Keller, 1993, 1998). The importance of brand associations has been recognized in such that they have a positive influence on consumer choice, preferences and intention of purchase, their willingness to pay a price premium for the brand, and recommend the brand to others (Agarwal and Rao, 1996; del Río et al., 2001; Hutton, 1997; Low and Lamb, 2000; Park and Srinivasan, 1994). Consistent with a network of nodes, brand associations are the other informational nodes linked to the brand node in memory and contain the meaning of the brand for consumers (Keller, 1993). Similarly brand

associations are anything linked to the brand that consumers hold in memory (Aaker, 1991). In discussing values of brand associations, Aaker (1991) maintained that brand associations provide an important basis for differentiation, which makes one brand distinguishable from others. A differentiating association can be a key competitive advantage, acting like a formidable barrier to competitors. Some associations influence purchase decisions by providing credibility and confidence in the brand and this provides consumers a specific reason to buy and use the brand (Aaker, 1991). Associations also represent bases for creating positive attitudes/feelings and brand extensions.

Along with product associations, several researchers added organizational associations to the components of brand associations. Organizational associations identified by Aaker (1996) are society/community orientation, perceived quality, innovation, concern for customers, presence and success, and local versus global. Brown and Dacin (1997) measured the effects of two general types of corporate associations, corporate ability (CA) associations and corporate social responsibility (CSR) associations on product response. The first effect related to CA associations focuses on the company's capability for producing products such as the expertise of employees, superiority of internal research and development, and the resulting technological innovation, and so on (Brown and Dacin, 1997; Chen, 2001). The other effect in connection with CSR associations focuses on the company's status and activities with respect to its perceived societal obligations (Chen, 2001). The results demonstrated that consumers' knowledge about a company may have impact on their beliefs and attitudes toward new products produced by that company. In addition, depending on CA and CSR associations, consumers respond to products differently. Chen (2001) presented a

conceptual model by combining these two types of brand association, product association (functional and non-functional attribute association), and organizational association (CA associations and CSR associations). It is revealed that the CSR associations are difficult to retrieve from the respondent's memory, leaving nearly absent from list of subject's free associations. del Río et al. (2001) attempted to analyze the brand associations based on the functions and benefits that the consumer associates with the brand. Brand functions differentiate from product functions in such that brand functions are related to intangible attributes or images added to the brand while the latter refer to the physical or tangible attributes (del Río et al., 2001). Four dimensions were used to measure brand functions: guarantee, personal identification, social identification and status. Instead of identifying each element of brand associations separately, an attempt was made to measure how they are interrelated (Low and Lamb, 2000). The authors selected three brand associations (brand image, brand attitude, and perceived quality), which have been used independently for many years, and conceptualized to see how and if they are related. It is concluded that brand associations differ across brands and product categories. It further supported the conclusion that brand associations for different products should be measured measuring different items.

Dimensions of Brand Associations (Attribute, Benefit, and Attitude)

Several research efforts have explored different types of brand associations (Aaker, 1991; Chen, 2001; Keller, 1993; Low and Lamb, 2000). According to Aaker (1991), brand associations can be categorized into 11 different types: (1) product attributes; (2) intangibles; (3) customer benefits; (4) relative prices; (5) use/application;

(6) user/customers; (7) celebrity/person; (8) lifestyle/ personality; (9) product class; (10) competitors; and (11) country/geographic area.

Keller (1993, 1998) classified brand associations into three major categories: attributes, benefits and attitudes. Attributes are those descriptive features that characterize a brand, for instance, what a consumer thinks the brand is or has and what is involved with its purchase or consumption. Attributes are then divided into product-related attributes and non-product-related attributes. The former relates to a product's physical composition or a service's requirements. The latter refers to external aspects of the product or service including price, user and usage imagery, brand personality, and feelings and experiences. When the attribute is meaningful, the association can directly translate into reason to buy or not buy a brand (Aaker, 1991). Brand attributes are commonly used for developing positioning strategy.

Benefits are the personal value consumers attach to the brand attributes (functional/experiential/symbolic benefits), that is, what consumers think the brand can do for them (Keller, 1998). Functional benefits usually correspond to product-related attributes, which are often linked to fairly basic motivations (e.g., physiological and safety needs). Symbolic benefits are the more extrinsic advantages of product or service consumption, corresponding to non-product-related attributes such as user imagery. Consumers often relate symbolic benefits to their self-concepts that value the prestige, exclusivity, or fashionability of a brand. Experiential benefits relate to what if feels like to use the product or service, satisfying experiential needs such as sensory pleasure (sight, taste, sound, smell, or feel), variety, and cognitive stimulation. Likewise, Aaker (1991) distinguished between a rational benefit and a psychological benefit. A rational

benefit corresponds to functional benefits, closely linked to a product attribute. A psychological benefit is similar to symbolic benefits, relating to what feelings are engendered when buying and/or using the brand (Aaker, 1991).

Brand attitudes are consumers' overall evaluations of the brand. The importance of brand attitudes lies in forming the basis for consumer behavior (e.g., brand choice). These associations can vary according to their favorability, strength, and uniqueness (Keller, 1993, 1998).

Brand Image

Brand image perceptions have played a critical role in understanding consumer's purchasing behavior and developing the brand's position in the marketplace. A positive brand image can generate several competitive advantages (del Río et al., 2001). The firm with a strong brand image tends to increase current performance and profitability by commanding higher margins and/or volumes, less vulnerable to price increase, and increase marketing communication effectiveness (del Río et al., 2001). Another advantage comes from longevity of profits (e.g., brand loyalty) and growth potential such as licensing opportunities, generation of positive word-of-mouth, and brand extensions.

In emphasizing the structure of a set of associations, brand image research is often based on the associative network model (Farquhar and Herr, 1993; Keller, 1993, 1998). In the context of an associative network memory model of brand knowledge, Keller (1993) defined brand image as perception about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory. These associations include perceptions of brand quality and attitudes toward the brand. An associative network perspective was also

applied by Hsieh (2002) to conceptualize the brand image dimensions of automobile brands. He identified four image dimensions including consumer's sensory, utilitarian, and symbolic and economic need. It is further suggested that groups of countries with similar levels of economic development, cultural dimension, or geographic distance share the similar brand image perceptions. The author also argued that brand image dimensions, consisting of the strength and uniqueness of associations, differentiate one brand from another in associative networks of memory. Biel (1992) identified brand image as corporate image, product image and user image. Each of these three images can be divided into two types of association. One is the perception of utilitarian and functional attributes (e.g., speed or ease to operate). The other is related to soft or emotional attributes such as providing fantasy or being exciting, innovative, or trustworthy.

Brand Identity

According to Keller (1998), brand identity reflects the contribution of all brand elements to awareness and image (p. 166). In other words, a brand identity provides direction, purpose and meaning for the brand and it is central to a brand's strategic vision and the driver of brand associations, which are the heart and soul of the brand (Aaker, 1996). Aaker (1996) has provided the comprehensive scope of a brand identity by elaborating the definition of brand identity and of related concepts. In his book (1996), he argued that a firm should consider its brand as: (1) a product, (2) an organization, (3) a person, and (4) a symbol. These different brand elements should be employed in brand's strategic planning in a way to help clarify, enrich and differentiated an identity.

Product-related associations are an important part of a brand identity because they are directly linked to brand choice decisions and the use experience (Aaker, 1996). These associations are grouped into product scope in association with product class, product attributes, quality and value, associations with use occasion and users, and links to a country or region.

The brand-as-organization perspective focuses on attributes of the organization rather than those of the product or service. This has frequently been termed as "corporate brand identity" in connection with "corporate branding" (de Chernatony, 1999). The components of brand identity for corporate include brand's vision, culture, positioning, personality, relationship and the brand's presentation (de Chernatony, 1999). Organizational attributes are more enduring and more resistant to competitive claims than are product attributes (Aaker, 1996). Unlike a product, it is much harder to duplicate an organization with unique people, values, and programs (Gordan and DiTomaso, 1992).

The brand-as-person perspective suggests that like a person, a brand can be perceived as being upscale, competent, impressive, trustworthy, fun, or intellectual (Aaker, 1996). A brand personality helps in creating a stronger brand by creating a self-expressive benefit that becomes a vehicle for the customer to express his or her own personality. A consumer may be more willing to invest in a relationship or even develop a friendship with the brand as a result. Lastly, a strong symbol can provide cohesion and structure to an identity and make it much easier to gain recognition and recall (Aaker, 1996). Symbols can be memorable and powerful if they involve visual imagery and a metaphor, with the symbol representing a functional, emotional, or self-expressive benefit (Keller, 1998).

Destination Brand Building

Several researchers have attempted to define a destination branding in the context of concept of branding widely used in business marketing area (Cai, 2002; Morrison and Anderson, 2002; Ritchie and Ritchie, 1998). Cai (2000) defined a destination branding as "selecting a consistent brand element mix to identify and distinguish a destination through positive image building." Morrison and Anderson (2002) argued, "destination branding is a process used to develop a unique identity and personality that is different from all competitive destinations." On the other hand, Ritchie and Ritchie (1998) proposed that "a destination brand is a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates the destination; furthermore, it conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; it also serves to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience."

According to their definitions, two key words have centered in defining a destination branding – identification and differentiation functions of a brand. The "identity" of a destination brand refers to that part of the equity resulting from the perceived benefits offered by a brand that makes it attractive as the object of a possible purchase (Ritchie and Ritchie, 1998). Brand identity is considered to be a product of the melding of a brand's positioning and its personality, and is played out in the product/service performance, the brand name, its logo, the brand's marketing communications, and in other ways in which the brand comes into contact with its

customers (Ritchie and Ritchie, 1998). Aaker (1996) posited that the brand identity "should help establish a relationship between the brand and the customer by generating a value proposition involving functional, emotional or self-expressive benefits" (p. 68). On the other hand, strong brands usually hold a unique combination of product characteristics and added values, which differentiate them from other competitors (Morgan et al., 2001a). Within a globally competitive marketplace where, for instance, a destination such as New Zealand competes with approximately ninety other destination for only 30 percent of the worldwide tourism market, tourism marketers should differentiate their products by stressing attributes they clam will match their target market's needs more closely than other brands (Morgan and Pritchard, 2001). In summary, definitions of a destination branding mentioned above reflect that a destination brand is a way to communicate a destination's unique identity to visitors by differentiating a destination from its competitors.

The Challenges of Destination Branding

Although a significant number of attempts to adopt and integrate "branding" concepts from marketing field into tourism context can be found in destination brand literature, many tourism marketers still raise questions about the relevance and applicability of branding for a tourism destination standpoint (Ritchie and Ritchie, 1998). Ritchie and Ritchie (1998) expressed some concerns when transferring the concepts, theories, and practices of branding to the destination setting. Due to diverse and complex natures of tourism products and distribution channels, the product can be delivered by many different firms that are typically quite different in terms of their functions and

capabilities. As a result, destination branding requires much more of a collective phenomenon than is normally found in the generic marketing/branding situation (Ritchie and Ritchie, 1998). The second concern is derived from the fact that there is not full agreement as to what the destination offers/should offer or what its ideal image should be in the marketplace. This may create potential misunderstanding and conflict between residents of the destination and the tourism operations in developing generic destination brand. Capturing the essence of the experiential dimension along with the functional one is also challenge in the process of destination brand.

Similarly, Morgan and Pritchard (2001) addressed several challenges of destination branding with respect to developing and implementing a destination brand. The first challenge facing destination marketers is their extremely limited budgets in comparison to the marketers of many consumer goods and services. According to Morgan and Pritchard (2001), one of dilemmas most national tourism organizations are confronting now is they have limited budgets and yet have to market globally; competing not just with other destinations, but also with other giant global brands such as Procter & Gamble and Sony who may spend millions each year promoting their various brands to capture consumer's minds. Resisting the political dynamic is the second challenge for destination marketers. Morgan and Pritchard argued (2001) that nowhere is the paradox of public policy and market forces more sharply defined than in destination branding. For instance, as Ritchie and Ritchie (1998) pointed out, residents of a host destination tend to have a more idealistic perception of the destination than do more realistic industry operators who are in close contact with the marketplace. This leads to considerable debate among destination marketers and destination stakeholders over the use of clichés

and stereotypes in marketing and advertising (Morgan and Pritchard, 2001). In consequence, destination marketers have to develop a destination branding strategy which is both politically acceptable and which makes marketing sense. Public sector destination marketers are also hugely hampered by a variety of political pressures including a reconciliation of a range of local and regional interests and promotion of an identity acceptable to a range of constituencies (Buhalis, 2000). Bureaucratic red tape can also confound effective advertising. One of examples was an advertising campaign of Valencia, Spain's third city (Morgan and Pritchard, 2001). Because of political considerations intended for appeasing local pressure groups and local residents, the marketers of Valencia could do little to ensure consistency of message, leading to seriously compromising the impact of the branding campaign. The third challenge is with respect to the external environment. Destinations are particularly vulnerable to international politics, economics, terrorism and environmental disasters such as the 9/11 bombing in New York, the Gulf War, volcanic eruptions and hurricanes in the Caribbean, the Asian economic crisis, and political instability in Middle East countries, just to name a few. Even a well-funded, internally supported branding exercise cannot guarantee success; such is the unpredictability of the external marketing environment.

It is widely acknowledged that destinations are not a single product but composite products consisting of a bundle of different components, including accommodation and catering establishments, tourist attractions, arts, entertainment and cultural venues, and the natural environment (Buhalis, 2000; Ritchie and Crouch, 2000). Destination marketers have relatively little control over these different aspects of their product and a diverse range of agencies (e.g., local and national government agencies, environmental

groups, chambers of commerce, and trade associations) and companies are partners in the task of crafting brand identities (Morgan and Pritchard, 2001). Morgan and Pritchard (2001) argued "Today's tourists are not asking 'what can we do on holiday?,' but 'who can we be on holiday?' – they are increasingly looking less for escape and more for discovery – and that creates the basis of an emotional connection which marketers can exploit through branding." The challenge lies here to make the destination brand live, so that visitors truly experience the promoted brand values and feel the authencity of a unique place.

Lastly, a successful destination brand should offer a unique selling proposition so that consumers can differentiate that brand from many other destination brands in the tourism marketplace. The point of differentiation must reflect a promise which can be delivered and which matches expectations. Good destination branding is therefore original and different but its originality and difference needs to be sustainable, believable and relevant.

The Process of Building Destination Brand

Morgan and Pritchard (2001) maintained the five phases in destination brand building as follows:

- Phase One: Market investigation, analysis and strategic recommendations
- Phase Two: Brand identity development
- Phase Three: Brand launch and introduction – communicating the vision
- Phase Four: Brand implementation
- Phrase Five: Monitoring, evaluation and review

Based on these five phases, the first stage is to establish the core values of the destination and its brand, which should be durable, relevant, and communicable and hold saliency for potential tourists. This process should be backed up by intensive research on the targeted market and analysis of its key competitors.

The next phase is to develop the brand identity and the concepts of the "brand benefit pyramid" and "brand architecture" that were introduced by Morgan and Pritchard (2001) as the key elements in this phase. The concepts of the brand benefit pyramid and brand architecture will be discussed in more details below. Once the brand's core values have been established, they should underpin all subsequent marketing activity – especially in literature text and illustrations – so that brand values are cohesively communicated. A logotype or brand signature and a design style guide, which ensures consistency of message and approach, should also reinforce the brand values. To successfully create an emotional attachment a destination brand has to have several qualities including credibility, deliverability, differentiation, enthusiasm for trade partners, and resonation with the consumer.

How the destination rates according to "wish you were here?" appeal and celebrity value is critical to this process – do tourists regard it as a fashion accessory, a must-see place on every aspirational traveler's shopping list or as a fashion faux pas (somewhere with no conversational value and even less status)? (Morgan et al., 2001). Figure 11 takes this celebrity matrix and illustrates a range of destination brands measured on the axes of emotional appeal and celebrity value.
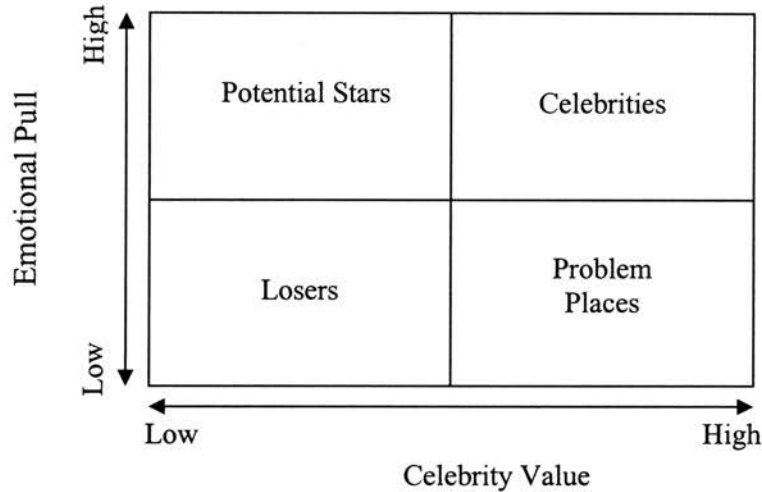
Figure 11: The Destination Celebrity Matrix (Source: Morgan et al., 2001).

On any positioning may brand winners emerge as those places which are rich in emotional meaning, have great conversation value and hold high anticipation for potential tourists (Morgan and Pritchard, 2001). By comparison, brand losers are places with little meaning, even less status, virtually no conversation value and zero anticipation for tourists. Morgan and Pritchard (2001) maintained that problem places are those destinations which are talked about for the wrong reasons and, far from holding an emotional appeal, actively repel potential tourists. Other destinations, which do have high emotional pull but currently have limited celebrity value hold huge untapped potential and could be tomorrow's winner destination brands, and currently include places such as India, Cuba, Vietnam and South Africa (Figure 12).
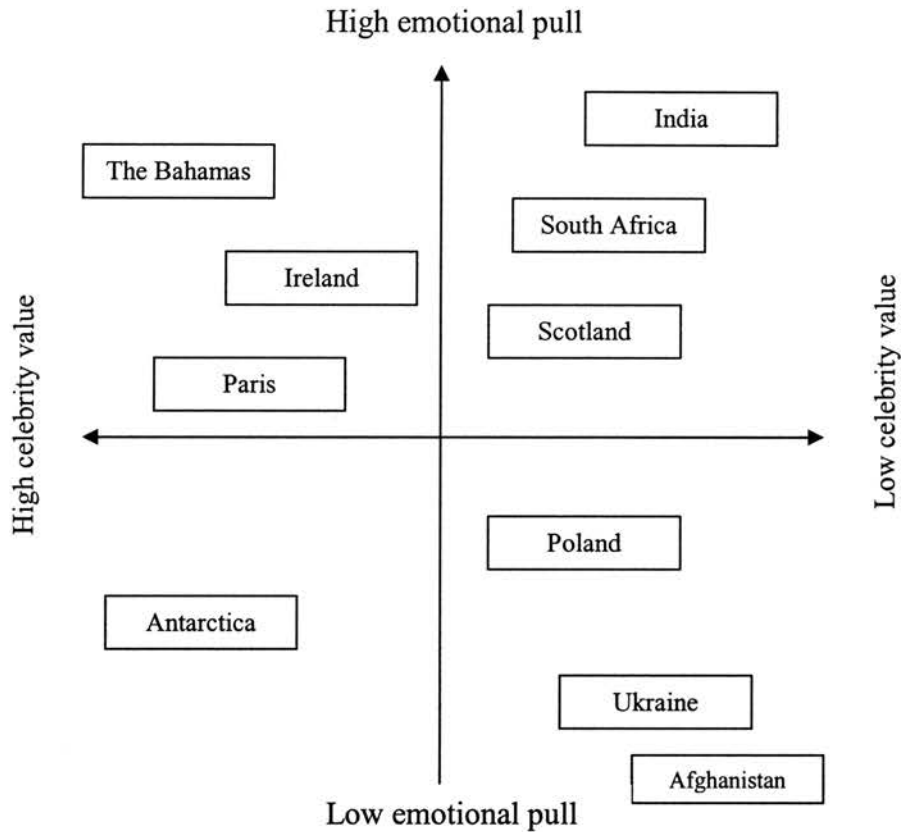
Figure 12: The Destination Brand Positioning Map (Source: Morgan and Pritchard, 2001, p. 23).

The Brand Benefit Pyramid

The brand benefit pyramid refers to the point at which consumer's wants and the destination's benefits and features intersect – any communication (through advertising or public relations) should then encapsulate the sprit of the brand. This pyramid can be instrumental in helping to distil the essence of a destination brand's advertising proposition. Figure 13 illustrates the different levels of the destination brand benefit pyramid.
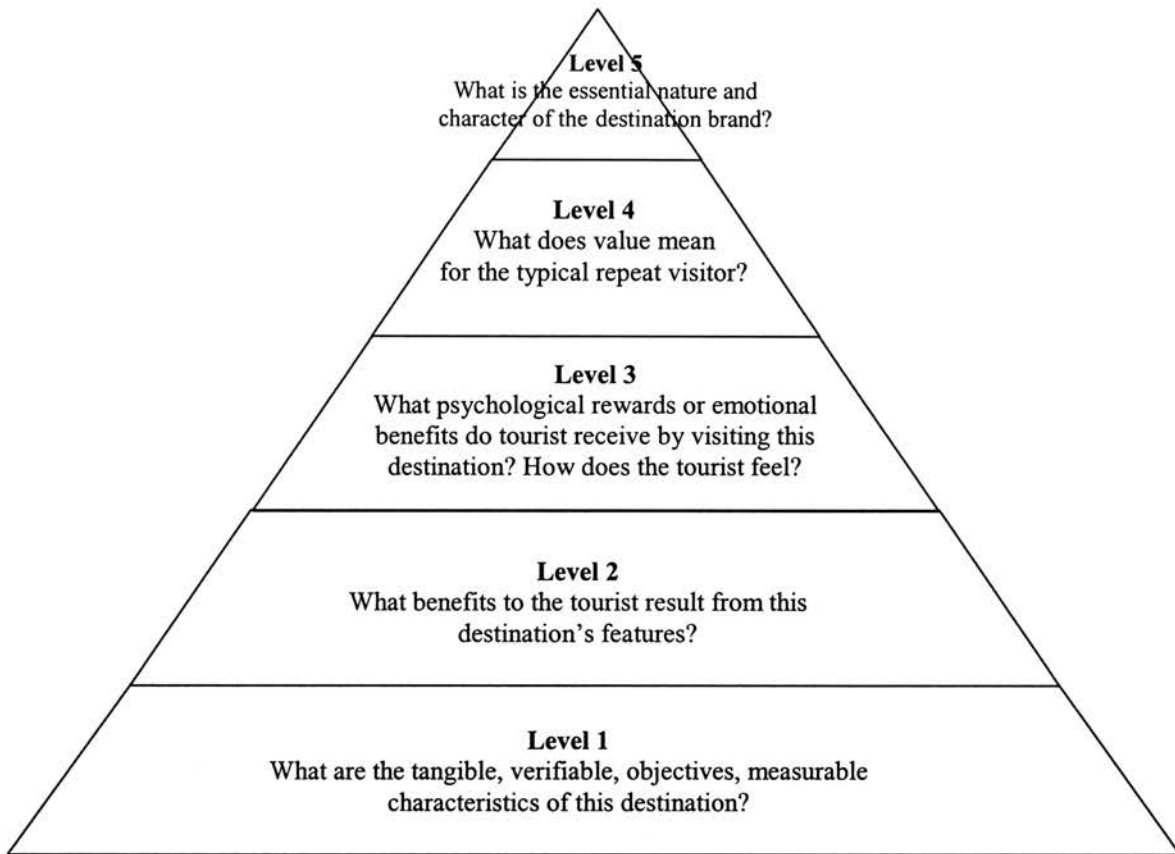
Figure 13: The Destination Brand Benefit Pyramid (Source: Morgan and Pritchard, 2001, p. 31).

Brand Architecture

Brand architecture should reflect all the key components of a destination brand including its positioning, its rational (head) and emotional (heart) benefits and associations, together with its brand personality (Morgan and Pritchard, 2002). A brand's architecture is in essence the blueprint which should guide brand building, development and marketing and more and more tourism destinations are looking to establish their brand architecture in order to put themselves ahead of competitors. One of important roles of a brand's architecture is it helps in developing the "destination suprabrands" and

"sub-brands." For instance, Britain is a destination suprabrands and the sub-brands (e.g., England, Scotland, Wales, London) are both part of, and at the same time, distinct from it. The brand architecture divides four categories such as positioning, rational benefit, emotional benefit, and personality and each sub-brand under the suprabrand, Britain is analyzed into each category. The positioning of England, for instance, described as lush, green land of discovery in the brand architecture, is translated into the rational benefit of afternoon teas, quaint village pubs, rugged country and moorland. At emotional or salient level, these benefits offer the overseas visitor the emotional benefits of feeling fulfilled by experiencing the quaint culture and history of England. Finally, the culmination of these brand attributes is a destination personified by pleasant, refined, hearty and humorous. This becomes the essence of England the Brand, with values rooted in the experience of past visitors, credible and relevant to potential visitors and, most crucially, which the product can deliver (Morgan and Pritchard, 2001).

Success Stories of Destination Brand Winners (Country/State)

It is true that a suspicion has been raised by both academic researchers and industry practitioners as to whether a destination or a country can actually be considered a brand and whether conventional branding techniques are appropriate when one is considering a destination (Pride, 2001). Many branding purists will still contend that it is not appropriate to consider a place as a brand and that it is impossible to brand a destination effectively. This is mainly because, as some researchers have already addressed (Morgan and Pritchard, 2001; Ritchie and Ritchie, 1998), destinations are amorphous, delivering a wide range of products and experiences. Pride (2001) argued

that too often the creative an ambition of marketing departments within tourist boards have been constrained by the existence of two additional "Ps" invariably linked to destination marketing: "politics" and "paucity." The environment surrounding the marketing of a country is almost always political and there are pressures to satisfy the aspirations and demands of a wide range of industry sectors, which can lead to compromise. As a result, the communication and advertising output from tourist board has often been destination-led rather than market-led communications which highlight all aspects of the destination rather than showcase those elements which make the destination special (Pride, 2001).

Despite all these hindrances, however, several success stories of branding countries or states (e.g., Wales, New Zealand, Spain, Western Australia, states of Oregon and Louisiana) have demonstrated that a destination can be considered a brand when using traditional branding techniques coupled with orchestrating a harmony among government, tourism practitioners, local residents and media to create a unique destination proposition (Crockett and Wood, 1999; Curtis, 2001; Gilmore, 2002a & 2002b; Gnoth, 2002; Hall, 2002; Hankinson, 2001; Lodge, 2002, Morgan et al., 2001; Papadopoulos and Heslop, 2002; Pride, 2001). The following four cases illustrate how each destination has created its own unique and successful destination branding and became brand winners in the tourism market, followed by a summary of the key elements in destination branding success.

The Case of New Zealand

In recognizing the need to develop and communicate a single concise brand across all markets, New Zealand has started the "100% Pure New Zealand" campaign, the country's first global branding initiative to showcase New Zealand's diverse landscapes, people, culture and tourism activities (Morgan et al., 2002). The "100%" logo incorporates an image of the country's two islands (North and South) while the strap line "100% Pure New Zealand" seeks to position New Zealand as a place shaped by its inhabitants over time. The prime target markets are the ultimate backpacker and thrill-seeker – people young in body or heart who love travel, seek new experiences and enjoy the challenge. Extensive marketing research underpinned the creation of the "New Pacific Freedom" brand essence for New Zealand and, in particular, identified the key niche markets for the destination (e.g., Australia, Japan, UK, USA, Germany and Singapore) (Morgan et al., 2002). Currently, strap lines such as "100% Pure Romance," "100% Pure Spirit," and "In Five Days You'll Feel 100%" are being used. Critical to the success of the New Zealand brand is the extent to which the destination's brand personality interacts with the target markets.

The Case of Wales

Another nation brand winner, Wales, adapted classical branding techniques to create a successful brand strategy for tourism, co-operating with other organizations within Wales to address the wider issue of Wales' image deficit (Pride, 2001). For many years, Wales has experienced an identity problem, partly due to stereotypical images of Welsh men and women. Consequently, among potential audiences in the UK, one of the

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biggest tourism markets for Wales, people found it difficult to think about Wales' positive attributes as a leisure destination. The Wales Tourism Board (WTB) solved this image problem by devising a brand architecture and marketing framework based on a tiered or layered approach, with the country or domain brand giving direction and guidance (Figure 14). Upon agreement on the overall brand proposition among various levels of decision makers, a manual was created which defines the heart of the Wales domain brand and which suggested how Wales should be conveyed in pictures and words. The heart of the domain brand was "In Wales you will find a passion for life – Hwyl." Hwyl (pronounced who-ill) is a word, which has no direct English translation, and it represents a unique Welsh feeling of passion and well-being.

DOMAIN BRAND				
TOURISM POSITIONING				
Entry Concept	Entry Concept	Entry Concept		Entry Concept
TARGET SEGMENTS				
UK		OVERSEAS		
RELEVANT PRODUCTS				
THROUGH THE LINE SYNERGY				
Advertising	Direct Marketing	Brochures	Web	Promotions
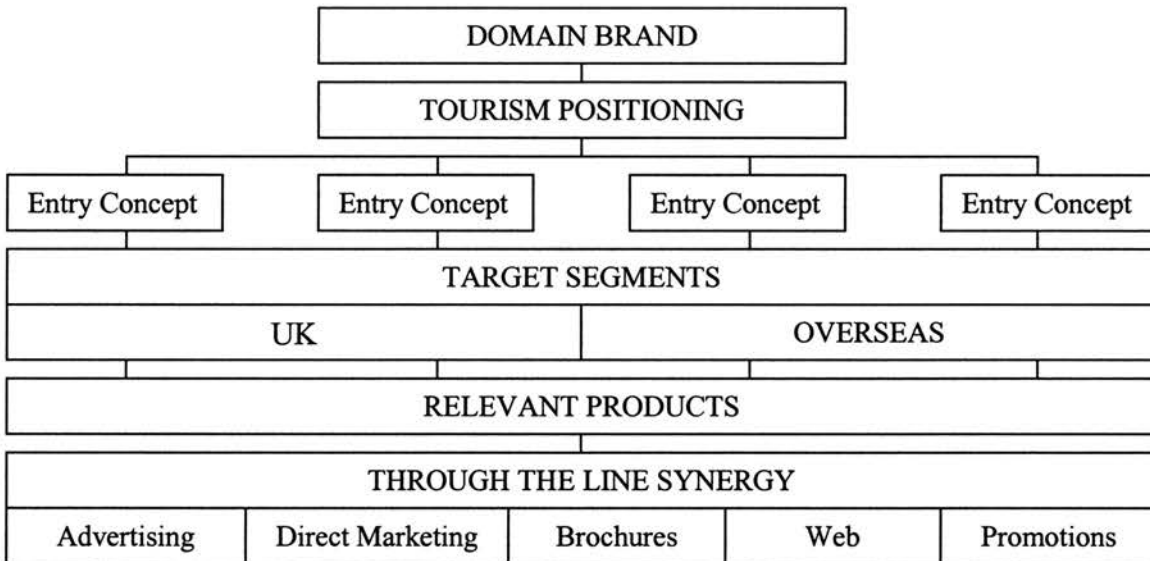
Figure 14: The Unique Destination Proposition (Source: Price, 2001, p. 114).

Once the domain brand was defined, the next step was to set about configuring a tourism positioning for Wales to ensure maximum resonance with potential visitors to Wales. Armed with extensive visitors research, WTB decided that the brand positioning for Wales should be natural revival or naturally reviving as being unspoiled, down to earth, with traditional values, genuine, green and beautiful, providing physical and spiritual revival – and all of this hidden on England's doorstep. Finally, the campaign with the strap line "Wales Two Hours and A Million Miles Away" was launched through various advertising tools including the poster, television and direct marketing executions. The campaign resulted in significant increases in the awareness and ranking of Wales as a holiday or short-break destination. The branding success of Wales is largely due to the marketing strategy rooted in reality is built upon the belief of the people living and working in Wales (Pride, 2001). In addition, the messages communicated are relevant and motivating to the marketplace.

The Case of Western Australia

The success story of branding Western Australia demonstrates the Western Australian Tourism Commission's (WATC) methodical approach to positioning Western Australia as a premier nature-based tourism destination in a worldwide market (Crockett and Wood, 1999). Based on intensive consumer research, Brand Western Australia (Brand WA) resulted in an entire organizational shift and has repositioned Western Australia as a premier nature-based tourism destination in the global market. Brand WA has been built on a solid research foundation undertaken in 1996 that resulted in a set of descriptors for the personality and values of Western Australia, and an "essence" that

captures the underlying spirit of the state. Brand WA captures the distinctive character of the Western Australian people, its unique natural beauty, pristine environment, the colors of the landscape the free-spirited nature of the Western Australian lifestyle (Crockett and Wood, 1999). Brand WA is a very broad strategy incorporating trade, consumer and events marketing, visual branding, convention activities, product and infrastructure development as well as interaction and communication between WATC and its stakeholders. As a result, partnership with industry and its stakeholders is at the core of the WATC's philosophies and the WATC has developed a comprehensive approach to mold a unique image of Western Australia in true partnership with industry. As Crockett and Wood (1999) argued, successful destination branding must embrace a host of activities, including infrastructural development, product enhancement, protection against environmental degradation, changes in organizational culture, and promotional partnerships – all based on intensive market research to identify consumer desires. The case of BWA demonstrates that, when combined with the development of a distinctive, broad visual language and strong creative promotional executions, these activities can provide the platform for a successful destination brand. Extensive research has also played a major role in developing a successful branding strategy for Western Australia. Marketing intelligence derived from a comprehensive qualitative research program was used to shape all aspects of the strategy and, to establish credible and representative brand attributes (Crockett and Wood, 1999). This research analyzed global tourism trends, consumer behavior and the decision-making processes of travel consumers, and aligned these against visitor perceptions of Western Australia, its services and attractions.

The research also revealed Australia, UK, Germany, Japan, Singapore and Malaysia as its core markets for Western Australia.

The Case of Louisiana

Although Louisiana has remained a powerful travel destination in the consumer's minds, it has faced the challenge, like any other destinations, to depict the territory as a unique place, creating some point of differentiation that provides the tourist with more than just a destination spot (Slater, 2001). To create a strong and successful brand, the state needed to offer several unique destination elements to travelers in addition to food attraction. Extensive research enabled Louisiana to create the Louisiana brand identity by collecting and analyzing some unique elements that motivated the visitor to choose Louisiana (Slater, 2001). The research showed that Louisiana offered several unique destination elements (e.g., scenery, architecture, history, culture and music) to travelers in addition to the food attraction. With this information, Louisiana has incorporated its positioning as 'unique or different from anything else' with the various attractions in creative executions for a specific target group (domestic out-of-state travelers, between the ages of twenty-five and fifty-four with incomes of US$30,000 plus). The whole process of branding Louisiana has been underpinned by the development of a strong advertising agency-government tourism office partnership. The Mayer agency, an advertising agency for DCRT of Louisiana, created a consortium with three other communications firms in the state in order to provide better sense of the different elements of the state in terms of regional, political and cultural differences. This co-operative won the Louisiana tourism business in 1993 (Slater, 2001). Through this joint

effort, equipped with intensive research, they developed a creative strategy that incorporated positioning with the various attractions in creative executions for a specific target group. In addition, the slogan ('Come as you are. *Leave Different.*®'), the lipstick logo, and the overall design features provided strong continuity of the image in every advertisement or promotional piece. The power behind the Louisiana brand has been a substantial advertising budget, well-targeted media placements and efficient and effective media exposure (Slater, 2001). A well-defined target and creativity in reaching them are critical to delivering the brand image of Louisiana. The primary target audience for the Louisiana brand is families, adults, aged twenty-five to fifty-four, with children still at home and household incomes of US$40,000 plus per year (Slater, 2001). In addition, secondary targets comprise seniors, adults aged fifty-five plus, no children at home, with a household of US$40,000 plus per year; and African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans, aged twenty-five to fifty-four with household income of US$30,000 plus. These audiences are reached through a combination of print, television and some radio advertising. Print is used as the primary media choice, accounting for approximately 60 percent of the advertising dollars, with 40 percent being allocated to spot television and radio in various regions.

Based on research, the media plan for Louisiana tourism uses brand development indexing (BDI) to rank and index all US markets to determine their propensity to generate visitors to Louisiana (Slater, 2001). The top twenty major markets are then analyzed; the key markets are then identified for spot television and radio flights are established for the yearly campaign. For the 2000/1 campaigns, thirteen markets were chosen for spot television and radio flights. In addition to television and radio, consumer

magazines (both regional and national), trade publications, newspapers and travel directories are used as part of the media mix. All these and others communication methods were devised to support the brand's uniqueness and its positioning.

Key Elements of Branding Success

Having reviewed the general process of several national/state brands (e.g., Wales, New Zealand, Western Australia, and Louisiana) that have emerged as brand winners, one can notice that those destination brands have a number of common ingredients for success. These features are identified as brand identity and brand personality, extensive research and right target market, positioning, communication channel, and partnership.

(1) Brand identity and brand personality

The foremost important feature is they all have successfully created a consistent and durable brand identity and it has been translated into a suitably emotionally appealing brand personality (Crockett and Wood, 1999; Morgan et al, 2002; Pride, 2001; Slater, 2001). A brand identity is central to the direction, purpose and meaning for the brand and it should help establish a relationship between the brand and the customer by generating a value proposition (Aaker, 1996). Morgan et al. (2002) argued that brand identity should be timeless or at least expected to be relevant for a long period of time. Further, it is likely to be relevant across markets and products. As international travel has become more desirable and accessible and competition has became more aggressive, the need for a destination to create a unique identity – to find a niche and differentiate themselves from their competitors – is more critical than ever (Morgan et al., 2002). The brand

winners introduced here have all recognized this swift changes in the global travel and tourism market.

The brand identity of New Zealand, for instance, is landscape and fundamentally it is what brings the majority of visitors to the country (Morgan et al., 2002). This "landscape" allows one to express oneself through activities and experiences and is diametrically opposite to that experienced on a daily basis by many of the country's visitors who live in some of the world's most overpopulated and polluted cities. Likewise, Western Australia has added sophistication. A brand personality, on the other hand, can be defined as the set of human characteristics associated with a given brand (Aaker, 1996) – like a human personality, it is both distinctive and enduring. According to Morgan and Pritchard (2001), a brand's personality has both a head and a heart. The head refers to the logical brand features, whereas the heart refers to its emotional benefits and associations. Brand propositions and communications can be based around either a brand's head or its heart: head communications convey a brand's rational values, while heart communications reveal its emotional values and associations. The four success stories of branding destination illustrate that critical to the success of each brand of four destinations is the extent to which the destination's brand personality interacts with the target markets.

New Zealand has been perceived by the world as a relatively undiscovered, untouched land and due to this character, New Zealand has authentic and genuine personality. Western Australia identified the four core personality elements of Brand WA, including; fresh, natural, free and spirited. These are the constants of Western Australia's proposition as a destination. For many years Wales has regarded a suffix to

England to the outside world and negative or distorted perceptions of Wales were hindering and limiting Wales' tourism performance (Pride, 2001). Recognizing the need to turn an identity deficit of Wales into an identity premium, the Wales Tourism Board (WTB) has begun to determine the overall brand propositions for Wales. Using branding techniques such as brand architecture and marketing framework, WTB has created a manual, which defined the heart of the Wales domain brand, a unique Welsh feeling of passion and well-being.

(2) Extensive research and target market

Another common feature found in the four cases of destination branding is extensive research is the foundation for developing a detailed branding strategy, including identification of brand value, target markets, and positioning. New Zealand, for instance, initiated a series of research projects that surveyed local businesses, regional economists, destinations with similar programs and previous visitors as well as tourists who had never been to New Zealand (Morgan et al., 2002). This process enabled New Zealand's brand managers to build a brand with value and salience with existing and potential market segments (e.g., backpackers/young people, well-off professionals, and well-traveled people looking for something different). Similarly, research has been critical to build a brand for Wales' tourism. During the research process, WTB identified target audiences and established what attracted them to a particular destination (Pride, 2001).

(3) Brand positioning

How a destination positions itself from others is an important ingredient to its success. In general, brand positioning involves identifying strong and unique attributes of a destination and developing marketing strategies in such away that the destination is seen as differentiated from the rest in the minds of consumers. For example, Western Australia's pristine environment made it well suited for positioning a fresh, new nature-based tourism destination with friendly, spirited people with the freedom and space to travel.

(4) Communication channel

Once the brand's core values have been established, they should strengthen all subsequent marketing activity – especially in literature text and illustrations – so that the brand values are cohesively communicated with consumers (Morgan and Pritchard, 2001). The four destination branding strategies have all successfully implemented. Communication plans, focusing on mainly television and print (magazine) had ensured extra efforts so that all visual communications reflected the core brand personality and identity. The Brand WA strategy, for instance, relied heavily on consumer advertising, utilizing celebrity endorsement television commercials which were supported by a co-ordinated publicity campaign encouraging the publication of positive tourism stores on Western Australia.

(5) Partnership

Last but not the least common feature to notice is partnerships among various levels of decision makers (e.g., government agencies). Destination branding is difficult since tourism is a composite product consisting of many components, including

accommodation, transport, catering establishments, tourist attraction, arts, entertainment and the natural environment (Crokett and Wood, 1999). Without a multiagency and cross-industry approach, it would be almost impossible to initiate successful destination branding. The examples of the four brands illustrate that partnership is critical to the success of destination branding. This is particularly true of niche destinations that have a small share of voice like New Zealand. The impact of the campaign has been notably strengthened by the support and commitment of industry partners – in addition to Tourism New Zealand (TNZ)'s investment, 102 tourism industry partners in 13 countries have significantly contributed to the campaign (Morgan et al., 2002). The Brand WA is a result of collaborative work of Western Australia's broader community (e.g., the premier of Western Australia, Western Australia government agencies, business leaders, and representatives from the inbound tourism industry), coordinating the overall process of developing an extensive branding strategy for Western Australia. Table 5 compares the key elements of branding success for each destination discussed.

TABLE 5

COMPARISON OF KEY ELEMENTS OF BRANDING SUCCESS
FOR FOUR DESTINATIONS

Key Elements	New Zealand	Western Australia	Wales	Louisiana
Brand Identity	Landscape	Nature-based environment	Hwyl (a unique Welsh feeling of passion and well-being)	Joie de vivre (the joy of living)
Brand Personality	Authentic and genuine	Fresh, natural, free and spirited	Unspoiled, down to earth, and genuine	Joyful, alive, and friendly
Perceptions	Undiscovered, untouched land	Relax and recharge, a fresh, clean environment and unspoiled natural scenery	Negative or neutral	Unique blend of history, Mardi Gras, music (jazz, blues, gospel)
Slogan	"100% Pure New Zealand"	"Holidays of an entirely different nature"	"Wales Two Hours and A Million Miles Away"	"Come as you are. Leave Different.®"
Target Market	Australia, Japan, UK, USA, Germany and Singapore	Australia, UK, Germany, Japan, Singapore and Malaysia	UK and overseas market	Families, adults aged 25 to 54 and house-hold incomes of US$40,000 plus per year
Positioning	An adventurous new land and new culture on the edge of the Pacific Ocean	Nature-based tourism destination	"Natural revival" – Wales puts back into your life what life take out – the anti-dote to everyday life	Unique, different from anything else
Comm. Channel	TV, print (magazine), travel literature	Consumer advertising (e.g., celebrity endor-sement television commercials)	Print (magazine), travel literature	Print, television, radio
Partnership	Tourism industry partners in 13 countries	Industry and other key stakeholders	Key stakeholders and tourism businesses	Consortium of advertising agencies

Conceptual Framework of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to develop and test a theoretical model, which represents the elements contributing to the building of destination brand. The conceptualized framework presented in Figure 15 incorporates the conceptual and empirical perspectives from destination image literature into Keller's (1993, 1998) conceptual framework of brand knowledge.

Destination Brand Associations

Keller (1993, 1998) conceptualized the brand knowledge as a brand node in memory with a variety of association linked to the associative network memory model. An associative network memory model views memory as consisting of a network of nodes and connecting links where nodes represent stored information or concepts and links represent the strength of association between this information and concepts (Keller, 1993 & 1998). Brand knowledge can be characterized in terms of two components: brand awareness and brand image. Brand awareness consists of brand recognition and brand recall. The former reflects the ability of consumers to confirm prior exposure to the brand. The latter refers to the ability of consumers to retrieve the brand when given the product category, the needs fulfilled by the category, or some other types of probe as a cue (Keller, 1993, 1998). Brand image is defined as consumer perceptions of a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer's memory.

In the brand literature, it has been widely recognized that brand associations are key elements of making up brand equity (Aaker, 1991, 1996; del Rio et al., 2001; Keller, 1993, 1998; Low and Lamb, 2000). Keller (1993, 1998) defined brand associations as

informational nodes linked to the brand node in memory that contains the meaning of the brand for consumers. Brand associations can be used for a firm to differentiate, position, and extend brands, to create positive attitudes and feelings toward brands, and to suggest attributes or benefits of purchasing or pursing a specific brand (Low and Lamb, 2000, p. 351). They are also useful for consumers to help process, organize, and retrieve information in memory and to aid them in making purchase decisions (Aaker, 1991).

The framework in Figure 15 has conceptualized attributes, benefits, and attitudes as possible dimensions of destination brand associations. These three brand/destination associations are selected on the basis that they are three dimensions discussed frequently as important elements of the brand equity and destination image in several marketing and tourism studies (Aaker, 1991, 1996; Chen, 2001; del Río et al., 2001; Echtner and Ritchie, 1991; Hu and Ritchie, 1993; Low and Lamb, 2000; Milman and Pizam, 1995). They also have established reliable, published measures in the literature (Low and Lamb, 2000).

In branding and destination image literature, attributes are commonly described as having two different components: those that are tangible-based (more physical and measurable characteristics) and those that are intangible-based (more abstract and less measurable). These components are termed differently in brand and destination image related studies. According to Aaker (1991, 1996), they are termed as functional and emotional whereas Keller (1993, 1998) describes the two components as non-product-related and product-related. Similarly, Echtner and Ritchie (1993) argued that destination image has two main components, attribute-based (climate, accommodation facilities, friendliness of people) and holistic impressions (imagery). Each of these components

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contains functional (tangible and directly observed) attributes such as historic sites, beaches, infrastructure and psychological (abstract) attributes such as friendliness, safety, culture, and general feelings (Ecthner and Ritchie, 1993).

The second association chosen in the framework is destination brand benefits derived from Keller's 1993 and 1998 studies. Depending on what types of benefits are involved, they are comprised of functional (product-related benefits), experiential (feelings, cognitive stimulation benefits), and symbolic benefits (non-product related benefits). The third one is brand attitudes, which refer to consumer's overall evaluation of the product (Keller, 1993, 1998).

Destination Brand Image

Image has long been recognized as an important concept in both marketing and tourism studies (Aaker, 1991; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Chon, 1990, 1991; Crompton, 1979; Ecthner and Ritchie, 1993; Gallarza et al., 2002; Hunt, 1975; Jenkins, 1999; Keller, 1993, 1998; Low and Lomb, 2000). In marketing, brand image has been considered a vital part of a firm's marketing program, not only because it serves as a foundation for tactical marketing-mix issues but also because it plays an integral role in building long-term brand equity (Hsieh, 2002; Keller, 1993; Park, Milberg, and Lawson, 1991). In association with brand, brand image is defined as the reasoned or emotional perceptions consumers attach to specific brands (Low and Lamb, 2000). Brand image consists of functional and symbolic brand beliefs and brand associations are largely product category specific (Park and Srinivasan, 1994).

From the tourism perspective, a commonly adopted definition of image is that it is a set of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that people have of a place or destination (Kotler, et al., 1993; Crompton, 1979). This definition mostly emphasized a perceptual/ cognitive component of image. Gartner (1993) presented a conceptual framework of destination image that is formed by three distinctly different but hierarchically interrelated components: cognitive, affective and conative. Cognitive evaluation refers to beliefs and knowledge about an object whereas affective refers to feelings about it (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Gartenr, 1993). The conative image component is analogous to behavior because it is the action component. After all internal and external information is processed a decision is reached. Gartner argued that both cognitive and affective evaluations form the overall image of a place (composite image). The overall image (composite image) of a place is formed by the two components of cognitive and affective evaluations. The concept of cognitive image adopted in this model refers to the knowledge about the place's objective attributes and physical features of environments (Hanyu, 1993). A common agreement among diverse researchers is that those two constructs are interrelated (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Gartner, 1993; Stern and Krakover, 1993). As Gartner (1993) stated, people's perceptions of various attributes within a destination will interact to form a composite or the overall image. Another image included in this model is unique image. Unique image provides the destination with a sustainable, competitive advantage or unique selling proposition that gives consumers a compelling reason why they should select that particular destination.

The model reflects the notion that three components of destination brand image (perceptual/cognitive, affective, and unique images) play a critical role in creating a

destination brand identity. The assessment then provides input in building a strong, favorable, and unique destination brand (Figure 15). This study mainly focuses on upper portion of the model, which proposes a role of destination brand images (perceptual/cognitive, affective, and unique images) in building a favorable, strong, and unique destination brand for Oklahoma. The bottom portion of the model (in the dotted box) demonstrates a relationship between destination brand attributes and benefits in forming a destination brand for Oklahoma. This is beyond the scope of this study. A future study is recommended by using this portion of the model to assess the role of destination brand associations including destination brand attributes and benefits in developing a destination branding for Oklahoma.
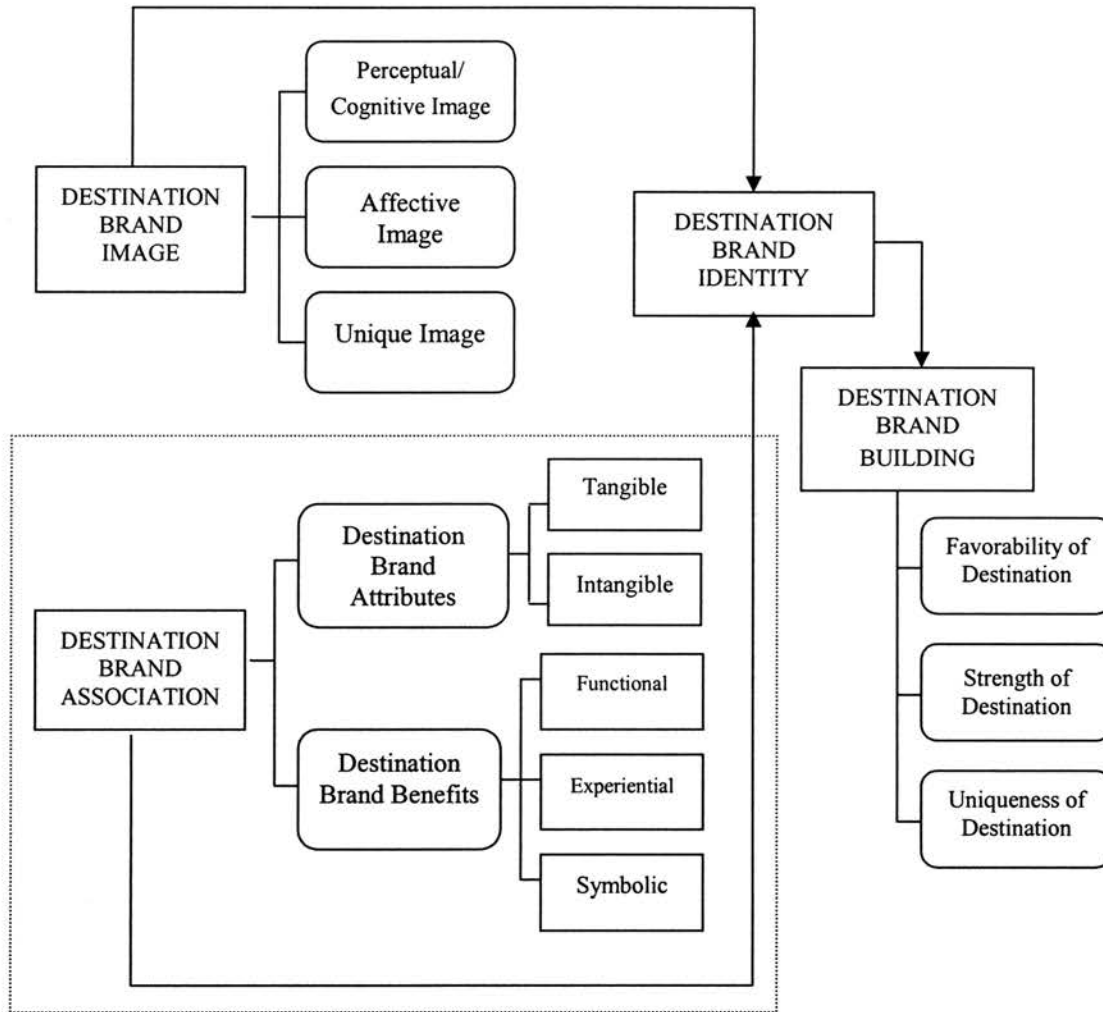
Note: The bottom portion of the model (in the dotted box) is recommended for future study to assess the role of destination brand association including destination brand attributes and benefits in developing a destination brand for Oklahoma. This study mainly focuses on the upper portion of the model.

Figure 15: A Conceptual Framework of Building Destination Branding

Figure 16 represents a model of destination branding to test several hypotheses pertaining to the impact of destination brand elements (perceptual/cognitive, affective, and unique images) on tourist behavior (intentions to revisit and recommend the place to others). In particular, in this study, the mediational role of overall image in a hierarchical model of the influence of individual destination brand associations on tourist's intentions to revisit and recommend. This model with hypotheses paths was derived from the reviews of the literature, research objectives of the study, and the conceptual framework of building destination branding illustrated in Figure 15.
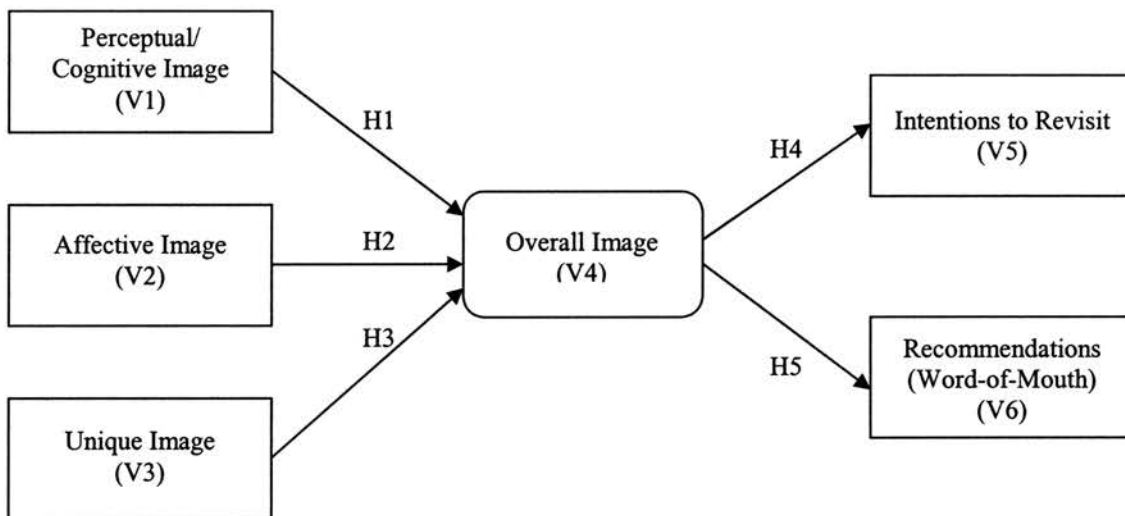
Figure 16: A Model of Destination Branding with Hypothesized Paths

It is widely agreed among tourism researchers that destination image has influenced on tourist behavior (Chon, 1990; Chon and Olsen, 1991; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Woodside and Lysonski, 1989; Um and Crompton, 1990). As several marketing and tourism researchers also have acknowledged, brand/destination image and associations have played a critical role in creating positive evaluations and feelings toward brands/destinations and influencing on consumer's brand/destination choice (intentions to visit or intentions to purchase) (Aaker, 1991, 1996; Keller, 1993, 1998; Low and Lamb, 2000; Woodside and Lysonski, 1989; Um and Crompton, 1990). According to destination choice model proposed by Woodside and Lysonski (1989), affective associations/images refer to positive and negative feelings linked with a specific destination considered by a traveler. The components of destination image used in hypotheses 1 and 2 are perceptual/cognitive and affective components. These two components are frequently referred in destination image studies capturing objective and physical attributes (perceptual/cognitive image) and meaning or the emotional component of environmental image (affective image) (Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997; Stern and Krakover, 1993). Another association included in the model is brand uniqueness. Although there is little discussion of brand uniqueness in the related literature as one dimension of brand associations up to date, it is included in this study in consideration of its important role in terms of strength of the brand. Brand uniqueness is essence of brand positioning because it provides the brand with a sustainable competitive advantage or unique selling proposition that gives consumers a compelling reason why they should buy that particular brand (Keller, 1998). Thus, brand uniqueness serves as a critical reference

in identifying, differentiating and competitive associations of the brand that can be outperformed in the minds of customers as opposed to its competitors.

It is argued that an overall image of a destination is formed as a result of both perceptual/cognitive and affective evaluations of that destination (Baloglu, 1996). Stern and Krokover (1993) proposed the model of the formation of a composite urban (city) image depicted that designative (perceptual/cognitive) and appraisive (affective images) together form a composite or overall image of a city. A portion of Woodside and Lysonski's (1989) model of traveler destination choice illustrated that perception or cognitive evaluations of a destination leads to affective evaluations which are feelings of travelers about the destination. These cognitive and affective associations then together influence the travelers' relative overall image or attitude. Gartner (1993), when relating image formation to the destination selection process, maintained that the cognitive component of image, which is defined as the sum of beliefs and knowledge of attributes of the object or product, and affective component image is distinct but hierarchically related in a sense that affective evaluations develop based on cognitive evaluations. Gartner (1986) also stated that people's perceptions of various attributes within a destination will interact to form a composite or overall image.

Based upon these ideas, the proposed relationships among these constructs and overall image are presented in the following hypotheses:

H1: *The destination brand image associated with perceptual/cognitive image will positively affect the visitor's overall image toward Oklahoma as a travel destination.*

H2:   *The destination brand image associated with unique image will positively affect the visitor's overall image toward Oklahoma as a travel destination.*

H3:   *The destination brand image associated with affective image will positively affect the visitor's overall image toward Oklahoma as a travel destination.*

The Mediational Role of Overall Image in Influence of Individual Destination Brand Associations and Tourist Behavior – Hypotheses 4 and 5

Aaker (1991) argued that many brand associations involving product attributes or consumer benefits present a basis for purchase decisions and brand loyalty by providing a specific reason to buy and also credibility and confidence in the brand. This is confirmed by Washburn and Plank (2002) with respect to the correlations between brand associations and purchase intention. The effects of brand associations on consumer response constitute a highly important subject when analyzing the brand value the firm has (del Río et al., 2001). Brand associations such as brand image, attitude, and perceived quality are found to be important influencers on consumer choice, intention of purchase, and willingness to recommend the brand (del Río et al., 2001; Low and Lamb, 2000). Images constructs are frequently studied to predict consumer behavior in tourism research (Baloglu, 1996). Woodside and Lysonski (1989) maintained that traveler variables, destination awareness, and affective associations together influence traveler destination preferences which lead to intentions to visit which in turn leads to destination choice.

The significant impact of word-of-mouth (WOM) on consumer behavior is supported by broad agreement among practitioners and academics (Anderson, 1998; Bansal and Voyer, 2000; Goldenberg, Libai, and Muller, 2001). Evidence supports that

consumer's decision making is strongly influence by WOM. It has been generally found that both satisfied and dissatisfied consumers tend to spread positive and negative WOM, respectively, regarding products and services which they purchase and use (Anderson, 1998). Today's managers are diverting increased efforts to the management of WOM. Recent anecdotal evidence confirms an upward trend in the use of referral reward programs, in which customers are compensated for spreading the word about a product, and including product consumption by their acquaintances (Biyalagorsky, Gerstner, and Libai, 2001). Recently, WOM has been gained much attention from service sector on the ground that the WOM process offers special solutions to the problem of intangibility of services (Bansal and Voyer, 2000). Due to intangibility nature of service product, a consumer's purchase decisions usually involve higher levels of perceived risk than purchasing manufactured products. As a result, he or she is likely to rely on WOM information from an experienced source. In several tourism literatures, WOM is considered an important information source affecting consumer's choice of destination (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000; Oppermann, 2000; Weaver and Lawton, 2002; Yvett and Turner, 2002). In association with visitors' overall satisfaction about the destination, it is revealed that tourists who are satisfied with the destination tend to have a higher levels of intentions to visit the place and recommend it to others, which leads to attracting potential new customers to that destination (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000). It is also argued that a person with a positive attitude about a destination will provide positive word-of-mouth (Oppermann, 2000).

Although previous studies have not specifically examined the mediational role of overall liamge, based on these literature reviews, it is anticipated that visitor's overall

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image toward a specific place will mediate the relationships between destination brand images (perceptual/cognitive, unique, and affective images) and tourist behavior in destination selection (intention to revisit and recommend the place to others).

H4:   *Visitor's overall image toward Oklahoma will mediate the relationships between three destination brand images (perceptual/cognitive, unique, and affective images) and the visitor's intention to revisit Oklahoma.*

H5:   *Visitor's overall image toward Oklahoma will mediate the relationships between three destination brand images (perceptual/cognitive, unique, and affective images) and the visitor's intention to recommend Oklahoma as a travel destination to others.*

The hypotheses proposed for this study are summarized as follows:

H1:   The destination brand image associated with perceptual/cognitive image will positively affect the visitor's overall image toward Oklahoma as a travel destination.

     H_0:   There will be no significant relationship between perceptual/cognitive image and the visitor's overall image toward Oklahoma as a travel destination.

     H_1:   There will be significant relationship between perceptual/cognitive image and the visitor's overall image toward Oklahoma as a travel destination.

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H2: The destination brand image associated with unique image will positively affect the visitor's overall image toward Oklahoma as a travel destination.

H_0: There will be no significant relationship between unique image and the visitor's overall image toward Oklahoma as a travel destination.

H_1: There will be significant relationship between unique image and the visitor's overall image toward Oklahoma as a travel destination.

H3: The destination brand image associated with affective image will positively affect the visitor's overall image toward Oklahoma as a travel destination.

H_0: There will be no significant relationship between unique image and the visitor's overall image toward Oklahoma as a travel destination.

H_1: There will be significant relationship between unique image and the visitor's overall image toward Oklahoma as a travel destination.

H4: Visitor's overall image toward Oklahoma will mediate the relationships between three destination brand images (perceptual/cognitive, unique, and affective images) and the visitor's intention to revisit Oklahoma.

H_0: There will be no significant mediational relationship between overall image and destination brand images on visitor's intention to revisit Oklahoma.

H_1: There will be significant mediational relationship between overall image and destination brand images on visitor's intention to revisit Oklahoma.

H5:   Visitor's overall image toward Oklahoma will mediate the relationships between three destination brand images (perceptual/cognitive, unique, and affective images) and the visitor's intention to recommend Oklahoma as a travel destination to others.

H_0:   There will be no significant mediational relationship between overall image and destination brand images on visitor's intention to recommend Oklahoma as a travel destination to others.

H_1:   There will be significant mediational relationship between overall image and destination brand images on visitor's intention to recommend Oklahoma as a travel destination to others.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter reviewed the literature about destination image, brand and brand equity, and destination branding followed by a conceptual framework and research hypotheses for this study. The first section of the chapter discussed important perspectives of destination image including components/ dimension, destination image formation process, destination choice process, variations in the perceptions of image, positioning of tourisms destination, and various measurement techniques used in destination image study. In the second section of the chapter, general issues related to brand and brand equity were reviewed. A relatively new concept of destination branding was also introduced in this section. Finally, based upon the literature review and research objectives of this study, a conceptual framework and research hypotheses of the study were proposed.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study was conducted using a combination of descriptive and causal research designs, which advances and tests the hypotheses to confirm the causal relationships. A cross-sectional survey was administered in an attempt to explain the state of Oklahoma as a favorable, strong, and unique travel destination by developing and testing a theoretical model of the destination branding. The target population of this study was the visitors stopping at the selected five welcome centers in Oklahoma during an eight-week period of July and August, 2002. A two-stage sampling approach, proportionate stratified sampling and systematic random sampling, was used to select the sample.

Focus Group

A focus group is a useful method for gathering ideas and insights (Churchill, 2000). Although focus groups do vary in size, most consist of eight to twelve members. Smaller groups are too easily dominated by one or two members; with larger groups, frustration and boredom can set in, as individuals have to wait their turn to respond or get involved (Churchill, 2000). It is recommended to select focus groups that are relatively homogeneous to minimize both conflict among group members on issues not relevant to

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the study objectives and differences in perceptions, experiences, and verbal skills (Churchill, 2000). In this study, two focus group sessions were held with twelve participants each developing multi-item scales capturing various aspects of Oklahoma's image as a travel destination. Individuals participating in the focus group sessions were drawn from various groups such as students (undergraduate and graduate levels), faculty members, and employees at the university, as well as marketing practitioners at Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department (OTRD). During the focus group sessions, the respondents were asked to provide various images of Oklahoma held in their minds with respect to positive, negative and distinct or unique images. The related questions were: (1) "What are some positive images that come to your mind when you think of Oklahoma as a travel destination (positive image)"; (2) "What are some negative images that come to your mind when you think of Oklahoma as a travel destination (negative image)"; and (3) "What do you find distinctive or unique about images of Oklahoma that you can think of (distinct or unique images)." The second part was devoted to identifying the perceptions of Oklahoma as a travel destination in comparison with four neighboring states including Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas. These neighboring states were selected based on the inbound target markets of Oklahoma defined by OTRD. The participants were instructed as follows: "Imagine that you have decided to visit recently the five states (including Oklahoma) nominated below. Please list as many benefits as possible that come to your mind that helped you decide to visit these states." The image attributes as a result of the focus group sessions served as a foundation of developing measurement scales for capturing more complex images of Oklahoma.

Survey Instrument

The majority of destination image studies have used either structured (scale format) or unstructured (open-ended, repertory grid, etc.) measurement techniques. The studies adopting a structured measurement technique employed the semantic differential and/or Likert scale for measuring perceptual/cognitive and affective components of destination image (Baloglu & Bringerg, 1997; Gartner, 1989; Milman & Pizam, 1995). The shortcoming of this method is that the structure measurement techniques usually do not capture the "richness" of image and image items salient to individuals. To overcome this problem, some researchers have adopted unstructured techniques aimed at examining the "complex" structure of image (Dann, 1996; Embacher & Buttle, 1989; Reilly, 1990). Echtner and Ritchie (1993) suggested that a combination of both structured and unstructured methodologies should be utilized to capture the complex assessment of destinations. With this in mind, the survey was designed using a combination of structured and unstructured techniques in order to fully capture various components of destination image. A copy of the instrument along with the cover letter can be found in Appendix A.

The survey questionnaire consists of the five major sections. The first section included questions relating to individual travel behavior of respondents and information source prior to planning a trip to Oklahoma. The travel behavior items include the number of times they visited Oklahoma, purpose for the trip, length of stay, and total trip spending. The variety of information source was used to measure the importance of type of information in forming impressions about Oklahoma. The items were derived from several studies such as Um and Crompton's (1990) symbolic and social images, Gunn's

(1972) and Gartner's (1993) typology of information sources, and Rittichainuwat, Qu, and Brown's (2001) various image attributes. The seven items were 1) tour guide books; 2) travel agencies; 3) Internet; 4) advertisement (TV/newspaper/magazine); 5) tourist information center (welcome center); 6) family/friends/relatives; and 7) literature picked up during trip or from prior trip.

The second section was developed to assess the respondent's perceptual/cognitive and affective images along with overall images toward Oklahoma as a travel destination. To generate a complete list of the respondent's perceptions associated with perceptual/cognitive images, a method used by Echtner and Ritchie (1993) was adapted. By using more than one of the techniques such as literature search, experience survey, insight-simulating examples, critical incidents, and focus groups, the likelihood of producing a complete list of items to describe the concept is increased (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993). During the review of the literature on destination image measurement, all the attributes used in the previous studies were recorded and grouped by the researcher into a "master list" of attributes. In an effort to capture holistic aspects of image, an unstructured technique (focus group sessions) was also used. For additional input, various travel literature and promotional brochures on Oklahoma's tourism were also reviewed. The results of the literature review and the focus group sessions were then merged to produce a more complete set of destination attributes. Table 6 lists the selected image attributes derived from a review of previous literature regarding destination image, and focus group sessions.

TABLE 6

SELECTED PERCEPTUAL/COGNITIVE IMAGE ATTRIBUTES

Common Image Attributes	References
Accommodations (availability of suitable accommodations)	Chon et al. (1991); Echtner and Ritchie (1993); Fakeye and Crompton (1991); Gartner and Shen (1992); Goodrich (1977); Haahti (1986); Hu and Ritchie (1993); Javalgi et al. (1992)
Adventurous activities	Echtner and Ritchie (1993)
Appealing local food (cuisine)	Baloglu and McCleary (1999); Echtner and Ritchie (1993); Embacher and Buttle (1989); Calantone et al. (1985); Fakeye and Crompton (1991); Pearce (1982)
Good weather, climate	Baloglu and McCleary (1999); Echtner and Ritchie (1993); Hu and Ritchie (1993); Javalgi et al. (1992);
Interesting cultural attractions	Embacher and Buttle (1989); Calantone et al. (1989); Goodrich (1977); Haahti (1986); Pearce (1982); Rittichainuwat et al. (2001)
Restful and relaxing atmosphere	Chon et al. (1991); Echtner and Ritchie (1993); Goodrich (1978); Rittichainuwat et al. (2001)
Beautiful scenery/natural attractions	Calantone et al. (1989); Chon et al. (1991); Echtner and Ritchie (1993); Embacher and Buttle (1989); Fakeye and Crompton (1991); Gartner and Shen (1992); Goodrich (1978); Haahti (1986); Hunt (1975); Pearce (1982)
Clean/unspoiled environment	Baloglu and McCleary (1999); OTRD (2001)
Cowboy life and culture	OTRD (2001); Plog Research (1999a, 1999b)
Cultural/historical attractions	Ahmed (1991); Baloglu and McCleary (1999); Chon et al. (1991); Echtner and Ritchie (1993); Fakeye and Crompton (1991); Gartner and Shen (1992); Goodrich (1978); Javalgi et al. (1992); Rittichainuwat et al. (2001)
Accessibility to the area (easy access to the area)	Chon et al. (1991); Echtner and Ritchie (1993); Rittichainuwat et al. (2001)
Entertainment/nightlife	Ahmed (1991); Baloglu and McCleary (1999); calantone et al. (1989); Echtner and Ritchie (1993); Gartner and Shen (1992); Goodrich (1978); Rittichainuwat et al. (2001)
Friendly local people	Calantone et al. (1989); Baloglu and McCleary (1999); Chon et al. (1991); Echtner and Ritchie (1993); Embacher and Buttle (1989); Fakeye and Crompton (1991); Gartner and Shen (1992); Goodrich (1978); Haahti (1986); Hu and Ritchie (1993); Hunt (1975); Rittichainuwat et al. (2001)
Good place for children and family	Echtner and Ritchie (1993); Plog Research (1999a, 1999b); Rittichainuwat et al. (2001)

TABLE 6

SELECTED PERCEPTUAL/COGNITIVE IMAGE ATTRIBUTES (CONTINUED)

Common Image Attributes	References
Good shopping centers/facilities	Calantone et al. (1989); Chon et al. (1991); Echtner and Ritchie (1993); Goodrich (1977); Rittichainuwat et al. (2001)
Golfing/tennis	Chon et al. (1991); Goodrich (1978); Fakeye and Crompton (1991); Rittichainuwat et al. (2001)
Open space/not crammed in cities	Echtner and Ritchie (1993); OTRD (2001); Plog Research (1999a, 1999b); Rittichainuwat et al. (2001)
Outdoor recreation	Ahmed (1991); Fakeye and Crompton (1991); Goodrich (1978); Hunt (1975); Rittichainuwat et al. (2001)
Quality of infrastructure	Baloglu and McCleary (1999); Echtner and Ritchie (1993); Embacher and Buttle (1989); Fakeye and Crompton (1991); Rittichainuwat et al. (2001)
Readily available travel information	Echtner and Ritchie (1993); Plog Research (1999a, 1999b); Rittichainuwat et al. (2001)
Safe and secure environment	Baloglu and McCleary (1999); Calantone et al. (1989); Echtner and Ritchie (1993); Embacher and Buttle (1989); Gartner and Shen (1992); Rittichainuwat et al. (2001)
State/amusement/theme parks	Ahmed (1991); Echtner and Ritchie (1993); Plog Research (1999a, 1999b); Rittichainuwat et al. (2001)
Native American/western heritage	OTRD (2001); Plog Research (1999a, 1999b)
Water sports (beaches, sailing, etc.)	Baloglu and McCleary (1999); Calantone et al. (1989); Chon et al. (1991); Fakeye and Crompton (1991); Goodrich (1978)
Costs, price levels (shopping/hotel/restaurant)	Calantone et al. (1989); Echtner and Ritchie (1993); Plog Research (1999a, 1999b); Rittichainuwat et al. (2001)
Opportunity for adventure/wilderness activities	Echtner and Ritchie (1993); Hunt (1975); Plog Research (1999a, 1999b); Rittichainuwat et al. (2001)
Value for money	Calantone et al. (1985); Echtner and Ritchie (1993); Embacher and Buttle (1989); Haahti (1986); Hu and Ritchie (1993); Javalgi et al. (1992); Rittichainuwat et al. (2001)

The last step was to have a panel of expert judges, who are academics and practitioners in the areas of tourism, marketing, and consumer behavior, examine the complete list of attributes to eliminate redundancies and to add any missing attributes. Finally, 28 items relating to perceptual/cognitive image were selected and respondents were asked to rate Oklahoma as a travel destination on each of 28 attributes on a 5-point Likert scale where 1=*Strongly Disagree (SD)*; 2=*Disagree (D)*; 3=*Neutral (N)*; 4=*Agree (A)*; and 5=*Strongly Agree (SA)*.

Affective image of destination was measured using affective image scales developed by Russel and colleagues (Russel, Ward, and Pratt, 1981). The scale included four bipolar scales: *Arousing-Sleepy, Pleasant-Unpleasant, Exciting-Gloomy*, and *Relaxing-Distressing*. A 7-point semantic-differential scale was used for all four bipolar scales where the positive poles were assigned to smaller values: 1=*arousing* and 7=*sleepy*, 1=*pleasant* and 7=*unpleasant*, 1=*exciting* and 7=*gloomy*, and 1=*relaxing* and 7=*distressing*. T he s cale o f o verall i mage m easurement w as m odified f rom S tern a nd Krakover (1993) who studied the composite image formation of a city. The respondents were asked to rate their overall image toward Oklahoma as a travel destination on a 7-point scale with 1 being *very negative* and with 7 being *very positive*.

The third section was to identify the unique attributes that make Oklahoma unique or different from neighboring states (Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas) as a travel destination. A total of 15 items was derived from a image study of Plog Research (1999a, 1999b) and various travel literature and promotional brochures on Oklahoma as well as neighboring states with a 5-point Likert scale (1=*strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree*).

An additional two questions were assessed to determine the respondent's likelihood or intention to revisit Oklahoma and his or her willingness to recommend Oklahoma as a favorable destination to others with a 5-point Likert scale (1=*most unlikely*; 5=*most likely*).

The fourth section included questions that determine the competitiveness of Oklahoma in comparison to its neighboring states namely Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas on a 5-point scale that was previously used to measure the unique images. The general image attributes of the five states including Oklahoma were derived from the tour guidebooks and travel literature related to selected destinations together with the results of the same focus group sessions described in the earlier section. The final section was devoted to collecting demographic information about the respondents.

Validity and Reliability

Content and Construct Validities

Validity is the extent to which a scale or set of measures accurately represents the concept o f i nterest (Hair, A nderson, T atham, and B lack, 1 998). T wo v alidity c hecks, content validity and construct validity, were performed to ensure that the measure includes an adequate and representative set of items that would tap the concept. A combination of the in-depth reviews of literature and focus group sessions were conducted in order to ensure the content validity of the attributes for measurements of perceptual/cognitive and unique images. The image attributes that were derived from the literature review and the focus group sessions were selected to narrow down the list. Then a panel of experts who are faculty members in hospitality, tourism, and marketing

examined the survey instrument to ensure content and face validity of the questionnaire. The survey instrument was also sent to the tourism marketers at OTRD for their comments and input on each item included in the questionnaire.

Construct validity is an assessment of how well the instrument captures the construct, concept, or trait it is supposed to be measuring (Churchill, 2000). To provide the construct validity of the study, a set of measurement items were generated through literature review related to the subject and examination of the panel of experts. In addition, a pilot test was conducted to ensure the construct validity and reliability of the instrument.

Reliability

Reliability is an assessment of the degree of consistency between multiple measurements of a variable (Hair et al., 1998). A pilot test was performed to assess how well the survey instrument captured the constructs it was supposed to measure, and to test the internal consistency and reliability of questionnaire items. The first draft of the survey instrument (Appendix A) was distributed to 20 randomly selected visitors who stopped at Thackerville Welcome Center in June 2002. This welcome center was selected because it is the largest welcome center among 12 Oklahoma welcome centers in Oklahoma by virtue of number of visitors. The respondents were asked to fill out the questionnaire and advised to ask for any clarification. A total of 20 questionnaires were collected at the site. The result showed that 60% of the respondents were male and 65% of them were in the age range of 18 to 50 years old. About 75% of the respondents had obtained college or graduate degrees. More than half of the respondents were

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professional or technicians. The results indicated that about 45% of the respondents were first time visitors. With respect to purpose of the Oklahoma trip, 50% of the respondents reported they had visited Oklahoma for a vacation, followed by visiting relatives or friends (25%) and business trip (20%). A majority of the respondents obtained information about Oklahoma from their family members, relatives, or friends and tour guidebooks. Almost 90% of the respondents indicated that they would visit Oklahoma again in the future and intended to recommend Oklahoma to others as a favorable travel destination.

A reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha) was performed to test the reliability and internal consistency of each dimension of perceptual/cognitive and unique images, and the competitiveness of Oklahoma as a travel destination. The results of the separate reliability tests for each dimension showed that Cronbach's alpha was 0.89 for perceptual/cognitive items, 0.75 for uniqueness of Oklahoma, and 0.82 for competitiveness, indicating above the minimum value of 0.70, which is considered acceptable as a good indication of reliability (Hair et al., 1998).

Based on the results of the pilot test and feedback from OTRD about questionnaire design, wording, and measurement scale, the final version of the survey instrument was modified (Appendix B).

Sampling Plan

Target Population

The target population of this study was the domestic visitors, who stopped at the selected five welcome centers in Oklahoma during the eight-week period of July and August 2002.

Sample Size

Confidence interval approach was used to determine the sample size (Burns and Bush, 1995). The formula for obtaining ±5% accuracy at the 95% confidence level is:

$$n = \frac{z^2(pq)}{e^2}$$

Where:
n = sample size
z = standard error associated with chosen level of confidence (95%)
p = estimated variability in the population 50/50*
q = (100 – q)
e = acceptable error ±5%

$$n = \frac{1.946^2(50*50)}{5^2} = \frac{3.79(2500)}{25}$$

$$= \frac{9475}{25}$$

$$= \underline{379}$$

Note: * The amount of variability in the population is estimated to be 50% which is widely used in social research. From a practical standpoint, most researchers will opt for the 50% level of p because it is the worst possible case, but it does not dramatically impact the sample size (Burns and Bush, 1995).

Applying this formula, the sample size was set at 379 (n=379) at 95% confidence level with 5% confidence interval. Given that on site survey generally obtains a relatively higher response rate than mail survey, the expected response rate was 30%. Assuming a response rate of 25% and unusable rate of 5%, a total of 1,264 (379/0.30) people were approached to participate in the survey.

Sampling Approach

Two stages of sampling approach were used in this study: proportionate stratified sampling and systematic random sampling (SRS). Based on previous visitor numbers of the 12 welcome centers in 2001, the top five largest welcome centers (Thackerville, Sallisaw, Colbert, Erick, and Miami) were selected in terms of number of total attendance in July and August 2001 (OTRD, 2002). The proportionate sub sample size of each welcome center was then stratified proportionately. According to the OTRD statistics, the total number of attendance at these five welcome centers was 132,232 accounting for approximately 73% of the total welcome center attendance (180,457) in 2001 (Table 7).

TABLE 7

PROPORTION OF WELCOME CENTER ATTENDANCE

Top 5 Welcome Center Attendance	Total Number of Attendance (July 2001)	Percentage	Proportionate Sample Size	Every n^{th} Visitor
Thackerville	45,929	34.7%	439	14
Sallisaw	30,098	22.8%	288	14
Colbert	28,172	21.3%	269	13
Erick	14,611	11.0%	139	7
Miami	13,422	10.2%	129	6
Total	132,232	100%	1,264	

Source: OTRD, 2002.

The next step was to select the interval of the samples (n^{th}) by using a Systematic Random Sampling (SRS). The interval of the samples (n^{th}) was determined by dividing the previous total visitor number of the five welcome centers by the number of attendance at each of the five welcome centers (Table 7). It means that every n^{th} visitor who stopped at the five welcome centers was approached to participate in the survey. A random starting number for each day was created.

Survey Procedure

Given that the survey was being conducted on site by the staffs working at each of the five welcome centers, it was crucial that the staffs understood the purpose of the survey and followed the survey procedure accurately as described in the survey guidelines. Prior to conducting the survey, an orientation meeting was held at the OTRD office attended by a group of OTRD managers who oversee 12 welcome centers and the principal researcher of this project. At the meeting OTRD managers were provided a

copy of guidelines for conducting the survey. The survey guidelines stated the background of the survey, descriptions of the questionnaire, qualifications of participants for the survey, a detailed procedure of the survey, and answered questions anticipated by the respondents. The OTRD managers were also encouraged to ensure that the survey assistants fully understood questionnaire contents prior to distribution, and complied with survey procedure. Afterwards, a set of finalized questionnaires along with an instruction letter was sent to the five welcome centers according to proportionate sub sample size of each welcome center.

Data Analysis

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics were assessed to determine mean and standard deviation scores on perceptual/cognitive and affective image, and unique attributes. In addition, frequency distribution of travel behavior and visitor demographic information was analyzed.

Independent Sample Mean t test

Independent sample mean *t* test was performed to determine the significant mean differences of perceptual/cognitive, affective and overall images, and uniqueness of Oklahoma between first time and repeat visitors.

<u>Paired-Samples Mean t test</u>

The paired-samples *t* test procedure compares the means of two variables for a single group. It computes the differences between values of the two variables for each case and tests whether the average differs from zero (SPSS, 1999). This test was used in this study to assess the significant differences in the competitiveness of Oklahoma versus each of its four neighboring states (Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas).

<u>An Exploratory Factor Analysis</u>

A series of exploratory factor analysis was assessed to derive the underlying dimensions of perceptual/cognitive and unique images of Oklahoma as opposed to its neighboring states. A Principal component analysis with orthogonal (VARIMAX) was undertaken to assist in the interpretation of the factors. The next step was to ensure the appropriateness of factor analysis through visual inspection of correlations of the data matrix, the Bartlett test of sphericity, and measure of sampling adequacy (MSA). If visual inspection reveals no substantial number of correlations greater than .30, then factor analysis is probably inappropriate (Hair et al., 1998). The Bartlett test of sphericity provides the statistical probability that the correlation matrix has significant correlations among at least some of the variables. The MSA measure can be interpreted by the following guidelines: .80 or above, meritorious; .70 or above, middling; .60 or above, mediocre; .50 or above, miserable; and below .50, unacceptable (Hair et al., 1998). A combination of latent root of 1.0, percentage of variance, and scree test criterions were utilized for factor extraction on each construct. In determining significant factor loadings worth interpreting, both practical and statistical significance were

considered. From a practical significance standpoint, factor loadings greater than ± .30 are considered to meet the minimal level; ± .40 are considered more important; and if the loadings are ± .50 or greater, they are considered practically significant (Hair et al., 1998). According to Hair et al. (1998), in assessing statistical significance, factor loadings of ± .40 are considered significant based on the power of .80 at a significant level of $p \leq .05$ with the minimum sample sizes of 200.

Based on this any variables with factor loadings of ± .40 were included for further interpretation of the data. The underlying factors on perceptual/cognitive and unique images, which were extracted from the principal component analyses, were then transited to a confirmatory mode in a subsequent application for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). These factors became the latent variables (exogenous variables) in a measurement model.

In order to identify appropriate variables for subsequent application to other statistical techniques, some form of data reduction (a summated scale or factor scores) was employed (Hair et al., 1998). In selecting between two methods, a summated scale and factor scores, factor scores represent a composite of all variables loading on the factor leading to making interpretation more difficult (Hair et al., 1998). Summated scales, on the other hand, can portray complex concepts in a single measure while reducing measurement error. This makes it a valuable addition in any multivariate analysis (Hair et al., 1998). Hair et al. (1998) argued that "if the summated scale is a well-constructed, valid, and reliable instrument, then it is probably the best alternative." (p.120). Therefore, summated scales were created for subsequent analyses in this study through assessment of scale reliability (item-to-total correlation and Cronbach's alpha).

Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA)

The use of separate univariate ANOVA or *t* tests can create the problem of Type I error and ignores the possibility of detecting an overall group difference by examining each dependent variable separately (Hair et al., 1998). Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) is a statistical technique that can reduce these problems by exploring several dependent variables simultaneously. In this study, MANOVA was assessed to determine the differences in the perceived destination images of Oklahoma (perceptual/cognitive and affective images), and uniqueness of Oklahoma with different demographic profiles. Before calculating the test statistics for mean differences across the groups, two assumptions in MANOVA were performed. One important assumption in MANOVA is that the dependent measures are significantly correlated (Hair et al., 1989). The most widely used test for this purpose is Bartlett's test for sphericity. It examines the correlations among all dependent variables, and assesses whether collectively, significant intercorrelation exists (Hair et al., 1998). The other critical assumption concerns the homogeneity of the variance-covariance matrices among the groups. This can be done by Box's M test. The separate univariate tests were then employed to address the individual issues for each dependent variable. As a follow-up analysis, a post-hoc contrast with the Bonferroni test was conducted to determine which variables were differentiated on each attribute. The distribution of the dependent variables was also examined to check the homogeneity of variance and normality of MANOVA assumptions.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Objectives of SEM

The primary aim of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is to explain the pattern of a series of interrelated dependence relationships simultaneously between a set of latent (unobserved) constructs, each measured by one or more manifest (observed) variables (Reisinger and Turner, 1999). The most obvious difference between SEM and other multivariate techniques is the use of separate relationships for each set of dependent variables. S EM e stimates a s eries o f s eparate, but i nterdependent, m ultiple r egression equations simultaneously by specifying the structural model used by the statistical program (Hair et al., 1998). In this primary form of analysis, its closest analogy is multiple regression, which can estimate a single relationship (equation) (Hair et al., 1998). But SEM can estimate many equations at once, and they can be interrelated, meaning that the dependent variable in one equation can be an independent variable in other equation(s). This allows the researcher to model complex relationships that are not possible with any of the other multivariate techniques (Hair et al., 1998). In complex analysis frameworks SEM may be preferable to conventional statistical methods, for example, where a multiple regression is required to test for several dependent variables from the same set of independent variables simultaneously (Reisinger and Turner, 1999). SEM is a powerful method for effectively dealing with multicollinearity which is one of the benefits SEM has over multiple regression.

Application of SEM Modeling in Tourism

Although SEM has been widely used in a number of disciplines, including marketing, psychology, sociology, it has been a relatively unexplored concept in the tourism discipline. The popularity of SEM in many disciplines is due to its ability to solve research problems related to causal relationships between latent constructs and their measurable variables. Tourism researchers are often faced with a set of interrelated questions, thus the need for application of SEM in tourism has become important as a tool for promoting better quality research (Reisinger and Turner, 1999).

Reflecting its important role in tourism research, a growing number of researchers have recently used SEM technique to assess various topics in the tourism discipline. Several examples can be found in works of Getty and Thompson (1994), Vogt and Fesenmaier (1994), Gunderse, Heide, and Olsson (1996), Lindberg and Johnson (1997), Reisinger and Turner (1998 and 1999), Gursoy, Jurowski, and Uysal (2002), and Yvette and Turner (1999, 2002).

Application of SEM for Testing Hypotheses

For hypotheses testing illustrated in Chapter 2, a seven-stage process for SEM was applied as presented in Figure 17.

<u>*Stage 1: Developing a Theoretically Based Model*</u>

Stage 1 focuses on the development of a theoretical model with linkages (defined causal relationships) between latent constructs and their measurable variables, reflecting proposed hypotheses. The strength and conviction with which the researcher can assume causation between two variables lies not in the analytical methods chosen but in the

theoretical justification provided to support the analyses (Hair et al., 1998). Hair et al. (1998) argued that using SEM techniques in an "exploratory" manner is invalid and misleads the researcher more often than it provides appropriate results.

The most critical point at this stage is to include all key predictive variables (multiple indicators of the latent variables) to avoid a specification error (Hair et al., 1998; Reisinger and Turner, 1999). One of the problems associated with adding irrelevant variables is it reduces model parsimony, which may be critical in the interpretation of results. The additional variables may also make testing of statistical significance of the independent variables less precise therefore reducing statistical and practical significance of the analysis (Hair et al., 1998). Justification for inclusion of specific latent constructs and their indicators in a model must be theoretically sound and be weighted against the limitations of SEM and computer programs (Reisinger and Turner, 1999). Interpretation of the results and their statistical significance usually becomes difficult as the number of concepts becomes large (exceeding 20) (Hair et al., 1998).

The causal relationships between latent constructs and their observed variables illustrated in Figure 18 were derived from a theoretical basis as discussed in Chapter 2.
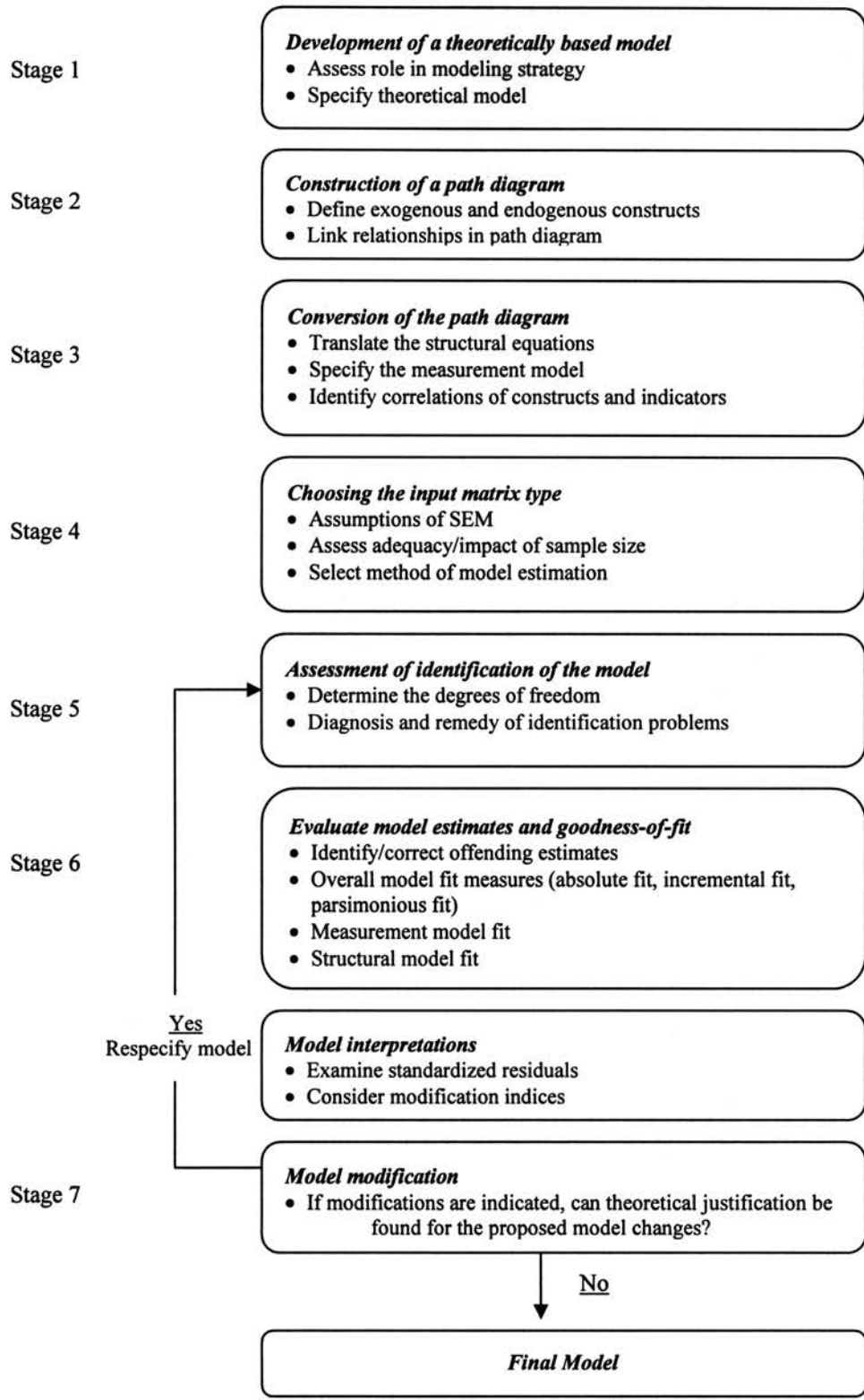
Figure 17: A Seven-Stage Process for Structural Equation Modeling (Source: Hair et al., 1998, p. 593, 602).

Stage 2: Constructing a Path Diagram of Causal Relationships

This s tage i nvolves d efining e xogenous a nd endogenous c onstructs and linking relationships in a path diagram. In the path diagram all causal relationships between constructs and their indicators are graphically presented with arrows (Figure 18). A straight arrow indicates a direct causal relationship from a construct to its indicators, and direct causal-effect relationship between constructs. For instance, the direct arrow from perceptual/cognitive image (ξ_1) to overall image (η_1) indicates that perceptual/cognitive image causes the overall image.

All constructs fall into two categories: exogenous and endogenous. Exogenous constructs (represented as ξ in Greek notation) are independent variables and are not caused/predicted by any other variable in a model. The hypothesized model in Figure 18 contains three exogenous constructs such as perceptual/cognitive image (ξ_1), unique image (ξ_2), and affective image (ξ_3). Endogenous constructs (represented as η in Greek notation) are predicted by other constructs and relationships contained in the model. In LISREL model for this study, there are three endogenous constructs that include overall image (η_1), visitor's intentions to revisit Oklahoma (η_2), and recommend Oklahoma to others (η_3). In order to avoid specification error attention has to be paid not to omit any exogenous or endogenous constructs (Reisinger and Turner, 1999). Two assumptions underlie path diagrams. First, all causal relationships are indicated with a theoretical rationale. The second assumption relates to the nature of the causal relationship that is assumed to be linear (Hair et al., 1998).

δ 1,1 → X1

λx 1,1

ξ₁

δ n,n → Xn

λx n,1

δ 1,1 → X1

λx 1,2

ξ₂

γ 1,2

δ n,n → Xn

λx n,2

δ 1,1 → X1

λx 1,3

ξ₃

γ 1,3

δ n,n → Xn

λx n,3

γ 1,1

Y1 ← ε 1,1

λy 1,1

η₁

Y2 ← ε 2,2

λy 2,2

η₂

β 2,1

β 3,1

η₃

λy 3,3

Y3 ← ε 3,3
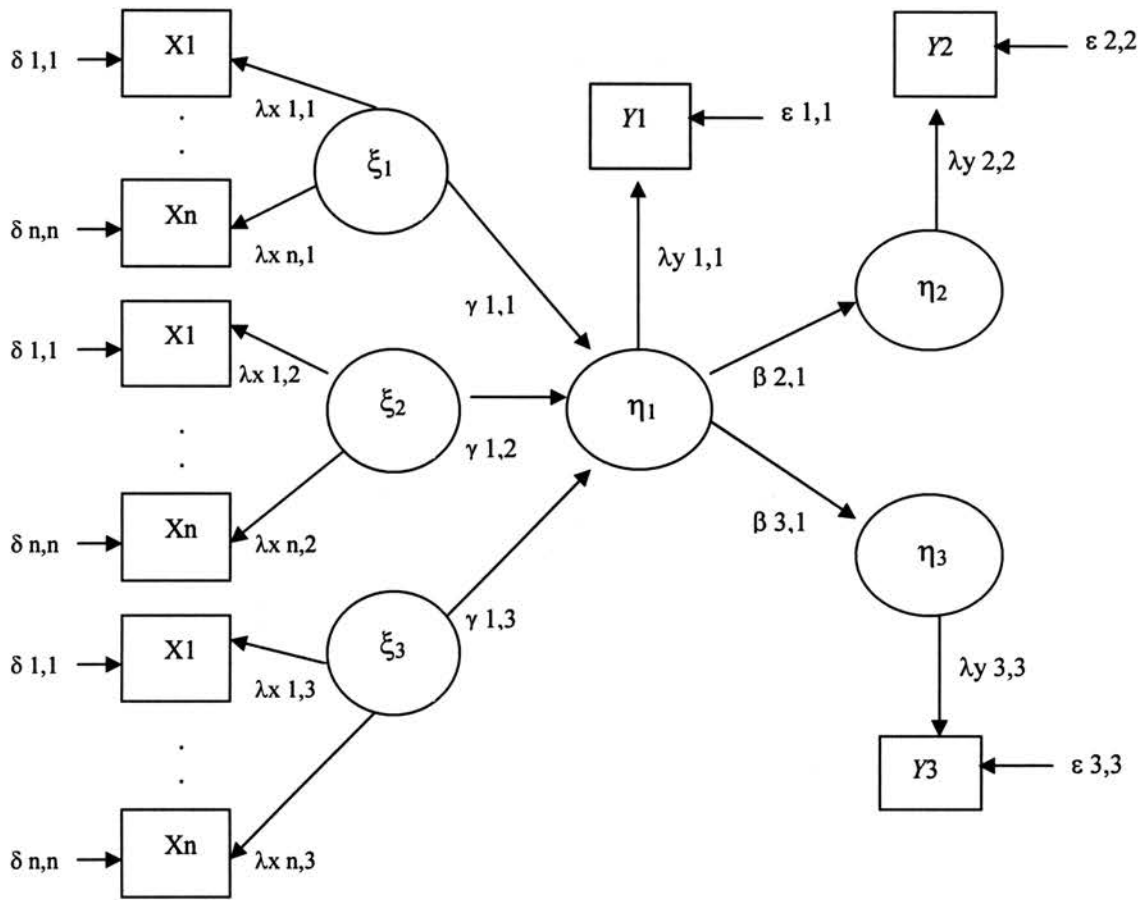
Where;

X1.....Xn	=	Observed measure associated with exogenous latent variables
Y1.....Yn	=	Observed measure associated with endogenous latent variables
λx1,1...λxn,3	=	Represents a parameter associated with the relationship between an exogenous latent variable (Ksi) and a corresponding observed variable (X) – often referred to as a factor loading
ξ₁	=	Exogenous latent variable (perceptual/cognitive image)
ξ₂	=	Exogenous latent variable (unique image)
ξ₃	=	Exogenous latent variable (affective image)
γ 1,1, γ 1,2, γ 1,3,	=	Represents a parameter associated with the relationship between an exogenous variable (Ksi) and an endogenous variable (Eta)
η₁	=	Endogenous latent variable (overall image)
η₂	=	Endogenous latent variable (intention to revisit Oklahoma)
η₃	=	Endogenous latent variable (intention to recommend)
λy 1,1, λy 2,2, λy 3,3	=	Represents a parameter associated with the relationship between an endogenous latent variable (Eta) and a corresponding observed variable (Y) – often referred to as a factor loading
δ1,1...δn,n	=	Represents a parameter associated with the residual variance of an observed measure (X) or the covariance of the residual variances of two observed measures on the exogenous side
ε 1,1, ε2,2, ε 3,3	=	Represents a parameter associated with the residual variance of an observed measure (Y) or the covariance of the residual variances of two observed measures on the endogenous side

Figure 18: Full Path Diagram Portrayal with LISREL Notations

Stage 3: Converting the Path Diagram (Structural and Measurement Models)

Stage 3 involves the formal mathematical specification of the model. This is done by describing the nature and number of parameters to be estimated (which variables measure which constructs), translating the path diagram into a series of linear equations which link constructs, and translating the specified model into LISREL language in the form of matrices, indicating hypothesized correlations among constructs or variables.

Structural model. In a structural model each endogenous construct (any construct with one or more straight arrows leading into it) is the dependent variable in a separate equation. The predictor variables are all constructs at the ends, or "tails" of the straight arrows leading into the endogenous variable. Table 8 illustrates this translation process for each of the path diagrams in Figure 18. The hypothesized model consists of six latent constructs: perceptual/cognitive image, unique image, affective image, overall image, intention to revisit, and intention to recommend.

TABLE 8

STRUCTURAL MODEL EQUATIONS FOR THE PATH DIAGRAM

Endogenous Variable		Exogenous Construct			Endogenous Constructs			Error
		ξ_1	ξ_2	ξ_3	η_1	η_2	η_3	
η_1 Overall image	$=$	$\gamma_{11}\xi_1 +$	$\gamma_{12}\xi_2 +$	$\gamma_{13}\xi_3$ $+$			$+$	ζ_1
η_2 Revisit	$=$				$\beta_{21}\eta_1$		$+$	ζ_2
η_3 Recommend	$=$				$\beta_{31}\eta_1$		$+$	ζ_3

Measurement Model. A measurement model involves the operationalization of the latent constructs via the measured variables, and describing the way in which they are represented by empirical indicators (manifest variables). The foundations of factor

analysis are quite analogous to the measurement model. The factors are, in measurement model terms, the latent variables. Each variable acts as an indicator of each factor. Used in this manner, factor analysis is primarily an exploratory technique because of the researcher's limited control over which variables are indicators of which latent construct. SEM, however, can play a confirmatory role because the researcher has complete control over the specification of indicators for each construct. To specify the measurement model, transition is needed from factor analysis to confirmatory mode, in which the researcher specifies which variables define each construct (factor).

Stage 4: Choosing the Input Matrix Type and Estimating the Proposed Model

Stage 4 addresses the actual process of estimating the specified model, including the issues of inputting the data in the appropriate form and selecting the estimation procedure.

Covariances versus Correlations. An important issue in interpreting the results is the use of the variance-covariance matrix versus the correlation matrix. SEM was initially formulated for use with the variance-covariance matrix. The covariance matrix is used when the objective is to test a theory, provide comparison between different populations or samples, or to explain the total variance of constructs needed to test the theory. Interpretation of the results, however, is somewhat more difficult when using covariances because the coefficient must be interpreted in terms of units of measure for the constructs. The correlation matrix has gained widespread use in many applications because it allows for direct comparison of the coefficient within a model. Use of correlations is appropriate when the objective of the research is only to understand the

pattern of relationships between constructs, but not to explain the total variance of a construct (Hair et al., 1998). In this study, the variance-covariance matrix was used as the variances and covariances satisfy the assumptions of the methodology, and are the appropriate form of data for validating causal relationships (Hair et al., 1998). The most widely used means of computing the correlations or covariances between manifest variables is the Pearson product-moment correlation and the correlation matrix is computed using PRELIS (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1995a, 1995b).

Sample Size. Sample size plays an important role in estimating and interpreting SEM results as well as estimating sampling errors (Reisinger and Turner, 1999). Although there is no correct rule for estimating sample size for SEM, recommendations are for a size ranging between 100 and 200 (Hair et al., 1998). A sample of 200 is called a "critical sample size." The sample size should also be large enough when compared with the number of estimated parameters (as a rule of thumb at least 5 times the number of parameters) (Reisinger and Turner, 1999). Maximum likelihood estimation (MLE), the most common estimation procedure, generally requires a minimum sample of 100 to 150 to ensure appropriate use. The total sample size for this study is 310, which is considered an appropriate sample size for providing valid results as the recommended critical sample size is 200 (Hair et al., 1998).

Stage 5: Assessing the Identification of the Structural Model

Stage 5 involves the issue of model identification, that is, the extent to which the information provided by the data is sufficient to enable parameter estimation (Maruyama, 1998). If a model is not identified, then it is not possible to determine model parameters.

A necessary condition for the identification is that the number of independent parameters be less than or equal the number of elements of the sample matrix of covariances among the observed variables (Maruyama, 1998).

Degrees of Freedom. The difference between the number of correlations or covariances and the actual number of coefficients in the proposed model is termed, degrees of freedom. A degree of freedom is an unconstrained element of the data matrix. The primary difference in the degrees of freedom used in SEM compared to other multivariate techniques is that the number of estimated parameters is compared to the number of elements in the data matrix, not the sample size (Hair et al., 1998).

Rules for Identification. The two most basic rules in association with identification issues are the rank and order conditions. The order condition states that the model's degrees of freedom must be greater than or equal to zero. This corresponds to what are termed just-identified or overidentified models. In a just-identified model, all the information available is used to estimate parameters and there is no information left to test the model (zero degrees of freedom). In an overidentified model there are positive degrees of freedom, meaning that it has more information in the data matrix than the number of parameters to be estimated. An overidentified model is the goal for all structural equation models (Hair et al., 1998). A model failing to meet the order condition is known as an underidentified model. This model has negative degrees of freedom as it tries to estimate more parameters than there is information available.

The order condition is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for identification. The model must also meet the rank condition, which requires being determined if each parameter is uniquely identified (estimated) (Maruyama, 1998). Several heuristics such

as the three-measure rule and the recursive model rule are available (Hair et al., 1998). The three-measure rule asserts that any construct with three or more indicators will always be identified. The recursive model rule states that recursive models with identified constructs (three-measure rule) will always be identified.

Identification Problems. The symptoms of potential identification problems are: (1) very large standard errors for coefficients; (2) the inability of the program to invert the information matrix; (3) impossible estimates (e.g., negative and non-significant error variances for any construct); and (4) high correlations (± 0.90 or above) among observed variables. These symptoms must be searched out and eliminated (Hair et al., 1998).

Sources and Remedies of Identification Problems. There are several sources of identification problems: (1) a large number of coefficients relative to the number of correlations or covariances, indicated by a small number of degrees of freedom – similar to the problems of overfitting, that is, insufficient sample size; (2) the use of reciprocal effects (two-way causal arrows between the constructs); (3) failure to fix the scale of a construct, that is, incorrect assignment of parameters as fixed or free (Hair et al., 1998); (4) skewness; (5) nonlinearity; (6) heteroscedasticity; (7) multicollinearity; (8) singularity; and (9) autocorrelation (Reisinger and Turner, 1999).

The potential solutions for identification problems are: (1) to eliminate some of the estimated coefficients (deleting paths from the path diagram); (2) to fix the measurement error variance of constructs if possible; (3) to fix any structural coefficients that were reliably known, that is, eliminate correlations over one because of multicollinearity of variables; (4) to remove multicollinearity by using data reduction methods like principal components analysis; (5) to eliminate troublesome variables, e.g.,

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highly correlated variables, redundant variables, and (6) to check for missing values and outliers (Hair et al., 1998). The procedures for remedies of identification problems will be discussed in Chapter 4 in greater detail.

Stage 6: Evaluating Goodness-of-Fit Criteria

Stage 6 relates to the assessment of the model fit using a variety of fit using a variety of fit measures for the measurement and structural model (and supporting/rejecting the proposed hypotheses) (Reisinger and Turner, 1998).

Offending Estimates. The results are first examined for offending estimates which are coefficients that exceed acceptable limits. The common examples are: (1) negative error variances or non-significant error variances for any construct; (2) standardized coefficients exceeding or very close to 1.0; and (3) very large standard errors associated with any estimated coefficient (Hair et al., 1998). These offending estimates must be resolved before evaluating the model results. In the case of negative error variances (Heywood case) the offending error variances can be changed to a very small positive value (0.005). If correlations in the standardized solution exceed 1.0, or two estimates are highly correlated, one of the constructs should be removes (Hair et al., 1998).

Overall Model Fit. When assessing model fit, attention must be paid both to the measurement and the structural models. Anderson and Gerbing (1982) argued that proper evaluation of the measurement model (latent variables) is a pre-requisite to the evaluation of the structural model. The LISREL program runs the assessment of both models simultaneously. Once no offending estimates are found, the model can be assessed for its "goodness-of-fit." Goodness-of-fit measures the correspondence of the

actual or observed input (covariance or correlation) matrix which is predicted from the proposed model. There are three types of goodness-of-fit measurement: (1) absolute fit measures; (2) incremental fit measures; and (3) parsimonious fit measures. Absolute fit measures assess only the overall model fit (both structural and measurement models collectively), with no adjustment for the degree of overfitting that might occur. Incremental fit measures compare the proposed model to another model specified by the researcher. Finally, parsimonious fit measures adjust the measures of fit to provide a comparison between models with differing numbers of estimated coefficients, the purpose being to determine the amount of fit achieved by each estimated coefficient. In order to achieve a better understanding of the acceptability of the proposed model multiple measures should be applied (Hair et al., 1998). The absolute fit measures provide information on the extent to which the model as a whole provides an acceptable fit to the data. They are evaluated by:

(a) *Likelihood ratio of Chi-square to the degrees of freedom* (the acceptable range is between 0.05 and 0.10 – 0.20). A large value of Chi-square indicates a poor fit of the model to the data, a small value of Chi-square indicates a good fit. The degrees of freedom judge whether the Chi-square is large or small. The number of degrees of freedom is calculated as

$$df = \frac{1}{2}\,[(p + q)\,(p + q + 1)] - t$$

where:

p = the number of endogenous indicators,
q = the number of exogenous indicators,
t = the number of estimated coefficients in the proposed model.

The Chi-square statistic is quite sensitive in different ways to both small and large sample sizes, thus, the researcher is encouraged to complement this measure with other measures of fit in all instances (Hair et al., 1998).

(b) *Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)* is another measure provided by LISREL. It is a nonstatistical measure ranging in value from 0 (poor fit) to 1.0 (perfect fit). Higher values indicate better fit and a marginal acceptance level is 0.90.

(c) *Root-mean-square residuals (RMSR)* reflect the average amount of variances and covariances not accounted for by the model. The closer to zero the better the fit. A marginal acceptance level is 0.08. RMSR must be interpreted in relation to the sizes of the observed variances and covariances.

(d) *Root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA)* attempts to correct for the tendency of the chi-square statistic to reject any specified model with a sufficiently large sample. Values ranging from 0.05 to 0.08 are deemed acceptable (Hair et al., 1998).

(e) *Noncentrality parameters (NCP)* are an alternative measure to the likelihood-ratio chi-square statistic that is less affected by or independent of the sample size. In a LISREL problem, the Noncentrality parameter can be calculated as:

$$NCP = \chi^2 - \text{Degrees of freedom}$$

(f) *Expected cross-validation index (ECVI)* is an approximation of the goodness-of-fit the estimated model would achieve in another sample of the same size.

While all the absolute measures might fall within acceptable levels, the incremental fit and parsimonious fit indices are needed to ensure acceptability of the model from other perspectives (Reisinger and Turner, 1999). The incremental fit measures assess the incremental fit of the model compared to a null model (the simplest

model that can be theoretically justified). These are: (1) Tucker-Lewis measure (TL); (2) Adjusted goodness-of-fit index (GFI); and (3) Normed fit index (NFI). All these incremental fit measures should exceed the recommended level of minimum 0.90 to support acceptance of the proposed model (Hair et al., 1998).

Parsimonious fit measures relate goodness-of-fit of the model to the number of estimated coefficients required to achieve this level of fit. The most appropriate parsimonious fit measures are:

(a) *Normed chi-square* is the ratio of the chi-square divided by the degrees of freedom. The recommended level is between 1.0 and 2.0. The Normed chi-square, however, has been shown to be somewhat unreliable, so it should be assessed in combination with other goodness-of-fit measures (Hair et al., 1998).

(b) *Parsimonious Normed fit index (PNFI)*, a modification of the NFI, takes into account the number of degrees of freedom used to achieve a level of fit. Higher values of PNFI are better.

(c) *Adjusted for the degrees of freedom goodness-of-fit index (AGFI)* takes values between 0 and 1 and the closer to unity, the better the model fit. If there is a drop in AGFI as compared to GFI, the overall fit of the model can be questioned (Hair et al., 1998).

Measurement Model Fit. Once the overall model fit has been evaluated, the measurement of each construct can then be assessed for unidimensionality and reliability. Unidimensionality is an assumption underlying the calculation of reliability and is demonstrated when the indicators of a construct have acceptable fit on a single-factor (one-dimensional) model (Hair et al., 1998). The fit of the measurement model is

assessed by examining squared multiple correlation coefficients (SMC) for the y- and x-variables. They indicate how well the y- and x-variables measure the latent construct, the largest amount of variance accounted for by the constructs, and the extent to which the individual variables are free from measurement error (Reisinger and Turner, 1998). They also represent the reliabilities (convergent validities) of these measures. These coefficients lie between 0 and 1 (the closer to 1, the better the variable acts as an indicator of the latent construct).

Structural Model Fit. The fit of the structural model is assessed by the squared multiple correlations (SMC) for structural equations which indicates the amount of variance in each endogenous latent variable accounted for by the independent variables in the relevant structural equation. It also accounted for by the total coefficient of determination (TCD) (R^2) for structural equations which show the strength of the relationships for all structural relationships together (Reisinger and Turner, 1998).

Each of the constructs can also be evaluated separately by:

(1) Examining the indicators' loadings (t-values for the paths) for statistical significance (Hair et al., 1998). If the t-values associated with each of the loadings for the path coefficients, are larger than 2 the parameters are significant and variables are significantly related to their specified constructs, thus verifying the relationships among indicators and constructs (Reisinger and Turner, 1999).

(2) Examining the correlation between the latent constructs (ϕ values and t-values); and correlation among latent constructs (t-value in parentheses). The results of fits of the measurement and structural models are reported in Chapter 4.

Stage 7: Interpreting and Modifying the Model

Stage 7 considers whether modification to the model has to be made in the light of the results obtained at the previous stage. At this stage the analysis becomes exploratory in nature and results from previous analysis are used to develop a better fitting model. The aim is to identify specification errors and produce a new model which fits the data better (Reisinger and Turner, 1999).

The first modification to the model may be done through examination of the standardized residuals and modification indices. The standardized residuals (normalized) are provided by the program and represent the differences between the observed correlation/covariance and the estimated correlation/covariance matrix. Residual values greater than ± 2.58 are considered statistically significant at 0.05 level (Hair et al., 1998). Significant residuals indicate a substantial prediction error for a pair of indicators (i.e., one of the correlations or covariances in the original input data). The acceptable range is 1 in 20 residuals exceeding 2.58 by chance.

The other two ways in which model modification can be made is by deleting or adding parameters (Hair et al., 1998). In both cases, deleting or adding parameters should be guided by theory. Non-significant t-values can give insight as to which parameters should be eliminated. However, if a theory suggests that particular parameters should be included in the model, even non-significant parameters should be retained because the sample size may be too small to detect their real significance (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1995a). The effect of deletion on the model fit can be assessed by comparing the chi-square values of the two models, particularly the differences in chi-squares (D^2). The modification indices (MI) can be used to decide which parameters

should be added to the model. The MI are measures of a predicted decrease in the chi-square that results if a single parameter (fixed or constrained) is freed (relaxed) and the model reestimated with all other parameters maintaining their present values (Hair et al., 1998). A value of 3.85 or greater suggests that a statistically significant reduction in the chi-square is obtained when the coefficient is estimated. Model modification must have a theoretical justification before being considered (Hair et al., 1998). As model modifications are made, the researcher must return to stage 4 of the seven-stage process and reevaluate the modified models.

Research Framework

The survey instrument was developed to identify perceptual/cognitive, affective, and unique images of Oklahoma, and test the hypotheses of this study. The Figure 19 illustrates the research framework used in this study.
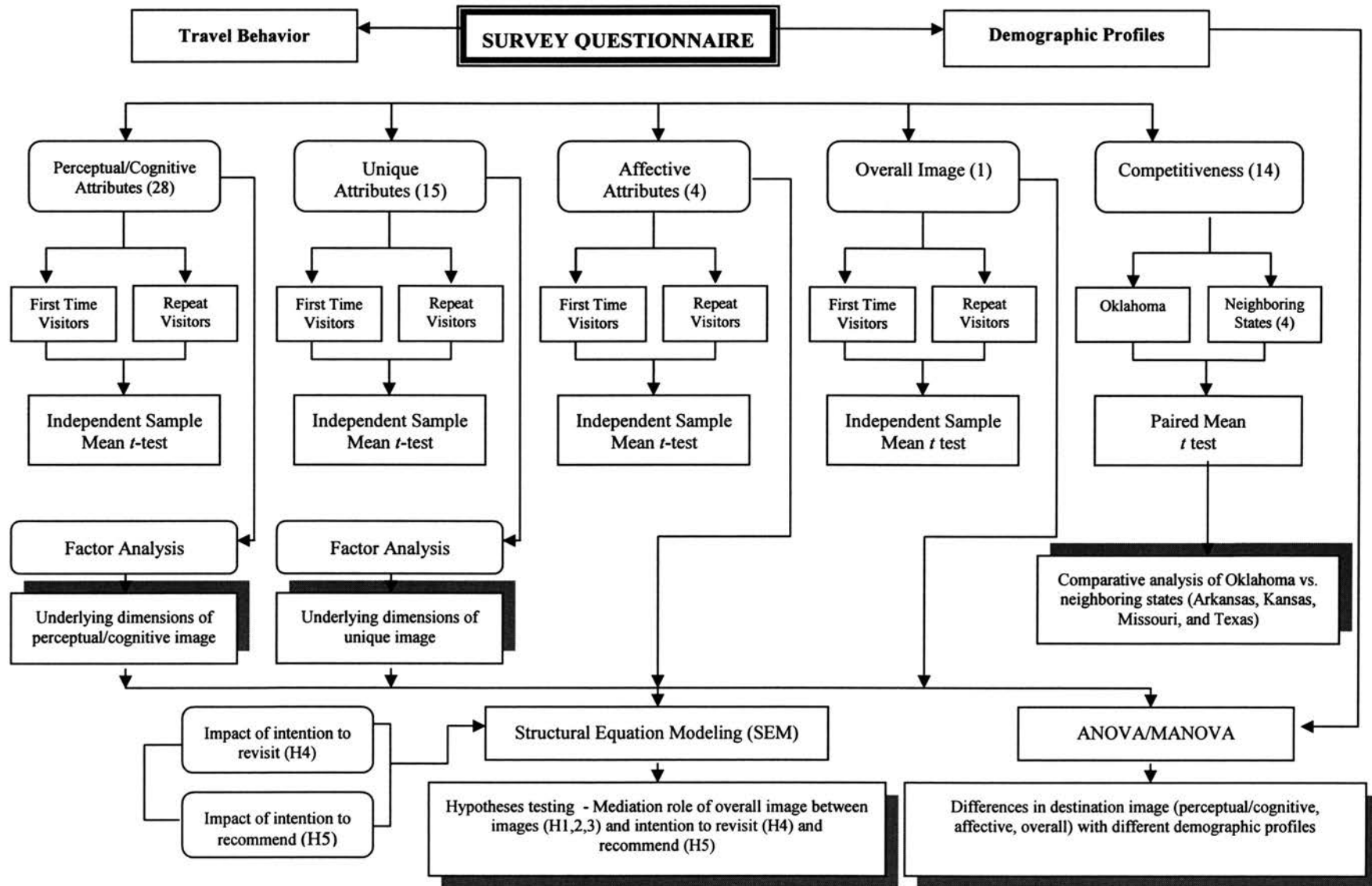
Figure 19: Research Framework

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presented research methodology including survey instrument, validity and reliability of the study, sampling plan, survey procedure, data analysis, and research framework. A self-administered questionnaire was used to determine perceptual/cognitive, unique, and affective images perceived by the respondents toward Oklahoma. The target population of the survey was all the visitors who stopped at the selected five Oklahoma welcome centers during the months of July and August 2002. A two stage sampling approach, proportionate stratified sampling and Systematic Random Sampling (SRS), was administered to randomly select the samples of the study. Univariate and multivariate approaches were used to analyze the data. Finally, the procedure of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using LISREL program to test the causal relationships of the five hypotheses were introduced.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents results of the data analysis and hypotheses testing. In the first section of the chapter response rate, demographic, and travel characteristics of the respondents are reported. This is followed by descriptive summaries of the data and a series of *t* test between first time and repeat visitors on perceptual/cognitive, unique, affective, and overall images of Oklahoma as a travel destination. The hypotheses discussed in Chapter 2 are tested through LISREL program in the second section.

Response Rate

Table 9 provides a summary of a response rate. During the eight-week period of July and August 2002, 1,264 questionnaires were distributed at the five selected Oklahoma welcome centers. A total of 355 questionnaires out of 1,264 were collected at the sites, representing 28.1% of the response rate (Table 9). Of those collected, 45 questionnaires were eliminated (3.6%) because they were returned incomplete or had excessive missing data. After elimination, 310 questionnaires (24.5%) were coded for data analysis.

TABLE 9

OVERALL RESPONSE RATE

Sample	Number	Percentage (%)
Number of questionnaires distributed	1,264	100%
Returned questionnaire	355	28.1%
Unusable responses	45	3.6%
Total Usable Responses	310	24.5%

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are shown in Table 10. The proportion of male (49.7%) and female (50.3%) was almost equally distributed. About 41% of the respondents were aged from 51 to over 65 years old, followed by the age group of 36 – 50 years old (34.4%). Majority of the respondents (65.4%) tended to having a college or graduate level education. The result is similar to that of Plog Research (1999a), indicating that Oklahoma visitors were more likely to be college graduates (35%) than the average U.S. adult (30%). With respect to occupations of the respondents, about 41% of the respondents held professional (23.1%) or management/administration positions (18.2%), followed by technical positions (13.3%). This shows a slight difference from the statistics of Plog Research (1999a) on professional (15%), management/administration (14%), and technical positions (8%). The residual of 45.4% represented as retired/not in workforce, (15.9%), government/military (8.4%), student (6.5%), self-employed (6.2%), others (4.9%), and homemakers (3.5%). Majority of the respondents (59.7%) had an annual income of between $35,000 - $64, 999, followed by the income level of under $25,000 (12.7%) and of $25,000 - $34,999 (10.3%). Due to diverse states of origin, only those having more

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than 10 respondents (79.4%) were reported in this study and the rest was categorized as others (20.6%). Majority of the respondents resided in Texas (37.1%), Oklahoma (16.4%), and California (14.1%). The respondents who came from Kansas were 5.2%, followed by Missouri (3.3%) and Florida (3.3%). The residents of the total marketing area (Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas) for Oklahoma tourism, which was defined by OTRD (2002), accounted for 62% of Oklahoma visitors. This indicates that Oklahoma appears to be successful in attracting people from these targeted marketing areas.

TABLE 10

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Gender (N=310)	Frequency	Percentage
Male	154	49.7
Female	156	50.3
Age (N=302)		
Under 20 years old	9	3.0
20 - 35 years old	64	21.2
36 - 50 years old	104	34.4
51 - 65 years old	81	26.8
Over 65 years old	44	14.6
Income Level (N=300)		
Under $25,000	38	12.7
$25,000 - $34,999	31	10.3
$35,000 - $44,999	102	34.0
$45,000 - $54,999	35	11.7
$55,000 - $64,999	42	14.0
$65,000 - $74,999	24	8.0
Over $75,000	28	9.3
Education Level (N=301)		
Elementary school	6	2.0
High school	72	24.0
College degree	130	43.1
Graduate degree	67	22.3
Other	26	8.6
Occupation (N=308)		
Management/administration	56	18.2
Professional	71	23.1
Technical	41	13.3
Government/military	26	8.4
Student	20	6.5
Self-employed	19	6.2
Homemaker	11	3.5
Retired/not in workforce	49	15.9
Others	15	4.9
States of Origin (N=305)		
Texas	113	37.1
Oklahoma	50	16.4
California	43	14.1
Kansas	16	5.2
Missouri	10	3.3
Florida	10	3.3
Others	63	20.6

Travel Characteristics of Respondents

A summary of travel characteristics of the respondents is shown in Table 11. About 36% of the respondents visited Oklahoma for the first time while almost half of them (50.4%) were repeat visitors. The most frequently reported purpose for the trip was vacation/leisure (33.3%), followed by visiting friends and relatives (24.7%) and business (15.3%), whereas about 15% of the respondents were passing through. This result shows a slight difference from the report of OTRD (2001), which indicated that visiting friends and relatives (48.7%) was the primary purpose of the trip to Oklahoma, followed by business (23.1%). This may be due to the fact that the survey for this study was conducted during the months of July and August, which are normally considered peak vacation season and leisure trips. More than half of the respondents (56.4%) took short trips, staying less than a week in Oklahoma. About 15% of the respondents indicated no overnight stay. This shows similar results of OTRD (2001) on staying less than a week in Oklahoma (53.2%). In addition, Plog Research (1999a) reported that Oklahoma visitors were more likely to enjoy short getaways (1.7 nights) than the average U.S. adult (2.7 nights).

With respect to money spent, about half of the respondents reported that they would spend money on the trip to Oklahoma within the ranges of $100 (or lower) to less than $250, an indication of a lower spending pattern. The results of OTRD (2001) showed even higher percentages in lower spending categories (62%).

The majority of the respondents were likely to take this trip with a spouse and children (16.6%) or no children (32.5%). Taking the trip alone accounted for 24.0% and only 2.6% were with a tour group. In planning a trip to Oklahoma, word-of-mouth from

family/friends/relatives (26.6%) was found to be one of major sources of information heavily used by the respondents, followed by Internet (21.9%) and tourist information centers (welcome centers) (16.4%). Plog Research (1999a) also found that using references from family/friends/relatives (41%) was the most preferred information source for travelers while planning their vacation. On the other hand, the percentages of the visitors who had utilized tour guidebooks and travel agents (19.1%) as information sources are much lower than those (38%) found in Plog Research (1999a). The results also indicated that the visitors tended to obtain information about their trip by utilizing at least two or more combinations of information channels. For instance, one can search for information about a trip to Oklahoma through Internet, travel literature picked up at the information centers (welcome centers), or during a conversation with his/her family, co-workers, and friends.

TABLE 11

TRAVEL CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Number of Visits (N=310)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
First time	111	35.8
2 – 3 times	38	12.3
4 – 5 times	36	11.6
More than 5 times	82	26.5
Resident of Oklahoma	43	13.9
Purpose of Trip (N=300)		
Vacation/leisure	100	33.3
Visiting friends and relatives	74	24.7
Business	46	15.3
En route somewhere else	45	15.0
Others	19	6.3
Convention/exhibition	16	5.3
Length of Stay (N=305)		
1 – 2 days	112	36.7
3 – 6 days	60	19.7
A week	33	10.8
More than a week	55	18.0
No overnight stay	45	14.8
Money spent on this trip (N=250)		
Less than $100	73	29.2
$100 to less than $250	63	25.2
$250 to less than $500	53	21.2
$500 to less than $750	18	7.2
$750 to less than $1,000	9	3.6
$1,000 or more	4	1.6
Undetermined	30	12.0
Travel Members (N=308)		
Spouse, without children	100	32.5
Alone	74	24.0
Friends/relatives	55	17.9
Spouse, with children	51	16.6
Others	20	6.5
Tour group	8	2.6
Source of information (N=305) *		
Word-of-mouth from family/friends/relatives	81	26.6
Internet	67	21.9
Tourist information center	50	16.4
Tour guide books	45	14.8
Advertisement (TV/magazine)	19	6.2
Others	19	6.2
Travel agencies	13	4.3
Literature picked on trip or previous trip	11	3.6

Note: * Multiple responses

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Perceived Destination Images of Oklahoma

In this section, a summary of descriptive statistics of means scores and standard deviations of perceptual/cognitive, unique, and affective image attributes are presented in Table 12, 13, and 14.

Perceptual/Cognitive Image of Oklahoma

The descriptive statistics of mean scores and standard deviations for perceptual/cognitive image of Oklahoma are shown in Table 12. The mean scores can be considered as an average evaluation of Oklahoma in terms of attributes relating to perceptual/cognitive image. The state of Oklahoma's major strengths are mostly focused on Native American/western culture and natural environment. These attributes are "Native American/western culture" (4.02), "friendly local people" (3.92), "availability of tourist information centers" (3.90), "beautiful scenery/natural wonders" (3.90), "lots of open space/not crammed in cities" (3.88), and "clean/unspoiled environment" (3.85). The image study of Oklahoma conducted by Plog Research (1999b) supports these findings that the traveler's image toward Oklahoma revolves around Native American heritage and natural beauty. This also suggests that the advertising campaign, "Oklahoma Native America," which focuses on Native American and western heritage, has the right message to position the state of Oklahoma as a land of Native American and western heritage. On the other hand, the respondents did not perceive strongly on attributes such as "a wide variety of entertainment" (2.82), "lots of things to do in the evening (nightlife)" (2.52), and "availability of facilities for golfing and tennis" (2.18) (Table 12). The study of Plog Research (1999b) has similar results, which rated these

attributes in a bottom quartile compared to other image attributes. Given that the visitors consider a variety of entertainment and nightlife as one of the important factors when deciding where to travel, it is suggested that destination marketers in Oklahoma should focus on attributes with low scores in order to attract more visitors to Oklahoma. In addition, the perception on shopping needs to be improved as it is frequently reported as one of the most popular activities for visitors during their vacation (Plog Research, 1999a).

TABLE 12

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF PERCEPTUAL/COGNITIVE
IMAGE OF OKLAHOMA

Attributes	Mean	Std. Deviation
Native American/Western culture	4.02	1.00
Friendly local people	3.92	1.03
Availability of tourist information centers	3.90	1.01
Beautiful scenery/natural wonders	3.90	.95
Lots of open space/not crammed in cities	3.88	.96
Clean/unspoiled environment	3.85	.95
A wide variety of outdoor activities	3.88	.89
Readily available travel information	3.82	.96
Restful and relaxing atmosphere	3.78	.96
Safe and secure environment	3.72	.91
Easy access to the area	3.71	1.04
Interesting cultural/historical attractions	3.69	.97
A taste of cowboy life and culture	3.68	1.00
Good place for children and family	3.64	.96
Interesting state/theme parks	3.62	.93
Appealing local cuisine	3.60	.95
Interesting cultural events/festivals	3.60	.98
Reasonable cost of hotels/restaurants	3.56	.90
A wide choice of accommodation	3.55	.83
Good shopping centers/facilities	3.54	.94
Reasonable cost of shopping	3.50	.54
Good weather and climate	3.49	.96
Quality of infrastructure	3.46	1.02
Availability of facilities for water sports	3.43	1.01
Lots of adventurous activities	3.07	.68
A wide variety of entertainment	2.82	.95
Lots of things to do in the evening (nightlife)	2.52	.84
Availability of facilities for golfing and tennis	2.18	.85

Note: A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure perceptual/cognitive image:
     Scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree.

Affective Image of Oklahoma

The respondents rated Oklahoma relatively high in offering "relaxing" (5.56) and "pleasant" (5.16) atmosphere compared to other affective evaluations such as "arousing" (4.03) and "exciting" (3.86) (Table 13). This result is similar to that of Plog Research (1999b), indicating that visitors viewed Oklahoma as a relaxing and pleasant destination rather than a destination with arousing and exciting atmospheres.

TABLE 13

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF AFFECTIVE IMAGE OF OKLAHOMA

Attributes	Mean	Std. Deviation
Relaxing – Distressing	5.56	1.62
Pleasant – Unpleasant	5.16	1.84
Arousing – Sleepy	4.03	.92
Exciting – Gloomy	3.86	1.11

Note: A 7-point semantic-differential scale was used for affective image of Oklahoma:
    Scale: 1 = relaxing; 7 = distressing
           1 = pleasant; 7 = unpleasant
           1 = arousing; 7 = sleepy
           1 = exciting; 7 = gloomy

Unique Image of Oklahoma

Table 14 illustrates the mean scores and standard deviations of unique image for Oklahoma versus its neighboring states. The major unique images of Oklahoma perceived by respondents in comparison to the four neighboring states (Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas) were "Native American culture" (4.08) and "restful and relaxing atmosphere" (4.00). Other distinctive images of Oklahoma were "scenery and natural wonders" (3.85), "moderate prices for hotel/restaurant/shopping" (3.71), "safe and secure environment" (3.66), and "cultural attractions" (3.66). They are similar to

those of perceptual/cognitive image, suggesting that these items play an important role for visitors not only in forming an impression of Oklahoma as a travel destination but also in differentiating the state from its neighboring destinations. On the other hand, the results also imply that there is room for improvement on several attributes, which are considered important factors in attracting the visitors (Plog Research, 1999a) but rated low relative to their importance. These items include "shopping" (3.43), "outdoor activities" (3.28), "good value for money" (3.05), and "entertainment/nightlife" (2.99).

TABLE 14

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF UNIQUE IMAGE OF OKLAHOMA

Attributes	Mean	Std. Deviation
Native American culture	4.08	.88
Restful and relaxing atmosphere	4.00	.87
Scenery and natural wonders	3.85	.89
Moderate prices for hotel/restaurant/shopping	3.71	.66
Safe and secure environment	3.66	.70
Cultural/historical attractions	3.66	.91
Clean/unspoiled environment	3.65	.93
Friendly and helpful local people	3.58	.75
A wide variety of state/theme parks	3.56	.79
Lots of tourist attractions	3.53	1.03
Shopping	3.43	.80
Appealing as a travel destination	3.38	.93
A wide choice of outdoor activities	3.28	.68
Good value for money	3.05	1.20
Entertainment/nightlife	2.99	.93

Note: A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure unique image:
    Scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree.

Perceptual/Cognitive Image Differences by First Time and Repeat Visitors

The Independent sample mean t test was performed to determine the differences between first time and repeat visitors in terms of perceptual/cognitive destination image. Of those total respondents (310), Oklahoma residents (43) were excluded from the test. Levene's test was used to check for homogeneity of variance assumption. The results indicate that four items were found to be unequal variance among 28 attributes (Table 15). Therefore, the separate-variance t test for means (the equal variances not assumed) was used for comparing means of these four attributes (SPSS, 1999). These items are "good place for children and family," "good weather and climate," "clean/unspoiled environment," and "readily available travel information."

As reported in Table 15, three variables were found to be significantly different ($p \leq 0.05$) between first time and repeat visitors with respect to perceptual/cognitive destination image. They are "interesting state/theme parks," "good shopping centers/ facilities," and "lots of things to do in the evening (nightlife)." These three attributes are better perceived by repeat visitors than first time visitors. More than 89% of the total attributes were not statistically different between first time and repeat visitors. However, it is worth examining as which attributes have relatively higher scores received by first timers than repeaters. A total of 12 attributes were found to be well perceived by first time visitors. Examples include "friendly local people" (3.97 vs. 3.36), "good weather and climate" (3.58 vs. 3.47), and "clean/unspoiled environment" (3.66 vs. 3.52).

TABLE 15

PERCEPTUAL/COGNITIVE IMAGE DIFFERENCES BY FIRST TIME AND REPEAT VISITORS

Attributes*	First time Visitors (N=111)**		Repeat Visitors (N=156)**		Mean Diff.	t value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Native American/Western Culture	4.08	0.99	4.00	0.95	.08	.67
A wide variety of outdoor activities	3.82	0.83	3.87	0.89	-.05	-.42
Safe/secure environment	3.70	0.95	3.73	0.89	-.03	-.24
Reasonable cost of shopping	3.05	0.77	3.04	0.76	.00	.00
Interesting state/theme parks	**3.59**	**0.94**	**3.77**	**0.87**	**-.18**	**-2.33***
Restful and relaxing environment	3.75	0.95	3.83	0.88	-.08	-.69
Easy access to the area	3.74	0.95	3.74	0.98	.00	.01
Beautiful scenery/natural wonders	3.82	0.93	3.91	0.91	-.09	-.79
Reasonable cost of hotels/restaurants	3.49	0.87	3.62	0.87	-.14	-1.24
Interesting cultural events/festivals	3.52	0.85	3.66	0.96	-.14	-1.21
Friendly local people	3.97	0.94	3.86	1.09	.11	.89
Lots of open space/not crammed in cities	3.86	0.91	3.78	0.93	.01	.77
Good shopping centers/facilities	**3.76**	**0.91**	**3.89**	**0.85**	**-.13**	**-2.22***
Availability of facilities for golfing/tennis	2.72	0.82	2.79	0.88	-.07	-.69
Availability of tourist information centers	3.88	0.86	3.96	1.06	-.07	-.59
Appealing local cuisine	3.60	0.78	3.60	0.98	.00	.01
Good place for children and family****	3.67	0.95	3.72	1.03	.04	.40
Good weather and climate****	3.58	0.75	3.47	0.97	.11	.98
A taste of cowboy life and culture	3.65	0.95	3.72	1.03	-.08	-.61
A wide variety of entertainment	3.46	0.90	3.53	0.91	-.07	-.58
Lots of things to do in the evening (nightlife)	**3.78**	**0.88**	**3.95**	**0.96**	**-.17**	**-2.30***
Availability of facilities for water sports	3.35	0.92	3.41	1.05	-.06	-.47
Interesting cultural/historical attractions	3.68	0.87	3.71	0.97	-.03	-.25
A wide choice of accommodations	3.56	0.80	3.54	0.91	.02	.19
Quality of infrastructure	3.46	0.97	3.52	0.96	-.06	-.49
Lots of adventurous activities	3.30	0.72	3.22	0.64	.07	.86
Clean/unspoiled environment****	3.66	0.80	3.52	0.98	.14	1.22
Readily available travel information****	3.84	0.81	3.82	1.06	.02	.15

Note:
*   A 5-point Likert scale was used for measuring perceptual/cognitive image: Scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree
**   Oklahoma residents (43) were excluded.
***   Significant at $p \leq 0.05$.
**** Unequal variances not assumed.

Unique Image Differences by First Time and Repeat Visitors

The results of the test show that three variables were statistically significant at $p \leq$ 0.01 and $p \leq 0.05$, indicating differences in unique image between the two groups (first time and repeat visitors) (Table 16). The three attributes include "restful and relaxing atmosphere" ($p \leq 0.05$), "clean/unspoiled environment" ($p \leq 0.05$), and "safe and secure environment" ($p \leq 0.01$). The repeat visitors rated higher than first time visitors on the first two variables while first time visitors had more favorable perceptions than repeat visitors on "safe and secure environment." Interestingly, the attribute associated with safe and secure environment is only one that was perceived significantly higher by first time visitors than repeat visitors. This may be attributed to the unique image of safe and secure environment becoming a less important factor for visitors as they repeatedly visit Oklahoma and become familiar with the destination. Other attributes that had relatively higher scores by repeat visitors than first timers include "appealing as a travel destination" (3.44 vs. 3.33), "shopping" (3.45 vs. 3.35), and "scenery and natural beauty" (3.85 vs. 3.81). On the other hand, first time visitors are found to be highly perceived on attributes such as "Native American/western culture" (4.14 vs. 4.03), "friendly and helpful local people" (3.76 vs. 3.58), and "a wide variety of state/theme parks" (3.65 vs. 3.50). From the management perspective, it may imply that these attributes need to be enforced and utilized as unique factors in developing promotional strategies for Oklahoma as a competitive destination, in particular, targeting prosperous and first time visitor groups.

TABLE 16

UNIQUE IMAGE DIFFERENCES BY FIRST TIME AND REPEAT VISITORS

Attributes*	First time Visitors (N=111)**		Repeat Visitors (N=156)**		Mean Diff.	*t* value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
A wide variety of outdoor activities	3.33	0.71	3.28	0.65	.06	.680
Entertainment/nightlife	3.04	0.68	3.07	0.64	-.03	-.420
Lots of tourist attractions	3.56	0.97	3.51	1.06	.05	.359
Restful and relaxing environment	**3.65**	0.86	**3.86**	0.86	**-.21**	**-2.80*****
Good value for money	3.25	0.92	3.27	0.88	-.02	-.209
Native American/Western culture	4.14	0.80	4.03	0.95	.12	1.07
Appealing as a travel destination*****	3.33	0.66	3.44	0.87	-.11	-.1.11
Clean/unspoiled environment	**3.56**	0.87	**3.75**	0.81	**-.19**	**-2.47*****
Friendly and helpful local people	3.76	0.85	3.58	0.90	.18	1.63
Shopping*****	3.35	0.70	3.45	0.84	-.10	-.991
Scenery and natural beauty	3.81	0.82	3.85	0.92	-.04	-.322
A wide variety of state/them parks*****	3.65	0.72	3.50	0.85	.13	1.31
Cultural/historical attractions	3.65	0.64	3.67	0.73	-.02	-.207
Safe and secure environment	**3.99**	0.90	**3.70**	0.93	**.29**	**3.72******

Note: * A 5-point Likert scale was used for measuring unique image:
Scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree
** Oklahoma residents (43) were excluded.
*** Significant at *p* ≤ 0.05; **** Significant at *p* ≤ 0.01.
***** Unequal variances not assumed

Affective Image Differences by First Time and Repeat Visitors

The Independent sample mean *t* test was assessed to determine the differences in perceived affective image of Oklahoma between first time and repeat visitors. Oklahoma residents (43) were not included in this analysis. The result of the Levene's test indicated that all variables associated with affective image had equal variances, meeting the homogeneity of variance assumption. According to the results, only one variable ("pleasant") was found to be statistically significant at *p* ≤ 0.05, indicating that a trip to Oklahoma was less likely to be pleasant for repeat visitors than first timers (Table 17). It is found that repeat visitors had also lower perceptions than first time visitors on "arousing" (4.02 vs. 4.12) and "exciting" (3.78 vs. 3.87). This may be due to the fact that

these affective images are not consistent in satisfying repeat visitors because those attributes are better perceived when people visit Oklahoma for the first time and deteriorate with repeat visits.

TABLE 17

AFFECTIVE IMAGE DIFFERENCES BY FIRST TIME AND REPEAT VISITORS

Attributes*	First time Visitors (N=111)**		Repeat Visitors (N=156)**		Mean Diff.	t value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Pleasant – Unpleasant	**5.95**	1.86	**5.76**	1.76	**.19**	**2.09*****
Arousing – Sleepy	4.12	1.71	4.02	1.44	.01	.10
Relaxing – Distressing	5.15	1.44	5.17	1.23	-.02	-.34
Exciting – Gloomy	3.87	1.49	3.78	1.40	.09	.91

Note: * A 7-point semantic-differential scale was used for measuring affective image of Oklahoma:
   Scale: 1 = pleasant; 7 = unpleasant, 1 = arousing; 7 = sleepy
     1 = relaxing; 7 = distressing, 1 = exciting; 7 = gloomy
  ** Oklahoma residents (43) were excluded.
  *** Significant at $p \leq 0.05$.

Overall Image Differences by First Time and Repeat Visitors

The same procedure was assessed to determine the differences in overall image toward Oklahoma between first time and repeat visitors. Oklahoma residents (43) were not included in this analysis. The result of the Levene's test indicated that the assumption of the homogeneity of variance was met.

According to the result, repeat visitors had a more positive overall image about Oklahoma as a travel destination than first time visitors, indicating a statistically significant difference at $p \leq 0.01$ (Table 18). This supports the results of Milman and Pizam's study (1995) on familiarity with a destination. It was found that people who

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have previously visited a destination and became familiar with the place had a more positive overall image of the destination.

TABLE 18

OVERALL IMAGE DIFFERENCES BY FIRST TIME AND REPEAT VISITORS

Attributes*	First time Visitors (N=111)**		Repeat Visitors (N=156)**		Mean Diff.	t value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Overall image toward Oklahoma	3.63	1.01	3.87	0.87	-.24	-2.94***

Note: * A 7-point Likert scale was used for measuring overall image of Oklahoma:
　　　　Scale: 1 = very negative; 7 = very positive.
　　** Oklahoma residents (43) were excluded.
　　*** Significant at $p \leq 0.01$.

Underlying Dimensions of the Destination Image

Principal component analysis with orthogonal (VARIMAX) and oblique (PROMAX) rotations was used to determine the underlying dimensions of the perceptual/cognitive and unique images of Oklahoma as a travel destination. The factorability of the correlation matrix was assessed through a visual examination of the correlations among the variables, overall significance of the correlation matrix with the Bartlett test, and the measure of sampling adequacy (MSA). In order to be appropriate for factor analysis, the data set should show nonzero correlations in the Bartlett test and meet the necessary threshold of .50 in MSA (Hair et al., 1998). The latent root criterion of 1.0, scree test, and total variance explained were applied to select the number of components to be retained for further analysis. Factor loadings of .40 were utilized for item inclusion (Hair et al., 1998). Finally, a summated scale was calculated by taking the average of the variables in the scale for subsequent analyses.

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<u>Underlying Dimensions of Perceptual/Cognitive Image</u>

First, an index of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin of measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) and Bartlett's test of sphericity was used to examine the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis. The result of Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2 = 3431.49$, $p = 0.00$), indicating that nonzero correlation existed. The overall value of MSA was 0.930, which was well above the recommended threshold of sampling adequacy at the minimum of 0.50 (Hair et al., 1998). These two tests suggested that the destination image data set was suitable for an exploratory factor analysis. A principal component analysis with orthogonal (VARIMAX) rotations was assessed to identify underlying dimensions of perceptual/cognitive image.

Based on the eigenvalue greater than one, scree-plot criteria, and the percentage of variance criterion, five factors were chosen which captured 58.5% of the total variance. Among 28 image attributes, four items had communalities less than .50 and factor loading less than .40. These variables are "lots of adventurous activities," "reasonable cost of shopping centers," "a wide choice of accommodations," and "availability of facilities for golfing/tennis." When there are variables that do not load on any factor or whose communalities are deemed too low, each can be evaluated for possible deletion (Hair et al., 1998). The dropping of these variables with low communalities and low factor loadings increases the total variance explained approximately 4% (from 58.5% to 62.1%). The results of the principle component analysis with orthogonal (VARIMAX) rotations was shown in Table 19. The scree plot indicated that four factors may be appropriate (Figure 20), however, based on a

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combination of scree plot and eigenvalue greater than one approach, five instead of three factors were retained.

Scree Plot
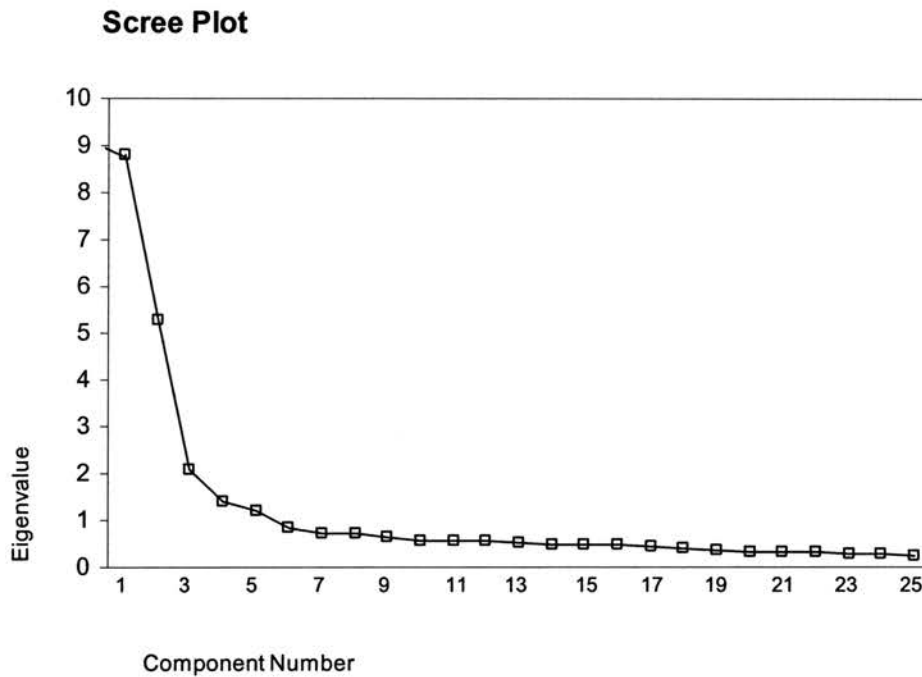
Figure 20: Scree Test of Perceptual/Cognitive Image

The scale reliability for each factor was tested for internal consistency by assessing the item-to-total correlation to each separate item and Cronbach's alpha for the consistency of the entire scale. Rules of thumb suggest that the item-to-total correlations exceed .50 and lower limit for Cronbach's alpha is .70 (Hair et al., 1998). The results of the item-to-total correlation indicated that each of the five factors exceeded the threshold of .50 ranging between .63 and .74. The results showed that the alpha coefficients for the five factors ranged from .71 to .86.

TABLE 19

DIMENSIONS OF PERCEPTUAL/COGNITIVE DESTINATION IMAGE

Attributes	Factor Loadings					Communality
Factor 1: Quality of Experiences	**F1**					
Easy access to the area	.798					.719
Restful and relaxing atmosphere	.723					.645
Reasonable cost of hotels/restaurants	.662					.641
Scenery/natural wonders	.651					.570
Lots of open space	.589					.641
Friendly local people	.574					.591
Factor 2: Touristic Attractions		**F2**				
Local cuisine		.667				.657
State/theme parks		.663				.645
Good place for children/family		.648				.663
Welcome centers		.645				.605
Good weather		.627				.562
Cultural events/festivals		.617				.597
Good shopping facilities		.501				.606
Factor 3: Environment and Infrastructure			**F3**			
Clean/unspoiled environment			.744			.671
Infrastructure			.705			.602
Availability of travel information			.698			.702
Easy access to the area			.697			.630
Safe and secure environment			.573			.601
Factor 4: Entertainment/Outdoor Activities				**F4**		
Entertainment				.727		.688
Nightlife				.678		.610
Water sports				.658		.653
A wide variety of outdoor activities				.640		.639
Factor 5: Cultural Traditions					**F5**	
Native American culture					.591	.626
A taste of cowboy life and culture					.461	.578
Eigenvalue	8.8	5.3	2.1	1.4	1.2	
Variance (%)	19.4	13.1	12.9	9.8	6.8	
Cumulative Variance (%)	19.4	32.5	45.5	55.3	62.1	
Cronbach's Alpha	0.86	0.76	0.75	0.72	0.71	

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Factors were labeled based on highly loaded items and the common characteristics of items they included. The factors' labels are "Quality of Experiences" (Factor 1), "Touristic Attractions" (Factor 2), "Environment and Infrastructure" (Factor 3), "Entertainment/Outdoor Activities" (Factor 4), and "Cultural Traditions" (Factor 5).

The first factor with 19.4% of total variance explained was labeled "Quality of Experiences" as it related to attributes that usually influence visitors' overall travel experiences of a place. Six attributes included in Factor 1 are "easy access to the area," "restful and relaxing atmosphere," "reasonable cost of hotels/restaurants," "scenery/natural wonders," "lots of open space," and "friendly local people."

The second factor, "Touristic Attractions," focused on various tourist attractions that allure people to visit the place. This factor accounted for 13.1% of total variance explained and seven items were included in the factor: "local cuisine," "state/theme parks," "good place for children/family," "welcome centers," "good weather," "cultural events/festivals," and "good shopping facilities."

The third factor was labeled "Environment and Infrastructure" and accounted for 12.9% of total variance explained. These attributes included five items pertaining natural environment and infrastructure including accessibility to travel information and safe environment. The five items are "clean/unspoiled environment," "infrastructure," "availability of travel information," "easy access to the area," and "safe and secure environment."

The fourth factor, "Entertainment/Outdoor Activities," related to a variety of entertainment including nightlife and outdoor activities, explaining 9.8% of total

variance. Those variables included in this factor are "entertainment," "nightlife," "water sports," and "a wide variety of outdoor activities."

The fifth factor, "Cultural Traditions," identified two items, which were associated with the local cultures including "native American culture" and "a taste of cowboy life and culture." This factor accounted for 6.8% of total variance explained.

These five factors were later used to construct summated scales as independent variables for structural equation modeling (SEM) with LISREL program for hypotheses testing.

Underlying Dimensions of Unique Image of Oklahoma

The results of a measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) and Bartlett's test of sphericity indicate that unique image set was appropriate for factor analysis. The overall value of MSA was 0.83, meeting the suggested cutoff of sampling adequacy at the minimum of 0.50 (Hair et al., 1998). Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant with a chi-square value of 832.04 ($p = 0.000$). Based on the eigenvalue greater than one, scree-plot criteria, and the percentage of variance criterion, three factors were extracted through principal component analysis with oblique (PROMAX) rotations. The three-factor model captured 46.1% of the total. A total of three items had communalities less than .50 and factor loading less than .40. These variables are "value for money," "a wide variety of state/theme parks," and "moderate prices for hotel/restaurant/shopping." The dropping of these variables with low communalities and low factor loadings increases the total variance explained approximately 6% (from 46.1% to 52.3%). Table 20 shows the results of the principle component analysis with oblique (PROMAX) rotations. The scree

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plot indicated that three factors may be appropriate (Figure 21). A combination of scree plot and eigenvalue greater than 1 approach selected three factors.

Scree Plot
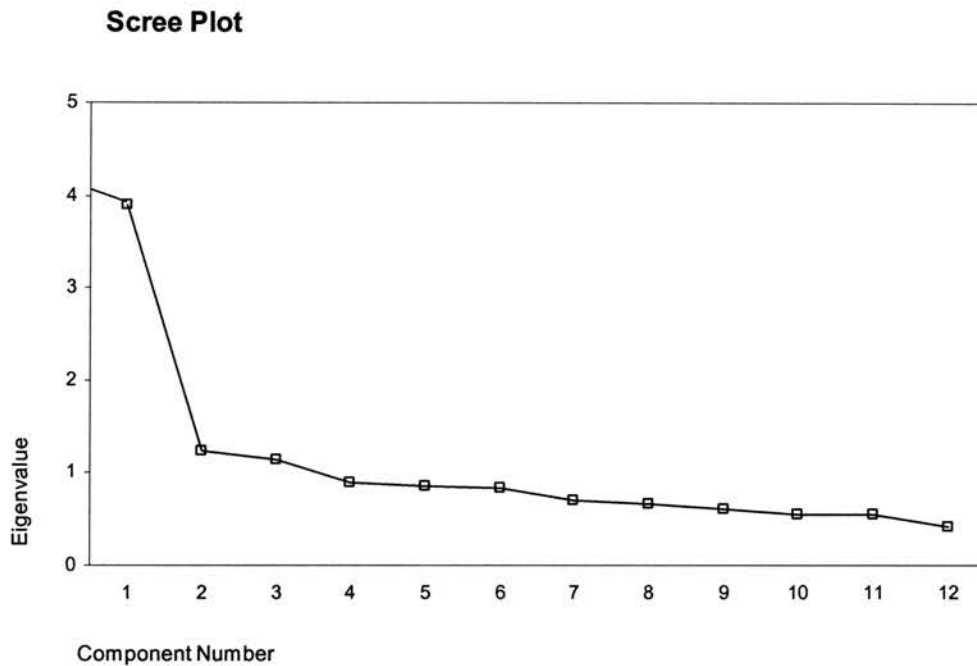
Figure 21: Scree Test of Unique Image

Factors were labeled based on highly loaded items and the common characteristics of items they included. They are labeled as "Native American/Natural Environment" (Factor 1), "Appealing Destination" (Factor 2), and "Local Attractions" (Factor 3) (Table 20).

For testing internal consistency of the three factors, the item-to-total correlation to each separate item and Cronbach's alpha were used. Each three factor met the cutoff of .50, indicating the range between .62 and .75. The alpha coefficients for the three factors through the Cronbach's alpha test range from .71 to .85.

TABLE 20

DIMENSIONS OF UNIQUE DESTINATION IMAGE OF OKLAHOMA

Attributes	Factor Loadings			Communality
Factor 1: Native American/Natural Environment	**F1**			
Native American/Western cultures	0.81			0.76
Friendly and helpful local people	0.72			0.70
Scenery and natural wonders	0.70			0.67
Restful and relaxing atmosphere	0.68			0.56
Clean environment	0.67			0.53
Factor 2: Appealing Destination		**F2**		
Appealing as a travel destination		0.75		0.70
Entertainment/nightlife		0.71		0.72
A wide choice of outdoor activities		0.69		0.62
Shopping		0.62		0.60
Safe and secure environment		0.60		0.56
Factor 3: Local Attractions			**F3**	
Lots of tourist attractions			0.83	0.74
Cultural/historical attractions			0.65	0.69
Eigenvalue	3.9	1.2	1.1	
Variance (%)	32.5	10.3	9.5	
Cumulative Variance (%)	32.5	42.8	52.3	
Cronbach's Alpha	0.85	0.74	0.71	

Factor 1 with 32.5% of total variance explained was labeled "Native American/Natural Environment" as it pertains to Oklahoma's Native American culture and natural beauty. The Factor 1 include "Native American/western cultures," "friendly and helpful local people," "scenery and natural wonders," "restful and relaxing atmosphere," and "clean environment."

Factor 2, "Appealing Destination," accounting for 10.3% of total variance explained, includes attributes associated with making the destination more appealing to visitors. The five items were included in this factor: "appealing as a travel destination,"

"entertainment/nightlife," "a wide choice of outdoor activities," "shopping," and "safe and secure environment."

Factor 3, "Local Attractions," identified two items such as "lots of tourist attractions" and "cultural/historical attractions." This factor accounted for 9.5% of total variance explained.

Image Differences by Various Demographic Groups

Perceptual/Cognitive Image Differences by Various Demographic Groups

Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was performed to assess whether an overall difference was found between demographic groups and the perceptual/cognitive image of Oklahoma. The dependent variables used for MANOVA test are five dimensions of perceptual/cognitive image such as "Quality of Experiences" (Factor 1), "Touristic Attractions" (Factor 2), "Environment and Infrastructure" (Factor 3), "Entertainment/outdoor activities" (Factor 4), and "Cultural Traditions" (Factor 5). The independent variables are various demographic groups including gender, age, and states of origin.

For the multivariate test procedures of MANOVA to be valid, two important assumptions for MANOVA were assessed: homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices across the groups and the correlation of the dependent measures. Homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices was checked by Box's M test. Box's M tests the null hypothesis that the observed covariance matrices of the dependent variables are equal across groups. The results indicate non-significant difference ($p = .200$) for dependent variables (five dimensions of perceptual/cognitive image), thus meeting the assumption

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(Table 21). As for assumption of correlation of the dependent measures, the result of Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant at $p \leq 0.01$, indicative of a significant level of correlation between the independent measures. The results of both tests indicate that the assumptions for MANOVA test are met.

TABLE 21

MANOVA ASSUMPTIONS TESTS (PERCEPTUAL/COGNITIVE IMAGE)

Assumptions Test			
Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices		Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	
Box's M	157.093	Likelihood Ratio	.000
F	1.126	Approx. Chi-Square	546.545
Sig.	**.200**	**Sig.**	**.000**
Note: Tests the null hypothesis that the observed covariance matrices of the dependent variables are equal across groups.		Note: Tests the null hypothesis that the residual covariance matrix is proportional to an identity matrix.	

In assessing overall fit of the MANOVA model, the first step is to examine the interaction effect and determine whether it is statistically significant. Table 22 contains the MANOVA results for testing the interaction effect. All four multivariate tests indicate that the interaction effect is significant at $p \leq 0.05$. This means that the five dimensions of perceptual/cognitive images may differ across the three demographic groups.

TABLE 22

MANOVA SUMMARY TABLE (INTERACTION EFFECT –
PERCEPTUAL/COGNITIVE IMAGE)

Multivariate Tests of Significance (Interaction Effect: Gender x Age x Residence)			
Test Name	Value	*F* value	Significance
Pillai's Trace	.266	1.357	**.044***
Wilks' Lambda	.759	1.355	**.046***
Hotelling's Trace	.285	1.350	**.047***
Roy's Largest Root	.100	2.413	**.007***

Note: * Significant at $p \leq 0.05$.

Univariate significance (ANOVA) was then applied to identify which dependent variables differentiated the groups, followed by a post-hoc test (Bonferroni test) to detect differences between groups. The results of one-way ANOVAs and post hoc comparisons of the three demographic groups' average scores on each dimension are summarized in Table 23. According to Table 23, only one significant difference was found between gender and Factor 3, "Environment and Infrastructure" ($p \leq 0.05$). Female respondents (mean=3.93) placed higher perception scores on Factor 3 than did their male counterparts (mean=3.71). Although it did not reach the statistically significant difference between gender groups, both male and female respondents were more likely to place relative higher mean scores (4.01 and 4.00, respectively) on Factor 5 ("Cultural Traditions") than other dimensions. With respect to age groups, there was no statistically significant difference found on each dimension. However, like gender groups, all age groups showed similar interest in Factor 5, placing relatively higher mean scores (G1=3.82; G2=4.08; G3=3.96; G4=4.06; G5=4.04) than other factors.

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Significant mean differences were found between different states of origin and Factor 5, "Cultural Traditions" ($p \leq 0.05$). A post-hoc test with Bonferroni statistics showed that respondents from Texas differed significantly in Factor 5 from those from various states. The residents from various states (group 5) had a higher perception (mean=4.25) on the factor of cultural traditions than those from Texas (group 2) (mean=3.91).

TABLE 23

THE RESULTS OF ANOVA AND POST-HOC TEST
(PERCEPTUAL/COGNITIVE IMAGE)

Demographic Characteristics	Dimensions of Perceptual/Cognitive Image				
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Gender					
Male	3.84	3.62	3.71*	3.47	4.04
Female	3.79	3.58	3.93*	3.58	4.00
Age					
Under 20 years old (G1)	3.36	3.36	3.27	3.53	3.82
20 – 35 years old (G2)	3.91	3.64	3.76	3.26	4.08
36 – 50 years old (G3)	3.85	3.61	3.75	3.43	3.96
51 – 65 years old (G4)	4.11	3.59	3.64	3.88	4.06
Over 65 years old (G5)	3.89	3.57	3.80	3.78	4.04
States of Origin					
Oklahoma (G1)	3.78	3.82	3.84	3.76	4.14*
Texas (G2)	3.73	3.42	3.67	3.46	3.91*
California (G3)	3.88	3.53	3.56	3.47	3.98*
Neighboring states (G4)***	3.83	3.73	3.87	3.50	4.03*
Other states (G5)	3.94	3.71	3.74	3.54	4.25*
Post-hoc (Bonferroni)	-	-	-	-	G2<G5**

Note: * Significant at $p \leq 0.05$
      ** Bonferroni test with significance level at $p \leq 0.05$.
      *** Neighboring states include Arkansas, Kansas, and Missouri.

<u>Unique Image Differences by Various Demographic Groups</u>

The same procedures that were applied to identify perceptual/cognitive image differences were also adopted for examining unique image differences by various demographic groups. A MANOVA was performed to assess to detect an overall difference between various demographic groups in terms of unique image of Oklahoma. The three dimensions of unique image of Oklahoma were entered as the dependent variables. They are "Native American/Natural Environment" (Factor 1), "Appealing Destination" (Factor 2), and "Local Attractions" (Factor 3). The independent variables included different demographic groups including gender, age, and states of origin.

Two MANOVA assumptions were tested for homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices (Box's M test) and the correlation of the dependent measures (Bartlett's test of sphericity). The result of Box's M test shows that the observed covariance matrices of the dependent variables are equal across groups ($p \leq 0.163$) (Table 24). The result of the Bartlett's Test of sphericity also shows that the MANOVA model has met the assumption of the correlation of the dependent measures, indicating a significant level of correlation at .000 (Table 24). Thus, both assumptions for MANOVA test were satisfied.

TABLE 24

MANOVA ASSUMPTIONS TESTS (UNIQUE IMAGE)

Assumptions Test			
<u>Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices</u>		<u>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity</u>	
Box's M	215.088	Likelihood Ratio	.000
F	1.110	Approx. Chi-Square	338.759
Sig.	**.163**	**Sig.**	**.000**
Note: Tests the null hypothesis that the observed covariance matrices of the dependent variables are equal across groups.		Note: Tests the null hypothesis that the residual covariance matrix is proportional to an identity matrix.	

In assessing overall fit of the MANOVA model, the first step is to examine the interaction effect and determine whether it is statistically significant. All three multivariate tests except Roy's Largest Root test (p = .004) indicate that the interaction effect is not significant (Table 25). With a nonsignificant interaction effect, the main effects can be interpreted directly without adjustment (Hair et al., 1998). According to the results, only one significant difference was found in states of origin groups at $p \leq$ 0.05.

A series of univariate tests (ANOVA) was assessed to identify which dependent variables made the group differences (Table 26). There was a significant difference in the unique image on "local attractions" (Factor 3) between male and female visitors ($p \leq$ 0.05). Female visitors (mean=3.62) were more attracted by the "local attractions" than their male counterparts (mean=3.27). Although a statistically significant difference was not reached, female visitors had a relatively stronger perception (mean=3.62) towards "appealing destination" than the male visitors (mean=3.59).

Another difference that resulted from ANOVA test was found in states of origin group and Factor 1 ("Native American/natural environment") ($p \leq$0.05). The result of a post-hoc test detected that this difference was accounted for by the respondents from Texas (group 2) and various states (group 5). It was found that the Texas residents had a significantly lower perception (mean=3.57) in this factor compared to those from various states (mean=3.87). On the other hand, there was no statistical difference found in age groups and each of three dimensions. However, all of age groups (G1-G5) had a relatively higher perception (G1=3.59; G2=3.60; G3=3.65; G4=3.68; G5=3.88) on "Native American/natural environment" than Factor 2 and 3.

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TABLE 25

MANOVA SUMMARY TABLE
(INTERACTION/MAIN EFFECT – UNIQUE IMAGE)

Multivariate Tests of Significance

(Interaction Effect: Gender x Age x States of Origin)

Test Name	Value	F value	Significance
Pillai's Trace	.134	1.42	.077
Wilks' Lambda	.871	1.43	.073
Hotelling's Trace	.143	1.44	.070
Roy's Largest Root	.091	2.76	**.004***

(Main Effect: Gender)

Test Name	Value	F value	Significance
Pillai's Trace	.017	1.612	.187
Wilks' Lambda	.983	1.612	.187
Hotelling's Trace	.018	1.612	.187
Roy's Largest Root	.018	1.612	.187

(Main Effect: Age)

Test Name	Value	F value	Significance
Pillai's Trace	.037	1.156	.321
Wilks' Lambda	.963	1.152	.324
Hotelling's Trace	.038	1.147	.327
Roy's Largest Root	.022	2.102	.111

(Main Effect: States of Origin)

Test Name	Value	F value	Significance
Pillai's Trace	.081	1.89	**.032***
Wilks' Lambda	.920	1.91	**.030***
Hotelling's Trace	.085	1.92	**.029***
Roy's Largest Root	.065	4.43	**.002***

Note: * Significant at $p \leq 0.05$.

TABLE 26

THE RESULTS OF ANOVA AND POST-HOC TEST (UNIQUE IMAGE)

Demographic Characteristics	Dimensions of Unique Image		
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Gender			
Male	3.50	3.59	**3.27***
Female	3.42	3.62	**3.62***
Age			
Under 20 years old (G1)	3.59	3.43	3.40
20 – 35 years old (G2)	3.60	3.53	3.45
36 – 50 years old (G3)	3.65	3.52	3.50
51 – 65 years old (G4)	3.68	3.50	3.59
Over 65 years old (G5)	3.69	3.55	3.58
States of Origin			
Oklahoma (G1)	3.64*	3.57	3.58
Texas (G2)	**3.57***	3.52	3.56
California (G3)	3.61*	3.48	3.31
Neighboring states (G4)***	3.60*	3.50	3.31
Other states (G5)	**3.87***	3.51	3.59
Post-hoc (Bonferroni)	**G2<G5****	-	-

Note: *   Significant at $p \leq 0.05$.

    **   Bonferroni test with significance level at $p \leq 0.05$.

    *** Neighboring states include Arkansas, Kansas, and Missouri.

Hypothesized Model of Destination Branding Image

The main purpose of this study was to develop and test a conceptual model, which represents the elements contributing to the formation of destination branding. Based on the objectives of the study, literature reviews, and the conceptual framework of building destination branding, five hypotheses were proposed. The derivation of these hypotheses was discussed in Chapter 2.

These hypotheses were tested by structural equation modeling (SEM) (LISREL 8.53, Joreskog & Sorbom, 2001). Before conducting LISREL analysis, missing values were replaced via mean substitution. The covariance matrix was used as input to the structural equation analysis.

Measurement Model

Constructing a Path Diagram of Causal Relationships

The confirmatory use of SEM can be illustrated by two principal components analyses discussed earlier. Through a principal component analysis, five underlying dimensions of perceptual/cognitive image were derived: X_1, quality of experiences; X_2, touristic attractions; X_3, environment and infrastructure; X_4, entertainment and outdoor activities; and X_5, cultural traditions. Another principal component analysis identified the three dimensions for unique image: X_6, Native American/natural environment; X_7, appealing destination; and X_8, local attractions. In addition, one of the constructs in the hypothesized model, affective image, has four measures such as pleasing (X_9), arousing (X_{10}), relaxing (X_{11}), and exciting (X_{12}). Combined, all these were operationalized in the measurement model, which posits 12 factors (X_1 through X_{12}), with each set of variables

not acting as indicators of the separate constructs. There is no reason to expect uncorrelated perceptions; thus the factors are allowed to correlate as well (Hair et al., 1998).

Next step is to portray the relationships in a path diagram. All constructs fall into two categories, exogenous and endogenous and the measurement model only contains exogenous constructs, which are independent variables and not caused/predicted by any other variable in a model. In this section, only the path diagram of measurement model is introduced (Table 27).

TABLE 27

THREE-CONSTRUCT MEASUREMENT MODEL

Variables/Indicators		Indicator Loadings on Constructs		
		Perceptual/ Cognitive image	Unique image	Affective image
x_1	Quality of experiences	L1		
x_2	Touristic attractions	L2		
x_3	Environment and infrastructure	L3		
x_4	Entertainment/outdoor activities	L4		
x_5	Cultural traditions	L5		
x_6	Native American/natural environment		L6	
x_7	Appealing destination		L7	
x_8	Local attractions		L8	
x_9	Pleasant			L9
x_{10}	Arousing			L10
x_{11}	Relaxing			L11
x_{12}	Exciting			L12

Converting the Path Diagram into a Measurement Model

Because all the constructs in the path diagram are exogenous, only the measurement model and the associated correlation or covariance matrices for exogenous constructs and indicators are considered. The appropriate LISREL notations are shown in Table 28. At this stage a distinction must be made between fixed, constrained and free parameters (Reisinger and Turner, 1999). An example of a fixed parameter would be to assign $\lambda x\ 11 = 1.00$ so that $\lambda x\ 21$, and $\lambda x\ 31$ would be compared against correlations when all parameters are free. Restricted (constrained) parameters are unknown and are estimated by the model. For example, when three independent variables (ξ_1, ξ_1, and ξ_3) have the same impact on a dependent variable (η_1) one can specify that $\gamma_{11} = \gamma_{12}$ ($\gamma =$ correlation between latent constructs). In this case it is only necessary to estimate one parameter to determine the value of the other. Free parameters have unknown values, are not constrained to being equal to any other parameter, and need to be estimated by the program.

TABLE 28

LISREL NOTATIONS FOR THE MEASUREMENT MODEL

	Exogenous Indicators (X)		Exogenous Constructs		Error
X1	Quality of experiences	$=$	$\lambda x\,1,1\xi_1$	ξ_1	$+$	$\delta\,1,1$
X2	Touristic attractions	$=$	$\lambda x\,2,1\xi_1$	(Perceptual/	$+$	$\delta\,2,2$
X3	Environment and infrastructure	$=$	$\lambda x\,3,1\xi_1$	Cognitive Image)	$+$	$\delta\,3,3$
X4	Entertainment/outdoor activities	$=$	$\lambda x\,4,1\xi_1$		$+$	$\delta\,4,4$
X5	Cultural Traditions	$=$	$\lambda x\,5,1\xi_1$		$+$	$\delta\,5,5$
X6	Native American/natural environment	$=$	$\lambda x\,6,2\xi_2$	ξ_2	$+$	$\delta\,6,6$
X7	Appealing destination	$=$	$\lambda x\,7,2\xi_2$	(Unique Image)	$+$	$\delta\,7,7$
X8	Local attractions	$=$	$\lambda x\,8,2\xi_2$		$+$	$\delta\,8,8$
X9	Pleasant	$=$	$\lambda x\,9,3\xi_3$	ξ_3	$+$	$\delta\,9,9$
X10	Arousing	$=$	$\lambda x\,10,3\xi_3$	(Affective Image)	$+$	$\delta\,10,10$
X11	Relaxing	$=$	$\lambda x\,11,3\xi_3$		$+$	$\delta\,11,11$
X12	Exciting	$=$	$\lambda x\,12,3\xi_3$		$+$	$\delta\,12,12$

Correlation among Exogenous Constructs (ϕ)

	ξ_1	ξ_2	ξ_3	
ξ_1	---			
ξ_2	$\phi 2,1$	---		
ξ_3	$\phi 3,1$	$\phi 3,2$	---	

Choosing Input Matrix Type and Estimating the Proposed Model

Structural equation modeling accommodates either a covariance or a correlation matrix. For purposes of CFA in this study, a covariance matrix was employed (Table 29). LISREL program (version 8.53) was chosen to estimate the measurement model and the construct covariances.

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TABLE 29

COVARIANCE MATRIX FOR CFA

	Variables	x_1	x_2	x_3	x_4	x_5	x_6	x_7	x_8	x_9	x_{10}	x_{11}	x_{12}
x_1	Quality of experiences	15.13											
x_2	Touristic attractions	13.44	19.18										
x_3	Environment and infrastructure	6.38	7.61	9.83									
x_4	Entertainment/outdoor activities	3.94	5.9	4.75	6.04								
x_5	Cultural traditions	2.87	3.27	1.98	1.31	1.63							
x_6	Native American/natural environment	2.99	3.34	2.5	1.69	1.12	3.90						
x_7	Appealing destination	1.57	1.93	1.94	1.50	0.67	1.49	2.64					
x_8	Local attractions	1.27	1.71	1.12	0.97	0.41	0.98	1.06	1.40				
x_9	Pleasant	-0.46	-0.33	0.28	0.06	-0.15	-0.15	-0.18	-0.13	0.90			
x_{10}	Arousing	0.01	0.21	-0.07	-0.04	0.03	-0.10	0.17	0.12	-0.03	0.84		
x_{11}	Relaxing	-1.60	-1.28	-0.77	-0.43	-0.53	-0.53	-0.56	-0.31	0.21	-0.02	2.01	
x_{12}	Exciting	-0.36	-0.56	-0.02	-0.21	-0.06	-0.06	-0.13	-0.13	-0.02	0.05	0.30	1.25

Evaluating Goodness-of-Fit Criteria

<u>*Offending Estimates*</u>

The results of the measurement model must first be examined for offending estimates, which are coefficients that exceed acceptable limits (Hair et al., 1998). The common examples are: (1) negative error variances or nonsignificant error variances for any construct; (2) standardized coefficients exceeding or very close to 1.0; (3) very large standard errors associated with any estimated coefficients (Reisinger and Turner, 1999).

These offending estimates must be resolved before evaluating the model results. In the case of negative error variances (Heywood case), no offending error variances were found in LISREL estimates for the measurement model. If correlations in the standardized solution exceed 1.0 or two estimates are highly correlated, one of the constructs should be removed (Hair et al., 1998). Based on this, a total of four indicators for exogenous variables, which were greater than 1.0 was deleted. The deleted variables were "cultural traditions" (perceptual/cognitive image) and "arousing" (affective image). The modified three-factor measurement model is illustrated in Figure 22. The modified measurement model was then reestimated for assessing overall model fit.
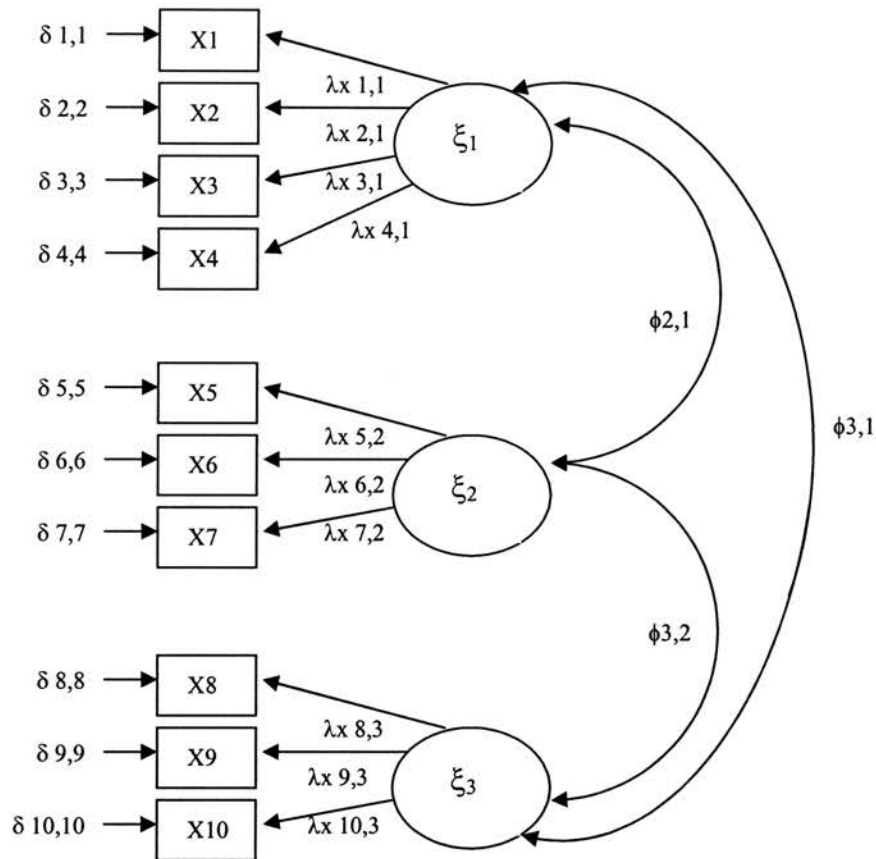
Figure 22: Hypothesized Three-Factor Measurement Model (Modified Model)

Overall Model Fit: Modified Model

The first assessment of model fit must be done for the overall model. In confirmatory factor analysis, overall model fit portrays the degree to which the specified indicators represent the hypothesized constructs (Hair et al., 1998). Three types of overall model fit measures were used: (1) absolute fit measures; (2) incremental fit measured; and (3) parsimonious fit measures.

Absolute Fit Measures. LISREL provides absolute goodness-of-fit measures and the first measure is the likelihood ratio chi-square statistic. The value ($\chi^2 = 61.02$, 49 *df*) has a statistical significance level of 0.061, above the minimum level of 0.05, but not

above the more conservative levels of 0.10 or 0.20. This statistic shows some support for believing that the differences of the predicted and actual matrices are nonsignificant, indicative of acceptable fit. Although chi-square values exceeded the minimum significance level of 0.05, it is generally agreed that chi-square should be used as a guide rather than an absolute index of fit because of its sensitivity to sample size, departures from multivariate normality, and model complexity (Anderson & Gerbin, 1984). Thus, several other goodness-of-fit indices that are less dependent on sample size should be assessed (Frone, Russell, and Cooper, 1994). In this study, the goodness-of-fit index (GFI) and adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) were used accordingly (Table 30). The values of GFI and AGFI are 0.97 and 0.94, which both fell within the acceptance level of 0.90. While all the absolute measures might fall within acceptable levels, the incremental fit and parsimonious fit indices are needed to ensure acceptability of the model from other perspectives.

TABLE 30

LISREL GOODNESS-OF-FIT MEASURES FOR CFA: MODIFIED MODEL

Measures	Revised Model
Chi-square (χ^2)	61.02
Degrees of freedom	49
Significance level	0.061
Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)	0.97
Adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI)	0.94

Incremental Fit Measures. The next type of goodness-of-fit measure assesses the incremental fit of the model compared to a null model. In this case, the null model is hypothesized as a single model with no measurement error.

The null model has a χ^2 value of 232.15 with 62 degrees of freedom. With this information, the two incremental fit measures, the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and the Normed Fit Index (NFI) can be calculated. The TLI value of 0.90 is met the recommended level of 0.90. The value of NFI (0.74) is below the recommended level of 0.90. The drawback of the overall fit measures is that they do improve as estimated coefficients are added (Reisinger and Turner, 1999). Thus, parsimonious fit measures should be applied.

Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)

$$TLI = \frac{(\chi^2_{null}/df_{null}) - (\chi^2_{proposed}/df_{proposed})}{(\chi^2_{null}/df_{null}) - 1}$$

$$\frac{(232.15/62) - (61.02/49)}{(232.15/62) - 1} = 0.90$$

Normed Fit Index (NFI)

$$NFI = \frac{\chi^2_{null} - \chi^2_{proposed}}{\chi^2_{null}}$$

$$\frac{232.15 - 61.02}{232.15} = 0.74$$

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Parsimonious Fit Measures. The final measures of the overall model assess the parsimony of the proposed model by evaluating the fit of the model versus the number of estimated coefficients needed to achieve that level of fit. Two measures introduced for direct model evaluations are the Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit (AGFI) and the normed chi-square. The value of AGFI provided by the LISREL program is 0.93, which is above the recommended level of 0.90. The normed chi-square (χ^2 / *df*) has a value of 1.24 (61.02/49). This falls within the recommended levels of 1.0 to 2.0. Combined with the AGFI, this result allows conditional support to be given for model parsimony.

In summary, the various measures of overall model goodness-of-fit provide support to the results of an acceptable representation of the hypothesized constructs.

Measurement Model Fit

With the overall model being accepted, each of the constructs can be evaluated separately by (1) examining the indicator loadings for statistical significance and (2) assessing the construct's reliability and variance extracted. First, for each variable the *t* values associated with each of the loadings exceed the critical values for the 0.05 significance level (critical value = 1.96) and the 0.01 significance level as well (critical value = 2.576) (Hair et al., 1998). The results indicate that all variables were significantly related to their specified constructs, verifying the posited relationships among indictors and constructs.

Next, estimates of the reliability and variance extracted measures for each construct were assessed whether the specified indicators were sufficient in their representation of the constructs. The results of loadings with *t* values and computations

for each measurement are shown in Table 31. In terms of reliability, two exogenous constructs, perceptual/cognitive image (0.88) and unique image (0.76), exceed the suggested level of 0.70. Affective image (0.65), however, is close to the threshold of 0.70; thus marginal acceptance can be given on this measure. The results of estimates of the reliability measure for three constructs with all significant t values support the convergent validity of the items in each scale. In terms of variance extracted, all three constructs, perceptual/cognitive image (0.69), unique image (0.59), and affective image (0.50), exceed or just meet the threshold value of 0.50.

TABLE 31

CFA RESULTS – MODIFIED MODEL

CONSTRUCT LOADINGS (t VALUES IN PARENTHESES)

	Variables	Loadings	Reliability	Variance Extracted
x_1	Quality of experiences	0.86 (11.54)	0.88	0.69
x_2	Touristic attractions	0.85 (12.86)		
x_3	Environment and infrastructure	0.74 (10.29)		
x_4	Entertainment/outdoor activities	0.75 (10.55)		
x_5	Native American/natural environment	0.80 (11.53)	0.76	0.59
x_6	Appealing destination	0.69 (6.82)		
x_7	Local attractions	0.65 (6.27)		
x_8	Pleasant	0.64 (6.23)	0.65	0.50
x_9	Relaxing	0.71 (7.12)		
x_{10}	Exciting	0.50 (4.78)		

Note:

Computation of reliability and variance extracted for each construct

Reliability

$$\text{Construct reliability (CR)} = \frac{(\text{Sum of standardized loadings})^2}{(\text{Sum of standard. loadings})^2 + \text{Sum of indicator measurement error}}$$

Sum of Standardized Loadings
    Perceptual/cognitive image = 3.20
    Unique image = 2.14
    Affective image = 1.85

Sum of Measurement Error
    Perceptual/cognitive image = 1.43
    Unique image = 1.46
    Affective image = 1.84

Reliability Computation
    Perceptual/cognitive image = 0.88
    Unique image = 0.76
    Affective image = 0.65

Variance Extracted

$$\text{Variance extracted (AVE)} = \frac{\text{Sum of squared standardized loadings}}{\text{Sum of square standard. loadings} + \text{Sum of indicator measurement error}}$$

Variance Extracted Computation
    Perceptual/cognitive image = 0.69
    Unique image = 0.59
    Affective image = 0.50

Structural Equation Model

Constructing a Path Diagram of Causal Relationships

The structural equation model in this study measures meditational role of overall image between exogenous variables and intention to revisit and recommend. These relationships are portrayed in a path diagram (Figure 23). The three evaluative dimensions become the exogenous variables (ξ_1 - ξ_3), each related to overall image (η_1),

which acts as a mediating variable between the exogenous variables and the rest two endogenous variables, intention to revisit (η_2) and recommend (η_3). The path diagram also indicates that the three exogenous dimensions are all proposed to be intercorrelated. Although the evaluative dimensions are proposed to be distinct, it is recognized that some perceptions are shared, and thus there are correlations among the constructs (Hair et al., 1998).
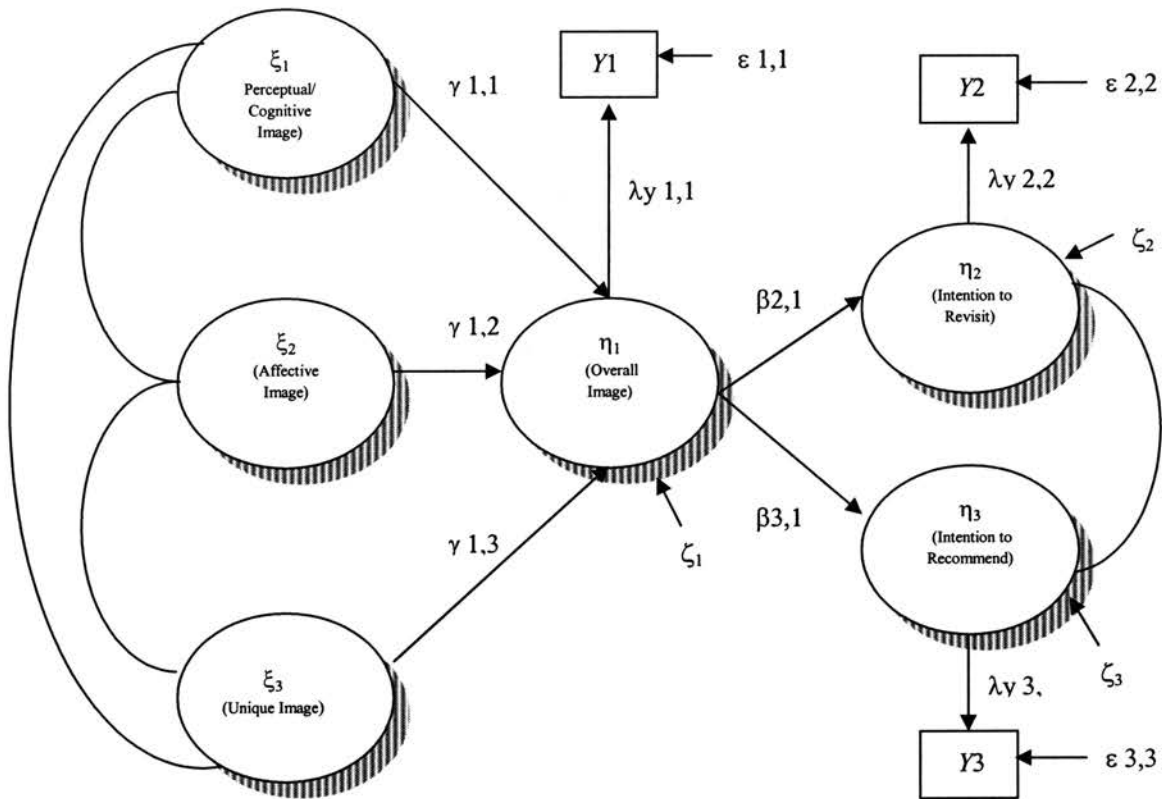
Figure 23: Path Diagram for SEM with LISREL Notations

Converting the Path Diagram into a Set of Structural Model

The path diagram provides the basis for specification of the structural equations and the proposed correlation (1) between exogenous constructs and (2) between structural

equations. From the path model, a series of structural equations (one for each endogenous construct) can be constructed to constitute the structural model.

The specification of a structural equation for each endogenous construct (overall image, intention to revisit and recommend) must specify the relationships to both the exogenous constructs and other endogenous constructs as well. The structural equation can be expressed as shown in Table 32. With the model specified, the type of input matrix was selected. In this study, covariances were used as they are the preferred input matrix type when testing a series of causal relationships (Hair et al., 1998). In addition, the structural equation was estimated with the LISREL program (version 8.53).

TABLE 32

STRUCTURAL MODEL EQUATIONS FOR THE PATH DIAGRAM

	Endogenous Variable		Exogenous Construct			Endogenous Constructs			
			ξ_1	ξ_2	ξ_3	η_1	η_2	η_3	Error
η_1	Overall image	$=$	$\gamma_{11}\xi_1 +$	$\gamma_{12}\xi_2 +$	$\gamma_{13}\xi_3$ $+$			$+$	ζ_1
η_2	Revisit	$=$				$\beta_{21}\eta_1$		$+$	ζ_2
η_3	Recommend	$=$				$\beta_{31}\eta_1$		$+$	ζ_3

Evaluating Goodness-of-Fit Criteria

Before evaluating the structural models, the overall fit of the model was assessed to ensure that it is an adequate representation of the entire set of causal relationships. Each of the three types of goodness-of-fit measures was used as follows:

Absolute Fit Measures. Three measures of the most basic measures of absolute fit are likelihood-ratio chi-square (χ^2), the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), and the Root Mean Square Residual (RMSR). The chi-square value of 57.49 with 49 degrees of freedom has

a statistical significance level of 0.38, exceeding both well above the minimum level of 0.05 and above the more conservative levels of 0.10 or 0.20 (Hair et al., 1998). This statistic shows support for a notion that the differences between the predicted and actual matrices are nonsignificant and it indicates an acceptable model fit. The GFI value of 0.97 is above at a marginal acceptance level of 0.90, as is the RMSR value of 0.074. As a complement to these basic measures, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was examined. RMSEA has a value of 0.03, which falls into the acceptable range of 0.08 or less. Although all of the absolute fit measures indicate that the model is acceptable, other types of fit measures should be also examined to ensure acceptability of the model from other perspectives.

Incremental Fit Measures. The incremental fit measures assess the incremental fit of the model compared to a null model (Hair et al., 1998). The simplest model that can be theoretically justified is a single-factor model with no measurement error. In this instance, the null model is a single-factor model with no measurement error. The null model has a chi-square of 232.15 with 62 degrees of freedom. The value of Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) is 0.94, above the recommended level of 0.90, whereas NFI value (0.75) falls below the desired threshold of 0.90. Thus, the incremental fit measures provide only conditional support and thus parsimonious fit measures should be also assessed.

Parsimonious Fit Measures. The two most appropriate parsimonious fit measures include (1) normed chi-square (χ^2/df) (the recommended level is between 1.0 and 2.0); and (2) adjusted for the degrees of freedom goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) (recommended level is 0.90) (Reisinger and Turner, 1999). The result of normed chi-square is 1.17

(57.49/49). This falls within the recommended levels of 1.0 to 2.0. The AGFI value of 0.95 is above the recommended level of 0.90. Combined with the normed chi-square, this result allows support to be given for model parsimony.

In summary, the various measures of overall model goodness-of-fit lend sufficient support to deeming the results an acceptable representation of the hypothesized constructs. The summary of various measures of goodness-of-fit for SEM is described in Table 33.

TABLE 33

THE THREE TYPES OF GOODNESS-OF-FIT MEASURES FOR SEM

LISREL Measures*	Absolute Fit Measures	Incremental Fit Measures	Parsimonious Fit Measures
Chi-square (χ^2)	57.49		
Degrees of freedom	49		
Significance	0.38**		
Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)	0.97		
Root mean-square residual (RMSR)	0.074		
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	0.030		
Chi-square (χ^2) of null model		232.15	
Degrees of freedom		62	
Tucker-Lewis index (TLI)		0.94	
Normed fit index (NFI)		0.75	
Normed chi-square (χ^2)			1.17***
Adjusted goodness-of-fit (AGFI)			0.95
Parsimonious normed fit index (PNFI)			0.62
Parsimonious goodness-of-fit index (PGFI)			0.53
Comparative fit index (CFI)			0.98
Incremental fit index (IFI)			0.98

Note: * Measures provided directly by version 8.53 of LISREL program.
    ** Significant at $p < 1.0$ or 2.0.
    *** Normed chi-square was calculated by chi-square divided by degrees of freedom.

Structural Model Fit

Having assessed the overall model and aspects of the measurement model, the estimated coefficients are to be examined for both practical and theoretical implications. An examination of the loadings (t values for the paths) was assessed for statistical significance. If the t values associated with each of the loading for the path coefficients, are larger than 2 the parameters are significant and variables are significantly related to their specified constructs. As a result, the relationships among indicators and constructs are verified (Reisinger and Turner, 1999).

The examination of the t values associated with each of the loadings in the hypothetical model indicates that for each variable they exceed the critical values for the 0.05 significance level (critical value = 1.96) and the 0.01 significance level as well (critical value = 2.576). Thus, all variables are significantly related to their specified constructs, verifying posited relationships among indicators and constructs (Table 34).

TABLE 34

SEM RESULTS: STANDARDIZED PARAMETER ESTIMATES FOR SEM MODEL

Construct Loadings (t value in parentheses) – Structural Model

Endogenous Constructs		Overall Image	Revisit	Recommend	Perceptual/ Cognitive factors	Unique factors	Affective factors	Structural Equation Fit (R^2)
Overall Image	=	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.62 (4.58)**	0.35 (2.49)*	0.21 (1.92)*	0.53
Revisit	=	0.41 (3.61)**	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.43
Recommend	=	0.25 (2.02)*	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.21

Note: * Significant at 0.05 level (critical value = 1.96).
    ** Significant at 0.01 level (critical value = 2.576).

The final approach to model assessment is to compare the proposed model with a series of competing models, which act as alterative explanations to the proposed model. In this way, the researcher can determine whether the proposed model, regardless of overall fit, is acceptable, because no other similarly formulated model can achieve higher level of fit (Hair et al., 1998). In this study, a nested model approach was adopted as a competing models strategy. A nested model approach is in which the number of constructs and indicators remains constant, but the number of estimated relationships changes. The most common form of nested model occurs when a single relationship is added to or deleted from another model. Thus the model with fewer estimated relationships is "nested within the model the more general model (Hair et al., 1998). The first model (MODEL 1) positions overall image in a fully mediational role between the intention to revisit and recommend. The second model (MODEL 2) allows for both direct and indirect effects (mediated through overall image) of the destination branding images including perceptual/cognitive, unique, and affective images on intention to revisit and recommend. The first model (MODEL 1) is nested within the second (MODEL 2) because more estimated relationships were added to MODEL 2 from MODEL 1 (Figure 24).

When a nested model is used, a χ^2 difference test can be performed to determine whether overall image (η_1) fully mediates or only partially mediates the influence of the destination branding images on each intention to revisit and recommend (Brown, Mowen, Donavan, and Licata, 2002). The χ^2 difference tests the null hypothesis of no significant difference, thus if the difference is significant, then the null hypothesis is rejected

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(Joreskog and Sorbom, 1995). The results of a χ^2 difference test suggested that there is no significant difference between MODEL 1 and MODEL 2 ($\Delta\chi^2 = 3.45$, $\Delta df = 6$). Therefore, the estimated model (MODEL 1) will be retained. As a means of comparison, a set of goodness-of-fit measures are calculated for each model and then compared to determine which of the two is the most parsimonious. Table 35 compares the two models on all three types of fit measures. For the absolute fit measures, MODEL 2 has the lower chi-square value than MODEL 1. The results also show that RMSEA, AGFI, NFI, and CFI have their lower value with MODEL 2. Therefore, it is concluded that the estimated model (MODEL 1) excels on most of statistics, making it a viable alternative for acceptance.
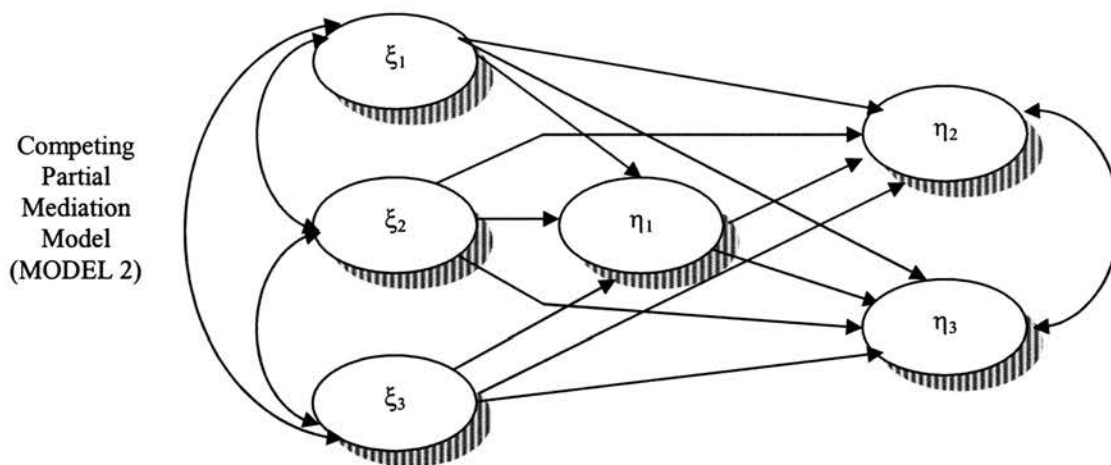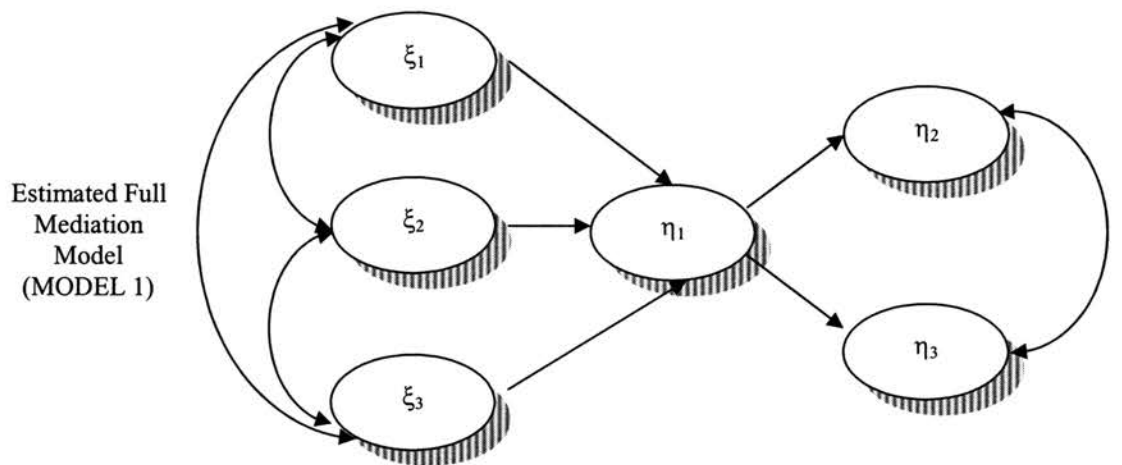
ξ_1 = Perceptual/Cognitive Image; ξ_2 = Unique Image; ξ_3 = Affective Image
η_1 = Overall Image; η_2 = Intention to revisit; η_3 = Intention to recommend

Figure 24: Path Diagrams of Estimated Full Model (MODEL 1) and Competing Partial Model (MODEL 2)

TABLE 35

COMPARISON OF GOODNESS-OF-FIT MEASURES FOR
THE TWO MODELS (MODEL 1 AND MODEL2)

Model Fit Statistics	MODEL1 (Estimated Model)	MODEL2 (Competing Model)
Likelihoood-ratio chi-square (χ^2)	57.49	54.04
Degrees of freedom	49	43
Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)	0.98	0.97
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	0.030	0.030
Adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI)	0.95	0.94
Normed fit index (NFI)	0.71	0.70
Comparative fit index (CFI)	0.98	0.98

Results of Destination Branding Model

The estimated standardized coefficients and t values of the five hypotheses were examined to test the proposed five hypotheses are supported by reaching statistical significances. The review of Figure 25 reveals that all five hypotheses contain statistically significant standardized coefficients with significant t values at 0.05 and 0.01 levels. Within the structural model shown in Figure 25, perceptual/cognitive image had a positive effect on overall image with a significant coefficient estimate value of 0.62 (t value = 4.58), supporting the Hypothesis 1. The parameter estimates of both unique and affective images were 0.35 (t value = 2.49) and 0.21 (t value = 1.92), both reaching the statistical significances. The results support the Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3, indicative of positive causal impacts of those two images on overall image. The overall image was found to have positive and significant causal effects on both intentions to revisit Oklahoma with a parameter estimate of 0.41 (t value = 3.61) and recommend Oklahoma to others (standardized coefficient = 0.25; t value = 2.02). This supports the

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Hypothesis 4 and the Hypothesis 5, which aimed to test positive causal impacts of overall image on intentions to revisit and recommend.
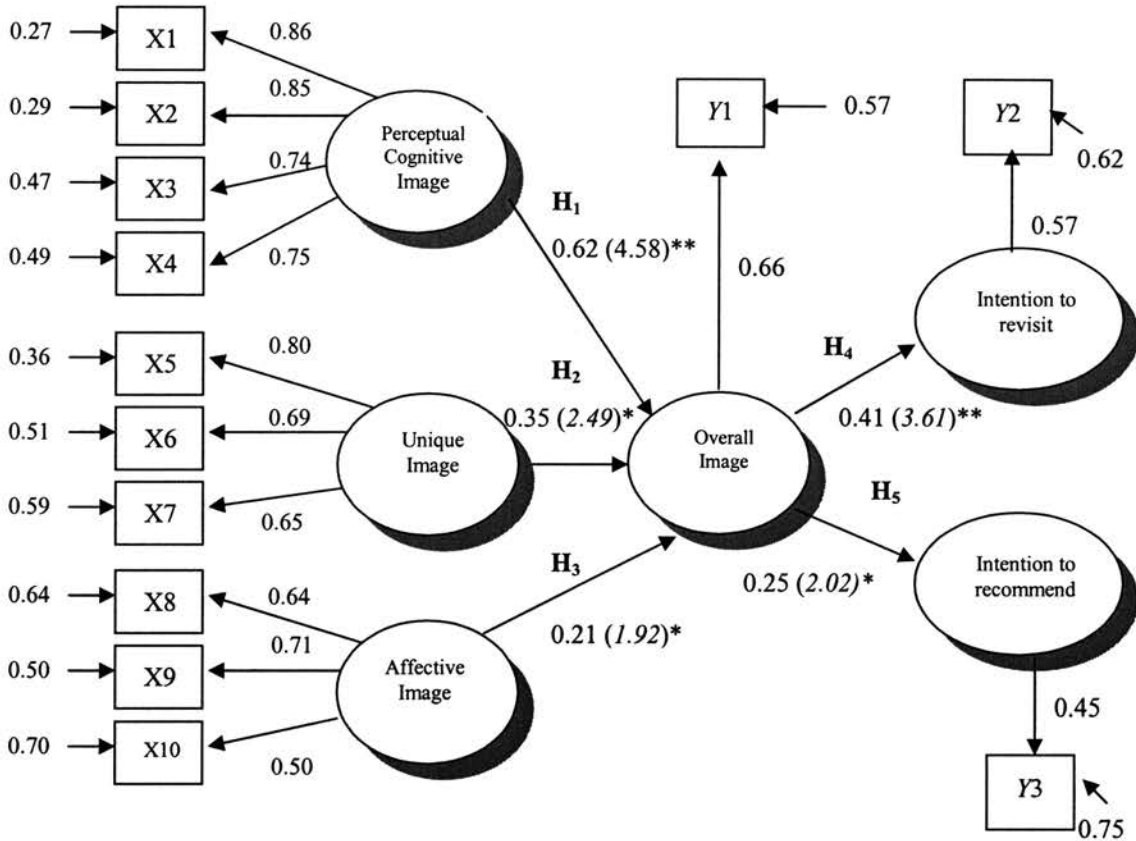
Note: * Significant at $p < .05$ (critical value=1.96); ** Significant at $p < .01$ (critical value=2.576).
$\chi^2 = 57.49$; df = 49; p value = 0.38; NFI = 0.71; GFI = 0.98; AGFI = 0.95; RMSEA = 0.030.
Variance explained (R^2) in Overall image (η_1) = 0.53; Intention to revisit (η_2) = 0.43;
Intention to recommend (η_3) = 0.21.

Figure 25: Results of Destination Branding Model*

Competitiveness of Oklahoma as a Travel Destination

This section aims to identify competitiveness of Oklahoma as a travel destination as opposed to its neighboring states, Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas. Positioning is the process of establishing and maintaining a distinctive place for a destination in the minds of potential visitors within target markets (Crompton et al., 1992). The positioning analysis was modified from the studies of Crompton et al. (1992) and Rittichainuwat (2001). The four stages were adapted from Crompton et al.'s study (1992) to identify a positioning of Oklahoma as a travel destination in the domestic travel and tourism market:

1. Identify the competitive destinations.

2. Compare visitors' perceptions of Oklahoma's strengths and weaknesses to those of its competitive destinations.

3. Determine how visitors perceive Oklahoma relative to its competitors.

4. Select the optimum position for the destination.

The first stage was to identify competitive destinations to Oklahoma. The four neighboring states such as Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas were selected based on the inbound markets of Oklahoma defined by Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department (OTRD). It is supported by the result of this study that 62% of Oklahoma visitors came from these four neighboring states. Specifically, about 37% of respondents resided in Texas, followed by Oklahoma (16.4%), Kansas (5.2%), Missouri (3.3%), and Arkansas (0.1%).

Stage 2 involved in comparing visitors' perceptions of Oklahoma's strengths and weaknesses to those of its competitors. The respondents were asked to rate selected

states including Oklahoma for each attribute that determines the visitor's perception toward each state as a travel destination on a five point Likert scale (1 = very poor; 5 = very good). A total of 14 attributes were derived from various travel literatures published by each selected state and the results of focus group sessions. The mean attribute scores with rakings of each of the five are presented in Table 36.

TABLE 36

RANKING OF TRAVEL DESTINATIONS
BY TRAVEL ATTRIBUTES

Attributes	Oklahoma		Arkansas		Kansas		Missouri		Texas	
	R*	Mean	R	Mean	R	Mean	R	Mean	R	Mean
Outdoor activities	4	3.28	3	3.31	5	3.14	2	3.45	1	3.69
Entertainment	5	3.05	4	3.25	3	3.52	2	3.68	1	3.79
Tourists attractions	3	3.53	4	3.31	5	3.08	2	3.44	1	3.72
Restful	1	4.00	2	3.44	4	3.01	3	3.41	5	2.88
Value for money	3	3.25	5	3.10	4	3.21	1	3.37	2	3.30
Native American	1	4.08	3	3.24	5	3.17	4	3.22	2	3.33
Appealing	3	3.33	4	3.25	5	3.09	2	3.38	1	3.51
Local people	2	3.54	5	3.18	4	3.37	1	3.58	3	3.45
Clean environment	1	3.65	3	3.36	5	3.26	4	3.34	2	3.43
Shopping	3	3.43	5	3.17	4	3.20	2	3.59	1	3.61
Scenery	1	3.85	2	3.58	5	3.23	4	3.50	3	3.54
State/theme parks	2	3.56	4	3.26	5	3.15	3	3.37	1	3.61
Cultural attractions	2	3.58	4	3.34	5	3.23	3	3.41	1	3.66
Pleasant weather	1	3.66	2	3.29	4	3.14	3	3.20	5	2.89

Note: * Ranks: 1 = the 1st ranking; 5 = the 5th ranking.
    Scale: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = average; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

Oklahoma scored higher than all of its competitors on attributes such as "restful atmosphere," "Native American/western culture," "clean environment," and "pleasant weather," suggesting that any positioning theme should be emerged from these attributes. Conversely, Oklahoma is not well perceived by the respondents in offering "a wide variety of entertainment" and "outdoor activities." Texas is well perceived by the respondents, making it ranked first in seven items including "outdoor activities,"

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"entertainment," "tourist attractions," "appealing," "shopping," "state/theme parks," and "cultural attractions." However, Texas scored lower than all of its competitors on "restful atmosphere" and "pleasant weather." Missouri ranked first place in terms of "value for money" and "friendly local people." Arkansas ranked second place after Oklahoma on "restful atmosphere," "scenery," and "pleasant weather." On the other hand, Kansas is perceived less favorably than other states in many attributes.

Stage 3 in the positioning process required a determination of how visitors perceived Oklahoma relative to its main competitors. Visitors are likely to select between competitive destinations on the basis of perceived differences between them (Crompton et al., 1992). Identification of these determinate attributes was made statistically by a series of a paired mean t test and Independent sample mean t test.

A paired mean t test was undertaken to determine significant differences between the mean scores reported by those identifying Oklahoma as their favorable destination and those selecting the 1st or the 2nd top ranking travel destinations. This will help identify the relative position of Oklahoma versus the 1st or 2nd top travel destinations. The comparison was based on a destination-by-destination basis (Table 37).

The results of a pair comparison between Oklahoma and the 1st or 2nd top ranking travel dentations reveal that there were statistically significant mean differences in 11 out of 14 travel attributes at significance levels of 0.05 and 0.01. Oklahoma is perceived relatively strong positions compared to Texas in two attributes such as "Native American culture" and "clean environment" whereas Oklahoma scored lower than Texas in "outdoor activities," "entertainment choices," and "tourists attractions." Likewise, it is revealed that Oklahoma is perceived inferior to Missouri in terms of "value for money"

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and "friendly local people." On the other hand, Oklahoma is viewed superior to Arkansas for "restful atmosphere," "beautiful scenery," and "pleasant weather." The respondents did not see any difference between Oklahoma and Texas in offering an "appealing destination," "state/theme parks," and "cultural attractions." In summary, the significantly greater emphasis placed on the attributes related to Native American culture, clean/unspoiled environment, and beautiful scenery by those who identified Oklahoma as their favorable destination suggests that these attributes may be useful in selecting Oklahoma's optimum position.

TABLE 37

POSITIOINING OF OKLAHOMA AS A TRAVEL DESTINATION

Perceived Travel Positioning (Oklahoma vs. 1st or 2nd Top Ranking Destination)	Mean^a	Mean^b	Mean Diff.	t value	
Outdoor activities: Oklahoma & Texas	3.28	3.69	-.41	-5.79	**
Entertainment : Oklahoma & Texas	3.05	3.79	-.74	-10.88	**
Tourists attractions: Oklahoma & Texas	3.53	3.72	-.19	-2.59	*
Restful: Oklahoma & Arkansas	4.00	3.44	.56	8.80	**
Value for money: Oklahoma & Missouri	3.25	3.37	-.12	-2.02	*
Native American: Oklahoma & Texas	4.08	3.33	.75	10.24	**
Appealing: Oklahoma & Texas	3.38	3.51	-.13	-1.81	
Local people: Oklahoma & Missouri	3.33	3.58	-.25	-4.06	**
Clean environment: Oklahoma & Texas	3.65	3.43	.22	3.38	**
Shopping: Oklahoma & Texas	3.43	3.61	-.19	-2.78	*
Scenery: Oklahoma & Arkansas	3.85	3.58	.28	4.39	**
State/theme parks: Oklahoma & Texas	3.56	3.61	-.05	-.73	
Cultural attractions: Oklahoma & Texas	3.58	3.66	-.08	-1.29	
Pleasant weather: Oklahoma & Arkansas	3.66	3.29	.37	6.43	**

Note: a = mean of Oklahoma; b = mean of 1st or 2nd top ranking destinations.
   * Significant at $p \leq .05$;   ** Significant at $p \leq .01$.

An alternative and complementary approach to selecting determinant attributes that may be useful for positioning is to identify the domains that differentiate between those visitors who plan to return to Oklahoma in the future and those who do not. This was achieved by conducting a series of Independent sample t tests seeking significant

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differences on each of attributes between those two segments. The results are shown in Table 38.

TABEL 38

DIFFERENCES IN THE MEAN SCORES FOR VISITORS WHO INTEND
TO VISIT OKLAHOMA AND THOSE WHO DO NOT

Attributes	Intend to Visit Oklahoma (N=188)		Do Not Intend to Visit Oklahoma (N=100)		Mean Diff.	t value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Outdoor activities	3.29	.670	3.06	.748	.23	1.38
Entertainment	3.06	.656	2.82	.951	.24	1.41
Tourists attractions	3.53	1.03	3.35	1.05	.18	.700
Restful atmosphere	**4.01**	.918	**3.42**	.781	**.59**	**2.54***
Value for money	3.25	.652	3.12	.600	.13	.844
Native American culture	4.12	.881	4.08	.982	.04	.175
Appealing	3.40	.804	3.18	.636	.22	1.10
Friendly local people	3.60	.747	3.29	.686	.31	1.65
Clean environment	3.66	.889	3.53	.943	.13	.586
Shopping	3.21	.782	3.18	.765	.03	.165
Scenery beauty	**3.87**	.879	**3.43**	1.01	**.44**	**2.12***
State/theme parks	3.55	.788	3.59	.712	-.04	-.179
Cultural attractions	3.66	.697	3.65	.702	.01	.093
Pleasant weather	3.67	.701	3.47	.624	.20	1.15

Note: * Significant at $p \leq .05$.

Differentiating attributes for both segments emerged on two attributes, "restful atmosphere" and "scenery beauty" ($p \leq .05$). Those who expected to return placed greater importance on restful atmosphere (mean=4.01) and scenery beauty (mean=3.87) than those who did not plan to return (mean=3.42 and 3.43). This result confirms that Oklahoma's strengths focus on restful atmosphere and scenery beauty.

Stage 4, the final stage in development of a positioning strategy, is to select the optimum position for Oklahoma. This section will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presented the findings and results of the study. First, frequency distribution of the demographic profile and visitor's travel characteristics were reported followed by a series of descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation scores) on the perceptual/cognitive, unique, affective, and overall images. Second, the independent sample mean t test was performed to determine the significant mean differences of these images between first time and repeat visitors. Third, two principal component analyses were assessed to derive the dimensions of perceptual/cognitive and unique images of Oklahoma. A summated scale was then used for subsequent data analyses, MANOVAs and ANOVAs. A combination of multivariate (MANOVA) and univariate (ANOVA) was assessed to determine whether any statistically significant differences exist between the composite dimensions (perceptual/cognitive and unique images) derived from principal component analysis and various demographic groups (gender, age, and residence). Fourth, structural equation modeling (SEM) was performed to test the five hypotheses described in Chapter 2. Finally, using descriptive statistics and the paired samples t test procedure, competitiveness of Oklahoma as a travel destination in comparison with the four neighboring states (Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas) was analyzed.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to develop a relatively new concept of destination branding in the tourism field by applying traditional branding theory and practices to the state of Oklahoma in order to build a unique and favorable destination brand in the domestic tourism market. To accomplish this, the current image of Oklahoma as perceived by its visitors as a travel destination was identified. A conceptual model, which represented the elements contributing to the building of a destination brand was also developed and tested in the context of the influence of overall image exerted in a hierarchical model of each of the dimensions on a visitor's likelihood of a visit to Oklahoma and one's willingness to recommend Oklahoma for a future visit.

The first section of this chapter discusses the summary of findings and a discussion of hypotheses tests (using LISREL program) in association with the research objectives discussed in Chapter 1. A destination branding strategy for the state of Oklahoma is presented in the second section of the chapter. The chapter concludes with limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

<u>Underlying Dimensions of the Destination Images (Objective 1)</u>

Objective 1: *To identify the underlying dimensions of the destination image of Oklahoma in terms of perceptual/cognitive and unique images perceived by visitors.*

Prior to this, a series of descriptive statistics with mean scores and standard deviations were first assessed to explore the average evaluations of visitors to Oklahoma in terms of perceptual/cognitive, unique, and affective images. The results reveal that the state of Oklahoma's major strengths are mostly focused on Native American heritage/western culture and Natural Environment such as "clean/unspoiled environment," "beautiful scenery/natural wonders," "safe and secure environment," and "open space/not crammed in cities." It suggests that the advertising campaign, "Oklahoma Native America," which has been conducted by OTRD (2003), has been successful in promoting the state of Oklahoma as a land of Native American and western heritage. Conversely, the respondent's perceptions on items such as "entertainment/ nightlife" and "adventurous outdoor activities" are found to be low, indicating that there is room for improvement on these items. Those two items are also found to be popular activities in which visitors participate in during their vacation (Plog Research, 1999a). Therefore, it is suggested that destination marketers in Oklahoma put more effort on improving these attributes to attract more visitors. With regard to affective image, the visitors view Oklahoma as a destination offering "relaxing" and "pleasant" atmosphere rather than as an "arousing" and "exciting" destination.

Next, exploratory factor analyses were performed to determine the underlying dimensions of the perceptual/cognitive and unique images of Oklahoma as a travel destination. With respect to the perceptual/cognitive attributes, the five factors were extracted out of 28 items. The five dimensions were "quality of experiences" (factor 1), "touristic attractions" (factor 2), "environment and infrastructure" (factor 3), "entertainment/outdoor activities" (factor 4), and "cultural traditions" (factor 5).

The three dimensions of unique image were also extracted from the same procedure that was applied to the perceptual/cognitive image. Each of the three factors mainly focuses on "Native American/natural environment" (factor 1), "appealing destination" (factor 2), and "local attractions" (factor 3).

Destination Branding Model (Objective 2)

Objective 2: *To explore causal relationships among destination brand images (perceptual/cognitive, unique, and affective images) and the mediational role of overall image on the visitor's behaviors (intentions to revisit Oklahoma and recommend it to others).*

To provide an answer to this question, a conceptual model consisting five hypotheses was developed and tested through structural equation modeling (SEM) with LISREL program.

Impact of Perceptual/Cognitive Image on Visitor's Overall Image

H1:   *The destination brand image associated with perceptual/cognitive image will positively affect the visitor's overall image toward Oklahoma as a travel destination.*

The hypothesis failed to be rejected at 0.01 significance level (standardized coefficient=0.62; *t* value=4.58).   This finding confirms the results of earlier studies conducted by Baloglu and Brinberg (1997) on image of Mediterranean destination and Stern and Krokover (1993) on city images.   Their findings are partially supported in terms of the direct contribution of perceived destination attributes to overall image because the relationship between the two is positive but trivial (Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997).   However, their indirect effects on overall image through affective evaluations are positive and notable.   This is confirmed by Stern and Krokover (1993) who also found that the indirect effects of perceptions of city attributes were greater than their direct effects.   Therefore, it can be concluded that the visitor's positive image of a travel destination in terms of perceptual/cognitive image would positively influence their overall image toward that destination.   In this case, the more positive perceptual/cognitive image of Oklahoma as a travel destination, the more likely visitors would have the positive overall image toward Oklahoma.

Impact of Unique Image on Visitor's Overall Image

H2:   *The destination brand image associated with unique image will positively affect*

  the visitor's overall image toward Oklahoma as a travel destination.

This hypothesis failed to be rejected at 0.05 significance level (standardized coefficient= 0.35; *t* value=2.49). There is little discussion about the causal relationship between unique image and overall image up to date. However, a uniqueness of brand positioning is important as it provides the brand with a competitive advantage or unique selling proposition that gives consumers a compelling reason to buy that particular brand (Keller, 1998). Thus, it was anticipated that the more positive unique image of Oklahoma as a travel destination, the more likely visitors would form a positive overall image toward Oklahoma. Results of the hypothesis testing suggest that the unique image is found to have positive and significant causal effects on positive overall image of the visitor toward Oklahoma as a travel destination.

Impact of Affective Image on Visitor's Overall Image

H3:   *The destination brand image associated with affective image will positively affect*

  the visitor's overall image toward Oklahoma as a travel destination.

This hypothesis failed to be rejected at 0.05 significance level (standardized coefficient=0.21 with *t* value of 1.92). It is suggested that the visitor's overall image toward Oklahoma was substantially and positively influenced by affective image. This finding is consistent with Woodside and Lysonski's (1989) study. They argued that a traveler's perception and cognitive evaluation of a destination leads to affective association, positive or negative feelings of the traveler about a specific destination.

These affective associations then influence the traveler's attitude toward the destination. It can be concluded that the more positive affective image of Oklahoma as a travel destination, the more likely visitors would have positive overall image toward Oklahoma.

Mediational Role of Overall Image in Influence of Destination Brand Images and Visitor's Likelihood of Revisting

H4:   *Visitor's overall image toward Oklahoma will mediate the relationships between three destination brand images (perceptual/cognitive, unique, and affective images) and visitor's intention to revisit Oklahoma.*

This hypothesis failed to be rejected at 0.01 significance level (standardized coefficient=0.41; t value=3.61). The results indicate that individual destination brand images (perceptual/cognitive, unique, and affective images) influence overall image, which in turn is related to visitors' destination choice behavior (intentions to revisit the place). It is generally acknowledged by several researchers that brand image, attitude, and quality have played an important role in influencing consumer choice, intention to purchase, and willingness to recommend the brand (del Río et al., 2001; Low and Lamb, 2000). It is further agreed that overall image is much more related to destination choice decision than image or perceptions by providing the basis for actions and behavior that the consumer takes with the brand choice (Um and Crompton, 1990; Um, 1993). Therefore, it can be concluded that the visitor's positive overall image toward Oklahoma as a travel destination, which is influenced by destination brand images (perceptual/cognitive, unique, and affect images), leads to likelihood of a revisit to Oklahoma in the future.

Mediational Role of Overall Image in Influence of Destination Brand Images and Visitor's Likelihood of Recommendation

H5: *Visitor's overall image toward Oklahoma will mediate the relationships between three destination brand images (perceptual/cognitive, unique, and affective images) and visitor's intention to recommend Oklahoma to others.*

The hypothesis failed to be rejected at 0.05 significance level (standardized coefficient=0.25; t value=2.02). This finding confirms the previous studies (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000; Oppermann, 2000), suggesting that a person with a positive attitude or overall composite image about a destination will provide positive word-of-mouth (WOM). WOM is also considered an important information source affecting consumer's choice of destination (Oppermann, 2000; Weaver and Lawton, 2002; Yvett and Turner, 2002). It can be concluded that visitor's positive overall image toward Oklahoma as a travel destination, which is influenced by destination brand images (perceptual/cognitive, unique, and affective images), leads to visitor's likelihood of recommending Oklahoma to others.

Image Differences between the First Time and Repeat Visitors (Objective 3)

Objective 3: *To determine whether there is a significant difference in perceived destination images (perceptual/cognitive, unique, and affective images) between first time and repeat visitors to Oklahoma.*

The Independent sample mean t test was performed to determine the differences between first time and repeat visitors in terms of perceptual/cognitive destination image. The results indicate statistically significant differences between first time and repeat visitors on the perceptual/cognitive image of "interesting state/theme parks," "good

shopping centers/facilities," and "lots of things to do in the evening (nightlife)." These three attributes are better perceived by repeat visitors than first time visitors. Repeat visitors are more likely to place higher than first time visitors on attributes such as "safe/secure environment," "beautiful scenery/natural wonders," and "restful and relaxing atmosphere." On the other hand, a total of 12 attributes were found to be highly perceived by first time visitors than repeaters. Examples of these attributes include "Native American/western culture," "friendly local people," "good weather and climate," and "clean/unspoiled environment."

With respect to the attributes related to unique image of Oklahoma, the repeat visitors rated higher than the first time visitors on the items such as "restful and relaxing atmosphere" and "clean/spoiled environment," whereas the first time visitors have more favorable perceptions than repeat visitors on "safe and secure environment," "friendly and helpful local people," and "a wide variety of state/theme parks." From the management perspective, it may imply that these attributes need to be enforced and utilized as unique factors in developing promotional strategies for Oklahoma as a competitive destination, in particular, targeting prosperous and first time visitor groups.

According to the results of affective image differences between these two groups, only one variable ("pleasant") is found to be statistically significant, indicating that first time visitors perceived a trip to Oklahoma as more pleasant than repeat visitors. The repeat visitors also had lower perceptions than first time visitors on "arousing" and "exciting." This may imply that Oklahoma should maintain consistent quality associated with affective images in order to retain repeat customers as those perceptions may become deteriorated upon their repeat visits.

Overall, the results of the image differences by first time and repeat visitors support the previous findings that repeat travelers who have previously visited Oklahoma generally show more favorable perceptions and impressions about some attributes than those who did not have previous visitation experience (Ahmed, 1991a & 1991b; Chon, 1990; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Hu and Ritchie, 1993; Oppermann, 1998). Similarly, it is consistent with the findings that people who have previously visited a place and become familiar with it had a more positive image of the destination due to perceived hidden qualities (Fakeye and Crompton, 1991), which are not obvious among first time visitors. It also supports the findings of several studies that as the number of visits increase, travelers have better perception towards a travel destination in terms of quality and price ratio, tourist attractions, and facilities (Chon, 1991; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Gartner, 1987; Phelps, 1986).

In terms of managerial applications, it suggests that destination marketers in Oklahoma should focus on advertising and promotion strategies in a way to increase awareness and first impressions about Oklahoma as a favorable destination between prospective and first time visitors.

Image Differences by Various Demographic Groups (Objective 4)

Objective 4: To assess the relationships between different destination brand dimensions (perceptual/cognitive and unique images) and different demographic groups.

Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was performed to investigate whether an overall difference was found between demographic groups and perceptual/cognitive image of Oklahoma. The dependent variables used for MANOVA test are five

dimensions of perceptual/cognitive image such as quality of experiences (factor 1), touristic attractions (factor 2), environment and infrastructure (factor 3), entertainment/outdoor activities (factor 4), and cultural traditions (factor 5). The independent variables are various demographic groups including gender, age, and states of origin.

The results show that the five dimensions of perceptual/cognitive images may differ across the three demographic groups (interaction effect). In order to examine which dependent variables would make the differences, one-way ANOVA and a post-hoc test (Bonferroni test) were also performed. The significant differences were found between gender and factor 3 (environment and infrastructure) and states of origin and factor 5 (cultural traditions). The female respondents were more likely than their male counterparts to place higher perception scores on attributes related to clean/unspoiled, safe and secure, and easy access to the area. Both male and female visitors show higher interest than other dimensions in Native American culture and western heritage (e.g., a cowboy life and culture). Likewise, out-of-state visitors are also attracted to Oklahoma's Native American culture. Again, it confirms that Native American and western cultures are major attractions to entice visitors to Oklahoma.

MANOVA was also applied in examining unique image differences by various demographic groups. The three dimensions of unique image of Oklahoma are entered as the dependent variables. They are Native American/natural environment (factor 1), appealing destination (factor 2), and local attractions (factor 3). The MANOVA test did not detect any significant interaction effects but a series of one-way ANOVA identified a significant difference between gender and factor 3, local attraction. Female visitors were

more attracted by local attractions than their male counterparts. They also had a relatively stronger perception towards appealing destination then the male visitors. Another difference is found in states of origin group and Native American/natural environment (factor 1). It appears that visitors from Texas show lower perception toward the image of Native American/natural environment than people from other states. This may be due to the fact that Oklahoma and Texas are possibly perceived as sharing similar cultural attractions such as Native American and western cultures, cultural/ historical significance and this may cause Texas visitors to show less interest in these attributes than visitors from other states.

In summary, it is concluded that perceived image differences exist among various demographic groups such as age, gender, and states of origin. The significant differences in the perceived image of Oklahoma support the finding of previous studies, indicating that destination image is formulated based on demographics (Baloglu and McCleary, 1996; Chon, 1990; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Rittichainuwat et al., 2001).

Competitiveness of Oklahoma as a Travel Destination (Objective 5)

Objective 5: *To conduct a comparative analysis of the image of Oklahoma versus its neighboring states such as Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas by determining relative strengths and weaknesses in terms of Oklahoma's possessive image in the minds of visitors as opposed to other states.*

The starting point of building a successful destination brand is to establish the core values of the destination and its brand, which should be durable, relevant, and communicable and hold saliency for potential tourists (Morgan and Pritchard, 2001).

This should be done by identifying and analyzing its key competitors which determine the overall brand positioning. One of the objectives of this study aims to identify the main competitors of Oklahoma in the domestic tourism market and classify various images of Oklahoma in the minds of the visitors into major strengths and weaknesses as compared to the other competitors. The main competitors defined by OTRD are Oklahoma's four neighboring states, Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas.

The results of the comparative analysis reveal Oklahoma's strengths and weaknesses compared to those of its competitors. Oklahoma demonstrates relatively strong positioning in comparison to its neighboring states in terms of offering a "restful atmosphere," "Native American/western culture," "clean/unspoiled environment," and "pleasant weather." Attributes such as "friendly local people," "state/theme parks," and "cultural attractions" are also strong attractions in the minds of visitors, placing them in second place among the five states. It may imply that any positioning theme for Oklahoma tourism should stem from focusing on these attributes.

Conversely, Oklahoma is not well perceived by the respondents in offering "a wide variety of entertainment" and "outdoor activities," suggesting that there is room for improvement as these attributes which may be potential weaknesses in perceived image of visitors. The results of a pair comparison between Oklahoma and Texas indicate that Oklahoma is perceived in a relatively strong position compared to Texas in "Native American culture" and "clean/unspoiled environment." On the other hand, Oklahoma scored lower than Texas on "outdoor activities," "entertainment choices," and "tourists attractions." The respondents did not see any significant difference between Oklahoma and Texas in offering an "appealing destination," "state/theme parks," and "cultural

attractions." It is also revealed that Oklahoma is perceived inferior to Missouri in terms of "value for money" and "friendly local people." Meanwhile, Oklahoma has similar strengths as Arkansas in "restful atmosphere" and "pleasant weather."

As an alternative and complementary approach to selecting determinant attributes, an analysis was conducted to identify the domains that differentiate between visitors who plan to return to Oklahoma in the future and those who do not. It was found that differentiating attributes for both groups were two attributes, "restful atmosphere" and "scenery beauty." Those who expected to return placed greater importance on "restful atmosphere" and "scenery beauty" than those who did not plan to return. This result confirms that Oklahoma's strengths focus on restful atmosphere and scenery beauty.

In summary, with respect to a determination of how visitors perceived Oklahoma relative to its main competitors, it is revealed that Oklahoma's most distinctive attributes among its four neighboring states are "Native American culture," "clean/unspoiled environment," "restful atmosphere," and "beautiful scenery." These attributes have played a key role in attracting visitors to Oklahoma over other competitive destinations because they are likely to select between competitive destinations on the basis of perceived differences between them (Crompton et al., 1992). They are also key determinant attributes that motivate visitors to return to Oklahoma. For managerial implications, these unique strengths identified by the analyses provide a focus which should guide all service, marketing, and communication decisions. They appear to describe the unique niche which Oklahoma occupies in the increasingly competitive domestic visitor market.

Recommendations

This section proposes a destination branding strategy for the state of Oklahoma to build a strong, unique, and favorable destination brand in an effort to increase the competitiveness of Oklahoma in the domestic travel and tourism markets.

Objective 6: *To propose a destination branding strategy for building a strong, unique, and favorable destination brand for the state of Oklahoma*

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Establishing Brand Architecture

Brand architecture is a device critical to the development of destination brand. It is bound to reflect all the key components of a destination brand including its positioning, its rational (head) and emotional (heart) benefits and associations, together with its brand personality (Morgan and Pritchard, 2001). The essence of brand architecture is the destination's unique qualities that make it different from other competitors. Based on findings of this study, brand architecture of the state of Oklahoma is proposed as a basis for developing a successful destination brand strategy for Oklahoma (Table 39).

TABLE 39

THE BRAND ARCHITECTURE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA*

Positioning	Rational Benefit	Emotional Benefit	Personality
Land of Native American and western heritage	• Unspoiled wilderness • Tradition • Western heritage • Natural and dramatic beauty • Friendly local people	• I feel uplifted by the spirituality of the natural environment. • I feel relaxed by the unspoiled and clean countryside. • I feel fulfilled by experiencing the western heritage and history of Oklahoma. • I feel soothed by the open, unspoiled outdoors.	• Relaxed • Down to earth • Pleasant • Hearty and friendly • Traditional yet open-minded

* Note: Adopted from the brand architecture of Britain (Source: Morgan and Pritchard, 2001, p. 34-35).

Positioning of Oklahoma

One of the important ingredients of brand architecture is development of a positioning strategy. Positioning strategy should start with identifying which of the strong attributes are unique and effective differentiate a destination from competitors in its ability to meet target visitors' needs (Crompton et al., 1992). This study identified several differentiating attributes such as "Native American/western heritage," "restful atmosphere," "clean environment," and "natural beauty." Aaker and Shansby (1982) suggested that only one or at the most two attributes should be used. They said that positioning strategies that involve too many attributes can be most difficult to implement. The result can often be a fuzzy confused image." It is also critical to build a brand on something which uniquely connects a destination to the consumer and it must have the potential to last, to grow old and to evolve in a long-term branding campaign (Morgan and Pritchard, 2001). Good destination brand is therefore original and different but its

originality and difference need to be sustainable, believable and relevant (Morgan and Pritchard, 2001). As a result of findings on various images of Oklahoma perceived by visitors, "Land of Native American and western heritage" is recommended as a positioning proposition for the state of Oklahoma (Table 39). The advertising campaign, which has been recently conducted by OTRD, also focuses on aspects of Oklahoma's root heritage, Native American culture. In this study, it is confirmed that this is the most important strength and uniqueness of Oklahoma; therefore, it should be retained as a positioning theme of Oklahoma and reinforced throughout various promotional activities and communication channels.

Brand Personality and Benefits

Another prerequisite for critical success of the Oklahoma brand is the extent to which the destination's brand personality interacts with the target markets (Morgan and Pritchard, 2001). Developing a rich, relevant brand personality is key to building a successful destination brand. A brand's personality has both rational and emotional benefits and it should also reflect and respond to changes in consumers' lives (Morgan and Pritchard, 2001). The positioning of Oklahoma as a land of Native American and western heritage is translated into the rational benefit of encountering unspoiled wilderness, western heritage, and natural and dramatic beauty. At a deeper, emotional or salient level these benefits offer the visitor the emotional benefits of feeling uplifted by the spirituality of the natural environment, relaxed by the unspoiled and clean countryside, and fulfilled by experiencing the western heritage and history of Oklahoma. Finally, the culmination of these brand attributes is a destination personified by relaxed,

down to earth, pleasant, and traditional yet open-minded traits. This should become the essence of Oklahoma, with values rooted in the experience of past visitors, credible and relevant to potential visitors and, most crucially, which the product can deliver (Morgan and Prtichard, 2001).

Brand Oklahoma Marketing Strategies

The following section discusses the advertising and marketing strategies for tourism to capitalize on the brand. It is noted that these strategies were based on the overall findings of this study; therefore, applications of marketing strategies can be varied according to a different image study. The overall marketing and promotional mix was determined as follows:

Price/value. According to the demographics and travel characteristics of visitors, Oklahoma visitors show a lower spending pattern while on a trip to Oklahoma. More than half of the respondents indicated that they spent or would spend money on the trip to Oklahoma within the ranges of $100 (or lower) to less than $250. This may be due to the findings that Oklahoma visitors were more likely to enjoy short getaways (average 1-4 days) and more than half of the respondents fell into the lower income level of between $25,000 (or lower) and less than $45,000 a year. These findings can draw two different implications. When solely depending on the findings of the study, Oklahoma visitors appear to be price sensitive with a limited budget. On the other hand, Oklahoma may not fully utilize or offer tourism products which allure visitors to spend their travel dollars. Whichever the case, Oklahoma should position in its core markets as a value-for-money

destination, and therefore marketing promotions are not principally price led, but rather reflect a value-added component.

Product. Product is principally centered on nature-based and Native American heritage products and experiences, with a heavy focus on regional attractions. In particular, tourism products should be developed in a way to offer visitors to Oklahoma unique and memorial experiences so that they can build an emotional relationship with Oklahoma. As Morgan and Pritchard (2001) argued, "the battle for customers in tomorrow's destination marketplace will be fought not over price but over hearts and minds..." (p. 12).

Place. Marketing and promotional activities are primarily delivered through broadcast consumer media such as advertising and publicity. The tourism product is delivered through traditional and electronic distribution channels utilizing wholesale packages, retail travel agents and other travel retailers such as airlines and booking companies. The official web site for Oklahoma tourism is central to assisting visitors to conduct their information search. A virtual industry structure will also help integrating visitor servicing, retail sales and access to product knowledge through a virtual call center, Oklahoma welcome centers, and a comprehensive state-wide database of tourism product.

Promotion. The overall proposition of Oklahoma as a destination including the positioning of Oklahoma, both rational and emotional benefits, and core personal traits should be integrated as a visual language to ensure that all visual communications reflect these key essences. They could also be marketed to strategic partners and consumer markets to promote their individual objectives, thereby, creating sub-brands under the

overall umbrella of Brand Oklahoma. The visual language is not just a logo, but rather a set of design briefs which ensure the elements of Oklahoma marketing always reflected the core personality, adding to the strength of the brand.

In summary, the findings of the overall study provide a clear brand position for Oklahoma destination brand. Brand Oklahoma emerged as a clear, focused strategy with a defined purpose and personality. Oklahoma's pristine environment and Native American heritage made it well suited to marketing a clean, nature-based tourism destination with friendly, spirited people and the freedom and space to travel. Based on the core personality traits (e.g., relaxed, down to earth, pleasant) and positioning propositions marketing strategies were proposed.

Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Study

One limitation of this study is that the study was conducted in the summer and traveler's characteristics and images of the state of Oklahoma as a travel destination may vary by season (e.g., summer, winter, etc.). For example, a traveler who has visited Oklahoma in summer season may form a different image and perception toward Oklahoma as a travel destination as opposed to that who has traveled in winter. Thus, the findings of this study are limited to images of Oklahoma for summer pleasure travelers. To overcome this limitation, a survey can be conducted in different seasons. Then, the results of the survey can be analyzed in such a way as to identify if there are any differences in image and perceptions of Oklahoma between travelers in different seasons.

Second, the population of this study was limited to visitors who stopped at the selected five welcome centers out of 12 in Oklahoma. Although these five welcome

centers were selected based on the total number of visitors, the results may be only applicable for the travelers from these welcome centers. It may not be generalizable for those who did not stop by any of the welcome centers during their trip to Oklahoma. In addition, the total response rate was low (24.5%), suggesting that this study was limited to generalizing the large portion of visitors who did not participate in the survey.

Third, there may be other factors influencing the development of destination image. This study was limited to the variables, which are consistently and repeatedly mentioned and partially supported by empirical results in the literature. Therefore, the results of this study may have been the exclusion of additional destination brand associations that might have helped better explain tourist destination choice behavior. Future research should investigate additional destination brand associations that may influence overall image and tourist destination choice behavior. They are also recognized as key elements affecting a destination image in traveler destination selection and image formation models. For instance, although an individual's values and motivations were proposed by several authors as an important construct influencing image, sociopsychological travel motivations of the individual were often suggested by numerous tourism scholars as a crucial construct in formation of tourism destination images. In addition, as suggested in Chapter 2, it is recommended to explore a role of destination brand associations including destination brand attributes and benefits in developing a destination branding for Oklahoma.

Fourth, the number of questions measuring some constructs in the model are constrained by the practical need to develop a parsimonious questionnaire. The findings are limited to the selected items measuring the related constructs.

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Summary

This chapter discusses the summary of the findings and the hypotheses tests (using LISREL program) in association with the research objectives. It also proposes practical recommendations to develop a successful destination brand for the state of Oklahoma. The chapter concludes with limitations of the study and recommendations for future study.

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APPENDIX A

PILOT TEST QUESTIONNAIRE

OSU

A Survey of Tourists' Perceptions of Oklahoma as a Travel Destination

Oklahoma State University
School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration
College of Human Environmental Sciences
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078-6173

Dear Tourist:

The purpose of this survey is to identify domestic tourists' perceptions of Oklahoma as a travel destination. The information you provide will help us better understand your perception of Oklahoma as a leisure destination. The findings of the survey will also aid tourism marketers in Oklahoma in designing advertising and promotional programs, tailoring images for specific target markets, and positioning itself in the travel market.

There is no personal risk or discomfort as a result of your participation in this survey. Your participation is completely VOLUNTARY, ANONYMOUS, and will be kept strictly CONFIDENTIAL. Non-participation will not result in penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled.

Once you complete the questionnaire, please return it to the person who provided the questionnaire. The data collected from this survey will be used for education and research purposes only.

Any questions about this study, or any related problems, may be directed to the Principal Investigator, Holly Im, a Ph.D. candidate at (405) 332-0594 (email: hollyim@hotmail.com) or you may contact Sharon Bacher, Secretary of Institutional Review Board (IRB), 203 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK74078 (Telephone: 405-744-5700; email: sbacher@okstate.edu).

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Holly Im
Ph.D. Candidate
E-mail: hollyim@hotmail.com

Hailin Qu, Ph.D.
Professor
School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration
Oklahoma State University
E-mail: qhailin@okstate.edu

PART I: TRAVEL BEHAVIOR

We are seeking your personal opinions about your experience in Oklahoma, so please answer ALL QUESTIONS below frankly. All responses are strictly CONFIDENTIAL.

1. How many times have you visited Oklahoma including this trip?
   - First time
   - 2-3 times
   - 4-5 times
   - More than 5 times
   - Resident of Oklahoma

2. What is the purpose of this trip?
   - Vacation/Leisure
   - Business
   - Visiting friends and relatives
   - Convention/Exhibition
   - En route to somewhere else
   - Other (please specify) _____

3. How many days do (did) you plan to spend in Oklahoma?
   - 1 - 2 days
   - 3 - 6 days
   - A week
   - More than a week
   - No overnight stay

4. Approximately how much will (did) you spend on this trip?
   - Less than $100
   - $100 to less than $250
   - $250 to less than $500
   - $500 to less than $750
   - $750 to less than $1000
   - $1000 or above
   - Undetermined

5. Are you traveling? (Please check all that apply)
   - alone
   - spouse, without children
   - spouse, with children
   - friends/relatives
   - Other (please specify) _____

6. Are you traveling with a tour group on this trip?
   - Yes
   - No

7. What source of information did you use in planning this trip to Oklahoma? (Please check all that apply)
   - Tour guide books
   - Travel agencies
   - Internet
   - Advertisement (TV/Newspaper/Magazine)
   - Tourist information center (Welcome center)
   - Word-of-mouth from family/friends/relatives
   - Literature picked up on trip or from previous trip

□ □ *Please continue on to the next page* ➡

PART II PERCEPTIONS/FEELINGS/ATTITUDE TOWARD OKLAHOMA

1. Perceptions

Listed below are some attributes that determine the quality of a tourist's experience in Oklahoma. Please rate Oklahoma as a travel destination for each item that best represents your perceptions.

1 Strongly Disagree (SD)	2 Disagree (D)	3 Neutral (N)	4 Agree (A)	5 Strongly Agree (SA)

Oklahoma is a place with:	SD	D	N	A	SA
Interesting Native American or Western culture	1	2	3	4	5
A wide variety of outdoor recreation (camping/canoeing/fishing)	1	2	3	4	5
Safe and secure environment	1	2	3	4	5
Reasonable cost of shopping centers	1	2	3	4	5
Interesting state parks/amusement/theme parks	1	2	3	4	5
Restful and relaxing atmosphere	1	2	3	4	5
Easy access to the area	1	2	3	4	5
Beautiful scenery and natural wonders (e.g., wildlife)	1	2	3	4	5
Reasonable cost of hotels/restaurants	1	2	3	4	5
Interesting Cultural events/festivals	1	2	3	4	5
Friendly local people	1	2	3	4	5
Lots of open space/not crammed in cities	1	2	3	4	5
Good shopping centers/facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of tourist information centers (welcome centers)	1	2	3	4	5
Appealing local cuisine	1	2	3	4	5
Good place for children and family	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of facilities for getting/events	1	2	3	4	5
Good weather and climate	1	2	3	4	5
A taste of cowboy life and culture	1	2	3	4	5
A wide variety of entertainment	1	2	3	4	5
Lots of things to do in the evening (nightlife)	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of facilities for water sports (beaches/sailing, etc)	1	2	3	4	5
Interesting cultural/school attractions (e.g., museums/art gallery)	1	2	3	4	5
A wide choice of accommodations	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of infrastructure (highway system, local transportation)	1	2	3	4	5
Lots of adventurous activities (e.g., hunting, rock climbing)	1	2	3	4	5
Clean/unspoiled environment	1	2	3	4	5
Readily available travel information	1	2	3	4	5

2. Feelings

Below is a list of scales that can be used to describe your feelings toward the places. Please evaluate Oklahoma as a vacation destination on each word set by circling the appropriate scale.

My visit to Oklahoma is (was) to be:

Pleasant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unpleasant
Arousing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Sleepy
Relaxing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Distressing
Exciting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Gloomy

3. Overall Attitude

Please check the box that best describes your overall attitude toward Oklahoma as a travel destination.

How favorable is your overall attitude toward Oklahoma as a travel destination?

Extremely Unfavorable ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 Extremely Favorable

How good a value is Oklahoma as a travel destination?

Extremely Bad ☐1 ☐2 ☐3 ☐4 ☐5 ☐6 ☐7 Extremely Good

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PART III   UNIQUENESS OF OKLAHOMA AS A TRAVEL DESTINATION VERSUS NEIGHBORING STATES

This section is to identify unique attributes that make Oklahoma differentiate from neighboring states as a travel destination. Please rate each attribute that you think is unique travel items in comparison with FOLLOWING NEIGHBORING STATES: Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas.

1 Strongly Disagree (SD)	2 Disagree (D)	3 Neutral (N)	4 Agree (A)	5 Strongly Agree (SA)

Attributes	OKLAHOMA vs. Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas				
Outdoor activities	1	2	3	4	5
Entertainment/Nightlife	1	2	3	4	5
Lots of tourist attraction	1	2	3	4	5
Restful and relaxing atmosphere	1	2	3	4	5
Good value for money	1	2	3	4	5
Native American/Western culture	1	2	3	4	5
Appealing as a travel destination	1	2	3	4	5
Friendly local people	1	2	3	4	5
Clean/unspoiled environment	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping	1	2	3	4	5
Scenery and natural beauty	1	2	3	4	5
A wide variety of state/theme parks	1	2	3	4	5
Cultural/historical attractions	1	2	3	4	5
Safe and secure environment	1	2	3	4	5
Moderate prices for hotel/restaurant/shopping	1	2	3	4	5

15. Do you plan to visit Oklahoma again in the future?
 ☐ Yes   ☐ No

15a. If YES, when do you plan to visit Oklahoma?
 ☐ Within one year   ☐ 1 – 2 years
 ☐ 3 – 5 years   ☐ More than 5 years   ☐ Undetermined

16. Would you recommend Oklahoma as a travel destination to your family/relatives or friends?
 ☐ Yes   ☐ No

17. Please indicate the likelihood of considering Oklahoma as a travel destination for your near future trips.

 Most unlikely   Unlikely   Not applicable   Likely   Most likely
 ◆   ◆   ◆   ◆   ◆

18. Please indicate the likelihood of recommending Oklahoma as a travel destination to your family/relatives or friends.

 Most unlikely   Unlikely   Not applicable   Likely   Most likely
 ◆   ◆   ◆   ◆   ◆

PART IV

Listed below are some REASONS that you will NOT visit Oklahoma AGAIN. Using the scale below, please circle only ONE number for each of the following statement.

1 Strongly Disagree (SD)	2 Disagree (D)	3 Neutral (N)	4 Agree (A)	5 Strongly Agree (SA)

Which of the followings are reasons you will NOT visit Oklahoma again?	SD	D	N	A	SA
Not a wide variety of things to do	1	2	3	4	5
Unfavorable environment (e.g., tornado, dry and dusty)	1	2	3	4	5
Flat and uninteresting scenery	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of a wide variety of shopping place	1	2	3	4	5
Unlikely to meet many people with different interests and life styles	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of nightlife and entertainment	1	2	3	4	5
Unlikely to be a good place to relax	1	2	3	4	5
Unsatisfied with a previous trip to Oklahoma	1	2	3	4	5
Not a good place to experience new and different things	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of interesting historical sites	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of major tourist attractions	1	2	3	4	5
Not appealing or exciting as a travel destination	1	2	3	4	5
Higher monetary cost than I can afford	1	2	3	4	5
Not a good value for the money	1	2	3	4	5
Deterioration of some of tourists attractions	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of appealing local culture	1	2	3	4	5
Less diverse cities and culture	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of availability of tourist information	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of interesting cultural events/festivals	1	2	3	4	5
Not safe or secure place to travel	1	2	3	4	5

☐☐ Please continue on to the next page ➡

PART V   COMPETITIVENESS OF OKLAHOMA AS A TRAVEL DESTINATION VERSUS NEIGHBORING STATES

This section's objective is to compare the image of Oklahoma as a travel destination with other NEIGHBORING STATES. Please rate each state as a travel destination for each item that best represents your perceptions even though you have not visited. The states listed below are OKLAHOMA, ARKANSAS, KANSAS, MISSOURI, and TEXAS.

1 Very Poor	2 Poor	3 Average	4 Good	5 Very Good

Attributes	OKLAHOMA					ARKANSAS					KANSAS					MISSOURI					TEXAS				
Outdoor activities	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Entertainment/Nightlife	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Lots of tourist attractions	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Restful and relaxing atmosphere	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Good value for money	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Native American/Western culture	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Appealing as a travel destination	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Friendly local people	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Clean/unspoiled environment	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Scenery and natural beauty	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Wide variety of state/theme parks	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Cultural/historical provinces	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Pleasant weather and climate	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

PART VI: ABOUT YOURSELF

Please provide us with some information about yourself by checking the box that best describes you.

1. What is your gender?
 ☐ Male   ☐ Female

2. What is your age group?
 ☐ Under 20 years old   ☐ 20 - 35 years old
 ☐ 36 - 50 years old   ☐ 51 - 65 years old
 ☐ Over 65 years old

3. What is the location of your primary residence?
 City_____   State_____

4. What is your annual income level?
 ☐ Under $25,000   ☐ $25,000 - $34,999
 ☐ $35,000 - $44,999   ☐ $45,000 - $54,999
 ☐ $55,000 - $64,999   ☐ $65,000 - $74,999
 ☐ Over $75,000

5. What is the highest completed level of education you have obtained?
 ☐ Elementary school   ☐ High school
 ☐ College degree   ☐ Graduate degree
 ☐ Other (please specify)_____

6. What is your occupation?
 ☐ Management/Administration   ☐ Professional
 ☐ Technical (i.e., computer, engineering)   ☐ Government/Military
 ☐ Student   ☐ Self employed
 ☐ Housewife   ☐ Retired/Not in workforce
 ☐ Others (please specify)_____

This completes the questionnaire. Please return the completed survey to the person who is conducting the survey. We appreciate your cooperation and taking time to answer our questions.

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APPENDIX B

REVISED QUESITONNAIRE

A Survey of Tourists' Perceptions of Oklahoma as a Travel Destination

Oklahoma State University
School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration
College of Human Environmental Sciences
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078-6173

Dear Tourist

The purpose of this survey is to identify domestic tourists' perceptions of Oklahoma as a travel destination. The information you provide will help us better understand your perception of Oklahoma as a leisure destination. The findings of the survey will also aid tourism marketers in Oklahoma in designing advertising and promotional programs, tailoring images for specific target markets, and positioning itself in the travel market.

There is no personal risk or discomfort as a result of your participation in this survey. Your participation is completely VOLUNTARY, ANONYMOUS, and will be kept strictly CONFIDENTIAL. Non-participation will not result in penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled.

Once you complete the questionnaire, please return it to the person who provided the questionnaire. The data collected from this survey will be used for education and research purposes only.

Any questions about this study, or any related problems, may be directed to the Principal Investigator, Holly Im, a Ph.D. candidate at (405) 335-0594 (email: hollyim@hotmail.com) or you may contact Sharon Bacher, Secretary of Institutional Review Board (IRB), 203 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK74078 (Telephone: 405-744-5700; email: sbacher@okstate.edu).

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Holly Im   Hailin Qu, Ph.D.
Ph.D. Candidate   Professor
School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration
Oklahoma State University
E-mail: hollyim@hotmail.com   E-mail: qhailin@okstate.edu

PART I: TRAVEL BEHAVIOR

We are seeking your personal opinions about your experience in Oklahoma, so please answer ALL QUESTIONS below frankly. All responses are strictly CONFIDENTIAL.

1. How many times have you visited Oklahoma including this trip?
   - First time
   - 2-3 times
   - 4-5 times
   - More than 5 times
   - Resident of Oklahoma

2. What is the purpose of this trip?
   - Vacation/Leisure
   - Business
   - Visiting friends and relatives
   - Convention/Exhibition
   - En route somewhere else
   - Other (please specify) _____

3. How many days do you plan to spend in Oklahoma?
   - 1 - 2 days
   - 3 - 6 days
   - A week
   - More than a week
   - No overnight stay

4. Approximately how much will (did) you spend on this trip?
   - Less than $100
   - $100 to less than $250
   - $250 to less than $500
   - $500 to less than $750
   - $750 to less than $1000
   - $1000 or above
   - Undetermined

5. Are you traveling? (Please check all that apply)
   - alone
   - spouse, without children
   - spouse, with children
   - friends/relatives
   - Other (please specify) _____

6. Are you traveling with a tour group on this trip?
   - Yes
   - No

7. What source of information did you use in planning this trip to Oklahoma? (Please check all that apply)
   - Tour guide books
   - Travel agencies
   - Internet
   - Advertisement (TV/Newspaper/Magazine)
   - Tourist information center (Welcome center)
   - Word-of-mouth from family/friends/relatives
   - Literature picked up on trip or from previous trip

Please continue on to the next page →

PART II PERCEPTIONS/FEELINGS/OVERALL IMPRESSION TOWARD OKLAHOMA

1. Perceptions

Listed below are some attributes that determine the quality of a tourist's experience in Oklahoma. Please rate Oklahoma as a travel destination for each item that best represents your perceptions.

1 Strongly Disagree (SD)	2 Disagree (D)	3 Neutral (N)	4 Agree (A)	5 Strongly Agree (SA)

Oklahoma is a place with:	SD	D	N	A	SA
Interesting Native American or Western culture	1	2	3	4	5
A wide variety of outdoor recreation (camping/canoeing/fishing)	1	2	3	4	5
Safe and secure environment	1	2	3	4	5
Reasonable cost of shopping centers	1	2	3	4	5
Interesting state parks/amusement/theme parks	1	2	3	4	5
Restful and relaxing atmosphere	1	2	3	4	5
Easy access to the area	1	2	3	4	5
Beautiful scenery and natural wonders (e.g., wildlife)	1	2	3	4	5
Reasonable cost of hotels/restaurants	1	2	3	4	5
Interesting cultural events/festivals	1	2	3	4	5
Friendly local people	1	2	3	4	5
Lots of open space/not crammed in cities	1	2	3	4	5
Good shopping centers/facilities	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of tourist information centers (welcome centers)	1	2	3	4	5
Appealing local cuisine	1	2	3	4	5
Good place for children and family	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of facilities for golfing/tennis	1	2	3	4	5
Good weather and climate	1	2	3	4	5
A taste of comfortable and culture	1	2	3	4	5
A wide variety of entertainment	1	2	3	4	5
Lots of things to do in the evening (nightlife)	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of facilities for water sports (beaches/sailing, etc)	1	2	3	4	5
Interesting cultural/historical attractions (e.g., museum/art gallery)	1	2	3	4	5
A wide choice of accommodation	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of infrastructure (highway system, local transportation)	1	2	3	4	5
Lots of adventurous activities (e.g., hunting, rock climbing)	1	2	3	4	5
Clean/unspoiled environment	1	2	3	4	5
Readily available travel information	1	2	3	4	5

2. Feelings

Below is a list of scales that can be used to describe your feelings toward the places. Please evaluate Oklahoma as a vacation destination on each word set by circling the appropriate scale.

My visit to Oklahoma is (was) to be:

Pleasant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unpleasant
Arousing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Sleepy
Relaxing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Distressing
Exciting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Gloomy

3. Overall Impression

Please check the box that best describes your overall image of Oklahoma as a vacation destination.

My impression for Oklahoma as a travel destination is to be (was):

Very Positive   Neutral   Very Negative

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

PART III   UNIQUENESS OF OKLAHOMA AS A TRAVEL DESTINATION VERSUS NEIGHBORING STATES

This section is to identify unique attributes that make Oklahoma differentiate from neighboring states as a travel destination. Please rate each attribute that you think is unique travel items in comparison with FOLLOWING NEIGHBORING STATES: Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree (SD)	Disagree (D)	Neutral (N)	Agree (A)	Strongly Agree (SA)

Attributes	OKLAHOMA vs. Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, and Texas				
Outdoor activities	1	2	3	4	5
Entertainment/Nightlife	1	2	3	4	5
Lots of tourist attractions	1	2	3	4	5
Restful and relaxing atmosphere	1	2	3	4	5
Good value for money	1	2	3	4	5
Native American/Western culture	1	2	3	4	5
Appealing as a travel destination	1	2	3	4	5
Friendly local people	1	2	3	4	5
Clean/unspoiled environment	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping	1	2	3	4	5
Scenery and natural beauty	1	2	3	4	5
A wide variety of state/theme parks	1	2	3	4	5
Cultural/historical attractions	1	2	3	4	5
Safe and secure environment	1	2	3	4	5
Moderate prices for hotel/restaurant/shopping	1	2	3	4	5

15. Do you plan to visit Oklahoma again in the future?
- Yes
- No

15a. If YES, when do you plan to visit Oklahoma?
- Within one year
- 1 – 2 years
- 3 – 5 years
- More than 5 years
- Undetermined

17. Would you recommend Oklahoma as a travel destination to your family/relatives or friends?
- Yes
- No

18. Please indicate the likelihood of considering Oklahoma as a travel destination for your near future trips.

Most unlikely   Unlikely   Not applicable   Likely   Most likely

19. Please indicate the likelihood of recommending Oklahoma as a travel destination to your family/relatives or friends.

Most unlikely   Unlikely   Not applicable   Likely   Most likely

PART IV   COMPETITIVENESS OF OKLAHOMA AS A TRAVEL DESTINATION VERSUS NEIGHBORING STATES

This section's objective is to compare the image of Oklahoma as a travel destination with other NEIGHBORING STATES. Please rate each state as a travel destination for each item that best represents your perceptions. The states listed below are OKLAHOMA, ARKANSAS, KANSAS, MISSOURI, and TEXAS.

1	2	3	4	5
Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good

Attributes	OKLAHOMA	ARKANSAS	KANSAS	MISSOURI	TEXAS
Outdoor activities	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Entertainment/Nightlife	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Lots of tourist attractions	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Restful and relaxing atmosphere	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Good value for money	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Native American/Western culture	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Appealing as a travel destination	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Friendly local people	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Clean/unspoiled environment	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Shopping	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Scenery and natural beauty	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Wide variety of state/theme parks	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Cultural/historical attractions	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Pleasant weather and climate	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

Please continue on to the next page

PART V: ABOUT YOURSELF

Please provide us with some information about yourself by checking the box that best describes you.

1. What is your gender?
- Male
- Female

2. What is your age group?
- Under 20 years old
- 20 – 35 years old
- 35 – 50 years old
- 51 – 65 years old
- Over 65 years old

3. What is the location of your primary residence?
City_____
State_____

4. What is your annual income level?
- Under $25,000
- $25,000 – $34,999
- $35,000 – $44,999
- $45,000 – $54,999
- $55,000 – $64,999
- $65,000 – $74,999
- Over $75,000

5. What is the highest completed level of education you have obtained?
- Elementary school
- High school
- College degree
- Graduate degree
- Other (please specify)

6. What is your occupation?
- Management/Administration
- Technical (i.e., computer, engineering)
- Student
- Housewife
- Others (please specify)_____
- Professional
- Government/Military
- Self employed
- Retired/Not in workforce

This completes the questionnaire. Please return the completed survey to the person who is conducting the survey. We appreciate your cooperation and taking time to answer our questions.

SURVEY OF TOURISTS' PERCEPTIONS OF OKLAHOMA AS A TRAVEL DESTINATION
(DOMESTIC MARKET)

OSU   OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

APPENDIX C

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW (IRB) FORM

Oklahoma State University
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 6/3/2003

Date : Monday, July 22, 2002   IRB Application No   HE0262

Proposal Title: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF A DESTINATION BRANDING FOR STATE OF
OKLAHOMA

Principal
Investigator(s) :

Hyun-Jung Im   Hailin Qu
210 HESW   201 HEWS
Stillwater, OK 74078   Stillwater, OK 74075

Reviewed and
Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s) : Approved   **Modification**

Please note that the protocol expires on the following date which is one year from the date of the approval of the original
protocol:

Protocol Expires: 6/3/2003

Signature :

_____   Monday, July 22, 2002
Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance   Date

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modifications
to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval with the advisor's signature. The IRB office
MUST be notified in writing when a project is complete. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited
and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

VITA ②

Hyun-jung (Holly) Im

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF DESTINATION BRANDING FOR THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA

Major Field: Human Environmental Sciences

Personal Data: Born in Seoul, Korea, the daughter of Kapsoon Im and Jungja Kim.

Biographical:

Education: Received Bachelor of Art degree in English Language and Literature from Kookmin University, Seoul, Korea in March 1990; received Bachelor of Science degree in Hotel Administration and Master of Hospitality Management degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management from University of Nevada Las Vegas, Las Vegas, Nevada in August 1996 and University of Houston, Houston, Texas in August 1999. Completed the requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree with a major in Hotel and Restaurant Administration at Oklahoma State University in December 2003.

Experience: Employed by University of Houston, College of Conrad N. Hilton as a graduate research assistant, 1997 to 1999; employed by Oklahoma State University, School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration as a graduate research assistant, 2001 to present.

Professional Memberships: Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (CHRIE), Eta Sigma Delta Honor Society