

THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG DESTINATION IMAGE,  
PLACE ATTACHMENT, AND TOURIST MOTIVATION  
FOR OKLAHOMA STATE PARKS

By

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Abstract: This study attempted to determine the relationship among three constructs of destination image, place attachment, and tourist motivation in order to provide a better understanding of Oklahoma State Parks as tourist destinations. Objectives for the current study included: identifying tourists' cognitive and affective images of Oklahoma State Parks; exploring the place attachment of Oklahoma State Park tourists; and examining the influence of destination image and place attachment on tourists' motivation for visiting the parks. To provide more effective marketing strategies for sustainable tourism, it was worthwhile to examine the relationship among the three concepts simultaneously. Data were collected using an online survey, and 768 usable responses of tourists to three Oklahoma State Parks were utilized for examining the hypothesized model of the relationship among destination image, place attachment, and tourist motivation. An exploration of these relationships was achieved using structural equation modeling. The findings revealed that the three constructs of destination image, place attachment, and tourist motivation were applicable to Oklahoma State Park tourists. The current study supported place attachment as a three-dimensional construct including: place identity, place dependence, and social bonding, and destination image as a one-dimensional construct including cognitive image. Findings suggested that place attachment of Oklahoma State Park tourists significantly influences their motivation for visiting the park. The results also confirmed that cognitive image of Oklahoma State Parks had a significant influence on the development of place attachment and tourist motivation. Overall, the results indicated that integrating the concept of place attachment with destination image could facilitate the understanding of motivation for visit.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries and provides the largest contribution to the economic development of destinations. It can contribute to the generation of revenue and employment opportunities for destination communities. Therefore, tourism has been considered as an extremely important phenomenon for both academics and practitioners. The economic benefits of tourism encourage states and local communities to promote different types of tourism such as natural, cultural, and heritage tourism in order to revitalize local economies.

People define tourism in different ways and their definition is the reflection of their attitudes towards a place as a tourist destination. In the contemporary world, there is always a competition among tourist destinations for a bigger share of travel and tourism destination market. Destination management organizations strive to understand how people choose a destination for travel and why people prefer one destination to other similar places (Woodside & Lysonski, 1989).

Over the past decade, several studies have focused on modeling tourists' decision making process. Sirakaya and Woodside (2005) described tourists' decision making as a funnel-like process in which tourists narrow down their choices among alternatives and this process is

influenced by both socio-psychological and non-psychological factors. The authors suggested that four types of variables can be used in explaining choice decisions as: (1) internal variables (i.e., attitudes, values, lifestyles, images, motivation, beliefs and intentions; (2) external variables (i.e., constraints, pull factors of a destination, influences of family and reference groups, and social class); (3) the nature of the planned trip (party size, distance, time, duration of trip); and (4) trip experiences (mood and feelings during the trip, post-visit evaluations).

Baloglu and Mangalolu (2001) emphasized that destinations mainly compete based on their perceived images relative to competitors in the marketplace. Guthrie and Gale (1991) stated that images are more important than the tangible resources, because the perceived image motivates the individual to act or not to act. Other researchers (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Gallarza, Saura & Garcia, 2002) claimed that tourists' destination image formation process and socio-psychological motivations are the most important phases of tourist destination selection process.

Olson (1994) stated that tourists make their travel decision based on the evaluation of information they perceive and process. Although this concept has been examined in several studies (e.g., Becken & Gnoth, 2004; Decrop, 2000; Woodside & Dubelaar, 2003), tourists' decision making process may be dissimilar due to the different types of tourists in different types of tourism settings (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005).

Tourists' destination image is composed of cognitive and affective images, and it influences tourists' destination choices (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b). Tourists' cognitive images are formed by their knowledge about the place while affective images are formed by their feelings about the place. Martine and Bosque (2008) indicated that cognitive images of the

destination directly influence the affective images. Tourists use both dimensions of destination image to form their impressions about a destination and evaluate the considered destinations in their final decision making processes (Martine & Bosque, 2008). Strong images impact people's perceptions of particular destinations (Gensch, 1978; Gartner, 1994).

In tourism literature, the concept of place attachment is relatively new. However, place attachment construct has been mentioned frequently in relation to natural resources in recreation and leisure field (Kruger, Hall & Stiefel, 2008; Kyle, Graefe, & Manning, 2005). Hidalgo and Hernandez (2001) suggested that place attachment is associated with emotional constructs such as attitude to the place.

Place attachment has been considered as a multidimensional construct (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000; Hammitt, Backlund, & Bixler, 2006; Hammitt, Kyle, & Oh, 2009; Kaltenborn & Williams, 2002; Kyle et al., 2005; Hou, Lin, & Morais, 2005). The most cited dimensions of place attachment are place identity and place dependence (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000; Moore & Graefe, 1994; Williams & Vaske, 2003). Some researchers identified other dimensions of place attachment such as social bonding (Kyle et al., 2005), familiarity, belongingness, and rootedness (Hammitt et al., 2006).

Confer and Kerstetter (2000), and Poria, Reichel, and Biran (2006) found that tourists have dissimilar motivation for visit because they have different level of place attachment to the destinations. The concept of place attachment may provide a better explanation for motivation to visit a park. It can also provide more information about how tourists are attached to the parks. The relationship between destination image and place attachment can be explored further in a park setting as a tourist destination.

Motivation for visiting a park may be different from that of tourists who have a different image of the destination and different place attachment. Tourists might have different perceptions of destination image, different attachment to a destination, and different motivations to visit the destination. Therefore, it is valuable to examine the relationship between destination image, place attachment, and tourist motivation.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the relationship among three constructs of destination image, place attachment, and tourist motivation in order to realize if tourists' motivation is influenced by destination image and place attachment. This study provides a better understanding of Oklahoma State Parks as tourist destinations and how the image of the parks, and place attachment motivates tourists for visit. The first objective of this study was to identify tourists' cognitive and affective images of Oklahoma State Parks as tourist destinations. The second objective was to explore the place attachment of Oklahoma State Park tourists. The third objective was to examine the influence of destination image and place attachment on tourists' motivation for visiting the parks.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

Several research questions guide this study:

1. Does cognitive component of destination image significantly influence the place attachment of tourists who visit Oklahoma State Parks?

H<sub>0</sub>: Cognitive component of destination image does not influence the place attachment of tourists who visit Oklahoma State Parks.

H<sub>A</sub>: Cognitive component of destination image significantly influences the place attachment of tourists who visit Oklahoma State Parks.

2. Does affective component of destination image significantly influence the place attachment of tourists who visit Oklahoma State Parks?

H<sub>0</sub>: Affective component of destination image does not influence the place attachment of tourists who visit Oklahoma State Parks.

H<sub>A</sub>: Affective component of destination image significantly influences the place attachment of tourists who visit Oklahoma State Parks.

3. Does cognitive component of destination image significantly influence the affective component of destination image for tourists who visit Oklahoma State Parks?

H<sub>0</sub>: Cognitive component of destination image does not influence the affective component of destination image for tourists who visit Oklahoma State Parks.

H<sub>A</sub>: Cognitive component of destination image significantly influences the affective component of destination image for tourists who visit Oklahoma State Parks.

4. Does cognitive image of Oklahoma State Parks significantly influence tourists' motivation for visiting the park?

H<sub>0</sub>: Cognitive image of Oklahoma State Parks does not have an influence on tourists' motivation for visiting the park.

H<sub>A</sub>: Cognitive image of Oklahoma State Parks significantly influences tourists' motivation for visiting the park.

5. Does cognitive component of destination image have an indirect influence through place attachment on tourists' motivation to visit Oklahoma State Parks?

H<sub>0</sub>: Cognitive component of destination image does not have an indirect influence through place attachment on tourists' motivation to visit Oklahoma State Parks.

H<sub>1</sub>: Cognitive component of destination image has an indirect influence through place attachment on tourists' motivation to visit Oklahoma State Parks.

6. Does affective image of Oklahoma State Parks significantly influence tourists' motivation for visiting the park?

H<sub>0</sub>: Affective image of Oklahoma State Parks does not have an influence on tourists' motivation for visiting the park.

H<sub>A</sub>: Affective image of Oklahoma State Parks significantly influences tourists' motivation for visiting the park.

7. Does place attachment of Oklahoma State Park tourists significantly influence their motivation for visiting the park?

H<sub>0</sub>: Place attachment of Oklahoma State Park tourists does not influence their motivation for visiting the park.

H<sub>A</sub>: Place attachment of Oklahoma State Park tourists significantly influences their motivation for visiting the park.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

Destination – “A country, state, region, city or town which is marketed or markets itself as a place for tourists to visit” (Bierman, 2003).

Destination image – Sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination (Crompton, 1979a).

Affective image – Feelings about a destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a).

Cognitive image – Belief and knowledge about a destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a).

Place Attachment – “An affective bond or link between people and specific places (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001).

Place dependence – “A function of how well a setting facilitates users’ particular activities” (Moore & Graefe, 1994).

Place identity – “An emotional attachment refers to the symbolic importance of place” (Williams & Vaske, 2003).

Social bonding – “The emotional bonds formed by the information were the product of an interactional process between the individuals and their environment” (Kyle et al., 2005).

Tourist motivation – “A meaningful state of mind which adequately disposes an actor or a group of actors to travel, and which is subsequently interpretable by others as a valid explanation for such a decision” (Dann, 1981).

### **Significance of the Study**

Examining tourists’ decision-making process may provide an alternative framework to understand tourists’ travel behaviors. The application of the concept of destination image and place attachment to tourism may support in understanding tourists’ motivation for visiting a destination, which may not only related to the functions of cognitive beliefs about the destinations but also to the symbolic meanings of the attributes (Klenosky, LeBlanc, Vogt & Schroeder, 2007). By linking destination image, place attachment, and tourist motivation together in one model, this study provided a theoretically driven and advanced understanding of the motivations for visiting a park. The results help in understanding how destination image

leads to meaningful attachments to the place which later results in motivation for repeat visit. Generating repeat visits is very valuable to both public and private tourism organizations and helps destination managers to understand how to efficiently provide an appropriate destination image and increase a favorable place attachment toward the destination and to generate repeat visits. Additionally, an exploration of the relationship between destination image and place attachment helps in understanding the tourists' visitation intention in order to assist in targeting the specific segments of the population. This information can help in destination planning and marketing decisions.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Tourism, recreation, and leisure have points of mutual agreement. Tourism and recreation can be viewed as a part of wider concept of leisure. Tourism is a reasonable option for leisure, and the element of pleasure in travel converts the action into recreation for the tourist (Caneday, 1991). Kelly (1985) defined tourism as “recreation on the move, engaging in activity away from home.” Mieczkowski (1981) and Murphy (1985) attempted to establish frameworks for understanding how tourism coexists with leisure and recreation. Their frameworks placed recreation entirely within leisure, while tourism extended beyond recreation and leisure due to its relationship with business travel (Smith & Godbey, 1991). Caneday (1991) demonstrated the mutual connection between tourism, recreation, and leisure in a diagram as follow (Figure 1):

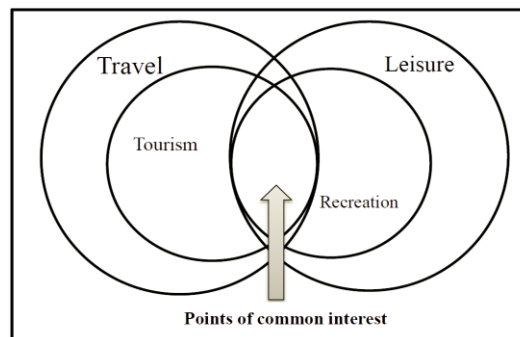


Figure 1 The connection between tourism, recreation, and leisure

The line between tourism and recreation in parks is not clear cut. Both tourists and recreationists share the same resources, utilize the same facilities, and exert similar impacts when the same activity is undertaken (Mathieson & Wall, 1982). Tourism in a natural setting is closely related to leisure and recreation, with tourism being regarded as an extreme form of recreation (Leiper, 1979; Mathieson & Wall, 1982). Hence, at some point along a continuum, recreation ends and tourism begins. Gross and Brown (2008) stated that in a park setting, recreational travelers may seek the intrinsic values of the park through engagement with the natural environment in such activities as camping, hiking, while leisure tourists may seek extrinsic recreational facilities such as accommodation, food and beverage, and other man-made attractions.

### **Destination image**

The concept of destination image and its importance in travel and tourism was acknowledged in the early 1970s in tourism literature. Destination image has been a popular topic of study in tourism due to its practical importance for destination management, marketing, branding, and its great contribution to the understanding of tourist behavior. The significance of destination image has been recognized by several scholars in tourism-related fields. Despite the increasing interest in destination image, most of the studies related to this area are insufficiently theory based and there is a lack of solid conceptualization.

Previous research on destination image can be categorized into destination image formation (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Gunn, 1972; Phelps, 1986), the meanings of destination image (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Dann, 1996; Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Gartner, 1994; Pike & Ryan, 2004; Ryan & Cave, 2005; Tasci, Gartner & Cavusgil, 2007), the assessment of destination image (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Jenkins, 1999; Lee, 2009; Prayag, 2009), and

factors influencing destination image (Chen & Kerstetter, 1999; Martin & Bosque, 2008; Milman & Pizam, 1995).

Gunn (1972) and Hunt (1975) were the first researchers that introduce the concept of destination image in tourism studies. The most approved definition of destination image was provided by Crompton (1979) as “the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination” (p. 8). Phelps (1986) defined destination image as individuals’ perceptions or impressions of a place. Destination image is valuable to tourism because it is the link between a destination and a tourist, and it influences tourist’s destination choice (Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000).

Several researchers (Pike, 2002; Gallarza et al., 2002; Tasci, Gartner & Cavusgil, 2007; Echtner & Ritchie, 2003) attempted to provide an overview of destination image studies. Echtner and Ritchie (2003) reviewed and analyzed 15 studies on destination image during 1975-1990. They suggested that the methodologies used to identify the components of destination image cannot be exclusively structured or unstructured. The existing literature on destination image studies has been divided into three categories: (1) conceptualization and dimensions of the destination image construct; (2) destination image formation; and (3) measurement of destination image.

### **The conceptual study of destination image**

The concept of destination image has been interpreted differently by various researchers due to its complex nature (Chon, 1990; Echtner & Ritchie, 2003, Gallarza et al., 2002; Tasci et al., 2007). Researchers (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Gartner, 1994) indicated that most tourism image studies fail to successfully conceptualize destination image

and lack a theoretical framework. Part of the reason is the difficulty in measuring destination image construct since tourism products/services are complex, multidimensional (Gartner, 1989), and intangible (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991).

For a better understanding of the concept of destination image, Gallarza et al. (2002) conducted an extensive review of the existing literature on destination image and proposed a theoretical framework based on four features: complexity, multiplicity, relativism, and dynamism. Every feature is a defining element of destination image construct and points out a useful dimension of the concept. Destination image is a complex concept since there are arguments around its nature and content. It is multiple due to its formation process and its multidimensionality. Destination image can be considered as relativistic because it is simultaneously subjective and comparative. Finally, destination image is dynamic because it changes based on time and space. The “complex” nature of the destination image underlines an analytical dimension to realize a precise understanding of the construct. Multiplicity provides an action dimension considering multiple attributes and multidimensional techniques. The relativistic characteristic interprets destination image as a strategic tool, and the “dynamic” nature of destination image allows for tactical decisions.

Echtner and Ritchie (2003) suggested that destination image consists of two major components: those that are attribute-based and those that are holistic; and each of these components is comprised of functional (physical attributes) and psychological characteristics (motivation). The authors specified that holistic attributes include both tangible (buildings and landscapes) and intangible (atmosphere) attributes. In addition, the authors stated that functional characteristics focused on the destination attributes, but the psychological characteristics focused on the mental impressions to the destination.

Some tourism scholars argue that destination image is composed of two distinct elements: cognitive and affective (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b). The cognitive component refers to knowledge and beliefs about a destination while the affective element refers to feelings about a destination. Baloglu and Brinberg (1997) suggested that cognitive and affective components of destination image may give better explanations as how a tourist generates destination image. Gartner (1994) recommended that the affective component becomes apparent when different travel alternatives are assessed.

Previous literature on destination image is overflowing with studies that only considered the cognitive component of destination image (e.g. Chen & Kerstetter, 1999; Court & Lupton, 1997; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Hui & Wan, 2003; Leisen, 2001). The cognitive dimension of destination image was the predominant dimension for analysis by several researchers (Chaudhary, 2000; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Grosspietsch, 2006; Hunt, 1975; and Phelps, 1986). In late 1990s, researchers began to include the affective component of destination image (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b) and some recent studies also included this component (Sirakaya, Sonmez & Choi, 2001; Son & Pearce, 2005).

Although the research on the affective component of destination image has started recently, there is more agreement over its structure and measurement than the cognitive image. Affective image is considered a one-dimensional concept and it is usually operationalized by means of four items (Baloglu, 2001; Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a, 1999b; Son & Pearce, 2005). However, there is a lack of homogeneity in the cognitive image dimensions used by researchers (Lee, Lee, & Lee, 2005).

Gartner (1994), Pike and Ryan (2004) and White (2004) acknowledged a third component in the destination image construct as conative component. Conative component refers to how tourists perform toward a destination based on the cognition and affect they have about it and it reflects a likelihood of destination selection (Pike & Ryan, 2004). Hence, the conative element of destination image is influenced by both the cognitive and affective components.

Martin and Bosque (2008) asserted that most of the destination image studies focused more on the cognitive component of destination image and considered only the destination attributes such as physical properties. The authors realized that few destination image studies have explored the influence of tourists' psychological perceptions on destination image. However, recent studies support both cognitive and affective components of destination image (Baloglu, 2001; Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Kim & Richardson, 2003; Lin, Morais, Kerstetter, & Hou, 2007; Martin & Bosque, 2008). Some selected definitions of destination image are presented in the following table (Table 1):

**Table 1 Definitions of destination image**

<b>Author/s</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Lawson and Baud-Bovy (1977)	An expression of knowledge, impressions, prejudices, imaginations and emotional thoughts an individual has of a specific place
Crompton (1979)	Sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination
Assael (1984)	Total perception of the destination that is formed by processing information from various sources over time
Phelps (1986)	Perceptions or impressions of a place
Gartner and Hunt (1987)	Impressions that persons hold about a state in which they do not reside
Moutinho (1987)	An individual's attitude toward the destination attributes based on their knowledge and feelings
Calantone et al. (1989)	Perceptions of potential tourist destinations
Embacher and Buttle (1989)	Ideas or conceptions held individually or collectively of the destination under investigation
Chon (1990)	Result of the interaction of a person's beliefs, ideas, feelings, expectations and impressions about a destination
Echtner and Ritchie (1991)	The perceptions of individual destination attributes and the holistic impression made by the destination
Dadgostar and Isotalo (1992)	Overall impression or attitude that an individual acquires of a place
Milman and Pizam (1995)	Visual or mental impression of a place, a product, or an experience held by the general public
MacKay and Fesenmaier (1997)	A composite of various products (attractions) and attributes woven into a total impression
Pritchard (1998)	An visual or mental impression of a specific place
Baloglu and McCleary (1999a)	An individual's mental representation of knowledge, feelings, and global impressions about a destination
Coshall (2000)	The individual's perceptions of the characteristics of destinations
Murphy, Pritchard and Smith (2000)	A sum of associations and pieces of information connected to a destination, which would include multiple components of the destination and personal perception
Tapachai and Waryszak (2000)	Perceptions or impressions of a destination held by tourists with respect to the expected benefit or consumption values
Bigne, Sanchez and Sanchez (2001)	The subjective interpretation of reality made by the tourist
Kim and Richardson (2003)	Totality of impressions, beliefs, ideas, expectations, and feelings

Source: San Martin and Rodríguez del Bosque (2008)

## **Destination image formation**

Destination image construct can be examined from the facet of how it is formed. Previous studies (Gunn, 1972; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991) suggest that destination image is formed under the influence of different information sources. Phelps (1986) suggested that destination image formation has two stages: primary images and secondary images. The primary image is the result of visiting the destination and it is more realistic and complex while the secondary image is formed from information sources such as brochures and travel agents.

One of the early models of the recreation travel experience was developed by Clawson and Knetsch (1966). They suggested that leisure-based tourism is experienced in five phases which incorporated the anticipation (pre-trip), the journey (travel to the site), on-site experiences (whilst at the destination), the return (travel back) and finally, the recollection (post-trip memories). Clawson and Knetsch's (1966) work is a classic foundation for the travel experience model by Gunn (1972). Gunn (1972) developed a model of the travel experience which includes seven phases. Phase 1 is the accumulation of mental images about vacation experiences. Phase 2 is the modification of those images by further information. Phase 3 is the decision to take a vacation. Phase 4 is travel to the destination. Phase 5 is participation at the destination. Phase 6 is returning home, and phase 7 is modification of images based on the vacation experience.

According to Gunn's (1972) model, phase 1, 2, and 7 can be identified as the three states of destination image formation. In the first two phases, destination image is formed based on secondary sources of information, while in phase 7, first-hand experiences modify the destination's image. Two categories of destination image are distinguished by Gunn (1972) as organic image and induced image. Organic image is based primarily upon external information not associated with marketing promotion such as general media and family/friend's opinions.



Induced image is formed from commercial sources of information such as travel brochures, and travel agents.

Fakeye and Crompton (1991) conceptualized destination image as evolving from an organic image, through an induced image, to a complex image. They suggested that organic image exists before exposure to any promotional information from tourist destinations; induced images happen when individuals are exposed to promotional messages from tourism suppliers; and complex images incorporate actual experiences at the destination. A model for tourist's destination image formation process proposed by Fakeye and Crompton (1991) is presented in the following figure (Figure 2):

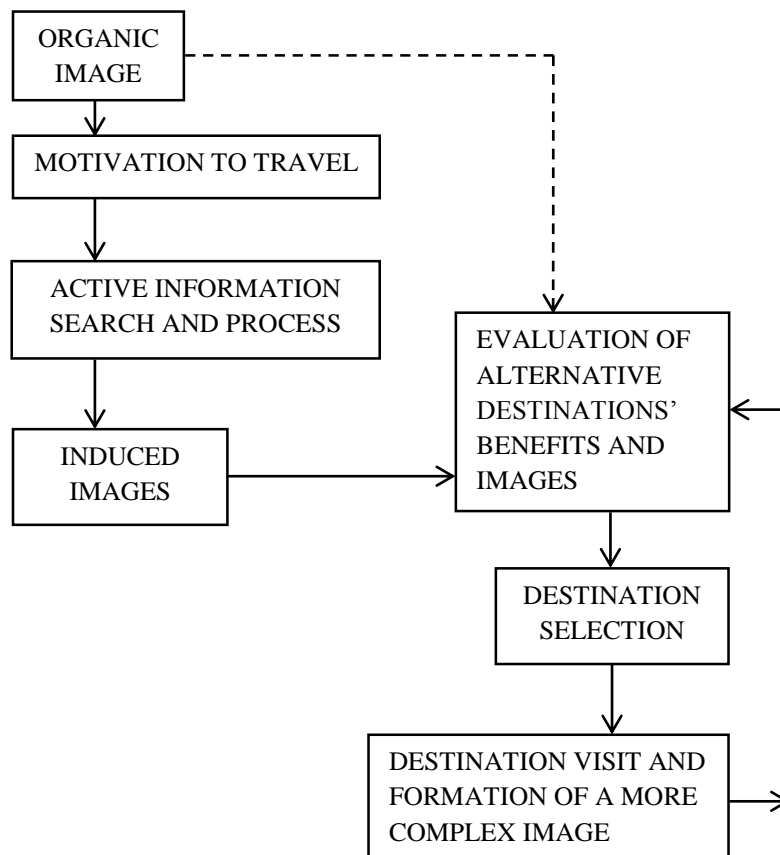


Figure 2 A model of a tourist's destination image formation process

Echtner and Ritchie (2003) noted that the process of destination image formation underlines two important points. First, individuals can have an image of a destination without visiting a destination or being exposed to commercial forms of information about a destination. Second, it is important to distinguish pre-visit and post-visit images of the destinations because of the changes in destination image before and after visitation.

### **Factors influencing destination image**

Previous literature (Stern & Krakover, 1993; Beerli & Martin, 2004) discovered two key factors that influence destination image formation: stimulus factors and personal factors. Information sources are the main stimulus factors that have an influence on the forming of cognitive perceptions. Baloglu and McCleary (1999a) found that the amount and type of information sources influence cognitive image formulation. Information sources such as advertisements and recommendations from family/friends play a direct effect on tourists' perceptions of the sites (Baloglu, 2001). A number of authors (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Gartner, 1994; Um & Crompton, 1990; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989) have stated that information sources are among the determinants of tourists' destination choice behavior.

An individual's personal characteristics also affect the formation of destination image (Bramwell & Rawding, 1996; Gartner, 1994). Personal factors include psychological characteristics such as motivations, values, and personality in addition to socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, age, level of education, place of residence. Some studies show that personal characteristics influence the cognitive perceptions of destination image (Um & Crompton, 1990; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989).

Researchers have been conducted empirical studies on the relationship between destination image and socio-demographic characteristics and came up with mixed results (Baloglu, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a; Calantone, Di Benedetto, Hakam & Bojanic, 1989; Walmsley & Jenkins, 1993). Some studies found differences in the perceived image based on all demographic variables while others found differences only in the cases of age and education.

Several authors (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Dann, 1996; Gartner, 1994) suggested that motivation may affect the image of a destination and is associated with the affective component of image. Researchers found that motivation influences destination image formation and destination choice process since it is the compelling force behind all actions (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Um & Crompton, 1990).

### **Place attachment**

Place attachment has been researched broadly in various fields of study. There has been a growing interest in the concept of place attachment among the academics and professionals. Scholars utilized the place attachment concept in several disciplines. The literature on place attachment dates back to 1960s in environmental psychology and human geography and has broadened beyond the scope of these disciplines and has gained eminence in other disciplines such as leisure sciences, sociology, cultural anthropology, urban studies, tourism, forestry, and ecology (Lewicka, 2011). Although there is an existing body of literature devoted to people-place relationships, there is still a need for research in this area in order to explore unknown territories and identify future directions.

Several conceptions of the relationship between individuals and places have been researched over the years and most of these concepts share similar definitions. The most

common terms used in defining this relationship include: place attachment (Low & Altman, 1992; Williams, et al., 1992), sense of place (Hay, 1998; Stedman, 2002; Williams & Stewart, 1998; Hummon, 1992; Shamai, 1991), place identity (Proshansky, Fabian & Kaminoff, 1983; Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996), and place dependence (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981). Some other concepts of place attachment that are less empirically studied include: rootedness (Chawla, 1992; Tuan, 1977), topophilia (Tuan, 1974), and geopiety (Tuan, 1975).

Place attachment has been defined in different ways because of its application to many perspectives. Most of the researchers described place attachment as a multidimensional concept that characterizes the connection between individuals and their significant places (Giuliani, 2003; Low & Altman, 1992). One of the earliest definitions of place attachment developed by a geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1974) who used the term “topophilia” as an affective bond between people and place or setting. Tuan (1974) described place as a center of meaning, concerning the experiences a person has with a particular place.

Relph (1976) defined place as a physical setting where human activities, human social and psychological processes happen. Relph (1976) proposed that place has three components: physical setting, activities and meanings, and the essence of place lies in its ability to create spatial relationships with existing human experiences.

Place attachment has also been referred to as “sense of place” in some contexts and has been defined as the connection between an individual and a place. Sense of place is usually considered as a broader term to indicate all types of connection to places while “place attachment” is more explicitly defined as the affective bond between people and places.

Jorgensen and Stedman (2001) recommended that sense of place should be considered as an attitudinal construct. They used attitude theory to define sense of place as affective, cognitive, and conative relationships with human environments. They defined sense of place as a multidimensional concept comprising constructs which existed in the environmental psychology literature: place identity, place dependence, and place attachment. They mentioned that place attachment contains the emotional and affective component of sense of place while place identity is considered as a cognitive element, and place dependence was reflective of the conative component.

Low and Altman (1992) stated that place attachment is a complex phenomenon that includes several aspects of people-place connection. They noted that place attachment involves the biological, psychological, environmental, and socio-cultural aspects of people's lives and affect, emotion, and feelings are central to the concept. They mentioned that these emotions are accompanied by cognition and practice. According to Low and Altman (1992) the word 'place' focuses on the setting to which individuals are emotionally attached while 'attachment' refers to affect. The broad and wide ranging use of the place attachment construct has created varying conceptualizations of the construct. Place attachment literature varies with respect to the components that comprise the concept. There are diverse point of views on different components of place attachment that make it difficult for studying and measuring.

### **Dimensions of place attachment**

Traditional research on place attachment has revealed that place attachment is a multidimensional concept. Previous research has found that place attachment has at least two sub-dimensions: place identity and place dependence (Hunt, 2008; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Kyle, Graefe, Manning, & Bacon, 2004; Williams & Vaske, 2003). There are also other

dimensions of place attachment that have been recognized by some researchers and conceptualized as part of people-place relationships such as social bonding (Kyle et al., 2005) and affective attachment (Giuliani, 2003; Low & Altman, 1992).

Hammitt, Backlund, and Bixler (2006) conceptualized place attachment in recreation settings as a five dimensional construct including: place identity, place dependence, place familiarity, belongingness, and rootedness. Place familiarity refers to pleasant memories, cognitive meanings, environmental images, and memories associated with recreation settings. Although place familiarity can also occur for unpleasant places, it is unlikely for place attachment to happen without positive place familiarity (Shamai, 1991). Place belongingness demonstrates higher levels of social bonding than place familiarity and demands an affective connection toward social environments (Proshansky et al., 1983). Place identity concerns people's identities and claims that places can become an extension of the self. Place dependence refers to the perceived strength of association between a person and a place, and how well a setting facilitates individual's activity needs. Place rootedness characterizes a strong bond between an individual and a place in a sense that a place feels like home. In recreation settings, place rootedness refers to a particular place where the individual's ancestors used to recreate (Hammitt et al., 2006).

Scannell and Gifford (2010) have recently proposed a multidimensional framework for place attachment based on the review of different definitions of place attachment existed in the literature. They proposed that place attachment is a three-dimensional, person-process-place, concept. The person dimension refers to individual or collective connections to a place. The process dimension concerns the way people relate to a place that comprises of affective,

cognitive, and behavioral components. The place dimension highlights the place characteristics of attachment, including social and physical elements.

For the purpose of this study, three dimensions of place attachment have been considered as: place identity, place dependence, and social bonding. Support for different dimensions of place attachment has been studied and each dimension is reviewed with regards to the existing literature.

### **Place Identity**

In order to understand the concept of place identity, one has to distinguish “place identity” from “the identity of a place.” The identity of a place refers to “the qualitative characteristics of its symbolic meaning to the people who are connected with it” (Droseltis & Vignoles, 2010, p.23), while place identity refers to a sense in which a person would like to identify with a specific place. Place identity is a more complex dimension of place attachment and is treated as a cognitive component of place attachment.

Cuba and Hummon (1993) stated that place identity can answer the question of “Who am I?”, and defined it as an interpretation of self that uses place meaning in order to symbolize identity. They mentioned that places and their meanings contribute to identity and individuals use places to communicate qualities of the self to self or other. Places are an important aspect of every individual’s life and may be integrally involved in the construction of both personal and social identities.

Proshansky (1978) considered place identity as one of the facets of an individual’s self-identity. He defined place identity as the sub-dimension of self-identity which defines an individual’s personal identity in regard to the physical setting. Proshansky et al. (1983) argued

that self is not only made up of the distinction from others but also the distinction from the objects, places, and physical spaces of the world. Proshansky (1978) later described place identity as an individual's view of the world which represented by a mixture of memories, ideas and feelings about particular physical settings and types of settings.

Tuan (1974) noted that an individual may develop an emotional bond to a setting without visiting a place and place identity may exist in an individual's life without a physical attachment to the setting. Relph (1976) also supported Tuan's idea and pointed out that place identity may be the result of having shared interest and values. He further stated that people might be attached to a place for something other than the physical geography like national heritage.

### **Place dependence**

Place dependence has been viewed as the functional aspect of place attachment which fulfills personal goals through the use of place. Milligan (1998) refers to place attachment as the emotional connection to a place that reduces the substitutability of one place to another. Place dependence is based on functional goals rather than on affective evaluations. The functionality of a place may be related to its ability to provide leisure opportunities or economic benefits (Hunt 2008).

Stokols and Shumaker (1981) described place dependence as the perceived strength of association between people and specific places, and the degree to which people view themselves as being functionally dependent upon places. This dependence is a process of assessing current outcomes with outcomes that would have been obtained by selecting alternative places. Place dependence suggests that people evaluate places against alternatives.



Williams and Roggenbuck (1989) considered place dependence as the functional aspect of place attachment and described it as using a resource to satisfy specific activity needs. This means an individual values a place because of its physical characteristics.

### **Social bonding**

One of the other dimensions of place attachment is social bonding and interpersonal relationships that occur in places. Place attachment encompasses the emotional meanings that individuals give to places in addition to showing the amount of attachment people have to a place. Several scholars have investigated the importance of social bonds in attachment to places. Some believe that place attachment is the result of social connections that occur within a specific setting. Tuan (1974) argued that social interactions that develop within the physical setting can create sense of place more than the physical space.

Attachment to a place can be both physical and social. There is an existing body of literature for both physical attachment and social attachment that develops within a particular place. People can become attached to the physical aspects of a place as well as the interpersonal connections that happen within a setting. Hidalgo and Hernandez (2001) examined both physical and social forms of place attachment across three spatial ranges (house, neighborhood and city). The result of their study shows that social attachment was greater than physical attachment, which highlights the importance of social interactions in place attachment.

Milligan (1998) used an interactionist view to explore the social dimension of place attachment and examined the role of social interactions in attachment to a coffee house. She identified interactional past and interactional potential as the two components in social bonding process. Interactional past is considered as the past experiences and memories with a place and

interactional potential as the future experiences that are likely to occur in a place. The result of her study shows that the social interactions that happen within a place create place attachment. Milligan (1998) argued that a physical space becomes meaningful to the individual through social interaction, and place attachment is the emotional bond between the individual and the physical space through interaction.

Low and Altman (1992) also pointed out the social dimension of place attachment by stating: “places are repositories and contexts within which interpersonal, community and cultural relationships occur, and it is to those social relationships, not just place qua place, to which people are attached” (p.7). The social dimension of place attachment has been well studied in environmental psychology literature. In leisure studies, Kyle et al. (2005) suggested “social bonding” as the third dimension of place attachment. They believed that meaningful social relationships that occur within a leisure setting can create place attachment because much of the leisure experience is social in nature.

These findings suggest that a place can be meaningful to an individual beyond its physical characteristics and in some cases social bonding can be the primary source of place attachment. Experiences and memories shared with significant others in a place can be an important factor in place attachment. For the purpose of this study, social bonding is considered to be an important dimension of place attachment and is incorporated in the conceptualization of place attachment.

### **Place Attachment in Tourism Research**

There is a lack of published research on place attachment in tourism, and how tourists develop the sense of attachment to a destination. Only a few researchers investigated place

attachment from a tourism perspective. However, place attachment is a well-studied subject in environmental psychology and leisure studies literature. MacCannell (1976) acknowledged the necessity of studying tourist destination attachment and suggested tourist destinations are symbolic features of the contemporary landscape due to the distinctive meanings conveyed to tourists.

Tourist's destination attachment is an important factor in satisfaction and loyalty intentions toward a destination (Yuksel, Yuksel & Bilim, 2010). People create bonds with places based on the sense of place resulting from the meaning and value they assign to the destination (Kaltenborn & Williams, 2002; Williams, Patterson, & Roggenbuck, 1992). Lee, Backman, and Backman (1997) highlighted the finding that psychological attachment is an important factor in understanding tourist behavior and repeat visitation to a destination. Gross and Brown (2008) examined the relationship between involvement and place attachment within a tourism context, and realized that the level of involvement in tourism influences tourists' place attachment.

Most of the studies on place attachment in the field of tourism have been conducted from the perspective of residents in tourism destinations. Um and Crompton (1987) measured residents' attachment levels in a tourist destination for both recent and long-established residents. The results of their study showed that community attachment was positively related to the length of residence and heritage. McCool and Martin (1994) investigated community attachment and attitudes toward tourism development and found that residents living in communities with higher levels of tourism development have the strongest sense of community attachment, but have the shortest tenure in their community.

Place attachment plays an important role in developing destination loyalty. Tourists may become attached to a destination because of its ability to fulfill particular needs or its symbolic meaning. Having the knowledge of the relationship between place attachment and travel related variables will help in understanding tourists' behavior. Understanding the nature and the extent of place attachment among tourists can help destination managers in planning and marketing tourism and recreation services.

### **Tourist motivation**

Motivation has been recognized by tourism scholars as an important variable in explaining tourist behavior. A generally accepted definition of motivation was proposed by Murray (1964) as: "motive is an internal factor that arouses, directs, and integrates a person's behavior which is not observed directly but inferred from his behavior or simply assumed to exist in order to explain his behavior" (p.7). Mannell and Kleiber (1997) described motive as a phenomenon that "impels people to action and gives direction to that action once it is aroused or activated" (p. 188).

Motivation has been defined as socio-psychological forces that influence an individual to participate in a tourism activity (Iso-Ahola, 1982). Tourist motivation has been conceptualized as an individual's state of tension or disequilibrium which is generated by internal psychological factors such as needs and wants (Crompton & McKay, 1997). Dann (1981) defined tourism motivation as "a meaningful state of mind which adequately disposes an actor or a group of actors to travel, and which is subsequently interpretable by others as a valid explanation for such a decision" (p.211).

For decades, researchers have attempted to identify motivation for travel. Tourism scholars have long recognized that pleasure travel is the result of multiple motives (Crompton, 1979; Mansfeld, 1992; Pearce, 1982). Motivation research has been developing since the beginning of Dann's (1977) "anomie" and "ego-enhancement" and Iso-Ahola's (1982) "escape-seeking" motivation. Much of the foundational work on tourism motivation has been provided by Dann (1977), Crompton (1979), and Iso-Ahola (1980, 1982).

Dann (1977) hypothesized that motivation for travel lays in the two concepts of "anomie" and "ego-enhancement", and further argued that the presence of these factors is conducive to the formation of a fantasy world to which a tourist plans a periodic escape. Dann (1977) stated that the potential tourist lives in an anomic society along with everyone else, therefore the connection between tourist's home situation and his leisure patterns should be investigated. He claimed that a possible "push" factor for travel lies in the desire to get away from the feeling of isolation obtained in everyday life, and the need for social interaction which can only be fulfilled away from the home environment. Furthermore, ego-enhancement derives from the need to be recognized and the desire for such recognition by others is often described in terms of "status." For some, travel is one way to enhance the ego. A tourist can go to a place where his social status is unknown and where he can feel superior and on his return a further boost can be given to his ego by describing his holiday experiences.

Iso-Ahola (1982) believed that tourism motivation is a part or one form of leisure motivation. He published a rejoinder to Dann's (1981) appraisal of tourism motivation and mentioned that Dann's (1981) treatment of tourism motivation would have benefitted immensely from an understanding of leisure motivation. Iso-Ahola (1980) proposed a motivation theory which is applicable to leisure, recreation, and tourism. He proposed a theory of leisure

motivation which is composed of both seeking (intrinsic rewards) and escaping (routine environments) elements. Both dimensions have a personal (psychological) and interpersonal (social) component. This dichotomy of motives is not mutually exclusive, and it is often possible for a person to be engaged in both motives simultaneously (Iso-Ahola, 1983).

Iso-Ahola's (1982) theory has been proposed as the driving force for tourism behavior. According to him, there are two motivational forces for tourism behavior: the desire to leave the routine environment, and the desire to obtain psychological (intrinsic) rewards through travel. Iso-Ahola's (1982) argued that tourism represents more of an escape-oriented than approach-oriented activity for most people under most circumstances. However, for many people change from the home/work environment to a destination is not enough to feel escaped from the routine unless they can perform activities that provide a feeling of mastery and achievement. Iso-Ahola's (1982) model emphasizes that tourism behavior is a dialectical-developmental process because it provides an outlet for avoiding something and for simultaneously seeking something. Therefore, both approach (seeking) and avoidance (escaping) components are present in leisure motivation in general (Iso-Ahola, 1980) and tourism motivation in particular (Iso-Ahola, 1981).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is also a popular theory of motivation used by leisure researchers (Iso-Ahola, 1980). Maslow (1943) classified human needs into five levels which in ascending order from the most fundamental were physiological needs, safety/security needs, social needs, self-esteem/development needs, and self-actualization needs, and suggested that the appearance of one need depends on the satisfaction of a more fundamental need. Pearce (1982) developed the "travel needs model" based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs. According to Pearce (1982), the importance of using such an integrative framework "is that without some guiding motivational framework with which to differentiate travel samples, it is difficult to explore and

interrelate traveler characteristics in anything but a descriptive manner” (p. 62). Pearce (1982) also argued that no single theory of tourism motivation could explain tourists’ behavior completely.

McCabe (2002) stated that Pearce’s model implies individual’s motivation varies at different stages of life and the life cycle determines his motivation. McIntosh, Goeldner and Ritchie (1995) argued that the travel needs model emphasizes that individual’s travel motivation is multi-purpose oriented, and higher-level travel needs can include lower-level needs. Furthermore, Pearce’s model recognizes that tourist travel motivation may vary within one holiday experience (McIntosh et. al, 1995).

Most discussions of tourist motivation revolve around the concepts of “push” and “pull” factors. “Pull” factors are those which attract the tourist to a particular destination and aroused by the destination rather than emerging from within the traveler, while “push” factors refer to the factors predisposing the tourist to travel. Push factors have been viewed as internal needs and wants of the individuals while pull factors are related to attraction and features of a particular destination. Traditionally, push motives have been used to explain the desire to travel while pull motives have been thought useful for explaining the choice of destination.

Crompton (1979) developed a conceptual framework to identify the motives of pleasure vacationers that influence the selection of a destination. He identified nine motives. Seven were classified as socio-psychological (pull) and two were classified as cultural (push) motives. Socio-psychological motives include: escape from a perceived mundane environment, exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship relationships, and facilitation of social interaction, while novelty and education form the cultural category. Cultural

motives were noted to be at least partly aroused by the specific features that a destination offers. However, socio-psychological motives were found to be unrelated to destination attributes. Crompton (1979) emphasized on the destination as a medium through which socio-psychological needs could be satisfied.

Previous research indicates two different points of view in terms of concurrence of push-pull factors. The first view assumes that two separate decisions are made at different times. The first decision is whether to travel or not (push factor), and then to decide where to go (pull factor). Dann (1981) noted that “once the trip has been decided upon, where to go, what to see or what to do (relating to specific destinations) can be tackled. Analytically, and often both logically and temporally, “push” factors precede “pull” factors” (p. 207). Crompton (1979) also suggested that push factors “may be useful not only in explaining the initial arousal, energizing, or “push” to take a vacation, but may also have directive potential to direct the tourist toward a particular destination” (p. 412). The second view emphasizes that push and pull motives are not operating separately and they occur simultaneously. Individuals are pushed by their internal drives to travel and are simultaneously pulled by the external drives of destination features (Cha, McCleary, & Uysal, 1995; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994).

Crompton (1979) was among the first researchers who suggested that non-destination-specific push motives are often the major driving forces in an individual’s selection of when and where to travel. Formerly, it was thought that push motives were held accountable only for establishing a desire to travel, and pull motives were responsible for destination choice (Dann 1977). Crompton (1979b) suggested that tourists are not only “pushed” by internal needs, but also “pulled” by destination attributes, therefore travel decisions are finalized when pull factors satisfy push factors.



## **Relationship among Destination Image, Place Attachment, and Tourist motivation**

Tourists' decision making is one of the most popular issues of tourism research (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). Decrop (2000) suggested that tourists' decision making can be approached by a cognitive model which proposes that tourists' decision-making is a cognitive psychological process. This psychological process refers to the cognitive-affective framework and shows how psychological variables affect tourists' decision-making (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005).

Tourists' psychological motivations also influence their images of destinations (Mayo & Jarvis, 1981). Researchers identified a relationship between psychological motivations and affective image of a destination (Baloglu, 1997; Dann, 1996; Gartner, 1994). Some authors suggested that motivations are related to the affective component of destination image and people's affective image toward a destination is influenced by their motivations (Dann, 1996; Gartner, 1994; Walmsley & Jenkins, 1993). However, the cognitive component of destination image also helps in understanding the individual's intention to visit a destination and is related to the individual's beliefs about a tourist destination.

The image of a destination is highly related to tourist motivation and can create motivation for travel. Motivation plays an important role in destination image formation. In the destination choice process, images are formed in relation to the motivations either consciously or unconsciously (Moutinho, 1987). Some scholars argued that destination image and tourist motivation are the most important phases in tourist destination selection process (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Gallarza et al., 2002). Pearce (1995) recommended that the relationship between motivations and destination image should be studied in order to better understand tourist behavior and enhance the motivation theory.

Previous studies suggested that destination image and place attachment may play an important role in predicting tourists' visitation intention. Huang and Hsu (2009) indicated that the image of a destination is an important factor for attracting a person to visit and motivate the repeat visits. Furthermore, the cognitive-affective framework indicates that place attachment might be affected by the cognitive component of destination image (Baloglu, 2001; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a). However, the relationship between cognitive or affective components of destination image and place attachment is unclear.

Based on the previous literature, in this study the researcher attempts to investigate the relationships between destination image, place attachment and tourist motivation in order to fully understand tourists' behaviors and motivations for repeat visit. Understanding the relationships between place attachment and other travel related variables such as the image of a destination and tourist motivation might provide a better understanding of individuals' behavior.

### **Research Sites**

The state parks included in this study were Beaver's Bend State Park, Sequoyah State Park, and Robbers Cave State Park. The researcher chose these three parks as the research sites due to their similar features within parks. Each research site offers varied experiences, various natural resources, and various amenities.

#### **Beavers Bend State Park**

Beavers Bend State Park is one of the original seven state parks in Oklahoma and is located in McCurtain County in the southeastern corner of Oklahoma. McCurtain County is less than a half day drive from larger populations in Oklahoma (approximately 250 miles from Oklahoma City, and 220 miles from Tulsa).

Beavers Bend State Park was created by the Oklahoma State Park Commission in the early 1930s through land donations and land purchases from different sources such as the National Park Service, the Oklahoma Legislature, and so forth (Reeves, 1938). The park is located in the mountainous region of southeast Oklahoma along the shores of Broken Bow Lake and the Mountain Fork River.

Beavers Bend lies approximately seven miles north of Broken Bow, Oklahoma on Highway 259. The highway to Beavers Bend State Park (259) reflects significant impact of tourism to the state park, and the highway corridor to the north and south of the park entrances contains a large number of diverse businesses linked to tourism related to the park.

Beavers Bend State Park offers a variety of recreational activities such as: eagle watching, trout fishing, fly fishing clinics, guided horseback rides, and hayrides throughout the park. Other park activities include golfing, miniature golf, archery, tennis, jet skiing, bumper boat rides, boating, and canoeing. A nature center is also situated in the park with daily programs and activities for individuals. There are historic structures on property from the efforts of the Civilian Conservation Corps camp. A National Forest Center and a Wildlife Museum are also located within close proximity to park entrances.

There are different lodging options both within and outside the Beavers Bend State Park. Lodging within the state park is allowed through the Lakeview Lodge located on the shores of Broken Bow Lake. Lakeview Lodge offers guests a view of Broken Bow Lake and is located on a hillside at an elevation above the flood pool level for the lake. There are cabins located throughout the entire park, and various camping spots also located throughout the entire park. Forty-seven cabins are located in the main portion of Beavers Bend State Park on the River.

The cabins are physically located approximately four miles from Lakeview Lodge. Lodging outside of the state park consists of a significant variety of options. Visitors have a variety of options to rent out cabins from local operations located throughout the highway corridor and along the park entrance roads. However, there are not many hotels or motels in the immediate area for visitors to stay. There are a few options available in the town of Broken Bow.

The number of visitors for Beavers Bend State Park has increased significantly since the 1930s. Over one million people or more visit Beavers Bend State Park annually. The total reported visitation number for Beavers Bend State Park was 1,023,509 during 2009. This number includes both day visitors and overnight visitors. The day visitors include pass-through sightseers, golfers, anglers, equestrian visitors, picnickers, trail hikers, boaters, river floaters, and many other recreational visitors lodging at locations other than within the park. Overnight visitors include campers, cabin guests, lodge guests and group campers who spend one or more nights within Beavers Bend State Park. There is an indication of dominance by out-of-state guests in Beavers Bend State Park. A significant percentage of the visitors to Beavers Bend State Park are Texans which is evident from identification of license plates in the parking lots and around the campgrounds.

### **Sequoyah State Park**

Sequoyah State Park was added to the Oklahoma State Park system in 1948 under lease agreements with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Caneday, L., Chang, K., Jordan, D, Bradley, M.J., & Hassell, D.S. 2011). Sequoyah State Park is in Cherokee County in northeast Oklahoma and is located on a large peninsula on Fort Gibson Lake. The Park is on the eastern shore of Fort Gibson Lake in Cherokee County, Oklahoma, and is in close proximity to two

major cities of Wagoner and Tahlequah in Oklahoma. It is 8 miles east of Wagoner, Oklahoma and 18 miles west of Tahlequah, Oklahoma on State Highway 51.

Sequoyah State Park attracts different types of recreational visitors and offers a wide range of recreational experiences and amenities. Visitors can enjoy hiking, picnicking, guided horseback trail rides and Western-themed activities as well as wildlife watching, golf and disc-golf, boating, fishing and camping. Sequoyah Riding Stables provides trail rides and hay rides within the park.

Sequoyah Lodge, formerly known as Western Hills Guest Ranch, operated in conjunction with Sequoyah State Park, is one of the largest state park lodges offering various onsite lodging options. The lodge includes 101 guest rooms and three suites in two arching wings, each with two levels. There are also ten pool-side cabanas adjacent to the newly renovated pool and Spray Park. Additionally, the Bunkhouse offers a lodging option distinctly different from the cabins or main lodge housing up to 46 while providing a kitchen and social area for guests.

Sequoyah State Park includes 44 cabins in the area just north of Sequoyah Lodge. A bunkhouse is also located adjacent to Sequoyah Lodge. Within the Lodge, there is a full service restaurant and Black Jack's Saloon also provides a social setting for additional food and beverage options. The total reported visitation number for Sequoyah State Park was 308,245 during 2010.

### **Robbers Cave State Park**

Robbers Cave State Park is one of the original state parks in Oklahoma park system. The park is located in southeastern Oklahoma in Latimer County, in the Sans Bois Mountains, west

of the Ouachita Mountains. The park is situated in the northwest portion of Latimer County, north of Wilburton and east-northeast of McAlester.

The property encompasses campgrounds, cabins, lodge, day use areas, three recreational lakes and multiple streams, lake access areas, trails, and other facilities. Numerous, varied and long-distance trails are among the distinguishing recreational features in Robbers Cave State Park. As one of the larger state park properties, Robbers Cave State Park is a historic, cultural, natural, and recreational resource.

Robbers Cave State Park provides different recreational facilities such as: swimming beach, playgrounds, miniature golf, hiking trails, horseback riding stables, paddle boat rentals, and a nature center. Several miles of trails are scattered throughout the park. The park encompasses three lakes: Lake Carlton, Lake Wayne Wallace and Coon Creek Lake. The lakes provide opportunities for different type of recreational activities.

RV sites, tent sites and equestrian campsites are available throughout the park and lodging facilities at Robbers Cave State Park include the Belle Starr View Lodge, 25 cabins and two group camps. Belle Starr View Lodge provides hotel style lodging with 20 rooms and a big room that serves as a decent location for groups to gather. The lodge does not include food service, but vending service is available.

Reeves (1938) reported that 20,216 visitors had been at Robbers Cave State Park at that time and the park was the second highest visited park in the system. Visitation for Robbers Cave State Park has decreased during the past five years from a reported 1.4 million visitors in 2009 to a low of 812,181 in 2011. The total reported visitation number for Robbers Cave State Park was 849,959 in 2013.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter explains the research methods and data analyses utilized to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses of the study. It begins with an overview of the research process including population and sampling, data collection and location, and the theoretical framework. Later in this chapter, measurement and survey instrument of each concept has been explained in detail.

#### **Population and Sampling**

The population of this study was tourists who visit Beavers Bend State Park, Robbers Cave State Park, and Sequoyah State Park in Oklahoma. The researcher chose these three Oklahoma state parks because they could be considered as tourist destinations and they shared similar amenities. Park visitors included overnight visitors and day use visitors. Only overnight visitors who spent at least one night in one of these three Oklahoma State Parks were included in the study. A convenient sample was used for this study. Within the convenient sample, all responses were voluntary, independent and mutually exclusive. The sample for this study included visitors who stayed at least one night in Beavers Bend State Park, Robbers Cave State Park, or Sequoyah State Park.

One of the important issues in sampling is to determine the appropriate sample size to be used. This determination depends on the number of variables and the statistical estimating precision needed. Boomsma (2000) recommended a sample size of at least 200 respondents to perform a moderately complex model. Bentler (1993) suggested that for structural equation modeling, the ratio of sample size to the number of parameters needs to be at least 5:1, or preferably 10:1. Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) suggested that having at least 300 cases for factor analysis is acceptable. Using these suggestions, a sample size of 300 respondents was targeted for this study.

### **Data collection and location**

To ensure the targeted response rate, the data collection procedure was planned to use a mixed model design method proposed by Dillman (1978). Prior to the study, the researcher obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma (Appendix E) for protection of human subjects. Research subjects were recruited through an email list provided by Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department. A permission letter to use the email list was obtained from Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department (Appendices C & D). Onsite invitations were also extended by the researcher to park visitors via posters and cards made available to campers at the various campgrounds within the parks. Posters and cards included essential information such as survey purpose, QR code, and web address for the survey (Appendix H).

Visitors to three Oklahoma state parks (Beavers Bend State Park, Robbers Cave State Park, and Sequoyah State Park) received invitations to participate in the survey. The invitations to participate in the survey were sent to the email addresses of individuals who had made reservations at a cabin or lodge in these three state parks on the second and third quarter of 2014



(April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 to September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014). The questionnaire was posted online on Qualtrics, a software program for online surveys. An email message with an invitation to participate, information about the study, and a link to online survey was used to contact participants (Appendix F). All participants were informed of the voluntary nature of their participation, informed that there were no risks to their participation, and assured confidentiality and anonymity regarding their responses through consent at the beginning of the survey (See Appendix A).

The survey was active from mid-September, 2014 to mid-November, 2014. After four weeks a reminder e-mail was sent to participants to take the online survey (Appendix G). The questionnaire was posted online for a total of two months in order to increase the timeframe for recruiting enough participants to take the survey. The hypotheses and the model were formulated in a general nature rather than specific to each park as a tourist destination. Therefore, the data was tested on the combined data set (pooled data) regardless of the destinations.

### **Statistical approach**

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used as the primary statistical technique in this study to examine the causal relationships between destination image, place attachment, and tourist motivation. Structural equation modeling (SEM) is an important statistical tool in applied multivariate analysis for theory testing and causal modelling. It has become a significant statistical technique for understanding causal relationships in outdoor recreation and leisure studies (Oh & Ditton, 2008). Although structural equation modelling is a popular technique in social sciences and behavioral research, it has not been widely applied in the tourism discipline. In recent years, the number of tourism studies using SEM model has been increased (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2007).

The primary function of structural equation modeling (SEM) is to examine the inter-related dependent relationships simultaneously between a set of latent variables which have been measured by one or more observed variables (Reisinger & Turner, 1999). A measured or observed variable is a variable that is directly measured. In contrast, a latent variable is a hypothesized construct in the model that cannot be measured directly and must be tested through measured variables and applied by the covariance among two or more measured variables (Stevens, 2009).

Reisinger and Mavondo (2007) viewed structural equation modelling as a confirmatory procedure rather than an exploratory by using one of the three approaches: (1) strictly confirmatory approach, (2) model development approach, and (3) alternative models approach. Structural equation modelling technique is not a single procedure and is a combination of path analysis and factor analysis. In structural equation modeling, the measurement model is evaluated by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is used to measure the measurement model to detect the distinction between indicators and the underlying latent variables (Kline, 2005).

Kline (2005) recommended that the minimum number of indicators per factor for applying CFA is three and adding indicators can re-specify a non-identified CFA model which enhances the number of observations available to estimate effects. Confirmatory factor analysis tests the measurement instrument of each construct to examine how a pre-specified factor model fits observed data. In this study, each factor had at least three indicators to enrich the factor loadings on latent variables. Confirmatory Factor Analysis was used to test how well the prior theoretical models, destination image, place attachment, and tourist motivation fit the sample

data. SPSS and AMOS programs were used to analyze the data and alpha 0.05 is considered as a significance level to determine if the model and hypotheses are statistically significant.

Structural Equation Models are composed of two parts: a measurement model and a structural model. The measurement model deals with the relationship between measured variables and latent variables while the structural model deals with the relationships among latent variables. The measurement model tests the theoretical construct of each factor and its observed variables. The structural model helps to determine the causal-effect relationship between the factors. Figure 3 shows the measurement and structural model of this study.

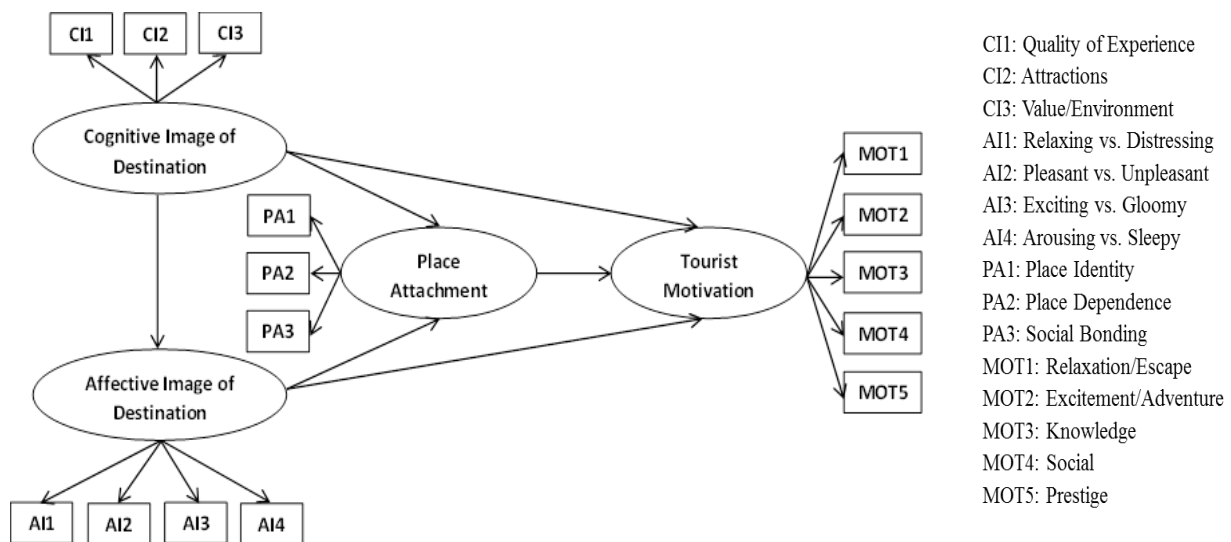


Figure 3 The Measurement Model and Structural Model of the Study

### Measurements and Instruments

Four instruments were used in this study: destination image instrument (composed of cognitive image instrument and affective image instrument) (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999), place attachment instrument (Kyle et al., 2005), and tourist motivation instrument (Baloglu &

McCleary, 1999). These four instruments were used in other studies and determined as reliable and valid measurements. The following section provides a further explanation of these three instruments. The survey instrument consisted of five sections: questions relating to cognitive evaluations of destination image; questions relating to affective evaluations of destination image; questions relating to place attachment; questions relating to tourists' socio-psychological motivations; and questions designed to gather demographic information. The survey instrument for this study is available in Appendix B.

### **Measurement of destination image**

The measurement of a concept is significantly affected by how it is theorized. Therefore, various aspects of the destination image construct were measured using different instruments. According to Gallarza et al. (2002), multivariate information reduction techniques such as factor analysis methods predominate because they allow for the identification of the latent dimensions of the destination image construct. Most of the studies in destination image only measured the cognitive component of destination image (Pike, 2002), and only a few studies measured the affective component of destination image or both components in the same study. Furthermore, destination image researchers favored structured methodologies over qualitative ones (Gallarza et al., 2002; Pike, 2002).

A conceptual model of destination image comprised of cognitive and affective components of image were used to measure destination image in the current study. According to Baloglu and McCleary (1999b), cognitive image refers to beliefs and knowledge about a place, whereas affective image refers to feelings toward a place. Russell (1980) asserted that people's emotional state can be categorized by their information of the environment. In other words, the

cognitive component of destination image influences the affective component (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Lin et al., 2007; Martin & Bosque, 2008).

Russell and his colleagues (Russell, 1980; Russell and Pratt, 1980; Russell, Ward, and Pratt, 1981) have developed a scale to measure the affective component of places or environments. They conceptualized the affective quality or image as a two-dimensional bipolar space that can be defined by eight variables falling in a circumplex (Figure 1): pleasant (arbitrarily set at  $0^\circ$ ), exciting ( $45^\circ$ ), arousing ( $90^\circ$ ), distressing ( $135^\circ$ ), unpleasant ( $180^\circ$ ), gloomy ( $225^\circ$ ), sleepy ( $270^\circ$ ), and relaxing ( $315^\circ$ ). Russell and Pratt's (1980) proposed model has been presented as a two-dimensional bipolar space in which eight terms are placed approximately  $45^\circ$  apart and bipolar affect terms are shown as vectors originating from the center of the circle (See Figure 4).

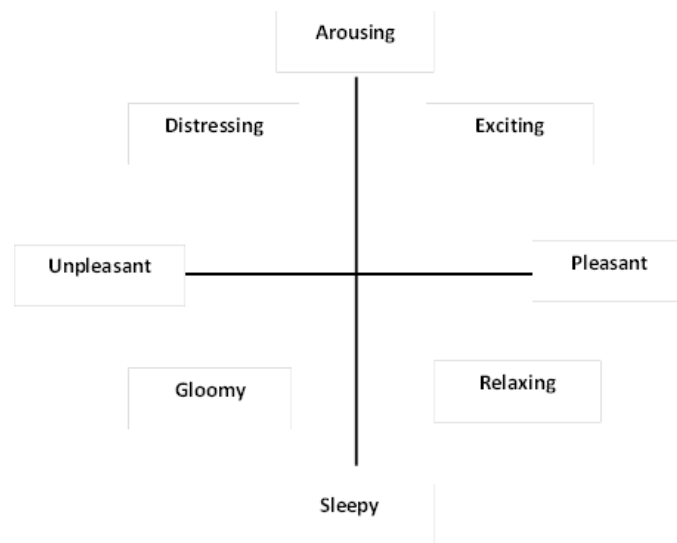


Figure 4 A Circumplex model of affect (Russell & Pratt, 1980)

Both cognitive and affective components of destination image were measured to examine the relationship between destination image, place attachment, and tourist motivation. The instrument used to measure the cognitive and affective component of destination image was adopted from Baloglu and McCleary's (1999b) study of destination image formation. The scale which has been used in previous studies (e.g., Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Lin et al., 2007; Walmsley & Jenkins, 1993) to measure the affective component of destination image was first developed by Russell and Pratt (1980) and includes four variables: relaxing-distressing, pleasant-unpleasant, exciting-gloomy, and arousing-sleepy.

Respondents evaluated the park as a tourist destination on each of Russell and Pratt's (1980) four adjectives (pleasant-unpleasant; relaxing-distressing; arousing-sleepy; and exciting-gloomy). Respondents were asked to indicate which word in each pair of affective descriptors best describes how they feel about that destination. Cognitive evaluation attributes were adopted from Baloglu and McCleary's (1999b) instrument. Respondents were asked to rate each park as a tourist destination on fourteen attributes on a 5-point Likert scale, very poor, poor, average, good, and excellent (1 to 5, respectively).

### **Reliability and validity of destination image instrument**

Internal consistency between the items in the measures was estimated using Cronbach's alpha which is the most widely used reliability measure to estimate the degree to which the items on a measure are representative of the domain of the construct being measured (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b). A coefficient alpha of at least .70 is usually considered reliable. In Baloglu and McCleary's (1999b) work, some of the cognitive scales could not meet this criterion and lower alpha values were associated with those scales that included a smaller number of items. However, the acceptable alpha limit is as low as .60 or .50 for scales consisting of a small

number of items (Carmines & Zeller, 1979; Pedhazur & Schmelkin, 1991). As the number of items increases, the alpha value also increases. For other cognitive scales, Cronbach's alpha values ranged from .72 to .89 which indicates the reliability of the cognitive destination image instrument. The reliability and validity of the affective scales have been proven over different samples, cultures, and environment types (Baloglu & Brinberg 1997; Hanyu 1993; Russell & Snodgrass, 1987; Russell, Lewicka & Niit, 1989; Russell, Ward & Pratt, 1981; Walmsley & Jenkins, 1993; Ward & Russell, 1981). Therefore, the destination image instrument was considered as a reliable and valid instrument.

### **Measurement of Place attachment**

The most commonly agreed dimensions of place attachment are place identity and place dependence. These dimensions have been described in almost all research associated with place attachment (Hunt, 2008; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Kyle et al., 2004; Moore & Graefe, 1994; Williams, 1992; Williams & Vaske, 2003). Some researchers suggested other dimensions of place attachment such as social bonding (Kyle et al., 2005), social lifestyle (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000; Bond, 2006) and place commitment (Bond, 2006).

Place attachment instrument was first developed and measured as a multi-dimensional concept by Williams and Roggenbuck (1989). Their scale was influenced partly from Proshansky's (1978) conceptualization of place identity as a cognitive connection between the individual and physical environment, and Stokols and Shumaker's (1981) emphasis on the functional aspect (place dependence) of a place for individuals. Their instrument produced moderate levels of internal and external validity as well as moderate levels of generalizability.

Williams and Vaske (2003) explored a slightly adjusted scaled questionnaire as an instrument to measure place attachment. The revised edition of the place attachment instrument has been widely utilized in a variety of fields investigating place attachment and related theories. Kyle et al. (2005) tested the dimensionality of place attachment using data from visitors to the Appalachian Trail in United States. Their data supported a correlated three factor model consisting of place identity, place dependence, and social bonding. The authors conducted a multi-group confirmatory factor analysis to cross-validate the three factor model and examine the equivalence of covariance and mean within two randomly split subsamples of the data.

Place attachment instrument for this study was developed based on a multi-dimensional measurement adopted from previous studies (Kyle et al., 2005; Williams & Vaske, 2003). In this study, place attachment was measured by three dimensions: place identity (four items), place dependence (four items), and social bonding (four items) (Kyle et al., 2005) with a five point Likert scale from 1= strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

### **Reliability and validity of place attachment instrument**

Williams & Vaske's (2003) model has been tested several times to assess factor validity, convergent validity, and variance components estimates. The researchers used confirmatory factor analysis to test factor validity. Their instrument attained a Cronbach's alpha of 0.83 which indicates a good internal consistency. Convergent validity shows that the instrument tests what it theoretically should test, and it is a strong indicator of construct validity.

To assure the accurate measurement of the concept, Williams & Vaske (2003) conducted a study with several samples to test convergent validity by testing the variances using ANOVA. The F ratios for place identity met or exceeded significance levels in each of the four samples.



Williams and Vaske's (2003) revised instrument showed significant levels of validity and generalizability. Williams and Vaske (2003) used items with Cronbach alphas from .81 - .94 with acceptable reliability alphas (0.79 - 0.91) to measure participants' place identity and place dependence.

Kyle et al. (2005) assessed the reliability of place attachment instrument by examining the internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of the items for each dimension of place attachment. The reliability of their instrument varied in different groups. However, the theoretical model remained the same which indicates that the place attachment instrument is reliable. The Cronbach's alphas, determining the internal consistency of the items in three dimensions were 0.87, 0.86, and 0.62.

Nunnally (1978) recommended that the acceptable Cronbach's alpha coefficients should be equal to or greater than 0.70, while Cortina (1993) argued that in scales with six or less items, the acceptable Cronbach's alpha is 0.60 or more (Kyle et al., 2004; Kyle et al., 2005). Kyle et al. (2005) used items with Cronbach alphas (0.62) to measure social bonding and considered it acceptable in light of the previous literature (Cortina, 1993). Therefore, the place attachment instrument was considered as a reliable and valid measurement.

### **Measurement of tourist motivation**

The instrument for measuring socio-psychological motivators was adopted from Baloglu and McCleary's (1999b) study. Literature review of tourist motivation reveals that no single established scale exists to measure tourists' motivations. Therefore, the authors reviewed a variety of studies (Crompton, 1979b; Dann, 1981, Iso-Ahola, 1982; Beard & Ragheb, 1983) to draw socio-psychological motivation items. They added four items to assess precision and for

cross-validation and as a result a total of 27 motivation items were identified. Those 27 items were then tested on a sample of 45 students and faculty. To assess participants' travel motivations in this study, a list of motivations including: relaxation/escape; knowledge; excitement/adventure; social and prestige, were provided to the participants (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b). Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement on a five point Likert scale ranging from "not at all important" to "very important" as a reason for their visit.

### **Reliability and validity of tourist motivation instrument**

Baloglu and McCleary (1999b) factor analyzed 27 motivation items using principal component analysis with a varimax rotation procedure. Factors with an eigenvalue greater than one and factor loadings 0.40 or greater were retained. In their initial solution, three items did not meet the 0.40 criteria and several factors included redundant items. Therefore, the authors eliminated the redundant items based on the lowest item-to-total correlation. That resulted in 17 motivation items which were factor analyzed again using the same procedure and criteria. All items met the 0.40 cut-off point and produced five factors. Percentage of the variance explained by the finalized factors was 70.2%. Baloglu and McCleary (1999b) assessed the consistency or precision of the scale by correlation coefficients, which was greater than 0.75 for all items added for cross-validation. Therefore, the scale was considered as having consistency and precision.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS**

This chapter presents the results of the research and a summary of the data analysis. In the first section, a detailed description of the sample including the descriptive and frequency statistics is provided to help the reader in understanding the research participants. The second section includes the descriptive analysis of each instrument and normality assessment. The third section presents the results of the confirmatory factor analysis for each instrument. The final section of this chapter presents the findings of the structural equation modeling (SEM) used to explore the relationship between destination image, place attachment, and tourist motivation.

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship among three constructs of destination image, place attachment, and tourist motivation. Three major objectives of the study were: (1) to identify tourists' cognitive and affective images of Oklahoma State Parks as tourist destinations; (2) to explore the place attachment of Oklahoma State Park tourists; and (3) to examine the influence of destination image and place attachment on tourists' motivation for visiting the parks. The survey instrument was composed of four instruments: destination image instrument (including cognitive image instrument and affective image instrument) (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999), place attachment instrument (Kyle et al., 2005), and tourist motivation instrument (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). The questionnaire consisted of five sections: questions

relating to cognitive evaluations of destination image; questions relating to affective evaluations of destination image; questions relating to place attachment; questions relating to tourists' socio-psychological motivations; and questions designed to gather demographic information.

### **General Information for the Sample**

Data screening is an important procedure before conducting the analysis in order to find incomplete surveys and clean the data (Kline, 2005). No missing data is permitted to be included in the structural equation modeling (Byrne, 2010). Therefore, it is common to delete all missing data before applying the structural equation modeling (Little & Rubin, 2002). A total of 845 participants responded the survey. Only 742 responses were complete, and 26 participants did not respond to the demographic questions. All incomplete surveys were removed from the analysis except the ones who were missing the demographic information only, because the missing data in the demographic information section would not directly influence the data analysis. Therefore, a total of 742 responses were used for the purpose of demographic analysis, and 768 responses were used for confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling.

### **Demographic characteristics**

The sample consisted of slightly more female (53.8%, N=399) than male (46.2%, N=343) respondents. The majority of the respondents (78%) were older than 45 years of age. Most of the respondents were Caucasian (89.5%, N=664), and Native Americans were the second largest ethnic group (5.4%, N=40). Other ethnic groups (Hispanic, Asian, African-American, other) each consisted of fewer than 2% of the respondents. Only 18.5% of the participants did not have a post-secondary education. The highest percentage for annual household income was \$125,000 or more which was reported by 22.9% of the participants.

Cabin guests made up more than half of the respondent pool (54.6%), followed by Lodge guests (25.5%), RV campers (16.2%), and Tent campers (3.8%). The sample consisted of only 208 (28%) first time visitors and the rest (72%, N=534) were repeat visitors. Most of the respondents (60.8%, N=451) did not consider themselves as a “Tourist.” Table 2 displays the detailed demographic information of the sample.

**Table 2 Demographic Information for the Sample**

	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cum Percent</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	46.2	46.2	46.2
	Female	53.8	53.8	100.0
<b>Age</b>	18-24	3	.4	.4
	25-34	42	5.7	6.1
	35-44	118	15.9	22.0
	45-54	193	26.0	48.0
	55-64	236	31.8	79.8
	65+	150	20.2	100.0
	<b>Ethnicity</b>	Caucasian (White)	664	89.5
African-American		3	.4	89.9
Hispanic		13	1.8	91.6
Asian		12	1.6	93.3
Native-American		40	5.4	98.7
Other		10	1.3	100.0

Table 2 continues on next page

**Table 2 Continued – Demographic Information for the Sample**

	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cum Percent</b>
<b>Education</b>	Less than High School	2	.3	.3
	High School or Equivalent	113	15.2	15.5
	Associate's Degree	124	16.7	32.2
	Bachelor's Degree	253	34.1	66.3
	Master's Degree	139	18.7	85.0
	Professional Degree	41	5.5	90.6
	Doctorate	48	6.5	97.0
	Other	22	3.0	100.0
<b>Income</b>	Less than \$25,000	21	2.8	2.8
	\$25,000 - \$49,999	85	11.5	14.3
	\$50,000 - \$74,999	163	22.0	36.3
	\$75,000 - \$99,999	156	21.0	57.3
	\$100,000 - \$124,999	147	19.8	77.1
	\$125,000 or more	170	22.9	100.0
<b>Group</b>	Lodge Guest	189	25.5	25.5
	Cabin Guest	405	54.6	80.1
	Tent Camper	28	3.8	83.8
	RV Camper	120	16.2	100.0
<b>How Long Visited</b>	First visit	208	28.0	28.0
	Up to 2 years	75	10.1	38.1
	2-5 years	113	15.2	53.4
	More than 5 years	346	46.6	100.0
<b>Tourist or Not</b>	Yes	291	39.2	39.2
	No	451	60.8	100.0

## **Descriptive analysis of the instruments**

Four different instruments were used for this study: destination image instrument (including two instruments: cognitive image instrument, and affective image instrument), place attachment instrument, and tourist motivation instrument. Items in each instrument were respectively denoted as: the instrument abbreviation, the order of factor, and item number. For instance, CI3\_1 represents the first item in the third dimension (value) of the cognitive image instrument.

Destination image instrument composed of two instruments: cognitive image instrument, and affective image instrument. Cognitive image (CI) instrument consisted of three factors. The first component of cognitive image was “quality of experience” which was denoted as CI1. The second factor was “attractions” and denoted as CI2. The third component of cognitive image was “value/environment” and denoted as CI3. Items in each factor were named based on the factor they were related to. Cognitive image items were denoted as CI1\_1 to CI1\_8 for the first factor, CI2\_1 to CI2\_3 for the second factor, and CI3\_1 to CI3\_3 for the third factor. The means and standard deviation scores for cognitive image instrument are presented in table 3. The third factor (value/environment) has the highest mean (4.35), followed by attractions (4.14), and quality of experience (4.00).

**Table 3 The Means and Standard Deviation of the Items in Cognitive Image Instrument**

Cognitive Image		Mean	S.D.
CI1_1	Standard Hygiene and Cleanliness	3.99	.839
CI1_2	Quality of Infrastructure	3.95	.800
CI1_3	Personal Safety	4.19	.708
CI1_4	Nature Center & Interpretive Programs	4.00	.861
CI1_5	Quality of Room/Cabin/Campsite	3.90	.939
CI1_6	Appealing Local Food (Cuisine)	3.52	1.015
CI1_7	Lake/River Activities	4.18	.824
CI1_8	Interesting and Friendly Staff	4.31	.777
CI2_1	Interesting Cultural Attractions	3.84	.836
CI2_2	Interesting Historical Attractions/Events	3.85	.879
CI2_3	Beautiful Scenery/Natural Attractions/Events	4.72	.572
CI3_1	Good Value for Money	4.27	.857
CI3_2	Unpolluted/Unspoiled Environment	4.39	.734
CI3_3	Good Climate	4.40	.689

Affective image (AI) instrument consisted of four factors denoted as AI1 to AI4. The first factor (AI1) represented the Distressing/Relaxing item. The second factor (AI2) indicated the Unpleasant/Pleasant component. The third factor (AI3) represented the Gloomy/Exciting component, and the fourth (AI4) component represented the Sleepy/Arousing factor. Table 4 presents the means and standard deviation scores for the affective image instrument.



**Table 4 The Means and Standard Deviation of the Items in Affective Image Instrument**

Affective Image		Mean	S.D.
AI1	Distressing-Relaxing	4.70	.610
AI2	Unpleasant-Pleasant	4.67	.647
AI3	Gloomy-Exciting	4.08	.802
AI4	Sleepy-Arousing	3.76	.895

Place attachment instrument included three factors: PA1 (place identity), PA2 (place dependence), and PA3 (social bonding). The means and standard deviation scores for the place attachment instrument are presented in table 5. Social bonding has the highest mean score (4.02), followed by place identity (3.79), and place dependence (3.25).

**Table 5 The Means and Standard Deviation of the Items in Place Attachment Instrument**

<b>Place Attachment</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>
PA1_1 _____ State Park means a lot to me.	4.02	.895
PA1_2 I am very attached to _____ State Park.	3.82	.990
PA1_3 I identify strongly with _____ State Park.	3.73	.989
PA1_4 Visiting _____ State Park says a lot about who I am.	3.60	.978
PA2_1 _____ State Park is the best place for what I like to do.	3.56	.987
PA2_2 I get more satisfaction out of visiting _____ State Park than from visiting any other park.	3.27	1.081
PA2_3 Doing what I do at _____ State Park is more important than doing it in any other place.	3.15	1.013
PA2_4 I wouldn't substitute any other park for the type of things I do at _____ State Park.	3.02	1.094
PA3_1 I have a lot of fond memories about _____ State Park.	4.19	.877
PA3_2 I have a special connection to _____ State Park and the people who visit it.	3.54	1.050
PA3_3 I do tell many people about _____ State Park.	4.17	.922
PA3_4 I bring my family/friends to _____ State Park.	4.18	.935

Note: \_\_\_\_\_: Beavers Bend, Robbers Cave, Sequoyah

Tourist motivation instrument consisted of five factors denoted as MOT1 to MOT5. The first factor (MOT1) included five items (denoted as MOT1\_1 to MOT1\_5). The second and third factor included four items each (denoted as MOT2\_1 to MOT2\_4, and MOT3\_1 to MOT3\_4 respectively), while the fourth and fifth factor consisted of only two items (denoted as MOT4\_1 to MOT4\_2, and MOT5\_1 to MOT5\_2 respectively). Table 6 presents the means and standard deviation scores for the place attachment instrument. Relaxation/escape has the highest mean

score (4.36), followed by excitement/adventure (3.61), knowledge (3.51), prestige (3.40), and social (3.20).

**Table 6 The Means and Standard Deviation of the Items in Tourist Motivation Instrument**

<b>Tourist Motivation</b>		<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>
MOT1_1	Relieving stress and tension	4.31	.762
MOT1_2	Getting away from demands of everyday life	4.41	.722
MOT1_3	Relaxing physically and mentally	4.42	.660
MOT1_4	Getting away from crowds	4.30	.766
MOT1_5	Escaping from the routine	4.36	.705
MOT2_1	Doing exciting things	3.68	.945
MOT2_2	Finding thrills and excitement	3.31	.966
MOT2_3	Being adventurous	3.71	.892
MOT2_4	Having fun, being entertained	3.74	.913
MOT3_1	Learning new things, increasing my knowledge	3.60	.924
MOT3_2	Experiencing different cultures and ways of life	3.37	.996
MOT3_3	Enriching myself intellectually	3.35	.990
MOT3_4	Experiencing new/different places	3.73	.986
MOT4_1	Meeting people with similar interests	3.23	1.051
MOT4_2	Developing close friendships	3.16	1.049
MOT5_1	Going places my friends have not been	3.09	1.096
MOT5_2	Telling my friends about the park	3.71	.988

### **Assessment of univariate normality**

To ensure the appropriateness of the items in each instrument for conducting a multivariate analysis, the researcher tested the normality of each item. The value of skewness and kurtosis were used to determine if the scores of the items were normally distributed. The acceptable range for skewness is between (-3) and (+3) or an absolute value of less than three, and the acceptable range for kurtosis is an absolute value of less than eight (Kline, 2005). All the items of this study reached the two criteria for normality, except two items in the affective image instrument (AI1 and AI2) which had a kurtosis value of more than 8. The reason is that almost all of the study participants responded the same on the affective image factors. The normality tests of the four instruments are reported in Table 7.

**Table 7 Normality Testing of the Sample**

Cognitive Image			Affective Image			Place Attachment			Tourist Motivation		
Item	Ske w	Kurtosi s	Item	Ske w	Kurtosi s	Item	Ske w	Kurtosi s	Item	Ske w	Kurtosi s
CI1_1	-0.91	1.42	AI1	-2.63	9.08	PA1_1	-0.70	0.32	MOT1_1	-1.24	2.21
CI1_2	-0.64	0.60	AI2	-2.56	8.37	PA1_2	-0.46	-0.28	MOT1_2	-1.45	3.24
CI1_3	-0.60	0.34	AI3	-0.63	0.36	PA1_3	-0.34	-0.37	MOT1_3	-1.23	2.84
CI1_4	-0.84	0.87	AI4	-0.21	-0.41	PA1_4	-0.33	-0.28	MOT1_4	-1.12	1.70
CI1_5	-0.73	0.32				PA2_1	-0.27	-0.40	MOT1_5	-1.18	2.34
CI1_6	-0.42	-0.11				PA2_2	0.03	-0.63	MOT2_1	-0.42	-0.06
CI1_7	-1.03	1.37				PA2_3	0.17	-0.31	MOT2_2	-0.09	-0.08
CI1_8	-1.13	1.56				PA2_4	0.21	-0.50	MOT2_3	-0.45	0.06
CI2_1	-0.39	0.08				PA3_1	-1.04	0.96	MOT2_4	-0.69	0.47
CI2_2	-0.42	-0.13				PA3_2	-0.17	-0.60	MOT3_1	-0.37	-0.03
CI2_3	-2.45	7.74				PA3_3	-1.35	1.98	MOT3_2	-0.25	-0.22
CI3_1	-1.22	1.44				PA3_4	-1.20	1.25	MOT3_3	-0.16	-0.29
CI3_2	-1.09	1.07							MOT3_4	-0.66	0.11
CI3_3	-0.92	0.60							MOT4_1	-0.18	-0.41
									MOT4_2	-0.08	-0.35
									MOT5_1	-0.04	-0.48
									MOT5_2	-0.57	0.02

## Instrument and Structural Model Testing

The first step in conducting the analysis is to test the instrument model before examining the structural model. The purpose for testing the instruments is to investigate which items in the survey instrument are appropriate for state park visitors. Therefore, all four instruments of the

study, including cognitive image instrument, affective image instrument, place attachment instrument, and tourist motivation instrument were tested in order to retain the most appropriate items in the instruments. Confirmatory factor analysis is used to test the measurement instrument of each construct.

There is a slight agreement on the choice of fit indexes and criteria for evaluating a model. Bagozzi and Yi (1988) suggested three criteria for evaluating a model fit which include: (1) all factor loadings (standardized regression weights) should be less than 0.95; (2) all measurement errors should be positive; (3) all standard errors should be less than one. The overall goodness of fit for any model can be obtained with a chi-square test. However, chi-square test is very sensitive to sample size. The chi-square test depends on several factors: (1) model size (models with more variables have larger chi-square); (2) the distribution of variables (skewness and kurtosis increase chi-square values); and (3) the sample size (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2007).

According to Bagozzi and Yi (1988), chi-square test is more likely to reject a model when the sample size increases. Therefore, it is not a very good fit index and the likelihood of rejecting a model when the sample size is big is high because it is more likely to identify discrepancies between the implied and observed covariance matrices (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). As a result, several goodness-of-fit statistics were used to investigate the model fit. The goodness-of-fit statistics used for this study are: chi-square (CMIN), chi-square divided by degree of freedom (CMIN/DF), goodness of fit index (GFI), normed fit index (NFI); comparative fit index (CFI), standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA).

Kline (2005) suggested that chi-square divided by degree of freedom (CMIN/DF) should be 3 or less to be acceptable, and others allow values as high as 5 to consider a model adequate fit. For this study, the acceptable chi-square divided by degree of freedom (CMIN/DF) was 5 with an attempt to get it closer to 3 if the modification is necessary. Hu and Bentler (1999) suggested that for a maximum likelihood method, a cut off value close to 0.90 for GFI and NFI; a cut off value close to 0.95 for CFI; a cut off value close to 0.08 for SRMR; and a cut of value close to 0.06 for RMSEA is a relatively good fit between the observed data and the hypothesized model.

If the model does not fit the data, a modification is necessary. In order to modify the model, the modification indices (MI) from the Amos output are used to identify the observed variables that impact the fit of the model. Researcher is allowed to fix the model by starting from the highest modification index (MI) and only modify one item at a time in the model (remove the path or set the parameter free) (Byrne, 2010). The modification index states the chi-square statistic with a single degree of freedom. For  $p < 0.05$ , the value of chi-square with one degree of freedom is 3.84; therefore, when the modification index is larger than four, the item is worthy of modifying (Kline, 2005). In this study, the model is modified if the modification index is more than four. For this study, the models are modified until there were no modification index larger than four and the majority of the model fit indexes were qualified as a good fit. Therefore, each instrument model would preserve the best factors and become fit.

The reliability and validity of the instruments were tested by using four statistics: (1) squared multiple correlation ( $R^2$ ) is used to evaluate how much an individual factor is explained by a collective set of predictors ( $R^2 > 0.20$  is acceptable); (2) composite reliability (CR) value is applied for measuring the overall reliability of an instrument (CR value is better larger than

0.60); (3) Cronbach's alpha is used to check the internal reliability of the instrument (alpha value should not be less than 0.60); (4) The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) estimates the sampling adequacy which should be greater than 0.50 for a satisfactory factor analysis to proceed (Fornell & Lacker, 1981; Stevens, 2009).

### **Instrument model of cognitive image**

Cognitive image instrument is composed of three dimensions: quality of experience (CI1), attractions (CI2), and value (CI3). Quality of experience (CI1) dimension has eight sub-dimensions while attraction (CI2) and value (CI3) have three sub-dimensions each. The instrument model of cognitive image was tested by conducting confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to check if the model fits the data. All the fit statistics failed to match the criteria in the original model of cognitive image instrument. As a result, a modification of the model is necessary. The original model of the cognitive image instrument is displayed in figure 5.



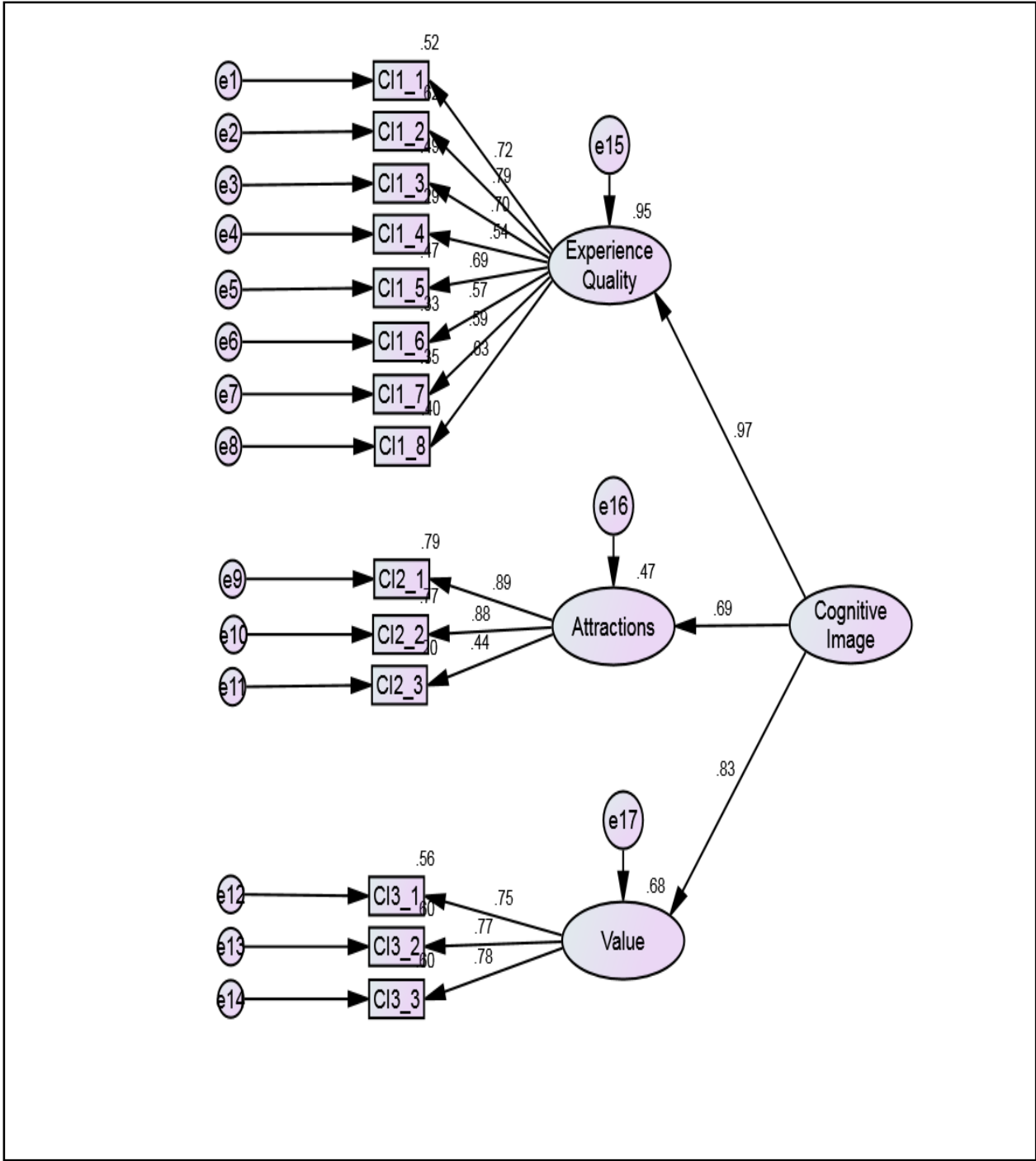


Figure 5 Original Cognitive Image Instrument Model

Note: CI1 (quality of experience), CI2 (attractions), and CI3 (value); each observed variables (items) was denoted as its instrument abbreviation, the number of dimension in the analysis, and number of item in the dimension. For example, CI2\_3 represents the third item in the second (attractions) dimension of the original instrument.

Table 8 explains the sequence of modification for cognitive image instrument. The original model was denoted as M0, and the modified models were named as M1, M2, M3, and so on. The fit for modified models would be accomplished when the majority of the model fit indexes are qualified as a good fit.

**Table 8 The Sequence of Modification for Cognitive Image Instrument**

Model No.	M0	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8
<b>Modified Item</b>	-	CI2_3	e2<->e8	e13<->e14	CI1_4	CI1_6	CI1_7	e5<->e8	e1<->e8
<b>CMIN (<math>X^2</math>)</b>	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01
<b>CMIN/DF (<math>X^2</math>/d.f.)</b>	9.37	8.06	7.66	6.78	6.56	6.43	5.07	4.38*	3.39*
<b>GFI</b>	0.87	0.90*	0.90*	0.92*	0.93*	0.94*	0.96*	0.97*	0.98*
<b>SRMR</b>	0.09	0.06*	0.06*	0.06*	0.05*	0.05*	0.04*	0.04*	0.03*
<b>RMSEA</b>	0.10	0.10	0.09	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.06*	0.05*
<b>NFI</b>	0.87	0.90*	0.90*	0.92*	0.93*	0.94*	0.96*	0.97*	0.98*
<b>CFI</b>	0.88	0.91	0.91	0.93	0.94	0.95*	0.97*	0.97*	0.98*

Note: \* means the index is at its cutoff point

In the cognitive image instrument, after eight modifications from the original cognitive image model, the final model's goodness-of-fit statistics are: CMIN/DF (3.39<5.0), GFI (0.98>0.90), SRMR (0.03<0.08), RMSEA (0.05<0.06), NFI (0.98>0.90), and CFI (0.98>0.90) which indicates that M8 (final model) is a good fit. However, the chi-square (p-value<0.05) still did not reach the necessary criteria. The reason for that is chi-square test (p-value) is extremely sensitive to sample size and might not be the most accurate index to define the model's fit especially with a large sample size (Byrne, 2010).

After the modification, all the standardized regression weights ranged from 0.67 to 0.90 (<0.95), the value of measurement errors are positive, and all the standard errors ranged between 0.04 and 0.08 (<1.00). Maradia's coefficient should be lower than  $p(p+1)$ , where  $p$  is the number of observed variables to achieve the multivariate normality (Bollen, 1989). The Maradia's coefficient of final place attachment instrument is 41.14 (<110=10×11), which indicates that these items attain the requirement of normality in a multivariate level.

All the fit indexes indicate that the final modified model is a better fit than the original one. Therefore, the final model of cognitive image instrument (M8) is considered as a good fit. The final modified cognitive image instrument contained five items in quality of experience (CI1) dimension, two items in attractions (CI2) dimension, and three items in value (CI3) dimension. Figure 6 displays the final modified model of the cognitive image instrument.

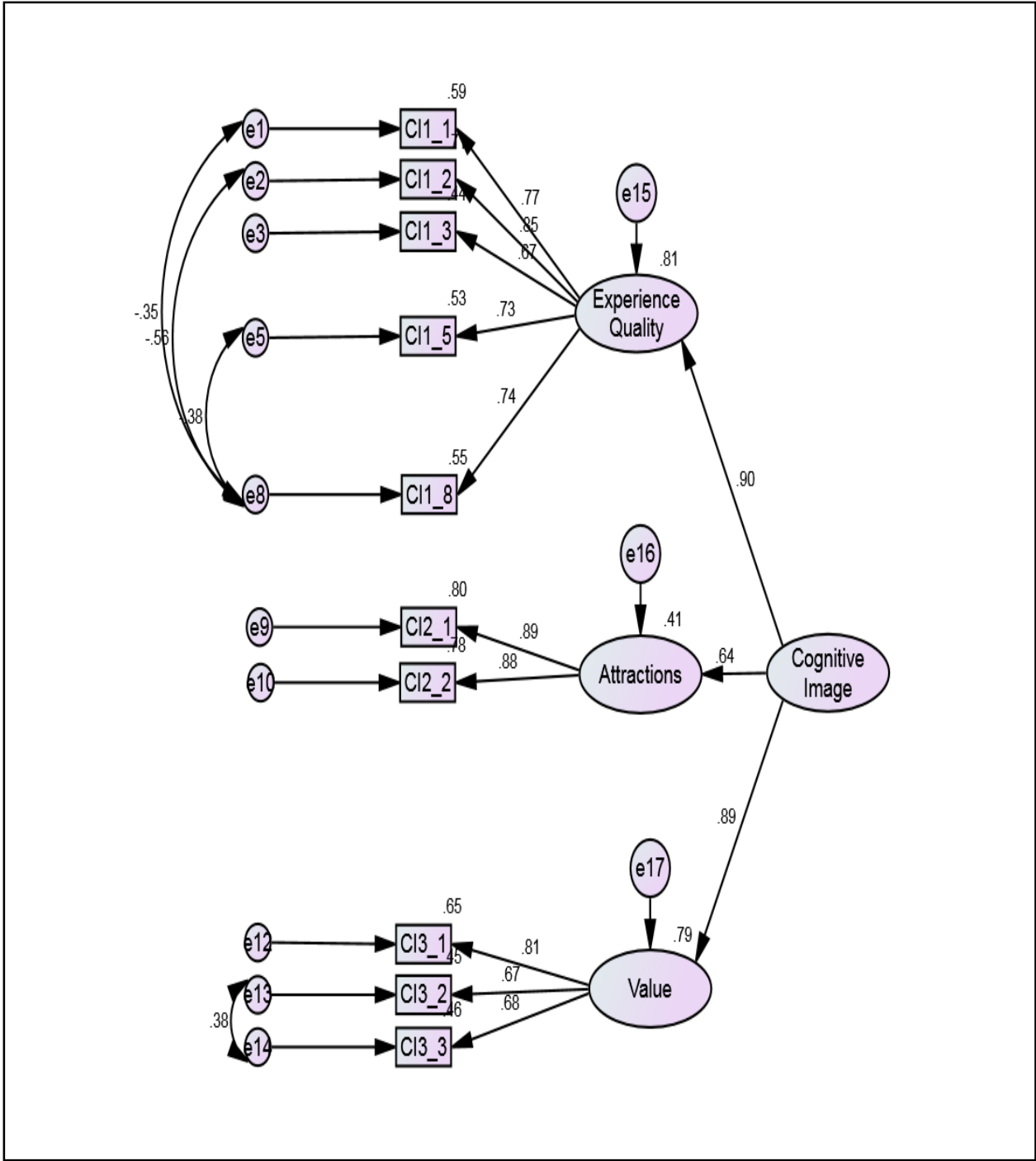


Figure 6 Modified Cognitive Image Instrument Model

Note: CI1 (quality of experience), CI2 (attractions), and CI3 (value); each observed variables (items) was denoted as its instrument abbreviation, the number of dimension in the analysis, and number of item in the dimension. For example, CI2\_3 represents the third item in the second (attractions) dimension of the original instrument.

In the final cognitive image instrument (M6), squared multiple correlations ( $R^2$ ) ranged from 0.41 to 0.81 ( $>0.20$ ). In addition, the composite reliability (CR) values are between 0.77 and 0.87 ( $>0.60$ ), and the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of all three dimensions in the instrument ranged from 0.80 to 0.88. The KMO of the final cognitive image model is 0.89 ( $>0.50$ ) which indicates it is satisfactory for factor analysis. All of the above statistics indicate that the final modified cognitive image instrument is reliable and valid. Table 9 represents the squared multiple correlation ( $R^2$ ), composite reliability (CR), and Cronbach's  $\alpha$  (alpha) for final cognitive image instrument (M8).

**Table 9 The Regression Weights, error,  $R^2$ , Composite Reliability, and Alpha Value of the Final Cognitive Image Instrument (M8)**

Cognitive Image	Regression Weights	Error	$R^2$	CR	Alpha
					0.89
CI -> CI1	0.90*	0.02	0.81	0.87	0.84
	CI1 -> CI1_1	0.77*	0.02	0.59	
	CI1 -> CI1_2	0.85*	0.02	0.77	
	CI1 -> CI1_3	0.67*	0.02	0.44	
	CI1 -> CI1_5	0.73*	0.03	0.53	
	CI1 -> CI1_8	0.74*	0.02	0.55	
CI -> CI2	0.64*	0.03	0.41	0.88	0.88
	CI2 -> CI2_1	0.89*	0.02	0.80	
	CI2 -> CI2_2	0.88*	0.02	0.78	
CI -> CI3	0.89*	0.01	0.79	0.77	0.80
	CI3 -> CI3_1	0.81*	0.02	0.81	
	CI3 -> CI3_2	0.67*	0.02	0.67	
	CI3 -> CI3_3	0.68*	0.02	0.68	

Note: \* means that the effect is significant in  $p < 0.05$ , two-tailed.

### Instrument model of affective image

Affective image instrument is consisted of four factors in total. Four dimensions were used to examine the visitors' affective image of the three state parks. The first factor (AI1) represented the Distressing/Relaxing item. The second factor (AI2) indicated the Unpleasant/Pleasant component. The third factor (AI3) represented the Gloomy/Exciting component, and the fourth (AI4) component represented the Sleepy/Arousing factor. The instrument model of affective image is presented in figure 7.

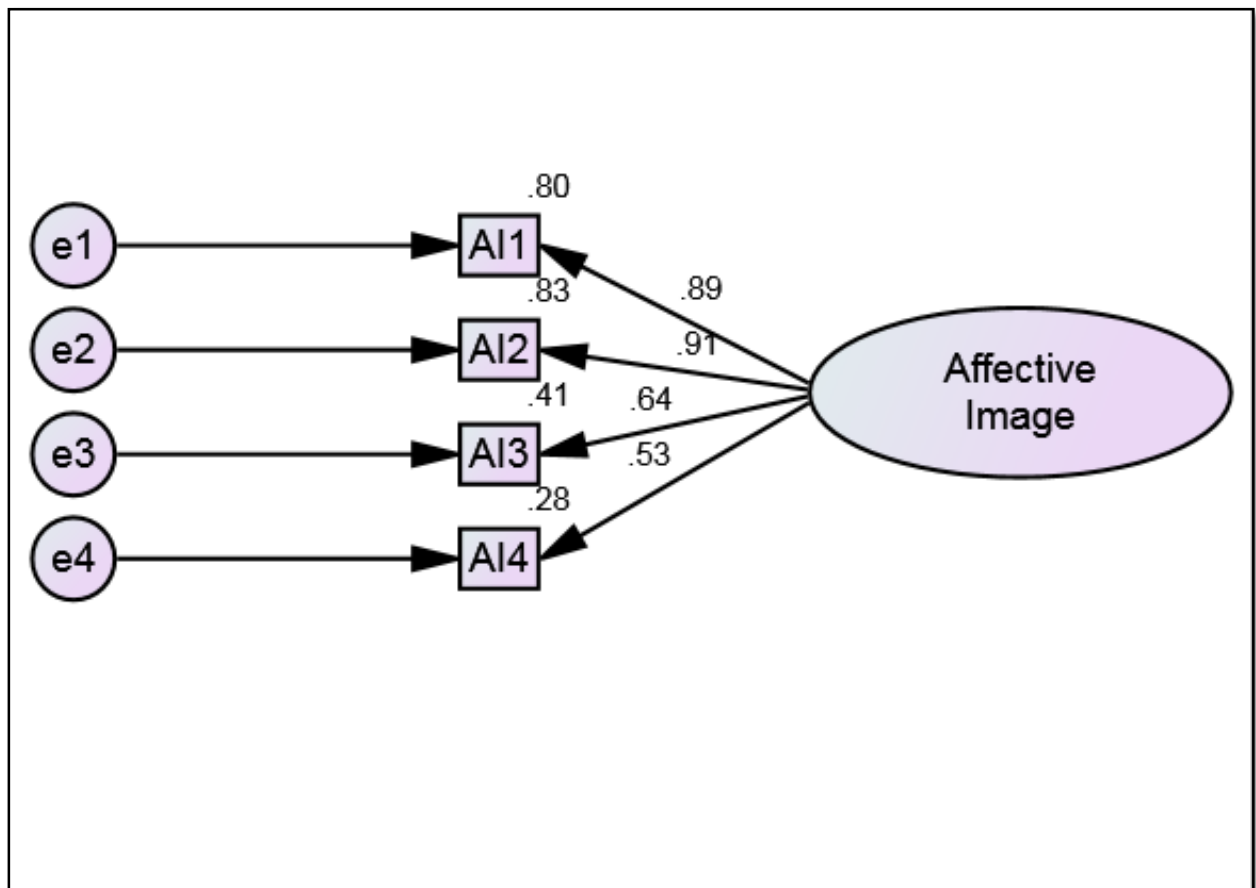


Figure 7 Original Affective Image Instrument Model

Note: AI (Affective Image), AI1 (relaxing/distressing), AI2 (pleasant/unpleasant), AI3 (exciting/gloomy), and AI4 (arousing/sleepy).

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted for the affective image instrument to test if the data fits the model. However, all the fit statistics in the affective image instrument failed to match the criteria in the study. Therefore, the affective image component was dropped from the rest of the analysis because none of the goodness-of-fit statistics were at their cutoff points and the instrument was not modifiable. This instrument also failed the normality test because there were no variances in the responses for the affective image questions. Table 10 reports the goodness-of-fit statistics for the affective image instrument.

**Table 10 Goodness-of-fit Statistics for Affective Image Instrument**

CMIN ( $X^2$ )	260.73
CMIN/DF ( $X^2/d.f.$ )	130.37
GFI	0.87
SRMR	0.11
RMSEA	0.41
NFI	0.84
CFI	0.85

Note: \* means the index is at its cutoff point

### **Instrument model of place attachment**

Place attachment instrument is composed of three dimensions: place identity (PA1), place dependence (PA2), and social bonding (PA3). Each dimension has four sub-dimensions. The instrument model of place attachment was tested by conducting confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to check if the model fits the data. All the fit statistics were failed to match the criteria in the original model of place attachment instrument. As a result, a modification of the model is necessary. The original model of the place attachment instrument is displayed in figure 8.

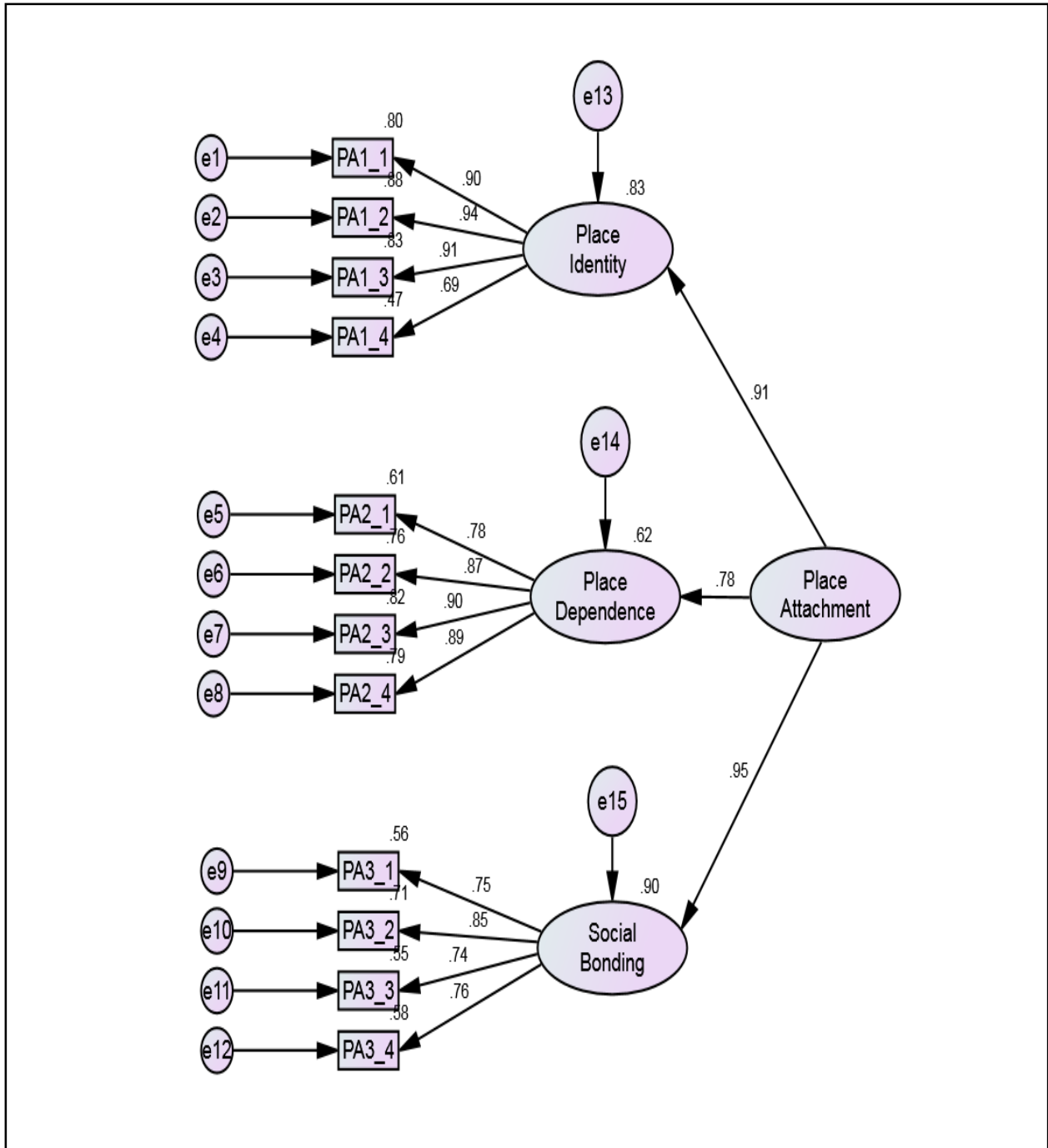


Figure 8 Original Place Attachment Instrument Model

Note: PA (place attachment): PA1 (place identity), PA2 (place dependence), and PA3 (social bonding); each observed variables (items) was denoted as the instrument abbreviation, the order of dimension in the analysis, and number of item in the dimension. For example, PA2\_1 represents the first item in the place dependence dimension of the original instrument.



In terms of the goodness-of-fit of final place attachment instrument, the CMIN/DF decreased from 8.92 to 3.47 (<5.00), SRMR decreased from 0.05 to 0.02 (<0.08), RMSEA decreased from 0.10 to 0.06 (<0.06). In addition, the GFI increased from 0.91 to 0.97 (>0.90), the NFI increased from 0.94 to 0.98 (>0.90), and CFI increased from 0.95 to 0.99 (>0.90). As a result, the final model is considered as an acceptable fit model. Table 11 reports the sequence of modification for place attachment instrument. The chi-square (p-value<0.05) still did not reach the necessary criteria because of its sensitivity to sample size.

**Table 11 The Sequence of Modification for Place Attachment Instrument**

Model No.	M0	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7
<b>Modified</b>	-	e11<->e12	PA1_4	e7<->e8	e9<->e12	e10<->e11	e1<->e3	e10<->e12
<b>Item</b>								
<b>CMIN (X<sup>2</sup>)</b>	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01
<b>CMIN/DF (X<sup>2</sup>/d.f.)</b>	8.92	7.08	5.56	4.77	4.49	4.10	3.64*	3.47*
<b>GFI</b>	0.91*	0.93*	0.95*	0.96*	0.96*	0.97*	0.97*	0.97*
<b>SRMR</b>	0.05*	0.04*	0.04*	0.03*	0.03*	0.03*	0.02*	0.02*
<b>RMSEA</b>	0.10	0.09	0.08	0.07	0.07	0.06*	0.06*	0.06*
<b>NFI</b>	0.94*	0.96*	0.97*	0.97*	0.98*	0.98*	0.98*	0.98*
<b>CFI</b>	0.95*	0.96*	0.98*	0.98*	0.98*	0.98*	0.99*	0.99*

Note: \* means the index reaches the fit criteria

After the modification, all the standardized regression weights ranged from 0.73 to 0.93 (<0.95), the value of measurement errors are positive, and all the standard errors ranged between 0.02 and 0.07 (<1.00). Maradia's coefficient should be lower than  $p/(p+1)$ , where p is the number of observed variables to achieve the multivariate normality (Bollen, 1989). The Maradia's coefficient of final place attachment instrument is 48.59 (<132=11×12), which indicates that these items attain the requirement of normality in a multivariate level.

All the fit indexes indicate that the final modified model is a better fit than the original one. Therefore, the final model of place attachment instrument (M7) is considered as a good fit. The final modified place attachment instrument contained three items in place identity (PA1) dimension, four items in place dependence (PA2) dimension, and four items in social bonding (PA3) dimension. Figure 9 displays the final modified model of the place attachment instrument.

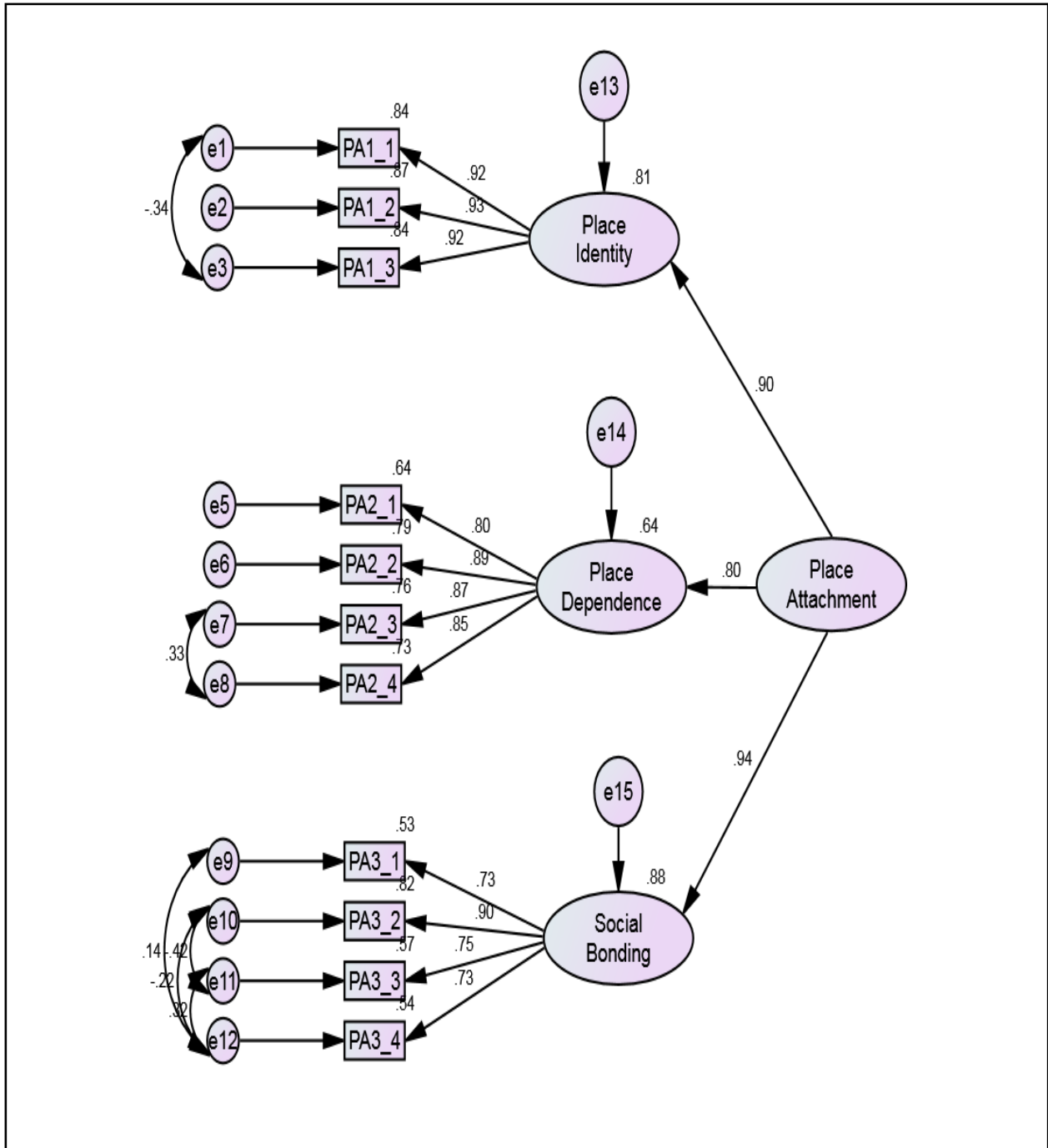


Figure 9 Modified Place Attachment Instrument Model

Note: PA (place attachment): PA1 (place identity), PA2 (place dependence), and PA3 (social bonding); each observed variables (items) was denoted as the instrument abbreviation, the order of dimension in the analysis, and number of item in the dimension. For example, PA2\_1 represents the first item in the place dependence dimension of the original instrument.

In the final place attachment instrument (M7), squared multiple correlations ( $R^2$ ) ranged from 0.53 to 0.88 ( $>0.20$ ). In addition, the composite reliability (CR) values are between 0.86 and 0.94 ( $>0.60$ ), and the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of all three dimensions in the instrument ranged from 0.86 to 0.94. The KMO of the final place attachment model is 0.94 ( $>0.50$ ) which indicates it is satisfactory for factor analysis. All of the above statistics indicate that the final modified place attachment instrument is reliable and valid. Table 12 represents the squared multiple correlation ( $R^2$ ), composite reliability (CR), and Cronbach's  $\alpha$  (alpha) for final place attachment instrument (M7).

**Table 12 The Regression Weights, error,  $R^2$ , Composite Reliability, and Alpha Value of the Final Place Attachment Instrument (M7)**

Place Attachment	Regression Weights	Error	$R^2$	CR	Alpha
					0.94
PA -> PA1	0.90*	0.02	0.81	0.95	0.94
	PA1 -> PA1_1	0.92*	0.01	0.84	
	PA1 -> PA1_2	0.93*	0.01	0.87	
	PA1 -> PA1_3	0.92*	0.01	0.84	
PA -> PA2	0.80*	0.03	0.64	0.91	0.92
	PA2 -> PA2_1	0.80*	0.02	0.64	
	PA2 -> PA2_2	0.89*	0.02	0.79	
	PA2 -> PA2_3	0.87*	0.02	0.76	
	PA2 -> PA2_4	0.85*	0.02	0.73	
PA -> PA3	0.94*	0.02	0.88	0.86	0.86
	PA3 -> PA3_1	0.73*	0.02	0.53	
	PA3 -> PA3_2	0.90*	0.03	0.82	
	PA3 -> PA3_3	0.75*	0.03	0.57	
	PA3 -> PA3_4	0.73*	0.03	0.54	

Note: \* means that the effect is significant in  $p < 0.05$ , two-tailed.

## **Instrument model of tourist motivation**

The original instrument of tourist motivation is composed of five dimensions: relaxation/escape (MOT1) dimension, excitement/adventure (MOT2) dimension, knowledge (MOT3) dimension, social (MOT4) dimension, and prestige (MOT5) dimension. Relaxation/escape (MOT1) dimension has five sub-dimensions, excitement/adventure (MOT2) and knowledge (MOT3) dimensions each have four sub-dimensions, and social (MOT4) and prestige (MOT5) dimensions have two dimensions each. The instrument model of tourist motivation was tested by conducting confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to check if the model fits the data. Some of the fit statistics were failed to match the criteria in the original model of tourist motivation instrument. As a result, a modification of the model is necessary. The original model of the tourist motivation instrument is displayed in figure 10.

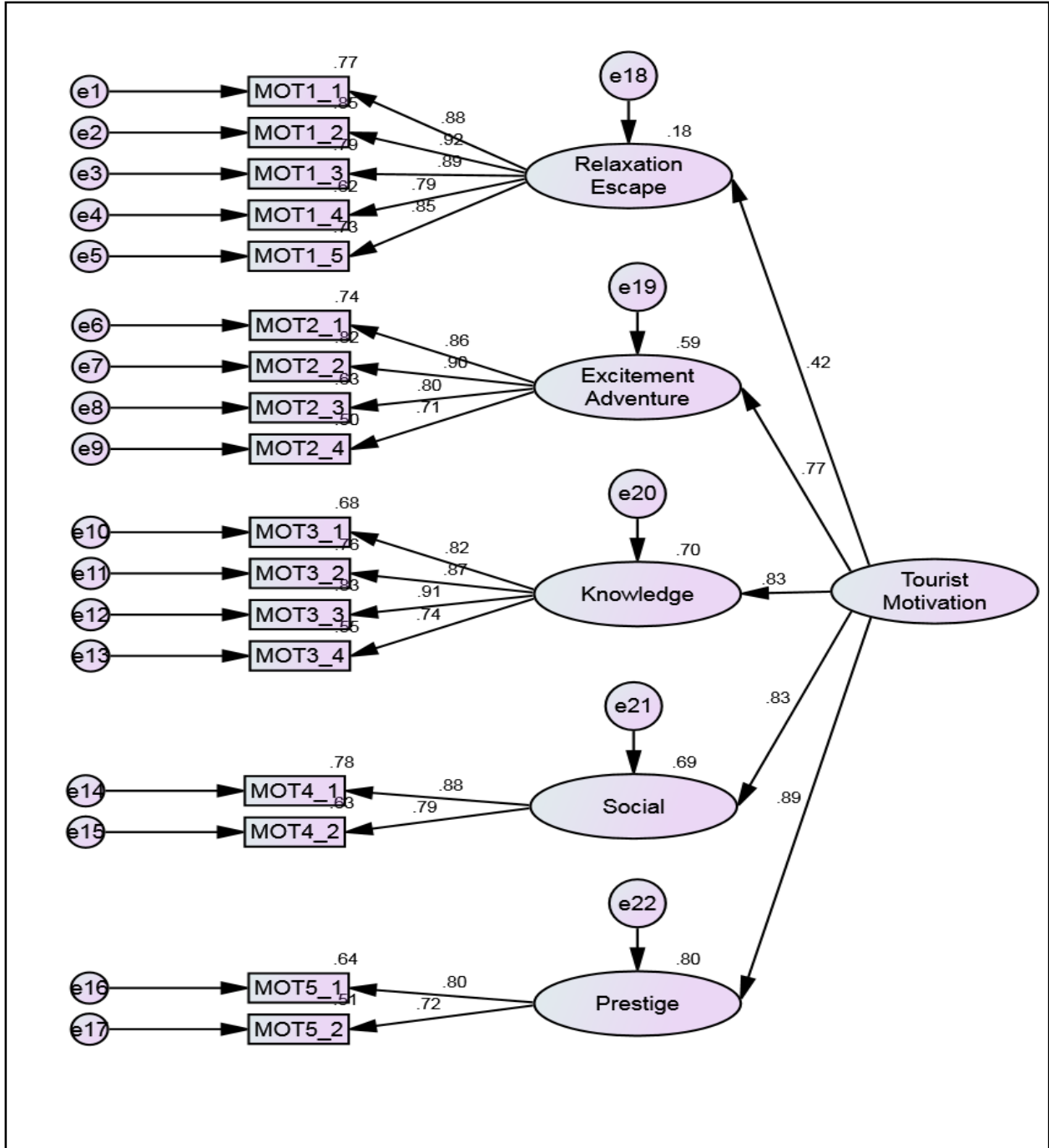


Figure 10 Original Tourist Motivation Instrument Model

Note: MOT (Tourist Motivation): MOT1 (relaxation/escape), MOT2 (excitement/adventure), MOT3 (knowledge), MOT4 (social), and MOT5 (prestige); each observed variables (items) was denoted as the instrument abbreviation, the order of dimension in the analysis, and number of item in the dimension. For example, MOT3\_4 represents the fourth item in the social dimension of the original instrument.

Table 13 explains the sequence of modification for tourist motivation instrument. The original model was denoted as M0, and the modified models were named as M1, M2, M3, and M4. The fit for modified models would be accomplished when the majority of the model fit indexes were qualified as a good fit. Most of the model fit indexes were at their cutoff points. The modification helped with decreasing the CMIN/DF.

**Table 13 The Sequence of Modification for Tourist Motivation Instrument**

Model No.	M0	M1	M2	M3	M4
Modified	-	MOT1_1	e2<->e3	e6<->e7	e3<->e4
Item					
CMIN ( $\chi^2$ )	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01
CMIN/DF ( $\chi^2$ /d.f.)	5.05	5.21	4.43	4.28	4.25*
GFI	0.92*	0.92*	0.93*	0.94*	0.94*
SRMR	0.07*	0.06*	0.06*	0.06*	0.06*
RMSEA	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.06*
NFI	0.94*	0.94*	0.95*	0.95*	0.96*
CFI	0.95*	0.95*	0.96*	0.96*	0.96*

Note: \* means the index reaches the fit criteria

In the tourist motivation instrument, after four modifications from the original tourist motivation model, the final model's goodness-of-fit statistics are: CMIN/DF (4.25<5.0), GFI (0.94>0.90), SRMR (0.06<0.08), RMSEA (0.06=0.06), NFI (0.96>0.90), and CFI (0.96>0.90) which indicates that M4 (final model) is a good fit. However, the chi-square (p-value<0.05) still did not reach the necessary criteria. The reason for that is chi-square test (p-value) might not be the most accurate index to define the model's fit because of its sensitivity to the sample size (Byrne, 2010).

All the standardized regression weights for the final modified model ranged from 0.45 to 0.93 (<0.95), the value of measurement errors are positive, and all the standard errors ranged

between 0.03 and 0.04 ( $<1.00$ ). Maradia's coefficient should be lower than  $p/(p+1)$ , where  $p$  is the number of observed variables to achieve the multivariate normality (Bollen, 1989). The Maradia's coefficient of final tourist motivation instrument is 125.02 ( $<272=16 \times 17$ ), which indicates that these items attain the requirement of normality in a multivariate level.

All the fit indexes indicate that the final modified model is a better fit than the original one. Therefore, the final model of tourist motivation instrument (M4) is considered as a good fit. The final modified tourist motivation instrument contained four items in relaxation/escape (MOT1) dimension, four items in excitement/adventure (MOT2) and knowledge (MOT3) dimensions, two items in social (MOT4) dimension, and two items in prestige (MOT5) dimension. Figure 11 displays the final modified model of tourist motivation instrument.



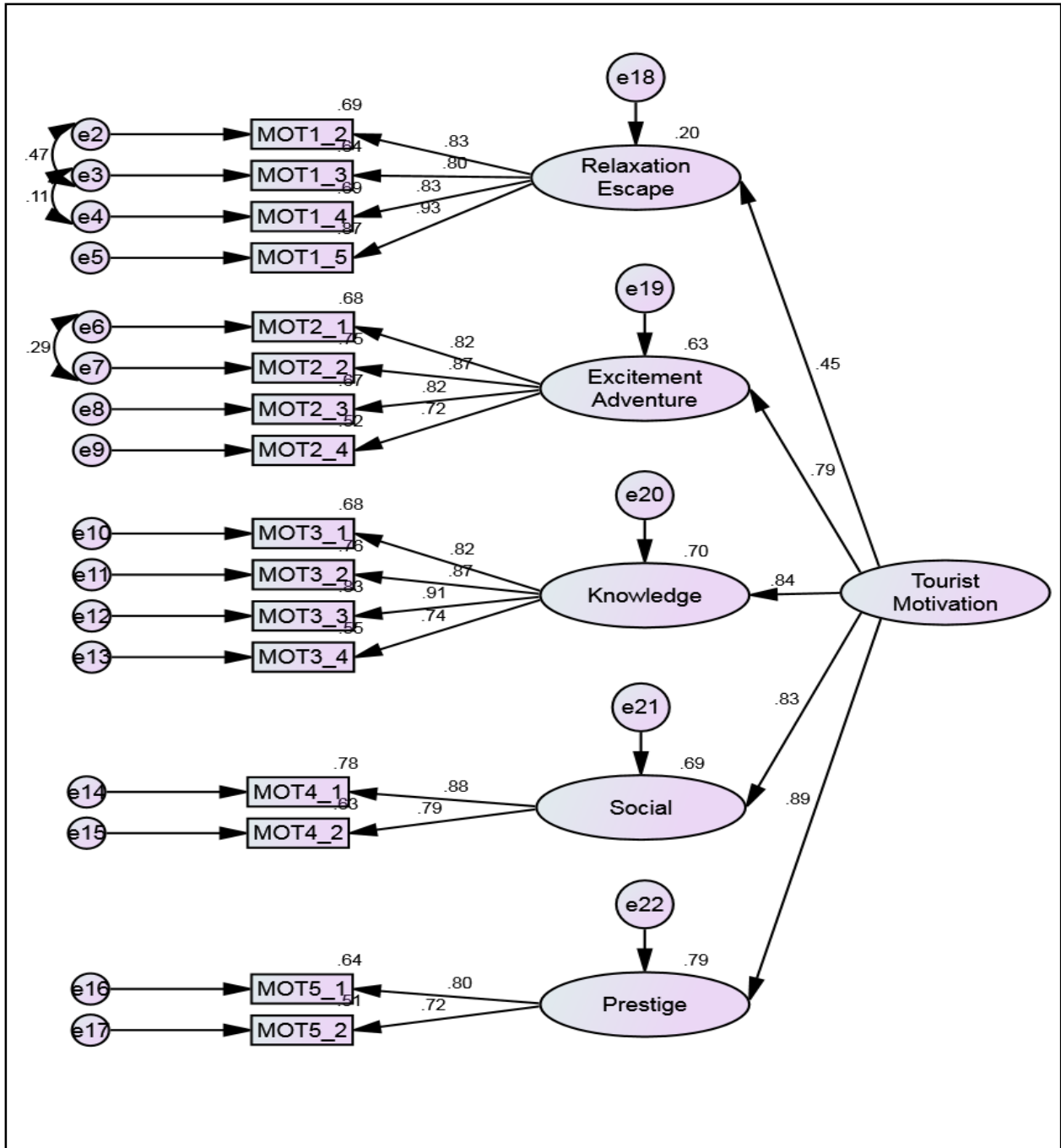


Figure 11 Modified Tourist Motivation Instrument Model

Note: MOT (Tourist Motivation): MOT1 (relaxation/escape), MOT2 (excitement/adventure), MOT3 (knowledge), MOT4 (social), and MOT5 (prestige); each observed variables (items) was denoted as the instrument abbreviation, the order of dimension in the analysis, and number of item in the dimension. For example, MOT3\_4 represents the fourth item in the social dimension of the original instrument.

In the final tourist motivation instrument (M4), squared multiple correlations ( $R^2$ ) ranged from 0.0.20 to 0.87. In addition, the composite reliability (CR) values are between 0.73 and 0.91 ( $>0.60$ ), and the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of all five dimensions in the instrument ranged from 0.73 to 0.92. The KMO of the final tourist motivation model is 0.92 ( $>0.50$ ) which indicates it is satisfactory for factor analysis. All of the above statistics indicate that the final modified tourist motivation instrument is reliable and valid. Table 12 represents the squared multiple correlation ( $R^2$ ), composite reliability (CR), and Cronbach's  $\alpha$  (alpha) for final tourist motivation instrument (M7).

**Table 14 The Regression Weights, error,  $R^2$ , Composite Reliability, and Alpha Value of the Final Tourist Motivation Instrument (M4)**

Tourist Motivation	Regression Weights	Error	$R^2$	CR	Alpha
					0.92
MOT -> MOT1	0.45*	0.02	0.20	0.91	0.92
	MOT1 -> MOT1_2	0.83*	0.01	0.69	
	MOT1 -> MOT1_3	0.80*	0.01	0.64	
	MOT1 -> MOT1_4	0.83*	0.01	0.69	
	MOT1 -> MOT1_5	0.93*	0.01	0.87	
MOT -> MOT2	0.79*	0.02	0.63	0.88	0.89
	MOT2 -> MOT2_1	0.82*	0.02	0.68	
	MOT2 -> MOT2_2	0.87*	0.02	0.75	
	MOT2 -> MOT2_3	0.82*	0.02	0.67	
	MOT2 -> MOT2_4	0.72*	0.02	0.52	
MOT -> MOT3	0.84*	0.02	0.70	0.90	0.90
	MOT3 -> MOT3_1	0.82*	0.02	0.68	
	MOT3 -> MOT3_2	0.87*	0.02	0.76	
	MOT3 -> MOT3_3	0.91*	0.01	0.83	
	MOT3 -> MOT3_4	0.74*	0.03	0.55	
MOT -> MOT4	0.83*	0.03	0.69	0.82	0.82
	MOT4 -> MOT4_1	0.88*	0.03	0.78	
	MOT4 -> MOT4_2	0.79*	0.03	0.63	
MOT -> MOT5	0.89*	0.02	0.79	0.73	0.73
	MOT5 -> MOT5_1	0.80*	0.04	0.64	
	MOT5 -> MOT5_2	0.72*	0.03	0.51	

Note: \* means that the effect is significant in  $p < 0.05$ , two-tailed.

### Measurement and structural model testing

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship among destination image, place attachment, and tourist motivation for Oklahoma State Park visitors. All of the four instrument models of the study were tested by conducting a confirmatory factor analysis. One of

the instruments was dropped from the rest of the analysis because of the issues that existed with that instrument which was discussed in the earlier section. Therefore, the instruments used for structural equation modeling are: cognitive image instrument, place attachment instrument, and tourist motivation instrument.

The structural equation model of this study consisted of three observed variables (CI1, CI2, and CI3) representing the cognitive image latent variable (CI), three observed variables (PA1, PA2, and PA3) representing the place attachment latent variable (PA), and five observed variables (MOT1, MOT2, MOT3, MOT4, and MOT5) representing the tourist motivation latent variable (MOT). The observed variables were computed from the average scores of remaining items from the confirmatory factor analysis. The structural model of the relationship among cognitive image, place attachment, and tourist motivation is presented in figure 12.

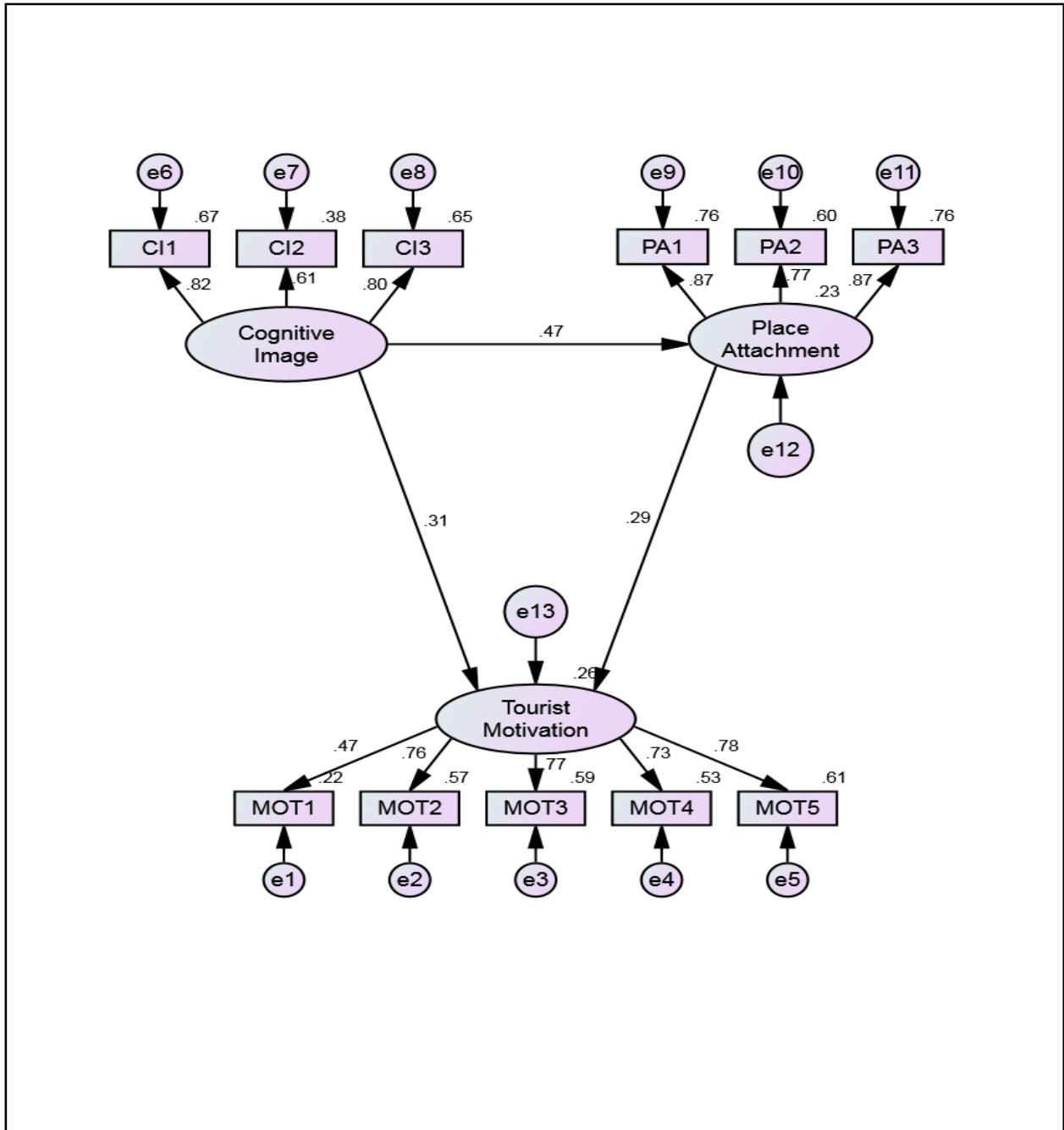


Figure 12 The Original Structural Model of the Relationship among Cognitive Image, Place Attachment, and Tourist Motivation.

Note: Latent variables: CI (cognitive image), PA (place attachment), and MOT (tourist motivation); observed variables: CI1 (quality of experience), CI2 (attractions), CI3 (value), PA1 (place identity), PA2 (place dependence), PA3 (social bonding), MOT1 (relaxation/escape), MOT2 (excitement/adventure), MOT3 (knowledge), MOT4 (social), MOT5 (prestige); e1 to e11 represent the error terms of observed variables, e12 and e13 represent the errors of latent variables.

In order to conduct structural equation modeling (SEM), the measurement model needed to be tested (Kline, 2005). The results showed that none of the goodness-of-fit indexes (except GFI) matched the criterion which means the modification of the model is necessary. The original measurement model is denoted as M0, and the following modified measurement models are labeled as M1 to M8. The fit indexes for the original and modified models are reported in Table 15.

**Table 15 The Fit Indexes of the Original and Modified Measurement Model**

Model No.	M0	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8
<b>Modified Item</b>	-	e1<->e4	e2<->e3	e3<->e4	MOT3	e4<->e5	e1<->e5	e2<->e4	e7<->e8
<b>CMIN (X<sup>2</sup>)</b>	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01
<b>CMIN/DF (X<sup>2</sup>/d.f.)</b>	11.73	9.68	9.22	8.67	7.55	6.72	5.59	5.20	4.86*
<b>GFI</b>	0.90*	0.92*	0.92*	0.93*	0.94*	0.95*	0.96*	0.96*	0.97*
<b>SRMR</b>	0.09	0.08	0.08	0.07*	0.07*	0.06*	0.05*	0.05*	0.04*
<b>RMSEA</b>	0.12	0.11	0.10	0.10	0.09	0.09	0.08	0.07	0.06*
<b>NFI</b>	0.88	0.91*	0.91*	0.92*	0.93*	0.94*	0.95*	0.96*	0.96*
<b>CFI</b>	0.89	0.91	0.92	0.93	0.94	0.95*	0.96*	0.97*	0.97*

Note: \* means the index reaches the fit criteria

In the final measurement model (M8), all the standardized regression weights scored between 0.35 and 0.88 (<0.95); all observed variables' error are positive, and all standard errors are between 0.01 and 0.05 (<1.00). The Maradia's coefficient of is 24.92 which is smaller than 110 (=10×11, 10 is the number of observed variables) which shows the model reached the multivariate normality assumption (Bollen, 1989).

Within the structural model, the fit indexes indicated that the structural model is considered as an acceptable fit. The majority of the fit statistics matched the requirement:

CMIN/DF (4.86 <5.00), GFI (0.97>0.90), SRMSR (0.04<0.08), NFI (0.96>0.90), CFI (0.97<0.90), and RMSEA is at its cutoff point (0.06). However, the structural model's chi-square p-value (CMIN) is less than 0.05. As is mentioned in the previous section, the chi-square alone is not appropriate for evaluation of a good model fit, because chi-square is strongly sensitive to the large sample size (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). Therefore, the final model has a better fit than the original model and is considered as an acceptable fit. The standardized parameter of the structural model is provided in figure 13.

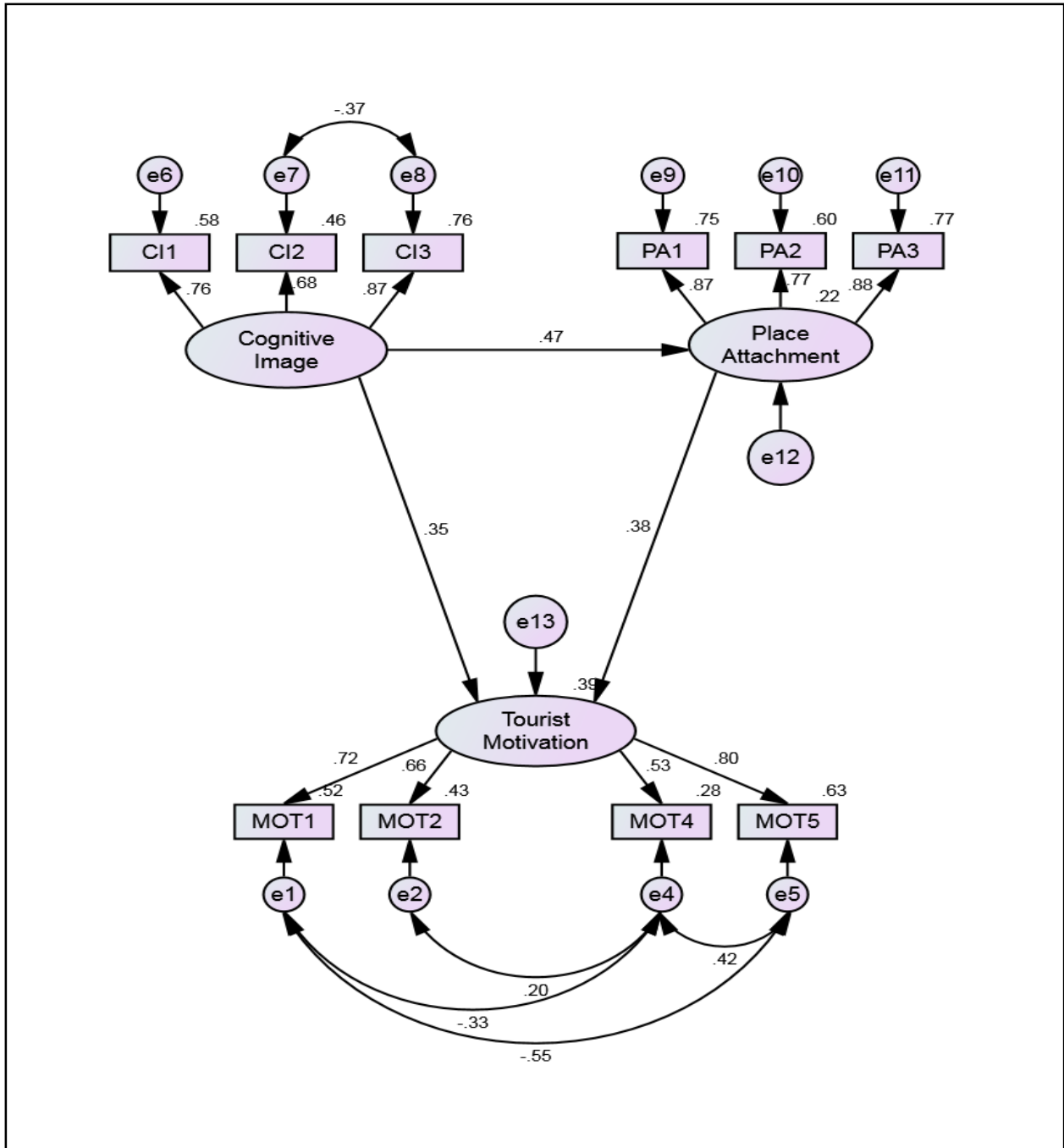


Figure 13 The Final Modified Structural Model of the Relationship among Cognitive Image, Place Attachment, and Tourist Motivation.

Note: Latent variables: CI (cognitive image), PA (place attachment), and MOT (tourist motivation); observed variables: CI1 (quality of experience), CI2 (attractions), CI3 (value), PA1 (place identity), PA2 (place dependence), PA3 (social bonding), MOT1 (relaxation/escape), MOT2 (excitement/adventure), MOT3 (knowledge), MOT5 (prestige); e1 to e11 represent the error terms of observed variables, e12 and e13 represent the errors of latent variables.



In the modified model, cognitive image (CI, latent variable) has moderate to strong loadings on three observed variables (CI1, CI2, and CI3) ranging from 0.68 to 0.87. The value dimension of the cognitive image represents the highest relationship (0.87) within the cognitive image construct. The covariance between attractions (CI2, e7) and value (CI3, e8) is significant and negatively correlated (-0.37). Place attachment (PA, latent variable) has the highest regression weights (0.88, 0.87, 0.77) on the three observed variables respectively (PA3, PA1, and PA2). Tourist motivation (MOT, latent variable) also has moderate to high factor loadings on all four observed variables (MOT1, MOT2, MOT4, and MOT5) ranging from 0.53 to 0.80. The direct impact from cognitive image to tourist motivation is 0.35 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Cognitive image also has direct impact on place attachment and its regression weight is 0.47 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Through place attachment, cognitive image has an indirect impact on tourist motivation ( $0.47 \times 0.38 = 0.18$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The direct impact of place attachment to tourist motivation is also statistically significant with a regression weight of 0.38 ( $p < 0.05$ ). In this model, place attachment creates an indirect impact between cognitive image and tourist motivation. Table 16 shows the direct effect, indirect effect, and covariance of the final modified model.

**Table 16 The Direct Effects, Indirect Effects, and Covariance of the Final Modified Model**

Direct Effect				
	Regression Weights		Error	R <sup>2</sup>
Cognitive Image	CI -> CI1	0.76*	0.02	0.58
	CI -> CI2	0.68*	0.03	0.46
	CI -> CI3	0.87*	0.02	0.76
Place Attachment	PA -> PA1	0.87*	0.02	0.75
	PA -> PA2	0.77*	0.02	0.60
	PA -> PA3	0.88*	0.01	0.77
Tourist Motivation	MOT -> MOT1	0.72*	0.02	0.53
	MOT -> MOT2	0.66*	0.03	0.43
	MOT -> MOT4	0.53*	0.05	0.28
	MOT -> MOT5	0.80*	0.04	0.63
CI -> PA		0.47*	0.07	0.22
PA -> MOT		0.38*	0.04	0.39
CI -> MOT		0.35*	0.07	0.00
Indirect Effect and Covariance				
CI -> PA -> MOT		0.18*		
e1 < -> e4		-0.33*		
e1 < -> e5		-0.55*		
e2 < -> e4		0.20*		
e4 < -> e5		0.42*		
e7 < -> e8		-0.37*		

Note: \* means that the effect is significant at the p<0.05 level, two-tailed.

### Findings of the study

Seven research questions were developed to achieve the study objectives. The primary purpose of this study is to determine the relationships among three constructs of destination image, place attachment, and tourist motivation in order to identify if tourists' motivation is influenced by destination image and place attachment. The following section will present each

research question and the result of the statistical analysis which aids in answering the research question.

**Research Question 1:** Does the cognitive component of destination image significantly influence the place attachment of tourists who visit Oklahoma State Parks?

H<sub>1</sub>: Cognitive component of destination image does not influence the place attachment of tourists who visit Oklahoma State Parks.

In the final structural model, the direct relationship between cognitive component of destination image and place attachment is 0.47 ( $p < 0.05$ ), which indicates that cognitive image of the destination has a significant positive influence on place attachment of tourists who visit Oklahoma State Parks. Therefore, the researcher rejects the first hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>) of the study.

**Research Question 2:** Does the affective component of destination image significantly influence the place attachment of tourists who visit Oklahoma State Parks?

H<sub>2</sub>: Affective component of destination image does not influence the place attachment of tourists who visit Oklahoma State Parks.

The affective component of the destination image was dropped from the analysis because of the issues associated with it, which was mentioned in the previous section of this chapter. As a result, the second research question could not be answered.

**Research Question 3:** Does cognitive component of destination image significantly influence the affective component of destination image for tourists who visit Oklahoma State Parks?

H<sub>3</sub>: Cognitive component of destination image does not influence the affective component of destination image for tourists who visit Oklahoma State Parks.

Since the affective component of destination image was dropped from the analysis, the researcher was unable to answer the third research question.

**Research Question 4:** Does cognitive image of Oklahoma State Parks significantly influence tourists' motivation for visiting the park?

H<sub>4</sub>: Cognitive image of Oklahoma State Parks does not have an influence on tourists' motivation for visiting the park.

According to the final structural model, cognitive component of destination image has a significant positive relationship ( $\beta=0.35$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) with tourist motivation. Thus, cognitive image of Oklahoma State Parks significantly influences tourists' motivation for visiting the park. Therefore, the researcher rejects the fourth research question of the study (H<sub>4</sub>).

**Research Question 5:** Does cognitive component of destination image have an indirect influence through place attachment on tourists' motivation to visit Oklahoma State Parks?

H<sub>5</sub>: Cognitive component of destination image does not have an indirect influence through place attachment on tourists' motivation to visit Oklahoma State Parks.

There is a significant positive relationship between cognitive image and tourist motivation through place attachment. The indirect relationship between cognitive component of destination image and tourist motivation is 0.18 ( $p<0.05$ ) which is smaller than the direct relationship between cognitive image and tourist motivation ( $\beta=0.35$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Therefore, the cognitive component of destination image has an indirect influence through place attachment on

tourists' motivation to visit Oklahoma State Parks. As a result, the researcher rejects the fifth hypothesis of the study (H<sub>5</sub>).

**Research Question 6:** Does affective image of Oklahoma State Parks significantly influence tourists' motivation for visiting the park?

H<sub>6</sub>: Affective image of Oklahoma State Parks does not have an influence on tourists' motivation for visiting the park.

The sixth research question could not be answered because the question was associated with the affective component of destination image which was dropped from the analysis.

**Research Question 7:** Does place attachment of Oklahoma State Park tourists significantly influence their motivation for visiting the park?

H<sub>7</sub>: Place attachment of Oklahoma State Park tourists does not influence their motivation for visiting the park.

The structural model of the study indicates that place attachment has a significant positive relationship with tourist motivation ( $\beta=0.38$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). This result confirms that place attachment of Oklahoma State Park tourists significantly influences their motivation for visiting the park. Therefore, the researcher rejects the seventh hypothesis (H<sub>7</sub>) of the study.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

This chapter presents a summary of the study including: discussion of findings, conclusions, implications, limitations, and recommendations. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship among three important constructs of destination image, place attachment, and tourist motivation. Three major objectives of the study were: (1) to identify tourists' cognitive and affective images of Oklahoma State Parks as tourist destinations; (2) to explore the place attachment of Oklahoma State Park tourists; and (3) to examine the influence of destination image and place attachment on tourists' motivation for visiting the parks. In this study, the relationships among destination image, place attachment, and tourist motivation have been examined simultaneously.

#### **Discussion of findings**

In order to achieve objectives of this study, a structural model of the relationship between destination image, place attachment, and tourist motivation were proposed, and based on that several research questions were developed. The original proposed model of the relationship between destination image, place attachment, and tourist motivation could not be tested because of the problems associated with the affective component of destination image. Therefore, the

model was tested without the affective component of destination image and the results of the structural equation modeling for the modified model were significant. Although the original model was not considered as a good model fit, after several modifications, all model fit indexes reached the fit criteria, except the p-value of CMIN ( $p < 0.05$ ).

The main objective of the study was to identify tourists' cognitive and affective image of Oklahoma State Parks as tourist destinations, and the influence of destination image on place attachment and motivation for repeat visit. The attributes used in the cognitive image instrument were based on the research of Baloglu and McCleary (1999b). This study examined three cognitive attributes: 1) Quality of experience, 2) Attractions, and 3) Value/Environment. Quality of experience (CI1) originally included eight items: cleanliness (CI1\_1), quality of infrastructure (CI1\_2), personal safety (CI1\_3), interpretive programs (CI1\_4), quality of room/cabin/campsite (CI1\_5), cuisine (CI1\_6), lake/river activities (CI1\_7), and friendly staff (CI1\_8).

After conducting confirmatory factor analysis and modifying the model to fit the data, three factors (interpretive programs, cuisine, and lake/river activities) were dropped from this component. Therefore, the quality of experience (CI1) factor in the final model of this study included only five items: cleanliness (CI1\_1), quality of infrastructure (CI1\_2), personal safety (CI1\_3), quality of room/cabin/campsite (CI1\_5), and friendly staff (CI1\_8). The second factor in cognitive image component was attractions. Attractions (CI2) included three items originally: cultural attractions/events (CI2\_1), historical attractions/events (CI2\_2), natural attractions/events (CI2\_3). After modification, the attractions (CI2) factor maintained two items: cultural attractions/events (CI2\_1), and historical attractions/events (CI2\_2). The third component of cognitive image was value/environment (CI3). Value/environment dimension of cognitive image composed of three factors: good value (CI3\_1), unspoiled environment (CI3\_2),

and good climate (CI3\_3). All of the items in the value/environment dimension of cognitive image maintained in the final modified model.

In the present study, several tangible and intangible items were identified to be significant for Oklahoma State Park tourists. With respect to the cognitive attributes of destination image, study participants identified several attributes and rated them based on the importance of that attribute. In the final structural equation model the value/environment dimension of the cognitive image had the highest factor loadings. The results indicate that it is important for Oklahoma State Park tourists to get a good value for the money they spend, and they also enjoy the unspoiled environment of the park. So the value/environment dimension of the destination image was the first priority for Oklahoma State Park tourists. The quality of experiences that they get at the park was the second significant factor in developing destination image. The attractions component of destination image had smaller factor loadings compared to the other two dimensions. These results indicate that a cultural/historical attraction or an event within the park was not the priority for Oklahoma State Park tourists. Although, tourists were interested in cultural/historical attractions or events, their main reason to be in the park was mostly because of the park environment.

The scale of the affective image previously tested by Baloglu and McCleary (1999b) has been utilized in a variety of destination settings. However, it has not been tested in a recreation setting. Therefore, it was worthwhile to utilize this instrument in this study. Four affective components of this study were: 1) Distressing/Relaxing (AI1), 2) Unpleasant/Pleasant (AI2), 3) Gloomy/Exciting (AI3), and 4) Sleepy/Arousing (AI4). The present study could not confirm the affective component of destination image for Oklahoma State Park tourists. However, this result was consistent with some previous studies which considered destination image as a one



dimensional construct (Chen & Kerstetter, 1999; Court & Lupton, 1997; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Hui & Wan, 2003; Leisen, 2001). This finding implies that cognitive attributes were the most important factors in the development of destination image for Oklahoma State Park tourists. Cognitive image also had a direct impact on place attachment of Oklahoma State Park tourists, and its regression weight was 0.47 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This indicates that the cognitive image of Oklahoma State Parks have a significant influence on the development of place attachment for tourist who visit these parks.

Place attachment concept has been examined in several recreation settings. Previous research found three dimensions of place attachment (place identity, place dependence, and social bonding) across different settings (Kyle, Graefe, & Manning, 2005). The current study also confirmed the existence of the three dimensions of place attachment in tourists who visit Oklahoma State Parks. This study included eleven items associated with place attachment. These items were divided into three sub-dimensions: place identity (PA1), place dependence (PA2), and social bonding (PA3). Based on the findings of the present study, it appeared that place attachment had a significant influence on motivation for repeat visits to Oklahoma State Parks. In the final structural model, social bonding dimension had the highest regression weights followed by place identity, and place dependence. Therefore, Oklahoma State Park tourists had a special connection to these parks more than identification with or dependence on the park.

Additionally, in the final model, the researcher rejected the fifth hypothesis ( $H_5$ ) of the study which indicates that place attachment could be used as a factor between cognitive image and tourist motivation for understanding the possible relationship between the destination image of Oklahoma State Park tourists and their motivation for visiting the park. The fifth hypothesis ( $H_5$ ) was composed of two directional relationships including a positive and significant

relationship between cognitive image and place attachment, and tourist motivation and place attachment. The direct impact of place attachment to tourist motivation was also statistically significant with a regression weight of 0.38 ( $p < 0.05$ ). As a result, incorporating the concept of place attachment into destination image framework can facilitate an understanding of the formulation of tourist motivation for visiting Oklahoma State Park.

Previous studies suggested that destination image and place attachment may play an important role in predicting tourists' motivation for visit. Huang and Hsu (2009) indicated that the image of a destination is an important factor for attracting a person to visit and motivate the repeat visits. Destination image is highly related to tourist motivation and can create motivation for travel. Motivation plays an important role in destination image formation. Researchers claimed that destination image and tourist motivation are the most important phases in tourist destination selection process (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Gallarza et al., 2002). Pearce (1993) recommended that the relationship between motivations and destination image should be studied in order to better understand tourist behavior.

The scale of tourist motivation utilized for this study was developed by Baloglu and McCleary (1999b). Tourist motivation originally included seventeen items and five sub-dimensions. The five sub-dimensions of tourist motivation included: relaxation/escape (MOT1), excitement/adventure (MOT2), knowledge (MOT3), social (MOT4), and prestige (MOT5). The third dimension of tourist motivation (knowledge, MOT3) was dropped from the structural equation model after the modification which indicates that the knowledge (MOT3) dimension is not a motivating factor for visit. Therefore, the structural model of the relationship between destination image, place attachment, and tourist motivation, only included four dimensions in the tourist motivation construct. The prestige (MOT5) dimension of tourist motivation had the

highest factor loading, followed by relaxation/escape (MOT1), excitement/adventure (MOT2), and social (MOT4).

Cognitive image significantly influenced tourist motivation and the direct impact of cognitive image to tourist motivation was 0.35 ( $p < 0.05$ ). The direct impact of place attachment to tourist motivation was also statistically significant with a regression weight of 0.38 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Tourist motivation was also influenced by the indirect effect of cognitive image through place attachment. The indirect relationship between cognitive image and tourist motivation was 0.18. This finding reveals that after developing cognitive destination image, the attachment of tourists to Oklahoma State Parks can influence their motivation for repeat visit.

## **Conclusion**

This study proposed a comprehensive theoretical model of the relationship between cognitive component of destination image, place attachment and motivation for visit for tourists who visited Oklahoma State Parks. Overall, the findings revealed that the three constructs of destination image, place attachment, and tourist motivation were applicable to Oklahoma State Park tourists. More specifically, this study developed a significant structural model which may provide a better understanding of tourists' conceptualizations of the image of Oklahoma State Parks as tourist destinations, their attachment to the park, and their motivation for repeat visit.

The present study also identified several components of destination image for Oklahoma State Parks. The findings suggested that the cognitive image plays an important role in formulating tourists' destination image. The current study revealed that three dimensions of place attachment existed for tourists who visit Oklahoma State Parks: place identity, place dependence, and social bonding. The results confirmed that place attachment is a multi-

dimensional construct and social bonding should be considered as an individual dimension representing the connection between people and place (Kyle, Bricker, et al., 2004; Kyle & Chick, 2007).

Exploring the relationship between destination image and place attachment provided more insight to understand tourists' decision-making processes. The results indicated that incorporating two concepts, destination image and place attachment, to explore their influence on motivation for visit can help in understanding tourists' behaviors. The application of the concept of place attachment to tourist motivation supports an understanding that tourists' motivation for revisit is not only related to the functions of cognitive beliefs about the destinations but also to the symbolic meanings of the places (Klenosky et al., 2007).

### **Implications**

This study proposed a comprehensive theoretical model that contributes to the literature as a first step towards a synthetic framework bringing together the destination image and place attachment theories. The current study supported that the framework of cognitive destination image could be applied to the study of Oklahoma State Park tourists. Destination image is an important variable that influences tourists' intentions for visit (Chen & Tsai, 2006). Improving tourists' destination image can increase their visitation intention. Therefore, knowing which cognitive components have the most profound effects on destination image can increase understanding of how to attract people to revisit the parks.

Place attachment is an emotional construct that can provide more insights on why people revisit certain places. Therefore, knowing which place attachment dimensions have the most important effects on visitation intention can help in designing better promotional packages for

tourists. More importantly, knowing which cognitive destination images have the most important effects on place attachment can provide useful information for developing effective marketing strategies to strengthen tourists' bonding to the parks and to inspire first-time visitors to become repeat visitors.

This study also shed some light on a less explored area of the effect of destination image and place attachment on tourists' motivation for re-visitation. By linking destination image, place attachment, and tourist motivation in the model, this study suggested that destination image, and place attachment dimensions positively influence tourist motivation which provided useful practical implications for destination management. Understanding the significance and attachments tourists assign to the destinations is necessary for effective destination marketing and tourism planning.

### **Limitations**

Although the findings of the study were significant and informative, there were some limitations:

First, the use of an online survey and email list might be a source of bias. The data collection was limited to the email list and people who was recruited through cards and posters distributed throughout the parks. This study might have missed a portion of the population that is not technologically savvy. Moreover, using an online questionnaire presented a challenge. Some people refused to respond to the questionnaire because they were afraid that it was a phishing email. Unfortunately, they did not read the email or consent page carefully. There were also some concerns about how their emails were obtained, and disposition of their demographic information, specifically their income. Additionally, people who usually volunteer to participate

tend to be more attached to particular places. Therefore, the attached tourists might be overrepresented in the sample. However, online surveys allow participant to respond at their convenience and foster the sense of anonymity, so it was considered legitimate for this study. Furthermore, using a convenient sample might provide some source of bias and limit the generalizability of the results of the study. However, convenience sample helps in collecting useful information that would not have been possible using probability sampling techniques. Within the convenient sample of this study, all responses were voluntary, independent and mutually exclusive which specifies some elements of randomness.

A second limitation of this study was associated with the data. The data were tested on the combined data set (pooled data) regardless of the destinations. Although the three selected Oklahoma State Parks (Beavers Bend State Park, Robbers Cave State Park, and Sequoyah State Park) shared similar features and facilities, there are some features specific and unique to each destination. Therefore, it is possible that responses would be different for each park.

The third limitation was related to the study participants. Only people who had made reservations at a cabin or lodge in the three selected Oklahoma State Parks (Beavers Bend State Park, Robbers Cave State Park, and Sequoyah State Park) on the second and third quarter of 2014 were included in the survey. Therefore, the sample was limited to visitors who spent at least one night in one of the three state parks from April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 to September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014. As a result, the generalizability of the findings was limited. Future research would be needed to sample a wider time frame so that the researcher can validate claims made in this study.

## **Future studies and recommendations**

This study was the first step in developing a theoretical model of the relationship between destination image, place attachment, and tourist motivation. A possible recommendation for future researchers is to test the model in a different setting. Additionally, the scales used for this study were based on existing instruments. For future studies it might be worthwhile to improve or redesign the instrument which perfectly matches the park setting. Finally, future studies may consider including both overnight and day visitors for testing the model because these two groups might have different point of views.

Based on the results and conclusion of the study, there are some suggestions for Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department on how to provide a favorable destination image and increase tourists' attachments to the parks and motivate repeat visits to Oklahoma State Parks.

First, it is necessary to recognize the important attributes that are associated with developing a favorable image of the park as a tourist destination. Oklahoma State Park tourists considered the value that they get for the money they spend as the highest indicator in developing destination image. Some characteristics such as quality of infrastructure, cleanliness, and quality of room/cabin/campsite ranked high in developing the destination image. Therefore, an increased emphasis on specific aspects of guest services such as cleanliness and quality of room/cabin/campsite is needed. It is important that Oklahoma State Parks attempt to improve their facilities and services in order to generate repeat visits. Furthermore, friendliness of staff was also considered as an important indicator of destination image. So, an investment in staff training and supervision can provide significant benefits in developing a favorable destination image.

Second, findings suggested that Oklahoma State Park tourists have a special connection to the parks and they tend to bring their families and friends to these properties. Findings suggested that visitors are attached to the parks and some of them even identify themselves with these parks. Word-of-mouth from friends and relatives is one of the most relied-upon sources of information for destination selection. This can be a great opportunity for Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department to take advantage of this attachment and word-of-mouth, and improve their services in order to provide a positive word-of-mouth and attract repeat visits.

Third, Oklahoma State Park tourists did consider the parks as places for relaxation and escape from the crowds and stress of daily life. Social dimension of tourist motivation was also a significant contributor to motivation for visit. This result was consistent with the findings of place attachment instrument. However, factor loadings for tourist motivation instrument were smaller in the final model compare to the factor loadings for cognitive image and place attachment. This indicates that tourists were not motivated as much as they were attached to Oklahoma State Parks. Therefore, Oklahoma State Parks should find ways to generate repeat visits by providing marketing promotions such as loyalty programs to State Park visitors.



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## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix A

### Participant Information Sheet

Hello

My name is Fatemeh (Tannaz) Soltani, a doctoral student in Leisure Studies at Oklahoma State University. I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to participate in an online research survey. The purpose of this research is to investigate how destination image and individuals' attachment to the destination may affect their motivation for visiting the destination.

Your response is valuable to the success of this study. Please take about 15 minutes to complete this survey. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate. Your response to this survey is voluntary and your answers will be kept totally confidential.

Please feel free to contact the researcher or the advisor, if you have any questions or concerns about this survey.

<b>Principal Investigator:</b>  Fatemeh (Tannaz) Soltani 180 Colvin Center OSU-Stillwater campus 405-762-3585 tannaz.soltani@okstate.edu	<b>PI's Advisor:</b>  Lowell Caneday, 180 Colvin Center OSU-Stillwater campus 405-744-5033 lowell.caneday@okstate.edu
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If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office at [irb@okstate.edu](mailto:irb@okstate.edu).

Note that Qualtrics has specific privacy policies of their own. If you have concerns you should consult this service directly. Qualtrics' privacy statement is provided at:  
<http://qualtrics.com/privacy-statement>

Thank you in advance for your participation and for volunteering your valuable time. I strongly urge you to participate in this very important survey to help the tourism industry serve you better. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Fatemeh (Tannaz) Soltani  
Doctoral Candidate  
Oklahoma State University

Please click "Next" if you choose to participate

## Appendix B

### Research Instrument

Select the Oklahoma State Park you most recently visited

- Beavers Bend State Park                     
  Robbers Cave State Park                     
  Sequoyah State Park

#### Destination image instrument

#### Cognitive image instrument

This section focuses on your perception or image of \_\_\_\_\_ State Park. Your perception/image includes how you **Think** and **Feel** about \_\_\_\_\_ State Park.

	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Standard Hygiene and Cleanliness	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of Infrastructure	1	2	3	4	5
Personal Safety	1	2	3	4	5
Nature Center & Interpretive Programs	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of Room/Cabin/Campsite	1	2	3	4	5
Appealing Local Food (Cuisine)	1	2	3	4	5
Lake/River Activities	1	2	3	4	5
Interesting and Friendly Staff	1	2	3	4	5
Interesting Cultural Attractions	1	2	3	4	5
Interesting Historical Attractions/Events	1	2	3	4	5
Beautiful Scenery/Natural Attractions/Events	1	2	3	4	5
Good Value for Money	1	2	3	4	5
Unpolluted/Unspoiled Environment	1	2	3	4	5
Good Climate	1	2	3	4	5

### Affective image instrument

In this section, please indicate which words below best describe \_\_\_\_\_ State Park as a tourist destination.

	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Distressing</b>					<b>Relaxing</b>
<b>Unpleasant</b>					<b>Pleasant</b>
<b>Gloomy</b>					<b>Exciting</b>
<b>Sleepy</b>					<b>Arousing</b>

### Place attachment instrument

This section focuses on your attachment to \_\_\_\_\_ State Park. Below you will read several statements regarding your experiences at \_\_\_\_\_ State Park. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
_____ State Park means a lot to me.	1	2	3	4	5
I am very attached to _____ State Park.	1	2	3	4	5
I identify strongly with _____ State Park.	1	2	3	4	5
Visiting _____ State Park says a lot about who I am.	1	2	3	4	5
_____ State Park is the best place for what I like to do.	1	2	3	4	5
I get more satisfaction out of visiting _____ State Park than from visiting any other park.	1	2	3	4	5
Doing what I do at _____ State Park is more important than doing it in any other place.	1	2	3	4	5
I wouldn't substitute any other park for the type of things I do at _____ State Park.	1	2	3	4	5
I have a lot of fond memories about _____ State Park.	1	2	3	4	5
I have a special connection to _____ State Park and the people who visit it.	1	2	3	4	5
I do tell many people about _____ State Park.	1	2	3	4	5
I bring my family/friends to _____ State Park.	1	2	3	4	5



## Tourist motivation instrument

This section focuses on your reasons for visiting \_\_\_\_\_ State Park. Following is a list of reasons or motivations you may have for visiting \_\_\_\_\_ State Park. For each of the listed reasons, please choose the number that best represents how much you agree that the reason is a motivating factor for you to visit \_\_\_\_\_ State Park.

	<b>Not at all important</b>	<b>Not important</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very important</b>
Relieving stress and tension	1	2	3	4	5
Getting away from demands of everyday life	1	2	3	4	5
Relaxing physically and mentally	1	2	3	4	5
Getting away from crowds	1	2	3	4	5
Escaping from the routine	1	2	3	4	5
Doing exciting things	1	2	3	4	5
Finding thrills and excitement	1	2	3	4	5
Being adventurous	1	2	3	4	5
Having fun, being entertained	1	2	3	4	5
Learning new things, increasing my knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
Experiencing different cultures and ways of life	1	2	3	4	5
Enriching myself intellectually	1	2	3	4	5
Experiencing new/different places	1	2	3	4	5
Meeting people with similar interests	1	2	3	4	5
Developing close friendships	1	2	3	4	5
Going places my friends have not been	1	2	3	4	5
Telling my friends about the park	1	2	3	4	5

## Demographic information

This section contains the basic demographic information of the respondent/participant. Please check or type in the appropriate response.

1. What is your gender?  
 Male                       Female
  
2. What is your age?  
 18-24  
 25-34  
 35-44  
 45-54  
 55-64  
 65+
  
3. What is your ethnicity?  
 Caucasian (White)  
 African-American  
 Hispanic  
 Asian  
 Native American  
 Other
  
4. What is your highest level of education?  
 Less than High School  
 High School or Equivalent  
 Associate's Degree  
 Bachelor's Degree  
 Master's Degree  
 Professional Degree  
 Doctorate  
 Other
  
5. What is your annual household income level?  
 Less than \$25,000  
 \$25,000 - \$49,999  
 \$50,000 - \$74,999  
 \$75,000 - \$99,999  
 \$100,000 - \$124,999  
 \$125,000 or more

6. What is your five digit residential zip code?

7. Please select the group that best defines you.

- Lodge Guest
- Cabin Guest
- Tent Camper
- RV Camper

8. For how long have you visited this park?

- First visit
- Up to 2 Years
- 2-5 Years
- More than 5 years

9. Do you consider yourself as a “**Tourist**”?

- Yes
- No

Thank you for your assistance in this important survey!

## Appendix C

### Request for Conducting Research



**School of Applied Health and Educational Psychology**

434 Willard Hall - Main Office  
180 Colvin Recreation Center  
Stillwater, OK 74078-4033

P 405-744-6040  
F 405-744-6756

[www.okstate.edu/education/sahep](http://www.okstate.edu/education/sahep)  
July 30, 2014

Kris Marek  
Division Director  
Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department  
120 North Robinson, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73102

Dear Ms. Marek:

As a doctoral candidate at Oklahoma State University, I am completing my dissertation under the direction of Dr. Lowell Caneday. I have also been a member of the research teams on the lodge feasibility study and the resource management plans. While the recent work is very gratifying, I seek your permission to begin a new study in the state park system for my dissertation.


The purpose of my research is to determine the relationships among destination image, place attachment, and tourist motivation in order to identify whether tourists' motivation is influenced by destination image and place attachment. I would like to investigate how the image of the park and the individual's attachment to the park may affect their motivation for repeat visits. I would like to survey overnight visitors who stayed at lodges, cabins, and campgrounds in three state parks. I seek permission to use three of your state parks as research sites: Beavers Bend State Park, Robbers Cave State Park, and Sequoyah State Park. I seek to elicit respondents who stayed at these parks during the second and third quarter of 2014 calendar year. I also would like to have the opportunity to survey visitors who stayed at these parks during the first quarter of 2014 calendar year in case I am unable to acquire enough responses from the original two quarters. I do not anticipate the process to extend beyond October 2014.

This study will provide an advanced understanding of the motivations for visiting a park. The results will help in understanding how destination image leads to meaningful attachments to the park which later results in motivation for repeat visits. Generating repeat visits is very valuable to tourism-based organizations such as Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department and helps managers to understand how to efficiently provide an appropriate destination image and increase a favorable place attachment toward the destination and to generate repeat visits. This information can help in destination planning and marketing as well as assisting in targeting the specific segments of the population.

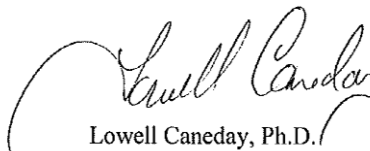
The research shall be approved through Oklahoma State University's Institutional Review Board, ensuring proper research protocol and protection for human subjects. All information collected will be anonymous and confidential. Upon completion of the dissertation, I would be happy to provide you with a copy of the final document. Therefore, I request your and your agency's approval to contact visitors at the three properties listed above. I would contact Janet Logan to

acquire email contacts for lodge and cabin guests during the specified times. These lodge and cabin guests would be contacted by email to complete an online survey. We would post invitations in campgrounds using URLs and QR codes to invite responses from campers, linking them to the same survey. I appreciate your time and efforts on my behalf, and look forward to continuing the great relationships between OTRD and OSU. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Fatemeh (Tannaz) Soltani  
Doctoral Candidate  
Oklahoma State University  
180 Colvin Center  
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078  
fatemes@ostatemail.okstate.edu



Lowell Caneday, Ph.D.  
Regents Professor  
Oklahoma State University  
180 Colvin Center  
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078  
lowell.caneday@okstate.edu  
405.744.5503

## Appendix D

### Permission for Conducting the Research



OKLAHOMA TOURISM &  
RECREATION DEPARTMENT

120 NORTH ROBINSON  
SUITE 600  
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK  
73102

P.O. BOX 52002  
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK  
73152

405-230-8300

August 20, 2014

Fatemeh Soltani, Doctoral Candidate  
Oklahoma State University  
180 Colvin Center  
Stillwater, OK 74078

Dear Ms. Soltani:

We have reviewed your research request and see the value of knowing more about the influence of attachment to a park on repeat visits. Please proceed with Institutional Review Board approval for this work.

I have copied this letter to our Division Sales Manager Janet Logan who can help with e-mail information you seek. We understand that the sites you wish to research include Beavers Bend, Robbers Cave and Sequoyah State Park. The lodge at Sequoyah has a renovation project which started in August of 2014 which may create some difficulty obtaining information during a portion of the third quarter of 2014.

We look forward to seeing the results of your study. Best of luck on the project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kris Marek".

Kris Marek, Director  
Oklahoma State Parks

C: Janet Logan  
Lowell Caneday, Regents Professor

OKLAHOMA  
NATIVE AMERICA

OKLAHOMA  
STATE PARKS

INTEGRIS  
DISCOVER  
OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma  
TODAY

OKLAHOMA  
FILM &  
MUSIC

## Appendix E

### Institutional Review Board Approval

#### Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Friday, August 22, 2014  
IRB Application No ED14119  
Proposal Title: The Relationship among Destination Image, Place Attachment, and Tourist Motivation for Oklahoma State Parks

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

**Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 8/21/2017**

Principal Investigator(s):

Fatemeh (Tannaz) Soltani	Lowell Caneday
180 Colvin Center	180 Colvin Center
Stillwater, OK 74078	Stillwater, OK 74075

---

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.


The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI advisor, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of the research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Dawnett Watkins 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, dawnett.watkins@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

  
Hugh Crethar, Chair  
Institutional Review Board

## Appendix F

### Invitation Email

Hello

My name is Fatemeh (Tannaz) Soltani, a doctoral student in Leisure Studies at Oklahoma State University. I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to participate in an online research survey. The purpose of this research is to understand your motivations for visiting Oklahoma State Parks.

Your response is valuable to the success of this study. This survey will take less than 15 minutes of your time. Your response to this survey is voluntary and your answers will be kept totally confidential. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate.

If you have any questions regarding the questionnaire, you may contact me directly at [tannaz.soltani@okstate.edu](mailto:tannaz.soltani@okstate.edu) or by phone at [405-762-3585](tel:405-762-3585).

If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) at [irb@okstate.edu](mailto:irb@okstate.edu).

To access the survey click here: <http://goo.gl/5XJh1C>

Thank you in advance for your participation and for volunteering your valuable time. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Tannaz Soltani  
Doctoral Candidate  
Oklahoma State University



## Appendix G

### Reminder Email

Dear visitor to Oklahoma State Parks

You are invited to participate in an online research survey.

If you have already responded to the survey, please disregard this e-mail and thank you for your response.

**This study is approved by Oklahoma State Parks, a part of OTRD, and the Institutional Review Board at Oklahoma State University for protection of human subjects. As a result, all information is confidential and well protected. Your email contact is not being shared. Your identity is protected.**

The purpose of this research is to understand your motivations for visiting Oklahoma State Parks. This study is part of a doctoral dissertation being conducted at Oklahoma State University.

Your response is extremely valuable to the success of this study. This survey will take less than 15 minutes of your time. Your response to this survey is voluntary and your answers will be kept totally confidential. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate.

If you have any questions regarding the questionnaire, you may contact me directly at [tannaz.soltani@okstate.edu](mailto:tannaz.soltani@okstate.edu) or by phone at [405-762-3585](tel:405-762-3585).

If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) at [irb@okstate.edu](mailto:irb@okstate.edu).

To access the survey click here: <http://goo.gl/5XJh1C>

Thank you in advance for your participation and for volunteering your valuable time. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Tannaz Soltani  
Doctoral Candidate  
Oklahoma State University

## Appendix H

### Invitation Poster



OKLAHOMA  
STATE  
UNIVERSITY™

# The Relationship among Destination Image, Place Attachment, and Tourist Motivation for Oklahoma State Parks

You are invited to participate in an  
online research survey.



The purpose of this research is to investigate how  
destination image and individuals' attachment to the  
destination may affect motivation for visiting the  
destination. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Use the URL or QR code below to access the survey.

<http://goo.gl/5XJh1C>



## Appendix I

## Respondents' Comments

My reasons for visiting Oklahoma state parks are numerous. Beaver's Bend is beautiful! Unlike the sandy, brown water so common to east Texas, Mountain Fork River is clear and cold. I love the hiking trails and the mountain top views. It also brings back fond memories from my childhood. My mother grew up in Broken Bow and we would go to Beaver's Bend to picnic anytime we went to visit my grandmother. I took my now-grown children when they were younger to offer them those same experiences. I still have an 11 year old and I will continue to take him so that we can create those same memories together. Beaver's Bend is well-maintained and offers a museum, trail rides, the Nature Center, and nice shower facilities. It is also close enough to home so that we can go for the weekend and enjoy ourselves without rushing. My family and I are planning to visit other Oklahoma state parks when we have vacation time together. Tenkiller, Lake Eufaula, and Robbers Cave are on the top of our list!

Camp grounds shut down, bathrooms in horrible condition and not able to view the scenes on all the pull outs due to overgrowth. This was so depressing. It did help somewhat when we got to the Arkansas border and everything was beautiful and clean. Such a shame Oklahoma has let this happen. I even wrote the governor and received zero response. Maybe you can help Oklahoma.

I have completed your survey for the Robbers Cave S.P. My most common use for this facility is its proximity to the Robbers Cave and James Collins WMA areas. My colleagues and I hunt for wild boar on these facilities and the State Park offers us a convenient place to bivouac. I am a UK resident. After my visit to Robbers Cave I put a review on TripAdvisor and have recently had an email from a reader to ask whether the facilities are pet friendly \_ perhaps this is something that affects visitors.

I live in California near Lake Tahoe where we have beautiful state and national parks. I also have Napa, Muir Woods and Yosemite all within a three hour car ride at most. I visited Beavers Bend for a Family Reunion because it had the facilities to accommodate a group that we could not find for our mostly Texas based family. It was a meeting point for folks from Georgia, Kansas, Texas, California and New Mexico. It was a very good reunion location. With that said, I still had to drive almost 4 hours from a major airport to get there.

The "reservation" system at OK state parks is severely lacking! Only 31 spots at Beavers Bend can be reserved...so we drive up from Dallas gambling whether or not we'll have a spot. Would OK parks have more business if people could be guaranteed a spot? Just look at Texas for an example...online reservations and park ranger station at the entrances for control!

We were there for the equine camping and trail riding. Spending mon - sat at the park. Best park for our activity, corrals at each campsite and everything was clean and well maintained. Went with friends and now more want to join us next year.

This last trip was for a reunion. We stayed in the cabins, which leave a lot to be desired for the price. It would be nice if they had a small kitchen facility, where one could prepare small meals: a two burner stove, sink, and a few pans. I also did not like, and did not answer truthfully, the question of how much income. That is very personal, and not really relevant to the attraction to the park.

Also, the restrooms are really REALLY gross. Yes, they are old but they are also dirty. One thing to be old but no reason to be dirty. OK should look at charging entrance fees and/or higher site fees in order to pay for maintenance of the park. This Texan wouldn't mind paying more in OK in order to be able to make reservations and better facilities.

We love going to Beaver's Bend, it has been a family tradition since the 1980s when we lived in Tulsa. The park personnel are friendly and the lake is the cleanest, least crowded lake we have ever been on. There's no lake near us in the DFW Texas region that comes even close to the beauty of Broken Bow.

Last July we went to Robber's Cave State Park for our family reunion. We had a wonderful time and plan to go back in two years. The cabins and grounds were very well kept up. We're proud of state for taking such good care of the park.

I enjoy the hiking trails, but unfortunately a few bridges have been damaged (washed off) a couple of years ago and still not repaired. I hope they can pay more attention to the structure of the park.

The state and national parks system are so important to us all and our future!

In search of Bigfoot at Oklahoma State Parks.

## VITA

Fatemeh (Tannaz) Soltani

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG DESTINATION IMAGE, PLACE ATTACHMENT,  
AND TOURIST MOTIVATION FOR OKLAHOMA STATE PARKS

Major Field: Health, Leisure and Human Performance

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Health, Leisure, and Human Performance at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in July, 2015.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Hospitality Administration at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in 2011.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in Business Administration at Multimedia University, Cyberjaya, Malaysia in 2009.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Applied Mathematics at Islamic Azad University, Fars, Iran in 2005.

Experience:

Graduate Research Associate – Oklahoma State University, School of Applied Health and Education Psychology, Leisure Studies Program, Aug 2011 – Present.

Graduate Teaching Associate – Oklahoma State University, School of Applied Health and Education Psychology, Leisure Studies Program, Spring 2013.

Graduate Research Associate – Oklahoma State University, School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration, Jan 2010 – Jan 2011.

Professional Memberships:

National Recreation and Parks Association, 2011 – Present.