

Guesthouse-based Backpackers in Seoul : Destination Image, Knowledge Management and Q Method

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Abstract

To attract visitors, it is essential to make destinations understandable by developing appropriate destination image. However, managing destination image properly is very complicated in order to induce visitors.

In this study, the perceived destination image of backpackers who stay in guesthouse located in Seoul is explored. The purpose of the study was to examine the image of Seoul as a tourism destination. To this end, Q methodology, a technique designed for the systematic study of subjectivity in terms of beliefs, opinions, and attitudes is employed. More specifically, the statements representing different destination images perceived by sampled backpacking visitors were Q-sorted.

Results showed that four different clusters of sampled backpacking visitors present four different perceived images accordingly: Seoulizer, Patternaizer, Utilizer, and Socializer. The results of this study imply that backpackers provide idiosyncratic perceptions of destination image, which are different from those offered by general travelers who are less sensitive to travel budgets. In addition, for tourism management, based on this study's results, destination marketing planners are encouraged to perform knowledge management, develop more appropriate plans and customized marketing strategies according to different perceived destination images of backpackers.

Keywords: Guest-house, Backpackers, Destination Image, Q-methodology

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I. Introduction

The number of visitors staying in guesthouses is increasing by 50% over last few years: 6.4% in 2009, 11.8% in 2013 according to the Korean Tourism Organization. And it is essential to manage effectively those guesthouse-based visitors, general travelers who are highly sensitive to travel budgets. Specifically, to induce more visitors, it is imperative to understand perception of visitors who are staying in guesthouses about how they find Seoul as a tourism destination.

Destination images influence tourists' decision-making process (Pearce, 1982; Sirgy & Su, 2000; Yükel&Akgül, 2007) as potential tourists have a wide range of destinations to choose. Thus, developing and maintaining an appealing destination image is highly important to the destination marketer and promoters, given that the destination image is a very complex and not easy to manage.

Destination image can be divided into two parts of the physical reality of a tourist destination. One part is the purposive projection of a message regarding the destination conveyed deliberately via marketing channels. The other part is the perception of a destination received and/or experienced by tourists. Gunn(1972) defined those two parts as induced and organic destination image, respectively.

More than 10milliontourists have visited to Korea in year 2015 and Seoul as a capital city become most popular destination among other

cities in Korea. DMO(Destination Marketing Organization) of Seoul have invested valuable resources in order to develop and maintain the desired image. They put substantial efforts to explore and achieve effective planning, development, and marketing tourism destinations. Meanwhile, recognition of the significance of destination image is one of the most crucial factors since destination image is strongly related to gaining differentiation and competitive advantage for a particular tourism destination.

While the numbers of visitors to Seoul has grown substantially, especially, the number of backpackers, independent travellers, is growing noticeably. A backpacker is people who seeks out unique experiences associated with budget travel and puts an emphasis on close interaction with local people and fellow travelers. And most of them choose to stay in guesthouse since they are highly sensitive to travel budgets. Since Information Communication Technology, especially social media and SMS became common method of exchanging information, knowledge and news (Eunsoo Choi& Chulwon Kim, 2016), it is leading developments in the individual travellers sector such as backpackers.

Numerous studies have investigated tourism-related research subjects regarding ordinary travelers who have lower sensibility to travel budget. However, little attention has paid to guesthouse-based experiences backpackers visiting Seoul despite the rapidly growing importance of a guesthouse as a preferably se-

lected accommodation in Seoul to independent travelers. Moreover, so far in the literature, no study that investigates subjectivity regarding destination image of backpackers staying in guesthouses exists.

Addressing the above this research lacuna, the current study aims to categorize destination images perceived by guesthouse-based backpackers. In addition, the findings of this study are expected to offer actionable implications for destination marketers to perform knowledge management by improving competitive advantage of the tourism destination.

To accomplish the study's purpose, the sample of backpackers staying in Seoul was collected between Dec. 2015 - Jan. 2016. This study employs Q method, a qualitative technique used to identify the beliefs, opinions, and attitudes. (Barry & Proops, 1999; Stephenson, 1935).

II. Literature Review

2.1 Destination Image

Destination image is a highly important concept in studying the destination selecting process and has been playing critical role to the theory of tourist behavior.

Destination image is defined as an individual expression of characteristics of destination (Coshall, 2000; Tasci & Kozak, 2006) and impression, knowledge, and emotional thoughts

might have of a specific place. It is generally related to the tourist-based image rather than marketer-based image. Yet, the formation of destination image could be influenced by promotional information of the promoters, media, and others. (Tasci & Kozak, 2006).

Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 2003) developed a conceptual framework for understanding the components of destination image ranged from components, based on common functional and psychological traits, to components, based on more unique events or feelings.

It consists of the follow continuums:

(1) attribute-holistic: ranges from individual attributes to holistic impressions of a destination image

(2) functional-psychological: ranges from the functional attributes of an image. It could be observed or measured directly, to its psychological attributes, which couldn't be directly measured

(3) common-unique: ranges from common image attributes, according to which all destinations could be examined and compared, to idiosyncratic image attributes, which are exclusive to the particular destination

Destination image could be defined into two parts of the physical reality of a tourist destination. One part is the purposive projection of a message regarding the destination conveyed deliberately via marketing channels. The other part is the perception of a destination as a received a/o experienced. Gunn (1972) defined those two parts as induced versus organic

destination image. The challenge faced by destination promoters is to deliver the image that potential tourists have in their mind as similar as possible to the desired image. Besides, to attempt altering an destination image is another big challenge to the promoters since it requires substantial resources and takes long time to be conveyed.

Regarding measuring destination image, there are structured (usually on a Likert-type or semantic differential scale) and unstructured method which respondents freely express their perceived images of the destination (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991).

This study is to review the guesthouse-based backpackers experience of Seoul as a tourism destination which, to date, there has been no sufficient effort to examine to enhance the current understanding and of developing more appropriate marketing strategy. To this end, Q methodology, unstructured method, which has been used to identify resident subjectivities in indigenous tourism (Hunter, 2011) is employed. Q methodology is suitable for the systematic study of subjectivity in terms of beliefs, opinions, and attitudes of respondents.

2.2 Guest-House

The guest house is one of the tourist accommodation types that are popular among international tourists, especially those who are backpackers. As an international terminology, the guest house was used in the 1980s for the first and broadly spread in the 1990s. Guest

house is defined as a tourist accommodation type that belongs to the serviced destination accommodation category, catering mainly for the leisure and holiday markets (Middleton, 1988) and as a serviced commercial tourist accommodation type (Holloway, 1994). More specifically, Holloway (1994) defines guest houses are a broad spectrum of private accommodation types, which includes the private hotel through boarding houses and guest houses to bed-and-breakfast establishments. A small owner managed establishment usually providing accommodation, food and drink to residents (Medlik, 1993). Jefferson and Lickorish (1988) also propose guest and boarding houses as similar definition, providing overnight accommodation, but no full meal service offered.

The definition of the guest house in this study can be defined as built similarly to a registered hotel providing reasonable price accommodations to more than five persons and provide opportunities for international tourists to meet with other tourists and exchange cultures and tour related information.

In perspective of Korean tourism industry, guest house is mainly defined as a small and cheap accommodation where international tourists can stay. They have opportunities meet with other tourists from all over the world and exchange cultures, information of exploring a destination (Kwon, 2011). The guest houses in Korea are located in the center of the each city where tourists can experience unique and traditional culture of Korea by exploring various

tourist attractions and cultural events.

As of December 2014, there are 185 guest house registered at the Seoul Tourism Organi-

zation. Majority of guest houses are located in Sinchon and Hongik university area.

[Table 1] Guest houses in Seoul

Area	Numbers	Area	Numbers
Gwanghwamun & City Hall	8	Cheonggyecheon & Jongno	16
Myeong-dong & Namdaemun	15	Insa-dong & Bukchon	6
Daehangno & Dongdaemun	12	Sinchon & Hongik University	58
Itaewon	8	Yeouido	7
Gangnam area	21	Other areas	34

Korea Tourism Organization, 2014

As shown on [Table 1], guest houses in Seoul are also located in its center, nearby Insa-dong area, Sinchon, Hongik university, and Gangnam area. These places tend to be easily accessible to public transportation facilities and within walking distance of tourist attractions and shopping centers (Oh, 2005). There are relatively expensive guesthouses located in Insa-dong area where near to the old palace and national museum. Sinchon and Hongik university where are famous for young people. Especially, Hongik university area is a neighborhood known for its youthful and romantic ambience, and underground culture. There are various cultural events, street performances, and festivals held throughout all the year which makes people excited. Gangnam area is the prime district for those living south of the Hangang River. Regardless generation many people

tend to gather at Gangnam, as the location is geographically and commercially suitable as a meeting point for social gatherings, events or personal engagements.

2.3 Backpackers

Travellers are more seek for adventurous and educational experiences from their tour activities (Chulmo Koo, Su-Hung Jung & Namho Chung, 2016) Backpackers are examples of postmodern tourists. A backpacker is people who keen to explore unique experiences associated with budget travel and desire to have a close interaction with local people as well as fellow travellers. A backpacker is organized independently and free from constraints of time and money, travels as long as possible within the limitations of their own life, and put value on informal and participatory holiday activities.

The backpacker in the classic 'drifter' (Cohen, 1972) sense is mobile, decentralized, alternative-minded, minimalist, and geographically, socially, and temporally free. They are keen to construct a new identity through travel, in the sense that they desire to become more relaxed, courageous, and independent (Cohen, 2004; Elsrud, 2001). Also backpackers hope to escape what they consider as a very materialistic and harsh society to find refuge in a pure and relaxed destination (Cohen, 1973; MacCannell, 1973; Westerhausen, 2002).

Advances in information communication technology allow backpackers to enrich their identity and virtually interact through online communities, such as Facebook (Paris, 2009& 2010).

Most of backpackers to Seoul are staying in guesthouses where less expensive than usual establishments such as hotels and they mainly stay in Insadong area, Sinchon, Hongik university, and Gangnam area. Backpackers who stay in Insadong area are travelling as a family or more than 3 people together. The guesthouses in Insadong are Hanok type and the backpackers have opportunities to exposure to various traditional activities within a guesthouse: tea ceremony, cooking class, authentic architecture. Backpackers who choose to stay in Sinchon and Hongik university fun oriented young group since there are unique places plus the cultural activities, street performances, and festivals held in Hongik university area that is always packed with young crowd and excitement. Spe-

cial streets such as ateliers' street (lined with private institutions for art students preparing for university entrance exams), Picasso's Street, and Club Street are also must-go places if you're hoping to fully experience the Hongik university area. Backpackers who choose to stay in Gangnam are interested in high-end shopping and plastic surgeon. Especially, it requires longer-term stay for the plastic surgeon. Therefore people prefer to stay in guesthouses which are less expensive compare to the hotels. They are not always young group but in terms of budget sensitivity and independent organized, can be considered as backpackers.

Previous studies regarding backpackers are mostly focused on its motivation, satisfaction, and behavioral intention. And lack of conceptualized how backpackers perceive a destination image differently compare to ordinary traveller. In this study, we attempt to provide operational strategies for customized marketing to destination promoters by contributing managerial implications.

III. Methodology

Q methodology, a technique designed for the systematic study of subjectivity in terms of opinions, beliefs, and attitudes that make up a social discourse (Barry & P. Roops, 1999; Stephenson, 1935). This method is used to explore the operant subjectivities which make up a social discourse (Brown, 1993).

Q method is used for the first by Stephenson (1935) and it has been used to examine social identities (Marshall, 1991), in marketing strategic planning and design (Popovich & Popovich, 2000), and in the study of perception (Hutson & Montgomery, 2006). Q method relies on methods of impression to extract the subjective meaning or significance items respondents might have. This method focuses on the respondent's internal frame about the significance and meaning of each respondent's subjectivity (Stergiou & Airey, 2011).

Parameters for validity (whether a study measures what it is intended to measure) of Q methodology include: (1) an explicit theoretical definition of the concourse (2) rigid extraction of Q statements and (3) the use of statistical tools to identify clusters of Q sorts (Ekinici & Riley, 2001; Fairweather & Swaffield, 2002). Parameters for reliability (the consistency or repeatability of a study) of Q methodology include: (1) well suited between conceptual framework and sampling (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991), (2) fellowship between researcher and respondent and (3) additional interviews and case-specific interpretation of results (Balch, 1982; McKeown & Thomas, 1988).

The method uses mathematical and interpretive tools to identify subjectivity of individual and interpret social constructions. And this method is employed in tourism sector as well. W. Hunter (2013) use Q methodology to understand of resident subjectivities of Orchid

Island, Taiwan. He defined the role of residents as stakeholders in tourism in their communities. The results of his study show that many issues in tourism, especially in indigenous communities or small islands, are highly relevant to disagreement among residents concerning destination tourism development, distrust in local government rather than toward inbound visitors.

The Q method approach used in this study is a five-step process:

1. Generate the concourse and Q set; the first step involves identifying a 'concourse', which is a technical concept used in Q for a contextual structure of all the representative statements that flow of communicability on the topic (Stephenson, 1993);

In Q-methodology, a concourse is formed with feelings rather than facts; each of these statements expresses feelings and emotions (not necessarily knowledge) driven by immediate experience and lived through personal experience (McKeown, 1990).

The Q set used in current study consisted of 42 statements. The statements include 11 categories of measuring destination image: accommodation & transportation (6), atmosphere & cultural distance (5), cultural attraction (4), natural attraction (3), entertainment (5), comfort & security (5), tourist facilitation (4), expensiveness (3), language barrier (3), benefits of staying at a guesthouse (2), escape & relaxation (2). The Q statements were printed on cards, was distributed to each respondent for Q sorting.

2. Recruit P set -the second step is to find respondents who are involved in the social discourse (Brown, 1993; McKeown & Thomas, 1988).

The P set is, by definition, usually smaller than the Q set. In Q methodology, that proposes a minimum ratio of two Q-set items to each participant or, in other words, a Q set that contains two times bigger number than number of participant. That means, given a 30-item Q set, that this study might actually be judged harshly if there are more than 60 participants (Watts, S., & Stenner, P., 2012). Previous Q studies have used P sets of 30 (Brown, 1993; McKeown & Thomas, 1988), 66 (Fairweather & Swaffield, 2001), 27 (Dewar et al., 2007), 30 (Hunter, 2011) and 20 respondents (Hutson & Montgomery, 2006).

In current study, the P set is consisted of 24 respondents, backpackers who stay in guest houses across downtown Seoul, who were selected using a purposive sampling strategy.

3. Perform Q sort - the third step, after the construction of the Q-sample, P-sample who will sort the items. Respondents sort the topics by placing all statements in a pre-structured Q-sort table (Figure 1) which is a bell-shape piles ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree (Hutson & Montgomery, 2006), and the sorted distributions are recorded by researcher, respondents have to express their views. Prior to Q sort proceeded, sufficient explanation was given to the respondents

4. Process data analysis using mathematical

and interpretive analyses- the fourth step involves the sequential application of three statistical procedures: correlation, factor analysis, and the computation of factor scores (Brown, 2004).

In this study, the PCQ software and judgmental rotation were used. And the results showed that four different clusters of sampled backpacking visitors present four different perceived images accordingly: Seoulizer, Patternizer, Utilizer, and Socializer.

5. Deliver findings and describe implications.

Previous studies utilize Q methodology in tourism sector. For instance, John R. Fairweather et. al (2001) employ Q methodology to investigate the the Visitor Experiences of Kaikoura, New Zealand. The study focuses on how these experiences vary among different groups. Andra Ioana Milcua et. al (2014) use Q methodology to navigating conflicting landscape aspirations: Application of a photo-based Q-method in Transylvania (Central Romania). The study identified 5 groups (1. landscapes for prosperity and economic growth; 2. landscapes for traditions and balanced lifestyles; 3. landscapes for human benefit; 4. landscapes for farming; and 5. landscapes for nature) and it showed areas of consensus and disagreement among participants.

To accomplish the study's purpose, the sample of backpackers staying in Seoul was collected between Dec.2015-Jan.2016. Based on literature review we have set of 42 statements and divided into 11 criteria which are in English

version as well as Chinese version. We have visited 22 guest houses. In this study, the P set (the group of respondents who sort the Q set; see Step 2) consisted of 29 respondents, who are young individual travellers and staying in Seoul more than a week.

IV. Findings

As the result of the study, there are four different clusters of sampled backpacking visitor present four different perceived images accordingly: Seoulizer, Patternaizer, Utilizer, and Socializer.

A total of 29 respondents were selected for analysis. Of these 29 respondents, 12 were men and 11 were women. The majority of respondents were aged between 20 and 30, and Caucasians were 21, Asians were 8.

Q sort factor analysis was performed using PCQ software and judgmental rotation, and it produced four factors out of five that accounted for 24 of 30 sorts, with levels of significance ranging from 0.77 to 0.40. Only one sort was confounded, or found to be statistically significant in more than one factor, so it was excluded from the following analysis. The 24 sorts, four factors and scores, and descriptions of the respondents are presented in Table 2. Eigenvalues and explained variance are also given for all five factors tested. In Q method, judgmental rotation is used to manually rotate factors in order to capture the largest

number of sorts in the fewest categories (Eden et al., 2005) and to minimize the number of confounded sorts. It is a reflexive process that seeks theoretically relevant clusters of subjectivity that are shared by respondents in the P set.

The four clusters identified through factor analysis were defined in terms of eleven types of statements. The statements could be divided as distinguishing statements, characterizing statements, Unique-characterizing statements. Distinguishing statements for each cluster are those which all respondents within a cluster agreed with. And it represents most feature of a cluster. Distribution scores for statements contrast the difference between clusters (Hunter, 2013). Characterizing statements are those extreme score identified by cluster, and Unique-characterizing statements are those significantly either negative or positive statements compare to other clusters. The P set consensus statement is one which all respondents agreed with.

In this study, two consensus statement for the P set were found, five distinguishing statements for clusters A, B and C were found and 28 statements that reflect the largest relative difference in subjectivities between clusters were found with extreme scores (-4, -3, 3, 4) in at least one cluster (Van Exel & De Graaf, 2005). The consensus, distinguishing and characterizing statements are listed in Table 3, with distribution scores for each cluster.

[Table2] Q sort factor analysis results

24 Q sorts accounted for in 4 factors out of 5; 1 sort significant in two or more factors (confounded)					
Sort	A (16)	B (5)	C (2)	D (1)	Respondent Description*
1	0.66				31, UK
2	0.63				32, FR
4	0.44				21, CH
5	0.48				22, MR
9	0.53				24, US
11	0.40				35, US
12	0.69				24, FR
13	0.77				25, GR
15	0.51				23, AT
18	0.63				33, US
19	0.43				34, US
20	0.74				26, CL
24	0.48				28, US
26	0.70				26, TH
27	0.71				23, TH
28	0.67				29, SP
3		0.43			21, CH
8		0.40			22, SG
16		0.67			27, AJ
17		0.74			30, MS
22		0.57			28, US
7			-0.50		23, US
30			0.44		24, CH
21				0.50	28, US
Confounded sort					
29		0.40		0.53	24, CH

Eigenvalues and explained variance between clusters

5 Factors	A	B	C	D	E	Totals
Eigenvalue	6.91	3.41	1.80	1.72	1.15	14.99
% Variance	23	11	6	6	4	50

*Respondent descriptions key: age; nationality; gender; others

When it comes to consensus statements which all respondents agreed with, the statements “I found that Seoul has a clear traffic signage” and “I think Seoul has easy access to eco-oriented/nature-concerned park/stream/river” were chosen. Distribution scores of each cluster ranged from -1 to 0 which means most respondents disagreed with the statements or remained neutral to those. Considering the

personality of backpackers, this result seemed obvious since neither backpackers staying in the guesthouse drive their own cars nor go to natural attractions. The Q method analysis identified four clusters of operant subjectivity. Cluster categorization was conducted considering the statements with extreme distribution scores (Fairweather & Swaffield, 2001).

[Table3] Q statements with relative distribution score by cluster

Item	P set consensus statement (2) Distinguishing statements for clusters A, B and C Significant Q statements and 'Destination Image' theoretical themes (28)	Distribution score by cluster			
		A	B	C	D
P set consensus statement (2)					
6	I found that Seoul has a clear traffic signage	-1	-1	0	-1
7	I think Seoul has easy access to eco-oriented/nature-concerned park/stream/river	-1	0	0	0
Distinguishing statements for clusters (Cluster A)					
10	I feel that customs are different than those from my perspective	2	-2	-3	-3
19	I think people can enjoy diverse nightlife activities in Seoul	4	0	-2	-1
32	I think it is easy to access to useful websites to collect online information	-3	1	1	1
Distinguishing statements for clusters (Cluster B)					
33	I feel that prices are high in general	-3	4	-4	-2
Distinguishing statements for clusters (Cluster C)					
9	I feel that the lifestyle of Seoul is similar to that of my own culture	-4	4	0	-4
Distinguishing statements for clusters (Cluster D)					
No statement					
Characterizing statements (extreme scores) identified by theme and cluster (26 in all clusters)					
Accommodation/Transportation/Infra (5 out of 6)					
1	I think it is convenient to take public transportation (bus/subway/taxi etc) in Seoul	3	3	4	2
2	I think the guesthouse where I am staying is in a pleasant neighborhood	1	-2	1	1
3	I think the guesthouse where I am staying has a convenient reservation system	0	-1	1	-1
4	I think the guesthouse where I am staying is expensive	-4	-4	0	-2
5	I think it is easy to get to city/downtown area from the airport	1	-1	3	1
Atmosphere/Cultural Distance (4 out of 5)					
8	I think there are some quiet places in Seoul	-2	1	4	3
9	I feel that the lifestyle of Seoul is similar to that of my own culture	-4	-4	0	-4
10	I feel that customs are different than those from my perspective	2	-2	-3	-3
11	I think Koreans are well mannered	-1	0	2	3

		Cultural Attraction (2 out of 4)			
13	I think Seoul has modern architecture & buildings	3	1	-2	3
14	I think Seoul offers a rich pop culture	3	1	-1	1
		Entertainment (3 out of 5)			
19	I think people can enjoy diverse nightlife activities in Seoul	4	0	-2	-1
20	I think Seoul is well furnished with various shopping facilities	4	3	-1	2
21	I think people can experience interesting festivals in Seoul	0	0	-4	-1
		Comfort/Security (3 out of 5)			
25	I think Seoul has good public safety and security	2	1	-1	4
26	I think Koreans are friendly	1	4	2	4
27	I feel that Seoul is crowded with people in the city area	-2	1	-3	2
		Tourist Facilitation (2 out of 4)			
29	I think Seoul has abundant tourist attractions	0	-3	0	-4
32	I think it is easy to access to useful websites to collect online information	-3	1	1	1
		Expensiveness (3 out of 3)			
33	I feel that prices are high in general	-3	4	-4	-2
34	I think there is no pressure to give tips in Seoul	1	0	-3	0
35	I think currency exchange is accessible in Seoul	0	-3	3	2
		Language barrier (2 out of 3)			
36	I feel that only few Koreans can understand English	-1	2	-1	-3
37	I feel that many Koreans can speak English	-3	-3	3	0
		Benefits of Staying at Guesthouse (1 out of 2)			
39	By staying in the guesthouse, tourists can share information on local culture, history and society	2	-2	1	-3
		Escape & Relaxation (1 out of 2)			
41	I think Seoul helps me leave my problems behind	-2	3	-1	0

The subjectivity characterizing each cluster was decided after the brief post-sort interview with the respondents. In this study, three established viewpoints were found (clusters A, B and C) and one emergent theme was found (cluster D) (Van Exel & De Graaf, 2005). Table 4 presents the basic characteristics of each cluster with cluster name and each is discussed in detail below.

Cluster A-Seoulizer

Cluster A is the largest cluster which contains 16 respondents. Commonly, the respondents in this cluster agreed that customs are different from their perspective and they can enjoy diverse nightlife activities while staying in Seoul. In addition, they all thought that they face some difficulties when accessing websites for online information. However, they were satisfied with rich pop culture Seoul offers and well-furnished shopping facilities Seoul offers.

In this sense, cluster A seemed to fully enjoy diverse aspects of Seoul. Therefore, this cluster can be defined as Seoulizer who experienced dynamic attractions Seoul has.

Cluster B-Patternizer

In Cluster B, five respondents were included and they similarly chose negative items which is big difference among other clusters. First, they strongly thought that overall prices are high when traveling in Korea. Also, this cluster agreed that Seoul does not provide abundant tourist attractions. Moreover, respondents were dissatisfied with the poor English skills of Koreans when met in the streets. Surprisingly, it was found from the interview that respondents in this cluster were mostly first or second time visitors to Seoul. As this cluster had overall negative impression of Seoul and most of respondents are first time visitors, it was assumed that the respondents expected but failed to find patterned and typical destination image of Seoul. So this cluster was named as "Patternizer" with somewhat disappointment.

Cluster C-Utilizer

Two respondents were categorized as cluster C. They are long-stay visitors to Korea who visited other cities outside Seoul. One of them was from the U.S and been to Jeonju, Daejeon and Suwon. Another respondent was from China who planned to travel around Korea for 18 days and have stayed a week in Seoul. Both of them disagreed with the idea that the lifestyle

of Seoul is similar to their culture. Different from Cluster A, this cluster showed opinions on local characteristics such as public transportation and accessibility issue. Also, the respondents seemed to prefer quiet places in Seoul where people are not much crowded. As a result, they agreed with the statements the Seoul and this resulted in agreement with the statements that Seoul has quiet places and is not crowded with people. Thus, this cluster was named "Utilizer" who tend to pay more attention to practical aspect.

Cluster D-Socializer

Only one respondent was in this Cluster. This was recognized as unique cluster due to the statements the respondent chose. In the study, this cluster was defined as "Socializer" who interacts well with Koreans. The statements "I think Koreans are well mannered" and "I think Koreans are friendly" were accorded with the respondents' viewpoint. On the other hand, the respondent seemed to disagree with the statement "I feel that only few Koreans can understand English" and thought that there was no problem with speaking English with Koreans. Respondent was traveling around Korea with Korean friends and stayed in friend's house as well as guesthouse. This may have resulted in distinguishing aspects of other clusters since the respondent had more time to socialize with Koreans.

[Table4] Defining clusters

Cluster A:Seoulizer (Dynamic Seoul)		
Distinguishing Statements		Scores
10	I feel that customs are different than those from my perspective	2
19	I think people can enjoy diverse nightlife activities in Seoul	4
32	I think it is easy to access to useful websites to collect online information	-3
Unique characterizing Statements:		Scores
4	I think the guesthouse where I am staying is expensive	-4
14	I think Seoul offers a rich pop culture	3
20	I think Seoul is well furnished with various shopping facilities	4
Cluster B: Patternizer (Why Seoul)		
Distinguishing Statements:		Scores
33	I feel that prices are high in general	4
Unique characterizing Statements:		Scores
29	I think Seoul has abundant tourist attractions	-3
37	I feel that many Koreans can speak English	-3
Cluster C: Utilizer (Practical Seoul)		
Distinguishing Statements:		Scores
9	I feel that the lifestyle of Seoul is similar to that of my own culture	-4
Unique characterizing Statements:		Scores
1	I think it is convenient to take public transportation (bus/subway/taxi etc) in Seoul	4
5	I think it is easy to get to city/downtown area from the airport	3
8	I think there are some quiet places in Seoul	4
27	I feel that Seoul is crowded with people in the city area	-3
Cluster D: Socializer (Touching Seoul)		
Unique characterizing Statements:		Scores
11	I think Koreans are well mannered	3
13	I think Seoul has modern architecture & buildings	3
25	I think Seoul has good public safety and security	4
26	I think Koreans are friendly	4
36	I feel that only few Koreans can understand English	-3

V. Conclusion

This study is to explore and understand the subjectivity of international guesthouse backpackers in terms of destination image of Seoul. Q methodology was employed, in which 42 statements of Q set were derived from previous

literatures on general destination image perceived by tourists. P set of the study consisted of 31 respondents staying at the guesthouses in Seoul, mostly in Hongik university area. Their characteristics, such as nationality, gender and age were diverse enough to show various subjectivities.

After the factor analysis, conducted by using PCQ software, a total of 24 respondents were

finally included in P set of the study, resulting in 4 distinguishing clusters. Only one respondent's sort was confounded and six were not significant, thereby being excluded from further analysis. Among 42 statements, 2 statements were agreed by all clusters and based on distinguishing and unique characterizing statements with extreme scores. The result was utilized when defining each cluster. In addition to the statements sorted by respondents, short interviews with the respondents were considered in the process of cluster classification.

The four distinguishing clusters were named as Seoulizer, Patternizer, Utilizer and Socializer, representing the characteristics and subjectivities interpreted by the researchers of this study.

Seoulizer is the largest cluster which contains 16 respondents. The respondents in this cluster agreed that customs are different from their perspective and they appreciate diverse night-life activities in Seoul. In addition, they were satisfied with rich pop culture and well-furnished shopping facilities Seoul offers.

Patternizer includes five respondents and they similarly chose negative items which is big difference among other clusters. First, they strongly thought that traveling cost is high in Seoul. Also, this cluster agreed that Seoul does not provide abundant tourist attractions. Moreover, respondents found difficulties to communicate with Koreans cause of language barrier. Surprisingly, it was found from the interview that respondents in this cluster were mostly first or second time visitors to Seoul.

Utilizer includes two respondents. They are long-stay visitors to Korea who visited other cities outside Seoul. Both of them disagreed with the idea that the lifestyle of Seoul is similar to their culture. The respondents seemed to prefer quiet places in Seoul where people are not much crowded. And they tend to pay more attention to practical aspect.

Socializer includes only one respondent. This was recognized as unique cluster due to the statements the respondent chose. Respondent was traveling around Korea with Korean friends and stayed in friend's house as well as guesthouse. This may have resulted in distinguishing aspects of other clusters since the respondent had more time to socialize with Koreans.

Based on the literatures on backpackers and guesthouses, this study assumed idiosyncrasies of backpackers staying at guesthouses such as high sensitivity to travel budget, exploratory tourists' behavior, and passions for tourism, which may influence the formation of different characteristics and perspectives related to the destination image of Seoul, compared to general tourists. Coinciding with this assumption, the clusters classified in this study seemed to differ from those formed using the sample of general tourists such as visitors staying in hotel, Chinese tourists so-called 'Youke', and other types of tourists like group tour.

VI. Implications and Limitations

The findings of this study on guest-house-based backpackers visiting Seoul may suggest several practical implications.

First, the development of more proper and sophisticated positioning of Seoul is encouraged. Although, currently, Seoul and other cities in Korea offer various kinds of attractions and other tourism-related characteristics, the image of cities in Korea is too much related to “Youke”. One of the reasons is the tendency of employing product-based approach in forming destination image; for example, integrated resorts, casinos and luxurious hotels, which “Youke” preferably visits are considered as major attractions in Korean tourism industry. Therefore, to establish more exact and realistic position of cities in Korea, it is needed to apply the feature-based and experience-based tourism approach, based on the opinions and statements sorted by some clusters, for example, in the study.

Second, this study’s results imply that destination marketers should develop more appropriate plans and customized marketing strategies according to different destination images perceived by visitor clusters and unique characteristics of each visitor cluster. Tailored destination operations and marketing should be devised and implemented by considering idiosyncratic interests and experiences of each visitor type.

Third, to mitigate negative perspectives on Seoul image by four clusters, such as tourist facilities, destination marketers must make

efforts in detecting specific factors that determining amiable image by tourists. Further, destination marketers should perform knowledge management by reconsidering and reestablishing marketing strategies and approaches to change the destination image into positive side.

The limitation that must be taken into consideration of this research is that generation of clusters. The clusters Utilizer and Socializer are probably unstable because of small numbers of respondents (such as cluster Socializer, with only 1 respondents).

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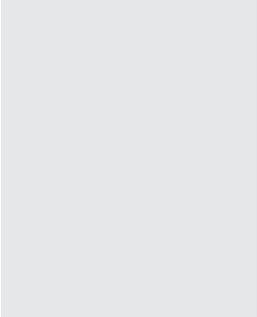
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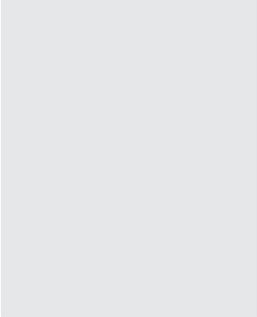
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