



# A Study on the Moderating Effect of Psychological Power in the Relationship between Service, Image, and Satisfaction in the Tourism Context

Davaanyam BOLORTUYA<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad RAZA<sup>2</sup>, Jin-Kwon KIM<sup>3</sup>, Tony-Donghui AHN<sup>4</sup>

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between service quality, destination image, and tourist satisfaction for foreign tourists visiting Korea, and in particular, to analyze the moderating effect of psychological power in the relationship. **Research design, data, and methodology:** A research model was derived through existing literature research and a survey was conducted on foreign tourists visiting Korea. Structural equation model of SPSS and AMOS24.0 were used for data analysis and hypothesis testing. **Results:** The tourism service quality affects the image of tourist attractions. Images of tourist attractions were found to affect tourism satisfaction. It was found that the lower the psychological power, the greater the effect on the relationship between service quality and image, and the relationship between image and satisfaction.

**Conclusions:** This study demonstrated that service quality at travel destinations is a key factor in order to enhance the image and satisfaction of Korean tourist destinations for foreigners visiting Korea. On the other hand, since the image and satisfaction level of the tourism destination vary depending on personal factors such as psychological power, it suggests that travel industry workers or researchers should develop and operate services tailored to the individual characteristics of the tourists.

**Keywords:** Service Quality, Image, Satisfaction, Psychological Power, Tourism

**JEL Classification Code:** M10, M31, Z30, Z32

## 1. Introduction

As the impact of Covid-19 has gradually decreased since 2022, the travel industry, which has slowed down, is

also on the rise. According to the World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) global tourism index, the number of international tourists increased by 172% from January to July 2022, compared to the same period in 2021.

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1 First Author. Graduate form Tech University of Korea, Mongolia. Email: [tuya\\_9929@naverl.com](mailto:tuya_9929@naverl.com)  
2 Second Author. Graduate form Tech University of Korea, Pakistan Email: [mraza084@gmail.com](mailto:mraza084@gmail.com)  
3 Third Author. Adjunct professor, Department of Business Management, Tech University of Korea. Korea. Email: [kjk66kr@tukorea.ac.kr](mailto:kjk66kr@tukorea.ac.kr)

4. Corresponding Author. Professor, Department of Business Management, Tech University of Korea. Korea. Email: [tonydahn@tukorea.ac.kr](mailto:tonydahn@tukorea.ac.kr)

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This means it recovered nearly 60% of the level before the global COVID-19 pandemic. Foreign tourists visiting Korea also decreased from 17.5 million a year to 2.5 million due to the influence of Covid-19, but it is expected to gradually recover from the previous level in the near future. In particular, “Hallyu”, or the Korean Wave brand, including K-POP, dramas, and movies, is expected to play a positive role in the future increase in the number of travelers as foreigners are increasingly interested in Korea.

When travelers visit foreign countries, the service quality of travel destinations is generally recognized as the most important factor for satisfaction. The service quality of the travel destination is divided into human factors, material factors, and systematic factors, and consists of the reliability, authenticity, empathy, cleanliness and convenience of facilities, and the playfulness and benefits of tourism programs and so on (Kwon & Jeong, 2019). In addition to these service quality factors, personal factors such as travel purpose, age, income level, and travel involvement have been studied to directly and indirectly affect tourism satisfaction. In particular, in recent marketing studies, customer psychological power is included as an important factor in consumer behavior, and related studies are increasing.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between service quality, destination image, and tourist satisfaction for foreign tourists visiting Korea, and in particular, to analyze the moderating effect of psychological power in the relationship. The research results are expected to provide important implications for improving travel satisfaction and providing personalized services for researchers in the travel industry.

## 2. Research Background

### 2.1. Tourist Service Quality.

Service quality is a comparative concept of consumer expectations for tangible and intangible product services and services after using them (Parasuraman et al., 1991). Holbrook (1986) defined service quality in terms of objective quality and subjective quality, stating that objective quality is the technical superiority of the product, while subjective quality is the subjective response of the consumer. According to Parasuraman et al. (1994), service quality refers to the subjective quality perceived by consumers.

In the tourism context, various services provided by

tourist destinations during the tour period are intended to benefit and satisfy the customer. As part of customer-centricity, service delivery and expectations must be met. (Kim & Woo, 2001). As a result of the quality of service provided to tourist destinations, tourists' expectations of tourism experiences and perceptions of these destinations can be fulfilled.

Service quality in the tourism context is defined to be the level of human, physical, and systematic customer expectations at the travel destination to improve traveler's satisfaction (Rust & Oliver, 1994; Kwon & Jeong 2019). The sub-elements are composed of the reliability, authenticity, empathy, cleanliness and convenience of facilities, and the playfulness and benefits of tourism programs and so on. This travel destination service quality was found to have a positive effect on the image of the travel destination or traveler's satisfaction.

### 2.2. Tourist Destination Image

Generally, image means a mental picture, the thought of how something looks or might look, or the idea that people have about someone or something. Lee and Park (1999) defined the tourist destination image as the overall idea of a tour destination formed through various information obtained before tourists visit the destination and experience the nation. Sohn and Choi (2003) said that it is affected by the components of the tourist image by judging the value of tourists and that it is an impression that can change depending on factors such as the degree of favorability, culture, and geography for the tourist destination. Tourists tend to choose tourist destinations based on the image of tourist destinations, and there may be a positive correlation between the image of tourist destinations and preferences or visit intention (Mayo, 1975).

The image of tourist attractions plays an essential role in customer decision-making on tourist attractions and tourism products (Gunn, 1972). It is said that this affects the subjective of individual tourists. It affects the choice and behavior of tourist destinations (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). The image of tourist destinations perceived by customers affects the selection and expectation of tourist destinations and evaluation after visiting tourist destinations (Lee et al. 2012).

The image of a tourist destination may be formed by information that a tourist may obtain through various channels before visiting the tourist destination (Cho & Jung, 2009). This means that tourism images can be formed through information transmitted through mass media or various channels through which data can be obtained (Gartner, 1993). In addition, the image of tourist attractions had a positive or negative image for a long time,

which is an essential factor in determining tourist attractions (Lee & Park, 1999).

### 2.3. Tourist Satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction refers to a state in which customers continue to trust and repurchase products and services because of sufficient satisfaction of customers' expectations and needs (Kim, 2003). Customer satisfaction activities are management techniques that reflect the image of products, services, and organizations from the customer's perspective. Customer satisfaction is determined by comparing expectations for products or services before purchase with results obtained after purchase and use (Kim & Han, 2010). As one of the factors affecting customer satisfaction, customer satisfaction increases as service quality is perceived, and service quality is an influential factor in determining purchase intention. (Parasuraman et al., 1994).

Tourist satisfaction is a factor that directly affects behavior, such as purchasing tourism products or revisit the tourism sites (Kozak & Rimmingron, 2000). Tourism satisfaction is an evaluation by comparing tourists' expectations before and after tourism and their performance after travel (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Choi et al. (2012) found that tourist destination service quality had a significant effect on tourist satisfaction and product purchase intention.

### 2.4. Psychological Power.

Psychological Power is the perception of control over valuable resources in social relationships (Magee & Galinsky, 2008). If somebody perceives others as controllable in the direction he wants, it can be said that psychological power is high.

Emerson (1962) stated that psychological power is the cane of the state by controlling people's cognitive resources.

People with high psychological power tend to be less affected by people or the environment around them when setting and achieving their goals and processing information analysis independently. Psychological power is known to affect human attitudes, behaviors, and cognition. People with high psychological power are more likely to self-oriented information processing. He has confidence in his experience, skills, and knowledge. In addition, interest in the surrounding environment and information tends to decrease, and empathy for thinking in others' situations tends to decrease (Sembada et al., 2016). As a disadvantage, it tends to decide based on stereotypes, one's own experience, knowledge, and skills and ignoring the advice and opinions of others (Goodwin et al., 2000).

Briñol et al. (2017) said that people with high psychological power act confidently and feel they need their surroundings or information with confidence that their perspectives and thoughts are right. If somebody thinks that correct psychological power is low, he is not sure of his thoughts and judgments, so he puts more effort into processing the given information and carefully considers it.

## 3. Research Design.

### 3.1. Research Model

This study aims to investigate the relationship between service quality, destination image, and tourist satisfaction, and in particular, to analyze the moderating effect of psychological power in the relationship.

Based on the results of previous studies, Tourism service quality was designated as an independent variable, while tourism image as mediating variable of tourist satisfaction. The moderating effect of psychological power is to be verified in the relationship between service quality and tourist image, and also in the relationship between tourist image and tourist satisfaction. The research model is shown in Figure 1.

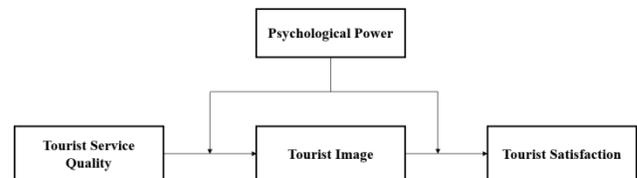


Figure 1: Research Model

### 3.2. Hypothesis

Customers who receive services that customers feel satisfied with have a positive image of the company and are very helpful in terms of the effectiveness of the company (Park & Lee, 2002). Assael (1995) said that service quality is important because the excellent behavior of stores and employees, good language, and impressions shape customers who visit stores. Kim et al. (2005) also suggested that service quality has a positive effect on the image formation of products and service value on customer satisfaction.

In a study on the relationship between service and travel image, Lee et al. (1999) and Park and Lee (2002) demonstrated that resort service quality has a positive effect on the travel image, loyalty, and revisit intention. Park et al. (2007) also analyzed that in-flight services, customers, and flight-related services had a positive effect

on airline image formation, and Kim (2009) confirmed that employee service and additional service quality had a significant impact on hotel image. Kim et al. (2013) stated that the active behavior and kind guidance of local residents of tourist destinations increase visitors' satisfaction and affect the formation of a positive image. Other research shows that tourist destination service quality has a positive effect on tourist destination image (Kwon & Jeong, 2019; Tosun et al., 2015). Therefore, the following research hypothesis was established in this study based on the previous studies.

**H1:** The quality of tourist destination service will have a positive (+) effect on the image of tourist destinations.

Kim and Park (2011) said in a study on the development of an image measurement scale of rural tourism villages that the emotional and cognitive images of rural tourism villages influenced the tourists' satisfaction. Kang and Lee (2016) found that moving images influenced pastoral visit satisfaction, but cognitive images did not affect rural visit satisfaction.

Park et al. (2007) stated that social and cultural images, which are urban image factors, affect facility satisfaction. It was found that social images had more influence on facility satisfaction than cultural images. Service satisfaction was found to have been more influenced on cultural images than social images. Lee et al. (2012) found that the urban image affects tourism satisfaction and affects the intention to revisit and recommend behavioral intentions. Therefore, the following research hypothesis was established in this study based on these previous studies.

**H2:** The image of a tourist destination will have a positive (+) effect on tourism satisfaction.

People with high psychological power are less affected by other people's opinions or information, have no resistance to taking risks, and show an optimistic tendency. On the other hand, people with lower psychological power rely more on other people's opinions or information and make safer choices in decision-making (Anderson & Galinsky, 2006; Maner et al., 2010; Murali & Nagpal, 2013; Rucker et al., 2012; Rucker et al., 2011; Rucker & Galinsky, 2016).

When a person with high psychological power purchases a product or service, other people's opinions or information are unimportant, so positive opinions or knowledge of others are expected to have no difference in purchase intention. People with low psychological power tend to be dependent on other people's purchase reviews, comments, and information as the product purchase

experience is added to the products they want to purchase. When purchasing a product or service, it is based on experience and information, and the higher the positive reviews or information of others, the higher the purchase intention. People with high psychological power think their opinions and perspectives are more important, and people with low psychological power will purchase products or service based on other people's experiences, knowledge, and information. Existing studies have suggested that the type of product/service purchase may vary depending on the type of psychological power. Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) found that people with high psychological power play a more important role in purchasing decisions in the products they want to buy rather than the specific characteristics of the bell. Through the consideration of existing studies, this study expects that there will be differences in the service quality, image of tourist destinations, tourist satisfaction of tourist destinations according to psychological power. Accordingly, the following research hypothesis was established.

**H3:** There will be differences in the relationship between tourist destination service quality, tourist destination image, tourist satisfaction according to psychological power.

### 3.3. Scale of Variable

For this study, 6 items of service quality are based on the research of Anderson and Lindestad (1998). 6 items of image are based on the analysis of Crompton and Kotler (1992). 4 items of satisfaction are based on the Oliver (1980). 6 items of Psychological Power are based on the research of Magee and Galinsky (2008). The questionnaire items were modified and used according to the purpose of this study and used on a Likert 5-point scale.

**Table1:** Measurement items

Construct	Item	Source
Tourist service quality	- prompt - trust - consideration - hygiene - design - accessibility	Anderson and Lindestad (1998)
Tourist image	- Culture - experience - thrill - attractiveness - learning - enjoyment	Crompton and Kotler (1992)
Psychological power	- Judgment - opinion - decision - suggestion - information - oneself	Magee and Galinsky (2008)
Tourist	- Expectation	Oliver (1980)

satisfaction	- satisfaction - needs - satisfy	
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### 3.4. Data Collection

The survey of this study was conducted on foreigners in Korea for a total of 120 days from September 2022 to December 2022. A total of 219 copies of the questionnaire were distributed through e-mail, SNS, and phone calls. A total of 211 copies were used for the final analysis, excluding 8 samples with unfaithful and unanswered questions

### 3.5 Analysis Method

The collected questionnaire data were analyzed through data coding using the statistic programs of SPSS 24.0 and AMOS 24.0. Descriptive frequency analysis was conducted on each variable's data characteristics of each variable. To verify the validity and reliability of the measurement variables, exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis using the Cronbach alpha coefficient were conducted. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed using factors classified and measured through exploratory factor analysis

and reliability analysis to verify the validity of concentration and convergence of each constituent concept. Discriminant validity was verified using each factor's correlation coefficient and variance extraction index. The effect of independent variables on dependent variables was examined to verify the research hypothesis by presenting a

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted for each item variable. Reliability analysis was conducted through Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient to confirm internal consistency. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed to verify the convergence validity.

**Table 2:** Results of Validity & Reliability

Variable	item	Construct Reliability	AVE	Chroubach's $\alpha$
Tourist Service Quality	6	0.693	.581	.941
Tourist Image	6	0.943	.717	.935
Tourist Satisfaction	4	0.936	.785	.907
Psychological Power	6	0.819	.793	.843

### 4.3. Correlation Analysis

path coefficient by structural equation

## 4. Research Methods

### 4.1. Demographic Characteristics

**Table 3:** Shows the demographic characteristics of 211 people who answered the questionnaire for this study

		Frequency	%
Gender	Male	133	63.0
	Female	78	37.0
Age	1-20	14	6.6
	21-30	57	27.0
	31-40	75	35.5
	41-50	52	24.6
	51-	13	6.2
Marriage status	Married	141	66.8
	Unmarried	70	33.2
Tourism Type	Individual	99	46.9
	group	112	53.1
Length of stay (days)	2-3	5	2.4
	4-7	108	51.2
	8-11	66	31.3
	12-15	32	15.2

### 4.2. Demographic Character Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to confirm the relationship and direction of variables, discriminant validity, and possible causal analysis. As a result of the investigation, the correlation coefficient of each variable was 0.475 to 0.671, which was a positive (+) relation. Because of comparing the square value of the correlation coefficient with the mean-variance extraction index (AVE), each variable secured discriminant validity.

**Table 4:** Results of Correlation Analysis(n=211)

Item	1	2	3	4
1. Service Quality	(.687)			
2. Tourist Image	.671**	(.717)		
3. Tourist Satisfaction	.569**	.649**	(.785)	
4. Psychological power	.475**	.660**	.533**	(.761)
Mean	3.31	3.42	3.35	3.44
S.D	0.72	0.67	0.79	0.66

### 4.4 Research Model Analysis

As a result of verifying the suitability of the research model,  $\chi^2 = 487.982 (df=250)$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.952$ ,  $p = 0.000$ , CFI = .931, IFI = .932, NFI = .869, RFI = .856, RMSEA = 0.067. Although the NFI, RFI and RMSEA values did not meet the overall fitness level, other indices showed satisfactory values. They did not fall significantly from the fitness level, so the overall fitness of the research model was judged to be good.

### 4.5 Hypothesis Verification Result

This study establishes a causal relationship between tourist destination service quality, tourist destination image, tourist satisfaction, and purchasing intention, and hypothesis verification are as follows. As a result of verifying the relationship between the service quality of tourist attractions and the tourist image, the service quality is the image of tourist attractions ( $B = .741$ ,  $t < 9.256$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Hypothesis 1 was accepted as it has a significantly positive effect. As a result of verifying the relationship between tourist image and tourist satisfaction, tourist image is tourist satisfaction ( $B = .741$ ,  $t < 10.052$ ,  $p < .001$ ) Hypothesis 2 was accepted as it has a significant positive effect. As a result of verifying the relationship between tourist destination service quality, tourist destination image, tourist satisfaction according to psychological power, the high psychological power group is the tourist destination image of service quality ( $B = .613$ ,  $t = 5.315$ ,  $p < .001$ ), tourist satisfaction of tourist attraction image ( $B = .465$ ,  $t = 4.742$ ,  $p < .001$ ) It was found effect. The low psychological power group is the image of tourist destinations with service quality ( $B = .675$ ,  $t = 5.911$ ,  $p < .001$ ), tourist satisfaction of tourist attraction image ( $B = .767$ ,  $t = 6.134$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The chi square of model  $CMIN = 16.202$ ,  $p < 0.01$  It has been shown to have a moderating effect.

As a result of data analysis, it was found that the effect of service quality on image and the effect of image on satisfaction were higher in groups with low psychological power than in groups with high psychological power. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was also accepted.

The results of the hypothesis are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5:** Hypothesis Testing

(Hypothesis 1) Service Quality->Tourist Image

	$\beta$	S.E	C.R	p
Service Quality->Tourist Image	.741	.080	9.256	.000

(Hypothesis 2) Tourist Image -> Tourist Satisfaction

	$\beta$	S.E	C.R	p
Tourist Image -> Tourist Satisfaction	.741	.074	10.052	.000

(Hypothesis 3-1) Service Quality -> Tourist Image

	$\beta$	S.E	C.R	p
High Psychological Power	.613	.115	5.315	.000
Low Psychological Power	.675	.114	5.911	.000

Hypothesis 3-2 Tourist Image -> Tourist Satisfaction

	$\beta$	S.E	C.R	p
High Psychological Power	.465	.098	4.742	.000
Low Psychological Power	.767	.125	6.134	.000

## 5. Conclusion and Limitations

As the COVID-19 crisis stabilizes, the number of tourists visiting foreign countries is expected to increase again. It is time for each country to find various ways to improve tourist satisfaction in preparation for the increase in the number of foreign tourists. This study investigated the relationship between service quality, destination image, and tourist satisfaction for foreign tourists visiting Korea, and in particular, analyzed the moderating effect of psychological power in the relationship.

The analysis results and implications are as follows.

First, human service quality, which shows the trust, service, and careful consideration of tour guides, and materials service quality such as state-of-the-art tourist facilities and appearance, cleanliness, landscaping, and accessibility to tourist attractions affect the image of tourist attractions. This indicates that it is necessary to enhance a positive image of the travel destination, develop various services to satisfy travelers, and continuously improve the service level. Second, the tourist destination image such as experiences, learning, and entertainment has a positive effect on the tourist satisfaction. Therefore, to attract tourists, it is necessary to find ways to create and promote Korea's unique culture and have something special to experience, see, enjoy and eat to attract foreigners. Third, according to the psychological power, the effect of service level on tourist destination image or satisfaction was higher in groups with low psychological power than in groups with high psychological power. This indicates that travelers with low psychological power are more sensitive to service quality and have a greater effect

on service quality. This suggests that customized services should be improved in consideration of the psychological power level of tourists.

This study derived the above results and implications, but there are several limitations. First, it will be necessary to subdivide travel quality factors according to the demographic characteristics of tourists. In particular, it is necessary to study tourists behavior patterns according to age, income level, religion, etc. In addition, it is necessary to further study how service factors and satisfaction vary depending on tourists' personal characteristics such as travel involvement, travel purposes, etc.

On the other hand, this study dealt with customer satisfaction level as a dependent variable, but in addition, it will be a meaningful study to analyze the effect on customers' intention to purchase products at travel destinations. These studies will be left as follow-up studies.

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