

Trade in Tourism Service on the Basis of Tourism System: A Mixed-methods Study of South Koreans to the United States

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Abstract

Purpose – Acknowledging the limitations of the widely-used concept of destination image, this study proposes the concept of tourism image using trade in tourism service on the basis of Leiper’s (1990) tourism system. This new concept incorporates an image formed from South Koreans focusing on the tourist holistic experience relevant to the United States based on the tourist rather than the tourism destination.

Design/methodology – A convergent parallel mixed-methods study design constituted the concept, which emerges from the analysis of narratives and quantitative examinations of South Koreans focusing on tourism experience to the United States.

Findings – The study considers the following aspects in addition to destination image: first, images formed outside the destination, e.g., in the tourist generating region and the transit region; second, non-hedonic images, which are a part of the tourist experience despite not directly involving a visit to the tourist attractions; and third, non-service-driven elements, such as co-created destination images formed from interaction with residents and fellow tourists.

Originality/value – The tourism image concept allows consideration of aspects that have been overlooked in destination image studies yet may affect the image of the tourism experience.

Keywords: Destination, Experience, Geographic Region, South Korea, Tourism Trade, Trade in Service, Tourism Image, United States

JEL Classifications: F00, F01, F13

1. Introduction

While extensive academic research in understanding tourism destination image has focused on the destination region (e.g., Gkritzali, Gritzalis and Stavrou, 2018), other research has attempted to delineate the scope and the nature of the tourist experience. Tourism experience has been defined as “an individual’s subjective evaluation and undergoing...of events related to his/her tourist activities which begins before..., during..., and after the trip...” (Tung and Ritchie, 2011, p. 1369). Its characteristics include escape from everyday life (MacCannell, 1973) and “a reversal of everyday activities” (Cohen, 1979, p. 181), in which one may participate through diverse modes—recreational, diversionary, experiential, experimental, and/or existential (Cohen, 1979). However, notwithstanding the significance of

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understanding a tourism experience holistically and the offering a memorable tourism experience, extant literature has not yet clarified the conceptualization of tourism image that can facilitate the understanding of this realm. Noticeably, studies on the tourism experience, especially those highlighting postmodernist views, increasingly accept that the subjective state and how tourists assign meaning form the tourism experience (Uriely, 2005).

A problem that motivates the trend toward subject-based rather than destination element-based understanding of the tourism experience is that extant destination image studies have been unable to capture certain elements. For example, a bad flight experience, which occurs outside the destination region and is thus not captured with a destination region-based measurement, may critically affect the tourism image (Pike, Pontes and Kotsi, 2021). Similarly, while extant destination image items focus on hedonic aspects, some non-hedonic procedural tasks, such as acquiring a visa, help constitute tourist experience. In addition to the recent notion that the role of residents and their interactions with tourists shape experience online and offline in combination with the classical inclusion of the image of the host citizens (Uchinaka, Yoganathan and Osburg, 2019), more holistic and multi-faceted social interactions among diverse tourism actors who contribute to image formation need to be considered (Choe and Schuett, 2020; Styliadis, 2022).

In light of such missing links, this study illustrates the scope of the image of a tourism experience in conceptualizing tourism image. Tourism image is conceptualized at the scale of country as geographic unit because tourism policies can usually be implemented efficiently with this geographical scale (Huang and Gross, 2010). The concept expands the scope of the image tourism experience constructed beyond the attributes ingrained in the tourism destination.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Linkage between Trade and Tourism

Previous research has shed some important light on the linkage between tourism and trade (Gallego, 2018; Kim and Hong, 2023). First, scholars have explored why tourism promulgates trade. Above all, business trips are necessary to initiate and develop international trade of goods and services (Khan and Lin, 2002). Also, international tourism would benefit from rudimentary services and infrastructure. Another channel emerges through heightened demand given that tourists could access goods and services that are not produced in the tourist destination and may therefore need to get imported from elsewhere. Second, there are various plausible explanations as to why trade promulgates tourism. To begin with, international trade requires and shapes business trips (Khan and Lin, 2002). Also, transactions between two countries may stimulate international visits because consumers develop interest about the source countries. Moreover, frequent trade widens the availability of a gamut of products for visitors who then consume them in their countries of origin. This link is strengthened by repeat visits and pleasure trips of family and friends to derive information about a destination country (Mykletun, Crotts and Mykletun, 2001).

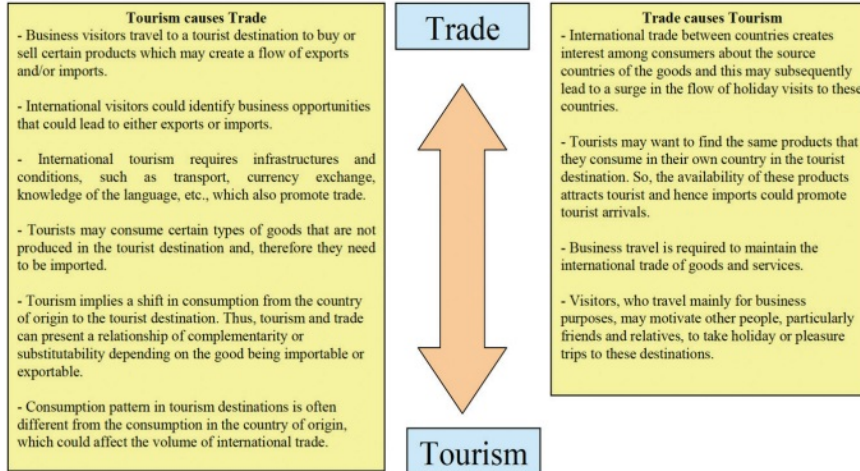
Such relationships have been empirically analyzed, which has illuminated evidence in favor of a bilateral relationship between tourism and trade (Fig 1). A study by Kulendran and Wilson (2000) supported the relationship between tourism and international trade and tourism in Australia. Khan, Toh, and Chua (2005) analyzed the link between the two using

data from Singapore and showed the presence of a strong relationship in relation to business visits and imports. Finally, employing Granger causality techniques in China, Shan and Wilson (2001) identified a two-way relationship between the two.

In addition, a group of studies have estimated models for tourist demand whereby international trade is perceived as an additional regressor. Such studies have revealed that international trade serves as a significant variable to describe tourist demand and also have identified a positive correlation between international trade and tourism (Eilat and Einav, 2004; Goh and Law, 2003). For example, in analyzing tourist demand, Turner and Witt (2001) found that international trade is one of the primary determinants for business trips.

Some studies have examined the relationship by focusing on certain products or regions. Aradhyula and Tronstad (2003) showed that government agencies are important in ensuring the provision of perfect information related to trade opportunities by helping business ventures and tourism. On the other hand, Fischer and Gil-Alana (2005) examined Germany's imports of Spanish wines, concluding that imports are indeed promoted by tourism. As per the findings of this study, the response of the trading partners to the alterations made in terms of real income may have impacted the country's tourism by increasing surpluses on the tourism balance of trade. While several papers have cited reasons and produced evidence that establishes a relationship between trade and tourism, their analyses have primarily focused on certain products or regions. In addition, these studies have primarily utilized time series techniques.

Fig. 1. Tourism and Trade Links



Source: Gallego (2018, p.12)

2.2. Tourism Image

An image incorporates concepts of perceived functional quality, subjective knowledge, and mental pictures. Although destination image is a significant determinant of tourists' behavioral intentions, travel behaviors, and pre-purchase, in-situation purchase, and post-purchase decisions (Pratminingsih, Rudatin and Rimenta, 2014) its definition focuses primarily on tourists' perceptions of a destination (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). It has been

classified according to various taxonomies. Echtner and Ritchie (2003) classified it by elements. Gartner (1994) highlighted its formation process. Many other studies have supported the dichotomous structure of the cognitive and affective components of tourism image, where the former indicates the beliefs regarding the product/service elements and the destination while the latter denotes emotions and feelings (San Martín and Rodríguez del Bosque, 2008). Some studies have highlighted the spectrum of functional and psychological elements (Echtner and Ritchie, 2003). Such dichotomization has been scrutinized in relation to conative (Gartner, 1994) image, which captures the desire to visit the destination, and overall (i.e., composite or holistic) images (Beerli and Martin, 2004).

Destination image has been studied in tourism and marketing (Ferrer-Rosell and Marine-Roig, 2020). However, clear delineation of its geographical and experiential scope is still lacking (Choe et al., 2022; Choe, Lee and Sim, 2023; Choi and Li, 2017). Owing to the lack of advanced definition, studies linking destination image to tourism experience have failed to incorporate images that are not destination-originated or those related to a combination of destinations, and they have mostly concerned overall emotional states focusing on hedonism. Furthermore, they have failed to capture multiple aspects of personal encounters in shaping the image of the tourism experience (Stylidis, 2022). Because the scope of destination image has not been adequately considered, there are limited measurement items for capturing the more holistic perception.

Tourism image, suggested in the current study, is differentiated from destination image in that it also includes the image constructed by the tourism experience in the tourist-generating region, the transit region, and multiple tourism destinations, if applicable, that contribute to the overall tourism experience (Choi and Cai, 2022). Choi and Cai (2022) recently introduced the notion of an experiential tourism image, which builds upon the established destination image concept that primarily focuses on the image formed about the attributes in a destination region. According to them, the experiential tourism image incorporates novel insights into destination image by considering diverse geographical regions where the tourism experience unfolds and is co-created. While experiential tourism image (Choi and Cai, 2022) considers geographical aspects, the current study reconceptualizes the scope of a tourism experience and what aspects of tourism to consider by broadening the scope by addressing three aspects—geographic regions, hedonism, and service-driven vs. non-service-driven elements.

Tourism image can capture such unexplored components of a tourism experience. For example, image about a flight experience to a destination, interactions with other tourists in addition to service providers and local residents, or non-hedonic experiences such as visa applications and security checks at the airport, which have been overlooked in destination image research, can be integrated into tourism image.

Tourism image is also differentiated from tourism experience not only because it captures the perceived experience, which is applicable to both experienced tourists and potential tourists, but also because the approach is based on the attributes of each step of the tourism experience rather than on holistic emotional realms that many previous studies on the tourism experience have measured based on the experience economy concept (Pine and Gilmore, 1998; Song, Kim and Choe, 2019). This study did not attempt to incorporate all the elements that form the comprehensive scope of tourist regions but focused on the image of a tourism experience to the United States (hereafter the U.S.) as a destination region for South Koreans (hereafter Koreans).

2.3. Geographic Regions

Davidson and Maitland (1997) defined a destination as a combination of tourism products offered in a well-defined geographic area. The destination is the location that tourists desire to use to fulfill needs not fulfilled in the tourist-generating region. Since most tourism activities take place in the tourist destination region, destination image studies have centered there. Accordingly, a destination may function as the unit for setting a “political and legislative framework for tourism marketing and planning” (Buhalis, 2000, p. 98).

Although the term destination denotes a confined region, there is increasing consensus that its actual scope spans other tourist scenes, because the tourism experience is not limited to tourism products and services in a destination region. In designating the geographic regions of a tourism experience, Leiper’s (1990) widely accepted tourism system model is fundamental and provides a framework for a geographical approach for theoretical and practical purposes. Leiper (1979, 1990) identified three interacting elements in a tourism system: tourists, geographical elements (the generating region, the transit region, and the destination region), and tourism industries. Their interaction exhibits reciprocal influence with features of various environments, which ultimately influences traveler transit through the region (Lohmann and Netto, 2016). The first two elements, which have been overlooked in measuring the image of a tourism experience, are considered below in discussing expanding the scope of the geographic regions to consider in conceptualizing tourism image.

First, tourism image is formed from the tourist generating region (or home region). It is where the tourism experience begins, through activities such as information searching and travel booking (Leiper, 1979). Organic and induced images are formed based on personal and online information exchange as well as exposure to non-promotional mass media coverage and marketing messages (Gartner, 1994).

Second, tourism image is formed in the transit regions, situated between the tourist generating region and the tourist destination region (Leiper, 1979). The tourism image during transit involves the smoothness of connections between regions (Buhalis, 2000) and the image of transit services, ports, and terminals (Nghiem-Phú and Suter, 2018). Thus, this aspect of image includes attributes of destination regions as well as non-destination regions. Consequently, there are different levels at which the attributes of a destination affect the image. For example, perceptions are influenced by airline services that then affect the entire travel experience. First, an airline service links a tourist generating region and a tourist destination region. Second, international tourists spend much time in transit regions. In addition to airline services, service experience with ground transportation affects the overall tourism image (Tseng et al., 2015). In sum, consideration of the geographic regions based on the tourism system would facilitate a holistic understanding of the tourism image.

2.4. Elements Beyond Hedonic and Service Experiences

The proposed tourism image concept considers non-hedonic elements of the tourism experience, which are mostly addressed in research on tourists’ uncertainty and risk assessments (Karl, 2018) but often overlooked. Gaps also exist in knowledge of the extent to which tourism regulations, such as visa regimes, complexify the tourism experience (Edgell et al., 2008).

In addition, a tourism experience encompasses non-service encounters beyond the control of service management (Styliadis, 2022). Even if destination management organizations

(DMOs) successfully position and communicate the identities of the tourism destination, actual images are likely to be highly affected by the organic image formed through experiences (Gartner, 1994). Elements that are less controllable and non-service-driven, which may be overlooked from the point of view of experiential design, service experience, and destination image, therefore, need to be addressed and should be incorporated fully into measuring destination image.

Service-driven elements include tourism experiential elements offered by service providers, including public and private entities. Non-service-driven elements include atmospherics, interactions with local residents and other tourists, and experiences of the social system of the destination. Of these elements, social interactions are a particular one addressed in the proposed concept. Interpersonal relationships in tourism is a core component in describing destination features, as the tourism experience is created together by multiple actors, such as tourists and non-tourists (Lin, Chen and Filieri, 2017). Non-tourists, such as resident host, affect the destination experience. Particularly due to the development of information technology, such as mobile apps (Kim, 2019), interactions have become more complicated than previously—multiple actors interact both online and offline, and such interactions affect the way tourists' perceptions are formed (Uchinaka et al., 2019). Such a consideration reflects the increasing role of users in sharing and regenerating information using digital media.

3. Research Methods

This study employs the convergent parallel mixed methods approach using both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques (Creswell and Clark, 2011) to a holistic understanding of tourism image. When the researcher gathers and analyzes both quantitative and qualitative data during the same point of the research process and then synthesizes the two sets of independent results into an overall interpretation, the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods enhances understanding of the phenomena under investigation (Creswell and Clark, 2011).

For this study, quantitatively, factor analysis was conducted to explore the underlying structure of the tourism image, the scope of which was conceptualized. The qualitative analysis was conducted to explore if the scope and the elements of the tourism image can be discovered from the interviewees' narratives. Data was collected using unstructured face-to-face interviews in 2019. Using snowball sampling, in-depth interviews were conducted with 12 Koreans with diverse demographic profiles with and without tourism experience to the U.S.

In this study, the context for Koreans' tourism image is the U.S. as a destination. In addition to Korea's significant role in the U.S. tourism industry, based on the number of visitors, the long history of cooperation between the two countries on the basis of mutual support has resulted in a comprehensive strategic partnership sharing common values, common interests, and a strong bond of friendship. According to the U.S. International Trade Administration (2022), South Korea's growing outbound tourism market has played an increasingly large role in arrivals and export revenue for the U.S. Positive economic indicators, South Korea's addition to the U.S. visa waiver program in 2008, and South Korea's entering into the Free Trade Agreement in 2012 have further benefited leisure and business travel to the U.S., which included 2.3 million South Korean travelers in 2019. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic,

different from most other countries, South Korea and the U.S. continued to open their borders to each other's countries.

A self-administered survey was conducted in South Korea, mostly in Seoul, Daejeon, and Gyeonggi Province. To reflect the population's demographic distribution, data were collected to roughly match the proportion of the population's gender and age distribution. Specifically, among the respondents, 44.1% were male, while 55.9% were female. Additionally, 30.4% of the respondents were in their 50s, and 26% were aged 15–29. Two-thirds of the respondents were married. The majority of the participants had a tertiary degree (79.9%). Of the respondents, 46.2% were categorized as managers /professionals, 24.3% were students/not employed, and 18.7% were white collar workers. Most of the respondents were residing in the Seoul Metropolitan Area (76.2%) (See Table 1 for details). The survey was conducted both offline and online. Possible sampling bias by conducting the online survey was considered: previous studies have shown that online sampling would cause the bias of the sample in terms of its demographics rather than bias in responses (Farrell and Petersen, 2010). A total of 640 responses (in-person=396, online=244) were collected. After a listwise deletion of systematically incomplete responses, 572 complete responses were analyzed (in-person=367, online=205).

Interviewees for the qualitative inquiries included those with the age range of 20s to 60s. Seven of them were female and five were male. The interviewees' previous firsthand experiences related to the U.S. included travelling for leisure and business, studying abroad, working, and short-term training (See Table 2).

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Sample (n=572)

Characteristics		n	%
Gender	Male	252	44.1
	Female	320	55.9
Age	15-29	149	26.0
	30-39	119	20.8
	40-49	125	21.9
	50-64	174	30.4
	No response	5	0.9
Marital Status	Married	379	66.3
	Single	193	33.7
Highest Level of Education	Primary	1	0.2
	Secondary	111	19.4
	Tertiary	457	79.9
	Other	1	0.2
Occupation	Managers / Professionals	264	46.2
	White collar workers	107	18.7
	Blue collar / Pink collar workers	37	6.5
	Students / Not employed	139	24.3
	Other / No response	25	4.4
Education Level	Primary education	1	0.2
	Secondary education	111	19.4
	Tertiary education or above	457	79.9
	Other / No response	3	0.5

Table 2. Interviewee Profile

ID	Age Group	Gender	Previous Experience
1	21-30	Female	Travelled for leisure
2	21-30	Male	No firsthand experience in the U.S.
3	31-40	Female	Travelled for leisure
4	31-40	Female	Studied, worked, travelled on business and for leisure
5	31-40	Male	Studied
6	31-40	Female	Studied
7	31-40	Female	Travelled for leisure. Lived when she was a middle school student. Visited LA, San Diego, Las Vegas, and New York
8	21-30	Female	No firsthand experience in the U.S.
9	61-70	Male	Travelled. Short-term training
10	51-60	Female	Travelled on business and for leisure
11	31-40	Male	Travelled for leisure. Short-term training
12	31-40	Male	Travelled for leisure

In addition to the items used for measuring destination image (e.g., Beerli and Martin, 2004; Nadeau et al., 2008; Qu, Kim and Im, 2011), items reflecting tourism image were developed by modifying existing measurement items to directly reflect the conceptualized elements. Destination components from earlier studies were reviewed, categorized, and re-reviewed. Broader categories included tourism resources, facilities, accessibility, host communities; attractions including the built environment, natural environment, and intangible activities; and services and facilities such as accommodations, and shopping, transportation and infrastructures.

The measurements focused on capturing the image of the core destination offering were cultural experience, historical experience, built environment, natural environment, and entertainment options. The cultural experience category (Hughes and Allen, 2005) included elements such as ethnic culture (V12), contemporary culture (V7), and cultural events (V9). Next, historical experiences, which include historical sites and museums (V10) were considered, following Bonn et al. (2007). Concerning the built environment category, its scope (architecture) has been defined from various perspectives (Hankinson, 2005). For the purposes of this study, to measure architecture (V8), Echtner and Ritchie (2003) measurement approach was adopted. In measuring natural environment (V3, V5), Murphy's (2000) conceptualization was adopted. To measure sports games and activities at theme parks and shows (V1), Klenosky and Gitelson's (1998) approach was used.

In addition, other destination image elements previously used for measuring the image focally associated with the destination tourism experience were adopted. As non-service-driven elements, such items included the receptiveness of the hosts (V13, V16), safety and hygiene (V17, V18), and popularity of the destination (V24, V25). Additional hedonic and non-hedonic items reflecting the image at the transit region (V19–V23), destination information (V28, V29), tourist-tourist interactions (V14, V15), and non-hedonic procedural activities involved with the visitation to the U.S. (V27) were developed and reviewed by three other academic experts in the tourism field (see Table 3 for details). A seven-point Likert type scale

was used for measuring the image set.

In conducting factor analyses, a principal component analysis with PROMAX rotation with a Kappa value of 4 was used. An eigenvalue of 1 was used as a cutoff for identifying significant factors, and .4 was used as a threshold for factor loadings (Hair et al., 2010).

The qualitative phase of this research explored the image of the entire tourism experience to the U.S. based on elements revealed in interviews of Koreans with varying demographic profiles and a diverse spectrum of experiences about the country; thus, it aimed to capture how an image of the country is formed and modified and the spectrum of the image. Based on the prior research such as Echtner and Ritchie (1993), the interview questions were developed (e.g., “What do you have in mind when you think about traveling to the U.S.?”; “How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while traveling to the U.S.?”; and “Please describe any distinctive or unique images that you can think of traveling to the U.S.”). The data were analyzed by using a qualitative content method (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). The thematically analyzed statements were compared with the results from the quantitative study to enrich the quantified results and deepen understanding of the scope of tourism image.

Trustworthiness of the data was determined by methods developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Credibility was enhanced using a member check and by debriefing peers among the research teams to interpret the results obtained from the quantitative methods. Transferability was obtained by using thick descriptions, allowing readers to make inferences about the findings in regard to applicability in other contexts. Dependability of this study was enhanced by an inquiry audit, where colleagues reviewed the process and product of the research inquiry. Confirmability of the study was ensured via triangulation to ensure the mitigation of the researchers’ biases using transcripts, field notes, documents, and probing questions.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics and Factor Analysis

Table 3 presents 29 variables related to tourism image items and their comparison with destination image items. The results of the descriptive statistics revealed that the variables had a mean score ranging from 2.87 to 5.2 and a standard deviation ranging from 1.24 to 1.57. Among the variables, “many shopping places” had the highest mean value, while “when I think of travelling, the U.S. comes to mind” had the lowest mean,” as shown in Table 3. Measures of skewness between -0.74 and 0.76 and kurtosis between -0.85 and 0.13 were demonstrated.

The factor analysis of 29 items revealed significant results for the underlying structure of tourism image. Communalities of items ranged from .503 to .779, which were all acceptably high. A five-factor model was yielded, explaining 68.499% of the total variance. Factor 1 captured predominantly images of the hedonic, tourism-service-driven experiences, undergone mostly at the destination region. It included items representing cultural, historical, and natural attractions, shopping process, and destination accommodations. Factor 2 captured items mostly measuring non-tourism-service-driven experience, which highlights the image of the social interactions during the tourism experience. Most items from Factor 3 included

those experienced during transit. Items loaded on Factor 4 explained the general perception of the tourism experience. Last, items extracted for Factor 5 included the non-hedonic procedural experience as well as the image concerning information sharing (See Table 4 for details).

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Tourism Image Items and Comparison with Destination Image Items

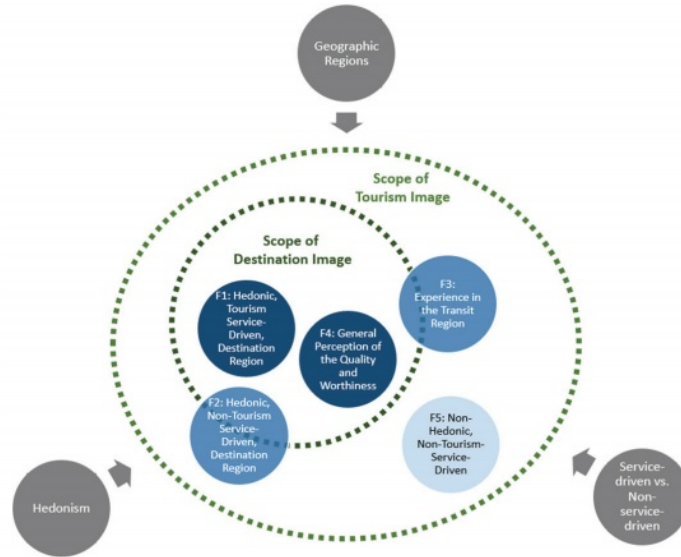
ID	Items	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
V1	Leisure and entertainment options	4.98	1.38	-0.59	0.05
V2	Good accommodations	4.98	1.33	-0.51	-0.08
V3	Beautiful natural attractions	5.15	1.43	-0.74	0.13
V4	Good restaurants	4.91	1.31	-0.52	-0.12
V5	Beautiful scenery	5.08	1.40	-0.65	-0.05
V6	Well-developed infrastructures	5.14	1.34	-0.68	0.11
V7	Contemporary art and culture	4.75	1.47	-0.53	-0.28
V8	Good architecture	4.65	1.47	-0.36	-0.49
V9	Interesting cultural events	4.56	1.42	-0.39	-0.29
V10	Many historical attractions	4.60	1.42	-0.41	-0.37
V11	Many shopping places	5.20	1.38	-0.61	-0.20
V12	Diverse ethnic cultures	4.30	1.43	-0.19	-0.58
V13	People in the U.S. are welcoming and friendly	4.19	1.33	-0.11	-0.20
V14	Other American tourists behave appropriately*	4.42	1.27	-0.14	-0.12
V15	Other foreign tourists to the U.S. behave appropriately*	4.38	1.26	-0.18	-0.09
V16	People in the U.S. are receptive	4.33	1.32	-0.18	-0.25
V17	The U.S. is a safe country	3.96	1.55	-0.01	-0.72
V18	Good hygiene and cleanliness standards	4.60	1.30	-0.26	-0.40
V19	Transportation terminals provide good services*	4.24	1.28	-0.20	0.12
V20	Good transportation services are expected	4.24	1.24	-0.15	0.04
V21	Security checking is done efficiently at the airports*	3.68	1.44	0.07	-0.48
V22	Good airline services are expected during the experience to the U.S.*	4.27	1.26	-0.14	0.06
V23	Entry inspection process is done smoothly at the airports*	3.78	1.48	0.00	-0.47
V24	When I think of travelling, the U.S. comes to mind	2.87	1.54	0.76	-0.02
V25	A popular destination	3.73	1.57	0.09	-0.85
V26	High quality tourism services	3.81	1.35	0.00	-0.42
V27	Easy to obtain an entry permit*	3.50	1.51	0.22	-0.65
V28	Good online tourist information*	4.43	1.27	-0.25	-0.10
V29	Much tourism information to the U.S. is shared*	4.36	1.32	-0.23	-0.20

Note: * Items not used in previous destination image studies

Table 4. Factor Analysis of Tourism Image Items and Comparison with Destination Image Items

Variable ID	Factor Loading					Communality
	1	2	3	4	5	
Factor 1. Hedonic, tourism-service-driven experience at the destination region (Reliability: 0.938)						
V1	0.86	-0.13	0.18	-0.06	-0.09	0.66
V2	0.81	0.12	0.18	-0.08	-0.21	0.73
V3	0.80	0.18	-0.22	0.02	0.00	0.71
V4	0.76	0.08	0.19	-0.12	-0.09	0.65
V5	0.75	0.17	-0.19	0.08	0.02	0.70
V6	0.75	0.26	0.15	-0.19	-0.18	0.71
V7	0.72	-0.12	-0.16	0.17	0.24	0.73
V8	0.66	-0.16	0.15	0.25	-0.03	0.61
V9	0.65	-0.14	-0.09	0.16	0.30	0.70
V10	0.64	0.02	-0.14	0.19	0.20	0.68
V11	0.62	0.19	0.08	-0.18	0.03	0.50
V12	0.49	-0.09	-0.02	0.45	0.04	0.62
Factor 2. Destination region, hedonic, non-tourism-service-driven experience (Reliability: 0.895)						
V13	-0.01	0.82	0.06	0.12	-0.02	0.78
V14	0.06	0.78	-0.06	-0.11	0.22	0.72
V15	0.06	0.75	-0.05	-0.11	0.25	0.71
V16	0.10	0.73	-0.03	0.05	0.09	0.69
V17	-0.01	0.71	-0.04	0.23	-0.15	0.53
V18	0.25	0.63	0.07	0.12	-0.15	0.66
Factor 3. Experience in the transit region (Reliability: 0.880)						
V19	0.20	-0.13	0.86	0.05	-0.13	0.72
V20	0.22	-0.04	0.74	-0.05	0.11	0.74
V21	-0.29	0.09	0.71	0.16	0.25	0.71
V22	0.22	-0.05	0.70	-0.03	0.17	0.73
V23	-0.31	0.20	0.62	0.16	0.26	0.70
Factor 4. General perception of the quality and worthiness (Reliability: 0.832)						
V24	-0.19	0.16	0.10	0.94	-0.21	0.73
V25	0.17	0.03	-0.02	0.76	0.01	0.75
V26	0.18	0.06	0.16	0.66	-0.02	0.69
Factor 5. Non-hedonic, non-tourism-service-driven (Reliability: 0.764)						
V27	-0.25	0.14	0.15	-0.11	0.77	0.60
V28	0.22	-0.04	0.18	-0.13	0.72	0.72
V29	0.24	0.03	0.07	-0.01	0.63	0.66

Factor 1 and Factor 4 included extant destination image items only. Factor 2 mostly included destination image items while most items from Factor 3 were beyond the scope of extant destination image items. All items from Factor 5 were newly captured by extending the scope of image from destination to tourism experience (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2. Comparison of the Scope of Destination Image and Tourism Image

4.2. Hedonic, Tourism-service-driven Experiences at the Destination Region

Statements from the interviews reflected that core destination-based tourist offerings form a vital element of tourism image, which Factor 1 from the quantitative analysis captured. Hedonic, tourism-service-driven experiences were related to various tourism attractiveness factors that draw tourists to the destination region, such as natural and cultural attractions, monuments and museums, entertainment, transportation, accommodations, and gastronomy (Regalado-Pezúa et al., 2022).

Specifically, both natural (V3, V5) and cultural (V1, V4, V7–V12) attractions and elements were mentioned. Especially among those respondents with experience in the U.S. (ID1), one of the top-of-the-mind associations for the West was nature such as the Grand Canyon. ID4 emphasized the prevalent image of the nature in the U.S., and she showed strong intention to prioritize this type of place to visit: “If I have another chance to go to the U.S. for travel, I would go to Utah or Arizona. I want to enjoy the huge nature.” The East was perceived as having famous attractions, with historical museums and art museums.

Statements from the informants reflected the attraction experience of contemporary art and culture (V7) and concretely exemplified the measurement items used for the factor analysis in the quantitative segment. Museums (V10) were noted as core attractions; for instance, ID1 mentioned the Museum of Modern Art as one of the most impressive attractions.

In the quantitative study, the mean values for historical attractions (mean=4.60) and ethnic culture (mean=4.30) were lower than those for scenery (mean=5.08) and natural attractions (mean=5.15). Most participants responded that they were not so interested in the traditional culture and perceived the U.S. as a young country. ID1 said, “I am not interested in the traditional culture and history of the U.S., and neither are my friends around me. I would go

to other countries to see the relics and ruins. I would like to see the developed aspects of the U.S.” ID4 was also negative about enjoying such traditional culture, saying, “I would rather go there to enjoy the nature.”

Additionally, firsthand and secondhand experience of the tourism infrastructures (V6), such as transportation, urban architecture, entertainment, accommodation, gastronomy, and network of shops, were cited as part of the tourism experience. While ID12 was approaching the city center of New York, observing the road and the pavement and experiencing the 100-year-old subway facilities, he appreciated the government’s effort to maintain its old infrastructure.

Architecture and buildings (V8) were mentioned at the city level, such as Chicago (ID9), and as specific architecture, such as the Empire State Building (ID1). It was ID4 who remarked on the availability of events and festivals (V9). In illustrating the characteristics, she pointed out more resident than tourist participants at the local festivals. ID7’s statement “I like Disneyland” reflected leisure and entertainment options (V1). Statements about shopping options (V11) occurred quite extensively across different informants. ID4 expressed that malls represent America. “For example, when you go to Paris, or when you go to Spain, there are small shops, small streets, patios, etc. If you are out of New York, there are not such places and there are mostly shopping malls.”

Especially regarding sleeping and eating, uniqueness and positive and negative aspects in accommodation options in the U.S. (V2) were reflected. ID7 expressed hardship with finding decent accommodations and a tradeoff among accessibility, safety, and price, saying that “cheap areas are dangerous and decent places are too expensive.” ID1 and ID7 cited Airbnb as a good accommodation option during the visit to the U.S. Food and restaurant options (V4) were generally not mentioned as primary motivators. Oily foods, hamburgers, and steaks as the main dish were mentioned by the majority: “I would not go to the U.S. solely to eat at Five Guys. I would go there to eat because I am traveling there (ID6).” ID7’s statement echoed others: “For me and people around me, the U.S. is not a culinary tourism destination.” ID9 perceived that most American foods can be tasted in Korea, and there is no particular place to eat that he prefers during the visit. ID10 has an image of American food as that for “ordinary people” and characterized European foods as “noble.”

4.3. Destination Region, Hedonic, Non-tourism-service-driven Experience

Factor 2, which included the image of the people a tourist encounters during the trip, including local residents and other tourists (V13–V16), and non-tourism features such as safety and hygiene (V17–V18), was described in several ways. First, statements from the interviews illustrating the experience with host Americans revealed that, above all, observation of the hosts formed the tourism experience. Racial issues also appeared to be salient. ID1, ID4, and ID12 reported a racial divide during the trip to the U.S. ID1 said, “I could rarely see Caucasian Americans using the subway in New York. Caucasian Americans were above the ground, taking taxis and cars.” ID4 observed that “people are not intermingled ... Hispanics gather together with Hispanics. African Americans gather together with African Americans.” Observation of the homeless was reported repeatedly by ID9, ID10, and ID11. Emotions in encountering local United States citizens were expressed. ID12 expressed the sense of being overwhelmed by the local “foreigners,” saying, “It was like the first day after transferring to a new school in my childhood.”

ID4 indicated that one of the strongest images of the U.S. with regards to other tourists

(V14–V15) was that there were many more domestic than international tourists: “There were many festivals in New York in summer. Most of the participants were citizens, not foreigners.” ID1, ID11, and ID12 felt that the local hosts did not treat them as tourists, and accordingly, they felt freedom from being gawked at. ID12 stated, “What I liked while I was around the park and the beaches was that nobody worried about me.” As a part of the interactions with the local host, one of the ways to meet the locals was service encounters.

In addition to the items used in the quantitative study segment, specific tourism occasions, especially visiting friends and relatives (VFR), were given as a main motivation for certain visits (ID1, ID6, ID7, ID8, ID9, ID10, and ID12). Both non-tourists and tourists perceived VFR as significant for the trip to the U.S. ID6 stated, “the reason why I go to the U.S. more often is because I have more acquaintances there than in Europe.”

One of the items under Factor 2 was safety concerns (V17). This item had the lowest mean value among Factor 2 items, and in the qualitative interviews, safety concerns during the visit to the U.S. were frequently mentioned among the informants, showing a constant tendency among the study participants to perceive the U.S. as an unsafe destination. ID1 said, “I find much information about safety and about the places I should not visit.” She was aware of the threat from guns, and set temporal and spatial restrictions on her experience of the city: “[during the visit to New York,] I did not go around at night.” Accordingly, one bit of critical information she collected for travel to the U.S. was what not to do and what to avoid, including not selecting certain guesthouses. ID9 reported that, as a tourist, traveling to the U.S. involves risks; he would “avoid going to new places.”

4.4. Experience in the transit region

Experience in the transit region contributes to the tourism image, such as transportation, security check, and the immigration procedures. Noticeably, this realm especially has been well considered in the extant destination image concept. The informants’ reflections on transportation experiences and those at the terminal were also extracted for Factor 3 in the quantitative segment. First, with regards to transportation options (V20), excepting a limited number of cities such as New York (ID1, ID7, ID10, ID11, ID12), the U.S. was perceived as a country where it was hard to use public transportation and tourists needed to rent a car. ID2, ID9 and ID10 expressed difficulty travelling within the country. ID9 said, “Transportation is inconvenient, and renting a car is a must.” ID6 added, “There is a strong image that public transportation in LA is very dangerous. My friend living in LA told me not to take the subway.” ID6 was a frequent passenger on the routes between New York and Boston, mentioning preferred buses. She also remarked on Amtrak, saying that the trip is time-consuming, unpleasant, expensive, and not as fast as buses. Travelers with the capacity to use technology appeared to utilize Uber (ID11).

With regard to the flight experience (V22), ID5, ID7, and ID 12 mentioned enhanced accessibility to the U.S. because of more flights and cheaper tickets. ID5, however, cited poor overall airline service experience, saying, “Poor service is certainly expected, but flights cannot be replaced with buses.” ID7 echoed, “I have a bad impression of American airlines.” In addition, the experience at the transport terminals (V19) was discussed in describing the tourism experience, reflecting this component as a part of the experience. ID12 mentioned that JFK Airport was relatively clean and modern.

The interviews revealed that the perception of the security check and the immigration procedures also contribute to the image. Low mean values in the quantitative segment of the

study for the security check (V21; mean=3.68) and entry inspection (V23; mean=3.78) were supported by the narratives. ID11 found the security check bothersome. ID12 recalled, "During the body scan, I could not understand what the security person was saying, and he was yelling at me." A few informants reported rumors that Asians are stringently queried during the immigration clearance.

4.5. General perception of quality and worthiness

General perception of the tourism experience, which was extracted as Factor 4, suggested developments and age differences. While a few participants felt that the American Dream is still prevalent, the image of the U.S. as a superpower and a must-visit place was weaker for some younger informants. Rather than envisioning the country as an attractive tourism destination, they tended to view it as a place to visit and stay for other purposes. All the participants in their 20s expressed a strong perception of the U.S. as a study abroad destination. For instance, ID4, a very experienced tourist, stated, "Other regions, such as Europe and South America, come to my mind in terms of good destinations for backpacking. The U.S., for me, is the place I would go for business."

Interviewees older than mid-30s appeared to have a relatively strong image of the U.S. as Pax Americana, and such an image appeared to motivate their visit to the country. ID10 asserted that the U.S. is still considered the center of the world. Because of that, she expressed, "As I feel that I need to know about the U.S., I feel I need to visit this country." ID3, in her late 30s, added that she had been experiencing an Americanized society in Korea, and, because of that, she thought that some Koreans may want to experience the American standard in person. According to ID4, the primary reason for people around her to visit the U.S. was because the country is "admired by people."

Younger informants tended not to prioritize the U.S. as a country for travelling. ID7 said, "There are many of my friends who say they would like to go to Europe; there are few of them who say they would like to go to the U.S." From a college student's perspective, ID8 said she would rather go to Europe and could not think of why she should go to the U.S. She said,

With the same budget, I would rather go to different places such as Europe; if I have a smaller budget, I would go to Southeast Asia. If I don't have enough funds, I would travel domestically. I know the U.S. is very big, but I don't expect that I will be able to acquire that much when I explore the country. It takes too much time to travel.

ID3 and ID8 pointed out a lack of a distinctive image of mega-cities in the U.S. ID3 said, "The impression of similar and familiar urban landscape of the U.S. may be because my country is Americanized. On the other hand, I feel that what I see in Europe is a lot different from where we live." For her, visiting the U.S. meant witnessing familiar scenes from American movies or dramas. ID8 reacted similarly: "I travel to enjoy something different. I feel that there is nothing particular to see in the U.S."

4.6. Non-hedonic, Non-tourism-service-driven

The interviews also illuminated non-hedonic, non-tourism-service-driven experiential elements, which were extracted as Factor 5. With regards to the visa issue (V27), because of the introduction of the ESTA system, the process of acquiring permission to travel to the U.S. was reported to be no longer a critical issue. Nevertheless, particularly those who lived in the U.S. described others' experiences of trying to extend their stay after graduation. ID10 said that

even with the ESTA system, it still would be relatively more complicated than to go to most European countries, where no visa is required.

Regarding information availability (V28), rather than news media, the tendency to build image through entertainment content was prevalent among the informants. ID1 said, "I tend to strongly feel that I would like to visit the places which I found in the movies. Before I visit a city, I watch all the movies related to the city, and I think I would like to go to the restaurant that that actor visited".

The informants tended to rely less on printed media for travelling to the U.S. than to other country destinations. ID7 said that in order to find travel information, she consults blogs rather than professional information. "I search on Naver [a Korean search engine] with keywords 'how to get to XXX'". She did not rely on United States residents for such information: "Those who are living there do not know how to travel. I rely on Naver for details." For ID12, one main information source during his visiting experience was on-site information acquired personally.

5. Discussion and Implications

5.1. Discussion

As suggested by existing scholarly literature devoted to mixed methods research, this study adopted a convergent parallel mixed method by merging the two strands of research, following Creswell and Clark (2011), in order to compare, validate, and contrast the related results. This research involved collecting data simultaneously while analyzing results separately, before combining them in the interpretation phase to obtain an in-depth understanding of the topic (Creswell and Clark, 2011). Factor analysis was conducted to identify the underlying structure of the tourism image, the scope of the geographic regions to consider in conceptualizing tourism image on the basis of Leiper's (1990) tourism system. The factor analysis results revealed five factors: (1) hedonic, tourism-service-driven experience at the destination region, (2) destination region, hedonic, non-tourism-service-driven experience, (3) experience in the transit region, (4) general perception of the quality and worthiness, and (5) non-hedonic, non-tourism-service-driven. The qualitative phase supports these findings and allows us to expand our understanding of the tourism image.

Based on the results of this study, hedonic, tourism-service-driven experience in the destination region of diversified natural and cultural resources formed Koreans' tourism image of the U.S. This included details on the various aspects of conditions and the environment (nature, culture, food) for Korean tourists visiting the U.S. The finding corroborates the ideas of Regalado-Pezúa et al. (2022), who suggested that a destination's built social environment has a significant impact on whether it is perceived as appealing to tourists (natural and cultural attractions, tourism infrastructure). This result also accords with the U.S. International Trade Administration (2022)'s findings which showed the unique status of the U.S. and its cultural influence on Korea to stimulate interest in travel to the U.S. among Koreans. Thus, the U.S. tourism industry can continue to attract Korean tourists by appealing to the image of the core destination with a diversity of attractions such as cultural experiences, historical attractions, built environment, natural environment, and entertainment options, while improving tourism infrastructure.

Koreans' tourism image of the U.S. was related to a non-tourism-service-driven experience,

which can be the image of personal social interactions during the tourism experience and non-tourism features of a destination. Tourists' experience is the total of the many social interactions that occur during the stay, and the interaction quality affects both tourists' experience (Yoo, Choe and Lee, 2022; Wang, Choe and Song, 2020) and image of the destination and the acceptance and tolerance of tourists by hosts (Kour, Jasrotia and Gupta, 2020). The findings suggest that developing partnerships among the national tourism organizations and multiple actors is vital to establish regulation standards for tourists' safety and security so that tourists feel safe and cared for. It is also expected that, since health safety and hygienic travel conditions of the destination region contribute it to being perceived as a place for good tourism experiences, special legislation or government policies are needed (Choe, Wang and Song, 2021). Practitioners can also offer a crowd-monitoring system to alert people and help them avoid dangerous destinations. A marketing process for safe tourism images is also recommended. The 'non-tourism-service-driven' factor also shows the important roles of diverse types of people tourists interact with their tourism experience. It is thus suggested that the U.S. tourism industry offers residents and tourists information that can facilitate better interactions among them.

Reported experience in the transit region indicated that Koreans' tourism image of the U.S. is related to the perception of a terminal facility where passengers and freight are assembled or dispersed during transportation and the security check and the immigration procedures form the image of the tourism experience. The tourism system should offer good services in tourism destinations and build good relationships with travel agencies, airline companies, transportation, and local suppliers to remain competitive and better meet tourists' expectations. Particularly, the experience in the transit region is tied to transit locations and/or services, such as a flight path, an airplane, or a hub airport. These things can also affect the image of the stopover destination, attracting stopover passengers into future stayover tourists (Tang, Weaver and Lawton, 2017). Furthermore, offering more and better public transportation services is vital to ensuring that tourists perceive the U.S. as accessible.

The general perception of quality and worthiness constituted the general perception of the tourism experience, which starts to form in the tourist-generating regions and is modified and developed throughout the entire tourism experience. There are similarities between American and Korean culture, resulting in the lack of a distinctive image of United States mega-cities among Koreans. Thus, it is vital for the U.S. to promote its unique culture, emphasizing the various ethnic/regional cultures within destinations through its people, food, music, and art. DMOs can use diverse communication channels to promote unique ethnic/regional cultures, create interest in the destination, proliferate the competitiveness of tourist destinations, and form a favorable image (Chiu, Zeng and Cheng, 2016). Non-hedonic, non-tourism-service-driven image includes the non-hedonic procedural experience as well as the image of information sharing. Korean tourists find social media to be an effective tool for finding and booking services in the pre-trip stage regarding visas and information (Chung and Koo, 2015). Therefore, marketers need to focus on social media travel platforms through entertainment content and develop user-friendly mobile apps.

5.2. Implications

By proposing a new concept of tourism image, this study reconceptualizes the scope of a tourism experience and offers significant information about what aspects of tourism to consider in an attempt to broaden the scope by addressing three aspects—geographic regions,

hedonism, and service-driven vs. non-service-driven elements. The major theoretical contribution of this research is in expanding the scope of the geographic regions to consider in conceptualizing tourism image on the basis of Leiper's (1990) tourism system. This study also introduces new measurement items for capturing the more holistic geographical perception. Furthermore, this study advances the concept of extant destination image by incorporating both hedonic and non-hedonic elements of tourism experiences and the attributes about how multiple actors co-create tourism images.

This study has practical implications in this it emphasizes the importance of coordinating the attributes of tourism experience smartly. The results from the study remind practitioners that multiple service providers and actors should all work well together to enhance the image of the entire tourism experience. The qualitative part of the study further revealed the actual perceptions and the experiences of each element of tourism image. Narratives suggested potential group and individual variations with regards to tourism image. Further investigation about such variations could yield a more dynamic and detailed understanding of tourism image.

Practical implications for DMOs and marketers concern topics such as market segmentation, tourism image, and positioning strategy for a tourist destination. The results can be used for marketing strategies, which could then be implemented by DMOs to develop their competitiveness against other long-haul destinations. Implications for policy planning and destination management are recommended with the development of more competitive marketing plans (i.e., study abroad travels, leisure/ business travelers, VFR, golfers) and the improvement of partnerships in developing tourism products and cooperative destination promotion by matching each destination's resources and varied tourists' needs. This does not mean, however, that the concept of destination image is useless. DMOs can focus more on destination image if they establish strategies for improving the destination region. Tourism image can be utilized to develop strategies to improve tourism experience and to collaborate with diverse actors within and outside of the destination regions.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research

Despite the above-mentioned significance and implications of the study, there are a few limitations that warrant future studies. First of all, some findings from the qualitative part of this study, such as VFR and the intersections of the image of a country in terms of its political, socioeconomic aspects, among others, and that of the tourism aspects of a country, would need to be addressed in the quantitative applications of a tourism image in the future.

Also, the data collection was conducted before pandemic, and the descriptive statistics presented in this study may not have captured the change of perceptions of Koreans (Choe, Lee and Lee 2022; Moon, Choe and Song, 2021; Wang, Choe and Song, 2021). Longitudinal studies are thus warranted to understand the commonalities and differences between pre- and post-COVID tourism images.

Although quota sampling does not use random selection procedures, limiting the generalizability of results of the study, regionally, the present study focused on Koreans' perceived experience; thus, it increases understanding of long-haul tourism experiences of tourists in the Asia-Pacific Region. Specifically, factor analyses and narratives together revealed the scope and the strengths of experiential image associations, attractive experiential elements, sense of homogenized global landscape and differentiated perceptual elements, risk perceptions, and interpersonal encounters throughout the entire tourism experience. While this research was

limited to a specific experience, its contribution and significance may go beyond the geographical limits. Empirical examinations of diverse countries are warranted in order to yield a generalized structure of the tourism image.

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