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The Idea of Congruence between Image and Society Stereotype on Attitude toward Tourist Destination

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Abstract

This article aims to provide a conceptual framework that depicts the matching between destination image, destination society stereotype in the context of consumer's behavior, and tourist destination. Using literature review and empirical researches, the present study attempts to formulate propositions that connect destination image and destination society stereotype in creating and/or improving positive attitude toward tourist destination. Based on literature review and empirical researches, the concept fit as matching can be implemented to achieve congruence between destination image and destination society stereotype in order to develop more optimal (positive) attitudes toward tourist destination. The present study also offers the concept of relationship closeness and image formation type as moderation to strengthen the development of positive attitudes. At the end of this paper, several suggestions and recommendations are provided to follow up the proposed notions in the form of empirical research. They include the dimensions and elements of each concept that need further exploration. This paper provides conceptual framework for practitioners and academics who are looking for theoretical support pertaining to destination image and destination society stereotype in the context of tourist destination. In addition, this paper also offers the concept of fit as matching to build congruence between destination image and destination society, as an instance of the application of strategic discipline in the context of marketing and tourism. The propositions in this paper contain the concepts of relationship closeness and image formation type as variables of moderation which may provide further contribution to the literature of tourism marketing.

Introduction

Tourism has been one of the important sectors in global economy (Kotler and Gertner 2002, Rial, Ferreira and Varela 2009, Lopes 2011). According to World Tourism Organization (UNWTO 2009), international tourists' growth

keeps increasing every year; in fact, it is predicted that by 2020, international tourists' growth may increase up to 1.6 billion, with approximate profit or earning up to US$ 2 trillion (Kotler and Gertner 2002).

Such big economic potential nudges the movement of marketing activities toward tourism marketing; that is the application of marketing concepts in the context of travel and tourism industry aiming towards 'selling' or marketing certain tourist destination like a product (Ashworth and Voogd 1990). The objective of tourism marketing is to build a strong and attractive image for a tourist destination; and to promote the image as unique feature and benefit that people can get from the tourist destination, in an efficient and accessible form, so that it will attract visitors (Bergqvist 2009, Kotler, Splund, Rein and Haider 1999).

Image is a series of belief, ideas, and impression that one has to subjectively represent a picture of an object (Echtner and Ritchie 1991, Milman and Pizam 1995, Kotler 1997, Hallmann and Breuer 2010). For tourists, destination image may reflect their attitudes toward a tourist destination (Jalilvand *et al.* 2012), including tourist destination choice they may make; particularly if they have never visited the destination (Mayo 1973, Govers and Go 2003, Hallmann and Breuer 2010). Good and strong destination image will develop positive attitudes toward the destination (Al-Kwifi 2015), so that there is greater probability for the tourist destination with positive image to be visited (Alhemoud and Armstrong 1996, Chi and Qu 2008).

In a tourism marketing study, the importance of destination image has been universally acknowledged. Since image is closely related to subjective perception of individuals (Lawson and Baud Bovy 1977, Phelps 1986, Lopes 2011, Jalillvand *et al.* 2012), which will lead to tourism behavior and destination choice (Chon 1990, 1992, Echtner and Ritchie 1991, Stabler 1988, Telisman-Kosuta 1989, Gallarza *et al.* 2002), it is important to pay particular attention to destination image in a tourism marketing study.

Various studies have been conducted on destination image. Majority of those studies put an emphasis on certain aspects such as perception toward destination image (Goodrich 1978b, Riley and Palmer 1975, Calantone, Benedetto, Hakam and Bojanic 1989, Gallarza, Saura and Garcia 2002, Kim and Richadson 2003), destination preferences (Scott, Schewe and Frederick 1978), tourism experiences (Phelps 1986), evaluation components of destination image (Engel, Blackwell and Miniard 1986, Embacher and Buttle 1989), and the process of destination image construction (Gunn 1972, Phelps 1986, Mansfield 1992, Gartner 1993, Baloglu and McClearly 1993, 1999). Other studies focus on the complexity of destination characteristics (Smith 1994), multidimensional aspect of destination image (Gartner 1989), and research methodology (Seaton 1994, Sessa 1989). Yet another study discusses the concepts of image of travel agency, other tourists, and hotel staff as inseparable parts of destination image (Calderon, Gil and Gallarza 1998).

The numerous amount of study on destination image brings about many difficulties for such future studies on this topic (Gallarza, Saura and García 2002). The primary difficulty is the rareness of supporting theory to develop a destination image study (Fakeye and Crompton 1991, Echtner and Ritchie 1991, Gallarza, Saura and García 2002). Gartner (1993) even states that most of the researches on destination image have no theoretical foundation underlying its development. This indicates that there is a crucial need to develop conceptual and theoretical foundation for tourist destination study.

In several literature about tourism, it is stated that tourist destination offers tourism products in the forms of not only beautiful scenery, cultural buildings and architectures, exotic seas and oceans, and so on, but also attractions (Kotler, Bowen and Makens 1996, Bieger 1998) and unique and friendly people (Echtner and Ritchie 1993) which can be 'consumed' by the tourists during their visit to the area. These literatures implicitly state that people living in a tourist destination (or destination society) can also be considered as a factor that strengthen destination image. It is because such attractions, uniqueness, and friendliness can only be produced by the native society in that particular destination.

Therefore, the stereotype people developed about a destination society is important. Stereotype affects people's perception and responses toward various issues related to a society (ALBU 2013, Chen, Lai, Petrick and Lin 2016), so that stereotype of destination society will influence peoples' perception of attitude developed in the destination. This is further supported by Echtner and Ritchie (1993) who note that friendly behavior of local society could help in developing positive attitude toward a tourist destination; which indicates that we should focus not only

on destination image as a general characteristic, but also on destination society stereotype as a unique aspect that the area offers (Echtner and Ritchie 1993).

The present study offers a conceptual framework to examine the correlation between destination image and destination society stereotype in the context of consumer's attitude toward tourist destination. Specifically, this study attempts to implement the principle of congruity theory on destination image and destination society stereotype (Osgood and Tannenbaum 1955). Congruity Theory states that, if there are two sets of information to be decided by a single observer, both sets of information should be made congruent to produce optimal decision (Osgood and Tannenbaum 1955). Referring to this theory, the two sets of information in this study; *i.e.* destination image and destination society stereotype should be made congruent to produce more optimal (positive) attitudes toward tourist destination.

1. Literature review

Destination image

The root of destination image theory is imagery. Psychologists have defined imagery as a way through which individual processes and retains multisensory information. Essentially, imagery is a holistic/gestalt method to represent an information. This process or method is commonly referred to as mental picturing (Echtner and Ritchie 2003).

The importance of destination image is universally acknowledged. It is closely related to subjective perception of individuals which will lead to tourism behavior and choices (Chon 1990 and 1992, Echtner and Ritchie 1991, Stabler 1988, Telisman-Kosuta 1989, Gallarza *et al.* 2002). There are many alternative approaches to study destination image (Ahmed 1991, 1996, Bramwell and Rawding 1996, Gartner 1989, Gallarza *et al.* 2002), including destination image approaches from anthropology, sociology, geography, semiotics, and consumer behavior (marketing) disciplines.

Destination image is an important factor of tourism marketing. It faces unique challenges because destination image is an intangible subjective aspect. How individuals develop their perception and impression about that aspect is affected by many factors (Caldero ́n, Gil and Gallarza 1998). In conclusion, destination image contains intangible elements that become tourists' consideration concerning particular tourist destination, even before they visit and experience the destination (Fakeye and Crompton 1991, Gallarza 1998).

Researchers in social discipline have found that tourism sites and destinations are sources of identification and affiliation for people, which have special meaning in their life (Williams and Vaske 2003, Hosany and Gilbert 2010). A site becomes meaningful for an individual because of the individual's attitude, value, and belief pertaining to the site. Snepenger (2004) finds that tourist destination can be distinguished based on its hedonic and utilitarian meanings.

The meaning of tourism or travel differs from one individual to another. Hedonic characteristic of tourism reflects a fun, challenging, and entertaining condition in the tourism experience. Hedonic tourism is defined as a tourism for the purpose of having fun, fulfilling fantasy, having an adventure, socializing, et cetera (*e.g.,* Bloch and Richins 1983, Hirschman 1983, Sherry 1990, Fischer and Arnold 1990, Babin *et al.* 1994, Kim 2006). Meanwhile the utilitarian attribute of tourism reflects the function and benefit of tourism for the tourist (consumer). Some of the attributes of utilitarian destination are quality of service, price, aesthetics of the site, accessibility from airport, and so on. Utilitarian tourist destination is defined as a destination that satisfies tourists' functional and practical needs in terms of efficiency and achievement (Babin, Darden and Griffin 1994).

Both the hedonic and the utilitarian attributes are intangible elements of destination image which one can evaluate, in terms of its functionality, image, and other aspects. Therefore, for a destination to be accepted by tourists, it is important to understand the tourism characteristics that it offers.

Destination society stereotype

Stereotype is "a belief about a certain group of people" (Fiske and Taylor 1991, Chattalas 2008, Roth and Diamantopoulos 2009). It is a generalization about characteristics, attributes, and behaviors inherent in a certain

group of people (society), which may affect perception and response toward various issues pertaining to that group of people (Albu 2013, Chen, Lai, Petrick and Lin 2016).

In the field of marketing and social psychology, the development of stereotype is based on the theory of learning. In social psychology discipline, there is a prominent theory of learning; *i.e.* social cognitive learning (Bandura 1977), which is then adopted by the field of marketing as cognitive learning theory (Solomon 1996, 2006, 2010, 2012). This theory states that individuals may learn from experience (Miller and Dollard 1941, Bandura 1971, Solomon 1996, 2006, 2010, 2012), or through observing others' action and/or behaviors exposed to them (Bandura 1977, Solomon 1996, 2006, 2010, 2012).

Referring to the learning process described by Solomon (1996, 2006, 2010, 2012) and Bandura (1977), the development of destination society stereotype can be assumed to occur based on cognitive learning process. Cognitive learning process is when individuals use the insights and information that they possess about the attributes of certain society and associate these attributes with the characteristics of similar society.

This assumption or analogy is supported by academics who note that social cognitive process is the root of stereotype development (Fiske, Neuberg, Beattie and Milberg 1987, Taylor, Fiske, Etcoff and Ruderman 1978). Schneider (2005), in his book "The Psychology of Stereotyping" states that stereotype may develop based on social cognition which, in turn, is based on assumptions, values, and belief of the people.

Based on social cognition theory, Fiske and Taylor (1991) develop a stereotype model; that is stereotype content model (SCM). SCM categorizes stereotype into two orthogonal and continuous dimensions; *i.e.* perceived competence and perceived warmth to measure the competence and warmth of a certain society (Fiske, Xu and Cuddy 1999, Cuddy *et al.* 2009). Fiske *et al.* (2002) then developed a matrix that combines perceived competence and perceived warmth into four categorizations to map individual stereotype of a certain social group. The four categories are paternalistic prejudice, contemptuous prejudice, admiration prejudice, and envious prejudice (see Table 1) (Fiske *et al.* 2002).

Paternalistic prejudice produces paternalistic stereotypes, in which a social group is associated with high warmth, but low competence. This prejudice is based on the prejudice or impression about social status and competitiveness of the social group, both of which are low, so that the emerging stereotype is that the social group is caring and sympathetic. Social group with this stereotype are, for instance, housewives, elderly people, and disabled people (Fiske *et al.* 2002).

On the other hand, contemptuous prejudice creates contemptuous stereotypes; *i.e.* a social group which is associated to be not warmth and of low competence, because it has no social status and is not competitive. The stereotype of this group is a social group which is vile, tend to be vengeful, and angry. The social group with this stereotype includes, for instance, beggars, homeless people, and poor people (Fiske *et al.* 2002).

The next category is admiration prejudice, which leads to admiration stereotypes; *i.e.* an ideal social group which is associated with high level of warmth and competitiveness. This prejudice is based on the assumption of high social status and competitive competence, which creates a stereotype of ideal and admired social group (Fiske *et al.* 2002). However, the prejudice underlying this category is generally subjective (Tafjel, 1981 in Chattalas, 2008) and used only to assess one's allies.

The final category is envious prejudice, which creates envious stereotypes; *i.e.* a group of people associated with high competence but not warm, due to their high social status and competitiveness. This association creates a stereotype of an envious group of people, such as Asian, Jews, rich people, and feminist (Fiske *et al.* 2002).

Table 1. Four types of individual prejudice as a combination of competence and warmth

Competence		
Warmth	Low	High
High	*Paternalistic* prejudice	*Admiration*
	Low status, not competitive	High status, not competitive
	Pride, sympathy (*e.g.* elderly people, disabled people, housewives)	Pride, admiration (*e.g.* in-group, close allies)
Low	*Contemptuous* prejudice	*Envious* prejudice
	Low status, competitive	High status, competitive
	Contempt, disgust, anger, resentment (*e.g.* welfare recipients, poor people)	Envy, jealousy (*e.g.* Asian, Jews, rich people, feminist)

Source: Fiske, S., Cuddy, A., Glick, P. and Xu, J. (2002)

Empirical study on SCM asserts that majority of social group receives not only one but also a combination of stereotypes (Fiske *et al.* 1999, 2002). For instance, the social group of "Asian-American" is given stereotypes as competent but not warm (Fiske *et al.* 1999, 2002). This stereotype affects individuals' attitude and behaviors in evaluating a certain social community, as well as things affiliated to it (Kaynak and Cavusgil 1983).

Similar assumption is also applicable for destination society stereotype. This is because tourist destination is an issue that is directly related to the concept of stereotype (*e.g.* Albu 2013, Chen, Lai, Petrick and Lin 2016). It particularly relates to stereotypes that tourists assign to the destination society (local people). The scheme of stereotypes to respond to various issues can be applied to tourist destination issue (Chen, Lai, Petrick and Lin 2016), that is the way an individual evaluate and process information he received concerning certain destination society.

Although stereotype can be positive or negative, it generally tends to exaggerate the characteristics of a society. Therefore, for a tourist destination to be accepted by tourists, it is crucial to understand the belief and values that one holds, as well as the stereotype formed toward the destination society (Albu 2013).

Attitude toward tourist destination

Attitude is an umbrella term for concepts such as preference, feelings, emotion, belief, faith, expectation, perception, values, principles, opinion, and intention (Bagozzi 1994a, 1994b, Jain 2014). Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) argue that attitude emerges because of individual's ties with various aspects of his life, including other people, physical objects, behaviors, or certain policies.

Attitude represents responses of an individual toward objects or situations (Jain 2014). According to Malhotra (2007), attitude is a summary of evaluation toward an object or thought. Attitude can be formed for any object or phenomenon (Bohner and Wanke 2002), in which one may have positive, negative, or neutral opinion, and show supporting or not supporting attitudes (Eagly and Chaiken 1993). Every individual has various attitudes, although not all of them are shown clearly; some of the attitudes are very subjective and personal, which makes it difficult to measure them (Jain 2014). There are some models proposed in the present study to measure attitudes, adopted from various schools; including (Table 2):

Table 2. Attitude model from various schools

Author	Model	Dimension and Conceptualization
Rosenberg (1956)	Expectancy-value model	Value importance and perceived instrumentality. This model develops attitudes related with values that an individual holds (Calder and Ross 1972).
Fishbein (1963)	*Multi-attribute measurement model*	This model measures attitudes that are influenced by belief and evaluative aspects toward an object.
Calder and Lutz (1972)	*Vector model*	This model proposes two dimensions of metric, consisted of affective component (liking or favorable) and cognitive component (likely or probable).

Author	Model	Dimension and Conceptualization
Spooncer (1992)	Tripartite Model	This model consists of three components; *i.e.* emotion, belief, and behavior.
Davis (1989, 1993)	*Technology acceptance model* (TAM)	This model can be used to measure attitudes emerging toward technology and perception of the use of technology.
Solomon (1996)	ABC *model*	This model proposes affective, behavior, and cognitive dimensions to measure attitudes.
Schiffman and Kanuk (2004)	CAC *model*	This model shows that attitude is developed based on three components: cognitive (belief), affective (emotion), and conative (behaviors).

Source: (Jain 2014)

Among various models proposed by various schools to measure attitude, ABC model; developed by Solomon, is the most commonly used model to measure attitude toward an object (Jain 2014). ABC model can represent attitudes emerging or occurring simultaneously (Solomon 1996), and can explain the correlation between environmental situation and emotional reaction or behavior (Solomon 1996, Dunn *et al.* 2007). This model is believed as the antecedent of attitude as one's mental readiness to respond positively or negatively toward an object such as people, place, or event; consisted of three components as depicted in Figure 1 (Jain 2014).

Figure 1. ABC Model of Attitude

Source: Solomon 1996, 2006; Jain 2014

Affective component is called affectively-based-attitude. This kind of attitude is based on values instilled in an individual, referring to the individual's emotional reaction toward an object (Solomon 1996, Jain 2014). Behavior component is called behaviorally-based attitude, referring to the way an individual reacts toward an object (Solomon 1996). Behavior is an aspect of measurable action and response of an individual. Therefore, behavior is easier to measure and identify, compared with affect or cognition. The cognitive component is called cognitive-based-attitude, referring to knowledge, belief, and faith of individual concerning an object (Solomon 1996). The development of attitude based on cognitive component refers to previous knowledge; which connect the object of attitude with its attributes (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975).

2. Methodology

This article aims to provide a conceptual framework that depicts the correlation between destination image, destination society stereotype in the context of consumer's behavior, and tourist destination. Using literature review and empirical researches, the present study attempts to formulate propositions that connect destination image and destination society stereotype in creating and/or improving positive attitude toward tourist destination.

3. Findings and discussion

The present study offers a conceptual framework to measure the correlation between destination image and destination society stereotype in the context of consumer's behavior toward tourist destination. In the process, this study employs the principle of congruity theory on destination image and destination society stereotype (Osgood and Tannenbaum 1955). Congruity Theory argues that if destination image and destination society stereotype can be made congruent, the resulting attitude toward tourist destination will be more optimal.

Congruency between the two concepts (image destination and destination society stereotype) can be developed using the fit concept from the field of marketing. The fit concept has been applied to construct theories in various fields of study (Aldrich 1979, Fry and Smith 1987, Thompson 1967, Drazin and Van de Ven 1985), including strategic management (Miles and Snow 1978, Snow and Miles 1983, Venkatraman and Camillus 1984). The mapping of fit concept is based on: (1) degree (high-low) of specificity of fit-based-functional form, (2) number of variables (few-many) used in fit equation, and (3) specification choices (specific-free) of fit-based-relationship criteria (Venkatraman 1989). Based on this mapping, six fit concepts are formulated; *i.e.* fit as moderation, mediation, matching, covariance, profile deviation, and gestalts (Venkatraman 1989). In short, each fit can be categorized into fit between two variables (reductionist view) or fit between one variable and other variables (holistic view).

Fit in reductionist view consists of fit as moderation, mediation, or matching. Fit as moderation refers to interaction between two variables used in the equation, which potentially may create third variable as moderation (Harrigan 1983; Ginsberg and Venkatraman 1985). Fit as mediation refers to a significant intervention mechanism between the dependent and the independent variables, both the directly and the not-directly related variables. Fit as matching refers to the definition of theoretical match between two correlated variables, without directly referring to the dependent variable. Conceptually, fit as matching is employed to match two concepts which are theoretically related (Venkatraman 1989).

Fit in holistic view includes fit as covariance, profile deviation, or gestalts. Fit as covariance refers to internal consistency among a series of variables that are theoretically related, in which all underlying dimensions should fit and be based on the principles of factor analysis (Venkatraman 1989). Fit as profile deviation refers to the degree of correspondence with a previously set ideal profile (*e.g.* Drazin and Van de Ven 1985). The closer it is with the ideal profile, the greater its influence on the dependent variable. The last one is fit as gestalts; which is a fit concept employed to find an appropriate alternative functional form (Venkatraman 1989).

Based on the two views of fit concept proposed by Venkatrama (1989), the fit concept appropriate to relate destination image and destination society stereotype is fit as matching. Fit as matching refers to the definition of theoretical fit between the two interrelated variables, without referring directly to the dependent variable. Conceptually, fit as matching is applied to match to concepts which are theoretically interrelated (Venkatraman 1989); in this case the destination image and the destination society stereotype. Therefore, the effort to achieve congruency between destination image and destination society stereotype to develop optimal (positive) attitude toward tourist destination will bring us to the first proposition.

P$_1$. Matching profile between destination image and destination society stereotype is more likely to create higher attitude toward tourist destination

The present study offers a concept of relationship closeness as moderation variable which could strengthen the development of attitude toward tourist destination. Relationship closeness is one of the important concepts in interpersonal relationship theory (Clark and Reis 1988). In interpersonal theory, the variation of relationship closeness between individuals is known to affect the form of relationship created, either positively or negatively (Levine and McCornack 1992). Relationship closeness indicates the level of closeness in a relationship that involves emotional feelings and specific knowledge among the individuals (Dibble, Levine and Park 2012).

Aron *et al.* (1997) conceptualize that closeness is a result of self-disclosure which leads to subjective closeness (Campbell and Sedikides 1999). The greater an individual's dependency on an object is, the greater the relationship closeness between them will be (Aron, Aron and Smollan 1992). In a previous study on tourist destination, pertaining to relationship, it is found that tourist destination can create specific meaning and identification for individual, which will promote the development of closeness toward the tourist destination (Moore and Graefe 1994, Halpenny 2006, Reitsamr *et al.* 2016). Such closeness reflects the extent to which an individual feels the values and identification of tourist destination; which affects his feeling and emotion, knowledge and belief, as well as behavior and actions (William and Vaske 2003, Jalilvand *et al.* 2012). Based on this idea, the second proposition is formulated as the following.

P$_2$. Relationship closeness moderates matching profile relationship between destination image and destination society stereotype variables and attitude toward tourist destination

The last focus in this study is the role of destination image development in affecting the development of attitude toward tourist destination. The development of destination image is influenced by personal factors and external stimuli factors (Baloglu and McCleary 1999). Personal factors include the individual's psychological and social conditions; while the external stimuli include any kind of external information the individual receives, including visiting experience to the tourist destination.
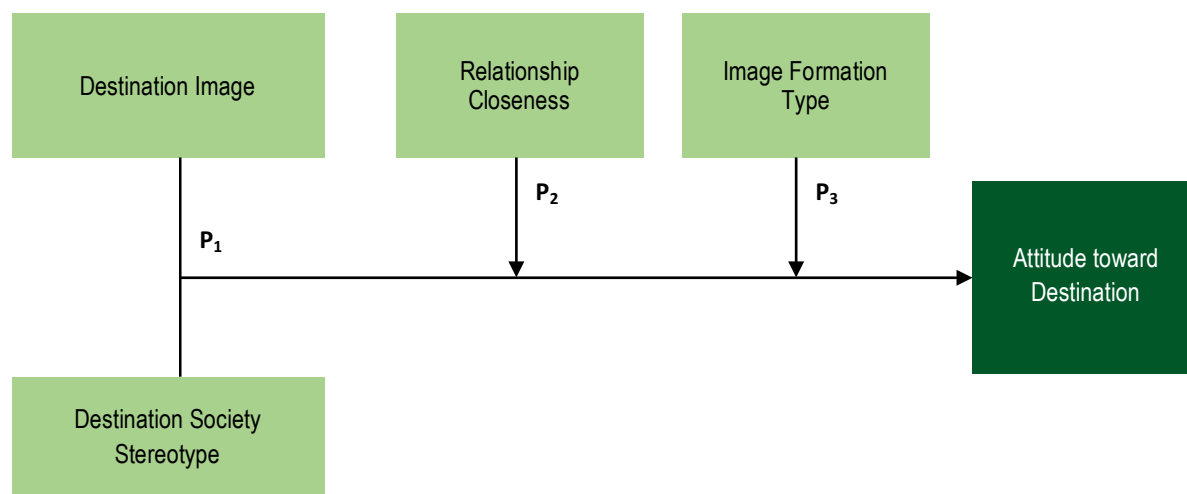
In 1972, Gunn proposed a seven stages theory of destination image. This theory argues that the development and modification of destination image may occur through organic, induced, and modified-induced processes. Destination image developed through organic process originates from natural information delivered without any specific intention; such as news in television, books, lesson at school, social media, and word-of-mouth (WOM). Destination image developed through induced process is based on formal information presented as a part of marketing communication, such as advertisement, brochures, human relationship department activities, produced by the related tourism organization. Meanwhile, destination image developed through modified-induced process comes from personal experience of visiting the tourist destination (Jenkins 1999).

Several years after Gunn's proposition, the process of destination image development was classified into primary and secondary image (Lubbe 1998). Primary image is an image formed based on the individual's personal visit, or an image formed by recalling the previous experience of visiting the tourist destination (Phelps 1986, Gunn 1988, Mansfeld 1992; Beerli and Martin 2003, Koerte 2009, Lopes 2011). Meanwhile, secondary image is the development of destination image without the individual having to have experience of visiting the tourist destination (Koerte 2009). These various processes of developing destination image based on previous studies bring us to the last proposition in the conceptual framework proposed in the present study.

P$_3$. Image formation type moderates the matching profile relationship between destination image and destination society and the attitude toward tourist destination

Based on the propositions one through three described above, the conceptual framework proposed in the present study is as follow (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

The aforementioned literature has discussed the theories pertaining to the issues of tourism marketing, in its relation to destination image, destination society stereotype, and attitude toward tourist destination. However, despite the many studies on tourist destination, theories supporting the study on destination image are scarce. This

indicates a crucial need for conceptual and theoretical development based on theories and concepts from related schools and disciplines.

The present study is expected to contribute to close the gap of supporting theory through implementing congruity theory on destination image and destination society stereotype. Borrowing the concept of fit as matching from the field of strategic marketing, and implementing it on tourism marketing, destination image and destination society stereotype can be made congruent to create a more optimal (positive) attitude toward tourist destination.

Conclusion

The conceptual framework proposed in this study is designed to illustrate the relationship between its variables; *i.e.* destination image, destination society, attitude toward tourist destination, relationship closeness, and image formation type. The arguments and justification provided in the present study are expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions; for instance, the importance of considering the aspect of society, in creating positive attitude toward tourist destination. Furthermore, it is important to maximize the role of relationship closeness and to select a more natural media for delivering messages concerning a tourist destination. Therefore, it is interesting to explore the conceptual framework further so that each proposition offered in this study can be developed into research hypotheses for empirical analysis.

Acknowledgments

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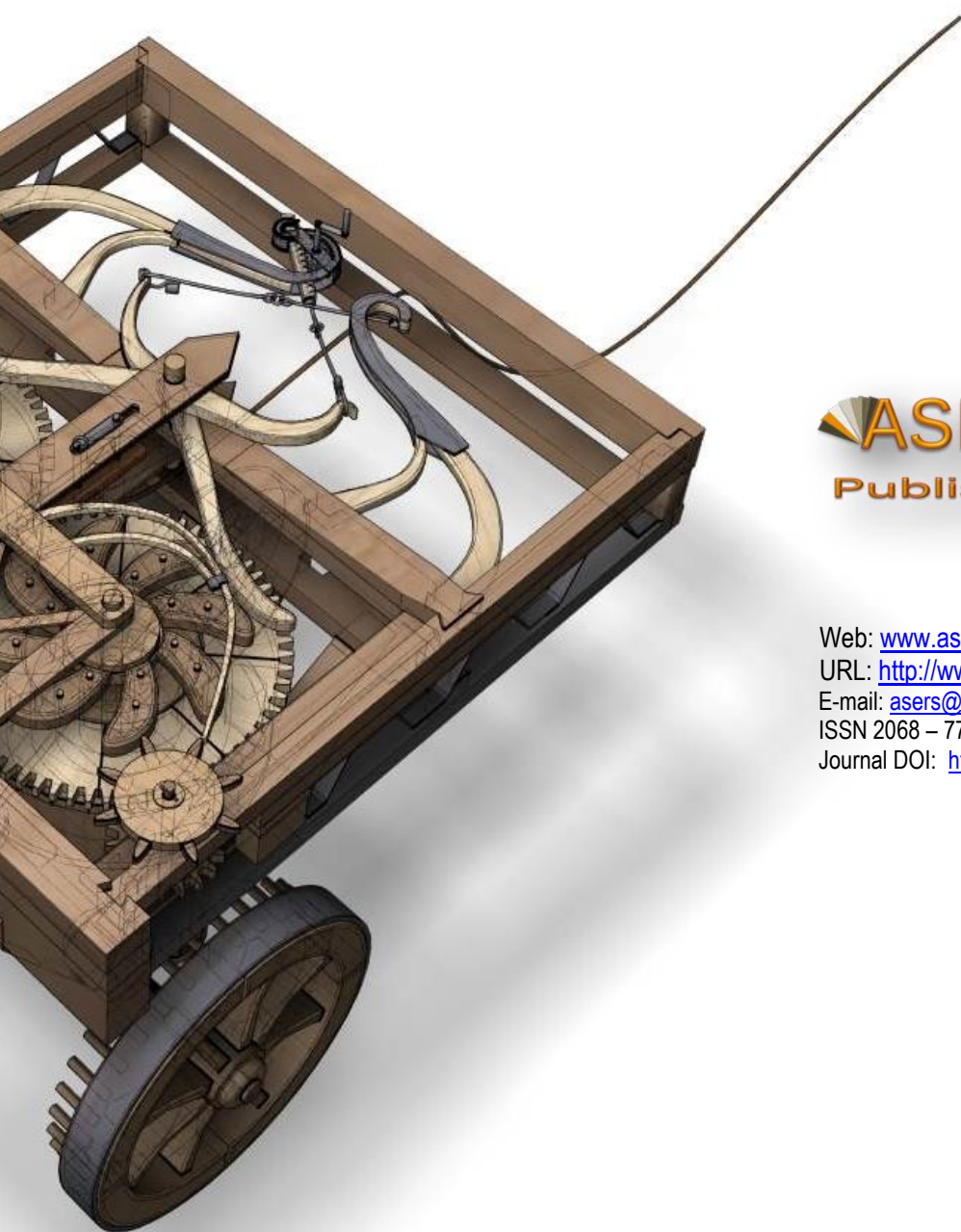[34] Chon, K-S. 1990. The role of destination image in tourism: A review and discussion. *Revue du Tourisme,* 2: 2–9.

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