

The Causal Relationships between Destination Image, Tourist Satisfaction and Revisit Intention: A Case of the United Arab Emirates

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Abstract—The connection between past travel experience and tourists' revisit behavioral intentions has not been widely explored but the existing studies suggest a close relationship between them. Destination image can equally be construed as having effects on the attitudes of the tourists at the end of their actual visitation and the satisfaction of a tourist with his or her travel experiences contributes to a revisit intention towards a particular destination. With strong marketing efforts, UAE is not only considered to be successful in attracting foreign investors, but is becoming the most popular tourism destination in the Arab region. UAE is seriously developing its tourism image and taking serious initiatives to attract new or repeat visitations from the international tourists. This study empirically investigates the causal relationships between tourism destination image, tourist satisfaction and revisit intention using UAE as a contextual study setting. A very clear picture emerged which provides a host country with potential implications for its tourism industry practitioners, Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing and the travel agencies who act as the intermediaries between the potential tourists and the hotel operators.

Keywords—Destination image, tourist satisfaction, revisit intention.

I. INTRODUCTION

UNITED Arab Emirates (UAE) is without doubt blessed with a location that is strategic and it provides a connecting link between not only Europe and the Indian subcontinent, but also between the Far East and Africa [13]. It is still somewhat of a melting-pot as the population originates from different cultures, but somehow the dominant culture remains Arabic, despite the fact that even the Arabs themselves are from different corners of the Arab world. Against such a backdrop, UAE appears to be a beneficiary of the convenience of air travel which has contributed to the significantly increased number of visitors. The tourism industry has contributed to a steadily increasing percentage of Dubai's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) which, according to some estimates is 20 percent [13]. Some views are mind-boggling as it is claimed that tourism is expected to be as

important as oil exports as a major source of revenue in the near future for the UAE. Although this only a prediction, trends showing that, despite the recession, the arrivals of tourists are still increasing as a result of an unrelenting campaign by Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing [12] and hotels are willing to slash their rates.

Since January 1997, subsequent to the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing [12] taking over from the Tourism and Trade Promotion Council, there has been renewed focus on the worldwide promotion of UAE as an ideal tourist destination, apart from being a thriving commercial and business centre and very attractive for Dubai property investors. What followed after the takeover was the setting up of the DTCM representative offices in many countries across the globe as well as participation in numerous international tourism fairs to promote the country.

UAE as a country is also rich in culture and history and an exciting place to visit with numerous events held throughout the year. The Dubai Shopping Festival and the Dubai Desert Classic are unique to the city and UAE with other national festivals being vibrant for the tourists. The Dubai Desert Classic normally takes place at the Emirates Golf Club and this is one of the main golf tournaments, not only attracting golfers, but visitors from around the world. Emirates also is renowned as one of the largest horse races in the entire world with a winning prize of USD 6 million. Besides these, the catchphrase of the event is also "shop, save and celebrate", and most of the city's malls and other outlets offer massive discounts on their products, while the activities held during this time are divided into categories such as arts, food, nature and adventure [13].

In addition, apart from being thriving commercial and business centres and very attractive for property investors with its political stability, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Fujairah are three major cities and districts which are flowing with local and international tourists and are ideal tourist destinations. According to reports, 3.95 million visitors visited UAE in the first 6 months of 2009 compared to one million visitors annually in the last ten years and only 600,000 during the 1980s [12]. Similarly, the demand for hotel rooms has tremendously increased with 255 international hotels in the city of Dubai alone with a total of 17,253 rooms compared to fewer than 100 in the last decade. In the period of January-September 2011, Dubai hotels played host to 6.64 million guests with an increase of 11% compared to the first three quarters of 2010 [13]. During the first eight months of 2011

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data show a good increase in tourists in the hotels and hotel apartments to over 1.3 million guests in Abu Dhabi.

Looking at this opportunity, the government of UAE through the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing is aggressively promoting the country internationally, keeping travelling at a lower cost, maintaining the core products (shopping, events, beaches and cultures) and upgrading the facilities and services of hotels and cities as a tourism image. Billions of dollars have been spent yearly for that purpose. It is no exaggeration that, with its strong marketing efforts, UAE is not only considered to be successful in attracting foreign investors, but becoming the most popular tourism destination in the Arab region. UAE is seriously developing its tourism image and taking serious initiatives in attracting new or repeat visitations among the international tourists. Despite this positive development, how the tourism destination images developed by UAE relate to the tourist level of satisfaction and their revisit intention are not widely investigated. With that, this study empirically investigates the causal relationships between tourism destination image, tourist satisfaction and revisit intention using UAE as the contextual study setting and hypothesizes that;

H1. There is a significant relationship between destination image and tourists' satisfaction;

H2. There is a significant relationship between destination image and tourist revisit intention;

H3. There is a mediating effect of tourist satisfaction on the relationship between destination image and revisit intention.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies on travel and tourism have shown that destination image plays a significant role, especially in the destination selection process and hence, offers better understanding of tourist behavior. Some key characteristics of previous studies which were based on 142 destination image papers and published during the period 1973 to 2000 were summarized by [34] as follows:

- i. North America was the most studied regions [32];
- ii. Countries were the most popular type of destination of interest. However, there was growing interest in urban tourism which led to more research into the imagery of cities [31];
- iii. Most studies measured only one destination;
- iv. The type of survey respondents were quite heterogeneous and included visitors, non-visitors, travel experts, local residents [26] and
- v. Some of the areas of interest were: a) the measurement of destination image [15], b) its components [10] or factors influencing it [1], c) the effect of destination image on behavioural intentions [30]; d) the impact of familiarity [10], e) distance [17], f) time [20], g) demographic variables on destination image [1].

A. Definition and Conceptualization of Destination Image

Destination image has been recognized as the most prevalent topic in the tourism literature and some researchers [14], [17], [19] found that the studies were only theoretical

and there was no conceptualization and operationalization of the destination image construct. This is attributed to the fact that the characteristics of tourism products/services, for instance, its complexity [12]; [35], multidimensionality [24], subjectivity [7] and intangibility [17] collectively make it difficult to measure the destination image construct.

Despite the wide use in the empirical context, destination image does not have a solid conceptual structure and as such, its definition becomes rather loose [17]. This assertion is found in [18] who lament that there are almost as many definitions of image as scholars devoted to its conceptualization. For instance, tourism images are defined by some researchers as an individual's overall perception or total set of impressions of a place (e.g., [17] or as the mental portrayal of a destination [20]. Table I presents some selected definitions of the destination image to untangle its various dimensions.

TABLE I
SELECTED DEFINITIONS OF PRODUCT, PLACE AND DESTINATION IMAGE

| Ref. | Authors | Definitions |
|------|---------------------------|--|
| [28] | Lawson & Bond-Bovy (1977) | An expression of the knowledge, impressions, prejudice, imaginations and emotional thoughts an individual has of a place specific object or place. |
| [8] | Crompton (1979) | The sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination. |
| [11] | Dichter (1985) | The concept of image describes not only individual traits or qualities but the total impression an entity makes on the minds of others, comprising the ideas or conceptions held individually or collectively of the destination under investigation; may comprise both cognitive and evaluative components. |
| [17] | Fakeye & Crompton (1991) | The mental construct developed by potential tourists on the basis of a few selected impressions among the flood of total impressions. |
| [27] | Kotler et al. (1994) | The sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a place. |
| [23] | Gartner (1992) | Consists of three hierarchically interrelated components: cognitive, affective and cognitive. |

The concept of destination image can be better understood by looking at a proposition by [18] who developed a comprehensive theoretical framework, defining image in terms of its four features: 1) complexity (it is not unequivocal), underlining an analytical dimension 2) multiplicity (in elements and processes), providing an action dimension 3) relativistic (subjective and generally comparative) translating destination image as a strategic tool and 4) dynamic (varying with time and space), allowing for tactical decisions based on destination image.

Some of the complexities associated with destination image are complex and emerge as a result of debates around its nature (collective image or uni-personal impression) and its content (components that make up the image and ways these components interact). The multiplicity of the destination image is attributed to: 1) its formation process (both static and dynamic) and 2) its multidimensionality (attribute-based and / or holistic). It is relativistic because it is both subjective (varies across people) and comparative (involves comparisons among various objects/destinations). Finally, it is not static but rather changes with on time and space.

B. Components of Destination Image

Destination image represents a global impression, and this

argument is indeed accepted by researchers. However, they have different opinions with regard to the components that make up the global impression. For instance, [18] regarded destination image as having a cognitive component, whereas perceptual/cognitive evaluations refer to an individual's knowledge and beliefs about an object (an evaluation of the perceived attributes of an object). On the other hand, [29] described consumers as developing an overall image based on evaluations of various product / service attributes and [18] argues that tourists' perceptions of various destination attributes will interact to form a composite / overall image. In an earlier study, [25] empirically examined the relationship between cognitive attributes and overall image and concluded that the overall impression is dependent on individual attributes.

Other studies [1]-[3], [37], [38] consider image as being formed by two closely related components: 1) perceptive / cognitive evaluations and 2) affective appraisals. Basically, affective evaluations refer to an individual's feeling towards an object. The general agreement is that the cognitive component is an antecedent of the affective component. In other words, tourists do form their feelings as a function of beliefs and opinions. Additionally, the combination of these two components forms an overall or composite image of a product [4], [5]. Another study by [36] shows empirically that perceptual / cognitive evaluations influence the overall image directly as well as indirectly through affective evaluations.

Interestingly, [22] and [9] suggest that destination image is made up of three distinct but hierarchically interrelated components: 1) cognitive, 2) evaluative and 3) cognitive. The cognitive component is viewed as the sum of the beliefs and attitudes of an object leading to some internally accepted picture of its attributes (external forces, pull attributes). On the other hand, the affective component of image is related to motives in the sense that it is how a person feels about the object under consideration (internal forces, push attributes).

Tourists travel because they are pushed into making travel decisions by internal forces and pulled by external forces of the destination attributes [8], [9]. As a consequence of the processing of the external and internal stimuli of a destination, a decision is made whether or not to travel to the area. This act is referred to as the cognitive component which is the active component of the image and is argued to be equivalent to the behavior. The three components together form the travel decision process.

C. Attributes of Destination Image

There are three components which are suggested by [30] that constitute a destination image within the cognitive context: 1) the product (attractions), 2) the hosts' behavior and attitude and 3) the environment (e. g., weather, facilities, etc.). On the other hand, [14] and [16] posit that there are three axes along the cognitive line of destination image: 1) the functional and psychological axes, 2) the common and unique axes and 3) the holistic and attribute-based axes. Along with the functional and psychological continuum, functional images are directly observable or measurable, whereas psychological

images are less tangible and more difficult to observe or measure. As for the common-unique line, destination images range from those perceptions based on "common" characteristics to those based on unique features or auras [33]. Moreover, destination image can be perceived as having individual attributes (such as the climate, accommodation facilities and friendliness of the people etc.) and more holistic impressions (mental pictures or imagery) of the place.

Some academic papers (i.e., [2], [15]-[17], [21]) do not reveal any compelling homogeneity with respect to the attributes that constitute a destination image. Generally, the selection of the attributes used in a study is largely based on the attractions of each destination under study. Meanwhile, [18] selected 25 empirical destination studies that measured attribute-based image. All the attributes used in these studies were reviewed and the most common ones were organized into functional and psychological axes. It was found that "residents' receptiveness" and "landscape and/or surroundings" were the most mentioned attributes in previous image research and additionally, there was a balance between the functional and psychological attributes being studied.

Emanating from an exhaustive review of the existing literature, [6] classified all attributes influencing image assessments into nine dimensions: 1) natural resources, 2) tourist, leisure and recreation, 3) natural environment, 4) general infrastructure, 5) culture, history and art, 6) social environment, 7) tourist infrastructure, 8) political and economic factors and 9) atmosphere of the place.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Sampling and Instruments

A descriptive research design using a quantitative approach through a cross sectional study was applied with a self-reported and self-administered questionnaire. As this study was specifically looking at the UAE, the population and the units of analysis were individual international tourists who were checked-in at hotels for at least three days in three major cities namely Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Fujairah. The sample units were spread across the 15 five star international hotels comprising six hotels in Fujairah, four hotels in Abu Dhabi and five hotels in Dubai. These hotels were chosen owing to their popularity among the international tourists in UAE and the researcher's capacity as the international exhibition coordinator who had personal contact with the general managers of the identified hotels.

The survey instrument comprised four major sections of which section A solicited the demographic information of the respondents which included gender, age, nationality, group, ethnicity, marital status, occupation and household income. Eighteen items were used in section B in measuring the destination image which consisted of three dimensions: 1) the cognitive image, 2) the affective image and 3) the overall image. Section C used seven items to measure tourist satisfaction while, after a review of the literature, four items were probed in this Section D to measure the international tourists' revisit intention. Most items in all dimensions were

replicated from the previous related studies with a few minor modifications of wording to address specific needs of the current research or fit the tourism context.

Respondents were required to translate their views on a seven type Likert scale ranging from 1 with "strongly disagree" to 7 "strongly agree". Although English is widely spoken, the questionnaire was also translated into other languages like Arabic, French, Russian and German as some of those tourists may not be familiar with English. By so doing, the response rate would be better and the data not be biased towards English-speaking tourists. Despite most questions being adapted from previous studies, a pilot study was also initially conducted to verify and confirm the reliability and validity of the items used. All comments and recommendations were considered and some further changes were made before arriving at a final version of the survey instrument.

B. Data collection

Before the actual survey the general managers of fifteen hotels were initially contacted to obtain permission for undertaking the survey and request administrative support. The introduction and the consent letters to conduct a research were mailed to the respective hotel general managers. As the drop-off and collect approach was adopted for the administration, the researcher personally delivered the questionnaires to the respective hotels and had a meeting with each hotel front office manager. The meeting was important in explaining details of instructions, procedure and how the questionnaire was to be administered by their front office personnel. With the intention to achieve maximum response from the international tourists, the researcher reminded each hotel front office manager of the one month time span of the data collection period.

Based on reports from each hotel front office manager, the questionnaire was administered by their front office personnel based on the stipulated time period given by the researchers. The feedback from those administering the survey confirmed that the non-response rate was very minimal and in light of the positive feedback and the absence of any obvious problem with either the instrument or the process, good responses were obtained. A total 413 useable questionnaires were collected from all respective hotels.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Respondent Profile

On demographic profile, 60.00 percent were males against 40.00 percent of females. 50.1 were married compared to 16.2 percent who were single. 34.6 percent of the respondents were aged between 40 and 49 years, 25.4 percent between 50 and 59 years, 20.1 percent were in the age range between 30 and 39 years, 8.9 percent between 29 and 30 years and 4.8 percent were under 20 years of age. 69.9 percent possessed an undergraduate qualification, 14.04 percent possessed a postgraduate qualification, 13.6 percent had a diploma and 2.4 percent (n=10) had a doctoral qualification. The majority of

the respondents were from the European continent with 11.62 percent British, 5.81 percent French, 10.16 percent German, 8.47 percent Italian, 7.75 percent Russian, 6.05 percent Swedish, 4.60 percent, Austrian. 10.90 percent American, 9.93 percent Australian and 5.57 percent Indian, 6.30 percent Malaysian and 5.57 percent Filipino. Data revealed that 77.03 percent travelled for the purpose of a holiday and sightseeing against 10.7 percent for business purposes, 2.4 percent for shopping, 3.4 percent visiting friends, 0.7 percent on transit, 1.7 percent on honeymoon, 3.4 percent for seminars and conferences and 0.2 percent for exhibition sport and recreation.

On the frequency of visit, 15.5 percent were visiting UAE for the first time, 22.5 percent were visiting for the second time, 19.4 percent for the third time, 14.3 percent for the fourth time compared to 14.5 percent who were visiting for the fifth time. It is interesting to note that 13.8 percent reported they had visited this country more than five times. As the majority of international tourists visited the United Arab Emirates for the purpose of a holiday, it is not surprising to see 75.3 percent reported their average length of stay as more than 8 nights, with 10.7 percent staying around 7 nights, 7.7 percent for 6 nights, 2.4 percent for 5 nights, 2.9 percent for 4 nights and 1.0 percent for 3 nights. On the type of travelling, 30.1 percent were travelling with spouses and children compared to 21.8 percent who were travelling alone, followed by 9.9 percent with spouses, 2.2 percent with relatives, 11.1 percent with friends, 6.5 percent with business associates and 18.4 percent with a tour group.

B. Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics were undertaken looking at the mean scores rated by respondents based on each dimension of the variables.

TABLE II
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR DESTINATION IMAGE

| No | Items | Mean | SD | N |
|-------|--|------|-------|-----|
| dim1 | Local standard of cleanliness is high. | 5.90 | 1.130 | 413 |
| dim2 | It has natural scenic beauty. | 5.50 | 1.334 | 413 |
| dim3 | Lodging properties are easy to find. | 5.83 | 1.206 | 413 |
| dim4 | Restaurants are of good quality. | 5.83 | 1.186 | 413 |
| dim5 | Prices are affordable. | 5.78 | 1.224 | 413 |
| dim6 | Good tourist accommodation is readily available. | 5.55 | 1.147 | 413 |
| dim7 | Many places of interest to visit. | 5.55 | 1.132 | 413 |
| dim8 | A visit to Fujairah is a real adventure. | 5.43 | 1.192 | 413 |
| dim9 | The food is similar to mine. | 5.57 | 1.163 | 413 |
| dim10 | There are restful and relaxing places to visit. | 5.79 | 1.236 | 413 |
| dim11 | Fujairah has good night life. | 5.34 | 1.459 | 413 |
| dim12 | The weather is pleasant. | 5.32 | 1.478 | 413 |
| dim13 | The standard of living is high. | 4.82 | 1.577 | 413 |
| dim14 | Local architecture styles are different from mine. | 5.15 | 1.638 | 413 |
| dim15 | In general, it is a safe place to visit. | 5.28 | 1.599 | 413 |
| dim16 | Everything is different and fascinating. | 5.20 | 1.578 | 413 |
| dim17 | Local hygiene standards are high. | 5.38 | 1.163 | 413 |
| dim18 | Local people are friendly. | 5.41 | 1.138 | 413 |

Scale: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly disagree, 4= neither, 5= slightly agree, 6= agree, 7= strongly agree

C. Destination Image

The descriptive statistics for destination image are summarized in Table II. The item with the highest mean is dim1 which suggests that the local standard of cleanliness is high. The item with the lowest mean is item dim13 which suggests that the respondents are not strongly in agreement with the statement that the standard of living is high. This could be attributed to the existence of many foreign workers who worked as laborers and rode on bicycles in contrast with the local citizens who drove cars. This could explain the reason for the lower mean score for this item.

D. Tourist Satisfaction

The results of the descriptive analysis for the tourist satisfaction construct are as shown in Table III. It is evident that the means of the items are all below 5.00 or above 4.9 which implies that the respondents moderately satisfied with all items. This suggests that the respondents moderately agree with the statement that they feel good about their decision to visit the UAE.

TABLE III
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR TOURIST SATISFACTION

| No | Items | Mean | SD | N |
|------|--|------|-------|-----|
| tsa1 | The visit was exactly what I needed. | 4.95 | 1.596 | 413 |
| tsa2 | The visit worked out as well as I thought it would. | 4.97 | 1.424 | 413 |
| tsa3 | I am satisfied with my decision to visit this destination. | 4.98 | 1.493 | 413 |
| tsa4 | If I could do it over again, I would visit this destination. | 4.94 | 1.529 | 413 |
| tsa5 | I have truly enjoyed this visit. | 4.97 | 1.489 | 413 |
| tsa6 | I am happy that I came to this destination. | 4.98 | 1.446 | 413 |
| tsa7 | I feel good about my decision to come here. | 4.99 | 1.588 | 413 |

Scale: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly disagree, 4= neither, 5= slightly agree, 6= agree, 7= strongly agree

E. Revisit Intention

Table IV is the tabulation of the descriptive statistics for the revisit intention construct. The means for items rin3 and rin4 are above 5.00 whereas for items rin1 and rin2 they are below 5.00. Therefore, it can be concluded that the respondents did not discount the possibility of revisiting the UAE.

TABLE IV
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR REVISIT INTENTION

| No | Items | Mean | SD | N |
|------|------------|------|-------|-----|
| rin1 | Likely. | 4.94 | 1.089 | 413 |
| rin2 | Possibly. | 4.76 | 1.066 | 413 |
| rin3 | Probably. | 5.06 | 1.112 | 413 |
| rin4 | Certainly. | 5.06 | 1.095 | 413 |

Scale: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= slightly disagree, 4= neither, 5= slightly agree, 6= agree, 7= strongly agree

F. Relationship between Destination Image and Tourists' Satisfaction

For the first hypothesis, single-step multiple regressions were conducted with the destination image as the predictor while the criterion variable refers to tourist satisfaction. In other words, this test is to evaluate how much the international tourists' experience of the destination image influenced their

level of satisfaction. Results show that the destination image was able to clarify 42 percent ($R^2 = .42$, F-change = 307.855, $p < .001$) of the variance in international tourists' satisfaction. The outcomes demonstrated that the United Arab Emirates' destination image significantly contributed to the prediction of the international tourists' satisfaction. The value of $\beta = 1.39$, $p < .000$ demonstrated that destination image has had a significant impact on international tourists' satisfaction thus, hypothesis one is strongly supported.

TABLE V
RESULTS OF MULTIPLE REGRESSIONS OF DESTINATION IMAGE WITH INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS' SATISFACTION

| Predictors | Model 1 Std. B |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Step 1: Model Variable | |
| Destination Image | 1.393*** |
| R^2 | .422 |
| Adj. R^2 | .420 |
| F-Change | 307.855*** |

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

G. Relationship between Tourist Satisfaction and Revisit Intention

Single-step multiple regressions were also conducted to test the international tourists' satisfaction as predictors against their revisit intention as the criterion variable. Looking at the table, international tourist satisfaction managed to explain around 14 percent ($R^2 = .14$, F-change = 72.914, $p < .001$) of the variance in revisit intention. International tourist satisfaction was found to significantly and positively influence the revisit intention. The value of $\beta = .37$, $p < .000$ demonstrated that satisfaction had an impact on revisit intention among the international tourists. In actual fact, this holds through from the researcher's observation as a slight positive movement of international tourists toward United Arab Emirates. In sum, this second hypothesis is supported.

TABLE VI
RESULTS OF MULTIPLE REGRESSIONS OF TOURIST SATISFACTION WITH REVISIT INTENTION

| Predictors | Model 1 Std. B |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Step 1: Model Variable | |
| Tourists Satisfaction | .37*** |
| R^2 | .14 |
| Adj. R^2 | .14 |
| F-Change | 72.914 *** |

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

H. Mediating effect of Tourist Satisfaction on Destination Image toward their Revisit Intention

The third hypothesis looks at how significantly tourists' satisfaction mediates the relationship between destination image and tourists' revisit intention. In other words, the destination image is a predictor and satisfaction is a mediator while the criterion variable refers to revisit intention. Results of Step 1 revealed that destination image is able to explain the 7 percent ($R^2 = .07$, F-change = 35.447, $p < .001$) of the variation in tourist satisfaction. The value of $\beta = .278$, $p < .000$ demonstrated that elements of destination image had a slight impact on the revisit intention among the international tourists. In the second step, tourist satisfaction as a mediator was

entered as another independent variable to influence the dependent variable. It was apparent that tourist satisfaction explained an additional 7 percent (R^2 Change =.07) as a mediator for elements of the destination image to influence the tourists' revisit intention. The beta value ($\beta=.351$, $p<.001$) indicates satisfaction mediates the relationship between elements of destination image and revisit intention. In other words, destination image through satisfaction influences international tourists' revisit intention.

TABLE VII
RESULTS OF MULTIPLE REGRESSIONS ON THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF TOURISTS' SATISFACTION ON DESTINATION IMAGE TOWARD THEIR REVISIT INTENTION

| Predictors | Model 1 Std. β | Model 2 Std. β |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Step 1: Model Variables | | |
| Destination Image | .278*** | |
| Step 2: Mediating Variable | | |
| Satisfaction | | .351*** |
| R^2 | .07 | .14 |
| Adj. R^2 | .07 | .14 |
| R^2 Change | | .7 |
| F-Change | 35.447*** | 36.795*** |

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

V. IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This study implicitly revealed three important results. First, destination image significantly contributed to the prediction of the international tourists' satisfaction. Second, tourist satisfaction had an impact on their revisit intention and third, satisfaction mediates the relationship between destination image and international tourists' revisit intentions. The findings provide a host country, in this context the United Arab Emirates, with potential implications for its tourism industry practitioners who are largely among the hotel operators who provide the management of hotels with the supporting frontline employees, Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing with its management staff and its representatives who are located around the world and the travel agencies who act as the intermediaries between the potential tourists and the hotel operator. It is so compelling that UAE must pay serious attention to its destination image and it must be complemented by its hotel frontline employees who are regarded as the ambassadors of UAE. Hotel operators rather than reducing the job of the frontline employees to mundane and repetitive tasks must achieve competitive advantage by broadening job descriptions and developing their employees through commitment-enhancing human-resource practices. Hotels should embark on continual improvement of their products and services because this could make transient hotel guests or international tourists value them the most in their quest for leisure and pleasure throughout the visit to the UAE and experience and evoke a set of image that will induce their propensity to revisit.

As tourism, besides oil exports, will be an important source of revenue in the near future, the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing should continually commence advertising campaigns and tourism-related exhibitions in

Dubai and participate in the annual International Tourism Exhibitions such as those in Berlin, London, Kiev and worldwide. Advertisement and promotion worldwide are basically enhancing the country's image, destination and hotel image so that potential visitors are systematically guided in making their selection and are induced to choose UAE as the place to visit and revisit. In addition, the interaction between, and the common goal of travel agencies and stakeholders within the tourism industry should always be strengthened to foster the growth of tourism in UAE. Finally, providing excellent internal and external services by all parties to the international tourists respectively with memorable experiences and overall satisfaction will evoke a set of image, thus creating intention to revisit behavior.

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