

## A Longitudinal Study of Destination Image, Tourist Satisfaction, and Revisit Intention

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### Abstract

International tourists' perceptions of the destination's image, travel satisfaction and revisit intentions are crucial to effective destination marketing and overall destination competitiveness. Tourist destinations often compete through their image in potential tourists' minds. Therefore, a destination image is central due to its influence on tourists' decision-making and destination selection. Successful destination marketing depends on the in-depth understanding of the destination image held by tourists. This study investigates the destination image changes of Mongolia for specific periods of time. The research examines the attributes of destination images through a longitudinal comparison of data sets from 2004 to 2019 to determine if any change in destination images existed over time. The research model was developed on the attributes of cognitive and affective images, tourist satisfaction, and revisit intentions. The first set of data was obtained from the 280 international tourists who travelled to Mongolia in 2004. The second set of data was obtained from 310 international tourists who travelled to Mongolia in 2019. The research model was validated using structural equation modelling. Independent sample t-tests were performed using two data sets to examine changes in the destination image over the years. The result shows that there are positive changes in the cognitive and affective image of the destination in a given period of time, which influenced tourist satisfaction and their revisit intentions. The implications of the research findings for the travel intermediaries, destination marketing organizations, and potential future research are also discussed.

**Key Words:** destination image, tourist satisfaction, behavioural intention, longitudinal study, image change, and competitiveness

**JEL Classification:** Z31, M31, C12

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### 1. Introduction

Creating a favorable image for international tourists in global markets could support reinforcing the destination's competitiveness. Although a level of destination competitiveness depends on

geographical location, country size, tourist attraction, tourism ancillary services, and carrying capacity (Albert, 2016); destinations regularly compete with the images that are placed in the minds of potential tourists. Destination image is a crucial aspect that influences the decision process of the tourists. Therefore, destination marketing organizations, marketers, or government tourism organizations devote significant time and effort to establishing a promising image to reassure international tourists to visit their destinations. Each business environment includes many stakeholders and government policies that regulate and influence business development (Urbancová et al., 2020; Vasanicova et al., 2021; Ključnikov et al., 2022). To compete strongly in the global tourism market, it is important to maintain a favorable image which could be achieved by tourist satisfaction, revisiting intentions, and recommending destinations to others (Casali et al., 2020; Albayrak et al., 2018; Pike & Page, 2014). Visitors form an image of a destination in many ways, and it is mostly created from the different media or information sources they receive, including advertisements, promotions, books, magazines and social media, review sites, word-of-mouth or previous experiences and visitation to the destination (Severt & Hahm, 2020; Crompton, 1979). To compete in current and vibrant tourist market, it is crucial to provide a favourable yet distinctive destination image (Casali et al., 2020). The image of a destination is a mental picture that derives from tourists' perceptions, and impressions from different media and information sources (Beerli & Martin, 2004). The global tourism market has become increasingly competitive for emerging tourist destinations, which puts the pressure on being innovative and distinctive for destination branding. However, many emerging destinations lack tourism expertise and knowledge coupled with the poor service performance and tourist facilities, which could negatively impact destination image, customer satisfaction, and behavioural intention (Gavurova et al., 2021). Furthermore, the majority of the existing literature on destination image study, tourist satisfaction, and behavioural intention focus primarily on well-established destinations (Chi & Qu, 2008). A relatively less researched area in the tourism literature is how international tourists perceive the image of the emerging destination (Stylidis et al., 2017; Rigelsky et al., 2021).

Mongolia has an important geographical location in East Asia with a vast 1.566 million sq km area with 3.2 million inhabitants. Mongolia has a profound mixture of landscapes from high mountains to deserts, a pristine environment, and a unique nomadic way of life. Similar to the emerging destinations, Mongolia is attempting to enhance its tourism competitiveness. However, there is a lack of research on the assessment of tourists' perception of Mongolia's image, travel satisfaction and intentions to revisit. Most tourism literature on destination image research has focused on well-established destinations, and very few research exists regarding tourism in Mongolia. Muara et al., (2013) studied actual and potential tourist perceptions of destination images of Mongolia, including the formation of images and its implications for destination marketing. The research result suggests that the actual perceptions of Mongolia were highly positive, and projected images of the destination represented relatively accurate images. The most positive features of the cognitive images of Mongolia were landscape scenery, authentic nomadic culture, and local people, while the more dominant features of the affective images of Mongolia were 'peaceful', 'untouched', 'wild' and "magnificent". The historical attractions, for instance, the name Chinggis Khaan and his empire, which is frequently projected by local destination management organizations to market Mongolia, were not significant for destination image formation (Muara et al., 2013). Chen and Myagmarsuren (2010) research state that Mongolia's destination image is often related to the natural environment, and cultural and historical heritage. Mongolia's unique way of nomadic lifestyle plays an important role in creating general perceptions among international tourists about Mongolia (Chen & Myagmarsuren, 2010).

To maintain a position on the global tourism market in times of growing competition among destinations, it is essential to understand Mongolia's destination image in international tourists, which the latter reflect on tourist satisfaction, revisit intention, destination loyalty and overall destination image. This study attempts to see if the cognitive and affective attributes of destination images, travel satisfaction, and revisit intention have changed over time in the case of an emerging destination.

Photo 1. Nomadic lifestyle of Mongolia



Source: photographer Bridget Moreau, 2014

This study will contribute to the limited research on longitudinal studies of destination image changes. The aim of the research is a) to study the destination images that are perceived by international tourists over the years and to disclose the relationship between the variables in the research model; and b) to provide practical evidence about destination image changes to the tourism policy makers, marketing organizations to take the lead in destination competitions. Furthermore, this research examines multiple correlations of cognitive and affective attributes of destination images, travel satisfaction, revisit intentions, and recommendation of destinations.

## 2. Literature review

*Destination image*- It is a crucial aspect in the tourism marketing and industry itself, since destination image distinguishes one destination from another (Chiu & Cheng, 2016). The tourism industry is characterized as a service industry that offers an experience to the customers. Therefore, tourists do not know the quality of the tourism product until they actually experience it. This intangible feature of the tourism product forces the tourist to make their travel decisions based on the image of the destination and perception about the country of interest in the trip. Tourism literature has been acknowledged that destination images perceived by international tourists play an integral role in their purchase behaviour, decisions, destination choice, evaluation, and revisit intentions process (Karl & Schmude, 2017). Therefore, the importance of the destination image has brought extensive research in tourism literature (Tan & Wu, 2016; Sun et al., 2013; Deng & Li, 2014). Destination image has become well-researched topics among tourism academics as it has influenced tourist decision making, destination choice, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions (Altunoğlu et al., 2022; Ceylan et al., 2020; Bigne & Sanchez, 2001; Chiu et al., 2016). Deng & Li (2014) state that the significance of the destination image has produced significant amount of literature in the last decades with a range of topics including



dimension and conceptualization of destination images, formation, assessment, measurement of destination image and tourist behaviour. In addition, many studies investigate the images of a destination by various features of the destination including natural and cultural heritage, leisure and entertainment, special events, infrastructure, accessibility, and lodging (Gartner & Ruzzier, 2011; Prayag & Ryan, 2011; Wu, 2016; Chen & Phou, 2013). Crompton (1979) determined that the destination image is the collection of an individual's beliefs, notions, and perceptions about a destination. It is apparent that the majority of tourism researchers state that the destination image is consisted of two attributes which are cognitive and affective destination image (Garther, 1994; Smith et al., 2015; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Pike & Ryan, 2014; Yağmur, & Aksu; 2020). Cognitive image represents the ideas and beliefs of a traveller about the attributes of destination, the affective image reflects the feelings of a traveller about the destination and the traveller's experiences gained from the destination. However, an extensive amount of tourism study has dedicated for the cognitive image of the destination (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Sun et al., 2013; Papadimitriou et al., 2015). Pike's (2002) study reveals that there are 142 research articles on destination images published over three decades from 1970 to 2000, only six articles that include affective features of destination images. Alcocer & Ruiz (2019) state that the cognitive and affective characteristics of the destination image are a human mental framework for social judgement, which create the total image of a destination. In the cognitive aspect, a tourist assesses a destination with the best data or information he or she obtained in terms of the physical appearances of the destination. Regarding the measurement of cognitive images, the study by Baloglu et al., (2015) identifies three factors such as quality of experience, place of interest and value, and entertainment with 17 overall items. More recent studies in the measurement of cognitive images were conducted in the tourism literature by Stylos et al., (2016), whose study includes the factors of natural environment, essential conditions, and attractive activities with 25 measurement items. Stylidis et al., (2017) measure cognitive components of destination images of natural environment; amenities, attractions, accessibility, and social environment.

With a comparison, the affective image is the individual value and attachment to the destinations based on the motivations of the tourists (Beerli & Martin, 2004). Pan & Li (2011) state that affective images attached to destinations are described by expressions used by respondents, including exciting, great, happy, and busy. In tourism studies, affective destination images are measured by items related to individual attachment to destinations such as the terms nice/unpleasant; relaxing/stressful; fun/boring; exciting/depressing (Chi & Qu, 2008; Bigne et al., 2001); stimulating/calm; ugly/beautiful; exciting/gloomy (Qu et al., 2011); peacefulness, relax, serenity, hopefulness, excitement and pleasure (Choi et al., 2015); and boring/fun; nice/unpleasant, exciting/gloomy; positive/negative; unfavourable/favourable; and distressing/relaxing (Stylos et al., 2016). However, the affective image has basically acknowledged less in the tourism study, although it is crucial attribute to the contribution of the favorable tourist' perception and travel satisfaction. Furthermore, some tourist literature argues that two concepts, cognitive and affective characteristics, are interrelated, since the formation of affective images depends on the cognitive image of the tourist (Gartner, 1994; Alcocer & Ruiz, 2020). Therefore, Nam et al., (2016) state that the cognitive attributes of destination image significantly impact on the affective attributes of destination images. However cognitive image impacts affective image (Beerli & Martin, 2004), the examination of the affective features of the destination image could be more vital than the evaluation of physical attributes for overall destination image formation (Alcocer & Ruiz, 2020). The strength of affective image attributes is stronger than cognitive image attributes in influencing destination assessment and overall destination image. Tourists will be more satisfied when the attributes of the destinations are able to fulfil their personal benefits and value (Stylos et al., 2016). Furthermore, the research by Baloglu et al., (2015) and Kim & Yoon (2003) exposed that, compared to cognitive images, affective images have a greater influence on the development of an overall image formation and destination assessment. This finding shows that the affective image of the destination, which is recently highlighted in the current tourism study, is a significant aspect in the destination assessment (Alcocer &

Ruiz, 2020; Styliadis et al., 2017). Furthermore, both cognitive and affective images could result in revisiting intention and recommending destination to others (Prayag & Ryan, 2011; Qu et al., 2011).

*Tourist satisfaction*-Tourist satisfaction has received a considerable amount of attention in the tourism literature. Satisfaction is determined as the customer's assessment of the product and service they received (Kotler & Armstrong, 2020). One of the important components of effective destination marketing is customer satisfaction, since it has an effect on destination choice and behavioural intention (Kanwel et al., 2019; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Therefore, it is critical to study the destination image and its correlation with travel satisfaction to determine tourists' revisit intentions and recommendation to others (Wang & Hsu, 2010; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Dawi et al., (2018) notes that overall customer satisfaction determines customer loyalty, repeat purchase of the same service and future behavioural intentions. From the tourist's perspective, the destination image is the key player in the tourist destination choice, the information search of a potential tourist, the selection of the destination, satisfaction, and the revisit intention (Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020). Furthermore, the destination image is argued to be the main factor in the prediction of the perceived destination image, travel satisfaction, and behavioural intentions (Xia et al., 2018). Chen & Phou (2013) highlight that destination image plays a key role in the establishment of customer loyalty and constitutes an important part of strong brands. As a literature review suggests, the correlation between destination image and travel satisfaction has attracted significant academic interest (Chi & Qu, 2008; Bigne et al., 2001). These studies reveal that the image of the destination has a positive association with travel satisfaction. More positive the destination image brings the greater the level of tourist satisfaction (Chi & Qu, 2008; Wang & Hsu, 2010; Wang et al., 2021).

*Revisit intentions*-Tourist destinations around the world are engaging in marketing to target previous and potential tourists in efforts to present a favourable destination image, increase visits, and loyalty to a destination. The destination image is significant to tourist behavior, such as destination selection and revisit intentions (Alcaniz et al., 2009; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Petrick, 2004; Chi & Qu, 2008; Prayag & Ryan, 2012). Zeithaml et al., (1996) examine the revisit intentions as repurchases, recommendation to others, and customer relations. Hui et al., (2007) state that satisfied tourists are willing to choose to travel to the same destination again and it is possible to recommend to others. Wang & Hsu (2010) examine the mediating effect of tourist satisfaction and its causal relationship between attributes of destination image and revisit intention. Understanding and predicting the intention of the tourist to revisit specific destinations and the willingness to recommend them to others are important. In spite of well-established research on destination image, the causal relationships between the destination image, travel satisfaction and revisit intentions in terms of the emerging destinations is less researched. Therefore, it is necessary to broaden the research on destination image studies to various destination settings to deepen the understanding of the correlations between variables. Understanding the relationships between destination image, travel satisfaction, and behavioral intention is crucial to creating an attractive image that contributes to a successful marketing campaign and increasing tourism in general. This study proposes a research model that examines the relationships between destination image, travel satisfaction, and behavioral intentions over two different time periods.

*Longitudinal studies of image change of destination*-Destination image has been a subject of extensive study for four decades. However, most of the destination image was studied at one point in time (Severt & Hahm, 2020). In comparison to well-established cross-sectional destination image studies, there is limited research that focused on the temporal destination image change (Gartner & Shen, 1992; Pike, 2009; Moreira & Iao, 2014; Severt & Hahm, 2020; Wu & Shimizu, 2020). Gartner (1986) led destination image change studies by examining temporal influences on destination images based on environmental activities and attractions in America. In Gartner's (1986) study, two statistically important differences were determined in the characteristics of the destination image. Gartner & Hunt's (1987) longitudinal study examined Utah's change in destination image over a 12-year period between 1971 and 1983. The study result shows that there were mainly positive changes in the image attributes. The literature review suggests that festival and local events are good tools for image building for host countries, as events

support infrastructure development, increase publicity, awareness, tourist flow, or improve national pride (Getz, 2019). On the contrary, some longitudinal studies reflect the positive impact of events on the changes of destination image over time. Smith (2005) examines how sports events effectively changed the old, industrial and dull image of Barcelona into an exciting, modern, progressive and festive Catalan city of Spain. Kim & Morrison (2005) examined the change in destination image among international visitors to South Korea by measuring before and after the 2002 Football World Cup. Thus, an internationally significant major event could change the destination image in a short time; however, it is required to monitor consistency of the destination image over a longer period of time (Kim & Morrison, 2005). Furthermore, Tasci & Holecek (2007) conducted the destination image of Michigan between 1996 and 2002. The research result suggests that a small improvement was observed in nine of the 15 image items. Moreira & Iao (2014) examine the destination image of Macao and the change of images in 2012 and 2013. The study result shows that all the image attributes were steadily positive over a year. The latter longitudinal studies in the tourism literature were conducted by Severt & Hahm (2020); Wu & Shimizu (2020) and Rittichainuwat et al., (2020). Severt & Hahm (2020) examine Alabama's destination image based on political association between 2014 and 2018. The study measures the perceived image of the destination, the familiarity and future revisit intention of the destination among those who had visited or had not visited and compared the findings between two different periods. Wu & Shimizu (2020) attempt to examine the effect of a natural disaster on destination image by conducting a panel study before and after a natural disaster. The result shows that there was a different change in the destination image after a natural disaster for tourists from different countries of origin. Rittichainuwat et al., (2020) identify the changes in destination image of Thailand as a MICE destination during crises. Although most temporal destination image change studies reveal positive changes or improvements in image components over the years, Gartner & Shen (1992) depict a negative change or image deterioration in some image attributes of China's image as a tourist destination. The study was carried out after the Tiananmen Square demonstrations in 1989, which received extensive international media coverage. Therefore, media coverage influenced image attributes that included urban life, the natural environment, and people (Gartner & Shen, 1992). As the literature review suggested, most of the longitudinal studies of destination image examined the impact of destination marketing promotional campaigns on destination image change. There is a lack of longitudinal research that examines changes in destination image with respect to emerging destinations. Most destination image studies have concentrated on well-established tourism destinations and less popular long-haul and emerging destinations such as Mongolia have received limited attention.

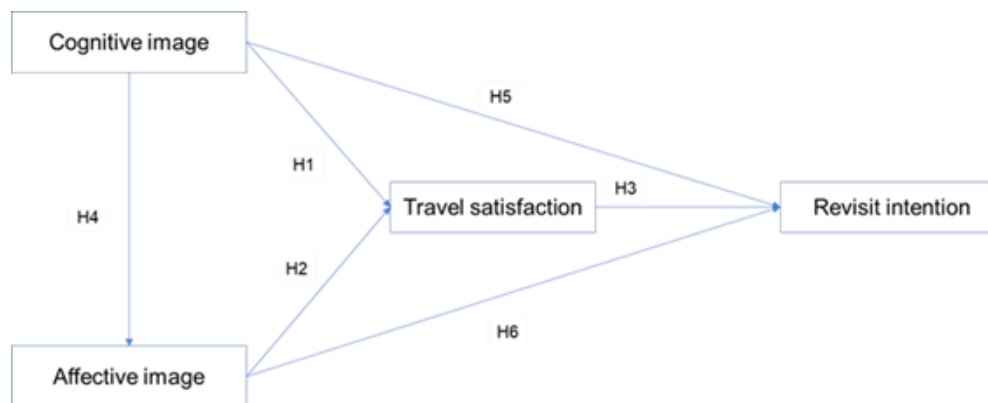
This research attempts to examine the attributes of destination images through a longitudinal comparison of data from 2004 and 2019 to determine whether there was any change in destination image over the 15-year period. Mongolia welcomed an estimated 300,538 international tourists in 2004 from origin markets mainly from China, Russia, South Korea, Japan, and the United States (National Statistics Office, 2020). Leisure tourist arrivals steadily increased by about 20% in the subsequent years. In general, the tourism industry is the important foreign exchange provider for the Mongolian economy, accounting for 7 to 8 % of the country's GDP. Furthermore, Mongolia received 577 300 international tourists in 2019 (National Statistics Office, 2020).

According to the literature review, this study develops a research model which aims to enable in-depth analysis of destination image, influence of its component as cognitive and affective images and its relationship between attributes. An analysis of cognitive and affective destination images is performed to examine the extent to which they influence tourist satisfaction and revisit intentions. The research model seeks to contribute to the literature on the role that destination images play in emerging long-haul destinations.

An empirical finding of the literature review suggests that the cognitive and affective features of destination images are hierarchically correlated as the cognitive image is created prior to the formation of the affective image (Woosnam et al., 2020). Breitsohl & Garrod (2016) state that both cognitive and

affective images will have influence on tourist satisfaction and tourists' future revisit intentions. The relationship between cognitive and affective features of destination image in tourists' mind reflects in tourists' decision making to revisit intentions (Alcocer & Ruiz, 2020; Wu & Liang, 2020).

Graph 1. Research Model



Source: literature search

Qu et al., (2011) note that cognitive features of destination image have greater influence on the travel intentions for the places that are developed and well established. On the other hand, there is some evidence that emotions that are affective features of destination image are better indicators of behavioral intentions than cognitive features (Pearce, 2005). In comparison, some longitudinal studies of destination images show the positive influences of sporting events on image change over the years. Kim & Morrison (2005)'s study reveals that there was a positive change in destination images of South Korea in three nationalities before and after 2002 FIFA World Cup. King et al., (2015) examined the destination image decay by using longitudinal repeated measurement. The research result suggests the affective features of destination image were more vulnerable while cognitive features of destination image were more consistent. Thus, there is a need for more longitudinal research pursuing the destination image over distinctive period of time. Based on the empirical findings of the literature review, the research hypotheses are raised as follows.

H1. Cognitive image of the destination is positively related to tourist satisfaction.

H2. Affective image of the affected destination is positively related to tourist satisfaction.

H3. Travel satisfaction positively and directly influences the revisit intention.

H4. Cognitive image positively and directly related to affective image.

H5. Cognitive destination image positively and directly influences the revisit intention.

H6. Affective destination image positively and directly influences the revisit intention.

H7. There is a significant difference in cognitive image over two distinct periods of time.

H8. There is a significant difference in affective image over two distinct periods of time.

H9. Affective image has more influence than the cognitive image on tourist satisfaction over two distinct periods of time.

H10. Affective image has more influence than the cognitive image on the intentions to revisit over two distinct periods of time.

### 3. Methods

*Survey instruments*-To measure cognitive, affective images, tourist satisfaction, and revisit intentions, valid and reliable items were taken from a literature review (Wu & Shimizu, 2020; Alcocer &



Ruiz, 2020; Atadil et al., 2017; Casali et al., 2020). Cognitive images were evaluated using a five-point Likert scale from strongly agreeing to strongly disagreeing, while affective images were assessed using four attributes using the same five-point semantic differential scale. The four attributes of affective image were friendly, exciting, pleasant, and relaxing (Stylidis et al., 2017). Two measurement items of travel satisfaction were adopted from the Zeithaml et al. (1996) study. Revisit intentions were assessed by using a five-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree based on Beerli & Martin (2004); Baloglu et al., (2015); behavioural intention was captured using three items: planned intention to revisit ('I would return to Mongolia to travel other parts in the future'), repetitive intention ('I would like to revisit to Mongolia and travel the same places'), and intention to recommend ('I would recommend Mongolia to others'). As literature review suggests, a standardized scale with close-ended questions was adopted to assess the attributes of the destination image.

*Sampling*-The questionnaire was the main tool for collecting primary data from international tourists who travelled to Mongolia during 2004 and 2019. The self-completed and paper-based printed questionnaire was sent to the respondents. The questionnaire was conducted in English. In 2019, Oyunchimeg's (2004) destination image study was repeated with modifications. The 2004 study was aimed to determine Mongolia's destination image perceptions by international tourists. The 2019 study had the same primary objective; however, a secondary objective was to identify changes in destination image over a time for Mongolia as a tourist destination. To compare the results of the 2019 study with those obtained by Oyunchimeg (2004), the majority of questions and image attributes were duplicated in the 2019 questionnaire. The random sampling technique was applied to collect data from the study population. Researchers approached each tenth of the tourists and asked them to participate in the survey. The total sample included 590 questionnaires (280 in 2004 and 310 in 2019). The questionnaires were administered to international tourists and were conducted on three different sites in 2004, including the National History Museum of the capital city Ulaanbaatar, and an entry point of Terelj National Park. In comparison, the survey was conducted solely in Ulaanbaatar in 2019 in the state department store and the main square of the city of Ulaanbaatar. The data were analysed by using a statistical software program SPSS 23.0, which constructed both inferential and descriptive statistics. Prior to the main data analysis, the data were cleaned for missing values, errors, and normality. The final data size was 532 out of 590 questionnaires returned.

#### 4. Results

*Demographic characteristics*-The demographic features of the respondents are shown in Table 1. In total, 234 and 298 valid surveys were collected in 2004 and 2019 in Mongolia. Of the total of 532 respondents, 276 (51.8%) were female, and 256 (48.2%) were male. There are somewhat different age distributions, with 43 (8.4%) for 18-20 years, 22 (4.1%) for 21-30 years, 193 (36.2%) for 31-40 years old; 151 (28.3%) for 41-50; 61 (11.4%) for 51-60; and 62 (11.6%) for 60 years above. Most of the respondents, 159 (29.8%) travelled with the family; 157 (29.3%) with tour groups; 134 (25.1%) with friends, and only 86 (15.8%) travelled with relatives, colleagues and alone.

Table 1. Respondents' profile (N=532)

Features	Category	2004		2019	
		Number	%	Number	%
Gender	Male	126	53.8	130	43.6
	Female	108	46.2	168	56.4
	total	234	100	298	100
Age	18-20 years old	19	8.1	24	8.1



	21-30 years old	14	6	8	2.7
	31-40 years old	102	43.6	91	30.5
	41-50 years old	54	23.1	97	32.6
	51-60 years old	20	8.5	41	13.8
	Over the 60s	25	10.7	37	12.4
Traveling with	Alone	19	8.1	18	6
	Tour group	78	33.3	79	26.4
	Family	77	32.9	82	27.4
	Friends	48	20.5	86	28.8
	Relatives	9	3.8	26	8.7
	Colleagues	3	1.3	8	2.7

Source: own elaboration

*Factor analysis of affective and cognitive images* - Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed to evaluate the dimensionality of a total of 24 destination images. In order to minimize the number of items, a factor loading value that indicates the correlation between the items and the factors was identified to determine whether the variable group could be displayed by factor or not. The eigenvalue one was defined and items with factor loading greater than 0.5 were taken into account for each factor group. In the questionnaire, various items were determined to measure respondents' destination images of Mongolia. A principal component analysis along with the varimax rotation of the lower extremities was used to identify the basic factors of the items. As a result, the principal component analysis identified four factors classified as "nature", "cultural", "infrastructure", and "travel environment", which later explains for 70% of the total variance (Table 2). Six items of cognitive destination images were not relevant and excluded from the analysis. Bartlett's sphericity test was evaluated as significant ( $p < 0.001$ ) and the KMO measurement was calculated as 0.905, exceeding the allowable minimum of 0.6. The internal consistency of the factors measured by Cronbach's alpha showed good reliability with scores between 0.66 and 0.91. Furthermore, EFA of the affective image of the destination is shown in Table 2. The results of the affective images were significant as pleasant 0.878; relaxing 0.907; exciting 0.901; and friendly 0.854. The Cronbach's alpha for the total affective image showed good reliability with 0.907. All dimensions had acceptable Cronbach's alpha value ( $> 0.6$ ) and were consistent with the suggestions of Nunnally & Bernstein (1994). In addition, all values presented good levels of composite reliability (0.60) suggested by Bagozzi & Yi (1988) and average variance extracted (AVE) was above 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 2. EFA and reliability test results of Cognitive and Affective Image

COGNITIVE IMAGE	Total N=532	
	Loading	Cronbach $\alpha$
<i>Factor 1: Nature</i>		
Attractive natural scenery	0.921	0.916
Close to nature	0.881	
Beautiful/stunning/many natural wonders	0.926	
Dry/hot/desert	0.834	
<i>Factor 2: Cultural</i>		
A variety of arts/crafts	0.794	0.745
A rich nomadic culture	0.689	
Variety/diversity/contrast	0.779	
Many cultural sites	0.819	
<i>Factor 3: Infrastructure</i>		
		0.664

Suitable accommodation	0.674	
Good transportation	0.729	
<i>Factor 4: Travel environment</i>		
Clean	0.633	0.748
Politically stable	0.764	
Safe	0.875	
Friendly local people	0.796	
<b>AFFECTIVE IMAGE</b>		
Pleasant	0.878	0.907
Relaxing	0.907	
Exciting	0.901	
Friendly	0.854	
<i>KMO = 0.905; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, p value = 0.000</i>		

Source: own elaboration

The relationship between destination image and travel intention-SEM-structural equation model is used to analyze the relationships between affective image, cognitive image, and travel intention. The model estimation is performed using Amos 22.0 software. The researchers adjusted two different periods to determine whether the affective and cognitive images positively and directly affect the intention of the tourists to return. Table 3 shows the results of the model estimation. The goodness-of-fit measures are higher than the model adaptability standard RMSEA < 0.07), ( $\chi^2 / df < 3$ , CFI > 0.9, TLI > 0.9, IFI > 0.9 which indicates that the structure of the model can effectively characterize the detected data. The results of the analysed indices exist above the acceptable levels (Hair, 2010). Both the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) indices were well above the baseline of 0.9, which indicated a good incremental fit value proposed by (Hair, 2010). CFI value presented an excellent conformity (Hu & Bentler, 1999). In addition, appropriate fit values from 0.06 to - 0.08 were calculated based on Byrne's (2000) recommendation. Hoelter's (1983) critical N for 0.5 and 0.1 was well above the desirable value, as suggested in this study. Furthermore, all path coefficients are significant at the 95% level. The results approve the reliability and validity of the constructs. Table 3 summarizes average variance extracted (AVE) and the composite reliability indicators (CR), which are higher than the critical values of 0.8 and 0.5, respectively, for all samples. Graph 2 and 3 show the results of the sample 2004 and 2019 and summarize the estimation results of the relationship between affective image, cognitive image, and travel intention. The results confirm that cognitive images have a significant influence on affective images, and cognitive and affective images have a significant influence on revisit intentions over the two data periods.

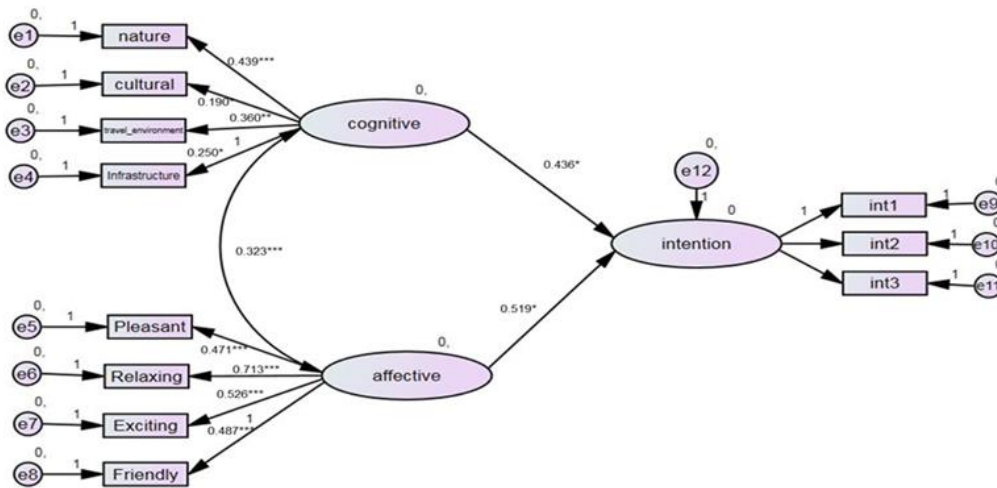
Table 3. Model Estimation Results

Path	2004	2019
	Baseline	Baseline
Revisit intention ← Cognitive image	.436*	.134**
Revisit intention ← Affective image	.519*	.866**
Affective image ← Cognitive image	.323***	.302***
Nature ← Cognitive image	.439**	.783**
Cultural ← Cognitive image	.190*	.703**
Infrastructure ← Cognitive image	.250*	.109***
Travel environment ← Cognitive image	.360**	.745***
Pleasant ← Affective image	.471***	.529***
Relaxing ← Affective image	.713***	.613***

Exciting ← Affective image	.526***	.585***
Friendly ← Affective image	.487***	.559***
Goodness-of-fit measures	$\chi^2/df = 2.96$	$\chi^2/df = 2.04$
	CFI = 0.920	CFI = 0.956
	TLI = 0.901	TLI = 0.929
	IFI=0.919	IFI=0.957
	RMSEA = 0.05	RMSEA = 0.02
	AVE=.079; CR=.096	
*** $p < 0.001$ , ** $p < 0.05$ , * $p < 0.1$		

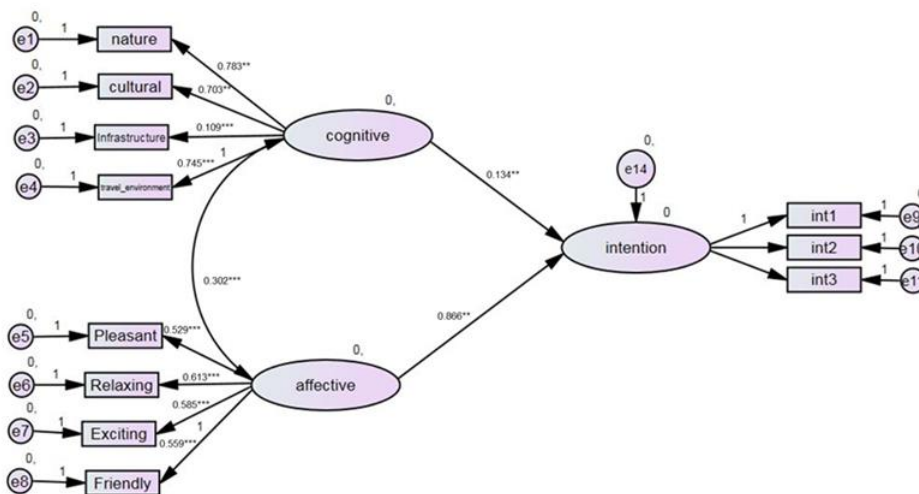
Source: own elaboration

Graph 2. SEM result of the sample (2004)



Source: own research

Graph 3. SEM result of the sample (2019)



Source: own research

The results of direct relationships between variables- The aim of the structural research model is to assess the relationship between the affective and cognitive image of destination, travel satisfaction, and revisit intentions. The summary of the overall assessment is displayed in Table 4 and Graph 4. The results show

that the cognitive image influence on travel satisfaction ( $\beta=0.147, p<0.001$ ), (H1); affective image directly and positively influence on travel satisfaction ( $\beta=.155, p<0.000$ ), (H2); travel satisfaction directly affects intention to revisit ( $\beta=.148, p<0.001$ ), (H3); and cognitive and affective image of destination directly influence on intention to revisit ( $\beta=.414, p<0.006$ ; (H5) and ( $\beta=.516, p<0.000$ ; (H6) were highly supported. There is a positive relationship between the cognitive destination image and the affective destination image ( $\beta=.808, p<0.000$ ), thus H4 was strongly supported.

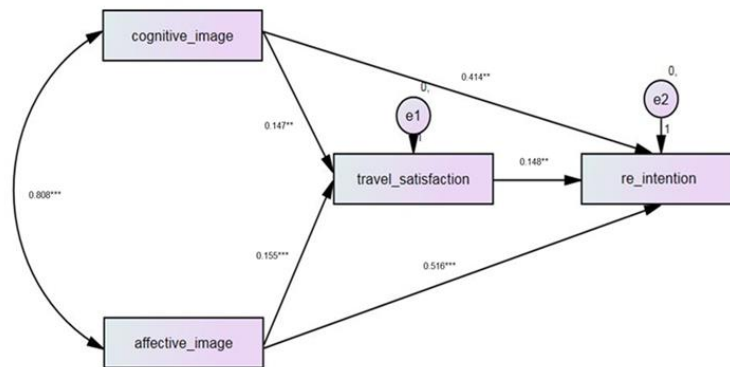
Table 4. The results of the direct relationships between variables

H	The path	Beta estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Remark
H1	Travel satisfaction ←Cognitive image	0.147	0.248	3.302	0.001**	Supported
H2	Travel satisfaction ←Affective image	0.155	0.166	7.140	0.000** *	Supported
H3	Revisit intention ←Travel satisfaction	0.148	0.017	5.293	0.001**	Supported
H4	Affective image ←Cognitive image	0.808	0.031	9.254	0.000**	Supported
H5	Revisit intention ←Cognitive image	0.414	0.033	4.346	0.006**	Supported
H6	Revisit intention ←Affective image	0.516	0.027	2.673	0.000** *	Supported

Note: \*\*\* $p<0.001$ , \*\* $p<0.05$ , \* $p<0.1$ ; S.E; Standard error. C.R; Critical Ratio.

Source: own elaboration

Graph 4. Research Model Output



Source: own research

*Longitudinal analyses of destination image, travel satisfaction, and revisit intention between 2004 and 2019* To examine temporal changes in Mongolia’s destination image since 2004, the results of frequency analyses were compared with the data for 2019 (Table 5).

Table 5. Frequency difference of destination images (2004 and 2019)

Cognitive image	Affective image
-----------------	-----------------



Image factors	2004	2019	Image Factors	2004	2019
Nature	44	45	Pleasant	98	96
Culture	49	42	Relaxing	70	95
Infrastructure	23	69	Exciting	55	115
Travel environment	45	43	Friendly	125	187

*Note: Frequency value of the factor*

Source: own elaboration

Overall, the mean value of affective images and cognitive images increased somewhat between 2004 and 2019. The results are shown in Table 5. In terms of affective images, the most increased destination image item from 2004 to 2019 was “friendly”, followed by “exciting” and “relaxing”. The attribute “pleasant” was slightly decreased. The mean value of cognitive image was analyzed by factors. The factor that increased the cognitive destination image most from 2004 to 2019 was “infrastructure”. This factor includes cognitive images attributes of “suitable accommodation” and “good transportation”. The factor ‘nature’ which includes ‘attractive natural scenery’; “close to nature”; “beautiful, stunning, many natural wonders”; and ‘dry, hot, desert’ were almost similar for both years. The “travel environment” factor that presents “clean, politically stable, safe, friendly local people” decreased slightly from 2004 to 2019. The lowest value for the cognitive image factor between 2004 and 2019 was ‘cultural’, including ‘a variety of arts and crafts’; “rich nomadic culture”; “variety, diversity, contrast’ and ‘many cultural sites’.

In addition, the authors examined change in the destination image on travel satisfaction over the years, linear regression were performed using the data set for data sets from the 2004 and 2019 data set (Table 6).

Table 6. Change in the travel satisfaction over the years (2004 and 2019)

Year	Independent variables	Beta estimate	S.E.	t	P
2004	Cognitive image	0.008	1.540	0.116	0.908
	Affective image	0.029	0.974	0.415	0.678
2019	Cognitive image	0.200	0.017	3.273	0.001**
	Affective image	0.437	0.031	7.157	0.000***

**Dependent variable: Travel satisfaction**

Note: \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \* $p < 0.1$ ; S.E; Standard error. C.R; Critical Ratio.

Source: own elaboration

The result is to verify the relationship between the cognitive and affective images and travel satisfaction over the years. Therefore, a linear regression analysis was performed between the two variables by destination image as an independent variable and travel satisfaction as a dependent variable. Table 6 is shown the result of the analysis. In 2004, the regression of cognitive image and travel satisfaction is  $\beta = 0.008$ ,  $p > .01$ , while the affective image and travel satisfaction is  $\beta = 0.029$ ,  $p > .01$ . Thus, the result shows that there is no statistical importance, which means respondents from the data set of 2004 had a lower level of travel satisfaction. On the contrary, the relationship between the cognitive and affective images and travel satisfaction for the data set of 2019 was statistically significant for the cognitive image and travel satisfaction which is  $\beta = 0.200$ ,  $p < 0.1$ ; the affective image and travel satisfaction is  $\beta = 0.437$ ,  $p > .01$ .

As result suggests the level of travel satisfaction is positively changed over the years.

The results of hypothesis H7 to H10- Furthermore, to see if there was a change in the image over the years, independent sample t-tests were performed using the data set for data sets from the 2019 and 2004 data set (Table 7).

Table 7. The results of hypothesis H7 to H10 (2004 and 2019)

Variables	2004	2019	Difference	S.D	t-value	p
	N=234	N=298	(2004-2019)			
Cognitive image	2.21	3.63	0.42	0.523	0.36	0.000** *
Affective image	1.60	3.78	2.18	0.705	0.39	0.000** *
Travel satisfaction	2.57	3.88	1.31	0.046	3.15	0.006**
Revisit intention	0.45	3.97	3.52	0.048	0.60	0.000** *

\*\*\* $p < 0.001$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \* $p < 0.1$

Source: own elaboration

Therefore, the result of the testing of H7 to H10 displays the longitudinal analyses (comparison between 2004 and 2019) of destination image. On the basis of independent sample t-tests, no statistically significant differences were found for cognitive image attributes. International tourists who traveled to Mongolia for two distinctive periods of time have the similar perception of cognitive images of the destination  $M_{2004} = 2.21$ ,  $M_{2019} = 3.63$ ,  $t = 0.36$ ,  $p < 0.000$  and the difference is 0.42. However, in comparison, there is a significant difference on affective images of the destination between two distinctive period as  $M_{2004} = 1.60$ ,  $M_{2019} = 3.78$ ,  $t = 0.39$ ,  $p < .000$  and difference is 2.18. Similarly, that result shows the tourist satisfaction and revisit intention were significantly different from 2004 to 2019. The travel satisfaction result is shown to be  $M_{2004} = 2.57$ ,  $M_{2019} = 3.88$ ,  $t = 3.15$ ,  $p < 0.006$  and the difference is 1.31. Finally, the difference in the intention to revisit is shown as 3.52 and  $M_{2004} = 0.45$ ,  $M_{2019} = 3.52$ ,  $t = 0.60$ ,  $p < 0.000$ . Thus, the predicted H7 to H10 hypotheses are all supported (Table 7).

## 5. Research implication and conclusion

Tourist perceptions of the destination image, travel satisfaction, and destination loyalty are important factors for effective destination marketing and the overall competitiveness of the country. Therefore, the destination image is a critical element in the overall assessment of tourist destinations (Cai et al., 2004) and its future behavioral intention (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). The destination image could strongly influence tourist behaviour and decision making; moreover, it contributes to determine a success and failure of a destination (Tasci & Gartner, 2007). This study analyses the how cognitive and affective destination images, tourist satisfaction and revisit intentions of Mongolia have changed over the years. Therefore, this research establishes the structural research model of destination image that covers the cognitive, affective attributes, tourist satisfaction, and revisit intention; and examines the causal relationship between them. A self-completed questionnaire survey was conducted in Mongolia in 2004 and 2019. Both surveys collected the respondents' perceptions about cognitive and affective images of Mongolia in two distinctive periods of time. Mongolia's destination image was measured by using research frameworks (Wu & Shimizu, 2020; Alcocer & Ruiz, 2020; Atadil et al., 2017; Casali et al., 2020) consisting of cognitive and affective images. In the context of Mongolia, the main cognitive images held by international tourists seems to be attractive natural scenery, beautiful and stunning natural wonders,

close to nature, and dry and hot desert for both periods. In terms of the affective destination image, unique psychological features were centered on the friendly and pleasant. This result supports some components of Muara et al., (2013)'s research on Mongolia's destination image and its marketing implication. They concluded that the most positive features of the cognitive destination image of Mongolia were landscape scenery, authentic nomadic culture, local people, while psychological-holistic destination images perceived by international tourists were remoteness, peaceful, untouched, magnificent and wilderness (Muara et al., 2013). As tourism literature suggests affective features of destination image reflects more on the destination branding, brand identity of the destination, therefore, it is an important feature for building competitive advantage of the destination (Qu et al., 2011; Stylos et al., 2016).

As output of the research model shows, both cognitive and affective image directly influence on travel satisfaction which latter positively influence on revisit intention. There is a positive relationship between the cognitive and affective attributes of the destination image. The results confirm that cognitive images have a significant influence on affective images, and cognitive and affective images have a significant influence on revisit intentions over the two data periods. This research result supports the study by Nam et al. (2016), who stated that the cognitive image significantly affects affective images. This research examines the significance of cognitive and affective images of Australia perceived by Korean tourists and their implications. In addition, they concluded that cognitive and affective images played a significant role in attracting potential Korean tourists to Australia. Furthermore, the study argues that international tourists should be taken into consideration in creation of destination marketing. In terms of longitudinal analyses between variables, the mean value of affective images and cognitive images increased somewhat between 2004 and 2019. This finding is in accordance with the study by Gartner & Hunt (1987); Hahm & Severt (2020) in Utah and Alabama. Gartner & Hunt (1987)'s study reveals that there were mostly positive changes found every attraction and tourist activity they examined in Utah's destination images between 1971 and 1983. Severt & Hahm (2020)'s study measured the perceived destination image, familiarity and future intention in an accordance with political event and affiliation in 2014 and 2018. Furthermore, the study assessed how the cognitive and affective images and future intentions of the Alabama state have changed over the years. The authors stated that the mean score of average cognitive and affective images and future intentions increased from 2014 to 2018 (Severt & Hahm, 2020).

In this research, the attributes of cognitive image that positively changed between 2004 and 2019 were "infrastructure" including "suitable accommodation" and "good transportation". Mongolia has put a lot of effort to develop tourism in the last two decades and recognized the tourism industry as a priority sector with good potential to generate income and address poverty, while also providing investment in developing roads, transportation and communication. As a result, road and transport conditions have improved somewhat in the last fifteen years (ADB project report, 2019). The main tourist accommodation in Mongolia is called the traditional 'ger' round-shaped felt dwelling. Along with increase in international tourist arrivals and the government effort of tourism promotion, private sectors have invested in the tourism accommodation over the years. Therefore, international hotel chains have entered the Mongolian market as well as the quality of tourist "ger" camps' facility and service standard have notably increased in given period of time (ADB project report, 2019). These may result in positive changes in the perceptions of the respondents about the cognitive images of Mongolia. In comparison Muare et al., (2013) research result indicated that the most frequently stated negative image attributes were visit to the capital city Ulaanbaatar and a variety of meals. Furthermore, the authors emphasized that a quality of transportation and hygienic conditions had received low rankings from the respondents.

The lowest-ranked cognitive image attribute was 'culture' that included 'a variety of arts and crafts'; "rich nomadic culture"; "variety, diversity, contrast' and 'many cultural-sites'. Mongolia's main tourist product is the unique nomadic culture; however, the result shows a slight decrease in the perception of the respondents between 2004 and 2019. This result indicates that there is a lack of familiarity with culture or related product development. DMO and local tour operators should take this

finding into account and make an effort to improve existing cultural and rural tourism products and services. The local tour operators should include more cultural activities into their tour itineraries with clear objectives to show Mongolia's unique tangible and intangible cultural resources. Cultural tourism products such as various community-based nomadic tours could be developed extensively to please the demands of international tourists seeking novel cultural experiences. Mura & Kljucnikov (2018) study exposes that rural and countryside tourism offer a distinctive and unique holiday experience for busy urban residents. Destination marketing organization should effectively enhance its image and awareness through various marketing communication strategies focusing more on cultural sites and nomadic lifestyles. For instance, digital content on social media, user-friendly applications, search engine optimization, or public events aimed at international tourists can improve both the cognitive and affective destination images of the Mongolian destination.

Furthermore, DMO should create a marketing strategy to brand, position, and increase awareness of the cultural aspects of Mongolia as a tourist destination. Gartner & Hunt's (1987) longitudinal study shows that Utah's destination marketing and organic and induced destination image promotion have contributed to the positive changes in images. Therefore, the organic and induced destination image (actual visitation, news, media, advertising, and indirect sources of information) influenced Utah's positive image changes (Gartner & Hunt, 1987). Consequently, there is a significant and positive difference in affective images of the destination from 2004 to 2019. The affective images items such as "friendly", "exciting," and "relaxing" were significantly increased over the given period of time. This result may reflect the importance of affective images in recent tourist literature (Stylos et al., 2016; Alcocer & Ruiz, 2020; Styliadis et al., 2017). Baloglu & McCleary (1999) state that affective image attributes are stronger than cognitive image attributes, which latter influence tourist satisfaction.

The result shows a positive change in the degree of travel satisfaction and revisits intentions from the respondents between 2004 and 2019, who enjoyed their travel experience with attractive natural scenery, closeness to nature, beautiful natural wonders, and moderate tourism infrastructure in Mongolia. Although there are positive perceptions of the affective destination image by tourists, it is necessary to improve the quality of local tourism businesses, service providers, and tourism organizations. All local tourism organizations in the supply chain need to work as a team to provide better service and facilities to the international tourists to Mongolia. The affective image is based on the individual value and the destination attachment. Individual value is defined as feelings, sentimental impressions, and emotions suggested by tourism destinations. To make this affective image positive, the DMO should think long-term and carefully prepare a strategy to increase awareness of the destination, capacity building, education, and training of the local community to provide better service and products to tourists. Overall, the research result suggests that destination marketing organizations must closely cooperate or dialogue with actual or potential international tourists through research to understand their perceptions about the destination. This will help destination marketers to understand better the features contributing to the tourists' perceptions about the destination, later tourist satisfaction, and behavioural intentions, therefore, destination organization can deliver suitable products and services.

*Limitations and further research*-There are some limitations to this research. Firstly, destination image creation and image changes are long-lasting processes; therefore, future research must examine Mongolian destination image changes over a given time period. Second, the number of respondents was limited due to the first set of data samples in 2004. To examine longitudinal changes in destination images, the authors decided to sample similar numbers of respondents in 2019. Finally, since other attributes e.g., previous travel experiences and destination loyalty, influence destination image, it is necessary to compare to tourists by using different segmentation. Future research needs to address the difference in the perception of Mongolia based on the different geographic market segments (by geographical regions or by countries). This study will be helpful to destination management organization to customize efficient marketing strategies to specific geographical regions in the hopes of improving and consolidating the image of Mongolia over time.



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