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THE EFFECT OF CULTURAL ATTACHMENT ON PERCEIVED IMAGE OF SOJOURN DESTINATION: AN EVIDENCE FROM CHINESE DESCENT STUDENTS OF ASEAN COMING TO GUANGXI, CHINA

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The main purpose of this paper is to investigate how international students as experienced visitors constitute perceived images of their sojourns destination under the influence of cultural attachment.

Theoretical framework: The framework extends the three-dimensional structure of perceived image consisting of the cognitive image, affective image, and conative image dimensions supported by previous literature (Agapito, Valle & Mendes, 2013), adding the relevant influence of the cultural attachment dimension (Hong, Fang, Yang & Phua, 2013).

Design/methodology/approach: The research methodology used quantitative analysis. The deductive approach was used as a guide to build hypotheses based on the logical inter-dimensional relationships described previously in the literature. 525 ASEAN Chinese with study abroad experience in Guangxi participated in the questionnaire investigation as respondents, and related data were tested for the stated hypotheses using SPSS 26.0.

Findings: The main findings further support previous similar studies that there are important interrelationships in the internal composition of perceived images, and innovatively confirm the important role of cultural attachment on perceived images.

Research, Practical & Social implications: The research makes distinctive use of the cultural experiences of overseas students, offering possibilities for tourism image communication and destination marketing.

Originality/value: The results uncover the academic value of cultural attachment to destination image marketing, which enriches the theoretical system of tourism destination marketing to some extent.

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O EFEITO DO APEGO CULTURAL NA IMAGEM PERCEBIDA DO DESTINO DA ESTADA: UMA EVIDÊNCIA DE ESTUDANTES CHINESES DESCENDENTES DE ASSEUS VINDO PARA GUANGXI, CHINA

RESUMO

Objetivo: O principal objetivo deste trabalho é investigar como os estudantes internacionais como visitantes experientes constituem imagens percebidas do destino de suas estadias sob a influência do apego cultural.

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Referencial teórico: A estrutura estende a estrutura tridimensional da imagem percebida que consiste na imagem cognitiva, imagem afetiva, e dimensões de imagem conative suportadas pela literatura anterior (Agapito, Valle & Mendes, 2013), acrescentando a influência relevante da dimensão de apego cultural (Hong, Fang, Yang & Phua, 2013).
Desenho/metodologia/abordagem: A metodologia de pesquisa utilizou a análise quantitativa. A abordagem dedutiva foi utilizada como um guia para construir hipóteses baseadas nas relações lógicas inter-dimensionais descritas anteriormente na literatura. 525 chineses da ASEAN com experiência de estudo no exterior em Guangxi participaram da investigação do questionário como respondentes, e os dados relacionados foram testados para as hipóteses declaradas usando o SPSS 26.0.
Resultados: As principais conclusões apoiam ainda mais estudos similares anteriores de que existem importantes inter-relações na composição interna das imagens percebidas e confirmam de forma inovadora o importante papel do apego cultural às imagens percebidas.
Pesquisa, implicações práticas e sociais: A pesquisa faz uso diferenciado das experiências culturais dos estudantes estrangeiros, oferecendo possibilidades de comunicação de imagem turística e marketing de destino.
Originalidade/valor: Os resultados revelam o valor acadêmico do apego cultural ao marketing de imagem de destino, o que enriquece em certa medida o sistema teórico de marketing de destino turístico.

Palavras-chave: Apego Cultural, Estadia, Imagem Percebida, Destino Turístico.

EL EFECTO DEL APEGO CULTURAL EN LA IMAGEN PERCIBIDA DEL DESTINO DE LA ESTANCIA: UN ESTUDIO DE LOS ESTUDIANTES DESCENDIENTES DE CHINOS DE ASEAN QUE VIENEN A GUANGXI, CHINA

RESUMEN
Propósito: El objetivo principal de este trabajo es investigar cómo los estudiantes internacionales, en tanto que visitantes experimentados, constituyen imágenes percibidas de su destino de estancia bajo la influencia del apego cultural.
Marco teórico: El marco amplía la estructura tridimensional de la imagen percibida consistente en las dimensiones de imagen cognitiva, imagen afectiva e imagen conativa apoyada por la literatura previa (Agapito, Valle & Mendes, 2013), añadiendo la influencia relevante de la dimensión de apego cultural (Hong, Fang, Yang & Phua, 2013).
Diseño/metodología/enfoque: La metodología de investigación utilizó el análisis cuantitativo. Se utilizó el enfoque deductivo como guía para construir hipótesis basadas en las relaciones interdimensionales lógicas descritas previamente en la bibliografía. 525 chinos de la ASEAN con experiencia de estudios en el extranjero en Guangxi participaron como encuestados en la investigación del cuestionario, y los datos relacionados se sometieron a prueba para las hipótesis planteadas utilizando SPSS 26.0.
Resultados: Los principales resultados corroboran estudios similares anteriores en el sentido de que existen importantes interrelaciones en la composición interna de las imágenes percibidas, y confirman de forma innovadora el importante papel del apego cultural en las imágenes percibidas.
Implicaciones sociales, prácticas y de investigación: La investigación hace un uso distintivo de las experiencias culturales de los estudiantes extranjeros, ofreciendo posibilidades para la comunicación de la imagen turística y el marketing de destinos.
Originalidad/valor: Los resultados descubren el valor académico del apego cultural al marketing de la imagen de destino, lo que enriquece en cierta medida el sistema teórico del marketing de destinos turísticos.

Palabras clave: Apego Cultural, Estancia, Imagen Percibida, Destino Turístico.

INTRODUCTION

In terms of tourism marketability positioning, immigrants are seen as a special international tourism group (Seetaram, 2012). Due to the existence of cultural homogeneity, some immigrants may have a longing for their ancestral places of origin and thus undertake tourism activities to the places of ethnic origin mainly for the purposes of homesickness,

visiting relatives, and visiting old friends (Griffin, 2016; Ying-xue, Bing, Li & Zhi, 2013). This not only generates considerable inbound tourism revenue for the immigrants' previous home countries to a certain extent, but also creates job opportunities for tourism suppliers to provide the corresponding tourism services.

China has been committed to the worldwide export of its culture in the hope of bringing in more international visitors, of which overseas Chinese are also an important target customer group. The"Belt and Road Initiative" policy introduced by China's government has successfully brought in a growing number of international Chinese students to China in general and also to Guangxi specifically (Wu & Chan, 2019; Gong, 2018). These students are the bearers of Chinese immigrant culture overseas. This phenomenon is mainly attributed to the mutual recognition of academic qualifications as part of the policy. In addition to that, the geo-structural factors of Guangxi which is located in the south have strong geographical connections with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries since the ancient Maritime Silk Road. ASEAN is also an important part of China's Maritime Silk Road strategy (Cheng, 2013). Therefore, Guangxi is directed as a window to ASEAN in the policy. It is also for this reason that Guangxi's universities have many international students from ASEAN, some of whom are international Chinese. These international students might have a strong cultural attachment to China due to their ethnic backgrounds (Li & McKercher, 2016). Thus, understanding students' image formation is important as they could be the future ambassadors to promote the tourism of their sojourns to other people in their homeplaces.

Studying the visitor's perceived image of a destination is an important prelude to destination marketing (Zhang, Wu & Buhalis, 2018; Sun, Ryan & Pan, 2014). Perceived images can help explain visitors' cognition and affection for destinations, as well as their behavioral intentions related to tourism that arise from the image perception process (Michael, James & Michael, 2018; Beerli & Martín, 2004; Kunt & Gulcan, 2021). There are currently a large number of references on the perceived image of tourism destination (e.g. Marine-Roig & Clavé, 2016; Andreu, Bigné & Cooper, 2000; Agapito, Valle &Mendes, 2013; Hallmann, Zehrer & Müller, 2013). Thus, there is a strong indication of the importance of perceived image for destination tourism development research. In order to compete for clientele, destination marketers often invest significant resources in building a desirable perceived image of tourism for their target markets. Further, in visitor decision-making and visitor behavior theory, a destination perceived image is an important factor that influences tourists in making travel choices (Correia, Valle & Moço, 2007).

Distinguish from ordinary visitors, for the study abroad tourist group, the perception of the culture of the host country may be an important factor in constructing their perceived images. Similar cultural traditions and life backgrounds can make international visitors less resistant to the destination and get a degree of comfort from psychological security. In some researches, a novel theory of cultural attachment is considered to be used to study the influence of sojourners' native culture on host culture (Hong, Fang, Yang & Phua, 2013; Keller, 2012; Hong, 2017; Yap, Christopoulos & Hong, 2017). Cultural attachment is an emotional connection between individual and culture, and its core is affective attachment (Hong et al., 2013). In the perception of affective image, the individual motivation of visitors is influenced by the cultural attachment of destination. Although in most tourism studies, attachment theory is mainly reflected in place attachment or community attachment (Japutra, 2020; Hasana, Swain & George, 2021), cultural attachment, as a direct research factor, can more objectively reflect the process of acculturation of visitor groups like international students and the changes in cognition and affection they may generate toward their sojourns. In previous studies, cultural attachment as an influencing factor of perceived image has not been fully explored for its value.

Based on the above background, the main purpose of this paper is to design and construct a model of the perceived image composition of ASEAN international Chinese students under the influence of cultural attachment, and to classify the perceived image into three important dimensions, including cognitive image, affective image and conative image. Specifically, the first part discusses the academic interrelationship between perceived image and cultural attachment; the second part attempts a quantitative analysis of the composition of perceived images under the influence of cultural attachment through a questionnaire involving 525 respondents. This study suggests that ASEAN international Chinese students with cultural attachments to Guangxi are an adequate group of respondents for investigation of tourism perceived image, which can help Guangxi to deeply expand its marketing strategy and enlarge the international popularity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The perceived image is considered to be a mental construct or state representation of a visitor's perception of a destination (Chan & Zhang, 2018). It is an impression and evaluation of objective things formed by the human brain processing (Schoenmakers, Barth, Heskes & van Gerven, 2013). The evaluation mechanism is formed by people's feedback to information about external stimuli. visitors reflect on the destination through mental recollections in the act of

purchasing and making decisions about tourism products. This way of image composition has attracted the attention of scholars. As a result, research on the perceived image of tourism has gradually penetrated into several fields, including conceptualization of integration with tourism, definition of formative factors and dimensions, constitutive mechanisms, evaluation and optimization, management analysis of destination image, definition of influence patterns and influence capabilities, and image life cycle (Stylidis, 2020; Kislali, Kavaratzis & Saren, 2016; Tasci, Gartner & Cavusgil, 2007).

The basic theoretical research on image began mainly between the 1970s and 1980s. In the subsequent studies, the perceived image was subdivided and relatively focused on the principles of image composition, the logic of image formation, and the formed process of image. Gartner (1993) presents that perceived image is structured mode consisting of cognitive image, affective image, and conation images. Baloglu and McCleary (1999) affirmed the effect of cognitive image and affective images in the formation of perceived image. This type of doctrine constructs the image structure of perception from the perspective of the visitor's psychological feelings. It is more easily quantifiable and operationalised, and relatively most researchers' agree with this type of psychological illustration theory.

These group of studies noted the perceived image generated by the tourists' willingness to revisit or recommend, which is derived from the image of conation. Gartner (1994) refers that conative image is influenced by the cognitive image and is a composite perceptual behavior. Tourists develop the idea of revisiting or recommending because they have already obtained a positive evaluation of the destination by certain sources. During this process, the conative image plays a mediating role. Several studies have supported the finding and suggested that affective image is also associated with conative images. Thus, the behavioural motivation of tourists construct a linear link with their their affective and conative images. Agapito, Valle and Mendes (2013) further defined the important role of cognitive image, affective image, and conative image as constituents of perceived images based on previous studies. They constructed an impact hypothesis among the three images and built a constitutive framework based on it. More studies also proposed the intention to revisit and recommend as two important dimensional criteria for the variable of conative image. In this study, the interrelationship of these dimensions would be further verified. Currently, conative image is also more widely discussed in the field of tourism destination studies as a constituent element of measuring perceived image (Woosnam, Stylidis & Ivkov, 2020; Han & Hwang, 2016; Kladou & Mavragani, 2015).

The term cultural attachment was mentioned sparingly in early studies of the state-to-culture relationship. Routh and Burgoynec (1998), while studying national identity, regard that cultural attachment is a self-sense of national, cultural and historical symbols such as flags and currencies. In this period, cultural attachment did not form a relatively complete theoretical system. After the 21st century, some scholars began to construct a theoretical framework for cultural theory. Hong et al. (2013) proposed a new theoretical framework that would be used to describe the emotional connections that individuals form with different cultures and cultural groups. They argue that the emotional connection of cultural attachment is expressed in the individual's sense of trust and belonging to the culture. Hossain and Lamb (2019) defined cultural attachment as an individual's continuous and stable emotional connection to his own culture and cultural group. It includes the degree to which an individual trusts the culture and receives support and comfort.

More scholars have primarily argued that cultural attachment is an extension of traditional parent-child attachment in the cultural domain. But they still need to explore whether cultural attachment is a unidimensional concept that contains only affective components or a multidimensional concept that contains cognitive, affective, and intentional components (Hong et al., 2013; Yap, Christopoulos & Hong, 2017). Some early attachment researches emphasized the importance of cognition and considered attachment as a structure that individuals use to develop and maintain their self-perceptions (Main, 1990; Frederking, 2004). Attachment has strong motivational and behavioral tendencies, and is a multidimensional concept that includes three components: cognitive, affective, and conative behaviour.

Moreover, existing studies on brand attachment, place attachment, organizational attachment, and website attachment also confirm the three-dimensional structure of attachment from a number of perspectives (Gilal, Zhang, Gilal & Gilal, 2020; Lewicka, 2005; Cardador, Dane & Pratt, 2011; Granqvist, 2021). Because cultural attachment is an extension of attachment theory to culture, it is inferred that cultural attachment should also be rooted in the multidimensional properties of cognition, affection, and conation. In contrast, it is worth noting that cognitive, affective, and conative images are also the main constituent dimensions in the perceived image composition model. This makes cultural attachment possess potential influence relationships with these dimensions.

Based on the above theoretical background, the following hypotheses are proposed in this paper:

H1: For the international Chinese students from ASEAN who come to Guangxi, their

cultural attachments have significant impact on their cognitive images.

H2: For the international Chinese students from ASEAN who come to Guangxi, their cultural attachments have significant impact on their affective images.

H3: For the international Chinese students from ASEAN who come to Guangxi, their cultural attachments have significant impact on their conative images.

H4: For the international Chinese students from ASEAN who come to Guangxi, their cognitive images have significant impact on their affective images.

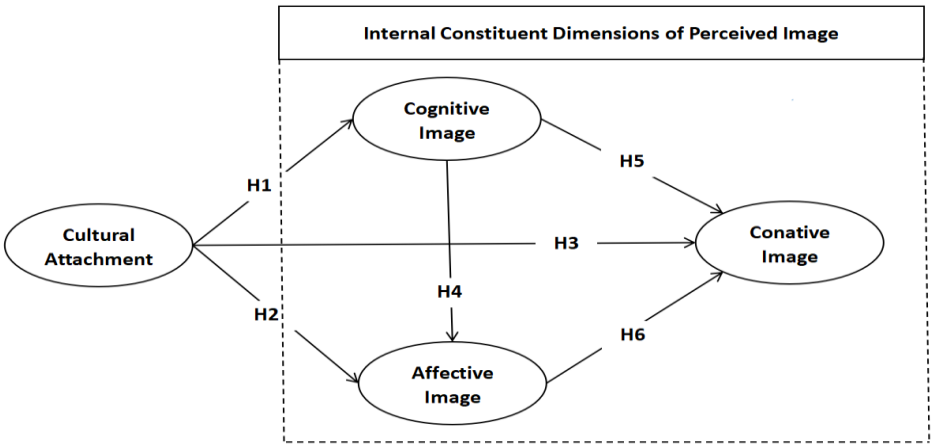
H5: For the international Chinese students from ASEAN who come to Guangxi, their cognitive images have significant impact on their conative images.

H6: For the international Chinese students from ASEAN who come to Guangxi, their affective images have significant impact on their conative images.

METHERIAL AND METHODOLOGY

Based on the theoretical background, the variables included in the model of this study are cultural attachment, cognitive image, affective image, and conative image. The last three are the internal constituent dimensions of perceived image. The logical relationship between the variables is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Research Framework



Source: Prepared by the authors (2023).

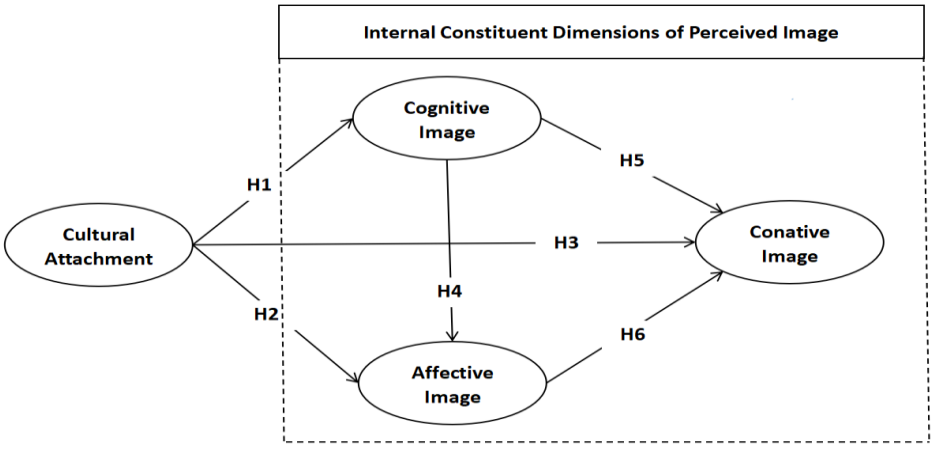
Measurement Scale

The respondents in this research were asked to complete a questionnaire consisting of 32 main items, including 25 items on cultural attachment, cognitive image, affective image, and conative image. These items were measured using a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly

disagree (1 point) to strongly agree (7 point). The remaining 7 items were statistics on the Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, including gender, age, nationality, annual family income, marital status, from which university, and the specialty of study. Table 1 illustrates the dimensions adapted from the relevant literature.

This study uses methods of data analysis such as reliability testing, validation factor analysis, and path analysis. Thereinto, it uses SPSS 26.0 to test the stability and reliability of the measurement instruments, and the validity of the scales. It uses the mean as a reference to make the variables eligible for regression analysis and conducts path analysis using cultural attachment as a starting point to investigate the influence relationship between the variables.

Table 1 -- Dimensions adapted from literature



Source: Prepared by the authors (2023).

Since the relationship between cultural attachment and other variables is logically constructed based on previous theories, a pretest analysis is required. This study used independent sample t-tests for pretest analysis, which has been supported in the previous literature to be effective in analyzing the variability between high and low subgroups of the sample. This can further confirm the reliability of the questionnaire. In addition, the pretest sample size for this study consisted of 50 experienced respondents, as suggested by Oksenberg, Cannell and Kalton (1991). The respondents who took the pretest were international Chinese students from Guangxi University and Guangxi Normal University. Among them, Guangxi University is in Nanning, the capital of Guangxi, and Guangxi Normal University is in Guilin, the most famous tourism city in Guangxi. This makes the pretest samples distinctly representative. The results showed significant variability in the high and low scoring samples for all dimensional items, so all items were retained for the formal questionnaire.

Sample Structure

The respondents of the questionnaire survey consisted of international Chinese students from ASEAN who had the experience of studying in one of the 18 universities in Guangxi that have the qualification of enrolling international students. Questionnaires were collected using the snowball method. The official questionnaire was designed online on a survey website and exported as links. These links have sent separately to the international college staff of Guangxi universities who assisted in this study, and they distributed to international Chinese students who have graduated or are currently studying through China's mobile social software such as QQ groups and WeChat groups. To enhance the efficiency of the questionnaire collection, both the collectors and respondents will receive different levels of awards. From November 1-15, a total of 554 questionnaires were returned, of which 525 were valid samples for quantitative analysis. The socio-demographic characteristics of the samples are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 -- Structure of respondents

Dimensions	Operational Definition	No. of Items	Sources
Cultural Attachment	The cultural perceptions of Chinese students from ASEAN regarding Guangxi as a sojourn place for study abroad mainly expressed their cultural reflection and cross-cultural competence.	10	Hong et al., 2013; Hossain & Lamb, 2020; Keller, 2012.
Cognitive Image	Cognitive image is a perceived image that Chinese students from ASEAN produce by knowing and thinking about Guangxi as a tourism destination.	5	Agapito et al., 2013; Gartner, 1993; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999.
Affective Image	Affective image is a perceived image formed by respondents' emotional disposition towards Guangxi as a tourism destination.	5	Agapito et al., 2013; Gartner, 1993; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999.
Conative Image	Conative image is a perceived image constituted by the respondent's behavioral intention to generate tourism-related activity.	5	Agapito et al., 2013; Gartner, 1993; Woosnam et al., 2020.

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023).

Of the 525 questionnaires, the proportion of females and males was 58.94% and 41.06% respectively, with a higher proportion of females than males. The age group is mainly between 18 to 22 years old, with a share of 61.9%, which indicates that the participants in this study were predominantly undergraduate students. The income was mainly concentrated between less than USD 30,000 and between USD 30,000 to 50,000, accounting for 43.91% and 29.28% respectively, which may mean that lower family incomes can afford to study in Guangxi as well. On the other hand, these students are mainly from Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Cambodia, and Laos, with the largest number of Thai students (29.9%). Of these students, 74.86% are still single. They mainly choose management (32.7%) and computing (30.61%) as

their study majors. The questionnaire was mainly filled out by students from Guangxi University, Guangxi Normal University, Guangxi Minzu University, Guilin University of Electronic Technology, and Guilin University of Technology, their proportions of approximately 15%. It is worth noting that all these five universities have PhD programs and are well-known in Guangxi.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data Analysis

In this study, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to test the validity of the dimensions. After principal component analysis, 3 items of cultural attachment 7, 9 and 10 were removed because the factor loadings were below 0.6. This helped the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value to be at a high level of 0.84. The inter-item correlation coefficients were all above 0.3, indicating that the data support items with positive convergent validity. The Bartlett's sphericity test reached statistical significance (p<0.05), supporting the decomposability of the correlation matrix. The percentage of explainable variance is 67.14%, indicating that the items retained in this dimension have a high model explanatory capacity. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 3.

On the other hand, relatively satisfactory EFA results were obtained for the 3 dimensions of perceived image. Among them, item COG2 (0.237) and AFF4 (0.263) were deleted because their inter-correlation coefficients are below 0.3 (Asuero, Sayago & González, 2006). All other items reached the reference standard required for factor analysis. As shown in Table 4, 5 and 6.

Table 3 -- EFA results of cultural attachment

Variables / Items		**Factor Loadings**
CA1: You are attached to the culture of Guangxi.		0.812
CA2: You feel like you belong to Guangxi.		0.852
CA3: You think Guangxi is safe.		0.705
CA4: You think Guangxi is a tolerant place.		0.793
CA5: You think the local residents of Guangxi are friendly.		0.798
CA6: You are physically and mentally healthy while living in Guangxi.		0.772
CA8: You like to learn and use some Guangxi dialects.		0.784
Factorability Assessment	**Results**	**Standard**
Explained variance	67.14%	More than 50%
KMO measure of sampling adequacy	0.840	Min value is 0.6
Bartlett's test of Sphericity	$p < 0.001$	$p < 0.05$
Strength of inter-correlation among items	Retained items more than 0.3	> 0.3

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023).

Table 4 -- EFA results of cognitive image

Variables / Items		Factor Loadings
COG1: Guangxi has beautiful natural environment.		0.693
COG3: There are many entertainments and leisure time in Guangxi.		0.744
COG4: Guangxi has harmonious humanity environment.		0.787
COG5: Guangxi has excellent social atmosphere.		0.808
Factorability Assessment	**Results**	**Standard**
Explained variance	57.66%	More than 50%
KMO measure of sampling adequacy	0.768	Min value is 0.6
Bartlett's test of Sphericity	$p < 0.001$	$p < 0.05$
Strength of inter-correlation among items	Retained items more than 0.3	> 0.3

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023).

Table 5 -- EFA results of affective image

Variables / Items		Factor Loadings
AFF1: Guangxi's tourism is pleasant.		0.814
AFF2: Guangxi's tourism is relaxing.		0.762
AFF3: Guangxi's tourism is interesting.		0.704
AFF5: Guangxi's tourism is original.		0.718
Factorability Assessment	**Results**	**Standard**
Explained variance	56.35%	More than 50%
KMO measure of sampling adequacy	0.758	Min value is 0.6
Bartlett's test of Sphericity	$p < 0.001$	$p < 0.05$
Strength of inter-correlation among items	Retained items more than 0.3	> 0.3

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023).

Table 6 -- EFA results of affective image

Variables / Items		Factor Loadings
CON1: You would like to travel to Guangxi again.		0.814
CON2: You would like to recommend others to travel to Guangxi.		0.745
CON3: You would miss the local life when you leave Guangxi.		0.770
CON4: You would like to popularize the tourism image of Guangxi.		0.774
CON5: You have a good impression of Guangxi's tourism.		0.763
Factorability Assessment	**Results**	**Standard**
Explained variance	59.86%	More than 50%
KMO measure of sampling adequacy	0.832	Min value is 0.6
Bartlett's test of Sphericity	$p < 0.001$	$p < 0.05$
Strength of inter-correlation among items	Retained items more than 0.3	> 0.3

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023).

Despite the fact that EFA ensured the validity of the remaining items of each dimension, their reliability must be further tested. This study focuses on reliability testing through Cronbach coefficient alpha, which has been supported and recommended in the previous literature (Cronbach & Shavelson, 2004; Christmann & Aelst, 2006). The reliability analysis method proposed by Cronbach coefficient alpha was used to calculate the variables of each dimension and the results obtained are shown in Table 7.

Table 7 -- Reliability test results for each dimension

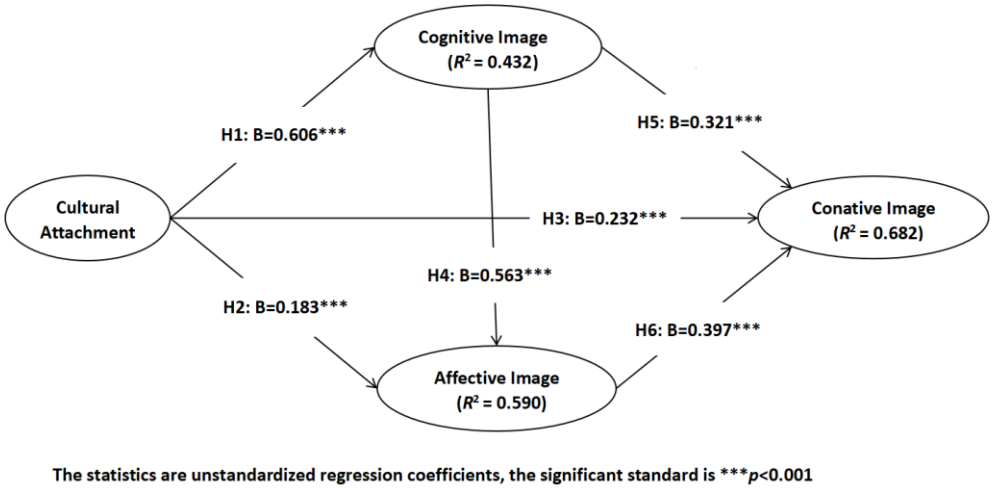
Dimensions	No. of Items	Cronbach'α	Standard Explanation
Cultural attachment	7	0.829	0.7-0.9 indicates high reliability
Cognitive image	4	0.754	
Affective image	4	0.741	
Conative image	5	0.832	

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023).

The results of the reliability analysis showed that the Cronbach coefficient alpha of the examined dimensions were in the range of 0.7-0.9. According to Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2010), the minimum acceptable range of Cronbach coefficient alpha is between 0.6-0.7. Value between 0.7-0.9 indicates that the retained items have favorable reliability and would produce more credible conclusions when used for quantitative analysis.

The path coefficients of the effects of the variables were examined using PLS correlation analysis. From the results of the analytical tests, the path coefficients between all dimensions starting with cultural attachment are significant ($p < 0.001$). The explained variance (R^2) of cognitive image, affective image, and conative image as dependent variables are 0.432, 0.563, and 0.682, respectively, which indicates that the regression analysis of dependent and independent variables has certain explanatory effect and the analysis results are valid. The results of PLS path analysis are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Results of path analysis



Source: Prepared by the authors (2023).

PLS regression analysis was used in this study to test the critical linear association between the independent and dependent variables, and the results of its correlation data can confirm the validity of the previously stated hypotheses. The main quantitative calculation

results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8 -- Detailed data results for path analysis

DV	IV	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	*p*	95.0% CI for B		VIF	R^2
		B	Std. Error	β			Low	High		
COG	Constant	2.588	0.166		15.566	0.000	2.262	2.915		0.432
	CA	0.606	0.030	0.657	19.944	0.000	0.646	0.665	1.000	
AFF	Constant	1.682	0.158		10.636	0.000	1.371	1.993		0.590
	CA	0.183	0.032	0.215	5.768	0.000	0.121	0.245	1.761	
	COG	0.563	0.034	0.609	16.381	0.000	0.496	0.631	1.761	
CON	Constant	0.414	0.168		2.465	0.014	0.084	0.744		0.682
	CA	0.232	0.031	0.249	7.368	0.000	0.170	0.294	1.873	
	COG	0.321	0.041	0.317	7.875	0.000	0.241	0.401	2.666	
	AFF	0.397	0.042	0.363	9.409	0.000	0.314	0.480	2.436	

Regression Equation: COG = 2.588 + 0.606CA ; AFF = 1.682 + 0.183CA + 0.563COG ;
CON = 0.414 + 0.232CA + 0.321COG + 0.397AFF

Source: Prepared by the authors (2023).

There are detailed data results that show that the whole dimensions have values of less than 3 for the covariance diagnosis (VIF) in the path analysis. It further indicates that there is no problem of covariance between dimensions due to high correlation and the findings of the study are credible. Thereof, the standardized coefficient (β) of cultural attachment on cognitive image is 0.657 with a t-value of 19.944, and with an explanatory value 0.432 of R^2 , the effect of cultural attachment as an independent variable on cognitive image is significant ($p < 0.001$). Hence, hypothesis H1 is verified.

The standardized coefficients for the regression analysis of cultural attachment and cognitive image when AFF is the dependent variable are 0.215 and 0.609, respectively. The t-values are 5.768 and 16.381, respectively. These data facilitate the support of the hypotheses. From the results, the effects of both cultural attachment and cognitive image on affective image are significant ($p < 0.001$) at the explained value 0.590 of R^2. Thus, the hypotheses H2 and H4 are confirmed in this study as well.

Moreover, the remaining 3 hypotheses H3, H5 and H6 are also validated. With conative image as the dependent variable, the standardized coefficients of the independent variables are 0.249 (cultural attachment), 0.317 (cognitive image), and 0.363 (affective image), respectively. Among them, the t-value of cultural attachment is 7.368, while that of cogitive image and affective image are 7.875 and 9.409. At $p < 0.001$, cultural image, cognitive image, and affective image are important antecedent variables affecting conative image, explaining 68.2%

(R^2) of the variance in conative image.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study validate the proposed research framework, and the analysis supports the hypotheses of the relationship between the variables . First, cultural attachment (β = 0.657, 0.215 & 0.249, $p < 0.001$) is confirmed to have significant influences on the 3 dimensions of the perceived image of Guangxi as tourism destination set by this study based on previous literature. Due to cultural commonalities, visitors have a receptive perception of the tourism and culture of their ethnic origin country (Huang & Crotts, 2019). Indeed, cultural attachment not only helps to explain the cross-cultural adaptation of expatriates like international students in their sojourn environment, but also further explains from their experiences part of the reasons for the formation of their perceived images towards the places of residence. Correspondingly, this finding supports some tourism development perspectives that focus on culture as a core attraction. For Chinese destinations, the integration between culture and tourism will be an important factor to be fully considered when developing their marketing strategies. Especially for overseas Chinese, the role of cultural attachment in destination marketing should be emphasized.

Furthermore, the final result of the path analysis shows that the respondents are willing to recommend Guangxi tourism or revisit Guangxi under the influence of cultural attachment (CA→ CON, β = 0.249, $p < 0.001$). This supports the development idea that Guangxi expects to enhance the tourism image through international students. In fact, some overseas Chinese bloggers who have had the experience of studying in China have already promoted China's tourism through online social media (Weaver & Wang, 2017). Tourism marketers in Guangxi need to pay more attention to this favorable condition and perhaps generate a stronger interactive effect on the tourism economy through cooperation with ASEAN Chinese descent students.

On the other hand, the model of this study further supports the three-dimensional structure of perceived image consisting of cognitive image, affective image, and conative image. These results are consistent with some literature sharing the view that cognitive image, affective image, and conative image as important internal components of perceived image have a relationship of mutual influence (Agapito et al., 2013; Woosnam et al., 2020; Michael et al., 2018). Especially when standardized coefficients are used as a measure of influence ability, the internal three dimensions of perceived image clearly outweigh the influence of external factors

such as cultural attachment in terms of effect. Specifically, when analyzing the impact on affective image, the β value for cognitive image (0.609, $p < 0.001$) is much higher than cultural attachment (0.215, $p < 0.001$). Likewise, when analyzing the effect on conative image, the β value of cultural attachment (0.249, $p < 0.001$) is still lower than cognitive image (0.317, $p < 0.001$) and affective image (0.363, $p < 0.001$). A possible explanation for this result is that even though visitors are influenced by various external factors to create an earlier impression of the destination, they gradually develop a more complex perceived image as their cognitive and affective changes during the destination tour. This means that even though Guangxi attracts a large number of ASEAN Chinese students through its policy advantages, it still needs to continuously improve the quality of tourism, which will deeply provide these special tourist groups for better sensations.

CONCLUSIONS

Perceived image has long occupied an important place in the marketing of tourism destinations. The exploration of the internal structure of the perceived image as well as the external influences is constantly changing as the situation transforms. The important contribution of this study is the introduction of a perspective from cultural attachment for external influences on perceived images through a logical link in the psychological structure. The corresponding dimensions and measure scales were confirmed to be valid in the subsequent quantitative analysis findings. This new angle assists destinations committed to culture as a tourism attraction.

In particular, the results of the investigation provide valuable insights. Cultural attachment has a positive supporting effect on the perceived image. This not only supports previous literature's critical discussion of cultural attachment in cross-cultural adaptation, but also further enriches the theoretical body of research on perceived image in the cultural domain. The significance of the study findings is not limited to the travel perceptions of similar groups of international students. In fact, for tourism service providers who are committed to using international students as tourism marketing intermediaries, this study helps them gain insight into the feasibility of using Chinese international students as a promotional group for word-of-mouth effects. This may be possible in the future for their larger Chinese tourism groups.

In conclusion, the innovative perspective of this study is to explore the influence of cultural attachment on perceived image, which has not been adequately discussed in conjunction with existing research. It effectively integrates the disciplinary thinking of tourism

and psychology, and supports previous findings related to perceived image research on an innovative basis. Although the limitation in the interviewed group makes this study have some limitations, its research value can be further explored and reflected in the subsequent studies. Therefore, the present study has sufficient reference significance.

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