

# The Concepts through the Mediating Effects of Psychographic Constructs in Tourist Behavior

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## ABSTRACT

The relationships of subjective norms as well as their roles in the causal relationships as constructs are main issues for understanding consumer behavior. Hence, the importance of subjective norms is not covered as a valuable subject. Since there are a few studies about causal relationships of latent variables as mediating effect in the tourism literature; the aim of this article is to pursue and present to discover those precise associations among subjective norms as variables which lead to a new model of them. Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT) and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) are employed as the base of created model from Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Moreover, investigating of subjective issues is very useful to find out consumer behavior, while their concepts are as latent variables or intangibles are very complicated and sophisticated. Besides, tourism literature has a little information through the mediating effects of psychological variables which are led to tourism loyalty. However, the importance of mediating effects is valuable to know the customers how and why to do as well as to predict behavioral intentions. Further, the lack of conceptual framework from mentioned issues is improved by considering variables as subjective and their roles as mediating effects like lifestyle, personality and travel satisfaction between destination image and loyalty.

**KEY WORDS:** Consumer behavior, Psychographic variables, tourism marketing, mediating effects, destination images, loyalty

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## INTRODUCTION

Changing technology causes to variety needs and wants among consumers and consumption patterns. Also, tourism sector and its importance are influenced as global market by new technologies and approaches. According to Ajzen (1991), subjective norms have played important roles to predict consumer behavior as pre- or post-purchasing. While, there are such latent variables which cause to align decision making like psychographics or subjective norms. The authors believed that those variables which can be intervening or mediating effects in causal relationships of constructs give new glances to understand and forecast of consumer behavior. There is a little study in the literature as mediating effects of psychographic variables in tourism marketing. The consequences of studying like Bigne et al. (2001), Gonzallez and Bello (2002), Roy and Goswami (2007), Correia et al. (2009), Bigne Alcaniz et al. (2009), Byon and Zhang (2010) and Chen and Li (2010) have pointed out the contributed latent variables to predict loyalty as behavioral intentions like purchasing again or intention as well as recommending products to the others. Consequently, they presented that new class of issues to distinguish consumer behavior towards loyalty of customers. Finally, the authors recognized that the SEM modelling is the useful way to show clearly causal relationships of them for depicting the roles of subjective norms by using theories such as EVT and TPB.

### EVT and TPB Theories

EVT theory presents relationships of motivation and choice destination in the tourism literature which can help academic researcher to interpret tourist behavior. This theory stated that selecting decision or decision making of a tourist directly is influenced by his/her attitudes, while attitudes are due to beliefs (Ajzen, 1991; Correia et al., 2009; Chen and Li, 2010). Moreover, tourists' behavioral intentions are directly related to their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Therefore, TPB theory is propounded towards predicting tourist behavior. In addition, social status, self-esteem, and self-actualization of a tourist are contingent up EVT theory.

Also, motivations can be interpreted through the destination image of tourists (Vroom 1964; Correia et al., 2009). Even though, perceptions and expectations are arouse from pre-purchasing, the first point for decision making is tourists' motivations (Crompton, 1979b; Beerli and Martin, 2004; and Correia et al., 2009). Motivations, expectations and perceptions are employed as "push and pull

systems” for tourists’ making decisions. However, perception is a precise concept in marketing research which is determined by physical sensations. The information has a major role in outcomes of perceptions. As a result, the information sources show that they are released from advertisements or word of mouth circulations.

Push factors are which cause tourists out of home like friendship, social status, adventures, while pull factors are which relate the destination attributes. Both of them consider impact of tourists’ motivations. According to Crompton (1979b), attributes of the destination affect expectations and satisfaction. Motivations and expectations are linked by EVT theory. This theory associates to destination image in order to determine antecedents and consequences of it. In fact, TPB theory declares that the intention of customer is due to his/her beliefs and attitudes (Chen and Li, 2010). In addition, attitude is formulated by expectancy-value model, while Subjective norm is the force from people whether to act or not a certain behavior which pertains to the level of expectation from others. Perceived behavioral control is the level of difficulties of performances (Ajzen, 1991).

### **Psychographic Constructs**

Plog (2002) believed that psychological aspects have been played extremely important roles in the leisure trips. Also, the type of activities is another factor as making-decision to choose the destination. Hence, psychographic variables are considered for measuring and analyzing some aspects of consumer traits like feelings, thoughts, reflecting, lifestyles, personality and demographic (Kotler et al., 2009). On the other words, it is given tools to the researchers of quantities to measure psychological dimensions of customer situations or segments target market with common traits of consumer behaviors (Roy and Goswami, 2007). Psychographic variables are related to internal traits of person or his/her lifestyle (Gonzalez and Bello, 2002). Sometimes it is focused on specific area of consumer behavior and sometimes on general issues. In addition, the variables of psychographic are chosen from standard criteria of lifestyles or personalities, and may be handmade.

As a result of the literature for finding out psychographic, a tourist should purchase time and place for his/her activities based on his/her plan. The plan is an engine for pushing tourist internally to make a decision directly or indirectly as a motivation (Crompton, 1979b; Beerli and Martin, 2004). The motivation is an attitudinal process from affective and cognitive system. However, the capability and consciousness of tourist are main elements on processing in his/her mind. Absolutely, the process of mind is performed by the principles and comments from the norms of the society, economic and culture which over on psychographic variables of tourists. As the consequence of psychographic constructs, we can consider that there is a specific result for the specific market, as well as the result of the research would be different with the future research (Gonzalez and Bello, 2002). The reasons why the differences would be occurred in the future are related to change high technology, lifestyle, and consumption patterns. Also the circumstances of economically and environmentally are influenced from those changing that affect on lifestyles and personalities of individuals as tourists.

### **Destination Image**

The concept of destination image has emerged since 1970s by Hunt (1975) and Crompton (1979a) has identified it as integrating opinions and images from the specific destination as attitudes of tourists. Whereas, Etchner and Ritchie (1993) stated that the destination image has been obtained from the effect of such attributes which are determined by considering tourists behavior for analyzing SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat) of the destination.

The destination image has especial forces to convert a travelling decision to real visiting, whereas evaluation of experience of the destination has especial power to affect or refine the last image. Ibrahim and Gill (2005) suggested relationships between destination image with perception and satisfaction of tourists. It is a construct in which influences in subjective perceptions, consequences of tourists’ behavior and their making decisions to select a destination. In fact, tourists are contributed to realize their destination image and consequent behaviors in tourism researches. However, service quality and travel satisfaction are determined by positive destination image (Chi and Qu, 2008). Hence, destination image has an important role to attain tourists’ loyalty and their satisfaction. As a result, when destination image is formed, it is very hard to change. It has become a precise stage for the destination to deliver correct image and maintain it.

In fact, Bigne et al. (2001) believed that destination image is a subjective interpretation of experiences of the tourists from visiting or visited destination. Hence, cognitive and affective systems are employed to judge about the destination. Purchase behavior is owing to cognitive system and evaluations. Therefore, it cannot be considered only as an objective variable. It is not only useful to select destination through tourists but also influences in tourists’ behavior during and after the trip. According to Bigne et al. (2001), destination image is antecedents of service quality, satisfaction, and intention behaviors. Even though, it is impossible to control the elements of destination image in

tourists' mind, there are many ways to influence destination image by using media to manipulate information or conveying information from friends and acquaintances.

However, Correia, Oliveira and Silva (2009) confirmed that destination image is established by mental processing and such characteristics from the destination. Also, it is started by considering motivation which it is followed to reach an expectation. In addition, Tourists use EVT Theory and Image Theory from motivations, expectations and perceptions. In addition, the study of Gallarza, Saura, Garcia (2002) identified two dimensions for destination image. As a first, cognitive image is an important factor to attain tourists' loyalty. Whereas the next, affective of destination is the consequence of emotional image. Moreover, Cognitive image can influence in emotional component.

The study of Wang and Hsu (2010) identified that changing in tourists' behaviors are the signal of destination image in tourists' mind. Further, destination attributes associate to destination image (Beerli and Martin, 2004). However, it is considered as a multi-dimensional construct like knowledge, impressions, prejudices, and emotion thoughts from tourists (Wang and Hsu, 2010). Hence, cognitive image is involved to attributes of the destination, while affective image is feeling respect to the destination. Moreover, affective image is due to process of cognitive image. They are distinct but hierarchically are related together.

### **Loyalty of Tourists**

In fact, the utmost key of the tourism researches is tourism loyalty which can be produced post events from tourism products or services. Also, it is crucial concept for the researchers and marketers. The consumer behavior is studying more about this issue from different customers who use up different products. Kozak (2001) believed that it has emerged in the tourism marketing as revisit intention (RVI) and recommends intention (RCI). Moreover, the different antecedents of loyalty are satisfaction, attribute satisfaction and overall image. Ibrahim and Gill (2005) believed that there is significant relationship between satisfaction and RVI which are studied towards positioning the destination in order to develop tourism products and services. Chi and Qu (2008) posited that the managers of destination can focus on the main factors which are affected in tourist behavior in the future by recognizing the loyalty and how to retain customers. Besides, satisfaction and service quality are major antecedents for loyalty. Good travel experiences and high satisfaction by performances and service quality are leading to loyalty.

According to Yoon and Uysal (2005), Word-of-Mouth (WOM) is the reliable way to attract tourists to the destination and it shows loyal tourists who are advertising the destination based on their experiences. Therefore, loyalty of tourists has become measuring construct to present the success level of the destination (Wang and Hsu, 2010). Also, destination image is directly or indirectly an antecedent of loyalty of tourists as behavioral intentions.

### **The Relevant Theories**

Recently Byon and Zhang (2010) have claimed that destination image can be directly or indirectly influence in intention of tourist behaviors. The intentions of tourists refer to visit, RVI and RCI. Also, Bigne et al. (2001) proved that quality of trips and tourist satisfaction as factors can be affected directly on RVI and RCI. Whereas Chen and Tsai (2007) demonstrated that destination image can be indirectly influenced in RVI and RCI by intervening service quality or satisfaction.

In addition, expectancy refers to attain values of the attributes (Correia et al., 2009). EVT theory is related to motivations and choice destination. Also, Wigfield and Eccles (2000) proposed that choice, persistence, and performance of individuals can be interpreted by their beliefs which pertain to their how well doing and evaluating their activities. As a result, this theory can assist the current research to interpret tourists' behaviors through their ideas towards destination image and its consequences.

Personality as personal value or value is more powerful psychographic variable. It can be predicted through tourist's behavior, attitudes, and lifestyle. Personality affects on interests, time-use activities, and roles. But lifestyle values are almost stable vs. personality values. Brunso et al. (2004) believed that lifestyle is as a key construct in research of consumer behavior, specifically in hierarchical cognitive system. Also, personality puts on the top of hierarchical cognitive system. Hence, lifestyle is considered as an intervening system which it can relate specific product to personality through the structural cognitive system. In addition, personality and lifestyle are engaged to each other to attain a subjective norm as behavior.

The review of study woodside et al. (2005) confirmed that tourist's choice for vacation can be fitted by their lifestyle like a glove. Also, personality (value) is adding as a construct to describe better understand tourists' behavior. Gonzalez and Bello (2002) believed that personality and lifestyle are two essential variables in tourist behavior. Besides, the basis of personalization in the market causes to define market as a whole from such variables as consumer habits. Moreover, customer can be able adapt to consumption patterns based on their lifestyle, therefore they can buy different

products or services. Further, Gonzalez and Bello (2002) employed lifestyle to investigate tourist behaviors. While Roy and Goswami (2007) confirmed that psychographic variables have intervening role between personality and consumer behavior. Although tourism model has become as a global model from consumption patterns, it can be analyzed specifically if purchasing behavior focuses on certain products or services. However, personality and psychographic variables which are related to motivations can be defined in the markets as a whole (Gonzalez and Bello, 2002).

Ajzen (1991) believed that belief of customer influences his/her attitude which can be able to establish behavioral intention. The recent study of Chen and Li (2010) mentioned that intention can be developed by attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In addition, favourable or unfavourable attitude influences directly behavioral belief which can be formulated by EVT theory. Also, subjective norm is associated to the expectation through others as the normative objective. Perception of behavioral control is related to ease or difficulty of performance from certain behavior. Moreover, it pertains to beliefs as existing control factors which can facilitate the execution of the certain behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In fact, TPB theory is essential of individual's judgment in order to recognize intention behavior.

Travel satisfaction has become the core of tourist behavior in the tourism research to determine tourism loyalty. Gallarza and Gil Saura (2006) stated that perception of value is concerned in satisfaction; and satisfaction is associated to loyalty directly. While Bigne et al. (2001) proposed a SEM model among destination image, quality, and satisfaction, recommend and return constructs. Also, satisfaction has associated directly to return and recommend intentions. In addition, Chen and Tsai (2007) propounded another SEM modelling from destination image towards behavioral intention. The consequences of destination image are trip quality and perceived value. Further, satisfaction is considered consequence of trip quality and perceived value. Destination image can influence directly or indirectly on satisfaction and behavioral intention. Moreover, the model of Chen and Tsai (2007) confirmed satisfaction is antecedent of behavioral intention. While, studying of Yoon and Uysal (2005) presented that making-decision of travelling is the base of motivation from push and pull systems in the impact of emotions through the tourists and attributes of the destination. Hence, they considered that travel satisfaction is affected by push and pull motives which are pertaining to the performances of tourism sections from the destination and the tourist's experiences. Further, destination loyalty is the result of attitudes which is influenced by travel satisfaction.

### **The Gaps in Tourism literature**

There are many latent variables between the relationship of destination image and loyalty in tourism area. Some of them are considered as psychological and the others may be social or economical factors. Undoubtedly, the positive destination image can be influenced on tourist's behavior in the future as loyalty (Beigne et al., 2001; Chen and Tsai, 2007). As a result of review of the tourism marketing literature, there are a little studying about the mediating effects of variables between destination image and loyalty.

Also it would be better to distinguish proper modelling in this field, because most of the researchers believed that each situation has own pros-cons and unstable features since of changing tech and new features. The literature of tourism marketing is less considering about mediating effect of psychographic variables in tourism marketing. The authors believe that this mediating effect of introduced constructs that would be very useful for stakeholders to understand better their tourists. Moreover, the given model can produce new class of research based on mediating effect in tourism area by considering target markets. It is noticeable that the mediating effects of constructs perform psychologically between two constructs.

Since the mediating effect as a construct is one of the most important psychological variable, so this point confirms the studies which have been using it are still scarce as intervening between couple of constructs in tourism literature. Recognizing it has very valuable situation for tourism researchers and tourism planning. In fact, its role can be shown as how to do and why to do. Also, there are bridge gaps from mediating effect of latent variables between two constructs which are accounted as subjective norms or psychographic variables. In addition, it can relate constructs to one another to ease relationships. Hence, this issue can produce circumstances or facilities to ease the relationships of constructs. It is not only useful but also very helpful to study of tourist behavior. In sum up, the role of mediating in tourism literature is less considering as subjective norms.

### **Relationships among Constructs**

**Destination Image.** To date, there are such researches about destination image with different aspects; this article is considered it by allocating recently models. For example, the following studies about destination image and its applications like branding theories in tourism (Hosany et al., 2006), online image and using the Internet (Dwivedi, 2009). In addition, Correia et al. (2009) proposed that the destination image is influenced making-decision through motivations, perceptions and

expectancy. While Bigne Alcaniz et al. (2009) introduced that image construct is a continuum variable from starting functional image towards psychological image. Moreover, Byon and Zhang (2010) discussed about scaling it. Since destination image is due to cognitive and affective images, so it is impact to evaluate or compare through tourists' mind after and before visiting the destination. The beliefs and attitudes of tourists influence tourists' decisions and activities. It would be related to lifestyle, personality, and travel satisfaction.

**Loyalty.** Loyalty in tourism research is scaled by presenting RVI and RCI. Also, satisfaction is the utmost important antecedents for loyalty of tourists. Hsu et al. (2009) considered forecasting loyalty by Bayesian network approach. Also, Fuchs and Reichel (2011) investigated perceptions, risks and loyalty among first-time and repeat visitors. Loyal tourists are created by having positive image from the destination. Hence, the destination image can be associated directly and indirectly to loyalty. Also, lifestyle and personality can affect tourist behavior, if tourism consumption pattern are adapted tourist's lifestyle and consistency with his/her personality. Since lifestyle acts like glove during travel, the high level of adapting tourism products or services leads to loyalty.

Tourism behavior has become core of this study which is based on destination image, travel satisfaction and loyalty of tourists. Also, satisfaction is introduced as mediator between destination image and loyalty by Chi and Qu (2008). The review of substantially tourism literature is presented that there is a few issues about mediating effect constructs between destination image and loyalty. There are many latent variables between them which may be acted as mediators, while the authors are interested in survey mediating effect of lifestyle, personality, and travel satisfaction between destination image and loyalty.

**Lifestyle.** Brunso et al. (2004) considered cause-effect relationship between lifestyle and behavior. Also, Gonzalez and Bello (2002) proposed a model based on tourists' lifestyle in short and long run visiting as behavioral intentions. Lifestyle has played a key role in travel. Also, it is acted like glove in tourists' daily life in the impact of tourists' activities, interests, and opinions. Since destination image is based on tourists' perceptions, motivations and expectations as well as the marketing literature confirmed that lifestyle is antecedent of loyalty, so following hypothesis is formed:

**H1:** Lifestyle is mediating effect between destination image and loyalty.

The next hypothesis is formed from mediating effect of lifestyle between destination image and travel satisfaction. Because lifestyle affects as a psychographic role to make decision based on EVT and TPB theories. Hence, the high level of travel satisfaction is due to the consequence of adapting more lifestyle criteria with travel. Therefore, following hypothesis is presented:

**H2:** Lifestyle is mediating effect between destination image and travel satisfaction.

**Personality.** Thyne (2001) surveyed about personality which is based on motivation of museum visitors by LOV approach. Brunso et al. (2004) pointed out the relation between personality and behavior. There is a little research about mediating role of personality in tourism area. Personality has played a complementary role in psychographic surveys. Another view of personality is related to value of products or services based on attitudes and beliefs of tourists. Moreover it is very crucial through the stakeholders to distinguish right personality because of patronizing customers. Hence, there are following hypotheses:

**H3:** Personality is mediating effect between destination image and loyalty.

**H4:** Personality is mediating effect between destination image and travel satisfaction.

**Travel Satisfaction.** Wang and Hsu (2010) proposed a SEM model based on relationships of destination image with satisfaction and loyalty. Also, Hui et al. (2007) pointed out the relationship between satisfaction and RVI/RCI. Bigne et al. (2001) studied about causal relationships among constructs like destination image, quality, satisfaction and loyalty. In similar way, Chen and Tsai (2007) presented SEM model from causal relationships among destination image, trip quality, perceived value, satisfaction and loyalty. In addition, Gallarza and Gil Saura (2006) studied cause-effect relationships of such constructs as the sequence of perceived value, satisfaction, and loyalty. Further, the SEM model of Yoon and Uysal (2005) confirmed that there are causal relationships among motivations, travel satisfaction and loyalty. This study is considered travel satisfaction which is based on travel experience during the visiting destination. Travel satisfaction, in fact, is a construct which is measuring the total satisfaction through visiting of the destination, psychological fulfilment their needs and comparing the previous experiences with the current travel. Therefore, the following hypotheses are propounded:

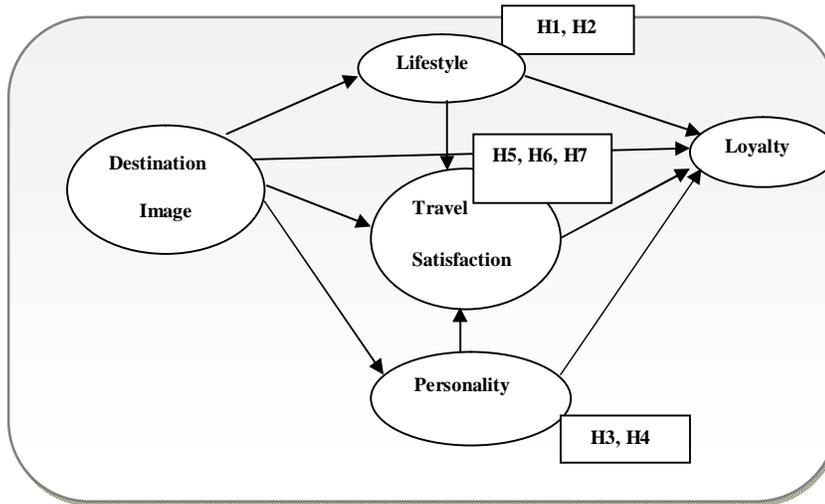
**H5:** Travel satisfaction is mediating effect between destination image and loyalty.

**H6:** Travel satisfaction is mediating effect between lifestyle and loyalty.

**H7:** Travel satisfaction is mediating effect between personality and loyalty.

### Conceptual Framework

The integrated model is based on mentioned hypotheses. Also, this conceptual framework is obtained by improving theoretical framework and causal relationships among the psychographic constructs. Moreover, the mediating effect which are considered in the presenting hypotheses lead to the following conceptual framework:



**Figure 1** Conceptual Framework

As aforementioned about psychographic constructs, there are such latent variables which should be investigated among the tourism literature. EVT theory is relevant to justify by employing estimating motivations, expectations and perceptions as well as TPB theory is another theory that can evolve to achieve the surveying tourist behavior by considering tourist's attitudes, subjective norms and controlling behaviors. Also, mediating effects of variables are very important to know and realize such behaviors which can be acted as latent variables like subjective norms or psychographics in tourism marketing. The first evaluating step of the specific destination is impact on the value which outcomes from the tourists' attitudes and expectations. So, the destination image as a construct presents tourists' values from the destination. In addition most of stakeholders from the destination seek to attain towards fulfilment of tourists' satisfaction as antecedents of loyalty. Hence, this investigation represent how tourists can convert to loyal tourists by employing subjective norms or psychographic constructs such as lifestyle, personality and travel satisfaction. In sum up, the role of mediating effect through them are very sensitive and serious to determine loyal tourists.

### Further Study

The authors believed that the mediating effects of constructs in the relationship between destination image and loyalty relates too many of psychological as well as eco-social situations. Therefore, the propounded model can be considered as the new features of causal relationship in the tourism marketing by considering other subjective norms or psychographic variables. In addition, the future studying would be surveyed about other mediating effects of variables between destination image and loyalty as two main keys from potential to loyalty tourists. As a result, this article explains clearly that there are such mediating effects between destination image and loyalty of tourists.

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