DESTINATION IMAGE IMPACTS OF WUHAN POST-PANDEMIC ON CHINA'S FOREIGN STUDENTS' BEHAVIOURAL INTENTION

Febriana RIESTYANINGRUM [1]
School of Tourism Management, Zhengzhou University, China
ORCID: 0000-0002-4257-8922

Arash PASHAEV
School of Tourism Management, Zhengzhou University, China
ORCID: 0000-0002-3005-6879

Alessio SIMONE
School of Tourism Management, Zhengzhou University, China
ORCID: 0000-0002-5409-4706

Sem SISAMUTH
School of Tourism Management, Zhengzhou University, China
ORCID: 0000-0002-6965-6337

ABSTRACT

Wuhan was discouraged over time as a tourist destination after the COVID-19 pandemic spread around the world. This unique and unexpected situation, particularly affected foreign students' behaviour, urging them to avoid the well-known Chinese tourist spot, notoriety recently tainted by the spread of the epidemic around the world. The objective of this research is to determine if there are any direct and indirect impacts of destination image on behavioural intention through attitude. Based on an online survey of 385 participants were analysed using path analysis through a nonprobability, convenience-sampling approach. Findings suggest that: (1) destination image is directly associated with attitude; (2) attitude is directly associated with behavioural intention; (3) destination image is directly associated with behavioural intention; (4) destination image is indirectly associated with behavioural intention through attitude. The outcome of this research will therefore a contribution to decision-making process managers of tourism destinations so that they can manage their business in the best possible way to accommodate the post-pandemic situation.

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[1] Address correspondence to Febriana Riestyaningrum, School of Tourism Management, Zhengzhou University, China. E-mail: riestyaningrumfebriana@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

At the end of 2019 in Wuhan City, Hebei province, China has indicated for the first time the novel coronavirus or commonly called the COVID-19. The virus has spread rapidly across China and around the world. The public is fearful by this outbreak and has a significant impact on lower demand in the travel and tourism industry (Bakar & Rosbi, 2020; Li et al., 2020). COVID-19 is not a pandemic that we have experienced before; it has cluttered all our economic systems, supply chain infrastructure, and opportunities to travel (Nicola et al., 2020). Many sectors suffered from quarantine, lockdown, entry bans, and border closures (Goodell, 2020), and it has created an absolute shift of demand as consumers are more focused on sanitary items. Statistics show that the loss incurred due to lock down and travel restrictions are prolonging day by day. Following the first outbreak news, UNWTO (2020) estimated that the number of international tourists would drop by 60-80%. Similarly, China's Tourism Academy estimated that tourist numbers will be reduced by 932 million in 2020, which means a 56% decrease compared with 2019 in the first quarter, and a loss of 1.18 trillion Yuan tourism-driven economic revenues (Huaxia, 2020).

As the city where the COVID-19 pandemic began, Wuhan has largely been avoided as a tourist destination after lifting travel restrictions on April 8, 2020. The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention recommends travellers avoiding non-essential travel to China. On the other hand, Wuhan is among the top destination wish list in China according to a survey conducted by the Chinese Tourism Academy, from a poll of 15.000 people (Thiessen, 2020). The above argument underlies this research gap to develop the existing problem statement. Furthermore, foreign students study in China have the potential to become permanent tourists every year, or indirectly they are ambassadors to promote Chinese tourism to their country. According to a 2018 data report on overseas students in China, there were a total of 492.185 students (Ministry of Education, 2019). If the students post about tourist destination in their own social media and gives a good review, this will indirectly affect other people's psychology to have the intention to visit China. There is no doubt that it has a profound effect on tourist consumption and behaviour (Wen et al., 2020). The behaviour of tourists plays a role in how travellers decide to visit a tourism destination, and according to Ismayanti (2010), every tourist has a concept of buying behaviour with unique purchasing decisions because the tour is a tangible return on investment, closely related to income and expenses, not booked instantly (except for business travellers), and involves decision planning.

Considering if the destination image is playing an important role in tourists' behavioural intention, researchers are encouraged to find out if creating a destination image is significant for the future of Wuhan's tourism in the international market. According to Beerli and Martin (2004), who created a conceptual model for the formation of destination pictures, the overall image of the destination is formed by cognitive and affective components. Attitude towards destination attributes is evaluated as perceived facilitators and is considered to hinder the accommodation of situational constraints that fulfil specific motives for travel (Um & Crompton, 1990). Ajzen (1991) examined that attitude shows how a person responds to objects that are liked or disliked. Gnoth (2002) adds that understanding tourist motivation and behaviour is important, attitude is an important construct for it. According to the Jalilvand et al.'s (2012) findings, the decision to travel to a destination is based on a tourist's attitude. Cognitive, affective, and conative (behavioural) components underlie tourist attitudes.

Tourist destination preference determines visit intention, which can be seen as tourist attitudes, one of the most widely used variables for predicting consumer behaviour is (Woodside & Lysonski, 1989; Um & Crompton, 1990). Performance is more likely to be a general rule when there is a strong desire to engage in the behaviour. However, it is noted that a behavioural intention can only be manifested in behaviour if the behaviour is under the direction of the will. That is, if people can at their will to do the desired behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Woodside and Lysonski (1989) stated that this is by the general model of choice of tourist destinations, where the choice of actual destinations is influenced by the intention and situational variables to visit directly. This model also confirms that behavioural intention is a mediating variable related to attitudes toward behaviour choice. Apart from attitude, the destination image is also an important predictor of behavioural intention. Sheth (2020) explained if some experts believe that even if the transmission of this virus stopped by 2021, the tourism industry will not come back to the normal stage before 2024. Opposite with his opinion, Wahyuni & Kusumaningrum's (2020) study results showed that after the pandemic over, the intention of travel intention is high. To attract tourists once the pandemic is over, every destination should be concerned with the service and facilities of the destination itself.

According to the limited study that has been done in the specific concept of COVID-19, this research objective is to determine any direct or indirect influence among the destination image, attitude, and behavioural

intention. Besides, this research also intended to find out observation markets and assist tourism businesses to prepare for the healing process in the tourism industry. This research used a market survey to learn about the demands and needs of tourists among international students, and to understand the market situation in the context of helping tourism departments and companies in Wuhan to prepare themselves for the recovery of the tourism market after an outbreak along to provide better services in various aspects.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Destination image

Ratkai (2004) observed if the concept of destination image has evolved over time, it still lacks a clear, operational definition. Beerli and Martin (2004) designed a conceptual model for the components of an overall destination image that involved cognitive and affective components. Where, two important elements of the overall destination image; (a) Cognitive image relates to resources, physical attractions, perceptions, evaluation of destination attributes, and individual knowledge, (b) Affective image refers to individual feelings generated by goals and emotions. Individual knowledge or beliefs regarding destination attributes refer to cognitive components, these attributes are described as transparency, recreational facilities, weather, attitudes of local communities, landscapes, and affective components. This refers to individual feelings about the destination (Gartner, 1994; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999), such as happy, relaxed, gloomy or sleepy. The relationship between affective and cognitive images exists although they are different. Beerli & Martin (2004) claimed that the overall image is produced by combining these two elements, associated with a positive or negative evaluation of a destination.

Attitude

Um & Crompton (1990) in the study of marketing and consumer behaviour, defined attitude as a prediction of customer choice. In each group, beneficial attitudes result from behavioural beliefs; subjective norms or social pressure resulting from normative beliefs; perceived behavioural control results from control beliefs, and the difficulty or perceived ease of doing behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Apart from various types of planned behaviour, individual intentions play an integral role that may skew a person's behaviour in a particular direction. Jalilvand et al. (2012) demonstrate how a tourist's attitude influences their decision to visit a destination.

Furthermore, the more positive the attitude on the destination, the willingness to visit is getting higher. In line with the study by Yoon & Uysal (2005), internal attitudes can affect tourists to visit destination. Cognitive, affective, and conative (behavioural) components underlie tourist attitudes.

Behavioural intentions

The definition of behavioural intention according to Moutinho (1987) is behaviour before action depending on the differences associated with evaluative beliefs, a set of normative beliefs conveyed by social factors, and situational factors. The willingness of tourists to participate in word-of-mouth (WOM) communication is the concept of behavioural intentions (Andreassen & Lindestad, 1988). During the visit, pre-visit, and post-visit stage, the impact of tourists' behaviour on their affective and cognitive destination image has been investigated by the researchers in the terms of the consequences of destination image (Tasci & Gartner, 2007). Additionally, current research has found a positive correlation among loyalty, destination image and tourist satisfaction. (Lee et al., 2005; Assaker et al., 2011). Furthermore, behavioural intention is influenced by functional and psychological variables that influence their behaviour towards a destination. Psychology can be shown by emotions, which indicate a strong emotional (Goossens, 2000; Hosany & Prayag, 2013). Furthermore, psychological and functional factors frequently impact its behaviour toward a goal, resulting in travel intention.

The relationship between destination image and attitude

The is a correlation between the destination image, future attitudes and the likelihood of guests who have a favourable impression of returning destination and promoting it to others (Lucio et al., 2006; Chen & Tsai, 2007). The intangible character of tourism, as well as the fact that holiday purchases and consumption are typically separated both geographically and temporally, likely to affect attitude development and modification at each stage of the tourist decision-making process. (Litvin & Ng Sok Ling, 2001; Chen & Funk, 2010). How people evaluate an entity and form an attitude is an understanding of cognitive responses (Jalilvand et al., 2012; Tseng et al., 2015). Meanwhile, the cognitive component is formed by attitudes and information obtained by having knowledge or perception (Bilim & Yüksel, 2008; Amaro & Duarte, 2015; Kim & Stepchenkova, 2015). For the reasons above, this study predicts if there is an influence between destination images, attitude, and behavioural intentions. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1. *Destination image is directly associated with attitude.*

The relationship between attitude and behavioural intention

According to the theory of planned behaviour, three major factors influence an individual's behaviour intentions: subjective norms, attitude, and a sense of behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991). External behaviour also affects the intention of an attitude (Ajzen, 1991; Lee, 2007). Ajzen (2001) states that the more preferred the attitude toward the behaviour, the higher the individual's intention to do that behaviour. Intention is considered to impact motivational variables that influence behaviour; it demonstrates how far individuals are prepared to go in order to succeed, and how much work they are planning to put in to engage in particular behaviours (Ajzen, 1991). Attitudes have an impact on whether a possible destination is included as a result of the generated set and on their way to their final destination (Um & Crompton, 1990). Tourist attitudes, according to Lee (2009), have an impact on future tourist behaviour. Lam & Cathy (2004) investigated the mainland Chinese tourists to Hong Kong. Their findings reveal a connection between travel intention, attitude and perceived behavioural control. However, attitude is an essential influence on behavioural intentions as discussed by many previous researchers (Cheng et al., 2006). These findings, therefore, formulated an attitude-behaviour intention connection. Hence, the following hypotheses were drawn:

H2. *Attitude is directly associated with behavioural intentions.*

The relationship between destination image and behavioural intention

The tourism literature has established the connection between destination image and behavioural intention (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Bigné et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2005; Bao et al., 2008). As previous researchers examined the connection between the destination image and behavioural, it seems that the consensus does not exist for this type of relationship in the literature (i.e., between direct and indirect relationships). Besides, behavioural intention is directly influenced by the destination image (Court & Lupton, 1997; Yang et al., 2009). Tourism related attitudes and behaviour are influenced by the image of a destination, by strengthening or affirming existing ones, creating new ones, or changing them (Kim & Richardson, 2003). The perception of destination image also affects tourists' attitudes towards destinations (Woomi & Soocheong, 2008). Jalilvand et al. (2012) stated that destination image and tourist attitudes have a significant effect on travel intentions. Ajzen (2001) argued that the attitude and intention to

travel had a significant relationship while Um & Crompton (1990) also argues that a positive attitude makes tourists act stronger and have a high desire to traveling when tourists' attitude dictate the prospective destination. They argue that tourists' attitudes are a good predictor of tourists' decision to travel to a destination. Previous research results that have been discussed indicate a relationship between destination image, attitude, and behavioural intentions. Following are some hypothesis formulations based on the preceding discussion:

H₃. *Destination image is directly associated with behavioural intentions.*
H₄. *Attitude mediates the indirect association between destination image and behavioural intentions.*

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The research design which is conducted to create an understanding of the flow of this research, is a plan prepared by the researcher to answer research questions (Saunders et al., 2012; Churchill, 1995). As a data collecting approach, quantitative research is used in this study, as Saunders et al. (2012) states the relationship between variables shown in numeric with statistical techniques is the goal of quantitative research. This study can be considered using cross-sectional studies that are the most common research design used by researchers (Olsen & St George, 2004) because the data is gathered just once. Bryman and Bell (2011) summarizes that due to time, money, and access limitations, they don't need practice for all populations, and therefore a representative sample should be selected. In the previous section, China's foreign students who were selected as a population were discussed. Participants have to fulfil two distinct requirements: (i) above the age of 18 (ii) foreign students who study in Chinese universities. Non-probability purposive random sampling techniques were selected to gather the respondents. The sample size was chosen to reflect a significant number of people (Collis & Hussey, 2009). The questionnaire was distributed via social media as WeChat, QQ, and Weibo to responders in order to determine the sample size. The sample size for the confidence interval method was calculated according to Burns and Bush (1995). The 95 percent confidence level and 95 percent accuracy are calculated using the following formulae

$$\text{n} = \frac{z^2(pq)}{e^2} = \frac{1.95^2(0.5 \times 0.5)}{0.05^2} = 385 \qquad (3.1)$$

Where z is the standard error for the selected degree of confidence (95%); p is (50%) of the population's estimated variability; q ¼ 1Àp and e the 75% tolerable error (95% accuracy). To create an understanding of the research, figure 1 illustrates the research model, there are four hypotheses based on the theory that has been discussed in the previous section.
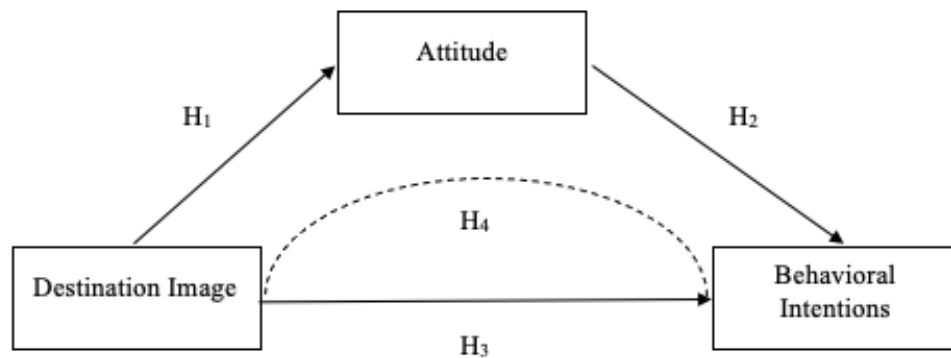

Figure 1. *The research model*

Questionnaire development

This study employed a questionnaire to gather data in order to fulfil the study's objectives. Data collecting from big samples is summarized by Saunders et al. (2012), who claim that questionnaires are the most appropriate data collection techniques. In the interest to create instrument measurements, researchers affect the validity and reliability of the data gathered. As a result, Bryman & Bell (2011) recommend utilizing items that have already been evaluated by other researchers. The authors tweaked the current scale to fit the research objectives. The questionnaire has been divided into four section. The first section contains information on the respondents' demographics. The items in the second part are used to measure the "destination image" which were assessed by twenty-four items adapted from the previous studies (respectively) (Russell, 1980; Lin et al., 2007; Smith et al., 2015; Akgün et al., 2019). The third part is designated for "attitude", the five questions were derived from Li et al (2020) and Chin et al. (2015). The last part is planned for measuring "behavioural intention" which were three items, adapted from Jalilvand et al. (2012). Here, all variables were emphasized in constructed questionnaires based on a five-point Likert scale (Bryman & Bell, 2011) which includes a total of 32 items. Where strongly disagrees is represented by a scale 1, disagree is indicated by scale 2, neutral is shown with a scale 3, agrees for scale 4, and strongly agrees with scale 5. Data is gathered from September until October 2020.

Data analysis

Descriptive analyses describe the characteristics of respondents and the mean values of each item. The measurement model in application exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) can be used as the characteristic sample factor in the data set and targeted for the model that has not been generalized (Olorunniwo et al., 2006). In the structure, the model element of one model survives and the second model is needed to examine the instrument dimensionally (Chin & Todd, 1995). Therefore, samples are tested with statistical approaches (EFA and CFA). In this study EFA is regarded less robust than CFA, a random sample of 50 samples is chosen at random for assessment.

Afterwards, a sample was used for EFA and the research model was tested on the larger sample using Structure Equation Model (SEM) analysis.

RESULTS

Descriptive of the respondent's characteristics

The field study provided data from 385 participants from 62 university students. Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1. *Respondent's Profile*

	Distribution of Respondents
Gender	Female: 52.5%; Male: 47.5%
Age	18-30: 54.8%; 31-45: 45.2%
Education	Bachelor's Degree: 40%; Master Degree: 33%; PhD: 27%
Income	1000-2500¥: 39.5%; 2500-4500¥: 47%; Above 4500¥: 13.5%
Previous experience	Never: 50.8%; 1 time: 24.1%; 2 times 15.5%; 3 or more: 9.6%

Table 1 shows that 52.5% of the participants are females, and 47.5% are males. The majority of respondents (54.8%) fall in the category of 18-30, after that 45.2% between the ages of 31-45. A bachelor's degree is the highest level of education with 40%, next to a master's level with 33% and PhD level with 27%. In terms of income group of respondents, out of 385 respondents, 47% of respondents earn 2500-4500 ¥ per month, 39.5% of respondents earn 1000-2500 ¥ per month, and the rest of it, 13.5% of respondents earn above 4500 ¥ per month. Considering the previous experience, as shown in the Table 1, 50.8% of the participants have never been to Wuhan, while 24.1% of the respondents have gone once. Moreover, 15.5% of participants have gone twice and 9.6% of them have been to Wuhan three times or more.

Table 2. *Results of the Measurement Model*

Item	EFA Loading	CFA Loading	Variance %	Mean	α	AVE	CR
DI1	0.66	0.81					
DI2	0.79	0.78					
DI3	0.89	0.79					
DI4	0.85	0.77					
DI5	0.69	0.82					
DI6	0.54	0.77					
DI7	0.65	0.76					
DI8	0.61	0.68					
DI9	0.89	0.75					
DI10	0.85	0.76					
DI11	0.81	0.79					
DI12	0.76	0.72	17.42	24.28	0.70	0.72	0.96
DI13	0.71	0.73					
DI14	0.69	0.80					
DI15	0.66	0.63					
DI16	0.61	0.73					
DI17	0.96	0.70					
DI18	0.87	0.73					
DI19	0.50	0.68					
DI20	0.75	0.83					
DI21	0.75	0.78					
DI22	0.52	0.75					
DI23	0.57	0.91					
DI24	0.75	0.77					
A1	0.90	0.85					
A2	0.97	0.79					
A3	0.97	0.83	11.307	37.58	0.70	0.93	0.97
A4	0.95	0.72					
A5	0.90	0.75					
BI1	0.97	0.91					
BI2	0.98	0.86	13.558	21.88	0.75	0.96	0.97
BI3	0.96	0.84					

Note: DI: Destination Image, A: Attitude, BI: Behavioural Intention

Measure Analysis

EFA was used to measure the dimensionality of customer behavior. A maximum likelihood estimator with varimax rotation is used. Thereafter, Table 2 shows the highest indicators for variance explained is 17.42%, and the value of factor loading ranges between 0.52 to 0.98, with a threshold greater than 0.4 as suggested by Hair et al. (2010). The range for Cronbach's Alpha of the three components is around 0.75 to 0.84, it is considered acceptable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The three elements label as destination image, attitude, and behaviour intention. Table 2 shows that the composite reliability of each component ranged from 0.96-0.97, which is

higher than the suggested threshold (CR> 0.7) (Hair et al., 2017). The sample adequacy statistic calculated by Kaiser Meyer-Olkin (KMO) was 0.70, and Bartlett's statistic of sphericity was significant at p < 0.01 (x^2 / df = 1416.181/161), showing that the data in the sample was regularly distributed and suitable for factor analysis.

According to the EFA output, to measure a larger sample was conducted with CFA using SPSS-AMOS 17.0. In this study, determining a goodness of fit, validity, and reliability was assessed for all constructs. Several steps were adopted to evaluate degrees for the determinant model according to data. CFA was shown if the overall fits of the value design acceptable (χ^2 = 1312.23, df = 387, CMIN/df = 3.4, RMSEA = 0.062, CFI = 0.93, GFI = 0.89, AGFI = 0.83, NNFI = 0.93, p = 0.001), based on Hair et al. (2010). The average amount of variance extracted (AVE) and factor loadings providing substantially to determine the develop validity of structure level and indicators. Fornell & Larcker (1981) state if the AVE value is 0.50 or higher, it can be considered as an acceptable measurement. Furthermore, the measures showed a validation following recommended value. Fornell & Larcker (1981) claim that to determine the validation discriminant compared to AVE values to correlations among constructs, and the findings showed that all respective constructs were upheld (see Table 3). The values of standard deviation (SD) extended from 2.379 to 7.665, and mean values ranged from 10.72 to 86.93. The interactor correlation analysis for all variables is shown in Table 3. They were all less than 0.85 and sig. value (p <0.01). Each component's squared correlations were all less than the AVE value, suggesting good discriminant validity.

Table 3. *Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix*

Factors	Mean	SD	1	2	3
Destination Image	86.93	7.665	-		
Attitude	18.59	2.979	0.053*	-	
Behavioural Intentions	10.72	2.379	0.102*	0.804*	-

* p-value < 0.01

Hypothesis Testing

SEM (maximum likelihood technique) was employed to evaluate the hypothesized structural connections between the study's three components once the measurement model's validity and partial invariance were established. The findings model fit with the structural model (χ^2 = 852.7, df = 176, CMIN/df = 2.595, RMSEA = 0.06, AGFI= 0.91, CFI= 0.90, GFI= 0.95, NFI= 0.93, p= 0.001). All model fit index values were acceptable. Table 4

shows that there was a statistically significant relationship between three constructs (p<0.05), lending support for hypotheses 1, 2, and 3.

Regression weights (β) were used to proven hypotheses 1-3 that are presented in Table 4. Hypothesis 1 claimed there would be direct effect between destination image and attitude; this is supported (β= 0.53, t= 33.623, p < 0.01). Hypothesis 2 was that attitude would have direct effect on behavioural intention; this is supported by the studies' findings (β= 0.86, t= 33.624, p < 0.01). Hypothesis 3 asserted that destination image would have direct impact on behavioural intention and the result provided support for H3 (β= 0.10, t= 2.185, p < 0.05).

Table 4. *Result of hypothesis testing*

Hypothesis	Relationships	T-value	P-value	Path	SE	Results
H1	DI → A	33.62	0.001	0.864	0.07	Supported
H2	A → BI	33.62	0.001	0.861	0.10	Supported
H3	DI → BI	2.18	0.003	0.056	0.12	Supported

Approach given by Preacher and Hayes (2008) was employed in this study to test hypothesis 4, and the SPSS PROCESS macro given by Hayes (2012) was utilized to execute the investigation. Table 5 shows the findings of this study, including the indirect impact value for each model and confidence intervals (95%) for evaluating the significant (signalled with **) when 0 falls outside the confidence interval (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Attitude was used as the mediation variable, the mediation was not significant (indirect effect = .0298, 95% CI: -.0183, .0596 with 5.000 resamples). As a result, hypothesis 4 was rejected.

Table 5. *Indirect Effects of Destination Image on Behavioural Intention through Attitude*

Mediation	Bootstrapping (5000 samples)		
	Indirect effect of the double mediation	Percentile 95% bias corrected and accelerated CIs	
		Lower	Upper
Attitude	.0298**	-.0183	.0596

DISCUSSION

Discussion and implementations

The primary contribution of this contextual study is a thorough theoretical model that examines the impact of destination image on behaviour intention through attitude. This study assists to comprehend the relation

between destination image, attitude, and behavioural intention from a theoretical perspective. This research adds to the existing literature of contributions in four ways.

First, this research demonstrates empirically the destination image is directly associated with attitude. These results indicate a positive signal from a foreign student as a potential tourist that will visit Wuhan in the future. In line with previous studies, destination image positively affects tourist attitude (Jalilvand et al., 2012). Here, it appears that if foreign students in China will have positive attitude and intend on going on holiday to Wuhan after this epidemic is over. Hultman et al. (2015) summarize that a positive city image can determine tourists' attitudes. Moreover, the results of this study are good news for tourism marketers in Wuhan to promote the destination in order to attract tourists. The destination image is one of the most important aspects in the worldwide market for the future of Wuhan tourism. The important thing that becomes the main consideration for visiting one destination for the tourists is the image of the destination an image of the city itself. Lopes (2011) believes that attitude and city image are interrelated, likewise the attitude towards city image (Han et al., 2009; Lita et al., 2014). Tourists that visit Wuhan and have a pleasant experience are more likely to suggest the city's landmarks, delicious cuisines, historical attractions, and beautiful scenery as a positive reaction.

Second, this study mentioned that attitude is directly associated with behavioural intention. According to recent study, travellers with a good attitude are more likely to make travel arrangements to a destination. (Chin et al., 2015; Amalia et al., 2018; Gosal et al., 2020). The findings in this study resulted in a relationship between attitudes and behavioural intention is consistent with previous studies. Furthermore, marketing of the destination should apply practical implications to increase intention to visit Wuhan. Based on attitude, destination management must develop and implement marketing strategies to influence tourist travel behaviour. The attitude of tourists is dependent on each other expectations about the destination for those tourists. In other words, tourists have different expectations and attitudes towards a destination. As discussed above, to create a good attitude to travel needs inducement from host tourism sites which means they should prepare good products and services to attract tourists to come. For the long term, to trigger revisit intention attitude, host tourism planners should further keep in mind to satisfy customer expectations. Previous researchers agreed that attitude significantly influences on behavioural intention (Cheng et al., 2006; Liu & Yu, 2012). Furthermore, the tourist's

attitude is close to the emotion, feeling, and mood of tourists towards a destination.

Third, this research shows that the destination image has a direct association with behavioural intention. Wuhan, as a host tourism city, should make an interesting package to attract a tourist to recovery tourism post-pandemic; in this part, the destination management has an important role to promote the products to target markets. Tasci and Gartner (2007) believed promotional information from these destinations affects the destination image. These findings support previous studies that shows a favourable relationship between destination image and behavioural intention (Lopes, 2011; Molinillo et al., 2018). The toughest challenges in maintaining the image of a destination are external threats such as disasters, terrorists, and pandemics. Wuhan, as a destination, will take time to recover and restore the trust of tourists. As an important role in attracting tourists to travel, negative image of destinations also has a potential high threat. Besides threats, the results of this study state that Wuhan has a good attraction for foreign students in addition to its natural beauty that has been recognized by tourists. However, a good destination image does not only require the role of government, tourism management, and local communities but also responses from the experiences of visiting tourists. Therefore, each stakeholder must carry out its obligations well, and support each other to achieve the common goal of increasing tourist arrivals and ensuring their positive experiences.

Finally, this research discovered that attitude plays a role in mediating the indirect relationship between destination image and behavioural intentions. Although there is an indirect relationship between destination image and behavioural intention, which is mediated by attitude, brand image and tourist attitude have been proven to have a significant effect on travel intentions in previous research (Jalilvand et al., 2012). In line with them, several researchers (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Woomi & Soocheong, 2008; Jansen et al., 2009; Hanna et al., 2011; Lien et al., 2015) reporting if there is a significant impact between brand image and tourist attitudes toward tourist decision and purchase intentions. The findings have some implications in practical importance. Marketing destinations may involve objectively printing the image of the destination and make improvements in their marketing services. In addition, management needs a good understanding of what influences the tourist decision-making process. The attitude increases the behavioural intention of foreign students in China, builds a good image of Wuhan and decreases promotion expenses. Furthermore, the destination image influences travellers'

decisions while picking a vacation spot, and in general (Bigné et al., 2001). For benefitting from the image and to develop successful tourism destination, management of destinations should improve the image and facilities to create trust, satisfaction, and intention to revisit in visitors. Understanding tourists' needs, attitudes, and archiving their expectations are key to commercial success. As successful destinations depend on tourists' intention and willingness to visit, effort to build promotion about the destination and effort to archive tourists' expectations and needs will bring a positive impact in the future.

Limitations and recommendations for future research

Sufficient theoretical and practical contributions can help overcome the limitations. Indication of limitations is found in sampling techniques to generalize large populations over small samples. Another limitation of this study is that it was conducted in only one location (Wuhan) is used as a destination, and with a low budget available. Longitudinal studies in other destinations may have a different magnitude of the relationship because tourism development and tourism dependence on a destination is different. Hence, the result of this generalization, if it is to be applied to other destinations, requires modification or a need for caution. First of all, because the restricted number of respondents make this research limited. Further study should be done on a wider scale and with a larger sample size. Similarly, tourism in a post-pandemic, further studies of destination image on travel intention through attitude may also be important issue to examine for other researchers. This research suggests that each city or country must start promotional campaigns in overseas markets to re-create its national branding, expected to restore the confidence of tourists in travel overseas. This study provides an important contribution to the destination (Wuhan), but this concept requires further investigation. However, the results cannot be generalized in other destinations because Wuhan was the only research site. Last but not least, this study collects self-managed data using closed questionnaires that are distributed through an online platform. Different results can be achieved by future studies that have a more diversified sample profile.

CONCLUSION

Several findings about destination image, attitude, and behavioural intention are discussed in this research. According to the findings, destination image is directly associated with attitude and behavioural intention, and attitude directly associated with behavioural intention.

Furthermore, through attitude, the destination image is indirect with behavioural intention. In the case of Wuhan tourism, destination management should think about how to promote the city to attract visitors. According to the findings of our research, Wuhan tourism may begin preparing for a spike in visitors once the restrictions are lifted, and Wuhan has been deemed ready to accommodate international tourists. The key conclusions are that Wuhan should work to create a positive destination image in order to entice tourists to visit, understand tourists' attitudes, and form a trustworthy connection with the tourism sector. It must take quick steps to provide professional training and development. Wuhan has to improve the quality of the working environment, provide proper planning, execute effective personnel planning, and provide job descriptions for all stages of the service industry, including hotels, restaurants, travel agents, and destinations in Wuhan, in order to reduce attrition. As a result, in the case of Wuhan tourism, the destination image must be greatly improved in order to improve tourist attitudes, which will, in turn, increase tourist intention to visit Wuhan.

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