The Measurement of Destination Image: An Empirical Assessment

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The purpose of this article is to carefully examine the concept of destination image with the goal of designing more appropriate and rigorous techniques for its measurement. A framework is presented which suggests that to completely measure destination image, several components must be captured. These include attribute-based images, holistic impressions, and functional, psychological, unique and common characteristics. It is proposed that a combination of structured and unstructured methodologies is necessary to measure destination image as envisaged in the conceptual framework. A series of open-ended questions and scale items are developed and are shown to successfully capture all of the components of destination image.

It is generally recognized that one of the most important components of marketing strategy is product positioning. Basically, positioning involves creating the appropriate image of the product in the minds of the consumers in the targeted markets. The need for an effective positioning strategy is essential to the marketing of all products or services. In this aspect, tourism destinations, such as states, regions and countries, are certainly not an exception. Creating and managing an appropriate destination image are critical to effective positioning and marketing strategy.

To date, only a few studies have pertained to destination image (Table 1). Although these studies have alluded to the complex nature of destination image, there really has been limited effort, up to this point, to carefully examine and understand the unique characteristics of this concept.

One attempt to remedy this shortcoming (Echtner and Ritchie 1991) contained a detailed review and assessment of prior research concerning destination image measurement. Through an extensive examination of research in several areas, including product, brand, corporate and store image, the strengths and deficiencies of the methods used to define and measure destination image were assessed. As a result, suggestions for enhancing the manner in which destination image is conceptualized and measured were proposed. The conclusions reached in this article are:

- Destination image should be envisioned as having two main components: those that are attribute-based and those that are holistic.
- Each of these components contains functional (or more tangible) and psychological (or more abstract) characteristics.
- Images of destinations can also range from those based on "common" functional and psychological traits to those based on more distinctive or even unique features, events, feelings or auras.

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- To capture all of these components, a combination of structured and unstructured methodologies should be used to measure destination image.

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR DESTINATION IMAGE MEASUREMENT

The conceptual framework developed for destination image by Echtner and Ritchie (1991) is illustrated in Figure 1. Essentially, the framework consists of three continuums: (1) attribute-holistic; (2) functional-psychological; and (3) common-unique. Each of these components is briefly explained in the discussion which follows. For a more detailed understanding of the process used to develop this conceptualization, the reader should refer to the original article.

The attribute-holistic continuum is based on research concerning the nature of human information processing from the fields of psychology and consumer behavior. In essence, it has been proposed that any product is perceived both in terms of pieces of information on individual features, or attributes, and in terms of more gestalt, or holistic, impressions (MacInnis and Price 1987). This suggests that images of the tourism product, the destination, should also consist of these components. In other words, destination image should be composed of perceptions of individual attributes (such as climate, accommodation facilities, friendliness of the people) as well as more holistic impressions (mental pictures or imagery) of the place. An illustrative example using the country of Nepal is given in Figure 2.

Figure 2 also provides an example of the functional-psychological continuum of destination image. Several researchers of product image, most notably Martineau (1958), have made the distinction between those characteristics of image which are directly observable or measurable (functional) and those which are less tangible or more difficult to observe and measure (psychological). As Figure 2 illustrates, functional and psychological characteristics may be perceived as individual attributes or as more holistic impressions. On the attribute side are the numerous perceptions of the individual characteristics of the destination, ranging from

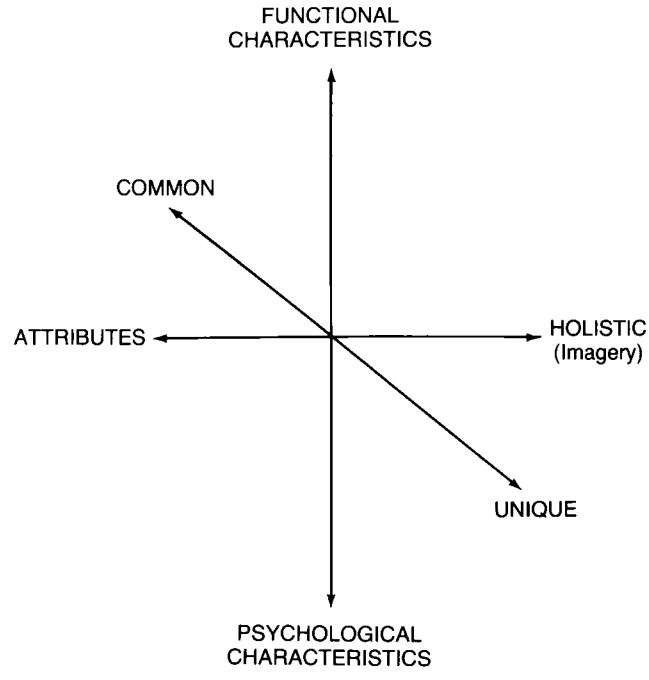
TABLE 1

PREVIOUS DESTINATION IMAGE RESEARCH

Reference	Objective	Methodology
Hunt (1975)	To measure the images of four states: Utah, Montana, Colorado, Wyoming	Structured: – 20 attributes – 7- and 5-point sem. diff. scale
Crompton (1977)	To measure the image of Mexico	Structured: – 18 attributes – 7-point sem. diff. scale
Goodrich (1977)	To measure the image of nine destinations; Florida, Hawaii, Mexico, California, and five Caribbean Islands	Structured: – 10 attributes – 7-point Likert scale
Crompton (1979)	To measure the image of Mexico in different states of the United States	Structured: – 30 attributes – 7-point sem. diff. scale
Pearce (1982)	To measure and compare the pre-travel and post-travel images of seven countries	Structured: – 13 attributes – 6-point Likert scale
Haahti and Yavas (1983)	To measure the image of Finland (12 countries included in the survey)	Structured: – 10 attributes – 9-point Likert scale
Crompton and Duray (1985)	To measure the image of Texas (while testing alternative approaches to importance-performance analysis)	Structured: – 28 attributes – 5-point sem. diff. scale
Kale and Weir (1986)	To measure the image of India	Structured: – 26 attributes – 7-point Likert scale
Phelps (1986)	To measure pre-travel and post-travel images of Menorca	Structured: – 32 attributes – check list of attributes
Tourism Canada (1986-1989)	To measure the image of Canada in various major tourism generating markets	Structured: – 29 attributes – 5-point Likert scale
Gartner and Hunt (1987)	To measure the change in Utah's image over a 12-year period	Structured: – 11 attributes – 5-point sem. diff. scale
Richardson and Crompton (1988)	To explore differences in images held of USA and Canada between French and English Canadians	Structured: – 10 attributes – 4-point comparative scale
Gartner (1989)	To measure the images of four states: Utah Montana, Colorado, Wyoming (using multidimensional scaling techniques)	Structured: – 15 attributes – 5-point Likert scale
Calantone et al. (1989)	To measure the images of eight Pacific Rim countries held by tourists from various countries of origin	Structured: – 13 attributes – 7-point Likert scale
Reilly (1990)	To measure the image of Montana	Unstructured: – open-ended questions

FIGURE 1

THE COMPONENTS OF DESTINATION IMAGE



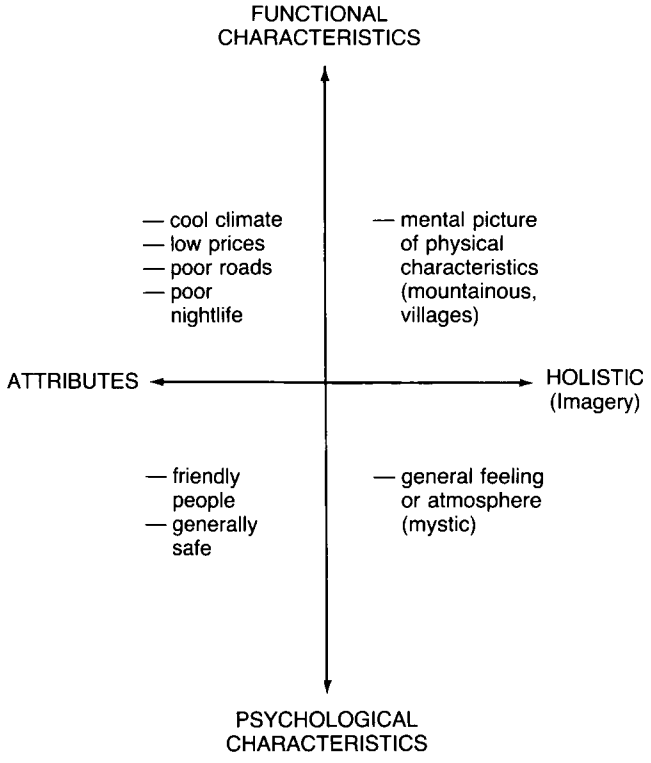
Note: This figure should be envisaged in three dimensions.

functional to psychological. On the holistic side, the functional impression consists of the mental picture (or imagery) of the physical characteristics of the destination, while the psychological impression could be described as the atmosphere or mood of the place.

In terms of the final continuum, common-unique, the importance of the unique part of destination image has been alluded to by several tourism researchers. These include Pearce (1988) in his mention of symbols as a significant factor of destination image, and MacCannell (1989) in his discussion of "marker" or must-see sights. Basically, this continuum highlights the idea that images of destinations can range from those perceptions based on "common" characteristics to those based on "unique" features or auras:

> On one extreme of the continuum, the image of a destination can be composed of the impressions of a core group of traits on which all destinations are commonly rated and compared. For example, a destination's image can include ratings on certain common functional characteristics, such as price levels, transportation infrastructure, types of accommodation, climate, etc. The destination can also be rated on very commonly considered psychological characteristics: level of friendliness, safety, quality of service expected, fame, etc. On the other end of the continuum, images of destinations can include unique features and events (functional characteristics) or special auras (psychological characteristics) (Echtner and Ritchie 1991).

FIGURE 2
AN ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE OF FOUR COMPONENTS OF DESTINATION IMAGE (NEPAL)



An examination of the previous studies of destination image (as presented in Table 1) revealed that none of the researchers had been successful in capturing all of the components of destination image as conceptualized in Figure 1. Therefore, a study based on this conceptual framework was undertaken to develop a more comprehensive and rigorous approach for measuring destination image. In the remainder of this article, the results of this empirical study are presented.

METHODOLOGY

As illustrated in Table 1, almost all of the previous studies have used structured methodologies, specifically scales, to measure destination image. The scale items, usually based on a set of standardized attributes, are used to rate and compare a series of destinations. While such structured methodologies can be quite effective for measuring the common and attribute-based components of image, they are not useful for capturing the unique and holistic components. For this purpose, an unstructured methodology such as open-ended questions is most effective. To date, however, only one study (Reilly 1990) has used open-ended questions in destination image measurement.

It is argued that to fully capture the components of destination image — attribute, holistic, functional, psychological, common, and unique — a combination of structured and unstructured methodologies must be used. With this in mind, the primary objectives in designing a system of measurement for destination image were

1. To develop a series of open-ended questions that capture the holistic components of destination image along both functional and psychological dimensions. The presence of distinctive or unique features or auras within these impressions was also explored.
2. To produce a reliable and valid set of scales to measure the common, attribute-based components of destination image along both functional and psychological dimensions.

Development of Open-Ended Questions

A series of open-ended questions was derived based upon similar questions used in previous research in the study of image (Ritchie, Echtner, and Smith 1989; Zimmer and Golden 1988; Boivin 1986; McDougall and Fry 1974; Kunkel and Berry 1968). After the open-ended questions were developed, they were examined by a panel of expert judges who were academics and practitioners in the areas of tourism, marketing, and consumer behavior (N = 6). The judges were asked to provide comments and criticisms as to the wording and appropriateness of the questions.

The feedback from this panel of judges was used to produce a revised set of open-ended questions, which were incorporated into the first section of the questionnaire. Subsequently, in the pre-test of the questionnaire, feedback was also obtained from a sample of respondents (N = 30). The final set of questions used to measure the holistic and unique components of image were the following:

1. What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of XXX as a vacation destination? (functional holistic component)
2. How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting XXX? (psychological holistic component)
3. Please list any distinctive or unique tourist attractions that you can think of in XXX. (unique component)

The first question was designed to allow respondents to think freely about the destination and to describe their overall impressions of it. However, because it was anticipated that respondents may tend to focus on the more functional characteristics of image, the second question was added in an attempt to capture the holistic psychological component of image, described as atmosphere or mood of the destination. Finally, the third question was asked to determine some of the attractions that respondents considered distinctive or unique to the destination.

Development of Scales

A comprehensive procedure for developing scales has been outlined by Churchill (1979). The eight steps involved in this process and the recommended techniques to accomplish each step are presented in Table 2. Issues of content validity, dimensionality, and internal consistency are addressed in the first four steps of scale development, and reliability, criterion validity, and construct validity are dealt with in the last half of the procedure.

TABLE 2

PROCEDURE FOR DEVELOPING SCALES

Recommended Techniques	Step
1. Specify domain of construct	– Literature search
2. Generate sample of items	– Literature search – Experience survey – Insight-stimulating examples – Critical incidents – Focus groups
3. Collect data	
4. Purify measure	– Coefficient alpha – Factor analysis
5. Collect data	
6. Assess reliability	– Coefficient alpha – Split-half reliability
7. Assess validity	– Multitrait multimethod matrix – Criterion validity
8. Develop norms	– Average and other statistics summarizing distribution of scores

Source: Churchill (1979), p. 66. Reprinted with permission from Journal of Marketing Research, published by the American Marketing Association.

For the purposes of this research, the first four steps of the scale development were completed to address the content validity, dimensionality, and internal consistency of the set of scales developed. Assessment of reliability with new data and issues concerning criterion and construct validity remain to be dealt with in future research.

The first step involved producing a relatively precise definition of the construct "destination image." The literature search and review undertaken resulted in the conceptual framework of destination image presented in Figure 1. The standardized scales developed were used to measure the attribute-based and common components of destination image along both functional and psychological dimensions. Accordingly, common functional and psychological attributes were specified as the domain of the construct for the scale development.

The second step in the procedure was to generate items which capture the domain as specified in Step 1. At issue at this point was ensuring the content validity of the measurement instrument. By using more than one of the techniques suggested in Table 2 (Step 2), the likelihood of producing a complete list of items to describe the concept is increased. Therefore, two of the methods, literature search and focus groups, were used to generate the list of attributes used to measure destination image.

During the review of the literature on destination image measurement, the attributes used in previous studies were recorded and grouped by the researchers into a "master list" of attributes. Although this list probably represented the most complete compilation of destination image attributes constructed to date, additional input was obtained by using focus groups. In total, 12 focus groups were held with an average of eight participants per group. Individuals participating in the focus groups were drawn from the membership of community associations located in different quadrants of a large metropolitan center in Western Canada. In each session, respondents were asked to provide their images of five countries as travel destinations. A different set of five countries was chosen for each focus group from a pool of 10 different countries: France, Sweden, Yugoslavia, Egypt, Kenya, Australia, China, Japan, South Korea, and Peru.

Content analysis of the results produced 360 image statements. Subsequently, nine individuals were each given about half of these statements (180) and asked to group them into categories. This sorting and grouping procedure identified and labeled 40 categories of destination image attributes.

The results of the literature review and the focus group sessions were then merged to produce a more complete set of destination attributes.

Finally, the same panel of judges used previously (N = 6) was asked to examine this list of attributes to eliminate redundancies and to add any attributes that were missing. This independent assessment by six expert individuals was the final check on the content validity of the list proposed destination attributes. The final list of 35 attributes used in developing the scale items is presented in Exhibit 1. The attributes have been arranged along the functional-psychological continuum.

Two scale items were developed to measure the perceptions of each of the 35 attributes, producing a total of 70 scale items which were incorporated into a six-point Likert scale

EXHIBIT 1

FINAL LIST OF ATTRIBUTES USED FOR DEVELOPING SCALE ITEMS

FUNCTIONAL (physical, measurable)

Tourist sites/activities
National parks/wilderness activities
Historic sites/museums
Beaches
Fairs, exhibits, festivals
Scenery/natural attractions
Nightlife and entertainment
Shopping facilities
Facilities for information and tours
Sports facilities/activities
Local infrastructure/transportation
Cities
Accommodation/restaurants
Architecture/buildings
Costs/price levels
Climate

Crowdedness
Cleanliness
Degree of urbanization
Economic development/affluence
Extent of commercialization
Political stability
Accessibility
Personal safety
Ease of communication
Customs/culture
Different cuisine/food and drink

Hospitality/friendliness/receptiveness
Restful/relaxing
Atmosphere (familiar versus exotic)
Opportunity for adventure
Opportunity to increase knowledge
Family or adult oriented
Quality of service
Fame/reputation

PSYCHOLOGICAL (abstract)

format. These scale items comprised the second section of the questionnaire.

Step 3 (data collection) and Step 4 (purify measure) are described in the discussions of data collection and data analysis which follow.

DATA COLLECTION

The initial questionnaire was pre-tested on a sample of students (N = 30) and several modifications were made.

The final version of the questionnaire was administered to a total sample of 600 students in attendance at four educational institutions in the same metropolitan region used for the focus groups. Because of the captive nature of the data collection setting, a virtually 100% response rate was obtained. Including students from various undergraduate, graduate, adult education, and technical programs yielded a reasonably broad representation of various demographic characteristics.

Four countries were used as the tourist destinations for the study — Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, and Switzerland. The countries were selected to obtain a variety of destination types:

Jamaica:	undeveloped nation, part of American continent, generally a recreational (sun/sand) vacation experience
Japan:	developed nation, part of Asian continent, generally an educational (cultural) vacation experience
Kenya:	undeveloped nation, part of African continent, generally an adventure vacation experience
Switzerland:	developed nation, part of European continent, generally a mixed cultural/recreational destination

The main impetus behind choosing a wider variety of countries (in terms of geographic location, stage of economic development, and type of vacation destination) was the desire to develop a standardized set of scales that would be applicable over a broad range of destinations.

A questionnaire concerning one of these countries was randomly assigned to each respondent; if a respondent had visited the assigned country, she or he was randomly reassigned one of the remaining countries. In this way, respondents were screened to ensure that they had *not* visited the country for which they were providing image information. This control was instigated to ensure that the destination images measured in this survey were based solely on secondary sources of information and not on first-hand experience. Since the total sample size consisted of 600, about 150 questionnaires were completed for each of the four countries.

DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of the data in this study consisted of two major parts: analysis of the open-ended questions and analysis of the attribute-based items.

Analysis of the Open-Ended Questions

The primary objectives in analyzing the open-ended questions were to classify and label the various descriptions used by respondents and then, by means of frequency analysis, to determine the holistic and unique images most commonly held of each country.

To establish the classification schema used to code the answers to the open-ended questions, a subset of 30 questionnaires was randomly drawn for each country and provided to three independent judges, who were asked to group similar answers for each of the open-ended questions and to provide a label for these groupings. Other than directing the judges to keep the groupings as detailed as possible, no restrictions were made on the grouping procedures.

Subsequent to this, the groupings and labels provided for each question by the judges were analyzed for consistencies and discrepancies in the number and labeling of the categories and the placement of items within the categories. Both the differences noted between the classification of items and the labeling of categories were resolved by consensus at a joint meeting of the three judges and the researchers. As a result of this procedure, a final classification schema was developed for each of the open-ended questions for the four countries. It should be noted that, in the categorization of responses, a detailed classification system was developed. Therefore, where respondents provided very specific images, such as Mount Fuji, these were coded into correspondingly specific categories (e.g., a category labeled "Mount Fuji"). More general categories such as mountains or scenery reflected more general answers on the part of the respondents. In the case of these general categories, consistent labeling was used across the four countries where possible.

The answers on the remaining questionnaires were coded using the guidelines established by the classification schema. Frequency tables were then produced for each of the open-ended questions for the four countries.

Analysis of the Attribute-Based Items

The primary objective in the analysis of the attribute-based items was to develop a reliable, yet parsimonious, set of scales to measure the common, attribute-based components of destination image.

As suggested by Step 4 of Table 2, the first procedure was to use factor analysis to determine the dimensionality of the scales. Specifically, principal axis factoring and various rotational techniques (orthogonal and oblique) were used to indicate the number of underlying factors in the data and to identify the set of items loading on each of these factors. The factor analysis was conducted on the pooled data set (i.e., data from all four countries, N = 600) since the objective was to develop a standardized measurement instrument applicable across all destinations.

In the initial solution, 14 factors with eigen values greater than one were extracted and a varimax rotation produced the cleanest solution. The percentage of variance explained by this initial solution was 52.4%. At this point, items which had "weak" factor loadings were eliminated. Although a minimum factor loading of .3 is often cited as a criterion for item retention (Kim and Mueller 1978; Tabachnick and Fidell 1989), previous researchers have argued for the use of a more stringent criterion during the initial stages of scale development (Shimp and Sharma 1987; Parasuraman et al. 1986; Chusmir and Koberg 1986). Therefore, only those items with factor loadings greater than .4 were retained. Subsequent to the elimination of weak items, the factor analysis was repeated, followed by more eliminations if necessary. This iterative process was continued until a solution with no weak

items was produced. The result was an eight factor solution consisting of 57 items, which explained 50.6% of the variance.

In the next stage, Cronbach's alpha, a measure of internal reliability, was calculated separately for each of the eight factors identified in the exploratory analysis. To increase reliabilities, item-to-total correlations were examined to determine which additional items should be eliminated (Churchill 1979).

At this point, it was noted that several of the factors included redundant items. This was not surprising since two scale items were initially developed to measure each attribute. In the interests of avoiding unnecessary duplication and developing the most parsimonious set of scales, where redundant items appeared under the same factor, one was eliminated based on the lowest item-to-total correlation. A similar procedure was used by Crompton (1977) in developing a set of scales to measure images of preferred destinations.

The resulting 34 items were again subjected to factor analysis. Eight factors were extracted, with the varimax solution producing the cleanest results; no weak items emerged. The percentage of variance explained by this final solution was 52.1%.

The scales were labeled by the researchers according to the common theme of the items composing each factor. The final results of the factor analysis are given in Table 3.

TABLE 3

FINAL RESULTS OF FACTOR AND RELIABILITY ANALYSES

Dimension (Factor)	No. of Items	Rel. Coeff. (Alphas)
Comfort/security	10	.87
Interest/adventure	6	.77
Natural state	4	.76
Tourist facilitation	4	.68
Resort atmosphere/climate	3	.78
Cultural distance	3	.72
Inexpensiveness	2	.81
Lack of language barrier	2	.75
*Reliability of Linear Combination (Total Scale Reliability)		.72
Percent of Variance Explained (8 Factor Solution)		52.1%

*Formula used to calculate total scale reliability (Nunnally 1978):

$$r = 1 - \left(\frac{k - \Sigma r_{ii}}{\sigma^2_y}\right)$$

k = number of scales
r_{ii} = reliabilities of each scale
σ^2_y = summation of the elements of factor correlation table

The next stage of the scale development process (Step 5 of Table 2) would involve testing the factor model across another selection of countries with a new sample of respondents. However, as indicated previously, this was beyond the scope of this study.

RESULTS

The primary focus in examining the results of the study was to determine if the combination of open-ended questions and scale items was successful in capturing the complex nature of destination image. Although the original study included four countries, in the interests of brevity only the set of image data for one of the countries used in the study, Jamaica, is reviewed here (refer to Tables 4 and 5). Readers interested in the results pertaining to the other four countries included in the study should contact the authors.

Table 4 provides the most frequent responses to the three open-ended image questions included in the survey. For each open-ended question, the responses given by more than 10% of the survey sample are listed. For Questions 1 and 2, the responses that were used to construct stereotypical holistic images (those provided by more than 20% of respondents) are grouped separately.

TABLE 4

MOST FREQUENT RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED IMAGE QUESTIONS (JAMAICA)

1. Images or characteristics evoked when thinking of Jamaica as a vacation destination
   - beaches (80.5%)
   - tropical climate (61.1%)
   - sun (44.3%)
   - ocean (30.2%)
   - negroid peoples (25.5%)
   - music/reggae (25.5%)

   - rum-tropical drinks (18.1%)
   - poverty (17.4%)
   - friendly-hospitable (16.1%)
   - palm trees (16.1%)
   - watersports (16.1%)
   - scenery (13.4%)
   - culture (11.4%)
   - fun-party (11.4%)
   - tropical vegetation (11.4%)
   - food-fruits (10.7%)
2. Descriptions of the atmosphere or mood expected while visiting Jamaica
   - relaxing (55.0%)
   - friendly-hospitable (41.6%)
   - fun-party (38.9%)
   - slow-pace (38.3%)
   - happy (21.5%)

   - exciting (17.4%)
   - tropical (11.4%)
   - romantic (10.1%)
3. Distinctive or unique tourist attractions in Jamaica
   - beaches (57.3%)
   - watersports (17.9%)
   - ocean (16.2%)
   - music/reggae (14.5%)
   - culture (13.7%)
   - tropical climate (12.0%)
   - Montego Bay (11.1%)

In general, it was found that the open-ended questions were successful in drawing out the holistic and unique components of destination image. The responses to Question 1 provided detailed and distinctive functional impressions of each destination, whereas Question 2 was effective in prompting respondents to produce a description of the atmosphere or mood of the place. Question 3 showed that respon-

dents were able to supply numerous examples of unique tourist attractions for each country.

Overall, when the lists of impressions provided for each country in the responses to the open-ended questions were examined, it became apparent that each destination was characterized by stereotypical mental pictures in terms of both functional and psychological characteristics. When compared to the scale items, the answers to the open-ended questions provided more descriptive, distinctive, and detailed impressions. For example, while one scale item measured the degree of perceived friendliness, the open-ended questions revealed the differences in the way this friendliness was manifest — in Jamaica as outgoing and fun, whereas in Japan as reserved and formal. The scale item, because of its more standardized format, could not capture such special nuances.

In Table 5, scores are provided for each of the eight factors identified and for selected individual scale items. Although these scores probably are most useful when used in relative terms (that is, in comparison to other competitive destinations), they also can be interpreted in absolute terms. For example, Jamaica obtained "high" scores (over 5.0 on a six-point scale) on the items relating to restfulness, scenic beauty, availability of packaged vacations, beaches, nightlife, and pleasant weather. Alternatively, Jamaica's lowest item scores related to standard of living (2.63) and standards of cleanliness and hygiene (3.01). In terms of factors, the highest score was achieved for the resort atmosphere/climate dimension (5.44) and the lowest for inexpensiveness (3.65).

TABLE 5
SCORES ON SELECTED SCALE ITEMS (JAMAICA)

Factor	Score
Comfort/Security (10 items)	3.79
Local standards of cleanliness and hygiene are high	3.01
High standard of living	2.63
Good quality restaurants and hotels are easy to find	4.23
In general, is a safe place to visit	4.49
Local people are friendly	4.71
Interest/Adventure (6 items)	4.28
A holiday in Jamaica is a real adventure	4.54
Everything is different and fascinating	4.14
Many places of interest to visit	4.35
Natural state (4 items)	4.65
Restful and relaxing place to visit	5.27
Offers a lot in terms of natural scenic beauty	5.26
Tourist facilitation (4 items)	4.71
Many packaged vacations available	5.33
Good tourist information is readily available	4.80
Resort atmosphere/Climate (3 items)	5.44
Good place to go for the beaches	5.74
Has good nightlife	5.01
Pleasant weather	5.58
Cultural distance (3 items)	4.45
* Lifestyles and customers are similar to ours	4.54
* Food is similar to ours	4.52
* Local architectural styles are similar to ours	4.32
Inexpensiveness (2 items)	3.65
Prices are low	3.81
* Goods and services are expensive	3.50
Lack of language barrier (2 items)	4.90
* Few people understand English	4.84
Many people speak English	4.95

* These items were reverse coded for data analysis.

The purpose of using scale items in the measurement instrument was to focus on the common, attribute-based components of destination image. The open-ended questions, as discussed above, provided detailed, holistic impressions on only some aspects of each destination. Perceptions of certain other attributes, such as accommodation facilities, shopping facilities, language barriers and so on, were not provided by the open-ended questions. While these attributes were not prominent in the more holistic impressions held of destinations, this does not necessarily indicate a lack of their perception or importance. In other words, stereotypical mental pictures tended to embellish certain aspects of each destination at the expense of failing to provide information on the perception of others. In comparison, the scales provided a broader base of image information, albeit based on more standardized attributes.

As depicted previously in Figure 1, the components of destination image were envisaged to fall within three continuums — attribute-holistic, functional-psychological, and common-unique. Since it is difficult to deal in three dimensions, Figures 3a, 3b, and 3c separate the components of destination image into a series of two dimensional diagrams. Examples, provided by the data set for the country of Jamaica, are given for each of the components delineated by the three figures. The source of the data, open-ended questions or scale items, is also indicated for each figure.

Figure 3a provides the attitude-holistic and functional-psychological components of Jamaica's image as a tourist destination. The scale items were the primary source of data for the attribute information in terms of both functional and psychological characteristics. Alternatively, the holistic functional and psychological imagery was supplied by the responses to the open-ended questions.

Scale scores for several functional attributes of Jamaica are presented in the upper left quadrant of the figure. These include ratings of climate, nightlife, scenery, and costs. The lower left quadrant provides scale scores on various psychological attributes such as friendliness, safety, fame, and relaxation. By completing the scale items, respondents were compelled to provide their images of Jamaica in terms of the comprehensive set of destination attributes included in the questionnaire.

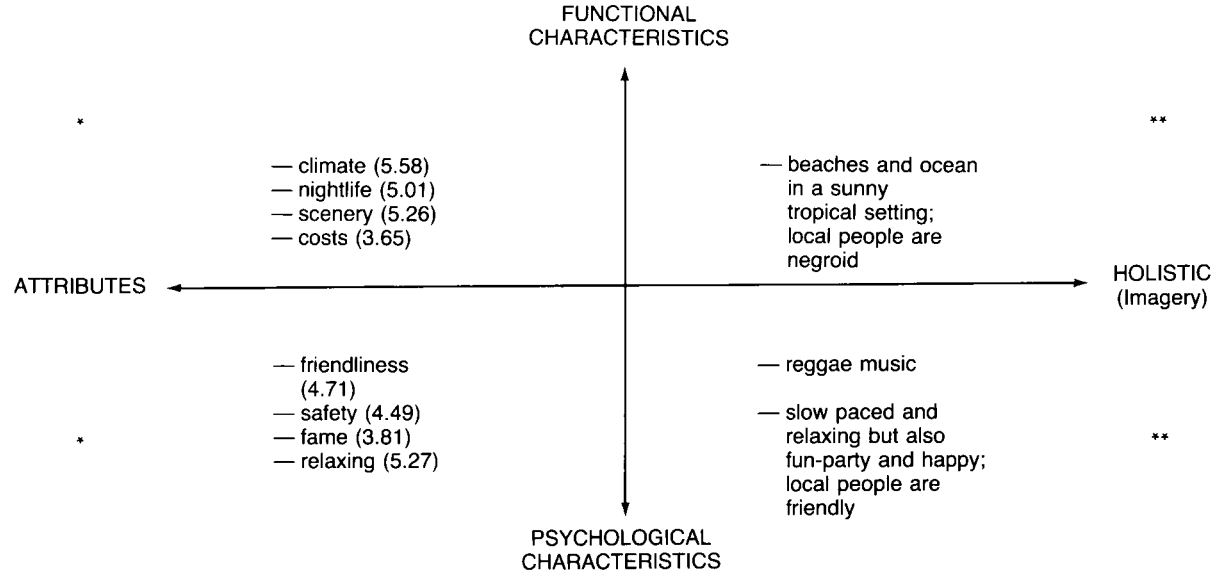
The open-ended questions, on the other hand, supplied data for the right side of the figure. Data from Question 1 primarily produced the functional holistic image, while the responses to Question 2 provided the psychological characteristics of the holistic image. An exception was reggae music, which was a frequent response to Question 1, but was seen to be more psychological in terms of its contribution to the overall atmosphere of Jamaica.

In Figure 3b, the functional-psychological and common-unique components of destination image are illustrated. By virtue of their standardized format, the scale items were effective in measuring the common characteristics of destination image in terms of both functional and psychological attributes (the two left quadrants), but the items were unable to measure the distinctive and unique components (the two right quadrants).

Data for the right side of the figure had to be obtained from the responses to the open-ended questions. Question 3,

FIGURE 3a

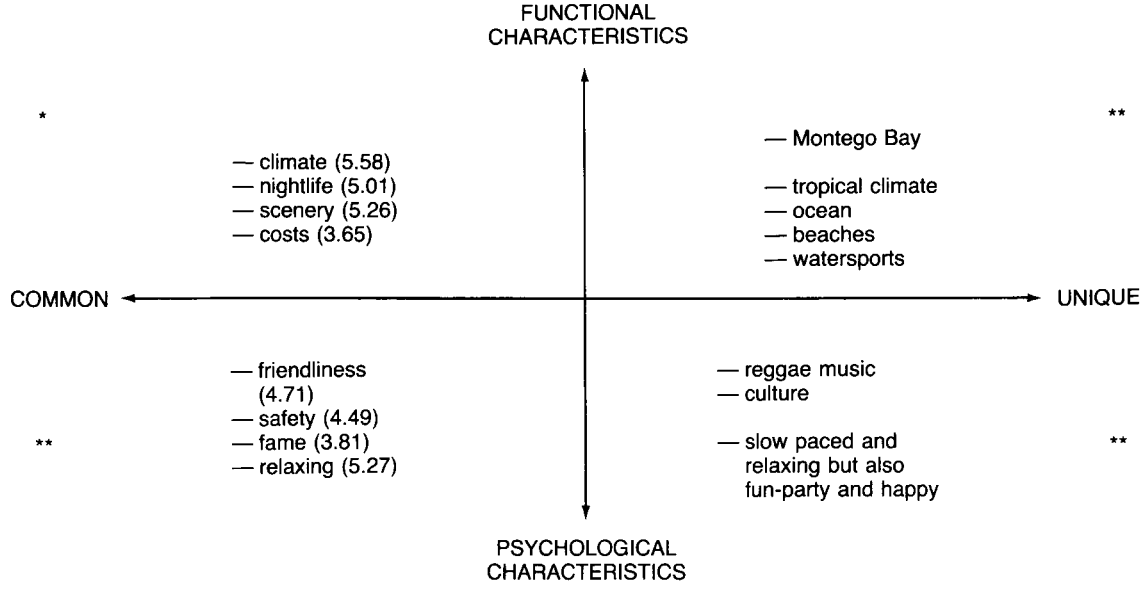
THE ATTRIBUTE/HOLISTIC AND FUNCTIONAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPONENTS OF DESTINATION IMAGE (JAMAICA)



* Information in quadrant supplied by scale items.
** Information in quadrant supplied by open-ended questions.

FIGURE 3b

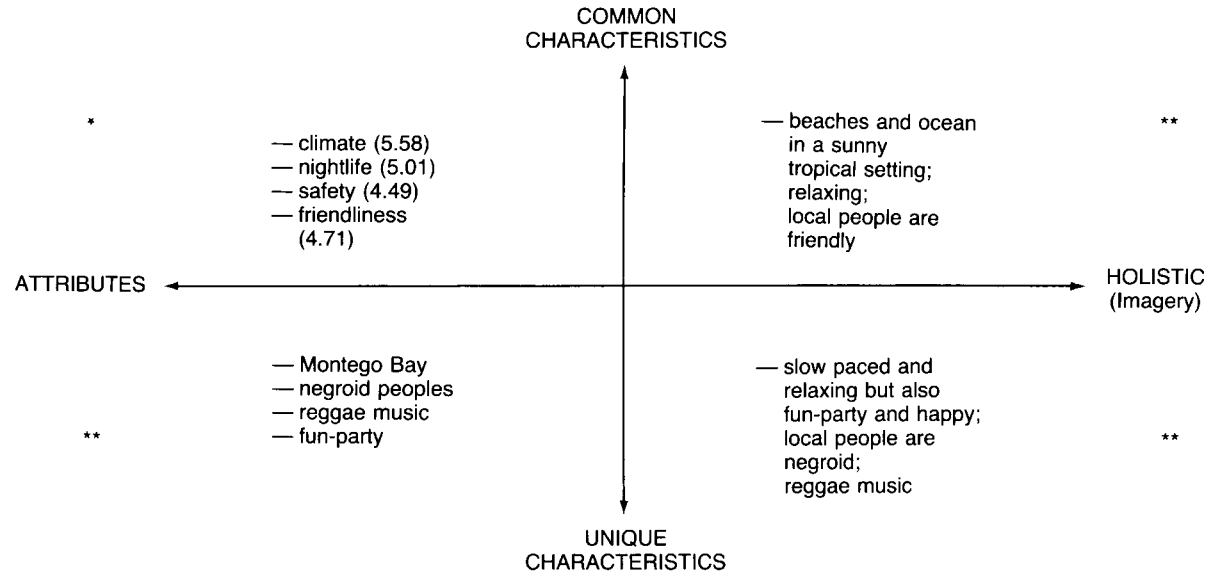
THE COMMON/UNIQUE AND FUNCTIONAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPONENTS OF DESTINATION IMAGE (JAMAICA)



* Information in quadrant supplied by scale items.
** Information in quadrant supplied by open-ended questions.

FIGURE 3c

THE ATTRIBUTE/HOLISTIC AND COMMON/UNIQUE COMPONENTS OF DESTINATION IMAGE (JAMAICA)



* Information in quadrant supplied by scale items.
** Information in quadrant supplied by open-ended questions.

which required respondents to give examples of distinctive or unique tourist attractions in Jamaica, provided the majority of the data for the unique functional and psychological characteristics.

In terms of functional characteristics, only Montego Bay can be considered unique to Jamaica. The other functional characteristics mentioned — tropical climate, ocean, beaches, and watersports — are certainly not unique to Jamaica. However, these characteristics are special features which evidently served to distinguish or differentiate Jamaica as a tourist destination.

Question 3 also provided some distinctive and unique psychological characteristics of Jamaica's image, namely reggae music and culture. In addition, the data provided by Question 2 were included in the lower left quadrant because it describes Jamaica's distinctive overall atmosphere.

Finally, in Figure 3c, the attribute-holistic and common-unique components of image are shown. In this case, the scale items provided data for only one of the quadrants, that encompassing the common attributes of image. Examples of both functional and psychological common attributes are provided in the upper left quadrant of the figure.

The standardized scale items were not able to provide data for unique attributes. Therefore, individual responses to the open-ended questions were used to provide a sampling of the distinctive or unique attributes given for Jamaica, along both functional (Montego Bay, negroid people) and psychological (reggae music, fun-party atmosphere) dimensions.

The left side of Figure 3c presented an interesting challenge in terms of separating the holistic imagery of Jamaica, as provided by Questions 1 and 2, into common and unique components. Basically, imagery that could be used to describe a number of tropical island settings was combined and placed in the common holistic category. This included functional attributes, such as beaches, ocean, and tropical climate, and the psychological attributes of relaxation and friendly locals. Imagery that was more distinctive or unique to Jamaica was grouped in the holistic unique quadrant. This included negroid peoples (functional imagery), and reggae music and slow pace but party atmosphere (psychological imagery).

Admittedly, the placement of the image data for Jamaica into the various "boxes" provided by Figures 3a, 3b, and 3c is a somewhat artificial exercise. The overall image of Jamaica as a tourist destination should be envisaged as the combination and interaction of all of the components — attributes, holistic, common, unique, functional, and psychological. However, the series of figures has been presented to illustrate that a combination of methodologies is necessary to capture destination image in its entirety.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As emphasized above, this article has attempted to illustrate that a combination of structured and unstructured methodologies is necessary to measure destination image. The empirical study has indicated that a relationship exists between the system of measurement used and the ability to capture certain components of destination image. The responses to open-ended image questions provide the more holistic functional and psychological characteristics of the

destination image. The open-ended questions also allow the unique images of each destination to emerge. The scale items, on the other hand, focus attention on the common, attribute-based functional and psychological components of destination image. Therefore, to completely measure the concept of destination image as proposed in this study, a combination of open-ended questions and scale items is essential. While further improvement is undoubtedly possible, from a methodological perspective the present study does provide a generalized framework that can be used to compare and contrast the images of most, if not all, tourist destinations.

From a practical standpoint, the more complete measurement of destination image provides information useful for positioning and promotional strategies. For example, if a destination is found to be difficult to categorize or is not easily differentiated from other similar destinations, then its likelihood of being considered and chosen in the travel decision process is reduced (Mayo and Jarvis 1981). Holistic and unique images are particularly important in determining how a particular destination is categorized (stereotype holistic impressions) and differentiated (unique attractions, auras) in the minds of the targeted markets. For instance, using the responses to the first open-ended question, Jamaica was categorized as a sun/sand destination by the imagery evoked of beaches, tropical climate, sun, and ocean. However, it was simultaneously differentiated from other sun/sand destinations by its negroid peoples and reggae music. Furthermore, the answers to the subsequent open-ended questions illustrated that the unique psychological characteristics of Jamaica, in terms of its relaxing and enjoyable atmosphere, were an important part of its image.

Sometimes the imagery evoked is somewhat fragmented, negative or inaccurate. Although not discussed in this article, respective examples which emerged in the study included a fragmented image of Japan (which emerged in Question 1), negative images of poverty, dryness/dust and apprehension for Kenya (Questions 1 and 2), and an inaccurate image of Mount Kilimanjaro in Kenya (Question 3). Since the goals of positioning strategy are to create clear, positive and realistic images, the information provided by the open-ended questions can suggest issues which should be addressed in subsequent destination marketing plans.

Imagery is a particularly effective tool in advertising. In print and television advertisements, the appropriate holistic imagery, both functional and psychological, must be communicated to the potential traveler. In this sense, the open-ended image questions are useful for determining not only existing holistic imagery but also for monitoring the effect of advertising campaigns on these images.

The scale items provide more general information on the attribute-based components of destination image. This is particularly useful for comparing several destinations and thus for pinpointing competitive advantages. Relative strengths and weaknesses can be determined by comparisons across several destinations along either each of the 34 items comprising the scales or each of the eight underlying dimensions identified by the factor analysis. Some of the weaknesses identified by the attribute-based items have implications for product development. For example, perceptions of poor quality accommodations, shopping facilities, and roads raise issues that have to be addressed in the planning and development of destination regions.

As a result of this empirical study, a succinct questionnaire was designed for future destination image research. It consists of three open-ended image questions and 34 scale items. This short questionnaire not only encourages a good response rate but also reduces the amount of data to be entered and analyzed. The need for a more condensed version of the instrument used in this study was indicated by the reaction of subjects in the survey. While willing and interested owing to the data collection setting, respondents suggested that a questionnaire designed for a more general study should be shorter. While some additional research remains to be undertaken, especially in terms of further testing of the reliability and validity of the set of scales developed, the abbreviated version of the questionnaire nonetheless represents a significant attempt to more fully capture destination image.

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