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Effect of Destination Image on Domestic Travelers' Satisfaction of Mandalay City

Htin Kyaw Lim

Lecturer, Faculty of Business, NMA University
htinkyawlin48@gmail.com

Abstract

This study analyzed the effect of destination image on domestic travelers' satisfaction of Mandalay City. Two objectives were intended for this study. The first objective was to determine the domestic travelers' perceptions on destination image of Mandalay City. The second objective was to analyze the effect of destination image on domestic travelers' satisfaction of Mandalay City. In this study, destination image was measured by four dimensions: namely natural environment, cultural environment, social environment, and infrastructure. To attain these objectives, both primary and secondary data were utilized, and the data was gathered from travelers who have visited Mandalay City in the last two years. Convenience sampling was used to collect data for the application from a total of 385 travelers. The findings of this study showed that most domestic travelers' perception of Mandalay City is based on its cultural environment. In addition, two dimensions of destination image, namely, cultural environment and infrastructure have significant positive effects on domestic travelers' satisfaction. Therefore, in order to satisfy travelers, the authority should maintain and develop various traditional architecture and cultural heritage atmosphere and the local community and stakeholders should also maintain and develop good quality infrastructure such as quality road and public transport systems.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, tourism has spread out and has developed into a more dominant sector in the world. Tourism critically refers to the activities undertaken by visitors, also known as the visitor economy and the tourism industry encompasses all activities that take place within the visitor economy. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in 2010, tourism is a collection of activities that includes a travel experience encompassing transportation, lodging, food, seeing the sights, shopping and engaging in a variety of societal activities and entertainment as well as other hospitality services offered to individuals or groups traveling far from home (UNWTO, 2010). Moreover, according to (Page & Connell, 2001), the term "tourism" refers to the temporal component of the visit, which necessitates a minimum and maximum amount of time spent at travelling and the destination. In addition, as to UNWTO (2016), tourism has emerged as a prominent worldwide industry, accounting for 10% of the global GDP and 6% of global exports.

However, the coronavirus epidemic and the nation's political unrest have delivered serious blows to Myanmar's domestic tourist sector in recent years. The quantity of foreign arrivals has therefore sharply declined. Nonetheless, indications suggest that domestic travel is starting to rebound, as seen by an increase in domestic travelers over the Thingyan vacation period in April 2022 (Thuta, 2022). With 2.5 billion US dollars in revenue in 2019 alone, tourism in

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Myanmar contributed significantly to the nation's economy and made up 3.8% of its GDP, or around 2% of total foreign tourist revenues in Southeast Asia. It is one of the biggest sectors in Myanmar, generating a lot of jobs, promoting economic expansion, and building up the nation's infrastructure.

After Yangon, Mandalay is the second-largest city in Myanmar. With 1,225,553 residents as of the 2014 census, the city is situated on the east bank of the Irrawaddy River, 631 kilometers (392 miles; road distance) north of Yangon. It was established by King Mindon in 1857, taking Amarapura's place as the Konbaung dynasty's new royal capital. Prior to the kingdom's absorption by the British Empire in 1885, it served as Burma's last capital. Despite the development of Yangon as the new capital of British Burma, Mandalay maintained its cultural and commercial significance during the British colonial era. When Burma was conquered by the Japanese in World War II, the city was severely damaged. Mandalay joined the recently formed Union of Burma in 1948.

With a lifespan of one hundred and forty-two years, Mandalay is the ancient capital of Myanmar, the center of Buddhist Sasana and traditional arts and crafts, and a city rich in historical landmarks, cultural monuments, and Buddhist buildings. Thus, it is the most valuable historical site. The Mandalay Hill, which is located in the northeastern portion of the current city, inspired the name of the city. The hill has long been revered as a holy mount, and it is said that Lord Buddha foretold that a large city, the Buddhist metropolis, would be built at its base. Nowadays, Mandalay is regarded as the center of Burmese culture and the commercial hub of Upper Myanmar. Despite the recent ascent of Naypyidaw, Mandalay continues to be the primary economic, educational and medical hub of Upper Myanmar.



Source: Myanmar: District Map – Mandalay Region (23 Oct 2017)

Figure (1) Map of Mandalay City

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2. Literature Review

2.1. Concept of Travelers' Satisfaction

Satisfaction is theoretically defined as the traveler's emotional state in the post-visitation phase, after they have arrived at their intended destination (Horávth, 2013). Moreover, satisfaction is a traveler's statement of total satisfaction after a vacation or visit (Thiumsak & Ruangkanjanases, 2016). A traveler destination's ability to successfully promote itself depends on how satisfied its travelers are (Devesa, et at., 2010). According to Kozak and Rimmington (2007), satisfaction influences travelers' decisions about which place, goods and services to purchase, which is a critical component of maintaining a competitive tourism industry.

Yoon and Uysal (2005) were among the first to suggest that destination executives should cultivate positive traveler behavior and a high degree of post-purchase satisfaction in order to maintain and grow a competitive destination. Thus, traveler satisfaction is a significant indicator of intent to visit a place (Bramwell, 1998). Moreover, there are a variety of factors that contribute to travelers' satisfaction with their travels, including the high caliber of service, the infrastructure, the safety and cleanliness of the surroundings, consumer protection and ease of access.

Satisfaction has several different components and every dimension is unique in character. (Parasakul, 2012). As a result, traveler satisfaction with tourism-related activities varies. Thus, achieving satisfaction encompasses meeting the different aspects of the tourism experience, such as being content with the services or the natural surroundings (beautiful, pristine, clean and scenic). Every dimension of satisfaction needs to be examined independently. In conclusion, travelers' satisfaction with their travel experience will influence how devoted they are to a certain location going forward. Therefore, travelers who are happy with their tourism experience are more likely to return and refer to others to the location.

2.2. Concept of Destination Image

An important consideration in the tourism industry is the perception that prospective travelers have of a certain location. Hunt (1971) was the first to apply the idea of image to the tourist industry in the early 1970s. According to Hunt (1971), destination image is defined as the collective or individual perceptions of the location they do not currently reside in. Ever since, there has been a lot of discussion on destination image in the travel literature (Melo et at., 2017). According to Sonnleitner (2011), destination images are crucial when choosing a trip. With the intangible nature of tourism services, destination images are believed to become even more crucial than reality (Dwyer et al., 2020). Moreover, destination image plays a crucial role in determining how valuable, satisfying and loyal visitors feel about it (Sangle-or & Kornpetpranee, 2015).

According to Cavlak & Cop (2019), a person's perception of a destination might come from both their personal experience and information from other sources. This impression may develop prior to, during, or following a visit to a location (Ioradanova & Stylisdis, 2019). According to Hsu et al. (2008), travelers' perceptions of the appearance of tourist sites are based on their imaginations or the information they are given. The tourist attraction is working to distinguish itself from other places and increase awareness of its brand in the meantime. A destination image may be conveyed through a variety of means, including its name, logo, and visual media like pictures and animations.

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Melo et al. (2017) state that even though a number of academics have established ideas related to tourism destinations, there is still disagreement over how to define, quantify, and shape these concepts, making them complex and subjective. These conceptualizations rely on location and time. According to Ksouri et al. (2015), measuring the destination picture is a complicated phenomenon since it depends on several variables throughout its development and growth due to the variety of features and conclusions that define the destination image. As stated by Birdir et al. (2018), combining both affective and cognitive representations creates the destination image. While the affective image focuses on people's sentiments and emotions towards the trip, the cognitive image deals with information about the destination. The following Table (1) presents different dimensions of destination images by two authors.

Table 1 Dimensions of Destination Image

Authors	Dimensions
Martin and del Bosque (2008)	• Infrastructure and socio-economic environment • Atmosphere • Natural environment • Cultural environment
Qu, Kim and Im (2011)	• Quality of experiences • Touristic attractions • Environment and infrastructure • Entertainment/external activities • Cultural traditions

Source: (Cetinsoz, 2017)

2.3. Research Model and Hypothesis Development

There are many studies conducted by scholars about the effect of destination image on tourist satisfaction when related literature is examined. According to Huanchen Tang, R. W. (2022), the destination image consists of four elements namely natural environment, cultural environment, social environment and infrastructure. And then, the authors carried out one study with 545 tourists to rural regions in China. The study carried out by the authors examined the effect of motivation, destination image and satisfaction on willingness to revisit. The study concluded that all the destination image attributes namely natural environment, cultural environment, social environment and infrastructure have positive significant effect on tourist satisfaction.

Destination image is divided into four elements namely natural environment, infrastructures, social environment, and entertainment (Xue, 2019). Authors also conducted one study with 400 Chinese tourists to Bangkok. This study indicated that destination image has a significant positive effect on tourist satisfaction. Another study conducted by (Coban, 2012), investigated the effect of destination image on tourist satisfaction and loyalty with 170 tourists who visited Cappadocia. In this study, destination image is divided into two categories, namely cognitive and emotional. The result indicated that cognitive image is a significant positive effect on tourist satisfaction in this study.

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In addition, the study conducted by (Cetinsoz, 2017) stated that Arab visitors' intentions to return are significantly and favorably impacted by their perception of their cognitive image. Stated differently, the more positively Arab visitors see Istanbul's natural appeal, infrastructure, overall mood, social environment and value for money, the more likely it is that they will return. And then, it has been shown that there is no meaningful correlation between the intention to return and the Arab tourists' affective image. For the present study, the following hypotheses were put to test empirically based on the above discussion.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Natural environment has a significant positive effect on domestic travelers' satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Cultural environment has a significant positive effect on domestic travelers' satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Social environment has a significant positive effect on domestic travelers' satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Infrastructure has a significant positive effect on domestic travelers' satisfaction.

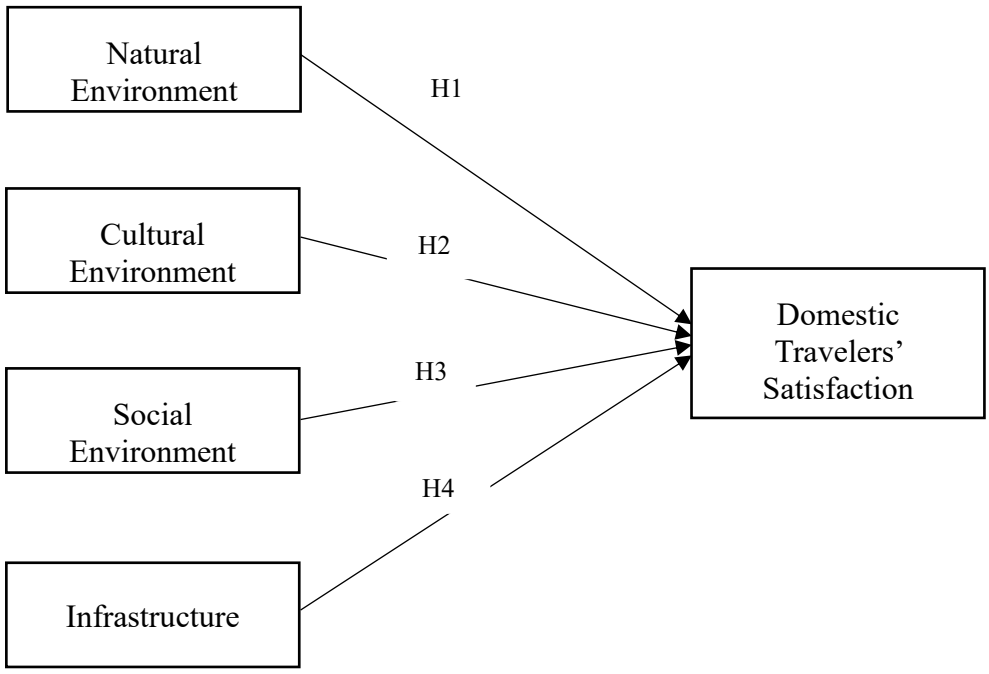


Figure (2) Hypothesized Framework of This Study

3. Research Method

The purpose of this study is to determine domestic travelers' perception on destination images and to analyze the effect of destination images on domestic travelers' satisfaction of Mandalay City. To achieve these objectives, the quantitative research approach was applied in this research. The population in this study is travelers who have visited Mandalay City in the last two years and the sample that was utilized to reflect the characteristics of the population under

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investigation was chosen using the convenience sampling approach. According to Myanmar Tourism Statistics (2022), number of domestic travelers arriving in Mandalay City is about 1.201 million. Since the population, (N), is greater than 10,000, it can be assumed that it is the large population for this study. Thus, to determine the required sample size, Cochran's formula (1977) was used and the minimum sample size for this study was calculated as 385 with the formula. A survey was employed as the data gathering method in this study, and it was given to over 415 individuals. Nevertheless, 385 questionnaires were analyzed overall, taking into account incomplete, inaccurate, and unreturned questionnaires.

There are three sections to the survey that are used to gather data. The first section discusses demographic profiles of travelers (gender, age, marital status, education, monthly income and visit time to Mandalay City). The second section is comprised of a destination image scale with 15 items and the third section deals with the scale measuring domestic travelers' satisfaction which is comprised of 4 items. According to Huanchen Tang, R. W. (2022), destination image is measured by four dimensions namely natural environment, cultural environment, social environment and infrastructure. These dimensions are used as independent variables in this study. The scales used by (Mulia, 2019), were used to determine the travelers' satisfaction. A Likert scale with ratings ranging from 1 to 5 is used to quantify each indication (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree).

4. Result And Discussion

4.1. Reliability Test

A reliability test is defined as a measuring instrument that is used repeatedly to evaluate the same symptoms and yields findings that are generally consistent, indicating increased reliability of the measurement instrument. The value of Cronbach Alpha is used to determine whether an instrument is reliable.

Table 2. Reliability Test

Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Natural Environment	3	.714
Cultural Environment	4	.912
Social Environment	4	.901
Infrastructure	4	.871
Domestic Traveler's Satisfaction	4	.874

Source: Survey Data (2023)

Table 2 indicates that the Cronbach alpha value was greater than 0.7, indicating extremely strong internal accuracy and reliability for the scale with this sample.

4.2. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The findings of the survey were categorized the respondents into six categories namely, gender, marital status, age, education, monthly income and visited time to Mandalay City.

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Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n = 385)

Variables	Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	105	27.27
	Female	280	72.73
Marital Status	Single	319	82.86
	Married	66	17.14
Age	Below 21	44	11.44
	21 – 30	199	51.68
	31 – 40	101	26.23
	41 – 50	41	10.65
	Above 50	0	0
Education	High School	31	8.05
	Bachelor Degree	229	59.48
	Master Degree	122	31.69
	Doctor Degree	3	0.78
Monthly Income	300,000 MMK – 500,000 MMK	218	56.63
	500,001 MMK – 700,000 MMK	46	11.95
	700,001 MMK – 900,000 MMK	27	7.01
	Above 900,000	94	24.41
Visit time to Mandalay	1 – 3 times	146	37.93
	4 – 6 times	74	19.22
	7 – 9 times	22	5.71
	Above 9 times	143	37.14

Source: Survey Data (2023)

According to the above tale, the majority of respondents were: female (72.73%), single (82.86%), aged between 21 to 30 (51.68%), having level of education bachelor's degree (59.48%), having monthly income level of 300,000 MMK – 500,000 MMK (56.63%) and having visited time to Mandalay 1-3 times (37.93%).

4.3. Descriptive Statistics

As previously indicated, the destination images for this study were made up of four dimensions. The respondents were requested to provide their opinion on the dimensions of destination image. The mean and standard deviation (SD) scores for the destination images are presented in Table (4). Cultural environment has the highest mean score, followed by infrastructure, natural environment and social environment.

Table 4. Domestic Travelers' Opinion on Dimensions of Destination Image

Dimensions of Destination of Image	Mean	S.D	Rank
Natural Environment	3.63	0.975	3
Cultural Environment	4.06	1.004	1
Social Environment	3.62	0.950	4
Infrastructure	3.69	0.961	2

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Additionally, travelers were required to rate their satisfaction in visiting Mandalay City. The results are presented in Table (5). It was found that the travelers who were satisfied with the taste of food in Mandalay had the highest mean score, followed by those who were satisfied with the cultural activities and events of Mandalay, those satisfied with getting new knowledge and experiences from Mandalay and those satisfied with the quality of services applied from transportations, accommodations and restaurants of Mandalay city.

Table 5. Domestic Travelers' Satisfaction on Visiting Mandalay City

Domestic Travelers' Satisfaction	Mean	S.D	Rank
DTS 1	3.78	.971	3
DTS 2	3.84	1.042	2
DTS 3	4.18	.995	1
DTS 4	3.74	.902	4

Source: Survey Data (2023)

4.4. Hypothesis Testing

The information gathered from the 385 respondents via the questionnaire was utilized to analyze how destination images affect domestic travelers' satisfaction and to test the four hypotheses, multiple regression analysis was utilized in this study.

Table 6Multiple Regression Results between Destination Image and Domestic Travelers' Satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.961	.165		5.833	.000
Natural Environment	-.030	.046	-.028	-.654	.514
Cultural Environment	**.468**	**.052**	**.501**	**9.023**	**.000**
Social Environment	.031	.055	.031	.559	.576
Infrastructure	**.279**	**.059**	**.273**	**4.752**	**.000**
R Square			.529		
Adjusted R Square			.524		
F Value			106.778 (P Value = 0.000)		

Source: Survey Data (2023)

According to regression analysis, the F value is 106.778 (sig. = 0.000), and the significance test of the regression equation shows that there is a linear correlation between two independent variables (cultural environment and infrastructure) and dependent variable. Except natural environment and social environment as destination image, the other two independent variables were significant in the model at a significance level of 0.000 (99%). The Adjusted R square value is 0.524, indicating that the closeness of the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable is 52.4%

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Cultural environment and infrastructure have significant positive effect at 1% level on travelers' satisfaction. It shows that every one-unit increase in cultural environment helps satisfaction to increase by 0.468 and every one-unit increase in infrastructure helps satisfaction to increase by 0.279. Natural environment and social environment are not significant at any level. Hence, hypothesis H2 and H4 were accepted while H1 and H3 were rejected.

5. Conclusion

The main objective of this study is to analyze the effect of destination image on domestic travelers' satisfaction of Mandalay City. The study's sample comprised 385 travelers who visited Mandalay City. Multiple regression analysis was employed in the collection and analysis of data. Four dimensions of destination image were identified, which consisted of natural environment, cultural environment, social environment and infrastructure. One of the most factors influencing travelers' satisfaction with Mandalay City is the cultural environment, which is one of the destination images. Traditional architecture, unique cultural experiences, cultural heritage atmosphere and historic sites and heritage are included in cultural environment. All of these factors are included in Mandalay City. Therefore, to satisfy travelers, the authority should maintain and develop various cultural environments and those involved in tourist development should organize some aspects of tourism around the themes of nature, customs, and culture.

Furthermore, infrastructure needs to be regarded as the second most factor influencing travelers' satisfaction with destination. Infrastructure features include factors like well-maintained roads, a robust travelers' information network, high-quality hotels and accommodations for travelers and a high degree of sanitation and hygiene. Thus, the local community and stakeholders in Mandalay City should maintain and develop good quality infrastructure such as quality of road and public transport system. Moreover, when creating tourism policies and plans, travel firms and tourism marketers should consider the environment of the destination, budgets, costs, mementos, logistics, transportation and lodging.

Ultimately, the goal of this study has been to identify many elements and aspects that affect satisfaction of travelers. Consequently, rather than emphasizing a discussion of the effect of the perceived travelers' development, the managerial implications of this study are primarily concerned with a discussion of this conclusion. The aforementioned study's findings may aid in the understanding of what the major players (travelers) in the tourism industry would like to see developed in tourist attractions. They may also assist stakeholders and marketers in the industry in gathering data and developing competitive strategies that are appropriate given the destination image described above.

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APPENDIX 1

Mandalay Royal Palace








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APPENDIX 2

Famous Place in Mandalay



Mandalay Hill



Kuthodaw Pagoda

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Oo Pain Bridge

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