Journal of Tourism Management Research
2025 Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 157-171
ISSN(e): 2313-4178
ISSN(p): 2408-9117
DOI: 10.18488/31.v12i1.4248

The moderating role of gender and generation in the impact of destination image on behavioural intention at world natural heritage site

Qiwen Zheng[1+]
Suraiyati Rahman[2]

[1]*School of Culture and Tourism Industry, Shangrao Normal University, Jiangxi P.R., China.*
Email: zqw16@foxmail.com
[1,2]*School of Housing Building and Planning, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia.*
Email: suraiyati@usm.my

(+ Corresponding author)

Article History
Received: 4 April 2025
Revised: 28 May 2025
Accepted: 16 June 2025
Published: 30 June 2025

Keywords
Behavioral intention
Conative image
Destination image
Gender differences
Generation differences
Natural heritage tourism.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the links between cognitive image (COG), affective image (AF), and CON, as well as the relationship between DI and behavioral intentions (BI) across gender and generational groups. Data from 388 valid responses collected at Mount Sanqingshan National Park were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) and Multi-Group Analysis (MGA). The findings underscore the pivotal role of COG within the DI construct, indirectly influencing BI through AF and CON. It also finds that CON has a significant direct impact on BI. Gender analysis reveals highly substantial differences in the effects of COG on AF, COG on BI, and AF and BI across female and male tourists. Generationally, there is a considerable difference between the post-2000s/1990s and post-1980s/1970s groups regarding the relationship between COG and BI, COG and CON, and AF and CON. This research represents the first attempt to evaluate the inner association (including CON) and its relationships with BI, while also considering gender and generation to determine whether these factors moderate these elements. These insights enhance the understanding and management of tourist perceptions and behaviors towards WNHSs, providing practical guidance for improving WNHSs' strategies for diverse tourist groups.

Contribution/Originality: The destination image construct has been reassessed within the context of the World Natural Heritage Sites (WNHSs). Gender and generation serve as moderators in the internal formation of destination image and its influence on behavioral intention.

1. INTRODUCTION

Destination image (DI) is crucial in assessing tourists' behavioral intentions (BI) and serves as an instrument in tourism branding, particularly for World Heritage Sites (WHSs). However, most existing empirical research has primarily concentrated on World Cultural Heritage Sites or Mixed World Heritage Sites (Carreira, González-Rodríguez, & Díaz-Fernández, 2022; Stylidis, Woosnam, & Kim, 2022) while World Natural Heritage Sites (WNHSs) remain largely underexplored, especially within the Chinese context. Existing studies have focused exclusively on two WNHSs within China (Wang, Yang, Han, & Shi, 2017; Wang & Hsu, 2010). This study highlights the link between DI and BI in the context of Chinese WNHS destinations. DI encompasses travelers' beliefs and attitudes toward a destination based on their personal experiences (Chon, 1992; Crompton, 1979; Hunt, 1975). While prior research has established that the cognitive image (COG) and affective image (AF) constitute the DI (San Martín & Del Bosque, 2008), the conative image (CON) has received comparatively less attention. It has often been equated

with BI. For instance, Woosnam, Stylidis, and Ivkov (2020) explored the relationships between COG and CON, and AF and CON, with CON measured by intentions to revisit and recommend. Stylos, Vassiliadis, Bellou, and Andronikidis (2016) were the first to empirically demonstrate the significant distinction between CON and BI, prompting a re-evaluation of CON's role in tourism research. Nevertheless, no previous study has examined the underlying relationship within DI, grounded in a clear understanding of CON. Therefore, this research reconsiders the formation of DI and investigates its internal structural relationships in the context of Chinese WNHSs. The findings aim to support the effective branding of China's WNHSs and offer practical insights for their marketing and management.

Additionally, the research assesses how gender and generation influence the relationship between DI and BI. Most tourism studies apply to DI and tourist behavior but treat gender and generation as external factors (Huang & van der Veen, 2019). There are few situations where both the moderating effects of gender and generation on DI and BI are studied simultaneously. However, understanding these dynamics is vital for developing targeted promotional strategies and enhancing visitor experience schemes, which would, in turn, aid in the management and promotion of WNHS destinations. This study aims to review the relationships among COG, AF, and CON, assessing their impacts on BI in a Chinese WNHS context, as well as the moderating effects of both gender and generation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Destination Image (DI) and Behavioral Intention (BI)

In the tourism field, COG and CON are widely recognized as the main dimensions of DI (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Casali, Liu, Presenza, & Moyle, 2021; Kim, Lehto, & Kandampully, 2019; Paniandi, Albattat, Bijami, Alexander, & Balekrisnan, 2018; Stylos, Bellou, Andronikidis, & Vassiliadis, 2017). COG has been defined as a tourist's knowledge of a destination's physical attributes (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Hallmann, Zehrer, & Müller, 2015; Kock, Josiassen, & Assaf, 2016; Stylidis, Shani, & Belhassen, 2017; Xu, Kim, & Reijnders, 2020). In contrast, the AF dimension had been neglected by the researchers, and some even argued that DI could be assessed based solely on its cognitive side (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993). The importance of assessing AF was first introduced by Russell and Pratt (1980) and later received significant attention. AF focuses on the psychological evaluation of tourists' emotional responses to a destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Hallmann et al., 2015; Kock et al., 2016; Stylidis et al., 2017; Xu et al., 2020). Moreover, AF is influenced by COG. As indicated by Kim et al. (2019) and Souiden, Ladhari, and Chiadmi (2017), emotional conditions during a tour are dynamic and are shaped by cognitive evaluations. Wang, Qu, and Hsu (2016) also affirm that AF is dependent on COG, with affective responses being shaped by cognitive reactions. Furthermore, various researchers have reported that both COG and AF significantly affect BI (Loureiro & Jesus, 2019; Lv & McCabe, 2020; Stylos et al., 2016). Accordingly, three hypotheses were proposed.

H_1: COG significantly influences AF.

H_2: COG significantly influences BI.

H_3: AF significantly influences BI.

Nevertheless, some scholars have indicated that the DI construct includes CON, which has been largely overlooked in tourism research and is often considered synonymous with BI. Some studies have examined the associations among COG, AF, and CON to better understand the correlation between DI and BI (Lee & Jeong, 2018; Woosnam et al., 2020). Surprisingly, Huang and Lin (2024) and Lee, Lin, and Wang (2023) both empirically reported a significant positive relationship between AF and CON, based on the measurement of actual CON, and further argued that CON is conceptually equivalent to BI. Indeed, the CON is a precursor to the intention to visit a destination that can be formed through mental processes alone. This reflects an inherent tendency to transition from one motivational state to another (White, 2014). Specifically, it reflects how a tourist's initial interest in general attractions and activities at a destination shifts toward anticipating the personal enjoyment they expect to share with companions (Bagozzi, 1992). These features are not present in the cognitive or affective components of DI (Stylos et al., 2016).

Based on this, tourists' cognitive assessment is more likely to trigger conative responses. Moreover, White (2014) empirically demonstrated that COG and AF significantly affect CONs, while Carvache-Franco, Carvache-Franco, Hernández-Lara, Hassan, and Carvache-Franco (2024) suggested that CON is formed through the interaction between COG and AF. Additionally, recent tourism research has begun to address this issue and has empirically shown a positive correlation between CON and BI (Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020; Stylos et al., 2017; Stylos et al., 2016), thereby confirming the distinct relationship between these constructs. As indicated by Dann (1996), tourists cannot form an intention to travel without a desire to visit a specific destination. Therefore, another three hypotheses were posited.

H_4: COG significantly influences the CON.

H_5: AF significantly influences the CON.

H_6: CON significantly influences the BI.

Furthermore, AF has been empirically proven to mediate the impact of COG on BI (Fu, Ye, & Xiang, 2016; Yang, Isa, Yao, Xia, & Liu, 2022). However, no previous research has examined the mediating role of CON between AF and BI, likely due to the relatively recent conceptual clarification of CON within tourism studies. In this research, AF is found to have a significant impact on CON and also exerts a direct effect on BI, suggesting a potential mediating pathway: AF → CON → BI. Although no prior research has directly examined the integrated association among COG, AF, CON, and BI, existing studies suggest that COG influences tourists' affective responses during travel, and AF enhances their mental intention to visit (Loureiro & Jesus, 2019; Stylos et al., 2016) thereby improving BI (Huang & Lin, 2024; Lee et al., 2023; Stylos et al., 2017; Stylos et al., 2016). Furthermore, it has been established that tourists' COG has a direct positive influence on their BI (Fu et al., 2016; Loureiro & Jesus, 2019; Stylos et al., 2016). Accordingly, another three hypotheses were proposed.

H_7: AF significantly mediates the COG and BI.

H_8: CON significantly mediates the AF and BI.

H_9: AF and CON both significantly mediate the COG and BI.

2.2. Moderating Effect of Gender

Gender is regarded as both a biological attribute and a construct influenced by societal and cultural norms (Okazaki & Hirose, 2009) and plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions of travel experiences and tourist behaviors (Dedeoğlu, Balıkçıoğlu, & Küçükergin, 2016; Han, Hsu, & Lee, 2009; Huang & van der Veen, 2019; Wang et al., 2016). Previous studies have reported that tourists' cognitive evaluations differ significantly across gender groups. For instance, Beerli and Martin (2004) found that women exhibit stronger cognitive assessment of natural and cultural attributes than men. Gender differences have also been observed in tourists' attitudes toward destinations. Huang and van der Veen (2019) found that men hold less favorable attitudes toward the natural environment compared to women. Similarly, Wang et al. (2016) identified significant gender differences in the relationship between AF and tourist expectations. Furthermore, Frew and Shaw (1999) reported notable gender-based differences in visitation patterns and preferences for tourist attractions, as male and female tourists showed distinct interests. These findings are relevant for market segmentation and for understanding gender-based tourist preferences, yet they have received limited attention in tourism research. Additionally, as a precursor to BI, CON also represents a transitional state from desire to intention. However, no previous studies have explored the moderating role of gender in the relationship between CON and related constructs. Given the scant literature, this research aims to further explore the potential moderating effect of gender on the impact of DI on BI. Accordingly, six hypotheses have been proposed.

H_{10a}: The connection between COG and AF is significantly moderated by gender.

H_{10b}: The connection between COG and BI is significantly moderated by gender.

H_{10c}: The connection between AF and BI is significantly moderated by gender.

H_{10d}: The connection between COG and CON is significantly moderated by gender.

H_{10e}: The connection between AF and CON is significantly moderated by gender.

H_{10f}: The connection between CON and BI is significantly moderated by gender.

2.3. Moderating Effect of Generation

The issue of generational differences is an important aspect of tourism studies because different generations typically have distinct perceptions and behaviors. Therefore, it is significant for marketers in the tourism industry to segment their markets based on behaviors that stem from such generational differences so that they can tailor products and strategies to meet the core needs of consumers (Gardiner, Grace, & King, 2014; Huang & Lu, 2017). A generational theory emphasizes that individuals belonging to the same generational period tend to exhibit similar patterns of attitudes, values, and behaviors, resulting from shared historical, social, and cultural experiences during their formative years (Strauss & Howe, 1997). Gen "X" is usually used to describe an unnamed generation in Western terminology. However, there is no universal agreement on generational punctuation in China (Huang & Lu, 2017). With respect to the West, generations, such as Generation Y, are labelled in alphabetical order. However, western generational labels are less clear-cut in a country like China, with its unique political and socio-cultural history. Instead, according to Huang and van der Veen (2019), one may better achieve their purposes by using development-stage names, such as post-1980s and post-1990s. Overall, research into the moderating role of generation on tourists' DI and behavior remains sparse. The generational effect on tourist behavior has received comparatively more attention than DI. Previous studies have found that different generations demonstrate varying travel preferences when visiting specific destinations and exhibit distinct tourism motivations (Gardiner et al., 2014; Huang & Lu, 2017; Li, He, & Qiao, 2021; Seabra et al., 2020). However, the influence of generation on BI derived from tourist experiences, particularly in natural tourism contexts, remains underexplored (Gardiner et al., 2014). Few studies, such as those by Huang and van der Veen (2019) and Li, Li, and Hudson (2013), have evaluated and confirmed that generational differences significantly affect tourist perceptions and attitudes. These differences enable tourism providers and destination managers to tailor marketing strategies to diverse market segments and behavioral patterns. Based on this understanding, we propose the following:

H_{11a}: The connection between COG and AF is significantly moderated by generation.

H_{11b}: The connection between COG and BI is significantly moderated by generation.

H_{11c}: The connection between AF and BI is significantly moderated by generation.

H_{11d}: The connection between COG and CON is significantly moderated by generation.

H_{11e}: The connection between AF and CON is significantly moderated by generation.

H_{11f}: The connection between CON and BI is significantly moderated by generation.

According to the discussion above, the current study's conceptual framework is depicted in Figure 1.

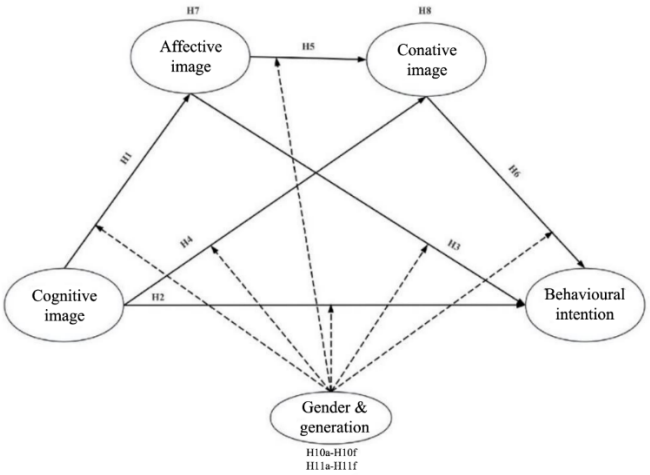

Figure 1. This research's conceptual framework.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Area

Mount Sanqingshan National Park (MSNP), located in Shangrao City, China, is renowned for its dramatic granite topography, characterized by peculiar pillars and peaks resembling humans or animals. In addition to its stunning natural scenery, MSNP's beauty is enhanced by frequent atmospheric phenomena such as halos and rainbows, caused by its unique meteorological conditions. Recognizing its significant geological and aesthetic value, MSNP was designated a World Natural Heritage Site in 2008 by UNESCO (2021). MSNP also has a rich Taoist heritage, which attracts many tourists. Tourism in MSNP has increased substantially, with visitor numbers rising from 1.48 million in 2008 to 23.95 million in 2019 (Mount Sanqingshan National Park Mountain Management Committee, 2023). Such rapid expansion reflects MSNP's rising stature in the tourism industry, with visitors coming from a variety of demographics. Its differentiation through natural scenery and historical heritage provides an ideal environment for studying how DI affects BI, especially concerning the moderating influence of gender and generational differences. It also offers a suitable environment for gathering diverse and representative samples.

3.2. Measures

This research used the following measures to assess the concepts within the conceptual framework. Firstly, the study of Stylidis et al. (2017) and Wang and Hsu (2010) serves as the major references in measuring the nine-item COG. Secondly, MSNP measures AF with four items adopting from Beerli and Martin (2004) and Wang and Hsu (2010) 's items. Four items of the CON will be measured adopting from Stylos et al. (2016). Additionally, BI with three items based on the study of Loi, So, Lo, and Fong (2017); Papadimitriou, Apostolopoulou, and Kaplanidou (2015), and Stylos et al. (2016). Data were collected using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree").

3.3. Data Collection and Data Analysis

A total of 450 questionnaires were distributed during May and June 2024 at the Jinsha Visitor Centre of MSNP through simple random sampling. This period coincides with the peak tourist season at MSNP, which can facilitate the collection of more effective and valid data. However, it is also a busy period, which may limit tourists' response times. Due to incomplete responses and non-standard answers such as patterns of identical ratings, contradictory selections, or missing demographic information, 62 questionnaires were excluded. Consequently, 388 valid responses were retained for analysis, resulting in an effective response rate of 86.2%.

Table 1. Response profile.

Category	Option	Frequency
Gender	Female	178
	Male	220
Age	18-24 years old	42
	25-34 years old	200
	35-44 years old	104
	45-54 years old	42
Occupation	Government sector	131
	Private sector	206
	Student	20
	Retired	9
	Non-government organizations/Others	22
	High school or below	16
Travel Partners	Alone	35
	With family member	119
	With a spouse or partner	152
	With friends	82

Descriptive analysis indicated that 178 respondents were male and 220 participants were female. Slightly more than half of the participants were aged 25–34 years (51.5%) and employed in the private sector (53.1%). Participants who visited MSNP with a spouse or partner accounted for the highest percentage of respondents (39.2%), while those with family members represented the second-largest group (30.7%), followed by respondents who visited with friends (21.1%) and alone (9%) (See Table 1).

This research utilized Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) through SmartPLS 3.1 to ascertain the impact of DI on female, male, young-generation (post-2000s/1990s), and old-generation (post-1980s/1970s) tourists' BI. Specifically, permutation tests and Multi-Group Analysis (MGA) were employed to examine the effect of moderator variables.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Common Method Variance

Assessing common method variance (CMV) is essential to mitigate potential bias from self-administered questionnaires and single-source data collection. A complete collinearity assessment using variance inflation factors (VIFs) is an established method for evaluating CMV (Kock & Lynn, 2012). The results showed that VIFs for all constructs ranged between 1.00 and 3.041. These results indicate that CMV did not significantly compromise the validity of the research findings.

4.2. Evaluating Measurement Model

Table 2 demonstrates that the criteria for composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) are satisfied, with CR values ≥ 0.7 and AVE values ≥ 0.5 for all constructs. All indicator loadings exceed 0.708, except for "COG1" and "COG6."

Table 2. Results of the measurement model.

Construct/Item	Loading	CR	AVE	
Cognitive image		0.919	0.559	
COG1	0.692			
COG2	0.809			
COG3	0.768			
COG4	0.761			
COG5	0.735			
COG6	0.690			
COG7	0.753			
COG8	0.781			
COG9	0.734			
Affective image		0.898	0.745	
AF1	0.847			
AF2	0.877			
AF3	0.866			
Conative image		0.910	0.718	
CON1	0.852			
CON2	0.885			
CON3	0.842			
CON4	0.809			
Behavioral intention		0.907	0.764	
BI1	0.870			
BI2	0.880			
BI3	0.873			
Discriminant validity	1	2	3	4
1. Affective image				
2. Behavioral intention	0.839			
3. Conative image	0.794	0.869		
4. Cognitive image	0.846	0.825	0.862	

Note: The "AI4" has been deleted due to discrimination validity.

However, these indicators were retained, as the construct met the minimum threshold values for AVE (0.5) and CR (0.7), in accordance with the guidelines of Ramayah, Cheah, Chuah, Ting, and Memon (2016). Additionally, discriminant validity was confirmed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), with all values below the HTMT0.9 threshold, as recommended by Hair et al. (2019) (refer to Table 2).

4.3. Evaluating the Structural Model

Before assessing the structural model, variance inflation factors (VIFs) were evaluated. All the inner VIF values were below the threshold of 3.33, as recommended by Hair et al. (2019) (see Table 3). These results indicate that multicollinearity does not pose a concern in the internal model of the current research. Next, R2 values for all variables exceeded the minimum recommended threshold of 0.1, as established by Hair, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2017). Specifically, in this study, the R^2 value for BI was notably high at 0.643, followed by CON at 0.612 and AF at 0.540. These results suggest that the core constructs demonstrate the framework's favorable explanatory power. Subsequently, all Q^2 values were greater than zero ($Q^2_{AF} = 0.395$; $Q^2_{CON} = 0.434$; $Q^2_{BI} = 0.484$), indicating the model's medium predictive relevance.

Furthermore, hypothesis testing was conducted using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples, and the results are presented in Table 3. COG had a significant effect in enhancing AF ($\beta = 0.735$, $t = 26.813$, $p < 0.001$), BI ($\beta = 0.222$, $t = 2.580$, $p < 0.05$), and CON ($\beta = 0.580$, $t = 10.857$, $p < 0.001$), thereby supporting H1, H2, and H4. AF also significantly influenced BI ($\beta = 0.280$, $t = 4.952$, $p < 0.001$) and CON ($\beta = 0.250$, $t = 4.145$, $p < 0.001$), thereby supporting H3 and H5. Meanwhile, CON was positively associated with BI ($\beta = 0.386$, $t = 6.122$, $p < 0.001$), thereby supporting H6. Moreover, the indirect effects of COG → AF → BI ($\beta = 0.206$, $t = 5.004$, $p < 0.001$) and COG → CON → BI ($\beta = 0.224$, $t = 5.599$, $p < 0.001$) were significant, supporting H7 and H8. Additionally, the serial mediating effect of AF and CON between COG and BI ($\beta = 0.071$, $t = 3.216$, $p < 0.01$) was also significant, indicating that H9 is supported.

Table 3. Results of the structural model.

Hypothesis	Relationship	*β*	*t*	95% CI	VIF	Supported
H1	COG→ AF	0.735	26.813***	[0.682;0.775]	1.000	Yes
H2	COG→ BI	0.222	2.580*	[0.079;0.358]	3.041	Yes
H3	AF→BI	0.280	4.952***	[0.185;0.372]	2.336	Yes
H4	COG → CON	0.580	10.857***	[0.490;0.667]	2.175	Yes
H5	AF →CON	0.250	4.145***	[0.153;0.351]	2.175	Yes
H6	CON→ BI	0.386	6.122***	[0.330;0.461]	2.576	Yes
H7	COG→ AF→BI	0.206	5.004***	[0.138;0.274]	-	Yes
Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t	95% CI	VIF	Supported
H8	COG →CON→BI	0.224	5.599***	[0.162;0.293]	-	Yes
H9	COG →AF →CON→BI	0.071	3.216**	[0.040;0.114]	-	Yes

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

4.4. Moderating Effect Test

This section explores the role of gender and generation as moderators within the structural relationships among COG, AF, CON, and BI. The gender distribution (female = 178, male = 220) was relatively balanced. A random subset of 100 respondents aged 24–32 was also selected. Respondents aged 18–24 and 25–34 were classified as the younger generation (i.e., post-2000s and post-1990s; n = 142), while respondents aged 35–44 and 45–54 were classified as the older generation (i.e., post-1980s and post-1970s; n = 146), based on the generational definitions discussed in Section 2.3.

Moreover, establishing measurement invariance is crucial to ensure that differences in PLS-SEM results between groups reflect actual construct variations, not measurement errors. According to Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt

(2015), this can be assessed through configurational invariance, compositional invariance, and equal means and variances assessment. First, measurement models for female and male tourists, as well as younger and older generation groups, were assessed using factor loadings, CR, AVE, and HTMT values. Configurational invariance between the groups was confirmed.

Furthermore, compositional invariance was confirmed, as all correlation coefficients exceeded the 5% quantile (Table 4). However, the gender group did not satisfy the equal variance assessment criteria, indicating only partial measurement invariance. In contrast, full measurement invariance was established for the generation group, allowing for meaningful comparisons of path coefficients across younger, older, and combined generational groups.

The comprehensive MGA analysis is presented in Table 5 and Table 6. These results indicate that the impact of COG on BI varies significantly across gender and generation groups, supporting hypotheses H10b and H11b. Notably, COG has a significant impact on the BI of male tourists (CI: 0.207, 0.559) and young-generation tourists (CI: 0.203, 0.530), but not on female tourists (CI: -0.134, 0.263) and older-generation tourists (CI: -0.116, 0.240). Furthermore, the positive effect of COG on AF was significantly stronger for male tourists than for female tourists, supporting H10a. Additionally, a significant difference was observed in the positive effect of AF on BI, which was stronger among female tourists than male tourists, supporting H10c.

Regarding the generation group, two significant differences were identified in the positive effects of COG and AF on CON, thereby supporting H11a and H11d. Specifically, the impact of COG on CON was stronger among younger tourists, while the effect of AF on CON was more pronounced among older tourists. Notably, AF significantly affected the CON of older-generation tourists (CI: 0.251, 0.553) but not that of younger tourists (CI: -0.048, 0.222). Nevertheless, the remaining structural relationships between gender and generation groups did not exhibit significant differences, resulting in the rejection of H10d, H10e, H10f, H11a, H11c, and H11f. 10.

Table 4. Permutation test for gender and generation group.

Construct	Configurational invariance (Same algorithmic for both groups)	Compositional invariance		Partial measurement	Equal mean assessment			Equal variance assessment			Full measurement
		C=1	>5%	Invariance established	Difference	CI	Equal	Difference	CI	Equal	Invariance established
COG	Yes	0.999	0.999	Yes	-0.130	[-0.156, 0.165]	Yes	0.313	[-0.272,0.259]	No	No
AF	Yes	1.000	0.999	Yes	0.021	[-0.165,0.169]	Yes	-0.065	[-0.285,0.269]	Yes	Yes
CON	Yes	1.000	0.999	Yes	-0.138	[-0.170,0.165]	Yes	0.292	[-0.277,0.259]	No	No
BI	Yes	0.999	0.999	Yes	-0.130	[-0.161,0.161]	Yes	0.189	[-0.372,0.350]	Yes	Yes
COG*	Yes	1.000	0.999	Yes	0.003	[-0.197,0.200]	Yes	0.186	[-0.291,0.276]	Yes	Yes
AF*	Yes	0.999	0.999	Yes	0.002	[-0.205,0.193]	Yes	0.012	[-0.338,0.321]	Yes	Yes
CI*	Yes	1.000	0.999	Yes	0.003	[-0.196,0.192]	Yes	0.024	[-0.339,0.319]	Yes	Yes
BI*	Yes	0.999	0.999	Yes	0.002	[-0.202,0.201]	Yes	0.068	[-0.401,0.388]	Yes	Yes

Note: *For generation group.

Table 5. Multigroup analysis for gender group.

Hypothesis	Path coefficient Relationships			95% CI		Path coefficient difference	*p*-value difference (One-tailed)		Support
		Female	Male	Female	Male		Permutation	Henseler's MGA	
H10a	COG→ AF	0.742***	0.745***	[0.664, 0.798]	[0.682, 0.791]	-0.003	0.482	0.52	Yes/Yes
H10b	COG→ BI	0.076	0.384***	[-0.134, 0.263]	[0.207, 0.559]	-0.308	0.038	0.973	Yes/Yes
H10c	AF→BI	0.396***	0.160*	[0.274, 0.516]	[0.030, 0.297]	0.235	0.014	0.015	Yes/Yes
H10d	COG → CON	0.563***	0.590***	[0.431, 0.692]	[0.455, 0.714]	-0.027	0.377	0.594	No/No
H10e	AI →CON	0.276**	0.230*	[0.129, 0.408]	[0.084, 0.381]	0.046	0.388	0.357	No/No
H10f	CON→ BI	0.420***	0.339***	[0.273, 0.590]	[0.217, 0.466]	0.082	0.299	0.252	No/No

Note: According to Henseler's MGA method, a p-value less than 0.05 or greater than 0.95 signifies a significant difference at the 5% level between the path coefficients across the two groups: **p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

Table 6. Multigroup analysis for generation group.

Hypothesis	Relationships	Path coefficient			95% CI		Path coefficient	*p*-value difference (One-tailed)		
		Complete	YG	OG	YG	OG	difference	Permutation	Henseler's MGA	Support
H11a	COG→ AF	0.750**	0.777**	0.726**	[0.706, 0.827]	[0.633, 0.792]	0.051	0.198	0.193	No/No
H11b	COG→ BI	0.196*	0.368**	0.059	[0.203, 0.530]	[-0.116, 0.240]	0.308	0.03	0.021	Yes/Yes
H11c	AF→BI	0.298**	0.202*	0.366**	[0.085, 0.327]	[0.204, 0.530]	-0.164	0.122	0.904	No/No
H11d	COG → CON	0.587**	0.733**	0.469**	[0.607, 0.850]	[0.345, 0.589]	0.264	0.01	0.008	Yes/Yes
H11e	AF →CON	0.262**	0.086	0.411**	[-0.048, 0.222]	[0.251, 0.553]	-0.325	0.006	0.994	Yes/Yes
H11f	CON→ BI	0.400**	0.353**	0.434**	[0.199, 0.516]	[0.298, 0.565]	-0.081	0.278	0.743	No/No

Note: According to Henseler's MGA method, a p-value less than 0.05 or greater than 0.95 signifies a significant difference at the 5% level between the path coefficients across the two groups; *p<0.01; **p<0.001; YG=Young generation; OG=Old generation.

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The current research aimed to enhance our understanding of how the internal structural relationships within DI and their association with BI are shaped by examining the effects of gender and generation within the context of a WNHS. This research supported all the links between DI and BI, specifically among COG, AF, CON, and BI across gender and generational groups (H1–H9, H10a–H10c, and H11b, H11d, H11e), although some hypotheses did not differ significantly across gender and generational groups (H10d, H10e, H10f, H11a, H11c, and H11f).

5.1. The Effect of Destination Image and Behavioral Intention

Previous DI studies have focused on COG and AF and their relationships to BI. The current research further emphasizes the role of CON within the DI construct. This study may be among the first attempts to evaluate the internal associations among these components, including CON, and their relationships with BI, particularly by assessing AF and CON's mediating effects in the COG and BI relationship. The results revealed that COG had a more substantial effect on AF (t=26.813) than on CON (t=10.857) and was the strongest among all path coefficients, suggesting that WNHS tourists' COG is more likely to shape their psychological attitudes toward WNHSs. Furthermore, COG influenced CON more strongly than AF (t=4.145). These findings reveal that COG plays a vital role in shaping the tourist experience and supports WNHSs in conveying a positive affective impression and conative response. This contrasts with the findings of White (2014), which showed that facilities and attractions had a greater impact on positive AF than on CON. This exploratory study is based on path analysis results, and variation across different research contexts is to be expected. AF had a weaker influence on CON compared to the relationship between COG and CON in the WNHS context. Indeed, studies exploring the internal relationships within the DI construct, including CON, remain rare. For example, White (2014) focused on potential tourists with no prior experience traveling to Hong Kong. In contrast, this research investigated tourists who had previously visited MSNP. Therefore, the unique contribution of this internal DI construct assessment lies in its ability to enhance destination authorities' understanding of tourists' travel perceptions, an area not previously emphasized in tourism marketing research, particularly in the WNHS context. Furthermore, AF has become a central focus of recent DI research. Consequently, scholars should reconsider the significant role of COG within the DI construct in shaping DI. Meanwhile, WNHS managers should work to improve the tourist experience by providing more physical support, such as clear visitor guidelines and environmentally friendly facilities. For instance, guided tours that educate tourists about MSNP's unique culture, history, ecology, and natural heritage can strengthen tourists' COG of the WNHS destination. By deepening understanding, emotional responses (AF) may be elevated, making tourists more likely to develop CON.

Moreover, the t-value from CON to BI appeared higher (t=6.122), while the values from AF to BI (t = 4.952) and from COG to BI (t=2.580) were relatively lower. This implies that CON is empirically distinct from BI and has a more substantial influence on BI than either COG or AF. Limited prior research has found that within the cognitive–affective–conative structure, CON exerts a more substantial impact on BI than other image dimensions (Stylos et al., 2017; Stylos et al., 2016), corroborating the findings of this study. Additionally, CON, representing an internal desire process, is a prerequisite for BI and is more closely related to it. Furthermore, the stronger correlation between AF and BI, compared to that between COG and BI, may be attributed to the emotional experiences encountered during travel, which can significantly influence future travel decisions. This is also confirmed by a meta-analysis and empirical research conducted by Afshardoost and Eshaghi (2020). These findings further confirm the essential role of CON in influencing BI within the WNHS context and offer insights for WNHS managers to develop compelling CON strategies that influence tourists' internal desires and motivate transitions in behavioral states. For instance, targeted campaigns involving adventure tourism experiences (e.g., hiking trails, nature tours) can provide opportunities for tourists to engage deeply and form strong, memorable CON.

Additionally, the effect of AF (t=5.004) mediating the influence between COG and BI is less potent than that of CON (t=5.599). Moreover, the serial mediating effect involving COG, AF, CON, and BI (t=3.216) reveals further

insights. These results indicate the importance of the presence of AF and CON in determining WNHS tourists' BI, providing an integrated explanation of the influence of COG on BI through these intervening constructs. Regardless of the intervening variables, the indirect paths between COG and BI always exert a stronger influence than the direct effect. This implies the potential of COG as the foundation, while the interaction of the affective and conative dimensions enhances its influence. These findings reinforce the need for a positive COG, emotional connections (i.e., AF), and CON to effectively stimulate tourists' BI. These results also inform how marketers and managers in destinations can develop comprehensive strategies addressing the cognitive, affective, and conative aspects of tourist experiences in an integrated manner. For instance, modernizing a destination's physical attributes, safeguarding its core natural features, creating emotionally evocative experiences, and fostering internally motivated intentions can significantly increase tourists' likelihood of revisiting the place or encouraging others to do the same.

5.2. The Impact of Gender and Generation

This research is among the few to empirically investigate the impact of gender and generation on DI and BI within the context of WNHS tourism. These findings reveal that, although the links between COG and AF and between COG and BI are generally stronger for male tourists, the association between AF and BI is stronger among female tourists. These findings are consistent with previous research indicating that women are more emotionally influenced than men in tourism contexts (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Huang & van der Veen, 2019; Mestre, Samper, Frías, & Tur, 2009; C. Wang et al., 2016). Particularly in nature-based destinations, male tourists were more responsive to physical attributes, which evoked BI (Huang & Lu, 2017; Omid, Pons, & Zins, 2017) whereas women's attitudes, when inspired by the natural environment, were more likely to influence their BI positively (Huang & van der Veen, 2019). These findings offer insights for WNHS managers, enhancing physical attributes that cater to female tourists, such as women-friendly services and travel routes, can improve their emotional experience and encourage visitation. For the male market, focusing on the quality of physical attributes, such as maintaining clean pathways and preserving the natural environment, can strengthen their AF of the destination and increase their BI.

Regarding generational groups, the post-2000s/post-1990s generation exhibited stronger path coefficients in the relationships between COG and CON, as well as COG and BI. In contrast, the association between AF and CON was stronger among the post-1980s/post-1970s generation. Interestingly, for the younger generation, this relationship was not statistically significant. This partially aligns with the findings of Huang and van der Veen (2019), who noted that younger generations often seek out natural environments or aim to escape work-related stress when they travel; thus, a positive COG is more likely to promote favorable CON and BI among this group. From the perspective of generational theory, older generations, who have generally achieved social status and economic stability, may pay more attention to their emotional experiences. Huang and Lu (2017) also pointed out that individuals born in the 1970s–1980s in China tend to be individualistic and self-interested, implying a heightened sensitivity to affective stimuli. Thus, positive AF tends to evoke internal intentions among the post-1970s/1980s generation. These findings suggest that WNHS authorities should provide more services or facilities with emotional value to appeal to the older generation, while also exploring natural attractions and high-quality services that cultivate a sense of escape and foster a positive COG among the post-1990s/2000s generation.

This research expands the literature on DI and BI by highlighting the moderating effects of gender and generation within the context of WNHS tourism. The findings confirm and extend existing theories related to gender differences, suggesting that men and women process DI differently. While COG exerts a stronger influence on males, AF plays a more critical role among females. This aligns with emotional susceptibility theories and underscores the importance of considering gender when analyzing tourist behavior. Additionally, this study provides new insights into the generational distinctions in DI formation and its effects on BI. The stronger link between COG and CON in the post-2000s/post-1980s generation suggests that BI among this group is primarily influenced by physical and practical evaluations of destinations. Conversely, the post-1980s/post-1970s generation relies more on the affective–

conative pathway. These findings enrich generational theory by linking it to specific psychological and behavioral patterns in tourism. Tourism marketers should tailor campaigns to align with the distinct preferences of different gender and generational groups, thereby enabling better targeting of their diverse audiences and ultimately promoting sustainable growth and enhancing visitors' future intentions.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research has provided valuable insights into the internal relationships within the DI construct and the association between DI and BI across gender and generation groups in the context of WNHSs. The findings confirm the interrelationships among COG, AF, and CON, indicating that COG exerts a more substantial influence on AF than on CON, while it also more easily influences CON than AF. Furthermore, these findings support the positive effects of DI on BI, highlighting the significance of CON in shaping individuals' intentions toward WNHS destinations.

Moreover, the study reports the mediating effects of AF and CON on the relationship between COG and BI, with evidence of a serial mediating pathway involving COG, AF, CON, and BI. These findings comprehensively explain how COG influences BI through these intermediate constructs. Additionally, the study emphasizes the roles of gender and generation in moderating the association between COG and BI. Gender also moderates the link between COG and AF, as well as between AF and BI. Meanwhile, the moderating effect of generation plays a vital role in shaping the relationships among COG, AF, and CON. Therefore, WNHS destination managers can effectively promote natural heritage tourism practices through targeted branding and marketing strategies.

Although this research contributes to several aspects of theory and marketing, there are two limitations. Despite the overall sample size meeting the targeted number, the subgroup sizes for testing generational differences were relatively small, which limited our ability to examine potential interaction effects related to generation. Future research could address this limitation by employing a more robust sampling design that allows for detailed testing of these effects. Another limitation concerns the classification of generational groups based on the data collected. Due to the limited number of respondents from the post-2000s and post-1970s groups, the post-2000s and post-1990s were combined into a "young" generation group, while the post-1980s and post-1970s formed the "old" generation group. This grouping approach may lack precision in exploring each generation's DI and BI. Further research should evaluate the moderating role of each generational group in the relationship between DI and BI.

Funding: This study received no specific financial support.
Institutional Review Board Statement: The Ethical Committee of Shangrao Normal University, China has granted approval for this study on 8 January 2024 (Ref. No. SNU/2024/01).
Transparency: The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.
Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.
Authors' Contributions: Both authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study. Both authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

REFERENCES

Afshardoost, M., & Eshaghi, M. S. (2020). Destination image and tourist behavioural intentions: A meta-analysis. *Tourism Management*, *81*, 104154. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2020.104154

Bagozzi, R. P. (1992). The self-regulation of attitudes, intentions, and behavior. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *55*(2), 178-204. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.2307/2786945

Baloglu, S., & McCleary, K. W. (1999). A model of destination image formation. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *26*(4), 868-897.

Beerli, A., & Martin, J. D. (2004). Factors influencing destination image. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *31*(3), 657-681. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.ANNALS.2004.01.010

Carreira, V., González-Rodríguez, M. R., & Díaz-Fernández, M. C. (2022). The relevance of motivation, authenticity and destination image to explain future behavioural intention in a UNESCO World Heritage Site. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *25*(4), 650-673. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2021.1905617

Carvache-Franco, M., Carvache-Franco, W., Hernández-Lara, A. B., Hassan, T., & Carvache-Franco, O. (2024). The cognitive and conative image in insular marine protected areas: A study from Galapagos, Ecuador. *Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism*, *47*, 100793. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jort.2024.100793

Casali, G. L., Liu, Y., Presenza, A., & Moyle, C.-L. (2021). How does familiarity shape destination image and loyalty for visitors and residents? *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, *27*(2), 151-167. https://doi.org/10.1177/1356766720969747

Chon, K. S. (1992). The role of destination image in tourism: An extension. *The Tourist Review*, *47*(1), 2-8.

Crompton, J. L. (1979). An assessment of the image of Mexico as a vacation destination and the influence of geographical location upon that image. *Journal of Travel Research*, *17*(4), 18-23. https://doi.org/10.1177/004728757901700404

Dann, G. M. (1996). Tourists' images of a destination-an alternative analysis. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *5*(1-2), 41-55. https://doi.org/10.1300/J073v05n01_04

Dedeoğlu, B. B., Balıkçıoğlu, S., & Küçükergin, K. G. (2016). The role of tourists' value perceptions in behavioral intentions: The moderating effect of gender. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *33*(4), 513-534. https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2015.1064062

Echtner, C. M., & Ritchie, J. B. (1993). The measurement of destination image: An empirical assessment. *Journal of travel Research*, *31*(4), 3-13. https://doi.org/10.1177/004728759303100402

Frew, E. A., & Shaw, R. N. (1999). The relationship between personality, gender, and tourism behavior. *Tourism Management*, *20*(2), 193-202. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(98)00081-8

Fu, H., Ye, B. H., & Xiang, J. (2016). Reality TV, audience travel intentions, and destination image. *Tourism Management*, *55*, 37-48. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2016.01.009

Gardiner, S., Grace, D., & King, C. (2014). The generation effect: The future of domestic tourism in Australia. *Journal of Travel Research*, *53*(6), 705-720. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287514530810

Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2017). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Hair, J. F., Ringle, C. M., Gudergan, S. P., Fischer, A., Nitzl, C., & Menictas, C. (2019). Partial least squares structural equation modeling-based discrete choice modeling: An illustration in modeling retailer choice. *Business Research*, *12*(1), 115-142. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40685-018-0072-4

Hallmann, K., Zehrer, A., & Müller, S. (2015). Perceived destination image: An image model for a winter sports destination and its effect on intention to revisit. *Journal of Travel Research*, *54*(1), 94-106. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287513513161

Han, H., Hsu, L.-T. J., & Lee, J.-S. (2009). Empirical investigation of the roles of attitudes toward green behaviors, overall image, gender, and age in hotel customers' eco-friendly decision-making process. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *28*(4), 519-528. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2009.02.004

Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015). A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *43*, 115-135. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-014-0403-8

Huang, Q., & Lu, Y. (2017). Generational perspective on consumer behavior: China's potential outbound tourist market. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, *24*, 7-15. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2017.07.008

Huang, S., & van der Veen, R. (2019). The moderation of gender and generation in the effects of perceived destination image on tourist attitude and visit intention: A study of potential Chinese visitors to Australia. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, *25*(3), 375-389. https://doi.org/10.1177/1356766718814077

Huang, Y.-C., & Lin, Y. H. (2024). The influence of perceived authenticity on pilgrimage image in the Dajia Mazu pilgrimage. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *27*(12), 1989-2003. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2023.2222581

Hunt, J. D. (1975). Image as a factor in tourism development. *Journal of Travel Research*, *13*(3), 1-7. https://doi.org/10.1177/004728757501300301

Kim, S., Lehto, X., & Kandampully, J. (2019). The role of familiarity in consumer destination image formation. *Tourism Review*, *74*(4), 885-901.

Kock, F., Josiassen, A., & Assaf, A. G. (2016). Advancing destination image: The destination content model. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *61*, 28-44. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.ANNALS.2016.07.003

Kock, N., & Lynn, G. S. (2012). Lateral collinearity and misleading results in variance-based SEM: An illustration and recommendations. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, *13*(7), 2. https://doi.org/10.17705/1jais.00302

Lee, T. H., Lin, Y. H., & Wang, C.-K. (2023). Can aboriginal images contribute to aboriginal cultural identity? Evidence from the perspective of tourists' images. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *26*(7), 1051-1066. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2021.2005553

Lee, W., & Jeong, C. (2018). Effects of pro-environmental destination image and leisure sports mania on motivation and pro-environmental behavior of visitors to Korea's national parks. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, *10*, 25-35. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2018.05.005

Li, F., He, C., & Qiao, G. (2021). Attributes that form romantic travel experience: A study of Chinese generation Y tourists. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *24*(15), 2130-2143. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2020.1820456

Li, X., Li, X. R., & Hudson, S. (2013). The application of generational theory to tourism consumer behavior: An American perspective. *Tourism Management*, *37*, 147-164. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.01.015

Loi, L. T. I., So, A. S. I., Lo, I. S., & Fong, L. H. N. (2017). Does the quality of tourist shuttles influence revisit intention through destination image and satisfaction? The case of Macao. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, *32*, 115-123. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2017.06.002

Loureiro, S. M. C., & Jesus, S. (2019). How perceived risk and animosity towards a destination may influence destination image and intention to revisit: The case of Rio de Janeiro. *Anatolia*, *30*(4), 497-512. https://doi.org/10.1080/13032917.2019.1632910

Lv, X., & McCabe, S. (2020). Expanding theory of tourists' destination loyalty: The role of sensory impressions. *Tourism Management*, *77*, 104026. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.TOURMAN.2019.104026

Mestre, M. V., Samper, P., Frías, M. D., & Tur, A. M. (2009). Are women more empathetic than men? A longitudinal study in adolescence. *The Spanish Journal of Psychology*, *12*(1), 76-83. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1138741600001499

Mount Sanqingshan National Park Mountain Management Committee. (2023). *Economic benefits of tourism in Sanqingshan and growth in visitor numbers over the years*. Retrieved from https://www.sqs373.com/sqs/8334.html

Okazaki, S., & Hirose, M. (2009). Does gender affect media literacy? Exploring gender differences in online privacy attitudes. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, *12*(4), 437–441.

Omid, M., Pons, F., & Zins, M. (2017). Revisiting drivers of tourist satisfaction and loyalty: Role of key moderators. *International Journal of Services Technology and Management*, *23*(3), 165-188. https://doi.org/10.1504/IJSTM.2017.085472

Paniandi, T. A., Albattat, A. R., Bijami, M., Alexander, A., & Balekrisnan, V. (2018). Marketing mix and destination image, case study: Batu Caves as a religious destination. *Almatourism-Journal of Tourism, Culture and Territorial Development*, *9*(17), 165-186.

Papadimitriou, D., Apostolopoulou, A., & Kaplanidou, K. (2015). Destination personality, affective image, and behavioral intentions in domestic urban tourism. *Journal of Travel Research*, *54*(3), 302-315. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287513516389

Ramayah, T., Cheah, J., Chuah, F., Ting, H., & Memon, M. A. (2016). *Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 3.0: An updated and practical guide to statistical analysis* (1st ed.). Kuala Lumpur, KL: Pearson Malaysia Sdn Bhd.

Russell, J. A., & Pratt, G. (1980). A description of the affective quality attributed to environments. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *38*(2), 311-322. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.38.2.311

San Martín, H., & Del Bosque, I. A. R. (2008). Exploring the cognitive–affective nature of destination image and the role of psychological factors in its formation. *Tourism Management*, *29*(2), 263-277. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2007.03.012

Seabra, C., Pereira, A., Silva, C., Abrantes, J. L., Reis, M., & Paiva, O. (2020). Destination image perceived by domestic tourists: The influence of Generation Gap. *European Journal of Tourism Research*, *25*(2506), 1-22. https://doi.org/10.54055/ejtr.v25i.421

Souiden, N., Ladhari, R., & Chiadmi, N. E. (2017). Destination personality and destination image. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, *32*, 54–70. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.JHTM.2017.04.003

Strauss, W., & Howe, N. (1997). *The fourth turning: An American prophecy*. New York: Broadway Books.

Stylidis, D., Shani, A., & Belhassen, Y. (2017). Testing an integrated destination image model across residents and tourists. *Tourism Management*, *58*, 184-195. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2016.10.014

Stylidis, D., Woosnam, K. M., & Kim, S. (2022). Perceptions of attractions, residents as "more knowledgeable others" and destination image: Evidence from two destinations. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *24*(3), 472-486. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2515

Stylos, N., Bellou, V., Andronikidis, A., & Vassiliadis, C. A. (2017). Linking the dots among destination images, place attachment, and revisit intentions: A study among British and Russian tourists. *Tourism Management*, *60*, 15-29. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.TOURMAN.2016.11.006

Stylos, N., Vassiliadis, C. A., Bellou, V., & Andronikidis, A. (2016). Destination images, holistic images and personal normative beliefs: Predictors of intention to revisit a destination. *Tourism Management*, *53*, 40-60. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.TOURMAN.2015.09.006

UNESCO. (2021). *Mount Sanqingshan national park - UNESCO world heritage centre*. Retrieved from https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1292

Wang, B., Yang, Z., Han, F., & Shi, H. (2017). Car tourism in Xinjiang: The mediation effect of perceived value and tourist satisfaction on the relationship between destination image and loyalty. *Sustainability*, *9*(1), 22. https://doi.org/10.3390/su9010022

Wang, C.-y., & Hsu, M. K. (2010). The relationships of destination image, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions: An integrated model. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *27*(8), 829-843. https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2010.527249

Wang, C., Qu, H., & Hsu, M. K. (2016). Toward an integrated model of tourist expectation formation and gender difference. *Tourism Management*, *54*, 58-71. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2015.10.009

White, C. J. (2014). Ideal standards and attitude formation: A tourism destination perspective. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *16*(5), 441-449. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.1938

Woosnam, K. M., Stylidis, D., & Ivkov, M. (2020). Explaining conative destination image through cognitive and affective destination image and emotional solidarity with residents. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *28*(6), 917-935. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2019.1708920

Xu, M., Kim, S., & Reijnders, S. (2020). From food to feet: Analysing A Bite of China as food-based destination image. *Tourist Studies*, *20*(2), 145-165. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468797619888305

Yang, S., Isa, S. M., Yao, Y., Xia, J., & Liu, D. (2022). Cognitive image, affective image, cultural dimensions, and conative image: A new conceptual framework. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *13*, 935814. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.935814