
Explaining visit intention involving eWOM, perceived risk motivations and destination image

Manel Hamouda*

ISGG,
University of Gabès,
Rue Jilani Habib, 6002 Gabès, Tunisia
Email: manel.hamouda@gmail.com

*Corresponding author

Imen Yacoub

ISSET Bizerte,
Route Menzel Abderrahman, Zarzouna,
7021 Bizerte, Tunisia
Email: imenyacoub@yahoo.fr

Abstract: This research aims to understand the effects of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), the perceived risks related to a foreign country, and the main motivations for the cognitive image, affective image and intention to visit a potential destination. 368 completed questionnaires were obtained through convenience sampling and completed by travellers or potential travellers looking for trip destinations information on some Tunisian Facebook groups related to travel and tourism. Findings indicate that the cognitive destination image is only influenced by perceived risk whereas the affective image of a destination is influenced by eWOM, knowledge motivations, relaxation motivations and entertainment motivations. Moreover, the affective image is the component of destination image that has a significant and positive impact on the intention to visit. The outcomes of the study help to better develop a more effective and successful tourism marketing strategy.

Keywords: destination image; intention to visit; motivations; eWOM; electronic word-of-mouth; perceived risk.

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Biographical notes: Manel Hamouda is an Assistant Professor at the Higher Institute of Management at the University of Gabès (Tunisia). Her research interests lie in consumer behaviour, postmodern marketing, online marketing and international marketing.

Imen Yacoub is an Assistant Professor at the Higher Institute of Technological studies, of Bizerte (Tunisia). Her research is focused mainly on consumer behaviour, brand management, brand extension, relationship marketing and international marketing.

1 Introduction

The sector of tourism contributes significantly to the economic development of countries (Kandampully, 2000). It contributes to the creation of income and employment in the society, as well as the enrichment of many related industries. As a result, tourism is an extremely interesting topic for researchers and professionals (San Martín and del Bosque, 2008). It is, therefore, necessary to develop a positive image of the tourist destination in the target markets in order to obtain a real competitive advantage (Souiden et al., 2017). In fact, it is the image that makes it possible to make a distinction between tourist destinations. In addition, the destination image represents an integral and influential part of the travellers' decision-making process (Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997).

Hunt (1975) was the first to show the importance of the destination image and since then, this concept has become one of the most studied subjects in the academic literature during the last 30 years (Tapachai and Waryszak, 2000; Hallmann et al., 2013). However, more efforts are needed to scrutinise the multidimensional spirit of the destination image. In previous researches, a one-dimensional structure of the destination image has been widely studied. This is the cognitive dimension. Recently, several studies have suggested integrating not only individuals' cognitive assessments, but also the emotional assessments of a tourist destination (Kim and Richardson, 2003; Pike and Ryan, 2004). The destination image is already considered as a cognitive and affective dual-dimensional concept in most of the current research (Chen et al., 2016; Stylos et al., 2017).

More efforts are also required to better understand the formation or the background image of the destination image and the intention to visit (Gallarza et al., 2002). Previous research has explored the role of stimulating factors and personal factors in the process of image formation (Baloglu, 2001; Hui and Wan, 2003). However, some of these factors are missing or require more theoretical and empirical investigations. For example, the psychological factors (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999a) at the level of personal factors or sources of information, and more precisely online sources, such as electronic word-of-mouth at the level of the sources of stimulation (Chen et al., 2015).

In addition, the perceived risk has been also favoured as a groundwork of a destination image (Kim and Chalip, 2004; Becken et al., 2016) and the intention to visit and whose research is still limited.

Thus, this research attempts to better understand the concept of destination image at a dual level. First, we will further explore the structure of the concept by adopting the cognitive-affective nature of the image of the destination. On a second level, we will try to improve the knowledge on the formation of the image of a destination as well as its intention to visit by a traveller, studying the antecedents slightly surveyed by literature. And more particularly, we will try to check whether the travellers' diverse psychological motivations, the electronic word of mouth and the perceived risk will have any influence on the formation of a pre-conceived image prior to visiting the destination as well as the intention to visit this very destination.

2 Conceptual framework

A review of the existing literature allowed us to identify, mainly, three antecedents to the image and intention to visit a destination. First, there are the characteristics of tourists or personal factors (psychological and social). Among these factors, the travellers'

psychological motivations seem to exert a significant effect of the destination image on the level of both its cognitive and affective dimensions (Baloglu, 2000; San Martín and del Bosque, 2008).

Second, there are stimulation factors as well as information sources (Baloglu, 2000; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999a), which seem to have a significant influence on the cognitive and affective intentions and images.

Finally, in addition to the tourists' characteristics and stimulus factors, Chen et al. (2012) used the constraint literature to argue that safety and security are an important constraint in travel (Kim and Chalip, 2004). They found that the perceived risks before a trip have a significant relationship with the destination image perceived by travellers as well as their intention to visit a destination.

Thus, our conceptual framework integrates the three types of antecedents at the same time in order to better understand the image concept of destination and to study their impact on the intention of the visit.

2.1 Destination image and intention to visit

An image is a set of meanings by which an object is recognised and by which individuals describe, remember, and relate to that object. More precisely, an image is the outcome of the interaction of a person's beliefs, ideas, feelings, expectations and impressions about a subject or object (Chon, 1990). In the tourist context, the image is associated with a destination: it is the destination image that has aroused a growing interest from researchers to understand its formation, its antecedents and its consequences (Chew and Jahari, 2014). The definition of the most frequently quoted tourist destination image (Jenkins, 1999) in literature would be the one suggested by Crompton (1979), which defines it as "the set of beliefs, ideas and impressions of a person in respect of a destination".

Moreover, several studies advocate that the destination image is made up of two facets: cognitive and affective (Pike and Ryan, 2004; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999a). The affective image has been basically disregarded during the three decades of study on the image since most searches on the destination image were concentrated on the physical attributes of a destination, it is hence the cognitive image (Pike, 2002).

However, recent studies have shown that the cognitive-affective dichotomy of the destination image is likely to provide a better understanding of the destination image and therefore used by many destination image researchers (Chew and Jahari, 2014; Gkritzali et al., 2017; Hernández-Mogollón et al., 2017).

Thus, the concept is now understood from both dimensions. The cognitive image which includes the perceived attributes of the destination ie the set of beliefs of a tourist vis-à-vis this destination (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999a) and the affective image that refers to the emotional attributes represented by the individual's feelings towards the tourist destination (Pratt and Sparks, 2014; Kim and Richardson, 2003).

Moreover, the destination image is regarded to be crucial in the travellers' decision-making process (Beerli and Martín, 2004; Castro et al., 2007; Chen and Tsai, 2007) and in particular the intention to visit a touristic destination (Chen et al., 2013; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999a; Sirgy and Su, 2000).

In fact, several researchers agree that the choice of a destination by tourists is based on their images in favour of this very destination (Chen and Tsai, 2007; Pratt and Sparks, 2014). A positive opinion about a destination image enhances travellers' preferences for

the destination (Lin et al., 2007) and very likely they will choose this destination (Birgit, 2001; Echtner and Ritchie, 1993).

Baloglu (2000), within the context of the dual-dimensional approach of the destination image, thinks that the cognitive dimension and the affective dimension have a substantial influence on the tourist's intention to visit. Other research has also shown a significant and positive relationship between the destination image and the intention to visit (Chen and Tsai, 2007; Hudson and Ritchie, 2006; Shani et al., 2010; Chen et al., 2013).

These studies come to the conclusion that the more a destination image appears positive, the greater the intention to visit the destination is (Chi and Qu, 2008; Quintal et al., 2010). Hence we can assume that:

H1: The cognitive image of the destination influences positively the intention to visit by the tourist.

H2: The affective image of the destination positively influences the intention to visit by the tourist.

2.2 *Electronic word of mouth (eWOM)*

The sources of information represent one of the stimulating factors that contribute to the formation of a destination image (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999a). In the past, many consumers used to resort to travel agencies as a source of information because the latter provide detailed information about the destination and more straightforward contact with the service providers (Heung, 2003). However, with the technological progress and especially the spread of internet use, the majority of tourists now use this media as a source of information for preparing and planning a trip (Liang et al., 2013). Thanks to user-generated content, traditional word-of-mouth (based mainly on recommendations from friends, family, etc.) has taken an electronic shape. Defined as "either a positive or negative statement made by potential, current and former customers, about a product or company, which is intentionally made by the internet media" (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) has become one of the most important sources of information for consumers in the tourism sector (Pan et al., 2007; Chen et al., 2015).

In the same way, the traditional word-of-mouth (WOM) has been validated (Hanlan and Kelly, 2005). Several researches have reckoned the influence of electronic word-of-mouth upon the formation of a destination image by a traveller and his intention to visit (Ying and Chung, 2007; Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012; Jalilvand, 2017). For example, in a survey of foreign tourists, Jalilvand et al. (2012) have shown that positive eWOM contributes, on the one hand, to an image in favour of a destination and a growing increase in the travel intentions of these very tourists to that very destination. A study carried out by Setiawan et al. (2014) also highlighted the positive and significant influence of eWOM on the image of a destination.

Furthermore, Zhu and Lai (2009) have put forward that online comments, as well as travel blogs, significantly influence the choice and intention to visit a touristic destination. This result was also supported by Wang (2012). As of Casaló et al. (2011) and Hamidizadeh et al. (2016) they suggest that the eWOM represents one of the reasons of intention to visit a travel destination. Therefore, we can suggest that:

H3: The electronic word of mouth (eWOM) positively influences the cognitive image of a destination.

H4: The electronic word of mouth (eWOM) positively influences the emotional image of a destination.

H5: The electronic word of mouth (eWOM) positively influences the intention of visiting a destination.

2.3 Perceived risk

The perceived risk was initially introduced in marketing and more specifically in the consumer's behaviour by Bauer (1960). The commonly accepted definition is that the "Consumer's behaviour involves a risk with the idea that any action undertaken by a consumer will produce consequences that he may not have anticipated with confidence and that some of them are likely to be unpleasant" (Pichon, 2003).

Literature has shown that the perception of risk is more important for customers of service than for products (Murray and Schlacter, 1990). This concept is, indeed, crucial to the tourism sector since, in times of terrorist attacks, wars, epidemics, sanitary and economic disasters, the tourism sector must manage numerous types of difficulties such as a growing debt, lower margins and turnover, tourist's changing behaviour, successes of new acting partners (low-cost companies and online travel agencies that offer 'tailor-made' services for the price of standardised packages)... etc. (Croutsche and Roux, 2005). The concept of perceived risk plays a key role in a tourist's decision-making process and should be helpful during this process by reducing this feeling (Roehl and Fesenmaier, 1992).

However, it appears that in the literature there are not sufficient studies on the relationship between the destination image and the perceived risk (Schroeder et al., 2013). Indeed, according to Chapuis et al. (2015), the relationship between perceived risk, destination image and intention to visit has not been resolved in the literature. From a practical point of view, the identification of risk factors contributes to a better understanding of the image of the destination and makes it possible to understand its impact on the behaviour of tourists.

In tourism research, these two concepts (destination image and risk perception) have been considered as separate constructs (Perpiña et al., 2017). In fact, whereas, destination image is formed by the components of cognition and affection (Pike and Ryan, 2004), risk perception is not divided into components. Often, elaborated as typology, risk perception tends to describe several attributes related to risks that tourists can face during their journey (Fuchs, 2013; He et al., 2013).

According to San Martín and Del Bosque (2008) the lower the risk is perceived by tourists the more the destination will be regarded as familiar and attractive and especially for tourists with a low level of risk. They can have a high level of confidence and thus a better image of the place before visiting it. Contrariwise a higher risk perception about a destination can erode destination image (Becken et al., 2016).

More precisely, several studies suggest that perceived risk may affect the cognitive component of a destination image as well as its affective component (Lepp et al., 2011; Chew and Jahari, 2014).

Hence, the following hypotheses can be set:

H6: The perceived risk has a negative impact on the cognitive image of the destination.

H7: The perceived risk has a negative impact on the affective image of the destination.

Moreover, and according to Chapuis et al. (2015), the intention to visit a destination also varies accordingly to the perceived risk level of the destination. A high level of perceived risk decreases tourists' intention to visit the destination (Noh and Vogt, 2013). In fact, in recent years, and due to several high-risk events that occurred in the world tourists consider their perceived risks of vacationing in a destination before making their travel decision (Lam and Hsu, 2006). For instance, the intentions to participate in a mega event such as the Olympic Games depend on the perceived risk related to the destination (Schroeder et al., 2013).

H8: The perceived risk has a negative impact on the intention to visit a destination.

2.4 Motivations

'Motivations' is a concept widely studied in the context of the consumer's behaviour. It is considered among one of the most important factors in understanding the behaviour of tourists (Li et al., 2010).

Several authors claim that the motivations influence the process of image formation of the destination (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999a; Gong and Tung, 2017). These motivations are considered as a central concept in the understanding of a tourist's behaviour and in the preference of a destination. Motivations, indeed, set the image of the destination before and after a visit (San Martín and del Bosque, 2008). In the process of choosing a destination, images constructed by a tourist are produced by his motivations and, this occurs via his conscious and subconscious mind (Moutinho, 1987). According to Gartner (1993), the affective component of the image of a destination is only the value – regarding their motivations- that individuals grant to the destination. According to many research (Beerli and Martín, 2004; Khan et al., 2016), motivations exert a direct influence on the affective component of the destination image. Baloglu and Mc Clearly (1999a) empirically tested the relationship between motivation and emotional image. They came to the conclusion that the role played by the motivation on the affective image about the destination is crucial. Similarly, Beerli and Martín (2004) have found out that some aspects of that motivation also have a positive impact on the affective image of the destination.

Moreover, the relationship between the motivations and the destination image was also studied from a cognitive point of view (Khan et al., 2016). It was approached in relation to the theory of cognitive motivation suggested by Lazarus (1991). This theory studies the joint correlation between environmental variables and an individual's responses and, this in regard to the individual's goals and the context in which a consumer finds himself. In the case of tourists, the goals sought after by a tourist are strongly influenced by his need to search for an environment that responds to his motivations and which offers him the opportunity to move away from the harmful environment in which he finds himself (Iso-Ahola, 1980).

However, in literature, this relationship set between the motivation and the cognitive image of the destination has not been sufficiently studied in the literature, requiring thus more empirical studies on this subject matter (Li et al., 2010).

H9: Motivations positively influences the cognitive image of the destination.

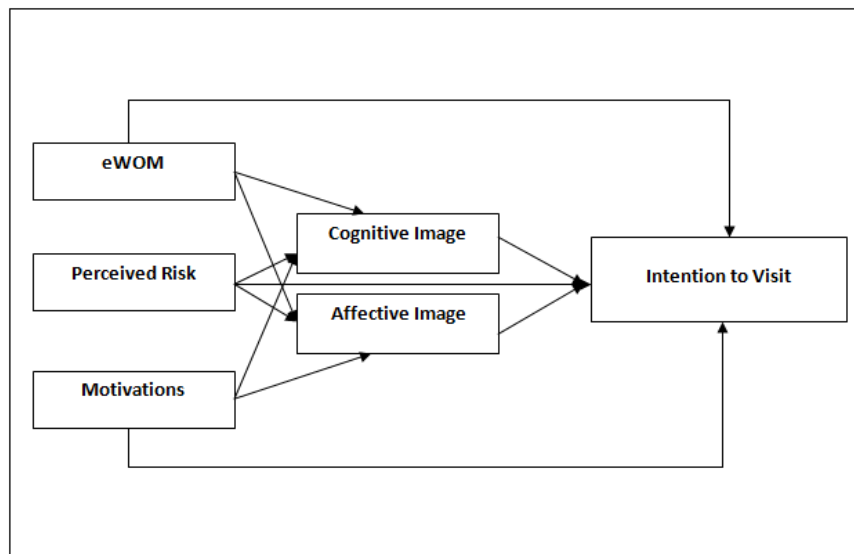
H10: Motivations positively influences the affective image of the destination.

Furthermore, according to Li et al. (2010), the tourist's motivation is a crucial factor in the process that a tourist takes in regard to the decision to travel and the choice of destination. Baloglu and McCleary (1999b) and Wong et al. (2017) have shown that the motivation has a positive impact on the intention to visit of four Mediterranean countries. Similarly, Huang and Hsu (2009) have studied this relationship within the Chinese context and have shown that the motivation has a significant impact on the intention to visit once again a destination.

H11: Motivations positively influences the intention to visit a destination.

The research model is as follows (Figure 1):

Figure 1 Research model



3 Research methodology

3.1 Sampling and data collection

Any Tunisian resident likely to search for information about destinations for a touristic trip may be considered as a potential respondent, and thus represents our population of interest. Hence, respondents had to be travellers or potential travellers looking for trip destinations. In order to reach this target, the questionnaire hyperlink was posted on some popular Tunisian Facebook groups related to travel and tourism and which includes a large number of members. Generally, people who join these groups are tourists or

potential tourists looking for a destination or preparing a trip program. In the questionnaire, we asked the respondents to assess the importance and opinions about some features when choosing a tourist destination for recreational holidays outside their country. Otherwise, it was specified that respondents should be first-time visitors to their particular destination choice. This convenience sampling technique led to 368 completed questionnaires were obtained from July to September 2016. As shown in Table 1, the sample is mostly constituted of relatively young travellers (nearly 80% aged between 25 and 45), university degree holders. In addition, more than 60% of respondents had already made at least 3 trips.

Table 1 Respondents profile ($n = 368$)

| | <i>Variable</i> | <i>N</i> | <i>%</i> |
|-----------------|------------------|----------|----------|
| Age | Less than 25 | 33 | 9 |
| | 25–35 | 145 | 39.4 |
| | 35–45 | 170 | 46.2 |
| | 45–55 | 20 | 5.4 |
| | More than de 55 | 0 | 0 |
| Gender | Male | 118 | 67.9 |
| | Female | 250 | 32.1 |
| Education level | Primary school | 0 | 0 |
| | Secondary school | 22 | 6 |
| | University | 346 | 94 |
| NB de voyages | Jamais | 49 | 13.3 |
| | Une fois | 38 | 10.3 |
| | Deux fois | 37 | 10.1 |
| | 3 à 5 fois | 127 | 34.5 |
| | 6 fois et plus | 117 | 31.8 |

3.2 *Measurement instruments*

The cognitive image of a destination was measured by the cognitive scale suggested by Baloglu and McCleary (1999a). This scale is constituted of three secondary aspects (quality of experience, entertainment and leisure, environment/value). The respondents must indicate their level of satisfaction about each of the 14 features of the cognitive image on a 7-point rating scale (rate 1 strongly disagree – rate 7 strongly agree).

Based on prior research studied this concept (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999a; San Martín and del Bosque, 2008), the affective image was measured using a seven-point differential semantic scale developed by Russell and Pratt (1980). The scale is composed of four features (unpleasant/pleasant, boring/stimulating, sad/exciting, stressful/relaxing).

The (eWOM) was assessed by means of 6 items adapted to the tourism context by Jalilvand and Samiei (2012) based on the work of Bambauer-Sachse and Mangold's (2011).

To measure socio-psychological motivations, we used the scale adopted by Beerli and Martín (2004). The scale was developed on the basis on the typology of the fundamental

functions suggested by the work of Fodness. Thus 13 items on a 7 point-Likert-rating scale (1 strongly disagree/7 strongly agree) have allowed us to measure tourists' motivations.

To measure the perceived risk of travel, respondents were asked seven items describing the different types of trip risks (material risk, financial risk, physical risk, psychological risk, satisfaction risk, social risk and time risk). This scale measures the perceived risk of recreational tourism. In addition, the scale has good internal coherence (Roehl and Fesenmaier, 1992; Sellick, 2004).

Based on previous work, Pratt and Sparks (2014) suggest two items to measure the intention to visit a tourist destination. According to these authors, these two items have proved to be the most relevant with a good validity.

3.3 Data analysis methods

For data analysis, SPSS 21.0 and AMOS 21.0 programs were used. First descriptive statistics were conducted to set the profile of the respondents. Next, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was carried out to check scales reliability, followed by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test whether the measurement model fits to the data and to confirm that the structure could measure the constructs. Then, an analysis of the proposed research model and a test of the hypotheses were performed through to the structural equation modelling (SEM).

4 Results

An EFA with Varimax rotation was carried out in order to verify the dimensionality of the measurement scales and the reliability of each construct. As shown in Table 2, the KMO index, the Bartlett sphericity test and the explained full variance give satisfactory results (KMO is greater than 0.5, the Bartlett test is meaningful; explained variance greater than 50%) (Hair et al., 2006). In addition, the constructs of our study show a good level of internal consistency with a Cronbach alpha greater than 0.7 for all variables.

Table 2 Exploratory factor analysis and reliability of constructs

| <i>Variables</i> | <i>KMO</i> | <i>Bartlett test (signification)</i> | <i>Percentage of variance explained (%)</i> | <i>Cronbach Alpha</i> |
|--------------------|------------|--|---|---------------------------|
| Cognitive image | 0.751 | 7080.015 (0.000) | 81.375 | 0.889 |
| Affective image | 0.775 | 2760.456 (0.000) | 83.375 | 0.979 |
| eWOM | 0.851 | 1896.327 (0.000) | 70.224 | 0.941 |
| Motivation | 0.725 | 1761.749 (0.000) | 70.890 | 0.739 |
| Perceived Risk | 0.818 | 1052.116 (0.000) | 56.259 | 0.843 |
| Intention to visit | 0.500 | 77.472 (0.000) | 71.852 | 0.964 |

The confirmatory factor analysis was, then, used to validate the structure of the EFA scales and to test the hypotheses of the research model.

The condition of the multi normality of data was verified by reference to the indicators advocated by Roussel et al. (2002): the coefficient 'skewness' must not exceed

3 (in absolute value); the coefficient ‘Kurtosis’ must not exceed 8 in absolute value and the coefficient Mardia should show a value less than or equal to 3 in absolute value. However, the multi normality condition has not been satisfied for most of our measurement models. To solve this problem, we have used Bollen-Stine’s bootstrap procedure (Bollen and Stine, 1992). According to this procedure, it would be possible to consider the initial results obtained by the Maximum likelihood ratio if the corrected Bollen-stine Chi2 probability obtained following the bootstrap application ($n = 2000$) was significant (less than 5%).

It should also be noted that during this analysis it was found out that the motivation is not a second-order construct, hence an adjustment of the hypotheses H9, H10 and H11 are required. Each hypothesis has been subdivided into 4 under separate assumptions to respect the 4-dimensional structure (Knowledge, Relaxation Entertainment and Prestige) of motivation (see Table 3).

Table 3 Results of hypotheses testing

| <i>Hypotheses</i> | <i>Estimate</i> | <i>CR</i> | <i>p-value</i> | <i>Accept/reject hypothesis</i> |
|--|-----------------|-----------|----------------|---------------------------------|
| H1: Cognitive image- Intention to visit | -0.114 | -0.364 | 0.716 | Reject |
| H2: Affective image- Intention to visit | 0.763 | 8.762 | 0.000*** | Accept |
| H3: eWOM-Cognitive image | 0.010 | 0.323 | 0.747 | Reject |
| H4: eWOM-Affective image | 0.070 | 3.961 | 0.000*** | Accept |
| H5: eWOM-Intention to visit | 0.056 | 2.939 | 0.003* | Accept |
| H6: Perceived Risk -Cognitive image | -0.438 | 6.791 | 0.000*** | Accept |
| H7 : Perceived Risk -Affective image | -0.017 | 0.785 | 0.433 | Reject |
| H8: Perceived Risk – Intention to visit | -0.004 | 0.030 | 0.976 | Reject |
| H9: Motivation – Cognitive image | | | | |
| <i>H9a: Knowledge- Cognitive image</i> | 0.114 | 1.910 | 0.056 | Reject |
| <i>H9b: Relaxation- Cognitive image</i> | -0.090 | -1.859 | 0.063 | Reject |
| <i>H9c: Entertainment- Cognitive image</i> | 0.014 | 0.206 | 0.837 | Reject |
| <i>H9d: Prestige- Cognitive image</i> | 0.074 | 1.702 | 0.089 | Reject |
| H10: Motivation – Affective image | | | | |
| <i>H10a: Knowledge- Affective image</i> | 0.237 | 6.145 | 0.000* | Accept |
| <i>H10b: Relaxation- Affective image</i> | 0.057 | 2.076 | 0.038*** | Accept |
| <i>H10c: Entertainment- Affective image</i> | 0.083 | 2.030 | 0.042*** | Accept |
| <i>H10d: Prestige- Affective image</i> | -0.009 | -0.350 | 0.726 | Reject |
| H11: Motivation – Intention to visit | | | | |
| <i>H11a: Knowledge- Intention to visit</i> | 0.167 | 3.005 | 0.003*** | Accept |
| <i>H11b: Relaxation- Intention to visit</i> | 0.074 | 1.785 | 0.074 | Reject |
| <i>H11c: Entertainment- Intention to visit</i> | 0.043 | 0.977 | 0.329 | Reject |
| <i>H11d: Prestige- Intention to visit</i> | 0.002 | 0.044 | 0.965 | Reject |

* $P < 0.05$; *** $P < 0.001$.

Moreover, the reliability of the measurements was assessed using the rho de Jöreskog (ρ) coefficient, which had an acceptable value, greater than 0.6 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988) for all constructs (Table 4). The convergent validity ρ_{vc} was also verified with a greater value than 0.5 (Table 4) as recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981).

Table 4 Joreskog's Rhô and the convergent validity of measurement model variables

| <i>Variables</i> | <i>Joreskog's Rhô</i> | ρ_{cv} |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Cognitive image | 0.833 | 0.554 |
| Affective image | 0.915 | 0.789 |
| eWOM | 0.825 | 0.532 |
| <i>Motivation</i> | | |
| Knowledge | 0.760 | 0.571 |
| Relaxation | 0.772 | 0.510 |
| Entertainment | 0.692 | 0.530 |
| Prestige | 0.621 | 0.550 |
| Perceived Risk | 0.709 | 0.662 |
| Intention to visit | 0.789 | 0.652 |

Table 5 shows that the discriminating validity is very satisfactory since the ρ_{vc} concerning each construct is much higher than the squared correlations with other constructs.

Table 5 Discriminant validity of model variables

| | <i>CI</i> | <i>AI</i> | <i>EW</i> | <i>KN (1)</i> | <i>RL(2)</i> | <i>EN(3)</i> | <i>PS(4)</i> | <i>PR</i> | <i>IV</i> |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|
| Cognitive image | 0.554 | | | | | | | | |
| Affective image | 0.007 | 0.789 | | | | | | | |
| eWOM | 0.038 | 0.013 | 0.532 | | | | | | |
| Knowledge | 0.023 | 0.049 | 0.055 | 0.571 | | | | | |
| Relaxation | 0.006 | 0.010 | 0.054 | 0.168 | 0.510 | | | | |
| Entertainment | 0.002 | 0.025 | 0.045 | 0.173 | 0.024 | 0.530 | | | |
| Prestige | 0.331 | 0.027 | 0.027 | 0.208 | 0.023 | 0.498 | 0.550 | | |
| Perceived risk | 0.191 | 0.009 | 0.236 | 0.004 | 0.062 | 0.148 | 0.613 | 0.662 | |
| Intention to visit | 0.003 | 0.063 | 0.031 | 0.093 | 0.030 | 0.044 | 0.031 | 0.002 | 0.652 |

The adjustment of the structural model to data is good in so far as all absolute, incremental and parsimony indices are satisfactory and fall within the acceptability thresholds: GFI = 0.957 (>0.90); AGFI = 0.901 (>0.90); RMSEA = 0.09 (<0.10); TLI = 0.959 (>0.90); CFI = 993 (>0.90); Chi-two normed: 4.748 (<5).

In order to test the different model relationships, the regression coefficients were examined, as well as their critical ratios (CR > 1.96) and their degree of significance (p-value < 0.05). Based on these indicators, hypotheses: *H2*, *H4*, *H5*, *H6*, *H10a*, *H10b*,

H10c, *H11a* were confirmed. Table 5 summarises the obtained results for all assumptions.

5 Discussion

The cognitive image does not have a significant impact on the intention to visit a destination: this result corresponds to the result obtained by Pratt and Sparks (2014) and Chew and Jahari (2016) who did not corroborate the existence of a noteworthy relationship between the cognitive image of a destination and the intention to visit. The result obtained can be explained by the fact that we did not specify a particular destination in so far as some authors have shown that the effect of the cognitive image on the intention to visit may differ according to the chosen destination (Noh and Vogt, 2013).

The hypothesis that the affective image has a significant and positive impact on the intention to visit a destination has been confirmed in this survey. The result is consistent with several research in the field which states strong emotional impact on travel intentions (Regan et al., 2012; Baloglu, 2000). This result emphasises the importance of emotional features (pleasure, excitement and relaxation) when choosing a destination (Lin et al., 2007) for a leisure trip.

The electronic word of mouth (eWOM) significantly and positively affects the emotional aspects of the image of a destination while it has no impact on the cognitive dimension. Unlike the studies carried out by Baloglu and McCleary (1999a), Gartner (1993), Woodside and Lysonski (1989) which have come up to the conclusion that the information sources exert a great influence on the cognitive image. Our results rather match the results obtained by Li et al. (2009). Indeed, these authors have found that only the emotional image shaped towards the destination is influenced by an online information source. Similarly, some researchers, have put forth the idea that the dynamic and interactive nature of the internet allows tourism recommendation sites to offer affection-related information more effectively than the traditional sources of information (Kim and Fesenmaier, 2008). For Zhu and Lai (2009), Wang (2012), Jalilvand et al. (2012) and Chen et al. (2015) alike, the results of this study confirm that eWOM has an impact on the intention to visit a destination. It is generally because of the lack of experience that travellers tend to make use of other travellers' experience to form their behavioural intentions and anticipate their own potential future journey (Casaló et al., 2011). Furthermore, the information spread through the eWOM is considered efficient by travellers to the extent that it reduces potential risks (Bhattacharjee, 2001) since the information comes from people like them and not from a formal source such as a travel agency for example.

As far as the link between the perceived risk and cognitive image is concerned, the results showed that the perceived risk has a negative and significant influence on the cognitive destination, as a consequence, the less the risk is felt by tourists the more the destination will be perceived as attractive, therefore hypothesis H6 is confirmed.

According to our results, we can figure out that the perceived risk acts mainly on the cognitive dimension. Thus, the tourists consider that a destination is attractive when they feel less perceived risk associated with the chosen country and they rely on the cognitive image they hold on a tourist destination to assess it (San Martín and del Bosque 2008).

As regards the hypothesis concerning the impact of the motivation on the image of the destination, this impact it has been found positive and significant with the three dimensions of motivation: knowledge, relaxation and entertainment and insignificant with the dimension prestige. This result is explained by the lack of studies on this link as mentioned by Li et al. (2010) as well as other factors that may affect motivation that has not been taken into account in researches such as age and gender (Jonsson and Devonish, 2008). As regards the link between motivation and purchase intention, our results show that this link is insignificant for three dimensions of motivation and significant for the 'knowledge' dimension only (H11a).

6 Conclusion

The goal of this research was to understand the use of electronic word-of-mouth, the perceived risks related to a foreign country and the main motivations that may influence the cognitive image, the affective image and the intention to visit a destination for a potential leisure trip.

This research involves some theoretical contributions in so far as it suggests an integrating model which takes into account the three types of antecedents (personal factors, stimulus factors and constraints) provided by literature and which are likely to influence the image of a destination and the intention to visit. Moreover, our investigation integrates the dual facet of the destination image since we have taken into account not only the cognitive image but also the affective dimension which was slightly discussed in research.

The results of this study also make it possible to provide several managerial recommendations. Indeed, destination marketers need to be more aware of the role of the eWOM in shaping the emotional image and the part it plays on the intentions to visit a destination. In fact, this study has shown that the tourists' emotional image may be more liable to change than the cognitive image while searching for information, online.

As a consequence, destination marketing organisations (DMO) web designers are urged to pay more attention to the components (colour choices, photos, videos, etc.) that can generate positive affective responses. Besides and given the straightforward impact of eWOM on the intention to visit, destination organisations could create online tourism communities for their destination.

These communities are virtual spaces where tourists can exchange, get information and share their experiences online. Managers or tourism organisations could launch point-of-sale activities to encourage the WOM online contribution by enabling consumers to share their personal impressions online (Chi and Qu, 2008; Miao, 2015).

Furthermore, destination marketers should focus exclusively on the emotional attraction for their destinations, paying particular attention to the aspects of pleasure, excitement and relaxation because, in the light of our inquiry, the latter has a strong impact on the intention to visit a destination for a leisure trip, particularly as the results of this study highlight the effect of relaxation and 'entertainment' as being the dimensions of the most influential motivations in the formation of the affective image. However, to improve the cognitive image of their destinations, managers should emphasise on risk minimisation related to their destinations during a trip.

Although the current study has many implications theoretical as well as managerial, it nevertheless poses some limitations that can open the way for further research.

First, the use of a convenience sample and an online survey may limit the generalisation of the obtained results. A more representative demographic and geographical sample of the population will undoubtedly improve the generalisation of the results of future studies. After that, in this research, we did not take into account a specific destination in order to study the background for shaping an image with the intention to visit a destination generally speaking. This could hinder the knowledge of the impact of the characteristics of a particular destination.

Moreover, the mediating effects of the cognitive image and the affective image have not been studied. Other studies are necessary to study these mediators between the three types of antecedents (eWOM, Motivations and perceived risk) and the intentions of visits of travellers. At the end, and with the aim of extrapolating our results to other populations, a cross-cultural study will unveil the potential distinctions in the determining factors for the formation of the image in the travellers' and their intention to visit.

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