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Research Article

THE INTERMEDIARY ROLE OF DESTINATION IMAGE IN THE IMPACT OF DESTINATION PERSONALITY ON VISITOR SATISFACTION

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Abstract

Destination personality and destination image can have an important role in enhancing of visitor satisfaction. The traits of destination personality can also subscribe to the positive improving of the destination image. In line with this, the main target of the research is to specify whether the destination personality traits and destination image of Bolu have an impact on the visitor satisfaction. In addition, in this research, it has been tried to determine whether the destination image has an intermediary role in the impact of Bolu's destination personality on visitor satisfaction. Data were collected from 234 domestic tourists who visited Bolu through a questionnaire. On the obtained data, respectively; reliability, validity and normality tests, correlation analysis and finally linear and hierarchical regression analyzes were performed. Based on the outcome of the research, the factors of the destination personality (attractiveness, humane modernist and vibrancy) have an impact on the destination image and visitor satisfaction in a significance and positive way. It has been determined that the destination image has a meaningful and positive influence on the customer satisfaction. Moreover, it has been observed that there is a partial intermediary role of the destination image on the impact of destination personality factors on the visitor satisfaction. According to these outcomes revealed, the entire hypotheses tested in the study have been accepted.

Keywords: Destination Personality, Destination Image, Visitor Satisfaction, Bolu

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Introduction

The competition among the touristic destinations has increased more than ever at the present time. Based on the fact that certain touristic products offered in the destinations can easily be substituted, it is no longer feasible for destinations to attract new visitors, satisfy visitors and gain superiority in the competitive environment by enabling and activating their functional qualities. Therefore, it is required to effectively benefit from the symbolic functions such as the destination personality in the destinations. In this regard, it is significant to implement marketing and destination branding strategies emphasizing the traits of the personality (Usakli and Baloglu, 2011) and unique image (Qu, Kim and Im, 2011) that shall distinguish the destinations among their competitors.

Many factors are available for the visitors to consider when choosing among touristic destinations in the process of purchasing touristic products and during their visits to touristic destinations. However, fundamentally, the evaluations of the tourists on the destinations are based on cognitive, affective (emotional) and the personality dimensions (Hosany, Ekinci and Uysal, 2007). Therefore, it can be revealed that the evaluation framework of touristic visitors with respect to the destinations is formed by the destination image (cognitive and affective) and destination personality. By evaluating these factors, touristic visitors also deliver their final decisions on whether or not to visit the destination for the next time. Based on the fact that visitors establish an emotional tie with the destination and associate the general traits of the destination with their personality traits can be effective in their destination preferences and satisfaction levels following their visit. Factors reflecting the general image of the destination, such as the destination's natural, social, cultural, historical attractions, touristic infrastructure and superstructure, the overall attitudes and behaviors of the domestic people and tourism staff towards the visitors are also the additional factors having an impact on the preferences and satisfaction of visitors.

Examined from the viewpoint of domestic tourists within the scope of the research, Bolu is among the prominent destinations of Turkey, especially in terms of its natural beauties, recreation areas and winter tourism activities. It can be thought that the city, which is located close to the major metropolises of Turkey such as Istanbul and Ankara, has important advantages both in this respect and in terms of tourism. Due to the importance of Bolu in terms of touristic, in this research, the relationships between the variables of destination personality, destination image and visitor satisfaction are examined specifically for Bolu destination. As a result of the literature review, it has been determined that there are a limited number of studies in the literature examining the relationships between the variables of destination personality, destination image and visitor satisfaction (Chen and Phou, 2013; Umur and Eren, 2016; Feizabadi, 2016; Gün, 2019; Aktaş, 2021). In addition, some studies were only examined the relationship between destination personality and destination image, or the effect of destination personality or destination image on visitor satisfaction (Hosany, Ekinci and Uysal, 2006; Hosany et al., 2007; Chi and Qu, 2008; Prayag, 2009; Çoban, 2012; Rostampour, 2013; Bilim and Bilim, 2014; Leib, 2014; Souiden, Ladhari and Chiadmi, 2017; Kim et al., 2017; Chenini and Touaiti, 2018; Gün, Durmaz and Tutcu, 2019; Alcocer and Ruiz, 2019; Atay, Türkmen and Carus, 2020; Stavrianea and Kamenidou, 2020; Aniqoh et al., 2022). On the other side, the fact that there is no study examining the effect of destination personality and destination image on visitor satisfaction in Bolu constitutes the original side and starting point of this study. Therefore, the study is considered to conduce to the literature in this sense. In line with this, the main target of the research is to specify whether destination personality traits and destination image of Bolu have an impact on the visitor satisfaction. Moreover, it has been further endeavored to identify whether the destination image of Bolu has an intermediary role on the impact of the destination personality on the visitor satisfaction. In addition to these objectives, the research endeavors to determine which of the destination personality traits of Bolu come to the fore and have impact on the image of the destination. After the explanation of the related concepts in the research, method, findings, discussion and conclusion titles are given.

Conceptual Framework

Destination Personality

Destination personality is a concept that emerged with the attribution to the destinations and adaptation of the brand personality concept and dimensions introduced by Aaker (1997). In the aforementioned research, the main dimensions of brand personality are determined as excitement, robustness, sophistication, competence and sincerity.

The concept of destination personality can be stated as the identification of touristic destinations with human personality traits (Chen and Phou, 2013; Ural et al., 2016). In other words, destination personality can also be expressed as the human-specific personality traits of the destination perceived by the tourists visiting the destination (Ekinci and Hosany, 2006) or the set of human traits related the visitors performing visit to the destination (Kumar and Nayak, 2014). In this context, it may be possible to identify human personality traits such as original, interesting, exciting or friendly with destinations (Chen and Phou, 2013).

Destination personality has three different characteristics mainly the functional, symbolic and experiential. Functional features include concert halls, museums, theaters, art galleries, conference and exhibition facilities, hotels, leisure and sports activities and facilities, restaurants, public spaces, nightclubs and entertainment centers, transportation infrastructure and accessibility in the destination. The symbolic features involve the characteristics of the domestic people, the profile of the visitors, and the defining features of the service quality. The feelings of the visitors regarding the destination, the descriptors of the destination feeling, the construction features of the destinations, and the descriptors of safety and security are among the experiential features (Hankinson, 2004).

According to Hosany et al. (2006) and also Ekinci, Sirakaya-Turk and Baloglu (2007), destination personality has three basic dimensions as amusement, excitement and sincerity. Murphy, Benckendorff and Moscardo (2007) determined four factors in their studies, different from the five-factor destination personality dimensions asserted by Aaker, using the brand personality scale enhanced by Aaker (1997). The factors determined in the research have been named as sincerity, thrill and robustness and sophistication+competence. Usakli and Baloglu (2011) have determined the dimensions of destination personality in their study as sophistication, vibrancy, competence, sincerity and contemporary.

For the purpose of making the best use of the limited resources of destinations, marketing specialists should pay attention to the selection of destination personality traits. Destinations can differentiate their images from their competitors based on their personality traits. Therefore, it may be possible to position the images of tourism destinations by making use of personality dimensions (Ye, 2012). Destinations are required to emphasize their unique features in order to become the preferences of the visitors among their competitors. In this regard, destination branding and destination personality can have a decisive role in differentiation from competing destinations (Sharifsamet, Jin and Martin, 2020).

It is not quite easy to identify the destination personality traits of destinations, which have a complex structure due to the vast number of sub-products and experiences. However, assuming that other competing destinations can also benefit from these traits and features by evaluating the destination brand personality traits, efforts are required to be performed to discover and activate the personality traits of the destination. In line with this, determining the elements defining the destination personality and conveying the correct and effective messages to the potential visitors by using the determined elements are among the main duties of the destination marketing and brand managers (Pereira, Correia and Schutz, 2014).

In the measurement of destination personality, some symbolic characteristics representing destination-related personality traits should be evaluated. In this process, it is important to determine the distinctive personality traits of the destination that are not found in other destinations, as well as the personality traits that are common with other destinations. In addition, touristic consumers consider the holistic impression of the destination, namely its image, as well as personal characteristics. Therefore, holistic impressions of destinations are among the significant factors that need to be gingerly considered and developed (Kumar and Nayak, 2014).

Destination Image

Destination image can be expressed as the general ideas, faiths and impressions of visitors who have visited the destination before or who are in the potential situation (Crompton, 1979). Destination image comprises of two basic constituents: affective (emotional) and cognitive. The cognitive constituent states to the individual's faiths and knowledge related to the destination, while the emotional constituent states to the individual's emotions or adherence to the touristic destination (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Kim and Lehto, 2013). In order to achieve success in the branding process of destinations, the emotional and cognitive elements of the destination image should be utilized effectively (Qu et al., 2011). Destination image is conceptually complex (cognitive, affective and associative elements, general image and personal impressions, chooser image and additional image), versatile (multi-disciplinary, multi-item, static and dynamic), relative (variable according to people, comparable between objects) and dynamic (which can be affected by time and distance factors) (Gallarza, Saura and García, 2002).

Figure 1. General Framework Regarding The Destination Image Formation Process
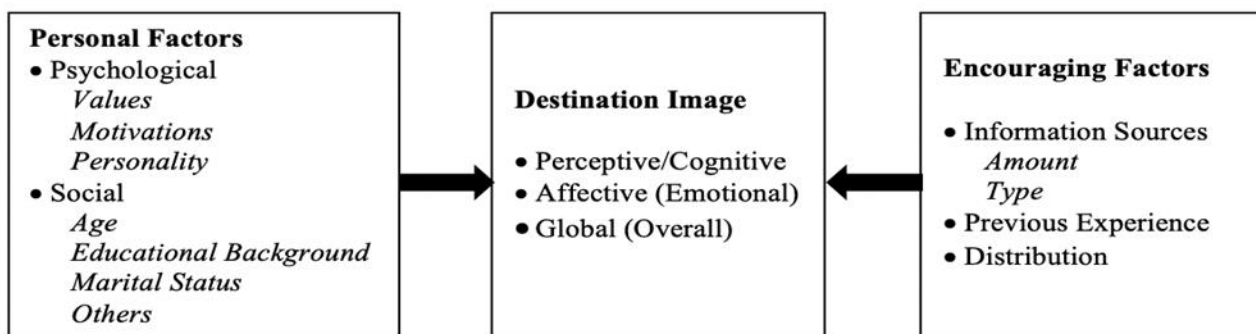
Source: Baloglu and McCleary (1999: 870)

In Figure 1, the overall framework regarding the constitution process of the destination image is presented. With respect to the common view of the researchers, visitors evaluate the objects primarily cognitively, and emotional responses emerge as a result or function of cognitive responses. The overall image of the destinations consists of the sum of the perceptual/cognitive and emotional image evaluations of the visitors about the destinations (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). Destination image, destination has the potential to positively affect consumer behavior before, during and after the visit (Tascı and Gartner, 2007). In addition, it can be considered that the destination image positively influences the visitors' intention to visit the destination (Saçlı, Ersöz and Kahraman, 2019; Ahmad et al., 2021).

Beerli and Martín (2004) analyzed the determinants of destination image under nine main headings. These; general infrastructure (1), natural resources (2), touristic infrastructure (3), culture, history and art (4), leisure and recreation areas (5), political and economic elements (6), social ambiance (7), natural environment (8) and destination atmosphere (9). In the study of Chi and Qu (2008); the dimensions of the destination image are determined as travel environment, entertainment and activities, natural attractions, historical attractions, infrastructure, price and value, accessibility, outdoor recreation, leisure. According to Chi and Qu (2008), destination image is one of the significant issues that destination managers should show sensitive about. Destination image is a significant factor that directly influences tourist satisfaction. In order for destinations to compete effectively with their competitors, destination managers are supposed to concentrate on improving the destination image. Considering the difficulty of changing the pre-existing image, it is recommended that destinations position their image in the best way from the beginning and try to preserve this image.

Visitor Satisfaction

The customer satisfaction strategy is generally preferred in markets with low growth potential or saturation, that is, in markets where competition is intense. With this strategy, businesses or destinations focus on protecting their current markets, in other words, retaining their current customers. Therefore, in this approach, it is accepted that customer retention depends on creating loyalty. Loss of existing markets is often due to competitors. According to this approach, keeping up with changes and developments is an important condition for ensuring customer satisfaction (Fornell, 1992). The notion of satisfaction is a function of the combination between an adaptation component (anticipations and previous attitudes of customers/visitors) and disapproval variables. According to the expectation disapproval theory; the act of disapproval relates to customers' rating of whether the expectation is met or not. Situations that are below the expectation are expressed as 'negative disapproval', and situations that exceed the expectation are expressed as 'positive disapproval' (Oliver, 1980).

Conceptually, customer satisfaction emerges in consequence of customers' evaluation of their consumption of the products they buy in terms of benefits and costs. Operationally, customer satisfaction can be expressed as the sum of satisfaction obtained by customers from various features of goods and services (Churchill and Surprenant, 1982). Pizam and Ellis (1999), regarding the customer satisfaction, defines it as "satisfaction shaped on a result or process".

Since the tourism product generally has an abstract and integrated structure, it is based on a different evaluation process and visitor satisfaction in tourism is formed in consequence of a general assessment of all components

in the tourism product. In addition, the fact that the tourism product has an abstract structure in general causes the evaluations of the tourism product to be relative. For these reasons, it is much more difficult to provide comprehensive customer satisfaction in tourism than in other sectors. According to Bosque and Martín (2008), visitor satisfaction reveals the cognitive-emotional state of visitors as a result of their experiences. According to Baker and Crompton (2000), visitor's a satisfied departure from the destination may result in a raise in the number of visitors in consequence of former visitors revisiting the destination or recommend to others. In parallel with this, the support for tourism in the destination and the income obtained from tourism may increase.

The difference that shall occur between the services expected and perceived by the customers is the determinant of customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction. One of the ways to evaluate the feedback received from customers is to determine the difference between expected and perceived services (Pizam and Ellis, 1994). In this direction, by measuring the satisfaction level of the visitors, it can be determined to what extent the goods and services offered in the destination meet the needs of the tourists. By utilizing the satisfaction level data, destination marketing experts can identify the deficiencies of the goods and services they offer, eliminate these deficiencies, and present the goods and services that are attractive to the visitors as a priority (Meng, Tepanon and Uysal, 2008).

Since satisfaction is a function of service quality, high quality service must be provided in destinations in order to ensure visitor pleasure. Visitor satisfaction has a substantial impact on destinations and tourism businesses being re-preferred by visitors and on the expenditures of visitors. At this point, meeting the expectations created in the best way is an important condition for the realization of visitor satisfaction (Mortazavi, 2021).

Methodology

Population and Sample

The population of the research comprises of domestic tourists visiting Bolu. Because it was not possible to reach the all the research population, it was decided to choose sample from the population. In this study, the deliberate (decisional/purposive) sampling technique, which is among the non-probabilistic sampling types, was used. In this sampling technique, attention is paid to the selection of the subjects that make up the sample from those who can find answers to the research problems of the researcher. In short, the researcher decides who the subjects shall be. In this study, it was acted according to the principle of having at least 30 subjects in order to make some statistical analyzes (Altunışık et al., 2010). Accordingly, 234 participants, who were thought to be able to produce answers to research problems, were reached in the research.

Table 1. Demographic Attributions of the Participants

		Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Woman	117	50
	Male	117	50
Age	18-25	64	27.4
	26-34	65	27.8
	35-44	75	32.1
	45-54	23	9.8
	55-64	7	3.0
Education	Secondary education	41	17.5
	Associate degree	60	25.6
	Bachelor's degree	106	45.3
	Graduate	27	11.5
Profession	Unemployed	5	2.1
	Student	53	22.6
	Private Sector Employee	51	21.8
	Self-employment	19	8.1
	Public Personnel	99	42.3
	Retired	7	3.0
Income	4.250 TL and below	63	26.9
	4.251-6.250 TL	34	14.5
	6,251-8,250 TL	40	17.1
	8.251-10.250 TL	35	15
	10,251 TL and above	62	26.5
Average Spending	500 TL and below	45	19.2

	501-2.000 TL	103	44
	2.001-3.500 TL	51	21.8
	3.501-5.000 TL	23	9.8
	5.001 TL and above	12	5.1
Frequency of visiting Bolu	First time	65	27.8
	2 times	58	24.8
	Three times	20	8.5
	4 times	6	2.6
	5th time and more	85	36.3
Total		**234**	**100**

Some of the domestic tourists who visited Bolu during the survey application did not want to fill out the survey. Some of the filled questionnaires were excluded from the sample because they contained missing data. At last of this process, a total of 234 questionnaires could be included in the sample. When the demographic attributions of the visitors involved in the sample (Table 1) are examined, it has been revealed that half of the participants were men and half were women, the majority of them were between the ages of 35-44 (32.1%), a bachelor's degree (45.3%) and public servants (42.3%). In addition, it has been observed that people with an income of 4.250 TL and below at most participate in the research, followed by the income group of 10.251 TL and above. It was determined that 44% of the participants spent between 501-2.000 TL on their travels to Bolu and 36.3% had visited Bolu at least 5 times before.

Data Collection Tools

The data related to the research were gathered through the questionnaire. The questionnaire has four parts. These sections are demographic questions, destination personality, destination image and visitor satisfaction. The demographic questions used in the survey were adapted from the demographic questions in the survey in Gün's (2019) doctoral thesis. For the purpose of the research, demographic questions such as age, gender, educational status, occupation, revenue, average expenditure for vacation, number of visits to Bolu were included. Three different and independent scales were used to gauge and evaluate the variables of destination personality, destination image and visitor satisfaction of the research. In this context, in the research; the destination personality scale improved by Usakli and Baloglu (2011), the destination image scale developed by Baloglu (1996) in his doctoral thesis, and the visitor satisfaction scale developed by Gün (2019) in his doctoral thesis were used. Perceptual/cognitive image and emotional image dimensions in the destination image scale were combined to evaluate the overall destination image of Bolu and were not analyzed as sub-dimensions. Five-point Likert rating system was used in the scales. Ethics committee approval was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee of Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal University on March 8, 2022 for the data collection process. In the next stage, data were gathered from a total of 234 participants between 9 March – 30 March 2022 via electronic and face-to-face surveys.

Analysis of Data

First of all, a pilot study was practiced in the research. The reliability of the data obtained in the pilot study was tested and the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was figured out. Afterwards, explanatory factor analysis and normality test were performed on all data obtained within the scope of validity analysis. In addition, after the data collection process was completed, the reliability coefficients of all data were recalculated. It was deemed appropriate to perform other analyzes on the scales whose reliability, validity and normality tests were completed. In this direction; first of all, it was tested whether there was a correlation between the variables of destination personality, destination image and visitor satisfaction, and then linear and hierarchical regression analysis was implemented to examine the model and research hypotheses given in Figure 2, and the results were presented in the results section.

Reliability and Validity Analysis

In consequence of the pilot study substantiated on 40 participants in the first stage of the data collection process, it has been observed that the scales of destination personality (Cronbach's Alpha=0.975), destination image (Cronbach's Alpha=0.980) and visitor satisfaction (Cronbach's Alpha=0.993) have high reliability. According to these results, since there was no need for any changes on the scales at this stage, the data collection process continued. After the end of the data collection process, it was made benefit of exploratory factor analysis to test the validity of the relevant scales. Before starting the factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test was practiced on the scales in order to determine whether sufficient sample size was achieved and the test results were determined as 0.953 for destination personality, 0.945 for destination image,

and 0.971 for visitor satisfaction. In addition, before evaluating the factor analysis results, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity value was also checked. The Bartlett test values of all the destination personality, destination image and visitor satisfaction scales were determined as 0.000. Durmuş, Yurtkoru and Çinko (2016) stated that there is an adequate level of correlation to be able to perform factor analysis in cases where the p value of the Bartlett test is less than 0.05 significance level. In this respect, exploratory factor analysis was implemented because the KMO value was close to 1 and the significance of the Bartlett test was less than 0.05. In the exploratory factor analysis with the Varimax method, the factors were provided to form independent sub-dimensions. On the other side, the reliability of all data was recalculated with the Cronbach's Alpha method. The factor structures revealed and the results of the reliability analysis regarding these factor structures are tendered in Table 2.

Table 2. Explanatory Factor and Reliability Analysis Results of the Destination Personality Scale

Expressions	Attractiveness	Humane Modernist	Vibrancy
Charming	0.826		
Glamorous	0.807		
Elite	0.706		
Unique	0.691		
Nice-looking	0.666		
Leader	0.659		
Achieved	0.626		
Exciting	0.613		
Daring	0.607		
Showy	0.577		
Friendly		0.788	
Cheerful		0.760	
Confident		0.739	
Young		0.730	
Independent		0.677	
Intelligent		0.654	
Trendy		0.645	
Up-to-date		0.578	
Imaginative		0.568	
Vibrant			0.844
Energetic			0.797
Alive			0.787
KMO: 0.953			
Explained Variance (%)	27,666	27,082	18,455
Total Variance (%)	73,203		
Reliability Values (Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients)			
Overall Reliability Result	**Attractiveness Factor**	**Humane Modernist Factor**	**Vibrancy Factor**
0.970	0.947	0.946	0.927

The structure of the scale, which normally has 5 factors, was gathered under 3 factors in the wake of the factor analysis. Since no statements below 0.50 were found, no items were dropped from the scale, and the combined factors were named by the researchers as attractiveness, humane modernist, and vibrancy. However, the 3-factor structure obtained for the destination personality scale meets the theoretical expectations, and the obtained factors explain 73% of the total variance. On the other hand, it can be said that the destination personality scale (Cronbach's Alpha: 0.970) has a high level of general reliability. When the reliability of the factors of the destination personality variable is examined; it has been observed that the attractiveness factor has reliability values of 0.947, humane modernist factor 0.946, and the vibrancy factor 0.927. These values show that the factors of the variable also have high reliability.

Considering the results of factor and reliability analyzes of destination image and visitor satisfaction scales; it can be said that two factors emerged in the destination image scale composed of 18 items and covered 70% of the total variance, while four factors emerged in the visitor satisfaction scale consisting of 44 items and they met the theoretical expectations by meeting 79% of the total variance. On the other hand, it has been observed that they provide the expected high reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha level of 0.967 for the destination image scale and 0.990 for the visitor satisfaction scale.

Table 3. Normality Test

Variables	Skewness	Kurtosis
Attractiveness	-0.239	-0.214
Humane modernist	-0.288	-0.134
Vibrancy	-0.228	-0.714
Destination image	-0.545	-0.279
Visitor satisfaction	-0.553	-0.216

After the factor analysis was completed, skewness and kurtosis tests were performed in order to understand whether the data set indicated a normal distribution. It has been concluded that the obtained data sets have values between +1.5 and -1.5. Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) state that skewness and kurtosis values should be between +1.5 and -1.5 for the data to exhibit normal distribution. With the completion of the skewness and kurtosis tests, the analysis of the research given in the results section was started.

Research Model and Hypotheses

In the research, the relations between the related variables and the direction of the relations were tried to be determined. As seen in the model in Figure 2, the destination personality variable was determined as the independent variable, the destination image variable was determined as the dependent, independent and mediator variable depending on the relationship status, and the visitor satisfaction variable was specified as the dependent variable. In the research; the effect of the destination personality factors on the destination image, the destination personality factors on the visitor satisfaction and the effect of the destination image variable on the visitor satisfaction were examined. In addition, the intermediary role of the destination image variable in the impression of destination personality factors on visitor satisfaction was also investigated.

Figure 2. Model of the Research
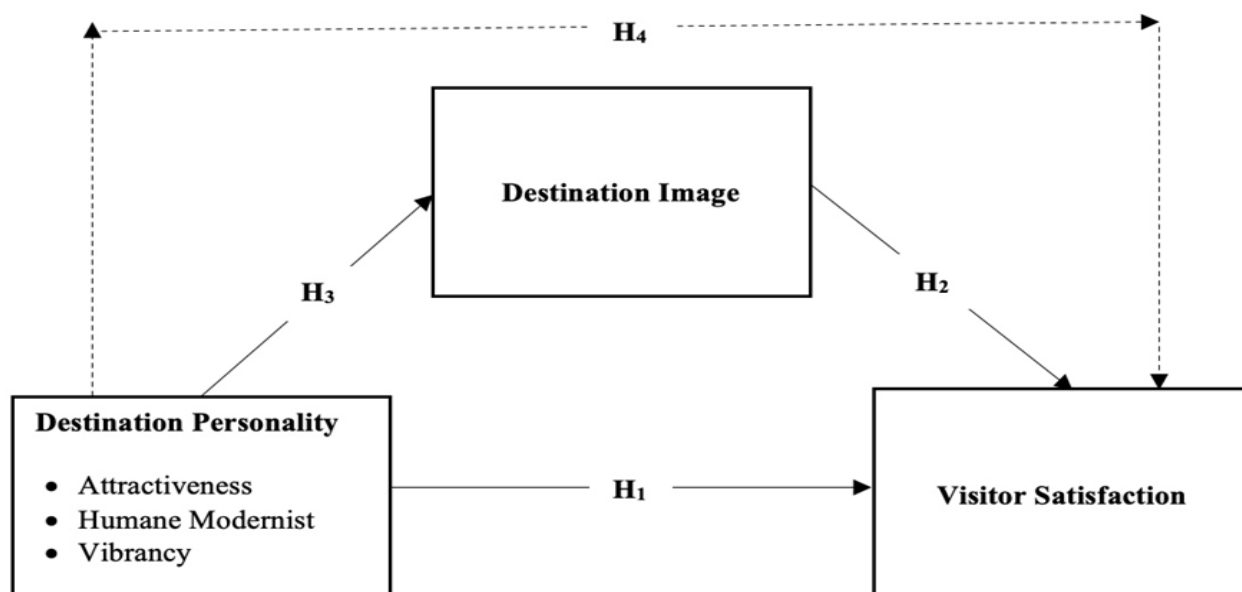
Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses to be examined within the framework of the research model are given below:

H_1: Destination personality significantly and positively affects visitor satisfaction.

H_{1a}: The attractiveness factor significantly and positively affects visitor satisfaction.

H_{1b}: The humane modernist factor significantly and positively affects visitor satisfaction.

H_{1c}: The vibrancy factor significantly and positively affects visitor satisfaction.

H₂: Destination image significantly and positively affects visitor satisfaction.

H₃: Destination personality significantly and positively affects destination image.

H₃ₐ: The attractiveness factor significantly and positively affects destination image.

H₃ᵦ: The humane modernist factor significantly and positively affects destination image.

H₃c: The vibrancy factor significantly and positively affects destination image.

H₄: Destination image has an intermediary role in the effect of destination personality on visitor satisfaction.

H₄ₐ: Destination image has an intermediary role in the effect of the attraction factor on visitor satisfaction.

H₄ᵦ: Destination image has an intermediary role in the effect of humane modernist factor on visitor satisfaction.

H₄c: Destination image has an intermediary role in the effect of vibrancy factor on visitor satisfaction.

Results

After examining the reliability, validity, normality tests and descriptive statistics of the scales, the analysis of the research has been initiated. The descriptive statistics of the variables and the Pearson correlation coefficients showing the level of correlation among the variables are summed up in Table 4. When the coefficients for all variables are analyzed, it is seen that the averages obtained are close to each other and the variables of destination personality, visitor satisfaction and destination image are observed at a moderate level. Evidence has been provided that the correlation coefficients among the independent variables do not form enough to cause the multiple linear connection problem (Bryman and Cramer, 1997: 257).

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics and Pearson Correlation Coefficients

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	1	2	3	4	5
Attractiveness	3.32	.94	1				
Humane Modernist	3.35	.93	0.832 **	1			
Vibrancy	3.24	1.11	0.714 **	0.744 **	1		
Visitor Satisfaction	3,57	.97	0.504 **	0.551 **	0.510 **	1	
Destination Image	3,58	.94	0.468 **	0.497 **	0.489 **	0.838 **	1

N= 234,* p<.05,**

Following the correlation analysis, linear regression and hierarchical regression analyzes have been performed to examine the hypotheses and the results obtained are shown in Tables 5, 6 and 7.

Table 5. The Mediator Role of Destination Image in the Effect of Attractiveness Factor on Visitor Satisfaction

Model 1 Independent variable	The dependent variable	R²	F	Beta (β)	t	p
Attractiveness	Visitor Satisfaction	0.254	79,197	0.504	8,899	0,000*
Model 2 Independent variable	**The dependent variable**	**R²**	**F**	**β**	**t**	**p**
Attractiveness	Destination Image	0.219	65,204	0.468	8,075	0,000*
Destination Image	Visitor Satisfaction	0.701	545,042	0.838	23,346	0,000*
Model 3 Independent variable	**The dependent variable**	**R²**	**F**	**β**	**t**	**p**
Attractiveness	Visitor			0.144	3,631	0,000*
Destination Image	Satisfaction	0.718	293,428	0.770	19,461	0,000*

* p<0.01; ** p<0.05

Table 5 indicates the outcomes of linear and hierarchical regression analysis regarding the intermediary role of destination image in the impact of the attractiveness factor on visitor satisfaction. According to the results; as seen in Model 1 and Model 2, 25.4% (R²=.254) of the visitor satisfaction variable and 21.9% (R²=0.219) of the destination image variable are explained by the attractiveness variable, it is found to have significance at the p<0.01 level. When the data in Model 2 are examined, it is observed that 70.1% of the visitor satisfaction

variable is explained by the destination image variable (R^2=.701) and its significance level is $p<0.01$. When Model 1, which reveals the effect of the attractiveness variable on visitor satisfaction, was examined, it was seen that attractiveness had a significant and positive impact on visitor satisfaction (β=.504; $p<0.05$). When Model 2, which reveals the impacts of destination image on visitor satisfaction, is examined, it is observed that destination image affects visitor satisfaction (β=.701; $p<0.01$) and attractiveness affects destination image (β=.219; $p<0.01$) significantly and positively. According to this result; H_{1a}, H_2 and H_{3a} hypotheses have been accepted. Based on the results in Model 1 and Model 2, the mediation effect given in Model 3 can also be examined.

In Model 3, it is observed that 71% of the visitor satisfaction variable is explained by the attractiveness (R^2=.718) and destination image variables and has a significance level of $p<0.01$. Apart from this, although the regression coefficient of the attractiveness variable in Model 1, namely the Beta value (β=.504), decreased (β=.144) with the inclusion of the destination image mediator variable in Model 3, it did not completely disappear ($p<0.01$). Furthermore, the destination image mediator variable also maintained its significance level ($p<0.01$). Within the framework of these results, the hypothesis "H_{4a}= The destination image has an intermediary role in the effect of the attractiveness factor on visitor satisfaction" has been accepted with a partial mediation effect.

Table 6. The Mediator Role of Destination Image in the Effect of Humane Modernist Factor on Visitor Satisfaction

Model 1 Independent variable	The dependent variable	R^2	F	β	t	p
Humane Modernist	Visitor Satisfaction	0.303	100,880	0.551	10,044	0,000*
Model 2 Independent variable	**The dependent variable**	**R^2**	**F**	**β**	**t**	**p**
Humane Modernist	Destination Image	0.247	76,237	0.497	8,731	0,000*
Destination Image	Visitor Satisfaction	0.701	545,042	0.838	23,346	0,000*
Model 3 Independent variable	**The dependent variable**	**R^2**	**F**	**β**	**t**	**p**
Humane Modernist	Visitor Satisfaction	0.725	304,932	0.178	4,478	0,000*
Destination Image				0.749	18,842	0,000*

* $p<0.01$; ** $p<0.05$

Table 6 indicates the results of linear and hierarchical regression analysis regarding the intermediary role of destination image in the effect of humane modernist factor on visitor satisfaction. According to the results, as seen in Model 1 and Model 2, 30.3% (R^2=.303) of the visitor satisfaction variable and 24.7% (R^2=0.247) of the destination image variable are explained by the humane modernist variable and it has been determined to have significance at the $p<0.01$ level. When the data in Model 2 is examined, it has been observed that 70.1% of the visitor satisfaction variable is explained by the destination image variable (R^2=.701) and it has significance at the $p<0.01$ level. When Model 1, which reveals the effect of the humane modernist variable on visitor satisfaction, is examined, it has been specified that the humane modernist variable has a significant and positive effect on visitor satisfaction (β=.303; $p<0.01$). When Model 2, which shows the impression of destination image on visitor satisfaction, is examined, it is observed that destination image affects visitor satisfaction significantly and positively (β=.701; $p<0.01$). According to this result, hypotheses H_{1b} and H_{3b} have been accepted. Based on the results obtained in Model 1 and Model 2, the mediation effect presented in Model 3 can also be examined.

Accordingly, in Model 3, it has been determined that 72% of the visitor satisfaction variable was explained by humane modernist (R^2=.725) and destination image variables and had a significance level of $p<0.01$. However, although the regression coefficient of the humane modernist variable in Model 1, namely the beta value (β=.551), decreased (β=.178) with the inclusion of the destination image mediator variable in Model 3, it has not been entirely disappeared ($p<0.01$). Accordingly, the destination image mediator variable also maintained its significance value ($p<0.01$). Based on these results, the hypothesis "H_{4b}=Humane modernist factor has an intermediary role in the effect of visitor satisfaction" has been accepted with a partial mediation effect.

Table 7. Mediator Role of Destination Image in the Effect of Vibrancy Factor on Visitor Satisfaction

Model 1 Independent variable	The dependent variable	R^2	F	β	t	p
Vibrancy	Visitor Satisfaction	0.260	81,640	0.510	9,036	0.000 *
Model 2 Independent variable	**The dependent variable**	**R^2**	**F**	**β**	**t**	**p**
Vibrancy	Destination Image	0.239	72,866	0.489	8,536	0.000 *
Destination Image	Visitor Satisfaction	0.701	545,042	0.838	23,346	0,000*
Model 3 Independent variable	**The dependent variable**	**R^2**	**F**	**β**	**t**	**p**
Vibrancy	Visitor Satisfaction	0.715	289,435	0.132	3,287	0.001*
Destination Image				0.773	19.185	0.000 *

* $p<0.01$; ** $p<0.05$

Linear and hierarchical regression analysis results regarding the intermediary role of destination image in the effect of vibrancy factor on visitor satisfaction are provided in Table 7. According to the results; as seen in Model 1 and Model 2, 26% (R^2=.260) of the visitor satisfaction variable and 23.9% (R^2=0.239) of the destination image variable were explained by the vibrancy variable, and $p<0.01$ level of significance was determined. When the data in Model 2 are examined, 70.1% of the visitor satisfaction variable is explained by the destination image variable (R^2=.701), it has been observed that it is significant at the $p<0.01$ level. When Model 1, which reveals the effect of the vibrancy variable on visitor satisfaction, is examined, it has been specified that the vibrancy variable has a significant and positive effect on visitor satisfaction (β=.510; $p<0.01$). When Model 2, which reveals the impression of destination image on visitor satisfaction, is examined, it has been specified that destination image affects visitor satisfaction significantly and positively (β=.838; $p<0.01$). According to this result, H_{1c} and H_{3c} hypotheses were accepted. Based on the results in Model 1 and Model 2, the mediation effect shown in Model 3 can also be examined.

In Model 3; 71% of the visitor satisfaction variable is explained by the vibrancy (R^2=.715) and destination image variables, and it has a significance level of $p<0.01$. Moreover, although the regression coefficient of the vibrancy variable in Model 1, namely beta value (β=.510), decreased (β=.132) with the inclusion of the destination image mediator variable in Model 3, it has not been entirely disappeared ($p<0.01$). Furthermore, the destination image mediator variable remained significant ($p<0.01$). According to these results, the hypothesis of "H_{4c}=The destination image has an intermediary role in the effect of the vibrancy factor on visitor satisfaction" has been accepted with a partial mediation effect.

Discussion and Conclusion

Destination personality and destination image issues are among the topics that are generally examined within the scope of brand management. In addition, it is one of the strategic marketing topics that has been focused on sensitively by destinations in recent years and has often been turned into a research topic by researchers in terms of focusing on other final goals of destinations, especially visitor satisfaction. In this study, this sensitive and important issue is discussed in terms of Bolu destination. In this direction, the effects of destination personality factors (attractiveness, humane modernist and vibrancy) and destination image on visitor satisfaction were examined in the research. In addition, the intermediary role of destination image in the effect of destination personality factors (attractiveness, humane modernist and vibrancy) on visitor satisfaction is also among the topics examined. The results of the research show that destination personality factors affect destination image and visitor satisfaction, while destination image affects visitor satisfaction. When the results of the studies implemented within the scope of the subject are examined, it has been observed that the results of the relevant studies generally coincide with the results of this research. For example, Kim et al. (2017) in the city of Seoul, South Korea, it has been determined that the exciting, comfort and activity dimensions of

the destination personality traits affect the destination image positively, except for the sincerity dimension. In the study, it was concluded that the sincerity dimension did not affect the destination image, unlike the results of this research. In addition, Işık and Özkan (2019) in their research in Gaziantep; they found a non-strong positive relationship between the dimensions of destination personality, which they determined as modernity, competence, sincerity and peace, and visitor satisfaction. On the other hand, Hosany et al. (2007) determined a correlate between destination personality and destination image. In parallel with the results of this research, Chi and Qu (2008), Prayag (2009) and Gün et al. (2019) concluded that the destination image positively affects visitor satisfaction. Chen and Phou (2013) also determined that destination personality and destination image affect destination satisfaction significantly and positively. Aktaş (2021), on the other hand, examined the relationships between the variables of destination personality, destination food image, satisfaction and behavioral intentions. In this study, it was determined that destination food image and destination personality have a positive effect on satisfaction.

In this research, different dimensions from the vibrancy, competence, sophistication, sincerity and contemporary dimensions identified by Usakli and Baloglu (2011) were revealed. In this direction, in the research; it has been determined that Bolu's destination personality has three different dimensions: *attractiveness, humane modernist* and *vibrancy.* Hosany et al. (2006) and Ekinci et al. (2007) similarly identified three dimensions in their research as amusement, sincerity and excitement. It can be considered that the *attractiveness, humane modernist* and *vibrancy dimensions* determined in this research are perceived by the tourists as the basic personality traits of Bolu and that the tourists' perceptions of Bolu are shaped in a positive way because they identify these personality traits with their own personality traits. It has been observed that a new dimension has emerged with the integration of two different personality traits, which seem completely different from each other, especially in the humane modernist dimension. The fact that the sincerity dimension, which can be described as the personality trait of the traditional domestic people, and modernity are gathered under the same dimension, shows that the two personality traits, which sometimes conflict and contrast with each other, are perceived as the common characteristic of the Bolu destination. Therefore, the Bolu destination is perceived by tourists as a destination that preserves and exhibits sincerity and other domestic personality traits. In addition, Bolu is considered by tourists as a destination that has managed to modernize with its developed infrastructure and superstructure, qualified service understanding, and attitudes and behaviors of domestic people and tourism workers. In short, it can be considered that while Bolu progresses rapidly on the path of modernization, it has succeeded in preserving its domestic and cultural identity and reflecting these characteristics to the visitors. In the research, since the answers given to humane modernist and attractiveness factors have a relatively higher average than the vibrancy dimension, it can be considered that these dimensions are the most dominant personality traits perceived by tourists in Bolu. According to this result, it has been observed that Bolu is perceived as a humane modernist and attractive destination rather than a vibrant or lively destination. Due to the fact that Bolu stands out with its relatively natural attractions; it is possible to say that it exhibits a quiet, calm and peaceful destination personality. In addition, the fact that Bolu is close to more lively and lively destinations than Bolu, such as Ankara and Istanbul, may cause it to stand out with its quiet and calm personality. On the other hand, Bolu's quiet and calm destination personality feature allows it to receive more visitors from big metropolitan cities such as Ankara and Istanbul. This situation can be explained by the quiet, calm, relaxing and peaceful features of Bolu.

In the research, the idea of examination the intermediary role of destination image in the impact of destination personality on visitor satisfaction is based on the theory that tourists shall begin to have a positive image about the destination both perceptually/cognitively and emotionally allied with they establish a connection between the personality characteristics of the destination and their own personality traits. As a matter of fact, the results of the study also support this theory. In this research, it has been seen that the destination personality traits are an important factor in positively shaping visitor satisfaction directly and through the partial mediation effect of the destination image, namely indirectly. It can be considered that a positive image about the destination begins to form in the minds of the tourists, who are positively affected by the destination personality traits, and that they leave the destination in a satisfied way by reinforcing this image with the positive experiences they have in the destination. In this sense, destinations should consciously implement effective destination personality positioning strategies for the target market or try to develop existing destination personality traits compatible with their target audiences by integrating them with their service understanding. Because, as seen in this study, destination personality traits have emerged as a substantial element in the positive improvement of the destination image and ultimately in the formation of visitor satisfaction.

Implementation of destination personality development and positioning strategies in Bolu and other destinations can provide significant advantages to destinations in terms of focusing on target audiences and differentiation from competitors and can enhance destination image. By concentration on the existing personality traits of the destinations, it can be tried to gain a place in the market with these personality traits, as well as new destination personality traits and destination image positioning strategies can be applied to upgrade the destination image, in accordance with the expectations of the market and to differentiate from the competitors. At this point, the ultimate goal is ensuring visitor satisfaction, developing long-term relationships with visitors, and reaching the number of visitors and revenue targets determined by the destination. Tourists, who are affected by the destination personality traits and accordingly start to have positive impressions about the destination and reinforce this impression with the positive experiences they have in the destination, shall not only leave the destination satisfied, but also shall most likely tend to revisit the destination and advice it to others. During the implementation of destination personality and destination image positioning strategies; In addition to classical marketing tools, destinations are expected to benefit effectively from digital marketing tools such as websites, social media channels, mobile application tools, whose strategic importance has become indisputable today.

In the constitution of destination personality and destination image; in particular, the destination's social, cultural, historical and natural tourism supply resources, the service understanding of tourism enterprises, the attitudes and behaviors of tourism employees and domestic people have an important role. In addition, the image of the destination is directly affected by the personality traits and general image of the country. In this sense, the main actors of tourism need to act together in harmony and cooperation in order to create a quality service understanding spread throughout the destination. Ensuring harmony and cooperation among the stakeholders is seen and recommended as a prerequisite for the general image of the destination to develop positively and for the visitors to leave the destination in a satisfied way.

In future studies, it may be useful to examine factors such as the attitudes and behaviors of the domestic people and tourism workers, the natural and cultural attractions of the destination, and the digital infrastructure that may affect the destination image and visitor satisfaction, apart from the destination personality. Since only domestic tourists constitute the sample of this research, the results of this research are limited to the opinions of domestic tourists. In future studies on the subject, it may be proposed to include foreign tourists in the research sample. In addition, it can be recommended to increase the number of studies in which small-scale destinations are examined in terms of destination personality, destination image and visitor satisfaction, apart from cities such as Bolu or large metropolitan destinations. In the future, it may be recommended to conduct qualitative research aimed at revealing the personality and image expectations of tourists about destinations. Thereby, a better understanding of the expectations of tourists can be achieved and the results obtained from these researches can be a source for the personality and image positioning studies and strategies of destinations.

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