Towards Understanding of Destination Image and Place Attachment for State Park Tourists

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Research Background

- Tourists’ decision making is a funnel-like process (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005).

- Destinations mainly compete based on their perceived images (Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001).

- Images are more important than the tangible resources (Guthrie & Gale, 1991).

- Tourists have dissimilar motivation for visit because they have different level of place attachment to the destinations (Poria, Reichel, and Biran, 2006).
Purpose

■ Determine the factors that influence the destination image of Oklahoma State Parks.

■ Explore the place attachment of Oklahoma State Park tourists.

■ Examine the influence of destination image and place attachment on tourists’ motivation.
Destination Image

- Sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination (Crompton, 1979).

- The link between the destination and tourist (Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000).

- Destination image is composed of two distinct elements (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999):
  - **Cognitive**: knowledge and beliefs about a destination.
  - **Affective**: feelings about a destination.
Place Attachment

- The word ‘place’ focuses on the setting to which individuals are emotionally attached while ‘attachment’ refers to affect (Low & Altman, 1992).

  - **Place identity**
    - A sense in which a person would like to identify with a specific place (Cuba & Hummon, 1993)

  - **Place dependence**
    - Using a resource to satisfy specific activity needs (Williams & Roggenbuck, 1989).

  - **Social bonding**
    - A physical space becomes meaningful to the individual through social interaction (Kyle, Graefe, & Manning, 2005).
Tourist Motivation

- An important variable in explaining tourist behavior.

- Two motivational forces for tourism behavior (Iso-Ahola, 1982):
  - Desire to leave the routine environment
  - Desire to obtain psychological (intrinsic) rewards through travel

- Tourists are not only “pushed” by internal needs, but also “pulled” by destination attributes (Crompton, 1979).
  - Pull factors: attraction and features of a particular destination.
  - Push factors: internal needs and wants of the individuals.
Research Sites

- Beavers Bend State Park
- Robbers Cave State Park
- Sequoyah State Park
Beavers Bend State Park

- One of the original seven state parks in Oklahoma.

- Located in Southeastern corner of Oklahoma in McCurtain county.

- Recreational activities
  - eagle watching, fishing, horseback rides, golfing, miniature golf, tennis, jet skiing, boating, and canoeing.

- Nature center & interpretive programs.

- Historic structures
  - Civilian Conservation Corps camp

- Lakeview Lodge, cabins, campsites
Robbers Cave State Park

- One of the original state parks in Oklahoma park system
- Located in Southeastern Oklahoma in Latimer county.
- Recreational facilities
  - swimming beach, playgrounds, miniature golf, hiking trails, horseback riding stables, paddle boat rentals, and a nature center.
- The park encompasses three lakes
  - Lake Carlton, Lake Wayne Wallace, and Coon Creek Lake.
- Belle Starr View Lodge, cabins, campsites
Sequoyah State Park

- Northeast Oklahoma on Fort Gibson Lake in Cherokee County

- Recreational activities
  - hiking, picnicking, guided horseback trail rides, golf, wildlife watching, disc-golf, boating, fishing and camping.

- Sequoyah Lodge
  - Formerly known as Western Hills Guest Ranch
  - Restaurant

- Cabins, campsites
Methods

■ Data collection:
  – Online survey through Qualtrics

■ Sampling:
  – Convenience sampling
  – Overnight visitors
  – Invitations through
    ■ Reservation email list
    ■ Onsite invitations
      – Posters and cards
Research Design

- **Instrument development**
  - Based on current literature on related topics

- **Instrument structure**
  - Destination Image Instrument (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999)
  - Place Attachment Instrument (Kyle et al., 2005)
  - Tourist Motivation Instrument (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999)
  - Socio-demographics

- **Data analysis:**
  - Descriptive analysis
  - Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)
  - Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)
Destination Image Instrument

- Three factors
  - Quality of experience
    - Eight items
  - Attractions
    - Three items
  - Value/Environment
    - Three items

- Fourteen attributes on a five point Likert scale: Very Poor, Poor, Average, Good, and Excellent (1 to 5, respectively).
Place Attachment Instrument

- Three dimensions
  - *Place identity*
    - Four items
  - *Place dependence*
    - Four items
  - *Social bonding*
    - Four items

- Five point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).
Tourist Motivation Instrument

■ Five motivation factors
  – Relaxation/escape
    ■ Five items
  – Excitement/adventure
    ■ Four items
  – Knowledge
    ■ Four items
  – Social
    ■ Two items
  – Prestige
    ■ Two items

■ Five point Likert scale ranging from “not at all important” to “very important”.
Demographic Characteristics

- **Gender**
  - Female (54%)

- **Age**
  - Age 45 and older (78%)

- **Ethnicity**
  - Caucasian (90%)
  - Native Americans (5%)

- **Education**
  - Post-secondary education (82%)

- **Income**
  - Annual HH income > $50,000 (86%)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination Image Factors</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beautiful Scenery/Natural Attractions/Events</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Climate</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpolluted/Unspoiled Environment</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting and Friendly Staff</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Value for Money</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Safety</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake/River Activities</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature Center &amp; Interpretive Programs</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Hygiene and Cleanliness</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Infrastructure</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Room/Cabin/Campsite</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting Historical Attractions/Events</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting Cultural Attractions</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appealing Local Food (Cuisine)</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Factors:
- Quality of Experience
- Attractions
- Value/Environment
## Results: Place Attachment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place Attachment Factors</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have a lot of fond memories about _____ State Park.</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I bring my family/friends to _____ State Park.</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do tell many people about _____ State Park.</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ State Park means a lot to me.</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am very attached to _____ State Park.</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I identify strongly with _____ State Park.</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting _____ State Park says a lot about who I am.</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_____ State Park is the best place for what I like to do.</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a special connection to _____ State Park and the people who visit it.</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get more satisfaction out of visiting _____ State Park than from visiting any other park.</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing what I do at _____ State Park is more important than doing it in any other place.</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wouldn’t substitute any other park for the type of things I do at _____ State Park.</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Factors:
- **Place Identity**
- **Place Dependence**
- **Social Bonding**
## Results: Motivations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation Factors</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relaxing physically and mentally</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting away from demands of everyday life</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escaping from the routine</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relieving stress and tension</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting away from crowds</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having fun, being entertained</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiencing new/different places</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being adventurous</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telling my friends about the park</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing exciting things</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning new things, increasing my knowledge</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiencing different cultures and ways of life</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enriching myself intellectually</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding thrills and excitement</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting people with similar interests</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing close relationships</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going places my friends have not been</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Factors:**
- Relaxation/Escape
- Excitement/Adventure
- Knowledge
- Social
- Prestige
### The Direct Effects, Indirect Effects, and Covariance of the Model

#### Direct Effect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Regression Weights</th>
<th>Error</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Destination Image</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DI -&gt; DI1</td>
<td>0.76*</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DI -&gt; DI2</td>
<td>0.68*</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DI -&gt; DI3</td>
<td>0.87*</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place Attachment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA -&gt; PA1</td>
<td>0.87*</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA -&gt; PA2</td>
<td>0.77*</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA -&gt; PA3</td>
<td>0.88*</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourist Motivation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOT -&gt; MOT1</td>
<td>0.72*</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOT -&gt; MOT2</td>
<td>0.66*</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOT -&gt; MOT4</td>
<td>0.53*</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOT -&gt; MOT5</td>
<td>0.80*</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DI -&gt; PA</strong></td>
<td>0.47*</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PA -&gt; MOT</strong></td>
<td>0.38*</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DI -&gt; MOT</strong></td>
<td>0.35*</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Indirect Effect and Covariance

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DI -&gt; PA -&gt; MOT</td>
<td>0.18*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e1 &lt;-&gt; e4</td>
<td>-0.33*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e1 &lt;-&gt; e5</td>
<td>-0.55*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e2 &lt;-&gt; e4</td>
<td>0.20*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e4 &lt;-&gt; e5</td>
<td>0.42*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e7 &lt;-&gt; e8</td>
<td>-0.37*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * means that the effect is significant at the p<0.05 level, two-tailed.
Discussion of Findings

- Destination image
  - Quality of experience, attractions, value/environment
    - Priorities
      - Value/environment
      - Quality of experience
      - Attractions
    - Significantly influences place attachment
      - Regression weight (β = 0.47, p < 0.05)
    - Significantly influences tourist motivation
      - Regression weight (β = 0.35, p < 0.05)
Discussion of Findings Cont.

- Place attachment
  - *Place identity, place dependence, social bonding*
    - Priorities
      - *Social bonding*
      - *Place identity*
      - *Place dependence*
    - *Significantly influences tourist motivation*
      - Regression weight ($\beta = 0.38$, $p<0.05$)
    - *Factor between destination image and tourist motivation*
      - Regression weight ($\beta = 0.18$, $p<0.05$)
Tourist motivation
- Relaxation/escape, excitement/adventure, knowledge, social, and prestige.

Priorities
- Relaxation/escape
- Excitement/adventure
- Knowledge
- Social
- Prestige

Direct impact of destination image on tourist motivation ($\beta = 0.35$, $p<0.05$).
Direct impact of place attachment on tourist motivation ($\beta = 0.38$, $p<0.05$).
Indirect relationship between destination image and tourist motivation ($\beta = 0.18$, $p<0.05$).
Conclusion

- First step towards a theoretical model

- Understanding tourist’s decision making process
  - Emphasis on specific aspects of guest services
  - Investment in staff training and supervision
  - Take advantage of word-of-mouth

- Support for multi-dimensionality of place attachment