
Research article

The Impact of Cognitive Country Image on Tourist's Memorable Experience Through the Meditating Role of Tourist Destination Competitiveness and its Consequences on Revisit Intention

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Abstract:

This study aims to explore the impact of cognitive country image on tourists' memorable experience and its consequences on the future behaviours. It also aims to address the role of the practical contribution in forming tourists' memorable experience by examining the effect of tourist destinations competitiveness and its impact on the future behaviours.

The method of this study is adapting a theoretical conceptualization. Based on quantitative results and literature review, a questionnaire is developed, piloted, and administrated to the tourism-goers in Saudi Arabia. The results of this empirical study confirmed the effects of cognitive country image on tourists' memorable experiences, enhancing tourism destination competitiveness which leads to affecting the behavioural state including revisit intention. Which in turns, provided theoretical and practical contributions to stakeholders and practitioners in tourism and marketing field in Saudi Arabia.

This study offers a novel investigation into how cognitive country image affect the formation of memorable experience and how that affects behaviours in the future.

Keywords: Tourism, cognitive country image, Tourism destination competitiveness, Tourists' memorable experience, Re-visit intention.

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1. Introduction:

Tourism is one of the main drivers of the global economy that significantly boosts job creation, generates enormous profits, and fosters economic success (Bazargani et al., 2021). For instance, the World travel and tourism council WTTC (2021) reports that, in 2019 tourism generates over 9 billion dollars with a total contribution of 10.4% to the global GDP. Hence, these enormous benefits of tourism raise the challenge between tourism destinations around the world to obtain a greater share of those benefits (Ragab, Mahrous and Ghoneim, 2020). As a result, this has led both the well-known and less-visited destinations as enticing as possible.

The cognitive country image is one of the essential factors influences tourists' experience which has an impact on their perception, attitude, evaluation, and future behaviours (Zhang et al., 2018). Hence, the perception of a country has a significant impact on travellers' intentions to travel there, return, and refer others to it. (Jeannie Hahm and Tasci, 2019a). Given the importance rule of tourist destination competitiveness, which have an influence on future behaviour, this study examines the mediating function of tourist destinations' competitiveness within the framework of cognitive country image. This study is aiming to provide several significant contributions and implications for researchers and policymakers in tourism and marketing fields.

For instance, it will support in establishing a conceptual clarification of creating memorable tourism experience and its consequences on tourists' future behaviours. This study will contribute to what is currently a limited amount of empirical research on investigating the impact of cognitive country image on tourist's memorable experience. Therefore, people's beliefs, ideas, and impressions make up the cognitive country image, which is an interactive system of ideas, sentiments, opinions, visualizations, and intentions toward a place. (Ferreira et al., 2019).

Tourism destination competitiveness may be defined as the ability to increase tourism expenditure by offering enjoyable, unforgettable experiences, while preserving the destination's natural capital for future generations (Fernández et al., 2020). Therefore, this piece of research will also address the importance of the practical contribution in shaping the tourists' memorable experience by examining the functionality of the tourist destinations, which can play a leading role in facilitating that experience. This current study seeks to lay out significant and comprehensive findings for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers.

It has been arguing that there is a link between the effectiveness of cognitive country image and tourism destination competitiveness leading to a tourists' memorable experience which in fact, affecting their revisit intention. Thus, this link needs to be identified and evaluated which could benefit both the local tourism authority and the end user. Therefore, the main aim of this study is to explore the impact of cognitive country image on tourists' memorable experiences through the role of destination competitiveness and its impact on their revisit intention in Saudi Arabia.

Based on the main aim above, the objectives of this study will be:

- To explore the effects of cognitive country image on tourists' memorable experiences
- To assess the impact of cognitive country image on tourists' revisit intention

- To evaluate the link between cognitive country image and tourism destination competitiveness
- To examine the relationship between tourism destination competitiveness and tourists' memorable experience
- To identify the relation between tourists' memorable experiences and tourists' revisit intention

2. Literature review

2.1. Cognitive country image

The cognitive country image encompasses features associated to attributes that offer tangible feature of a destination such as local infrastructure and safety, cuisine, lodging, and touristic attraction services (Ferreira and Giraldi, 2019). As well, it relates to how visitors perceive a nation's degree of industrialisation, technological advancement, standard of living, and economic development. (Li *et al.*, 2014). It reflects the tourist's knowledge, recognition, beliefs, thoughts, and awareness of each attribute of a tourism destination (Michael, James and Michael, 2018).

It is a significant element that influences how visitors react based on their overall knowledge and opinions while assessing a destination's qualities. (Loureiro *et al.*, 2022). In other words, it affects attention, encoding, evaluation, and application of information, potentially influencing tourists' decision to visit and/or their inclination to return (Pezeshki *et al.*, 2019). Thus, the competitiveness of a destination's position in the tourism market is impacted by cognitive image, which is an essential component of engaging imagery, projected destination image, and perceived destination image. (Michael, James and Michael, 2018).

Cognitive image helps to differentiate a place in consumers' minds related to tourism satisfaction, leading to the intentions to visit (Marques, Vinhas da Silva and Antova, 2021). Hence, the perceived image of the tourists would depend on the attractions that a place offers on its positioning as a tourist destination, and on the objectives of the assessment of perceived image (Michael, James and Michael, 2018). Thus, before visiting a place, travellers set expectations based on its perceived image, which they then compare to the outcome of their trip. (De Nisco *et al.*, 2015).

According to Pezeshki *et al.*, (2019), cognitive image is seen as a factor that influences the choice of the visitors for a destination by forming the destination attribute and creating an appropriate image of their attractions offering. As well, the cognitive image acts as an essential resource for promoting a destination's image, addressing the value expression, and offering the concept of hard and soft factors at any given destination (García-Hernández and Garay-Tamajón, 2022).

As Martín-Santana *et al.*, (2017), state that, the pre-visit perception is regarded as a key component in the formation of expectations, which will subsequently be used as the foundation for comparison once the vacation is experienced. Thus, the cognitive image is a result of various aspects of standards that are immediately observed about the destination, such as friendliness of citizens, quality of lodging, attractions, and safety (Jeannie Hahm and Tasci, 2019b). Therefore, it represents an individual's perception of the different attributes of a place, while also using visual elements to convey one's

personal thoughts about the location (Gorji, Garcia and Mercadé-Melé, 2023).

Hence, the cognitive image can be acknowledged by the actual experience with the destination, through interaction with people and place. (Stylidis, 2022). Therefore, the construct's dynamic nature enables it to evolve continually and alter in response to information received from various sources at various stages of the destination selection procedure. (Jeannie Hahm and Tasci, 2019b).

2.2 Tourist destination competitiveness

Tourism destination competitiveness can be seen as a booster, driving tourism spending and draw tourists by offering them fulfilling, unforgettable experiences and protecting the destination's natural capital for future generations. (Salinas Fernández et al., 2020). Hence, tourism destination competitiveness is a crucial element for a destination to obtain a favourable position in the world tourism market and promote a competitive advantage (Cronjé and du Plessis, 2020). Similar to that, as Rodríguez-Molina et al., (2019) state that TDC is a significant source of competitive advantage, and preserving it, is an essential for professionals tasked with tourism destinations.

On the other hand, there has been another stream of view led by several studies such as Goffi et al., (2019) and Zadeh Bazargani and Kiliç, (2021) who address the magnitude of tourism destination competitiveness from the angle of its performance. For instance, they claim that tourists perceived that destination management provides better and satisfactory services using destination resources. Hence, destination management is a solid orientation towards the needs of potential guests and create experiences which makes the future behaviour a vital factor of competence of a destination management .(Pearce and Schänzel, 2013)

Thus, destination management is viewpoint that highlight the necessity of variety in tourism destinations to maximise the benefits for all parties involved including tourists, tourism providers and local communities (Volgger et al., 2021). Indeed, addressing the sufficiency and efficacy of the offerings, infrastructure, services, and activities that collectively contribute to the creation of unforgettable travel experiences for tourists is the fundamental goal of destination management. (Pearce and Schänzel, 2013). Therefore, destination Management is a way leading, effecting and coordinating the management of all aspects of a destination that can be offered to a visitor's experience (Coban and Yildiz, 2019).

As a result, the management of tourist destinations has a unique significance, with the effective management of their competitiveness being especially pertinent by focusing on the efficacy and efficiency of managing the resources at the destination. (González-Rodríguez, Díaz-Fernández and Pulido-Pavón, 2023).

Besides, as Altinay and Kozak, (2021) state that the utilization of tourism resources and the preservation of their distinctive characteristics are essential for sustaining the competitiveness of a destination and its capacity to retain market share. In the words of Chen et al., (2016), destination resources can be defined as a set of specific natural, cultural, historical, physical, and human resources that improve the destination's appeal, bolster the supporting elements, and best adjust to the situational conditions. Thus, destination resources are an essential element of destination competitiveness,

recognised as a driver of innovation processes, stimulating economic diversification, a booster of financial, human, and social capital of the region (Muštra, Perić and Pivčević, 2023).

Therefore, a destination's resources are a strategic asset that determines the amount of activity it can achieve. By drawing entrepreneurs who invest in facilities, these resources help the destination attract tourists and increase its competitiveness. (Vengesai, 2018). Hence, the competitiveness, attractiveness, and sustainability of a destination are thus impacted by a variety of factors that affect the tourism service provider, as well as by tourism-related factors that draw potential tourists. (Albayrak *et al.*, 2018).

2.3 Tourist memorable experience

According to Zhang *et al.*, (2018), memorable tourist experience can be referred to those Experiences that are carefully crafted from tourist experiences and that can be recollected and remembered after a trip are referred to as memorable tourist experiences. It has a significant impact on memory formation depending on how each person evaluates the event and is one of the best indicators of a tourist's behavioural purpose. (Rasoolimanesh *et al.*, 2021a). It determines visitors pleasure and memorable experiences at the destination, and it can be seen as a prime indicator of their future behaviours. (Kim, 2014).

It can be viewed as the subjective mental state experienced by visitors' interaction with a service and a scale to assess the standard of the tourism experience according to behaviours, leisure, and tourist activities (Loureiro, 2014). Hence, the memory of tourism experiences is associated with resources for controlling moods and travel inclinations, and they may be a crucial predictor of people's emotional states and future actions. (Kim, Ribeiro and Li, 2022). Therefore, the core of the travel and hospitality sector is to produce unforgettable experiences, as marketing research moves from a traditional paradigm to an experiential marketing paradigm. (Li *et al.*, 2021).

As well, this could boost the experience economy, by planning tourism around a supply of personal, unique, and varied experiences (García-Hernández and Garay-Tamajón, 2022). According to Melón *et al.*, (2021), creating memorable experiences is fundamental to destination competitiveness, viability, and profitability as considered to be the most valuable information source when choosing a tourist destination as well as defining future decision-making. In addition, Coudounaris and Sthapit, (2017) argue that MTE is becoming more important in periods of holidays, which adds value by influencing tourists and their behaviours positively in terms of revisiting the same destination. Hence, MTE should be included when modelling the antecedents of tourists' satisfaction and behavioural intentions (Sharma and Nayak, 2019).

in the word of Gato *et al.*, (2022), The core of a tourist experience can be enhanced if it is presented as a multifaceted, unforgettable activity that visitors actively participate in, giving them the chance to have an authentic experience and boosting their desire to return. Thus, tourists can access subjective experiences characterised to be vivid, sensory, and emotionally intense, involves emotional valence, and social functions that predict people's affective states and future actions (Kim, Ribeiro and Li, 2022).

In addition, when compared to the pre-trip phase, these experiences can improve tourists' perceptions of a destination, especially when it comes to features like the social environment, activities, weather, facilities, and culture. (Gorji, Garcia and Mercadé-Melé, 2023). Hence, this discursive link, which forms the foundation of a subjective attachment to a place and the subsequent formation of a sense of place, is often created by the interaction of the individual experience with the collective discourse around the destination. (García-Hernández and Garay-Tamajón, 2022).

Therefore, relative to the meaningfulness of the activity, objects, places, other people, must be taken as authentic to support feelings of real, genuine, and meaningful experiences (Moore *et al.*, 2021). Besides, to ensure that tourists have a satisfying and unforgettable experience, advance planning is necessary, including recruiting and keeping accountable, proactive, and responsible individuals where services are provided. (Gato *et al.*, 2022).

In this respect, TME would be essential to promoting effectiveness, a conception that emphasizes the active participation in their experiences since it may strengthen their ties, to the destination and have a positive association with their intents to return (Garau-Vadell, Orfila-Sintes and Batle, 2021). Thus, the quality of visitors' experiences and their evaluations of the amenities and services offered to them have a significant impact on the tourism sector, which is a service-oriented industry. (Abbasi *et al.*, 2021a).

2.4 Revisit intention

According to Stylos *et al.*, (2017), revisit intention to a certain place is an outcome of an established holistic image serves as an explanatory mechanism in the interaction between many facets of the country image and, consequently, tourists' intention to return to a particular location. Hence, the desire to seek hedonic tourism experiences such as enjoyment and excitement are critical factors in determining revisit intention and future behaviour (Rasoolimanesh *et al.*, 2022). Therefore, it refers to behavioural intentions as perceptions of individuals about what they expect to do in each situation. Thus, it may be interpreted as an assessment of the traveller's likelihood of returning to the same location or their propensity to suggest it to others. (Bayih and Singh, 2020).

In other words, revisit intention describes a person's preparedness and desire to repeat visit (Rasoolimanesh *et al.*, 2021). According to Rodríguez-Molina *et al.*, (2019), they mention that destination appeal leads to revisit intention as it considered to be as a combination of the relative importance of the benefits for tourists and the perceived capacity of the destination to deliver those benefits. Moreover, revisit intention is affected by destination attributes which determine the competitiveness capability, attractiveness, and sustainability of a destination (Albayrak *et al.*, 2018). Hence, revisit intention may often be affected by several variables ranging from perceived attractiveness of the destination to the real destination attributes as well as the image of the destination, perceived quality, and satisfaction (Bayih and Singh, 2020).

Xu and Zhang, (2016) argue that building and reinforcing place attachment of tourists can be used as distinctive tourism marketing tool to increase revisit frequency of the tourist and increase the market share. It is indeed that revisit intention is regarded as a significant factor for businesses growth and survival which contributes to the profitability of the tourism business and is regarded as the key to

successful destination marketing (Abbasi *et al.*, 2021b). As well, place attachment also plays a key role in tourist experiences as the intensity of place attachment enhances loyalty and revisit behaviour (Vada, Prentice and Hsiao, 2019). Hence, the quality of tourism destinations is often judged by destination satisfaction and revisit intention which considered to be the strongest indicator of destination loyalty (Acharya, Mekker and De Vos, 2023).

As such, revisit intention is the attitudinal approach concerns by tourists' affective bond to a place forming an emotional attachment (Kuo *et al.*, 2021). Hence, one of the primary factors influencing travellers' decisions to visit or return to a place is its uniqueness, which can therefore provide economic value to travel destinations. (Shaykh-Baygloo, 2021). Therefore, the quality of visitors' experiences and their evaluations of the amenities and services offered to them have a significant impact on their intention to return. (Abbasi *et al.*, 2021b). As such, experience has a significant impact on memory formation, determines the level of intentional commitment one may make to conduct an action, and is one of the most reliable indicators of a tourist's behavioural intent. (Rasoolimanesh *et al.*, 2021b).

According to Wang and Butkouskaya (2023), an integrated framework can be used to evaluate behavioural intentions, which are the guaranteed likelihood of engaging in a specific behaviour. These intentions can be viewed as a collection of behaviours that predict whether consumers would buy the same product or service in the future. Thus, the country image has a significant impact on intention, through the cognitive and affective images which significantly influence the behavioural intention such as revisiting or recommending travel experience involvement (Nazir, Yasin and Tat, 2021).

3. Conceptual model development

3.1 Cognitive country image and tourists' memorable experiences

Cognitive country image has received fundamental research attention from different perspectives. For instance, it has an impact on focusing, assessing, and application of information, through the attribute of the destination which may persuade a tourist to visit and/or post-visit intentions to revisit (Pezeshki *et al.*, 2019).. Hence, this perceived image plays a significant role in the development of expectations, which will be used as the foundation for comparison after the vacation is realised (Martín-Santana *et al.*, 2017). Thus, it represents an individual's perception of the different attributes of a place, while also using visual elements to convey one's personal thoughts about the location (Gorji, Garcia and Mercadé-Melé, 2023). Therefore, based on the above reasoning, it is suggested that:

- **(H1)** Cognitive country image has a positive effect on tourists' memorable experiences.

3.2 Cognitive country image and tourists' revisit intention

According to Martín-Santana *et al.*, (2017), cognitive country image has the influence not just when traveling but even after the trip is over, which has an impact on how satisfied tourists are and if they return. Hence, cognitive country image can be considered as a national stereotype which has a positive influence on destination image, promoting to the intention to revisit (Chaulagain *et al.*, 2019). Hence, the proposed hypothesis would be as follow:

- (H2) Cognitive country image has a positive effect on tourists' revisit intention.

3.3 Cognitive country image and tourism destination competitiveness

Dedeoğlu (2019) argues that cognitive country image is a crucial component of tourism which acts as antecedents of destination competitiveness, resulting in the structure of tourists' opinions about the elements of the travel destination positively. Hence, cognitive image acts as a fundamental factor that engaging imagery, projected destination image and perceived destination image which significantly affect the competitiveness of a destination's position in the tourism market (Michael, James and Michael, 2018). Therefore, based on the above arguments, the proposed hypothesis would be as follow:

- (H3) there is a positive relationship between cognitive country image and tourism destination competitiveness.

3.4 Destination competitiveness and tourists' memorable experiences

Tourism destination competitiveness is a crucial element for a destination to obtain a favourable position in the world tourism market and promote a competitive advantage (Cronjé and du Plessis, 2020). Therefore, the core of the travel and hospitality sector is to produce unforgettable experiences, as marketing research moves from a traditional paradigm to an experiential marketing paradigm. (Ye et al., 2021). Therefore, based on the above arguments, the proposed hypothesis would be as follow:

- (H4) there is a positive relationship between tourism destination competitiveness and tourists' memorable experiences.

3.5 Tourists' memorable experiences and tourists' revisit intention

According to Melón et al., (2021), creating memorable experiences is fundamental to destination competitiveness as regarded to be the most important source of information for determining future decision-making and selecting a tourist location. Hence, revisit intention is affected by destination attributes which determine the competitiveness capability, attractiveness, and sustainability of a destination (Albayrak et al., 2018). To this end, the following hypotheses are proposed as follow:

(H5) tourists' memorable experiences have a positive effect on tourists' revisit intention.

Taking into account all hypotheses, Fig. 1.3 illustrates the proposed research model in this study.

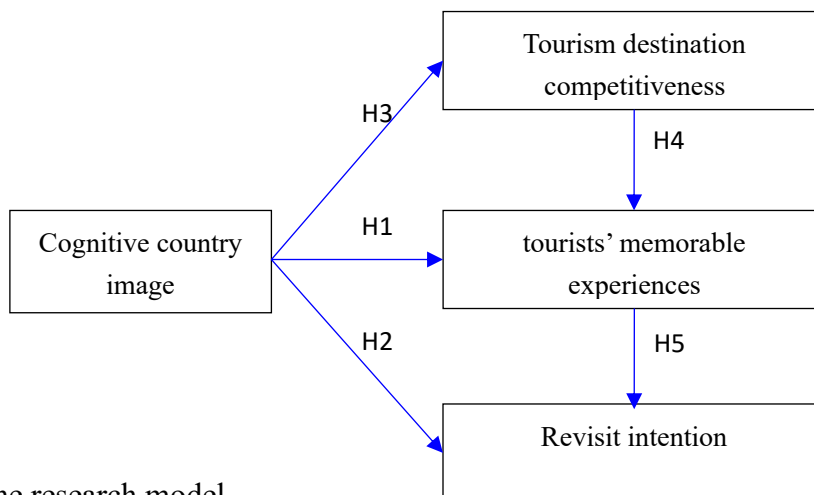


Fig. 1.3 The research model

4. Research methodology:

4.1 introduction

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of cognitive country image on tourists' memorable experience through the mediating role of tourist destination competitiveness and its consequences on their future behaviour. This study aims to bring together two well established and proven theories: place attachment and theory of planned behaviour. The theoretical foundation of the proposed research model was built based on the existing theories in the social field. This current study assigns a value-free way, benefitting from well-established theories to build a research model.

4.2 Research instrument

The constructs were measured by 5-point Likert-type scales based on degree of agreement or disagreement (1= strongly agree, 5= strongly disagree). Prior to the analysis, the measures were modified from scales validated in previous research for the objectives of this study. The measurement of cognitive country image adapted from (Ragb, Mahrous and Ghoneim, 2020). The tourists' memorable experiences' measurement adapted from (Kim, 2018). The tourist destination competitiveness measurement adapted from (Vengesai, 2013). The revisit intention's measurement adapted from (Stylos *et al.*, 2016).

4.3 Research sampling

The sample of this research is a probability random simple which takes on a subgroup of cross-sectional culture. The target study population consisted of foreign visitors who were over the age of 18 and visits Saudi Arabia. four constructs were measured: cognitive country image, tourists' memorable experiences, tourist destination competitiveness, and revisit intention.

The data collection method in accordance with this study is a survey including a structured questionnaire. This pattern is the most cost-effective way of collecting data which provides a high responses rate (Bryman and Bell 2007).

4.4 Data analysis

To assess the proposed model, using the relationships suggested and the concepts previously specified in the theoretical framework, a structural equation model was developed. The data analysis involved multivariate tests to assess direct and indirect links between the theoretical constructs, using SPSS (SPSS Statistics 22) for an exploratory study, EQS (EQS 6.3 for Windows) for a confirmatory analysis, and EQS for a structural analysis of the data.

5. Finding and results

To assess the research constructs' structures and determine whether the items for each construct share a common underlying factor, exploratory factor analysis, or EFA, was used. To construct a

measurement model, EFA models were used to assess (a) structures of cognitive country image dimension, (b) tourist destination competitiveness dimension, (c) tourists' memorable experience dimension, (d) revisit intention dimension to produce a concise set of classification.

The Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant with a value of 2598.8 ($\alpha=0.001$), and the Kaiser Meyer-Olkin test, which assesses the measure of sample adequacy (MSA), was over the 0.5 least accepted level (MSA=0.902). These findings demonstrate that the study sample was appropriate for factor analysis. In the data analysis, items with factor loadings of 0.5 or higher were kept. Furthermore, factors with eigenvalues of one or above were deemed significant and kept.

5.1 Demographic findings

Of the respondents, 18% and 82% are female and male, respectively. Half of the sample are composed of individuals who had graduate/university degree 50% holders. Of the respondents, 34% have visited Saudi Arabia for the first time, and 42% of them had visited Saudi Arabia alone; also, 71% of the respondents indicated that they stayed more than 20 days in their visit.

5.2 Measurement model analysis

The assessment process of the validity in this study adapted the suggested values from the literature. For example, chi-square/degrees of freedom (χ^2/df) less than 5 indicates a strong model fit. (Hair et al., 2009), a root mean square residual (RMR) less than 0.05 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2014), GFI, CFI and NFI exceeding the minimum criterion of 0.90 (Hoyle, 2011) and PCFI and PNFI greater than 0.5 (Stevens, 2009).

Therefore, to evaluate the overall first-order measurement model, various fit indices were calculated. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis showed the following fit-statistics; chi-square=744.92, $df=348$, GFI = .68, RMR = .074, CFI= .84, NFI= .74, PCFI = .72 and PNFI= .63. Considering the model's complexity, these statistics show that the model fits the data well. The measuring scales' reliability was investigated using composite reliability (CR). Reliability was demonstrated by the fact that the CR values for each dimension met the recommended levels of 0.8 and 0.5, respectively.

5.3 Structural model analysis

The structural model was developed and assessed by using the four constructs examined: cognitive country image, tourism destination competitiveness, tourists' memorable experience, and revisit intention. The results of the structural model demonstrated that every path was positively correlated and statistically significant ($p<0.01$). The estimated coefficients in a standardized format are displayed in *table 5.1* below, together with the significance level that serves as the foundation for accepting or rejecting the suggested hypotheses.

As it can be seen from *Table 5.1*, cognitive country image has a positive direct impact on tourists' memorable experiences, tourists' revisit intention, and tourism destination competitiveness ($\beta= +.84$; $p < 0.01$, and $\beta= +.54$; $p < 0.01$, and $\beta= +.83$; $p < 0.01$ respectively), thus supporting **H1**, **H2**, and **H3**. In addition, the results show that tourism destination competitiveness has a positive relationship with the tourist memorable experience ($\beta= +.41$; $p < 0.01$). Thus, supporting **H4**. Also, tourists' memorable experience has a positive direct impact on revisit intention ($\beta= +.88$; $p < 0.01$). Thus, supporting **H5**.

Table 5.1

Summary of hypothesis testing results			
Hypothesis path description	Estimate	p	Results
(H1) Cognitive country image has a positive effect on tourists' memorable experiences	0.84	***	Supported
(H2) Cognitive country image has a positive effect on tourists' revisit intention	0.54	***	Supported
(H3) there is a positive relationship between cognitive country image and tourism destination competitiveness.	0.83	***	Supported
(H4) there is a positive relationship between tourism destination competitiveness and tourists' memorable experiences	0.41	***	Supported
(H5) tourists' memorable experiences have a positive effect on tourists' revisit intention	0.88	***	Supported

Summary of SEM results, regarding the preceding model is listed in the above Table 5.1. The table demonstrates that the all the hypothesised relationships between the research factors were significant (5 hypotheses). It is also illustrating the highest relationship was related to the tourists' memorable experience on revisit intention ($\beta=+.88$ with $p<.01$). on the other hand, the lowest significant link pertained to the effect of tourism destination competitiveness on tourists' memorable experience ($\beta=+.41$ with $p<.01$).

6. Conclusion and future study

The purpose of this research was to explore the effectiveness of cognitive country image on tourists' memorable experience through the role of destination competitiveness and its consequences on their future behaviours. This study offers a novel investigation into how cognitive country image affect the formation of memorable experience and how that affects behaviours in the future. Therefore, the results have theoretical and practical ramifications for the tourism sector. For instance, it has brought together a large body of relevant literature and connected different schools of thought into one integrative perspective. The present study attempted to bridge the gap in the literature by investigating the impact of cognitive country image on tourists' memorable experience.

Although previous studies have investigated cognitive country image effects on creating memorable experience (Kim, 2014; Li et al., 2021; Gorji, Garcia and Mercadé-Melé, 2023), intention to revisit (Kuo *et al.*, 2021), impacting competitiveness (Muštra, Perić and Pivčević, 2023), very few studies have examined these factors together. Hence, connecting cognitive country image, tourist memorable experience, and intention to revisit, and highlighting the role of tourism destination competitiveness,

the outcomes of this research have yielded useful recommendations for academicians and practitioners, to successfully communicate the positive aspects of their destination to influence and increase tourist's intention to visit.

For instance, this study confirmed the results of other studies that indicated the importance of the associations between the cognitive country image and tourists to have memorable experience. As such, the cognitive country image obtains perceptions related to attributes that includes tangible aspects of a destination (Ferreira and Giraldi, 2019), and helps to differentiate a place in consumers' minds related to tourism satisfaction, leading to the intentions to visit (Marques, Vinhas da Silva and Antova, 2021). Hence, cognitive country image is a key factor that drives tourist responses through the total knowledge and beliefs used by tourists to evaluate the attributes of a destination (Loureiro *et al.*, 2022).

This study also supported the investigations that showed cognitive country image influences tourism destination competitiveness (Michael, James and Michael, 2018). Besides, it revealed the impact of cognitive country image on the intention to revisit (Bayih and Singh, 2020). As well, the role of tourism destination competitiveness to obtain memorable experience (Salinas Fernández *et al.*, 2020). Besides, the influences of tourists' memorable experience on the decision of having revisit intention (Rasoolimanesh *et al.*, 2022).

The findings are in line with the place attachment theory. This theory identified significant outcomes of the engagement between the feature and the attribute of the place, leading to various experiences affecting individuals' benefit (Vada, Prentice and Hsiao, 2019). As well, the results of the study are in consistent with the theory of planned behaviour. This theory helps in determining the role of cognitive country image of constructing the system of belief of individuals, to give them meaning and allow them to discover various experiences around them (Abbasi *et al.*, 2021a).

Consequently, this study has achieved five main objectives. Firstly, the results confirmed the effects of cognitive country image on tourists' memorable experiences. Secondly, the findings confirmed the impact of cognitive country image on tourists' revisit intention. Thirdly, the study proved the link between cognitive country image and tourism destination competitiveness. Fourthly, the study demonstrated the relationship between tourism destination competitiveness and tourists' memorable experience. Lastly, the results provide convincing evidence of relationship between tourists' memorable experiences and tourists' revisit intention.

However, the study collected its data from only foreign nationalities among tourists whose visited Saudi Arabia. Considering the diversity of different nationalities, it would be useful for future studies to include the local citizens of Saudi Arabia, to explore different perspectives related to measure different behaviours and perceptions. As well, the study appointed cognitive country image as a solo predictor to determine the role of country image. Hence, there is a need to pay attention to other country image dimension factor, which may include additional contributions to future studies and assist in developing the theory.

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أثر الصورة الذهنية للدولة على تجربة السائح ودور تنافسية الوجهات السياحية وأثرها في تكرار الزيارة

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الملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف تأثير الصورة الذهنية للدولة على تجربة السياح و أثرها على السلوكيات المستقبلية. كما تهدف إلى قياس مدى المساهمة العملية في خلق تجربة سياحية استثنائية من خلال فحص تأثير تنافسية الوجهات السياحية وتأثيرها على السلوكيات المستقبلية.

لجأت هذه الدراسة الى تطبيق المفهوم النظري، و استنادًا إلى النتائج الكمية ومراجعة الأدبيات، تم تطوير الاستبانة الخاصة بالدراسة، و توزيعها على الزوار القادمين من الخارج الى المملكة العربية السعودية. أكدت نتائج هذه الدراسة تأثير الصورة الذهنية للدولة على التجارب السياحية الاستثنائية، مما يعزز من تنافسية الوجهات السياحية وأثرها على تكرار الزيارة. بالتالي، لخصت هذه الدراسة مساهمات نظرية وعملية لأصحاب المصلحة والممارسين في مجال السياحة والتسويق في المملكة العربية السعودية.

تفيد نتائج هذه الدراسة في خلق مفاهيم متجددة حول كيفية تأثير الصورة الذهنية للدولة على خلق تجارب سياحية مميزة وكيف يؤثر ذلك على السلوكيات في المستقبل ومنها تكرار الزيارة.

الكلمات الافتتاحية:

السياحة، الصورة الذهنية للدولة، تجربة السائح، تنافسية الوجهات السياحية، تكرار الزيارة.