Core Tourism Resources and Destination Image for International Tourism

Nelson Oly Ndubisi*
College of Business and Economics
Qatar University
Doha, Qatar.
nndubisi@qu.edu.qa

Saif Alsowaidi
College of Business and Economics
Qatar University
Doha, Qatar.
s.alsowaidi@qu.edu.qa

Shrabani Saha
Lincoln International Business School
University of Lincoln
United Kingdom.
ssaha@lincoln.ac.uk

Ghialy Yap
School of Business and Law
Edith Cowan University
Joondalup, Australia.
c.yap@ecu.edu.au

*Correspondences to: nndubisi@qu.edu.qa.

Abstract

This paper examines the effect of core destination resources, namely natural resources, heritage resources and created resources on destination image, and the moderating effects of customer value and destination satisfaction. International tourists to Qatar provided the data for the study. The results show that natural resources and heritage resources are significantly related to destination image, but created sources is not. Customer value positively and negatively moderates the association of natural resources and heritage resources respectively with destination image. Destination satisfaction positively moderates the relationship between heritage resources and destination image. Focus on inimitable endowed resources rather than imitable created resources seems to be a viable strategy for promoting tourism destinations to international tourists. Managerial and theoretical implications of the study are discussed.

Keywords: Core resources, Destination image, Destination satisfaction, Customer value, International tourists, Qatar.

1.   Introduction

A country's image is a critical factor in determining its competitiveness as a tourism destination (Dedeoğlu, 2019), influencing travel intentions (Chaulagain, Wiitala & Fu, 2019), and crafting a destination personality and relationship (Chen & Phou, 2013). Identifying the factors affecting destination competitiveness has been a topic of interest among tourism researchers for a few decades now (Dwyer et al., 2014). Some of these efforts have focused on destinations' resources, institutions, costs, geopolitics, cultures, physical and psychic distances, levels of corruption, economic openness, diplomatic relations, and so on. Research into destination competitiveness is generally based on Michael Porter's theory of firm competitiveness, and this is considered a critical aspect of developing and promoting a tourism destination (Cronjé & du Plessis, 2020). Some of the prominent work in the area of destination competitiveness includes that of Ritchie and Crouch, which spans two decades (Crouch & Ritchie, 1994, 1999; Ritchie & Crouch, 1993, 2003; Ritchie, Crouch, & Hudson, 2001). According to Ritchie and Crouch (2003, p. 2), "[W]hat makes a tourism destination truly competitive is its ability to increase tourism expenditure, to increasingly attract visitors while providing them with satisfying, memorable experiences, and to do so in a profitable way, while enhancing the well-being of destination residents and preserving the natural capital of the destination for future generations."

Thus, what sort of tourism experience should destinations emphasize? Unlike other services and products, destination experiences are orchestrated and offered through a complex set of resources and providers (Crouch, 2011). Indeed, a number of factors and stakeholders contribute to tourists' experiences and the overall destination image. Destination image and competitiveness are therefore complicated concepts that are shaped by numerous actors who together determine how tourists perceive a destination. Such complexity—coupled with competition from other destinations, resource

constraints, and other factors—has given rise to a rich and expanding body of literature in this field (Novais et al., 2018; Crouch & Ritchie, 1999; Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Enright & Newton, 2004). Some studies have been based on the resource-based view (RBV) (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984), while others have been based on the natural-resource-based view (NRBV) (Hart, 1995). The difference between Hart's NRBV and its predecessor RBV lies in how it captures the important role that the biophysical (natural) environment plays in addition to the external and internal environments of the RBV.

Consequently, several NRBV-inspired frameworks have been developed in the field of destination competitiveness over the last two decades, such as those of Ritchie and Crouch (1993, 2000, 2003), Dwyer and Kim (2003), and Mazanec et al. (2007). More specifically, Ritchie and Crouch (2003) proposed 36 variables for destination competitiveness arranged over five levels: qualifying and amplifying determinants; destination policy, planning and development; destination management; core resources and attractors; and supporting factors and resources. They also considered macro- and micro-environmental forces that affect destination competitiveness in their model (Crouch, 2011). A further model for destination competitiveness was introduced by Dwyer and Kim (2003), and this presents a number of categories for variables: resources, which are further divided into endowed and created resources; supporting factors; destination management; situational conditions; demand factors; and market-performance indicators (Mazanec et al., 2007). A third model proposed by Heath (2002) comprises components called the "foundations," and these include key attractors (e.g., history, culture, etc.), fundamental non-negotiables (e.g., safety and health), enablers (e.g., infrastructure), value-adders (e.g., location), facilitators (e.g., accommodation and travel), and experience enhancers (e.g., hospitable and authentic experiences). The model also indicates some key drivers for successful destination competitiveness (Heath, 2002; Mazanec et al., 2007).

Without a doubt, the RBV and NRBV have inspired debates and empirical research about destination competitiveness and its dimensions, as well as the various components of destination competitiveness. All these scholarly endeavors agree on the fundamental nature of some components and the supportive or ancillary role of others. There is also a consensus among management scholars (Barney, 1991; Hart, 1995; Prahalad & Hamel, 1990; Wernerfelt, 1984) about the need for organizations to focus their efforts on a firm's core resources and competencies in order to deliver a competitive advantage. Tourism researchers and practitioners also seem to concur with this by positing that tourism destinations should compete based mainly on their core resources and competencies, specifically the ones that are most suitable for creating a desirable destination image and achieving a competitive edge.

Against this backdrop, the growing magnitude of ecological problems (Hart, 1995) and the increasing popularity of nature tourism, a rising trend toward cultural tourism and acculturation (World Tourism Organization, 1985; Sam & Berry, 2010), and the rising number of mega-tourism projects (Flyvbjerg, 2014) in many countries of the world, warrant a closer examination of natural resources, heritage resources, and created resources in order to reveal how these core resources influence destination image, as well as the strength and direction of this relationship. This study therefore examines the role of the core destination resources—namely natural resources, heritage resources, and created resources—in creating a destination image. Secondly, this study also recognizes that some contingency factors may strengthen or weaken such relationships. Prior studies have called for attention to be paid to understanding these contingent factors in order to advance our comprehension of the phenomena and their outcomes (Ginsberg & Venkataraman, 1985; Li & Atuahene-Gima, 2001). Consequently, scholars have shown a growing interest in integrating contingency factors into relationship models

(Marshall & Biddle, 2001; Ndubisi et al., 2015, 2020). The contingency factors considered here include customer value and destination satisfaction, because these are strongly tied to, and derived from, a destination's core resources and can influence international tourists' perceptions of a destination. Indeed, an empirical examination of tourists' perceived value (as determined by the core resources) and overall destination satisfaction presents great promise for advancing our understanding of the actual role of core resources in creating a destination image, which is something that remains under-researched.

Furthermore, sociodemographic factors have been found to have a significant impact on destination image (Shankar, 2019). Key demographic variables could potentially confound the effects of the foregoing antecedents and contingency factors of destination image, and these need to be controlled for. Such variables include biological sex, age, education, occupation, and income (Shankar, 2019). This paper's line of investigation offers theoretical utility to researchers and practical value to public policy-makers engaged in studying or developing tourism-management and marketing policies. Moreover, insights into this area are also relevant for informing managers of destination and tourism products and services about how to create the appropriate conditions and employ strategies to enhance the effectiveness of their core resources.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

2.1 Core Resources

Ritchie and Crouch's models of destination competitiveness position core resources and supporting resources as the pillars of destination competitiveness (Crouch & Ritchie 1994, 1999; Ritchie & Crouch, 1993, 2000, 2003; Ritchie, Crouch, & Hudson, 2001) but point out the centrality of core resources. Ritchie and Couch (2003) also divide core resources over seven categories, namely

physiography and climate, culture and history, market ties, mix of activities, special events, entertainment, and tourism superstructure. These factors are presented as the primary motivators for attracting people to a destination (Ritchie & Couch, 2011). According to these authors, the *physiography and climate* are essential core resources based on a destination's physical surroundings and climate. *Culture and history*, meanwhile, are powerful core resources that help differentiate a destination in an increasingly homogenized market. Next, *market ties* represent the various links (e.g., business, religion, sports, trade, and culture) that the tourism sector establishes with the destination's residents. The *mix of activities* includes the various activities that are offered to visitors, and these are primarily rooted in the physiography and culture of the destination. As the name implies, *special events* covers large events that may be of interest to the visitors to, as well as the residents of, a tourist destination, such as the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup. Next, *entertainment* is a critical expectation, and this includes things like live arts and music performances at the destination. Finally, the *tourism superstructure* is not always considered a core resource, but it has become increasingly vital to serve visitors in areas such as accommodation, transportation, dining, and notable attractions (Ritchie & Couch, 2003, 2011).

In their model, Dwyer and Kim (2003) classified the core resources into two categories, namely endowed resources and created resources. Endowed resources, as the name implies, are the naturally inherited resources, such as natural and heritage resources. Natural resources include the local physiography, climate, flora and fauna, scenery, and other elements of nature. Heritage and culture are other endowed resources, and these relate to the history, traditions, artifacts, customs, institutions, architecture, handicrafts, cuisine, artwork, music, dance forms, and other cultural elements of a destination (Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Cohen, 1988; Murphy et al., 2000; Prentice, 1993). The created resources, meanwhile, include tourism infrastructure, special events, the range of available activities,

entertainment, and shopping (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). These are consistent with the core resources listed by Ritchie & Couch (2003, 2011).

It would be amiss to discuss core tourism resources without at least briefly mentioning supporting resources, although they are not the focus of this study. Since the two abovementioned resource categories contribute in one way or another to a destination's competitiveness, a question arises: What do tourists really want from their destination experience? Many years ago, Frederick Herzberg asked a similar question for job satisfaction (Herzberg, 1968, 1987), and this led to the promulgation of the motivator-hygiene theory. According to Herzberg (1987), motivating factors are primarily intrinsic elements that lead to job satisfaction, while hygiene factors are extrinsic elements of the work environment. Core resources could arguably be viewed as motivating factors for a positive destination image, whereas supporting resources are hygiene factors that reinforce them without necessarily directly influencing the destination's image per se. Ritchie and Crouch (2003) maintain that supporting factors and resources are the foundation upon which core resources are developed in the tourism industry. These include infrastructure like highways, railways, bus services, airports, ferries, and so on at a tourist destination. Other facilitating services could include financial institutions, a sound labor market, educational institutions, knowledge, and capital resources, to name but a few. Another critical supporting factor is the destination's accessibility, primarily in terms of availability and competitive transport services, such as airlines, efficient immigration services, good route connections, airport capacities, and the general hospitality of the destination's residents (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). Dwyer and Kim (2003) positioned supporting resources as vital skills that are offered by public and private organizations, and these contribute to destination competitiveness. Such factors include the general infrastructure (e.g., roads, airports, other transportation facilities, healthcare, financial services, etc.), quality services, the accessibility of the destination, hospitality, and market ties.

2.2 Destination Image

Scholars have looked at destination image, which can be for a country, a city, or a facility (e.g., Crompton, 1979; Chen & Phuo, 2013; Lindblom et al., 2018; Lu et al., 2016; Nadeau et al., 2008). Nadeau et al. (2008) reported that the tourism intentions of people are influenced by a country's image. On examining studies of the influence of the country of origin (COO) in the tourism context, Nadeau et al. (2008) confirmed there is a congruence between research findings for product–country image (PCI) and tourism destination image (TDI). According to Lu et al. (2016), the influence of a country's image on consumers' preferences for products and services is well-documented in the extant literature. Since the 1965 seminar work of Schooler, which reported a significant difference when evaluating goods and services based on a country's image, many studies have found that the country influences brand preferences in the marketing domain (Lu et al., 2016). While the research into product–country image is widespread and ever-growing (Roth & Diamantopoulos, 2009; Lopez et al., 2011; Lopez & Balabanis, 2020), more studies into tourism destination image are needed. Recent findings have indicated that a country's image and the tourism experience positively influence the "willingness to recommend the country as a tourism destination but also induce more positive intentions toward the products made in the sojourn country" (De Nisco et al., 2015, p. 10). In addition, there are reports (e.g., Lindblom et al., 2018) of a person's cognitive and affective country image impacting his or her destination beliefs and travel intentions.

For the purposes of this study, destination image is treated as the sum of the beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a tourist holds about a destination (Crompton, 1979; Chen & Phuo, 2013). Some scholars think of this as a multidimensional construct based on three primary dimensions, namely

cognitive, affective, and conative (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Prayag, 2007). Cognition, in this sense, represents the beliefs and knowledge about the physical attributes of a destination, whereas the affective component denotes a person's feelings toward a destination's attributes and the surrounding environment (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Chen & Phou, 2013). The conative component is similar to behavior, and this evolves from cognitive and affective images (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Prayag, 2007). This study focuses on the cognitive destination image, because this can be observed, described, and measured directly (Walmsley & Young, 1998), thereby providing more robust and interpretive information about the uniqueness of a destination. Moreover, the cognitive destination image has also received support from prior studies due to its ability to characterize a destination (e.g., Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997).

Regarding the relationship between core resources and destination image, a focused consideration of the various dimensions of core resources and their respective influence on the destination image will be expedient. At present, the existing research has documented several outcomes of a good destination image, such as destination satisfaction, destination personality, and destination loyalty (see Ekinci & Hosany, 2006; Hosany et al., 2006; Prayag, 2007). In addition, the role of core resources in destination competitiveness has been examined (Dwyer & Kim 2003), but the logical link between the dimensions of core resources and destination image is crying out for attention. Thus, we propose and test the first set of hypotheses that link core resources—namely natural resources, heritage resources, and created resources—to the destination image. Thus, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1: The core (natural) resources of a destination positively influence destination image.

H2: The core (heritage) resources of a destination positively influence destination image.

H3: The core (created) resources of a destination positively influence destination image.

2.3 The Moderating Effects of Customer Value and Destination Satisfaction

Customer value is a central concept in the marketing literature (Kumar & Reinartz, 2016; Möller, 2006; Woodruff, 1997; Parasuraman, 1997). Kumar and Reinartz (2016) asserted that every organization strives to create customer value, and effectively delivering such value makes organizations profitable. Woodruff (1997, p. 142) defined customer value as "a customer perceived preference for and evaluation of those products attributes, attribute performances, and consequences arising from use that facilitate (or block) achieving the customer's goals and purposes in use situations." Parasuraman (1997), meanwhile, suggested that creating and delivering customer value is a significant predictor of firm performance. Customer value also reportedly influences the perceptions and buying behaviors of the visitors to a tourist destinations (Lee et al., 2007; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Petrick, 2004; Petrick & Backmann, 2002). Chen and Chen (2010) found that the quality of the experience for a destination has a positive impact on perceived customer value, while a study of the Croatian tourist destination Dubrovnik showed that perceived value has a positive influence on visitors' level of satisfaction and future visiting behaviors (Pandža Bajs, 2015). We therefore posit the following hypotheses.

H4: Customer value moderates the relationship between primary resources and destination image.

H4a: Customer value moderates the relationship between natural resources and destination image.

H4b: Customer value moderates the relationship between heritage resources and destination image.

H4c: Customer value moderates the relationship between created resources and destination image.

Destination satisfaction is conceptually similar to customer satisfaction in that it measures how well a destination meets the expectations of tourists, much like how customer satisfaction measures how well a product or service meets the expectations of customers (Oliver, 1980). Customer satisfaction is therefore an essential determinant of firm performance (Bolton et al., 2004; Mithas et al., 2005; Bowen & Chen, 2001). As indicated earlier, customers' perceptions of value and quality are critical elements that contribute to customer satisfaction (Campo-Martínez & Garau-Vadell, 2010). Some studies report that destination satisfaction is a critical factor influencing tourists' willingness to return to a destination and recommend it to others (Bigne´ et al., 2001; Chen & Tsai, 2007). The tourism literature indicates how a tourist destination's level of satisfaction depends upon the service quality, attractions, and culture and lifestyle of the destination (Hui et al., 2007). Campo-Martínez and Garau-Vadell (2010) found that external factors, such as the destination's characteristics and context, and internal factors, such as tourists' own nationalities and cultures, influence destination satisfaction. De Nisco et al. (2015) maintained that the country and destination image influences tourist satisfaction, but the contingent role that destination satisfaction plays in the link between core resources and destination image has yet to be explored. The inherent utility of this line of investigation is compelling, and this leads to the following set of hypotheses:

H5: Destination satisfaction moderates the relationship between primary resources and destination image.

H5a: Destination satisfaction moderates the relationship between natural resources and destination image.

H5b: Destination satisfaction moderates the relationship between heritage resources and destination image.

H5c: Destination satisfaction moderates the relationship between created resources and destination image.

2.4. The Potential Confounding Effects of Sociodemographic Factors (*Gender, Age, Education, Occupation, and Income*) – Control Variables

Sociodemographic factors have been found to significantly affect destination image (Shankar, 2019). Sociodemographic variables have also been reported to influence destination choices for sports tourism (Valek et al., 2014). In contrast, a study of visitors to Bangkok found that age and gender had no considerable influence on the choice of the destination (Suttikun et al., 2018). Another study revealed that geodemographic variables—such as gender, educational level, income level, marital status, and age—influenced the attitudes of Chinese travelers (Mohsin, 2008). However, Venkatesh et al. (2000) listed several demographic variables from the extant literature that had potentially confounding effects on the results. Controlling for factors that may confound the perceptions and decisions of tourists (Seetanah et al., 2017) is typically used to handle such situations (Venkatesh et al., 2000). See Figure 1 for the schema of our research model and the control variables.

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

3. Methods

3.1 Data

The research hypotheses listed above were tested based on data from international tourists to Qatar. We examined how the various types of core tourism resources shape destination image. We also considered the moderating effects of customer value and destination satisfaction on the relationship between core resources and destination image. To these ends, we surveyed visitors to Qatar from around the world, and this was conducted by the researchers in 2020 with the help of sponsorship from the Qatar National Research Foundation. Using a multi-stage, stratified random-sampling

method (Chung et al., 2019; Lui et al., 2020), this survey of visitors to Qatar for vacation, educational, and business purposes was based on lists provided by the Qatar National Tourism Council, Qatar University's Academic Unit, and the Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry to provide a sampling frame. Using stratified sampling, we partitioned the population into subpopulations and selected samples from these subpopulations. Potential participants were sent a letter of invitation with a link to the online survey. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were free to withdraw from the process at any point. The informants in the study were international tourists who had already visited Qatar at least once and thus had first-hand knowledge and experience of what the country offers to international tourists, and all were willing to respond to the survey questions (John & Reeve, 1982; Ndubisi, 2011).

Increasing the number of international tourists to Qatar is part of a deliberate strategy by the current government to diversify the economy by developing the tourism sector into a vigorous engine for economic growth. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic raging at the time the survey was launched, the research generated 300 usable responses from an initial target of 500. Respondents were distributed across Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Europe. Interestingly, albeit unsurprisingly, no responses were received from the GCC countries, which were still enforcing a blockade of Qatar at the time.

To estimate any potential non-response bias, we compared early and late respondents in terms of key constructs and visitor demographics. A test for differences showed no significant variation between early and late responders, so we could assume that non-response bias was not an issue in our study. Regarding the potential issue of common method bias (CMB), we conducted a Harman's one-factor test, and all the variables were loaded into an exploratory factor (Podsakoff et al., 2012). The results

revealed the largest factor only explained 14.98% of the total variance, thus indicating that CMB was not a major concern in our data.

3.2 Variables and Measurement

To capture the unique context of Qatar tourism destination effectively, we developed some of the measurement items, and sourced others from existing literature and modified them appropriately. All the measures were then subjected to factor analysis in order to discover the factor structure of the measures, examine the internal reliability and the quality of the individual items.

3.2.1 Dependent variable

The dependent variable in the study is the *destination image* (of Qatar). The measurement items were adapted from those of Chen and Phou (2013) and Keller (2003), who also pointed out that brand image is an element of brand knowledge for the segmented target audiences.

3.2.2 Independent variables

The *core (primary) resources* represent the independent variables in this study, and these include inherited and created resources. The measurement items for these core resources were adapted from those of Gomezelj and Mihalicˇ (2008) and Dwyer et al. (2014).

3.2.3 Moderators

To assess how customer value and destination satisfaction acted as moderators, we adapted the items and scale from the literature. *Customer value* refers to the cost–benefit ratio that is offered by a tourism destination. Its items were partly developed and partly adapted to our tourism context from Dwyer and Kim (2003). *Destination satisfaction*, meanwhile, represents the overall post-purchase evaluation of the destination experience (Chen & Phou, 2013), and this in itself comprises a mixture of diverse

experiences (Gursoy et al., 2014). It is, however, a unidimensional construct (Chen & Phou, 2013; Hultman et al., 2015). To measure overall tourist satisfaction we employed items adapted from those of Bigné et al. (2001) and Chen & Phou (2013).

3.2.4 Control variables

We included several demographic variables as control variables that have been listed in the extant literature (Venkatesh et al., 2000) as having potentially confounding effects on the results, such as the gender, age, education, occupation, and income of tourists. Controlling for factors that may confound the perceptions and decisions of tourists (Seetanah et al., 2017) is a typically used procedure for handling such situations (Venkatesh et al., 2000). For example, male and female tourists may attach different degrees of importance to various tourism resources, and their value perceptions for a destination and its products may also differ. Furthermore, several important demographic variables could potentially confound gender differences in perceptions. The most important covariates are those that imply gender differences upon inclusion—such as income, occupation, and education level— because men are often overrepresented in populations with higher incomes, superior work positions, and greater educational qualifications (Venkatesh et al., 2000).

4. Results and Discussions

Table 1 summarizes the demographic makeup of the respondents. Males and females were nearly equally represented at 47 percent and 52 percent, respectively. With regard to age, most of the respondents were millennials, while the least-represented generation (2 percent) were baby-boomers (65 years and over in 2020). Individuals with post-graduate degrees (38 percent) outnumbered those with other educational qualifications, and 53 percent of the respondents were married. Almost half (47 percent) were employed, whether in the private or public sector. A number of respondents

preferred not to report their household incomes, and this testifies to the fact that income can be a sensitive subject for survey participants. However, among those who did report their income, the low–mid category was mostly cited. Regarding trips to Qatar, among the 55 percent who indicated the number of visits they had previously made to the country, most of these (70 percent) had been to the country more than once. A large majority (81 percent) reported five days as the average length of their stay in the country. In terms of their reason for visiting Qatar, 70 percent reported vacation, followed by business (11 percent), conference and exhibition (10.7 percent), a working holiday (8 percent), and study (0.3 percent).

[Insert Table 1 about here]

As aforementioned, all the measures were subjected to factor analysis in order to discover the factor structure of the measures, examine the internal reliability and the quality of the individual items. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) overall measure of sample adequacy was 0.862, indicating that the variables were interrelated and shared common factors. A total of 26 variables were loaded on six factors, and the explained variances were at 65 percent. The eigenvalues were greater than 1, and all factor loadings were greater than 0.50. The items loaded very well onto their respective factors, with their loadings ranging between .524 and .920. The cross-loadings were generally low, mostly less than .10, with the exception of one created resources item, which recorded .37, although it was retained because this did not seem to pose any problem at all. This decision was also supported by the construct's high loadings and high alpha coefficient (α) of .853. Other reliability estimates confirmed the internal consistency of the instruments (natural resources α = .818; heritage resources α = .820; customer value α = .829; country brand image α = .809; and destination satisfaction α = .836) (see appendix).

[Insert Appendix about here]

The study checked the variance inflation factors (VIFs). The highest VIFs were under 2.0 in the models without the interaction term (models 1–4), which is well below the critical threshold of 10 (Allison, 1999). Multi-collinearity was therefore not found to be a serious issue in this study. In models 5 and 6, the interaction terms were at least partially responsible for the high VIFs, and this is expected, because adding interaction terms often implies a certain degree of collinearity.

Table 2 presents the results of the hierarchical regressions. Presenting the regression results for six different models allowed for model fit and explanatory power to be compared between models (Aiken, West, & Reno, 1991; Lui et al., 2020). We will report the main effects of the control, independent, and moderator variables before analyzing the interaction effects.

[Insert Table 2 about here]

Model 1 includes only the control variables and serves as the base model for showing the effects of the control variables on the relationship between core resources and destination image. Model 2 includes the relationship that core resources (i.e., natural resources, heritage resources, and created resources) has with destination image. Next, Model 3 includes the main effect of customer value on destination image. Model 4 then includes the main effect of destination satisfaction on destination image. Model 5 incorporates the moderating effect of customer value on the relationship between core resources (i.e., natural resources, heritage resources, and created resources) and destination image. Finally, Model 6 investigates the moderating effect of destination satisfaction on the relationship between the three core resources and the country's brand image.

The estimated main effects of natural resources and heritage resources are significant in Model 2, but the same cannot be said for created resources. The direct effects of natural and heritage resources on the international tourists' destination image are both significant, implying that the image of a destination that is formed by international tourists is positively affected by the destination's natural resources and heritage resources. This provides support for Hypotheses 1 and 2. However, created resources do not have the same significant effect on destination image (Hypothesis 3). This observation could be plausibly explained by the fact that both natural and heritage resources are often unique and inimitable, while created resources can be copied and replicated easily elsewhere. Indeed, the replicability of tourism resources can harm a destination's competitive advantage or diminish its image considerably. As such, tourism management authorities in Qatar, as well as in other countries, should particularly emphasize their natural and heritage resources because these make a destination unique, and this in turn helps attract international tourists to a destination.

Interestingly and ironically, Qatar has placed considerable emphasis on its created resources, such as the sporting mega-projects and other projects. While created resources may enhance a destination's image, this may not be sustainable given the huge investments necessary for such projects compared to their relatively insignificant contribution. Such huge investments in created resources and their marginal contribution to the destination image is typical of the productivity paradox that is often associated with tourism mega-projects. On the other hand, natural and heritage resources add significantly to a destination's image, especially as they are seen as being more environmentally friendly than created resources. In the modern drive for sustainable development, and as more global citizens pay greater attention to the sustainable development goals of the UN, natural and heritage resources are expected to continue dominating over created resources in defining a tourism destination image.

In Models 3 and 4, which include the main effects of customer value and destination satisfaction, respectively, on destination image, the estimates for the direct effect of the two variables are positive and significant (customer value: $p < 0.001$; destination satisfaction: $p < 0.05$). This shows that higher levels of customer value and destination satisfaction both help to enhance destination image, thus supporting Hypotheses 4 and 5.

Based on Model 5, the moderating effect of customer value in the relationship between core resources and destination image seems to present a mixed picture. More specifically, customer value positively moderates the relationship between natural resources and destination image, but it negatively moderates the relationship between heritage resources and destination image. However, it does not significantly moderate the relationship between created resources and destination image at all. These results support the acceptance of Hypothesis 6a, the acceptance of a revised Hypothesis 6b (to reflect the negative sign of the relationship), and the rejection of Hypothesis 6c. The negative effect of customer value suggests that the positive relationship between heritage resources and destination image weakens when international tourists are more concerned with value for money. This is plausible, because heritage sites are often costly to maintain, and such costs are often passed on to tourists in the form of high entrance fees and costly memorabilia. This differs slightly from natural resources, which often come with a lower price tag. It was further observed that the insignificant impact of created resources on destination image was not remediated by a positive customer value perception. Once more, this finding underscores the need for tourism authorities and managers to rethink their use of created resources as a major marketing element.

Consistent with expectations, Model 6 showed that the relationship between heritage resources and the country's brand image was significantly ($p < 0.05$) and positively moderated by destination

satisfaction (Hypothesis 7b). However, destination satisfaction had no significant moderating effect on the relationship of natural resources and created resources with destination image, so it is reasonable to reject Hypotheses 7a and 7c. International tourists' image of Qatar as a destination seems to increase with their satisfaction as the country's heritage resources increases. This positive moderating effect was indeed expected, especially given our reasoning that heritage resources often come with a relatively high price tag. A rational consumer expects a greater level of satisfaction from experiences offered at a higher price, and the same would seem to apply to the responding international tourists.

5. Theoretical Implications

Integrating contingency factors into the resource-driven model of destination image will be very helpful in elucidating how the different types of resources offered by a tourism destination shape its image as a destination in the minds of international tourists. Past studies have considered the favorable outcomes of destination image (e.g., Chen & Phou, 2013), so it is therefore germane to reveal some of the facilitating factors for destination image. By doing exactly this, this study adds significant value to the literature by hypothesizing and testing the effects of different types of core resources on destination image. The findings also add to our existing body of knowledge for the resource-based view and the natural-resource-based view (Barney, 1991; Hart, 1995; Wernerfelt, 1984) for the competitiveness of tourism destinations (Chen & Phou, 2013; Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Dwyer et al., 2014). More specifically, this study corroborates previous findings about the significant role that natural resources and heritage resources play in determining the competitiveness of tourism destinations (Dwyer & Kim, 2003), but it also advances our knowledge by demonstrating how this enhanced competitiveness can be achieved through an enhanced destination image. In turn, a

destination's image can be enhanced by increasing the quality and quantity of the natural and heritage resources that it offers.

Contrary to previous studies' arguments about the importance of created resources for destination competitiveness (Dwyer & Kim, 2003), our study shows that while created resources have a positive influence on destination image, it is not a significant one. What this means for the tourism-related mega-projects in Qatar is discussed in the subsequent section on managerial and policy implications. For now, it suffices to say that our findings do not corroborate previous findings about the significance of created resources in enhancing destination image. One plausible explanation for the insignificant relationship identified in this, one which warrants further investigation, relates to sustainability and health and safety issues. Recent studies have shown that over the past thirty years, sustainable production and supply chains have become key factors for consumer demand and loyalty (Alwadani, 2021; Kouhizadeh et al., 2021). Given the recent skepticism over the safety and sustainability of most (tourism) mega projects, this outcome should not come as a complete surprise.

Furthermore, the results show that increased customer value and destination satisfaction contribute to destination image. A prior study looked at destination satisfaction as an outcome of destination image (Chen & Phou, 2013), but our study explores an alternative way of viewing this relationship. Indeed, as demonstrated in this study, customer value and destination satisfaction can also drive destination image directly, because satisfied tourists hold onto a favorable image of the destination after the experience.

Furthermore, the contingency view research stream argues that a better and more accurate understanding of relationships can be gained when researchers integrate contextual factors that such

relationships may depend on (Li & Atuahene-Gima, 2001). This present study contributes to this discourse by demonstrating that customer value and destination satisfaction play different kinds of roles in the link between core resources and destination image. There is empirical support for the positive and negative moderating effects, respectively, of customer value on the relationship of natural and heritage resources, respectively, with destination image. However, there is also evidence that destination satisfaction has a positive moderating effect on the association between heritage resources and destination image. The results of the empirical analysis support the argument that the relationship between some destination resources and the destination's image is contingent upon the level of value and satisfaction that is perceived by international tourists.

Taken together, the results of this study help to extend the frontier of our knowledge about the impact of a destination's core resources—namely natural, heritage, and created resources—on a destination's image (e.g., Chen & Phou, 2013; Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Dwyer et al., 2014). The results also go further than past findings (e.g., Li & Atuahene-Gima, 2001; Ndubisi et al., 2015) in emphasizing that contingency factors like customer value and destination satisfaction can enhance or diminish the link between core tourism resources and destination image. Our study also contributes to the literature for national or city branding, and it offers insights into the related resources that could drive such a brand image. This study also reveals factors related to tourists or a destination that could help relationships to flourish. In particular, greater natural resources can generally advance a destination's image, but the effect is greater when international tourists perceive greater value from them. In addition, greater heritage resources can generally advance a destination image, but the effect is greater when international tourists are not price sensitive and/or they experience greater destination satisfaction.

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6. Managerial and Policy Implications

Our findings have various implications for practitioners and policymakers. Indeed, our results indicate that destination brand architects, in general but particularly in Qatar, and the managers of tourism destinations and products need to develop and utilize a destination's natural and heritage resources and make them accessible, because these can enhance a destination's image. Many other destinations do not have anything like Qatar's unique natural and heritage resources, and it is generally difficult to replicate such core resources, compared to created resources. Thus, such resources may appeal to international tourists if local marketers and the government primarily promote the unique benefits offered by the natural and heritage resources, such that tourists can further enhance their tourism experience of Qatar. This new perspective may influence the design, enactment, and implementation of Qatar's tourism-marketing strategies and plans.

Unique created resources can also be promoted, but it should be with less emphasis and intensity. Practitioners and policymakers should consider the limited contributions that created resources make in influencing destination image. Huge investments have been made to develop mega-projects in many countries in the hope that they will directly attract international tourists, but our results suggest otherwise. For example, mega-projects like uniquely designed stadiums, modern railways, and other facilities are often put forward as things that will attract international tourists, but our findings suggest that such resources should instead be regarded as ancillary. Indeed, such resources are not particularly unique to any destination (including Qatar) and are highly imitable. Thus, it is more relevant to present them as additional utilities while focusing on the inimitable natural and heritage resources. This suggestion should not be seen as in any way undermining the benefits of such mega-projects, because their role in supporting other areas of the economy cannot be overstated. However, in the tourism context, they should not be relied upon to attract international tourists per se, although they can

provide additional value for international tourists who are more interested in the natural and heritage resources of the country, so "positioning" is clearly of immense importance here.

Furthermore, practitioners and policymakers should be aware that the link that natural and heritage resources has with destination image can be enhanced by ensuring strong customer value and destination satisfaction. Through enhanced customer value, natural resources can have a stronger impact on destination image. For those customers seeking value for money, however, it is not as viable to offer expensive heritage resources in the drive for an enhanced experience and destination image. The negative sign that the study found for customer value suggests that the strength of the positive relationship between heritage resources and a country's brand image decreases when international tourists are more focused on value for money. To reiterate, this finding is plausible because heritage sites are often costly to maintain, and such costs are generally passed onto tourists in the form of high entrance fees and costly memorabilia. Policymakers and marketers should remember the difference between the more-expensive heritage resources and the less-expensive natural resources when developing their tourism policies and programs.

Regarding the role of destination satisfaction, this significantly moderates the relationship between heritage resources and destination image, so a greater level of satisfaction is needed for customers who are interested in this relatively costly resource. Scientific and anecdotal evidence shows that customers who pay higher prices expect greater benefits, so there is no denying that the relevant tourism authorities and practitioners should endeavor to deliver greater satisfaction for its visitors if they want their heritage resources to be highly regarded.

For the direct effects of customer value and destination satisfaction on destination image, both have a positive impact. Policymakers and practitioners must therefore be mindful to deliver high levels of customer value and satisfaction. They should endeavor to facilitate customer value and satisfaction through good customer service policies and interventions, because both these may enhance the image of Qatar as a destination in the minds of international tourists. Past studies have also shown that when customers' expectations are met or exceeded, the experience leaves in its wake satisfied and delighted customers who develop a favorable opinion of the brand, such that they have a greater intention to repurchase and recommend the brand.

It is germane to point out here that the above results hold true regardless of the gender, age, education, and occupation of the tourists. As such, practitioners and policymakers need not necessarily differentiate their offerings based on these factors. This finding is particularly interesting and beneficial for service providers, because it means they can standardize their offerings and subsequently lower their costs without sacrificing any of the demographic segments.

7. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Like any other study, this study has its limitations. Firstly, other resources and factors in the external environment exist beyond the focal core resources, and these might further explain the idiosyncrasies of international tourists and a destination's experience and image. While the paper theorized that factors such as customer value and destination satisfaction are highly relevant moderators in our study's context, investigating further capabilities and contextual factors beyond these may represent a promising area for future research. Future research may also investigate the influence of non-core tourism resources, environmental and geophysical factors, and local and regional factors—such as geopolitics, institutions, sociocultural factors, environmental munificence, and the specific sub-

dimensions thereof—in order to understand their influences on the destination image for international tourists. Moreover, testing differences in the destination image, destination satisfaction, customer value perceptions, perceptions of core and supporting resources, and international tourists' attitudes based on their countries of origin could provide some interesting results for informing policy decisions and managerial practices, and this could be explored in future studies.

Qatar's tourism market continues to be a rich research context because of its unique tourism products. With Qatar's blend of the traditional and the modern, a juxtaposition of conservatism and liberalism, a combination of rural and urban development, and a measured openness in its social norms, it is vital that future studies look into how these unique characteristics may shape the future of Qatar's tourism industry. Future studies could also apply the research model to other Middle Eastern countries, especially given their sociocultural similarity and low psychic distance.

Future research could also consider extending the current model to include the consequences of destination image, such as in terms of attachment, trust, and loyalty for a destination.

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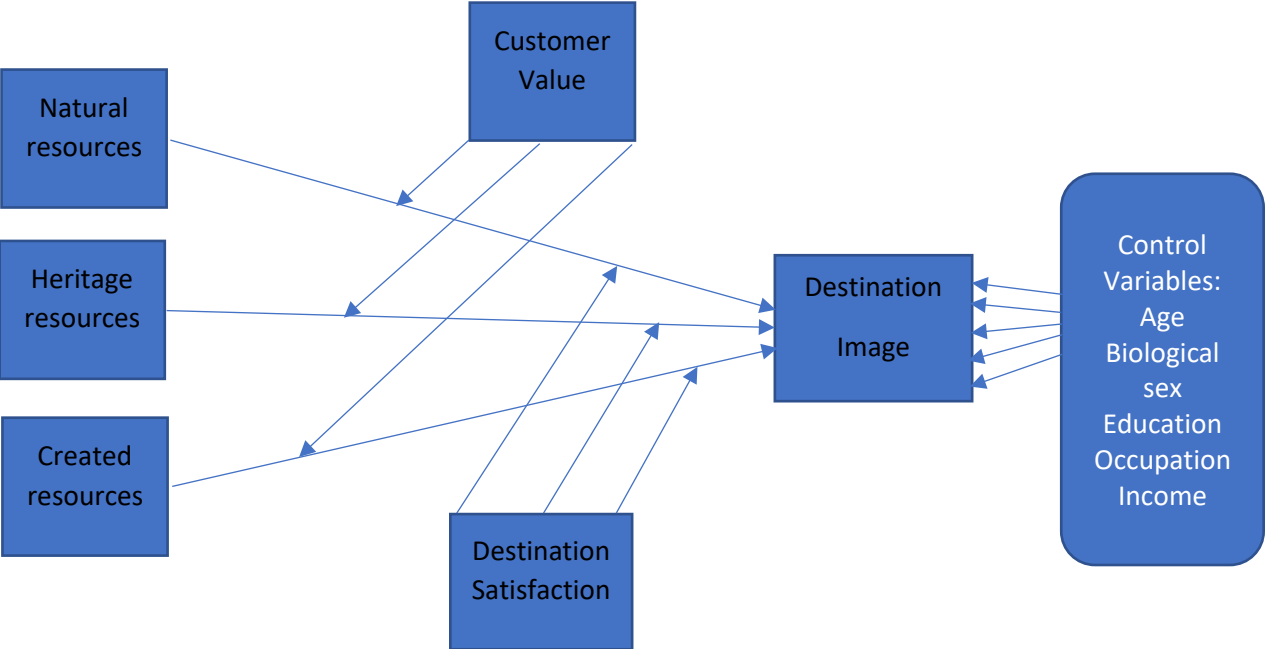**Figure 1: The Schema of the Research Model**

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demography	Categories	Count	Percent (%)
Gender:	Male	140	46.7
	Female	156	52.0
	Prefer not to say	4	1.3
Age	18-24	132	44.0
	25-34	61	20.3
	35-44	45	15.0
	45-54	42	14.0
	55-64	15	5.0
	65 or over	5	1.7
Level of Education	High School or lower	25	8.3
	2-3 Year college	66	22.0
	Degree	96	32.0
	Post graduate	113	37.7
Marital Status	Single	117	39.0
	Married	159	53.0
	Prefer not to say	24	8.0
Occupation	Student	83	27.7
	Public sector employee	68	22.7
	Private sector employee	74	24.7
	Self employed	37	12.3
	Unemployed	33	11.0
	Retired	5	1.7
Annual Income (Household)	< 50,000	55	18.3
	50,000-200,000	75	25.0
	200,001-400,000	43	14.3
	400,001-600,000	8	2.7
	600,001-800,000	5	1.7
	800,001-1 million	2	0.7
	> 1 million	16	5.3
	Prefer not to say	96	32.0
Number of trips to Qatar (including the present trip)	1	49	16.3
	2	40	13.3
	3	51	17.0
	4	23	7.7
	Prefer not to say	137	45.7
Average length of stay in Qatar (in days)	< 3	15	5.0
	3-5	42	14.0
	> 5	243	81.0
Purpose of visit	Business	34	11.3
	Conference and exhibition	32	10.7
	Working holiday	23	7.7
	Vacation	210	70.0
	Study	1	0.3

Table 3: Hierarchical Regression Results

Models	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Interaction effect						
Natural resources x Destination satisfaction						0.314
						(-1.008)
Heritage resources x Destination satisfaction						0.011
						(2.546)*
Created resources x Destination satisfaction						0.531
						(-.627)
Natural resources x Customer value						0.023	
					(2.281)*	
Heritage resources x Customer value						0.000	
					(-4.165)***	
Created resources x Customer value						0.466	
					(-.730)	
Moderators						
Destination satisfaction					0.038*		
				(2.087)		
Customer value				0.000		
			(14.529)***			
Independent variable						
Natural resources		0.000	0.193	0.181	0.042	0.718
		(3.593)***	(1.306)	(1.341)	(-2.043)*	(-0.362)
Heritage resources		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.518
		(5.581)***	(4.724)***	(4.718)***	(5.833)***	(0.647)
Created resources		0.274	0.756	0.803	0.473	0.329
		(1.095)	(-0.312)	(-0.250)	(0.719)	(0.979)
Control variables						

Sex	0.361	0.756	0.549	0.673	0.810	0.948
	(1.005)	(0.311)	(0.600)	(0.423)	(-0.240)	(-0.066)
Age	0.000	0.006	0.986	0.945	0.794	0.803
	(-4.756)***	(-2.785)**	(-0.018)	(-0.068)	(0.261)	(0.250)
Education	0.768	0.904	0.339	0.324	0.391	0.535
	(-0.296)	(-0.121)	(-0.958)	(-0.988)	(-0.860)	(-0.631)
Occupation	0.536	0.481	0.975	0.816	0.841	0.893
	(-0.619)	(-0.706)	(-0.032)	(0.233)	(0.201)	(0.135)
Income	0.595	0.455	0.597	0.539	0.400	0.410
	(0.532)	(0.748)	(0.529)	(0.616)	(0.844)	(0.825)
F	6.736***	19.152***	53.230***	48.458***	42.368***	35.338***
R	0.332	0.602	0.801	0.803	0.822	0.827
R^2	0.110	0.363	0.641	0.645	0.676	0.684

Notes:

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Dependent variable: Destination image.

Appendix: Factor Analysis

Items	F 1	F 2	F 3	F 4	F 5	F 6	Reliability Estimate (α)
Attractiveness of climate for tourism	**.662**	.017	.155	.108	-.080	.219	**0.818**
Unspoiled nature	**.524**	.030	.064	.172	-.017	.284	
Flora and fauna (e.g. animals, birds, forests)	**.757**	.099	.077	.145	.036	.176	
National parks	**.543**	.278	-.050	.159	.027	.066	
Water-based activities	**.762**	.160	-.024	.097	-.054	.148	
Natural nature-based activities	**.727**	.054	.243	.218	-.003	.143	
Artistic and architectural features	.107	**.784**	-.040	.244	.212	.124	**0.820**
Historic and heritage sites	-.014	**.773**	-.042	.199	.357	.117	
Traditional arts	.113	**.719**	.087	.160	.298	.031	
Recreation facilities	.165	-.027	**.678**	.023	.263	.021	**0.853**
Sport facilities (e.g. golf, tennis)	.095	.107	**.755**	-.005	.211	-.100	
Adventure activities	.028	.074	**.743**	.182	-.052	.071	
Variety of cuisine	.104	.270	**.744**	.232	-.101	-.029	
Arts and film festivals (e.g. musical concerts, international films festivals)	.118	.255	**.622**	.315	-.010	.050	
Conference tourism	.116	.152	**.867**	.049	.007	.028	
Rural tourism	.153	.186	**.785**	.108	-.042	.189	
Health resorts, spa	.069	.526	**.637**	.035	-.064	.094	
Ecotourism	.054	.371	**.526**	.194	.314	.201	
Value for money in destination tourism experiences	.078	.158	-.018	**.710**	.220	.116	**0.829**
Value for money in accommodation	-.037	.132	-.049	**.779**	.156	.105	
Value for money in shopping items	.167	.070	.001	**.734**	.106	.183	
Prices are reasonably cheaper	.045	-.013	-.106	**.746**	.236	.004	
Overall, I was satisfied with my trip experience in Qatar	-.027	.013	-.020	.001	**.921**	.059	**0.836**
My trip experience in Qatar exceeded what I expected before the trip	-.023	-.015	-.029	.007	**.920**	-.043	
International awareness of destination and products	.161	.073	.085	.163	.168	**.753**	**0.809**
Destination image and brand	.146	.058	.060	.166	.039	**.735**	

Notes:
KMO = 0.862
Approx. χ^2 = 3680.719
df = 325
Sig. = .000
F1: Natural resources; F2: Heritage resources; F3: Created resources; F4: Economic value; F5: Destination satisfaction; F6: Destination image.