

CULTURAL EVENT A WAY OF CITIES' IMAGE IMPROVEMENT LINZ – THE CULTURAL CAPITAL OF EUROPE 2009

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ABSTRACT

During the past three decades the process of destination image formation occurred as a significant part in tourism research. Although many researchers have greatly contributed to this important research field, still several aspects of destination image are not well understood and require attention. Level of satisfaction, destination choice decision-making process, after-decision-making behaviours, intention to revisit and willingness to recommend are indisputably dependent on destination image. This paper looks at the concept of destination image and the instruments of measuring destination image. In particular, the process of destination image formation and the factors that shape the destination image is highlighted. Afterwards, a short review of the ECC Event and a literature review of the methodologies existing in the literature regarding measurement of destination image are presented. Finally, the research methodology that will be implemented in the measurement of the image improvement of Linz during the ECC Event in 2009 is shortly described. The rationale for undertaking this study is to provoke discussions whether the successful measurement of destination image requires the implementation of both qualitative and quantitative approaches, wherein the qualitative approach precedes the quantitative method. Moreover, the combination of structured and unstructured methods presents a unique opportunity to analyse the multidimensional character of destination image.

KEYWORDS: Destination image formation, Measurement of destination image, ECC Event

INTRODUCTION

The process of image formation is unique for each one of us because “each person’s image of a particular place is unique, comprising their own memories, associations and imaginations of a particular place” (Jenkins and McArthur 1996, quoted in Jenkins 1999:2). Therefore, despite the efforts of many researchers to fully investigate the process of image formation and to discover the factors influencing it, this process is not well understood. Gunn (1988) was one of the first who talked about “organic” image (non-tourist information about the destination such as books), “induced image” (promotional campaigns) and “modified-induced” image (participation or experience at the destination). Hose and Wickens (2004) suggested that potential visitors, first time visitors and returned visitors have different images of the same destination. Other studies have developed models of image formation that include information sources, socio-demographics and socio-psychological travel motivations (Baloglu and McCleary 1999) or temporal factors (Gunn 1993).

Many research studies have revealed the influence of tourism image on consumer behaviour. On the one hand, it has the power to influence either positively or negatively the destination choice decision-making process. On the other hand, the image of a destination determines the after-decision-making behaviours including participation (on-site experience), evaluation (satisfaction) and future behavioural intentions (Ashworth and Goodall 1988; Bigne et al. 2001; Cooper, et al. 2005; Lee et al., 2005). A study conducted by Chen and Tsai (2007) indicates that a destination image appears to have the most significant effect on behavioural intentions (i.e. intention to revisit and willingness to recommend). This finding is consistent with Bigne et al. (2001). Therefore, efforts to build and/or improve the image of a destination are critical to the success of destination tourism development.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the theoretical basis of tourist destination images and identify the key methodological issues concerning this phenomenon. Engagement with the literature will be supported by a case study on the ECC event in Linz Austria. The paper argues that a preliminary phase of qualitative research is important in order to understand respondents’ constructs in the formation of tourist image of a destination and should be followed by a second phase using quantitative methods to measure the elicited components of destination image. The paper will conclude that measuring tourist destination image requires the utilization of both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study of destination image has started about three decades ago and is one of the relatively recent additions to the field of tourism research. According to Hunt (1975), each place has an image that could be good, bad or indifferent,

even though these characteristics are quite subjective and vague. Moreover, it has to be analysed how potential tourists or repeat visitors will evaluate its image and consequently whether a marketing campaign of changing or exploiting it could be introduced. Changing or exploiting an image of a destination, however, should not be turned into an end in itself. Each marketing effort has to be considered in terms of the long term period effect on the destination and the inescapable economic and social changes that will very likely occur. In essence, several studies have illustrated the importance of destination image and it is broadly accepted that it affects the potential tourists' subjective perception, consequent behaviour, tourism decision-making process and satisfaction levels (Mayo, 1973; Crompton, 1979; Telisman-Kosuta, 1989; Um and Crompton, 1991; Echtner and Ritchie, 1991; Kim and Richardson, 2003). Furthermore, past research shows that those destinations with strong, positive images are more likely to be considered and selected in the travel decision process or in other words, there is a positive correlation between image and behaviour intention (Hunt, 1975; Milman and Pizam, 1995). Therefore, recognizing the images that tourists have of a tourist destination is necessary to identify its strengths and weaknesses (Chen and Uysal, 2002), to promote it efficiently in the marketplace (Leisen, 2001) and to guarantee its competitive success (Telisman-Kosuta, 1994).

A great variety of studies regarding different dimensions of destination image exists in the literature. Some researchers focused their attention on the relationship between distance and image (Hunt, 1975; Scott et al. 1978; Crompton, 1979; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Ahmed 1991). Others concentrated their studies on the measurement of destination image (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993; Driscoll, Lawson and Niven 1994), its components (Dann, 1996; MacKay and Fesenmaier, 1997), or factors that influence destination image (Walmsley and Jenkins, 1993; Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997). Studies concerning the relationship between destination image and preference or visitation intentions (Mayo, 1973; Scott et al. 1978; Hunt, 1975; Milman and Pizam, 1995) are also presented in the destination image literature. Another research stream examined the impact of previous visitation or familiarity on destination image (Pearce, 1982; Phelps 1986; Fridgen, 1987; Ahmed, 1991; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Hu and Ritchie, 1993; Milman and Pizam, 1995; Dann, 1996). Additionally, others examined the differences between destination image and what is projected by destinations (Stabler, 1988), variations by trip reason (Javalgi, Thomas and Rao, 1992), and the relationship between socio-demographic variables and destination image (Walmsley and Jenkins, 1993; Baloglu, 1997).

Notwithstanding the image importance for the destination positioning strategy in the minds of potential or repeat visitors, the research on tourism

destination image faces many difficulties as summarized in the article by Gallarza, Gil and Calderon (2002). For instance, one is the specific tourism services' characteristics such as its complexity (Smith, 1994) and multidimensionality (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Gartner, 1989; Walmsley and Jenkins, 1992). Moreover, Gallarza et al. (2002) argued that there is also great subjectivity in providing a tourism product - images are mixed with impressions about residents, retailers, other tourists, and/or employees. But mainly, the intangibility of tourism product hinders image measurement due to the fact that destination image depends on invisible elements of pre-visit selection and pre-taste of the destination. Additionally, images based on past experiences are considered more complex and differentiated and impede the image destination measurement (Chon, 1991; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991).

Conceptualization and dimensions of destination image

Despite the importance of destination image and the huge number of studies recently undertaken in the area, Kim and Richardson (2003, p. 218) state that "the concept of image has not been understood in a unified way". The lack of a theoretically based conceptual framework underlying previous research regarding destination image has been recognized by several authors, particularly Fayeke and Crompton (1991), Echtner and Ritchie (1991), Gartner (1993) and Young (1999). Moreover, "there are almost as many definitions of image as scholars devoted to its conceptualisation" (Gallaza et al., 2002, p.58) and the definitions provided in the studies vary from vague descriptions of "impressions of a place", to those that provide some indication of the components of image.

Determining a precise definition of the term "tourist destination image" is a challenging task. As Pearce (1988, p. 162) argues "image is one of those terms that won't go away... a term with vague and shifting meanings". Echtner and Ritchie (1991) comment that many of the definitions used in previous studies are quite vague and more important in several cases, are not even explicitly stated. Likewise Jenkins state that (1999, p.1) "image is a term that has already been used differently in a large number of contexts and disciplines, thus creating different meanings", hence difficult to measure. On the one hand, in psychology the term image is used as a reference to a visual representation, whereas in behavioural geography the concept of image is more holistic thus consisting of all of the associated impressions, knowledge, emotions, values and beliefs. On the other hand, in marketing the term image refers to the attributes that underlie image and relate image to consumer behaviour. In this paper, destination image and the process of destination image formation will be investigated from the marketing point of view.

According to Ko and Park (2000) there are three research streams. The first stream emphasizes the composite structure of the image construct, defining it as

the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that people have of a place or destination based on information processing from a variety of sources over time, resulting in an internally accepted mental construct (Crompton, 1979; Assael, 1984; Gartner, 1993; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). In essence, this definition of destination image is most frequently used.

The second research stream includes attitudinal components of image such as “cognitive” and “affective”. The cognitive component refers to beliefs and knowledge about an object whereas the affective component refers to feelings about it. Hanyu (1993:161) suggests that “affective refers to the appraisal of the affective quality of environments while cognitive refers to the appraisal of physical features of environments”. Although the existence of an affective component has been acknowledged, most destination image studies seem to have overlooked the affective dimensions and have focused only on its cognitive component (Chen and Uysal, 2002; Gartner, 1989; Oppermann, 1996; Schroeder, 1996; Ong and Horbunlnekit, 1997, Choi, Chan and Wu, 1999). The practice of concentrating on only the cognitive component of destination image structure is not appropriate for studying destination image and this can have a significant consequences over the results since “the meaning of a place is not entirely determined by its physical properties” (Ward and Russell, 1981:123). These thinkers have demonstrated how the affective response model using four semantic differential scales – pleasant/unpleasant, relaxing/distressing, arousing/sleepy, and exciting/gloomy – could apply to perceptions of destinations. Moreover, their study found that tourist destinations possess distinct affective images. This finding that both cognitive and affective images can influence destination perceptions is further supported by Kim and Richardson’s (2003) study. More importantly they argue that researchers need to consider both components. Still, very few researchers in the field of destination image (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; MacKay and Fesenmaier, 2000; Uysal et al. 2000; Baloglu and Mangaloglu, 2001) adopted both affective and cognitive components in evaluating destination image. As Baloglu and McCleary (1999) mentioned in their study “A model of destination image formation”, a common agreement among diverse researchers in the field of tourism research, is that affective evaluation depends on cognitive evaluations of objects and the affective responses are formed as a function of the cognitive ones (Anand, Holbrook and Stephens, 1988; Gartner, 1993; Stern and Krakover, 1993). Therefore, even though a distinction is made between the affective and cognitive dimensions of destination image, they are also interrelated.

According to another group of researchers, the structure of destination image consists of three components. From this theoretical perspective destination images are developed by three hierarchically interrelated components: cognitive, affective, and conative. In this destination image model, the cognitive aspect of

image is a result of established facts and external stimuli, that influence the decision making process of an individual. Affective component is constructed from an evaluation, which relates an individual's travel motives to perceived images. Conative aspect of image is formed through the act of visiting, but is influenced by images gathered from previous encounters with one particular destination. Conation may also be considered as the likelihood of visiting a destination within a certain time period (Pike and Ryan, 2004).

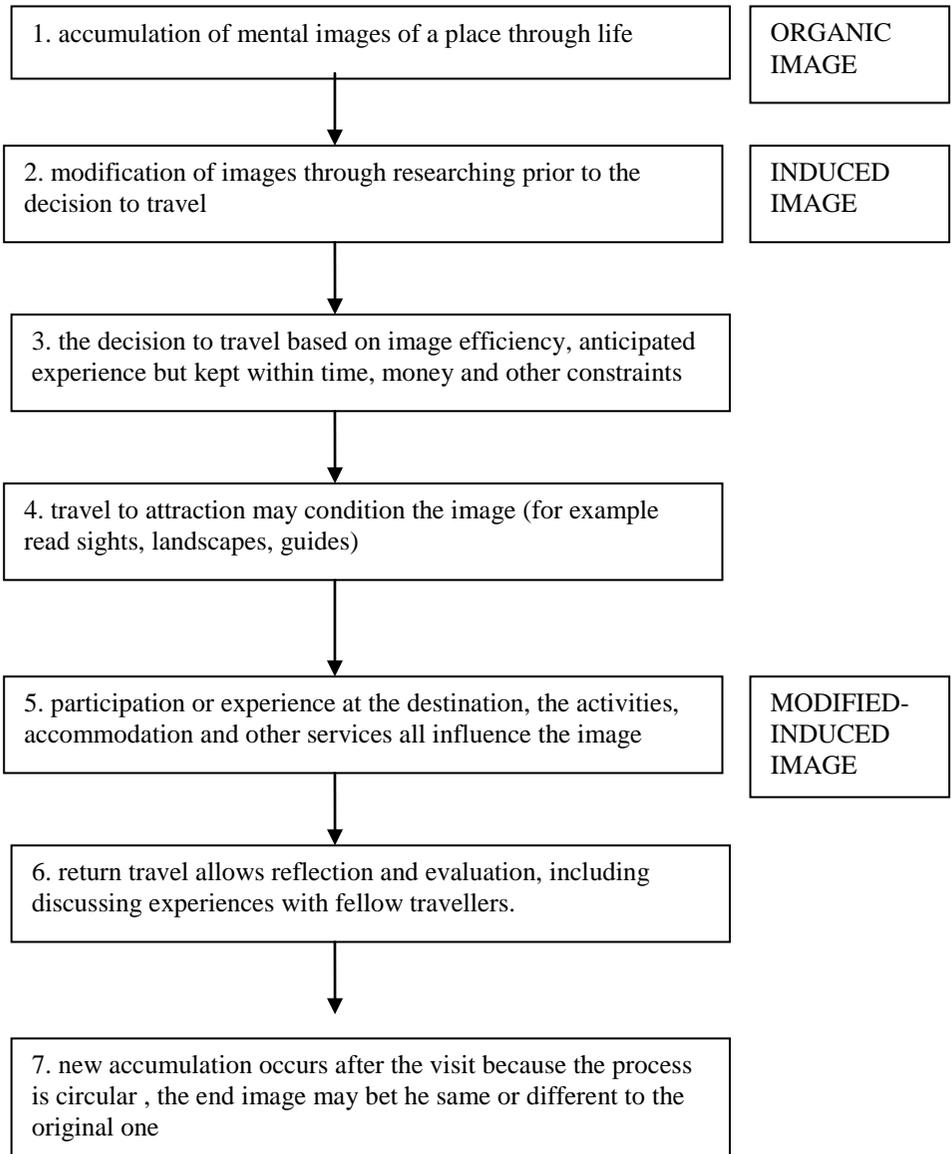
The third research stream defines a destination image as the expression of all objective knowledge, impressions, prejudices, imaginations, and emotional thoughts of an individual or group has of a particular object or place (Lawson and Baud-Bovy, 1977). For instance, Oxenfeldt (1974-75) and Dichter (1985) defined image as an overall or total impression which is formed as a result of the evaluation of individual attributes which may contain both cognitive and emotional content. By suggesting this definition of destination image, these thinkers recognize not only cognitive and affective images, but also the formation of the overall image from evaluations of an object or place. Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993) contribute greatly to the difficult task of framing tourism destination image, by acknowledging the existence of three axes that support the image of any destination: the functional/psychological, the common/unique, and the holistic/attribute-based axes.

For the purposes of this paper the definition of destination image provided by Crompton (1979, p.18) will be adopted as the most comprehensive one - "the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that people have of a place or destination based on information processing from a variety of sources over time, resulting in an internally accepted mental construct". This definition takes into account the fact that the process of destination image formation is not a static, but quite a dynamic and intensive one, and takes time to develop.

Models of destination image formation

Gunn (1972) proposed a model of destination image formation which consists of three stages: organic, induced and modified-induced images. Organic image is based on personal perception and background, and word of mouth. The second phase (induced image) concerns more about promotional material and commercial information source such as travel brochures, guidebooks etc. The final stage (modified-induced image) the actual experiences at a destination are used by the individual to formulate a complex destination image. Corresponding with Gunn's theory, research indicates that as a result of visiting the destination, images, on the one hand, tend to be more realistic, complex, and differentiated (Gartner, 1989; Gunn 1972; Pearce, 1982; Murphy and Hodel, 1980; Phelps, 1986; Chon, 1987; Hose and Wickens 2004).

Figure 1: Stage-theories of destination image



Source: (Gunn, 1972)

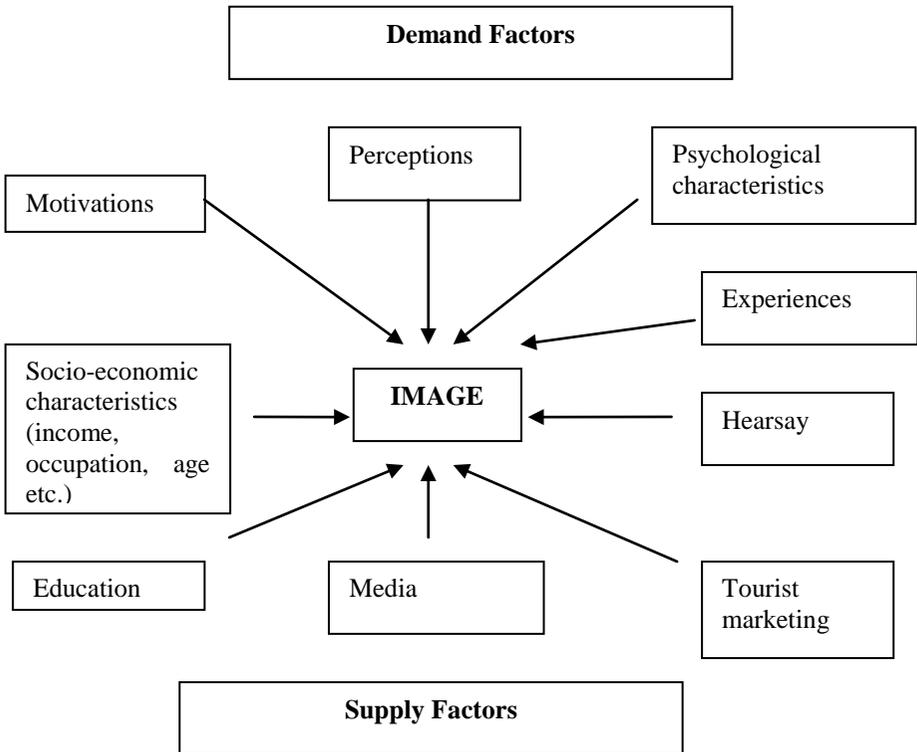
Furthermore Gunn (1972) postulated that there is a distinction between images held by potential visitors, non-visitors and returned visitors. Gunn's argument has been confirmed by Hose and Wickens' study (2004). They

suggested that potential visitors, first time visitors and returned visitors have different images of the same destination.

Factors influencing the process of destination image formation

Stabler (1988) made a quite vital contribution to the Gunn’s theory by dividing the factors that have influenced the formation of a consumer’s destination image into two groups: demand and supply factors (Fig. 2). The demand factors correspond with Gunn’s organic image formation (accumulation of mental images of a place through life), whereas the supply factors correspond to induced image formation (participation or experience at the destination, the activities, accommodation and other services that all influence the image).

Figure 2: Factors influencing the formation of consumers’ tourist image

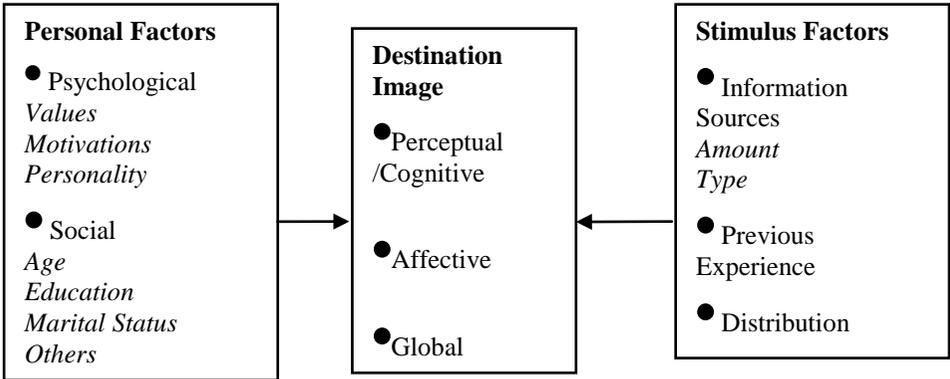


Source: (Stabler, 1988)

Baloglu and McCleary (1999) identified two categories of factors which can have an influence over the image formation process: the stimulus factors and personal factors. The stimulus factors refer to a physical object or previous

experiences whereas the personal factors are represented by the individual's social and psychological characteristics (Fig. 3).

Figure 3: The formation of a destination image



Source: (Baloglu and MacCleary, 1999)

The influence of psychological factors (for example motivations) on image that individuals have of a tourist destination before the actual visitation of the destination is discussed in a study by Martin and Bosque (2008). The results from their study provide support for the push and pull theory proposed by Dann (1981; 1996). The push factors include psychological factors (motivations, personality) as well as social factors (education, marital status), whereas the pull factors consist of the influence of external stimulus and physical objects or tourist attractions and previous experiences (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999).

A closer look at the studies of the destination image unveils several major problems in this research field. The research suffers from the quite vague and blurred framework of destination image. Moreover, in the literature there exists a group of studies that at first sight seem to examine diverse destination image constructs. In essence, however, by using different terminology these studies just repeat the findings of similar studies and as a result such studies fail to extend the body of literature but lead to confusion amongst researchers. Failing to provide a precise definition of destination image that can be adopted in a uniform manner leads to the second major problem in the research of destination image – its conceptualization, dimensions and process of formation. Moreover, this fact leads to the absence of a study where all the dimensions and factors of the destination image formation process are measured with equal weight.

The field work of the presented study will take place in Linz (Austria) in 2009 during the European Capital of Culture Event. In the next section a brief overview of this impending impressive cultural event in the cultural program of Linz is given.

LINZ A “CULTURAL CAPITAL OF EUROPE 2009”

The initiator of The European Capital of Culture Event (ECC Event) is Melina Mercouri - a former Greek Minister of Culture. The main purpose of the ECC event is to “help bring the peoples of the member states closer together” through the “expression of a culture which, in its historical emergence and contemporary development, is characterized by having both common elements and a richness born of diversity” (European Commission 1985). However, it should be noted here that the concept of ECC event is not precisely formulated and thus each city that served the event had enjoyed the freedom to interpret it in a way that mostly suits the needs and desires of the city. For instance, Bologna (2000), Bruges (2002) and Genoa (2004) used the ECC event to renew or regenerate themselves and transform their images – ie. to move from superficial tourism towards a contemporary cultural tourism.

The ECC Event in 2009 will be hosted by Linz and will be used to conduct the study discussed in this paper. This Austrian town is trying to escape from the shadow of Vienna (the capital of Austria) and Salzburg (the most renowned cultural city in Austria) by improving its image during the ECC Event. The application brochure of Linz for a “Cultural Capital of Europe 2009” emphasized on its transformation from an industrial to a high-tech cultural city since 1985. Linz had already gained great expertise and investment, particularly in new media. Additionally, the representatives of Linz presented their hometown as a creative, cultural and dynamic city of worldwide significance. From a European perspective, the city would emphasise urban development based on equality, migrants enriching cities and regions, and European integration including peace, solidarity and diversity. Linz aimed at creating an environment of openness for artists to develop their works (ECOC 2005). Approximately €300 million will be invested in urban infrastructure to make Linz “Euro-fit” for 2009. Additional investments of €67 million will be required for The Capital of Culture programme in 2009. The latter amount will be funded by issuing and selling of total of €60 million shares equally divided among the city, regional and national government, and the remaining €7 million will be raised through sponsorship and fundraising initiatives (ECOC 2005).

Coincidence or not, 2009 is the 120th anniversary of Hitler’s birth – the “genius of Linz” and the 70th anniversary of Hitler’s war. Although he was born in the outlying village of Braunau and there are no plaques on any wall, Linz is Hitler’s town as Salzburg is Mozart’s and Stratford is Shakespeare’s. Thus an interesting question arises – will Linz manage to escape from the ghost of Hitler

through deconstructing and redefining the meaning of culture in a heterogeneous society? The first act of a reconciliation between Linz and its past and as Linz09 artistic director Martin Heller says (2008) ‘The only way of dealing with Hitler is to be completely honest’, will be the first Event of the cultural programme of Linz09 - a public exhibition on ‘Linz: the Führer’s Culture Capital’. Moreover, probably ironic and heartless for some people or recovering from the difficult past of the city for others, Heller also plans to include the nearby Linz situated concentration camp of Mauthausen in the cultural programme of Linz09 (Lebrecht, 2008).

In what follows the paper presents the background of the case study and considers the proposed methodology.

BACKGROUND OF THE CASE STUDY

The research method presented in this paper will be implemented in the analysis of the destination image improvement of Linz as a result of the ECC Event in 2009. The field work will commence at the very beginning of the ECC event and will continue during the whole year. The ambitious mission statement of the policy makers of Linz is to make Linz Austria's most interesting city by 2015 (www.linz09.at). It is provoked by the image problems of the town not only because it has always stood in the shadow of Vienna and Salzburg but also because of its oppressive image as Hitler’s town. This particular ECC event presents a unique opportunity to analyse whether culture has the power to soften up the fascist past of the town by positively changing the image of Linz and positioning it in the visitors’ minds as a creative, cultural and dynamic city of worldwide significance. Furthermore, this research will unveil which image component – the cognitive or the affective one plays a more important role in the process of tourist destination image improvement for visitors with different geographical origins and different motivations to visit Linz. Gunn’s (1972) theoretical model of image formation will be employed for the purposes of this research. The ECC event in Linz 2009 was selected because it is unique since it will present a significant way for image improvement of ‘Hitler’s town’. Research will take place during the months of intensive and cultural events. A sample of about 1000 respondents will consist of international visitors (first-time and repeat visitors) from different European countries.

METHODOLOGY

Echtner and Ritchie (1991) found out that in previous studies secondary sources such as brochures have been used more frequently than primary sources. From their study they concluded that a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies should be used to understand the multidimensionality of destination image concept. Moreover they recommended that a quantitative methodology should be used to uncover common

characteristics and destination attributes and a qualitative methodology should be employed to explore the psychological impressions associated with destination image. According to Tasci, Gartner and Cavusgil (2007) studies using qualitative and a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods proliferated after the publication of Echtner and Ritchie's studies. Qualitative research methods such as case study, in-depth interviews, focus groups, and picture interpretation have been used to understand this phenomenon. (Chen and Kerstetter, 1999; MacKay and Fesenmaier, 1997; Milman and Pizam, 1995; Rezende-Parker et al., 2003; Tapachai and Waryszak, 2000).

Consequently, Echtner and Ritchie (1991) stated that studies focused on affective or both affective and cognitive components should employ a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, while studies concentrated only on the cognitive component of the destination image should utilize only quantitative methods with structured lists of destination attributes during the main data collection process. The argument for this differentiation is that the cognitive component of destination image refers to the appraisal of physical features of environments, while the affective component of destination image refers to feelings about a destination and consists of subjective attitudes that can be understood through free descriptions of the respondents (Selby and Morgan, 1996; Tapachai and Waryszak, 2000; Walmsley and Young, 1998). In addition to the outright preference for qualitative methods and analysis of the cognitive components of destination image in previous studies, the number of studies using structured methods (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Reisinger and Turner, 2000) outweighs the number of studies utilizing the unstructured method (Reilly, 1990; Perdue, 2000; Jutla, 2000). Pike (2002) investigated 142 studies from 1973 to 2000 regarding destination images and unveiled that the majority of papers (114) have used structured techniques to operationalise the destination image construct. Nevertheless, the number of studies using unstructured methods has increased recently and it can be concluded that a new research stream has emerged.

In a structured methodology (Table 1), a variety of general image attributes are specified and integrated into a standardized instrument, (for example a set of semantic differential or Likert type scales), whereas in an unstructured methodology, the participants are allowed to more freely describe their impressions of a destination. Applying the unstructured method (Table 1) requires data collection from a sample of respondents through such methods as focus groups or open-ended survey questions followed by content analysis and various sorting and categorisation techniques to determine the image dimensions. Both approaches have their advantages and disadvantages that have to be considered in constructing of one particular research methodology. For instance, structured methodologies are easy to administer, simple to code and

the results can be analysed using sophisticated statistical techniques due to the fact that they use standardized scales, (Marks, 1976 in Echtner and Ritchie, 1993). Moreover, structured methodologies focus their attention to destination image attributes – the respondents are asked to evaluate a list of previously selected attributes hence failing to capture the holistic and unique components of a particular destination. This disadvantage of the structured method is neutralized by the unstructured method where measuring the holistic components of product image is more conducive. Nevertheless, capturing the holistic components still depends on the participants’ verbal and writing skills, willingness to share their opinions and knowledge about one particular destination. Therefore, in order to fit all components of destination image, both structured and unstructured methodologies should be employed (Echtner and Ritchie 1991).

Table 1: Structured and Unstructured approaches in measuring of destination image

Structured method	Description	Instruments
	Various common image attributes are specified and incorporated into a standardized instrument and the respondent rates each destination on each of the attributes, resulting in an “image profile”	- A set of semantic differential - Likert type scales
	Advantages	Disadvantages
	- Easy to administer - Simple to code - Results can be analyzed using sophisticated statistical techniques - Facilitates comparison between destinations	- No direct opportunity to describe holistic impressions - Not designed to measure the unique characteristics of the product - The completeness of structured methods can be variable (possibility of missing important image dimensions)

Unstructured method	Description	Instruments
	The respondents are allowed to more freely describe their impressions of a product.	- Focus groups -Open-ended survey questions

	Various sorting and categorization techniques are used to determine the image dimensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content analysis - Repertory grid
	<p><i>Advantages</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More conducive to measuring the holistic components of product image - Capturing unique features and auras - Reduces interviewer bias - Reduces likelihood of missing important image dimensions or components 	<p><i>Disadvantages</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Results depend on the verbal and writing skills, willingness and knowledge base of the participants - Level of detail provided by respondents is highly variable - Limited statistical results - Comparative analyses are difficult to conduct

Source: (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991; Jenkins, 1999)

The proposed research method to be employed in the study of Linz 2009 is based on the recommendations by Echtner and Ritchie (1991) and Jenkins (1999) and consists of two main phases. The first phase utilizes the unstructured method and then the research is followed by the second phase that uses the structured approach. By incorporating both approaches, the researcher bias is reduced to a minimum and significant image dimensions are more unlikely to be missed and as a result the unique features of Linz will be captured. During the qualitative phase, respondents from different European countries will be interviewed and the collected data will be used to construct the image of Linz. Eliciting the constructs from the population being studied through qualitative research reduces the risk of pushing the participants to answer to a standardised framework that occasionally reflects the perceptions of the researcher and leads to distorted results (Jenkins, 1999). After the initial phase of eliciting image components the results will be incorporated into a questionnaire using Likert type scales. Tourists will be asked to evaluate the place according to a particular construct and also to rate the importance of the actual construct to them. The combination of the two scales allows the researcher to understand the image of particular destinations held by individual tourists. It also enables the researcher to assign weights to those aspects of image that are considered important by a particular individual or group of individuals (Jenkins 1999).

Multivariate analyses using statistical packages, such as SPSS, which facilitate researchers in making statistical procedures (for example cluster analysis, factor analysis, principle components analysis, and multidimensional scaling) provide a more sophisticated statistical analysis of the data gathered

from the participants and can be successfully implemented in measuring the destination image. Nevertheless, the selected technique should be appropriate to answer the research questions and being compatible with the data collected during the initial phase. The following research questions amongst others will be investigated during the field work:

- To what extent does the ECC event(s) positively influence the image of Linz?
- Is there a difference between the image held by visitors that have visited Linz because of the ECC event and visitors that were not aware of the ECC event?
- Are affective image components more powerful than cognitive image components in the process of destination image improvement?

CONCLUSION

A closer look at the studies concerning destination image shows that the process of destination image formation is not well understood and more than a few problems such as image multidimensionality, complexity and elusiveness hinder the definition and measurement of destination image. Definition and measurement are interconnected and their determination is a challenging task as it requires a consideration and implementation of an appropriate method to access all cognitive, affective, holistic and unique aspects of destination image. Several considerations lay in the core of the successful measurement of destination image. The first step is to define precisely the definition of destination image, bearing in mind the factors that influence the process of destination image formation in visitors' minds. The second step is to operationalise which components of destination image will be investigated – the more tangible or the more intangible ones or a combination of both and then to determine the most suitable research methodology. Finally, the image components that best describe the concept of the analyzed destination image should be clearly defined and elicited by using a representative sample of the population that reflect the unique characteristics of the destination and to be implemented in an appropriate measurement instruments. Previous studies into destination image have often ignored the initial elicitation of destination image components by a sample of visitors and relied on a list of components gathered from a literature review or other sources of secondary data. Further, previous studies had a preference for the structured methods concealing the risk of researchers' bias and missing important aspects of destination image. Therefore, a combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches is required for capturing the kaleidoscopic structure of destination image. This particular study will also uncover a unique opportunity to analyse whether cultural events are a

powerful toll to improve destination image or not and to reposition it in the visitors' minds.

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