Online Destination Image Development: The Role of Authenticity, Source Credibility, and Involvement

Dr. Arifur Rahman[1], Dr Tanvir Ahmed[2], Naila Sharmin and Mily Akhter[3]

[1] La Trobe business School, La Trobe University, VIC 3086, Australia

[2] La Trobe business School, La Trobe University, VIC 3086, Australia

[3] Department of Marketing, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Dhaka, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh

[4] Department of Marketing, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Dhaka, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh

E-mail: a.rahman@latrobe.edu.au

Abstract

Social media platforms are now prevalent in tourism literature and have the potential to influence tourists' decision-making by impacting the process of their destination image (DI) formation. This study aims to investigate online DI formation in tourists' minds and its impact on the intention to visit a site by incorporating three pivotal constructs—authenticity, source credibility, and involvement. The interrelationships are examined for a sample of 360 tourists. The PLS-SEM findings highlight the need to explore the role of authenticity and involvement in online platforms' specific context more extensively. The outcome adds to the academic and industry discussion about the significance of online platforms in impacting the critical elements of tourism literature and offer important implications regarding destinations' social media representation.

Keywords: Online Destination Image, Source Credibility, Authenticity, Involvement, Social media, Intention to Visit.

1. Introduction

For decades, one of the most popular concepts in tourism literature has been the destination image (DI), which has been demonstrated to influence tourists' consumption behavior(Beerli and Martín, 2004). As travel decisions can be complicated and risky, consumers engage in extensive information searches, studying multiple aspects of holiday places as they decide on a destination(Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005; W.-K. Tan & Wu, 2016).

In this context, online information sources significantly influence tourists' knowledge and decisions (Chung & Buhalis, 2008; Gursoy & McCleary, 2004; K. MacKay & Vogt, 2012; Pereira, Salgueiro, & Rita, 2016; W. K. Tan & Wu, 2016) and have made the DI development a more critical process (Hunter, 2016). Since tourism is an 'information-intensive industry'(Yoo & Gretzel, 2016), social media have become significantly relevant(Hays, Page, & Buhalis, 2013; Y. Wang, Yu, & Fesenmaier, 2002). Travelers share their perceptions and experiences on social media sites. Using that information, destination management organizations (DMOs) often brand and promote their particular destinations on the ubiquitous internet platforms to form their distinct DIs (Hays et al., 2013; Luna-Nevarez & Hyman, 2012; Molinillo, Liébana-Cabanillas, Anaya-Sánchez, & Buhalis, 2018).

According to Boyd & Ellison, (2007), social media platforms have enabled travelers to communicate and collaborate by publishing authentic content(Hays et al., 2013). The destination image emerges from WOM recommendations and communications of the tourists (de Lima, Mainardes, & Rodrigues, 2019). Consequently, both social media and resultant destination image influence the expectations of visitors.

However, there has been a gap in the literature. Although most studies investigate online sources and DI representation (Choi, Lehto, & Morrison, 2007; Tang, Choi, Morrison, & Lehto, 2009), there has been little research about the factors influencing the process of developing a DI as well as their impact on intention to visit, especially in the context of social media platforms (Kladou & Mavragani, 2015; Molinillo, Liébana-Cabanillas, Anaya-Sánchez, & Buhalis, 2018).

There are two critical areas where this study attempts to make an original contribution. Firstly, it attempts to address the gap in tourism literature by incorporating the context of social media platforms simultaneously with the concepts of source credibility, authenticity, involvement, intention to visit, and destination image studies. Secondly, it sets out to analyze the interrelationships between the attributes of authenticity, involvement, source credibility, DI, and intention to visit an island destination in the context of social media platforms integrated within the framework. This discussion leads to two research questions-

RQ1: To what extent social-media influence the formation of the online destination image of the tourists?
RQ2: Do tourists' involvement with the social media along with the authenticity and credibility of the site, have any significant impact on the destination image and intention to visit?

This paper is structured as follows. Section 2 defines the concepts of authenticity, involvement, destination source credibility, destination image, and the intention to visit the destination in the context of social media platforms and develop relevant hypotheses. Cognitive and affective images are discussed in sub-section as components of the destination image. In Section 3, the proposed conceptual model is shown and described. Section 4 illustrates the methodology followed, the procedure of data collection, how and where they were collected, and the measures are taken to examine them. Section 5 presents the results of the statistical modeling, followed by section 6, the discussion and conclusion.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Authenticity

As a concept, authenticity originates from antique philosophy and has played an important role in cultural tradition (Ahmed, 2016). The concept of authenticity plays a crucial role in the formation of online DI as tourists obtain information from online sources to stimulate the trip-planning process and to make informed decisions about destinations (Chung & Buhalis, 2008; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Therefore, the quality of information influences the individual's rational judgment by reinforcing and modifying extant beliefs (Bhattacherjee & Sanford, 2006). The analysis of the online content can contribute to providing better insight into destinations in a way "in which they incorporate the authentic in relation to the identity of place in the online image projection" (Govers & Go, 2005, p.75; Ahmed, Mort, & D'Souza, 2015). Perception of authenticity is considered an antecedent of tourists' intentions to visit a destination(Chhabra, Healy, & Sills, 2003)and tourists' destination image (Frost, 2006; Naoi, 2004).

This leads to two hypotheses:

H1: Authenticity has a direct and positive effect on the intention to visit.

H2: Authenticity has a direct and positive effect on the online DI.

A significant number of studies have validated the two-dimensional concept of DI(Hallmann, Zehrer, & Müller, 2015; Molinillo et al., 2018; Smith, Li, Pan, Witte, & Doherty, 2015; Zhang, Fu, Cai, & Lu, 2014).Previous studies also confirmed that authenticity has a direct effect on Destination image(Chhabra, Healy, & Sills, 2003). As the cognitive element is related to perception and the affective element is related to individuals' feelings toward a DI(Konecnik & Gartner, 2007)they act as antecedents for the DI formation (Smith, Li, Pan, Witte, & Doherty, 2015). Therefore, the tourists' perception of authenticity is influenced by different personal evaluation factors (Day, Shi, Cai, & Adler, 2015). Thus, it can be inferred that authenticity is also a significant factor influencing tourists' overall cognitive and affective evaluation(Naoi, 2004).

Hence it can be hypothesized that:

H3: Authenticity has a direct and positive effect on the cognitive image.

H4: Authenticity has a direct and positive effect on the affective image.

2.2 Involvement

Involvement is the state of motivation and desire towards an activity or associated item (Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003), and it is a person's perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interests (K. J. MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997). Studies argue that the level of involvement can vary based on the activities, products, and individual characteristics (Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003; Prayag & Ryan, 2011), and this applies to tourists'behavior and destination selection (Molinillo et al., 2018). Involved tourists are likely to make a more significant cognitive effort than the lesser involved ones and search for more information that will satisfy their cognitive and affective needs. Hence, involvement with the destination-specific website positively affects the cognitive and affective image, and ultimately the overall image.Accordingly, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H5: High levels of involvement with the website have a positive impact on the cognitive image.

H6: High levels of involvement with the website have a positive impact on the affective image.

2.3 Destination Source Credibility

Source credibility tends to affects tourists' decision of how much weight should be given to the information within a source; destination source credibility can be considered as a critical antecedent in the formation of social media-based DI(Jimmy Xie, Miao, Kuo, & Lee, 2011).

Roostika and Muafi (2014) identified that source credibility is critical in determining how a tourist perceives the claims made about a tourism destination to be truthful and believable. Their finding adds substance to earlier claims that higher destination source credibility can increase tourists' positive perceptions regarding DI (Erdem & Swait, 2004) and that destination source credibility plays an essential role in building tourists' feelings and attitudes toward destinations(Roostika & Muafi, 2014).

Since the concept of DI has been operationalized as consisting of a cognitive component that captures knowledge and beliefs about a destination's attributes and an affective component that describes feelings toward a destination, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H7: Destination source credibility is positively related to the cognitive image.

H8: Destination source credibility is positively related to the affective image.

2.4 Online Destination image

The destination image is defined as the subjective interpretation of reality perceived by tourists(Bigné, Sánchez, & Sánchez, 2001; Hyounggon Kim & Richardson, 2003)DI is crucial for both of those who have visited and those who have not yet visited a particular destination.

The importance of the internet as an image formation agent is being increasingly recognized (Choi et al., 2007; Djordjevic, 2013; Dolores M. Frías, Rodríguez, Alberto Castañeda, Sabiote, & Buhalis, 2012; Govers, Go, & Kumar, 2007; Gursoy & McCleary, 2004). The online representation of a destination's image ('online DI') is the online representation of the collective beliefs, knowledge, ideas, feelings, and overall impressions of a destination. The crucial distinction between DI and online DI is that in online DI, both the destination marketers (supply-side) and tourists (demand side) are equally empowered to create and share content on various social media platforms and harness the potential image of a destination spot. Thus the significance of online digital information on the formation of DI has become an indisputable issue in tourism literature (GOVERS & GO, 2005; Mak, 2017). There are multiple representations of a specific destination on different platforms on the internet: official website, Facebook page, online travel groups, YouTube, travel agents, online travel magazines, and others (Rahman, Sharmin, &Akhter, 2020).The images presented by different platforms may differ according to what content and information are available (Dolores M. Frías et al., 2012; Jeong, Holland, Jun, & Gibson, 2012; Llodra-Riera, Martínez-Ruiz, Jiménez-Zarco, & Izquierdo-Yusta, 2015).Tourists' dependence on online sources for information has added a new slant to the online DI formation process: the type and amount of information, images, eWOM, etc. on an online platform can affect the ultimate DI (Asunciòn Beerli& Martín, 2004b; Gartner, 1994; Prebensen, 2007).

2.4.1 Cognitive Image

The cognitive destination image refers to an individual's knowledge and beliefs about a destination(Asunción Beerli & Martín, 2004a). Cognitive component constitutes knowledge, awareness, or cognition: what someone knows about a destination. Researchers suggest that cognitive image has a positive impact on the affective image and the affective responses are formed as a function of the cognitive responses(Gartner, 1994; Hany Kim & Stepchenkova, 2015; W.-K. Tan & Wu, 2016; C. Wang & Hsu, 2010).The cognitive assessment of destination image and online destination imagewas analyzed in many studies (e.g.,San Martín and Rodríguez del Bosque, 2008; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Mak, 2017).

2.4.2 Affective image

The affective component represents the feelings or emotional responses about the destination or experience (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007).The affective component refers to the evaluation stage, concerning the emotions that the individual associated with the place of visit (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Asunciòn Beerli& Martín, 2004a; Gartner, 1994; Lijia, 2015). However, destination image, being a multi-dimensional phenomenon, goes beyond beliefs and knowledge of the destination (cognitive image) and includes feelings and emotions that the destination may evoke (e.g., pleasure, excitement).Online platforms add a new dimension in the formation of the affective component of online DI. The study of Pan, Lee, & Tsai, (2014) photo's ability to reflect the affective images of places from tourists' perspectives.

2.4.3 Online destination image formation process and cognitive and affective images

Although several studies (e.g., Tasci, Gartner and Tamer Cavusgil, 2007)follow Gartner's, (1994) propositionthat DI is the combination of three distinctly different but hierarchically interrelated components (cognitive, affective, and conative images), the majority of studies support a two-dimensional concept: cognitive image and affective image (Hallmann, Zehrer and Müller, 2015; Mano and Costa, 2015; Smith et al., 2015).

Researchers suggest that a cognitive image has a positive impact on an affective image in that affective responses are emotional responses to a destination's cognitive knowledge (Kim and Stepchenkova, 2015; W. K. Tan and Wu, 2016). In other words, what is in tourists' heads ultimately leads to what will be in their hearts. Accordingly, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H9: A favorable cognitive image has a positive impact on the affective image.

Also, the combination of these two components of the image gives rise to an overall DI that refers to the positive or negative evaluation of the destination(Stylidis, Shani, & Belhassen, 2017)based on information available in online platforms. Accordingly, the following hypotheses were formed:

H10: A favorable cognitive image has a positive impact on the online DI.

H11: A favorable affective image has a positive impact on the online DI

2.5 Online destination image and intention to visit

It has been demonstrated in tourism literature that travel and tourism consumers typically remain actively involved in ongoing information search activity (GOVERS & GO, 2008). This information creates an image or "mental prototype"(Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000, p.37) of potential travel experience in the mind of the content viewers, which ultimately influences the destination image and behavioral intention such as the intention to visit a destination(GOVERS & GO, 2008; Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000). A destination with a positive image is more likely to be selected, whereas a negative image can lead a destination to be eliminated from the evoked set(W.-K. Tan & Wu, 2016). Thus, the choice of a destination and the intention to visit that destination will seemingly depend on how the destination is positioned in tourists' minds and hearts.

H12: A favorable online DI has a direct and positive impact on tourists' intention to visit.

2.6 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework is shown in Fig 1. The model graphically illustrates the relationships proposed in the twelve hypotheses in the above sections of the literature review.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework adapted and modified from Molinillo et al., (2018).
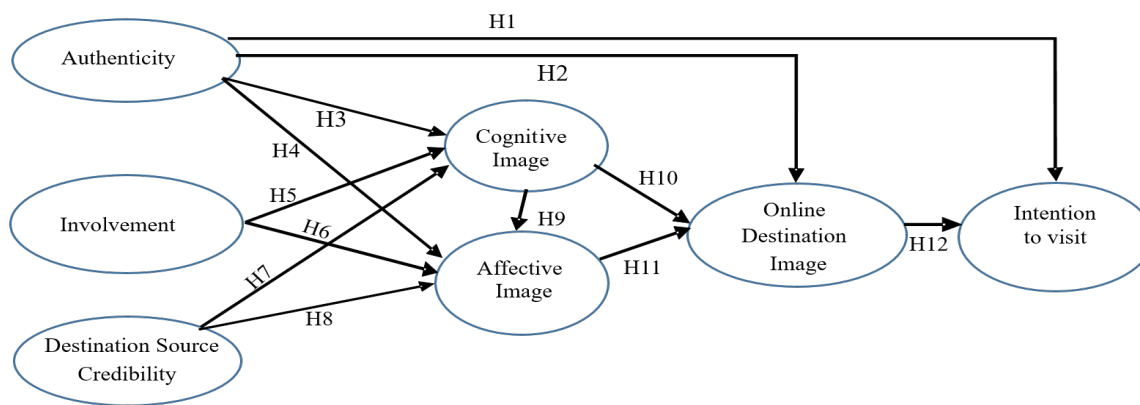
3. Methodology

The mixed-method approach was chosen in this study, as qualitative and quantitative findings together increase the accuracy, quality, and reliability of the data(Babbie, 2004). The context was St Martin's Island, located north-east of the Bay of Bengal, Bangladesh, and one of the most popular tourist destinations in Bangladesh (3500 visitors daily in the peak season (Fakir & Fakir, 2017).

3.1 Sample and research design

First, a qualitative study was conducted on a convenience sample of 50 respondents who had either already visited or were intending to visit the destination. This qualitative study identified the dominant online sources tourists typically prefer for travel-related inquiries and information to improve the composition of the questions in the quantitative questionnaire. Data solicited by one-on-one interviews (face-to-face and telephone)—the average length of the interview was 20 minutes. Open-ended questions were asked based on factors involved in decision making concerning participants' choice of a holiday destination—a semi-structured interview method appropriated to encourage open discussion. Responses were analyzed using the principles of the narrative analysis method. The primary purpose of conducting this qualitative study was to i) gain an understanding of how and why specific social media platforms were preferred for travel-related inquiries and ii) to learn which online factors play a dominant role in decision-making, and image building. The three most popular online sources were identified: Facebook (39.95% or 40%), travel blog sites (30.33% or 30), and YouTube (29.71% or 30%). This technique not only extracted core insights from the spoken words of the respondents but also contributed to the design of the quantitative study: (i) it facilitated quantitative survey's structure (ii) it helped identify the selection of basic constructs, and (iii) it helped to analyze and explain quantitative conclusions by indicating the perceptions and beliefs of the larger sample.

For the quantitative study, a total of 345 self-administered questionnaires were personally distributed. The respondents' specific characteristics were: (1) they intend to visit the site but have not visited yet; the participants who already had visited were excluded due to the possibility of confirmation bias in their responses; (2) they all have accounts in popular social media sites (Facebook, YouTube, and travel blog) and are regular users; (3) they all actively engage in discussions and seek information regarding traveling through social media via online posts, vlogs, blogs, and articles. After checking for quality, 310 complete responses were considered valid for the PLS-SEM analysis.

Before launching the final survey, a pre-test was administered involving 20 university students to determine the time, content quality, and understandability of the question composition. Minor adjustments made based on the feedback of the pre-test.

3.2 Measurement of constructs

The research had three exogenous constructs (involvement, source credibility, and authenticity) and four endogenous constructs (Online DI, cognitive image, affective image, and intention to visit). A structured, self-administered survey instrument was developed and distributed.

3.2.1 Measurement of exogenous constructs

Involvement included questions such as How much attention did you pay to the website information? How much did you concentrate on the website information? It was measured using a 5-point, five-item Likert scale (None/Not at all…a lot (Andrews, Durvasula, & Akhter, 1990; Dolores Ma. Frías, Rodríguez, & Castañeda, 2008; Muehling, Laczniak, & Craig Andrews, 1993). Source credibility was measured with five items adapted from(Veasna, Wu, & Huang, 2013).Authenticity was measured with three items: (i) Published information on the website is an authentic portrayal of coastal life and customs of the St. Martin's Island; ii) The visual imagery printed on the website arouses a feeling of authenticity; and (iii) Visitors and members of the site (both contributors and administrators) have a genuine intention to help by providing authentic information (items adapted from Chhabra et al., 2003;Lu, Chi, & Liu, 2015;Naoi, 2004;Sönmez & Sirakaya, 2002).

3.2.2 Measurement of endogenous constructs

The online destination image was measured with five items adapted from relevant studies (Prayag & Ryan, 2011; Veasna, Wu, & Huang, 2013). Items included 'accessibility of destination' and 'variety and quality of accommodation.' Cognitive image and affective image were measured by five and three elements respectively, adapted from past research(Chen & Phou, 2013; Chi & Qu, 2008; Hyounggon Kim & Richardson, 2003; Qu, Kim, & Im, 2011; San Martín & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2008; C. Wang & Hsu, 2010). Intention to visit was measured with four items adapted from past studies(Martínez & Alvarez, 2010; Molinillo et al., 2018; van der Veen & Song, 2014) by asking the respondents questions regarding the likelihood of them visiting St. Martin's Island as their next tourist destination. Details on the measures of the constructs are available in a table in the Appendix section.

4. Results

As noted, this study employed PLS-SEM to measure the impact (direct effect of) of the role of authenticity, source credibility, involvement on online destination image formation process, and intention to visit the destination. This statistical technique can run multivariate path analysis to evaluate complex models and proved to be useful when the sample size is small(F. Hair Jr, Sarstedt, Hopkins, & G. Kuppelwieser, 2014; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Henseler, 2010); it can also measure unobservable, hard-to-measure latent variables(Gye-Soo, 2016). SmartPLS 3 was used to analyze the data and determine the model fit(Ringle, Da Silva, & Bido, 2014).

4.1 Assessment of the measurement model: reliability and validity

The measurement model was developed to test the relationship between the latent variables (authenticity, involvement, source credibility, affective image, cognitive image, DI, and intention to visit) and their indicators. Before testing the proposed hypotheses, the measurement model was evaluated with PLS to verify each item's

reliability, the reliability of the scale, the convergent validity, and the discriminant validity(Bajpai & Bajpai, 2014; Malhotra & Dash, 2013).

Individual reliability of items was evaluated by examining simple correlations between the indicators and their respective variables. According to F. Hair Jr et al. (2014),factor loading estimates should be higher than 0.5, and ideally, 0.7 or higher. All the reliability indicators met the factor loading threshold of 0.5, and five out of seven indicators met the ideal threshold of 0.7. As loading estimates are not obliged to be higher than 0.7 (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011), the measurement model was reliable. Thus, the model passed the reliability tests.

The variable's reliability allows us to evaluate the accuracy of the items. Convergent validity was tested with the help of three statistical measurements: Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE).The values are considered to be acceptable when AVE is more significant than 0.5, CR is greater than 0.7, and Cronbach's alpha is above 0.8 (Cheah, Sarstedt, Ringle, Ramayah, & Ting, 2018; Cronbach, 1951; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011; Koo, Cho, & Kim, 2014).

The CR and AVE of all the constructs met the critical values, indicating that the measurement model had good convergent validity. Authenticity, cognitive image, and DI had slightly lower Cronbach's alpha value than recommended but are not considered a validity issue (Hamari, Sjöklint, & Ukkonen, 2016), especially when the values of the other validity measures were satisfactory.

Table-1: Convergent validity of the measurement model.

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (CR)	The average variance extracted (AVE)	Factor Loadings
Cognitive image	0.753	0.835	0.505	0.607-0.803
Affective image	0.812	0.889	0.727	0.844-0.861
Online Destination image	0.737	0.833	0.557	0.690-0.819
Intention to visit	0.800	0.869	0.625	0.748-0.853
Involvement	0.889	0.918	0.692	0.808-0.869
Source credibility	0.841	0.886	0.609	0.767-0.804
Authenticity	0.762	0.863	0.679	0.787-0.865

Lastly, the measurement model's discriminant validity was checked by determining the extent to which a given construct is different from the other constructs in the model. Discriminant validity analysis was administered to re-confirm the validity of the model(Anderson & Gerbing, 1988), using three methods: (i)cross-loadings of the indicators that require that the loadings of each indicator on its constructs are higher than the cross-loadings on other constructs (F. Hair Jr et al., 2014); (ii)the Fornell–Larcker criterion analyzes whether the correlations between the dimensions are lower than the square root of the AVE (Fornell & Larcker, 1981); (iii)Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio should be below 0.90(Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015)(Table-2).

The results of the three tests confirmed that all values were below the cut-off limit, so the measurement model had an acceptable fit. (Complete results can be obtained from the author upon request). The measurement model's analysis showed that the reliability and validity of every latent variable in the model complied with the corresponding standards. Thus, the measurement model had good reliability and validity.

Table-2: Discriminant validity[1]

	Affective image	Authenticity	Cognitive image	Destination image	Intention to visit	Involvement	Source credibility
Affective image	**0.853**	0.589	0.622	0.842	0.722	0.312	0.648
Authenticity	0.465	**0.824**	0.519	0.634	0.452	0.581	0.855
Cognitive image	0.494	0.397	**0.711**	0.880	0.368	0.230	0.587
Destination image	0.681	0.490	0.690	**0.746**	0.609	0.339	0.716
Intention to visit	0.594	0.354	0.291	0.502	**0.791**	0.258	0.498
Involvement	0.265	0.476	0.180	0.287	0.217	**0.832**	0.457
Source credibility	0.551	0.692	0.485	0.578	0.422	0.399	**0.780**

Note. Main diagonal in bold: square root of the AVE

4.2 Assessment of Structural Model

The bootstrapping method was used to test the significance of the path coefficients and the loadings of the structural model(Ali, Kim, & Ryu, 2016; F. Hair Jr et al., 2014).To do this, several tests were employed:

First, the R^2 of each of the constructs was analyzed, and all the values in the proposed model (AI:0.380;CI:0.244;DI:0.641; ITV:0.267) are above the limit of 0.1(Falk & Miller, 1992). Thestandardized regression path weights (Table 5) show that eight of the twelve hypotheses were supported.

Also, the size of the effect (f^2) verified the suitability of the proposed model. Values of $f^2$from 0.02to 0.15, 0.15 to 0.35, and 0.35 or higher indicate that an exogenous latent variable has a small, medium, and substantial impact on an endogenous latent variable (Chin, 1998; Monecke & Leisch, 2012).The model shows a near-zero impact of involvement on affective images (f^2=0.001) and cognitive images(f^2=0.002) and a minimal impact of authenticity on affective and cognitive images. On the other hand, both affective images (f^2=0.306) and cognitive images(f^2=0.387) have a substantial impact on online DI. Online DI has a medium effect on the intention to visit,

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[1]Fornell-Larcker criterion (below the main diagonal) and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) (above the main diagonal).

and source credibility has an impact on both affective image and cognitive image. Lastly, the standardized root means square residual (SRMR) values under 0.08 are considered acceptable—the proposed model has a value of 0.078.The results of all tests (full details available from the author) show that the evaluation of the structural model met all standard requirements.

4.3 Hypothesis tests

A total of twelve hypotheses have been tested in this study, and the result supported eight of them (Table 3). The result indicates that different types of social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and travel blogs influence tourists' destination image formation, thus affecting their intention to travel to a particular tourist destination. Concerning the hypotheses, authenticity has a positive and significant effect on tourist's intention to visit and online DI, supporting H1 and H2. However, contrary to expectation, despite effecting online DI, authenticity does not appear to have an impact on the cognitive and affective image, thus not supporting H3 and H4.

Table 3: Results of hypotheses tests

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	P-value	T-value	Support
H1	Authenticity → Online Destination image	0.127	0.026	2.238	Supported
H2	Authenticity → Intention to visit	0.143	0.030	2.178	Supported
H3	Authenticity → Cognitive Image	0.137	0.133	1.504	Not supported
H4	Authenticity → Affective Image	0.115	0.124	1.539	Not Supported
H5	Involvement → Cognitive Image	-0.048	0.535	0.621	Not supported
H6	Involvement → Affective Image	0.031	0.613	0.506	Not supported
H7	Destination Source Credibility → Cognitive Image	0.409	0.000	4.629	Supported
H8	Destination Source Credibility → Affective Image	0.320	0.000	3.678	Supported
H9	Cognitive Image → Affective Image	0.288	0.000	4.180	Supported
H10	Cognitive Image → Online Destination Image	0.439	0.000	7.679	Supported
H11	Affective Image → Online Destination Image	0.405	0.000	7.465	Supported

H12	Online Destination Image → Intention to visit	0.432	0.000	6.722	Supported

Similarly, involvement also does not appear to impact affective and cognitive image; therefore, not supporting H5 and H6. However, destination source credibility has a significant positive impact on both online DI and intention to visit, thus supporting H7 and H8. Besides, both cognitive and affective image positively and significantly influences online DI, and cognitive image also has an impact on the affective image, thus supporting H9, H10, and H11. Finally, the study confirms that online DI has a strong positive impact on the intention to visit the destination.

6. Discussions and conclusions

The findings of this study provide an exceptional understanding of the online destination image in the context of the internet. The analysis of the model confirmed that certain factors influence the formation of online destination image and the tourists' intention to visit the destination in the context of online social media platforms for Saint Martin's Island, Bangladesh. The results suggest that destination source credibility has a significant effect on both cognitive and affective images. Similarly, both cognitive and affective image strongly influences the overall online destination image. Correspondingly, the destination image is strongly and positively related to the intention to visit.In contrast to prior findings, limited evidence of the impact of authenticity and involvement on cognitive and affective images was witnessed. Finally, the study confirms that online DI has a strong positive impact on the intention to visit the destination.

The study sheds light on the relevance of authenticity in forming online DI in the context of social media platforms. Contrary to expectations, this study could not find any significant relationship between cognitive image and authenticity or affective image and authenticity. Despite previous studies suggesting the opposite, it seems conceivable that these results may be due to the internet's protean nature as a source of information(Doyle & Hammond, 2006). Chhabra, (2005) affirmed that authenticity is not a tangible element but rather a judgment of value placed on the site or product by those who observe it. Online communities mean different things to different people. Hesitant tourists might consider the unstable nature of the internet platform as a factor while processing the information obtained from it(Preece, Maloney-krichmar, & Abras, 2003). As one respondent put it:

"The imagery and information about Saint Martin's Island or any other tourist spot I find on the social media platforms are either retouched or enhanced most of the time. The dramatically blue ocean and white sands are definitely a visual delight, but the reality might be different. Unless and until I am personally acquainted with the post provider or the source is peer-confirmed, there is always doubt about the authenticity of the information"– (Anonymous, 25, Student).

In the view of Pearce & Moscardo, (1986)person-based approach to authenticity, where it could be achieved through different kinds of interactions with places, people or both, it can be inferred that interaction with peers on the social media platforms can also be incorporated in the study of the role of authenticity in contemporary tourism literature.

Hypothesis posited that high levels of involvement with the website have a positive impact on both the cognitive and affective images. A non-significant value was obtained in both cases, thus indicating that tourists' involvement with online social media platforms does not significantly impact the development of the cognitive and affective image. This result is incongruent with the study of Molinillo et al. (2018). The research has shown that tourists' degree of involvement provided a substantial influence on tourists' travel intentions and destination image(Molinillo et al., 2018).Nevertheless, there were also studies arguing that the level of involvement can vary

based on the activities, products, and individual characteristics(Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003; Prayag & Ryan, 2012). As Zaichkowsky (1985, p. 342) defined involvement as: "A person's perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values and interest"; a possible explanation for this non-significant result might be that involvement is relative and not as relevant as it supposed to be in developing destination image, especially in the context of social media platforms.As one respondent said:

"I am not a heavy user of social media. I use them occasionally to connect and share experiences with my friends and peers as well as for mere entertainment purposes. When it comes to selecting a destination for my next vacation trip, I prefer not to rely on the information solely I get from social media platforms" – (Anonymous, 35, Job Holder).

This study confirmed that the source credibility is a critical antecedent for the social media-based development of destination image. The findings are in sync with prior studies(Veasna et al., 2013)that demonstrated the effect of destination source credibility on destination image. The findings of this study indicate that higher source credibility of the social media platforms directly influences the tourists' cognitive and affective image. Therefore, it can be concluded that the credibility of information sources plays a significant role in predicting tourist behavior.

The findings of this study corroborate the hypotheses and are in line with the finding of earlier studies suggesting that cognitive and affective images are critical antecedents of the destination image. Specifically, the cognitive component has a significant impact on DI and simultaneously acts as an antecedent of the affective component. These findings align with the previous literature that explains the two-dimensional concept of DI and the interrelationship among the constructs that help to form DI(Hany Kim & Stepchenkova, 2015; Molinillo et al., 2018; W.-K. Tan & Wu, 2016). Finally, the study posits that favored online DI affects intention to visit. The study revealed a significant relationship between the perceived online destination image and tourists' intention to visit supporting the previous literature (Molinillo et al., 2018). Thus, the study attempts to answer the first research question regarding the extent of social-media influence on the formation of the online destination image by highlighting the identified relationships of the said constructs on the context of social media platforms.

As for the role of authenticity, this study attempted to explore the effect of the said construct in a complex setting involving other constructs. While the result partially confirmed previous literature by having a significant effect of Authenticity on the DI and intention to visit (Chhabra et al., 2003; Frost, 2006; Naoi, 2004), the failure to have an impact on the cognitive and affective image creates a theoretical contradiction. Because both cognitive and affective images are forming components of the DI (Hallmann et al., 2015; Mano & Costa, 2015; Smith et al., 2015)and thus having a significant impact on DI without effecting cognitive and affective image creates a discrepancy. Such discrepancy also indicates that more empirical studies should be conducted to assess and reaffirm the nature of the relationship between authenticity, destination image, and intention to visit.

This study also identified a contradictory result regarding the role of involvement and authenticity. As there has been a lacking of prior research assessing the role of these constructs in the specific context of social media, it reveals the scope for exploring the relationships in a more in-depth manner. It also implies that the effect of the said constructs on the formation of online DI and the interrelationships among themselves, deserve further attention in the tourism literature. Thus it answers the second research question regarding the impact of specific constructs on the formation of online DI and intention to visit. Another novelty of this study lies in the reaffirmation of the findings in the previous research in the specific context of the online social media platforms. Hence, it adds to the contemporary tourism literature.

6.1 Implications and future research directions

Apart from S. Molinillo et al. 's (2018) study, there is a general lack of empirical investigation to understand the relationship between tourists' involvement and the cognitive, affective image dimensions of DI on the social media platforms. Therefore, this study contributed to the existing literature and extended the S. Molinillo et al.'s (2018) model by incorporating and measuring the impact of two additional but important constructs: destination source credibility and authenticity in the formation of DI on social media platforms. The results of this study can help destination marketers develop a positive destination image through online platforms and influence tourists' intention to visit the destination. Essentially, a favored and appropriate destination image positively influences tourists' intention to visit the destination. Destination marketers should concern themselves with the social media-based image development process if they willing to differentiate their offerings in this competitive holiday market. The study also confirmed that consumers' perceived image of a destination comprised of both cognitive and affective components, which is also supported by previous studies(Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Hallmann et al., 2015; W.-K. Tan & Wu, 2016). Therefore, by devising an appropriate integrated marketing strategy, destination marketers' can create a favorable image through social networking platforms(Lei, Pratt, & Wang, 2017). Thirdly, the positive influence of authenticity on destination image and intention to visit necessitates the need to portray an authentic representation of the destination(Lu et al., 2015; Park, Choi, & Lee, 2019)by providing accurate and trustworthy online information as these online platforms enable tourists to verify the authenticity of information to a great extent even before visiting that destination.

Although the study offers insights on the combinatory mechanism of the seven constructs, the findings of this report are subject to at least three limitations: i) the boundaries of convenience sampling; ii) budgetary restrictions; iii) data were collected from only one location (Dhaka, the Capital City) of Bangladesh. Further research could be undertaken to better understand the influence of involvement under the context of social media platforms since the findings of this study are incongruent with prior research in terms of the impact of the involvement on online DI and intention to visit. To obtain a greater understanding of the precise mechanism of DI in the social media context, future studies can include the concept of e-WOM and perceived risk and the sub-dimensions of authenticity construct in the structural framework. The study also incorporates a multitude of objectives for critical analysis, which could be operationalized into a continuous string of future studies to achieve a more profound knowledge of each construct in the supposed context.

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Appendix

Variables and measures		
Variables	**Scale**	**Reference**
Authenticity	5-point scale from low to high	Y. Ram et al. / Tourism Management 52 (2016) 110-122 D. Stylidis et al. / Tourism management 58 (2017) 184-195
Involvement	5-point scale from low to high	S. Molinillo et al. 2018
Destination Source Credibility	5-point Likert measurement scale.	S.Veasna et al. / Tourism Management 36 (2013) 511-526

Cognitive Image	5-point semantic differential scale	Beerli& Martin, 2004; Chi & Qu, 2008; Baloglu&McCleary, 1999; Wang & Hsu, 2010; Chen & Phou, 2013 P. Ramseook-Munhurrun et al., / Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 175 (2015) 252 -259
Affective Image	5-point semantic differential scale	Hosany et al., 2006; Lin et al., 2007; Smith et al., 2015
Destination Image	5-point scale from worst to best	S.Veasna et al. / Tourism Management 36 (2013) 511-526 Lin et al., 2007; Smith et al., 2015.
Intention to visit	5-Point scale from highest disagreement level to highest agreement	Van Der Veen & Song, 2014, Alvarez & Campo, 2014