Development of New Tourist Destination Attractions for Destination Attachments Through the Moderating Role of Cultural Capital of Samut Songkhram Province, Thailand

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Abstract---The study objective was to check the development of new tourist destination attractions for destination attachments with the moderating role of cultural capital of Samut Songkhram Province, Thailand. For this purpose, the data was collected from 300 tourists by using convenient sampling technique. Using cross sectional research design and quantitative research approach. The Partial Least Square (PLS)-Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) results had shown that most of tourist destination attractiveness had positive and significant association with destination image except access and climate. In the same vein, the destination image also had a positive and significant association with destination attachment. The indirect effect also shown that cultural capital also had a positive and significant moderating effect on the relationship of cultural capital and destination attachment. Along with these findings, this study moderating effect relationship could be considered a big contribution of the study. This study also had some practical implications that could help to tourism department to know about the importance of destination attractiveness to increase the destination attachment. The research also had some limitations at the end of the study.

Keywords---cultural capital, destination attachments, destination image, Thailand, tourist destination attractions.
Introduction

With rapid world advancements, humans discover new ways of sustenance in the varying environment, adapting to technology and digital interface, however, human nature always remains with nature’s beauty and serenity. The desire to reconnect with the originality of nature impacts human beings and their attachment with the environment which motivates them to travel and explore. Usually, people travel places where they feel emotionally, and socially attached to the new destinations and prefer visiting places that are easy to reach. Leisure tourists usually tend to find new places experience joy and satisfaction. In recent years, the tourism industry has become one of the largest economically contributing industries, globally. Tourism is an emerging industry as people from major evolving continents and geographic sections i.e., Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East participate in tourism at domestic, intraregional and far distant global parts of the world (Cohen & Cohen, 2015). Tourism studies have previously been carried out to understand two key constituents: destination hosts (people living at tourism destinations) and the tourists, both are interdependently beneficiary in this symbiotic relationship (Uysal, Sirgy, Woo, & Kim, 2016). In this context, this study is going to investigate various factors which revolve around the second and most vital constituent of the tourism industry i.e., “tourists”. Kandampully and Suhartanto (2000) assert that tourism is very important to enhance the economic conditions of economies as it brings monetary as well as social benefits through tourist traffic.

Tourists are the consumers in the tourism industry, who buy tourism experiences and tend to fetch pleasure through various attributes of the destination. Studies have been conducted rigorously to find a theoretical association between destination attachment and tourists motivation to travel G Prayag, Hosany, and Soscia (2014), destination image Girish Prayag and Ryan (2012a), and past experiences of tourists with a place (G. T. Kyle, Mowen, & Tarrant, 2004) Specifically, it is in clear consideration that destination attachment is patronized by different destination-related facilities and services that Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) can provide and manage (Girish Prayag & Ryan, 2012a). Studies in the past reflect a direct relationship of different attributes of Tourist destination attractiveness with destination attachment but in the study of Reitsamer, Brunner-Sperdin, and Stokburger-Sauer (2016), they described tourists’ cognitive evaluation (Attitude) as mediating effect between the relationship of Tourist destination attractiveness and destination attachment, but in this proposed study, the destination image is under consideration because previous studies reveal that destination image is composed of two basic constructs of perceptual/cognitive evaluations and affective together. Baloglu and McCleary (1999) also added by describing Image with reference to cognitive and affective evaluations. This construct of “Image” further second by Buyong and Rajiani (2011), study described the formation of Image with implication of cognitive and affective evaluation. Mazursky and Jacoby (1986) discussed image formation in the context of retail store overall image building by evaluating and integrating observations regarding different store components. Based on those insights’ consumers use to form an overall image. Although it has been described in retail context, but it reflects a generic process of image formation.
Although tourism is an emerging area of study still there is several insights that need attention to study, for instance, Pike (2012) describes that although people decide for travelling on basis of the image theoretically image building is not well described. Many authors encouraging studies in tourism in the context of the image but its theoretical outlines are not well explained. Especially today when tourism is pivot construct for many researchers, Destination is subjected with various modern concepts in the context of consumer who is considered tourist in this Industry. Various studies namely, Dhanushkodi, Hanif, Anand, and TamilSelvan (2021) found that cultural capital had a significant and positive relation with the destination image. On the other hand, it is also found that cultural capital has negative and significant relationship with the destination image (Richards & Wilson, 2004). While, other study of Zetiu and Bertea (2015) found the insignificant relationship with destination image. While, in other words, it is also found that cultural capital had an insignificant association with the destination attachment (Ma, 2014). In other study is found the positive and significant impact of cultural capital on destination attachment (N. Chen & Dwyer, 2018). These findings have shown that cultural capital has relationship with both of the indicators namely destination image and destination attachments but had inclusive findings and most of the studies cultural capital had been used as a direct effect variable but not test as a moderating variable. Therefore, in the current study it had been used as a moderating variable. Moreover, the previous studies also had major focused on other developed countries (Richards & Wilson, 2004; Zhang, Xu, Lu, & Lei, 2015) while had little attention on other developing economies (Carballo, León, & Carballo, 2021; Sahin & Baloglu, 2011).

The proposed study is based upon the identified gap between tourists’ perceived Tourist destination attractiveness and attachment that has been investigated with the moderating role of cultural capital. This study also examined the significance of different components of Tourist destination attractiveness i.e., access, local community, scenery, climate, food, and sports & recreational opportunities in developing the image of the destination and ultimately its effect in creating attachment of tourists with their tour destination through the moderating effect of cultural capital of Samut Songkhram Province, Thailand.

**Literature Review**

**Destination Attachment**

Place attachment or Destination Attachment is a procedure through which people establish an emotional relationship to destination and the feeling of being staying at home or a place is the same, and it also makes emotional bond to a particular place. According to Halpenny (2006) an emotional, cognitive and functional relationship of people toward the destination is place attachment, Rubinstein and Parmelee (1992) suggested that personal visit and interaction to a people of destination establish feeling and tourists get attached to destination (Molinillo, Vidal-Branco, & Japutra, 2020). Destination attachment plays a vital role to inspire to develop strong feelings and it also inspires individual loyalty (Brocato, 2006). According to McMillan, Hwang, and Lee (2003) the more the people get attached to a destination, the less they change their options of place. Destination attachment depends on tourist’s loyalty. If tourist attachment is higher to a
destination, it means higher loyalty toward a destination (Alexandris, Kouthouris, & Meligdis, 2006). Attachment to a certain place increases if the tourist has more information about the place and having a strong feeling toward a destination (Brocato, 2006). Different researchers have different opinions about the formation of destination attachment some described that place attachment is made of the sense of place, place identity and place dependence (Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck, & Watson, 1992).

**Destination Image**

Sirakaya, Sonmez, and Choi (2001) described that in the tourism industry destination image is a blessing to any country or region. Positive images of a destination have always a high chance of flourish as compared to negative images of the destination. A concept shared by Kim and Richardson (2003) is described as the total of imprints in mind, beliefs, thoughts and feelings regarding a particular location concerning time. Murphy, Pritchard, and Smith (2000) second the concept of Kim and Richardson by defining as connections and units of information regarding a particular place, In short, that would develop a personal perception. Bigne, Sanchez, and Sánchez (2001) further raised the concept by describing Destination Image as an individual’s own way to interpret the facts regarding tour destination. Further Coshall (2000) defined the factor of Image as a personal way to perceive the various features of a tourist’s destination. In fact, Destination Image is an individual’s knowledge base, way of feeling and perceiving a destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). Simply it is an impression or a Perception regarding a destination (Tillisch et al., 1986).

Several studies have described the image as constant mind processing which results in the creation of reflections, thoughts, building beliefs and mental mapping in the form of impressions regarding the destination through information from the different sources (Crompton, 1979). Literature in the area of tourism is evident of image role for the success of a destination that is similar to marketing studies which focus overvalue by creating image (P.-J. Chen & Kerstetter, 1999). Lalicic, Marine-Roig, Ferrer-Rosell, and Martin-Fuentes (2021) emphasized embracing destination image analytics in the design process of destination marketing systems.

**Tourist destination attractiveness and destination image**

Tourist destination attractiveness is a basic factor among all the experiences of a Tourist during his tour (Alahakoon, Pike, & Beatson, 2021). Kušen (2002) describes attractiveness as facilities and services which may appeal to or already achieving the interest of tourists for a destination. Attractiveness possesses key importance in the tourism industry as Ritchie and Crouch (2003) in the study of destination competitiveness give key attention to attractiveness by illustrating attributes of attractiveness as major aspects which stimulate the tourists to tour a destination. Leask (2010) also seconds by explaining its significance as all factors of Attractiveness contribute a significant part in the success of a particular destination and those factors serve as instigators to attract tourists and may become assets for the residents as well. The attractiveness of a destination is a major role in choosing and selecting a destination, the way how destination
satisfies, how it attracts, the decision to spend money and time to stay at destination etc. (Henkel, Henkel, Agrusa, Agrusa, & Tanner, 2006). Attractiveness satisfies us for entertainment, curiosity and learning, which means it, may educate us as well (Hu & Wall, 2005). In larger meanings Tourist destination attractiveness is associated with economic and overall regional development (Andersson & Getz, 2009).

Cognitive image is based upon the way how tourist perceives or take an impression of different attributes and facilities of a destination (Beerli & Martin, 2004). According to Formica and Uysal (2006) tourists appealing image perception is destination attractiveness. Destination’s attractiveness factors are crucial for both image formation and memorability of the staged destination experience. Here we formulate the following hypothesis:

**H1:** Tourists’ perceived Tourist destination attractiveness positively affects the destination’s image.

Many studies have described the various attributes of destination Çakici and Harman (2007), such attributes are now practically considered indicators for tourist’s experiences. These studies in the context of attributes support the practitioners and marketers in this industry to meet the needs of tourists about the destination because as reflected in the above-mentioned studies, a visitor decides to visit, revisit, or recommend others as well.

**Accessibility and destination image**

Accessibility is defined by various integrated factors of approach or reaches for product, service, or destination to visit. As far as tourism is concerned, studies reflect it may include infrastructure (roads, airports, seaports, railways), modes of transportation services and many routes available to reach the destination with the frequency of services and prices charged and policies executed by the authorities about transportation like the quality of transportation and size and the number of persons in a vehicle etc. (Aksoy & Kiyci, 2011). In broader terms, the concept of Accessibility is about the way how conveniently a traveler may reach his planned destination that may include nonphysical factors of reach. Simply it is extent or level of ease for tourists to reach a destination and for this several factors are involved which have been studied as developing a smooth approach to destination, transportation with the standard of services accompanied by the availability of facts and data for all regarding a destination (Aksoy & Kiyci, 2011).

Sirgy and Su (2000) describe human instinct to look for comfort and ease and in the case of tourists, they see accessibility and other attributes to pattern their interest that is based upon image what they make in their minds. Sirakaya and Woodside (2005) further second by mentioning these attributes of destination as factors of image building that finally patronize the behavior of tourists. Based on the above explanation, we formulate the following hypothesis:

**H2:** Tourists access to destination positively affects destination image.
**Local Community and destination image**

The study of Jackson and Murphy (2006) reflects the worth of the local community as describing this factor as a key medium for destination attractiveness. In this way, Shone and Memon (2008) studied local participation for destination development. Especially Ghavami, Michael, and Kohno (2007) well debated over the worth of local community as a key factor to shape destination or development of a tour location. Local people or community is an attribute that was largely described as the factor for image formation by many researchers i.e. (Ashworth & Voogt, 1990). In this way, we formulate the hypothesis as:

**H3:** Local community of destination positively affects destination image.

**Scenery and destination image**

Keyser (2009) described that the different characteristics are major reasons for attraction towards a destination i.e., sight views and natural beauty of environment may attract the tourists. The above studies especially describe different activities like sight view; camping, riding, and hiking etc. add value to the environment of the destination. Therefore, preserving of environment and scenic beauty of the tour destination is important to keep the tourists attracted to a particular destination. Several initiatives are being taken to save and towards the betterment of the environment and people over the different geographical parts or destinations (Laroche, Bergeron, & Barbaro-Forleo, 2001). Rittichainuwat, Qu, and Brown (2001) claimed in their study that natural scenic beauty is a key composition factor of the destination image. Image is also described in terms of place attitude that can be determined by Scenic beauty (Chon, 1991). It will lead towards the following hypothesis:

**H4:** Natural beauty and serenity of destination positively affect destination Image.

**Climate and destination image**

Climate is a natural feature of a particular area or tour destination and is managed by natural environmental elements (Damir Krešić, 2007). But it plays a key role in deciding to choose a tour destination. Therefore, this feature naturally becomes a competitive advantage for many destinations to attract visitors (Damir Krešić & Prebežac, 2011). For this, many destinations consider their environment’s climate for their marketing campaigns and strategize their marketing messages accordingly by considering the climatic factor. Many tourists’ activities are based upon climates like sunbath, beach tours, health tourism and other sports-related tour locations (Damir Krešić & Prebežac, 2011). Gallarza, Saura, and Garcia (2002) found climate as a factor for building destination image. Therefore, in this study, we also hypothesized that:

**H5:** Pleasant climate at destination positively affect destination image.
Food & Beverages and destination image

Food is among the major features to attract visitors to the destination. It has its worth by considering its role in terms of different ways of Food services like Seafood at beaches, famous restaurants with special cultural dishes, different traditional meals, and specific taste with the particular style of cookery at a particular destination. Moreover, studies reflect such factors attract tourists and even these may attract non-visitors to visit and taste foods specifically managed by different tour destinations and their governments and countries (Dann, 1996). Food and Beverages are considered among the needs of tourists which are meant to be satisfied and considered a major factor to create the image. Food plays a major role in building the perceived image of the destination and also plays a competitive role among the various destinations or tour places (Everett & Aitchison, 2008). Therefore, this is a highly important element in the tourism industry and hotels as well (Ardabili, Rasouli, Daryani, Molaie, & Sharegi, 2011). In short, destination management organizations may properly work on this component to manage the image of the destination (Konecnik & Go, 2008). We formulate a hypothesis as:

**H6: Food & beverages availability at destination positively affect destination image.**

Sports & recreational opportunities and destination image

Among the important factors for tourism development, we may find sports clubs, fun and recreational resorts and water parks that play a vital role in the development of the tourism industry. Of course, recreational activities include many sports activities like football, basketball, high jumping, long jumping, badminton etc. Commonly recreation is considered participation in different sports and related activities and definitely, for a particular location these may earn for economic growth and may reward in terms of healthy human experience as well if properly managed by the government. For the first time, visitor information or branding regarding sports events play a very important role Court and Lupton (1997) and play a more important role in positively revisit intentions based upon the built image (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007). Marketers of different destinations give attention to hosting different sports events to build destination image in mind of tourists (Chalip, Green, & Hill, 2003). Based on the above explanation, we formulate the following hypothesis:

**H7: Sports & recreational opportunities at destination positively affect destination image.**

Destination Image and Destination Attachment

Based on the recent literature destination or place attachment is a multi-concept that is associated with different insights of Tourism (i.e., Destination Image and Attractiveness etc.) e.g., (G. Brown, Smith, & Assaker, 2016). Destination Attachment is a positive emotional factor or an affective link that is an image of the destination, between an individual and concerned destination Debenedetti, Oppewal, and Arsel (2014), that builds the concept of place affect which is Image factor in studies (M. T. Brown & Ulgiati, 2016). Affect emotion and feelings are a
composition for Image formation to drive the basic concept of place attachment (Tonge, Ryan, Moore, & Beckley, 2015). In this context, Ramkissoon, Smith, and Weiler (2013) described emotional bonding, sentimental associations towards the destination in the particular meaning of cognitive or effective imaging. Fakeye and Crompton (1991) expand the literature of Gunn (1977) and described that image is formed in tourist minds because of their repeated experience. Further T. H. Lee (2009) described that tourist decision to visit a destination is based on their experience. Moreover, changes happen to occur in the destination image perceptions due to experiences (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991). Bigne et al. (2001) described that image of a destination influence tourist’s behaviors. And the image of a destination also creates feeling (Davidoff & Davidoff, 1983). Moreover, the image of a place and attractiveness from past experience both affect a tourist’s attachment toward a destination (K. F. Lee, 2001). Hou, Lin, and Morais (2005) further described that image and attractiveness of place influence the power of attachment in various groups. Literature proves that image of destination influence individual destination attachment toward the destination Girish Prayag and Ryan (2012b), that image is the antecedent of destination attachment (Girish Prayag & Ryan, 2012a). This will lead towards the following hypothesis:

**H8: Positive image of the destination increases the tourist’s attachment towards the destination.**

### Cultural Capital as a moderator

After the previous discussion, the next step is to discuss about the cultural capital which played an important role to increase the destination image which could be ultimately effect to destination attachment. Various studies namely, Dhanushkodi et al. (2021) found that cultural capital had a significant and positive relation with the destination image. On the other hand, it is also found that cultural capital has negative and significant relationship with the destination image (Richards & Wilson, 2004). While, other study of Zetiu and Bertea (2015) found the insignificant relationship with destination image. While, in other words, it is also found that cultural capital had an insignificant association with the destination attachment (Ma, 2014). In other study is found the positive and significant impact of cultural capital on destination attachment (N. Chen & Dwyer, 2018). These findings have shown that cultural capital has relationship with both of the indicators namely destination image and destination attachments but had inclusive findings and most of the studies cultural capital had been used as a direct effect variable but not test as a moderating variable. Therefore, in the current study it had been used as a moderating variable. Thus, based on previous discussion, it has been hypothesized that,

**H10: The cultural capital had a significant moderating effect on the relationship of destination image and destination attachment.**

### Research Methodology

The essence of methodology is related to the philosophical approach used in the study which explains how the data was gathered, analyzed, and evaluated. The model was constructed based on two theories i.e., image theory Beach and
Mitchell (1987) and attachment theory (Bretherton, 1985). Data was collected through a self-administered survey questionnaire where all the questions are close-ended and adapted from well-established and authenticated sources. Further, a reflective model is implied in the study based on previous studies (Jiang, Ramkissoon, Mavondo, & Feng, 2017). The questionnaire was articulated in such a comprehensive way that the tourists can easily fill it without the presence of an interviewer. However, contact details of the interviewer are given in case of clarification and feedback. The population of this study was tourists who use to travel for the tour purpose to Thailand belong to different cultures and demographic backgrounds. The sample was selected from different travel agents’ tour clients by applying convenient sampling from Samut Songkhram Province, Thailand. Data collected from 300 respondents and the sample size was determined based on (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data. The reliability of data was checked through Cronbach Alpha. Multiple regression analysis was applied to test the hypothesis proposed in the study. This regression analysis was performed through the structural equation modelling (SEM) technique.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Measurement and structural

Cronbach alpha and composite reliability are used to test the reliability of data. If the value of alpha and composite reliability is 0.70 or greater than 0.70 then the result is satisfactory. Table 1 shows that all variable alpha value and composite reliability values are greater than 0.70, it means data is reliable. Discriminate validity exists if AVE for all items of the construct is greater than 0.40. The values of AVE in Table 1 are greater than 0.5 which satisfy the criteria of discriminate validity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>Composite Reliability</th>
<th>AVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destination Attachment</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist destination</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destination Image_</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Beverages</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Community</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenery</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports &amp; R. Opportunities</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Researcher own illustration

Results of the regression model were affected by the presence of multicollinearity. Multicollinearity affects the results by tumbling the ability to forecast the dependent variable and determine the diverse effect of explanatory variables.
(Black & Babin, 2019). According to Joseph F Hair, Ortinau, and Harrison (2010) multicollinearity is identified by testing the “Variance of Inflation Factor (VIF)”. To find out collinearity value of VIF are required. Joe F Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2011) stated that the threshold value for VIF should be below 5.0. Results can be seen in Table 3.

Table 2
Collinearity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exogenous Variable</th>
<th>Statistics VIF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>1.268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Community</td>
<td>1.387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenery</td>
<td>1.409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate</td>
<td>1.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>1.619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports &amp; Recreational Opportunities</td>
<td>1.672</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Researcher own illustration

According to Joseph F Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, and Tatham (2006) structural model provides information regarding the association in the hypothesized model of the study. T-values are used to determine the significance of the relationship among the constructs of the study, which are additionally utilized for decision making regarding proposed hypotheses. Figure 2 represents the structural model of the study.

Table 3 provides the values of path coefficient, p-values, and t-values. All the p-values are less than .05 and t-values are greater than 1.96 that’s why all hypotheses were supported except H1(a), and H1(d). Because p-values are greater than .05 and t-values are less than 1.96.

Table 3
Results of Hypotheses Testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Relations</th>
<th>Parameter Estimator</th>
<th>T-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>Tourist destination attractiveness</td>
<td>6.815</td>
<td>7.162</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-&gt;Destination Image</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>Access-&gt;Destination Image</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>0.227</td>
<td>0.820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>Local Community-&gt;Destination Image</td>
<td>0.222</td>
<td>3.424</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td>Scenery-&gt;Destination Image</td>
<td>0.311</td>
<td>4.746</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5</td>
<td>Climate-&gt;Destination Image</td>
<td>0.053</td>
<td>0.963</td>
<td>0.336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6</td>
<td>Food-&gt;Destination Image</td>
<td>0.154</td>
<td>2.173</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H7</td>
<td>Sports &amp; Recreational Opportunities-&gt;</td>
<td>0.299</td>
<td>3.833</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Destination Image</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H8</td>
<td>Destination Image-&gt;Destination Attachment</td>
<td>0.455</td>
<td>8.301</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H9</td>
<td>Destination Image*cultural capital-&gt;Destination Attachment</td>
<td>0.465</td>
<td>8.521</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition, it is also found that cultural capital is significantly and positively moderates on the relationship of destination image and destination attachment. The moderating effect results are predicted in the following Table.5 below.

**Discussion**

In this study, we investigated the significance of different determinants of destination which make it attractive. Secondly investigated these factors influence on destination attachment by measuring the behavior of tourists by studying the destination image and cultural capital as an important and working moderating variable. In this way, it is observed that the majority of the proposed hypotheses were supported by our research findings. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of tourist destination attractiveness on destination attachment with moderating role of the cultural capital of Samut Songkhram Province, Thailand. The finding of this study shows that there is a significant relationship between Tourist destination attractiveness and destination attachment. These findings agree with those of previous studies (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer, & Exler, 2008).
The result of our study shows that Tourist destination attractiveness has a significant relationship to the destination image. In previous studies different components of image were studied, our study uses the overall image defined by Baloglu and McCleary (1999). In this study out of six dimensions of destination attractiveness, two dimensions access, and climate have a nonsignificant relationship to the destination image. On the other hand, it also found that destination image also has a positive and significant impact on the destination attachment. The moderating effect of destination image also had positive and significant mediating impact on the relationship of destination image and tourist attachment.

**Conclusion and Future Directions**

The results of the study significantly confirmed our research hypothesis. Results represent that tourist destination attractiveness influences destination image. Samut Songkhram Province, Thailand food, sports & recreation opportunities are important determinants of destination attractiveness that are positively linked with destination image. The image of a destination builds positively in minds of tourists, and processes image for destination attachment. Further, this study confirmed and significantly supported moderating role of cultural capital between key variables of destination image and destination attachment.

Findings of this study give extension to the previous studies of image formation Crompton (1979), the schema of image theory Beach and Mitchell (1987), attachment theory Sperling and Berman (1994) and behavioral interaction that leads attachment (G. Kyle, Graefe, & Manning, 2005). Further, the destination image study is being confirmed with our results that will provide healthy insight of study for future research, especially in tourism. It was previously just studied as an antecedent concept of destination attachment (Girish Prayag & Ryan, 2012a). Now further, this study provides direction for other researchers in tourism studies to work on this model with different other destination factors and settings. The moderating effect of cultural capital also confirmed from previous studies (Richards & Wilson, 2004) who shows that cultural capital played an important role to enhance the destination image and destination attachment.

This research study provides a strong basis for practitioners in tourism. Based on this research, destination managers Samut Songkhram Province, Thailand strategize their offerings to attract tourists. They will be aware of factors that are more significant to design their market mix. Further, they may think to add different factors like they may plan to host events based upon local culture and traditions i.e., camel rides or desert safari tours in Thailand. They can invest in facilitating the local cuisine with cultural taste as it was reflected the significance of food & beverage in this study. These factors can increase not only the attractiveness but build the image of the destination in minds of tourists which can be led to destination attachment.

This study did not investigate among the first, second, third and multi-time visitors. Because this is a behavioral study involving a humanistic tourism approaches. Therefore, their opinions may vary based upon the number of visits to a destination. The moderating role of cultural capital can be further discussed individually with determinants of tourist destination attractiveness which will
especially provide strong managerial implications in future research with the help of this model.

References


