

Constructivism in Smart Tourism Research: Seoul Destination Image*

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This paper specifically delineated the methodological application of constructivism in smart tourism studies. It explained what constructivism is and how this methodology could be applied in the study of smart tourism. In this study, residents of Seoul participated in constructivist research using the Q method to identify their subjectivities toward Seoul based on photographs most commonly found in tourism promotional material. Residents are concerned with good governance and cultural integrity, and they are aware of their role as stakeholders in tourism in their communities. However their potential contribution to destination image formation has been usually overlooked by researchers and marketers.

Three clusters of subjectivities were revealed after 42 photographs of Seoul were sorted by 37 respondents. The results show how respondents perceived Seoul's destination image. The three clusters agreed that symbolic monuments were the key representations of Seoul. The paper recommends that tourism marketers and policy makers should focus on understanding and coordinating with residents' perceived image of Seoul as a destination when planning and decision making, especially in promoting Seoul as a destination market. This study, in conjunction with other constructivist research offers insight into how destination image is, especially with the rise of smart tourism, a complex social construction.

Keywords : Constructivism, Destination Image, Q Method, Seoul, Smart Tourism, Visual Methods

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I . Introduction

A city is a space where economic, social, and cultural activities take place; cultural and historical characteristics play pivotal roles in providing administration, education, and business services. A city that has an affluent history has constantly changed and evolved people's way of life, residence, and cultural style [Kim, 2008]. In recent years, the competition among cities has been very intense, and cities try to improve their image in terms of local economic revitalization. In this respect, a city that becomes recognized as a 'tourist destination' and has a particular 'destination image' will develop in a way that suits the tastes of a certain inbound market, or socioeconomic demographic. Place image has been defined as the beliefs, ideas and impressions that people have of a locale [Kotler, Haider and Rein, 1993]. It represents the simplification of a large number of associations and pieces of information connected with the place. It is a product of the mind's trying to process huge amounts of data about a place. Individuals develop and form their own unique image of place based on their own experiences. While individually determined images reflect individual differences in data processing and interpretation, destination images manifest the reality of the destination. Therefore, it is necessary to verify whether the projected images in promotional materials correspond to those held by various stakeholders in tourism [Mackay and Fesenmaier, 2000].

A destination image may be further extended by various channels, such as, residents, tourists, tourism publicity brochures, tourist guides, novels, travel writing, literary works, mass media,

and image campaigns [Kim, 2010]. Information technology (IT) is also highly involved in the formation of tourism destination images. IT has drastically transformed tourism ecosystems, including the distribution and marketing of tourism products [Buhalis and Spada, 2000], and the redesign of information consumption patterns [Choi, Lehto, and Morrison, 2007]. Through IT, destination image formation has become much more complex. With this phenomenon, to achieve the city's strategic goal as a tourism destination, it is critical to understand how the city is represented and perceived both online and offline.

Currently, in Asia Pacific Journal of Information Systems, smart tourism is become recognized as a term describing the convergence of IT with the tourism experience. It includes all forms of information exchange in tourism, based on mobile technology and Internet connectivity. These include e-commerce, onsite augmented reality, and destination image formation. IT has changed the traditional one-way flow of information from destination managers, marketers, and businesses to a multidirectional and constantly evolving open channel. As a result, tourism public culture no longer relies fully on information provided in print or even on official and commercial websites. Potential and actual visitors now exchange user created content (UCC) via social media in the form of personal narratives and, shared advice and comments and photographs of the destination.

According to Hollinshead [2004], the use and the application of technology in the tourism sector, in smart tourism, have addressed some of the key challenges to researchers, and they consider that the paradigm shift has been on-

going in tourism research for over a decade. Traditional tourism methods tend to focus on the hypothesis-driven studies that use a quantitative approach to developing scale or testing models. The minority tourism method is used to practice interpretive or naturalistic inquiry that is a well-established approach to research phenomena in the social sciences. This method, however, is recently gaining broader acceptance in the tourism field because of its ability to provide rich, in-depth knowledge from multiple viewpoints along with its emphasis on tourism related phenomena and experiences. These multiple viewpoints suggest that there are multiple constructed and holistic realities.

From this perspective, to understand how people construct their subjectivity in smart tourism, the term constructivism needs to be considered carefully. Constructivism, as a paradigm or worldview, posits that learning is an active, constructive process. People actively construct or create their own subjective representations of objective reality. New information is linked to prior knowledge, and thus mental representations are subjective. Social constructivism perceives knowledge and learning as social in origin [Au, 1998; Vygostky, 1978], and it emphasizes social activity in multi-cultural environments. Based on the view of tourism as an inherently social phenomenon, social constructivism has relevance to the greater understanding of tourism. Thus, the perspective of constructivism suggests that there is nothing 'natural' about tourism destinations because they are socially and culturally constructed by human intervention to be tourist oriented [Iwashita, 2003]. From this perspective, tourism destination image would presumably have plural structures and thus constructivist

methodologies need to be used to understand the multiple subjectivities and realities.

This paper describes a study conducted in the context of a larger constructivist project in smart tourism. In this project, there are three interrelated stages that work to interpret the construction of Seoul's destination image, and to explore how cross-methodological replication works in constructivist research for smart tourism. The three stages of the project include:

- Identification of the visual destination image of Seoul as projected through traditional print media;
- Interpretation of how operant subjectivity works in the perception of projected destination image; and
- Identification of the visual image of Seoul as it is produced through UCC and social media.

The purpose of this study is to identify and interpret Seoul's perceived destination image as shown in stage two of the project. The Q method, the best constructivist methodology for smart tourism ecosystems that are not fully qualitative or quantitative but quantum in that sense, recognizes that the subjectivities and signs that circulate in society are 'irreducibly paradoxical' [Brown, 2009, pp. 240-241]. In other words, the Q method offers many applications for smart tourism research including the identification of how stakeholders (residents, visitors, marketers, and retailers) observe controversial tourism issues such as destination marketing, infrastructure development, mega-events, and the general flow of communicability surrounding a destination's tourism economy.

In this study, residents in Seoul, Korea, view

the existing projected image of the city as a multiple socially constructed subjectivity. They express their subjective opinions on what places or landmarks best represent the destination for tourists. Through the Q method, the study found that residents are concerned with good governance and cultural integrity, and they aware of their role as stakeholders in tourism in their communities. The study also suggested that the Seoul projected destination image might not be a fully purposive act on the part of destination marketers. The implication is that by developing and replicating constructivist research, better insight into how destination image is formed can be reached.

II. Literature Review

2.1 Destination Image and Residents' Perception

The image of a city in tourism can be defined as an evaluation of tourists' experience while they travel. Tourists form an image of a city by the social phenomenon, atmosphere, and subjective impressions that they encounter. The factors that affect tourist image formation of the city are various tourism resources, including historic buildings, city landscapes, museums, theaters, concerts, and sporting events. Residents are also highly involved in the perceived image of the city because it should reflect their way of life and culture [Park, 2010]. The nature of city tourism means that the major resources and facilities of city tourism should meet a variety of user groups' needs during its development process. In this respect, many studies have pointed out that residents' view of the city image should

be preceded before evaluating tourists' view [Kim and Petrick, 2005; Park, 2010]. In other words, a tourist destination market should be carefully examined through residents' eyes, and studies on measuring residents' perceived image of the place should be conducted before measuring tourists' perceptions of the city [Kim, 2010].

Destination marketers recognize that image is a powerful factor in the decision-making process for potential travelers in the anticipation stage. Image is assumed to have a more significant role in personal subjectivity. A tourism product requires subjective judgments rather than objective measurement, because it cannot be tried before visiting [Um and Crompton, 1992]. Destination image has been categorized as including primary and secondary imagery depending on the information sources used [Phelps, 1986]. While primary images are formed through internal information such as experiences, secondary images are influenced by information received from external sources [Mansfeld, 1992]. Later research has recognized destination imagery as being projected to the visitor in the form of print and electronic media for marketing purposes [Pritchard and Morgan, 2001]. Simultaneously the image is being perceived by the tourist through experience. Thus, the destination image is both projected and perceived by various stakeholders in tourism. However with the convergence of IT with tourism, visitors and residents are increasingly able to upload their own photographic representations of the destination and their experiences as UCC via travel websites and social media. In smart tourism, the projection and perception of the destination image are no longer distinct, mutually exclusive

concepts [Gallarza, Saura and Garcia, 2002; Hunter, 2013].

Photographs are vital to creating and communicating images of a destination [Mackay and Couldwell, 2004]. The photo represents a simplification of a large number of associations and pieces of information connected with places [Day, Skidmore and Koller, 2002]. These visual images are powerful marketing tools that enable destination marketers to communicate a variety of images in a compressed format. While this general image perspective has been valuable to understanding the impact of advertising messages, little attention has been given to visual image research [Choi *et al.*, 2007]. A number of image studies have suggested effective destination positioning strategies to appeal to potential visitors, by either measuring existing images [Chaudhary, 2000], or by examining the structure and formation dynamics of image [Baloglu and McCleary, 1999]. However, understanding how residents-as tourism stakeholders-perceive their own environment has not received attention from scholars. Numerous studies on residents' perceptions of tourism have been conducted on issues such as tourism destination development of a special region or country, casinos, and theory development or conceptualization [Kim and Petrick, 2005]. Only a few recent studies have focused on residents' perception of tourism destination [Hunter, 2012; Park, 2010].

2.2 Seoul, Center of Korean History and Culture

Seoul is has become one of the world's major cities in terms of its size and location in a dyna-

mic world region. It is linked worldwide through the flow of commodities, information, and people. It is notable for its large population size, the relatively high average standard of living it affords its residents and its importance as an urban center and the sixth most attractive city in the world [Shin and Timberlake, 2006; Global Power City Index, 2013]. Located to the west of the central region of the Korean Peninsula, Seoul, the capital city of the Republic of Korea, has been the center of the country throughout its long history from the prehistoric era to the present day. Seoul was designated the capital city when the Korean government was established in 1948, and became the Seoul Metropolis a year later. In 1950, Seoul was heavily damaged as the Korean War had broken out, and it could not function as a capital for several months. However, post-war reconstruction efforts and the strong will of its residents saw the city re-emerge as the country's central city. Seoul led the country's swift economic growth. Described as being the "miracle of the Hangang [Han River]," South Korea achieved, in 30 to 40 years, the type of industrialization that took most advanced countries over a century [Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2013].

Now in its 600th year of official history, Seoul is a city where Korea's traditional and modern cultures coexist. Seoul is home to more than 10 million inhabitants from all over the country and around the world, living and working in modern skyscrapers and moving rapidly through a sophisticated infrastructure. At the same time, diverse forms of nature thrive throughout the city, while abundant cultural heritage assets coexist with modernity. Essentially, Seoul is traditional yet modern, technological yet natural [Korea

Tourism Organization, 2013]. Hence, Seoul is a good candidate for analysis of a city's perceived destination image for finding residents' ideal views using the Q method. A long history of forced reconstruction and historical revisionism, and rapid modern tourist city development has made them change or rebuild their city images, and representations of its features.

III. Methodology

3.1 Constructivism, Q Method and Tourism Research

New research suggests that the generative nature of smart tourism requires the practice of constructivist methods to fully grasp how IT affects destination image formation. Constructivism has been described as an ontological perspective on society that recognizes that multiple worldviews or truths are constantly at work [Hollinshead, 2006]. Researchers must work to transcend a functionalist view of IT [McIntosh, Zygodlo and Matunga, 2004] and embrace an understanding that IT brings ontologically based cultural effects [Jack and Phipps, 2005]. To this effect, the present research practices constructivism in the form of visual methods and the Q method. This current study is based on a previous study that used visual methods to distill the essential or synecdochical elements of Seoul's projected destination image as published in print-form brochures, guidebooks, and maps [Hunter, 2012]. That study used the quantitative characteristics of content analysis with the qualitative (semiotic) interpretation of photographic representations to identify the core projected destina-

tion image of Seoul. In addition, in Hunter's paper the Seoul destination image is discussed as the city's project to connect the reality of physical development with its representation, the promotional tourist photograph as used in brochures. The image of this city is an ideal portrayal of an attractive tourist destination that is designed to shape the movements and experiences of stakeholders. These representations include: a) Han River, b) cityscapes, c) monuments, d) festivals and performances, e) maps and simulations, and f) culture. These core representations made up the Q-set of 42 photographs used in this study.

The Q method was invented by William Stephenson in the UK in 1935 to bring together a theory of the self with a technique of measurement (drawing on his training in physics). It was later developed in North America, particularly in psychology [Brown, 1980], and through its own journal, *operant subjectivity*. Setting statistical procedures aside, however, what Stephenson [1935] provided is a means to study the subjectivity involved in any situation. Subjectivity here is not simple partiality. It refers to nothing more than a person's communication of his or her point of view [Goldman, 1999]. The Q method is well established [Stergiou and Airey, 2011], and literature on Q includes nearly 2500 bibliographic entries, most notably in the fields of communication, political science, and philosophy of science, and more recently in the behavioral and health sciences, marketing, public policy, rural research, and tourism [Brown, 1997]. Korean researchers have employed Q in the study of tourism motivations, preferences and attitudes [Kim and Oh, 2009], festivals [Jung and Lee, 2004], leisure satisfaction [Ahn *et al.*, 2010], and wine

marketing [You, 2013; Yu and Hwang, 2013]. This technique is described as quantum in that the factors or clusters of subjectivity that are found are “irreducibly paradoxical” [Brown, 2009]. It works on an understanding that while individuals might update or revise their attitudes toward a discourse [Bahl and Milne, 2006; Hunter, 2012], the clusters of subjectivity will represent original functional divisions within society [Brown and Kil, 2002].

3.2 Q Method Implementation: Concourse, Q-set, P-set, and Q-sort

Q method research is based on a concourse, or social discourse—a flow of communication on a particular subject. This concourse includes any number of subjective views on a subject [Kim and Oh, 2010]. In this study, the concourse is represented by 951 photographs of Seoul found in tourism brochures and guidebooks, through a content analysis performed in the Hunter’s [2012] study. A proportional sampling of the denotative ‘types’ identified in that study produced a balanced Q-set of 42 photographs of Seoul. Q-sets often consist of 40 to 50 items, but fewer or more items are certainly also possible [Van Exel and de Graaf, 2005]. The Q-set was selected because it was the concrete representation of Seoul that was examined through the lens of promotional photographs published in tourist brochures and guidebooks. Some of the photographs from the original study were unclear and were substituted with similar images found online. In addition, the quality of the photographs was upgraded and their color was changed to monochrome to prevent the respondents’ misjudgment caused by effects of color.

A P-set is the group of respondents who sort the Q-set. The P-set is, by definition, usually smaller than the Q set [Brouwer 1999; Van Exel *et al.*, 2005]. In this study, the P-set consisted of 37 respondents recruited using theoretical sampling to seek out a set of residents representing a wide variety of points of view [Patton, 1990]. A first wave of respondents was acquired from among the researchers’ circles of family, friends, and acquaintances. Further participants were recruited through snowball sampling, where existing participants recruited more participants from their circles. The P-set basic demographics are shown in <Table 1>, below. All ‘residents’ are Korean and live in Seoul.

The participants performed the Q-sort in October 2013. In the Q-sort, 37 participants were asked to look closely at 42 photographs. Each person began by dividing the photographs into three piles: representations of Seoul that they liked, disliked, or were neutral or undecided about. Next, the 42 photographs were sorted into a range from ‘most disagree’ on one end and ‘most agree’ on the other and in between a distribution that usually takes the form of a quasi-normal distribution, as shown <Table 1>, below.

IV. Findings

Q-sort factor analysis was performed using PCQ software and judgmental rotation, and it produced four factors that accounted for 25 of 37 sorts, with levels of significance ranging from 0.40 to 0.88. Twelve sorts were confounded, or found to be statistically in more than one factor, and they were excluded. The 25 sorts, three factors and scores, and descriptions of the respondents are presented in <Table 1>.

<Table 1> P-set and Q-sort Results

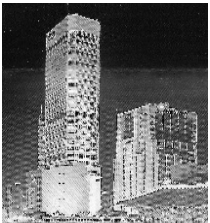
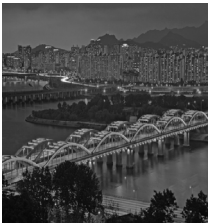




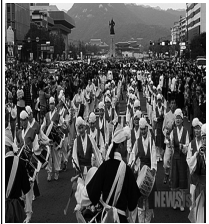



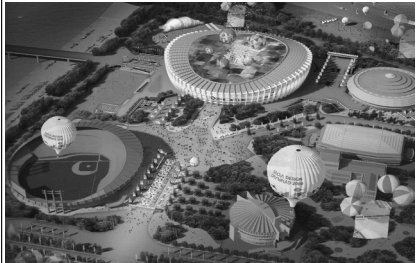
Three factors identified in statistical analysis																										
Cluster A: 22 sorts (Gender: M = Male, F = Female, Age: n = Age)							Cluster B: 1 sort																			
1. M 38 Researcher(0.88)							18. F 26 Employed(0.56)																			
2. M 26 Student(0.77)							19. F 27 Student(0.77)																			
5. F 26 Student(0.48)							20. M 28 Employed(0.61)																			
6. M 50 Employed(0.79)							21. F 30 Student(0.75)																			
8. M 49 Officer(0.54)							22. F 36 Lecturer(0.76)																			
9. F 39 Employed(0.70)							24. F 25 Chef(0.79)																			
10. M 44 Self Employed(0.79)							26. F 27 Employed(0.50)																			
12. M 37 Self Employed(0.43)							30. F 27 Employed(0.47)																			
14. M 31 Student(0.66)							33. F 23 Employed(0.47)																			
15. F 37 Lecturer(0.79)							34. F 37 Lecturer(0.82)																			
16. F 59 Professor(0.53)							36. M 58 Self Employed(0.72)																			
4. F 61 Housewife(-0.48)																										
Cluster C: 2 sorts																										
							17. F 25 Student(-0.40)																			
							28. M 26 Student(-0.51)																			
Confounded or not significant, 12 sorts: 3, 7, 13, 23, 27, 29, 31, 32, 35, 37, 11, 25																										
Eigen Values and % variance																										
Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Totals																
eigens	13.62	2.87	1.77	1.53	1.16	1.13	0.86	0.77	0.75	24.45																
%variance	37	8	5	4	3	3	2	2	2	66																
Cluster A Graphical				Cluster B Graphical				Cluster C Graphical																		
-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
7	6	11	9	3	5	20	1	27	15	7	3	1	6	16	25	2	26	18	7	2	6	3	1	28	27	25
40	31	21	12	4	13	25	2	29	21	19	8	4	9	31	28	33	27	37	8	5	10	11	4	34	29	26
	37	32	14	8	15	26	28		39	11	5	10	32	29	38		15	9	14	19	13	40	31			
		39	16	10	17	33			17	18	12	34	30			12	21	20	16	41						
		41	18	23	22	36			20	23	13	40	36			39	24	22	17	42						
			19	24	34				35	14	41				36	23	30				38	33	32			
			42	30	38				37	22	42					38	33	32					35			
				35					24																	

Eigenvalue and explained variance are also given for all nine factors tested. In the Q method, judgmental rotation is used to manually rotate factors to capture the largest number of sorts in the fewest categories and to minimize the number of confounded sorts [Eden, Donaldson and Walker, 2005]. A reflexive process, it seeks theoretically relevant clusters of subjectivity shared by respondents in the P-set. Decisions on how factors are rotated are described as bringing the researcher’s subjectivity into play, even in the ‘quantitative’ stage of Q [Eden *et al.*, 2005]. <Table 1> also shows a total variance of 66%. In that case, the results are statistically significant, if research results show that the eigenvalue is over 1.00 and total variance is over 60%

in general.

Defining variables are identified when a respondent’s factor loading exceeds a certain limit (usually: $p < 0.01$). The difference score is the magnitude of difference between an item’s score on any two factors that is required for it to be statistically significant. When an item’s score on two factors exceeds this difference score, it is called a distinguishing item. An item that is not distinguishing between any of the identified factors is called a consensus item [Van Exel *et al.*, 2005]. In this study, three consensus items were found among three clusters. They were ‘03Han3’ (Han River), ‘22City10’ (Cityscape buildings and gate), and ‘34Fest5’ (Festivals palace performance) (see <Table 2>).







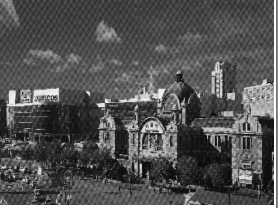

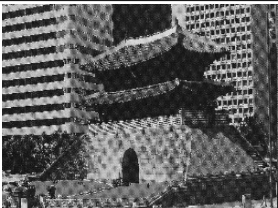
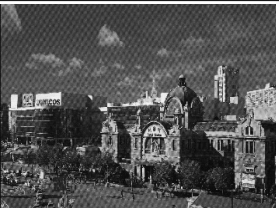
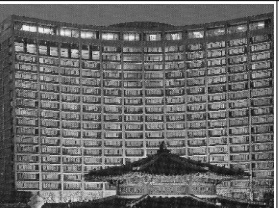

<Table 2> Three Clusters' Consensus and Distinguishing Items

Consensus items (all clusters agree)			
 22City10: Cityscape buildings and gate A1 B0 C0	 13Han3: Han River A1 B0 C1	 34Fest5: Festival palace performance A1 B1 C2	The three consensus items all have scores that reflect participants' indifference (0 = neutral)
Distinguishing items (unique item scores)			
Cluster A (22 sorts): 5 distinguishing items			
 15City3: Cityscape stream A1 B-4 C-3	 16City4: Cityscape market A-1 B1 C1	 31Fest2: Festivals Drums 1 A-3 B1 C3	 32Fest3: Festivals Drums 2 A-2 B1 C1
 40Cul2: Culture Women dance A-4 B1 C2			
Cluster B: (1 sort): 1 distinguishing		Cluster C: (2 sorts): 2 distinguishing items	
 2Han2: Han River 63 building A1 B-2 C1	 36Map2: Map subway A2 B2 C-1	 38Sim2: Simulation of Dongdaemun history & cultural park A1 B3 C-1	

Five distinguishing items were found for cluster A: '15City3' (Cityscape stream), '16City4' (Cityscape market), '31Fest2' (Festivals drums 1), '32Fest3' (Festivals drums 2), '40Cul2' (Culture women dance), 1 item for cluster B: '2Han2' (Han River 63 building), 2 items for cluster C: '36Map2' (Map subway), '38Sim2' (Simulation

of Dongdaemun history & cultural park). Extreme scores (-4, 1, 2) identified '40Cul2' (Culture women dance). Each cluster is defined quantitatively by its statistical correlation externally and by statements held in consensus, internally. Extreme scores identify the three clusters as seen in <Table 3>, discussed below.

<Table 3> Defining Clusters

Contrasting items with strong views by cluster			
Cluster A		Cluster B	
Most agreed	Most disagreed	Most agreed	Most disagreed
 27Mon3: Seoul Tower A4 B4 C3	 40Cul2: Culture Women dance A-4 B1 C2	 27Mon3: Seoul Tower A4 B4 C3	 21City9: Cityscape street A-2 B-4 C-1
 29Mon5: Namdaemun night A4 B2 C3	 07Han7: Han River sports A-4 B-3 C-3	 26Mon2: Seoul Station A2 B4 C4	 15City3: Cityscape stream A1 B-4 C-3
Cluster C		Most disagreed	
Most agreed			
 25Mon1: Namdaemun A2 B2 C4	 26Mon2: Seoul Station A2 B4 C4	 18City6: Cityscape hotel & pagoda A-1 B-1 C-4	 37Sim1: Simulation of Yongsan complex A-3 B-1 C-4

Note: ABC scores in each cell refer to cluster factor scores.

Cluster A, which included 22 respondents agreed that '27Mon3' (Seoul Tower) and '29Mon5' (Namdaemun night) are the most representative Seoul images. Items '07Han7' (Han River sports) and '40Cul2' (Culture women dance), the Korean traditional Boochae-choom were considered not to represent Seoul. The traditional dance was considered a representation of Korean culture rather than of the city. Cluster B is the smallest

cluster, which included only one respondent who remarked that skyscrapers with heavy traffic (15City3 and 21City9) should not represent Seoul as most large cities have similar views. Rather, '27Mon3' (Seoul Tower) and '26Mon2' (Seoul Station) most represent Seoul for cluster B. Cluster C included two respondents who strongly disagreed that modern and future buildings represent the image of Seoul. They chose '18City6'

(Cityscape hotel and pagoda) and '37Sim1' (Simulation of Yongsan complex) as the most un-representative images due to the fact that they are unfamiliar with those pictures. In post-interviews, they said that because they have not seen those buildings, they are irrelevant to Seoul's image. The subjectivities reflected in the three clusters are depicted in <Table 3>.

V. Conclusion

Understanding destination image is an important component of successful tourism planning and marketing. The projected destination image should be a tool that can help to transform and improve the city [Zukin, 1991], and increase tourism. This study, stage two of the constructivism project in smart tourism, explored that interpretation of how operant subjectivity works in Seoul residents' perceptions of destination image using the Q method. Findings in this study revealed three types of resident subjectivities. Clusters A, B, and C all agree that certain symbolic monuments are the most representative images of Seoul while differing in terms of what images least represent the city. The most representative images were Seoul Tower, Namdaemun (Sungnyemun, National treasure No.1), and Seoul Station.

Based on the content analysis conducted in the stage one of the constructivist project, the Han River was identified as the most synecdochical of all the representations, because it appeared most frequently in printed tourism brochures and guidebooks. However, no cluster in this study included the Han River as the most or least acceptable representation of Seoul. The connotation here is that Seoul destination

marketers are either out of touch with residents' perceptions of Seoul, or are consciously or unconsciously affected by government development projects such as the Han River Renaissance that was underway at the time of the previous study. These clusters of operant subjectivity are connected to experience, knowledge, and circumstances [Bahl and Milne, 2006]. During the post-sort interviews, respondents generally agreed with the pictures that they were most familiar with, such as the representations of Seoul's symbolic monuments. Most disagreed with the photos of city views, simulations of planned building projects, and depictions of Korean culture. These participants felt especially that Korean traditional dance represented Korean culture, not the city of Seoul. It was also noteworthy that people in their twenties generally disagreed with the historical representations of culture.

This study has revealed the following important findings in academic and practical aspects. From a practical standpoint, this research demonstrated how the residents of Seoul recognize their own city. Residents' perceptions are meaningful because the identity of destination derives from the residents' perception of their own city. Touristic representations are 'true' descriptions of destinations and their residents. They convey the objectivity of sights and experiences. They are signs that put forward the best, or worst, of places that are operationally inseparable from the practices of the tourism industry. Past studies have shown that seldom do the destination images perceived by receivers coincide with the images projected by suppliers because of various factors involved in the image formation processes [Andreu, Bigne, and

Cooper, 2000; Stabler, 1987]. This result provides further empirical support for a 'projected' versus 'perceived' image discrepancy for Seoul. The images projected by marketers and policy marketers were different from those perceived by tourists. Therefore, the implication for destination management is that more attention should be given to the planning and promotion of the image. Thus, it is recommended that tourism planners and developers focus on understanding and coordinating residents' perceived destination image of Seoul when planning and promoting Seoul as a destination market. Furthermore, to promote the city effectively, it is suggested that to be retained in long-term memory, the information should be episodic and repeated constantly (constant stimuli). The conclusion is that constant and episodic messages (images of Seoul) should be sent to potential tourists.

From an academic point of view, this study was to contribute to research methods for the analysis of smart tourism phenomena and experience. A smart tourism ecosystem is embodied by exchanging information via mobile devices or the Internet. Therefore, it brings new environment to business operators, consumers, and

researchers in the tourism sector. This new paradigm shift concerns researchers, and the paper suggested the application of constructivist methodologies because people are experiencing and constructing their own reality in virtual format on IT platforms.

Future studies using the Q method will focus on the identification of the visual image of Seoul as it is produced through UCC and Social media. This will contribute to researchers' understanding of eWOM and other important aspects of the social dynamic-communication-between customers and sellers. It will also contribute to an understanding of the dynamic role of reviewers as influential players [Lee, Lee, and Tan, 2013]. This study, in connection with other applications of Q method can help researchers to frame better questions related to IT in smart tourism. Classic problems related to IT use in tourism, such as habit, intention and satisfaction, benefits, perceived value, and intention [Lee, Lee and Sanford, 2010; Lee, 2011; Han *et al.*, 2013; Hong, Kim, and Cha, 2013] can be explored as concourses of operant subjectivity. Using the Q method in smart tourism research can lead to a deeper ontological view of the social construction of IT in tourism.

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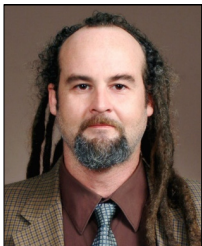
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