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**The Impact of Power on Destination Ads Effectiveness:
The Moderating Role of Arousal in Advertising**

Abstract

This study examines the impact of culturally-derived power (i.e., personalized vs. socialized power) on the effectiveness of destination advertising via the moderation of arousal in advertising, by identifying regulatory focus as an underlying mechanism. The findings indicate that *high-arousal* tourism destination advertisement is more effective for individuals primed with *personalized power*; *low-arousal* advertisement is more effective for individuals primed with *socialized power*. Culturally-derived power is found related to regulatory focus, which interacts with arousal in advertising to influence destination advertising effectiveness. This work not only contributes to the tourism literature by providing a new cultural perspective to the investigation of power, but also informs destination marketers of the importance of designing tailored advertising messages for different tourists.

Keywords: Power; Destination Advertising Effectiveness; Arousal in Advertising; Cultural Orientation

1 Introduction

Due to increasingly fierce competition among destinations, destination marketers have been heavily investing in the design of effective tourism destination advertisements to attract potential visitors (Byun & Jang, 2015). However, the effectiveness of destination advertising lies largely in the congruency between the message appeal and the individual characteristics of the message recipients. For example, Thailand as a destination brand can be portrayed as either dynamic and exciting (e.g., Bangkok's nightlife) or relaxing and rejuvenating (e.g., Chiang Mai's mountain views and the luxurious spas and massages). Moreover, which facet of Thailand to highlight in ads depends on which segment of tourists the advertising message is targeting. Should destination marketers portray Thailand as exciting or relaxing in travel magazines? Why? This research aims to address such questions.

Empirically, it is imperative to identify the congruency between message appeals and audience segments in order to increase the precision of destination advertising and maximize its effectiveness. Theoretically, the identification of determinants of congruency between message appeal, such as arousal, and tourists' psychological characteristics, such as perceived power, is crucial for a thorough understanding of the heterogeneity in various tourists' responses to the same ad's message. Some work has been done to examine the congruency between advertising message appeal and audiences' psychological characteristics (Hong & Chang, 2015; Lu & Sinha, 2017), especially psychological power (e.g., Liu & Mattila, 2017; Rucker & Galinsky, 2009). Prior research has also explored the effects of arousal (e.g., Kim, Kim, & Bolls, 2014; Wang & Sparks, 2016) and psychological power (e.g., Kayat, 2002;

Marzano & Scott, 2009; Saito & Ruhanen, 2017; Wong, Newton, & Newton, 2014) separately in the context of tourism research. However, the congruency between the arousal in an advertising message's appeal and culturally-derived power (e.g., personalized vs. socialized power), a critical individual psychological state associated with information processing (Torelli & Shavit, 2011), has not received much attention, which may cause tourism practitioners to miss critical opportunities to enhance profitability through an improved design of destination ads.

This study thereby proposes a novel framework for examining the effectiveness of destination advertising by focusing on the congruency between message appeal and psychological characteristics of targeted tourist segments. Specifically, we argue that tourism advertising messages with high-arousal appeals (e.g., excitement) are more congruent and therefore more attractive to individuals activated with a personalized power, because both the high-arousal messages and the personalized power emphasize the focus on self, which is in line with the self-accomplishment and aspirational needs of promotion focus (Higgins, 1997, 1998; Torelli & Shavitt, 2010, 2011; Wegner & Giuliano, 1980). Conversely, individuals activated with socialized power evaluate advertising messages with low-arousal appeals (e.g., relaxation and calmness) more positively, because both the low-arousal messages and the socialized power weaken self-recognition and lead individuals to focus on others, which is in line with the needs of prevention focus for security and responsibility (Higgins, 1997, 1998; Magee & Langner, 2008; Torelli & Shavitt, 2010, 2011; Wegner & Giuliano, 1980). Moreover, previous studies argue that individuals' regulatory focus is a critical factor that

influence goal-pursuit attitudes and behaviors (Higgins, 1997, 1998). For instance, promotion-focused (vs. prevention-focused) individuals who are more sensitive to the needs of aspiration and self-accomplishment (vs. safety and obligation; Higgins, 1997) might prefer the high-arousal (vs. low-arousal) messages in destination ads. Presumably, culturally-derived power would influence regulatory focus, which would then interact with arousal in advertising to affect tourism destination evaluations. In the present study, we utilize mixed methods of randomized experiments and empirical analysis based on online secondary data to examine and validate the mechanism proposed above, particularly the congruency framework.

Our work makes several contributions. First, managerially, our work demonstrates that the congruency between arousal, a prominent advertising message appeal, and culturally-derived power, an identifiable characteristic of tourist segments, is a critical determinant of the effectiveness of tourism advertisements. Second, building upon prior work that separately addresses arousal and psychological power, we advance the theory of psychological power by conceptualizing and uncovering a novel effect of congruency between arousal and psychological power. Third, we identify regulatory focus as a key driver of the congruency effect. Fourth, this study employs an experimental design approach to identify the causal effect of arousal as advertising message appeal and of power as individual psychological state on destination advertising effectiveness, and such effect is further validated by an empirical study based on secondary data from *TripAdvisor*. The methodological approach provides a timely response to calls for employing experimental research methodology to examine the

effects in tourism marketing contexts so that the field gathers more causality-driven knowledge instead of association- and correlation-driven knowledge (Viglia & Dolnicar, 2020).

2 Literature Review and Hypotheses

2.1. Power and culturally-derived power

Power is an established construct in the field of psychology and consumer research. It refers to individuals' perceptions of their own ability to influence others by providing or withholding access to valuable resources (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). Previous research has investigated the effects of power on individuals' perceptions and attitudes, including psychological perceptions (e.g., Waytz, Chou, Magee, & Galinsky, 2015), money attitudes (e.g., Garbinsky, Klesse, & Huang, 2016), brand compatibility and life satisfaction (e.g., Brick, Fitzsimons, Chartrand, & Fitzsimons, 2018), product and brand switching behavior (e.g., Jiang, Zhan, & Rucker, 2014), and information persuasion (e.g., Dubois, Rucker, & Galinsky, 2016). Researchers have argued that power creates qualitatively distinct psychological motivations that lead to unique consumption patterns (Rucker & Galinsky, 2009). For example, individuals with high (vs. low) power tend to favor products advertised as symbols of status or performance (Rucker & Galinsky, 2009). Also, individuals with high (vs. low) power are more likely to click on online hotel advertisements with uniqueness appeal (vs. belongingness appeal; Liu & Mattila, 2017).

However, a recent work in the tourism field has presented a new construct called culturally-derived power (Wong et al., 2014). This more nuanced version of power is conceptualized with the assumption that individuals have different cultural orientations and that those orientations affect a particular set of goals and motivations related to power (Torelli & Shavitt, 2010, 2011). The cognitive processes associated with power, such as meanings and goals, are found culturally patterned (e.g., Torelli & Shavitt, 2010). Individuals' distinct cultural orientations play critical roles in determining attitudes and behaviors as well as perceptions of power (Torelli & Shavitt, 2010, 2011). A key dimension of cultural orientations that can influence people's perceptions of power is the vertical/horizontal form of individualism and collectivism, used to describe the importance and the nature of hierarchy in interpersonal relations (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). According to this conceptualization, people with a vertical individualism orientation are concerned about acquiring status through individual competition with others (Torelli & Shavitt, 2010) and thus give more weight to displays of success and status (Nelson & Shavitt, 2002). Vertical individualism with a focus on independence and freedom is associated with personalized power, which is achieved when one exceeds the status of others and receives others' recognition for one's own resources (Torelli & Shavitt, 2010). In contrast, people with a horizontal collectivism orientation emphasize interdependence with and responsibility to others (Torelli & Shavitt, 2010) as well as cooperating with and offering help to others (Frieze & Boneva, 2001). A horizontal collectivism focus is associated with socialized power (Torelli & Shavitt, 2010), which is obtained when one helps others and works for others' benefits (Lammers, Stoker, & Stapel,

2009). Therefore, when determined by individuals' cultural orientations, power can be operationalized as either personalized power or socialized power.

Under the context of tourism marketing research, culturally-derived power is more specific than the traditional construct of power, which complements and enriches the traditional ways to segment tourists that usually rely on high- vs. low-power states (e.g., Kayat, 2002). Prior studies indicate that culturally-derived power has a significant impact on consumers' information-processing strategies and preferences. For example, personalized power amplifies the inclination to stereotype in processing product information, whereas socialized power increases the inclination toward individuated processing (Torelli & Shavit, 2011). In a tourism context, Wong et al. (2014) demonstrate that individuals with personalized power prefer self-indulgent holiday packages, while individuals with socialized power favor volunteer holiday packages. Although culturally-derived power seems to foster goals and motivations, shaping and guiding individuals' preferences for tourism destinations through various advertisements, empirical evidence is lacking in regard to the influence of this nuanced dimension of power on motivation and the effectiveness of destination advertising.

2.2. Arousal in advertising

As tourism products and services are highly experiential (Lu & Gursoy, 2015), a crucial construct in the image of tourist activities in advertising is arousal (Wang & Sparks, 2016). Arousal is defined as the degree to which an individual feels excited, stimulated, or activated in a given circumstance (Russell & Mehrabian, 1974). Additionally, arousal is

generally considered a form of information that can signal the importance, urgency, or issue relevance of an event (Storbeck & Clore, 2008).

Research from various disciplines has established that arousal plays a pronounced role in individuals' decision-making and behaviors in numerous contexts (e.g., Loureiro, 2014; Sohn et al., 2015). For instance, high arousal shifts individuals' motives from achieving long-term goals to seeking immediate gratification, which makes the aroused individuals tend to be more risk-seeking (Sohn et al., 2015). Arousal is associated with a higher level of impulsive decision-making (Peters, Västfjäll, Gärling, & Slovic, 2006) and can influence individuals' evaluations of objects in the sense that relatively unattractive substances can be perceived as more attractive by aroused individuals (Ariely & Loewenstein, 2006). Studies suggest that arousal amplifies reactions, leading to increased reliance on particular styles of learning, and enhances long-term memory for events (Storbeck & Clore, 2008). Additionally, arousal can polarize individuals' evaluations via elevated emotion (Gorn, Pham, & Sin, 2001). People who are highly aroused are inclined to evaluate positive ads more positively and negative ads more negatively than those who are only mildly aroused (Gorn et al., 2001). This is because individuals' evaluations become more extreme as they infer that their arousal is due to their strong feelings about the ads (Schwarz & Clore, 1988).

In advertising research, arousal is found to moderate the effectiveness of advertising messages in the sense that high arousal (vs. low arousal) can exacerbate the effects of advertising appeals on ad attitude and brand attitude (Belanche, Flavian, & Perez-Rueda, 2017). Storbeck and Clore (2008) posit that advertising can facilitate consumers' association

of products with certain sources of arousal, leading consumers to feel more excited about the products. In the field of destination marketing where a central mission is to create messages to motivate tourists to visit (Huang, Cai, & Ismail, 2010), advertisement messages with emotional appeals have been highlighted as key determinants of advertisement persuasiveness (Lewis, Watson, White, & Tay, 2007). However, research concerning the specific influence of arousal in advertising message appeal on the effectiveness of destination advertising remains limited; in particular, research is scant regarding whether low- versus high-arousal advertising is more efficient for targeted tourist segments.

2.3. The interactive effect of culturally-derived power and arousal in advertising on tourism destination advertising effectiveness

Although the role played by the congruency between advertising message appeal and audiences' psychological power in enhancing purchases has been indicated as important (Liu & Mattila, 2017), it is yet unclear whether a specific type of message appeal such as arousal in ads, when aligned with psychological power, would influence tourists' choices. This puts tourism marketers at a substantial disadvantage because in tourism advertising, a common practice is to deliver message appeal via emotional arousal (Wang & Sparks, 2016). We argue that culturally-derived power can lead tourists to make different evaluations toward destinations portrayed with low- or high-arousal advertisements, depending on the congruency effect between power and arousal.

When perceiving power in a personalized way, consumers pay more attention to the self and focus on highlighting the importance of self and pursuing personal goals,

achievements, and excellence (Torelli & Shavitt, 2010, 2011). Consistently, the high arousal of a positive affect is found to increase the salience of personal consequences because it narrows an individual's attention to the self and to increases in his or her thoughts about the self (Wegner & Giuliano, 1980). This suggests that high-arousal ads that highlight excitement are likely to motivate individuals to shift focus onto their personal goals, which specifically appeals to those who view power as personalized. Moreover, the congruency between message appeal and goal focus has been demonstrated to result in more-favorable evaluations (Lee & Aaker, 2004). Therefore, we predict that individuals with personalized power activated will prefer high-arousal ads, consistent with the individuals' motive of being attentive to the potential personal consequences of their actions. In contrast, individuals with socialized power activated will tend to tie power to social responsibility and focus on seeking benefits for others and caring for others' well-being (Magee & Langner, 2008; Torelli & Shavitt, 2010, 2011). Wegner and Giuliano (1980) suggest that a low-arousal and relaxed state can lead to less self-cognition and may result in increased concern for others. Therefore, it is reasonable to speculate that low-arousal ads that emphasize calmness and relaxation (Chim, Hogan, Fung, & Tsai, 2018; Scheibe, English, Tsai, & Carstensen, 2013) are more consistent with the psychological state of socialized power and that tourists under the socialized-power state will favor tourist destinations advertised with low-arousal appeals (e.g., emphasizing calm and relaxation). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis.

H1. Arousal in advertising moderates the influence of culturally-derived power on consumers' evaluations of tourism destinations. Specifically, (a) individuals primed by

personalized power (vs. socialized power) provide higher evaluations of a tourism destination with high-arousal advertising, and (b) individuals primed by socialized power (vs. personalized power) provide higher evaluations of a tourism destination with low-arousal advertising.

2.4. Regulatory focus as a mediating mechanism

2.4.1. The impact of culturally-derived power on regulatory focus

Regulatory focus makes a distinction between self-regulation with a promotion focus (e.g., accomplishments and aspirations) versus a prevention focus (e.g., safety and responsibilities; Higgins, 1997, 1998). Promotion-focused individuals strive to realize their ideals and aspirations in order to address needs for growth and advancement, who thereby approach their goals with eagerness and are sensitive to gains and non-gains. In contrast, prevention-focused individuals strive to fulfil their duties and obligations in order to address needs for safety and security, who approach their goals with vigilance and are sensitive to losses and non-losses. As a fundamental goal-driver of individuals' attitudes and behaviors, regulatory focus plays an important role in directing information search and processing as well as behavioral decision-making (e.g., Higgins, 1997; Wang & Lee, 2006).

Tourism literature has recently started to examine regulatory focus. One stream investigates how regulatory focus influences tourists' attitudes and preferences (e.g., Choi, Law, & Heo, 2016) and tourism motives (e.g., Kock, Josiassen, & Assaf, 2018). Another stream investigates how regulatory focus influences tourists' information processing, particularly how message framing and regulatory focus interact and influence tourists'

evaluations of a destination. For instance, Huang, Gursoy, and Xu (2014) suggest that neuroticism that resembles the prevention focus leads to higher perceived risk with the purchase of tourism products; as a result, neurotic individuals gather more product-related information. Similarly, Zhang, Zhang, Gursoy, and Fu (2018) find that a congruency between message framing (gain framed vs. loss framed) and regulatory focus positively influences the destination image formation. Although prior studies have mainly focused on the content of message framing, research into the framing of arousal in this context remains at the infancy stage. Therefore, the current study aims to examine the role of regulatory focus in the interplay of culturally-derived power, arousal in advertising, and tourism destination evaluations.

Previous research finds that situational factors can temporarily encourage a particular regulatory focus to be in play (Higgins, Roney, Crowe, & Hymes, 1994). For instance, Zhou and Pham (2004) find that a promotion focus can be triggered when individuals evaluate financial products such as individual stocks in a trading account, whereas a prevention focus can be triggered when individuals evaluate financial products such as mutual funds in retirement accounts. Sengupta and Zhou (2007) demonstrate that exposure to a hedonically appealing temptation triggers promotion focus among impulsive individuals.

According to the notion that mere exposure to certain objects and situations can spontaneously activate associated goals and regulatory focus (Sengupta & Zhou, 2007; Zhou & Pham, 2004), we predict that culturally-derived power can trigger regulatory focus. Prior work has demonstrated that power and regulatory focus are interrelated (Fetterman, 2012).

High-power individuals who attend to rewards may associate power with the ability to attain those rewards (Keltner et al., 2003; Smith & Bargh, 2008) and could thereby reveal a promotion-focused inclination. Although findings are inconsistent concerning whether or not low-power individuals would exhibit a prevention focus (Trew, 2009), low-power individuals tend to show behavioral inhibition (Smith & Barge, 2008). No prior work has examined how culturally-derived power specifically influences regulatory focus.

Specifically, individuals with personalized power activated are more concerned with how to use their power to gain personal status and to make themselves better than others (Torelli & Shavitt, 2010, 2011). Such motivation triggers the promotion focus, which is consistent with one's pursuit of positive outcomes and achievement needs (Higgins, 1998). In contrast, people with socialized power activated pay more attention to seeking benefits for others, maintaining relationships through power, and emphasizing the fulfilment of duties (Torelli & Shavitt, 2010, 2011). Because prevention focus that emphasizes security, responsibility, and obligation is related to the avoidance of loss (Higgins, 1998), socialized power is likely to trigger the prevention focus. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis.

H2. Culturally-derived power has a significant impact on travelers' regulatory focus.

More specifically, personalized power (vs. socialized power) can significantly increase consumers' promotion focus (vs. prevention focus).

2.4.2. The interactive effects of regulatory focus and arousal in advertising on destination advertising effectiveness

Choi, Jung, Oyonbileg, and Yang (2016) argue that both the types of self-regulatory goals and the levels of arousal affect the impact of product attributes on product evaluations of consumers who experience negative emotions. Accordingly, we speculate that regulatory focus might influence consumers' preferences for a tourism destination, and this effect is likely to be moderated by the arousal level in advertising. Because high arousal in ads presents excitement or agitation (Sohn et al., 2015; Storbeck & Clore, 2008), promotion focus-oriented individuals who pay more attention to aspiration and self-accomplishment (Higgins, 1997, 1998) are likely to prefer tourism destinations advertised with high-arousal messages. In contrast, because low arousal in advertising emphasizes calmness and relaxation (Chim et al., 2018; Scheibe et al., 2013), prevention focus-oriented individuals who value security, obligation, and responsibility (Higgins, 1997, 1998) are likely to prefer destinations advertised with low-arousal messages. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis.

H3. Arousal in advertising moderates the influence of regulatory focus on consumers' tourism destination evaluations. Specifically, promotion-focused (vs. prevention-focused) individuals prefer tourism destinations with high-arousal (vs. low-arousal) advertisement.

By synthesizing H1, H2, and H3, we further propose the following hypothesis.

H4. Culturally-derived power (personalized power vs. socialized power) is positively related to regulatory focus (promotion focus vs. prevention focus), which in turn interacts with arousal in advertising to influence tourism destination evaluations.

2.5. Proposed theoretical framework

On the basis of the preceding discussion, we propose the theoretical framework presented in Figure 1. The proposed framework conceptualizes the interactive effect of culturally-derived power and arousal in advertising on tourism destination evaluations and the mediating role of regulatory focus. This theoretical framework is examined via three experimental studies and further validated by secondary data in order to ensure both the internal and external validity of the psychological mechanism. More specifically, the interactive effect of culturally-derived power and arousal in advertising on tourism destination evaluations (H1) is tested in Study 1. Study 2a and 2b are designed to examine whether culturally-derived power can influence regulatory focus, which would in turn interact with arousal in advertising to influence tourism destination evaluations (H4). Study 2a explores the impact of culturally-derived power on regulatory focus (H2), while Study 2b verifies whether or not arousal in advertising moderates the effect of regulatory focus on tourism destination evaluations (H3). Utilizing an experimental causal-chain design in Study 2a and 2b, we provide additional evidence to support the proposed theoretical process (Spencer, Zanna, & Fong, 2005). Complementary to the experimental approach, Study 3 attempts to verify the congruency effect of culturally-derived power and arousal in determining destination evaluations by using tourists' online reviews from *TripAdvisor*.

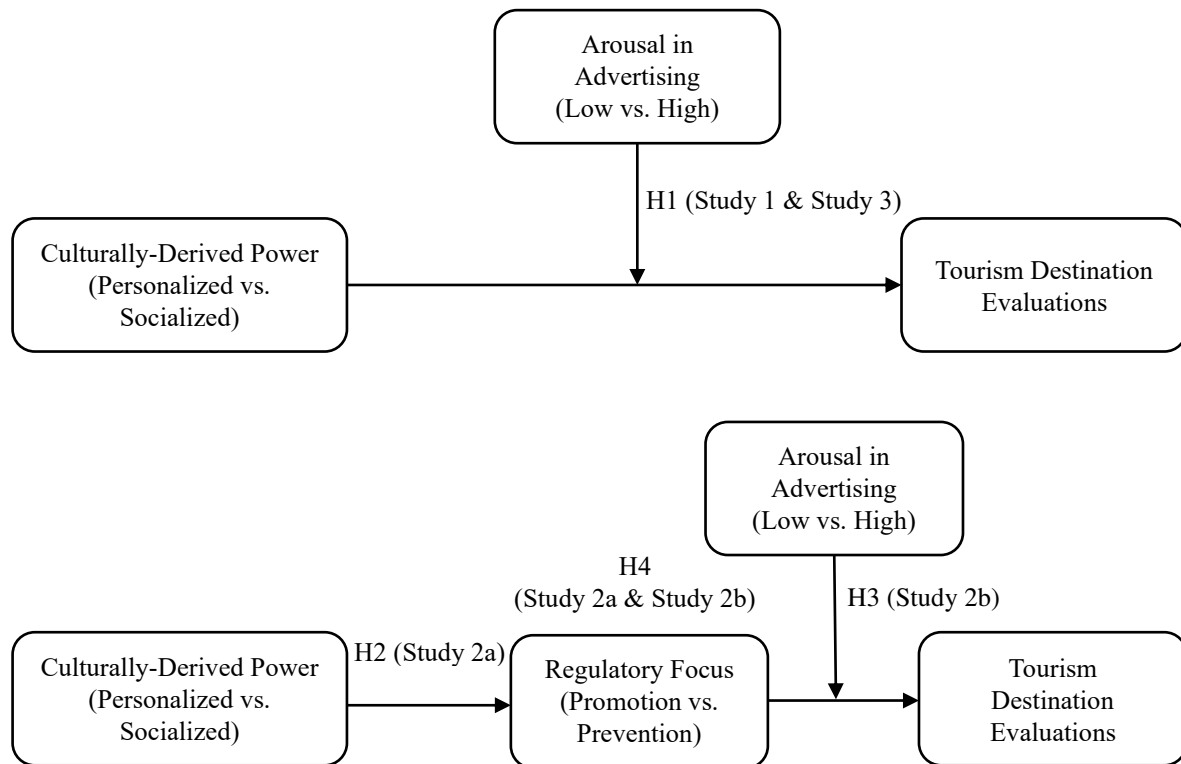


Figure 1 Theoretical Framework

3 Study 1: The Interactive Effects of Culturally-Derived Power and Arousal in Advertising

3.1. Method

The purpose of this study was to examine the moderating effect of arousal in advertising in the influence of culturally-derived power on destination evaluations. 119 undergraduate students (48.7% males; age = 19–22) were recruited to participate in a 2 (culturally-derived power: personalized power vs. socialized power) × 2 (arousal in advertising: low vs. high) between-subjects design experiment. Participants were randomly assigned to either personalized power or socialized power condition. Culturally-derived

power was primed via a recall-and-writing task, based on the definition of personalized versus socialized power (Torelli & Shavitt, 2011), a technique used to prime power in previous studies (Kilduff & Galinsky, 2013). Under the personalized (vs. *socialized*) power condition, participants were asked to "Recall an experience when you had power over others. Here power means the capacity of advancing one's personal agenda, obtaining praise and admiration from others (vs. *benefiting others and advancing others' wellness*)."

Participants were randomly exposed to either the low-arousal tourism advertisement or the high-arousal advertisement (see Appendix A) (Kim, Park, & Schwarz, 2010). Prior research suggests that images depicting tourism activities as relaxing or exciting can induce low versus high emotional arousal (Wang & Sparks, 2016). By following such findings, the present study examined arousal from a perspective that arousal was inferred through relaxing or exciting activities in tourism advertisements. For the low-arousal advertisement, images of peaceful and tranquil tourist activities (e.g., tea ceremonies) were shown and the headline read "Visit Korea! Full of Serene Offerings." For the high-arousal advertisement, images of adventurous and exciting tourist activities (e.g., skiing) were shown and the headline read "Visit Korea! Full of Adventurous Offerings."

To ensure the validity of arousal manipulation, we conducted a separate pretest. A total of 86 participants were randomly presented with low- versus high-arousal scenario stimuli. The participants were then asked to indicate their arousal level on the *Likert* scales anchored by "very passive/very active," "very mellow/very fired up," and "very low energy/very high energy" ($\alpha = .72$; Berger & Milkman, 2012). The three items were averaged

to form an index of psychological arousal. An independent sample *t*-test indicated that the participants perceived higher arousal under the high-arousal condition than under the low-arousal condition ($M_{\text{low-arousal}} = 3.34$, $M_{\text{high-arousal}} = 4.73$; $t(84) = 7.62$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.65$). The manipulation of arousal was thus successful.

Participants' evaluation of tourism destination were assessed on the basis of their agreement with two statements "I would like to visit the advertised destination" and "This is a good travel destination" ($r = .66$) (Amar, Droulers, & Legohérel, 2017; Kim et al., 2010). As a manipulation check of power, the participants were asked to rate two items about personalized power ($r = .64$; "promoting one's powerful status in the eyes of others" and "gaining status over others") and another two items about socialized power ($r = .67$; "caring for the well-being of others" and "helping others") on a seven-point *Likert* scale (Torelli & Shavitt, 2011). Finally, the demographic information was collected (See Appendix B) and a gift was given to each participant.

3.2. Results

The manipulation check was successful as participants in the personalized-power condition reported higher scores on personalized-power items ($M_{\text{personalized Power}} = 4.85$, $M_{\text{socialized power}} = 3.69$; $t(117) = 7.93$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.46$) and lower scores on socialized-power items ($M_{\text{personalized power}} = 3.90$, $M_{\text{socialized power}} = 4.74$; $t(117) = -5.03$, $p < .001$, $d = .92$) than those in the socialized-power condition did. The personalized-power message successfully activated personalized power and the socialized-power message distinctively primed socialized power.

Consistent with H1, the results showed a significant interaction between culturally-derived power and advertising arousal on destination evaluations ($F(1, 115) = 34.69, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .23$; Figure 2). Specifically, when the arousal in advertising was low, the participants primed by socialized power evaluated the destination more favorably than those primed by personalized power ($M_{\text{personalized power}} = 3.45, SD = .57; M_{\text{socialized power}} = 4.68, SD = 1.16; F(1, 115) = 26.51, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .19$). In contrast, when the advertising arousal was high, the participants primed by personalized power evaluated the destination more favorably than those primed by socialized power ($M_{\text{personalized power}} = 4.48, SD = 1.16; M_{\text{socialized power}} = 3.70, SD = .69; F(1, 115) = 10.28, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .08$). Additionally, the main effect of culturally-derived power on tourism destination evaluations was not significant ($F(1, 115) = 1.68, p = .197, \eta_p^2 = .01$), and neither was the main effect of arousal ($F(1, 115) = .02, p = .896, \eta_p^2 = .00$).

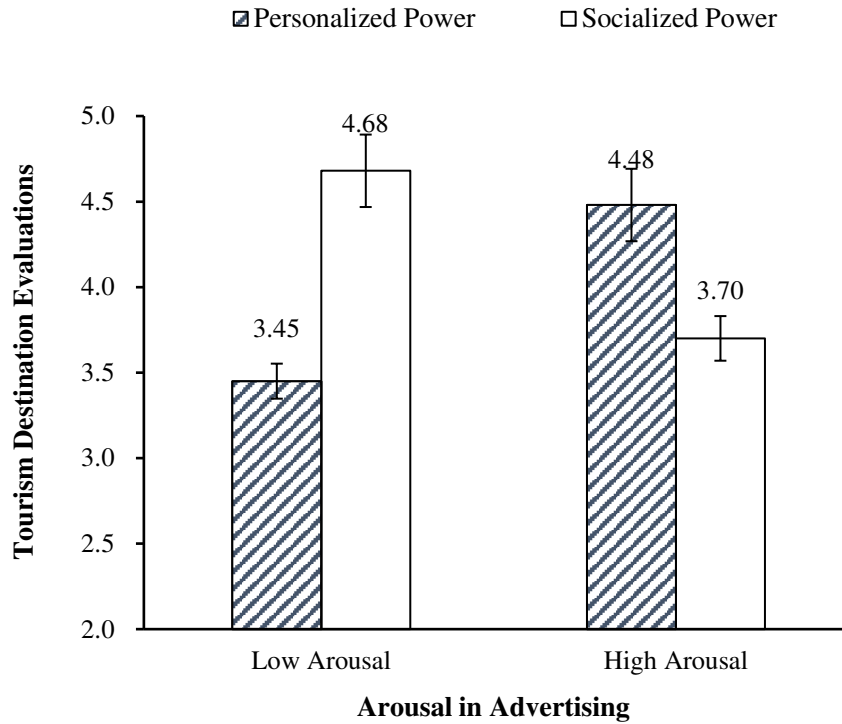


Figure 2 The Influence of Culturally-Derived Power and Arousal in Advertising

3.3. Discussion

The results indicated that under the low-arousal condition, individuals primed by socialized power evaluated the destination more favorably, whereas under the high-arousal condition, individuals primed by personalized power evaluated the destination more favorably, supporting H1. Therefore, these findings suggested that a congruency between culturally-derived power and arousal in advertising can positively influence tourism destination evaluations.

To further investigate the psychological mechanism regarding how arousal in advertising moderated the impact of culturally-derived power on destination evaluations, we introduced regulatory focus as a mediator in Study 2. To bolster the external validity of these

findings, we adopted a different method to prime culturally-derived power and recruited working adults with disposable incomes as more-representative samples in Study 2a and 2b.

4 Study 2a: The Impact of Culturally-Derived Power on Regulatory Focus

4.1. Method

The objective of this study was to examine the impact of culturally-derived power on regulatory focus. 157 working adults (56.1% males; age = 21–50) were randomly assigned to a condition in a one-factor (culturally-derived power: personalized vs. socialized power) between-subjects design. As brands, commercial messages, and objects can activate abstract notions (Fitzsimons, Chartrand, & Fitzsimons, 2008; Rucker, Dubois, & Galinsky, 2010), we adapted the priming stimulus for culturally-derived power from Torelli and Shavitt (2011) by holding the context constant across conditions, where participants were presented with information about a hypothetical company (Appendix C). In the personalized (vs. socialized) power condition, the blurb was used to enhance respondents' tendency for status enhancement (vs. caring for others and society as a whole).

We conducted an independent pretest ($N = 88$) to ensure the validity of this priming method of culturally-derived power. After reading the stimuli, participants were asked to rate their agreement on two items about personalized power ($r = .61$) and two items about socialized power ($r = .58$), identical to those used in Study 1. The results showed that the participants in the personalized-power condition reported greater personalized power ($M_{\text{personalized power}} = 4.88$, $M_{\text{socialized power}} = 3.87$; $t(86) = 3.37$, $p < .001$, $d = .71$) and lower

socialized power ($M_{\text{personalize power}} = 3.80$, $M_{\text{socialized power}} = 4.66$; $t(86) = -3.27$, $p < .01$, $d = .70$) than those in the socialized-power condition. Therefore, the manipulation of power was successful.

In Study 1, the stimuli of the high-arousal condition included several sports activities. However, it was possible that individuals primed by personalized power show higher favorability toward sports, which consequently influenced their regulatory focus and preference for ads with varying levels of arousal. To control for this potential confounding factor, we measured participants' attitudes toward sports with a two-item *Likert* scale anchored by like/dislike and positive/negative ($r = .61$; Sengupta & Johar, 2002). The results revealed no significant effect of culturally-derived power on participants' attitudes toward sports ($M_{\text{personalize power}} = 4.40$, $M_{\text{socialized power}} = 4.54$; $t(86) = .62$, $p = .537$, $d = .12$), excluding the confounding effect of sports attitude.

Regulatory focus was measured with three items about personal choices, in which participants were asked to indicate their preferences for the conflicts between the oughts and ideals on the *Likert* scale (e.g., "I prefer to pay back my loans" versus "I prefer to take a trip around the world")(Cronbach's $a = .74$; Pham & Avnet, 2004). All the items were averaged into a single index, with higher scores indicating a greater preference for the ideal, namely, relatively stronger promotion over prevention focus. Participants' demographic characteristics were collected (Appendix B).

4.2. Results

The results showed that the participants in the personalized-power condition ($M =$

4.71) exhibited significantly higher scores on ideals versus oughts than those in the socialized-power condition ($M = 3.71$; $t(155) = 6.89$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.11$). Such finding revealed that the personalized-power respondents showed a higher promotion versus prevention focus than the socialized-power respondents.

4.3. Discussion

This study provided evidence for the effect of culturally-derived power on regulatory focus. The results confirmed H2 by using a new priming technique of culturally-derived power different from that used in Study 1, demonstrating that culturally-derived power could play an important role in shaping travelers' regulatory focus inclination.

5 Study 2b: The Interaction between Regulatory Focus and Arousal in Advertising

5.1. Method

The purpose of this study was to explore the moderating role of advertising arousal in the impact of regulatory focus on destination evaluations. A total of 326 working adults (49.4% males; age = 21–53) were randomly assigned to a condition in a 2 (regulatory focus: promotion vs. prevention) \times 2 (arousal in advertising: low vs. high) between-subjects design. A pretest ($N = 82$) was performed as the manipulation check for regulatory focus. The participants were asked to write an essay to prime their regulatory focus (e.g., Pham & Avnet, 2004; Zhao & Pechmann, 2007). Participants in the promotion-focused condition were asked to list their past and current hopes, aspirations and dreams, while those in the prevention-focused condition were asked to list their past and current duties, obligations and

responsibilities. The manipulation check consisted of three items about personal choices (Cronbach's $a = .71$), identical to the measure of regulatory focus used in Study 2a. The manipulation of regulatory focus was successful that participants in the promotion-focused condition ($M = 4.63$) put greater emphasis on ideals versus oughts than those in the prevention-focused condition ($M = 3.59$; $t(80) = 5.93, p < .001, d = 1.31$).

The arousal in advertising was manipulated via both the images and the informational text of specific activities in tourism ads (Appendix D). Participants were randomly assigned to one of two tourism destination advertisements: the low- and high-arousal ads (Kim et al., 2010). For low arousal in advertising, a trip to Thailand was described as being full of serene, peaceful, and tranquil activities. For high arousal in advertising, a trip to Thailand was described as being full of adventurous and exciting activities. We pretested the above scenarios ($N = 91$) to determine whether they triggered different psychological arousals, using manipulation check items (Cronbach's $a = .77$) identical to those used in Study 1. The pretest results indicated that respondents under the high-arousal condition perceived a higher arousal level than those under the low-arousal condition ($M_{\text{low-arousal}} = 3.28, M_{\text{high-arousal}} = 4.80$; $t(84) = 8.86, p < .001, d = 1.85$).

The main experiment consisted of two unrelated tasks. First, participants were asked to complete the priming of regulatory focus as described above. Next, they were presented with a tourism ad and asked to evaluate the destination. The measures of attitude toward the destination ($r = .71$) were the same as in Study 1. Finally, the participants filled out demographic questionnaires (Appendix B).

5.2. Results

The results indicated a significant interaction between regulatory focus and arousal in advertising on destination evaluations ($F(1, 322) = 53.66, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .14$; see Figure 3), which supported H3. Specifically, when the advertising arousal was low, the participants primed by prevention focus evaluated the destination more favorably than those primed by promotion focus ($M_{\text{promotion focus}} = 3.80, SD = 1.14; M_{\text{prevention focus}} = 4.76, SD = .79; F(1, 322) = 32.58, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .09$). However, when the advertising arousal was high, the participants primed by promotion focus evaluated the destination more favorably than those primed by prevention focus ($M_{\text{promotion focus}} = 4.55, SD = 1.06; M_{\text{prevention focus}} = 3.77, SD = 1.24; F(1, 322) = 21.64, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .06$). Additionally, neither the main effect of regulatory focus ($F(1, 322) = .56, p = .456, \eta_p^2 = .002$) nor arousal in advertising ($F(1, 322) = 1.02, p = .314, \eta_p^2 = .003$) was significant.

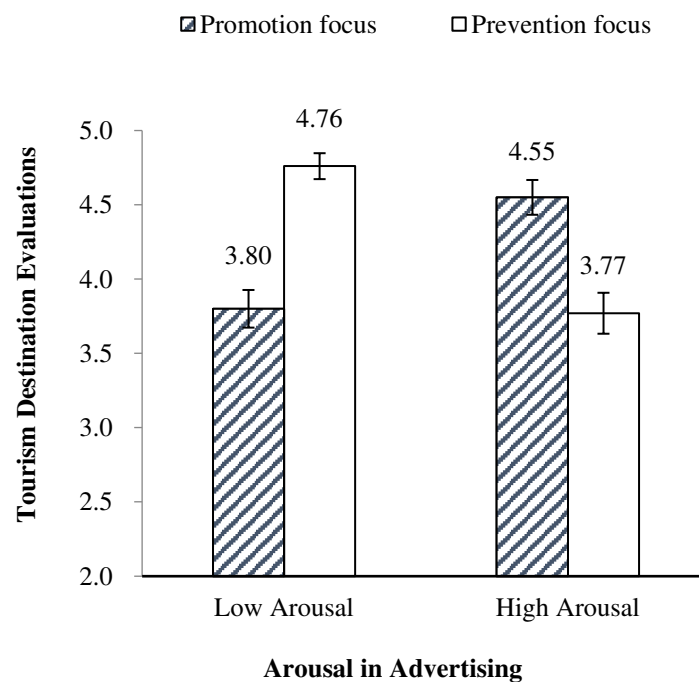


Figure 3 The Influence of Regulatory Focus and Arousal in Advertising

5.3. Discussion

The results of this study demonstrated that arousal in advertising can moderate the impact of regulatory focus on tourism destination evaluations, which supported H3. Along with previous experiments, the findings revealed that culturally-derived power affected regulatory focus, which then interacted with arousal in advertising to influence tourism destination evaluations, supporting H4. More specifically, tourists primed by socialized (vs. personalized) power had relatively weaker promotion over prevention focus; their preferences were thereby enhanced for a tourism destination advertised in low- (vs. high-) arousal. Conversely, tourists primed by personalized (vs. socialized) power perceived a relatively stronger promotion over prevention focus, which consequently induced an elevated evaluation of a tourism destination advertised in high- (vs. low-) arousal. The results of Study 2a and 2b suggested that culturally-derived power exerted influence on regulatory focus, which then interacted with arousal in advertising to influence destination advertising effectiveness.

6 Study 3: Validation of the Congruency Effect Using Field Data from *TripAdvisor*

Study 3 aimed to provide further evidence to improve the external validity for the congruency effect of culturally-derived power and arousal perception on tourists' destination evaluations. Secondary data from online reviews was used to reflect visitors' actual thoughts

and evaluation on real-world destinations. Online review data has drawn increasing attention as an important source of data for understanding tourists' experiences and psychological characteristics (e.g., Abbie-Gayle & Barbara, 2017; Brochado, Troilo, & Shah, 2017).

6.1 Data Collection

We obtained the data from an online travel platform (*TripAdvisor.com*) by hiring a professional programmer proficient in data crawling. We collected 131,642 online reviews written in English posted between 2006 and 2020 about *Chiang Mai*, a major Asian city ranked highly among popular destinations on *TripAdvisor*. The online reviews were about *All Things to Do*, a collection of tourism activities available in *Chiang Mai*, including outdoor activities, attractions, day trips, kayaking and canoeing, and nature and wildlife areas. They were compatible with our research context of advertising with tourism activities and aligned with the types of tourism activities advertised in the previous experiment stimuli. We collected the following key information for each review, including the reviewer's rating of the destination that ranged from 1 to 5, the text of each review, the number of helpful votes that each reviewer had received, and the average rating of each destination.

We obtained proxies of the psychological constructs central to our study, such as *arousal* (high vs. low) and *culturally-derived power* (personalized vs. socialized power), from the online review content texts. We developed a dictionary and used it to extract these constructs, as prior research suggests that important psychological constructs can be revealed through comments expressed by reviewers. For instance, Berger et al. (2020) find

that the language used in the reviews can provide knowledge about the reviewer (e.g., their personality and feelings). It is posited that both the conceptual and associated dimensions of words can be adopted to investigate their in-depth meanings (Leech, 1981). More specifically, we identified relevant keywords related to our concerned constructs within the data corpus on the basis of their conceptual and associated meanings, relying on the definitions of constructs in the literature, the synonyms of words contained in the definitions according to the *Merriam-Webster* dictionary, and the semantic network. For instance, "personalized" and "self" (vs. "socialized" and "others") were chosen to characterize personalized power (vs. socialized power); "relaxing" and "calm" (vs. "exciting" and "adventurous") were chosen to characterize low (vs. high) arousal. Please refer to Appendix E for the detailed keywords. Using the keywords that represented either personalized power–high arousal or socialized power–low arousal, we identified 2,719 power–arousal congruent reviews from the data corpus. The frequency of co-occurrence of keywords was shown in Appendix F.

Since the construct of culturally-derived power is only meaningful for people who at least have a sense of power (Torelli & Shavitt, 2010, 2011), we excluded those who were lack of a sense of power from the sample using the number of helpful votes that a reviewer received as a criterion. According to Wu, Mattila, Wang, and Hanks (2016), helpful votes a reviewer received could indicate the influence a reviewer has over other people. Thus, the number of helpful votes a reviewer received could be adopted as the proxy of *power*, which reflected the social influence of reviewers in online review context. After excluding the 273

reviewers who had not received any helpful votes, a total of 2,446 reviews of 58 destinations were finally obtained.

6.2 Results

Reviewer' ratings of the destinations were used as a measure for the dependent variable - destination evaluations. We aimed at examining whether the rating of each destination from the identified power–arousal congruent reviews was more favorable than the overall ratings of each destination on the basis of all the reviews. This was different from the Study 1 with an experimental design, which allowed us to manipulate the type of culturally-derived power and the level of arousal to create four randomized conditions, and then to compare power–arousal congruent conditions (personalized power–high arousal and socialized power–low arousal) with incongruent conditions (personalized power–low arousal and socialized power–high arousal). This was because that real-world online reviews towards a destination hardly contained all of the above conditions, which made the comparison between congruent and incongruent conditions unfeasible.

An ANOVA result showed that the ratings of the destination reviews with congruent keywords were significantly higher than the average scores of all reviews ($M_{\text{reviews-with-congruent-keywords}} = 4.71, SD = .35; M_{\text{all reviews}} = 4.58, SD = .22; F(1,114) = 5.63, p = .02, \eta_p^2 = .05$). This finding suggested that the reviews indicating either personalized power-high arousal or socialized power-low arousal were more likely to be related with a higher rating of the destination than the overall rating of the destination based on all the reviews, which was consistent with previous experimental studies.

6.3 Discussion

Using secondary data, this study had an advantage of investigating the congruent effect between culturally-derived power and arousal in a real-world situation. The results demonstrated that the congruent effect (between personalized power and high arousal as well as between socialized power and low arousal) boosted tourists' destination evaluations. Therefore, by presenting an empirical study complementary to experimental research, we were able to prove the generalizability of our laboratory findings, and to increase the quality of the contributions (Viglia & Dolnicar, 2020).

7 General Discussion

7.1. Theoretical contributions

This research makes several theoretical contributions to the literature on power, destination advertising effectiveness, and regulatory focus. First, the study presents the congruency effect between culturally-derived power and ads' arousal in destination advertising effectiveness and further reveals the underlying psychological process by proposing regulatory focus as the mediating mechanism. More specifically, our findings have demonstrated that personalized (vs. socialized) power is more congruent with high (vs. low) arousal embodied in destination ads' messages under the context of tourism. Moreover, by utilizing the regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997, 1998) as the theoretical framework, this study reveals that culturally-derived power shifts the relative weight of promotion focus versus prevention focus, which results in significantly different evaluations of a tourism

destination as a function of the advertising arousal level. Therefore, this research builds a moderated mediation model to decode the complicated roles that culturally-derived power, regulatory focus, and arousal in advertising play in shaping tourists' evaluations of tourism destinations. By integrating regulatory focus theory and revealing its applicability to the tourism advertising context, this study offers a sound theoretical background for better understanding the effectiveness of destination advertising.

Second, the present study provides a new cultural perspective for the investigation of power in destination advertising literature. Prior studies on power have explored levels of power (i.e., high vs. low) and their effects on individuals' attitudes (e.g., Garbinsky et al., 2016; Jiang et al., 2014) while ignoring the importance of cultural richness in this construct. Although Wong et al. (2014) have confirmed the effects of culturally-derived power on tourists' preferences and choices, a more specific role of culturally-derived power in tourists' evaluations of destination advertising is yet unclear, particularly when the arousal in advertising comes into play. Our study takes one step further to explore the impact of culturally-derived power on the effectiveness of destination advertising at various levels of arousal. Findings of this study suggest that personalized versus socialized power can lead to different preferences for destination advertising portrayed in high versus low arousal. Overall, our conceptualization of power as a culturally-derived two-dimensional construct offers new insights and perspectives to further the understanding of heterogeneity in tourists' attitudes toward tourism destinations with diverse advertising appeals.

Third, this study provides a more nuanced approach to bridge the research on power

in social psychology and the research on tourism destination advertising. Previous studies have investigated power (e.g., Rucker & Galinsky, 2009; Rucker, Galinsky, & Dubois, 2012) and destination advertising (e.g., Amar et al., 2017; Byun & Jang, 2015) separately rather than jointly. To the best of our knowledge, our study is the first to examine how power derived from interpersonal relationships based on individuals' cultural orientations and its interaction with arousal in advertising influence the effectiveness of destination advertising. By doing so, the present study fills this research gap and helps bridge social psychology to tourism destination advertising and marketing, thereby providing rich insights for future interdisciplinary research opportunities.

7.2. Managerial implications

Our findings provide valuable practical implications for tourism practitioners, especially for destination management organizations, destination marketers, travel agencies, and advertising agencies. First, on the basis of the level of arousal in destination advertisements, destination marketers should develop tailored promotional messages that match the level of arousal with the appropriate type of culturally-derived power. Previous studies suggest that the congruence between the product personality and the prospective consumers' personality can result in positive attitudes and behaviors toward the brand (Sop & Kozak, 2019), and the differences in perceived power may be activated by advertisements (Rucker et al., 2012). Accordingly, we might infer that in a real tourism context, the elements of power and arousal could both be designed into the advertisement to improve destination advertising effectiveness. More specifically, if the advertisement of a destination emphasizes

calming activities or experiences (i.e., low arousal), advertising messages that activate a sense of social responsibility or emphasize cohesion would be more effective due to establishing and strengthening relationships with others and the benefits of helping others while traveling. This approach may be more suitable for destinations that offer opportunities for socialization, family togetherness, volunteer tourism, and prosocial tourism activities that stress socialized connections and social obligations. In contrast, if the advertisement of a tourism destination presents exciting activities or experiences (i.e., high arousal), promotional messages that focus on personal achievement and success or direct benefits to the self would work better. This approach might be more appropriate for destinations that highlight self-indulgence and personal benefits.

Second, tourism marketers should design appropriately framed communication messages that contain a particular type of regulatory focus and descriptions of the destination activities. Our results indicate that an alignment between the arousal of destination activities and the framing of regulatory focus in the communication messages could result in significantly favorable destination evaluations, compared to messages containing a mismatch between arousal and regulatory focus. More specifically, if a tourism destination offers exciting, provocative, and adventurous activities and experiences, a promotion-focused frame, that highlights for instance *"Traveling is the right thing to do"*, is more appropriate to adopt in designing marketing communications. In contrast, if a tourism destination offers calming, relaxing, and peaceful activities and experiences, a prevention-framed message that highlights *"Don't miss this trip"*, may be more effective in improving travelers' evaluations of

the destination.

Third, our findings suggest that culturally-derived power can be used as an important market-segmentation tool by destination marketers and managers. Specifically, when targeting tourists with personalized power, advertisements should be designed with a high level of arousal; for instance, advertisements might include exciting and adventurous tourism activities, such as rafting, rope-bridge walking, or rock climbing. Conversely, when targeting tourists with socialized power, advertisements should feature a low level of arousal; for example, ads could present relaxing or calming activities, such as visiting ancient temples, getting massages, swimming in hot springs, or relaxing by pools or on beaches.

7.3. Limitations and directions for future research

It is worth noting that this study has several limitations. First, the priming of culturally-derived power mainly adopts the recall or reading task in a laboratory setting, isolated from the manipulation of arousal in advertising. Nevertheless, other manipulation methods involving more-natural settings—for instance, watching a video or entering into a real consumption context—could be employed. Future researchers are also advised to integrate improved priming of power into the advertising messages along with the manipulations of arousal; this will provide a better understanding of the role of power in destination advertising effectiveness as well as aid tourism practitioners in making use of the insights that this research offers.

Second, this study employs the regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997, 1998) as a mediating mechanism to explain the effect of culturally-derived power on destination

advertising effectiveness. Alternative explanations other than regulatory focus could be considered. Furthermore, the application of our mediating mechanism of regulatory focus to other tourism contexts—for instance, word of mouth and various services—is recommended for future studies. Given the complexity of tourism products, the application of our model under a variety of other contexts could provide meaningful insights.

Third, power could be conceptualized and categorized according to dimensions other than cultural orientation, such as implicit versus explicit power (Caza, Tiedens, & Lee, 2011), expectation versus experience of power (Rucker, Hu, & Galinsky, 2014), and the construal of power as opportunity versus responsibility (Scholl et al., 2018). Further research that focuses on how the varying dimensions of power influence consumers' preferences for tourism destinations deserves special attention.

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