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Designation of origin brand image associated with local cuisine - Scale development and validation

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Abstract

The designation of origin brand image associated with local cuisine is a relatively new concept and requires further comprehensive investigation in both theoretical development and measurement operationalization. Using qualitative and quantitative research methods, this study proposes and evaluates the validity of a measurement scale for designation of origin brand image (DOBI) linked to local cuisine. The results identify five dimensions of DOBI comprising 22 measurement items, including feature image, functional image, consumption value image, affective image, and unique cultural image. The assessment of scale validity indicates that the proposed DOBI dimensions exhibit strong content validity and high construct validity. Based on these findings, the study discusses several theoretical contributions and suggests directions for future research.

1. Introduction

Research on branding and brand image in tourism has emerged as a growing field over the past decade. Destination branding involves the analysis and evaluation of various brand-related elements, including brand image, brand associations, and the overall experience associated with a destination. Designation of origin brand image (DOBI) has recently emerged as a distinct

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concept in the academic literature. Nevertheless, the underlying phenomenon has long been salient in consumers' perceptions, exerting a substantial influence on customer evaluations, product judgments, and purchase decisions (Velikova et al., 2024). A positive DOBI can enhance a locality's competitiveness in attracting tourists, investors, and potential customers. Grijalva et al. (2020, p. 168) define DOBI as 'forms of distinctive signs that create a characteristic quality linkage between products or services and their designation of origin or region of origin'.

Along with the rapid development of the tourism industry, cuisine has increasingly been recognized as a fundamental factor contributing to destination competitiveness. Local cuisine is regarded as a particularly valuable resource for differentiating one destination from others. Local cuisine is intrinsically connected to its designation of origin, which generates perceptions of quality, authenticity, and place-based identity that contribute to tourists' overall experiences. As the distinctiveness of the designation of origin image increases, so too does the attractiveness of the cuisine to tourists (Apak & Gürbüz, 2023). However, research related to this field remains limited (Liang & Lai, 2023; García-Galán, 2024).

From a theoretical perspective, adopting a customer-based brand equity (CBBE) approach, several pioneering studies have extended the analysis of the role of DOBI and marketing. The findings indicate that DOBI provides substantial benefits for promotion and product marketing, as it influences customers' evaluations of products and embodies signals of product quality (Marcoz et al., 2016; Dias & Mendes, 2017). Despite growing scholarly interest in designation-of-origin branding, empirical research on the dimensions of DOBI remains scarce (Liang & Lai, 2023; Parris & Guzman, 2023; Baalbaki & Zizka, 2024). In particular, the attributes that shape DOBI in the context of local cuisine have received limited attention, notwithstanding their potential contribution to destination competitiveness. This highlights the need for further studies to operationalize the concept of DOBI across diverse tourism development contexts, thereby enriching the body of knowledge on destination branding in general and DOBI in tourism in particular.

By employing a mixed-method approach that integrates qualitative and quantitative research methods, this study aims to clarify the theoretical foundations of DOBI, to develop and validate the measurement scale of the DOBI concept in the context of local cuisine.

2. Review of literature

2.1. Concept of DOBI

The concept of designation of origin brand image (DOBI) is grounded in the theoretical framework of brand image, yet it has been conceptually extended to encompass place-based entities across geographical boundaries such as nations, regions, cities, and tourism destinations. In this context, a brand linked to a designation of origin is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct comprising the perceptions, impressions, and expectations held by both local and non-local audiences regarding a specific place of origin, which are formed through accumulated experiences, information exposure, and symbolic associations related to that place (Dias & Mendes, 2017; Khouaja, 2021).

Early scholarly work on designation of origin (DO) branding highlights its function as a quality cue and a mechanism for product differentiation through geographically linked attributes. The concept of DO encompasses information pertaining to a product's origin, geographical provenance, distinctive attributes, and established reputation, all of which are intrinsically linked to a specific territory. By signaling a close association between products and their place of origin, DO branding enhances the symbolic and functional value of products, particularly in the context of agricultural goods. Prior studies indicate that designation of origin significantly strengthens consumers' perceptions of authenticity and perceived quality, thereby contributing to favorable brand image formation (García-Galán, 2024).

An extensive review of the destination branding literature also reveals several distinct approaches to applying the designation of origin concept, reflected in notions such as brand of origin (BO) and designation of origin brand (DOB). From a semantic perspective, the term origin is commonly understood in a direct and relatively narrow sense, primarily referring to the place of product manufacture. In contrast, the concept of place or designation of origin conveys a broader and more abstract meaning (Cresswell, 2014). In the Vietnamese context, Government Decree No. 31/2018/NĐ-CP dated March 8, 2018, which provides detailed regulations for the implementation of the Law on Foreign Trade Management with respect to the origin of goods, clearly defines origin as a technical and legal term. However, designation of origin brand (DOB) extends beyond the mere identification of product origin to incorporate cultural values, traditions, and local heritage associated with a specific place (Youssef et al., 2015; Khouaja, 2021; Zhou & Chen, 2023).

It is also important to distinguish among concepts of destination brand image (DBI), DOBI, and destination image (DI), as these concepts are often confused in practice. DI refers to the overall beliefs, ideas, and impressions individuals hold about a destination (Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020). Similar to DI, both DBI and DOBI encompass cognitive, affective, and conative components (Shi et al., 2022; Ekinci et al., 2023). However, DBI and DOBI reflect the associations linked to a brand that exist in consumers' memory (Keller, 1993), whereas DI represents "the simplification of a large number of information connected with a place" (Kotler et al., 2006, p. 42). Furthermore, DOBI should be differentiated from related constructs such as place brand image (PBI) and country-of-origin image (COI). Within the CBBE framework, these constructs represent distinct forms of brand image, reflecting consumers' associations with different geographic brand entities. The distinction lies in the focal object of those associations: DOBI concerns a designation of origin as a signal of authenticity, heritage, and quality; PBI concerns a place as a broader geographic brand; and COI concerns a country as a product-origin cue (Koubaa, 2008; Khouaja, 2021; Oduro et al., 2023; García-Galán, 2024). This distinction is particularly salient in food tourism, where multiple geographic associations may simultaneously shape consumers' evaluations and behaviors.

Drawing on place branding theory, studies on designation of origin branding and brand associations have advanced the concept of DOBI, while also proposing analytical frameworks to examine the determinants influencing the destination branding development process of a specific locality or region (Grijalva et al., 2020). Zenker et al. (2017) define DOBI as the aggregate of cognitive and affective associations that an individual or group of people attaches to a particular place. These associations may encompass physical attributes (e.g., landscapes, infrastructure, and the environment), social attributes (e.g., people, culture, and lifestyles), and symbolic attributes (e.g., values, reputation, and identity).

Konecnik and Gartner (2007, p. 403) emphasize that "the name of a destination has credit value in the same way as the name of a company selling consumer goods." Similarly, Grijalva et al. (2020) emphasize the territorial nature of branding, arguing that DOBI refers to perceptions of a territory's reputation, evoking images and meanings associated with a specific designation of origin in the minds of information recipients. Building on this perspective, the present study conceptualizes DOBI from a marketing-oriented viewpoint, focusing on how it is perceived and interpreted by tourists and local communities, rather than from a legal protection or regulatory standpoint. DOBI represents the collective outcome of stakeholders' perceptions, emotions, and experiences associated with a specific place of origin. The development and management of a coherent, authentic, and distinctive DOBI are therefore critical for localities to build trust and to achieve sustainable long-term development

2.2. Dimensions of DOBI

A synthesis of prior studies indicates that there is a broad consensus regarding the core meaning of DOBI, which is understood as the set of brand associations held in consumers' minds, shaped

by their perceptions, impressions, and beliefs about a destination. Nevertheless, brand image is an inherently multifaceted and integrative construct, for which “no single operationalization fits all contexts” (Parris & Guzman, 2023, p. 225). Drawing on Associative Network Theory (ANT) to operationalize brand image attributes suggests that human semantic memory consists of two fundamental components: nodes and the associative links connecting them. Each node represents a unit of information corresponding to a concept, which may refer to an object, a person, or a designation of origin (Keller, 2003).

The study by Gómez et al. (2015) is regarded as one of the pioneering works that applied Keller’s (2003) hierarchical brand association framework to examine the relationship between brand image (i.e., brand associations) and a broader composite construct, namely DOBI, in consumers’ minds. The findings indicate that brand associations perceived as meaningful by consumers are transferred hierarchically from one brand-related cognitive category to another, whereby associations at a higher level (e.g., the destination brand) may be transmitted to a lower-level category, such as the DOBI of a wine tourism destination. However, the authors also emphasize that relationships among constructs at the same hierarchical level may be bidirectional (Gómez et al., 2015).

Adopting a similar theoretical perspective, Liang and Lai (2023) examined the bidirectional relationship between DOBI and destination image in the context of Yingde tea tourism in Guangdong, China. Their results demonstrate that four dimensions of DOBI—namely feature image, value image, functional image, and affective image—exert significant positive effects on the overall destination image of tea tourism. These findings further reinforce earlier research highlighting the role of brand associations and the cognitive linkage between brands and their designated origins in consumers’ minds (Cai, 2002; Boo et al., 2009; Gómez et al., 2015; Karagiorgos et al., 2023). The above discussions allow for the synthesis of the following proposed specific components of DOBI.

- Feature image: Fundamentally, brand image in general—and DOBI in particular—is associated with interconnected brand associations embedded in consumers’ cognition, beliefs, and impressions stored in memory regarding a product, service, or destination. Scholars argue that these associations may be either cognitive (rational) or affective in nature; however, they represent information cues that consumers assign to brands as means of identification and differentiation (Cai, 2002; Keller, 2003; Koubaa, 2008). Research on destination brand equity indicates that destination feature image is often operationalized through destination quality-related factors, such as physical facilities, service infrastructure, and environmental conditions (e.g., Boo et al., 2009; Oduro et al., 2023). In contrast, for destination-specific products or services, feature image is more frequently articulated in terms of the benefits that such products or services provide to consumers (Gómez et al., 2015; Liang & Lai, 2023). This distinction helps explain why feature image is considered a widely adopted and recurrent dimension in studies related to brand image.

- Functional image: One distinctive feature of DOBI, compared with the brand image of products in general, lies in the explicit linkage between perceived product quality and its designated origin. A positive DOBI can foster trust and stimulate consumers’ interest and favorable bias toward products and services. In the context of destination marketing, the distinctive attributes and attractions of a destination—such as natural beauty and cultural or historical appeal—constitute salient images and impressions that strongly influence destination choice decisions as well as the types of experiences tourists seek at each destination (Karagiorgos et al., 2023; Baalbaki & Zizka, 2024).

These attributes convey information about the benefits and values that consumers are likely to obtain from consuming or experiencing destination-related products and services. Accordingly, they shape perceptions of expected benefits, which are then associated with the brand image of

the product or service and used as reference points in consumers' evaluations of service and product quality (Koubaa, 2008; Youssef et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2017).

- Consumption value image: With regard to consumption value, the work of Sheth et al. (1991) is widely regarded as one of the seminal contributions to the development of consumer value theory. Sheth et al. (1991, p. 160) propose that consumer value comprises five dimensions: functional value, social value, emotional value, epistemic value, and conditional value, noting that “a choice may be influenced by any or all of the five consumption values.” Central to this perspective is the argument that perceived utility can be understood as a function explaining the functional value of a choice derived from consumers' consumption of a product's functional attributes, activities, and utilities. Accordingly, value image is conceptualized as a cognitive component of DOBI, reflecting tourists' perceptions of costs and prices in relation to perceived quality (Marcoz et al., 2016; Liang & Lai, 2023).

- Cultural uniqueness image: A review of relevant studies indicates that one of the key issues in measuring destination brand image lies in capturing destination-specific characteristics, particularly with regard to scale and the complex interplay of tangible and intangible elements that shape tourists' expectations of benefits (Kim et al., 2017; Majeed et al., 2024). This perspective is consistent with Keller's (2003) branding theory, which identifies differentiation as a fundamental attribute of brands.

Brand associations and holistic impressions—such as the “mental picture,” scenery, or perceived uniqueness of tourism products, as well as the distinctiveness of a locality, event, or festival—constitute salient perceptions that tourists tend to retain in their minds about a specific brand (Hankinson, 2009; Ekinici et al., 2023). In the context of local cuisine, DOBI conveys cultural identity and a sense of place to both domestic and international audiences. This further underscores the necessity of considering cultural uniqueness as a core dimension of designation of origin brand image.

- Affective brand image: In addition to cognitively oriented perceptions, affective perception constitutes a fundamental component of tourists' destination brand associations (Elouali et al., 2020). Affective image reflects an individual's emotional states and feelings toward a brand (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007). The operationalization of affective image of DOBI is therefore commonly linked to tourists' emotional responses to the brand, such as perceived attractiveness, distinctive brand personality, and favorable biases in brand associations (Boo et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2017; Majeed et al., 2024). Long et al. (2024) emphasized that, beyond core experiential attributes, the intangible aspects of culinary tourism products can evoke emotional attachment. Accordingly, affective brand image should be recognized as a significant component of DOBI.

3. Research methods

3.1. Research design

The procedures and analytical techniques for scale development have been widely emphasized by scholars as a sequential process that must be strictly followed, as deviations may compromise the validity and reliability of research findings (Churchill, 1979; Polit & Beck, 2006; Mora et al., 2016). In this study, the scale development process for the DOBI concept is informed by the methodological frameworks proposed by Churchill (1979) and DeVellis and Thorpe (2021).

- *Identification of DOBI dimensions and measurement items:* Using bibliometric analysis and systematic literature review, this step offers a comprehensive overview of the current state of scholarship and emerging research trends, while elucidating the theoretical foundations, conceptual definitions, and operationalization approaches associated with the constructs under investigation. Building upon this synthesis, the key characteristics of the composite constructs are identified, and a preliminary set of DOBI dimensions and corresponding measurement items is proposed.

- *Focus group discussion*: To assess the wording, clarity, and conceptual appropriateness of the proposed measurement scale (Churchill, 1979; Oluwatayo, 2012), this study conducted a focus group discussion with six faculty members from the School of Tourism, Hue University. These participants possess substantial academic expertise and in-depth knowledge of the research topic. The discussions were conducted in two rounds. The first clarified the conceptual aspects of DOBI, while the second evaluated the 30 proposed measurement items. As a result, a scale comprising five DOBI dimensions and 24 measurement items was established.

- *Expert judgment and content validity assessment*: The implementation of expert judgment was deemed appropriate given the novelty of the research construct (DOBI), which remains largely exploratory in nature, despite incorporating several normative elements adapted from prior studies (Polit & Beck, 2006; Mora et al., 2016). Due attention was therefore given to the selection of experts with substantial domain expertise and professional experience in branding and brand image research.

Regarding the number of expert panelists, the size may vary considerably, ranging from only a few individuals to several dozen. Nevertheless, prior studies generally recommend a moderate panel size to reduce the likelihood of random agreement, typically comprising six to fifteen experts depending on the complexity of the constructs under investigation (Lawshe, 1975; Wynd et al., 2003; Polit & Beck, 2006). This study adopted a panel of fourteen experts, including ten senior academics holding academic ranks of Associate Professor and currently teaching at domestic and international universities; two doctoral candidates specializing in tourism studies; and two managers of tourism companies. They were asked to assess the content validity of the proposed scale of DOBI. Accordingly, the 22 measurement items were evaluated as demonstrating high validity and were subsequently refined into the final measurement scale for DOBI.

- *Assessment of measurement scale using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)*: From the 22 refined measurement items, a structured questionnaire was developed and administered to tourists who have used services at vegetarian restaurants in Hue. Hue's vegetarian cuisine was selected as the empirical context due to its long-standing and distinctive culinary tradition, reflecting the integration of aristocratic refinement and Buddhist spirituality. It has evolved into a unique feature of Hue's culinary tourism and is widely recognized as a distinctive characteristic of the destination.

To conduct confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), this study followed the recommendation of Hair et al. (2010), which suggests a minimum sample size of 200-250 respondents. Using a convenient sampling method, a total of 250 questionnaires were distributed to tourists, of which, 248 were deemed valid and subsequently used for the analyses. The CFA procedures were conducted using IBM SPSS AMOS version 28.0.

3.2. Indicators for assessing measurement validity

Theoretically, the validity of a measurement scale refers to the extent to which the collected data accurately reflect or measure the underlying construct of interest (Taherdoost, 2016). A synthesis of the relevant literature indicates that scale validity may be influenced by multiple sources of evidence (Wynd et al., 2003; Polit & Beck, 2006; Oluwatayo, 2012), including internal structure, content, response processes, relationships with other variables, and consequential aspects (Figure 1).

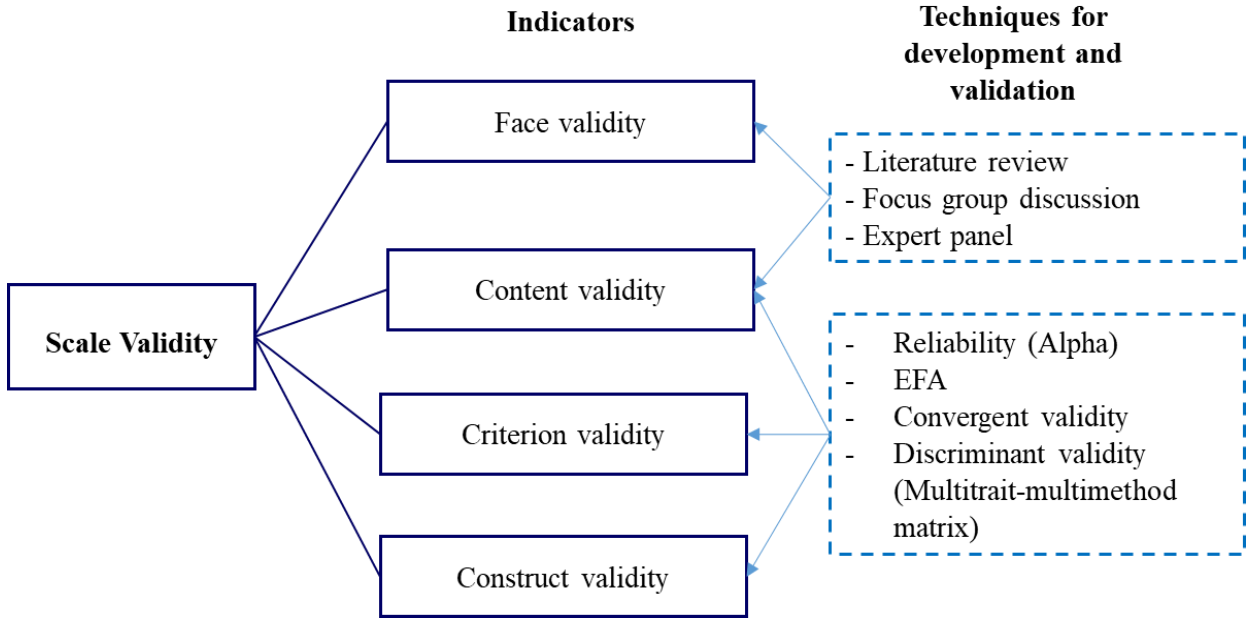


Figure 1. Procedure for a scale development and validation

Source: Applied from Churchill, 1979; Taherdoost, 2016

Several scholars argue that, with the exception of face validity - which are recommended but not mandatory—the remaining forms of validity are essential and should be rigorously assessed (Netemeyer et al., 2003; Mora et al., 2016; Yusoff, 2019). However, in practice, many empirical studies tend to evaluate only the content validity of proposed measurement scales by relying primarily on the Content Validity Index (CVI). While CVI provides useful overall evidence of content validity, the inclusion of item-level validity indicators can further strengthen the assessment and reduce potential risks in evaluating content validity (Polit & Beck, 2006). Accordingly, three indicators were applied in this study, namely I-CVI: Content validity of individual item (I-CVI), Scale-level content validity index (S-CVI/Ave), and Scale-level content validity index by universal agreement (S-CVI/UA).

4. Results

4.1. Evaluation of measurement validity

Based on the conceptual synthesis of DOBI, an initial pool of 30 measurement items was proposed for focus group discussion. The outcomes of the focus group review enabled the refinement and screening of the item pool, resulting in a reduced set of 24 measurement items, which were subsequently submitted for expert evaluation by a panel of 14 experts. Following this process, validity indices were calculated at both the item level and the scale level to assess the content validity of the DOBI measurement scale (Table 1).

Table 1. Validity assessment of DOBI

Construct		Items	Numbers rating at relevance	I-CVI	S-CVI/Ave	S-CVI/UA
Feature (FEAIM)	image	FEM1	14	1	0.96	0.60
		FEM2	14	1		
		FEM3	14	1		

Functional image (FUNIM)	image	FEM4	13	0.93	0.91 (0.96)*	0.40
		FEM5	12	0.86		
		FUN6	13	0.93		
		FUN7	13	0.93		
		FUN8	14	1		
		FUN9	14	1		
Consumption image (VALIM)	value	FUN10	10	0.71	0.95	0.50
		VAL11	13	0.93		
		VAL12	14	1		
		VAL13	12	0.86		
		VAL14	14	1		
Cultural image (CULIM)	uniqueness	CUL15	14	1	0.94	0.40
		CUL16	13	0.93		
		CUL17	14	1		
		CUL18	12	0.86		
		CUL19	13	0.93		
Affective (AFFE)	image	AFE20	14	1	0.93 (0.96)*	0.40
		AFE21	13	0.93		
		AFE22	11	0.79		
		AFE23	14	1		
		AFE24	13	0.93		

Note: Rating 1&2 = not relevant; 3&4 = relevant

* Scale-level content validity index after excluding FUN10 & AFE22

Source: Expert panel evaluation, 2025

The results presented in the table indicate that the majority of measurement items across the five proposed factors exhibit item-level content validity indices (I-CVI) exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.80 (Lynn, 1986), while the scale-level content validity indices (S-CVI) for all factors are above 0.90. These findings suggest that both the individual items and the factor-based measurement scales demonstrate a high level of content validity (Lynn, 1986; Polit & Beck, 2006).

However, two measurement items—namely, “Vegetarian cuisine at destination X helps tourists think more positively about life” (FUN10) and “Vegetarian cuisine at destination X has a stronger reputation than that of other destinations” (AFE22)—exhibited I-CVI values below 0.80 and were therefore excluded from the scale. The removal of these two items resulted in a substantial improvement in the scale-level content validity indices (S-CVI) of the corresponding factors (Table 1).

Consequently, the final measurement instrument for the five DOBI dimensions comprises 22 items, which were subsequently used to design the questionnaire administered to tourists experiencing vegetarian cuisine in Hue.

4.2. Assessment of DOBI measurement scale

Based on the assessment of item-level and scale-level validity, 22 measurement items were found to exhibit high validity and were retained for questionnaire development and subsequent tourist survey to test and refine the DOBI scale. A total of 248 valid responses were included in the analysis. The characteristics of the survey sample are summarized in the table below.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of surveyed sample

Categories		Number	%
Gender	Male	105	42.3
	Female	143	57.7

Nationality	Total	248	100.0
	Domestic tourists	186	75.0
	International tourists	62	25.0
Age	18-25	57	23.0
	25-34	119	48.0
	35-44	51	20.6
	45-54	16	6.5
	55 and above	5	2.0
Education	Total	248	100.0
	Elementary level, vocational training	33	13.3
	College and University	39	75.4
	Post-graduates	5	11.3
Occupation	Total	248	100.0
	Business	44	17.7
	Civil servants and public employees	106	42.7
	Blue-collar workers	44	17.7
	Students	34	13.7
	Retired	6	2.4
	Others	14	5.6
	Total	248	100.0

Source: Author's survey, April – September, 2025

The descriptive statistics presented in the table above indicate that female respondents accounted for 57.7% of the sample, and domestic tourists represented 75% of the respondents. A substantial proportion of the sample fell within the 25–44 age group, comprising 68.6% of the respondents, whereas those aged from 45 and above accounted for 17.8% (Table 2). In terms of educational attainment, 86.7% of the respondents held college, university, or postgraduate degrees. Regarding occupation, 17.7% of the sample were entrepreneurs, and 42.7% were civil servants or public employees. Overall, given the extended survey period and adequate sample size, the sample structure can be considered representative of the actual customer profile of vegetarian restaurants in Hue.

4.2.1. Assessment of DOBI measurement model

At this stage, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed to assess the measurement model of the constructs constituting DOBI and to examine the validity of the scale through indicators of convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity is used to evaluate the extent to which measurement items within the same construct are correlated, which is expected to be relatively high. This aspect is assessed through several criteria, including scale reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Detailed results of this assessment are presented in Tables 3 and 4, and Figure 2.

Table 3. Analysis of convergent validity and discriminant validity of DOBI

Items by constructs		Factor loadings	T-Value	Alpha	CR	AVE	MSV
Feature image (FEAIM)	FEM2	0.867	-	0.910	0.910	0.670	0.042
	FEM3	0.805	15.537				
	FEM4	0.823	16.097				
	FEM1	0.816	15.886				
	FEM5	0.779	14.749				
	FUN7	0.795	-	0.812	0.819	0.534	0.170

Functional image (FUNIM)	image	FUN8	0.782	10.180				
		FUN9	0.745	12.021				
		FUN6	0.581	7.632				
Consumption image (VALIM)	value	VAL12	0.900	-	0.833	0.815	0.534	0.020
		VAL11	0.652	10.180				
		VAL13	0.806	12.021				
		VAL10	0.503	7.632				
Cultural image (CULIM)	uniqueness	CUL16	0.788	-	0.894	0.894	0.630	0.170
		CUL15	0.842	14.207				
		CUL14	0.813	13.637				
		CUL17	0.800	13.376				
		CUL18	0.718	11.746				
Affective image (AFFE)		AFE22	0.840	-	0.843	0.833	0.565	0.020
		AFE21	0.904	13.653				
		AFE20	0.671	11.134				
		AFE19	0.536	8.477				

Note: AVE: Average Variance Extracted; CR: Construct composite reliability; MSV: Maximum shared variance

Source: Author's survey, April – September, 2025

The findings indicate that the DOBI measurement model, comprising all proposed constructs, demonstrates satisfactory psychometric properties. Specifically, all constructs exhibit high composite reliability (CR), which the lowest value is 0.815 (> 0.50). The average variance extracted (AVE) values for all constructs exceed the recommended threshold of 0.50. In addition, the maximum shared variance (MSV) for each construct is lower than its corresponding AVE, and the square root of AVE for each construct is greater than its correlations with the remaining constructs. These results confirm that the measurement scales for the DOBI constructs meet the requirements for reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 4. Fornell & Larcker matrix for assessing discriminant validity of DOBI (n=248)

	FEAIM	CULIM	AFFE	VALIM	FUNIM
FEAIM	0.819				
CULIM	0.142*	0.793			
AFFE	0.064	-0.019	0.752		
VALIM	0.088	0.121†	0.142†	0.731	
FUNIM	0.204**	0.412***	0.020	0.048	0.731

Note: The values in bold on the diagonal are the square roots of AVE.

Significant levels: *** $P = 0,001$; ** $P = 0,01$; * $P = 0,05$

Source: Author's survey, April – September, 2025

The results of CFA for measurement model of DOBI indicates that the model has all satisfactory indices, showing that it appropriately fitted the data (CMIN/df = 1,323 (χ^2 /df = 260,6232/197, $p = 0,002$); GFI = 0,915; CFI=0,977; TLI = 0,973; RMSEA = 0,036. The standardized factor loading of all measurement items are above 0,50, that confirms the convergent validity of the DOBI.

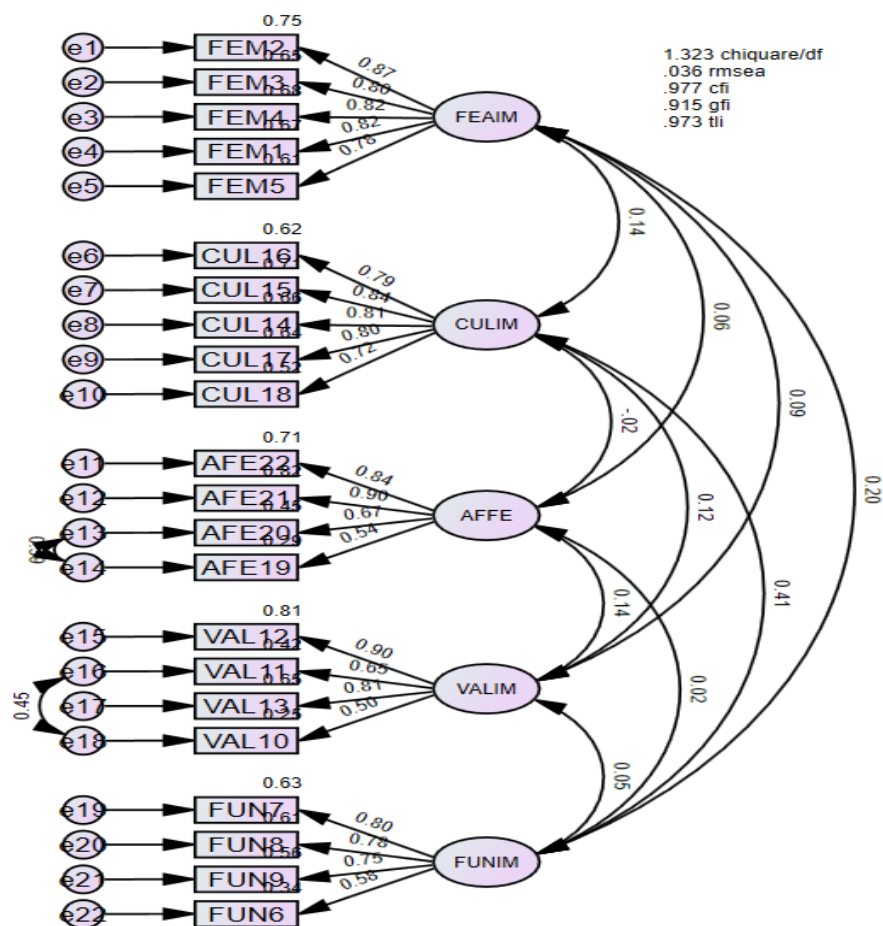


Figure 2. Measurement model of DOBI

Source: Author's survey, April – September, 2025

5. Discussion and Directions for Future Research

Although designation of origin brand image is a relatively new research concept, application of theories of brand image and brand associations reveals a fundamental consistency in both its conceptual scope and underlying dimensions. In this study, based on a rigorously designed research process and the judicious application of both qualitative and quantitative research methods, the findings show that DOBI is composed of five core dimensions, namely: (1) Feature image, (2) Functional image, (3) Consumption value image, (4) Affective image, and (5) Cultural uniqueness image, which are operationalized through 22 measurement items. In particular, through the introduction of cultural uniqueness image as a novel dimension of DOBI, this study makes a significant contribution to the destination branding literature by responding to prior calls for further research aimed at advancing the conceptualization and operationalization of the DOBI concept (Ghafari et al., 2017; Parris & Guzman, 2023; Wisker et al., 2023).

The scale validation results confirm that the proposed measurement scale of DOBI demonstrates strong reliability, high content validity, and robust construct validity. Furthermore, the results provide empirical evidence supporting the use of multiple criteria, techniques, and procedures for assessing scale validity, rather than relying exclusively on quantitative factor-based validation. Accordingly, this study establishes a foundation for the application of the DOBI scale in the context of local cuisine and provides a basis for extending research on designation-of-origin brand image across diverse tourism products and settings. The proposed scale may be

replicated and validated in different geographical and cultural contexts, while future research may refine and expand its dimensional structure to advance a more comprehensive understanding of DOBI.

From a theoretical perspective, scale development studies that rely solely on quantitative methods to assess reliability and factorial validity may not sufficiently ensure the extent to which a measurement scale adequately represents the construct being measured (Polit & Beck, 2006). This concern is particularly salient when the research concept is relatively new, multidimensional, and requires further empirical validation. In other words, greater attention should be paid to the appropriate and systematic integration of qualitative research techniques in the process of scale development. The development of the DOBI scale in this study represents an effort in this direction. As noted by Churchill (1979, p. 64), “scale development is a fundamental component in the advancement of a body of knowledge.”

From a methodological perspective, scale development plays a critical role in the research process and directly affects overall research quality. Accordingly, the scale development process has been widely conceptualized as a systematic and sequential procedure, with relatively consistent stages proposed in the literature (e.g., Churchill, 1979; Netemeyer et al., 2003; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021). Nevertheless, practical applications of these procedures remain highly diverse, and insufficient attention is often paid to the assessment of validity at both the item level and the overall scale level.

In particular, tourism research has tended to emphasize reliability and factorial validity through quantitative validation procedures, whereas qualitative methods are primarily used for item generation. As a result, systematic assessments of content validity remain relatively underdeveloped. Content validity is widely regarded as a fundamental prerequisite for ensuring the overall validity of a measurement scale and should be conducted in a rigorous and systematic manner (Yusoff, 2019; DeVellis & Thorpe, 2021).

From a practical application perspective, the selection of indicators used to assess content validity and factorial validity may yield different evaluation outcomes. Therefore, depending on the specific research context, it is advisable to adopt a combination of validity assessment criteria in order to minimize potential biases in scale evaluation (Lawshe, 1975; Lynn, 1986; Mora et al., 2016; Taherdoost, 2016). In this study, several additional validity indices (e.g., Aiken’s V, Cohen’s Kappa) were not employed for further comparative assessment. This limitation also represents an opportunity for future research to incorporate and contrast these indices, thereby providing further empirical evidence and comparative cases for extending and refining scale development and validation practices. In addition to the validation criteria employed in this study, further assessment of predictive validity, a dimension of criterion-related validity, may also be undertaken. Nevertheless, predictive validity - an important dimension of criterion-related validity - was not assessed due to the considerable time and resource demands of longitudinal data collection. Future research may address this limitation by examining the predictive capability of the proposed scale using larger samples and longitudinal research designs.

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Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Phát triển thang đo hình ảnh thương hiệu nơi chốn gắn với ẩm thực địa phương

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Tóm tắt

Hình ảnh thương hiệu nơi chốn của ẩm thực địa phương là khái niệm mới nổi và cần được nghiên cứu hoàn thiện cả về phương diện lý luận lẫn ứng dụng thực tiễn. Vận dụng kết hợp phương pháp nghiên cứu định tính và định lượng, nghiên cứu này tiến hành đề xuất và đánh giá giá trị hiệu lực của thang đo lường hình ảnh thương hiệu nơi chốn (DOBI) gắn với ẩm thực địa phương. Kết quả xác định 5 yếu tố cấu thành DOBI với 22 biến đo lường, gồm: Hình ảnh thuộc tính; Hình ảnh chức năng; Hình ảnh giá trị tiêu dùng; Hình ảnh cảm xúc; và Hình ảnh văn hóa độc đáo. Kết quả đánh giá tính hiệu lực của thang đo cho thấy các thành tố của DOBI đề xuất trong nghiên cứu này có giá trị hiệu lực về nội dung và hiệu lực nhân tố cao. Trên cơ sở đó, thảo luận một số đóng góp mới và định hướng nghiên cứu tiếp theo.

Từ khóa: Hình ảnh thương hiệu; Chỉ định xuất xứ; Ẩm thực địa phương; Giá trị hiệu lực.

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