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Guest-Editors: Saul Neves de Jesus, Margarida Pocinho and Mariusz Kwiatkowski

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Tourism, Regional Development and Well-being

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WINEMAKING AND WINE TOURISM IN LUBUSKIE AS A STRATEGY FOR LOCAL REVITALISATION

Jerzy Leszkowicz-Baczyński¹

ABSTRACT

The current paper aims to provide a theoretical and conceptual analysis of wine tourism in Lubuskie, Poland, to relate the experiences underlying the current state of the art and to formulate some guidelines for directions for future enotourism development. Lubuskie winemaking was reborn at the beginning of the present century, after half a century of the tradition remaining dormant. The redevelopment of Lubuskie winemaking has been accompanied by numerous manifestations of the development of enotourism and is noticeable in each of the examined cases below. The article is based on the author's research, which includes quality interviews with vineyard owners who state that, in addition to wine production, wine tourism is an equally important trend in their professional lives. Lubuskie's enotourism promotion is consistent with the patterns developed in countries with well-established wine traditions, although it is not as diverse. An important component of Lubuskie's tourism promotion is the reference to its pre-war tradition, combined with an exposition of its material wine heritage. The recommendations for further activities in the field of enotourism are related, on the one hand, to the expansion of the vineyards' enotourism packages and, on the other hand, to the implementation of new concepts for the popularization of Zielona Góra's wine heritage, including the development of the wine route in the city.

Keywords: Winemaking, Wine Tourism, Poland, Lubuskie.

JEL Classification: Z32

"They [foreign winemakers] look at us somehow strangely in general. I'm not talking about the Hungarians at all, who say: where do you want to plant it? In Poland? Where is it? Over there, on the other side of the mountains? Give it over. By this cold sea? Oh... no. Nothing will come of it!" [Laughs] (RKM 2.5)

1. INTRODUCTION

Poland is the northernmost country in Europe, where after a dormancy of almost half a century, commercial vine growing has been restored. From the perspective of the countries with well-established winemaking traditions, the process of Lubuskie's winemaking revitalization makes an interesting case. Lubuskie is the best-known winegrowing and wine production area in Poland and its main urban centre is Zielona Góra. The specificity of the regional winemaking is based on numerous references to the region's wine history, dating back nearly eight centuries.

The current paper aims to highlight some of the questions that scholars must face when they approach the issue of showing, on the one hand, the contemporary specificity of

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Lubuskie winemaking, and on the other, becoming acquainted with Lubuskie winemakers' activities aimed at developing wine tourism in the region. In order to achieve this goal, it will be necessary to answer three research questions. The first one is this: What are the strengths and weaknesses of Lubuskie's winemaking development? The answer will generate the next question: What is the specificity of enotourism promotion in the Lubuskie region? The third question, on the nature of recommendations, is this: What subsequent new actions should be considered as being the most effective for developing regional wine tourism in Lubuskie?

Poland's border changes after the end of the Second World War resulted, among other things, in a shift of Poland's territory to the west, i.e. to land that was previously German territory. The change caused a mass population exchange on Poland's western border. The post-war settlers could not fully utilize the capital inherited from their predecessors because only some of them had the needed skills to grow vineyards. Moreover, the socialist economic policy in the post-war decades did not allow private individual owners to produce and commercially sell wine. In the 1980s, the last vineyard in the city was closed down. The revived Lubuskie winemaking has a short tradition and its foundation is the political transformation of 1989.

The political change meant, on the one hand, the collapse of the non-market socialist economy and the state monopoly in many spheres of production; and on the other hand, it introduced the rules of the free market, liberating it from central economic planning. This made it possible for private owners, who often took up this challenge despite the lack of previous experience, to return to viticulture.

The organisation of the wine market started in Poland with their accession to the European Union in 2004. A year later the European Commission included Poland in its wine-growing zones. It was only in 2009, when the obligation to produce wine from one's own crops in the so-called tax warehouse was abolished, that wine producers started to register their activities. Another facilitation was provided by the Act on Production and Bottling of Wine Products, which passed in 2011. The new regulations, among other things, introduced the notion of a wine producer, which exempted the farmers who produced no more than 100 hectolitres from the obligation to register business activity for wine production, and abolished many earlier formal requirements. Since then, the interest in winemaking has significantly increased, while the acreage and the volume of wine production have increased. The data show strong developmental trends. In the initial period, the area of grape plantations was only 50 ha, but new plantations have been added every year. In the 2018/2019 season, vines in Poland were grown on an area of 394 hectares, and the data for 2019/2020 indicate a chance to increase the area under cultivation to over 460 hectares. Along with the increase in the cultivated area, the volume of wine production also increases. In the first years it amounted to about 200 hectolitres. In 2011 it doubled, and in 2018/2019 it reached over 12 thousand hectolitres. The dynamics of the process is indicated by the fact that 295 domestic vineyards were entered in the register of wine producers for the 2019/2020 marketing year (KOWR, 2019). Today, the landscape of Lubuskie is enriched by 40 vineyards, and their owners are engaged in enotouristic activities—hosting guests who are interested in wine. This type of tourism, as a result of the recent revitalization of winemaking in Lubuskie, is a permanent element of the region's tourist attractions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Wine tourism literature reveals the multiplicity of enotourism's aspects. In its narrowest, basic meaning, according to Brochado, Stoleriu, and Lupu (2019), the source of wine tourism is people's motivation to become acquainted with new types of wine. Bouzdine-Chameeva

(2019) broadens the scope of this notion by claiming that wine tourism makes it possible to come to know the wine on the one hand, and to know the location of its production site on the other. In a larger context, according to Bruwer and Alant (2009) wine tourism can be combined with other types of lifestyles. Looking at the social profile of people practising such activity, one can see that today it is particularly attractive for young people, including more women than men (Bouzdine-Chameeva, 2016). Other approaches underline the fact that the principal factors of visitors' motivation include touring vineyards, wineries, wine festivals, and wine exhibitions, and furthermore, the attributes of the wine region (Getz, 2000; Hall et al., 2000). This optimally assumes the view that wine tourism is an activity of visiting vineyards, wine-growing farms, wine festivals, wine conventions and other events where wine is the main motivating element for participation (cf. Hall, Longo, Mitchell, & Johnson, 2000). Pearce (2005) emphasised the role of three dimensions of motivation functions: novelty, escape/relaxation and relationship strengthening. In this approach, the 'novelty' factor differentiates experiences based on interests and fun, while the 'escape/relaxation' factor refers to a change from one's daily environment, combined with leisure. The third factor, 'relationship strengthening', is based on motivations stemming from desires to share experiences with family and friends.

The common denominator of the analyses devoted to wine tourism is the argument that tourism is a link between agricultural activities and general leisure services (Carmichael, 2005). Thus, enotourism makes it possible for vineyard owners and wine producers, on the one hand, and for companies in the tourism industry—be they involved in hotels, restaurants or transport services—on the other hand, to earn an income. Montella (2017) pointed out such a relationship, recognising that wine events and wine tourism play a key role in local and rural development, (Cavicchi & Santini, 2014). Bruwer and Lesschaeve's (2012) approach highlights the roles of the triad, linking the complex relationship between three operators: a wine region as a tourist destination, the local wineries, and the tourist/consumer.

The issue of wine tourism is also considered in a model context as a construct composed of specific components: theme; concept of staying; visitors; guidance of visitors at the same level; well-being; attractions/activities; and scenery (Mueller & Scheurer, 2004). In turn, Coelho, Gosling and Araújo (2018) created a theoretical framework for tourism experiences with three dimensions: personal, relational and environmental (Santos et al., 2019).

In addition to many approaches to wine tourism, it is interesting to try to interpret this concept by referring to other categories. Brochado, Stoleriu and Lupu (2019) described such a proposal by referring to the 'multisensory experience' in which all human senses are involved. According to this concept, the cognitive perspective, understood as 'viewing', should be complemented by the inclusion of the other human senses. Creating a situation in which enotourists experience a multisensory experience of wine-related places is called multisensory impressions (Heide & Grønhaug, 2006). It does not need to be proved that the view of wine places and facilities should be complemented by taste sensations from wine tasting and accompanying dishes because culinary tasting inevitably triggers a sense of taste and smell. Other important stimuli are the sounds that complement the full sensual experience associated with a vineyard or winery. This last issue, perceived as the audiosphere of the surrounding space, is also the subject of specialist descriptions (Kinal, 2019).

Activities consisting in the multiplication of tourist experiences (stimulating the senses) are supplemented by practices involving participants in trips both in the sensory and cognitive dimensions. Their aim is to acquire knowledge, provide information about the places visited, the culture of the region, and the specifics of wine production (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). This movement of tourism refers to the issue of cognitive needs. The most of the studies on the subject refer to the thesis that wine tours have an important informative function, satisfying the cognitive needs of the tourists.

The scope of knowledge gained at that time is extensive, mainly concerning the wine itself, its taste properties provided by individual grape varieties, as well as other factors such as the influences of climate and soil type. The concept of Terroir Wine Tourism is included in the perspective of objective conditions of winemaking. Terroir is understood as the complete natural environment in which a particular wine is produced (Marlowe & Lee, 2018). Thus, it concerns the natural factors, especially soil, topography, and climate. (Marlowe & Lee, 2018). In addition to the analysis of objective factors, the issues of history, both the vineyard itself and the entire wine region, are also relevant. For many people, especially from abroad, the culture of the region, the customs and habits of its inhabitants, and finally the works of art are also important.

Another thread in the analysis of wine tourism lies in the concept of experience economy, emphasizing the significant impact of impressions that are the result of widely understood consumption, associated with a stay in new vineyards, the purchase of local souvenirs, the tasting of local dishes, and finally the activities undertaken in these places. The range of stimuli that make up these activities can be extremely wide (Mossberg, 2007).

3. ENOTOURISM IN POLAND

Wine in Poland is increasingly fashionable and thus popular. While at the beginning of the present century, Poland was home to only 27 vineyards, the period of the greatest dynamics of their growth was in the years preceding the country's accession to the EU in 2005 and continuing after. The annual increase in the number of vineyards reached over 30 emerging ones at that time (years 2006-2010) (winogrodniczy.pl.) The number of registered vineyards in Poland in 2018/2019 reached 230, the total cultivated area almost 395 hectares, and the wine production reached 12,716 hectolitres (Wine Market, 2019). This trend is supported by the growing number of people who are passionate about vineyards and wine. Their joint activities contributed to the creation of enotourism in Lubuskie, as well as in other parts of the country. This type of tourism activity is also reflected in Polish academic writing (cf. Kosmaczewska, 2006, 2008; Mazurkiewicz-Pizło, 2010, 2012; Majchrzak-Lepczyk, 2012; Olszewski & Drózd, 2013; Sokół, 2015). The process of enotourism development in Lubuskie has also become the subject of research (Smogór, 2012; Charzyński, Nowak, & Podgórski, 2013; Kopczyńska, 2014; Zagrocka, 2016; Leszkowicz-Baczyński, 2019; Angutek et al., 2019).

Enotourism in Poland is based on patterns and principles developed previously in countries with established wine cultures. The term wine tourism is understood as organised tourism focused on typical wine issues, i.e. visiting vineyards, wineries, tastings, and meetings with the producers, with the possibility of discovering new places, tastes of regional cuisine and monuments. One of the fashionable alternatives of this activity is also travelling along the routes called 'wine trails'. Many such routes have already been established in Poland, among them: Jasielski Wine Trail (16 vineyards), Małopolski Wine Trail (26 vineyards), Podkarpacki Vineyards Trail (40 vineyards), Rostoczański Wine Trail (5 vineyards), Sandomierski Wine Trail (11 vineyards), and Dolnośląski Trail of Beer and Wine (17 vineyards). Now, the first initiative of this kind in the country was created in Lubuskie, and is called Lubuskie Wine and Honey Trail, comprising 33 vineyards and 4 apiaries. As assumed by the authors of this project, the trail is to promote a positive image of Lubuskie and Poland in terms of art, culture, and the protection of Poland's cultural and national heritage (Wine Route, 2019). Another initiative popularising Lubuskie is the Lubuskie Regional Product programme. Its creators assume that the regional products play an important role in tourism development and are a popular form of promoting the region. Moreover, thanks to local entrepreneurship

and economic activities, they improve the quality of life in Poland by generating individual income and creating new jobs.

The opportunities for the development of enotourism in Poland should be seen in the light that they can be implemented not only by large producers, but also on the micro-scale, by small vineyards with limited potential, of which there is a majority in the country. The size of Polish vineyards ranges from a dozen or more acres to a dozen or more hectares, the smaller ones dominating in number.

4. METHODOLOGY

The main goal of the current research is to understand better the challenges of wine tourism in Lubuskie and to show the background of this sector's development. The empirical material for this study was collected between autumn 2015 and spring 2016 in the area of the Lubuskie vineyards. The sample was made up of vineyard owners from this area who are active in winemaking (viticulture, wine production), and who are also usually involved in promoting enotourism on their farms. The size of the surveyed category is approximately one third of the vineyard owners within Lubuskie. The selection for the survey was deliberate, which was justified by the small size of the surveyed population.

The empirical part of the study was based on the tradition of empirical qualitative analyses. Due to the multi-perspective nature of the subjects, two types of qualitative interview were used. The first one was a thematic interview with elements of a biographical interview, carried out on the basis of a list of instructions. The order of the issues tackled and the emphasis given by the interviewees to particular threads in their statements was different for each of the interviews. This type of interviews was used to obtain statements on current issues, related to the specific conditions of running a vineyard. The second type of interview was a narrative interview (oral history), in which the researcher's role was (seemingly) more limited, because his or her interjections were much less frequent, allowing the interviewees to speak more freely.

5. RESULTS

Referring to the first of the above questions (What are the strengths and weaknesses of Lubuskie's winemaking development?), it was assumed that the characteristics of conditions supporting the development of Lubuskie winemaking are based on six issues.

The first issue is the region's brand, which is strongly associated with winemaking thanks to its centuries-long history. Documents indicate that grape seedlings were brought to Lubuskie around 1150 by settlers from Flanders (Kres, 1966; Kuleba, 2013). Over the following centuries, the region's brand became established, to which August Grempler, the founder of the wine and champagne factory, contributed spectacularly. In the 1920s in Grempler's Wine Factory, which is famous throughout Germany, 250 thousand bottles of sparkling wine were produced annually, and in the time before the outbreak of World War II, this production reached 800 thousand bottles a year (Palm House, 2016). The pride of Lubuskie winemaking is the modern production of "Grempler Sekt" based on a historical recipe.

The second issue is the important promotional argument in the modern revitalization of winemaking, which was confirmed by the dynamics of creating and reconstructing vineyards. Their presence makes it possible to speak about the return of the old tradition, and the region is unequivocally associated with winemaking in the country.

Third, there will be an important municipal initiative: the creation of a Wine Centre and Local Government Vineyard in Zabór near Zielona Góra, which has a record size of 33 hectares in the country. The centre hosts many events that popularize wine culture, both

in terms of cultural venues and in terms of workshops and scientific seminars (Lubuskie Centrum, 2019). It is the only museum in the country offering the possibility to observe 'live' the process of wine production. The vineyard adjacent to the wine centre (several plots of land leased by the surrounding vineyards' owners) is unique thanks to its function.

Fourth, Lubuskie's climatic and natural conditions are conducive to winemaking, especially the type of soil suitable for vineyards, such as the abundance of terrains with south-oriented slopes. The climate is characterised by balanced annual temperatures, a smaller decline in winter temperatures than in the eastern part of the country and adequate rainfall.

Fifth, the Lubuskie region is traditionally associated with the grape harvest tradition in Zielona Góra. The annual grape harvest festival held at the beginning of September is an event that attracts tens of thousands of tourists from many regions, both domestic and foreign. Presentations of local wine stands and wine tastings are accompanied by numerous cultural events, exhibitions and concerts. An important role is played by the taxiing tourists to individual vineyards for local tastings on 'winebuses' that have been especially prepared for grape harvest by the city transport company.

Sixth, the wine tradition is not only about preserving the view of the vineyards in the local landscape. It is evidenced by the production of local wines. The pre-war achievements of many wineries in Zielona Góra, with August Gremper's leading factory, were continued during the post-war decades by the State Lubuskie Wine Factory, which exported its products also to other countries. Today, however, owners of private vineyards acquire achievements, winning medals and awards at conventions and wine competitions.

The presented factors indicate the consolidation of the development of winemaking in Lubuskie, as well as the grounding of enotourism activities. The picture of conditions, however, needs to be supplemented with a list of blockades to the development of winemaking.

First of all, among the drawbacks, we will include much less favourable—compared with the wine-making areas of southern Europe—natural conditions: climate and weather variations. They pose a threat to the harvest, especially in spring, when frost can destroy vine shoot bundles. Wine production in Lubuskie is, to a large extent, subject to weather conditions.

Second, inter-regional comparisons reveal the small size of Lubuskie vineyards, which determines the relatively lower profitability of wine production. The smaller production scale and the manual grape harvesting have an impact on the price of local wines compared to that of foreign wines, making them relatively expensive. Thus, Lubuskie wines are associated with quite elite products, but at the same time are not treated as a standard choice.

Third, winemaking's development is blocked by the difficulties of obtaining manpower. There is no system of national oenological education and therefore a shortage of people who have knowledge in wine care. Even the labour force in the form of hired employees from Ukraine does not solve the problem because the working conditions in Lubuskie vineyards are not attractive to them.

Fourth, the scale of the additional, regional tourist packages [local events] supporting the marketing of individual vineyards is insufficient. It seems justified to extend the range of attractions that can be provided to enotourists.

The second of the research questions posed in the text concerned the specificity of enotourism promotion in Lubuskie, i.e., What is the specificity of enotourism promotion in the Lubuskie region? The materials from the author's interviews with the owners of Lubuskie vineyards will be used below. The information obtained during research contacts shows that this specificity is based on four main pillars. The first one is the above mentioned, the region's centuries-old wine heritage.

On the one hand, Germans have contributed to this [vineyard tradition], could convey tradition and inspire...with willingness or reluctance, whatever it is called. (...) It matters, because in the chronicles (...) they write [about it]. One cannot ignore the achievements of the predecessors. Although I am not particularly happy about the fact that the Germans were here and had to leave--we didn't have any influence on it--... But they laid the foundations for what is happening now.... Everyone has made a contribution. One cannot ignore the achievements of the predecessors. [PMM 1,2]

The influence of the historical wine heritage on enotourism is moderate, as the region lacks many well-preserved monuments of material wine culture. It has been mentioned earlier that almost all historical vineyards were closed down for a time. On the other hand, most of the new vineyards were created in new places or in locations where both the continuity of cultivation and the linearity of the cultural message were broken. All the more valuable, thus, are the vineyards founded on old plantations.

We can try to rebuild certain things historically. Anyway, this fragment, this hectare of vineyard, which I have planted, is on an old hill, where there were vines before the war. And these shrubs are still in Zabór. This is it, and we can use it and it's cool. But to create a market like it was before, I don't think there's a chance. [FCC 2,7]

Pastor Wegener had his property here. He cultivated vines and also vinified wines. No one else was coming to him, but Alexander von Humboldt because they were friends from the university. Together they studied botany in Berlin. (...) Wegener described this in his diaries. It is one hundred metres from here to the left of Pastor Wegener's house. This house is still in the same position. Everything is abandoned there. And there are old, unfortunately already dead shrubs. Perhaps they were grown by him? (KMG 3.5)

Despite the shortage of a material wine heritage, however, the history itself is nevertheless important for the vineyard owners. During tours of their vineyards, they devote a lot of time to describing the old history of the region and its immediate surroundings. They also refer to the original crops. This aspect constitutes the value of Lubuskie, which is not at the disposal of other regions in the country.

Inside the Głogów Silesia borders, these lands were, in a way, part of Austria because before the war for Silesia between Prussia and Austria, which was in 1741, there were marked vineyards to the west of Łaz. Between Łaz and Zabór this large vineyard, where today [the Lubuskie Wine Centre was established] there was also a large vineyard, so we knew where to look for these old shrubs and we found—just west of Łaz, a little bit to the south—old shrubs that were piling up somewhere on the bushes, on the trees in general. We tried to cope with them anyway... to survive..... they are today, listed as natural monuments (FKL 2,7)

The village of Mozów, formerly Mozau, based on an old map from 1858 or 1854. [Our] vineyard is here - Züllichau [shows on map] (PMM 1,2)

The second pillar, after the historical heritage, of the region's enotouristic promotion is the annual grapevine festival, which falls at the beginning of September and lasts over a week. It is the strongest point of the region's image, and the Zielona Góra Wine Festival is widely known in the country. It is important that in the last two decades its formula has gradually changed. In the early 1990s and later, the 'grapevine' was made up of products from abroad, as local winemakers were not able to sell their products due to the lack of

appropriate regulations. Gradually, the festivals began to emphasize the importance of local products, thus directing attention to the Lubuskie vineyard stands surrounding the Zielona Góra Town Hall.

The third pillar is that the essence of Lubuskie winemaker tourism package is the winemakers' readiness to receive tourists and to guide them around the vineyards and wine production facilities. Such meetings have multiple functions: (1) they appeal to tourists' cognitive demands by way of the historical dimension, which is related to the region and its tradition, as well as by way of the aspects of the wine—the knowledge of vineyards and of wines; (2) they appeal to tourists' sensual demands, such as by way of offering wine tastings; (3) and finally, they serve a ludic function by way of offering local cuisine. Following the activities of winemakers from other countries the tasting of various types of wine is accompanied by the offer of such things as locally baked bread, baked ham, local cheeses and cold cuts, as well as grape preserves. Sometimes workshops are organized to educate in selected skills as well.

I have another hobby: I make sausages and cheese. I make sausages less often, but the cheeses also have to be turned over [like turning bottles while aging]. I like doing this. We match wines with cheeses - our wines with our cheeses. And we try to present these to our customers. (YYMM 2.5)

Fourthly, an important role in Lubuskie's enotourism promotion is played by the Lubuskie Wine Centre in Zabór near Zielona Góra, established in 2015 thanks to the efforts of the Marshal's Office. Its main objective is to develop the brand and tourist potential of the Lubuskie Voivodeship, as well as the construction of a regional identity, the integration of wine-growing communities and the reclamation of traditions related to viticulture and wine production in Lubuskie (Centrum Winiarstwa, 2019). The Centre performs numerous functions: representative, tourist, recreational, didactic and museum functions. In previous years it also fulfilled the role of a researching and teaching base, enabling the education of students at the faculty of wine and an advisory centre for winemakers. Thanks to the Conference Room it is possible to conduct wine, sommelier and culinary workshops.

The owners of Lubuskie vineyards do not limit themselves to the production of wine itself. Everyone sees the need to promote their vineyard and their products. They remember that those who manage tourism very often visit those places that offer home wines and products. On their locations they observe the crops, the grape harvest, and the process of wine production, and they have the opportunity to taste beverages, talk to the hosts, and visit the cellars on the farms. In addition, they can purchase bottles of wine and other products related to their own wine-making activities on site.

The interviews revealed that Lubuskie winemakers undertake three main promotional strategies, apart from wine production itself. The first one is participation in the Wine Harvest, through their own wine stands, selling wine. The promotion of the vineyard plays an important role when winemakers host tourists arriving by bus. The crowning element is the participation in the best wine competition.

The second strategy is a promotion directed to wine tourists. Usually, it consists of showing the guests around the vineyard, preparing dinners—including local culinary specialties—and providing the tasting of various types of wine. In Lubuskie, the local specialties include oven-baked bread, baked ham, cheeses and cold cuts. The attraction also lies in the accommodation—allowing the guests longer stays in the vineyard.

I make Koryciński cheese. It's one of the simpler ones, Gouda, Swiss. Gorgonzola, Mascarpone. It depends what I feel like. I buy bacteria in the shop; I get everything there. I do it all by myself. I try to encourage my family, but somehow the family doesn't get to it yet. I make sausages myself too. I make cottage cheese, I smoke

it. (...) There's satisfaction, as you look later... and everything's gone. [Laughs] (RKM 2.5)

The third strategy refers to the cultural aspect. This has a strong reference to the history of the place where the vineyard was established, the knowledge of the history of the region. In practical terms, however, it is about the devotion with which Lubuskie winemakers strive to recreate grape varieties that were locally grown in previous centuries.

Winegrowing and wine production in Lubuskie are always family-based in nature, which means that they involve all adult members of the winemaker's family, even if those members are simultaneously active in other spheres.

It is good that there are my sons... When I tell [one] "go, get it", he will get it. I'll say "go to the field with a tractor", and he will go. Everyone's working. After we finish our work, we'll come home, have dinner, it's 4 - 5 p.m. There are some things you can't do [by yourself]. (JLP 1.5)

My wife also works in the vineyard, although she has very little time. She is the director of the hospital here in [name of the village]. She has little time. But she likes doing it [helping in the vineyard] very much and sometimes when she has that free moment, she helps us.... My daughter also works in the vineyard. She is a psychologist. She works in [name of the village] with difficult youths. And we still have agritourism rooms, which actually my daughter runs. We're holding it up for now. We'll see what happens next. (RKM 2.5).

The short period since the vineyards have been reborn means that the owners are still in the learning stage, gathering experiences related to running the vines and making wine. In this sense, their industry is still innovative.

But for me [vineyards] have unlimited possibilities. I can go for wine-related tourism, I can cook with wine, I can design, I can do workshops. I can go back to my profession—the hinterland is home, in the direction of plein air painting. I can be a nurseryman, which I am. I can sell fresh fruit. I can make wine. I can talk about it. I can design a label. I can do anything that develops me. That somehow gets me excited. (laughs). (RKS 1.5)

The third of the undertaken research questions was this: What subsequent new actions should be considered as being the most effective for developing regional wine tourism in Lubuskie? The presented research material indicates that the Lubuskie vineyard owners fully accept the idea of enotourism, and their promotions are focused on this type of recreational activity. It is interesting to note, though, that only one of the interviewees indicated the option of accepting enotourists travelling in campers. It is worth promoting this option to others. Secondly, it is justified to promote even more the participation of individual wine producers in wine competitions. Two of the vineyard owners said the following about their achievements so far:

The first of such presentations of our wines [competitions] were in Wroclaw, at the Polish wine festival. It was already after the new millennium.... It was the first serious wine fair and evaluation because these usually go hand in hand. Our wines were also evaluated. Awards can be viewed on our website. We received first, second and third prizes. [KMG 7]

[In response to a question about participation in the fair:] Yes. There is a wine fair in Poland, the largest in Poland and most recognized by winemakers in Krakow. And there we try to send wines every year.... In 2014 I probably sent the wine myself. This wine won a silver medal. My friend was also a co-creator

of this wine, and this is our common success.... Once a year we have meetings—a wine convention. (JLP 1.5)

6. CONCLUSION

The small size of the vineyards, as well as the limited scale of wine production in Lubuskie, make it incomparable to the traditional wine regions of Europe: Spain, Portugal, Italy and France in terms of area and volume of wine production and the spread of wine tourism. Another constraint results from the fact that enotourism in Lubuskie is at an early stage of development. However, the data from the author's own research document numerous similarities between Lubuskie winemakers and those from southern European regions. The factors that make Lubuskie vineyards similar to those in recognized wine regions include the focus on organic farming and the vineyard owners' ecological lifestyles, the diversification of wine promotion channels, and at the same time the intensive development of wine tourism. The factor that distinguishes Lubuskie from the vineyards of European prestige is the tendency to develop the wine sector significantly, as illustrated by the continuous increase in the number of vineyards and their size.

Lubuskie vineyard owners are following the best practices tested in other countries with rich wine traditions. They organize accommodations, prepare dinners combined with stories about the pre-war fate of the vineyards, and their rebirth at the turn of the last and present century. The menu is the local cuisine, based on local dishes prepared on site.

Wine tourism in Lubuskie is managed in two ways. On the one hand, at the macro-level, Lubuskie's enotourism is run by the vineyard owners, with a focus on promoting their own farms and the surrounding attractions. On the other hand, it is also carried out as part of major local government projects, such as the creation of the Wine Centre and Local Government Vineyard in Zabór. The limitations of wine tourism are noticeable, especially the lack of well-established traditions of wine culture, the relatively high price of local products, and the small number of vineyards in relation to the whole country. At the same time, the last factor is a magnet for regional vineyards.

The strongest factor popularising wine issues in Lubuskie is the annual grape harvest festival in Zielona Góra, an event that promotes local vineyards and their products. The vintage harvest is a combination of a fair and a series of cultural events. The trend of a new, provincial location of the event is important, which year after year accentuates the existence of local vineyards and their products.

An independent promotion strategy of enotourism should be carried out by the city authorities to popularize the wine monuments of Zielona Góra. The buildings of the first sparkling wine factory in Germany (1826), the former August Grempler Wine Factory, have been preserved in the city. The buildings of Heinrich Raetsch's Cognac Brennerei Factory (1886) have been carefully revitalized, and huge wine cellars in many places in the city have been preserved. If this potential is exploited, planning a wine tourist route around the city has a chance to become a stimulus for many enotourists. Internet promotion should be subordinated to this objective.

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EXPLORATORY WALK AS A METHOD OF STUDYING URBAN TOURISM SPACE: A CASE OF CHARLES BRIDGE IN PRAGUE

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Mariusz Kwiatkowski²

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to characterise the concept and discuss the possibilities of applying exploratory walking as a method of research in urban tourism spaces. In the article, the original concept of the method is characterised and discussed based on a pilot study. The place chosen for the pilot study is Charles Bridge in Prague. The conclusions about further work on improving the method and adapting it to the research needs related to the use of urban spaces by tourists are confirmed. Such walks can be a useful research method and a potential tool for recognising and introducing social and spatial changes. The exploratory walks help to obtain more material than sedentary interviews. Despite the positive functions of the walks, the pilot study also showed that the method could not function alone. Other methods and techniques should complement it. The analyses in the article method can contribute to a better understanding of the phenomena and processes observed in urban tourist spaces, as well as to the design and implementation of changes serving improving tourist services.

Keywords: Exploratory Walk Method, Public Space, Interview.

JEL Classification: Z39, B49, Z19

1. INTRODUCTION

How can social researchers contribute to the development of knowledge about the function of urban tourist space? This article proposes a solution based on the adaptation, improvement and dissemination of mobile and participatory research methods (Bates & Rhys Taylor, 2018; Prominski & von Seggern, 2019; O'Neill & Roberts, 2020). One of them is the author's concept of the exploratory walk (Kwiatkowski, 2016). Experts evaluated this idea during a pilot research and study. The conclusions of this pilot can be useful not only for developing the tested concept but also for those researchers and social practitioners who are looking for adequate ways to study and adapt tourism spaces to the diverse and changing needs of their users.

The article's aim is to characterise the concept of the exploratory walk as a method of researching urban tourism space in the light of pilot research carried out in a popular tourist destination. The exploratory walk is a combination of research in motion and social intervention. In some cases, cognitive functions come to the fore; in others, intervention functions (design and implementation of changes). In most cases, practical tasks and cognitive goals balance and reinforce each other.

The described pilot study was organised at Charles Bridge in Prague and followed by conducting an expert assessment of the method by a group of social researchers from several

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countries. The walk was carried out according to a pre-agreed scenario. The bridge was purposely chosen as a place popular among tourists from around the world. The participants of the pilot were experienced researchers who also played the role of experts. They were asked to pay attention to the selected features and phenomena taking place at the bridge. The final phase was a group discussion on the potentials and limitations of exploratory walks as a research method.

The article consists of three parts. In the first, the authors characterise the original concept of exploratory walks and present the assumptions of the pilot study. In the second, the course of the pilot walk was described. The third part is a summary of the discussion that took place after the walk. The final section comprises a conclusion about further work on improving the method and adapting it to the research needs related to the use of urban spaces by tourists.

2. EXPLORATORY WALKS IN URBAN TOURIST SPACE: ASSUMPTIONS OF THE PILOT RESEARCH

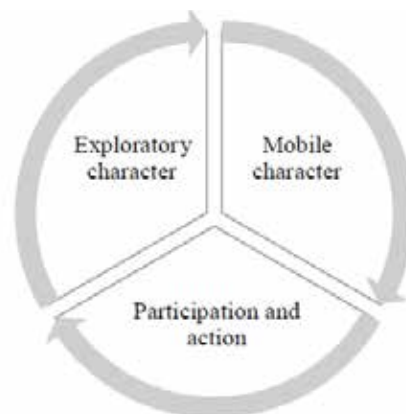
In this part of the article, the theoretical and methodological assumptions of the pilot study are discussed. The authors explain the key term and justify its use in social research. Subsequently, the main objectives of the pilot walk and the principles according to which it was conducted are presented.

The term “exploratory walk”, in a sense similar to the one adopted in this article, was first explained in research on so-called “networking studies” (Kwiatkowski, 2016). It was pointed out that during a deliberately organised walk, it is easier than in other circumstances to create and develop interpersonal and inter-organisational networks working to solve social problems. In other articles, the authors emphasised the educational and integrational functions of this form of research in the context of intercultural relations and the potentials for co-creating local cohesion (Doğan, Bazuń, & Kwiatkowski, 2019; Kwiatkowski, 2019). In this article, theoretical and methodological achievements are related to the assessment and development of urban tourism space.

For this study, the term “exploratory walk” refers to the mobile version of participatory action research. The partakers as co-walkers move together on foot in a selected space, explore the relationship between this space and community life, and conduct conversations regarding observed phenomena, processes and regularities.

In light of this definition, the exploratory walk is distinguished by its (1) exploratory and (2) mobile character, (3) and its focus on participation and action.

Figure 1. The Main Features of the Exploratory Walk



Source: Own Elaboration

As an exploratory study, it combines cognitive and practical functions. To explore means to think about something thoroughly before deciding what should be done and what is specific of the space. The authors assumed that joint exploration gives one a chance to understand social phenomena better and to formulate recommendations on solving perceived problems more accurately than traditional research.

The supposition of cognitive walking functions is confirmed in many studies on history, philosophy and theory of walking (Solnit, 2000; Gross, 2014), as well as in reports from empirical research conducted by those using this method. The authors emphasising the cognitive potential of walks noticed a strong connection between movement, perception and thinking. In one study on walking as a source of inspiration for designers and urban planners, the feature in question was recognised as an attribute of walking:

In my research, I define walking as a steady, physically challenging and rhythmic way to move by foot. The act of walking is characterised by exertion, rhythm and intensive perception. Walkers make use of their senses, are involved with the whole body and are sometimes exposed to exhaustion. The rhythm that characterises the act of walking enables a complex interplay of body and mind (Schultz, 2018: 72).

As a mobile method, it involves joint movement on foot (or a wheelchair) and the exchange of perceptions and opinions about the phenomena, processes, and regularities observed in the cognised space. The authors assume that talking while walking creates different research conditions that are more conducive to exploration than during a sedentary interview.

This approach is related to the “mobility turn” initiated by John Urry, who justified his position as follows: “Especially significant is the observing how people effect face-to-face relationships with places, with events and with people” (Urry, 2007: 40). The recognition of walking as an adequate research method also in relation to tourist traffic succinctly and accurately expresses the following sentence formulated by a team of researchers associated with the field of mobile research: “People do not stay in one place. Hence research methods need also to be on the move, to simulate this intermittent mobility” (Bærenholdt et al., 2004: 148).

As a participatory action research study, it focuses on the relationship between public space and the community. Joint exploration during a walk focused on the issues of the common area and helped strengthen the collaborative potential of participants as “co-walkers.” It can also contribute to expected social change in the given neighbourhood or community.

By definition, research walks are participatory because they involve the informants. As research on this method indicates, the mere fact of being in public spaces and motion together leads to greater involvement:

It is argued that walking interviews generate richer data because interviewees are prompted by meanings and connections to the surrounding environment and are less likely to try and give the “right” answer (...) There are, of course, limitations: to be relevant, research questions need to be framed by a “place” that can be walked, and the act of walking will exclude certain types of participants and interviewing techniques (Evans & Jones, 2011: 849).

These limitations, as increasingly discussed in the literature, are not higher than in the case of “sedentary methods”. What distinguishes the research walk in the context of its participatory values is the greater unpredictability noticed by some researchers (Jones, Bunce, Evans, & Gibbs, 2008: 8). Due to the open space and its users, the research may lead to impulses and meetings that are surprising for all parties. It seems, however, to be an

advantage that allows the researcher to observe more natural and spontaneous behaviour of participants.

Figure 2. The Charles Bridge during the Pilot Study



Source: Photo taken by Dorota Bazuń

The decision to conduct the pilot study on Charles Bridge in Prague with the participation of experts resulted from the following premises:

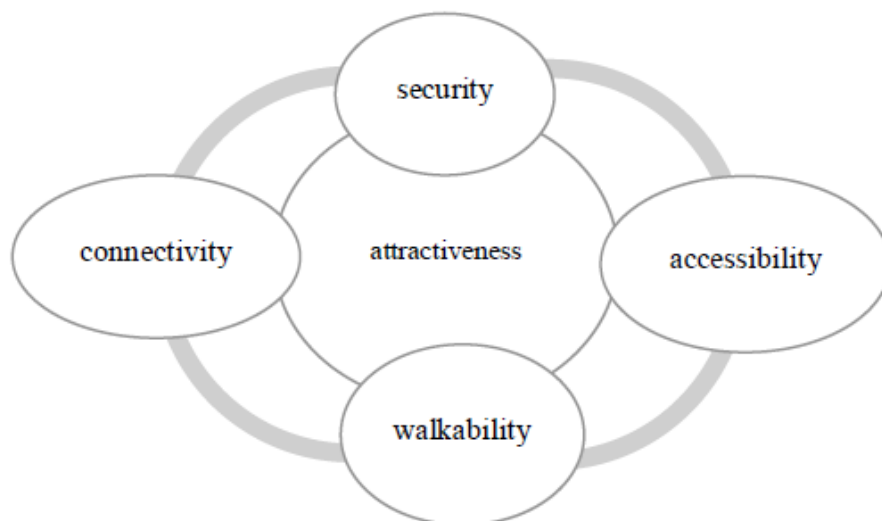
Firstly, the concept of an “exploratory walk” as a method of mobile participatory research is only in the development phase and should be subject to expert assessment.

Secondly, due to its popularity, as well as its historical and artistic values, Prague’s Charles Bridge is a suitable place for analysing relations between people and space.

Thirdly, the confrontation of impressions and opinions formulated by the participants and researchers representing various disciplines and appearing in a dual role (tourists and experts) can be a valuable contribution to the development of the analysed method and its application in research on the functions of urban tourist spaces.

The participants were asked to pay attention to several features in the space, presented in Figure 3. The key element of such space is its attractiveness, and that is why tourists want to be there.

Figure 3. The Features taken into Consideration during the Exploratory Walk



Source: Own Elaboration

2.1 Attractiveness

A specific space can be considered attractive if users want to stay there, and due to its pleasant look, they feel comfortable there.

The assessment of the attractiveness of public space is exposed to the subjectivity of different tastes and needs. However, there are at least a few indicators that are not controversial. During walks, opinions on the following topics can be determined quite easily: (a) the shape and condition of buildings, (b) the state of roads, pavements and squares, (c) the presence and condition of trees, shrubs and other greenery and related elements, (d) the presence and condition of distinctive features of the space (e.g. fountains, sculptures, murals, a view to observe), (e) air purity and perceived smell, and (f) acoustic sensations. Walks are an excellent opportunity to establish and compare ways of perceiving the aspects of the attractiveness or unattractiveness of space, as well as discussing the directions of the intervention, collecting ideas for introducing changes.

2.2 Security

A secure space is one in which we are not afraid to be and which is conducive to our health.

As a feature of a specific space, safety can also be assessed and designed during joint walks. In this case, however, we must consider two variables. First, correctly choose the day of the week and the time of day/night. Walks that are supposed to show a possible emergency in the evening should be organised at this time. Consequently, it is possible to identify how the lighting works and, for example, where there are clusters of people who threaten the safety of other users. Secondly, it is necessary to determine which categories of people are most exposed to danger in the area. Usually, they are the weakest (children, women) or recognised as strange or different (tourists, immigrants). The selection of participants and the choice of time will, therefore, affect the effects of the walk. When assessing the state of safety, we take into account the same set of indicators that we listed in connection with the assessment of attractiveness. Degraded buildings, leaky roads, noise, and polluted air pose a serious threat to safety and health. Additionally, it is possible to indicate lighting conditions, video surveillance, organisation of traffic flow and road markings, information signs (or lack of it), and premises gathering people who threaten safety (e.g. night shops with alcohol).

2.3 Accessibility

Accessible space is one which can be used by everyone, including persons with disabilities or special needs. Accessibility applies to any areas (streets, pavements, parks) and buildings. When assessing a specific space in terms of its accessibility, we take into account the various problems and limitations of its users. Limitations can be related to such features as age, psychophysical condition, social status, nationality, and ethnicity. There are many sets of available space indicators. Here it is possible only to indicate them in a general way. Spaces that are available to everyone should stand out as follows: (1) pavement and terrain facilitating the movement of people with reduced mobility, (2) technical assistance systems in places where independent movement is difficult (elevators, lifts, ramps), (3) contrast markings for the visually impaired, and (4) easy-to-read and accessible information for people with intellectual disabilities.

Particular attention should be paid to those places where there is a higher likelihood of the appearance of people with mobility difficulties (health clinics, offices serving the elderly) and those that may pose the greatest threat (pedestrian crossings, busy streets).

2.4 Walkability

A walkable space is one in which we can easily walk, ride a bike, or travel in a wheelchair.

Walkability, as a feature of shared space, is associated with accessibility and is about increasing the possibility of independent movement around the city or the countryside. According to Jeff Speck (2013), to make residents choose to walk instead of driving a car, four simultaneous conditions should be fulfilled. Walking must be (1) *useful* and it means that it is possible to realise most aspects of everyday life without using a car; (2) *safe*, so pedestrians feel secure in the public space (especially crossing the streets); (3) *comfortable*, that is, buildings and the landscape encourage people to stay in it, and (4) *interesting*, meaning that “sidewalks are lined by unique buildings with friendly faces that signs of humanity abound” (Speck, 2013: 11).

2.5 Connectivity

A connecting space is one where we can meet and interact with other residents and users of public or semipublic places. Connectivity as a feature of common space can be treated as a synthesis of all previously discussed features. It can be assumed that people are more likely to contact each other in an environment that they find attractive, safe, accessible, and walkable. When examining a specific area of a city or village in terms of connectivity, attention can be paid to the following phenomena: (1) places that favour spontaneous contact with others (silence, greenery, shade, a body of water); (2) devices that allow a longer, more comfortable stay and conversation (e.g. benches); (3) spaces that enable the purposeful organisation of meetings with friends, families, and neighbours (yards, squares, roofing); and (4) the tendency of residents and other users to use the common space to establish and develop contacts.

3. THE COURSE OF THE EXPLORATORY WALK ON THE CHARLES BRIDGE

Before presenting the course of the pilot research walk, some information about the Charles Bridge as a tourist attraction will be introduced.

The Charles Bridge (in Czech language Karlův Most) is an unusual space in every respect. The location is important for historical reasons. It was founded on the initiative of Emperor Charles IV in the fourteenth century and has survived almost unchanged to this day. The bridge witnessed many important events, including ceremonies with the participation of the king, but also executions (e.g. John of Nepomuk, 1393).

It is one of the most recognisable and famous places in Prague. The popularity of the bridge is, among others, due to its location and beautiful view. The bridge connects two historical parts of the city. Its length is 516 meters, and there are over thirty Baroque figures of high artistic value, some of which are very popular among tourists and pilgrims. As one researcher notes, there is a strong connection between the symbolism of the bridge and the figures on it and the waking up of Czech identity.

Of all the structures that were built in this period, none may be more representative and insightful than the famous Charles Bridge and its flanking rows of statuary. The aesthetic strands of an emerging Czech identity that were first articulated in the early seventeenth century would come together and reach a high point in what may be the most recognisable of Bohemia's landmarks (Louthan, 2003: 4).

The figure of John Nepomuk (1683) is of particular importance. It appeared first and became a model for hundreds of similar figures placed at the bridges in many regions of the Czech Republic and Central Europe. The creation of this figure initiated a process that can

be considered to be a spontaneous attempt by residents to express their beliefs, religious feelings, and artistic preferences. The researcher of this process interprets it as follows:

Equally important to note is the broad representation of the church. There was no master plan for the bridge, no centralised design of the archdiocese, no secret scheme of the Jesuits. In fact, quite the opposite occurred. Though the city council exercised some regulatory power, there was a certain entrepreneurial spirit to the entire enterprise (Louthan, 2003: 7).

As a result of the aforementioned process, a kind of religious theatre in the open space was created. This space has been appreciated by tourists from around the world who visit the bridge in crowds throughout the year. An additional attraction is souvenir stalls, stands run by cartoonists and painters, as well as soloists and music bands using the flow of numerous visitors and their financial resources. There are also people encouraging the use of such services as a cruise on the Vltava or participation in some entertainment event. In addition to these, there are also the characteristic figures of beggars, buskers, or street artists. It is difficult to find a time of year and day when the bridge is not crowded. On the one hand, this is a hindrance to the romantic approach to this place, but on the other, it allows social researchers to observe collective life, the behaviour of individual groups and members of the public, their ways of responding to observed objects, and interactions between individual categories of users. Participants of the pilot study took advantage of this opportunity

Figure 4. The Charles Bridge during the Preparation to the Exploratory Walk



Source: Photo taken by Dorota Bazuń

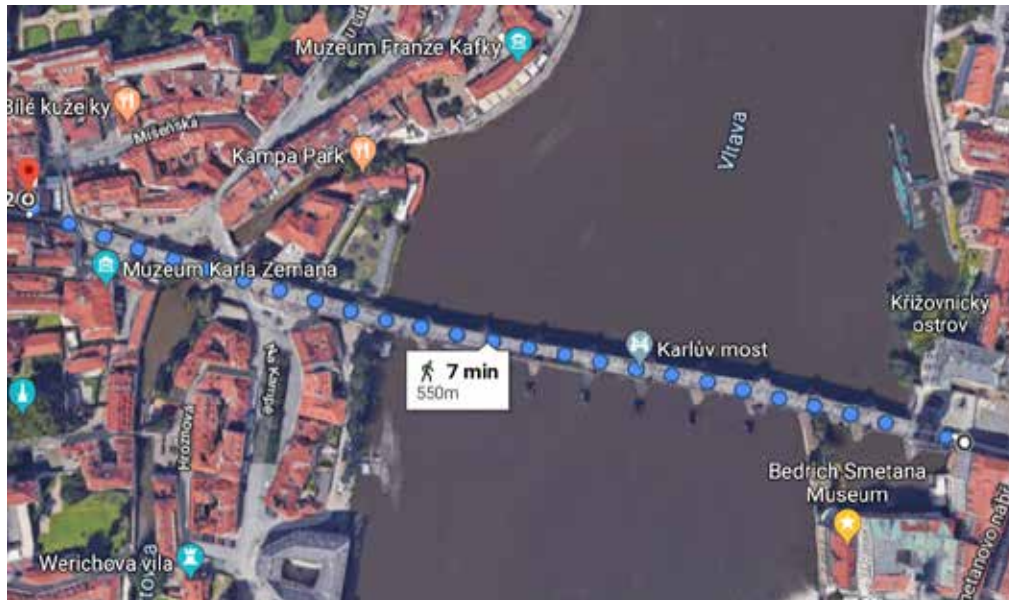
The pilot study was carried out in accordance with the following stages:

1. Participants met at a specific point (Charles IV. Monument, 1, Staré Město, 110 00 Prague). They were asked to pay attention to the following dimensions of phenomena occurring on the Charles Bridge: attractiveness, accessibility, walkability, connectivity, and security. The meaning of the five aspects was explained to everybody.
2. The second part was a joint walk along the Charles Bridge from the Old Town towards Mala Strana. During the walk, participants spontaneously expressed their

opinions about the explored space, referring to its five aspects (attractiveness, security, accessibility, walkability, and connectivity).

3. The third part had a stationary character, and this was a group discussion involving all participants. The discussion was moderated and participants shared their impressions and opinions, considering the five potentials of exploratory walks: cognitive, emotional, participatory, collaborative, and transformative.

Figure 5. Charles Bridge during the Preparation to the Exploratory Walk



Source: Google Maps (full link in the list of references)

The walk proceeded at a slow pace, meaning the distance, marked on Google Maps as a 7-minute walk, took much longer in the case of the exploratory walk, and the group met at the end of the bridge after 35 minutes. A group of six participants spontaneously divided into two subgroups. Five points were marked on the walking route where the contributors were stopping and shared insights. The staging points were: Charles IV Monument, Old Town Bridge Tower, Holy Crucifix and Calvary, Statue of John Nepomuk, and Mala Strana Bridge Tower. The final destination was located nearby the bridge café, which was a place of a discussion.

3.1 The Group Discussion after the Walk

The purpose of the group discussion organised after a joint walk was to compare the impressions and opinions of the participants regarding the features of the tourist space visited, as well as the potentials and limitations of the exploratory walk as a research method. Participants referred to those aspects which were, from their point of view, the most significant and the most interesting. Their findings, discussed in the subsequent section, were presented together with illustrations with selected quotes from participants' statements.

3.2 Comments and Impressions Regarding the Charles Bridge as an Urban Tourism Space

Participants of the walk conducted observations, considering the listed issues and questions. They had been aware of these before the walk because the list had been sent a few days earlier. Participants were

also reminded just before starting the walk, and these mentioned features such as attractiveness, security, accessibility, walkability, and connectivity.

At the staging points, they shared their insights. There were five stops planned but spontaneous ones were also possible. The course of the walk was not recorded, but the discussion which was held afterwards was recorded and transcribed.

1. The moderated discussion started with the issue of the attractiveness of the bridge. The examined space was unanimously found to be very attractive, firstly because of the unique location of the bridge over the wide river, between the two historical districts of the city, and secondly because of the richness of the artistic experience (numerous sacred sculptures) and the sense of connection with the rich historical past of Prague and the Czech Republic. Thirdly, because of the amazing views that visitors can admire by walking on the bridge.

All of the participants were agreeable that this was an unusual and magnificent place: *"actually I found the bridge almost cathartic let's say"* (No 6). However, some of our co-walkers did not like being in a crowd. *"That bridge is super over-crowded for me. So I think it is better to appreciate it, that experience the tourists' experience like seeing the river seeing the views. I don't like too many people and the vendors there. No. That's too much"* (No 3). Even though being surrounded by so many people was not comfortable, the participants were very into being at this area. *"I like the bridge and it's not only the bridge but what we see from the bridge. We see the city from the bridge and the old history of the old theatre and city and so on"* (No 4). One of the reasons for the attractiveness was feeling the long history of this place and in a way being able to move in between the past and the present, combining fresh memories with thinking about a long and complicated history. *"I like history. I want to know it because for me humanity is history and this bridge is the history, and I feel the history when I am walking there. (...) . I've always loved that bridge because of the connections with people on this bridge. I was there with my family (...) and my friends and the people from the other conferences so for me it reminds me always happiness"* (No 4). Exploring history by being in a place that remembers centuries was an exciting experience for those who are not interested in history: *"I don't like history, sorry. However, I do like it when I got to some place"* (No 3).

The participants had some ideas about assessing this space in terms of its attractiveness. The most attractive feature of this space was its aesthetic value and location between the two historical parts of the city, which could be seen in beautiful viewpoints. A broader perspective of the river and floating ships, the presence of perhaps too many but equally delighted tourists made up the uniqueness of this moment. All the participants of the exploratory walk wanted to come back and revisit the bridge and if it is possible at a different time of day when there are fewer people.

2. The sense of security was rated quite high. During the walk, Charles Bridge was a very crowded place, which for some participants aroused a sense of some discomfort. However, no serious sources of danger were spotted. Participants admitted that if there were even more people, which happens in the tourist season, they would prefer to come to the bridge at another time. *"It felt very safe but thinking about it now I think it is strange that the bridge is safe because usually historically bridges were unsafe areas"* (No 5).
3. The space of the bridge is generally accessible to people with mobility difficulties, but with numerous limitations. During the walk, only one person using a wheelchair was spotted, but it was a person with a slightly reduced efficiency. For people with severe

dysfunctions, the bridge is not so easily accessible due to the uneven cobblestones and the piston that dominates most of the day “*I don't think it is very accessible for the people with impairments*” (No 5). All agreed that it would be challenging to prepare facilities in such a way that they did not change the appearance of this historic place.

4. Walkability is the strength of Charles Bridge. It is a space that encourages people to take a slow walk, stop by at viewpoints and numerous artistic attractions and commercial places. The sounds of live music played by musicians and enjoying the wide surface of the bridge may also encourage people to walk, but it was considered to be walkable only for tourist. People who want only to move between these parts of the city need to choose other bridges because it is difficult to move faster on Charles Bridge. Trade stands and street artists, on the one hand, make this place more attractive and liven it up, but their improper arrangement can sometimes make it difficult to go on the bridge in the highest tourist season (No 1).
5. Connectivity, understood as encouraging, establishing, and developing contacts, was assessed ambiguously. On the one hand, a large number of people moving slowly and often stopping over a short distance (516 m) should be conducive to establishing numerous interactions. The tourist destination chosen for the pilot study was not considered to be a good location for interactions with other pedestrians. “*I didn't feel like (...) it was very connected. I felt like disconnected. (...) It feels like that space allows parallel worlds to be parallel and not interact but just share. I mean the only thing that they share is just the view. But there is not really much to interact about unless you count the street merchants [and] street vendors. But that's the only... economic interaction that you have*” (No 5).

It was noted that there were mainly interactions between participants who went on a walk together. If there were interactions between strangers, they are of a commercial nature (buying souvenirs, donations for musicians or beggars). Sometimes tourists asked someone for help in taking a picture, but this was sporadic contact between strangers. However, people mainly avoided contact with others, although visitors had something in common because they were “*more connected with the beauty and with history and with this amazing landscape. And obviously with a little bit of history. You know some interesting facts. It is always very nice when you experience something. But I was impressed by the fact that many people are looking at the same thing and are feeling the same*” (No 6).

If we compare this space with other open tourist spaces in Prague (Old Town Square, Wenceslas Square), Charles Bridge turns out to be the most favourable space from the point of view of meeting “strangers”.

4. POTENTIALS AND LIMITATIONS OF EXPLORATORY WALKS IN LIGHT OF STATEMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS/EXPERTS

The second goal of the group discussion was to assess exploratory walks as a method of exploring common space. It was an exchange of reflections about potentials, challenges, and limitations of the research made in motion. Since the participants were in a double role of visitors to Charles Bridge and social researchers and experts, their opinions about the experience were valuable. All of them described it as very interesting. There was also a strong effect of influencing each other during the walk and the discussion. One of the participants who had not been visiting the bridge for the first time mentioned that due to contact with other members, the group started to look at the bridge from a different angle: “*but since her*

special interests in sculpture, she was looking at the faces of the sculptures. And then it was something new to me. I was at the bridge many times before, and I have never looked at these sculptures and monuments in this way” (No 1).

The experts taking part in the exploratory walk noticed that the method could be useful in case of particular participants such as vulnerable groups, urban activists, dog owners, and street artists:

“that the type of methodology could also be useful when one wants to get started with the vulnerable groups of persons. Like persons with disabilities, refugees, homeless persons, etc. Especially important and useful it could be in case of persons who are somehow new in the area. Newcomers who are looking at the place and inhabitants differently having a fresh perspective and sometimes being afraid of something. That type of interview is more opening for them and can help us to look at the world in a much more deeper way than when we talk about [in the] the same sitting in front of each other. It can also give much more practical examples and observations in the field. It’s not only talking, but it is more involving emotionally” (No 4).

The walk on Charles Bridge inspired participants about possible changes in their research projects and interests: *“I have had the idea during our discussion that my research about Pokémon could be done in that walking way. Instead of doing interviews in chairs, we were going to the field and see[ing] the situation in a more detailed way, and then we could get more information” (No 6).*

4.1 Potentials of the Exploratory Walk as a Method

There are a few cognitive potentials of the exploratory walk because it focuses attention and helps to combine some aspects such as spatial, social, cultural, and economic. This type of field research engages several senses and allows participants to experience events more deeply than during just sedentary interviews. The illustration can be the statement:

“I had overlapped images of it when I was on it. I imagined very poor people in previous centuries just roaming the bridge having to find a place there. Because who wants to come on the bridge. The wealthier people didn’t want to be there, right? And that all is actually a symbol of a change. Only the people who can afford the trips go there and then the beggars and poor people can’t be there because it’s tourists. And I think you can see just to wrap up. This bridge has really huge cognitive potential, right?” (No 5).

The participants appreciated the experience, feeling like it was a more natural way of conducting research: *“I think it gives me more, and I learn more about this. I like that” (No 3).*

Another potential was connected to the engagement of emotions. Being in the space observing, talking, and experiencing all together helped to encourage conversations with people who had not known each other before. The social researchers noticed that it could be helpful to open and look for solutions together while being in the area they want to know better:

“for people, it is easier to do to put it when they are in connections when they are in collaboration” (No 4). Walking together helps to build ties between persons engaged in collective initiatives. The participants of the pilot study pointed out their impressions: *“for me, the emotional potential of the place is huge and I am pretty sure that for locals it has enormous emotional charge” (No 5).*

The exploratory walk changes a classical division between interviewer and interviewee. The researcher is playing an important role, but the shape of the interaction strongly depends on the other participants. This can happen when they are experts experienced in dealing with particular aspects, for example, history, transportation, dealing with disabilities, and

commerce. Not only can a researcher learn from them, but they can also learn and teach each other. Such an interview in motion enhances natural talk. In this way, it weakens the power relation between the researcher and the informant. If the participants of the research walk are representatives of vulnerable groups, the method can also contribute to the process of inclusion, recognition, and emancipation. However, the most important element is its participatory character, which means the deeper involvement of the participants. Such a method is also supporting a collaborative way of working with other participants. An added value can be strengthening trust ties and creating conditions for the development of interpersonal, intergroup, and cross-sectoral collaboration.

The transformation potential of the exploratory walk lies in its purpose. In many cases, such a walk with experts or inhabitants can inspire programming changes. It also has the potential of contributing to changing attitudes of participants and the community. Visiting a public space together can help to generate ideas, recommendations, and innovative activities. It can help to know the space better, taking into consideration different perspectives. It also has a networking potential because it can help the stakeholders to get to know each other.

Nevertheless, the transformation potential of the exploratory walk was not present in the case of Charles Bridge due to the nature of the location, which is attractive in itself. Protecting the bridge's historical value prevents many changes. In this situation, the goal is to preserve the shape of the place and its proper maintenance.

4.2 Limitations of the Exploratory Walk as a Method

The exploratory walk is a qualitative method. As with other methods of this type, there is a problem with the representativeness of the data received. In some cases, it is worth considering supplementing this method by using quantitative methods. Therefore, for this type of research, its purpose must be defined very accurately. If it is practical and is to be the basis for future interventions, it also requires a precise definition of the recipients of potential actions and changes. The informants must be carefully chosen because an improperly selected sample can affect the data strongly and result in receiving only fragmentary information.

In the case of exploratory walks carried out in terms of understanding the needs of tourists, researchers must also be aware of the perception of the needs of residents. These needs are not always convergent and what is attractive for tourists may be unbearable for the inhabitants. Different categories of space users therefore have to be taken into consideration.

In the case of group walks, the presence of dominant persons may be difficult. As a result, other participants' opinions can potentially be underrepresented. This method requires extensive experience in moderating the course of the study. The problems are similar as in the case of research carried out in focus groups.

As in the case of the exploratory walk on Charles Bridge in Prague, similarly to in other places where there are many people, it is difficult to record the course of the study. One way to deal with this difficulty can be the realisation of the study by two or three people and the division of tasks between them. One person will then film the walk and record statements of the participants in the context of specific places.

Another difficulty is similar to other qualitative methods because many researchers may find it challenging to present the data collected during the exploratory walk synthetically.

During the pilot study, the need to equip the participants of the walk with small notes was mentioned. The notes should point out the most important aspects to be observed in the space. Attention was also drawn to the fact that, if possible, it would be useful to record the course of the walk, or at least make notes during it.

Based on the group discussion, the following conclusions can be made:

1. Despite the difficulties and possible limitations of traversing the common space, combined with a spontaneous exchange of opinions and impressions, the walk increases the chance of obtaining rich research material.
2. The walking situation strengthens the emotional involvement of the participants.
3. By including persons with different perspectives or representing various professions in the exploratory walk, it is possible to widen the cognitive horizons of the researcher(s). Thanks to this, the interdisciplinary approach can be strengthened.
4. During a group walk, the will to cooperate with other participants is released, which in turn results in a synergy effect.
5. Exploratory walks in an adequately selected space can have transformational power. First, it changes the researcher's perspective. Secondly, it changes the relationships between participants. Thirdly, it can contribute to the creation of new ideas and projects.

5. CONCLUSION

In the article, we sought the answer to the following question: How can social researchers contribute to the development of knowledge about the function of urban tourism spaces? Our answer to this question is the author's concept of the exploratory walk as an adequate mobile and participatory research method. Experts evaluated this concept during the pilot study. Detailed conclusions regarding the assessment of the features of the space under study and the exploratory walk potentials are presented in the last part of the article. Here we formulate the most general comments regarding the application of the tested method and its development prospects.

1. Distinguishing between and characterising five aspects of the analysed space (attractiveness, security, accessibility, walkability, connectivity) opens the perspective for researchers to develop comparative analyses of selected locations. Participants of the pilot described in the article decided that the indicated analytical categories can be successfully used in social research, including the study of tourist functions of urban spaces, although the list can be modified depending on the needs and specificity of the place in question.
2. The indicated potentials of the exploratory walk (cognitive, emotional, participatory, collaborative, transformative) contribute to a better understanding of the studied issues. It is a promising research method and a potential tool for recognising and introducing social and spatial changes. One particularly beneficial feature of walks is the possibility of obtaining much richer research material than in classical, stationary research (sedentary research). Therefore, it can be an advantageous method of research on the function of urban tourism spaces. Participants of such research may notice and point out more aspects of the studied space. They can also feel more involved and ready to exchange opinions with other participants, and due to cooperating with others can formulate more ideas on introducing possible changes.
3. The pilot study also showed that the exploratory walk could not function as an independent research method; other methods and techniques should complement it. In the case of the described pilot, it was a group discussion in comfortable conditions. Therefore, as Peter Merriman stated, mobile methods should not be treated as an alternative to traditional methods of research (Merriman, 2004). The exploratory walk is a proposal to enrich the valuable repertoire of methods and techniques with one that increases the cognitive abilities of the research.

4. The pilot described in the article took place in one of the most popular sites in Europe. Prague attracts many tourists from around the world; most of them visit Charles Bridge. The pilot walk confirmed that this place is attractive in its artistic, historical, and scenic terms. Besides, it is a location where numerous interactions occur. The pilot study showed that these are mostly interactions between friends who jointly visit this place or commercial contacts. Observations and joint conclusions made in such a short time indicate that the method analysed in the article used systematically can contribute to a better understanding of the phenomena and processes observed in urban tourist spaces, as well as to the design and implementation of changes to improve tourist services.

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Map Source:

Charles Bridge map: <https://www.google.com/maps/dir/50.0861294,14.4139358/50.0873233,14.4067508/@50.0866474,14.4089862,465m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m2!4m1!3e2?hl=en>
[access: 10/01.2020].

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT TOURISM CLUSTER AND INSULAR ECONOMY: A BIBLIOMETRIC STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The tourism cluster is certainly a key sector study for any mainland or island economy. The paper reviews the extent and emerging perspectives on and approaches to tourism cluster and island economy. We adopted a systematic literature review using a bibliometric approach, focusing on the creation of maps and networks of visualization of intellectual structure in the period of 30 years (1987-2017), through the Web of Science database. The authors identify and classify the various theoretical lenses in the domain of cluster tourism and insular economy and suggest the future research agenda. The paper contributes by conceptually categorizing and mapping the extant research into five groups of clusters or approaches to the tourism cluster and insular economy: i) impacts; ii) islands; iii) satisfaction; iv) insularity, and v) tourism. The authors argue that tourism is undoubtedly the sector linked to island regions and that is an engine of the economy of an island.

Keywords: Bibliometric Analysis, Insular Economy, Intellectual Knowledge, Islands, Tourism Cluster.

JEL Classification: Z3, Z31, Z32, M2, M21

1. INTRODUCTION

Island destinations commonly referred to as islands depend heavily on their subsistence, entrepreneurial capacity and their internal resources. The islands themselves have spatial and temporal evolution patterns as tourist destinations (Yang, Ge, Ge, Xi, & Li, 2016; Su, Wall, & Wang, 2017; Almeida-Santana & Moreno-Gil, 2018), capable of creating wealth and potential for their residents and businesses, so that their island economy is minimally self-sustaining (Pons, Salamanca, & Murray, 2014; Loureiro & Sarmento Ferreira, 2015; Carvalho et al., 2015; Croes, Ridderstaat, & van Niekerk, 2018; Tsoukala et al., 2018).

In this sense, island destinations depend heavily on tourism activity and in particular on the tourism cluster, which has been the subject of interest by several researchers (Godenau, 2012; Pons, Salamanca, & Murray, 2014; Almeida-Santana & Moreno-Gil, 2018; Ferreira, et al., 2018; Tsoukala et al., 2018).

Thus, it is important to understand how the rapid development of the areas of social and economic sciences, based on the structuring of large-scale unstructured data, is generated, stored and recorded in different ways (Kambatla, Kollias, Kumar, & Grama, 2014; Li, Xu, Tang, Wang, & Li, 2018). Then, we are facing an era in which data, along with conceptual

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and technological innovations are used in large areas such as science, engineering, health, management, business, tourism, among others (Hashem et al., 2015; Li et al., 2018; Batista & Silva et al., 2018; Batrouni et al., 2018; Li et al., 2018).

In turn, the empirical evidence shows that the interaction among the actors in a cluster is not always strong, which limits the mobility and dissemination of knowledge and collaboration. In other words, clusters have a great potential but remain largely unmet, and this weak interaction isolates the members of a cluster, creating gaps between the different actors (Sölvell & Lindqvist, 2011; David & Nathan, 2017).

Despite the growing controversy in the literature on tourism clusters, and their contribution to competitiveness, the relationship between tourism clusters, islands and insular economy remains unexplored, particularly in relation to the mediating role of tourism sector performance, studies on tourism cluster and insular economy (Alberti & Giusti, 2012; Teixeira & Ferreira, 2018).

This work intends, therefore, to contribute in the sense of minimizing this great gap in the literature by presenting a comprehensive analysis of literature review on different types of data in the investigation of the tourism cluster and insular economy. It also aims to provide a systematic and bibliometric analysis from different perspectives, research focuses, data characteristics, analytical techniques, challenges and other possible directions of scientific research.

This article is structured as follows: the next section analyses the concepts of tourism cluster, islands, island economy and discusses the differences between concepts, and generally analyzes concepts based on scientific publications on the Web of Science (WoS). The third section describes the methodology of the investigation and the process of data collection, processing and analysis. The fourth section presents the main empirical results of the study. The final section reflects the main findings of the study, as well as the general implications and points out some suggestions for future research.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Tourism Cluster

A cluster is the combination of a geographic clustering, related industries and support, including businesses. In addition to business, clusters include organizations and institutions for educational research, capital providers, and government organizations. Dynamic enterprises and organizations referred to as clusters, typically connected in a differentiated way through the sharing of resources and information sharing, are often involved in collaborative projects (David & Nathan, 2017).

The activities of tourism clusters provide an opportunity for the development of tourism in a region. Based on tourism infrastructure development initiatives and several high-quality, innovative and attractive products, tourism can contribute to the activation of regions that are often underdeveloped compared to the country (Borkowska-Niszczoła, 2015).

Tourism clusters are the result of the location of complementary companies, which may not necessarily be involved in the same sector, but which may benefit from the dynamics of association and pre-existing network alliances (Britton, 2004; Camisón & Forés, 2017). Networks provide businesses access to knowledge, resources, markets or technologies (Inkpen & Tsang, 2005) and can operate as a strategic alliance if the companies involved sign a voluntary agreement to exchange, share or co-develop products or services (Gulati, 1998; Gomes, Barnes, & Mahmood, 2014; Ferreira, Fernandes, & Ratten, 2016).

Tourism clusters differ from typical industrial clusters, generally referred to as industrial clusters, and are based on the manufacturing of tourism clusters on the provision of services in the form of a tourist package (Lei & Huang, 2014; Luh, Jiang, & Huang, 2016; Stavroulakis & Papadimitriou, 2016). The basic difference lies in the final product of the cluster. In tourism, the product is comprehensive and consists of many different products that may exist in the market independently (Borkowska-Niszczota, 2015). After this brief reflection on tourism clusters, it is important to analyze the context where they are often inserted, which are the islands.

2.2 Island Destination

An island is usually defined as an area of geographic relief that is essentially surrounded by water on all sides. In many small islands all over the world, tourism is undoubtedly considered an essential development tool to boost a country's economy (Croes, 2006; Kurniawan, Adrianto, Bengen, & Prasetyo, 2016) as well as part of the global industry (Eligh et al., 2002; Daby, 2003; Teh & Cabanban, 2007).

Island tourism is an important commercial activity that through its natural and manufactured resources established in specific geographic spaces (Yang et al., 2016). The islands, which are specialized in tourist services, may present different patterns due to the dynamics of the industry in particular that relates a series of coincidences between spaces of production and consumption (Pons et al., 2014).

The preferences for small islands are somehow related to certain factors such as the beauty, exoticism, aesthetics, diversity of natural habitats, and warm, crystalline and attractive waters. (Daby, 2003; Kurniawan et al., 2016.).

Island tourism offers a variety of attractions and activities based on nature to enhance economic growth (Yu, Huang, Yeh, & Chao, 2017). In comparison to other tourism industries, the tourism industry has grown enormously and has become one of the largest industries in the world (Hall, 2001; Eligh et al., 2002; Gössling, 2002; Pickering & Hill, 2007; Kurniawan et al., 2016).

The term island refers to the phenomenon of tourism development on an island that promotes the establishment of family pensions, corporate hotels and other related commercial areas, as well as an integration of the island's sights and places. Urban development, in turn, can influence the growth of the local population of an island, the improvement of environmental quality, development of facilities and functional modernization (Yang et al., 2016; Teixeira & Ferreira, 2018).

In this sense, questions are open about how an island will implement the concept of a circular economy, nowadays with so many defined ambitious goals (Zorpas, Lasaridi, Pociovalisteanu, & Loizia, 2018).

Island destinations are characterized by the existence of fragile ecosystems, rival resources, rival land uses and inadequate management infrastructures (Farmaki & Papatheodorou, 2015).

3. METHODOLOGY

In this quantitative study, we used the data compiled by the Web of Science (WoS) database that contains numerous articles that are reflected in thousands of quotations, where it is possible to analyze information not only about their studies, authors, affiliations, countries and quotations. The WoS database is, together with Scopus, the most commonly used database, where the number of quotations is dominant in most quotations analysis studies to the present day (Strozzi, Colicchia, Creazza, & Noè, 2017).

To do so, we have used a bibliometric analysis that is one of the truly interdisciplinary fields of research that extends to almost all scientific fields. They are alternatives to the traditional literature reviews, which allow greater objectivity of these types of study. Bibliometry is used to evaluate the performance of publications of individuals and institutions in order to map the structure and dynamics of science (Acedo & Casillas, 2005; Ferreira et al., 2016, Koseoglu, Rahimi, Okumus, & Liu, 2016; Liang & Liu, 2018).

In addition, bibliometric studies covering several publications, and in which quotations analysis has gained popularity in the literature due to the development of databases such as WoS, allowing the collection of data that elucidate paths to emerging study areas and less exploited contexts (Merigó, Gil-lafuente, & Yager, 2015; Ferreira, Fernandes, & Ratten, 2016; Gomezelj, 2016; Castillo-Vergara, Alvarez-Marin, & Placencio-Hidalgo, 2018).

This research occurred in June and July of 2018 with the data subject to the analysis in July of the same year. In turn, the VOSviewer vs 1.6.5 Software was used, which allows bibliometric analysis according to published and specialized articles, without using the selection or exclusion of articles filters in order not to lose relevant information. In turn, the keywords used in the WoS database were essentially two: “tourism cluster” and “insular econom*”.

According to the database and software used, the analytical criteria were as follows: in the first phase of the search on the WoS database, we downloaded all documentation, complete registration including references cited, authors, titles, sources and abstracts. In the second phase, we applied the VOSviewer software and entered all the search data with the chosen method, the total counting method, resulting in the analysis of titles and abstracts of all these documents during the period under analysis, which was of 30 years (1987-2017). It should also be mentioned that there are several techniques of bibliometric research in any scientific field, in particular with the use of the analysis of quotations and co-quotations to study some fields of management or multidisciplinary. Several studies use this method to obtain better compression of existing data and intellectual knowledge to discover possible hidden or less exploited patterns that may be of great relevance to current or future research (Palmer, Sesé, & Montano, 2005; Acedo & Casillas, 2005; Barrios, Borrego, Vilagínés, Ollé, & Somoza, 2008; Koc & Boz, 2014; Global et al., 2016; de la Hoz-Correa, Muñoz-Leiva, & Bakucz, 2018).

4. RESULTS

4.1 Intellectual Knowledge: Tourism Cluster

The objective of tourism groups and clusters is to highlight the availability of certain activities of a particular destination or region so that often isolated companies succeed and cooperate to build a successful tourist product (Fredline, 2000; Schmitz & Spencer, 2006; Martin, Florida, Pogue, & Mellander, 2015; McLennan, Becken, & Watt, 2016; Camisón & Forés, 2017; Hoz-Correa, Muñoz-Leiva, & Bakucz, 2018).

Table 1 shows the scientific publications Top 15 with the highest number of quotations and greater relevance to the study based on the keyword “tourism cluster”, describing its rank, authors, journal, title, methodology, quotation number and average quotation per year.

Table 1. Top 15 of Scientific Articles on the Tourism Cluster

Rank	Author	Journal	Title	Methodology	Citations	Average citations for year
1	Novelli, Schmitz, & Spencer (2006)	Tourism Management	Networks, clusters and innovation in tourism: A UK experience	Qualitative	266	20.54
2	Williams & Lawson, (2001)	Annals of Tourism Research	Community issues and resident opinions of tourism	Quantitative	219	12.28
3	Fredline, (2000)	Annals of Tourism Research	Host Community Reactions - A Cluster Analysis	Quantitative	217	11.42
4	Briedenhann & Wickens, (2004)	Tourism Management	Tourism routes as a tool for the economic development of rural areas - vibrant hope or impossible dream?	Mixed	212	14.13
5	(Fodness & Murray, 1997)	Annals of Tourism Research	Tourist information search	Mixed	208	9.45
6	Park & Yoon, (2009)	Tourism Management	Segmentation by motivation in rural tourism: A Korean case study	Quantitative	183	18.30
7	(Park & Yoon, 2009)	Tourism Management	A benefit segmentation of tourists in rural areas: a Scottish perspective	Quantitative	148	10.57
8	(Ryan & Glendon, 1998)	Annals of Tourism Research	Application of leisure motivation scale to tourism	Quantitative	129	6.14
9	(Madrigal, 1995)	Annals of Tourism Research	Residents Perceptions and the Role of Government	Quantitative	128	5.33
10	(Devesa, Laguna, & Palacios, 2010)	Tourism Management	The role of motivation in visitor satisfaction: Empirical evidence in rural tourism	Quantitative	123	13.67
11	(Scott, Cooper, & Baggio, 2008)	Annals of Tourism Research	Destination networks - Four Australian cases	Quantitative	120	10.91
12	(McKercher, Prideaux, Cheung, & Law, 2010)	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	Achieving voluntary reductions in the carbon footprint of tourism and climate change	Quantitative	118	13.11
13	(Weaver & Lawton, 2001)	Annals of Tourism Research	Resident perceptions in the urban-rural fringe	Quantitative	117	6.50
14	(Beh & Bruyere, 2007)	Tourism Management	Segmentation by visitor motivation in three Kenyan national reserves	Quantitative	110	9.17
15	(Mehmetoglu, 2007)	Tourism Management	Typologising nature-based tourists by activity - Theoretical and practical implications	Quantitative	102	8.50

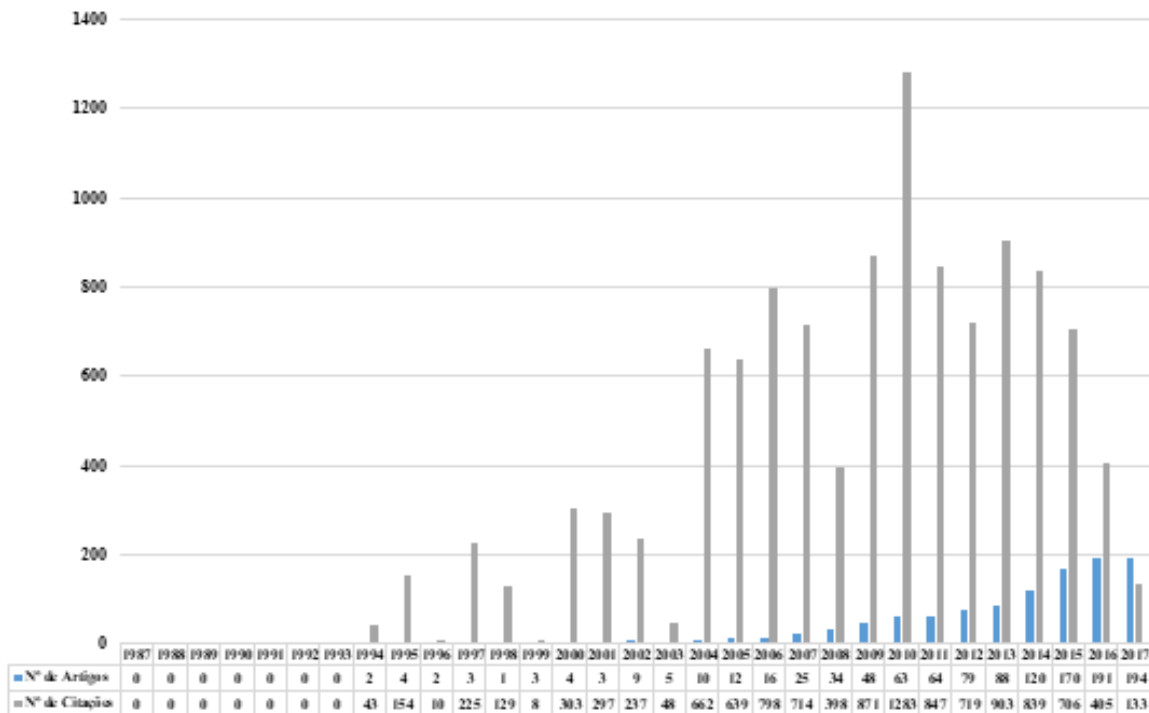
Source: Own Elaboration

The three most cited authors regarding studies on the tourism cluster are:

1. Novelli, M., Schmitz, B., & Spencer, T. (2006). Networks, clusters and innovation in tourism: A UK experience. *Tourism Management*, 27(6), 1141-1152.
2. Williams, J., & Lawson, R. (2001). Community issues and resident opinions of tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 28(2), 269-290.
3. Fredline, E. (2000). Host Community Reactions a Cluster Analysis. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27(3), 763-784.

According to figure 1, we can observe the annual evolution of the number of publications in (WoS) based on the keyword “*Tourism Cluster*” for the period from 1987 to 2017 without the application of any filter. The first articles only appear in 1994, but the articles of 2010 are those with the highest number of quotations.

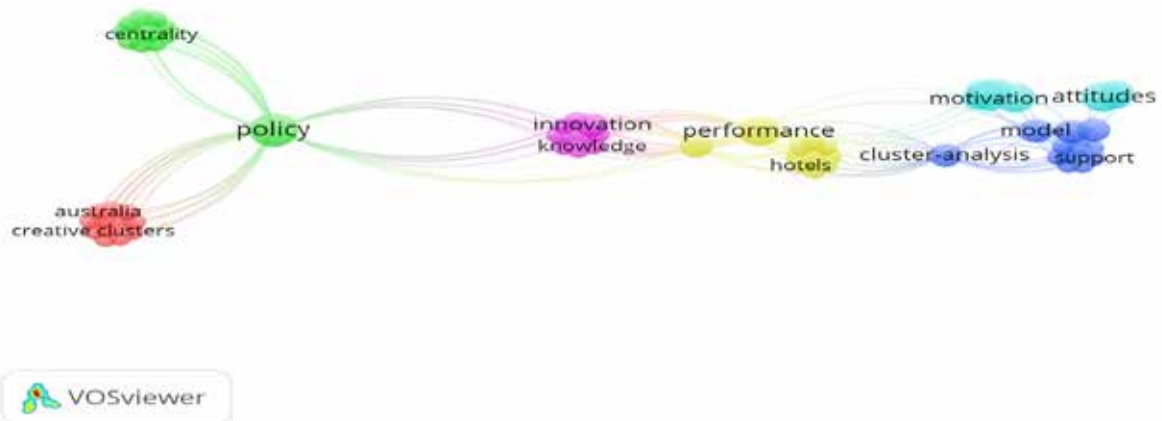
Figure 1. Number of Articles and Annual Quotations “Tourism Cluster”



Source: Own Elaboration

Figure 2 shows the areas of higher density related to this area of study.

Figure 2. Map of the Relationship between the Keyword “Tourism Cluster”



Source: Own Elaboration

The clusters of greater importance and areas with higher incidence of the existing studies, after the application of a filter using the keyword “*tourism cluster*” on the online database (WoS), the data was transported to the VOSviewer software using criterion to include only titles and abstracts, the “Full Counting” counting method. So, we analysed the most relevant clusters on the tourism cluster, we enumerate the Top 20 of the most quoted authors according to table 2.

Table 2. Top 20 Authors most Cited by Keyword “Tourism Cluster *”

Rank	Author	Citations	Documents	Total link strenght
1	Mills, a	390	1	0
2	Novelli, m	267	1	2
3	Schmitz, b	267	1	2
4	Spencer, t	267	1	2
5	Staab, s	205	1	0
6	Lu, j	147	1	4
7	Mao, ms	147	1	4
8	Wang, ms	147	1	4
9	Wu, ds	147	1	4
10	Zhang, gq	147	1	4
11	Claver-cortes, e	124	1	3
12	Molina-azorin, jf	124	1	3
13	Pereira-moliner, j	124	1	3
14	Tari, jj	124	1	3
15	Palacios, a	123	1	0
16	Scott, n	120	1	0
17	Cheung, c	118	1	3
18	Law, r	118	1	3
19	Mckercher, b	118	1	3
20	Prideaux, b	118	1	3

Source: Own Elaboration

It can be seen from table 2 that Mills, A., Novelli, M., and Schmitz, B., are indisputably the great reference, followed by Spencer, et al., Staab, S., Lu, J., Mao, ms., Wang, ms., Wu, ds., Zhang, G., Claver-cortes, M., Molina-azorin, J., Pereira- moliner, J., Tari, J., Palacios, A., Scott, n., Cheung, C., Law, r., Mckercher, b., Prideaux, b.

Once we have analyzed the most quoted authors, we have listed the Top 20 countries that produce the most articles, although they may not be the ones mentioned in table 3.

Table 3. Top 13 Countries with the Highest Number of Articles Produced according to the Keyword “Tourism Cluster *”

Rank	Country	Citations	Documents	Total link strenght
1	England	1135	5	177
2	Australia	948	7	271
3	USA	390	1	60
4	Denmark	322	1	7
5	Spain	247	2	11
6	New Zealand	222	1	337
7	Germany	205	1	0
8	Ireland	200	1	0

9	South Korea	184	1	24
10	Netherlands	156	1	5
11	France	148	1	10
12	Italy	120	1	99
13	Peoples r China	118	1	67

Source: Own Elaboration

Table 3 shows that “England” is at the top of the greatest number of quotations followed by Australia, USA, Denmark, Spain, New Zealand, Germany, Ireland, South Korea, Netherlands, France, Italy, People r China.

Table 4 shows the Top 8 scientific journals with the highest number of quotations on this subject, where it is possible to verify that Tourism Management is undoubtedly the most referenced one, being at the top of the ranking, followed by Annals of Tourism Research, American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, Journal of artificial intelligence research, Environmental pollution, Decision support systems, Journal of cleaner production, Journal of sustainable tourism.

Table 4. Top 8 of the Scientific Journals most Quoted by Keyword “*Tourism Cluster **”

Rank	Source	Citations	Documets	Total link strenght
1	Tourism Management	1393	7	61
2	Annals of Tourism Research	1269	8	65
3	American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene	390	1	0
4	Journal of artificial intelligence research	205	1	0
5	Environmental pollution	200	1	0
6	Decision support systems	147	1	0
7	Journal of cleaner production	124	1	0
8	Journal of sustainable tourism	118	1	0

Source: Own Elaboration

4.2 Intellectual Knowledge: Insular Economy

Island economies have some specific common characteristics, such as the fragmentation of the internal market due to the archipelagic condition or their distance from foreign markets, both for their export products and for consumers, and it may or may not be profitable to obtain them locally (Teixeira & Ferreira, 2018).

They also tend to be heavily atomized by their companies. These or other circumstances condition the evolution of their macroeconomic indicators (Lorenzo, 2016).

Table 5 shows the scientific publications with the highest number of quotations and with more relevance to the study based on the keyword “Insular Economy” selecting the top 15 and describing their rank, authors, journal, title, methodology, number of quotations and average quotations per year.

Table 5. Top 20 of the Scientific Articles on “Insular Economy”

Rank	Author	Journal	Title	Methodology	Citations	Average citations for year
1	(Nayak, 2003)	Environment and Planning D: Society and Space	Last of the ‘Real Geordies’? White masculinities and the subcultural response to deindustrialisation	Qualitative	64	4.00
2	(Kaika, 2010)	Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers	Architecture and crisis: re-inventing the icon, re-imag(in)ing London and re-branding the City	Qualitative	56	6.22
3	(Kasimis, Papadopoulos, & Zacopoulou, 2003)	Sociologia ruralis	Migrants in rural Greece	Qualitative	47	2.94
4	(Mildenstein, Stier, Nuevo-Diego, & Mills, 2005)	Biological Conservation	Habitat selection of endangered and endemic large flying-foxes in Subic Bay, Philippines	Quantitative	26	3.89
5	(Benitez-Capistros, Hugé, & Koedam, 2014)	Ecological Indicators	Environmental impacts on the Galapagos Islands: Identification of interactions, perceptions and steps ahead	Quantitative	20	1.86
6	(Wieland, Cwik, Müller, Schmidt, & Wolters, 2012)	Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization	A new comparative approach to macroeconomic modeling and policy analysis	Quantitative	20	4.00
7	(Kizos, Plieninger, & Schaich, 2013)	Landscape Research	Instead of 40 Sheep there are 400”: Traditional Grazing Practices and Landscape Change in Western Lesvos, Greece	Mixed	14	2.86
8	(Luvaas, 2013)	Fashion Theory - Journal of Dress Body and Culture	Indonesian Fashion Blogs: On the Promotional Subject of Personal Style	Qualitative	6	0.86
9	Liu, Ren-Jye and Brookfield, J. (2006)	Supply Chain Management: An International Journal	Japanese subcontracting in mainland China: A study of Toyota and Shanghai Koito	Quantitative	5	1.13
10	Epstein, G and Gintis, H (1995)	Review of International Political Economy	International capital markets and national economic policy	Quantitative	4	1.45
11	(Norder & Seijmonsbergen, 2017)	Ecology and Society	Assessing temporal couplings in social-ecological island systems: historical deforestation and soil loss on Mauritius (Indian Ocean)	Quantitative	3	2.33
12	(Farmaki & Papatheodorou, 2015)	Tourism Planning and Development	Stakeholder Perceptions of the Role of Low-cost Carriers in Insular Tourism Destinations: The Case of Cyprus	Quantitative	3	1.00
13	(Zorpas et al., 2018)	Journal of Cleaner Production	Monitoring and evaluation of prevention activities regarding household organics waste from insular communities	Quantitative	2	1.71
14	(Cohen, 2017)	Review of International Political Economy	Forum: Open Economy Reflections: Systemic Theory and Policy Relevance The IPE of money revisited	Qualitative	2	0.24
15	Mihail N. Diakomihalis, et al., (2011)	Tourism Economics	An empirical approach to coastal leisure shipping in Greece and an assessment of its economic contribution	Qualitative	2	1.83

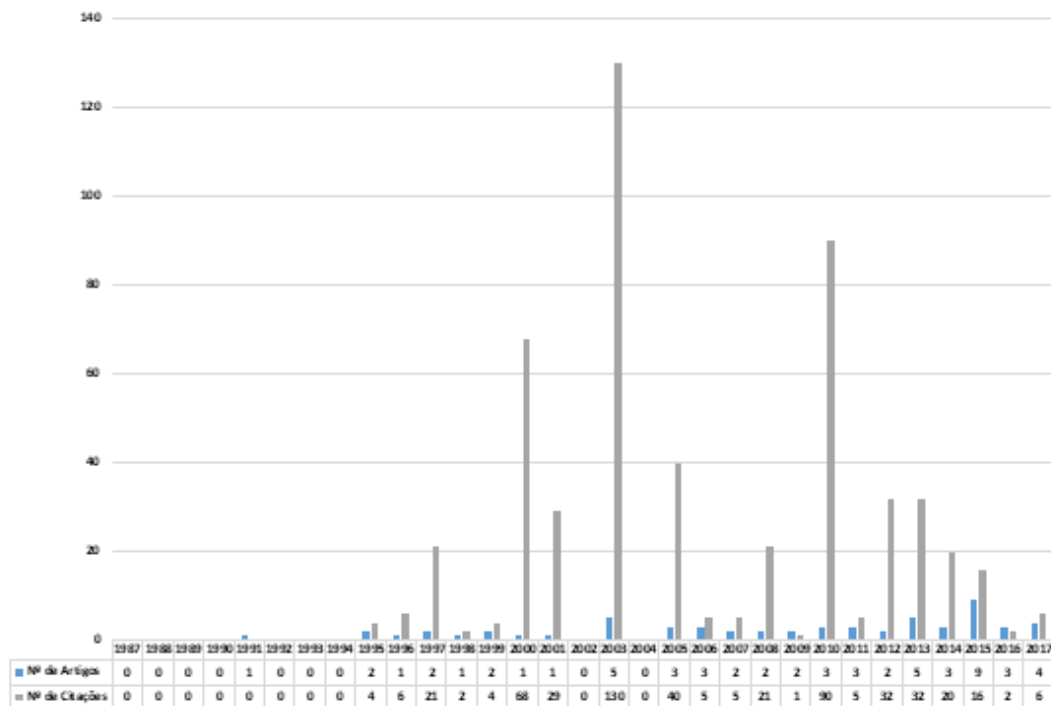
Source: Own Elaboration

Based on table 5, the 3 most quoted authors regarding studies on Insular Economy are:
 1. Nayak, A. (2003). Last of the “Real Geordies”? White masculinities and the subcultural response to deindustrialisation. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 21(1), 7-25.

2. Kaika, M. (2010). Architecture and crisis: Re-inventing the icon, re-imaging (in) ing London and re-branding the City. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 35(4), 453-474.
3. Kasimis, C., Papadopoulos, A., & Zacopoulou, E. (2003). Migrants in rural Greece. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 43(2), 167-184.

According to Figure 3, we can observe the annual evolution of the number of publications on the (WoS) based on the keyword “*Insular Economy*” for the period from 1987 to 2017 without the application of any filter. The first articles only appear in 1997, but the articles of 2003, and 2010 are those with the highest number of quotations.

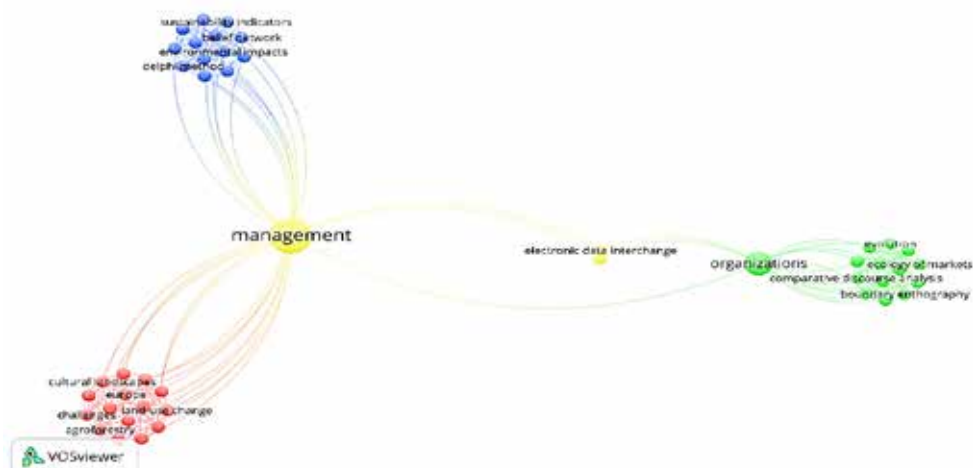
Figure 3. Number of Articles and Annual Quotations “*Insular Economy*”



Source: Own Elaboration

In Figure 4 we analyzed the areas of higher density related to this area of study.

Figure 4. Relationship Map between the Keyword “*Insular Economy*”



Source: Own Elaboration

Figure 4 shows the clusters of greater importance and areas with higher incidence of the existing studies, after the application of a filter, using the keyword “*Insular Economy*” on the online database (WoS), and we transported the data to the software VOSviewer using the criteria to include only titles and abstracts, the “Full Counting” counting method.

However, from this analysis we obtained the identification of five groups of clusters, with the 34 most relevant items. In this sense and after the analysis of the most relevant clusters on the “*Insular Economy*”, we listed the Top 20 of the most cited authors according to table 6.

Table 6. Top 20 most Cited Authors According to the Keyword “*Insular Economy* *”

Rank	Author	Citations	Documents	Total link strenght
1	Bedford,s	35	1	7
2	Buckley, hr	35	1	7
3	Hawkins, s	35	1	7
4	Herrscher, e	35	1	7
5	Kinaston, r	35	1	7
6	Neal, k	35	1	7
7	Spriggs, m	35	1	7
8	Valentin, f	35	1	7
9	Stier, sc	26	1	0
10	Cwik, t	20	1	4
11	Muller, gj	20	1	4
12	Schmidt, s	20	1	4
13	Wieland, v	20	1	4
14	Wolters, m	20	1	4
15	Kerndrup, s	12	1	4
16	Moller, b	12	1	4
17	Nielsen, s	12	1	4
18	Smink, c	12	1	4
19	Sperling, k	12	1	4
20	Voigt, cc	11	1	0

Source: Own Elaboration

In this table it can be noted that Bedford, s., Buckley, hr., Hawkins, s is undoubtedly the great reference, followed by Herrscher, e., Kinaston, r., Neal, k., Spriggs, m., Valentin, f., Stier, sc., Cwik, t., Muller, gj., Schmidt, s., Wieland, v., Wolters, m., Kerndrup, s., Moller, b., Nielsen, s., Smink, c., Sperling, k., Voigt, cc.

After analyzing the most cited authors, we have listed the Top 20 countries that produce more articles, although they may not be the most cited according to table 7.

Table 7. Top 13 Countries with the Highest Number of Articles Produced According to the Keyword “Insular Economy”

Rank	Country	Citations	Documents	Total link strenght
1	USA	141	6	3
2	England	126	3	0
3	Australia	121	3	3
4	Greece	70	3	2
5	Germany	45	3	4
6	France	35	1	2
7	New Zealand	35	1	2
8	Denmark	26	2	2
9	Philipines	26	1	1
10	Belgium	20	1	0
11	Spain	14	1	0
12	Mexico	11	1	1

Source: Own Elaboration

Table 7 shows that “The USA” is at the top with the greatest number of article productions being followed by England, Australia, Greece, Germany, France, New Zealand, Denmark, Philipines, Belgium, Spain, Mexico.

Table 8 lists the Top 8 scientific journals with the highest number of quotations on this subject, where it is possible to verify that “The International Journal of Urban and Regional Research” is undoubtedly the most referenced being at the top of the ranking, followed by Environment and Planning d-society & Space, Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, Rural Sociology, Journal of Archaeological Science, Yale Law Journal, Biological Conservation, and Ecological Indicators.

Table 8. Top 8 of the most Cited Scientific Journals According to the Keyword “Insular Economy *”

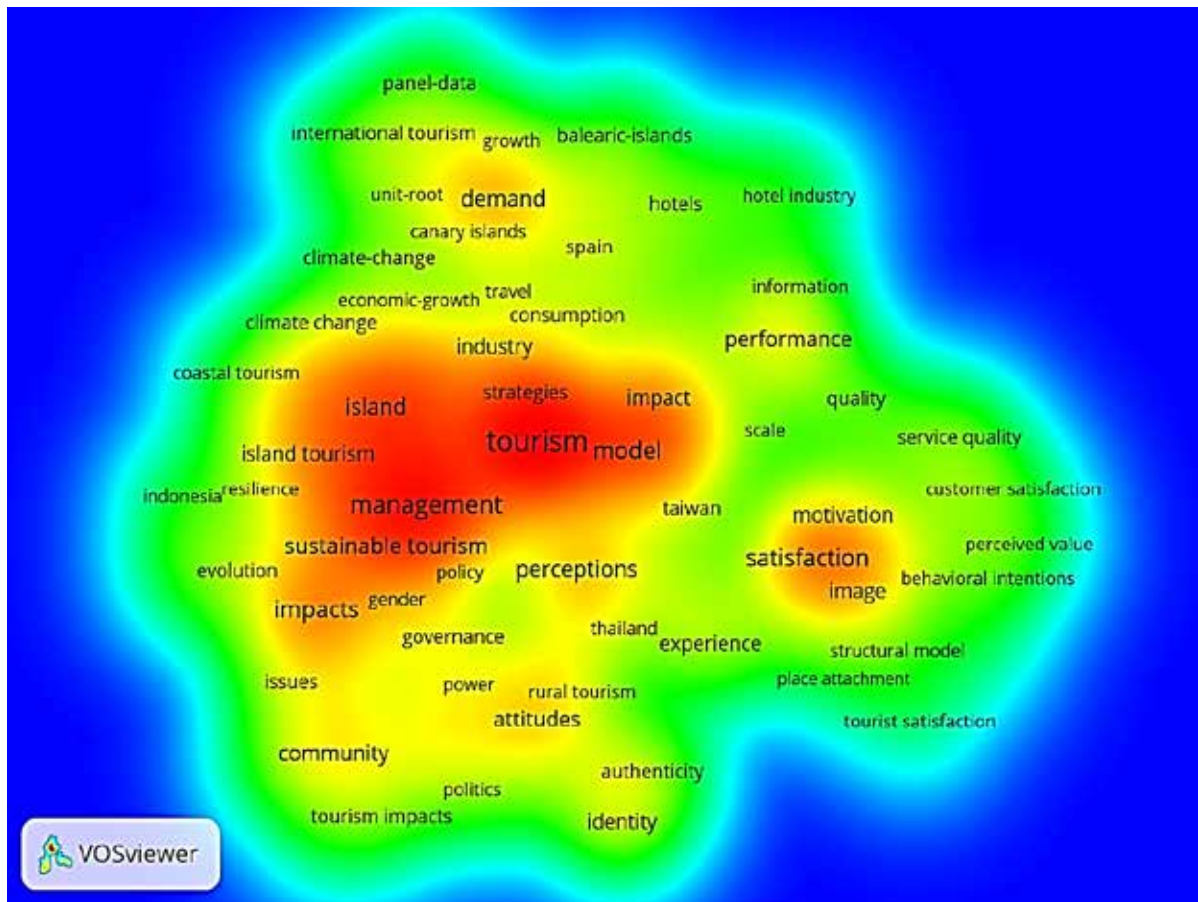
Rank	Source	Citations	Documents	Total link strenght
1	International Journal of Urban and Regional Research	68	1	0
2	Environment and Planning d-society & Space	64	1	0
3	Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers	56	1	0
4	Sociologia Ruralis	47	1	0
5	Journal of Archaeological Science	35	1	0
6	Yale Law Journal	29	1	0
7	Biological Conservation	26	1	0
8	Ecological Indicators	20	1	0

Source: Own Elaboration

Crossing of Intellectual Knowledge: Cluster of Tourism, Insular Economy

Intellectual knowledge is often difficult to analyse. We have then approached the two key concepts in relation to the islands that are the cluster of tourism and insular economy. We have only selected the 100 most cited words in the data collected and it can be checked in the density of visualization map in figure 5.

Figure 5. Density Map of Words based on the Intellectual Knowledge on “Tourism Cluster” and “Insular Economy”



Source: Own Elaboration

Freeman suggested three methods of measuring centrality for a network: 1) centrality of degrees, that is, the area with the highest density; 2) between centrality, that is, the zone with intermediate density and 3) centrality of proximity that are the most remote and less dense areas, that is, less explored areas of study (Freeman, 1979). The networks constructed in this research are non-directed networks because concepts of input and output, causal relationship, position difference, flow or diffusion, existed behind any of network actors interconnected in this study (Lee & Su, 2011). In this sense, table 9 shows the items that correspond to the five groups of clusters identified in the previous density map.

According to table 9 it was possible to group the top 100 of the most cited keywords, forming five groups of clusters: i) tourist impacts; ii) tourist islands; iii) tourist satisfaction; iv) insularity and v) tourism.

Table 9. Clusters Groups Originated According to the Selection of the Top 100 Keywords

Tourist Impacts (26 Items)	Tourist Islands (20 Items)	Tourist Satisfaction (20 Items)	Insularity (18 Items)	Tourism (16 Items)
Attitudes, australia, authenticity, community, cyprus, economy, ecotourism, gender, governance, heritage, identity, impacts, issues, new zealand, participation, perceptions, perspective, policy, politics, power, quality-of-life, rural tourism, social impacts, support, sustainable tourism, tourism impacts.	Climate change, coastal tourism, conservation, cycle, decision-making, destination, evolution, framework, Indonesia, industry, island, island tourism, management, national-park, residents attitudes, resilience, strategies, sustainability, sustainable development, travel.	Antecedents, behavioral intentions, customer satisfaction, destination image, experience, image, involvement, loyalty, model, motivation, perceived value, place attachment, quality, satisfaction, segmentation, service quality, structural model, Thailand, tourist satisfaction, variables.	Balearic-islands, behavior, canary islands, china, competitiveness, hospitality, hotel industry, hotels, impact, information, innovation, knowledge, pacific islands, performance, scale, spain, Taiwan, tourism.	Aruba, climate-change, consumption, demand, determinants, economic-growth, growth, international tourism, islands, Mallorca, models, panel-data, time-series, tourism demand, tourism development, unit-root

Source: Own Elaboration

Cluster 1: “Tourist Impacts”, this cluster reflects the relationship of environmental, economic and social impacts that are essential to require multiple indicators, appropriate for measuring the state of interactions of interrelated variables. Thus, island destinations are heavily dependent on air and sea transport for accessibility, and future research should focus on possible impacts on island tourist destinations (Maria, Remoaldo, & António, 2012; Yürük, Akyol, & Şimşek, 2017; Ferri & Pedrini, 2018; Lui, Bartosiak, Piccoli, & Sadhya, 2018).

Cluster 2: “Tourist Island”, islands often encounter associated factors and barriers, and offer ecosystems that are often closed. Island barriers are typically composed of land platforms, beaches, dunes, high tides, and are designated as barriers of the island system. However, small islands are generally rich in coastal and marine biodiversity (Podhorodecka, 2013; Dorta-Afonso & Hernández-Martín, 2015; Kurniawan et al., 2016; Tsoukala et al., 2018).

Cluster 3: “Tourist Satisfaction”, satisfaction directly or indirectly implies that a certain destination increases its arrivals, which in turn increases the wellbeing of the residents being the result of profit and competitiveness (Ko & Stewart, 2002; Lee, Jeon, & Kim, 2011; Yürük et al., 2017; Wikhamn, 2019).

Cluster 4: “Insularity”, the islands are, in large part, of fragile environment and rare wildlife, plus a set of unique and natural features. In this sense tourism in island territory is an opportunity for economic development with the potential to diversify livelihoods, reduce poverty, and strengthen the entry of outsiders, reducing insularity and boosting economic growth (Jones, 1996; Pugh, 2018).

Cluster 5: “Tourism”, the authors in this cluster argue that tourism is a fundamental factor in any island destination. Then, tourism through the characteristics of each island, leads to the search for this destination, which implies a greater need for tourism development, which in turn will be fundamental to the economic growth of this island region (Webster & Ivanov, 2014; Henderson, Avis, & Tsui, 2018).

5. CONCLUSION

The objective of this article was to provide a general and systematic overview of the most influential and productive publications, their authors, scientific journals for the study areas and their national origins in two distinct fields: tourism clusters and insular economy in the period from 1987 to 2017 according to WoS data.

Thus, this study carried out a mapping of scientific publications, intellectual structures and trends in research on cluster of tourism and insular economy, as well as the evolution over the years, through resources for these bibliometric methods. The results allowed identifying five approaches to tourism and insular economy: impacts, islands, satisfaction, insularity and tourism. This reflects the mode corresponding to each complex and specific field from which the search resulted.

The problems with measurement derive primarily from issues involving the complexity of the tourism cluster and island economy issues, as well as the lack of clear and accurate definitions and interpretations of these issues.

Accordingly, our analysis extends beyond the traditional range of bibliometric studies. In addition, through this innovative methodological approach, we demonstrate our ability to capture and identify new fields of research in the field of tourism cluster and insular economy in order to establish feasible search paths and opening of new ones that are not well explored, identified in groups of clusters previously described.

Although the expectation that tourism on islands contributes significantly to the development of a specific region, is high, the actual role that tourism plays in regional development is still poorly understood (Hall, 2002). Tourism in islands is undoubtedly the fastest growing industry in the world and at the same time the main source of revenue for a considerable number of developing countries and regions, not only because of the vast human potential but also because of the stimulus of regional development (Iordache, 2010) and wealth creation and employment (Kovačević et al., 2017).

The main implication of this study arises from the identification of the main research trends in this field and the respective shortcomings and specific needs for future scientific research in areas related to islands such as tourism clusters and insular economy.

Regarding the limitations and future lines of research, we can mention the fact that we have only adopted a database, which excluded some of the leading specialist journals in this field and which are not included in this database. Thus, a future line of research could also be the incorporation of the Scopus database in the analysis.

Another future research line could be conducting qualitative content of studies, by the application of other systematic reviews involving summaries and evaluations based on the interpretation by combining management practices based on evidence with inductive methods and use of methodological triangulation.

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HOTEL INDUSTRY AND REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS: THE BIBLIOMETRIC PERSPECTIVE OF WEB OF SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT

The hotel industry is certainly a key sector study for any regional competitiveness. The aim of this study is to review the extent and emerging perspectives and approaches to the hotel industry and regional competitiveness. We adopted a systematic literature review using a bibliometric approach, focusing on the creation of maps and networks of visualization of intellectual structure in the period of 18 years (2000-2018), through the Web of Science database. The author argues that the hotel industry is undoubtedly the sector linked to regional competitiveness and that is an engine of the regional economy.

Keywords: Bibliometric Analysis, Hotel Industry, Intellectual Knowledge, Regional Competitiveness.

JEL Classification: Z3, Z31, Z32, M2, M21

1. INTRODUCTION

The hotel industry belongs to one of the vital and structural elements of the tourism sector without which no destination could be competitive (Attila, 2016; Ouyang, Wei, & Chi, 2019; Zhao, Xu, & Wang, 2019). The importance of studying knowledge about a new and certain scientific domain is in itself interesting from its foundation or given period, allowing to see its theoretical position of the intellectual structure and its permanent development and future perspectives (Koman & Kundrikova; 2016; García-Almeida & Klassen, 2017; Atapattu, 2018; Aydin & Dube, 2018). Based on this assumption we chose to select two scientific areas of study, the hotel industry and regional competitiveness, since these are undoubtedly two areas that constitute an important source of economic growth in many countries, and because the hotel industry is a very important capital factor in the development and a source of research of great interest (Attila, 2016; Sellers-Rubio & Casado-Diaz, 2018; Assaf & Tsionas, 2019; Penela, Isabel, & Gregory, 2019).

Most of the empirical studies in the area of competitiveness at the level of the industries have been related to the manufacturing sectors, and only more recently some investigators have begun the study of the international competitiveness in the service sector with a particular focus on tourist destinations and the hotel industry that deserves a systematic and critical review (Tsai, Song, & Wong, 2016).

However, although many people deal with tourism, the hotel industry and tourist destinations of the regions in the literature on international tourism, there is still a large gap in the hotel industry rooted in the conditions and research trends that are rarely investigated (Yang & Cai, 2016).

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Although there are some empirical studies related to the hotel industry and competitiveness, most of them focus on services with a particular focus on destination, not on the hotel industry and regional competitiveness. But as tourism evolves the hotel industry continues to thrive in the global, international and domestic economy, among members of the industry, therefore, possessing competitive advantages may be a factor and key to the success of these hotel members (Tsai, Song, & Wong, 2009a; Attila, 2016; Tsai et al., 2016).

There are many other researchers who use the study of competitiveness indices to explore the impact of global or regional competitiveness from certain policy measures, for example, to determine the competitiveness of prices, destination to the market, and cost of access to the destination (Dwyer, Forsyth, & Rao, 2000; Picazo & Moreno-Gil, 2018). However, there is a lack of systematic studies that analyze driving and restricted forces in the adoption of hotel industry issues and this is one of the main objectives of this study, namely to identify these forces (Mak & Chang, 2019).

This paper, therefore, seeks to meet this need, from the literature bibliometric analysis that focuses on how these concepts (hotel industry and tourism competitiveness) have interrelated over time, given that their respective fields of study emerge as highly dispersed and, until now, systematic study of the literature in these terms. Currently, the bibliometric analysis represents the most commonly applied methodology for studying research results and literature (Palmer, Sesé, & Montano, 2005; Evren & Kozak, 2014; Cancino, Merigó, & Coronado, 2017; Castillo-Vergara, Alvarez-Marin, & Placencio-Hidalgo, 2018). This covers the application of quantitative and statistical analyzes to academic results in order to generate a broad perspective on research activities and their impacts, particularly on researchers, journals, countries and the origin of universities.

The objective of the study is to provide researchers with topics related to the hotel industry and tourism competitiveness, a map of journals, authors, themes, citations and other data that allow a better understanding of publications related to the theme and future perspectives. Thus in the review of the following literature, we approach these contexts of the hotel industry and tourism competitiveness in order to identify future research trends.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Hotel Industry

The hotel industry comprises the cluster of several commercial establishments specializing in providing accommodation to travelers for a certain amount depending on their rating and number of stars. The hotel industry and competitiveness have been relatively little studied, although some studies have already begun in other industries since the early 1990s (Tsai et al., 2009a; Mohsin & Lengler, 2015). The responsibility of hotels in relation to their natural, economic, social and cultural environment is undoubted of utmost importance, since it is in this environment that the tourism product is included, determining the quality and satisfaction of the tourist experience (Ettinger, Grabner -Kräuter, & Terlutter, 2018).

The hotel industry is also often characterized by the great power of the directors and managers in each unit, influencing business and management strategies in the development of new products and introduction of innovation factors, thus generating dynamic capacity development (Pusck, Kramer, Flag, & Freire, 2019).

However, only recently some researchers have begun to take an interest in studying and analyzing factors of competitiveness in the hotel industry and competitiveness in the tourism sector, either through conceptual and empirical studies with a particular focus on tourist destinations and the hotel industry (Tsai et al., 2009a, 2009a; Zainuddin et al.,

2015; Domínguez Vila et al., 2015). As tourism and the hotel industry continue to thrive in the global economy, competition whether national or international is becoming increasingly competitive (Tsai, Song, & Wong, 2009b; Orfila-Sintes, Crespi, & Martí, 2005; Ali Köseoglu, Ross, & Okumus, 2016). This heterogeneous distribution of the hotel industry, resources and capabilities among competing companies have been invoked as a relevant aspect in the creation of competitive advantage (Lafuente, Carlos, Moreno-gómez, & Szerb, 2019).

2.2 Tourism Competitiveness

The concept of tourism involves the analysis of the existence of actors such as institutions, groups, universities, industries, and regional competencies, as well as the interactions involved with innovation-related purposes, in order to provide local and state authorities with tools (Huahai, Xuping, & Feng, 2011). The concept of competitiveness of a country and within regions is similar to the concept of competitiveness of countries. Competitiveness is the capacity that a destination, a region or business has for people to live or work under dignified conditions to the human condition.

Although there is a large number of analyzes on the motivations and competitiveness of tourist destinations, there are still gaps regarding the empirical research that simultaneously encompasses the concepts of satisfaction, its attributes and tourism competitiveness in the analysis of multiple tourism events (Pansiri, 2014).

As far as satisfaction studies are concerned, these are one of the most important tools for gathering information and tourist opinions of a destination (Alegre & Garau, 2010). Thus, through the analysis of events and tourist satisfaction, it is possible to reach tourist competitiveness (Chen, Chen, Lee, & Tsai, 2016; Garcia-Almeida & Klassen, 2017; Garcia-Almeida & Klassen, 2017). Tourism is fundamental to the development of new clusters capable of sustaining regional competitiveness, bringing challenges to the tourism and cultural sector, nourishing its competitiveness, (Jackson & Murphy, 2002; Novelli et al., 2006; Zan et al., 2007; Alberti & Giusti, 2012).

According to Costa & Buhalis (2006), there is a need for a new conceptual approach to tourism, both in the introduction of new products with emerging solutions and in industries such as: reengineering established products and destinations, emerging destinations based on fashion and accessibility, based on experience, nature-based products, ecotourism and adventure tourism, sports and event tourism, urbanization tourism and residences, new age travel / tourism: spiritual experiences, shopping and tourism, gastronomy, food and wine; Thana tourism and Dark Tourism, (including spiritual tourism and pilgrimage) and even space tourism.

Communication and trust between tourists and residents, the efficiency of customs and emigration services, the attitude of customs and emigration services, the hospitality of residents to tourists, diversity of shopping experience, theme parks, financial institutions and ease of exchange, are also some factors of regional competitiveness (Crouch, 2011).

Management capabilities, the existence of tourism programs, cooperation between public and private sectors, spa and health resorts, tourist information and referral, casinos, nightlife and the use of e-commerce are fundamental elements for the competitiveness of a destination (Semlinger, 2008; Armenski et al., 2011; Aristei, Vecchi, & Venturini, 2016).

The destination vision regarding the values of tourism, residents, stakeholders and community are also identified by Armenski et al. (2011) as essential factors for tourism competitiveness. Briefly, the specific implications most supported by stakeholders in the tourism sector were the organizations and institutions of the tourism destination that can play an important role as facilitating strategies between the regional government and companies for better planning, development of tourism competitiveness (Banerjee & Homroy, 1998).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Data

The data for this research was used essentially using the WoS (Web of Science) database, which comprises several databases associated with it. The bibliometrics studies were initially used mainly based on the WoS and Scopus databases (Michael Hall, 2011; Sánchez, de la Cruz Del Rio Rama, & García, 2016; Cancino et al., 2017). Bibliometric study is a field of quantitative analysis that essentially uses bibliographical material, analyzing research trends, and it has been used in a wide range of fields (Palmer et al., 2005; Benckendorff & Zehrer, 2013; Jian-min, Chun-hao, & Jian-min, 2017; Estevão, Garcia, Filipe, & Fernandes, 2017; Castillo-Vergara et al., 2018; Project, 2018).

We have gathered our data from the Science Citation Index Expanded (2000-2018), Citation Index of Social Sciences (2000-2018), Arts and Humanities Citation Index (2000-2018), and the conference proceedings citation index - Social and human sciences (2000-2018), compiled by Thomson Reuters-ISI online databases containing many thousands of scholarly articles and bibliographic information about the authors and their affiliations and citations (Delbari, Ng, Aziz, & Ho, 2015; Global et al., 2016).

The research was conducted in April 2019 on the Web of Science Core Collection database involving the application of the search terms hotel industry and regional competitiveness with title, authors, abstract, keywords or source and with the chronological filter defined until the end of 2018, separated by schedules (Win). The result of this search resulted in 4466 articles associated with the keyword hotel industry and 3287 associated with the keyword regional competitiveness. All of these procedures have also occurred using Microsoft Excel 2010 software (Microsoft Corporation, Washington, USA) and VOSviewer software.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Hotel Industry

Table 1 shows the annual trends in the number of articles published in this area of study of the hotel industry, as well as its number of citations and average citations per year. The three articles that get the highest number of citations are:

1. Ray Reagans and Bill McEvily (2003). Network Structure and Knowledge Transfer: The Effects of Cohesion and Range. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (Jun. 2003), pp. 240-267). **(1376 citations, 80.65 citations per year)**.
2. Wedad Elmaghraby, Pinar Keskinocak (2003). Dynamic Pricing in the Presence of Inventory Considerations: Research Overview, Current Practices, and Future Directions. *Management Science*, Vol, 49, No. 10, 1287-1309. **(541 citations, 31.76 citations per year)**.
3. Meuter, ML; Bitner, MJ; Ostrom, AL; Brown, SW (2005). Choosing among alternative service delivery modes: An investigation of customer trial of self-service technologies. *Journal of Marketing*, 69(2), 61–83 **(485 citations, 32.27 citations per year)**.

Table 1. Intellectual Capital of Top 50 of the Most Cited Studies in the “Hotel Industry”

Rank	Title	Authors	Journal	Year of publication	Total citations	Average per year
1	Network structure and knowledge transfer: The effects of cohesion and range	Reagans, R; McEvily, B	Administrative Science Quarterly	2003	1376	80,65
2	Dynamic pricing in the presence of inventory considerations: Research overview, current practices, and future directions	Elmaghraby, W; Keskinocak, P	Management Science	2003	541	31,76
3	Choosing among alternative service delivery modes: An investigation of customer trial of self-service technologies	Meuter, ML; Bitner, MJ; Ostrom, AL; Brown, SW	Journal of Marketing	2005	485	32,27
4	Relational embeddedness and learning: The case of bank loan managers and their clients	Uzzi, B; Lancaster, R	Management Science	2003	460	27,06
5	Knowledge, clusters, and competitive advantage	Tallman, S; Jenkins, M; Henry, N; Pinch, S	Academy of Management Review	2004	432	27
6	A review of innovation research in tourism	Hjalager, Anne-Mette	Tourism Management	2010	426	42,6
7	Agglomeration economies, firm heterogeneity, and foreign direct investment in the United States	Shaver, JM; Flyer, F	Strategic Management Journal	2000	374	18,7
8	The geography of opportunity: spatial heterogeneity in founding rates and the performance of biotechnology firms	Stuart, T; Sorenson, O	Research Policy	2003	372	21,88
9	Friendships among competitors in the Sydney hotel industry	Ingram, P; Roberts, PW	American Journal of Sociology	2000	334	16,7
10	The effect of customers' emotional responses to service failures on their recovery effort evaluations and satisfaction judgments	Smith, AK; Bolton, RN	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	2002	318	17,67
11	The influence of user-generated content on traveler behavior: An empirical investigation on the effects of e-word-of-mouth to hotel online bookings	Ye, Qiang; Law, Rob; Gu, Bin; Chen, Wei	Computers in Human Behavior	2011	312	34,67
12	Making the next move: How experiential and vicarious learning shape the locations of chains' acquisitions	Baum, JAC; Li, SX; Usher, JM	Administrative Science Quarterly	2000	302	15,1
13	An empirical investigation of an incentive plan that includes nonfinancial performance measures	Banker, RD; Potter, G; Srinivasan, D	Accounting Review	2000	290	14,5
14	Transaction cost determinants and ownership-based entry mode choice: a meta-analytical review	Zhao, HX; Luo, YD; Suh, T	Journal of International Business Studies	2004	274	17,13
15	Using data envelopment analysis to measure hotel managerial efficiency change in Taiwan	Hwang, SN; Chang, TY	Tourism Management	2003	256	15,06
16	An importance-performance analysis of hotel selection factors in the Hong Kong hotel industry: a comparison of business and leisure travellers	Chu, RKS; Choi, T	Tourism Management	2000	253	12,65
17	Managing marketing channel opportunism: The efficacy of alternative governance mechanisms	Brown, JR; Dev, CS; Lee, DJ	Journal of Marketing	2000	246	12,3
18	Agglomeration effects and performance: A test of the Texas lodging industry	Chung, W; Kalnins, A	Strategic Management Journal	2001	222	11,68
19	Institutional-based antecedents and performance outcomes of internal and external green supply chain management practices	Zhu, Qinghua; Sarkis, Joseph; Lai, Kee-hung	Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management	2013	203	29

20	The relationship between brand equity and firms' performance in luxury hotels and chain restaurants	Kim, HB; Kim, WG	Tourism Management	2005	202	13,47
21	On the positive and negative effects of emotion work in organizations	Zapf, D; Holz, M	European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology	2006	198	14,14
22	Impacts of positive and negative corporate social responsibility activities on company performance in the hospitality industry	Kang, Kyung Ho; Lee, Seoki; Huh, Chang	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2010	182	18,2
23	Aspects of service-dominant logic and its implications for tourism management: Examples from the hotel industry	Shaw, Gareth; Bailey, Adrian; Williams, Allan	Tourism Management	2011	174	19,33
24	Effects of different dimensions of corporate social responsibility on corporate financial performance in tourism-related industries	Inoue, Yuhei; Lee, Seoki	Tourism Management	2011	172	19,11
25	brand equity, brand loyalty and consumer satisfaction	Nam, Janghyeon; Ekinci, Yuksel; Whyatt, Georgina	Annals of Tourism Research	2011	171	19
26	Innovation activity in the hotel industry: Evidence from Balearic Islands	Orfila-Sintes, F; Crespi-Cladera, R; Martinez-Ros, E	Tourism Management	2005	170	11,33
27	New consumer behavior: A review of research on eWOM and hotels	Serra Cantallops, Antoni; Salvi, Fabiana	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2014	168	28
28	Effect of experiential value on customer satisfaction with service encounters in luxury-hotel restaurants	Wu, Cedric Hsi-Jui; Liang, Rong-Da	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2009	166	15,09
29	Liquidity events and the geographic distribution of entrepreneurial activity	Stuart, TE; Sorenson, O	Administrative Science Quarterly	2003	163	9,59
30	Using fuzzy number for measuring quality of service in the hotel industry	Benitez, Juan Manuel; Martin, Juan Carlos; Roman, Concepcion	Tourism Management	2007	161	12,38
31	Hospitality teams: Knowledge sharing and service innovation performance	Hu, Meng-Lei Monica; Horng, Jeou-Shyan; Sun, Yu-Hua Christine	Tourism Management	2009	160	14,55
32	Knowledge transfer and management in tourism organisations: An emerging research agenda	Shawa, Gareth; Williams, Allan	Tourism Management	2009	159	14,45
33	Agglomeration effects and strategic orientations: Evidence from the US lodging industry	Canina, L; Enz, CA; Harrison, JS	Academy of Management Journal	2005	159	10,6
34	Developing an extended Theory of Planned Behavior model to predict consumers' intention to visit green hotels	Chen, Mei-Fang; Tung, Pei-Ju	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2014	158	26,33
35	Web reviews influence on expectations and purchasing intentions of hotel potential customers	Mauri, Aurelio G.; Minazzi, Roberta	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2013	156	22,29
36	Progress on information and communication technologies in hospitality and tourism	Law, Rob; Buhalis, Dimitrios; Cobanoglu, Cihan	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	2014	152	25,33

37	CSR and customer loyalty: The roles of trust, customer identification with the company and satisfaction	Martinez, Patricia; Rodriguez del Bosque, Ignacio	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2013	152	21,71
38	Understanding small firms in tourism: A perspective on research trends and challenges	Thomas, Rhodri; Shaw, Gareth; Page, Stephen J.	Tourism Management	2011	151	16,78
39	tourism economics research: a review and assessment	Song, Haiyan; Dwyer, Larry; Li, Gang; Cao, Zheng	Annals of Tourism Research	2012	150	18,75
40	Contemporary medical tourism: Conceptualisation, culture and commodification	Connell, John	Tourism Management	2013	147	21
41	A behavioral theory of firm growth: Sequential attention to size and performance goals	Greve, Henrich R.	Academy of Management Journal	2008	146	12,17
42	Motivations for ISO 14001 in the hotel industry	Chan, ESW; Wong, SCK	Tourism Management	2006	146	10,43
43	Do socially responsible activities help hotels and casinos achieve their financial goals?	Lee, Seoki; Park, Sun-Young	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2009	145	13,18
44	Environmental practices and firm performance: an empirical analysis in the Spanish hotel industry	Molina-Azorin, Jose F; Claver-Cortes, Enrique; Pereira-Moliner, Jorge; Jose Tari, Juan	Journal of Cleaner Production	2009	145	13,18
45	Consumers' willingness to pay for green initiatives of the hotel industry	Kang, Kyung Ho; Stein, Laura; Heo, Cindy Yoonjung; Lee, Seoki	International journal of Hospitality Management	2012	143	17,88
46	The Human Dimension A Review of Human Resources Management Issues in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry	Kusluvan, Salih; Kusluvan, Zeynep; Ilhan, Ibrahim; Buyruk, Lutfi	Cornell Hospitality Quarterly	2010	143	14,3
47	Feasibility analysis of stand-alone renewable energy supply options for a large hotel	Dalton, G. J.; Lockington, D. A.; Baldock, T. E.	Renewable Energy	2008	143	11,92
48	An investigation of the role of justice in turnover intentions, job satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behavior in hospitality industry	Nadiri, Halil; Tanova, Cem	International Journal of Hospitality Management	2010	141	14,1
49	The whole relationship between environmental variables and firm performance: Competitive advantage and firm resources as mediator variables	Lopez-Gamero, Maria D.; Molina-Azorin, Jose F; Claver-Cortes, Enrique	Journal of Environmental Management	2009	139	12,64
50	An analysis of environmental management, organizational context and performance of Spanish hotels	Gil, MJA; Jimenez, JB; Lorente, JJC	Omega-International Journal of Management Science	2001	139	7,32

Source: Own Elaboration

4.2 Regional Competitiveness

Table 2 shows the annual trends in the number of articles published in this area of regional competitiveness studies, as well as their number of citations and average citations per year. The three articles that get the highest number of citations are:

1. Porter M.E. (2000). Location, Competition, and Economic Development: Local Clusters in a Global Economy. *Economic Development Quarterly*, 14(1), 15-34. **(1470 citations, 73.5 citations per year).**
2. Martin, R; Sunley, P (2003). Deconstructing clusters: chaotic concept or policy panacea? *Journal of Economic Geography*, 3(1), 5–35 **(999 citations, 58.76 citations per year).**
3. Porter M.E. (2003). The economic performance of regions. *Regional Studies*, 37(6-7), 549-578 **(603 citations, 35.47 citations per year).**

Table 2. Intellectual Capital of the Top 50 Most Cited Studies in the “Regional Competitiveness”

Rank	Title	Authors	Journal	Year of publication	Total citations	Average per year
1	Location, competition, and economic development: Local clusters in a global economy	Porter, ME	Economic Development Quarterly	2000	1470	73,5
2	Deconstructing clusters: chaotic concept or policy panacea?	Martin, R; Sunley, P	Journal of Economic Geography	2003	999	58,76
3	The economic performance of regions	Porter, ME	Regional Studies	2003	603	35,47
4	Toward a relational economic geography	Bathelt, H; Gluckler, J	Journal of Economic Geography	2003	299	17,59
5	Regional competitiveness: An elusive yet key concept?	Kitson, M; Martin, R; Tyler, P	Regional Studies	2004	274	17,13
6	Competitiveness of regions from an evolutionary perspective	Boschma, RA	Regional Studies	2004	249	15,56
7	On the concept of territorial competitiveness: Sound or misleading?	Camagni, R	Urban Studies	2002	245	13,61
8	Face-to-face, buzz, and knowledge bases: sociospatial implications for learning, innovation, and innovation policy	Asheim, Bjorn; Coenen, Lars; Vang, Jan	Environment and Planning C-government and Policy	2007	241	18,54
9	Effects of new business formation on regional development over time	Fritsch, M; Mueller, P	Regional Studies	2004	241	15,06
10	How to unlock regional economies from path dependency? From learning region to learning cluster	Hassink, R	European Planning Studies	2005	208	13,87
11	National industry cluster templates: A framework for applied regional cluster analysis	Feser, EJ; Bergman, EM	Regional Studies	2000	185	9,25
12	Everyone's a 'winner': problematising the discourse of regional competitiveness	Bristow, G	Journal of Economic Geography	2005	171	11,4
13	Innovation and urban regions as national and international nodes for the transfer and sharing of knowledge	Simmie, J	Regional Studies	2003	170	10
14	The impact of different policy environments on agricultural land use in Europe	van Meijl, H; van Rheenen, T; Tabeau, A; Eickhout, B	Agriculture Ecosystems & Environment	2006	169	12,07
15	City repositioning and competitiveness building in regional development: New development strategies in Guangzhou, China	Xu, J; Yeh, AGO	International Journal of Urban and Regional Research	2005	147	9,8
16	Metropolitan institutional reform and the rescaling of state space in contemporary western Europe	Brenner, N	European Urban and Regional Studies	2003	143	8,41

17	The attractiveness and competitiveness of tourist destinations: A study of Southern Italian regions	Cracolici, Maria Francesca; Nijkamp, Peter	Tourism Management	2009	139	12,64
18	Resilient regions: re-'place'ing regional competitiveness	Bristow, Gillian	Cambridge Journal of Region's Economy and Society	2010	136	13,6
19	Analysis of sources of innovation, technological innovation capabilities, and performance: An empirical study of Hong Kong manufacturing industries	Yam, Richard C. M.; Lo, William; Tang, Esther P. Y.; Lau, Antonio K. W.	Research Policy	2011	127	14,11
20	Social capital, firm embeddedness and regional development	Cooke, P; Clifton, N; Oleaga, M	Regional Studies	2005	123	8,2
21	Creating a UK Competitiveness Index: Regional and local benchmarking	Huggins, R	Regional Studies	2003	123	7,24
22	Jockeying for position: What it means and why it matters to regional development policy when places compete	Malecki, EJ	Regional Studies	2004	117	7,31
23	The evolution of technologies in time and space: From national and regional to spatial innovation systems	Oinas, P; Malecki, EJ	International Regional Science Review	2002	117	6,5
24	Inequality and politics in the creative city-region: Questions of livability and state strategy	McCann, Eugene J.	International Journal of Urban and Regional Research	2007	112	8,62
25	The learning region: The impact of social capital and weak ties on innovation	Hauser, Christoph; Tappeiner, Gottfried; Walde, Janette	Regional Studies	2007	110	8,46
26	Competitiveness, productivity and economic growth across the European regions	Gardiner, B; Martin, K; Tyler, P	Regional Studies	2004	109	6,81
27	How to institutionalize innovative clusters? Comparing explicit top-down and implicit bottom-up approaches	Fromhold-Eisebith, M; Eisebith, G	Research Policy	2005	108	7,2
28	Consumers' preferences for locally produced food: A study in southeast Missouri	Brown, C	American Journal of Alternative Agriculture	2003	108	6,35
29	Why do business service firms cluster? Small consultancies, clustering and decentralization in London and southern England	Keeble, D; Nachum, L	Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers	2002	105	5,83
30	Internalisation of external cost in the power generation sector: Analysis with Global Multi-regional MARKAL model	Rafaj, Peter; Kypreos, Socrates	Energy Policy	2007	104	8
31	Social capital, economic growth and regional development	Iyer, S; Kitson, M; Toh, B	Regional Studies	2005	104	6,93
32	Evaluating the competitiveness of container ports in Korea and China	Yeo, Gi-Tae; Roe, Michael; Dinwoodie, John	Transportation Research part a-Policy and Practice	2008	103	8,58
33	Innovation in knowledge intensive industries: The nature and geography of knowledge links	Toedtling, Franz; Lehner, Patrick; Tripl, Michaela	European Planning Studies	2006	102	7,29

34	European agricultural landscapes, common agricultural policy and ecosystem services: a review	van Zanten, Boris T.; Verburg, Peter H.; Espinosa, Maria; Gomez-y-Paloma, Sergio; Galimberti, Giuliano; Kantelhardt, Jochen; Kapfer, Martin; Lefebvre, Marianne; Manrique, Rosa; Piore, Annette; Raggi, Meri; Schaller, Lena; Targetti, Stefano; Zasada, Ingo; Viaggi, Davide	Agronomy for Sustainable Development	2014	98	16,33
35	Hard and soft networks for urban competitiveness	Malecki, EJ	Urban Studies	2002	97	5,39
36	Why are bank profits so persistent? The roles of product market competition, informational opacity, and regional/macroeconomic shocks	Berger, AN; Bonime, SD; Covitz, DM; Hancock, D	Journal of Banking & Finance	2000	96	4,8
37	Rethinking innovation: context and gender	Blake, MK; Hanson, S	Environment and Planning	2005	90	6
38	Analysis of <i>Rhizobium etli</i> and of its symbiosis with wild <i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i> supports coevolution in centers of host diversification	Aguilar, OM; Rival, O; Peltzer, E	Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America	2004	87	5,44
39	Increasing state market share through a regional positioning	Uysal, M; Chen, JS; Williams, DR	Tourism Management	2000	87	4,35
40	Prospects for regional governance under the new regionalism: Economic imperatives versus political impediments	Norris, DF	Journal of Urban Affairs	2001	86	4,53
41	Health Information Exchange Among US Hospitals	Adler-Milstein, Julia; DesRoches, Catherine M.; Jha, Ashish K.	American Journal of Managed Care	2011	85	9,44
42	International tourism and climate change	Scott, Daniel; Gossling, Stefan; Hall, C. Michael	Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews-Climate Change	2012	83	10,38
43	LEADER and innovation	Dargan, Lorna; Shucksmith, Mark	Sociologia Ruralis	2008	83	6,92
44	Assessing the effects of invasive alien species on rural livelihoods: Case examples and a framework from South Africa	Shackleton, C. M.; McGarry, D.; Fourie, S.; Gambiza, J.; Shackleton, S. E.; Fabricius, C.	Human Ecology	2007	83	6,38
45	Agglomeration externalities: Marshall versus Jacobs	van der Panne, G	Journal of Evolutionary Economics	2004	83	5,19
46	Technology policy and the regions - the case of the BioRegion contest	Dohse, D	Research Policy	2000	82	4,1
47	Universities, knowledge networks and regional policy	Huggins, Robert; Johnston, Andrew; Steffenson, Rebecca	Cambridge Journal of Regions Economy and Society	2008	81	6,75
48	Optimal selection of location for Taiwanese hospitals to ensure a competitive advantage by using the analytic hierarchy process and sensitivity analysis	Wu, Cheng-Ru; Lin, Chin-Tsai; Chen, Huang-Chu	Building and Environment	2007	81	6,23

49	Putting porter into practice? Practices of regional cluster building: Evidence from Sweden	Lundequist, P; Power, D	European Planning Studies	2002	81	4,5
50	Social capital and localised learning: Proximity and place in technological and institutional dynamics	Lorenzen, Mark	Urban Studies	2007	78	6

Source: Own Elaboration

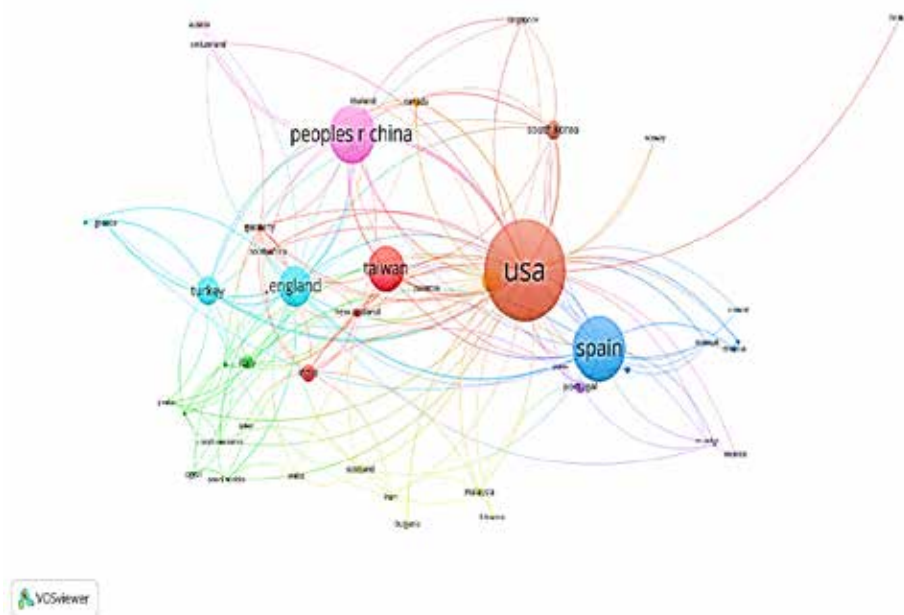
4.3 Global Analysis of Intellectual Knowledge: Hotel Industry and Regional Competitiveness

Intellectual knowledge is one that is associated with a deeper understanding of things, abstracts, concepts, theories, definitions, and interpretations of that knowledge. It is all type of knowledge produced that cannot be represented by a stimulus of the senses, that is, it must be revoked based on real facts by the investigator and his mind (Li, 2017; Trequattrini, Lombardi, Lardo, & Cuozzo, 2018; Teixeira, Veiga, & Fernandes, 2019).

On the human scale, this knowledge can be considered secondary when compared to the sensory knowledge, since it reflects attitudes learned, by the mind and human being since the individual has knowledge of it, and is able to prove by real and duly substantiated facts. According to the software, we chose the data type in the study area of the “hotel industry” and “regional competitiveness”, and from there we created a map based on the bibliographic data, using the type of analysis and counting method based on its coauthors selected the top 50 of the countries from which most publications originate, and which have at least one publication.

Bibliometry is a field of study that allows from the science of information the application of statistical and mathematical methods to construct indicators on the dynamics and evolution of scientific and technological information in the most diverse fields of study, scientific areas, organizations and countries (Acedo & Casillas, 2005; Evren & Kozak, 2014; Fan, Yang, & Chen, 2015; Merigo, Torres-abad, & Jose, 2015; Omerzel, 2015; Zhong, Geng, Liu, Gao, & Chen, 2016; Global et al., 2016; Liang & Liu, 2018).

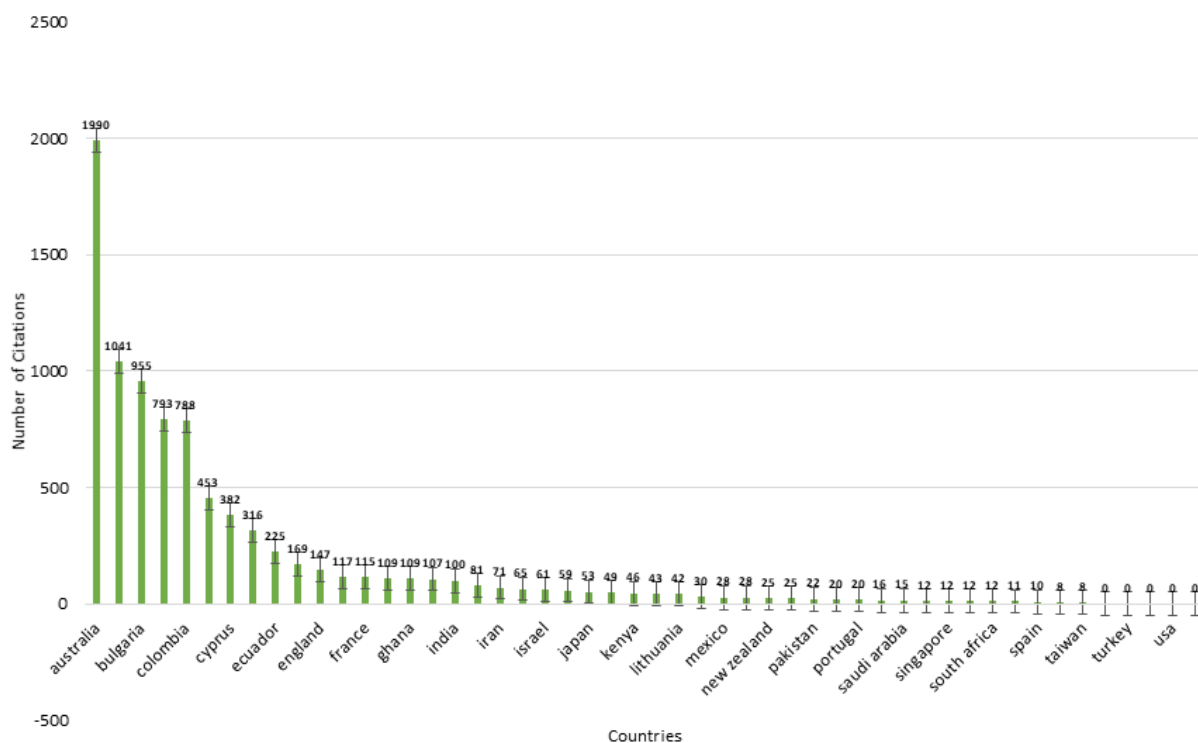
Figure 1. A Global Overview Map of the Countries with the Highest Publication Number by Keywords “Hotel Industry” and “Regional Competitiveness”



Source: Own Elaboration

Thus, from the following figures, we present the main outputs and groups of clusters obtained and originated from the selection of the Top 50 Countries, authors, the co-occurrence of words and journals that most published in the area of study of the hotel industry and regional competitiveness. From this analysis, it will be possible to highlight its importance, which areas and scholars have been devoted to the study of these two fields of study.

Figure 2. The Top 50 of Countries with the Highest Number of Citations in “Hotel Industry” and “Regional Competitiveness”

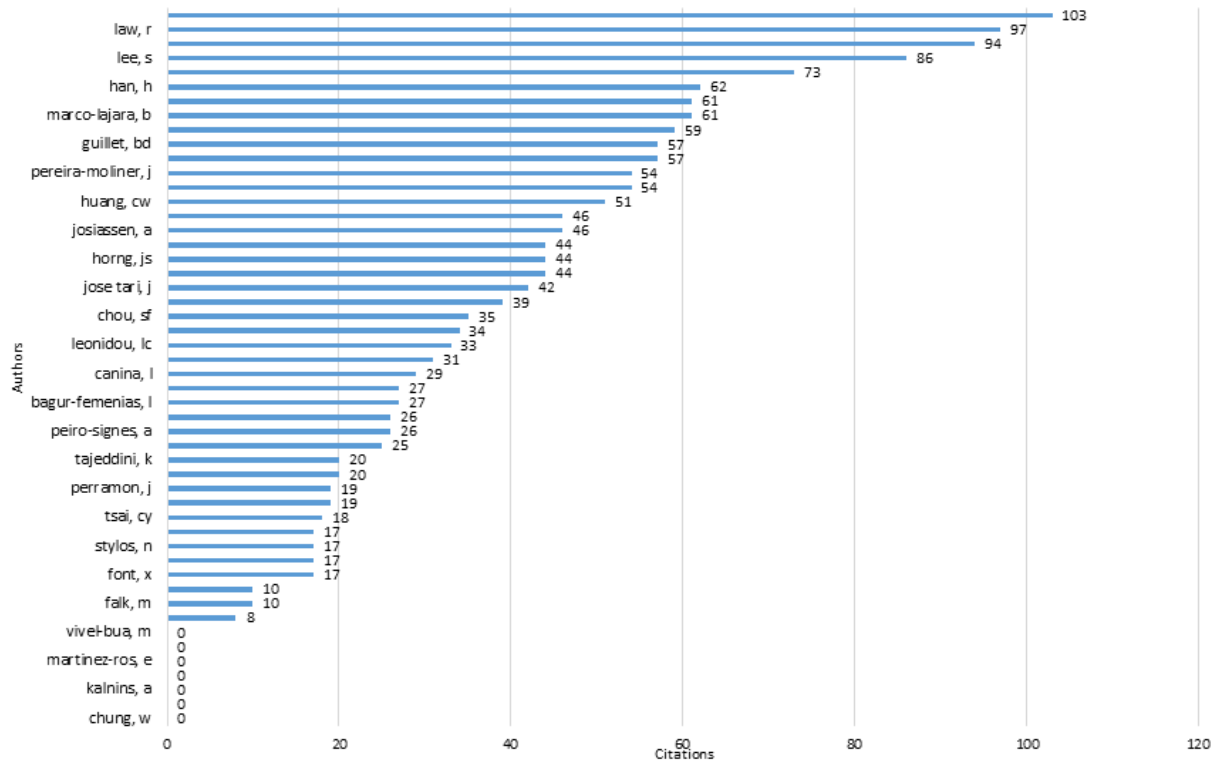


Source: Own Elaboration

Regarding the analysis of figure 2, it is possible to analyze and identify the countries with the highest number of citations in these areas of study. The countries with the largest number of publications covering these two areas of study are: Australia, Austria, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, England, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, India, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Republic of China, Portugal, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Scotland, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, USA, Wales.

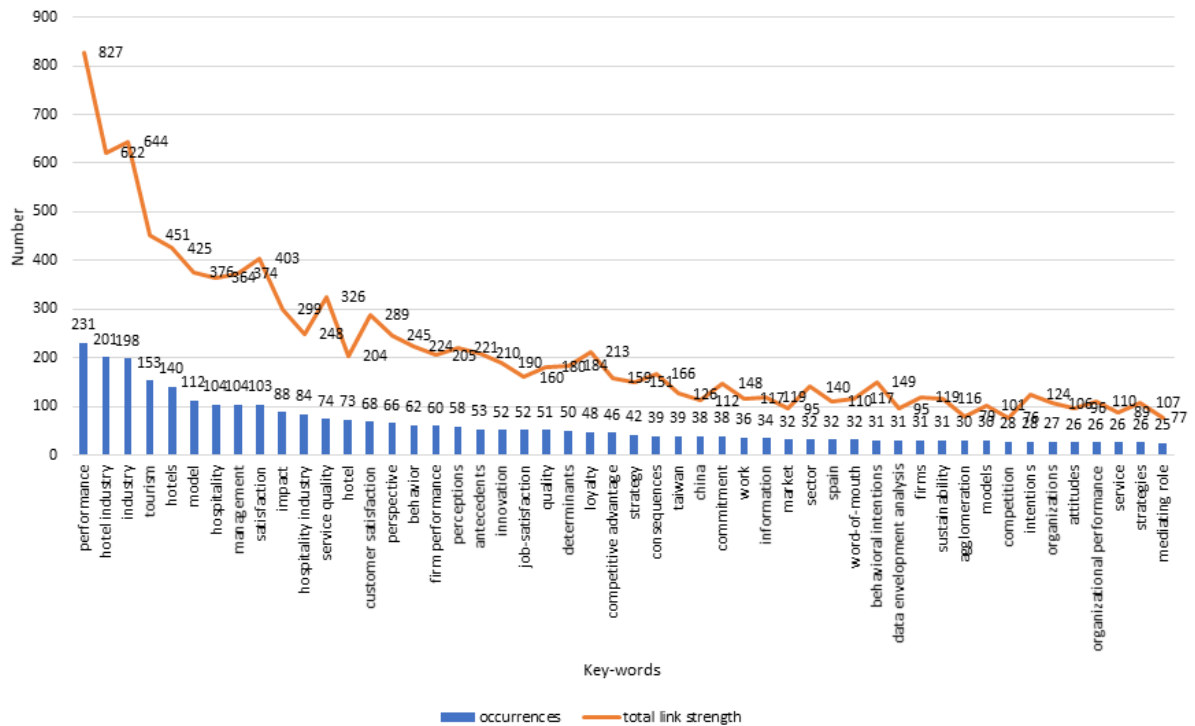
From the analysis of figure 3, it can be seen that the authors with the greatest number of citations in this field of study are: assaf, ag; law, r; jang, s; lee, s; lee, sk; han, h; marco-lajara, b; ubeda-garcia, m; chen, cm; claver-cortes, e; guillet, bd; molina-azorin, jf; pereira-moliner, j; huang, cw; josiassen, a; qu, h; del mar alonso-almeida, m; horng, js; o'neill, jw; jose tari, j; karatepe, om; chou, sf; tang, tw; leonidou, lc; orfila-sintes, f; canina, l; bagur-femenias, l; llach, j; peiro-signes, a; segarra-ona, m; chan, esw; hsu, chc; tajeddini, k; bilgihan, a; perramon, j; tsai, cy; font, x; lopez-gamero, md; stylos, n; yang, y; falk, m; sainaghi, r; okumus, f; chung, w; enz, c; kalnins, a; lado-sestayo, r; martinez-ros, e; nieves, j; vivel-bua, m.

Figure 3. The Top 50 of Authors with the Highest Number of Citations in “Hotel Industry” and “Regional Competitiveness”



Source: Own Elaboration

Figure 4. Top 50 and Global Map of Co-occurrence of Words Associated with “Hotel Industry” and “Regional Competitiveness”



Source: Own Elaboration

Figure 5. Top 50 Journals with the Highest Number of Citations in the Areas of “Hotel Industry” and “Regional Competitiveness”



Source: Own Elaboration

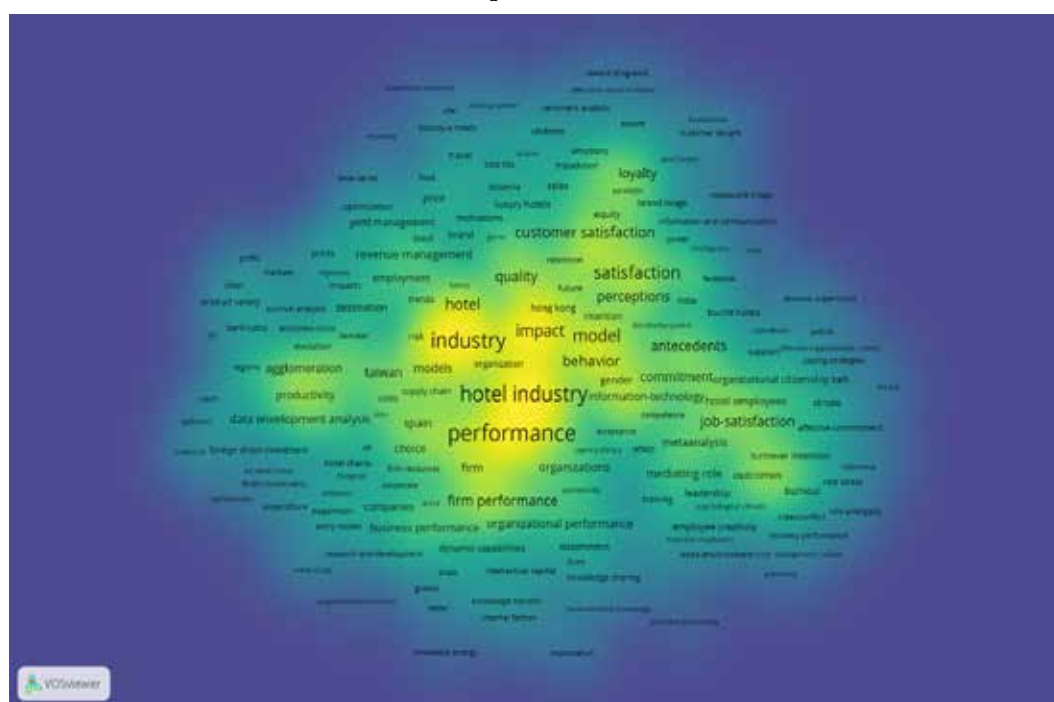
In the understanding of the visualization map of figure 4, the keywords with the greatest number of occurrences are: agglomeration; antecedents; attitudes; behavior; behavioral intentions; China; commitment; competition; competitive advantage; consequences; customer satisfaction; data envelopment analysis; determinants; firm performance; firms; hospitality; hospitality industry; hotel; hotel industry; hotels; impact; industry; information; innovation; intentions; job-satisfaction; loyalty; management; market; mediating role; model; models; organizational performance; organizations; perceptions; performance; perspective; quality; satisfaction; sector; service; service quality; Spain; strategies; strategy; sustainability; Taiwan; tourism; word-of-mouth; work, being the last ones referenced the less explored soon the exploration suggestions and areas of future investigation.

The journals with the highest number of citations, figure 5, in the defined study areas are: african journal of business management; amfiteatru economic; annals of tourism research; asia pacific journal of tourism research; benchmarking-an international journal; cornell hospitality quarterly; cuadernos de Turismo; current issues in tourism; economic research-ekonomiska istrazivanja; european journal of tourism research; information technology & tourism; international journal of contemporary hospitality management; international journal of culture tourism and hospitality research; international journal of hospitality and tourism administration; international journal of hospitality management; international journal of human resource management; international journal of tourism cities; international journal of tourism research; journal of business economics and management; journal of business research; journal of china tourism research; journal of economic geography; journal of hospitality & tourism research; journal of hospitality and tourism insights; journal of hospitality and tourism management; journal of hospitality and tourism technology; journal of hospitality marketing & management; journal of quality assurance in hospitality & tourism; journal of service management; journal of services marketing; journal of small

business management; journal of sustainable tourism; journal of travel & tourism marketing; journal of travel research; management decision; managing service quality; organization science; service business; service industries journal; sustainability; total quality management & business excellence; tourism; tourism analysis; tourism and hospitality research; tourism economics; tourism geographies; tourism management; tourism management perspectives; tourism review; worldwide hospitality and tourism themes.

From the map of visualization, we can then mention that some possible areas of future investigation that could be those that are in the appendix. Those that are more decentralized and far from the central nucleus, that is, the outermost areas are those areas that reveal a larger research gap, according to figure 6. It should be noted that those areas or keywords with the lowest number of occurrences are those which suggest future research.

Figure 6. Visualization Map of Future Research Trends in the “Hotel Industry” and “Regional Competitiveness”



Source: Own Elaboration

5. CONCLUSION

This study makes an innovative contribution in the field of hotel industry research and tourism competitiveness, providing a new methodological and innovative approach, with a perspective and analysis of the evolution of scientific knowledge in this field of study (Bowie, 2018). Based on the results obtained, we found that the literature emphasized that the knowledge about the hotel industry reveals that there is a great association of this area of the hotel industry with the regional competitiveness and tourism development of the regions. Our findings thus reveal a growing concern about the investment needs of the hotel industry in order to gain a competitive advantage. We can also report how this topic is recent and is undergoing a clear expansion and therefore the need for systematization and deeper analysis of the literature to understand the extent of future trends in scientific research associated with the hotel industry and competitiveness either regional, national or global scale.

We would also emphasize that generally, these themes appear in the literature associated with large sums of capital investments, the application of technical and scientific resources means to production systems and a deep restructuring of the regional economy. The provision and investment in infrastructures for these regions is, therefore, the result of considerable public investment designed to make private capital more productive in the expectation of greater business competitiveness, which is reflected in the competitiveness of the destination. Likewise, there is both growing demand and interest in setting up and operating new tourism and hotel businesses, with this evidence being a key factor within the knowledge process, innovation in obtaining greater competitiveness from the industries namely the hotel.

Can we then say which tools, models and mechanisms companies, regions or tourist destinations should adopt and exploit in order to be able to continue to become increasingly competitive and innovative at the regional level and better define their simultaneously sustainable growth policies, of the hotel industry?

A destination can only be competitive if the experiences it provides can be more satisfying to tourists and, on the other hand, offer more advantages in the long term to tourism professionals and local people than any other destination or region. These are some of the key challenges faced by researchers, business owners and policymakers. As future lines of research it may be interesting, with this opening of new less exploited areas (according to the less cited in the appendix), indicate and explore ways in this field of study, thus contributing to greater knowledge on this topic. One of the limitations was that it focused only on a single database and did not apply any chronological filter or areas of study.

Therefore, the analysis excluded many specialized journals in this field of studies not indexed in WoS and to which we recommend the use of another database such as Scopus. Another line of future research that could result would be the use of several databases, performing qualitative studies, longitudinal studies, and other systematic reviews of the literature, as well as using the triangulation data method. Finally, the selection of such keywords limits the scope of this study, and bibliometric analysis could be expanded by adding new keywords associated with this area of hospitality and tourism studies.

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CUSTOMER-BASED BRAND EQUITY FOR TOURIST DESTINATIONS: A COMPARISON OF EQUITIES OF PUERTO RICO AND THE US VIRGIN ISLANDS

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ABSTRACT

Historically, the Caribbean tourism destinations have competed based on their largely undifferentiated marketing mix. More recent evidence from the Caribbean tourism promotional practice, however, indicates the realization in the practitioner community that developing a distinct brand equity is critical for success. This paper aims to identify and measure elements of brand equity for Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands, compare the brand equity of the two destinations, and provide branding recommendations. In this study, these destinations were subjected to a customer-based brand equity for tourism destinations (CBBETD) model comprising the five dimensions of brand equity – i.e., social image, price/value, trustworthiness, identification/attachment, and brand performance. The CBBETD scores were then compared in order to understand better the differences in brand equity between these two similarly placed US territories in the Caribbean.

Keywords: Destination Branding, Brand Equity, Brand Performance, Customer-Based Brand Equity, The Caribbean.

JEL Classification: M31

1. INTRODUCTION

Branding has become one of the most critical tasks in the development of a marketing strategy. Brands are markers of internal resources and communicators of the marketing intent of an organization (Hunt, 2019). Marketers, entrepreneurs, managers, even politicians, have realized the importance of developing effective branding strategies that would lead to achieving brand equity. There has also been an increased interest in strategic marketing and branding research in the scholarly community, too (Steenkemp, 2017). During the past decades, in their efforts to attract visitors and investors, an increasing number of cities, countries, and regions have adopted marketing and branding practices (Gertner, 2011). Today most countries have a destination brand. Examples of countries with their destination brands are: 'Pure New Zealand,' 'South Africa it's possible', 'Your Singapore' or 'Incredible India.' The top four destination brands, as voted by their peers, are New Zealand, India, Spain, and Australia (Morgan et al., 2011).

Branding Latin America has remained a difficult venture because of the ultra-generalized images of the entire region as a homogenous cultural and geographic landscape (Thornton, 2019). However, Puerto Rico has been one of those territories in the Caribbean attempted to develop its unique brand. There have been as many different branding strategies as different

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government officials managing the effort. There is a need for determining if these efforts have had an impact on the destination brand equity. Before developing its re-branding strategy, Puerto Rico has been mostly indistinguishable from other island territories like the US Virgin Island – all conveying the time-tested yet vanilla theme of sun, sea, and sand.

The interest in destination branding as a field of inquiry has led to an increase in the number of investigations done focusing on different destinations' brand equity (Oliveira & Panyik, 2015). Most such studies passively utilized brand equity measurement scales and formats available in the generic marketing literature, neglecting the nuanced and thickly context-specific nature of the tourism phenomenon (Wu, 2016). In this paper, the brand equity model developed by Lassar, Mittal, & Sharma (1995) will be used as a base to further develop a valid and reliable tourism-focused brand equity scale. The adoption of this popular model into tourism will give a new perspective on the concept of the brand equity of tourism destinations since it is based on perceptual dimensions rather than behavioural ones.

This study has the following key objectives:

- a) validate a model of tourist-based brand equity for Puerto Rico;
- b) apply the model to compare the brand equity of Puerto Rico with that of the US Virgin Islands, two similarly placed US territories in the Caribbean;
- c) provide branding recommendations for Puerto Rico and the Caribbean region in general.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Puerto Rico government, through its *Compañía de Turismo de PR*, has been developing new branding strategies. Every time there is a change in government officials, there have been changes in public policy regarding the tourism industry. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, this industry is experiencing frequent changes regarding its policies (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2015). For example, new government officials may bring new logos, new media strategies, and new slogans, among other changes. Lassar et al. (1995) establish changing brand elements like logos, symbols, slogans, and signage, among others, mean establishing different branding strategies. Affecting these elements may affect customer-perceived brand equity elements (Lassar et al., 1995; Keller, 2008). There is a need to measure the brand equity of Puerto Rico as a destination brand to determine if these initiatives and different efforts have had an impact on Puerto Rico branding.

Tourism is an essential sector of the Puerto Rico economy. The total contribution of the tourism industry to GDP in 2017 was USD 7,185.7mn, which represents 7.2 % of the Gross Domestic Product (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2018). During 2017, the total employment only including jobs directly supported by the industry was of 19,000 (1.9% of total employment) (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2018). If the figure of total contribution to GDP is compared with other Caribbean destinations like Cuba (9.7%) and Dominican Republic (13%), it can be noted that Puerto Rico industry is contributing less to the economy. Hence, Puerto Rico industry has still room to grow.

The other brand equity models (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Zanfardini, Tamagni, & Gutauskas, 2011; Yuwo, Ford, & Purwanegra, 2013), used in previous research are all behaviour based while Lassar et al. (1995) model is largely perception focused. The dimensions used are the ones perceived by the consumer. Branding is the consumer's idea of a product as stated in one of the older and simpler definitions of brand equity think up by David Ogilvy (Blackstone, 2000). Ogilvy developed what could be the first principle of branding; "a brand is different from a product and the difference is something with which is invested by the consumer" (Blackstone, 2000: 101). Consumers are active participants

in the creation of equity and hence it is important to utilize a consumer-based brand equity model based on dimensions perceived by consumers (Baalbaki, Guzmán, Paswam, Blackson, & Conover, 2012). In tourism branding, perception is pivotally more important than the actual behaviour: tourist behaviours reflect more of circumstantial influences than deeply rooted intentions about a place (George & George, 2004). This study utilizes elements of the customer-perceived brand equity model developed by Lassar et al. (1995). Based on this research, only Evangelista & Dioko (2011) have used Lassar et al. model for measuring destination brand equity. In their article, Evangelista & Dioko do not mention the name of the destination they were analysing. Their confirmatory factor analysis provides support to the reliability and validity of Lassar et al. model.

2.1 Destination Branding

Places develop brand characteristics overtime, even if left to themselves (Dennie, 2015). The role of a destination marketer is to guide this development in an aspirational manner (Dinardi, 2017). Destination branding theory started to gain visibility during the late '90s (Almeyda & George, 2017). Being the central theme of 1998's Travel & Tourism Research Association Annual Conference triggered some of its visibility (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998). At this conference, various examples of destination branding were presented such as the branding of Canada, Oregon, New Orleans, Hawaii among others (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998). Even though the destination branding concepts appeared to be a new development (Gnoth, 1998), the topic had been developed previously by researchers under the subject of destination image studies (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998).

Tourism destinations' involvement in brand strategies originated roughly in the early '90s, too. These strategies were foretold by cities such as New York and Glasgow, through image-building marketing activities in which they launched its slogans 'I love New York' and 'Glasgow's miles better' during the 1980s (Morgan et al., 2011). As anticipated by those strategies, destinations like Spain, Hong Kong, and Australia followed a strategic approach toward the development of the brand. Later, cities like Las Vegas, Seattle, and Pittsburgh also adopted the strategic approach. These responses were fuelled by the need to compete more effectively, establish a decision-making framework and increase accountability to their stakeholders (Morgan et al., 2014).

Gartner (2014) stated, "Destinations are places of life and change" (p. 1). For this reason, destination brands lack the brand stability that most product brands have. Several market segments consume it simultaneously; each consumer is compiling their unique product from the services on offer. Thus, destination marketers have less control over the brand experience (Hankinson, 2009). They provide different experiences to different tourists (Gartner, 2014). Destinations are not tangible products that can be returned if the consumer is not satisfied. "Destination brands, therefore, are higher risk as much of what constitutes the brand can easily be sometimes modified purposively and sometimes by natural or human-induced influences" (Gartner, 2014: 2). An additional differentiating factor in destinations is that they are not sold in the marketplace, and they are unique. No other destination can be used as a generic base to evaluate brand equity (Gartner, 2014).

Ritchie & Ritchie (1998) defined destination branding as:

a name, symbol, logo, wordmark or other graphics that both identifies and differentiates the destination: furthermore it conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination: it also serves to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience. (p.18)

This definition incorporated some additional elements related to the concept of “experience” due to its importance in tourism theory and management. The first part of the definition deals with the traditional role of identification and differentiation of a brand. The second part stresses the importance of the destination brand conveying explicitly or implicitly, the promise of a memorable experience and if it is possible to a unique experience not available at any other destination (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998). Blain, Levy, and Ritchie (2005) revised the definition of destination branding based on a survey done by destination marketing organizations (DMO's). They enhanced the branding definition given by Ritchie and Ritchie (1998) and presented DMO's executives with the new definition. The revised definition had a more holistic approach, including themes like identification, differentiation, experience, expectations, image, consolidation, and reinforcement. DMO's executives added some additional themes they understood were essential to be included in the definition: recognition, consistency, brand messages, and emotional responses.

Based on this finding, Blain et al. (2005) proposed the following definition:

Destination branding is the set of marketing activities that (1) support the creation of a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that readily identifies and differentiates a destination; that (2) consistently convey the expectation of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; that (3) serve to consolidate and reinforce the emotional connection between the visitor and the destination; and that (4) reduce consumer search costs and perceived risk. Collectively, these activities serve to create a destination image that positively influences consumer destination choice. (p.337)

It is important to understand the peculiarities that differentiate a destination brand from the branding of traditional products or services for it to fulfill all the themes presented in the definition (Kladou, Kavaratzis, Rigopoulou, & Salonika, 2017). “The place product is a unique combination of building, facilities, and venues which represent a multiplicity of autonomous service businesses, both public and private” (Hankinson, 2009: 98). This complex product offering must be marketed through partnerships. These partnerships include public and private sector organizations (Warnaby, Bennison, Davies, & Hughes, 2002).

In marketing literature, researchers often focused on case studies of destination branding programs (Andrei, 2017; Rodrigues, 2018). However, Hankinson (2009) argued that this approach to destination branding had lacked appropriate managerial solutions. He advocates the development of a destination branding theory that would help determine and evaluate the managerial practices and would serve as the basis for future research. Many experts tried to apply the core branding theory developed by David Aaker and Kevin Keller to tourism destinations (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Boo et al., 2009; Pike et al., 2010; Konecnik et al., 2014). Other authors, like Ritchie & Ritchie (1998), were conscious that destinations have some distinct attributes that traditional products and services did not own. At the functional level, many destination management organizations had the misconception that the development of logos and taglines was the basis for building a destination brand.

The complexities of developing a destination brand are related to the development of the experiential element and the understanding of the tourists' decisional process. Tourist experience should be the basis of the branding story. Brands that cannot relate with pleasant and positive tourist experience cannot win their minds (Frias, Polo, & Rodríguez, 2017). Managers must understand the macro-environment, precisely the economic, political, and social issues of the destination along with the stakeholders' perception of the destination brand. Otherwise, managers and organization could be instead involved in a mere promotional exercise developing logos and taglines (Khanna, 2011).

Branding a nation should comprise the political, cultural, business, and sports environments (Olimpia, 2008). When referring specifically to branding a nation, the objective is to create a clear, simple idea built around emotional attributes. These emotional attributes can be symbolized verbally and visually and should be understood by different target audiences in different situations (Olimpia, 2008). Gilmore (2002) describes these emotional attributes as the spirit of the people and their shared purpose. "Part of this spirit consists of values—these are values that endure no matter what the times because they represent what the nation's citizens believe in and believe about themselves" (Gilmore, 2002: 286). Factors of the external environment, such as culture, resources, and the economy influence that spirit (Gilmore, 2002).

Kotler and Gertner (2002) stated that countries should embark in strategic place marketing in order to position the country in the global market. The authors argued that as in any strategic plan, it requires an understanding of the environmental forces that affect the country's positioning as well as the country's strength and weaknesses. Recent research points out that today it is harder to differentiate places according to what marketers categorized as 'hard' factors such as infrastructure, the economy, accessibility, and availability of financial incentives. Many countries are obtaining an excellent rating on these elements. Factors categorized as "soft factors" such as its environment, friendliness of local people, art and culture traditions and leisure activities are the ones that are gaining importance with tourists and investors, observe Morgan et al. (2011).

2.2 Brand Equity

Destination brands have a value, in direct proportion to their ability to pull tourists and their dollars (Almeyda & George, 2017). Brands and customers are like two poles of a magnet, and brand management is the process of aligning these two. Brand equity is akin to the quantity of attraction.

When designing marketing programs, marketers should acknowledge customers' perspective of value (Zablocki, Schlegelmilch, & Schant, 2017). This knowledge will give the marketing professionals a guideline of which elements will have an impact on customers and will lead to a favourable response (Keller, 2008). Customer-based brand equity (CBBE), defined by Keller (2008), is "the differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of the brand" (p.48).

Brand equity is measured from two different standpoints: the financial value of the brand to the firm and the measure of value to the customer (Keller, 2016; Pappu & Christodoulides, 2017). The standpoint of the financial value of the brand to the firm measures the result of customer-based brand equity. There are research studies that "developed and effectively tested accounting methods for appraisal of the asset value of a brand name" (Farquhar et al., 1991; Simon & Sullivan, 1992)" (as cited in Lassar et al., 1995: 12). This research measures brand equity from the perspective of value to the customer.

2.3 Brand Equity Measurement Approaches

There have been numerous attempts to develop measures of brand equity, approaching the construct from different perspectives. Table 1 summarizes some of the Consumer-based brand equity attempts:

Table 1. Dimensions of the Different Models of Consumer-Based Brand Equity Models

Aaker (1991)	Keller (1993, 1998, 2002)	Lassar, Mittal, & Sharma (1995)	Konecnik & Gartner (2007)	San Martin, Herrero & García (2018)
Brand Awareness	Brand Salience	Performance	Destination awareness	Destination awareness
Brand Perceived quality	Brand Performance	Social Image	Destination perceived quality	Destination quality
	Brand imagery			
Brand Association	Brand judgments	Price/value	Destination image	Destination image
	Brand feelings	Trustworthiness		Destination satisfaction
Brand loyalty	Brand resonance	Identification/attachment	Destination loyalty	Destination loyalty

Source: Own Elaboration

Consumer-based brand equity has been measured, utilizing direct and indirect approaches. The direct approach tries to measure the phenomenon directly by focusing on consumers' preferences or utilities (Christodoulides & de Chernatony, 2010). This method attempts to measure CBBE by evaluating the effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to elements of the marketing mix. The indirect approach measures potential sources of brand equity, identifying and tracking consumers' brand knowledge (thoughts, beliefs, images, perceptions) (Keller, 2002).

2.3.1 Direct Approaches

The direct approaches intend to achieve a separation of the value of the brand from the value of the product. To measure the effects of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing mix for the brand involves the use of experiments. In these experiments, there is a group of consumers that will respond to an element of the marketing mix ascribed to the brand, and there is another group that will react to the same element, but it will be attributed to an unknown or fictitious brand. When the responses are compared, it will provide an estimation of the effects that the specific brand knowledge has beyond the basic product knowledge (Keller, 1993).

One alternative to measuring the CBBE through a direct approach is using the multi-attribute model. One of the most discussed approach is the one developed by Park & Srinivasan (1994). They developed a survey-based method for measuring a brand's equity at the individual consumer level-based on multi-attribute preference model. It uses a survey procedure to obtain each's overall brand preference and his or her multi-attributed brand preference based on objectively measured attribute levels. After scaling both preference measures to cents, this direct approach subtracts the multi-attributed brand preference based on the objectively measured attribute levels from the overall brand preference to derive individual-level measures of brand equity (Park & Srinivasan, 1994). Also, this model divides brand equity into attribute-based and non-attribute-based components. The attribute-based component of brand equity refers to the impact of brand building strategies on consumer's attribute perception. The non-attribute-based component of brand equity refers to brand associations not related to product attributes (Park & Srinivasan, 1994).

A more recent approach is the one developed by Shankar, Azar, and Fuller (2008). The researchers developed a model to estimate, track, and manage brand equity for multi-category brands using customer survey and financial measures. The model has two components: the offering value and relative brand importance. The offering value is computed from discounted cash flow analysis and the relative brand importance from brand choice models. Shankar et al. (2008) identified the following brand image drivers: brand reputation, brand

uniqueness, brand fit, brand associations, brand trust, brand innovation, brand regard, and brand fame. All these drivers can be measured through a customer survey. Christodoulides and de Chernatony (2010) argued that even though this method has the advantage of estimating brand equity for multi-category brands and combining financial and consumer data, a major drawback is that it only produces an aggregate estimate of brand equity since the only component measured on an individual basis is the relative brand importance. Besides, it is difficult to compare with competitors' brand; competitors' financial measures are seldom available (Christodoulides & de Chernatony, 2010).

2.3.2 Indirect Approaches

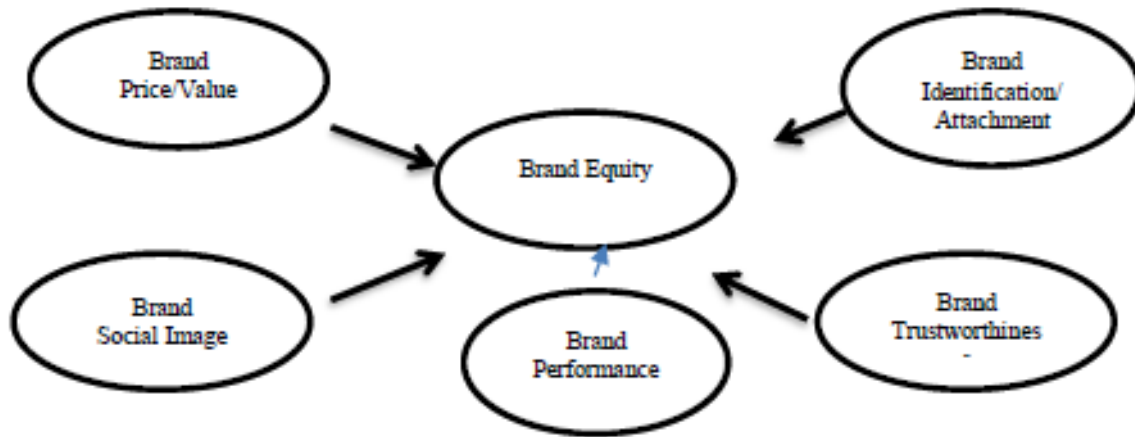
Indirect approaches rely on a more holistic view of the brand. They seek to measure brand equity either through its manifest dimensions or an outcome variable such as the price premium (Christodoulides & de Chernatony, 2010). One of the most cited approaches is the one developed by Vázquez, Del Río, and Iglesias (2002). They proposed to develop a measurement instrument for the utilities obtained by the consumer from the brand following its purchase. Their theoretical foundation was their definition of consumer-based brand equity. They defined consumer-based brand equity as "the overall utility that the consumer associates with the use and consumption of the brand: including associations expressing both functional and symbolic utilities" (p. 28). Vázquez et al. (2002) understand that the advantage of their developed scale is its ability to identify the sources of brand equity for the firm using four basic dimensions. It permits the assertion of the strengths and weaknesses of a brand compared to its main competitors. They focused on both utilities-functional and symbolic utilities. The four utilities they measured were functional utility associated with the product, symbolic utility related to the product, functional utility related to the brand name, symbolic utility associated with the brand name.

In 2007, Koçak, Abimbola, and Özer published their research replicating Vázquez et al.'s (2002) scale but in a different cultural setting. Koçak et al. (2007) concluded that various cultural conditions led consumers to different evaluations. These findings have important implications regarding the topic of globalization. Based on their conclusions, global brands must have the flexibility to reflect and to adapt to cultural variations that result in consumers having different product preferences. According to Koçak et al., the findings are consistent with the theories that suggested that there are "partial consistencies in the way customers evaluate brands across cultures, but not enough to treat markets that may seem similar in the same way" (p. 169).

Another indirect approach was the one developed by Yoo and Donthu (2001). The purpose of their research was to develop a generalizable individual measure of brand equity. They test Aaker's (1991) and Keller's (1993) conceptualizations of the brand equity concept. Their brand equity measure included ten items representing the three dimensions of brand loyalty, perceived quality, and brand awareness/associations.

Among its strengths, the scale applies to various product categories without requiring further adjustments; the instrument is easy to administer, parsimonious, which makes the scale easy to be used by brand managers. Also, they utilized an etic approach to scale development that suggests that the scale is culturally valid. Yoo and Donthu (2001) did a rigorous multi-step validation process. The only weakness Christoulides and de Chernatony (2010) pointed out is that the dimensions of brand awareness and brand associations that are two different constructs were combined in one dimension. Christoulides et al. (2010) argue that among the indirect approaches, the Yoo and Donthu (2001) research have the most strength and fewest weaknesses.

Figure 1. Model of Customer-Perceived Brand Equity for Tourism Destination (Lassar et al.,1995)



Source: Own Elaboration

2.3.3 The Lassar et al. (1995) Model

Lassar et al. (1995) understand that consumer-based brand equity occurs when the consumer is familiar with the brand, and also, he/she has favourable, robust, and unique brand associations in their memory. The researchers believe that there are five considerations regarding the definition of brand equity, which are:

First, brand equity refers to consumer perceptions rather than any objective indicators. Second, brand equity relates to a global value associated with a brand. Third, the global value associated with the brand stems from the brand name and not only from physical aspects of the brand. Fourth, brand equity is not absolute but relative to competition. Finally, brand equity positively influences financial performance. (Lassar et al., 1995: 12)

As mentioned before, Lassar et al. model includes five dimensions: performance, social image, price/value, trustworthiness, and identification/attachment. The performance dimension is a substitute for the dimension of perceived quality in previous models. They understand that performance is a more focused dimension than quality. Their definition of performance is “a consumer’s judgment about a brand’s fault-free and long-lasting physical operation and flawlessness in the product’s physical construction” (Lassar et al., 1995: 13).

The image dimension was limited by Lassar et al. (1995) to the social dimension. This element is defined as the consumer’s perception of the esteem that the consumer’s social group have of the brand. This dimension is value adding due to the social reputation associated with owning or using the brand. There are some product categories, such as designer clothing and perfumes, where this dimension has a more significant contribution to its brand equity (Lassar et al., 1995).

The price/value dimension refers to the relationship between the product price and its functionalities. A product will have brand equity when the consumer compares its performance with its price, and it results in a positive balance. The price/value dimension is the consumer’s consideration of the cost versus the benefits of owning the product.

The trustworthiness dimension is defined as “the confidence consumer places in the firm and firm’s communications and as to whether the firm’s actions would be in the consumer’s interest” (Lassar et al., 1995: 13). Usually, if consumers trust a brand, this dimension will have a high value. Otherwise, if there is no trust, consumers will give a low value to this dimension, and consequently, the brand equity can be lower.

The last dimension named identification/attachment is related to consumer's commitment to the brand but seeing commitment as a feeling not as an action. This commitment translates into the identification/attachment to the brand. The researchers defined it as the relative strength of a consumer's positive feelings toward the brand. These positive feelings result in consumers identifying with the brand and developing sentimental attachments with them.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present research is conducted in the quantitative research tradition. A cross-sectional survey was used to collect data for statistical analysis. In a cross-sectional design, the investigator gathers data only at one point in time (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). The sample included tourists who have travelled recently to Puerto Rico and or to the US Virgin Islands. An online panel was used to sample the population. This type of sampling involved using representative samples of consumers organized by marketing research companies with the intention of conducting online surveys (Burns & Bush, 2010). The researchers utilized the services of the marketing research company *Qualtrics*, Inc. The Qualtrics platform was used to interview USA residents who have travelled to Puerto Rico. In order to get better a perspective, the United States Virgin Islands (USVI) was chosen as the destination for comparison. The reasons for selecting USVI were: it competes directly with Puerto Rico, have similar characteristics such as both are in the Caribbean; also, there is no passport required for U.S. citizens. The respondents in that sub-sample evaluated both destinations Puerto Rico and USVI.

The guideline given to Qualtrics for the sample selection was: USA residents who have travelled to Puerto Rico. Qualtrics sent the questionnaire to those panellists they understood had a reasonable probability of having travelled to Puerto Rico based on their profile. Since it was not definite that the panellist had travelled to P.R. or the USVI, the initial question was a screening question to check the same. If the panellist has not travelled, they were directed to the end of the questionnaire. The sample size requested to Qualtrics was of 500 respondents. The data was collected during October and November 2015.

The research instrument employed was a Caribbean context-driven adaptation of the one developed by Lassar et al. (1995). The questions were adapted to the research subject of Puerto Rico / USVI as a destination brand. The instrument consisted of 17 items, and these items were evaluated on a 7-point Likert scale where one (1) stands for strongly disagree and seven (7) for strongly agree. Some adaptations made were between the PR / USVI samples due to the difference regarding the brands studied.

Three tourism experts reviewed the instrument to ensure that it measures the constructs in an appropriate manner. This group helped the researcher establish the face validity of the instrument. Since face validity is a subjective judgment call, being the panel composed of experts improved the face validity assessment (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). There were some adaptations done to the performance dimension. Elements related to the tourism services industry, not present in the questionnaire developed by Lassar et al., were added. Five of the new items were selected from the questionnaire developed by Konecnik (2007, 2010a), one was an adaptation from the Lassar et al. questionnaire. The tourism experts evaluated and approved the research instrument described above. Table 2 shows the new items included in the questionnaire.

Table 2. Additional Items Included in the Questionnaire

Items	Reference
Puerto Rico offers a flawless holiday experience	Adapted from Lassar et al., (1995)
Puerto Rico provides high quality of accommodations	Konecnik and Gartner (2007)
Puerto Rico offers appealing local food (cuisine)	Konecnick and Gartner (2007)
Puerto Rico offers low quality of services	Konecnick and Gartner (2007)
Puerto Rico is a safe destination	Konecnik (2010a) and recommended by experts in tourism
Puerto Rico has high-quality attractions	Konecnik (2010a) and recommended by experts in tourism

Source: Own Elaboration

The researcher calculated the brand equity scores for both destinations using the methodology established by Lassar et al. (1995) and analysed the scores utilizing the t-test. This test evaluates “whether the means of two groups are statistically different from each other” (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008: 302).

Also, the data collected was analysed utilizing Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to validate the model. This analysis provides an understanding of the multidimensional nature of the consumer-perceived brand equity for a tourism destination. SEM, like other statistical methods, measures independent and dependent observed variables. These observed variables are utilized to define independent and dependent latent variables that cannot be measured directly and are instead inferred (Schumacker & Lomax, 1996).

The SEM methodology is one of the choice data analysis used by marketing researchers and other disciplines due to its differentiating characteristics. SEM has a confirmatory approach (hypothesis testing), takes into account measurement error, and both observed and unobserved variables (Swimberghe, 2008). It utilizes a collection of tools to analyse connections between various constructs where these connections are relevant to expanding knowledge or solving a problem (Blunch, 2013).

When using SEM, the data analysis starts with a priori theory about the system mapped. Then, the model is tested against empirical data. Hence, SEM is a confirmatory technique, not an exploratory one (Blunch, 2013). With this tool, the model is confirmed, and, as a result, the strength of various connections is measured. The data were analysed with the software package of SPSS-AMOS version 23.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

The reliability measures for the variables studied are presented in table 3. It is noted that all the coefficients were higher than .7, which means that the scales have high reliability. The scales or constructs with the lowest reliability were the performance and trustworthiness scales for Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands.

Table 3. Reliability Measures

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of elements
Puerto Rico's variables	.967	22
Performance Puerto Rico	.889	9
Social Image Puerto Rico	.941	4
Price Value-Puerto Rico	.905	3
Trustworthiness Puerto Rico	.883	3
Identification Attachment-Puerto Rico	.907	3
US Virgin Islands variables	.957	22
Performance US Virgin Islands	.839	9
Social image US Virgin Islands	.929	4
Price/value US Virgin Islands	.915	3
Trustworthiness US Virgin Islands	.889	3
Identification/Attachment US Virgin Islands	.924	3

Source: Own Elaboration

The total sample obtained was of 688 respondents, of which 54 were rejected since they have not visited the destination(s). Of the 634 respondents, 94 of them did not answer the demographic questions. Those participants were discarded. On average, the sample is highly educated. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the sample has completed a bachelor's degree or a higher degree. The majority of the sample is employed (60%), followed by the retired segment that accounted for 25%. Only 8% of the sample is self-employed.

The age group with the smallest representation was the 18-24 yrs. old, which could be expected. The other age groups had a representation between 17% and 22%. Of the 540 respondents who have travelled to Puerto Rico, 357 have also travelled to the USVI.

Table 4 shows the statistical means for destination performance. All the different statements obtained a mean higher than 5 out of a maximum score of 7, except the statement regarding Puerto Rico/USVI offering low quality of services. This statement, named as Variable 31 is a candidate for exclusion due to its different mean and standard deviation. The highest level of agreement was the statement related to Puerto Rico offering appealing local food.

Table 4. Puerto Rico Performance Dimension Statistics

Field	Puerto Rico Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	USVI Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance
I can expect superior performance from Puerto Rico/USVI as a tourism destination.	5.39	1.271	1.616	5.62	1.091	1.191
Puerto Rico/USVI offers a flawless holiday experience.	5.20	1.324	1.752	5.50	1.131	1.279
Puerto Rico/USVI as a tourism destination works trouble-free.	5.29	1.280	1.637	5.54	1.214	1.474
Puerto Rico/USVI as a tourism destination works very well.	5.54	1.211	1.466	5.68	1.052	1.108
Puerto Rico/USVI provides high quality of accommodations.	5.56	1.188	1.412	5.59	1.081	1.169
Puerto Rico/USVI offers appealing local food (cuisine).	5.71	1.183	1.399	5.59	1.068	1.141
Puerto Rico/USVI offers low quality of services.	4.52	1.910	3.649	4.04	2.071	4.288
Puerto Rico/USVI is a safe destination.	5.18	1.342	1.801	5.55	1.183	1.400
Puerto Rico/USVI has high-quality attractions.	5.45	1.176	1.383	5.49	1.163	1.352

Source: Own Elaboration

Table 5 shows the statistical mean for the social image dimension. All the statements obtained a mean higher than five (5) out of a maximum score of seven (7). The highest level of agreement was with a sense of pride they will experience for having visited Puerto Rico/USVI.

Table 5. Puerto Rico/USVI Social Image Statistics

Field	Puerto Rico Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	USVI Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance
Puerto Rico/USVI as a tourism destination fits my personality.	5.44	1.392	1.939	5.63	1.113	1.239
I would be proud to tell that I have visited Puerto Rico/USVI.	5.71	1.271	1.616	5.79	1.056	1.114
Visiting Puerto Rico/USVI will be well regarded by my friends.	5.53	1.332	1.775	5.76	1.106	1.223
Puerto Rico/USVI fits my personality in terms of status and style.	5.43	1.402	1.967	5.67	1.155	1.334

Source: Own Elaboration

Table 6 shows the statistical mean for the price/value dimension. All the different statements obtained a mean higher than 5 out of a maximum score of 7. The highest level of agreement was the statement related to Puerto Rico/USVI being well priced.

Table 6. Puerto Rico/USVI Price/value Statistics

Field	Puerto Rico Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	USVI Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance
Puerto Rico/USVI is well priced.	5.45	1.911	1.312	5.27	1.243	1.542
Considering what I paid for visiting Puerto Rico/USVI, I got much more than my money's worth.	5.26	1.299	1.687	5.16	1.231	1.512
I consider Puerto Rico/USVI a bargain because of the benefits I received.	5.18	1.332	1.775	5.11	1.372	1.878

Source: Own Elaboration

Table 7 shows the statistical mean for the trustworthiness scales. All the different statements obtained a mean higher than five (5) out of a maximum score of seven (7). The highest level of agreement was the statement related to the people and organizations of Puerto Rico/USVI being trustworthy.

Table 7. Puerto Rico/USVI Trustworthiness Statistics

Field	Puerto Rico Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	USVI Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance
I consider that the people and organizations that stand behind Puerto Rico/USVI as a destination are very trustworthy.	5.33	1.272	1.619	5.49	1.118	1.251
In regard to consumer interests, Puerto Rico/USVI seems to be very caring.	5.29	1.238	1.533	5.40	1.124	1.264
I believe that Puerto Rico/USVI as a tourist destination does not take advantage of tourists.	5.10	1.389	1.929	5.20	1.285	1.652

Source: Own Elaboration

Table 8 shows the statistical mean for the identification/attachment dimension. All the different statements obtained a mean higher than five (5) out of a maximum score of seven (7). The highest level of agreement was the statement related to having developed positive personal feelings toward Puerto Rico.

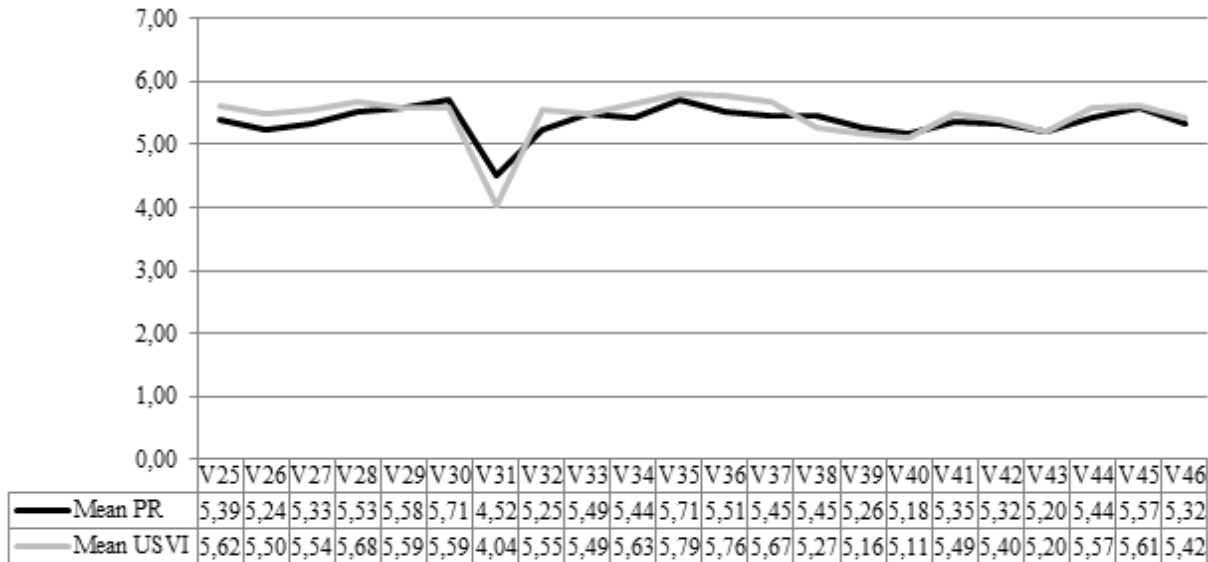
Table 8. Puerto Rico/USVI Identification/Attachment Statistics

Field	Puerto Rico Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance	USVI Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance
After visiting Puerto Rico/USVI, I grew fond of it.	5.42	1.429	2.043	5.57	1.213	1.471
I have positive personal feelings toward Puerto Rico/USVI.	5.55	1.345	1.810	5.61	1.165	1.358
With time, I will develop a warm feeling toward Puerto Rico/USVI as a tourism destination.	5.28	1.456	2.119	5.49	1.300	1.689

Source: Own Elaboration

Figure 1 shows a comparison of the means for each item for Puerto Rico and USVI. Puerto Rico has higher means in the items related to price/value and one item in the performance dimension related to the offering of appealing local food. In all the other dimensions, USVI has slightly higher means.

Figure 2. Comparison of means for Puerto Rico and USVI



Source: Own Elaboration

The researcher followed the Lassar et al. (1995) methodology to obtain the brand equity value, where the scale ratings were added, and from this sum, the average brand equity rating was calculated. Table 9 shows the brand equity rating for Puerto Rico and USVI.

Table 9. Brand Equity Ratings for Puerto Rico and USVI

Brand Equity	Puerto Rico	USVI
Ratings	5.39	5.51

Source: Own Elaboration

4.1 The Brand Performance Model

Five latent dimensions, namely, brand performance, brand social image, brand trustworthiness, and brand price/value and brand identification/attachment could broadly classify the observed variables constituting brand equity (See Table 10). These five dimensions thus determine the performance of any tourist destination.

Table 10. Observed Variable and Theoretical Construct to Which it Was Linked

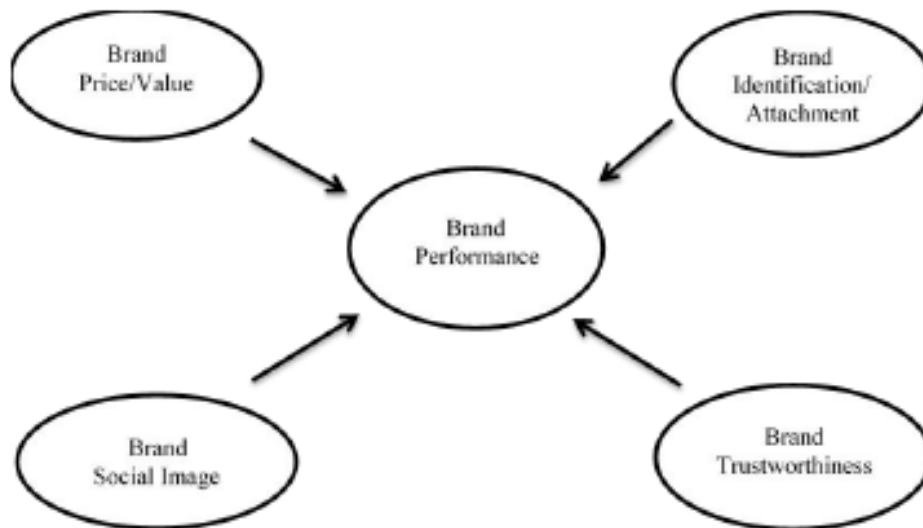
Observed Variable	Theoretical Construct
V25. I can expect superior performance from Puerto Rico as a tourism destination.	Brand performance (PERPR)
V26. Puerto Rico offers a flawless holiday experience	Brand performance (PERPR)
V27. Puerto Rico as a tourism destination works trouble-free	Brand performance (PERPR)
V28. Puerto Rico as a tourism destination works very well	Brand performance (PERPR)
V29. Puerto Rico provides high quality of accommodations	Brand performance (PERPR)

Observed Variable	Theoretical Construct
V30. Puerto Rico offers appealing local food (cuisine)	Brand performance (PERPR)
V31. Puerto Rico offers low quality of services	Brand performance (PERPR)
V32. Puerto Rico is a safe destination	Brand performance (PERPR)
V33. Puerto Rico has high-quality attractions	Brand performance (PERPR)
V34. Puerto Rico as a tourism destination fits my personality	Brand social image (SIPR)
V35. I would be proud to tell that I have visited Puerto Rico	Brand social image (SIPR)
V36. Visiting Puerto Rico will be well regarded by my friends	Brand social image (SIPR)
V37. Puerto Rico fits my personality, in terms of status and style	Brand social image (SIPR)
V38. Puerto Rico is well priced	Brand price/value (VPR)
V39. Considering what I paid for visiting Puerto Rico, I got much more than my money is worth	Brand price/value (VPR)
V40. I consider Puerto Rico a bargain because of the benefits I received	Brand price value (VPR)
V41. I consider that the people and organizations who stand behind Puerto Rico as a destination are very trustworthy	Brand trustworthiness (TPR)
V42. In regard to consumer interests, Puerto Rico seems to be very caring	Brand trustworthiness (TPR)
V43. I believe that Puerto Rico as a tourist destination does not take advantage of tourists.	Brand trustworthiness (TPR)
V44. After visiting Puerto Rico, I grew fond of it	Brand identification/attachment (APR)
V45. I have positive personal feelings toward Puerto Rico	Brand identification/attachment (APR)
V46. With time, I will develop a warm feeling toward Puerto Rico as a tourism destination.	Brand identification/attachment (APR)

Source: Own Elaboration

Destination brand performance is diagrammatically represented below (Figure 3):

Figure 3. Destination Brand Performance



Source: Own Elaboration

The method developed by Wheaton, Muthén, Alwin, and Summers (1977) known as relative normal chi-square (χ^2/df) was used for fitting the measurement model. Table 11 shows the summary of results for Model Fit, including the chi-square test. Also, the adjusted measurement model is given in Figure 3.

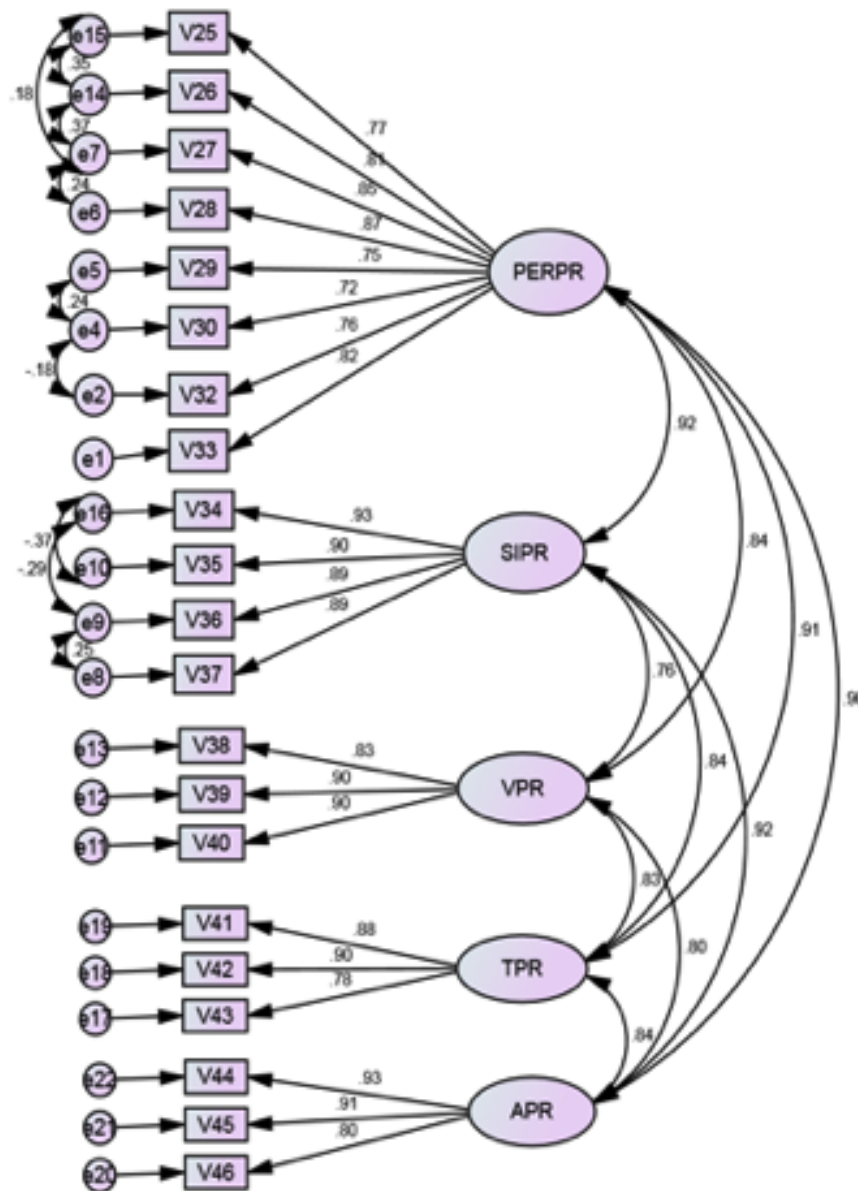
Table 11. Summary of Results for Model Fit

Fit indices	All variables	Interpretation	Adjusted variables	Interpretation
χ^2	731 (df=199, $p<.000$)	Not acceptable	432 (df=170, $p<.000$)	Good
CMIN/DF	3.674	Acceptable	2.546	Good
RMSEA	.70	Adequate	0.054	Good
IFI	.954	Good	0.977	Good
TLI/NNFI	.947	Adequate	0.972	Good
CFI	.954	Good	0.977	Good

Source: Own Elaboration

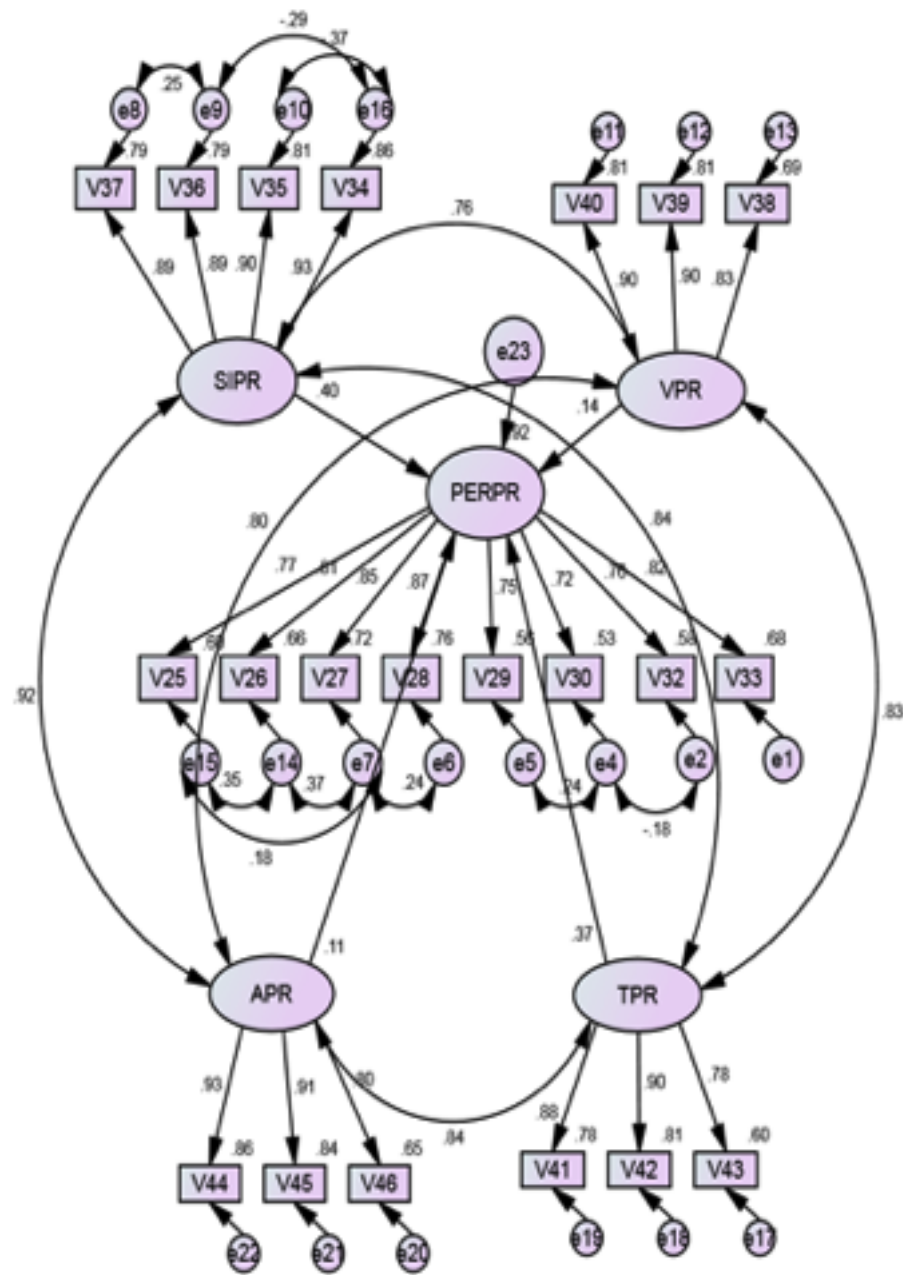
Afterward, a structural model depicting the relationship among the latent variables was developed. The final adjusted model after a series of iterations is given in Figure 5.

Figure 4. Adjusted Measurement Model



Source: Own Elaboration

Figure 5. Final Adjusted Model



Source: Own Elaboration

The social image, price/value, and trustworthiness are found to have a significant influence on performance. A possible explanation for the lack of influence between performance and identification /attachment is that each dimension deals with very different aspects of the brand. The performance evaluation is a very objective one; respondents evaluate the quality of accommodations, quality of local cuisine, among others. The identification/attachment is a subjective evaluation; respondents evaluate their feelings toward the destination; fondness with the destination, development of warm feelings toward the destination.

4.2 Discussion

Puerto Rico and USVI obtained good evaluations in all five dimensions; brand performance, brand social image, brand price/value, brand trustworthiness, and brand identification/attachment. Except for one statement about the brand performance dimension (Puerto Rico/USVI offers a low quality of service), all the means were higher than five (5), which for a scale of seven (7) are considered a good score. For Puerto Rico, the highest scores were in the dimensions of social image and identification/attachment. Puerto Rico outperforms USVI only in one dimension; price/value. The scale ratings were summed, and an average was calculated for the overall brand equity score. Puerto Rico obtained an overall score of 5.39, while USVI achieved an overall score of 5.51. Also, the brand equity rating for Puerto Rico did not differ statistically from the brand equity rating for USVI. This similar rating in brand equity reflects the lack of differentiation among the two islands.

The results of the study support the tourism industry-specific validation of the Lassar et al. (1995) model to measure the brand equity of a destination brand. The analysis shows that the dimensions of social image, trustworthiness, and price/value have a positive and significant effect on performance. The dimension of identification/attachment is the only dimension that does not have a significant effect on performance. Thus, it can be said that performance is the core dimension of the model; this dimension explains more than ninety percent of the customer-perceived brand equity. Lassar et al. (1995) have pointed out that the model demonstrated a halo effect across the dimensions, meaning that if a consumer rate a brand as being high in one dimension, there is a propensity for them to rate other dimensions high as well.

As mentioned above, the most critical dimension of the model is performance. This result supports the work of Rajasekar and Nalina (2008), who also determined that the latter, is the most important dimension when they measure the brand equity in the durable goods industry. Another similar finding to Rajasekar and Nalina (2008) is that trustworthiness is also a significant factor in the model.

The identification/attachment dimension does not have a significant effect on performance. A possible explanation is that those two dimensions measure very different aspects of the brand. Performance is related to very objective elements as the quality of accommodations, appealing local cuisine, safety while identification/attachment relates to subjective elements as fondness, feelings, and development of warm feelings toward the destination.

Another interesting finding is the importance of the social image dimension. Unlike the results of the Rajasekar and Nalina (2008) study, for our respondents, how the destination fits their personality, status, and style is important. Also, according to the results, it is important to them how their friends regard the destination visited. This difference could be attributed to the different type of product/services being measured in each study. Even though Rajasekar and Nalina (2008) do not specify for which products they measure the brand equity, they only indicate that they were durable goods; it can be inferred that the meaning given by the consumer to own a durable good is not the same as the one given to their traveling experiences.

Regarding the price/value dimension, even though the relationship with performance is positive and significant, it is relatively weak (factor loading=.14) compared to other variables. The explanation for this finding can be that the perception of price/value can be closely related to other factors such as income, social class, among others.

In this research, even when the price/value items for Puerto Rico did not obtain the highest scores, Puerto Rico scores were higher than those of USVI. The perception of being a destination that has a better relationship between pricing and value could be a strength for Puerto Rico when designing its marketing strategy. This comparison was made with a destination that appeals to higher-income travellers. If the comparison is made with other

Caribbean islands, the results could be different. However, the main key learning point regarding this issue is that among high price destinations, Puerto Rico can be seen as a much more price/value destination.

Of all the items evaluated, the ones that achieved the highest scores were: “Puerto Rico offers appealing local food,” and “I would be proud to say at I have visited Puerto Rico.” These two items should be taken into consideration when developing an effective differentiation and positioning strategy. Puerto Rico could differentiate itself by its local cuisine and position itself as a destination that enhances the travellers’ social image. Specifically, Puerto Rico could differentiate from USVI based on its local cuisine.

Based on the empirical evidence that showed that performance is the core dimension, more focused attention could be given to all the items involved in the perception of Puerto Rico’s performance as a destination. Special efforts should be given to the following issues: quality of accommodations, quality of services, the appeal of local food, quality of attractions. Enhancing the dimensions of the social image, price/value, and trustworthiness will have an impact on the performance dimensions. Puerto Rico can take advantage of the good ratings it obtained regarding local food, high quality of accommodations, and high quality of attractions and utilize them as selling points in its promotional strategy.

In addition to performance, another critical dimension is identification/attachment. From a strategic point of view, when trying to enhance this dimension, marketers must deal with the brand personality concept. Brand personality is the set of characteristics consumers attribute to a product as if it were a person. Building a successful brand personality is vital to achieving brand loyalty and is often a difficult task. Consumers’ feelings about a brand’s personality are part of brand equity. A product or service that creates and communicates a distinctive personality will differentiate from the competitors and will encourage brand loyalty among its consumers (Solomon, 2013). If marketers want to develop a loyal customer base, a brand personality to whom customers can relate should be developed. Both islands should work to develop their brand personalities.

As recommended by Kotler and Gertner (2011), after working out the SWOT, Puerto Rico must choose which historical and natural landmarks, and historic events are going to use in telling its story. In this analysis, what Gilmore (2002) describes as the spirit of the country, referring to the values and purpose shared by the population should be included. When defining its story, Puerto Rico should remain truthful to its story in order to achieve the necessary authenticity (Hornskov, 2011). The positioning statement should be developed based on the reality of the country, not in a make-believe story.

Also, this positioning statement should point out the points of differentiation from other Caribbean islands like the USVI. Puerto Rico should emphasize its price/value perception and its performance as a way of differentiating.

5. CONCLUSION

These days, destination brands have realized the importance of effective and efficient brand strategies to achieve their goals. Brand equity is crucial in the influence of tourists’ perceptions about destinations (Ritchie & Ritchie, 1998; Yoo & Donthu, 2001; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007). To manage a brand successfully is vital to understand and measure the concept of brand equity, which will give the tools to create a set of experiences directed toward the satisfaction of visitors and tourists.

One of the aims of this study was to validate the Lassar et al. model of consumer-perceived brand equity, applying it to a destination brand. As part of this validation, the importance of brand performance as the core dimension of the model was evaluated. The

model was validated, and the importance of brand performance as the core dimension was corroborated.

The complexities of developing a destination brand are concerned with the development of the experiential element and understanding of the tourist decisional process. Tourism organizations are involved in the designing of engaging experiences that charge a fee. As Pine & Gilmore (1998) state, “companies stage an experience whenever they engage customers in a personable, memorable way” (p. 99). In this research, valuable information was gathered regarding those two elements. The brand equity score provides us information regarding the experiential element since our analysis was based on respondents who have visited the destinations. Besides, important information was gathered regarding the consumers’ buying process when traveling to a destination.

According to the analysis, Puerto Rico obtained a brand equity score of 5.39 vs. USVI that obtained 5.51. The difference between the two scores is minimal. This small difference could reflect the reason why USVI was selected; both are Caribbean islands, are part of the USA, and there is no need for US citizens to bring passports to enter both islands. For future research, it would be interesting to compare the prices of both destinations along with the brand equity scores. It draws to the researchers’ attention that the only dimension where Puerto Rico obtained higher scores than USVI was price/value. Including the price factor could give additional support to the belief that when there is effective branding, firms are capable of developing a loyal customer base, and this permits to establish higher prices.

Based on the findings, Puerto Rico’s / USVI’s brand personality should be analysed. This analysis will help marketers identify brand weaknesses. Also, developing a distinctive brand personality will assist in the development of a more loyal customer base and the achievement of an effective differentiation strategy.

Regarding the different items used in the research, specifically those used to evaluate trustworthiness were very broad (organization’s trustworthiness, the destination’s caring image, and perception of destination not taking advantage of tourists). Further research may focus on identifying more accurate surrogate indicators consumers use when evaluating this dimension.

As Keller (2008) states, marketers need to understand the consumers’ perception of value, how much they are willing to pay, and their reaction to price changes. Understanding these factors will help marketers develop a pricing strategy to build and enhance the brand equity of products and services. This perception of value is what is measured in the price/value dimension of the CPBE model. The price/value perception, being the only dimension where Puerto Rico obtained higher scores than USVI, should be emphasized in Puerto Rico’s communication strategy. It could be a differentiating factor that fits the criteria for generating customer value, providing perceived value, and is not easily copied. To be effective with this strategy is critical to work in partnerships with the multiplicity of services businesses that make up the variable of product.

As Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie (2011) state:

in a globalized market, tourism product parity is becoming more of the norm as, for example, the UK consumers can purchase low-cost adventure holidays in Eastern Europe, compared to similar but more expensive products in Western Europe; thus, this will result in increasing pricing pressures. (p. 176)

The same could happen to Puerto Rico / USVI regarding other Caribbean islands like Dominican Republic, Aruba, Cuba, among others. Trying to achieve price parity could be a challenge due to all the different organizations involved in the destination experience, and the organizations in charge of marketing the destinations do not have control over

them. However, it is a challenge the destination must face since the price has shown to be a successful factor in destinations over the last decade (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2011).

Puerto Rico / USVI should develop a new strategic plan as a tool to immerse in a study of its strengths, weaknesses, and to understand the new opportunities and threats in the macro-environment (SWOT). The administrators should look at this process, not as one to discard all previous efforts, but to identify which efforts have been successful. No more logos and slogans should be developed until it is proven which of the previous ones have achieved the best recall among Puerto Rico's / USVI's target market.

Finally, the researchers recommend measuring changes in brand equity continuously. It is recommended to use the same instrument developed in this study, to be able to compare the score across time. This continuous research will give the PRTC / USVI the necessary information to monitor its strategies and make the necessary adaptations on time.

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FOREIGN TOURIST ATTITUDES AND VISIT INTENTIONS FOR MOUNTAINEERING TOURISM IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The development of adventure tourism destinations through good service quality brought a new perspective for the perceptions of foreign tourists. This study analysed the impact of the attributes of tourism service quality (TSQ) - monetary advantages, convenience advantages, and safety and security - and tourists' behavioural intention to engage in mountaineering in Pakistan. The study also analysed the moderating role of the destination's image in creating the tourists' intentions. A conceptual model was developed after the literature review. The research model was validated through exploratory factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha values. The findings show that international tourists focus on the monetary and convenience advantages in their intentions to visit Pakistan. Personal safety and security had no significant impact on attitude, because tourists focused on mountaineering perceive "there is no way to avoid all risks", although these risks can be minimized by taking courses and training in mountain climbing. Physical and environmental risks may occur because of travellers are unaware of the natural characteristics of the destination and their effects, just as personal risks may occur due to dangerous practices in leisure activities. The destination's mountaineering image has a role in creating positive intentions to visit Pakistan in the near future.

Keywords: Monetary Advantages, Convenience Advantages, Safety and Security, Tourists' Attitude, Behavioural Mountaineering Intention, Destination Image.

JEL Classification: M10, M31

1. INTRODUCTION

Mountaineering has long made attractive tourism destinations, essentially when based on a domestic and local source market with an established mountaineering or skiing culture. Mountaineering tourism involves outdoor climbing, skiing and related activities in which people purposefully interact with nature (World Tourism Organization [WTO], 2018). Surprisingly, as one of the fundamentals for tourism intentions, tourists' attitudes towards mountaineering have not been clearly understood.

Tourism, involving the movement of individuals both within their home country and across international borders, is a complex social phenomenon that cannot be fully understood without understanding the meaning or significance of tourism to tourists themselves, attractions, events, of their interactions with the sites and other people they encounter, and of the multitude of intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence the character and outcomes of these interactions (Sharpley & Stone, 2011: 2). As a scientific field, research on the industry has shown remarkable development and growth in the last 40 years. Such research

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has explored the challenges that tourism faces to create an opportunity for tourism to meet tourists' needs by focusing on the characteristics of the offer (Airey, 2015). Tourism is a hybrid concept borrowed from the individual orientation in psychology, which may be used to explain consumer behaviour. A destination's pull and push factors can motivate tourism: tourists' objectives are linked with push factors, and the destination's attractiveness is linked with pull factors (Kim, Lee, & Klenosky, 2003; Le-Klähn, Gerike, & Hall, 2014).

Researchers have investigated differences in the perceptions and behavioural patterns of tourists who have and have not visited a particular destination to examine the destination's image. Visitors have a more positive image of destinations in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) than non-visitors do (Hughes & Allen, 2008; Baloglu, Henthorne, & Sahin, 2014). The study conducted by Tan and Wu (2016) analysed whether previous visitors are more important sources for building a destination image than non-visitors, finding that familiarity and experience have positive impacts on a destination's image. Similarly, Robinson (1992) argued that adventure activities feature a contrast of experience, affording both positive and negative attitudes. As adventure tourism plays a significant role in formulating tourists' intentions, analysing the factors that affect attitude towards adventure tours can enhance tourists' intentions. Tan and Wu (2016) suggested that, in the case of past visitors, a cognitive image of a destination directly and positively influences the behavioural intention to visit, while an effective image of a destination does not. With no first-hand experience, non-visitors cannot perceive the destination accurately. For non-visitors, a cognitive image of the destination thus plays no role in influencing the destination's affective image.

Research has revealed that perceived safety and security concerns and the destination's image can affect tourists' return intentions (Chew & Jahari, 2014). The cognitive and affective images of a destination have a positive impact on visitor satisfaction, and thus influence intention to purchase and intention to recommend (Han, 2013a). While service quality has been relatively neglected in the tourism literature, it has an important influence on the traveller's evaluation of the destination. A focus on service quality helps industries to perform better (Otto & Ritchie, 2000).

Most tourism research in this vein has focused on Korea, Hong Kong, the United States, Europe, and Malaysia (Battour, Battor, & Ismail, 2012; Sato, Kim, Buning, & Harada, 2016). To our knowledge, no past or current studies have examined the quality attributes of Pakistan's mountaineering tourism service and their impact on tourist attitudes when building international tourists' perceptions of the destination's image and their visit intention.

Tourism is the most important and rapidly growing economic activity worldwide. Tourism is a multidimensional and multi-cultural activity that plays a major role in strengthening a country's economy by creating job opportunities and boosting the service sector. Pakistan's Tourism and Development Corporation (PTDC, 2019) reported that tourist arrivals from late 1995 to 2012 averaged 602,500 people. International tourists (overnight visitors) refer to the number of tourists who travel to a country other than their usual residence for a time not exceeding twelve months, the main purpose of which is to visit the country, rather than to conduct business.

The literature has ignored the impact of tourism service quality (TSQ) attributes on an adventurous attitude. Understanding how attributes like monetary advantages, safety and security and convenience can develop tourist attitudes can provide useful insights for the PTDC in developing effective destination marketing strategies. This study therefore sought to identify the attributes that affect international tourists' behavioural intention to visit adventure destinations. This study provides an in-depth understanding of key TSQ attributes that influence international tourists' attitudes and behavioural intentions to visit adventure destinations in Pakistan.

This study has two main research objectives. First, this study for the PTDC seeks to identify how three TSQ attributes affect tourists' mountaineering attitude; second, it also seeks to identify how the moderator, destination image, impacts the relationship between tourists' adventurous attitude and monetary advantages, safety and security, and convenience. Understanding TSQ attributes will help tourism organizations to describe adventure intentions with greater detail. It is thus important to understand where do travel intentions come from? Which factors have more influence on tourists' attitudes? This study adds to our knowledge by providing more focus on identifying how international tourists perceive TSQ attributes for mountaineering destinations, what effects their attitudes and behavioural intentions and how their mountaineering attitude differs based on destination image. This study thus provides a foundation for further investigation of the effect of perceived TSQ attributes, moderated by the destination's image, in the decision to visit an international mountaineering destination.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

2.1 Value of Service Quality in Tourism

Among service industries, tourism is especially significant in terms of its sensitivity to quality issues (Atilgan, Akinci, & Aksoy, 2003). Service quality refers to the difference between the expected service and the actual service delivered to customers. Tourists make decisions and undertake actions based on their perceptions of service quality. To provide good service quality to tourists, organizations and hotels must understand tourists' expectations. Improving TSQ can reduce dissatisfaction levels and increase the chances that tourists will (re)visit. It therefore necessary to identify the attributes that improve and create TSQ (Țîțu, Răulea, & Țîțu, 2016).

Many researchers have examined travel satisfaction, destination familiarity and behavioural intentions in different contexts and used different types of attributes to measure and improve the understanding of the service quality and behavioural intentions (Chen & Chen, 2010; Han, 2013b; Tan & Wu, 2016). Several different TSQ variables have been used, but there is limited research on which TSQ attributes are most important (i.e. from monetary advantages, convenience, health insurance and safety and security). Based on the previous literature and analysis of the role of service quality, this study examines TSQ in terms of monetary advantages, convenience and safety and security and their impact on tourists' attitudes, as applied to the moderating role of destination image. These three TSQ attributes can be important for perceiving tourist attitude, but they have not yet been examined when analysing international tourists' visit intention for destinations in Pakistan.

2.2 Impact of Convenience on Tourists' Adventurous Attitude

Knight (2010) defined the ease of obtaining and using a product as product convenience. Perceived service quality is a challenging concept to investigate (Brady & Cronin Jr, 2001; Wu & Cheng, 2013). The literature has suggested that convenience in service industries is an important indicator of behavioural intention. The effort and time saved while purchasing and using a service are known as service convenience. By minimizing effort, convenience reduces cognitive, emotional and physical effort while using the service (Roy, Shekhar, Lassar, & Chen, 2018).

Hussain, Jin and Parveen (2018) revealed that the service quality significantly affects international travellers' satisfaction and behaviour intentions. As the impact of service quality on tourists' attitudes still needs to be investigated, this study incorporated monetary

advantages, safety and security, and convenience in its study model. Our study seeks to determine whether convenience can assist in creating positive behavioural intentions to visit mountaineering destinations. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Convenience positively affects tourists' attitudes.

2.3 Impact of Safety and Security on Tourists' Adventurous Attitudes

More than any other economic activity, safety and security are vital to providing quality in tourism. A safe and secure environment for visitors results in tourism destination success. Safety and security needs to take into account the individual traveller (personal risks) and physical and environmental risks (natural climatological, epidemiological; WTO, 1996). For demanding and challenging markets, security services have increased year by year around the world. The composition of travel and tourism activity security is considered a vital issue that has an impact on service quality offered at different destinations and in different products. Studies conducted by Shin (2005) and Kozak, Crotts and Law, (2007) have demonstrated that safety and security influence domestic and international tourists' behaviour. Because of unsafe political conditions, especially in developing countries, high fluctuations occur in tourist arrivals (Shin, 2005). The popularity and success of a destination often depend on tourists' perceptions of its security and safety; suitable marketing strategies can thus help to create or repair the destination's image (Avraham, 2016). To develop and maintain quality tourism, a country must ensure that visitors are safe and secure with residents. It is important that, before choosing a particular destination, foreign tourists are educated about tourism safety (Popescu, 2011).

Destination selection is influenced by the destination's safety and security, which then help the tourist determine his or her revisit intentions. Accommodation safety and security have become important attributes for revisit intention (Ukpabi, Olaleye, Mogaji, & Karjaluoto, 2018). Accommodations with better safety and security measures create higher satisfaction with the destination, with the result that they significantly affect traveller's behaviour intentions (Qu, Ryan, & Chu, 2000).

Mountaineering remains a high-risk activity, regardless of the ease of mountain rescue arrangements (Musa & Thirumoorthi, 2015). Researchers have gained interest in analysing how foreigners perceive their safety and security while visiting a mountaineering destination. George (2003) argued that if tourists feel unsafe regarding a destination, they are not likely to participate in activities outside of their hotels and will not visit or recommend any destination they perceive to be unsafe. Personal security is the key factor in deciding on a travel destination (Pearce, 1988). Safety refers to protection from unintended incidents, while security refers to protection from intended incidents. For a country's tourism industry to grow, information about safety and security are key elements.

Unguided skiing and mountaineering results in dangerous mountain tourism-related accidents (Musa & Thirumoorthi, 2015). Evaluating tourists' risk perceptions of risky destinations in Malaysia revealed that tourists may perceive one specific destination to be high risk, but that any specific high-risk destination does not necessarily affect tourists' perceptions of other safe and secure destinations within the destination country (Yang, Sharif, & Khoo-Lattimore, 2015). Safety has become a global problem for supportable tourism, and the literature has examined the relationship between safety and security and destinations and accommodations, while ignoring the attitudes towards personal safety and security for mountaineering. It remains to be determined not only of how personal safety could be improved, but also how tourists' attitudes may be seen in terms of developing intentions so that industry can better resolve management issues related to mountaineering

tourism. When tourism organizations provide personal safety and security services, this can also contribute to shaping tourists' attitudes.

Mountaineering, skiing and hiking are becoming popular, although mountaineering is commonly linked to the danger of personal injury and even death. Deliberate seeking of risk is very common, and as tourism management organizations sell the risks linked with these activities, the number of tourists' engaging in mountaineering continues to grow as participants become aware of and accept security risks and responsibility for their actions (Musa & Thirumoorthi, 2015). However, the literature lacks empirical evidence on whether the mountaineering destination's safety and security protocols impact the attitude of international tourists to formulate behavioural intentions. Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: Personal safety and security do not affect mountaineering tourists' attitude towards visiting Pakistan.

2.4 Impact of Monetary Advantages on Tourists' Adventurous Attitude

In world markets, competitive advantages are determined through industry performance. The tourism potential of a country or destination depends upon its ability to offering better services than competitors. For travel decisions, price sensitivity is evaluated based on ticket taxes, airport charges, national purchasing and the hotel price index (Göral, 2016). Overall price sensitivity indicates how a tourist feels about paying an offered price destination package. Tourism is becoming easier and more affordable, although tourists are still interested in discounted accommodations when they select a destination, while easy access and affordable, high-quality services have a positive impact on the tourism industry (Malcheva, 2018).

The price of a hotel stay can be influenced by its facilities, so tourists look for value for money. The digital revolution has enabled travellers to access a broader array of information about tourism packages. Travellers may focus on price, location, service quality and other attributes (Castro & Ferreira, 2018). According to Rajaguru (2016), to achieve customer satisfaction and favourable behaviour intentions, the value of money is a crucial factor for the service industry. The literature has revealed that monetary advantages may be an important TSQ attribute that impacts tourists' attitudes to visit adventure destinations in Pakistan. Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis.

H3: Monetary advantages positively affect tourists' mountaineering attitude.

2.5 The Moderating Role of Destination Image

Most recent research provides evidence that destination image influences mountaineers' travel intentions. Dedeoğlu (2019) emphasized that the perception of a country's image is one of the most prominent factors in the tourism sector for evaluating TSQ and behavioural intention to visit. One of the most important external cues – country image – might require stakeholders to spend money to enhance tourists' perceptions of their organizations and their country. Dedeoğlu (2019) found that the halo effect might pertain if the destination is unfamiliar, so the characteristics of a tourist's destination are influenced by the country's image. Thus, tourists shape their attitude about a destination based on information about the country. International tourists' attitudes and intentions to visit a place – and their overall perception of the country's image – may play important roles. A positive image of a country not only enhances mountaineering attitudes but also tourism and behavioural

intentions. Chaulagain, Wiitala and Fu (2019) revealed that a country's image influences the destination image and visit intention.

National reputation and image have become increasingly critical assets. The impression people hold, their beliefs and the overall image refer to the mental representation of a country. In the international arena, media coverage and foreign policy are central to a country's positive image (Kenzhalina, 2014). Nadeau, Heslop, O'Reilly and Luk (2008) provided evidence that tourists' decisions are influenced by the destination's image. A person's understanding of a place is represented in a person's attitude, which impacts behavioural intentions. The concept of behavioural intention focuses on the fact that tourists may visit mountaineering destinations in the near future: they have a plan to visit mountaineering destinations and they hope to visit one in the near future.

The mental maps and knowledge structure of a country help to form destination images. There is also a strong relationship between a destination's image and its cultural activities and local culture. Accommodations, museums, restaurants and leisure activities are key elements in the formation of a cultural image of a destination (Hernández-Mogollón, Duarte, & Folgado-Fernández, 2018). Several studies have examined a destination's image as it relates to the perception of cultural activities. Cultural attractions and value for the money have been seen to have a positive impact on a destination's image. If tourists have positive thoughts about a destination, then their perceptions of service quality will also be positive, resulting in a positive behavioural intention to visit the destination (Tosun, Dedeoğlu, & Fyall, 2015).

Accordingly, most such studies (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Hernández-Mogollón, Duarte, & Folgado-Fernández, 2018; Nadeau, Heslop, O'Reilly, & Luk, 2008) examined the impact of the destination image on tourists' decisions, while others have investigated the impact of the cultural image of the destination (Hernández-Mogollón, Duarte, & Folgado-Fernández, 2018). The literature has ignored, however, the destination's image as a moderator and the best ways to examine the tourists' mountaineering attitude: the relation of destination image with TSQ attributes remains to be investigated. However, no research on Pakistan tourism has investigated the interaction between tourist services offered to international tourists and tourists' attitudes in making positive intentions to visit mountaineering destinations in the near future. The moderating role of a destination's image has remained mostly unconnected. Accordingly, we propose the following hypotheses.

H4: A destination's image moderates the relationship between convenience and tourists' mountaineering attitude.

H5: A destination's image moderates the relationship between personal safety and security and tourists' mountaineering attitude.

H6: A destination's image moderates the relationship between monetary advantages and tourists' mountaineering attitude.

2.6 Impact of Tourists' Adventurous Attitude on Intention to Visit

The literature focuses on the quality of a tourism experience – particularly perceived value and satisfaction – and explores its impact on post-visit behavioural intentions, especially the intention to visit (Chen & Chen, 2010). Tourism studies have concluded that tourists' attitude affects their behavioural intention to visit or revisit a destination. This is in line with studies that have found a positive attitude towards food consumption behaviour leads to a positive intention to purchase food and to recommend it to others: having a positive attitude about a product or place creates a positive behavioural intention to visit a place for food tourism (Choe & Kim, 2018). Tourists' overall attitude is thus a significant predictor

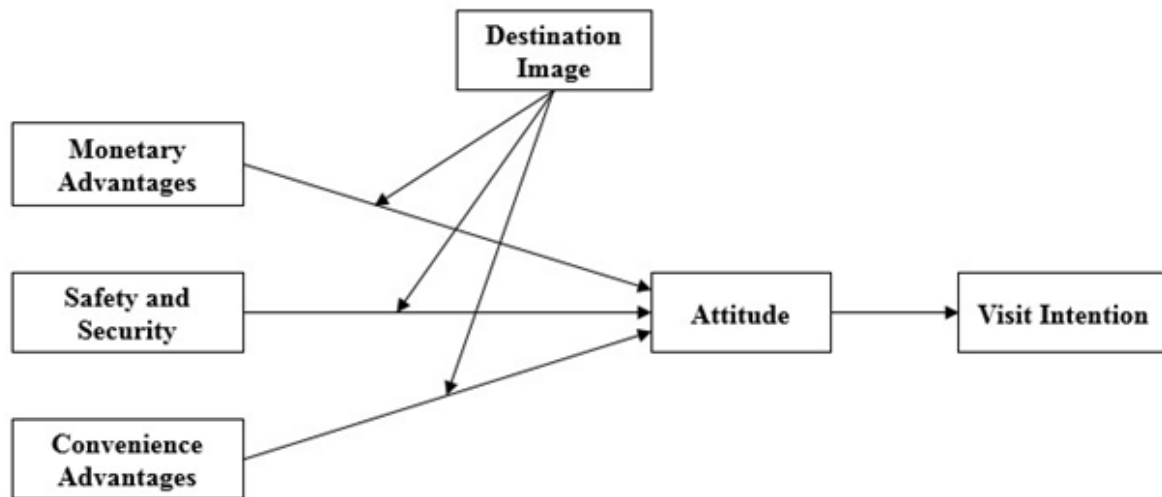
of their intention to recommend a destination (Prayag, Chen, & Del Chiappa, 2018). In another study, Huang and Hsu (2009) examined Chinese visitors' motivation to revisit Hong Kong, and their findings indicate that tourists' positive attitude has a positive impact on Beijing tourists' intention to revisit Hong Kong.

The impact of tourists' attitude on international mountaineering tourists' behavioural intention to visit Pakistan still needs investigation. This study seeks to determine whether tourists' mountaineering attitudes affect their intention to visit Pakistan. Based on these indications, the following research hypothesis is proposed:

H7: Tourists' mountaineering attitude positively affects international tourists' behavioural intention to visit Pakistan.

The relationships among TSQ attributes and tourists' adventurous attitude, destination image, and intention to visit are illustrated in figure 1.

Figure 1. Research Model



Source: Own Elaboration

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Questionnaire and Measurements

A questionnaire was used as the data collection tool for this research. The first section of the questionnaire was related to the destination image, TSQ attributes, tourists' attitude and behavioural intention to visit Pakistan. Demographic data were gathered in the second section. All items were measured with a 7-point Likert scale. Initially, the questionnaire was developed in English because the intended sample was composed of international tourists. Pilot testing of the questionnaire was conducted by contacting travel agency communities on social media located in Pakistan. Minor corrections and modifications were then made to the questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire was designed to document the destination image of Pakistan and awareness of mountaineering tourism.

3.2 Sample Design and Data Collection

We contacted about 400 tourists, of whom 211 mountaineering tourists from a variety of countries were willing to participate in the survey. We used a convenience sampling technique. The survey was distributed from December 2018 to March 2019. Data were collected by an online questionnaire in South Korea because it was the researcher's current country of residence, and the survey was shared on social media (Facebook, LinkedIn) pages and sent to various countries' embassies using an email ID.

3.3 Scale Development

To test the scale, the reliability and validity of measurement items were assessed. Items that indicated monetary advantages (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.878$), safety and security (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.921$) and tourists' attitude (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.935$) were extracted from a previous study (Han, 2013b), as were items to indicate convenience (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.929$; Kim, Lee, & Klenosky, 2003), visit intention (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.921$; Tan & Wu, 2016) and destination image (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.981$; Malik & Bhat, 2014).

3.4 Sample Characteristics

Regarding gender distribution of the total participating sample ($N=211$), most of the respondents were male (58.3%; $n=123$), while 41.7% were female ($n=88$). Most respondents (36.5%) were students, 23.2% were self-employed, 12.3% were working as a government employee and 28% belonged to other occupations. Of all respondents, 6.2% were less than 20 years of age, 39.3% were between 21 and 30, 33.6% were 31–40, 19.4% were 41–50 and 6.2% declared they were above 50 years of age.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Validity and Reliability Tests

A reliability test was used to describe the measures' consistency. The Cronbach's α values from an exploratory factor analysis verified the high internal consistency of the constructs. All constructs' Cronbach's α values were higher than 0.9, which indicates that all of the research constructs are reliable. The validity of all constructs was assessed using factor analysis, with values between 0.7 and 0.9 revealing high validity.

Table 1. Pearson Correlation

	Monetary Advantages	Safety and Security	Convenience Advantages	Attitude	Visit Intention
Monetary Advantages					
Safety and Security	0.848***				
Convenience Advantages	0.838	0.893***			
Attitude	0.779	0.696	0.735***		
Visit Intention	0.696	0.705	0.695	0.709***	
* $p<0.10$ ** $p<0.05$ *** $p<0.01$					

Source: Output from SPSS

In table 1, Pearson correlations were calculated for variables. All variables were significantly correlated to each other at the 0.01 significance level.

4.2 Results for H1, H2 and H3

We conducted regression analyses to show that monetary advantage and convenience have a positive impact on tourists' attitudes, while safety and security in mountaineering tourism have no impact on attitude. H1, H2 and H3 were supported.

Table 2. The Relationship between Tourism Attributes and Tourists' Attitude

Construct	Unstandardized Coefficients		<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i>	Correlation	Result
	<i>B</i>	Std. Error				
Monetary Advantages	0.688	0.101	6.802	0.000	0.779	Support H1
Safety and Security	-0.094	0.108	-0.876	0.382	0.696	Support H2
Convenience Advantages	0.365	0.109	3.346	0.001	0.735	Support H3
R-Square=63.1% Adjusted R-Square=62.6% Sig-change=0.000						

Source: Output from SPSS

Using monetary advantage as an independent variable and attitude as a dependent variable in the regression analysis, in table 2 we find that the significance was 0.000, which means ($p < 0.001$), so monetary advantages have a significant impact on attitude. Therefore, H1 is supported. Similarly, convenience has a positive relationship with attitude, with significance of 0.001 ($p < 0.001$), so H2 is also supported. The results of the regression analysis show that monetary advantages and convenience are strong positive influencers of tourists' attitudes.

The relationship of a mountaineering destination's safety and security with attitude is not significant ($p = 0.382$, $t = -0.876$), which shows the variable relationship has no observable impacts on tourists' attitude, so H3 is supported. While monetary advantages and convenience influence tourists' attitude, safety and security do not because of the adventurous nature of the destination – perhaps because young tourists are passionate about mountaineering tourism (72.9% of the respondents were between 21 and 40 years old), and mountaineers, in general, are more inclined to risk-taking than other tourists are, so personal safety and security may not affect their attitude because they already know about the dangers and expected consequences. This would be in line with the findings of Musa and Thirumoorthi (2015), who found mountaineering tourists to be risk-takers who do not particularly care about personal safety, injury or even death. Research conducted by Pizam et al. (2004) supports the results that young adults engage in risk-taking behaviour on leisure trips.

4.3 Results for H4, H5 and H6

Table 3. Destination Image's Relationship with Tourists' Attitude

Construct	Unstandardized Coefficients		<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i>	Correlation	Result
	<i>B</i>	Std. Error				
Destination Image→ Attitude	1.053	0.043	24.291	0.000	0.859	Accepted
R-Square=73.8% Adjusted R-Square=73.7% Sig-change=0.000						

Source: Output from SPSS

Before conducting moderation analysis, we checked the moderating relationships following the steps suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986). The moderator destination

image has a positive relationship with attitude. The analysis results ($t=24.291$, $p=0.000$, $\text{sig}=.000$) suggest a strongly significant relationship between destination image and tourists' attitude, which indicates that destination image can be a good moderator.

Table 4. Moderation Regression Analysis

Construct	Unstandardized Coefficients		<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i>	Correlation	Result
	<i>B</i>	Std. Error				
Interaction1	0.091	0.016	5.644	0.000	0.842	Accepted
Interaction2	-0.022	0.018	-1.232	0.219	0.798	Rejected
Interaction3	0.041	0.017	2.392	0.018	0.818	Accepted
R-Square=71.6% Adjusted R-Square=71.2% Sig-change=0.000						

Source: Output from SPSS

Note*

Interaction1=Monetary advantage $\times$ Destination Image $\rightarrow$ Attitude

Interaction2=Safety and security $\times$ Destination Image $\rightarrow$ Attitude

Interaction3=Convenience advantages $\times$ Destination Image $\rightarrow$ Attitude

Based on coefficient table 4 (*t*-values and *p*-values), destination image plays a moderating role between monetary advantages and attitude ($t=5.644$, $p=0.000$), so H4 is supported. The destination image also plays a moderating role in the relationship between convenience and tourists' attitudes ($t=2.392$, $p=0.018$), so H6 is accepted, However, destination image does not appear to play a moderating role in the relationship between safety and security and tourists' attitudes about visiting Pakistan ($t=-1.232$, $p=0.219$), so H5 is rejected.

4.4 Results for H7

Table 5. Relationship between Tourists' Attitude and Tourists' Intention to Visit

Construct	Unstandardized Coefficients		<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i>	Correlation	Result
	<i>B</i>	Std. Error				
Attitude	0.722	0.050	14.551	0.000	0.709	Accepted
R-Square=50.3% Adjusted R-Square=50.1% Sig-change=0.000						

Source: Output from SPSS

Based on the regression analysis in table 5 ($t=14.551$, $p=0.000$), tourists' attitude has a significant impact on tourists' intention to visit mountaineering destinations, so H7 is supported. We concluded that international tourists' intention to visit Pakistan is strong, supporting the information obtained from the PTDC (2019) report. According to the PTDC data, the number of international tourists more than tripled since 2013 to 1.75 million in 2017, which illustrates tourists' positive attitude towards visiting destinations in Pakistan (PTDC, 2019).

5. CONCLUSION

For mountaineering, monetary advantages and convenience are the most crucial attributes and positively influence tourists' adventurous attitude and behavioural intentions to make plans to visit mountaineering destinations in the near future. International tourists who have information about Pakistan perceive these two attributes, but the effect of a mountaineering

destination's safety and security on their attitude appeared to have no impact. The influence of the destination image on tourists' intention to visit Pakistan is in line with the literature which found that a destination's attractiveness is linked to pull factors (Le-Klähn, Gerike, & Hall, 2014).

Mountaineering tourists tend to be risk-takers and focus on pull factors in the case of tourism to Pakistan. Travellers and visitors themselves may create problems for their own safety and security, either due to previous health conditions, the dangerous practices of tourists' leisure activities or visits to dangerous areas (WTO, 1996). Tourists perceive Pakistan to be an attractive country that possesses mountaineering destinations for adventure tourism. The beauty of the mountains is the most important motive for mountaineering (Burnik & Mrak, 2010). There is less focus here on push factors, so the impact of safety and security on tourists' attitudes is not significant. As has already been investigated, mountaineers are high risk-takers (Musa & Thirumoorathi, 2015), so they are already aware of the possibility for injury. It is thus reasonable that there appears to be no significant impact for safety and security on mountaineering tourism, although its impact can be significant for other types of tourism in the same country: a high-risk destination does not necessarily affect tourists' perceptions of other safe and secure destinations (Yang, Sharif, & Khoo-Lattimore, 2015).

Monetary advantages are expected to have an impact on tourists' positive attitude when the destination's image is positive, and for mountaineering, the natural environment is gaining the monetary value (Burnik & Mrak, 2010). Tourists are thus likely to focus on the trip's quality because they give importance to monetary advantages, convenience and the destination's image, which creates a positive attitude and a favourable decision for mountaineering. Another possible explanation for these findings is that tourists are passionate about visiting new adventure destinations, so they consider monetary and convenience factors in light of what they can experience and enjoy in new mountaineering destinations they have not explored before. This may account for the insignificant relationship between safety and tourists' positive attitude. The results indicate a significant positive relationship between tourists' attitudes and intentions to visit attractive mountaineering destinations and their willingness to take risks to experience adventure destinations.

The findings of our study, the first to investigate international tourists' attitudes in relation to the TSQ attributes of Pakistani destinations, will be useful for PTDC and tourism agencies. The PTDC recently launched the Pakistan Tourism Friends Club, members of which receive an exclusive 20% discount at PTDC facilities. The PTDC should determine appropriate monetary and convenience strategies to increase inbound tourism in Pakistan, create awareness about Pakistan's destination image and develop safety and security positioning strategies appropriately.

5.1 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study has certain limitations that can be examined in future research. The study encourages tourism organizations to provide better value for money and greater convenience, as well as improving safety concerns for adventure tourism organizations, such as the requiring outdoor education before engaging in mountaineering activities. Future research could investigate the difference between two Asian countries' adventurous attitude and whether the results apply equally to other types of adventure tourism or not. Understanding this issue will become an important factor for tourism organizations. This research shows that monetary and convenience attributes can affect mountaineering tourists' attitude and behavioural intentions; however, in cross-cultural research it is important to cover other

attributes of service quality by following and developing methods and evaluations used in this study.

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