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Guest Editors: Patrícia Oom do Valle, Júlio Mendes and Manuela Guerreiro

Editor: Teresa de Noronha

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## Tourism and Places: New Approaches

# TECHNICAL INFORMATION

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## Tourism and Places: New Approaches

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# CONSUMPTION VALUES AND DESTINATION EVALUATION IN DESTINATION DECISION MAKING

*Vasyl Denys*
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**ABSTRACT**

Consumption values have received little attention in the tourism literature, comparing to such determinants of the consumer behavior as motivations, pull and push factors, satisfaction, quality, or destination image, etc. This study attempts to analyze consumption values and their types, and the influence that they have on the destination decision making and, particularly, on the destination choice. Current work brings new insights about the role of consumption values in detrmining preferences toward tourist destinations. Study findings justify the multidimensional nature of the consumption value, and demonstrate that every value dimension has a certain degree of importance for a tourist, which, to a big extent, can determine the destination choice.

Keywords: Consumption Values, Value Dimension, Destination Evaluation, Destination Decision Making

JEL Classification: M31, M15, D120

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Great amount of studies, theoretical and empirical, have been conducted in tourism for the last decades due to an exponential growth of tourism as a socio-economic activity, that turns it into a highly profitable industry and a complex social phenomenon. Increasing popularity of tourism generates a great interest to it among social scientists and business practitioners. In order to comprehend what factors drive tourists and determine their choices requires a thorough analysis of various complicated variables of internal and external environments that embrace the tourist behavior (Hung, 2008; Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005; Kotle *et al*., 2003).

Destination decision making is a complex multi-staged process (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005) that usually involves many sub-decisions, and where the final choice is based on evaluative judgments (Smallman and Moore, 2010). Complexity of the destination decision making relates to the nature of tourism itself, which is experiential, relatively expensive and, often, unpredictable activity with risks taking (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005). Tourist behavior encompasses interactions between various factors, which literature classifies onto internal - socio-psychological and demographical, and external - from the environment to which a consumer is exposed (Kotler, 2000). Among the internal factors there are few that tourism scholars emphasize the most: motivations, attitudes, preferences, and values. Destination image, on the other hand, is likely to be among the most influential factors of the external domain.

Consumption values and destination images are two constructs that this study is focused on. Researcher attempts to relate these two variables in order to explain the tourist behavior and destination preferences in particular. Pull and push factors concept refers to a tourist behavior as to a function of congruence between forces that push a tourist to take certain actions, and forces that pull actions from a tourist (Kim *et al*., 2007; Klenosky, 2002; Crompton 1979). These interrelated and dependent factors are generally described as motivations (push factors) that drive tourists, and destination attributes (pull factors) that attract tourists and influence their decisions (Prayag and Ryan, 2011; Kim *et al*., 2007; Baloglu and Uysal, 1996). Consequently, the researcher raises a question: "If two destinations offer similar sets of attributes, what serves as an evaluative criteria for a tourist to prefer one destination over another?"

Tourist destination is a country, an area within a country, a city or a resort (Buhalis, 2000; Lumsdon, 1997), or a place with a market-created boundaries (Kotler *et al*., 2003) that offers attributes that are attractive for tourists. Tourist destination proposes a set of benefits accumulated within boundaries. These benefits encompass products and services, including accommodations, events, entertainments, communication, food and beverages, transportation, people, culture, nature, weather, etc. (Buhalis, 2000; Lumsdon, 1997). By interacting with destination attributes that involve physical and social aspects, products and services, a tourist allows for a greater satisfaction of his/her personal needs for physical performances, social interactions, learning, and recognizing personal self (Vogt, 1976). These interactions, or consumptions, evoke emotions and feelings (Esper *et al*., 2010). King (2002) suggests that attributes themselves are not important to a tourist as much as experiences that they can provide, and their ability to enhance tourist's self-concept through those experiences. Traveler, arriving to a destination, expects for experiences that he/she wants to be engaged with on emotional, physical, spiritual or intellectual levels (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). These experiences are separated from products or services, and they can provide an extraordinary value to a consumer.

Hoping to fulfill own expectations at a destination, tourist relies, fully or partially, on that destination's image. It has been widely recognized in the literature that tourists' choices for a particular destination were greatly influenced by perceptions of that destination's favorable image (Kim and Perdue, 2011; Bigne *et al*., 2001; Um and Crompton, 1990). Knowledge, impressions, prejudices, and emotional thoughts that a person holds toward something describes its image to a person (Lawson and Baud-Bovy, 1977). The better the perception of the destination image is the higher is the probability for that destination to be preferred by a tourist (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). When deciding where to go, tourist identifies his/her own needs and their priorities, and examines various destinations assessing their likely capabilities to satisfy those needs (Fuller *et al.*, 2005; Mayo and Jarvis, 1981). Cognitive knowledge and beliefs about various destinations and their attributes, and sought for the best affective appraisal reasons the tourist's destination choice (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Um and Crompton, 1990). However, in order to be favorable, besides only having the higher cognitive-affective evaluation, a destination must evoke positive associations with the tourist's self-concept (Beerli *et al.*, 2007). People behave in ways that help them to maintain and enhance their self-concepts, maximize good feelings about themselves and gain social approval, and they avoid activities that are inconsistent with that (Hung, 2008). Therefore, a positive destination image has to respond to a tourist's personal perception of his/her self-concept, lifestyle and value system (Murphy *et al.*, 2007; Sirgy and Su, 2000).

Values are considered to be important and influential determinants of the human behavior. Being organized along the continuum of a relative importance to each other within a set, they create a personal system of values (Rokeach, 1973). Value is one of the most ambiguous variables of the consumer behavior due to its abstract nature and difference in opinions about it by various scholars (Rao and Monroe, 1989; Zeithaml, 1988). Many researchers define value as an enduring belief about one thing to be more desirable than another; as criteria for evaluating things; or as an utility which is acquired from experiencing consumption. Value is not something that one has, but it is what one can attach to something determining his/her personal judgment about that thing to be liked or disliked to a certain extent. And, since the consumption of products or services creates multidimensional outcomes (Sandstrom *et al.*, 2008; Holbrook, 1994; Sheth, Newman and Gross, 1991), values, attached to or acquired from them, are also multidimensional, and they are called consumption values (Williams and Soutar, 2000; Sheth *et al.*, 1991).

This research aims to contribute into the understanding of consumption values and define their role in the destination evaluation process and decision making. It seeks to answer "why tourist prefers one destination over another, and what is the ground for the evaluation of alternatives?". Current study attempts to find the relationship between tourist's expectations, destinations images, and destinations preferences, applying the theory of consumption values in the context of sea, sand and sun holidays.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1. The Concept of Value

Literature on economics, sociology, marketing, and consumer behavior offers various concepts of value and various definitions that explain the essence of it. Several of them are as follows: (1) Values are bundles of likes and dislikes, viewpoints, rational judgments and associated patterns that determine the worldview (Spranger, 1928); (2) Value is "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence" (Rokeach, 1973: 5); (3) ''Perceived value is the consumer overall assessment of the utility based on the perceptions of what is received and what is given'' (Zeithaml, 1988: 14); (4) Value is ''a cognitive trade-off between perceived quality and sacrifice'' (Dodds, Monroe and Grewal, 1991: 316); (5) By Sheth *et al.* (1991), value is a utility acquired from consuming products or services; (6) Gupta (1998) defines value as an intrinsic idea or goal that is attempted to be achieved in order to evoke a deep sense of fulfillment; (7) ''Value is a positive function of what is received and a negative function of what is sacrificed'' (Oliver, 1999: 45). One common aspect of value is the satisfaction that it brings to a person and the influence that it makes on the mode of behavior.

People usually do not think about values, but they realize them when values become relevant or activated (Verplanken and Holland, 2002). Values are factors that are important to do, follow and strive forward (McClelland, 1991). Dhar, Parashar and Tiwari (2008) state that at the macro-level values compose a meaningful set of ideas that are understood and shared in the society, and they are often culturally determined. At the micro-level values are motivating standards that allow an individual to evaluate available alternatives for further actions. Morris (1956) classifies values onto 3 different groups: ones that direct individual's behavior (operative values); ones that are shared, culturally determined conceptions of desirable behavior (conceived values); and ones that assess the importance of objects independently of preferences and normative standards (object values). Values are based on knowledge, beliefs and attitudes, and they serve as criteria for evaluations and judgments (Rokeach, 1968). They influence human behavior and also explain it (Krishnan, 1997). Determining choices and ways to invest time and energy, they become the core of human personality (Posner and Schmidt, 1992). Rokeach (1968) emphasizes that in order to comprehend the notion of value researcher should understand human personality and consider value as a part of a hierarchically built system. Author looks at a human personality through a prism of three distinct domains: behavioral, affective and cognitive. The cognitive domain incorporates three groups of beliefs: ones that evaluate things to be true or false, ones that evaluate things to be good or bad, and ones that evaluate things to be desirable or undesirable. Last explains values. Cognitive domain facilitates predicting and understanding affective and behavioral components of the human personality. People value as many things as they hold beliefs about them to be desirable or undesirable. Although personal values can explain human attitudes and behavior, in order to do so they must be measured all together, because values have different degrees of relative importance (Krishnan, 1997; Rokeach, 1973). It is not as much relevant to know what people value as to know which value is more favorable than the other (Krishnan, 1997). Krishnan concludes that two persons could appreciate the same set of values, but behave differenty, because of different priorities assigned to same values.

Lai (1995) identifies two approaches to the notion of value. One considers value to be an assessment, made by a customer about the purchase, in respect to the trade-off between what was given and what was received. This concept refers to the customer value (Lai, 1995; Dodds et al, 1991). Another approach explains value as a bundle of benefits acquired from a product usage. In the literature it is called consumer value (Lai, 1995) or consumption value (Sheth et al, 1991; Holbrook and Corfman, 1985). Gallarza and Gil (2006) underline two major approaches to the value research: one focuses on a value dimensionality or value types, and another – on the influence of values on consumer behavior. In this study researcher adopts on the concept of consumption values that are acquired through the consumption experiences, and combines two approaches studying the influence of value dimensionality on tourist behavior. Consumer acquires consumption values from the interaction with products or services (Holbrook, 1999). By Holbrook, value is a preference experience of a relativistic nature: it is personal, comparative, and situational. Due to the uniqueness of each one's personality different people can perceive values differently, and that makes it personal (Gallarza and Gil, 2008; Holbrook, 1999; Zeithaml, 1988). Values can be compared to each other and to values of alternatives, which explains their comparativeness (Gallarza and Gil, 2008; Nilson, 1992; Buzzell and Gale, 1987). Situational nature of value is in its ability to be perceived differently by a person depending on circumstances of the consumption, involving time and space (Gallarza and Gil, 2008; Gabott and Hogg, 1998; Sheth *et al.*, 1991). The model of Sheth *et al.* (1991), which is central in this research, distinguishes five consumption value types (dimensions): functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional.

### 2.2. Functional Value

Functional value relates to the functional usability of product attributes (mainly physical) and their utilitarian benefits (Sheth *et al.*, 1991). Utilitarian consumption serves to perform practical tasks (Strahilevitz and Myers 1998). It is cognitively driven, instrumental and goal oriented. According to the economic theory of utility sought, functional value is considered to be one of the major forces in decision making. In tourism it can be acquired from the consumption of destination physical aspects (natural or human made), products and services, such as souvenirs, food, various activities, etc. (Morgan *et al.*, 2010). Quality, variety, reliability, comfort, safety, prices, etc., are among the most popular destination factors that refer to the functional value.

### 2.3. Social Value

Social value relates to the perceived product utility that is acquired from product's positive associations with consumer's personal geographic, demographic, socioeconomic, political and cultural dimensions, and from positive recognition of product attributes in social (reference) groups to which consumer belongs or intends to belong (Sheth *et al.*, 1991). Reference groups have a great power over consumer's decisions and products choices (Burnkrant and Cousineau, 1975). Most people need a psychological association with someone else or a group of other people (Bearden and Etzel, 1982). Assimilating oneself to the group, or even liking the group with no intentions to be associated with it, fulfills the need of social association. If one believes that certain behavior is favored or unfavored by others, whose evaluations are important, then he/she will may try to behave in a way that is likely to be desirable by that group of others (Park and Lessig, 1977). Social value plays a significant role in a formation of tourists' perceptions of their experiences (Morgan *et al.*, 2010; Williams and Soutar, 2000). It is acquired when one is socially approved, feels accepted, makes good impression on others, and improves his/her self-image (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001). In tourism some researchers relate social value to direct social interactions. People's friendliness and hospitality, respectful treatment, genuine care for customers, willingness of others to help are factors that can create social value for tourists (Noypayak, 2009). Shanka and Phau (2008) add the possibility of making friendships and meeting people with common interests.

**2.4. Emotional Value**

Emotional value can be acquired from the product's ability to elicit feelings and change emotional stage while consumption (Sheth *et al.*, 1991). Although any manufactured product may create the emotional value for the consumer, it is usually associated with the consumption of esthetic and hedonic products, such as tourism. Consumption of hedonic products underlines "those facets of consumer behavior that relate to the multi-sensory, fantasy and emotive aspects of one's experience with products" as this behavior is pleasure-seeking (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982: 92). Hedonic products include multisensory features and imply experiential consumption, fun, and excitement, etc. Every product can be as much hedonic as it is perceived to be by an individual (Khan *et al.*, 2004). Russell and Pratt (1980) suggest that there are four basic emotional states (pleasant, unpleasant, arousing and sleepy), that help to affectively evaluate a tourist destination to be exciting, relaxing, irritating or boring, or combination of some. Measuring the emotional value, Sweeney and Soutar (2001) deploy scale items, such as feeling relaxed, enjoying consumption and receiving pleasure. Petrick (2002) notes that in order to create emotional value consumption should make consumer feel good and delighted, give pleasure and sense of joy, and bring happiness.

**2.5. Epistemic Value**

Epistemic value relates to the human curiosity and natural need for the cognition (Sheth *et al.*, 1991). Inventions and innovations are driven factors that evoke desire to discover and learn, foster people to variety and novelty seeking (Zuckerman, 1994; Sheth *et al.*, 1991). Schweizer (2006) suggests that desire to seek for novelty is coded in human genes. This behavior stems from possessing particular individual neurocognitive and personality traits, such as excitability, impulsiveness, ease to get bored, disinhibition, proactivity, and curiosity. It is a key explanation for complex levels of human motivations (Berlyne, 1950). Curiosity is one of the strongest driven factors of human behavior (Loewenstain, 1994). Yet from Aristotle's time it has been of interest for many philosophers, often being referred as a love of knowledge or a passion for learning. However, in the economic theory of utility curiosity has been neglected as the influential factor, since the consumption of information or knowledge wasn't believed to provide more value than the product consumption itself. Berlyne (1954) categorizes curiosity into 4 types: (1) Perceptual - occurs as a result of a novel stimuli; and it reduces as a stimuli continues; (2) Epistemic - relates to a human desire for knowledge; (3) Specific - occurs at the moment of a need for a particular piece of information to solve certain problem; and (4) Diversive - a need for stimulation to avoid boredom. Epistemic value is one of the core benefits expected from the tourism experience (Williams and Soutar, 2009). Experiencing new and different lifestyles and socio-cultural environments, meeting new people, trying new food, increasing knowledge, learning and discovering are among the strongest tourists' motivations (Kim *et al.*, 2007; Andreu *et al.*, 2006; Jang (Shawn) and Cai, 2002).

### 2.6. Conditional Value

Conditional value occurs when product's utility depends on a particular situation or circumstances under which the product is purchased (Sheth *et al.*, 1991). For instance, wedding dress would be valued in case of an upcoming wedding, or winter jacket in a cold weather. Conditional value addresses the situational nature of it, meaning that perceived value of a product can vary from one buying situation to another (Day and Crask, 2000, Gallarza and Gil, 2006). Even within the similar situation the value might be perceived differently with time due to past experiences. Conditional value is an acquired utility derived from temporary functional or social values that appear under certain conditions (Sheth *et al.*, 1991). At the tourist destination the conditional value can be acquired from a friendliness of locals, personal safety, good value for money, and good quality of life (Shanka and Phau. 2008). It is the least influential and the most ambiguous value dimension. Because conditional value appears under certain circumstances and conditions that a decision maker faces, its existence as a distinctive value dimension becomes questionable (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001; Williams and Soutar, 2000). Authors refer to it as to a specific case of any of other values. Therefore it is not a value itself, but a condition under which any other value's significance raises. Supporting the criticism, researcher eliminates the conditional value from the study, leaving only four other mentioned values.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

This work aims to contribute into understanding the role of four consumption values in the destination decision making. Researcher focuses on value dimensions, their relative degrees of importance, and its influence on destination evaluation and destination preferences. Two hypotheses were proposed:

> **H1**: *When thinking of going for holidays, tourists are able to group their expectations for experiences within consumption value dimensions, and recognize the importance of every dimension by assigning priorities to them.*
> **H2**: *Tourists prefer visiting a destination that is perceived to fulfill their expectations for experiences better than other alternatives, and in accordance with prioritized expectations.*

The Hypothesis 1 brings attention to the value dimensionality and to a tourist's ability to distinguish and prioritize value dimensions as separate driven factors of destination decision making. The Hypothesis 2 attempts to confirm the assumption that value dimensions with their different degrees of priority for a tourist can determine his/her destination choices. Researcher suggests that the destination choice is influenced by distinct value dimensions and by how they are prioritized in a value set of a decision maker. It is essential to clarify that the meaning of the destination choice in the context of this research is limited to the revelation of tourist preferences toward destinations that were suggested by the researcher.

For the purpose of this research European Union residents of the age group 17 – 34 years old were chosen to participate in the survey. Forming a lucrative segment of the holiday travel market (Chen and Kerstetter, 1999), and growing in number of travelers (Mattila *et al.*, 2001), youth is a considerably interesting market segment to study (Litvin, 2003; Babin and Kim, 2001). Due to the lack of consistent scales that could measure consumption values in tourism in respect to tourist destinations (Noypayak, 2009), the pool of scale items that are likely to represent value dimensions has been accumulated from the literature and given to a small sample of tourists in order to identify 5 most representative items for each value dimension. After interviewing 13 young tourists of 7 different EU nationalities, 22 scale items were voted as the most representative from the pool of total 37 items. Two pairs of items have received equal support and combined together within the emotional and social value dimensions (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Scale items adjusted to the current study**

| Value Dimension | № | Variables | Reference |
|---|---|---|---|
| Functional | 1 | Beautiful scenery | Noypayak (2009) |
| | 2 | Worth the money | Petrick (2002), Noypayak (2009) |
| | 3 | High quality service | Williams and Soutar (2000), Sweeney and Soutar (2001), Petrick (2002), Shanka and Phau (2008), Noypayak (2009) |
| | 4 | Cultural/historical/tourists attractions | Noypayak (2009) |
| | 5 | Economical holidays | Sweeney and Soutar (2001), Petrik (2002) |
| Emotional | 1 | Aquire emotional pleasure | Sweeney and Soutar (2001), Petrick (2002), Noypayak (2009) |
| | 2 | Relax emotionally and physically | Sweeney and Soutar (2001), Shanka and Phau (2008), Noypayak (2009) |
| | 3 | Feel secure | Noypayak (2009) |
| | 4 | Feel excited | Williams and Soutar (2001) |
| | 5 | Have fun | Shanka and Phau (2008), Noypayak (2009) |
| | | Feel joy | Sweeney and Soutar (2001), Petrick (2002) |
| Social | 1 | Meet friendly and hospitable people | Shanka and Phau (2008), Noypayak (2009) |
| | 2 | Meet people with common interests | Shanka and Phau (2008) |
| | 3 | Improve self-image | Sweeney and Soutar (2001) |
| | 4 | Follow recommendations | Sheth et al (1991) |
| | 5 | Be respected by others | Petrick (2002), Noypayak (2009) |
| | | Be socially accepted | Sweeney and Soutar (2001) |
| Epistemic | 1 | Learn about local culture and traditions | Sheth et al (1991) |
| | 2 | Experience something different | Shanka and Phau (2008), Williams and Soutar (2009) |
| | 3 | Evoke curiosity | Sheth et al (1991), Williams and Soutar (2009) |
| | 4 | Provide novelty experience | Sheth et al (1991), Zuckerman (1994), Williams and Soutar (2009) |
| | 5 | Discover something new | Sheth et al (1991) |

Turkey, Portugal and Morocco were chosen for this research as three relatively different in cultural, socioeconomic and natural aspects countries, but at the same time very popular sea, sand and sun destinations. The study survey has been conducted with help of web-based technologies through the distribution of the self-composed questionnaire, considering that it is one of the most efficient ways of collecting and managing the data (Dillman, 2007; Deutskens *et al.*, 2006; Duffy, Smith, Terhanian, and Bremer, 2005).

Survey questionnaire has been administered in English and it comprises three sections that are to help testing proposed hypothesis. Section 1 questions the likely capability of each of three given destinations to fulfill each of twenty scale items during sea, sand and sun holidays. It asks respondents to agree with twenty assumptions regarding every destination on a 5-point rating scale, anchored on (5) = "Strongly Agree" to (1) = "Strongly Disagree". An example of one of twenty assumptions is as follows: "This is the tourist destination where I could discover something new for myself." Section 1 intends to identify the personal perception of the destination image in respect to its likely capability to fulfill every scale item. Section 2 consists of twenty questions, each of which intends to identify the degree of importance that every scale item has for a tourist, which helps to generate a tourist's personal set of values that comprises items with different priorities. An example of one of twenty questions is as follows: "How important is to always visit destinations where you would meet people with common interests?". Section 2 uses a 5-point rating scale, anchored on (5) = "Very important" to (1) = "Very unimportant". Section 3 of the questionnaire asks a respondent to rank every tourist destination on a scale from most prefered to be visited for sea, sand and sun holidays to least prefered. Section 3 also includes the part that relates to the demographics.

## 4. RESULTS

In total 329 questionnaires have been collected during September-October 2011, among which 314 were eligible for the data analysis. All respondents represent 24 nationalities: 20.7% are Belgian, 16.9% are Polish, and in average 7% is accounted separately for German, Spanish, Dutch, Italian, French and Slovenian nationalities. 56.1% of respondents are female and 43.9% - male. Majority of them (62.7%) belongs to the age group of 17-24 years old, and the rest to 25-34 years old.

Before conducting any analysis the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's tests have been applied (Table 2).

**Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's test**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. | | 0.767 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 1332.131 |
| | Df | 190 |
| | Sig. | 0.000 |

Indicators in the table positively approve the data and prepare it for the factor analysis. Factor loading, initially conducted by the principal component method and then rotated by the Varimax method, has explained 52.138% of total variance, producing in total 5 distinct components (factors), instead of 4 as it was primarily proposed in the research (Table 3).

**Table 3: Rotated component matrix[a]**

| | Component | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Learn about local culture and traditions | **0.666** | | | | |
| Discover something new | **0.666** | | | | |
| Evoke curiosity | **0.664** | | | | |
| Experience something different | **0.646** | | | | |
| Cultural/historical/tourists attractions | **0.625** | 0.303 | | | -0.433 |
| Provide novelty experience | **0.525** | | | | |
| Feel secure | | **0.705** | | | |
| High quality service | | **0.689** | | | |
| Relax emotionally and physically | | **0.550** | | 0.450 | |
| Beautiful scenery | 0.383 | **0.490** | | 0.375 | |
| Be respected and socially accepted | | | **0.679** | | |
| Meet people with common interests | | | **0.669** | | 0.312 |
| Meet friendly and hospitable people | | | **0.602** | 0.323 | |
| Improve self-image | | | **0.548** | | 0.359 |
| Feel excited | 0.374 | | | **0.624** | |
| Aquire emotional pleasure | | | | **0.589** | |
| Follow recommendations | | | 0.316 | **-0.462** | 0.340 |
| Have joy and fun | | | 0.301 | **0.444** | |
| Economical holidays | | | | | **0.771** |
| Worth the money | | | | | **0.621** |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 12 iterations.

As it is shown in the table, the component 1 includes 6 items, 5 of which previously defined as epistemic and 1 as functional. Researcher assumes that destination's cultural/historical/tourists attractions can be perceived by respondents as in the context of having an opportunity to cognize and learn rather than to acquire functional utility from them. For that consideration this item stays within the epistemic dimension. The component 2 includes 2 functional and 2 emotional items. Researcher allows himself to assume that the item "feel secure" can be interpreted by respondents as a perception of the destination safety – the condition that assumes the degree of protection against fraud, crime, loss, danger, etc., which is seen more as a functional attribute rather than affective one. Similar assumption has been made in regards to "relax emotionally and physically", which, besides being directly associated to the emotional value, also may represent the opportunity to satisfy basic needs and wants of holidaymakers. Both former emotional items were included to the functional dimension. The component 3 generally complies with the predefined set of the social value, having only 1 item "follow recommendations" moved to the set of the emotional value. After analysing the component 4, the researcher has found no logical support to leave the item "follow recommendations" within the emotional value, consequently removing it from the study. Factor analysis has separated items "economical holidays" and "worth the money" from the functional value into a distinct component, named monetary. Value dimensions of a monetary nature have been also present in studies of Petrick (2002), Noypayak (2009) and Sweeney and Soutar (2001). Newly acquired data sets were analysed for their consistency and reliability by the Cronbach's alpha test (Table 4).

**Table 4: Reliability Cronbach's Alpha test**

| | Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|---|---|---|
| Epistemic | 0.730 | 6 |
| Functional | 0.601 | 4 |
| Social | 0.603 | 4 |
| Emotional | 0.603 | 3 |
| Costs | 0.626 | 2 |

Although, in order to be significant, alpha coefficient should approximate the value of 0.7 or higher (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994), current indices were accepted by the researcher, taking into consideration the small number of items in every set and the qualitative component of the study. Descriptive analysis of the statistics data in Table 5 reveals the general perception of destinations' images in respect to their capabilities to fulfill each of five consumption values.

**Table 5: Descriptive statistics - Countries' perceived images**

| | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| Epistemic_Turkey | 4.155 | 0.610 |
| Epistemic _Portugal | 4.029 | 0.598 |
| Epistemic _ Morocco | **4.309** | **0.535** |
| Funtional_ Turkey | 3.635 | 0.578 |
| Funtional_ Portugal | **4.201** | **0.448** |
| Funtional_ Morocco | 3.454 | 0.611 |
| Emotional_ Turkey | 3.959 | 0.750 |
| Emotional_ Portugal | **4.328** | **0.594** |
| Emotional_ Morocco | 3.913 | 0.799 |
| Monetary_ Turkey | 3.773 | 0.752 |
| Monetary_ Portugal | 3.771 | **0.668** |
| Monetary_Morocco | **3.779** | 0.761 |
| Social_Turkey | 3.350 | 0.609 |
| Social_ Portugal | **3.948** | **0.538** |
| Social_ Morocco | 3.254 | 0.617 |

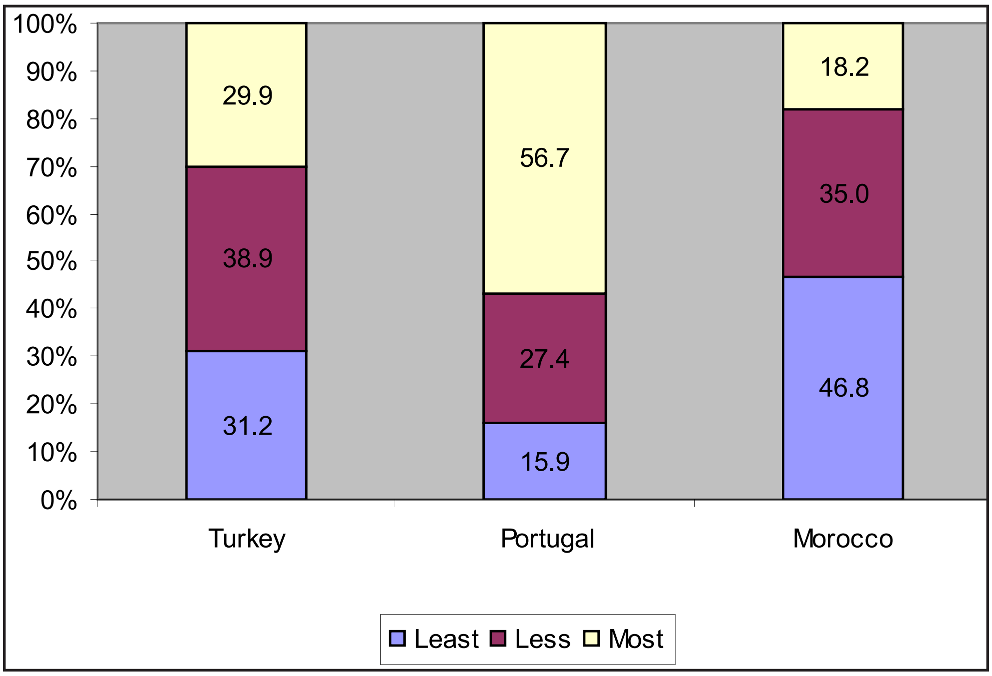
According to the table Portugal is likely to demonstrate the stronger and more favorable image of the tourist destination that fulfills emotional, functional and social values better than others. Considerably lower indices of standard deviation for Portugal explain the better consistency of its image and to some extent the better awareness of Portugal, knowing that most of respondents (61.6%) have visited this country before (Table 6).

**Table 6: Descriptive statistics - Past visits**

| | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Turkey | 35 | 11.2 |
| Portugal | 108 | 34.5 |
| Morocco | 7 | 2.2 |
| Turkey and Portugal | 57 | 18.2 |
| Turkey and Morocco | 7 | 2.2 |
| Portugal and Morocco | 11 | 3.5 |
| All three destinations | 17 | 5.4 |
| None of these destinations | 71 | 22.7 |
| Total | 313 | 100.0 |

Morocco shows its best results in fulfilling epistemic and monetary values. And although Turkey receives no best scores, its capability to fulfill emotional, functional and social values is higher than of Morocco. Study survey shows that respondents are willing to visit or re-visit Portugal the most, comparing to other two destinations (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Preferences toward Destinations**




Analysing value priorities in general for the sample population, emotional value has received the highest score to be the most important value dimension that tourists expect to acquire during their sea, sand and sun holidays (Table 7).

**Table 7: Descriptive statistics - Consumption values preferences**

| | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|
| Emotional | 4.202 | 0.535 |
| Epistemic | 4.000 | 0.519 |
| Functional | 3.889 | 0.592 |
| Monetary | 3.881 | 0.775 |
| Social | 3.326 | 0.631 |

Table 7 demonstrates that tourists are able to distinguish five consumption values assigning to them different priorities on a scale from most important to least important. In order to test and support the hypothesis 1 researcher decides to confirm this general finding by analyzing every respondent separately. Table 8 shows how many survey participants were able to distinguish every value dimension and assign priority to it. It also shows that 86.6% of respondents are able to assign different priorities to at least four consumption value dimensions. This amount is big enough that do not require conducting the Binominal test in order to support the hypothesis 1. Applied Monte Carlo test shows no significant differences between genders or age groups in that matter ($p = 0.782$ and $p = 0.786$ respectively).

**Table 8: Hypothesis 1**

| | | Frequency | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | 5 dimensions | 137 | 43.6 | 43.6 |
| | 4 dimensions | 135 | 43.0 | 86.6 |
| | 3 dimensions | 20 | 6.4 | 93.0 |
| | 2 dimensions | 9 | 2.9 | 95.9 |
| | 1 dimension | 12 | 3.8 | 99.7 |
| | Any dimension | 1 | .3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 314 | 100.0 | |

Hypothesis 2 infers that a tourist prefers to visit a destination, image of which is perceived to better fulfill consumption values in accordance to their degrees of importance for that tourist. Researcher assumes that in order to attract a tourist a destination must be perceived as a place where all consumption values can be acquired, but taking into account that some of values are more important than others. Testing the hypothesis 2 requires a personal approach to every participant of the study and involves simple mathematical formulas. At first each value dimension finds its relative weight of importance within the set of five values by assigning the weight coefficient to it (see the Formula 1).

$$\boldsymbol{W}\ \tilde{N} = \dot{\boldsymbol{v}} \div \boldsymbol{V}_{\max}, \tag{1}$$

where $\boldsymbol{W}\ \tilde{N}$ is a value weight coefficient, $\dot{\boldsymbol{v}}$ is a degree of importance that the value dimension has obtained (defined as a mean of value items), and $\boldsymbol{V}_{\max}$ is a maximum possible degree of importance, which is "5.0000" by default. The section 1 of the questionnaire has collected the data about every tourist's perceptions of destinations images. It helped to identify five destination sub-images where each of one relates to a separate value dimension and has a numerical expression that represents the degree of capability of that destination to fulfill a consumption value. The second step is to define the total beneficial utility of a destination, by multiplying every Value Weight Coefficient (*VWC*) by the respective Degree of Value Fulfillment (see Formula 2) and then summing up the results (see Formula 3).

$$VBU = VWC \times DVF, \tag{2}$$

where $VBU$ is a beneficial utility that a destination brings in respect to a certain value, and $DVF$ is a degree of destination's capability to fulfill a certain consumption value.

$$TDBU = \sum VBU, \tag{3}$$

where *TDBU* is a total beneficial utility of a destination. Researcher assumes that the destination that receives the highest value of *TDBU* corresponds to the destination that has been chosen as the most preferred to be visited by a respondent.

Questionnaires with no answer or in which respondents have chosen more than one destination as the most preferred were ineligible, leaving 301 questionnaires validated for testing the hypothesis 2. All the calculation were made in a semi-manual manner and presented in Table 9.

**Table 9: Hypothesis 2 ($p$ = 0.000)**

| | | Frequency | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Disagree | 105 | 34.9 | 34.9 |
| | Agree | 196 | 65.1 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 301 | 100.0 | |
| Total | | 314 | | |

Table 9 demonstrates that from 301 questionnaires only 105 reveal disapproving results and the rest 196 questionnaires, which accounts for 65.1% of respondents, support the hypothesis 2. Applied Binominal test, based on Z approximation, shows that the difference between two proportions is significant enough, which statistically supports the hypothesis 2 with the confidence level 99% (Table 10).

**Table 10: Binomial Test_Hypothesis 2**

| | | Category | N | Observed Prop. | Test Prop. | Asymp. Sig. (1-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H2 | Group 1 | Agree | 196 | 0.651 | 0.349 | 0.000[a] |
| | Group 2 | Disagree | 105 | 0.349 | | |
| | Total | | 301 | 1.000 | | |

a. Based on Z Approximation.

## 5. DISCUSSION

To comprehend the process of destination decision making is one of the greatest challenges for tourism marketers due to the complexity of interactions between various factors that influence tourists' behavior. Many researches and field studies have been undertaken to explore determining components of destination decision making, and yet very few have investigated the principal role of consumption values in the evaluation of destinations and in decision making per se. This study contributes into the understanding of consumption values and their influence on the destination evaluation and the destination choice. "Why two or more tourist destinations that, generally speaking, seem to offer relatively similar sets of attributes are differently evaluated by tourists? And do the destination image and the personal set of consumption values serve as interrelated grounds for the destination evaluation?" These were main questions of the researcher's concern.

According to Rokeach (2006) and Shwarts (2006) values serve as the only standards for the evaluation and determination of what is good or bad, positive or negative. In the market situation values acquire consumptional nature and refer to consumption values (Sheth *et al.*, 1991). Consumption values are various and they tend to be grouped within dimensions that explain them. Consuming any product, a person acquires certain utility that fulfills needs of different domains with different degrees of relevance. This concept of value differs from the one that presents value through the prism of a benefit-cost trade-off. Current research initially deploys the model of consumption values suggested by Sheth et al, however, excluding the conditional value due to its ambiguous and uncertain nature (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001; Williams and Soutar, 2000), and then adding the monetary value as a result of factor analysis.

Study findings may greatly contribute to the destination marketing theory, allowing for more tips in planning marketing communications. One of the main questions that this research is focused on concerns the value dimensionality and the ability of tourists to distinguish and prioritize consumption values during their holiday plannings. Analysis shows that along with four value dimensions, previously adopted for the study, respondents have also identified the fifth dimension of a monetary nature, separating it from a functional value. The opportunity for having economical holidays and receiving good value for money has proven to be an independent driven factor in destination decision making, which supports previously developed models of Noypayak (2009), Petrick (2002) and Sweeney and Soutar (2001). Monetary value receives second from the last degree of importance among the rest of consumption values, which emphasizes the hedonic nature of tourism and demonstrates the tourists' willingness to pay money for desired holiday experiences. At the same time, however, it shows the importance of receiving a fair deal. Data analysis supports the hypothesis 1 and confirms that consumption value is multidimensional, and every of its dimension can be assigned with a different degree of importance for every tourist. An absolute majority of survey participants were able to distinguish and prioritize different consumption values that they would like to acquire on holidays. Study findings reveal that emotional expectations are of the greatest importance for destination decision makers. Emotional value happens to be the factor that drives tourist's behavior the most, allowing for another recognition of the hedonic nature of tourism. Epistemic value appears as the second most important and, therefore, influential factor in destination decision making. Sequently on the scale of importance the epistemic value is followed by the functional, monetary and social values. Employing the concept of value dimensionality may help to improve destination marketing communication and positioning strategy. This study shows the relevance of targeting tourists' needs and communicating values, instead of targeting various demographic groups and communicating destination attributes. It suggests that marketing message appeals to the emotional state of a person and also evokes the feeling of curiosity.

By supporting the hypothesis 2 this research brings more lights on the role of consumption values in destination decision making. Study findings demonstrate the importance of priorities assigned to every consumption value within the personal system of values. In this context it is being proposed that system of values not only defines the man's personality, but it also serves as a criteria for the evaluation of things to be desirable or not according to that personality. Participants of this study reveal their abilities to evaluate and prioritize their holiday expectations, to assess the likely capability of a destination to fulfill those expectations, and to make a destination choice that is proved to be the most beneficial in that respective matter. It infers that any destination attribute becomes relevant to communicate if only the consumption of it creates value for a tourist. What a destination can offer is as much important to know as to find out what tourists need to be offered. Marketing message should communicate benefits and experiences acquired from consumption of destination attributes, and emphasize utilities that are worthwhile and promising enough to accommodate possible constraints. Due to the raising competition in the tourism industry it becomes harder to brand a destination, differentiate it, and communicate its uniqueness. Because tourist destination is complex and it comprises many products and services of different domains, demographic measures and behavioral segmentation become insufficient in defining right marketing communication and targeting strategy. This study shows that the tourist's perception of a destination is as much multidimensional as the consumption value is.

Basing on the study findings it is suggested that Portugal has the strongest and more favorable perception of the tourist destination image, comparing to Turkey and Morocco. Portugal is likely to fulfill emotional, functional and social values better than other two destinations, whereas Morocco is perceived to have better chances in fulfilling epistemic and monetary values. Although Turkey has not shown the dominance in any value dimension, its capability to fulfill emotional, functional and social values is higher than of Morocco.

Consequently it makes Turkey to be the second most preferred destination for sea, sand and sun holidays. Knowing that only 61.6% of all respondents had visited Portugal before the survey, 37% had been to Turkey, and only 13.3% were in Morocco, allows to make an assumption that tourists' perceptions of these destination images have been formed on beliefs, rumors, prejudices, marketing communications, etc., and not to a great extent on the personal experiences.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Study findings have demonstrated the support for both proposed hypotheses and made conclusions regarding the consumption value dimensions and their role in the destination decision making.

Several limitations related to this study can be pointed out. One of them concerns the sampling method and sample representation. Survey questionnaires have been distributed over the e-mail services and social networking sites only, therefore, eliminating people that were not social media users or internet-friendly. Study survey has been administered in English, ignoring those who had no sufficient language skills. The survey sample shows unequal distribution of demographics, having 62.7% of respondents of o the age group 17 - 24 years old. Residents of Belgium (20.7%) and Poland (16.9%) notably dominate in number among all survey participants. The rest 22 nationalities do not exceed 7% of respondents each. Other research limitations concern the conceptual part of the research. This study focuses mainly on consumption values in destination decision making, avoiding to consider many other important factors that influence the tourist behavior. The meaning of the destination choice in the context of this research is only limited to the revelation of tourist preferences, which is not a demonstration of intentions to visit any of given destination. At last, this study suffers from a certain degree of subjective thinking in regards to some particular conceptual issues. Thus, further research should be undertaken, expanding the covered object of study with the involvement of situational constraints, seasonality, travel particularities, and other external/internal factors that influence tourist behavior.

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# DESTINATION BRAND PERSONALITY OF PORTUGAL FOR THE RUSSIAN-SPEAKING MARKET

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**ABSTRACT**

Nowadays brand personality is admitted to be one of the essential parts of brand strategy. It has also become a popular aspect of destination branding due to the fact that destinations are constantly competing for visitors attention in various ways. The term of branding has been first applied to marketing of services or places since the 1990's. Later on it was broadened and utilized by specialists in the field of tourism marketing. Tourism brand personality is a relatively new one and there are only few works devoted to brand personality of countries as tourism destinations.

Keeping in mind the novelty of the research area, this study was planned as exploratory in nature. The stated goal of the research is: to identify the brand personality attributes ascribed to Portugal by the Russian-speaking market and compare the possible existing differences of attributes among the subgroups of the study (actual visitors and possible future visitors). The results of this research might be interesting to the local officials and to business representatives as it highlights the main attributes of Portugal brand personality from the Russian speaking people's point of view.

Keywords: Brand Personality, Nation Brand Personality, Tourism Destination

JEL Classification: M30, M31

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays brand personality is admitted to be one of the essential parts of any brand (Aaker, 1997). It has also become a popular aspect of destination branding due to the fact that destinations are constantly competing for visitors attention in various ways. Differentiation from others is the key to catching attention. Market research, constant attention to the campaigns of competitors, use of modern practices, well-designed and well-targeted advertising campaigns - all these elements enable a place (country, city, resort, tourist destination) to be successful and recognizable.

We started with the study of the theoretic information on "brand" topic, specifically: the definitions of brand suggested by various authors; types of brand contacts and benefits of branding. Then the adaptation of the branding theory to country and nation brands is presented. Being similar to branding of products and services, it also depends on the brand contacts and requires a thorough research. Country branding has some specific goals that are stated here. Arising from branding of a nation, a more particular topic "nation brand personality" is presented too. Some studies in the area (e.g. Aaker, 1997; d'Astous and Boujbel, 2007 and Fournier, 1998) concerning concept and scales to study the brand personality are mentioned further. Some of the methodologies used to carry out research in brand personality and nation brand personality are discussed.

This research paper is about Portugal, a country for which tourism is one of the main sectors of economy and it is about the choice of the Russian-speaking market as the target market of research. So, the goal of this research is to study of brand personality of Portugal as tourism destination to the Russian-speaking markets. On the initial step, the official touristic website of Portugal was analyzed (the contents and newsletters). After that the Internet search was done to find various data regarding the Russian-speaking market and its characteristics. Upon the completion of that part and the theory review the questionnaire was designed, and created on Google drive (free on-line tool, enabling the creation of surveys with questions of different types; has no restrictions regarding the number of questions or the number of responses). During the period of almost two months the link on the questionnaire was distributed via the social network widely used by the target market – vk.com. The results were translated from Russian into English and analyzed in IBM SPSS Statistics 21 and WordStat 6.1. The brand personality attributes of Portugal have been identified and compared among the subgroups of the study (actual visitors and possible future visitors).

This research paper has both, managerial and theoretical implementations. Due to the novelty of the topic, this work with the literature review and the research methodology suggested can serve as a basis for other papers on brand personality.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. From Brand to Brand Personality

Before going to the brand personality concept and its application to destinations, the term "brand" should be discussed. There are several definitions, but here will only be mentioned those, close to the meaning used later on to define nation brand personality. A brand is an impression perceived in a client's mind about a product or a service. It includes a sum of all the tangible and intangible attributes, which makes the selection unique (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009). A more detailed definition is that a brand is not only a symbol that distinguishes one product from others, but also all the tangible, intangible, psychological and sociological attributes and features related to the product that come to mind when consumer thinks about the brand (Kapferer, 1997). Obviously, a brand is sort of personality related to the product, a certain promise of quality and particular experience.

Arising from the given definitions, some benefits of branding are to be claimed: (1) differentiates/separates itself from competing products (Styles and Amber, 1995); (2) creates emotional benefits for the customer (e.g. Srinivasan, 1987); (3) brings long-term strategic benefits (Murphy, 1998); (4) brands direct practical arrangements between companies. People pay for trademarks and brands more that for physical assets (machinery, buildings, warehouses) (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009); (5) enables the connection of responsibility to the producer (Keller, 1998); and (6) guarantees the quality and gives protection if anything goes wrong (Besanko *et al.*, 2005). Given a brand can satisfy both rational and emotional needs and expectations of target customers it can be considered successful. Evaluation of "successfulness" can be made differently: assessing the influence on turnover, brand awareness, to which extend the brand supports the desired image of the product and the company, profitability (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009).

It is necessary to mention brand contacts while talking about brands. Observations that people make about the surrounding world and relate to a brand are called brand contacts (Schultz and Barnes, 1999). There are 4 categories of brand contacts (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009): (1) planned messages (advertising, brochures); (2) product messages (physical settings, features); (3) service messages (contacts in the service process); and (4) Unplanned messages (word-of-mouth, reviews, articles). With a flow of time collected, brand contacts lead to a brand relationship, which creates meaning in the consumers' minds for products, services, etc. Each individualized image is based on the bunch of brand contacts one has received (Gronroos, 2001). Not all the brand contacts are of same importance. Word-of-mouth usually has a higher influence on consumers.

Brand personality can be described as personality traits generally associated with humans that consumers perceive brand to possess (Batra *et al.*, 1993; Aaker, 1997). A distinctive brand personality can create a set of unique and positive associations in consumer memory enhancing brand equity (Keller, 1993) and brand personality serves as an enduring basis for differentiation (Crask and Henry, 1990). Brand personality can be considered as the first reaction people tend to have towards a brand when they hear, taste, see or touch a certain product of a specific brand name (Larson, 2002). The kinds of personality dimensions attributed to a brand are important because they can influence the evaluation and consumption of products (Swaminathan *et al.*, 2007), consumers will more likely purchase products with the personalities that match the most of his/her personalities (Hawkins et al, 2001). Previous research also suggests that consumers' implicit theories about the malleability of personality influence their acceptance of brand extensions (Yorkston *et al.*, 2010). Brand personality evokes various emotional responses in consumers and influences opinions and purchasing decisions about a brand. Brand personality may develop based on consumers' direct and indirect interactions with the brand, as well as from the marketing efforts of firms (e.g., Fitzsimons *et al.*, 2008).

*2.1.1. Brand Personality Research*

Jennifer Aaker developed a theoretical framework of a brand personality construct determining the number and nature of brand personality dimensions, namely: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness (Aaker, 1997). She also created a valid and generalizable across product categories instrument: the Brand Personality Scale (BPS). The traits that represent each of the five dimensions were identified. The BPS was adopted in many studies (e.g. Siguaw *et al.*, 1999) to learn consumers' perception of brand personality.

Another study in the area to be mentioned is the one of Fournier (1998): the author suggested a framework for understanding and extending brand personality using a brand relationship quality model containing six central factors – partners, quality, intimacy, interdependence, self-connection and love.

### 2.2. From Nation Brand to Nation Brand Personality

The idea of applying the concept of branding, and brand personality particularly, to destinations is relatively new. In 1990's the terminology of branding has been applied to marketing of services or places (Berry, 2000). In 1998, Simon Anholt wrote an article in which he claimed that the country and the nation can be equated to trademarks and brands (Anholt, 1998). The article caused both interest and disagreements in scientific circles, and within governmental officials. However, the practice of branding countries and nations appeared, and is actively developing and thriving now. From this point of view, a country (region, city, etc.) is to be promoted in a differentiating way, in order to bring more money to the national economy, local businesses, etc. Place selling can be defined as usage of publicity and marketing to transfer selected images of a certain place (geographical location) to a target market (Gold and Ward, 1994) and has different goals, mainly to build a positive image for a place to attract tourists, businesses, events, investors, residents (Kotler, 1999).

To be more concrete these goals can be mentioned while talking about nation branding. In most cases, the branding of the country is done in order to attract more tourists. Most countries' economies depend on tourism at some extent. Not only the income from tourists' spending, but also spreading of a positive image of a country, attraction of investors, and so on. It can be ascribed to obvious pluses of successful marketing campaigns and promotions of country's brands. A "well-promoted" country also helps to sell national products faster and on higher prices. The name of the country works as a trademark promising quality.

A well-established brand personality facilitates differentiation of a brand from that of its competitors (Aaker, 1997). A well-formed image of a country is able to "work" for it for a long time. Creating and maintaining a strong nation brand brings benefits to such sectors as: interest in its culture; interest in particular destination within the country; range of available business opportunities; politics, economics and diplomacy factors (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009). Country branding plays an important role at leveraging the perceived image of a place and in influencing tourist choice behavior (Crockett and Wood, 2002) and it allows to manage destination image and improve economic performance by attracting international business and tourism (Aronczyk, 2008). Branding allows organizations, individuals and countries to say things about themselves to foreign markets in the ways that language could not express (Pitt *et al.*, 2007).

A nation brand is influenced by all the contacts that one relates to the country: national products, celebrities, art, sports, fashion, inhabitants met elsewhere. The base for the development of a service brand is the customer's participation in the process; planned marketing communications play a supporting role. This means that a negative experience cannot be fixed with planned communication procedures (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009). Branding should be built on the results of consumer perceptions research. It is vital to understand how existing and potential customers view the country, its products and suggested services; what is the perceived image. Marketing campaigns must attractively differentiate the country from competitors based on this information.

At this point the concept of a nation brand personality must be introduced. As Hosany *et al.* (2007) noted, the term brand personality is frequently confused and interchanged with another one, brand image. The authors aptly conceptualized nation personality as the set of personality traits associated with a destination, while the most commonly cited definition of image is "the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination" (Crompton, 1979: 20). There is a school of thought (Biel, 1993: 71), which views brand image as "a cluster of attributes and associations that consumers connect to a brand". From this point of view, evoked associations can be either hard (tangible/functional) or soft (emotional attributes) (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993). The study (Hosany *et al.*, 2007) provides some empirical support to this contentious debate over two definitions. Results indicate that destination image and destination personality are two different but related concepts. The findings support the proposition that brand image is an encompassing term with brand personality as one of its components (Plummer, 1984) and brand personality is more related to the affective (softer) side of brand image.

In this study nation brand personality is considered to be a set of personality characteristics (traits) associated with the country and forming the emotional part of its image. The role of nation brand personality cannot be underestimated: the greater the match between the destination's personality and the visitor's self-concept is, the more likely the visitor will have a favorable attitude toward the destination (Sirgy and Su, 2000). In summary, if a consumer can relate his personality (desirable or perceived) to the personality of a destination there are more chances that he will prefer it to other competitors. National products related to the destination can be sold easier if the brand personality of the destination is positive and seems to be beneficial to consumers (prestigious, fancy, reliable, etc.).

Addressing nation brand personality, there is a range of tools to develop a place as a part of place marketing efforts: closer networks, promotion of partners in private and public sectors to develop technological resources; improved business and technical education, attempts to attract local entrepreneurship and investments (Kotler *et al.*, 1999). Before that a strong analysis is to be done; country's products, strengths of the identity, financial resources, commitment from the target group and public-private partnerships should all be used in a motivating way (Moilanen and Rainisto, 2009).

There is no doubt that information shared through social media (networks like Facebook, Vkontakte, Twitter, Instagram etc.) can have a significant impact on shopping preferences of tourists while choosing a destination to travel to, as it endows them with an access to different viewpoints and opinions (reviews, for example) (O'Connor *et al.*, 2008).

Regardless from how vast and successful (or not) promotion campaigns of destinations are, repeating visitors and possible future visitors already have some formed idea about the destination, its reputation and expected experiences. Usually country reputation is based on personal experience from a previous trip or is based on the reputation of its internationally known products and trademarks. Except that, the reputation can also be obtained from word-of-mouth communication or information from the media (Yang *et al.*, 2008). Based on the issues discussed in this section, it can be concluded that, the same goals as for a brand of an organization are set for a brand of a country (and nation brand personality as its essential component): to distinguish it from competitors, to form and consolidate certain emotional associations or to develop desired country's perception stereotypes.

*2.2.1. Nation Brand Personality Research*

Developing the personality concept to countries, d'Astous and Boujbel (2007) created a scale that differs from the BPS. Their scale was developed particularly for the measurement of country's personality and consists of six dimensions (with no facets within them): agreeableness, wickedness, snobbism, assiduousness, conformity, and unobtrusiveness. While both scales mentioned in this section reflect consumers' intentions toward a country, the former (BPS) predicts product purchase intentions better than the latter (d'Astous and Boujbel, 2007), though the latter outperformed the former in predicting travel intentions (Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2008).

Due to the fact that what makes sense for product brands also applies to countries as producers (Roth and Diamantopoulos, 2008), common rules for research apply too and the personality metaphor can be extended to nation branding. Nowadays, tourism industry advantageously uses public relations, marketing and advertising to promote destinations around the world (Morgan and Pritchard, 2005). This strategic approach of managing communications related to a brand involves: public relations efforts and identifying target markets; creation of a flexible plan of action that might be changed if needed to reflect shifting realities; and the last but not the least: monitoring feedback to see if there are attitude or behavior changes within the target publics (Tilson and Stacks, 1997). This approach is best illustrated in the usage of Social media, that lets both: state a desirable perceived image for the country; and communicate with consumers and learn about the perception of the brand personality of the country, existing in their minds. DMOs (Destination marketing organizations) can use the Internet to serve their branding needs by selecting brand elements to identify and distinguish a destination by building a positive image (Cai, 2002; Lee *et al.*, 2005) as they are actively involved in an effort to attract travelers because destinations are becoming highly substitutable due to the growing global competition (Pike and Ryan, 2004).

Since this research is devoted to the brand personality of Portugal, several methodologies used to carry out research specifically in the area of nation branding. Due to the considerable newness of the brand personality concept in relation to destinations topic, research is usually exploratory. The design of the research is either mixed (qualitative plus quantitative) or just qualitative, with content analysis and surveys being the handiest way of gathering information. Data analysis techniques commonly utilized are ANOVA, component and correspondence analysis (Sahin and Baloglu, 2011; De Moya and Jain, 2013; Rojas-Méndez *et al.*, 2011; Van Meer, 2010; Swaminathan *et al.*, 2008).

## 3. SETTING

This research is devoted to the brand personality (BP) of Portugal. There was research in the area, for example, Santos (2004) conducted an analysis of travel sections in some US newspapers (New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, and USA Today) between 1996 and 2002, about tourism in Portugal and found that it was represented in the US newspapers' travel sections of that time with personality traits such as "traditional", "contemporary", "modern", and "sophisticated".

Notwithstanding, the current study is focused on the existing brand personality for the Russian-speaking market as one of the biggest and most prosperous markets. Portugal is a part of the European Union. The popular tourist portal "Globe Spots" (2013) acknowledged Portugal as the best tourist destination in 2013. In the past years the flow of tourists from China, Russia and Brazil grows steadily. Speaking specifically about the Russian market, the opening of five weekly direct flights from Moscow to Lisbon played a significant role in easing of the transport accessibility and as a result – popularization of the destination. According to the official statistics of 2010, Portugal was visited by 118,170 Russian tourists. The preliminary data for 2011 showed that the number of Russians who visited Portugal was more than 150 thousands (Kapusta, 2013). Nevertheless, Russian operators are confident that the flow of tourists would be more noticeable, but it is almost impossible to find Russian-speaking guides in Portugal: according to the official statistics provided by the union of guides and interpreters of Portugal (Sindicato Nacional da Actividade Turística- Tradutores e Intérpretes - SNATTI), there are only eight officially registered Russian-speaking guides (Kapusta, 2013).

The official touristic website "www.visitportugal.com" provides some information in different languages, though none of the e-brochures is available in Russian. The information is divided within brochures according to themes (that can also be considered as the main things that the destination has to offer) that may interest future tourists while viewing the site: Itineraries, Heritage, Sun and Sea, Nature, Golf, Portugal (with common information).

In spite of the aim of this research was to study brand personality of Portugal and not to assess the image of the country, some common idea on the desired perceived image is necessary. So as to better understand how the team working on the image of Portugal positions the country, a content analysis of newsletters of year 2012 (September, August, June, May, March, February) and years 2010 and 2008 was made using Worditout.com on-line service. WordItOut lets one transform a text into word clouds made up of randomly positioned words, where the most important words are bigger than the others (Forsey and Low, 2014). The service allows creating a cloud from any entered text. These word clouds vary the size of a word with the number of times it appears in the original text.

The first step on this stage of research was to put together all the chosen newsletter's texts to make it applicable for the text input (which has no length limit and has an alternative option of using just *url* or web address for submitting a text for analysis). On the word cloud that was created entries were placed in order of count (words with higher frequencies are closer to the center of the word cloud and are of larger size). Words with fewer than three letters were ignored. The limit of how many words to put in the cloud was set equal to 70.

The word cloud that has been created and consists of 70 most frequently used words (bigger size and deeper color for the most repeated ones) is presented below (Figures 1, 2 and 3) with the maximum frequency of repeating of a word being equal to 6 and minimum - 2. As it can be seen, words on which the stress was made are: come, perfect, home, coast, discover, Algarve, nature, Azores, break, Madeira, wide and waits (this cloud was constructed using online service www.worditout.com).

**Figure 1: Word cloud for newsletters 2012**


Newsletters from 2008 and 2010 have been analyzed too in an attempt to compare the “message” behind all three years chosen for analysis. Resulting from this two more word clouds have been created (Figures 2 and 3 respectively. The clouds are constructed using online service www.worditout.com). The words with the highest frequency of repeating in 2010 are: Festival, come, great, visit, Madeira, World, best, holidays, discover, islands, music, fun. In 2008: find, discover, Algarve, Azores, come, enjoy, beaches, art, Madeira, North, travel, summer.

**Figure 2: Word cloud for newsletter 2008**

**Figure 3: Word cloud for newsletter of Year 2010**


According to the brochures offered on the website the main accent in the image of Portugal is made on nature offerings of the islands and southern coast of the country, perfect holiday break and beach vacation destination. Through all the years reviewed, with a slight change the emphasis is made on "invitational" verbs: come and discover; and main touristic destinations names: Madeira (mentioned in all 3), Algarve and Azores (mentioned in 2 out of 3).

## 4. METHODOLOGY

As the topic of nation brand personality is quite new, the research conducted is exploratory in its nature, inductive and forms a basis for further research in the field as well as serves to have a better understanding of the problem and generally determines its nature (Lambin, 2000).

The research started with a problem of determination within the field of Tourism Marketing, which led to the current research field determination, being Portugal's Brand Personality. The next stage was to formulate the research questions. This created focus and required a significant thinning down of the original problem. The main research questions are: identifying the brand personality attributes of Portugal among the Russian-speaking market; studying the differences in brand personality evaluation among subgroups of the research target group. Both stages required a thorough literature review. Design and distribution of the survey for the practical part was a vital. The purpose of the design is to determine a method to create accurate and unbiased data on which conclusions of the study are going to be based. The next stage was data design, including identification of what data is needed and how it will be collected. Choosing the data affects analysis stage (choice of means of analysis and the whole approach) and conclusions significance and credibility. Sampling was used to enable accurate analysis and valid results.

A survey was designed, conducted and analyzed, involving qualitative and quantitative techniques. The design was suggested keeping in mind recommendations on creation of a good, reliable questionnaire and an appropriate cover letter. The questionnaire in Russian was distributed among the Russian-speaking residents, visitors and perspective visitors of Portugal. The questionnaire consists of three open-ended questions (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991, 1993) and a number of multiple choice questions.

This format was used as one of the most appropriate in accordance with one of the objectives of the study - to get the clearer idea of the brand personality attributes of Portugal existing among the target market and answer such questions, as: what are the perceived attributes of brand personality of Portugal for the research target market concerning its functional characteristics and its atmosphere as a tourist destination as well as what are the perceived different characteristics. The approach with 3 open-ended questions was adapted from another research (Sahin and Baloglu, 2011) which included studying unique perceptions of visitors of Istanbul. In the open-ended (qualitative) questions section respondents were asked to list three words coming to their mind in association with: (1) the general image of Portugal; (2) The mood or the atmosphere expected to be experienced in Portugal; (3) Distinctive or unique tourist attractions. Gender, age, occupation, level of education and nationality were asked in order to define the background, the ethnic group and the academic level of respondents.

Proceeding to sampling, some Russian-speaking students of the University of Algarve were contacted with a request to fill out the questionnaire and ask 1-2 friends or relatives, who visited or planned to visit them, fill it out too (as the "word-of-mouth" is named within one of the most effective tools in marketing and information distribution), after that the link on the questionnaire was distributed with the help of vk.com – a major social network for the Russian-speaking people. Taking into consideration the idea that visitors, perspective visitors and current residents of Portugal (due to study or work issues) might be members of thematic social groups at the network, in five of such groups the request to fill out the questionnaire was posted in the second half of March. The groups were:

1. Гид по португалии (Guide to Portugal) (189 members)
2. Россия - Португалия / Russia – Portugal (3415 members)
3. Молодежь Португалии (Youth of Portugal) (920 members)
4. Высшее образование в Португалии (Higher education in Portugal) (199 members)
5. Португальский язык (Portuguese language) (5187 members)

It must be noted that the response rate on the public posts was negligible, so starting from the very end of March personal messages with the request to fill out a questionnaire were sent to those comprised in 3 of these groups (Guide to Portugal; Russia – Portugal; Portuguese language).

A stratified sampling technique was used, where sampling is random choice from a list of members of groups older than 18 (as those can be considered as adult travelers already), Russian-speaking (some members were also Portuguese-speaking or English-speaking), with an open access to private messages receiving, active users - last login not later than a week ago, with the use of subgroups. Subgroups that have been analyzed are: (1) those who study or studied in Portugal; (2) those who work or worked in Portugal; (3) those who visited Portugal; and (4) Those who plan to visit Portugal. A check for "uniqueness" of request has also been done as some of the people are members of several reviewed groups. The aim was to represent a diverse sample of different categories and to study possible differences in perceptions. All the subgroups have mixed genders and ages.

The on-line completion format via "My Drive" from Google was implemented as being the best way to reach out to the target population both currently living in Portugal and in Russian-speaking countries. During the phase of sending personal messages with a link on questionnaire, a total of 758 messages was send. The research resulted in 208 respondents, excluding the non-response; 203 of the responses were appropriate for analysis. All the received answers have been reviewed and translated from Russian into English. The responses to the questionnaire have been analyzed with the help of software SPSS Statistics 21 and WordStat 6.1. The first one was used to analyze quantitative data; the second one was used for content analysis of the open-ended questions.

The excel file with the responses was uploaded on to the program QDA Miner and analyzed with WordStat 6.1 – content analysis and text-mining software. It is used to extract and analyze information from large amounts of documents. WordStat 6.1 was considered to be a good option for the content analysis of the responses to the open-ended questions not only because of it availableness and ease to use, but also due to its previous usage in research works (Stephen, 1999; Sodhi and Son, 2005; Stephen, 2000). Predefined hierarchical content analysis dictionaries or taxonomies composed of words, word patterns, phrases as well as proximity rules have been used. Concretely, these two: Regressive imagery dictionary (RID), "composed of about 3200 words and roots assigned to 29 categories of primary process cognition, 7 categories of secondary process cognition, and seven categories of emotions" and Wordstat sentiment dictionary (Provalis research, 2013).

The basic steps of the performed analysis were as follows: First, the Excel data file was uploaded to QDA Miner program and the "Content analysis" command from the "Analyze" menu was executed; after that, the proper dictionary was chosen (the analysis was done twice, with Regressive imagery dictionary and then with Wordstat sentiment dictionary); finally, the program performed a categorization of words found in the responses and computed a frequency analysis on categories and sorted the frequency matrix in descending order of "Case Occurrence" (by default, the words displayed in the matrix were those specified in the Inclusion list. Words that have been left out of analysis due to the restrictions of the dictionary chosen, for example, geographical names, have been reviewed separately also). Another feature that has been used was "Phrase finder". It did a frequency analysis on phrases with restrictions on phrase length (from 2 to 7 words), minimal frequency of repeating being equal to 2 and sorted by "Case occurrence".

## 5. RESULTS

### 5.1. Characterization of the Sample

The minimal age of the respondent is 18 and the maximal is 67. Most of the respondents are aged between 21 and 27 years old, which is reasonable due to the average age of an active Internet user and also age of active travelers. The majority of respondents (64.04%) were single; 73.40% were female and 26.60% male. Out of four groups suggested, those who plan to visit Portugal is the most numerous one – 54.19% of all respondents. Almost 18% have already travelled to Portugal; those who work/ed or study/ied are represented by 12.81% and 15.27% of respondents, respectively. Most of the respondents (80.79%) have higher professional education. The second largest group is those who have secondary vocational education (13.30%); 4.43% have secondary general education; groups with primary general education and initial vocational education are less than 1% each.

Most respondents who visited Portugal earlier would like to visit it again (86.59%) and could recommend it to relatives and friends as a tourist destination (91.46%). Though 9.76% of respondents are not sure if they want to return to Portugal; 7.32% have doubts about recommending it. The number of respondents who don't want to come to Portugal again is 3.66%; percentage of those who wouldn't recommend to visit it is relatively small (1.22%).

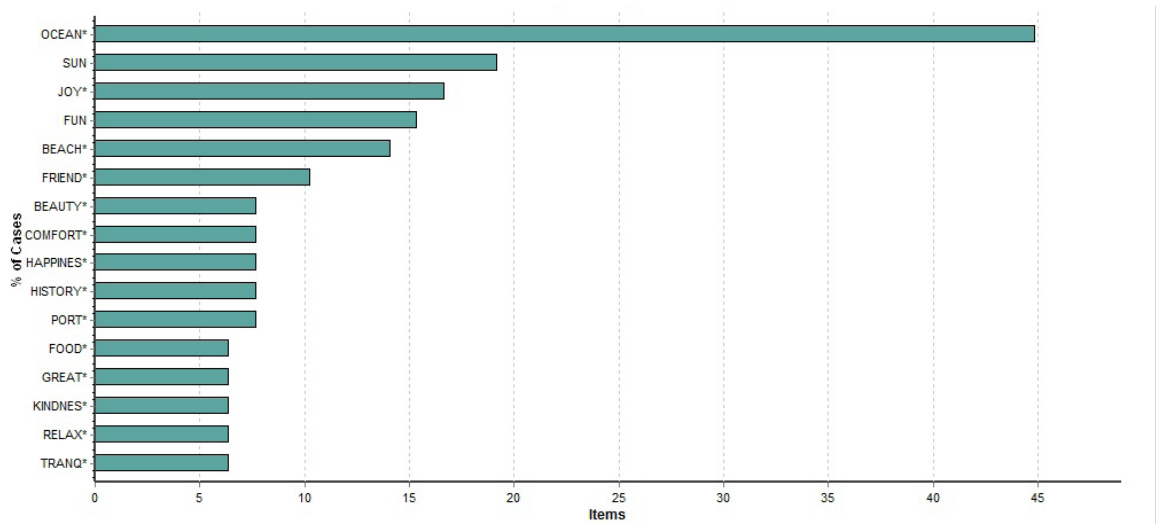
### 5.2. Brand Personality Attributes of Portugal

During the next step of the analysis the attention was paid to the responses to the open-ended questions:

1. What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of Portugal as a vacation destination?
2. How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting Portugal?
3. List any distinctive or unique tourist attractions that you can mention, speaking of Portugal.

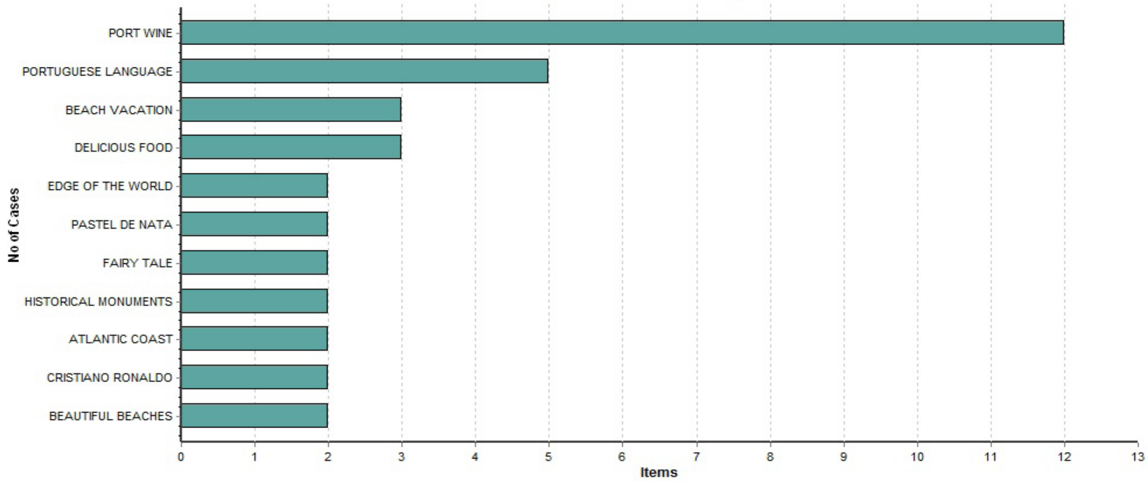
First open-ended questions responses to questions 1 and 2 have been analyzed together among all respondents, then responses to all 3 questions separately within subgroups: those who have already been to Portugal and not – to compare the attributes ascribed to Portugal by actual visitors and possible ones. All the items (words) with case occurrence (each response is viewed as a case) less than 2 have been removed. On the first step the analysis of word frequencies was made. Items that appear at least in 5 cases have been presented in the bar chart (Figure 4. Constructed in software WordStat 6.1). As it can be seen from the chart, most frequently the respondents mentioned the following words, while describing characteristics and atmosphere of Portugal: Ocean (and words with similar meaning or root, as marked with this symbol "*") – in 45% of cases; sun – in almost 20%; joy* and fun – each in more than 15%. If talking about feelings and emotions, these words should also be mentioned: friend* - in around 10%; comfort* and happiness* – both in around 7%; kindness*, relax* and tranquile* - in around 6% each.

**Figure 4: Distribution of words (RID)**



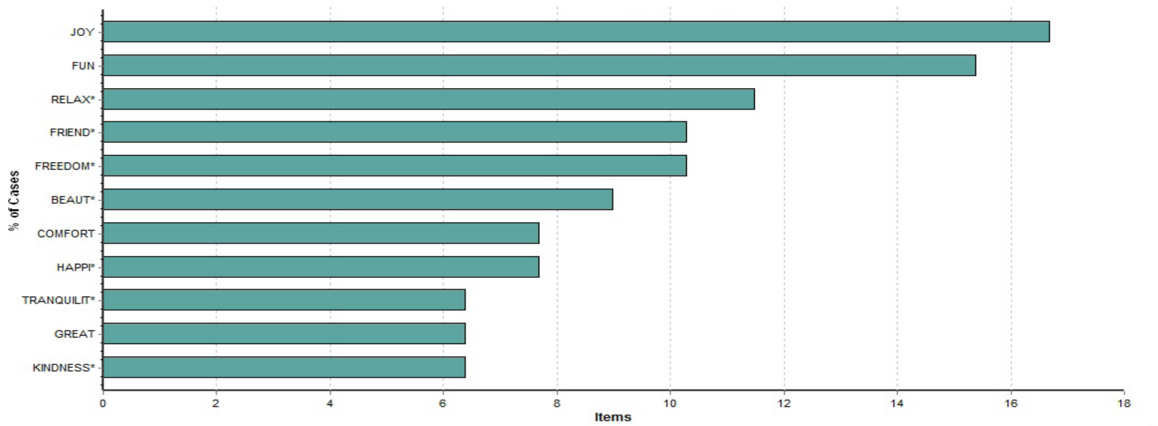

The next step was to analyze the document with the responses in "Phrase finder" (Figure 5, constructed in software wordstat 6.1). There restrictions were: each phrase should have been from 2 to 7 words length and the minimal frequency should have been equal to 2. All the phrases have been sorted by the case occurrence percentage. The phrase that was mentioned most frequently while talking about characteristics, mood and atmosphere of Portugal is "Port wine" (in 12% of cases). Portuguese language has also been mentioned several times (in 5% of cases). Quite expectable those phrases as "beach vacation", "Atlantic coast" are in the list too. In 2% of cases the exact phrase "edge of the world" was used to describe Portugal, which is also not much of surprise, since it is a faraway destination for the target market.

**Figure 5: Phrase finder result**




Similarly to the analysis with the previous dictionary, words "joy" and "fun" are one of the most frequently used by respondents – around 16 % of cases include them (Figure 6). In addition to such words as "relax*", "comfort" and "friend*" a word "freedom*" was included in the list with 10 %.

**Figure 6: Distribution of words (sentiment dictionary)**




*5.2.1. Actual Visitors vs. Prospective Visitors*

In order to compare the possible differences in the lists of attributes ascribed to the brand personality of Portugal by those who have already been to the country and those who only plan to visit it, their answers to all the 3 open-ended questions have been analyzed separately (Figures 7 and 8). A greater variety of phrases on Figure 9 is caused by a larger number of questionnaires, filled by those who have not been to Portugal and smaller frequency of appearance (not many respondents used the same phrases).

Differences in charts are easy to notice. Firstly, phrases used by actual visitors in 13% of cases - "Cabo da Roca"; 11% - "Port wine" and 5% - "Pastel de nata" are not even presented in the chart with another group's responses. Though such tourist attractions as: "Christo Rei", "Vasco da Gama bridge" and "Pena Palace" are recognized by both groups. Beach vacation (and beautiful beaches), ocean (rocky shores, the Atlantic), history and historical monuments are mentioned by those who only plan to visit Portugal. An assumption about the expected type of vacation can be made: beach vacation with cultural program, that might include trips to several cities (as the attractions mentioned are from different regions of the country), with Lisbon being a "must see". Another interesting observation to be made is that one name of a Portuguese celebrity Cristiano Ronaldo is in the list of phrases. Football has also been mentioned by many respondents in their answers. It is useful to know, because people form their idea about the brand personality of a country based on word-of-mouth, country's products, people they meet from this country and its famous people.

**Figure 7: Phrases used by actual visitors**

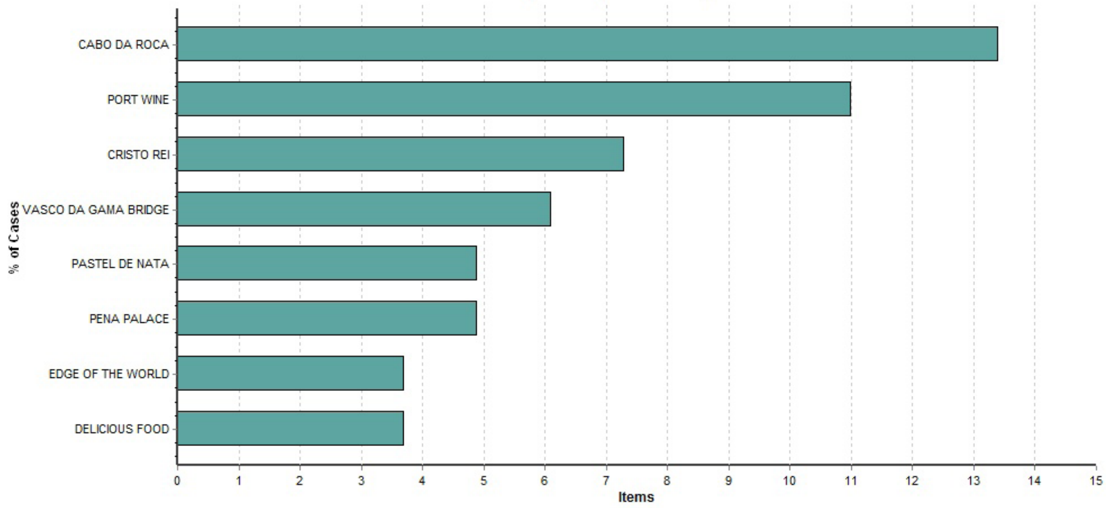
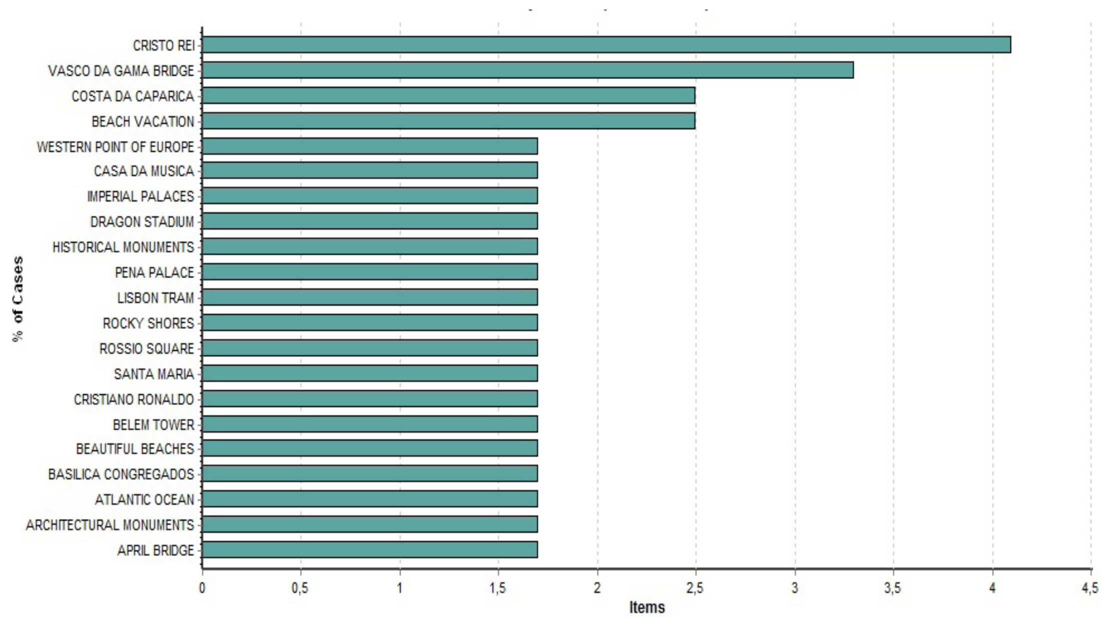



**Figure 8: Phrases used by prospective visitors**



## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Starting from 1990s, the terminology of branding has been applied to places too. Anholt (1998) wrote in his article that a country could be equated to a brand. Since then, methods of marketing, advertising and branding are used extensively to countries. There are different approaches to the definition of a brand personality, some of them are presented in this paper and were used to set the definition that is used in this work: the nation brand personality is considered to be a set of personality characteristics (traits) associated with the destination and forming the emotional part of its image.

Many authors (Hawkins *et al.*, 2001; Swaminathan *et al.*, 2007; Sirgy and Su, 2000) recognized the influence of brand personality on consumer preferences and willingness to purchase, the applicability of that principle to the intention to visit the country has also been proved. This means that a well-though promotion policy, strategic planning and active use of social media are of great importance.

The development of a powerful brand must start with an intelligent and reliable market research as well as with an intelligent, in-depth consumer research. For these purposes a wide range of research methodologies exists. The choice of one must be justified with the main aim, target market specifics and resources available to the researcher. When talking about brand personality, qualitative exploratory research is mostly applied.

This research paper has both, managerial and theoretical implementations. Due to the novelty of the topic that has already been discussed in previous chapters, this work with the literature review and the research methodology suggested can serve as a basis for other papers on brand personality. The review of articles on brand personality of places can also be handy, as possible research methodologies are mentioned there.

Practical implementation or managerial implementation is also possible. Firstly, the results of the conducted research might be interesting to the local officials (Tourism of Portugal) and will be suggested to them in a short time. Secondly, business representatives showed their interest to the findings during the survey distribution phase, namely, business marketing worker (consultation of Portuguese companies for entering the Russian market with their products). This can also serve as a proof of the relevance of the topic.

Consequently, one limitation is the difficulty with reaching out to the target population and the low response rate on the Internet requests. There were not many responses resulting from posts in groups, the main part comes from those answering to a personal message, which had a limitation of sending up to 20 people a day not being in the list of “friends”. Another limitation is a lack of trust and spam suspicion in a request to take part in academic survey, as well as doing it with no further benefit. Except that, a certain part of those addressed with the request couldn’t relate them to Portugal or responded that do not know anything about the country. Other considerable limitations to be mentioned are: limited time on collecting responses (up to the middle of May); chance that some information has been lost in translation from Russian into English (the author was the only person involved in translating the data), certain subjectivity of responses and limitation of the sample size.

Being exploratory in nature this research can be useful for those carrying out research in the field of brand personality of places. As the methodology utilized was amply described and it can be generalized to other research objects, it can be applied in similar studies devoted to other countries, cities etc. Specific possible suggestions for research in this area are worth mentioning. Further investigate brand personality of Portugal (Applying more research tools and approaches, for example, visuals as mentioned in the research paper by van Meer, L., (2010). As well as another target market can be chosen instead of the Russian-speaking to globalize the study). Use the Internet and resources it provides to study tourists’ perceptions and impressions of the destination (blogs, posts in social networks, etc.). Compare expectations and actual experiences of visitors (Choose a sample consisting of those who have not been to Portugal before but will travel to it in a short time and design a two-step research to be conducted before and after the visit). Investigate ways that allow to change the perceived brand personality (or brand image) of the destination.

It can be said that the goal of the research was met: the brand personality attributes of Portugal have been identified and compared among the subgroups of the study (actual visitors and possible future visitors). The questionnaire design is applicable for other research works with similar aims. Information provided by respondents under all three sections was used and resulted in sufficient description of the sample (Russian-speaking market). Still regarding improvements, modification of the questionnaire to better study destination's image is possible. For example, applying an approach already used in the field, add a section with categorization questions adapting Aaker's brand personality scale.

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# HOW DID MALAYSIA MANAGE ITS POSITION AS TOP 10 WORLD TOURIST DESTINATIONS IN UNWTO RANKING IN 2012?

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**ABSTRACT**

There are many reasons contributing to the achievement of Malaysia for being rank as top 10 most visited destinations in the world for the last four years. Among the factors are structures, resources, strategy, policy and leadership. In order to identify how Malaysia manage to be at this rank, a study was carried out on destination branding of Malaysian tourism from destination marketers' perspectives. The objectives are to identify tourism marketing messages that influence international tourists desire to visit Malaysia and to examine destination marketing agencies attitude towards building "Brand Malaysia" in tourism products. The subject of this research is the most recent promotion involving a new brand entitled "Malaysia Truly Asia" and examines the initiative within the framework of the country's destination branding and destination image development strategies. An assessment of the part played by destination branding in Malaysian tourism industry at large forms the wider context for the study and conclusions of more general relevance are drawn from the particularities of the case. A quantitative research method is used to examine the attitude of destination marketers towards the awareness on marketing mix used in creating "Brand Malaysia" tourism branding. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed to travel agencies based on purposive convenient sampling.

Keywords: Tourism Marketing, Destination Branding, Awareness, Image

JEL Classification: M310

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism industry in Malaysia is relatively well established, structured and focused. This started with the restructuring of Tourist Development Corporation (TDC) which was enacted in 1972 to become Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board (Tourism Malaysia) in 1992 to focus on promotion. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism formed in 1986 was restructured as the Ministry of Tourism in 2004. Then it was restructured again as Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MOCAT) in 2013. This strong set-up of both the Ministry and Tourism Malaysia has contributed into better and effective planning, implementation and improving of programmes and activities, in particular with overseas and domestic promotions. As a result of the intensive efforts made in changing the structures of Malaysian tourism authorities and agencies in promoting tourist destination, Malaysia has been ranked as top 10 most visited destinations in the world for the last four years. It was ranked as 9th position (2009-2011) and 10th (2012) based on the United Nations

World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), barometer. In 2012, Tourism Malaysia reported a total of 25 million tourist arrivals, an increase of 1.3% compared to 24.7 million in 2011. This brought in tourist receipts of RM60.6 billion, an increase of 3.8 % from RM58.3 billion in 2011. This is reflected in its top ten performers namely Singapore (13,014,268), Indonesia (2,382,606), China (1,558.785), Thailand (1,263, 024), Brunei (1,258,070), the Philippines (508,744), Australia (5-7,948), Japan (470,008) and the UK (402,207). This remarkable achievement has also made Malaysia as the only destination in Asia after China enjoys this privilege (Ministry of Tourism, 2012).

To further increase Malaysia visibility and position in overseas as top and attractive tourist destination, it has strong presence of Tourism Malaysia overseas offices and marketing representatives in key generating and potential markets. This is complimented with domestic offices in all 13 states in Malaysia. Not only that, Malaysia has a very supportive towards tourism from local governments, statutory bodies and regional development authorities. In other words, having fundamental and well organised national tourism organisation is paramount important to plan, execute and improving all policies, strategies and results in promoting the destination.

In view of the importance of tourism promotion, this study was carried out with the purpose of identifying the importance of tourism marketing messages that influence international tourists desire to visit Malaysia and investigate the travel agencies attitude toward the awareness of "Brand Malaysia" development of destination branding. This paper explores strategies for branding Malaysian tourism from the perspective of destination marketers, in helping to position Malaysia as an appealing destination in the traveller's mind. For that purpose, it reviews the importance of tourism marketing messages, destination attributes that establish the awareness and desire among the international tourists to travel to Malaysian destination, and as well as attitude towards branding work undertaken by the Tourism Malaysia in order to capture the relevant elements in branding Malaysia as a tourism destination. The Malaysian tourism brand has to include what Malaysian tourism aspires to be, a unique set of brand associations, and brand awareness to build as much brand equity as possible. The importance of networking between Malaysian Tourism authorities and destination marketers (travel agencies) is highlighted to ensure the "Brand Malaysia" positioning in both international and local market are focused holistically between both parties.

## 2. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

### 2.1. Destination Branding

The seriousness in tourism marketing of destination has resulted in a study on destination branding, image, communication and awareness. During the past years, the characteristics of the brand mentioned by Ritchie and Ritchie (1998) are repeated in the destination branding literature. Brands have been connotations of clear image, promotional tools used by destination marketers to gain distinctiveness and competitive advantage (Morgan *et al.* 2002), and are seen as acting an expression of a relationship between the customer and product (Hankinson, 2005). The brand creates the memorable and emotional bond between preferred travel markets and the destination (Morgan *et al.*, 2002; Williams *et al.*, 2004). According to Hanlan and Kelly (2005), a brand promise and a travel experience that live up to the promise are valuable elements of destination branding. Perhaps a more comprehensive destination branding definition was established by Blain *et al.* (2005:337):

> *"Destination Branding is the set of marketing activities that (1) support the creation of name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that readily identifies and differentiates destination and*

> *(2) consistently convey the expectation of memorably travel experienced that is uniquely associated with the destination; (3) serve to consolidate and reinforce the emotional connection between the visitor and the destination; and that (4) reduce consumer search cost and perceived risk. Collectively these activities serve to create destination image that positively influence consumer destination choice."*

### 2.2. Destination Image

The concept of destination image is multidimensional, with cognitive and effective spheres, and has been defined as an amalgam of knowledge, feelings, beliefs, opinions, ideas, expectations, and impressions that people have about a named location (Hosany *et al.*, 2006). It has been the subject of considerable discussion, but there is a consensus that destinations with clearly delineated and appealing images are better positioned than those about which little is known or which seem unattractive for various reasons (Ekinci *et al.*, 2007). It is not just the images of the travelling public which are significant, but also those of investors and managers of tourism businesses like tour operators, hotel companies and airlines whose decisions impact on individual travel opportunities and the pays of tourism development. Ecthner and Ritchie (1991, 1993), on the other hand, posit that the following questions are essential when determine how brand image established: i) what comes to mind when a destination is mentioned?; how clear of an image does the brand has of the destination?; how much do you like the brand after watching an advertisement containing it?; how favourable is the brand image?; how well does the brand message communicate the essence of tourism destination?; What does the brand stand for in the minds of customers?.

In the whole body of destination image studies, Echtner and Ritchie (1991:11) proposed a somewhat unique conceptualization of the destination image construct based on an extensive review of the literature on destination image research for the period of 1975–1990:

> *"Destination image should be envisioned as consisting of two main components; those that are attribute-based and those that are holistic. Each of these components of destination image contains functional, or more tangible, and psychological, or more abstract, characteristics. Images of destinations can also range from those based on "common" functional and psychological traits to those based on more distinctive or even unique features, events, feelings or auras".*

Altogether, the holistic component is positioned as a mental picture, or overall representation, of the destination, and, as such, resembles the overall component of the destination image. The holistic component is important for understanding how a particular destination is categorized in the minds of consumers, and what prevailing images and stereotypes are associated with a given destination. Echtner and Ritchie (1993) posit that a conceptual framework for operationalization of all specified components of destination image, as well as proposed a convenient format for visual representation of image components. In designing the scale for measuring the attribute-based items, Echtner and Ritchie (1993) showed the framework for marketing studies. The steps specifies the domain of the image construct, generating a sample of items, purifying the measures using Cronbach's alpha as an indicator, and iterative factor analysis were conducted. Thus, the issues of content validity, dimensionality, and internal consistency reliability of the proposed scale were addressed by the researchers.

### 2.3. Brand Communication

Marketing communication is the brand's weapon. It alone can unveil what is invisible; reveal the basic differences hidden by the packaging which often looks the same among competitors. It alone can sustain the attachment to the brand, by promoting intangible values, even if this loyalty is eroded by many promotions (Kapferer, 2004). The organization must carefully blend the promotion tools into a coordinated promotion mix that will achieve its advertising and marketing objectives. Organizations within the same industry differ greatly in how they design their promotion mixes of advertising, sales promotion, and public relations (Kotler *et al.*, 2003).

### 2.4. Destination Awareness

Destination awareness reflects both the knowledge and the salience of the destination in the customer's mind. Awareness can be measured on different levels including the following: recognition, recall, top of mind, brand dominance, brand familiarity, and brand knowledge or salience (David and Joachimsthaler, 2000). Therefore, destination marketers should always focus on the kind of destination branding establish by their tourism authorities and agencies in order to capture tourist demand from time to time. The changes in destination branding strategy by national or state tourism authorities normally as an effort to build a new destination concept to attract tourists to travel to the destination.

## 3. PROMOTING MALAYSIA AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

### 3.1. Tourism Resources, Products and Services

Tourism is one of the top three sectors contributing into foreign exchange for Malaysia. It has qualified and experienced professionals and practitioners that would accelerate the industry in efficient and effective way. Combining resources of public and private sectors in terms of experience, expertise, product development, service delivery, marketing and promotions as well as destination management, Malaysia is indeed on the track to move at greater height. This is evidenced with the introduction of new programmes, policy and activity, particularly in tourism courses offered from apprentice to doctorate levels. As destination, Malaysia never rest at its laurel, thus, in responding to market trend and demand, it has studied the market to match with relatively right products and services. Among others are family oriented products like theme parks, eco-tourism, medical tourism, education tourism. In terms of product strategy, Malaysia has given special emphasis into high value for high end market. These include by introducing special packages in conjunction with revenue-based hallmark events like Formula One Grand Prix, Mega Sales and MotoGP. In consideration of the importance of having more quality events, Malaysia has introduced innovative events namely Malaysia International Shoe Festival (MISF), 1Malaysia Contemporary Art Tourism Festival (1-MCAT), Parks and Gardens and Fabulous Food 1Malaysia (FF1M). Malaysia has also introduced Homestay Programme and Malaysia My Second Home (MM2H) programme to attract niche and long-stay tourists (Malaysia Tourism Report, 2012).

### 3.2. Malaysia Destination Brand Image and National Policy

Tourism is one of the 12 National Key Economic Areas (NKEA) to drive the nation's economic growth under Malaysia's Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) with a target of 2020:36:168 to be achieved through the implementation of 12 strategic Entry Point Projects (EPPs). Popularly known as Malaysia Tourism Transformation Plan (MTTP) it has five major themes upholding the agenda of the destination. These are: i) Affordable Luxury focusing on shopping; ii) Family Fun – integrated resorts and theme parks; iii) Events, Spa & Sports; iv) Business Tourism – as leading MICE market; v) Nature Adventure (Economic Transformation Programme, Annual Report 2012).

Consistency in pursuing and promoting its destination brand has positioned Malaysia strongly in the market place. It strongly believed in its world renowned brand of **Malaysia Truly Asia** since was launched in 1999. This has contributed significantly in tourists' perception both foreign and local towards Malaysia.

### 3.3. Tourism Malaysia Promotional Strategy

In consistence with MTTP, Malaysia is embarking to become a high-value tourism destination by concentrating on selected high-yield segments. At the same time, it still gives emphasis towards producing and potential markets from ASEAN, medium-haul and long haul. To further strengthen Malaysia position in the market, it continuous working with partners in the industry like airlines, attractions management companies (AMCs), destination management companies (DMCs), hotels and private sectors. Malaysia continues participating in major international and regional travel fairs like ITB, ATM, WTM as well as local shows through its overseas offices. The combination of Advertising and Publicity campaign initiated globally has also played very important role in making Malaysia as preferred destination. Capitalising on Malaysia Truly Asia brand, Malaysia through Tourism Malaysia uses an integrated media platforms consisting of above the line and below the line. These include TV, Radio, Print, out-of-home (OOH) like billboards, transit advertising, cinema) and online. It is common to see commercials on Malaysia in well-known networks such as CNN, BBC and Al Jazeera.

Embracing new technology in marketing is proven to be effective for Malaysia to reach the target segments including Gen Y. It is more than corporate websites. It has launched its digital platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Web TV and YouTube Channel. At the same time, the importance of continuous learning among travel trade and media about Malaysia as top tourist destination has never been neglected. It has introduced its travel familiarisation brand known as *Malaysia Mega Familiarisation Tour Programme* or in short *MEGA FAM* since 2000 to educate international travel fraternity and media with first-hand information and experience of various destinations, services and products.

Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) was formed in 2009 to look after the importance of business tourism business sector. It has secured many big conventions business for 2012 such as 81$^{st}$ Annual Scientific Congress of Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, 9$^{th}$ World Congress of Chinese Medicine, 43$^{rd}$ Union World Congress on Lung Health and 8$^{th}$ Design & Health World Congress and Exhibition.

### 3.4. Accolades

Malaysia receives many accolades in 2012 from international institutions that further demonstrate Malaysia strong brand as destination both for tourist and business (Malaysia Tourism Report 2012). Among are:

- 1$^{st}$ Prize UNWTO Ulysses Award 2012 – for innovative in Public Policy and Governance for Malaysia Homestay Experience Programme
- Kuala Lumpur as 4$^{th}$ Best Shopping City in the World by CNN (2012) after New York, Tokyo and London.
- 2$^{nd}$ Best Shopping Destination in Asia Pacific by Globe Shopper Index
- 10$^{th}$ World's Friendliest Countries by Forbes Online based on HSBC's Expat Explorer Survey
- 12$^{th}$ most competitive economy in the world for doing business by World Bank's Doing Business Report
- No. 7 Top 10 Meetings Destination in Asia Pacific by ICCA
- Asia's Leading Sports Tourism Destination and Asia's Leading City Destination at World Travel Awards 2011
- One of the world's top ten countries for 2010 by Lonely Planet

As destination, Malaysia has much to offer to foreign visitors and among the attributes are: value for money, well-developed infrastructure and amenities, great diversity of culture and natural attractions, state of the art facilities in transportation and communications, safe destination, stable government, peace and harmony, equal distance of many attractions, etc.

The most distinctive destination in Malaysia that have been recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Sites and Cities are Melaka, George Town, Kinabalu Park in Sabah, and Lenggong in Perak.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

Quantitative research method is used to examine the attitude of destination marketers towards the awareness on marketing mix used in creating "Brand Malaysia" tourism branding. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed to travel agencies located within Selangor state and 202 (67.3% respond rate) returned. The respondents were chosen based on purposive convenient sampling as the questionnaire was distributed to travel agencies located in major town in Selangor namely Shah Alam, Klang, Subang Jaya, Petaling Jaya, Kelana Jaya, Puchong, Seri Kembangan, Sepang, Bangi, and Ampang. A drop and collect approach was used as means in data collection as the respondents were given 7 days to answer the questionnaire. A courtesy phone call to remind the respondent on the questionnaire was done on day 6. The ample time given to the respondent to complete the questionnaire is important because most of respondents were the manager of the travel agency and were busy with their daily routine job. Moreover, they have to obtain information based on year 2011 company report as required in Section A in the questionnaire. Data analysis is carried out using SPSS software in order to establish the findings from this study. Since the research approach is exploratory in nature, data has been analyzed based on descriptive report findings that summarized the outcome in the form of standardized statistical features, namely percentage, mean and standard deviation.

## 5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The business profile of the travel agencies is categorized based on return on investment (ROI), their type of licenses owned and total of visitors send abroad in 2011. There are several marketing activities carried out by travel agencies either for local or international market. For local market, travel agencies involved in carried out campaign and promotional activities in the form of advertisement (90.0%) followed by brochure/pamphlet (80.7%), social media (77.7%), MATTA Fair (73.8%), direct selling (66.8%), magazine (44.6%) and sales coupon (31.7%). Thus, it can be said that most travel agencies still choose advertisement as their major promotional tools in marketing their tourism product locally. On top of advertisement, brochure/pamphlet and social media are their important promotional tools in their marketing activities. On the contrary for the international market, there are few differences in marketing strategies carried out by travel agencies namely in the form of sales calls, fax broadcasts, sales incentives, distribution of sales brochures, e-marketing, advertisement and public relations.

Among the top three marketing strategies undertake for international market are e-Marketing (86.1%), advertisement (72.9%), and sales calls (68.0%). Advertisement is considered the major marketing strategies for both local and international market undertake by travel agencies to promote their tourism products, even though e-Marketing is the top focus in marketing activities for international market. However, travel agencies do established promotional collaboration with hotels, airlines, transportation companies, theme park, government bodies, MATTA/IATA as well as with universities. The top four promotional collaborations are with MATTA/IATA (81.7%), hotels (77.7%), airlines (64.9%), and government bodies (61.4%).

The travel agencies in Selangor have rated South East Asia (mean 2.1548) countries as the most important market for their tourism products, followed by Middle East (mean 2.7206), Australia (mean 2.7953), Europe (mean 2.8051), America (mean 4.0110), Russia (mean 4.3529) and lastly the Antarctic (mean 5.8194) countries. Thus, this ranking of importance (scale 1(highest) to 7 (lowest), indicates that travel agencies are focusing their marketing strategies towards the top four countries namely South East Asia, Middle East, Australia and America.

The travel agencies agree that it is important to have various types of messages, such as corporate brand messages, individual property/attraction features messages and destination messages when developing marketing activities for Malaysian market. Destination messages is the most important type of messages in developing marketing activities for Malaysian market, followed by corporate brand messages (85%), and individual property/attraction features messages (82.1%). Therefore, travel agencies should include all the three type of messages into their marketing activities to attract Malaysian market in promoting the local tourism products.

Most travel agencies agree that all three types of messages identify Malaysia, state in Malaysia, or city or local region as identification as important messages in their marketing strategies. Travel agencies regard tourism products with Malaysia or aspect of Malaysia features (98.2%) followed by the city or local region in which the travel agency office located (97.5%), and tourism products with the state of Malaysia in which it is located (80.4%). Having these three types of tourism products messages in travel agencies marketing activities will provide more varieties in developing their marketing strategies in promoting travel destination in Malaysia.

Generally travel agencies agreed that pop culture, word of mouth, travel media, travel advertising and travel intermediaries are considered important factors in generating awareness, desires and actually get international tourists to visit Malaysia as destination for vacation. However, Travel Advertising (Tourism Malaysia major campaign – TV/Magazine/Newspaper/ Destination Brochure/MAS and Air Asia Airline advertising/other travel advertising/Travel product brochures) play a significant important role (98.5%) among all factors in generating awareness among international tourists to choose Malaysia as their holiday destination. On the contrary, factors in generating desires of international tourists to choose Malaysia as holiday destination is the pop culture (91.4%), but Travel Media (Travel guides/ Newspaper – travel stories/ Magazine – travel stories/Online travel guidelines) is the most important factor (98.4.%) in getting international tourists to actually visit Malaysia compared to other factors. Thus, these three most important factors play very influential roles in marketing strategies as perceived by travel agencies.

Malaysian travel products should present a "uniform" message about Malaysia when selling internationally given the highest score of 76.6% as agreed by travel agencies as they perceived this is the most important strategy in promotion activities. Travel agencies also consider two other promotional activities as important to help establish brand Malaysia: (1) The Malaysian National Tourist Organization should provide guidelines in presenting Malaysia in overseas market (75.7%); (2) The success of my sales (travel agency) and marketing in the international level is closely tied to the success of the promotion of Malaysia as a vacation destination (74.2%).

Travel agencies are aware that there are specific initiatives that have been carried out to establish Brand Malaysia in tourism industry such as:

- Ministry of Tourism has developed a branding strategy for Tourism Malaysia (58.7%);
- Key design components of the Brand Malaysia (58.5%);
- Key copy points of Brand Malaysia (55.7%).

Nevertheless, 59.2 percent of travel agencies agree that they are also aware on the effectiveness of brand activity in the international market, besides having aware of the availability of related branding initiatives that been carried out by Ministry of Tourism Malaysia.

There are several benefits of the outcome of "Brand Malaysia" marketing strategies that promote for tourism product selling to the international market. The following are the type of benefits as agreed by travel agencies based on the percentage of response:

- Brand Malaysia allows Malaysia tourism product to charge "price" premium (68.5%);
- Increased business as a direct result of participation in Tourism Malaysia campaign (68%);
- Brand Malaysia marketing makes it easier to convert "sales" to Malaysia (67%);
- Easier introduction of product in the international market because of brand Malaysia marketing (66%);
- Increased business as an indirect result of campaigns (62.5%);
- Ability to focus on product sales knowing "destination message" has been covered (59.5%).

Based on this findings, the 'Brand Malaysia" marketing strategies that have been implemented by tourism authorities and agencies in Malaysia do provide significant benefits to travel agencies business, thus helping them to market Malaysia tourism products at international market.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Malaysian tourism brand should be built and implemented with the cooperation and support of other tourism partners, especially destination marketers, and namely travel agencies who are in contact with visitors on the front line, and consequently able to create a synergetic effect. It is absolutely important to train personnel in the tourism industry since the tourism services and experiences eventually depend on the people, and Malaysia must also improve its service quality, enhancing the value of the Malaysian tourism brand. This is in line with Szondi (2006) statement that destination branding is concerned with the promotion of the tourism of a country, and accordingly Anholt (2009) posits that destination branding contributes to the improvement of the overall image and to the creation of a strong brand. As such, the Malaysian tourism authority namely the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism (MOCAT) and Malaysian Tourism Promotion Board (Tourism Malaysia) should alert to the trends of tourism environment and visitors to give the new brand more meaning, and in this ever more competitive tourism market, to sustain itself. For that purpose, sophisticated research to grasp and understand visitors' intrinsic motives and how satisfactorily they experience Malaysian tourism is required to strengthen Malaysian tourism brand and image especially in creating the "Brand Malaysia" in tourism products. As reaffirmed by D'Astous and Boujbel (2007) that authorities are urged to formulate a 'brand identity' for the nation that supports tourism, including a tourism brand. This holistic branding venture are still relatively uncommon, although nearly all government strives to depict themselves and their territories in the most flattering light to the international community.

Even though Malaysia is known as a country rich in historical, cultural and natural resources, further endeavours should be made to strengthen its competences. In particular, Malaysia's unique culture should be utilized as a vehicle to augment the future Malaysian tourism brand. It is required to nurture Malaysian culture strategically in conjunction with tourism. Malaysian advertising tag line "Malaysia Truly Asia" has created an identity with which customers can associate, and provide the experiences while holidaying in Malaysia.

The Malaysian tourism brand should be enriched, enforced, and monitored by delivering diverse tourism products and services, particularly memorable tourism experiences that have been developed through financial support and creative ideas from both public and private sponsorship. The future Malaysia tourism brand will provide a signal to guide the Malaysian tourism industry. In order to build a Malaysian tourism brand that converge Malaysian's attractions, Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism (MOCAT), Malaysian Tourism Promotion Board (Tourism Malaysia) and destination marketers' (travel agencies) aspirations, and visitors' expectations will be very strenuous, but it will bring a compelling and competitive edge to the Malaysian tourism industry. The new brand in the future "Brand Malaysia" definitely will play a key role in providing the Malaysian tourism industry with the focus to proceed and enforce its competitiveness in the future.

In view of the above findings on promotional activities and branding initiatives that are currently undertake by Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism (MOCAT) and Malaysian Tourism Promotion Board (Tourism Malaysia), there are still other marketing and branding strategies that may have been carried out by related Malaysian tourism authority and agencies that are not stated in this study. Thus, there are opportunities for researchers in future studies to look into such strategies so more comprehensive findings could be established.

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# ENVIRONMENTAL PRESSURES ON TOURISM COMPANIES: SIMULATION OF SCENARIOS IN GOLF COURSE OPERATORS

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**ABSTRACT**

Andalusia (Spain) has become one of the world's leading regions for receiving golf tourists. In recent years there has been a constant increase in the number of golf courses; as a result an institutional context is developing in respect of environment protection that is conditioning the behaviour of companies operating sports/tourism facilities of this type. In the present study we analyse this organizational context from the perspective of the Institutional Theory; we propose possible future scenarios by simulating the evolution of the normative pressures in respect of environmental protection. For this we have applied the statistical technique of Partial Least Squares.

The simulation by means of the ceteris paribus criterion has demonstrated for us that an increase of the normative pressures would not substantially modify the results of our original model. We believe that the relatively weak influence of this type of pressure may be because the wide social debate generated in that Spanish region on the sustainability of sports facilities of this type, has propitiated a substantial body of legislation that has conditioned the environmental behaviour of golf courses. Therefore, the best way to obtain legitimacy and social acceptance is still by complying with the law.

Keywords: Institutional Theory, Environmental Practices, Golf Tourism, Partial Least Squares

JEL Classification: L83, O13, R11

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades in Spain, a tourism product/market has been developed that is having enormous social and economic repercussions. We are referring to golf tourism, a specialist sub-sector in which Andalusia has been the Spanish region attracting the largest number of golf tourists. The regional government (Enterprise for the Management of Tourism and Sport in Andalusia, 2011) reports that, in the year 2011, Andalusia received 425,000 golf tourists, which represented a 0.5% increase over the previous year. The income produced by them signifies approximately half of the total amount generated by this sub-sector in Spain as a whole. In addition, this segment represents 1.9% of the total activity of the regional tourism sector. These visitors were principally British and German golf enthusiasts – players, spectators, family members and friends; the average stay was 13.9 days; and the average daily expenditure per tourist was 80.35 Euros, 20 Euros more than that of a conventional tourist.

Golf tourism can be defined in similar terms to those proposed by Tous and Borrero (2003: 3), who understand it as "a social phenomenon that, motivated by the practice of a sport and whose object is actually to play some golf, causes a series of displacements and movements of those interested, giving rise to significant economic activity associated with it. In golf tourists, a series of diverse factors come together, whose characteristics include sporting activity, competitions, tourism, economics and social behaviour, since in one form or another, this interest determines and configures not only the profile of the golf tourist/ player, but also aspects that involve, to a great extent, their life style".

However, there is an open debate in society on the environmental impact of this type of installation. This debate has led to a series of measures being taken, in most the cases imposed by legal regulation, aimed at reducing the negative effects that golf courses can have on the natural environment. In this line, studies such as those of Delmas and Toffel (2004), Buysse and Verbeke (2003), Dagapusta *et al*., (2000), and Henriques and Sadorsky (1996) demonstrate the importance of legal regulation as a conditioner of the environmental behaviour of organisations. Particularly in the organizational field of golf course operators, studies such as those of Paniza (2003) and Vargas and Riquel (2013) reach similar conclusions on the capacity of laws to influence the adoption and implementation of environmental practices in golf courses, specifically, in the region of Andalusia (Spain).

However there are other authors who argue that the environmental behaviour of organizations is principally conditioned by what are termed "normative pressures", which have their origin not in government, through laws, but in the professionalization of the sector and its professional associations, through convention and custom (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Scott, 1995). Notable among these are Palmer *et al*. (1993); Florida and Davison (2001); Raines (2002); King and Lenox (2000); Heugens and Lander (2009); Zsidin (2005); and Jhon *et al. (*2001). Nevertheless, in the field of the golf courses, we have not found any previous studies based on the framework of the Institutional Theory that reach conclusions similar to those of the authors cited above.

All in all, it is logical to think that, as a sector consolidates management practices and routines, the normative pressures defined by the Institutional Theory should show increasing capacity to influence the behaviour of the organizations that form part of that sector. Golf tourism in Andalusia is a sector in expansion but its development is fairly recent; because of this, we consider that it provides us with a suitable organizational field in which to put forward future scenarios in relation to the normative pressures, by means of simulations. This is the principal objective pursued with this study: to analyse, by means of different scenarios for the evolution of normative pressures, the capacity of environmental response of the golf courses of Andalusia, and in continuation, how this influences the perception of social legitimacy and organizational performance.

Therefore, in the present work we apply an experimental analysis based on resorting to ceteris paribus, by means of which we aim to isolate the influence of the so-called normative pressures, as defined in the Institutional Theory, in the implementation of good environmental practices by the golf courses. In this approach, while holding the other pressures constant, we submit to two different scenarios the normative pressures of environmental character defined in the research model, postulating increases, the first slight and the second major, in the Likert scale scores of the various different normative indicators. By this means we are able to compare the real starting situation with the two simulated scenarios, taking as our basis for this the Partial Least Squares (PLS) statistical methodology.

The present study has therefore been divided into several parts. The first is devoted to a general introduction of the problem to be investigated; in the second we outline the theoretical framework applied in the research and which has given rise to a series of hypotheses; in the third the research model is specified; the fourth part introduces the methodology used and presents the sample employed; the fifth comprises the statistical analysis of the scenarios simulated; and in the sixth and last, we state the principal conclusions, giving special attention to the implications for the management of companies operating in the tourism sector.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

Tourism is one economic activity among many, in which rules and principles are established to regulate the combination of resources available to companies for pursuing their profit-making commercial activities (Santana, 2010). These regulations, which condition the behaviour of the companies that together comprise the tourism offer of a particular region, tend to be imposed mainly by government, at the various applicable levels, but also by the rest of the interest groups that form the business context of these companies.

The companies that operate in tourist markets are, therefore, organisations suitable for study under the approach of the Institutional Theory. Zucker (1987) defines the institutional context as normative worlds constructed socially, in which organizations exist. Meyer and Rowan (1997) and DiMaggio and Powell (1983) define this context or institutional environment as those requirements to which organizations must submit themselves if they wish to receive legitimacy and support, adding that the origin of these requirements can be found in what are known as pressure mechanisms that are exerted by the State, by professional and academic associations, and by generally-accepted belief systems. Scott (1995), another of the principal theoretical institutionalists, classifies these pressure mechanisms into three main types - coercive, normative and mimetic. In the last decade there have been many articles published in which the relationship between institutional pressures and companies' business decisions has been studied. In this respect, notable studies are those of Rodrigues and Child (2003), Fligstein (2001), Bercket (1999), and Oliver (1991); in all of these the capacity of the pressure mechanisms proposed under the Institutional Theory to influence the behaviour of companies is confirmed. In the next part, we analyse each of the pressures that comprise the institutional context of the golf courses of Andalusia with respect to environmental protection.

### 2.1.The Regulatory System

In the studies of authors such as Buysse and Verbeke (2003), Dagapusta *et al*. (2000), and Henriques and Sadorsky (1996), it is proven how the legislative capacity of governments influences the behaviour of companies. In particular, Delmas and Toffel (2004) argue that it is the environmental legislation that has the greatest capacity to modify corporate operations. In this line, Porter and Van der Linde (1995) confirm that environmental legislation affects the competitive position of the company. Shaffer (1995) even considers that these laws have a direct influence on the financial performance, in particular, and on the business performance in general of companies (Ann *et al*., 2006; García and Armas, 2007; Piñero *et al*., 2009).

This legislation has become yet more evident in the case of the golf courses of Andalusia, a sector intimately involved with the tourism industry and for which diverse public initiatives have been taken, aimed at ensuring the sustainability of the sector. For instance, in Andalusia the Decree 43/2008 established a raft of regulations with the force of law, of obligatory compliance, for the start-up and operation of golf courses, with strict environmental conditions (this Decree was partially modified by the Decree 309/2010 of 15 June).

Based on the above, we are in a position to formulate the following research hypothesis:

**H1a:** Coercive pressure produced by the laws and other regulations applicable to the activities carried out have a positive influence on the adoption of sustainable environmental practices.

### 2.2. The Normative System

This system generates normative pressures that influence organizational behaviour, by indicating to companies those behaviours and practices considered appropriate, legitimate and desirable within the sector (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Heugens and Landers, 2009; Scott, 1995). These pressures arise in consequence of the professionalization of the companies and their managers, the homologation of the relevant education and training in universities and business schools, and the strengthening of networked activities through the professional associations of reference in the sector. For Jhon *et al.* (2001) and Zsdisin *et al.* (2005), the ultimate goal of this type of pressure is the maintenance and improvement of social legitimacy for the company.

Considering specifically environmental matters, there are many studies that point to these mechanisms as the principal conditioning factor of the environmental behaviour of the companies in a particular activity sector (Palmer *et al*., 1993; Henriques and Sardosky, 1996; King and Lenox, 2000; Florida and Davison, 2001; Raines, 2002). For companies of the tourism sector, however, there have been few empirical studies that have dealt with environmental pressure mechanisms of this type from the perspective of the Institutional Theory. In the particular case of the golf sector in Andalusia (Spain), in the study of Riquel (2011) and in the VIIIth International Workshop on Golf and the Environment held in Marbella (Andalusia) in October 2011, the following norms or standards were identified as the most accepted by the sector in relation to the environmental management of this type of tourism and sports facility: the EMAS Regulations, ISO Standard 14001, Audubon Certification, GEO Certification and UNE Standard 188001 (Q).

Based on the foregoing arguments, the following research hypothesis associated with normative pressures is put forward:

**H1b:** The acceptance of values and standards that originate from the applicable normative pressures have a positive influence on the adoption of sustainable environmental practices.

### 2.3. The Cognitive System

In any particular organizational field, as uncertainty grows, mimetic pressures exert more and more influence on the behaviour of the organizations comprising that sector (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Scott, 1995; Pasmar and Valle, 2011). This line is also taken in the study of Kimberly (1980), in which the author states that the managers of companies actively seek models to imitate. For Teo *et al.* (2003) this type of mechanism becomes evident in two ways: firstly by the prevalence of a particular practice, technology or process in a sector; and secondly by the perception of success achieved by the organization that adopts that practice or process, which acts to reduce the uncertainty (Haveman, 1993; Grewal and Dharwadkar, 2002; Pasmar and Valle, 2011). Bansal and Clelland (2004) state that, in the context of environmental protection, the uncertainty is even greater due to differences in the objectives pursued by the various pressure groups. Because of this the mimetic mechanisms of pressure may be predominant when a company is taking decisions on its environmental policy.

In the case of the golf courses, there is no doubt that interest in environmental management has been growing in recent years. Certain golf course operators in Andalusia have been identified as pioneers in practices of this type, which have been becoming more consolidated in this organizational field (VIIIth Workshop on Golf and the Environment, October 2011). These "model" courses include: Dunas de Doñana (Matalascañas, Huelva), which has been classified as the first ecological golf course in the whole of Spain; Valderrama golf course (San Roque, Cadiz), which is noted for its efforts in preserving autochthonous flora and fauna; and the recently-opened golf course of Castellar de la Frontera (Cadiz), which has been classified by the Junta de Andalucía (Regional Government) as being of particular tourist interest for its environmental commitment.

The following table summarizes the various pressure mechanisms proposed by the Institutional Theory:

**Table 1: Differences of emphasis of the three institutional pillars**

| INSTITUTIONAL ELEMENTS | REGULATORY | NORMATIVE | COGNITIVE |
|---|---|---|---|
| BASIS OF COMMITMENT | Convenience | Social obligation | What is accepted |
| MECHANISMS | Coercive | Normative (norms and values) | Mimetic |
| LOGIC | Instrumental | Appropriation | Orthodoxy |
| INDICATORS | Rules, laws, sanctions | Accreditation | General, isomorphism |
| BASIS OF LEGITIMACY | Legal sanction | Moral government | What is conceptually correct |

Source: Scott, 1995.

### 2.4. Environmental Responsibility: Legitimacy and Organizational Performance

There is an ample academic literature confirming the influence of the Institutional Theory on the strategies and structures of organizations (Teo *et al*., 2003), and the search for acceptance and legitimacy as the principal motivation for this alignment, which is associated with organizational isomorphism (Zucker, 1987). For Scott (2001), the need for legitimacy and the capacity to acquire more easily the resources necessary for survival are parallel motivations. One of the means employed most frequently by companies to achieve, maintain or increase their social acceptance or legitimacy is the adoption of practices respectful of the natural environment. Authors such as Gadenne and Zaman (2002) view legal compliance as the principal motivation for a company to implement environmental management practices and thus achieve legitimacy and avoid sanctions. Porter and Van de Linder (1995) state that it is the need to obtain competitive advantages that motivates companies to adopt practices of this type. Bansal and Roth (2000) and Xie and Haysase (2007) argue that attending to the demands of the various different interest groups is the factor that determines the implementation of environmental management systems. Lastly, in the study of Dias-Sardinha and Reijnders (2001), it is found that the improvement of the public image of the company is the path chosen to increase its social legitimacy, and that this latter goal is the principal factor that motivates practices of this type. As can be checked, the need for social legitimacy is a common thread in the various propositions on this topic in the scientific literature. In this line, Banasal and Roth (2000) design a model of corporate environmental responsibility in which the company's environmental initiatives are motivated both by the competition of the sector and by the need to improve the social legitimacy of the company.

The tourism sector has not been excluded from this process, particularly since tourism companies operate in a highly globalized context and with strong international competition. Given this dynamism, studies such as those of Huybers and Bennett (2002, 2003) stress the importance of environmental factors in the management of companies competing in the tourism sector. It could be stated that this importance was established definitively at the scientific level at the end of the 1990's, when the concept of sustainable tourism was institutionalized (Hunter, 1997; Hardy and Beeton, 2001; Hurbyes and Bennett, 2003; Blanco *et al*., 2009). This theoretical framework has given rise to studies demonstrating that the investment in responsible policies for protection of the natural environment have a positive effect both for the tourism companies and for the destinations in general (Candella and Cellini, 2006; González, León and Padrón, 2006, and Pintassilgo and Albino, 2007). Claver *et al*., (2007) state that this positively affects not only the financial results and business performance financial of the company but also the competitiveness of the destination.

Based on the foregoing arguments, we can propose the following research hypotheses that will be tested in the empirical analysis presented next.

**H2a:** The implementation of environmental practices is motivated principally by the search for social legitimacy, more than by the increase of business performance or returns.

**H3a:** The implementation of responsible environmental management practices has a positive influence on business performance.

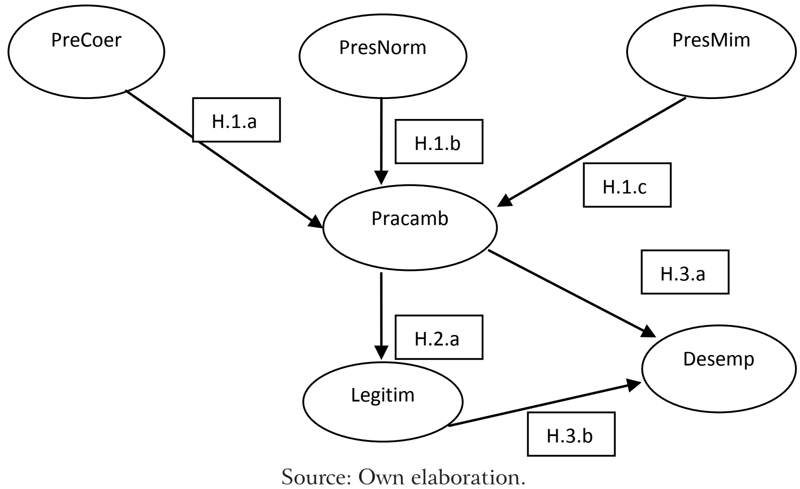
**H3b:** A positive direct relationship exists between the social legitimacy sought and business performance or results.

## 3. RESEARCH MODEL

The research model proposed is based on the configuration of the institutional context of the golf courses of Andalusia. The different systems that we have described previously translate to the three institutional mechanisms (normative, coercive and mimetic) that will exert pressure on the environmental practices of the golf courses of Andalusia. In studies of the institutional context of the golf courses of Andalusia by Riquel (2011) and Vargas and Riquel (2013), the normative pressures are found to have less influence in the adoption of practices described as environmentally responsible. This is because, in spite of golf tourism becoming one of the principal tourist products, with the considerable increase in numbers of golf courses in this region, this has taken place in a relatively short period of time. The effect of this is that there has not been sufficient time for the sector to acquire the necessary professionalization and collaborative operating network that would propitiate the diffusion and consolidation of these normative mechanisms.

With this study we reproduce possible future scenarios once there has been sufficient time for the normative pressures to gain weight in the context of the environmental management of the golf courses of Andalusia, as described in the part dealing with the analysis of data. The following figure represents the proposed research model on which we base the testing of our hypotheses.

**Figure 1: Graphic representation of the model**




Source: Own elaboration.

Legend: PresNorm = Normative Pressure; PresCor = Coercive pressure; PresMim = Mimetic Pressure; Pracamb = Implementation of environmental practices; Desemp = Organisational performance/returns; Legitim = Social legitimacy.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

The instrument used to obtain the data was a structured questionnaire addressed to the managers of the golf courses in the Region of Andalusia; these persons, assisted by their green-keepers usually, were selected as prospective respondents since they are likely to have more direct information on the topic under study.

A first version of the questionnaire was tested by several faculties with experience in this type of research, and by selected managers of golf courses. Our objective was to ensure the validity of content of the instrument of measurement. Once the pilot questionnaire had been sent, and after waiting one week, we interviewed these initial recipients to analyse their suggestions, which were incorporated in the definitive questionnaire. Having thus validated the questionnaire, we were then ready to apply it to the population being studied, that is, to the population consisting of the 96 golf courses in Andalusia that were in active operation during the year 2009. In continuation we present the principal characteristics of the sample.

**Table 2: Technical specifications of the sampling**

| | |
|---|---|
| Research field | Golf courses. |
| Geographic location | Andalusia, Spain. |
| Methodology | Structured questionnaire. |
| Universe | 96 golf courses in the Region |
| Size of the sample | Sample = universe, 96 golf courses |
| Valid responses | 31 |
| Sampling error | 7.42 % |
| Level of confidence | 95 percent, p = q = 0.5; Z=1.96 |
| Period of data collection | Pretest: September 2008. First mailing: December 2008. First re-mailing: January 2009. Second re-mailing: February 2009. Treatment of data: February and March 2009. |

Source: authors' own compilation.

We accepted a level of confidence of 95%; with this, the sampling error obtained with the final sample was 7.42 %, with p = q = 0.5. A total of 34 completed questionnaires were received but 3 of these were not completed correctly and had to be discarded. Thus the total of valid responses was 31, representing a response rate of 32.29% of the population. The scale utilised to measure the key factors of the research model is a Likert scale of five points, and for the results three types of measurement scale have been used. The first refers to the institutional context of the 96 golf courses in Andalusia, and the three pressure mechanisms proposed under the Institutional Theory have been measured. This type of measurement has been used before, in the studies of Kostova and Roth (1991) and Llamas (2005). The second type is the implementation of environmental practices; for this we have based our scale on the indicators designed for this purpose in organisations of this type by Romero (2005). Lastly, we have used the scale proposed by Powell and Dent-Micallef (1997) to measure the organisational performance, using the respondents' perceptions of their own organisation's performance in comparison with its competitors. The measurement of social legitimacy has been made based on Deephouse (1996). In relation to the type of indicator selected, in all cases they have been of the reflective type. The scales were reviewed using factorial analysis, with the object of determining their uni-dimensionality.

**Table 3: Latent variables of the model and indicators**

| HYPOTHESES | CONSTRUCTS | INDICATORS | ABBREVIATION OF INDICATORS |
|---|---|---|---|
| H.2.a | Legitimacy (Legitim) | Social recognition. | Recosoci |
| | | Organizational values. | Valorg |
| | | Legitimacy, conferred by government. | Admolegi |
| | | Legitimacy, conferred by employees. | Emplegi |
| | | Legitimacy, conferred by general public. | Ciulegi |
| | | Legitimacy, conferred by communications media. | Maslegi |
| | | Legitimacy, conferred by customers. | Clielegi |
| | | Legitimacy, conferred by suppliers. | Provlegi |
| | | Legitimacy, conferred by ecology pressure groups. | Asoclegi |
| | | Legitimacy, conferred by professional associations. | Proflegi |
| | | Legitimacy, conferred by business sector. | Sectlegi |
| | | Relationships with pressure groups. | Relagrup |
| H.1.a | Coercive pressure (Prescor) | Knowledge of laws. | Conoley |
| | | Compliance with laws. | Cumpley |
| | | Regulatory authorities. | Orgregul |
| | | Existence of agreements. | Exacuerd |
| H.1.b | Normative pressure (Presnor) | Moral obligation. | Obligmor |
| | | Congruence with values of the context. | Congrval |
| | | Social norms. | Normsoci |
| H.1.c | Mimetic pressure (Presmim) | Knowledge of other companies' experiences. | Conoexp |
| | | Models to follow. | Modelseg |
| | | Imitation of other companies' practices. | Imiprac |
| | | Knowledge of successful experiences. | Conoexit |
| H.3.a H.3.b | Environmental management practices (Pracamb) | Number of environmental proposals. | Numprop |
| | | Proposals put into practice. | Propract |
| | | Proposals that achieve their objectives. | Probjet |
| | | Cost of environmental actions | Costemed |
| | | Number of court cases for environmental matters. | Expedmed |
| | | Employees in environmental training activities. | Emplefor |
| | | Hours of environmental training activities. | Horafor |
| | | Suppliers with environmental certification. | Provcert |
| | | Purchases from suppliers with environmental certification. | Compcert |
| | | Expenditure on publicizing environmental achievements. | Diflogro |
| | | Expenditure on campaigns to increase awareness. | Campconc |
| | Business performance/ returns (Desemp) | Economic conditions 2007. | Condeco |
| | | Financial result 2007. | Rtdoeco |
| | | Profitability 2007. | Rentbil |
| | | Number of Green Fees 2007. | Numgren |
| | | Market share 2007. | Cuotame |
| | | Economic conditions 2003-2007. | Condec03 |
| | | Financial result 2003-2007. | Rtdoec03 |
| | | Profitability 2003-2007. | Rentb03 |
| | | Number of Green Fees 2003-2007. | Num03 |
| | | Market share 2003-2007. | Cuota03 |

Source: authors' own compilation

## 5. RESULTS

For the analysis of the data and the experimentation that we wished to conduct, we use the Partial Least Squares (PLS) technique. This technique can be considered appropriate in our case, for two main reasons. First, as a result of the procedure of segmentation of complex models, the PLS approach can work with small sample sizes (Barclay et al., 1992), as in our case where we have a sample of only 31 observations. Second, according to Selling (1995), the use of PLS should be considered in studies of the exploratory type.

### 5.1. Starting Situation

#### *5.1.1. Measurement models*

In this step we determine whether the theoretical concepts are measured correctly by the variables observed; for this their validity and reliability are studied. In a PLS model the individual reliability of the item, the internal consistency and the convergent and discriminant validity are analysed (Chin, 1998). The individual reliability per item for constructs with reflective indicators is assessed by examining the loadings with the PLS model. The value of the standardised loadings must be equal to or greater than 0.505, according to Falker and Miller (1992). The reliability of a construct allows us to check the internal consistency of all the indicators when measuring the concept; in other words, an evaluation is made of how rigorously the manifest variables are measuring the same latent variable. For this we follow Nunnally (1978), who suggests a reliability level of at least 0.8, although in early stages of the research 0.7 or greater is acceptable. The convergent validity is analysed by the average variance extracted (AVE), which gives the amount of variance that a construct obtains from its indicators in relation to the amount of variance due to the measurement error. For this, Fornell and Lacker (1981) recommend values higher than 0.5.

**Table 4: Evaluation of the measurement models**

| CONSTRUCT | ITEM LOADINGS | COMPOSITE RELIABILITY | AVE |
|---|---|---|---|
| PRESNORM | | 0.802031 | 0.579547 |
| Obligmor | 0.611600 | | |
| Congrval | 0.865600 | | |
| Normsoci | 0.785200 | | |
| PRESCOR | | 0.697582 | 0.537966 |
| Conoley | 0.658700 | | |
| Orgregul | 0.801300 | | |
| PRESMIM | | 0.744143 | 0.593380 |
| Imipac | 0.723500 | | |
| Conoexit | 0.814400 | | |
| PRACAMB | | 0.915181 | 0.576204 |
| Numgrup | 0.777300 | | |
| Porpact | 0.826600 | | |
| Costemed | 0.678800 | | |
| Emplefor | 0.834400 | | |
| Horafor | 0.757200 | | |
| Provecert | 0.775300 | | |
| Compcert | 0.778700 | | |
| Diflogro | 0.620000 | | |
| LEGITIMI | | 0.885277 | 0.609760 |
| Recosoci | 0.836900 | | |
| Valorg | 0.843300 | | |
| Clielegi | 0.740200 | | |
| Asoclegi | 0.621100 | | |
| Realgurp | 0.838800 | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| DESEMP | | 0.867587 | 0.505700 |
| Rtdeco | 0.709700 | | |
| Rentabil | 0.674300 | | |
| Numeren | 0.820400 | | |
| Cuotamer | 0.683500 | | |
| Rentb03 | 0.703600 | | |
| Num03 | 0.669600 | | |
| Cuota03 | 0.596900 | | |

Source: authors' own compilation.

To evaluate the discriminant validity we check whether the average variance extracted (AVE) of the construct is greater than the square of the correlations between that construct and the rest that make up the research model (Fornell and Lacker, 1981), which tells us that one construct is different from any other. To make the calculation procedure more practical, we carry out the inverse procedure.

**Table 5: Discriminant validity**

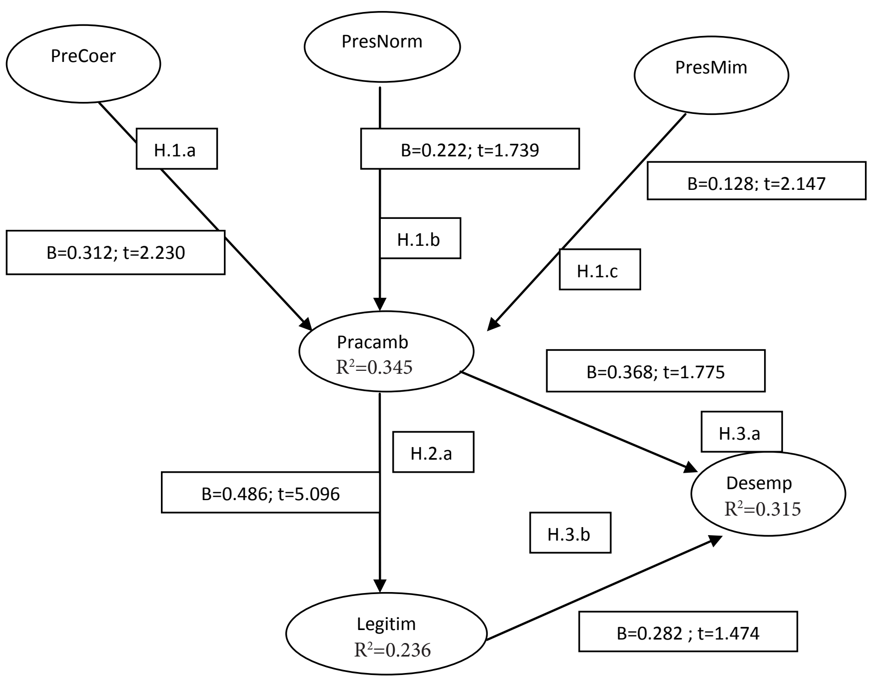
| *Constructs* | PresCoer | PresNorm | PresMim | Pracamb | Legtimi | Desemp |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PresCoer | *0.733* | | | | | |
| PresNorm | -0.382 | *0.761* | | | | |
| PresMim | -0.097 | 0.357 | *0.770* | | | |
| Pracamb | -0.425 | 0.444 | 0.397 | *0.759* | | |
| Legtimi | -0.312 | 0.633 | 0.411 | 0.486 | *0.780* | |
| Desemp | -0.464 | 0.207 | 0.135 | 0.505 | 0.461 | *0.711* |

Source: authors' own compilation.

*5.1.2. Structural model*

The path coefficients between the different constructs are reflected in figure 2, which tells us, as already commented, the strength of the relationships established between them:

**Figure 2: Path coefficients of the model of research**



As can be observed, all the path coefficients meet the condition proposed by Chin (1998), being higher than 0.2. In addition, the predictive power of the model that we have put forward can be analysed utilising the value of the variance explained (R2) for the dependent latent variables (Falk and Miller 1992; Chin, 1998; Leal and Roldán, 2001). Falk and Miller (1992) stipulate values that are equal to or larger than 0.1 as adequate for the variance explained, as in this model occurs.

**5.2. Simulations**

We share the opinion of Fatás and Roig (2004) that theory always organizes our knowledge and helps us to predict behaviour in new situations. However, in the traditional approach to economic research, as these authors argue, the observation of phenomena that occur naturally has been the only source of data available for stimulating the revision of existing theories. If the data relevant to an economic proposition were not directly observable in a natural economic setting, then the proposition would simply be left without the benefits of empirical testing. In recent years, however, experimental methods have given economists access to new sources of data, and have enlarged the set of economic propositions for which relevant data can be consulted (Fatás and Roig; 2004). In line with the above, we have carried out a simulation in the mechanisms of normative pressure, since these are the mechanisms of least impact in the original model, and based on the reasonable expectation that they will increase their institutional pressure in the near future. This simulation has consisted in altering the values of the indicators 10.5, 10.6 and 10.7, in two different scenarios: one of slight increase in normative pressure, reflected by the alteration by one positive point of those indicator values that were less than 5; and the other of a stronger increase in pressure, reflected by the alteration by two positive points of those indicator values that were less than 5.

We believe that, in addition to a legislative environment favourable to environmental responsibility, and with the existence of competitors that have already taken initiatives in this respect and are likely to be admired by the other golf courses as successful, it is necessary to study whether the golf courses of Andalusia perceive the implementation of sustainable environmental practices as an essential value shared with other members of the particular social context in which they are embedded. What we have to analyse is whether the golf courses perceive that society expects of them a certain line of proactive behaviour with respect to the natural environment, and whether society is holding them responsible for protecting that environment. A favourable normative context would lead companies to foster and adopt such measures, since these practices would be consistent with the standards, values and beliefs of society (Kostova and Roth, 2002).

Associated with professionalization, normative pressure is related to the normative pillar of Institutional Theory (Scott, 1995), which establishes social obligations that determine the behaviours expected of organisations. The importance is emphasized of the norms and standards that make up reality and the frameworks through which meanings are constructed. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) stress the importance of formal education, specialisation in university activities, and the establishment and growth of networks of professionals. The managers of organisations pay close attention to the institutionalised norms, standards and solutions relevant to their areas of business and their professional circles. In practice these patterns of behaviour are spread throughout activity sectors by key institutions that provide a forum for the exchange of information, establish standards, provide training and evaluate the success of practices in professional journals (Teo *et al*., 2003).

In the context of Spain, and more specifically in Andalusia, the importance of professional associations is different from that in North America, for example. However, it is true that in the last decade in the organizational field of the golf sub-sector, the existence of institutions of this type is being encouraged, whether of sectorial coverage or in training aspects. Institutional connections thus become a vehicle for spreading modes of management and/or novel measures in the environmental field. For these reasons it has been thought appropriate to introduce this simulation in our research model, with the object of capturing this natural tendency for the practices defined as normative to expand (by means of two scenarios, one of slight increases in the Likert scale scores of the normative indicators represented in table III, and another of bigger increases). In support of this experimental approach, it is noted that authors such as Garrod (1997), McGee (1998), Freeman *et al*. (2000) and Buysse and Verbeke (2003) consider that it is necessary to broaden the company's traditionally accepted strategic objective of creating value for the shareholders; they propose that the company accepts good environmental management as a corporate objective in response to the expectations and environmental pressures demonstrated by a variety of pressure groups very much broader than those represented by the shareholders, because the environmental impact of the company's operations is recognized as a key factor for the company's survival (Welford and Gouldson, 1993; Shrivastava, 1995; Stead and Stead, 1996; Fineman and Clarke, 1996; Rodríguez and Ricart, 1997; Berry and Rondinelli, 1998; and Henriques and Sadorsky, 1996).

### *5.2.1. Evaluation of the experimental measurement models*

In continuation, an analysis is given (table 6) of the principal statistics after submitting our initial research model to the simulations in the normative pressures previously commented.

**Table 6: Models of measurement with experimental simulation**

| Constructs | CURRENT SITUATION | | SCENARIO OF A 'MODEST' INCREASE | | SCENARIO OF A 'STRONG' INCREASE | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Composite reliability | AVE | Composite reliability | AVE | Composite reliability | AVE |
| PresNorm | 0.802031 | 0.579547 | 0.766511 | 0.624169 | 0.743115 | 0.657499 |
| PresCoer | 0.697582 | 0.537966 | 0.697582 | 0.537946 | 0.697639 | 0.537948 |
| PresMim | 0.744143 | 0.593380 | 0.744168 | 0.593405 | 0.744168 | 0.593416 |
| Pracamb | 0.915181 | 0.576204 | 0.915113 | 0.575941 | 0.915133 | 0.575959 |
| Legitimi | 0.885277 | 0.609760 | 0.872289 | 0.540332 | 0.872260 | 0.540302 |
| Desemp | 0.867587 | 0.505700 | 0.867450 | 0.485313 | 0.867423 | 0.485248 |

Source: authors' own compilation.

As can be observed there are gains in convergent validity, although the simulated models tell us that the indicators submitted to the simulation lose internal consistency, since the composite reliability is slightly lower in the simulated scenarios. In relation to the discriminant validity, it has been observed that each indicator of the constructs continues to be more closely related to its own construct than with the rest of the constructs. Therefore, it can be concluded that both simulated models improve the discriminant validity, compared with the initial model proposed.

**Table 7: Discriminant validity compared**

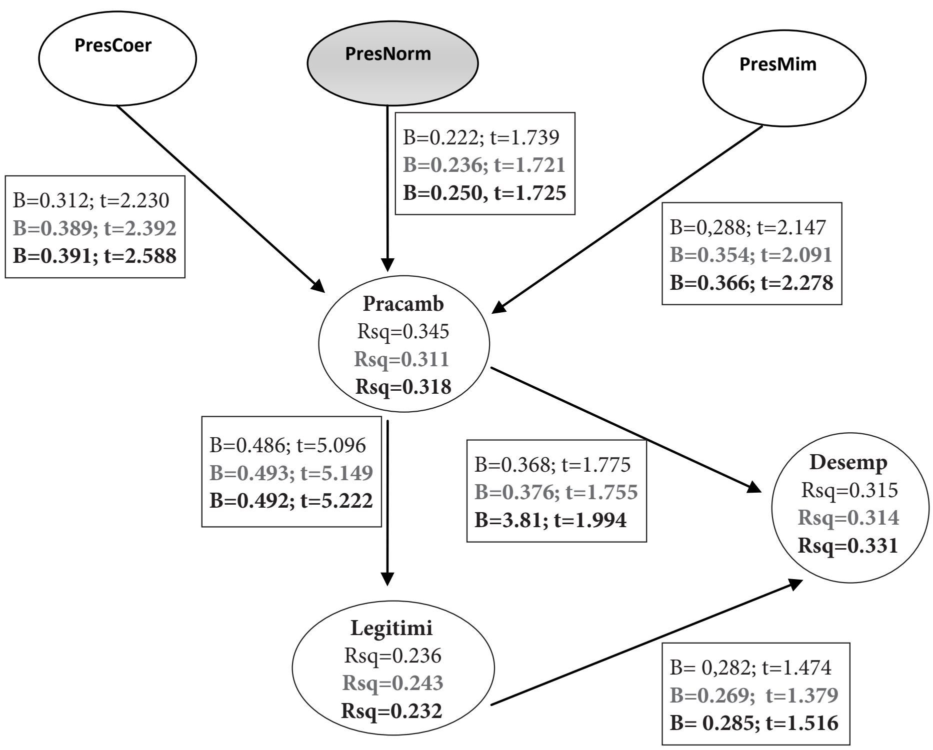
| Constructs | SCENARIO OF A 'MODEST' INCREASE | SCENARIO OF A 'STRONG' INCREASE |
|---|---|---|
| PresNorm (squared root of AVE's | 0.790 | 0.810 |
| Correlations with PresNorm | | |
| PresCoer | 0.436 | 0.120 |
| PresMim | 0.336 | 0.279 |
| Pracamb | 0.375 | 0.160 |
| Legitimi | 0.516 | 0.127 |
| Desemp | 0.169 | 0.160 |

Source: authors' own compilation.

*5.2.2. Evaluation of the structural models simulated*

In the following figure (3) a comparison can be observed of how our research model evolves when submitted to the two simulated scenarios for the mechanisms of normative pressure. As can be observed, all the path coefficients meet the condition proposed by Chin (1998), being higher than 0.2. In addition, the predictive power of the model that we have put forward can be analysed utilising the value of the variance explained ($R^2$) for the dependent latent variables (Falk and Miller 1992; Chin, 1998; Leal and Roldán, 2001). Falk and Miller (1992) stipulate values that are equal to or larger than 0.1 as adequate for the variance explained, as in this model occurs. The following table (8) gives the strength and the results of testing the hypotheses put forward in the scenarios that we have been contemplating:

**Figure 3: Structural models with experimental simulation in the normative pressures**




Source: authors' own elaboration.

Research model proposed.
Model with slight increase in normative pressures.
**Model with stronger increase in normative pressures.**

**Table 8: Testing and strength of the hypotheses**

| Hypotheses | Relationship between constructs | β Coefficients | Student-T test (bootstrap) | Level of significance and testing |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **H.1.a** | PresCoer->Pracamb | 0.312<br>0.389<br>**0.391** | 2.230**<br>2.392**<br>**2.588**** | **Accepted for a level of significance of P<0.05 in all the scenarios.** |
| **H.1.b** | PresNorm->Pracamb | 0.222<br>0.236<br>**0.250** | 1.739*<br>1.721*<br>**1.726*** | Accepted for a level of significance of P<0.1, rejected for more demanding levels of significance. |
| **H.1.c** | PresMim->Pracamb | 0.288<br>0.354<br>**0.366** | 2.147**<br>2.091**<br>**2.278**** | **Accepted for a level of significance of P<0.05 in all the scenarios.** |
| **H.2.a** | Pracamb->Legtimi | 0.486<br>0.493<br>**0.492** | 5.096***<br>5.149***<br>**5.222***** | **Accepted for a level of significance of P<0.001 in all the scenarios.** |
| **H.3** | Pracamb->Desemp | 0.368<br>0.376<br>**0.381** | 1.776*<br>1.755*<br>**1.994**** | **Accepted for a level of significance of P<0.05, in the scenario of stronger increase.** |
| **H.4.a** | Legtimi->Desemp | 0.282<br>0.269<br>**0.285** | 1.474*<br>1.379*<br>**1.516*** | Accepted for a level of significance of P<0.1, rejected for more demanding levels of significance, in all the scenarios. |

Levels of significance: *P<0.1; **P<0.05; ***P<0.001 (based on t(499) of two tails). Own elaboration.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The topic of this study is the business context in respect of environmental protection in which the golf courses of Andalusia operate. This is a business activity that is intimately linked to tourism, the principal source of income generation in this autonomous region. Although the Institutional Theory has been employed by several authors in the scientific literature to explain the reasons for the behaviour of companies in respect of the natural environment (Hoffman and Ventresca, 2002; Campbell, 2007; Melville, 2010), there are few studies on companies that serve the tourism sector. In this line we can conclude that the institutional environment in respect of environmental protection in which the golf courses of Andalusia operate, conditions and influences how they pursue environmentally responsible practices. This conclusion is based on the non-rejection of hypotheses H1a, H1c, H2a and H3a that we put forward in our research model, both for the starting situation that corresponds to the real situation now, and for the two scenarios that we have presented for the potential future evolution of the normative context.

We observe that the hypothesis referring to the normative pressures (H1b) is rejected in the starting situation; this makes it interesting to study the evolution in future scenarios in which the scores of the items that constitute the "normative pressures" construct are strengthened.

The coercive pressures are the mechanisms that show the greatest capacity to influence the behaviour of these organizations in environmental matters. For the golf courses of Andalusia, therefore, knowledge of and compliance with the applicable legal regulations represent key elements for maintaining and improving their social acceptance or legitimacy. These propositions are in line with studies such as those of Buysse and Verbeke (2003), Antón *et al*. (2004), and Telle and Larsson, (2007).

The protagonism of pressures of this type is maintained in the scenarios that we have put forward in which we strengthen the values of the normative pressures. As we understand it, this is because in recent years the Regional Government (Junta de Andalucía) has made notable efforts to develop a comprehensive regulatory framework aimed at ensuring the environmental sustainability of the region as a tourist destination. In fact, it is a topic of complaint that the wide-ranging environmental legislation to which the region's golf courses are subject requires them to devote equally great efforts to keep up-to-date with respect to all the legal dispositions that are applicable to them.

In relation to the normative pressures, we have made an analytical simulation of their possible future evolution, as described in the analysis of data of the present paper. It is fairly unusual to find studies that experiment with institutional contexts and simulate different scenarios for the evolution of pressures. From this simulation, which affects hypothesis H1b, we can conclude that, when the construct of the normative pressures is submitted to moderate and strong variations of the items that comprise it, the model does not vary substantially: the coercive pressures continue to be the factor that has the most influence on the behaviour in respect of conserving the natural environment. We believe that the large number of legal standards for environmental protection that affect golf course operators studied counteracts the effect of the normative mechanisms, because these environmental standards also have a formal component that can be linked with certain legal obligations. This result leads us to conclude that, in the medium term, the mechanisms of normative pressure in the sector of the golf courses of Andalusia will not be one of the principal motivations that drive sustainable practices by organizations of this type. These conclusions differ from those presented in the studies of Palmer *et al.*, 1993; Henriques and Sardosky, 1996; King and Lenox, 2001; Florida and Davison, 2001; and Raines, 2002, on the capacity of this type of mechanism to influence the environmental behaviour of companies, although in different sectors and from a non-dynamic perspective.

It is believed, therefore, that the normative pressures in this organizational field are still in the phase of diffusion and are not yet fully established in the sector. In fact, our model reveals that the impact of the normative pressures on the implementation of environmental practices is not statistically significant. This is despite the finding that the adoption of a policy of social responsibility in respect of environmental protection brings with it an improvement of social legitimacy, if we consider the institutional environment as a whole. This finding is reflected in the acceptance of the corresponding hypothesis (H2a) in all the scenarios (real and simulated). We therefore find ourselves aligned with the propositions put forward in the studies of Scott (2001) and Strong *et al.* (2001).

The testing of hypothesis H3a requires special attention. It seems clear that, as the normative pressures for environmental protection gain weight in the institutional context of an organizational field with strong legal regulations, the positive relationship argued by many authors (Williams et al., 1993; Worrell *et al.*, 1995; Cordeiro and Sarkis, 1997; Claver and Molina, 2000; Del Brio and Junquera, 2001; Peris and Marquina, 2002; Aragón and Sharma, 2003; Al-Tuwaijin, 2004; Ann *et al.*, 2006; Garcés et al., 2006; García and Armas, 2007; and Piñero *et al.*, 2009) between environmental responsibility and organizational performance is reinforced.

With respect to the last hypothesis put forward in our research model (H4a), it is shown that golf courses do not believe that better levels of social legitimacy lead to better levels of organisational performance; because of this finding, we can add weight to the propositions that, for organisations of this type, a better way to gain social acceptance and improve their performance is to comply with the ruling environmental legislation.

The present study is not free of limitations. The size of the sample, in both geographic and sectorial scope, together with the possibility that respondents introduced subjective views in the information provided, limit the possible generalizations that might be obtained from the conclusions. Thus, the application of other more confirmatory techniques would be justified and would be advisable. We consider this last limitation as a possible line for future research, complemented by the use of a larger sample.

### 6.1. Implications for the Tourism Management of Golf Courses

In recent years, government at the national, regional and local levels has made a determined effort to transmit an image of environmental sustainability for Spain's tourist destinations, which has meant that there has been government intervention on environmental matters by way of legislation. As a result every company associated with the tourism sector is obliged to be aware of and understand in detail a wide range of laws and standards issued by the government at all levels. This obligation is even more pressing for the companies that operate golf courses, given the negative connotations that arise from the construction of these facilities. This obligation inevitably involves the need to comply with these regulations so as to avoid possible sanctions and not suffer competitive disadvantage vis-à-vis the rest of the sector. To sum up, in today's business climate, the best way for golf course operators to maintain and increase their levels of social acceptance and legitimacy is still by complying with the law on environmental matters, even more than the implementation of voluntary standards and norms.

In this regard, mimesis (i.e. imitation of other operators' practices) has been also shown to be an effective means for reducing the uncertainties associated with any environmental innovation. In addition, as operators gain more experience of collaborating with others under the auspices of professional associations of the golf sector linked with the tourism sector, the standards and regulations in respect of measures required for environmental protection will become consolidated as recommended and accepted "best practices".

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# THE DESTINATION IS WHERE I LIVE! RESIDENTS' PERCEPTION OF TOURISM IMPACTS

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**ABSTRACT**

The main purpose of this paper is to understand how residents perceive tourism impacts. Based on the review of the literature in the area of tourism, in particular with regard to its development and to the residents' perceptions and attitudes towards this phenomenon, we studied the case of the municipality of Loulé, a privileged area of the tourist destination Algarve. The study adopts the residents' point of view, a perspective still with much to explore when it comes to tourism. It analyses the relationship between variables such as the perception of social, economic, cultural and environmental impacts in people's personal lives and in the area of residence, type and frequency of contact with tourism, professional and economic dependence on tourism and demographic characteristics. The results show that although residents identify, as the literature suggests, negative impacts of tourism, in general, they also acknowledge the importance of the tourism development in their area of residence and in their personal lives. It is noted that residents perceive tourism impacts differently according to professional and economic dependence on tourism activity, the proximity of the place of residence to the main tourist area and the frequency and type of contact with tourism. Demographic factors are not the most significant in explaining the perception of tourism impacts. The results of the study reinforce the importance of considering the residents' perceptions vis-à-vis the tourism as a decisive factor in the sustainable development of tourism destinations, being thus residents one of the key stakeholders in the context of a holistic and integrated approach to tourism planning and development.

Keywords: Residents, Tourism, Perceptions, Tourism destinations

JEL Classification: O21, R10

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Many consider tourism as an extraordinary means for developing a place. In many cases this is a viable and strategic way of renewal and creation of new local economic and social dynamics. In a context in which emerges the demand for new experiences and tourist areas, is truly important that local authorities responsible for developing territories are able to, simultaneously, satisfy the expectations of tourists and the residents' needs. However, despite the planning effort for a more sustainable development and an increased awareness for residents' perceptions and attitudes towards the tourism development in their place of residence, it remains that the perspective of residents is overlooked in favor of the common good and investors' interests.

There is a scientific and academic growing interest in studying the residents' attitudes and perceptions vis-à-vis tourism and the importance of these to heighten the attractiveness of destinations. However, there is still an immense field of study to explore regarding, on the one hand, the real influence of residents in tourist development and, on the other, the perception of influence of tourism on their lives. This paper explores this latter perspective, focusing on residents' perceptions, the influence of tourism on their personal lives and in the area of residence, identifying benefits and costs associated with tourism development. The literature review conducted in this study focuses in tourism development and in the residents' perceptions and attitudes. It emphasizes the perspectives of geography, psychology and sociology. This paper explores the main concepts and theories on the study of residents' perceptions of tourism. The main characteristics of the population and the territory considered for the case study, the municipality of Loulé, are briefly presented. The methodology adopted in the study and the main conclusions arising from the analysis of data obtained with the questionnaire application to a sample of Loulé residents are also described.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of tourism is increasingly associated with its multifaceted character and its multidisciplinary dimensions. In the context of this paper it is important to clarify, in particular, concepts related to tourism development, tourism destinations, residents' perceptions and attitudes, issues related to processes and social relations, especially between residents and tourists, the tourism impact on destinations and local communities, the processes of exchange and change, acculturation and lifestyles.

The tourism, more than any other social phenomenon, noticeably transforms places. These changes are faster and more pronounced than in areas where there is no tourism practice. Given this, it is important to understand how the residents perceive tourism phenomenon and how they recognise the importance of it in their lives. In fact, there is a controversy on how this development benefits people, regions and countries, and the very concept of development is strongly debated. On the one hand, public bodies try to create or improve the infrastructure and basic services such as education and health, to the local populations. On the other hand, the private sector, usually concerned with its own business and profit, often does not adopt a long-term preventive attitude of negative impacts. Nonprofit organizations usually dedicated to local development, especially in areas with low population density and socio-economic problems, assume an increasingly active role. Finally, we have residents more aware and increasingly concerned about the consequences of development in their lives. Although it is the group which endures the positive or negative consequences of tourist development, it is rarely involved in the planning and development process of its region. It then becomes necessary to understand the concept of development and apply it to the reality of the residents in tourism destinations and to their local and particular characteristics. In this context, the participation and the assessment of residents' perception of tourism impact can be useful for predicting and evaluating more complex impacts (Dean and Wu, 1979).

The literature suggests that tourism brings more benefits than disadvantages, both to tourism destinations and to residents, but in order to achieve a sustainable development it emphasizes the relevance of the participation of all stakeholders. This idea appears in the definition of the World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2004), which states that the sustainable tourism development entails the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects, and it takes a proper balance between these three dimensions to ensure its long-term sustainability.

Communities often envisage tourism as a way of improving their quality of life, thus they tend to encourage its development (Andereck *et al*., 2005; Gursoy and Rutherford, 2004; Lindberg *et al*., 1997; Pizam, 1978; Uriely and Reichel, 2002). It is also recognised that the activity has negative impacts, such as lifestyle, cultural and environmental changes and most studies highlight differences in the resident' attitudes according to the level of development of tourism and with the type and frequency of relationship with tourism. As Pizam (1978) notices, there is evidence that a large amount of tourism activity leads to a negative attitude from residents towards tourism and tourists.

The sustainable development of tourism and its relationship with the residents' attitudes is a topic of great interest to many authors (e. g. Allen *et al*., 1988; Andereck and Vogt, 2000; Carmichael, 2000; Gursoy and Rutherford, 2004; Jurowski *et al*., 1997; Ko and Stewart, 2002; Lindberg and Johnson, 1997; Perdue *et al*., 1987). Some of these authors refer themselves to the social exchange theory (Homans, 1961), recognizing that people evaluate the costs and benefits of establishing trade relations with others and that this fact is important in the residents/ tourists relationship. Taking into consideration the social exchange theory, and according to Turner (1986), residents who perceive the current or potential value of tourism believing that the costs associated with its development do not exceed the benefits, are more open to changes and endure better the necessary efforts to foster tourism development. Also Skidmore (1975) states that individuals engage in changes if the perceived benefits are greater than the costs and that they will put up with the development effort more effectively. The same situation is expressed by the model proposed by Jurowski (1994) which shows that the residents' attitude vis-à-vis tourism is influenced by economic, social and environmental perceived impacts. The author states that these perceptions are influenced by economic gain perceptions, the level of use of resources and the attitudes adopted by tourists towards environmental preservation.

Issues relating to the development of tourism destinations (Butler, 1980; Doxey, 1976; Perdue *et al*., 1990) are frequently addressed in the literature. Butler (1980) describes the development of a tourism destination by identifying the steps that occur over time and to which he associates a number of different tourists seeking the same destination: exploration, involvement, development, consolidation and stagnation. That idea is also expressed in Doxey's theory (1976). The author emphasizes the importance and the difference in the residents' attitudes according to the stage of development of the tourism destination. Doxey argues that the residents' attitudes tend to be more positive during the early stages, but become increasingly negative as the destination evolves into stagnation. However, Lepp (2006) warns that in destinations where there is no prior knowledge of tourism, it can be received with distrust, anxiety and fear, at an early stage. Dogan (1989) also alludes to the importance of the level of tourism development, when he says that among communities where tourism is in the initial stage the residents' attitude tend to be more homogeneous. The author states that as a destination matures, several adjustments arise and the success or failure of those adjustments influences the residents' attitudes emerging among them differentiated feelings.

In this study, the assessment of the perception of tourism impacts will be carried out taking into account the impacts more frequently studied in the literature about tourism (Akis *et al*., 1996; Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Jurowski, 1994), the social, the cultural, the economic and the environmental ones, according to the sustainable tourism development definition presented by the World Tourism Organization and aforementioned.

The literature suggests, as central and unanimously accepted ideas by many authors, that tourism is a way to improve communities' quality of life to the extent that, for example, it creates employment opportunities, promotes the infrastructure and allows contacts with different cultures. However, it is also unanimously acknowledged the negative tourism impacts, such as increased traffic, crime or undesirable activities or changes in residents' lifestyle. Residents clearly perceive investment resultant from the tourism development and its advantages in terms of local economy, but at the same time, they acknowledge the increase in the cost of living (Andereck and Vogt, 2000; Andereck *et al*., 2005; Ap and Crompton, 1993; Akis *et al*., 1996; Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Dyer, 2007; Gursoy and Rutherford, 2004; Jurowski *et al*., 1997; Perdue *et al*., 1987). In this context, several authors investigated these perceptions and based on Social Exchange Theory they explain residents' perceptions and differentiated attitudes vis-à-vis tourism (Ap, 1992; Jurowski, 1994; Lindberg *et al*., 1997). For Jurowski *et al*. (1997: 3) "the analysis demonstrate that potential for economic gain, use of the tourism resources, ecocentric attitude, and attachment to the community, affect resident perception of the impacts and modify both directly and indirectly, resident support for tourism".

There are also important theoretical efforts to understand the residents' attitudes and their link to behaviour (Lepp, 2006). Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) based on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). TRA is a tiered model, which states that the behaviour is influenced by the behavioural intention. In turn, the behavioural intention is influenced by attitudes and subjective norms, and both are influenced by beliefs.

The proximity of residence to the main tourist area is one of the factors studied recurrently in the literature and it is important to understand residents' attitudes and perceptions (Gursoy and Rutherford, 2004; Jurowski and Gursoy, 2004; Lankford, 1997; Sheldon and Var, 1984; Sheldon and Abenoja, 2001). Belisle and Hoy (1980) identify positive and negative impacts perceived by residents, considering the hypothesis that perception varies according to the distance from place of residence to the tourist area and the socio-economic status. The authors conclude that, in effect, the distance influences significantly the perception of tourism impact, although, in all groups, residents recognise direct and indirect benefits of tourism. These authors point out, similarly to the idea abovementioned, that an early stage of tourism development may contribute to a positive attitude towards this phenomenon.

Gursoy and Rutherford (2004) also explored the effect of distance from tourist attractions on residents' attitudes and perceptions and propose a model based on Social Exchange Theory (based on cost assessment / perceived benefits and the state of local economy). The distance from the area of residence to the tourism attractions unveils a significant effect on how the costs and benefits are perceived and evaluated. The observed relationship reveals that those who live closer feel that an increase in the number of tourists can negatively impact their ability to use those same tourism attractions. For Lankford (1997) these are the residents who are more concerned with the possibility of increased traffic congestion, crime, garbage, noise and the cost of living.

The residents more sensitive to environmental issues and living closer to the tourist area seem to be more likely to support the tourism than those with similar environmental attitudes but living in a medium distance. Jurowski's (1994) study reveals that the ecocentric attitudes have a positive effect when it comes to endorse the cultural and historical tourism, but negative towards other forms of tourism. The results of the study of Sheldon and Var (1984) reinforces this theory, since it shows that residents who live in higher-density areas are more likely to have positive attitudes towards tourism, favouring this activity to the detriment of others.

The frequency of contact with tourists and working or not in the tourism sector and being economically dependent on it are two other relevant indicators to the understanding of the residents' attitudes and perceptions (Akis *et al*., 1996; Sheldon and Var, 1984). The studies generally confirm the existence of a relationship between individuals' economic dependence on tourism and their attitude (Brunt and Courtney, 1999; Pizam, 1978) showing that the ones working in tourism are more favourable to its development.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

In this research, which begins with a literature review and secondary data collection on the theme and territory under study, the adopted methodology is both of a qualitative and quantitative nature. Thus, in a first phase, exploratory research was conducted in the municipality of Loulé. The primary data collection used the method of triangulation, which permits the comparison of the information obtained through the application of three techniques. In this case, exploratory semi-structured interviews, participant observation and collection of documentation were used. Concurrently with the review of the literature, the exploratory phase was determinant for designing the questionnaire to be applied to residents of the municipality of Loulé.

Semi-structured exploratory interviews were conducted with opinion leaders, including the presidents of parish councils and non-profit associations, some local businesses and residents who perform these roles in the area under study. Not all the interviews were recorded on audio or video since many respondents were not comfortable with the situation. In those cases, a more casual conversation was conducted and the ideas presented were written down. Respondents were asked questions about tourism in general, about their relationship with the phenomenon, their expectations and perceived impact and about the advantages and/or disadvantages of tourism in personal terms and in the area of residence, taking into account the various types of impacts.

Participant observation, the other technique used in the exploratory phase, was held intermittently in the territory and in time. The choice of moments for observation stemmed from the intention, on the one hand, to observe the daily life of residents, and, on the other hand, to observe special situations in which contact between residents and tourists occurs and assumes noteworthy characteristics.

The third technique employed at this early stage was the collection of information on the site. It proved to be very useful since it allowed to reconcile the information obtained from the interviews and participant observation and to articulate it with the theoretical framework and secondary data.

The second phase of the research consisted of questionnaire designing, testing and application to a sample of 1049 residents of Portuguese nationality, with 18 years or more, in the eleven parishes of the County of Loulé, distributed by the three main areas of the Algarve region – Serra (the mountains), Barrocal (the region between the mountains and the coast) and Litoral (the coast). The stratified sampling was used on account of the disproportion in the littoral/interior distribution of the population and the different stages of tourism development in each region. As in many other studies, a five-point Likert scale was used. Residents were asked to respond by evaluating the level of importance and/or satisfaction with regard to certain factors presented.

Data analysis was performed using the SPSS statistical analysis program (Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version 19) which allowed the characterization of the sample through the use of measures of location and dispersion (Pestana and Gageiro, 2003) and its subsequent presentation in tables or graphs. To compare the percentages of responses from respondents in relation to the indicators used for each variable, were taken into consideration frequencies, mode and the median, given the nature of ordinal variables used (Smith, 2010). In this context, some categories were grouped to enhance the perception of the level of agreement or disagreement.

## 4. CASE STUDY

The Algarve is internationally one of the best-known tourist destinations in Europe. Since the 1960s this region in southern Portugal has been successful as a 'Sun and beach' destination. Over the last decade, Algarve has also been internationally renowned as a golf destination. According to the Plano Estratégico Nacional para o Turismo (ME, 2006:6) in order to differentiate it from other competitive destinations, the country should invest on key factors such as "Climate and light", "History, culture and tradition", "Hospitality" and "Concentrated diversity" and on elements that bring value to Portugal in the context of tourists' options – "Modern authenticity", "Safety and Competitive quality".

The municipality of Loulé occupies a central geographic position in the region of the Algarve and is notable for its wide array of tourism attractions and accommodation. The municipality features a great geographic, economic, social and environmental diversity and there are differentiated levels of tourism development in coastal zones (high concentration of tourism) and the interior (the Barrocal, where tourism begins to emerge and the Serra, where tourism activities are virtually non- existent). In fact, the Litoral (coast), besides beautiful landscapes and the variety of natural resources, has the highest concentration of tourism services (attractions, accommodation, catering, services and transport) and the highest permanent and floating population density. Most people are employed in the tertiary sector and, to a large extent, in tourism. The population welcomes and integrates people of various nationalities and cultures, both tourists and foreign residents. The native population coexists with foreign residents, who settled in this territory on account of more job opportunities and tourists of different origins. In the Barrocal, the area between the coast and the mountains, the tourism is emerging. This zone is characterized by traditional activities linked to agriculture and animal husbandry, with most residents working on the coast or in the cities of Loulé and Faro, many of them in the tourism sector. The Serra is scarcely populated and is almost unexplored in terms of tourism. This territory faces desertification and its characteristic socio-economic activities are exploitation of cork and animal husbandry, the production of traditional cheeses, cured sausages and honey production.

**Figure 1: Geographic location of the Algarve and the municipality of Loulé**


Source: CML (2012)

Currently the Algarve and the municipality of Loulé invest on diversification of tourism products such as Meetings and Incentives, nature tourism and cultural tourism, in an attempt to attract tourists from other source markets and other types of demand.

As Vaz and Campos (2013) point out, studies on the municipalities are arduous due to the extension of the territory and its diversity in demographic terms and in terms of tourism demand. In this context, it becomes even more relevant to figure out how residents perceive the tourism development and how their opinions and interests contribute to this growth and to improve their quality of life.

The results of the exploratory research match the literature suggestions that there seems to be a consistently positive attitude regarding tourism development, a positive perception of tourism as a way to develop the area of residence, an increasing environmental awareness, especially towards scarce resources such as water, a greater ability to accept the tourism development when the residents do not negatively perceive tourism impact in their area, a positive assessment of the economic and social benefits of tourism, different perceptions according to the different levels of tourism development in the areas of residence, with the distance from the main tourist area in relation to the residence, with the incidence of contact with tourists, with tourism and economic dependence, with personal factors, such as number of years of residence, age or qualifications (Allen *et al*., 1993; Andereck, 1995; Butler, 1980; Gursoy *et al*., 2002; Jurowski and Gursoy, 2004; Jurowski *et al*., 1997; Lankford, 1994; Lindberg and Johnson, 1997; Liu *et al*., 1987; Maitheson and Wall, 1982; Pizam, 1978; Plog, 2001; Sheldon and Var, 1984; Smith, 1992; Weaver and Lawton, 2001).

### 4.1. Sample Characterization

A univariate analysis was performed taking into account gender, age, marital status, place of birth, the parish of residence, the number of years living on the place, educational qualifications, employment status, house ownership, average monthly household income, professional activity of the element that most contributes to the household income. A bivariate analysis was also carried out to determine the relationship between the respondents' characteristics and the frequency and type of contact with tourism.

It is possible to observe that the residents sample is almost equally divided between men (49.6%) and women (50.4%) aged 18 to 87 years (average age of 43.3 years). Most of the residents are married (64.7%), while 23.6% are single, 7.7% are divorced and 3.9% are widowed. Almost half of the residents (47.7%) have secondary or college or higher educational qualifications. In the sample, it is noteworthy the reduced number of illiterates (1.1%). Regarding employment, the majority of the respondents work (64.3%), whilst the proportion of pensioners is 14.6% and 9.9% are unemployed. Most residents work in the service sector, while 73.8% is related to the tourism sector and 73.6% to commerce. Of those interviewed, 71.8% own their home, 16.1% live in a rented house and 6.1% share a house. As for the household, 69.0% of respondents live with a spouse/partner, 34.3% with children under age 18 and 20.7% claim to have adult children still living at home; respondents' average monthly income ranges from €451 to €1 800 (66.6%) and only 3% of residents stated that they average monthly income exceeded the €3 600.

The majority of respondents were born outside the Algarve (38.3%), but the percentage of those who live in the parish where they were born is also high (34.1%). The number of years of residence in the parish range from 1 to 85 years, corresponding to an average of 28.3. The number of years of residence in the municipality reaches an average of 32.25 years. It is noteworthy that in the parishes of Loulé there are significant differences in the distribution of the population. The majority of residents live in Quarteira (27.3%), followed by São Clemente (24.3%), Almancil (14.9%) and São Sebastião (11.3%). These parishes are located on the coast (Quarteira and Almancil) or are urban parishes (São Clemente and São Sebastião). The remaining parishes represent less than 10,0% of residents and the parish of Ameixial represents only 1,0% of respondents.

When asked about the frequency of contact with tourists, in any of the situations presented (special events, work-related situations, situations of leisure and day-to-day situations), the majority of respondents admit a sporadic contact with tourists. Considering this frequency of sporadic contact, the situations that reveal a higher percentage of responses are the "special events" (59.0%) and the "leisure" situations (53.0%). About the contact between residents and tourists in work-related situations, 32.9% of residents affirm never to contact with tourists and 15.6% admit daily contact.

**4.2. Relationship with tourism**

An inferential oriented approach sought to assess the statistical significance of relationships between variables in the sample description. The analysis of the relationship between variables was performed by Pearson's Chi-square test of independence, which tests the null hypothesis of absence of a dependency relationship between two variables. In this paper stands out the studied relations which are statistically significant and, simultaneously, related to the main dimensions referred to in the literature and resulting from the exploratory research, including interviews with stakeholders.

With regard to the frequency and type of contact with tourists, all respondents of each age group claim to contact sporadically with tourists on special events (percentages above 60%). However, are the younger who say to contact often with tourists in this kind of events (responses of more than 13% for age groups up to age 44) and respondents in upper age groups (age 45 and over) present percentages of answers above 20% in the option relating to the non-existence of contact with tourists.

With regard to work-related situations, 31.2% of respondents from 25 to 34- year-old age group say to contact often with tourists. Among respondents aged 45 to 54, 29.4% admit doing so, as well as 28.2% of those who are in the age group of 35-44. It can be verified that are the older age groups who say never to contact with tourists (41.7% from 55 to 64-year-old age group, and 59.1% of respondents age 65 and over). Such high percentages of residents of these two age groups responding that never contact with tourism can be explained by the fact that most of these individuals are already retired and therefore have less contacts outside the familial environment or maybe because they do not work in tourism-related areas.

With regard to leisure situations, the highest percentage of responses focuses, for all age groups, in sporadic contact with tourists (61.4%). The percentage of respondents who never mention contact with tourists in these situations is 25.0% and only 13.6% say to contact frequently in leisure situations. These data can reveal that the residents' leisure situations are experienced with their families and friends, in an environment probably not attended by tourists.The residents' answers about contact with tourists in everyday situations are somehow distinct from those relating to leisure situations. Although, overall, the highest percentage (55.0%) is on the sporadic contact with tourists, only 17.6% refer never to contact daily with them. On the contrary, 27.1% admits a higher frequency of contact with tourists. However, it is to be noted that respondents in the age groups of 55-64 and age 65 and over, unlike other age groups, present higher percentages of responses on the option in which they assume never to contact with tourists (21.8% and 33.3% respectively).

The highest percentages of frequency of contact with tourists (over 30%) are in the 25 to 54-year-old age groups. This can be associated with the fact that these residents represent the active population and possibly for this reason, even in everyday situations, they contact more often with tourists due to a wider network of contacts, resulting from their professional activity.

The analysis of residents' frequency of contact with tourists in special events, taking into account the education level of the former, show that 79.8% of respondents with college or higher educational qualifications contact sporadically with tourists. This is also the option with higher percentages of response for residents with other educational levels (illiterate: 75.0%; elementary: 63.7%; secondary: 65.8%). In relation to work-related situations, only the illiterate have a high percentage of responses stating that they never contact with tourists (66.7%). For the remaining cases, residents refer to contact sporadically with tourists (47.8% for respondents with college or higher educational level; 43.4% with secondary or vocational level and 40.2% with elementary education level). These data suggest that, effectively, the higher the educational level the higher is the contact with tourists in a work context. It is recognised that individuals with college or higher educational qualifications tend to work more in the tertiary sector and, therefore, it is natural to have more contact with tourists than individuals working in the primary or secondary sectors.

A high percentage of respondents with college or higher educational level (71.8%) recognise to contact sporadically with tourists in leisure situations, 63.4% of residents with secondary or vocational educational level and 54.0% of residents with elementary education choose this option to better express their relationship with the tourist. On the contrary, 50.0% of illiterates recognise never to contact with tourists in leisure situations and 41.7% say that they do it from time to time. Thus, there is more contact between residents and tourists on leisure situations for residents with college or higher qualifications, what suggests that the choices of these residents in terms of leisure and recreational activities are closer to the choices of tourists, and there is, therefore, a greater socio-cultural proximity.

As regards to the residents' contact with tourists in everyday situations, 34.2% of respondents with vocational or secondary educational level and 27.8% with college or higher education say to contact often with tourists. However, most respondents say they contact sporadically with tourists: 62.7% with college or higher education, 54.7% with elementary educational level and 51.2% with vocational or secondary educational level. This reinforces the previous data-crossing, noting that, in fact, higher qualifications tend to increase contact with tourists also in daily life, possibly because the everyday spaces are the same as the ones the tourists experience.

While crossing respondents' answers regarding the frequency of contact with tourists in special events, with their professional activity, it turns out that the highest values are associated with sporadic contact with tourists (Agriculture/fishing/industry, with 71.4%; Tourism with 65.6%; commerce with 61.6%, and Security and other services with 73.6%). Another aspect to highlight is that the second highest percentage is the option: frequent contact with tourists (26.2% of individuals who work in the primary or secondary sectors and 21.4% of those who work in tourism). However, among respondents who work in commerce, only 14.1% declare to contact with tourists on special events and 24.2% responded "never", followed by 17.0% of those working in security and other services.

With reference to contact with tourists in work-related situation the percentages of those who say that they do it frequently are: 73.8% of respondents who work in tourism, 46.5% of those who work in commerce and 35.7% of those who work in agriculture, fishing or industry. As expected, residents who have a tourism related-job or in areas directly associated with it, such as commerce, contact more often with tourists.

The frequency of contact with tourists in leisure situations in relation to the various areas of activity show that 54.1% of respondents who work in tourism, contact sporadically with tourists, whilst 32.8% do it frequently. Only 13.1% of those individuals assume never to contact with tourists. On the contrary, in other areas of activity, the number of those who never interact with tourists is substantially higher. Actually, that is the case of individuals who work in the primary and secondary sectors (35.7%), 27.3% of those who work in commerce and 21.2% of residents who work in other services. It should be noted, however, that in all professional activities the answer "sporadically" has the highest percentages. In professional activities associated to tourism a higher percentage is observed (32.8%).

With regard to everyday situations, 63.9% of residents who have a tourism related-job admit to frequently contact tourists and 26.2% say that they do it sporadically. The percentages of respondents who work in commerce are more balanced among those who claim to contact with tourists frequently (45.5%) and sporadically (44.4%). On the contrary, respondents who work in agriculture/fishing/industry or on security and other services, 57.1% and 58.6% respectively, say that they contact sporadically with tourists. One can clearly associate a greater contact between residents and tourists in everyday situations among those working in the tourism sector or in areas directly related to tourism, such as commerce.

### 4.3. Perceptions on tourism impact

One of the most important steps in this research is to identify indicators to measure each variable and its relation with the residents' perception of tourism impacts. The variables and indicators used in this study are presented in table 1.

**Table 1: Variables and indicators of research**

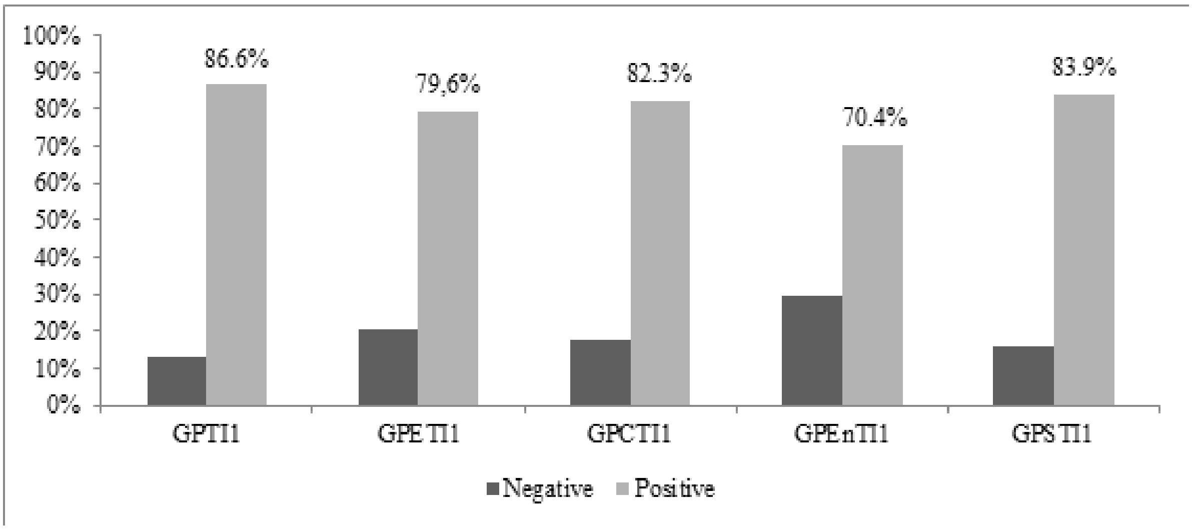
| **Variable: Global Perception of Tourism Impacts** | **Variable: Perception of Environmental Tourism Impacts (EnTI)** |
|---|---|
| GPTI1 – Global perception of tourism impacts | EnTIp1 – Restriction of the number of free access areas |
| GPETI1 – Global perception of economic tourism impacts | EnTIp2 – Outdoor life promotion |
| GPSTI1 – Global perception of social tourism impacts | EnTIp3 – Increase in environmental concerns |
| GPCTI1 – Global perception of cultural tourism impacts | EnTIr1 – Contribution for the area embellishment |
| GPEnTI1 – Global perception of environmental tourism impacts | EnTIr2 – Contribution to environmental preservation |
| **Variable: Perception of Economic Tourism Impacts (ETI)** | EnTIr3 – Increase in traffic problems |
| ETIp1 – Increase in income | EnTIr4 – Destruction of ecosystems |
| ETIp2 – Improvement in living standards | EnTIr5 – Increase in pollution |
| ETIr1 – Increase in employment opportunities | **Perception of Cultural Tourism Impacts (CTI)** |
| ETIr2 – Increase in investment and entrepreneurship | CTIp1 – Increase of knowledge of other cultures |
| ETIr3 – Increase of cost of living | CTIp2 – Increase of knowledge of local culture |
| ETIr4 – Increase of fees and taxes | CTIp3 – Development of language skills |
| ETIr5 - Difficulty in developing other economic activities | CTIp4 – Motivation to study more and/or improve occupational skills |
| **Variable: Perception of Social Tourism Impacts (STI)** | CTIr1 – Increase in services availability and cultural activities |
| STIp1 – Increase of chances to interact with different people | CTIr2 – Increase in residents' demand for cultural activities |
| STIp2 – Lifestyle changes | CTIr3 – Increase of residents' knowledge of other cultures |
| STIp3 – Strengthening of social ties within the community | CTIr4 – Local identity assertion |
| STIp4 – Increase of sense of pride for the community | CTIr5 – Local tradition changes |
| STIp5 – Increase of sense of community belonging | CTIr6 – Community values changes |
| STIp6 - Decrease of tranquillity | CTIr7 – Contribution to heritage preservation and promotion |
| STIr1 – Improvement of infrastructures | |
| STIr2 – Increase in services availability | |
| STIr3 – Increase in recreational activities offer | |
| STIr4 – Increase of residents' demand for recreational activities | |
| STIr5 – Improvement of public security | |
| STIr6 – Increase of residents' participation in local level decisions | |
| STIr7 – Increase in the sense of pride and community belonging | |
| STIr8 – Residents' lifestyle changes | |
| STIr9 – Increase of residents' demand for training | |
| STIr10 – Increase of illegal activities | |

Source: Own work

For a better visualization of respondents' answers, the obtained results are displayed in graphics and, when appropriate, some of the response categories are grouped. In the question about the global perceptions of tourism impacts were grouped the negative levels ("very negative" and "somewhat negative") and positive levels ("positive," "very positive" and "extremely positive"). For the remaining questions related to perception of tourism impacts, were grouped the levels of disagreement ("totally disagree" and "disagree") and the levels of agreement ("agree" and "totally agree"). In this research, the indicators used to study the residents' perception refer to the study of the global tourism impacts and to economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts in general and, in detail, on a personal level and in the area of residence.

Figure 2 illustrates the respondents' answers regarding the perception of tourism impacts at a global level (GPTI1) and regarding the economic (GPETI1), cultural (GPCTI1), environmental (GPEnTI1) and social (GPSTI1) impacts, also in a global way. As shown, the residents' perception is very positive at all levels. However, it can be noted a less positive perception regarding the environmental tourism impacts. The research has shown that the percentage of those who consider the overall impact of tourism positive, very positive or extremely positive reaches the 86.6%. This fact reveals that the vast majority of respondents positively perceive the tourism impacts.

**Figure 2: Global, economic, social, cultural and environmental tourism impact perceptions**




Source: Own work from SPSS software

The results of the global perception of economic tourism impact (table 2) show that 45.5% of residents consider this impact positive, followed by 22.5% who consider that the impact is very positive and 11.6% who say that it is an extremely positive impact. Only 20.4% of respondents have a negative perspective vis-à-vis the economic tourism impacts, while 79.6% perceive them positively.

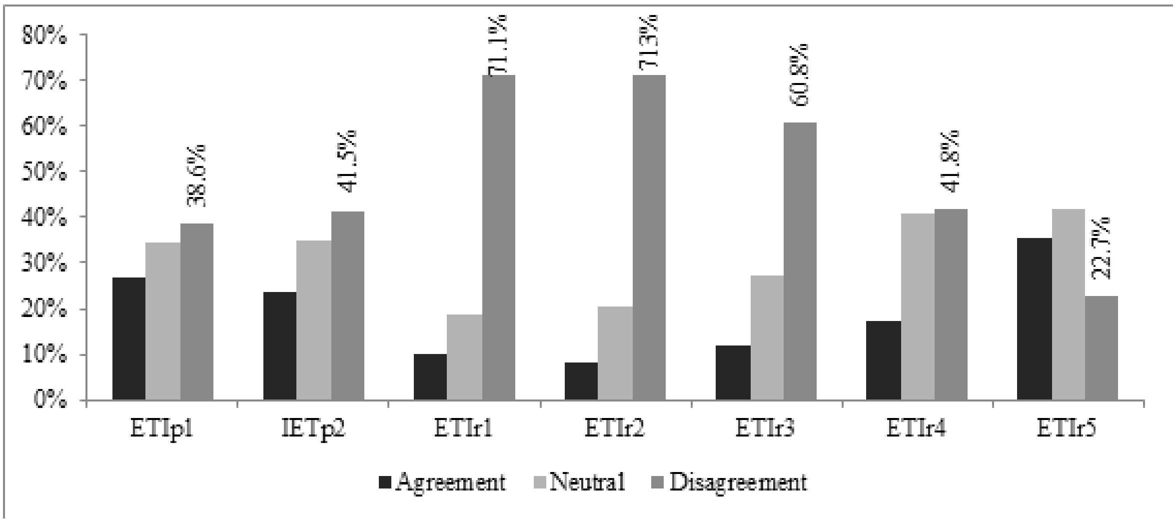
**Table 2: Global economic perception of tourism impact**

| Very negative (1) | Somewhat negative (2) | Positive (3) | Very positive (4) | Extremely positive (5) | Total % | Mode | Median |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.1% | 17.3% | 45.5% | 22.5% | 11.6% | 100 | 3 | 3 |

Source: Own work from SPSS software

The level of agreement expressed by the interviewees in relation to economic tourism impacts (Figure 3), on a personal level, is less than that the one presented in relation to the area of residence. However, the ETIr5 indicator, related to the difficulty of the development of other economic activities, with only 22.70% agreement, indicates that residents do not consider tourism as an obstacle to the development of other economic activities. The indicators with the highest levels of agreement are those related to the area of residence. 71.30% of residents recognise the potential effect of increased investment in tourism and entrepreneurship and 71.10% agree with the idea that tourism represents an increased employment opportunity and 60.80% admit that this activity increases the cost of living.

**Figure 3: Aggregated percentages related to the perception of economic tourism impacts**




Source: Own work from SPSS software

The results (table 3) show that only 1.8% of respondents perceive the tourist development in cultural terms as "very negative". This indicates that the perception of negative cultural tourism impact is not very relevant. Most residents (54.8%) consider positive the development of tourism, 19.9% identify it as very positive and 7.6% as extremely positive. This high percentage of positive cultural perceptions (82.3%), contrasts with the low percentage of negative opinions (17.6%).

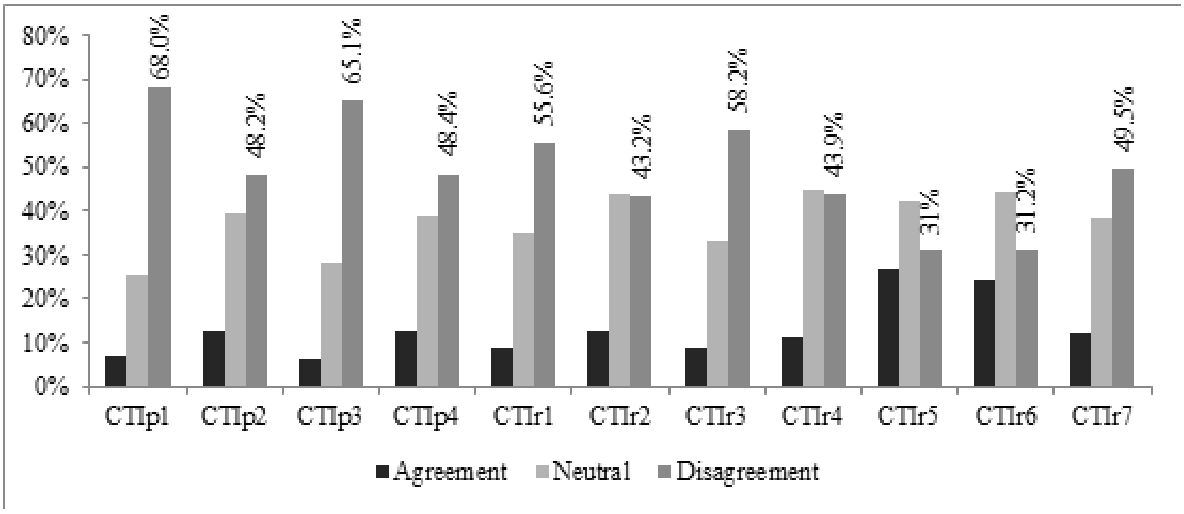
**Table 3: Global cultural perception of tourism impact**

| Very negative (1) | Somewhat negative (2) | Positive (3) | Very positive (4) | Extremely positive (5) | Total % | Mode | Median |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.8% | 15.8% | 54.8% | 19.9% | 7.6% | 100 | 3 | 3 |

Source: Own work from SPSS software

It can be observed (Figure 4) that the highest levels of disagreement are those relating to change of values and traditions, showing that residents do not consider the cultural changes that occur where they live. The agreement associated with the perception of positive cultural impact can be observed, especially on a personal level and, in particular, the knowledge of other cultures (68.0%) and the improvement of language skills (65.10%).

**Figure 4: Perception of cultural tourism impacts**




Source: Own work from SPSS software

The responses associated with the perception of environmental impacts (table 4) show that 54.8% of residents consider positively tourism development. However, 26.0% claim that this factor is somewhat negative. Thus, despite 70.4% of the total consider that tourism development is positive, very positive or extremely positive for the environment, 29.6% perceive it negatively, which can reveal the sensitivity of residents to environmental factors.

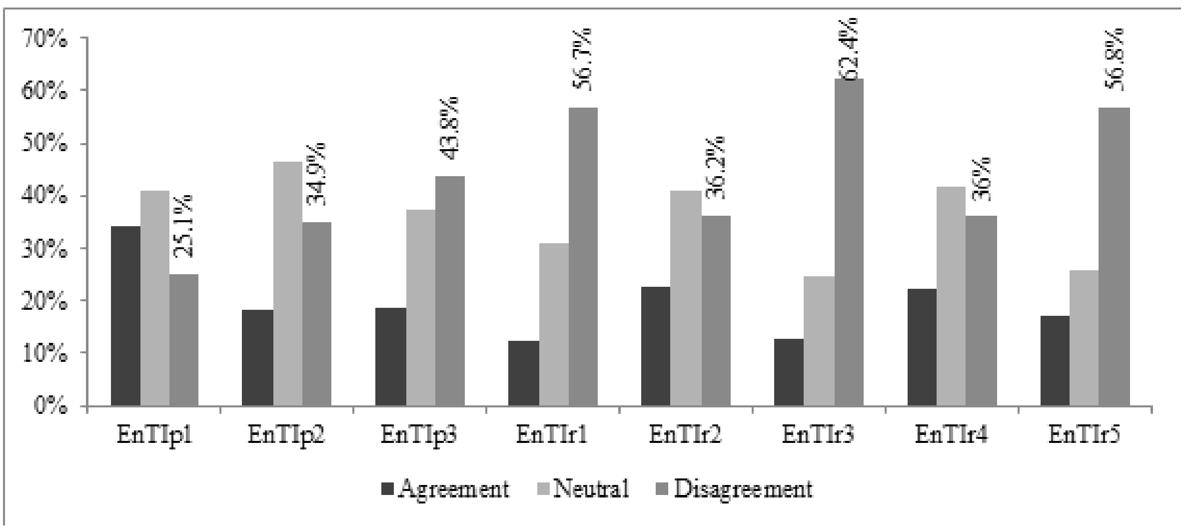
**Table 4 – Global environmental perception of tourism impact**

| Very negative (1) | Somewhat negative (2) | Positive (3) | Very positive (4) | Extremely positive (5) | Total % | Mode | Median |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3.6% | 26.0% | 54.8% | 11.2% | 4.4% | 100 | 3 | 3 |

Source: Own work from SPSS software

Figure 5 clearly illustrates the differences in positive and negative perceptions of tourism development in its relationship with the environment.

**Figure 5: Perception of environmental tourism impacts**




Source: Own work from SPSS software

The indicator related to the global perception of social impacts reveals a concentration of responses in the "positive" level (56.6%). Only 2.2% of the residents considered tourism very negative (table 5).

**Table 5: Global social perception of tourism impact**

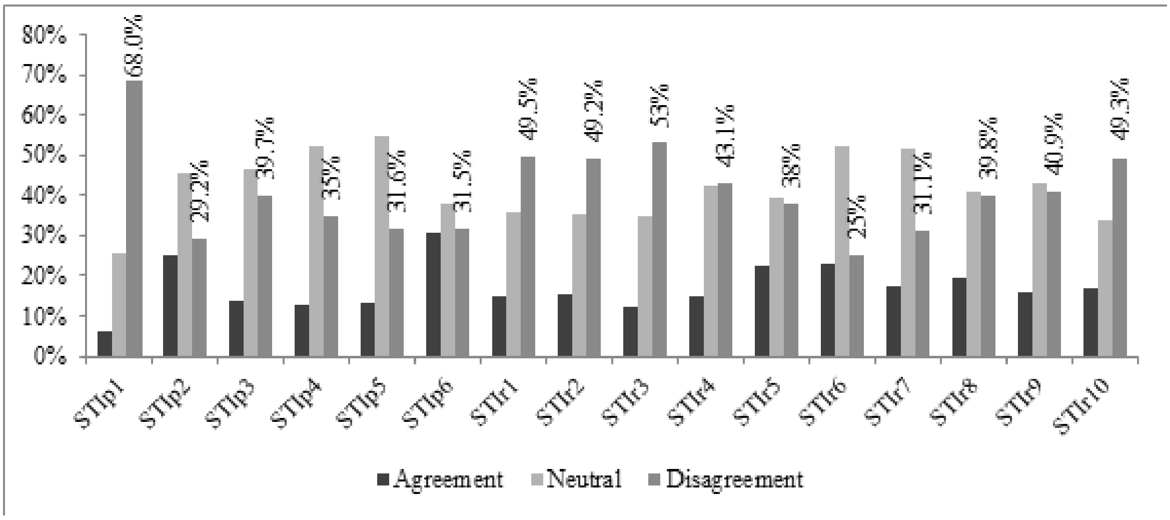
| Very negative (1) | Somewhat negative (2) | Positive (3) | Very positive (4) | Extremely positive (5) | Total % | Mode | Median |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.2% | 13.8% | 56.6% | 19.9% | 7.4% | 100 | 3 | 3 |

Source: Own work from SPSS software

The indicators related to the perception of the social tourism impacts (Figure 6) reveals on the personal level that 68.60% of residents agree with the assertion that tourism increases the chances of interaction with different people (STIp1). At the level of the region, the indicator that presents a higher percentage (53.0%) of answers is the one associated with the positive effect of tourism on the residents' participation in local level decision-making (STIr6).

The analysis of the residents' responses about the social tourism impacts on the personal level and in the area of residence reveals that the lowest percentages are associated to disagreement. In relation to agreement, STIp1 (68.6%), STIr3 (53.0%), STIr1 (49.5%), STIr10 (49.3%) and STIr2 (49.2%) correspond to indicators related to the increase of the possibilities of interact with different people, strengthening of social ties within the community, improvement of infrastructure, increase of illegal activities and increase in services availability. In this context, we highlight the importance of the indicator STIr10 (increase of illegal activities), which shows that almost half of the residents admit that this factor is associated with the tourism development, and they recognise it as a negative impact.

**Figure 6: Perception of social tourism impacts on a personal level and in the area of residence**




Source: Own work from SPSS software

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The research has concluded that there is a widespread positive feeling towards tourism and its development. Nevertheless, some of the stakeholders contacted recognise the existence of negative impacts in different fields and areas. It stands out, in particular, the concern with environmental issues, mainly in the interior regions, the increased sensitivity with regard to social issues, mainly observed in coastal zones and the noteworthy appraisal, globally and throughout the territory, of the positive tourism impacts in economic and social terms.

Regarding the global perception of tourism impacts, the data analysis of results from the application of the questionnaire confirmed that residents consider positive the tourism impact, both globally and in economic, social, cultural and environmental terms. This positive trend in terms of global assessment is verified in relation to most residents, regardless of their age, education, profession or place of residence. However, it was also possible to note differences in perception in relation to these various types of impacts and regarding a personal assessment or in terms of the residence area, particularly with regard to some socio-demographic characteristics such as education, professional activity, income and, in particular, the relationship with tourism in special events and leisure situations or in work-related or day-to-day situations. Respondents working in tourism or commerce perceive more clearly the positive consequences of tourism though also acknowledging negative impacts. Globally, it was also possible to verify a link between the level of education and a positive perception of tourism. Residents with higher incomes also tend to perceive more positively tourism.

With regard to the links associated to the global perception of economic, social, cultural and environmental tourism impacts the results revealed, for all kinds of impact, a direct and positive influence on the global perception of tourism impacts. It turns out, however, that the overall perception of economic tourism impacts reveal much higher response rates, followed by the global perception of cultural impacts, the global perception of social impacts, and, finally, the global perception of environmental impacts.

The research has also concluded that residents recognise the influence of economic, social, cultural and environmental tourism impacts, in personal terms and in the area of residence, although the values are lower in the responses associated with the perception of cultural tourism impacts in the area of residence and the influence of the environmental tourism impacts, in personal terms.

The research contributes to a better understanding of the elements that characterise the residents' perception of tourism impacts in general and in their life. The results obtained can be an important contribution to the development of a tourism destination and for present and potential investors in tourism in the region under study. This research reinforces the importance of considering the residents' perspective when defining a development strategy of the territories and, in particular, of tourism development, not only creating shared moments of reflection, to which residents are already called to participate in, but also effectively considering their contributions in the process of tourism planning.

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# VISITORS' MOTIVATIONS, SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY TOWARDS CASTRO MARIM MEDIEVAL FAIR

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**ABSTRACT**

The study tests the relationship between motivation, satisfaction, and loyalty using a structural equation model. Data have been collected through a questionnaire applied to visitors attending a local festival, Castro Marim Medieval Fair, which hosts every year between 45.000 and 60.000 visitors. Results show that satisfaction towards controlled variables of the event within the venue's boundaries, such as animation, gastronomy, and handicraft, influences visitors' overall satisfaction towards the event. On the other hand, they also reveal a direct relationship between overall satisfaction and loyalty. The study contributes to a better understanding of visitors' behaviour and provides useful guidance to festival ideation and design.

Keywords: Motivation, Satisfaction, Loyalty, Festival, Structural Equation Modelling

JEL Classification: M30

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Events are drivers of tourism travel, and for many tourists they are the main motivation for visiting a destination (Getz, 2008; Guerreiro *et al*., 2011a; Guerreiro *et al.*, 2013; Valle *et al.*, 2012). The new tourist is more informed, selective and demanding, looking for new places offering tourist products that include cultural attractions and events (Valle *et al*., 2011). Due to such events, cities have the opportunity to provide memorable experiences that add value to the brand and to their image (Guerreiro *et al.,* 2011b; Hall, 1989).

Felsenstein and Fleischer (2003) argue that festivals in particular have been used by cities as tourist attractions to achieve strategic objectives, namely, (1) generation of economic dynamics (Lee *et al*., 2008); (2) reduction of tourism seasonality, (Felsenstein and Fleischer, 2003), and (3) promotion of urban renovation (Carlsen and Millan, 2002; Richards and Wilson, 2004). It has been argued that events, if successful, contribute to the competitiveness of a destination, enhancing its notoriety (Ritchie and Crouch, 2003), fomenting community cohesion (Rao, 2001; Mendes *et al*, 2011), and strengthening place identity and attachment (De Bres and Davis, 2001). Festivals, as unique showcases of cultural heritage and traditions, are the subject matter of this research (McKercher *et al*., 2006). As Guerreiro *et al*., (2011b) have found, a Medieval Fair event produces a feeling of satisfaction to most visitors and usually exceeds visitors' initial expectations. In that study, the authors verified that visitors loyalty is very high as they express clear intentions of recommending the event to their friends and family and to return in the future.

Castro Marim is a Portuguese town and municipality located in the Faro District in the Algarve region, bordered in the north and west by Alcoutim, on the east by Spain, and on the south by Vila Real de Santo António and the Atlantic Ocean. It covers an area of 300 $km^2$ and has a resident population of 6,747. For the past fifteen years, the town has hosted a Medieval Fair in August. The event attracts performing artists (musicians, archers, sword specialists, dancers and crafts people) from all over the world.

In this study, the profile of visitors attending the Castro Marim Medieval Fair during summer 2008 is analysed through socio-demographic variables and forms of participation. The study further identifies visitors' motivations for attending the event and the attributes that most contribute to high levels of satisfaction. It concludes with a proposed model to predict relationships between visitors' motivation, satisfaction, and loyalty towards the event.

Section 2 outlines the theoretical model and related hypotheses, specifying a structural equation model (SEM) with latent variables for an empirical test of theoretical assumptions. Section 3 presents data collected on a sample of visitors to Castro Marim Medieval Fair in Algarve, Portugal and the description of data analysis measures and procedures. Section 4 presents SEM estimates on the sample. Finally, section 5 presents a discussion of the main results and their implications.

## 2. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Motivation

Motivation occurs when the individual performs an activity for the satisfaction of some kind of need (Goosens, 2000). Need awareness drives the individual to perform an action in order to fulfil it, therefore taking him/her to a specific search behaviour related to products and services available and the realization of their positive influence on the satisfaction of the need. Only then will (s)he feel motivated to make a purchase. Goosens (2000) concurs with Mill and Morrisson (1995), saying that the role of marketing is to generate product and service awareness, but also to suggest objectives that may contribute to the satisfaction of needs. Research on event motivation is crucial to the development of products able to fulfil visitors' desires and, at the same time, assure a competitive offer (Guerreiro *et al*., 2011a). Understanding motivations is also important to understand the visitors' decision-making process and to monitor satisfaction (Crompton and McKay, 1997).

Crompton and Mckay (1997) identify three main reasons for the study of festival visitors' motivation. Firstly, the understanding of motivation is essential to the development of better products, i.e. festivals that may maintain or intensify visitors' motivations. Secondly, as consequence of the direct relationship between motivation and satisfaction and the importance of monitoring the latter, it is necessary to know visitors' needs. Lastly, motivation identification and hierarchization will aid in the clarification of the visitors' buying decision-making process, which, in turn, will contribute to marketing effectiveness. The authors recommend six areas to include in a questionnaire on festival motivation, namely cultural exploration, novelty/regression, recovery equilibrium (rest and relaxation/escape), known group socialization, external interaction/socialization, and family togetherness.

Lee *et al*. (2004) reviewed published research between 1993 and 2000 on festival visitor motivations. They conclude that there are core motivations, regardless of theme and event location, transversal to different nationalities. They also assert that, taking into consideration festival specificities, motivational antecedents vary. They found core motivations of visitors for attending the 2002 World Culture Expo (cultural exploration, family togetherness, novelty, escape, event attractions, and socialization), and suggested the analysis of the relationship between visitors' motivation and behavioural intentions through structural equation modelling.

Li and Petrick (2006) attempted a similar approach reviewing literature on this topic, proposing a three-category classification: earlier discoveries, cross-culture testing, and exploration of generalizability. They too conclude that the decision to attend a festival is the effect of multiple motivations, thus recommending future research on the topic in order to develop theory and explanatory models. Guerreiro *et al.*, (2011b) also studied the motivation factors of visitors at a medieval fair and they found that attendees were strongly motivated by five groups of factors: socialization, novelty, intellectual enrichment, rest and relaxation, city identity.

On the other hand, as suggested, it is important to analyse and discuss the relationship between motivation and other latent variables. Lee and Hsu (2011) claim that there are few studies attempting the analysis of the relation between tourists' motivations and other latent variables, such as satisfaction.

Based on this review, the first hypothesis is presented:

**H1:** Visitors' motivation positively influences overall satisfaction with the festival experience. Hypothesis H1 will be divided into sub-hypotheses depending on the types of motivations.

**2.2 Satisfaction**

As a positive emotional response to a product or service, satisfaction equates to a favourable evaluation of a consumption experience. It is also an important indicator of tourist experiences while participating in tourism activities (Lee and Hsu, 2011). Recent studies on satisfaction adopt a holistic definition of the construct (Chi and Qu, 2008). As reported by Anderson *et al*. (1994: 54), overall satisfaction is 'the evaluation based on the total purchase or the overall consumption experience of a good or service over time'. The adoption of a unique global measurement to evaluate tourist satisfaction towards festivals is also used by Yoon *et al.* (2010) and, in the context of destinations, by Chi and Qu (2008) and Assaker *et al.* (2011).

Spreng *et al*. (1996) suggest that there are two direct antecedents of overall satisfaction, i.e. satisfaction with product or service attributes and satisfaction with information collected and used to make the purchase. Focusing on destinations, Chi and Qu (2008) studied satisfaction with the destination's attributes as an antecedent of overall satisfaction with tourism experience at the destination, demonstrating that the former directly influences the latter. Satisfaction with attributes is a subjective evaluation which depends on observation of attribute performance (Spreng *et al*., 1996). With respect to festivals, the concept of *festivalscape* encompasses these attributes. Dimensions of *festivalscape* found by Lee *et al.* (2008) include the programme content, staff, space and venue, food and related services, facilities, memorabilia, and information availability. The *festivalscape* positively influences satisfaction, as the authors have found.

In recent decades, marketing and tourism research has demonstrated the positive influence of satisfaction on consumers' future behaviour. High levels of satisfaction usually mean a higher probability of repeating the purchase, and recommending the product or service to friends and relatives (Anderson *et al*., 1994; Spreng *et al*., 1996; Kozak, 2001; Yoon and Uysalb, 2005; Lee *et al*., 2007; Chi and Qu, 2008).

Based on this review the second hypothesis is presented:

**H2:** Satisfaction with attributes positively influences overall satisfaction with the festival experience.

Hypothesis H2 will be divided into sub-hypotheses depending on the types of attributes.

**2.3 Loyalty**

Consumer loyalty is a main goal to all service providers, because a high capacity to retain customers usually means long-term profitability (Yoon *et al*., 2010). The relationship between satisfaction and loyalty has been a topic of research in tourism studies, and findings have been consensual in demonstrating the positive effect of satisfaction on loyalty (Yoon and Uysalb, 2005; Lee *et al*., 2007; Chi and Qu, 2008; Presbensen *et al*., 2010; Zabkar *et al*., 2010; Assaker *et al*., 2011; Valle *et al*., 2011). In the case of festivals, loyalty has been measured through recommendation, repeating visit, positive word of mouth, tolerance towards premium price, willingness to pay higher prices, and analysis of alternatives (Lee *et al*., 2008; Bayrak, 2011; Lee and Hsu, 2011).

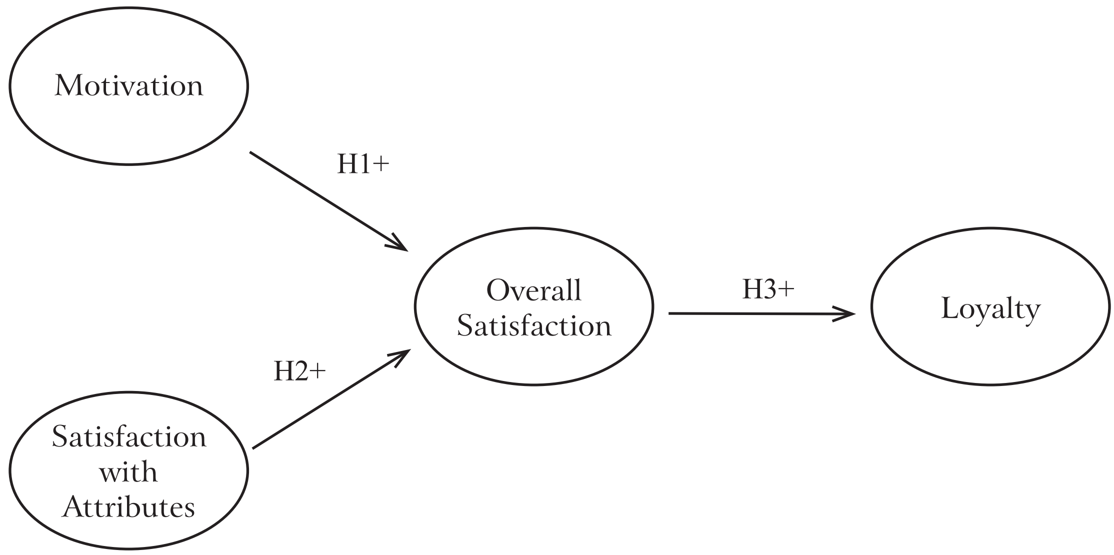
Based on this review the third hypothesis is formulated:

**H3:** Overall satisfaction with the festival positively influences loyalty.

**2.4 Conceptual Model**

The model evaluates the structural causal relationships between motivation, satisfaction, and loyalty. The model's hypotheses are shown in Figure 1 below and also the expected signs of the relationship between the constructs.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Model and Research Hypotheses**




Source: Authors

## 3. METHODOLOGY

**3.1. Population and Sample**

Castro Marim Medieval Fair is an annual event, taking place every last week of August in Castro Marim in the Algarve (Portugal). The event is a local community festival, and the town's Castle, old streets and squares are the main stages. It is considered an important tourist attraction in the region. For four days, a Middle Ages atmosphere is recreated through a cultural, gastronomic, and recreational programme that every year hosts between 45,000 and 60,000 visitors (Expresso, 2011). Entertainment includes music, drama, and pantomime performances with artists from Europe, Morocco, and Egypt. Local population and visitors dress up in costumes of different social classes from the Middle Ages such as nobility, church, and peasantry.

The target population for this study are visitors to this event. The sample consists of 404 valid observations and is statistically representative of the target population, with a margin of error of around 5% and a 95% level of confidence. Data for this study have been collected through a structured questionnaire. Structured questionnaires are adequate for collecting a large amount of data in a short period of time and are of practical use for analysis (Hill and Hill, 2005). The instrument's validity has been assessed through the application of a pre-test using a sample of 10 individuals. Visitors exiting the 11th edition of the festival in 2008 were asked to complete questionnaires in Portuguese or English by two graduate students.

### 3.2. Research Variables

To study motivation, an adapted measurement scale by Crompton and Mckay (1997) has been used to fit the specific event and population under analysis. The construct has been measured using 18 items and a 5-point Likert scale (1= completely disagree, 5 = completely agree). Similar procedures have been made to evaluate attribute satisfaction. The measurement scale consists of twelve indicators, which is also based on a review of the literature and takes into consideration the event and population. The question 'Indicate the level of satisfaction with this Medieval Fair', a 5-point Likert scale (1 = completely unsatisfied, 5 = very satisfied) is intended to assess visitors' overall satisfaction with the Castro Marim Medieval Fair. Two indicators assessed loyalty towards the event: repeating visit and intention to recommend the event to friends and relatives. The questions 'Do you plan to revisit Medieval Days in Castro Marim Castle?' and 'Will you recommend this event to your friends and relatives?' have been answered with No, Maybe, and Yes. An independent section of the questionnaire allowed the collection of information on participation, expectation and socio-demographic data.

### 3.3. Data Analysis Procedures

In the first stage of the analysis, data was carefully examined in order to detect missing values and outliers, as well as to check variables distribution. SPSS version 19 was used with the purpose of assisting in the analysis of data related to socio-demographics and participation in the event, and as such in the building of visitor profiles to the Castro Marim Medieval Fair.

Then, a factor analysis was conducted to reduce the number of variables associated to motivation and attribute satisfaction. The validation of the factor analysis was accomplished with the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's sphericity test. All procedures were carried out with SPSS 19. The criteria to form the factors included the eigenvalues analysis. Eigenvalues with characteristic values higher than 1 have been selected. Factor loadings were also evaluated. The items considered in the identification of factors showed loadings equal to or higher than 0.40. The principal components method with varimax rotation was chosen as the extraction method. This orthogonal rotation method minimizes the number of variables that have high loadings on each factor. For this reason, this method simplifies the interpretation of the factors and is the most commonly used.

The model was estimated and validated using the variance based technique Partial Least Square Path Modelling (PLS-PM), adequate to the modelling of structural equations (SEM). PLS-PM is used to study and measure the significance between causal relationships among a group of latent variables. Its objective is the maximization of the explained variance in endogenous constructs and the predictive power of exogenous variables (Hair *et al.*, 2011). The PLS-PM technique has the advantage of not being too demanding in terms of original data distribution and obtains good results with relatively small samples (Hair *et al*., 2012). Although the sample size in this study is large enough to use a covariance-based approach (Lisrel model), data distribution was very asymmetric. Furthermore, PLS-PM is adequate to prediction and theory building, which are sufficient motives to choose it as the most suitable tool to test the model. SmartPLS 2.0 software was used to assist in the process (Ringle *et al*., 2005).

Both the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model) are analysed. The evaluation of the reflective measurement model includes the analysis of each indicator's reliability, composite reliability, convergent validity of indicators associated to latent variables, and discriminant validity. Single indicator reliability is measured through each loading obtained, and the minimum score required to accept the indicator's reliability is 0.50 (Hulland, 1999). The assessment of indicator suitability to describe a latent variable is carried out through the analysis of composite reliability. The reference value of acceptability is 0.70, as recommended by Hair *et al*. (2012). Cronbach Alpha's Coefficient complements the analysis (DeVellis, 2003; Gefen and Starub, 2005), though Hair *et al*. (2012) draw attention to limitations with this measure. Convergent validity has been evaluated through the average variance extracted (AVE). AVE scores are expected to be higher than 0.50 (Hair *et al.*, 2011). This analysis is complemented with the verification of the indicators' loading significance.

Discriminant validity expresses the extent to which a latent variable's indicators differ from remaining latent variables' indicators included in the model. A common criterion used in the context of PLS to assess discriminant validity is that which requires a certain latent variable to share more variance with related indicators than with those associated with other latent variables of the model (Hulland, 1999). With this aim in mind, the cross-loadings were computed and observed. The structural model analysis consisted of the assessment of the coefficient of determination, $R^2$, which represents the amount of explained variance of each latent endogenous variable, by the model. $R^2$ values of 0.75, 0.50 or 0.25 can be described as substantial, moderate and weak, respectively (Hair *et al.*, 2011). The model's prediction capability has been analysed through predictive relevance Stone-Geiser Index, $Q^2$ (Stone, 1974; Geisser, 1975). $Q^2$ scores have been obtained with the blindfolding technique applied to the endogenous latent variables. In addition, the structural model's path coefficients, signals, magnitudes, and statistical significance were analysed. Coefficients and respective statistical significance were estimated via the bootstrapping technique (Hair *et al*., 2011).

## 4.RESULTS

### 4.1. Sample Characterization

Table 1 summarizes the sample's characteristics. The majority of respondents are women (55.8%) and the most represented age group is 25-46 (50.8%), with a mean age of 38 (sd= 14). 56.1% are married, and 50.1% of the sample have basic and secondary education; 64% live outside the Algarve region, 65.7% reside in Portugal and 26.4% in Spain. Professionally, the respondents are mostly represented in the categories 'Higher grade professional and managerial occupations', 'Lower supervisory and lower technician occupations' and 'Lower services, sales, and clerical occupations' (53.6%).

**Table 1: Sample socio-demographic characterization**

| Variable | Sample Structure (N= 404) |
|---|---|
| Gender | |
| Female | 55.8% |
| Male | 44.2% |
| Age | |
| 25 or less | 22.1% |
| 26 – 45 | 50.8% |
| 46 or greater | 27.1% |
| Mean | 37.5 |
| Standard Deviation | 13.8 |
| Marital Status | |
| Single | 37.6% |
| Married/Common law partners | 56.1% |
| Divorced | 5.0% |
| Widow(er) | 1.3% |
| Education | |
| Primary School | 11.2% |
| Secondary Education | 38.9% |
| Higher Education | 49.9% |
| Residence in Algarve | |
| Yes | 36.0% |
| No | 64.0% |
| Country of Origin | |
| Portugal | 65.7% |
| Spain | 26.4% |
| UK | 5.0% |
| Other | 2.9% |
| Professional Occupation | |
| Higher grade professional and managerial occupations | 21.6% |
| Higher grade technician and supervisory occupations, small employer and self-employed occupations | 14.4% |
| Lower services, sales, and clerical occupations | 17.6% |
| Lower supervisory and lower technician occupations | 15.3% |
| Lower technical occupations | 5.2% |
| Non workers | 10.4% |
| Students | 12.4% |
| Never worked | 3.1% |

Source: Authors

Table 2 shows the profile of visitors' participation in the event, and most relevant information is that the majority (51.7%) has been to the Medieval Fair at least once before. 52.8% of respondents are familiar with similar events and 94.8% of them participate with friends and relatives.

**Table 2: Participation in the event**

| Question | % Response (N = 404) |
|---|---|
| Is it your first time in the event? | Yes: 48.3% - No: 51.7% |
| Do you usually participate in this kind of events? | Yes: 52.8% - No: 47.2% |
| Did someone accompany you to the event? | Yes: 94.8% - No: 5.2% |
| Accompanying persons | Mean: 3.4 Standard Deviation: 2.3 |

Source: Authors

Most used and important sources of information are recommendation from friends and relatives and billboards. Visitor expectations towards the event were met or exceeded in 85.5% of cases. About 89.9% were satisfied or very satisfied. 82.6% expressed strong intention to return and 93.6% to recommend to friends and relatives. Table 3 shows detailed information on these variables.

**Table 3: Expectations, satisfaction and intentions in relation to the event**

| Variable | Sample Structure (N = 404) |
|---|---|
| Expectations towards the event | |
| Far Below | 0.5% |
| Below | 2.6% |
| Equal to | 44.6% |
| Exceeded | 40.8% |
| Far Exceeded | 11.5% |
| Overall Satisfaction | |
| Very dissatisfied | 3.1% |
| Dissatisfied | 0.8% |
| Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied | 1.3% |
| Satisfied | 55.2% |
| Very Satisfied | 39.6% |
| Intention of Repeating | |
| No | 0.5% |
| Maybe | 16.9% |
| Yes | 82.6% |
| Intention of Recommending | |
| No | 0.5% |
| Maybe | 5.9% |
| Yes | 93.6% |

Source: Authors

### 4.2. Results from PCA

The original principal component analysis solution was rotated using varimax procedure. Three factors were uncovered, as shown in Table 4. Indicators that scored the most in each factor were used to name it: ‘Novelty and Cultural Exploration’, ‘Socialization’, and ‘Relaxation’. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test to evaluate the sampling adequacy scored 0.862, a value higher than the reference value of 0.60, as proposed by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007). The Bartlett sphericity test proved significant (*p-value* < 0.001). The three factors taken together explain 63% of total variance and Cronbach’s Alpha for each factor indicates an acceptable level of internal consistency.

The process of ordering the factors according to their means put Novelty and Cultural Exploration in first place, followed by Relaxation, and finally by Socialization. The process of ordering attributes in harmony with means obtained, shows that most preferred attributes by visitors are ‘Enjoying these kind of events’, ‘Enjoying new experiences and cultures’, ‘Finding new things', 'Enjoying the exploring of new situations' and 'Increasing my knowledge on the region's history'.

**Table 4: PCA results (Motivation)**

| Indicators and motivation factors | *Loadings* | Mean | Standard Deviation | Explained Variance | Cronbach's Alfa |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Factor 1: Novelty and cultural exploration | | 4.22 | 0.70 | 37.97% | 0.815 |
| Enjoying new experiences and cultures | 0.810 | 4.33 | 0.66 | | |
| Enjoying the exploring of new situations | 0.807 | 4.23 | 0.68 | | |
| A valuable experience to me | 0.715 | 3.98 | 0.75 | | |
| Finding new things | 0.679 | 4.27 | 0.67 | | |
| Enjoying these kind of events | 0.570 | 4.37 | 0.62 | | |
| Increasing my knowledge on the region's history | 0.554 | 4.12 | 0.82 | | |
| Factor 2: Socialization | | 3.11 | 1.06 | 15.84% | 0.864 |
| Being with lots of people | 0.878 | 2.95 | 1.07 | | |
| Observing other people's behaviour | 0.824 | 3.01 | 1.09 | | |
| Making new friends during the event | 0.784 | 3.08 | 1.07 | | |
| Meeting people with similar interests | 0.716 | 3.42 | 1.02 | | |
| Factor 3: Relaxation | | 3.80 | 0.95 | 8.97% | 0.706 |
| This kind of events contribute to my relaxation | 0.756 | 3.77 | 0.95 | | |
| This kind of events change my routine | 0.728 | 4.09 | 0.87 | | |
| Slowing down the pace of my life | 0.727 | 3.53 | 1.03 | | |

Source: Authors

Table 5 shows the results of the PCA, after rotation using the varimax procedure, performed on indicators associated with attribute satisfaction. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test to evaluate the sampling adequacy scored 0.89, a value above the 0.60 recommended to an adequate analysis. The Bartlett sphericity test proved significant (*p-value* $< 0.001$). The two factors considered explain 62% of total variance and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for each factor represent an acceptable level of internal consistency. Two factors were found, namely 'Satisfaction with the venue' and 'Satisfaction with information'. The indicators that scored the highest were used to name the factors. The process of ordering attributes in harmony with means obtained, shows that most preferred attributes by visitors are Animation, Gastronomy, and Venue. Considering the mean values for the factors, that which appealed most to visitors relates to the venue and services available (Factor 1).

With these results, the model was redesigned to integrate five exogenous latent variables (Novelty and Cultural Exploration, Socialization, Relaxation, Satisfaction with the Venue, and Satisfaction with Information) and two endogenous latent variables (Overall Satisfaction and Loyalty). The complete set of hypotheses can now be formulated:

**H1:** Visitor motivation positively influences overall satisfaction with the festival experience
- **H1a:** Novelty and cultural exploration positively influence overall satisfaction with the festival experience
- **H1b:** Socialization positively influences overall satisfaction with the festival experience
- **H1c:** Relaxation positively influences overall satisfaction with the festival experience

**H2:** Satisfaction with attributes positively influences overall satisfaction with the festival experience
- **H2a:** Satisfaction with the venue positively influences overall satisfaction
- **H2b:** Satisfaction with available information positively influences overall satisfaction

**H3:** Overall satisfaction with the festival positively influences loyalty

**Table 5: PCA results (Satisfaction with attributes)**

| Items and factors of satisfaction with attributes | *Loadings* | Mean | Standard Deviation | Explained Variance | Cronbach's Alfa |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Factor 1: Satisfaction with venue | | 4.12 | 078 | 50.92 % | 0.825 |
| Gastronomy | 0.749 | 4.15 | 0.80 | | |
| Venue | 0.731 | 4.13 | 0.79 | | |
| Safety | 0.698 | 3.84 | 0.79 | | |
| Handicraft | 0.696 | 4.09 | 0.78 | | |
| Animation | 0.672 | 4.37 | 0.71 | | |
| Factor 2: Satisfaction with information | | 3.86 | 0.88 | 10.70 % | 0.854 |
| Dissemination | 0.848 | 3.77 | 0.95 | | |
| Information | 0.803 | 3.74 | 0.89 | | |
| Tourism Signage | 0.707 | 3.68 | 0.91 | | |
| Cultural Program | 0.678 | 4.00 | 0.79 | | |
| Organization | 0.600 | 4.12 | 0.83 | | |

Source: Authors

### 4.3. Measurement Model

Table 6 shows that all indicators load higher than 0.50, the minimum acceptable measure of the indicator's reliability (Hulland, 1999). 92% of loadings are above the recommended loading of 0.7, meaning that all indicators share more than 50% of variance with the associated latent variable. So, individual reliability was observed as the indicators load moderately/high on the corresponding latent variables

**Table 6: Results from the measurement model**

| Latent Variables and Indicators | | *Loadings* | t statistics |
|---|---|---|---|
| Novelty and Cultural Exploration | | | |
| P03 | Enjoying visiting these kind of events | 0.809 | 3.347*** |
| P04 | Finding new things | 0.808 | 3.865*** |
| P05 | A valuable experience to me | 0.683 | 3.243** |
| P06 | Enjoying new experiences and cultures | 0.758 | 3.727*** |
| P07 | Enjoying the exploring of new situations | 0.859 | 4.133*** |
| P08 | Increasing my knowledge on the region's history | 0.679 | 3.313*** |
| Socialization | | | |
| P14 | Meeting people with similar interests | 0.923 | 13.523*** |
| P15 | Observing other people's behaviour | 0.939 | 11.100*** |
| P16 | Being with lots of people | 0.958 | 11.456*** |
| P17 | Making new friends during the event | 0.934 | 10.682*** |
| Relaxation and Escape | | | |
| P09 | This kind of events contribute to my relaxation | 0.901 | 7.561*** |
| P11 | This kind of events change my routine | 0.884 | 6.975*** |
| P12 | Slowing down the pace of my life | 0.918 | 7.519*** |
| Satisfaction with Venue | | | |
| PL1 | Venue | 0.928 | 35.940*** |
| PL4 | Handicraft | 0.932 | 39.461*** |
| PL5 | Animation | 0.950 | 53.608*** |

| Latent Variables and Indicators | | *Loadings* | t statistics |
|---|---|---|---|
| PL10 | Safety | 0.906 | 31.140*** |
| PL11 | Gastronomy | 0.875 | 23.863*** |
| Satisfaction with Information | | | |
| PL2 | Information | 0.907 | 33.338*** |
| PL3 | Cultural Program | 0.882 | 28.819*** |
| PL6 | Organization | 0.899 | 32.315*** |
| PL7 | Dissemination | 0.868 | 27.200*** |
| PL8 | Tourism Signage | 0.899 | 36.258*** |
| Overall Satisfaction | | | |
| S01 | Overall Satisfaction | 1.000 | 2.773** |
| Loyalty | | | |
| RC1 | Intention of recommending | 0.973 | 70.458*** |
| RG1 | Intention of repeating visit | 0.969 | 54.557*** |

**Significant at a 1% significance level; *** Significant at a 0.1% significance level.

Source: Authors

Composite reliability results are shown in Table 7. Scores are higher than the reference value of 0.70 recommended by Hair *et al.* (2012), but also Cronbach's Alpha values perform very well. Both measures suggest good internal composite consistency. Convergent validity was also assessed with regard to loadings magnitude and significance (all *ts-bootstrap* are larger than 1.96) and average variance extracted (AVE, all larger than the threshold 0.5, with most of them exceeding 0.6) (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). Discriminant validity was evaluated by observing the crossloadings, i.e., the loadings of each indicator on the other latent variables. Although not presented in tables 6 and 7, findings show that each indicator loads higher on its latent variable than on the others, by which it may be concluded that the model's discriminant validity is significant.

**Table 7: Reliability, AVE and $R^2$**

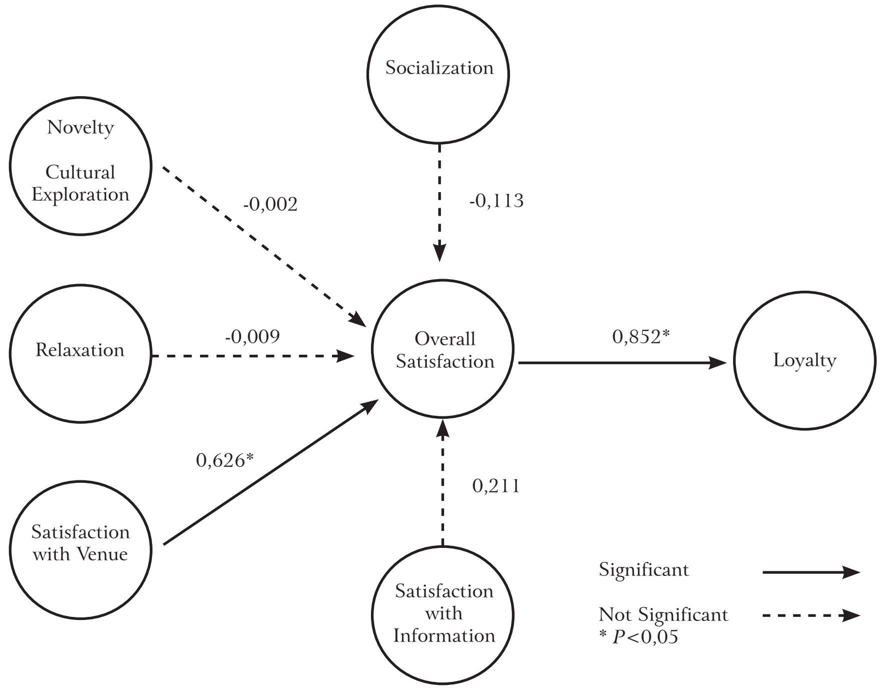
| | Composite reliability | Cronbach's Alfa | AVE | $R^2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Loyalty | 0.970 | 0.939 | 0.943 | 0.726 |
| Information | 0.951 | 0.935 | 0.794 | |
| Novelty | 0.896 | 0.888 | 0.591 | |
| Offer | 0.964 | 0.954 | 0.844 | |
| Relaxation | 0.928 | 0.886 | 0.812 | |
| Satisfaction | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0.625 |
| Socialization | 0.967 | 0.955 | 0.881 | |

Source: Authors

### 4.4. Structural Model

After the assessment of the measurement model, the relationships between latent variables were tested. The first test of the structural model is the determination coefficient, $R^2$, a measure representing the explained variance by each endogenous latent variable. Results shown in Figure 2 are moderate in relation to Satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.625$) and strong in relation to Loyalty ($R^2 = 0.726$) (Hair *et al.*, 2011).The predictive power of the model has also been tested through the Stone-Geiser Index, $Q^2$, which measures the ability of the model to predict each endogenous latent variable. Values obtained are consistent with literature recommendations, as they are all positive, meaning that the model has adequate predictive power. The path coefficients, their signal, magnitude and statistical significance were analysed, and results are shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Structural Model Results**




Source: Authors

Results show that Overall Satisfaction is not influenced by Socialization, Novelty and Cultural Exploration, and Relaxation; therefore there is no statistical evidence (for a 5% level of significance) supporting hypotheses **H1a**, **H1b**, and **H1c**. On the other hand, Satisfaction with the Venue has a direct and significant influence, at a 5% level of significance, on Overall Satisfaction, which supports **H2a**. There is no statistical evidence that supports **H2b**, meaning that Satisfaction with Information has a direct influence on Overall Satisfaction but is not significant. **H3** is supported by statistical findings, in which case it can be concluded that Overall Satisfaction has direct and significant influence at a 5% level on Loyalty. Table 9 summarizes the results obtained in the tests performed on the hypotheses.

**Table 9: Results about testing the hypotheses**

| Hypotheses | Relationship | Test Result |
|---|---|---|
| H1a | Novelty → Overall Satisfaction | Not corroborated |
| H1b | Socialization → Overall Satisfaction | Not corroborated |
| H1c | Relaxation → Overall Satisfaction | Not corroborated |
| H2a | Venue Satisfaction → Overall Satisfaction | Corroborated |
| H2b | Information Satisfaction → Overall Satisfaction | Not corroborated |
| H3 | Overall Satisfaction → Loyalty | Corroborated |

Source: Authors

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The majority of visitors (94.8%) are satisfied and highly satisfied with the event, an unequivocal indication of the Medieval Fair's success. About 85% of visitors are planning to repeat the visit and approximately 94% have the intention of recommending it to friends and relatives. In fact, 52% of respondents are repeating visitors; in addition, the main source of dissemination of the event is recommendation to friends and relatives, which is consistent with the nationality of most visitors (Portuguese and Spanish). Thus, attention should be paid to the selection of dissemination means to attract visitors from other countries. This question is relatively important as the venue is located in the main Portuguese tourist destination and it occurs at the end of the high season. To attract tourists from other nationalities who are on holiday in the region it is crucial to invest in alternative channels of communication and target diffusion among hotels and resorts in the Algarve.

The PCA shows that there are three groups of factors motivating visitor travel and participation in the Castro Marim Medieval Fair: Novelty and Cultural Exploration, Relaxation and Socialization. Novelty and cultural exploration is the most relevant factor to visitors in search of new situations related to local tradition and culture. Relaxation, on the other hand, is the second most relevant factor, especially important to those visitors in need of relaxing and escaping from daily routine. It would be interesting to analyse variations in terms of visitor socio-demographics, similar to those conducted in previous studies (Guerreiro *et al.*, 2011b). However, the hypotheses raised in relation to these three motivations allow us to conclude that there is no statistically significant relationship between them and overall visitor satisfaction with the event. These results point to the need to further deepen the construct of satisfaction, particularly with regard to its antecedents.

The PCA performed on the Medieval Fair attributes formed two groups of factors: Satisfaction with the Venue and Satisfaction with Information. The former has been found more important for visitors. From all the indicators analysed, gastronomy, the venue's physical characteristics, handicraft and safety were found to be key attributes to visitor satisfaction; therefore, they should be the focus of the event's developers and managers.

Another important result is the statistically significant relationship between the constructs Overall Satisfaction and Loyalty. The solutions that have been presented are unique and unequivocal, the discriminant validity of Overall Satisfaction and Loyalty shows the distinction between the two constructs, allowing the application of general notions on consumer loyalty in the context of events. It is possible to predict the intentions of Castro Marim Medieval Fair visitors, providing useful information to developers and managers of the event, as well as to tourism destination managers. Moreover, the results obtained from the tests performed on the model's hypotheses suggest that to improve overall visitor satisfaction, special attention should be paid to the attribute Satisfaction, namely those attributes related to the venue and services included, because they directly and significantly influence overall visitor satisfaction with the event. On the other hand, overall satisfaction is not influenced by available information. It would be interesting to identify the attributes relating to Information that visitors use to make their decision to attend the Medieval Fair. It would be the adequate context to test the assumption of Spreng *et al.* (1996) on the antecedents of overall satisfaction, i.e. attribute satisfaction and information used to make the purchase. In contrast with other studies, motivations didn't show a significant effect on overall satisfaction with the event. Additional research is needed to further investigate the reasons for these findings.

Also with regard to the significant relationship between Overall satisfaction with the event and Visitor loyalty, it would still be important to check whether or not this intention materializes, as well as identify the repeating pattern of the visit to this event. Monitoring the event over time will enable a more consistent understanding of visitor behavioral trends as well as provide a better perception on the position of the event compared to others of its kind, conducted either in the Algarve or in other competing destinations.

To conclude, and in accordance with previous findings (Guerreiro *et al.*, 2011b), the study's results draw attention to the complementary role of Culture and Sun & Sea, confirming that cultural events add value to and differentiate the Algarve as a tourism destination. In fact, these types of events can contribute to the memorization of unique experiences and to consolidate an image of the region able to differentiate it from its most direct competitors. In this sense, the cultural component is assumed as a strategically important factor not only for the tourism experiences but also to the destination image. The recognition of this issue may have implications, for example, in the changing process of this occasional event into a permanent event for visitors.

The model has been tested in a specific context, Castro de Marim town, Algarve (Portugal). It is recommended that the study could be replicated in other settings and higher dimension events, displaying different attributes, and hosting visitors from other nationalities, so that the model's generalization potential can be assessed. Its application in alternative settings should identify more reliable indicators to measure the constructs, thus contributing to its stability and robustness.

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