

VOLUME III | Issue 2 | 2015 | CIEO

Guest-Editor: Saul Neves de Jesus

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Journal of Spatial and Organizational Dynamics

Tourism and Psychology: Interdisciplinary Studies

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TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Volume III, Issue 2, 2015

JOURNAL OF SPATIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS

Tourism and Psychology: Interdisciplinary Studies

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Publisher:

Research Centre for Spatial and Organizational Dynamics - CIEO
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Open Access Policy:

This is a blind peer-reviewed journal.

Articles submitted to this journal should not have been published before in their current or substantially similar form.

The JSOD is diffused by all links related to the Research Center for Spatial and Organizational Dynamics and is continually online (http://www.cieo.pt/discussion_papers_editions.php)

This journal is supported by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT).

Networking and Indexing:

Silvia Fernandes

Page Layout:

Marlene Fernandes

Design and Cover Concept:

Bloco D, Design e Comunicação

Quarterly Edition
ISSN: 2183-1912
CIEO, Faro, Portugal

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ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS OF SURF TOURISTS: A CASE STUDY IN THE ALGARVE

Fabia Frank
Pedro Pintassilgo
Patrícia Pinto

ABSTRACT

Even though surf tourism in Portugal is an economic activity with a steady growth rate, there are not many assessment studies available. Using a survey undertaken in surf camps located in the Vila do Bispo County, this study aims to analyse the environmental awareness of surf tourists in the Algarve. Through the New Environmental Paradigm (NEP) scale it is shown that the environmental attitudes of respondents are strongly pro-ecological but also reveal some anthropocentric aspects. Tourists were asked about their willingness to pay for an accommodation tax earmarked for environmental protection in the Algarve. The results show that the large majority (86%) would be willing to pay, which indicates a high environmental awareness. It is also found that the willingness to pay is related to the nationality, with respondents from Germany, Austria and Switzerland showing a higher willingness to pay.

Keywords: Surf Tourism, Environmental Protection, Algarve

JEL Classification: L83

1. INTRODUCTION

Surfing is defined as “the act of riding an ocean wave while standing on a surfboard and broadly includes other aspects of wave riding, such as riding prone on a ‘bodyboard’ or simply ‘bodysurfing’ (using only one’s body surface to plane across the wave)” (Martin and Assenov, 2012: 257). The sport is practiced in almost all countries worldwide that are bordered with water and even in a few landlocked countries, like Switzerland (Murphey and Bernal, 2008). The surfing industry is a multibillion dollar industry, including the production of soft as well as hard goods, such as clothing and equipment, media publications, surf schools and rentals, surf camps, contests and surf parks (Murphey and Bernal, 2008). Surfing is known as a sport and recreational activity with strong lifestyle associations (Moutinho, Dionísio and Leal, 2007).

Surf tourism is a sub-section of Adventure Tourism and therefore refers to commercial tourism products aimed at adventure seeking travellers looking for a mixture of sport, culture and nature experiences (ASMAA, 2013). The surf tourism sector can be divided into four specific traveller markets: experienced surfers travelling alone, surfers that go on surf packaged safaris and tours, travellers taking surf lessons and travellers seeking for the surf experience in surf resorts or surf camps (ASMAA, 2013).

According to Bicudo and Horta (2009) surf in Portugal is seen not only as a sport but also as an economic activity with a steady growth rate since it was introduced to Portugal in 1958. With over 800km of coastline, high quality beaches and a mild climate with the

highest number of sunshine hours per year in Europe (Turismo de Portugal, 2007), Portugal has perfect conditions for surf tourists. Regardless of the steady growth of the sector, research in this area is difficult to perform due to the lack of data and information available. Tourism boards, local governments and the tourism industry have not yet begun to keep accurate records of surf visitation, tourist spending or stay duration. Even though surf tourism is a global phenomenon, research has only been carried out in a few countries and this may show a knowledge gap. Martin and Assenov (2012) refer that out of the 162 countries in which surfing occurs, only 18 countries have conducted research on surf tourism. This is progressively changing with more and more universities, especially in Australia, New Zealand and the U.S., offering courses and degrees in surf industry management. Hence, more research based on the activity is becoming available (Murphey and Bernal, 2008).

Given the growing size of this niche tourism, this study responds to the need for a better understanding of surf tourists in the Algarve. The focus lies on the environmental awareness of tourists that stay in surf camps – small hotels, offering surf tours and surf classes, mostly in the touristic regions and in popular surf spots – in the Algarve. In particular, their attitudes towards the implementation of an accommodation tax used to raise funds for the environmental protection of the coastal zone, which was strongly damaged by the negative effects of mass tourism, are analysed. Valle, Pintassilgo, Matias and André (2012) refer that unlike many other countries in the world, in Portugal there are no specific taxes levied on accommodation and a reduced value added tax (VAT) rate of 6% is applied to the sector. This matter, combined with the governmental financial problems, makes implementing accommodation taxes a likely outcome in the future.

Based on a survey carried out in the region, this study aims answering to three main questions:

1. What are the main characteristics of surf tourists in the Algarve?
2. Are surf tourists willing to pay an accommodation tax earmarked for environmental protection?
3. Is it possible to find a relationship between tourists' willingness to pay an accommodation tax earmarked for environmental protection and sociodemographic attributes?

The paper is structured as follows: in section 2 a literature review about the history of surfing, surf tourism, surf camps, surf tourists, and environmental awareness is undertaken. In section 3 the methodology is presented, including details about the study area, the survey and the data analysis method. Then, in section 4, the results are shown and discussed. Finally, in section 5 the main conclusions are presented.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section the literature on various topics important for this study is explored. It starts with the history of surfing, to find out where this sport has its roots. In sub-section 2.2 the literature about surf tourism in general and the development of this sector over the years is explored. Surf camps are defined in sub-section 2.3 and a literature review on the environmental awareness of tourists is undertaken in sub-section 2.4.

2.1 History of Surfing

The riding of waves has probably existed since the first humans began swimming in the ocean, which means that bodysurfing is the oldest type of wave-catching (Finney and Houston, 1966). Riding waves standing on surfboards was developed by the Polynesians, a nation that lived in harmony with the ocean. As there is no certainty about the timeline and movements of this nation, we can only guess that surfing is more than 4000 years

old (Siggemann, 2011). The first written record of surfing however was made in 1778 by Captain James Cook, who was amazed to see men and women riding long wooden planks across the face of breaking waves, as his ship pulled into Kealahou Bay on the Hawaiian Islands. Travellers that came to Hawaii were admiring the locals playing with the waves and talked about their experience back home (Probst, Schmutz and Eberhard, 2005). Through their stories, they brought surfing to other parts of the world. Due to the interest of the tourists, Hawaiian surfers started to teach them how to surf. One of the teachers was known by the name of Duke Kahanamoku (Finney and Houston, 1966). In 1914 he was the first man surfing a wave in Australia and today he is regarded as the father of modern surf (Probst et al., 2005). According to Booth (1995), before the outbreak of World War II, surfing was a recognized leisure activity in the Pacific Rim region, particularly in Southern California, Australia, New Zealand and Peru, as well as in South Africa. After the war, surfing developed worldwide as a recreation and an organized sport (Booth, 1995).

2.2 Surf Tourism

As defined by Dolnicar and Fluker (2003a) surf tourism involves people travelling to either domestic destinations for not more than six months or international destinations for not more than 12 months, who stay at least one night and where the primary motivation for the location selection is the active participation in surfing. This definition also includes travelling to or with surf schools. Surfing as a sport and the act of travelling are two behaviours that suit each other very well. *Searching for the perfect wave* is a belief that is shared by many and it describes the willingness of surfers to undertake travels with the hope to find their personal, perfect wave (Dolnicar and Fluker, 2003a).

With more and more affordable plane travels, lighter surfboards and the image of a surfing culture, which was delivered by the media, the surf travel boom started in the 1960s. In 1962 surf tourism as a concept was taken globally with the release of the film "The Endless Summer" by Bruce Brown, a documentary movie showing two young, enthusiastic surfers from California who followed the season around the globe in search of new surf breaks and the "perfect wave". This film introduced surf tourism to the world, to both surfers and non-surfers (Martin and Assenov, 2011).

Commercial surf tourism, which has only become popular in the 1990s, is now an important component of the tourism sector worldwide (Buckley, 2002a). Slowly surf tourism has become an important component of tourism and in particular of the adventure tourism industry (Dolnicar and Fluker, 2003a), generating economic, social and environmental importance to justify academic attention (Buckley, 2002a).

Buckley (2002a) claimed that in 2002 there were over 10 million surfers worldwide, a third of them cash-rich and time poor and therefore potential tour clients. According to Ponting (2008) in 2007 there were 112 countries offering some kind of surf tours or having information available for tourists related to surfing. Even though calculating the size and economic significance of this tourism sector is not an easy project (Buckley, 2003). According to Ponting (2008), its aggregate economic value worldwide can be estimated to be around one quarter of a billion U.S. dollars per year and is increases annually.

However, it should be noted that surf destinations in developed and developing countries often have hundreds of small surf tourism operators whose economic value is usually not accounted for (Ponting, 2008). The industry also includes businesses offering supplementary products, like souvenirs and clothing. By offering more specialized services such as surf schools and camps, the surf tourism industry promises additional growth (Moutinho *et al.*, 2007). As stated by Ponting (2008), surf tourism now appears on almost every surfable coast on all continents worldwide. Even though the position of surf tourism on the world tourism stage is steadily growing, there is not yet a significant body of research available.

2.3 Surf Camps

As mentioned previously, surf tourism started with independent self-guided travels in order to search for the perfect wave (Ponting and McDonald, 2013). Nowadays the majority of surf travellers are no longer backpackers with a lot of free time, but travellers that rely on tour operators to help them coordinate their surf experience (Pitt, 2009). Specialized commercial surfing tours began with basic surf camps in the late 1970s (Nourbakhsh, 2008), whereas today the surf tourism industry has grown profoundly and is represented by various market segments (Martin and Assenov, 2011). According to Martin and Assenov (2011), these segments include:

- Highly experienced surfers travelling to locations like Hawaii, Indonesia, South Africa or Western Australia to experience big, high quality waves;
- Intermediate surfers who stay in surf camps where lessons, coaching, access to equipment are included;
- Beginner surfers looking for surf lessons in a safe wave environment.

Surf camps have become a popular surf travel option worldwide for all budgets. They range from budget surf camps, traditional surf camps, remote surf camps, yoga and surf camps, adventure surf camps to luxury surf camps. Surf camps can be held in different locations, ranging from campgrounds and hostels to resorts, luxury villas and even surf charters and yachts (The Surf Camp Adventures Company, 2013).

2.4 Environmental Awareness

According to Dolnicar, Crouch and Long (2008) there are many studies about sustainable tourism and eco-tourism available, but not many that explore the profile of tourists that behave pro-environmentally. Nevertheless these findings are crucial to understand environmentally friendly tourists. When reviewing empirical eco-tourism studies, Dolnicar (2010) states that socio-demographic as well as psychographic variables could be valuable predictors of pro-environmental behaviour. Various studies have examined the possible relationships between socio-demographic variables and pro-environmental behaviour, yet without any clear results (Mehmetoglu, 2010). The variables that seem to have the most effect on environmentalism are: age, gender, education, income and political orientation (Dolnicar, 2010). Surprisingly, only one of these variables, a higher level of education, had the same results in most studies with a generally positive effect (Dolnicar, 2010). Most studies conclude that ecotourists with higher incomes are more concerned about the environment, whereas a small number of studies conclude the exact opposite (e.g. Mehmetoglu, 2010). The conclusions on age are the most contradictory: positive, insignificant and negative effects on pro-environmental behaviour have been found in empirical studies (Dolnicar et al., 2008). Similarly no clear results have been found from the analysis of the variable gender, even though some studies state that ecotourists tend to be female (Dolnicar, 2010). Finally, according to Mehmetoglu (2010), politically liberal orientated ecotourists are more likely to behave environmentally friendly.

The New Environmental Paradigm (NEP), which is used in this paper, is probably the most widely used psychometric scale to measure environmental values or attitudes worldwide (Dunlap, 2008). It is used as a survey instrument to measure the environmental worldview of people or groups, with 15 statements about humans and the environment (Noblet, Anderson and Teisl, 2013). According to Lundmark (2007), central aspects of NEP include: 1) human domination over nature; 2) human exemptionalism; 3) balance of nature; 4) the risk of an eco-crisis; 5) limits to growth.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Area

The Algarve is the most southern region of mainland Portugal, located on Europe's most western tip. It covers an area of 4 996 square kilometers, is segmented into 16 counties and has a coastline of 318 kilometers (Statistics Portugal, 2012). Vila do Bispo is located in the south western corner of the Algarve and therefore is the only county in Portugal with two coastlines, the south and west coasts.

This location makes the area perfect for surf tourism, as there are nearly no days without any suitable waves at one of the many surf spots on either coast. Both coastlines are known for perfect waves on beautiful beaches. Sagres is the most known town of the county and famous for "Cape Saint Vincent", the south westernmost point of Europe.

Figure 1. Geographic localization of Algarve and the Vila do Bispo county



3.2 The Survey

The survey was undertaken during September and October 2013, months of high surf tourism, in eight different surf camps in various locations in the county of Vila do Bispo. The surf camps were chosen randomly, four in Sagres and four in smaller villages in the county. For the surf camps to remain anonymous, further information is not provided.

A survey questionnaire, in English and German, was designed to collect quantitative and qualitative data from tourists staying in surf camps in the study area. The questionnaire included questions on socio-demographic characteristics, such as where they are from, which age group they belong to, what profession they have and what income they have. Tourists were also asked if they would be willing to pay an accommodation tax earmarked for environmental protection. The New Environmental Paradigm (NEP) scale was used to assess information about the environmental attitudes of the respondents.

The questionnaire was applied evenly at the eight different surf camps and after eight weeks a sample size of 256 tourists was reached. The survey was run in the surf camps at night, rather than in the lunch break at the beach, as the surf tourists are less distracted in the camp and have more time to fill out the questionnaire attentively. A total of 240 valid questionnaires were obtained, corresponding to 93.7% of the selected sample.

3.3 Data Analysis Method

After the collection of the surveys, the data was entered into the IBM SPSS Statistics 22 program for analysis. First, frequencies of all variables were computed and transferred into tables and charts in order to allow an initial characterization of the sample and describing the profile of tourist. Then, using the New Ecological Paradigm (NEP) scale, the environmental awareness of the respondents was assessed.

Moreover, five hypotheses were tested to find out about the relationship between some socio-demographic variables (nationality, gender, age, educational level, household net monthly income) and the willingness to pay an accommodation tax. For these hypotheses the interrelation between variables was assessed with the cross tabulation process. Whether or not the variables are statistically independent of the target variable depends on the *p-value* of the Pearson's chi-squared test. The critical value is set to 5%, the most commonly used value. If the *p-value* is smaller than 0.05, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between the variables and, therefore, one variable is dependent on the other.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Socio-demographic Characteristics

The main socio-demographic characteristics of the surf tourists surveyed are provided in Table 1. Nearly half of all respondents are German (49.2%) and are living in Germany (48.8%). This matter is consistent with the fact that German tourists play an important role in the county of Vila do Bispo. In 2012, Germans rank second in terms of nights spent in hotel establishments in Vila do Bispo (38,240 nights), which is very close to tourists from the UK (41,744 nights) (Statistics Portugal, 2012). As can be seen in Table 1, three out of the four most represented nations in this study are German speaking (Germany, Austria and Switzerland). This can be associated with the fact that surfing is a trend sport in these countries and more and more people want to be part of the surf lifestyle (Probst *et al.*, 2005). Due to this boom, a lot of surf camps in the Algarve focused their advertising and promotion on exactly those three countries.

More than half of the respondents are female (52.1%), which does not correspond to the idea of a predominant male participation in surfing (Dolnicar and Fluker, 2003b, Nourbakhsh, 2008). A large proportion (43.4%) of respondents is of young adults between 25 and 31 years and 30.8% are aged between 18 and 24 years. The average age is 26. Out of all 240 respondents, 69.2 % are single and 93.3% do not have children under 18. The educational level shows a widespread distribution with 28.3% of the respondents having secondary education, 29.2% a Bachelor degree and 27.5% a Master degree. 17.5% of all respondents were not willing to state their monthly net household income and, therefore, this variable is the one with the most missing values in the study. The most frequent class of monthly net household income is 1001-2000€ (24.6%), followed by lower than 1000€ (22.1%), which is not surprising as one third of the respondents are students.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Variables	Distribution of answers
Nationality	German: 49.2%; Austrian: 10.8%; Russian: 7.1%; Swiss: 5.8%; Other: 27.1%
Country of residence	Germany: 48.8%; Austria: 10.8%; Switzerland: 7.9%; UK: 7.1%; Other: 25.4%
Gender	Female: 52.1%; Male: 47.9%
Age	<18: 4.6%; 18-24: 30.8%; 25-31: 43.4%; 32-38: 12.5%; 39-45: 1.3%; >45: 1.7% Missing: 5.8%; Mean: 26.5

Marital Status	Single: 69.2%; Divorced/separated: 2.9%; Married/Living together: 27.9%
Children under 18?	No: 93.3%; Yes: 5.4%; Missing: 1.3%
Educational level	Primary: 10%; Secondary: 28.3%; Bachelor: 29.2%; Master: 27.5%; PhD: 3.8%; Missing: 1.2%
Monthly net household income	Lower than 1000€: 22.1%; 1001-2000€: 24.6%; 2001-3000€: 17.1%; 3001-4000€: 10%; 4001-5000€: 3.8%; Higher than 5000€: 5%; Missing: 17.5%

4.2 Environmental Awareness

In Table 2 the attitude towards an accommodation tax earmarked for environmental protection in the Algarve can be observed. For that the tourists were confronted with the following scenario:

Suppose an environmental fund were raised to protect the Algarve's coastal area. This would be used to finance among other things:

- *Preservation of natural environments;*
- *Environmental improvements to beaches and other coastal areas.*

Assume further that this fund would be financed through an accommodation tax paid as a fixed amount per day spent in an accommodation establishment in the Algarve.

Would you be willing to pay this? (In affirmative case) How much?

The tax would be collected by the accommodation establishment and paid as a fixed amount per night as part of the total price, independent of other taxes such as VAT. It should also be pointed out that according to the Portuguese billing system, the customer is always presented with the final price (after tax) and all relevant taxes are shown in the receipt.

Table 2. Attitude Towards Accommodation Tax

Variables	Distribution of answers
Willingness to pay an accommodation tax earmarked for environmental protection	Yes: 85.8%; No: 13.8%; Missing: 0.4%
Amount willing to pay	<2€: 23.0%; 2-4€: 47.5%; 5-7€: 19.1%; >7€: 10.3%

A total of 85.8% of all 240 tourists would be willing to pay this kind of accommodation tax. This is a very clear outcome and, therefore, it answers the second main research question. Table 2 also shows the distribution of the amount tourists would be willing to pay. Of the tourists who stated that they would be willing to pay an accommodation tax, 47.5% answered that they would be willing to pay 2-4€ per night.

Environmental attitudes of the respondents were examined with the NEP scale using a Likert type- 5-point scale (1 = totally disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = indifferent; 4 = agree; 5 = totally agree). For the sake of analysis the results were reduced into a 3-point scale. Table 3 shows the valid percent values.

The statements are categorized into eight items (rows in white) assessing an ecological view and seven items (rows with shading) assessing an anthropocentric view (e.g. Lundmark, 2007; Noblet *et al.*, 2013; Waikato Regional Council Technical Report, 2013/11). For example, "humans are severely abusing the environment" is an ecological item and "humans will eventually learn enough about how nature works to be able to control it" is an anthropocentric item. Therefore, to show a positive environmental attitude the respondents should agree with the ecological statements and disagree with the anthropocentric statements. In this study, the average respondents' attitudes are proecological. For example, 71.6% of respondents agree or strongly agree that "the balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset".

The majority of respondents showed an anthropocentric view only for one statement: 85.4% agreed or strongly agreed that “the earth has plenty of natural resources if we just learn how to develop them.” This indicates that, overall, the environmental attitudes of respondents show a very strong ecological view but also some anthropocentric aspects.

Table 3. Environmental Awareness Likert-Type-3-Point

	Com- pletely Disagree and Dis- agree	Indiffer- ent	Agree and Com- pletely Agree
We are approaching the limit of the number of people the earth can support	20.1%	26.8%	53.1%
Humans have the right to modify the natural environment to suit their needs	51.5%	25.1%	23.4%
When humans interfere with nature it often produces disastrous consequences	12.1%	16.7%	71.1%
Human ingenuity/creativity will ensure that we do NOT make the earth unlivable	26.4%	37.2%	36.4%
Humans are severely abusing the environment	3.8%	22.3%	73.9%
The earth has plenty of natural resources if we just learn how to develop them	3.8%	10.9%	85.4%
Plants and animals have as much right as humans to exist	8.4%	10.0%	81.6%
The balance of nature is strong enough to cope with the impacts of modern industrial nations	64.4%	21.8%	13.8%
Despite our special abilities humans are still subject to the laws of nature	7.5%	16.7%	75.8%
The so-called “ecological crisis” facing humankind has been greatly exaggerated	50.0%	34.0%	16.0%
The earth is like a spaceship with very limited room and resources	15.5%	22.6%	61.9%
Humans were meant to rule over the rest of nature	68.2%	20.1%	11.7%
The balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset	13.8%	14.6%	71.6%
Humans will eventually learn enough about how nature works to be able to control it	43.1%	31.8%	25.1%
If things continue on their present course, we will soon experience a major ecological catastrophe	11.3%	26.8%	61.9%

4.3 Relationship between Environmental Awareness and Socio-demographic Variables

This section addresses the third main research question: “*Is it possible to find a relationship between tourists’ willingness to pay an accommodation tax earmarked for environmental protection and sociodemographic attributes?*” For that, the relationship between the amount tourists were willing to pay for an accommodation tax used for environmental protection and five different variables was analysed. Therefore, five hypotheses were formulated and tested with the Chi square independence test. The results are shown in Table 4. It can be concluded that at 5% significance, the amount tourists are willing to pay for environmental protection is only related to Nationality ($p\text{-value} < 0.05$). The relationship between these two variables is shown in Table 5. The variable Nationality was split into two categories, one with the

DACH countries (Germany, Austria, Switzerland) and one with all the other nationalities. The variable Amount Willing to Pay was categorized into four categories, which were 0€, higher than zero but less than 2€, 2-4€ and more than 4€.

As can be seen in Table 5, 65.8% of all respondents are from the DACH region, whereas 34.2% are from other countries. The respondents from other countries are more likely not to be willing to pay the accommodation tax (25.6%), whereas only 9.5% of the respondents from the DACH region would not be willing to pay the tax. In both groups the most frequent range of willingness to pay is 2-4€, which represents 40.4% of the sample. 27.2% of the respondents from the DACH region would be willing to pay more than 4€ per night and only 20.7% of all the other countries would be willing to pay that much per night. To sum up, in the DACH region the proportion of respondents not willing to pay the tax is lower than in the other countries, whereas the proportion to pay more than 4€ is higher.

Table 4. Chi- Square Tests of Independence

Null Hypothesis	Chi-Square Statistics	<i>p-value</i> (1 sided)
Nationality is independent of the Amount Willing to Pay	12.676	0.0025
Gender is independent of the Amount Willing to Pay	4.926	0.0885
Age is independent of the Amount Willing to Pay	0.613	0.4465
Educational level is independent of the Amount Willing to Pay	5.621	0.066
Household income is independent of the Amount Willing to Pay	0.480	0.4165

Table 5. Cross-tabulation between Nationality and Amount Willing to Pay

0]0, 2[Amount willing to pay (€)				Total
			[2, 4]	>4			
Nationality	DACH	Count	15	36	64	43	158
		% within Nationality	9.5%	22.8%	40.5%	27.2%	100,0%
		% within Amount tax	41.7%	76.6%	66.0%	71.7%	65,8%
	Other	Count	21	11	33	17	82
		% within Nationality	25.6%	13.4%	40.2%	20.7%	100,0%
		% within Amount tax	58.3%	23.4%	34.0%	28.3%	34,2%
Total		Count	36	47	97	60	240
% within Nationality		15,0%	19.6%	40.4%	25.0%	100.0%	
% within Amount tax		100,0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

5. CONCLUSION

This study responded to the need for a better understanding of surf tourists in the Algarve, given the growing size of this tourism activity and its capacity to produce positive economic impacts in the area. By characterizing surf tourists that stay in surf camps in the Algarve, this study revealed information that could be used to strengthen marketing strategies for capturing or retaining surf tourists or to implement managerial actions to better serve those tourists.

Most of the tourists surveyed (65.8%) are from the DACH region (Germany, Austria, Switzerland). The Algarve has always been a perfect all-year around destination for these countries. More cheap flights and package deals reinforce this fact. A lot of surf camps therefore focused their marketing strategies on these countries and the Algarve as a surf destination became more known and popular. However, in other countries the Algarve is

still not associated with surf tourism. The Algarve as a surf destination should therefore adjust their tourism promotional campaigns in order to attract more tourists from other countries than the DACH region. In this move it is also important that marketing material integrates the characteristics which are significantly associated with the Algarve region as a surf destination. For example, advertising messages could be crafted to portray the surfing appeal of the destination, especially related to the variety of waves on both coastlines, the mild weather and the quality of the natural environment. It is also very important to keep a better record of the activity in the region in order to analyse the impact on both the economy and the environment.

This paper explored the tourists' attitudes towards an accommodation tax earmarked to fund environmental protection in the Algarve. 85.8% of the 240 respondents would be willing to pay for this kind of accommodation tax. This is a large proportion, which can be explained by the fact that the study focused only on surf tourists. A previous study in the Algarve (Valle *et al.*, 2012) reports more negative attitudes of tourists funding environmental protection: only 19% were willing to pay a tax earmarked for environmental protection. However, the results cannot be directly compared as a different tourist segment (sun and beach tourists) was surveyed. Surf tourists are mostly physically active and when realizing the sport they are in constant contact with the nature, which can be associated with a pro-environmental behaviour. Most surf camps in the Algarve try to share their environmentally friendly behaviour with their guests, which includes respecting the ocean and the coastal environment around. It is important for surf tourists to realize that the protection of the coastal area is essential in order to have a nice experience when surfing.

Using Chi-Squared Independence tests the relationship between the amount tourists are willing to pay for an accommodation tax used for environmental protection and five different socio-demographic variables (nationality, gender, age, educational level and household net income) was analysed. The decision of how much each person is willing to pay for the accommodation tax appears to be independent of all socio-demographic variables tested, except nationality. Tourists from the DACH region are more prone to pay the earmarked accommodation tax, compared to tourists from other countries. For a future survey it would be interesting to test which other characteristics actually influence the willingness to pay the accommodation tax. A possible influence could be the environmental education that the participants experience in their daily life.

Considering that the vast majority of respondents in this study would be willing to pay an accommodation tax earmarked for environmental protection, this study has important policy implications. Implementing an accommodation tax in the Algarve, however, does not only regard the surf tourists. As the majority of other tourist segments (Valle *et al.*, 2012) would not be willing to pay for the tax, the tax could have a negative impact on tourism demand in these segments. Only using the tax in surf accommodations, like surf camps, could work if a good marketing strategy was used for support. The surf tourists would have to be absolutely sure of the fact that their funds would be only used for the protection of the coastal environment. It would also be important to show the exact projects they would be supporting.

The study exhibits some limitations that should be controlled in future research. Considering the size of the surf industry in the Algarve, the sample size used was relatively small. The findings can therefore be regarded as a basis for future research studies. Avenues for further research include the extension of the survey to other counties in the Algarve and to other coastal areas in Portugal to get a better overview of the surf industry in the country.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This paper is financed by National Funds provided by FCT- Foundation for Science and Technology through project UID/SOC/04020/2013.

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EXPLORING THE PERSONALITY TRAITS OF PORTUGAL AS A TOURIST DESTINATION: PERSPECTIVE OF THE CZECH MARKET

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ABSTRACT

The personality of a destination is vital to build a coherent destination brand and strengthen the place identity. Furthermore, brand personality appears in literature as a strategic axis that can be explored by tourist destinations in order to differentiate themselves from competitors. Since a brand encompasses not only functional but also symbolic elements, its image, as perceived by consumers, can be assessed with respect to both its functional and psychological components. Hence, this exploratory study investigates the brand personality of Portugal as a tourist destination, from the perspective of the Czech market, through a destination image approach. The online survey instrument included open-ended items to depict functional and psychological destination features and additional questions to characterize the profile of a sample of Czech university students. The main findings of this research highlight positive personality traits that are related to the brand of Portugal, which suggest its potential as a vacation destination for the Czech market under study.

Keywords: Destination Brand Personality, Destination Branding, Destination Image, Destination Marketing

JEL Classification: M310

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the end of the 1970s, the new reality that characterizes western societies led to the arising of an increasingly more competitive economy not only in economic terms but also in terms of competitive pressure. No matter its dimension and besides being faced with a constant assessment and ranking process, places are under an intense competitive dispute as of the 1980s. The growing concerns with issues related to the quality of life, from the residents' perspective, and with the quality of the tourism experience, from the tourists' perspective, in addition to the need of gaining a differentiated and competitive position, led to marketing development with place management philosophy (Ashworth and Voogd, 1995).

Accordingly, marketing and place branding are among the main approaches included in the territory management and the study of the image is often recognized as essential to the definition of adequate marketing strategies and, specifically, strategies of creation and management of the respective brand. The process of branding a destination is also central to communicating a destination's unique identity, which differentiate places from competitors (Govers and Go, 2009). Moreover, the process of branding a destination should create links

between the destination and their audiences, and it should responsibly incorporate the fast environmental changes within society in the process of building the destination identity (Govers and Go, 2009; Olins, 2006).

In this context, the personality features of a destination are considered as vital in the process of building a coherent destination brand and strengthen place identities. Hence, a brand incorporates not only functional but also symbolic elements, and these components can be analyzed as perceived by consumers. Particularly, the personality dimension of a destination brand has been proven to influence consumer behavior, making its role in place marketing increasingly valued.

Considering that brand personality presupposes that the brand itself is associated with human characteristics (Aaker, 1997), this exploratory study investigates the brand personality of Portugal as a tourist destination, from the perspective of the Czech market, by analyzing the psychological dimension of Portugal as perceived by the market under study, in addition to the functional component. Although Czech Republic is not one of the main source markets of Portugal, in the National Strategic Plan for Tourism (Turismo de Portugal, 2007), Czech Republic is identified as an attractive potential source to Portugal in order to diversify its markets. Moreover, since 2010, there has been an increasing interest of Czech tourists in traveling to Portugal (Eurostat, 2014). Therefore, it seems that Czech Republic has an interesting potential as a tourist source market for Portugal (Tomigová, 2014), and thus it becomes relevant to understand how Portugal is being perceived by Czech Republic individuals.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Destinations and Brands

Although branding has been studied since the 1950s (Pike, 2010, mentions articles published by Banks, in 1950, and by Gardner and Levy, in 1955), research on the brand conceptualization to tourism destinations can be traced back to the 1990s. The definition of brand presented by Hankinson and Cowking (1993: 10) translates its functional (or rational) and psychological (or emotional) duality: “a brand concerns a product or a service made distinctive through the positioning with regard to competition and the personality, which includes a unique combination of functional attributes and symbolic values”. Thus, a brand represents a unique combination of product characteristics and the respective functional and symbolic added-value elements. It is a set of “values, intellect and culture” that, although invisible, are the key elements of the brand (Morgan, Pritchard and Piggott, 2002: 348). For Schmitt (1999) the brand triggers a set of associations in the sensorial, affective and cognitive field that result in memorable experiences.

The brand ensures the existence of an emotional relation between the destinations (as particularly efficient products to evoke emotions and awaken senses) and the tourists “who tend to seek less escape and more discovery” (Morgan et al., 2002: 338). Furthermore, brands differentiate the products, represent a promise of value, evoke emotions, induce behaviors and have their own personalities (Kotler and Gertner, 2002). They contribute to improve the perceived value (Anholt, 2002) and the residents’ quality of life (Green, 2005).

Indeed, brand identity reflects the contribution of all brand elements to the awareness and image of the product (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1998), which is also the case for destinations (Qu, Kim, and Im, 2011). Furthermore, researchers claim that the concept of visitor experience should be incorporated into the process of branding (Blain, Levy, and Ritchie, 2005) since it “conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination”, and it also serves to “consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable

memories of the destination experience” (Ritchie and Ritchie, 1998:103). However, the brand not only generates value to the consumer but also to all the stakeholders involved (Govers and Go, 2009).

2.2 Destination Brands and their Personalities

The construct of brand personality, which appears in the 1960s, is seen in consensus by most as an exploratory element for symbolic consumption and the fundamental premise of this construct is that consumers attribute human characteristics to brands (Aaker, 1997). However, only in the late 1990s with the work of Jennifer Aaker (1997), the measurement of personality has been addressed and brand personality is defined as a set of human characteristics associated with a brand. Aaker was the first researcher to develop an empirical scale related to the personality of the brand (Brand Personality Scale) (Klabi, 2012; Mathur, Jain, and Maheswaran, 2012). Aaker (1997) based her investigation on human psychology following several studies carried out by researchers who contributed to the identification of the five dimensions of human personality (Azoulay and Kapferer, 2003) and adapted it to the business world in order to identify the dimensions of the brand personality. These are *sincerity*, *excitement*, *competence*, *sophistication* and *ruggedness* (Aaker, 1997). The author states that a well-established brand personality can lead to differentiation, contributing to the development of a positive and lasting relationship with target audiences.

The brand personality of tourism destinations became an investigation topic since the first decade of the 21st century. Accordingly with Aaker (1997), Ekinsi and Hosany (2006) this concept refers to the personality traits that tourists associate to the destination. Hosany Ekinsi, and Uysal (2006) captured destination personality with Aaker’s (1997) five-dimensional brand personality scale. The authors found destination image and destination personality to be related concepts, concluding that Aaker’s (1997) brand personality scale is applicable to places.

The specific characteristics of places that present themselves preferably as tourism destinations have their own challenges, which impact the brand development. Their ambiguous nature, the involvement of politicians in place management, the lack of resources (Morgan et al., 2002), the complexity of tangible and intangible attributes and the diversity of stakeholders (Buhalis, 2000) are some of the main characteristics. Sahin and Baloglu (2011: 73) adds to this “the geographic distance between destination and target markets” as it “takes a longer and a harder effort to develop and manage a positive and attractive brand personality for destinations”. To be aware of the personality traits perceived by the actual and potential tourists may contribute to develop strong destination brands as well as to reinforce the promotion strategy of the destination.

2.3 Destination Image and Brand Personality

The increasing tourism revenues worldwide and the strong competition among tourism destinations have forced places to build favorable destination images to attract more visitors (Gartner, 1993; Goodall, 1990; Sahin and Baloglu, 2011). In the marketing literature this topic was first studied by Martineau (1958) who investigated the store image and personality. The author concluded that the success of retail stores can be envisaged as a force which can be explained by factors that are beyond prices or location. “This force is the store personality or image - the way in which the store is defined in the shopper’s mind, partly by its functional qualities and partly by an aura of psychological attributes” (Martineau, 1958: 47). To the author, image and personality were the same. However, further investigation led to the conclusion that image (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991, 1993) and personality (Aaker, 1997) are different constructs.

To Ekinsi and Hosany (2006), brand personality is one of the most relevant and metaphorical fields that builds the brands of destinations, helping them to strengthen their identities. Thus, brand personality must be assumed as a strategic pillar on which tourism destinations differentiate themselves from competitors (Murphy, Moscardo and Benckendorff, 2007). Accordingly with Sahin and Baloglu (2011: 70), “by examining the brand image and personality of a destination, a desired and fit-to-resources image and brand can be formulated”. In their study, Ekinsi and Hosany (2006) found evidence that destination personality has a moderating effect between image and behavioral intentions.

Considering that brand image is the “perceptions of customers or consumers about a brand or a product labeled with that brand” (Sahin and Baloglu, 2011: 70), it is, hence, a powerful component of successful brands (Aaker, 1996; Kapferer, 1998) contributing to build competitive advantage. Thus, the assessment of brand personality, from the consumers’ perspective, enables brands to “build greater, more favorable unique and strong brand associations and thus increase the brand equity” (Freling and Forbes, 2005, in Sahin and Baloglu, 2011). To these authors, “brand personality can be considered as the explanation of brand image with the appropriate human personality traits” (Sahin and Baloglu, 2011: 71).

Destination image studies started in the 1970s (Hunt, 1975; Gunn, 1972; Mayo, 1973) and have been a popular tourism research area since then (Hosany et al., 2006; Stepchenkova and Morrison, 2008). However, the concept remains difficult to define, and several proposals can be found in the literature (Gallarza, Saura and Garcia, 2002; Grosspietsch, 2006; Castro et al, 2007; Stepchenkova and Morrison, 2008; Balogu and Sahin, 2011; Nghiem - Phu, 2014). In general, the idea that the image of a tourist destination corresponds to a comprehensive and multidimensional impression prevails (Crompton, 1979; Phelps, 1986; Gartner and Hunt, 1987; Mackay and Fesenmaier, 1997; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999 a) b); Tapachai and Waryszak, 2000; Kim and Richardson, 2003; Kotler and Gertner, 2004; Stern and Krakover, 1993; Luque-Martínez et al., 2007), which supports the thesis that it has an holistic component (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991).

As a brand encompasses functional and symbolic elements, its image as perceived by consumers can be assessed analyzing, on the one hand, its functional components and, on the other hand, its abstract or psychological components. Accordingly with Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993), the functional impressions mean the mental map of the physical destination’s features, and the psychological impressions characterize the destination atmosphere. The image of a tourism destination is described in terms of “total impressions, auras and feelings” (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993: 40) tourists sense about it. This means a holistic approach that is made of a melt of attributes or characteristics (that can be directly observable or measured) as well as more abstract and intangible characteristics (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993). The uniqueness of the destination image can be captured through the identification of “unique features and events (functional characteristics) or auras (psychological characteristics)” (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993: 43). Accordingly with the authors, the image of the destination is therefore related to the imagery, a field of psychology (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991). The psychological dimension matches the atmosphere or mood of the place, encompassing the attributes related to the feelings and emotions that the experience creates in tourists.

In the literature, there is a notable predominance of studies using quantitative methodologies and structured techniques (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991; Baloglu and Mangalolu, 2001; Mackay and Couldwell, 2004; O’Leary and Deegan, 2005). The main advantage of structured methodologies centered on the assessment of attributes is the fact that tools are easy to administer, and the data are submitted to statistical treatment, yielding information that can be compared in different places (Grosspietsch, 2006). However, they are unsuccessful to capture the holistic nature of image (Jenkins, 1999; Echtner and Ritchie 1991, 1993; Baloglu and Mangalolu, 2001). The main advantage of structured

methodologies, centered on the destinations' attributes, is the easy data collection and statistical analysis.

3. METHODOLOGY

Echtner and Ritchie (1993) suggest three questions to determine the holistic and unique components of destination imagery. Thus, the authors use non structured methodologies, as they enable respondents to "use free form descriptions to measure image" (Boivin, 1986, quoted by Echtner and Ritchie, 1993: 44). With this view, "unstructured methodologies are more conducive to measuring the holistic components of product image and also to capturing unique features and auras", as well as the psychological component of image (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993: 44). The open-ended questions proposed by these researchers are as follows:

1. What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of Portugal as a vacation destination? This question endeavors to let the respondents think freely about the destination and to describe their impressions about the place. It aims to assess the functional characteristics of the destination.
2. How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting Portugal? This question depicts the atmosphere or mood of the destination in order to characterize its psychological profile.
3. Please list any distinctive or unique tourist attractions that you can think of in Portugal. This question intends to capture distinctive or unique attractions of the destination.

The questionnaire used to collect data for this exploratory study was divided into three sections. The first part intended to collect the demographic characteristics of respondents, while the second section was designed to explore if respondents had previously visited Portugal and their willingness to visit this country in the future. The third section of the survey included the three open-ended questions suggested by Echtner and Ritchie (1993) with the following objectives: 1) to analyze the most salient cognitive characteristics of Portugal as a tourism destination; 2) to identify the most salient personality traits of Portugal as a tourism destination; and 3) to identify the most distinctive attractions of Portugal as a tourist destination.

For the purpose of this exploratory study, a web-based questionnaire was conducted during the spring of 2014, using the *Google Docs* technology, and the main tool to disseminate the survey was Facebook, followed by the use of the email address. The target population was Czech university students and the snowball method was used to collect the data. Answers were generated in excel file and imported to IBM SPSS Statistics 22, in order to perform descriptive statistics. The web application Wordle was used to generate word clouds regarding each open-ended question.

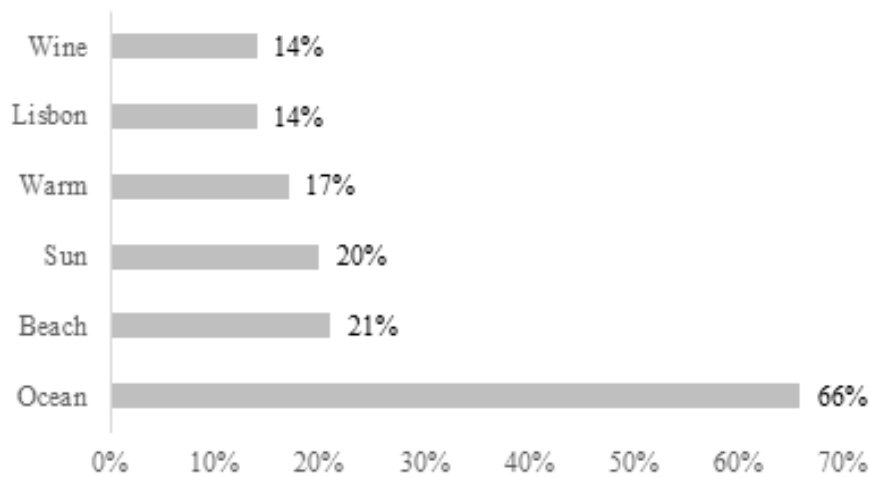
The study site, Portugal, is situated in southwestern Europe and also includes the Madeira and Azores archipelagos in the Atlantic Ocean. The country has 832 km of Atlantic coast and a 1,215 km border with Spain. According to the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics II, Portugal can be divided in seven regions: North, Center, Lisbon, Alentejo, Algarve, Azores and Madeira. The climate in Portugal varies considerably from one region to another, but is specially known for its sunshine, mild temperatures and Mediterranean climate. Tourism has a vital role in Portugal's economy, contributing to about 5% of its Gross Domestic Product (www.visitportugal.com, <http://www.turismodeportugal.pt>). Tourism is a sector in which the country has a comparative advantage due to its rich natural, historical and cultural assets.

4. RESULTS

Of the 111 respondents to the questionnaire, 55% are female and 25% are male, aged between 20 and 29 years old, with an average of 23.6 years old. The majority of the participants in the study were students that were not employed (68.5%), followed by employed students (30.5%). Those who had visited Portugal before represented 13.5% of the sample, while 86.5% of the respondents had never visited Portugal. From those who had been in Portugal before, 86.7% reveal that they are willing to visit Portugal again. With respect to the group of participants in the study who had never been in Portugal, 63.5% said that they are willing to visit this destination.

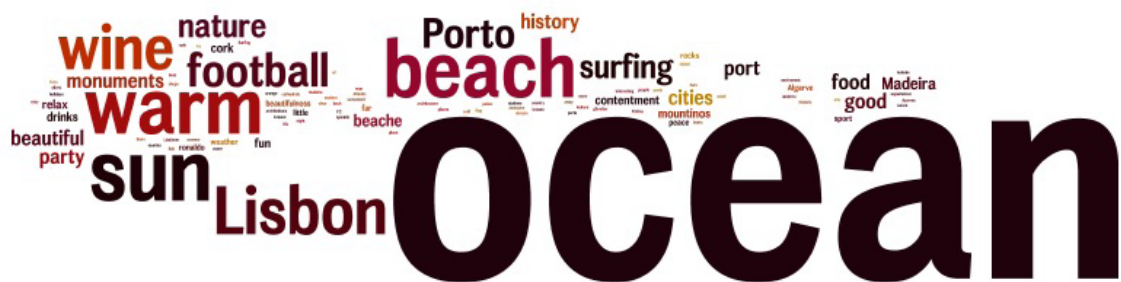
With respect to the question “What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of Portugal as a vacation destination?”, the respondents refer the ocean (66%), followed by beach (21%), sun (20%), warm (17%), Lisbon (14%), and wine (13%) (Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1. Word frequency related to functional attributes of Portugal (% of respondents)



Source: Own elaboration

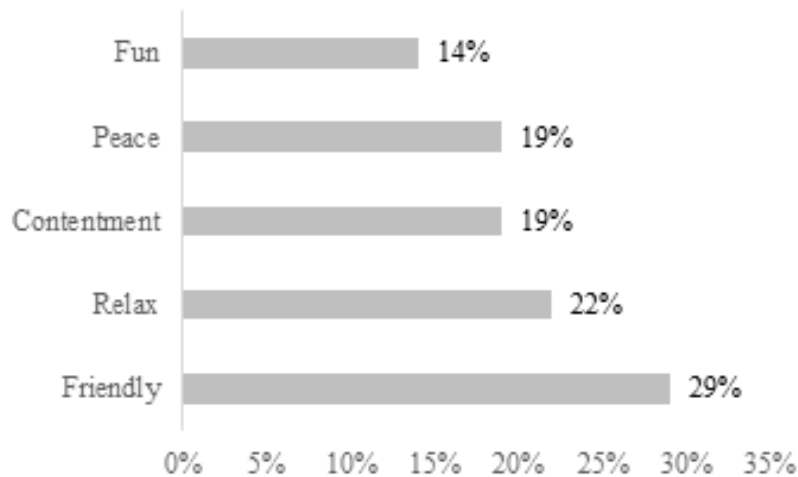
Figure 2. Functional attributes of Portugal as a vacation destination



Source: Wordle output

With regard to the open-ended question “How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting Portugal?”, respondents associate Portugal with a “friendly” personality trait (29%). Portugal is also described as a place with a relaxed (22%), contentment (19%), peace (19%), and fun (14%) aura (Figures 3 and 4).

Figure 3. Word frequency related to personality traits of Portugal (% of respondents)



Source: Own elaboration

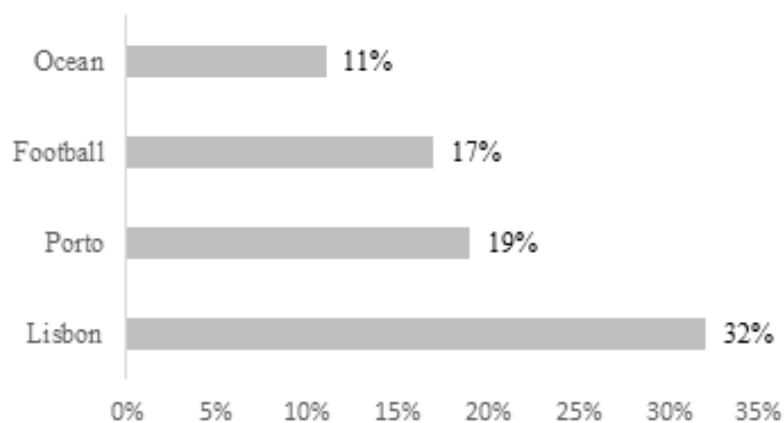
Figure 4. Affective personality traits of Portugal as a vacation destination



Source: Wordle output

When asked about “any distinctive or unique tourist attractions” related to Portugal, the respondents mentioned Lisbon (32%), followed by Porto (19%), football (17%), and ocean (11%) (Figures 5 and 6).

Figure 5. Word frequency related to unique attributes of Portugal (% of respondents)



Source: Own elaboration

Figure 6. Unique characteristics associated with Portugal as a vacation destination



Source: Wordle output

7. CONCLUSION

This exploratory research intended to study the brand personality of Portugal as a tourist destination, from the perspective of the Czech market, by analyzing the psychological dimension of Portugal as perceived by the market under study, in addition to its functional component. Hence, considering that brands have particular personalities, i.e., that there are human characteristics associated with brands (Aaker, 1997), Portugal is perceived by Czech university students as a friendly, relaxed, peaceful and fun destination, involved in an aura of contentment.

Despite not being one of the main markets choosing Portugal to spend holidays, the Czech market is one the strategic markets proposed in the National Strategic Plan for Tourism as important for the diversification strategy (Turismo de Portugal, 2007). In addition to the functional component related to the coastal nature of the destination and pleasant weather, the young respondents refer to football, and the most important metropolises of Portugal, Lisbon and Oporto, as unique features of the destination. These findings suggest that, although the respondents focus on highly competitive sport events, such as football, and busy cities, as distinctive attractions of Portugal, they feel that these attractions are surrounded by a friendly, positive and relaxed aura, which can be associated with a feeling of safety. This idea is in line with other studies carried out from the perspective of Czech markets, which acknowledges that Portugal has the potential to be visited by a greater number of tourists from Czech Republic, depending on adequate communication and brand strategies (Tomgová, 2014).

Furthermore, it is worth noting that, in the sample, the majority of the respondents that already visited Portugal intend to return, which suggests that they were satisfied with their *in loco* experience. In fact, destinations with positive, strong and more favorable images have a greater chance to be selected by tourists. Furthermore, it can result in an increased preference and higher emotional ties to the place brand. Finally, the authors note that these study findings should not be generalized to the whole of the Czech tourism market which will potentially visit Portugal, since this convenience sample used snowball method to reach

respondents. Hence, further empirical studies that replicate the proposed methodology are required to validate and deepen these findings.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This paper is financed by National Funds provided by FCT- Foundation for Science and Technology through project UID/SOC/04020/2013.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT AND WORK ENGAGEMENT AS PREDICTORS OF WORK SATISFACTION: A SAMPLE OF HOTEL EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

With more organizations looking for employees who take initiative and respond creatively to the challenges of the job, engagement and psychological empowerment becomes important at both individual and organizational levels. Engaged employees are generally more satisfied with their work, committed and effective at work. According to the JDR model (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004), engagement may be produced by two types of working conditions: job demands (i.e., role stress) and job resources (i.e., psychological empowerment; self-efficacy). This study examines the role of psychological empowerment and work engagement as antecedents of job satisfaction. A cross sectional study using online questionnaires was conducted. The sample consisted of 152 Portuguese workers in hotels. Tourism is an important tool for profit and the Portuguese hotels are fundamental for the growth of the country. Employee satisfaction increases employee retention and increases productivity influencing the income / profits for hotels. Hierarchical multiple regressions analyses revealed that job satisfaction was significantly predicted by psychological empowerment and work engagement. Results support JDR model by showing that positive outcomes, such as job satisfaction, may be predicted by motivational process and job demands. On a practical level, JDR model provides a framework for understanding motivating workplaces and engaged and satisfied hotel employees.

Keywords: Work Engagement, Psychological Empowerment, Job Satisfaction

JEL Classification: I10

1. INTRODUCTION

The Job Demands-Resources (JDR) model is a theoretical framework that tries to integrate two fairly independent research traditions: the stress research tradition and the motivation research tradition. According to this model, job demands are initiators of a health impairment process and job resources are initiators of a motivational process. In addition, the model specifies how demands and resources interact, and predict important organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction or organizational commitment. Previous research has shown that the assumptions of the model hold not only for self-reports but also for objective data (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). Moreover, studies have shown that the JDR model can predict the experience of burnout and of work engagement (Demerouti and Bakker, 2011).

Recently, there has been a great deal of interest in employee engagement. Some studies have claimed that employee engagement predicts employee outcomes, organizational success,

financial performance (e.g., total shareholder return) and client satisfaction (Chaudhary, Rangnekar and Barua, 2011). The experience of engagement has been described as a fulfilling positive work-related experience and state of mind (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004), and has been found to be related to good health and positive work affect, such as job satisfaction (Alarcon and Lyons, 2011; Maslach and Leiter, 2008; Saks, 2006; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). In the current economic climate, the employees' psychological connection with their work is certainly a key to compete effectively (Chaudhary *et al.*, 2011). The organizations are in need of employees who are engaged with their work (Bakker, van Veldhoven and Xanthopoulou, 2010). Likewise, it should be noted the positive consequences of psychological empowerment. Laschinger, Finegan, Shamian and Wilk (2001) report that the psychological empowerment has a direct effect on job satisfaction, just as the psychological empowerment has an impact on the degree of stress experienced at work. Similarly, Seibert, Wang and Courtright (2011) allude to the fact that a high level of psychological empowerment, brings greater satisfaction and well-being at work, greater organizational commitment, and improved task performance.

A variable closely associated separately with psychological empowerment and engagement in the research literature is job satisfaction. A number of authors have suggested that job satisfaction is of special significance, due to its relationship with other variables such as organizational commitment, intention to quit, and organizational citizenship (Alarcon and Lyons, 2011; Saks, 2006; Zhu, 2013). In this sense, this study examines the relationship between work engagement, psychological empowerment and job satisfaction, and the role of work engagement and psychological empowerment as antecedents of job satisfaction in a sample of Portuguese Hotel Employees.

2. THE JOB-DEMANDS AND RESOURCES MODEL

The Job Demands and Resources Model (JDR) (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004) distinguished two sets of variables in any kind of work: job demands and job resources. They relate, in different ways, to positive and negative outcomes, and can be typical of specific occupations.

Job demands are physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of work that require a physical and/or psychological effort (cognitive or emotional), and are associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs; instead, job resources refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that either/or (1) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; (2) are functional in achieving work goals; and (3) stimulate personal growth, learning and development.

With regard to the relationship between demands-resources and personal and organizational outcomes, Maslach and Leiter (2008) hypothesized that the presence of specific demands (i.e., role stress) and the absence of specific resources (i.e., self-efficacy or psychological empowerment) predict burnout, leading to negative results such as job dissatisfaction, job rotation, absenteeism, and reduction of organizational commitment. Also, the JDR model predicts that while job demands are related to burnout, job resources are related to engagement.

Recent research has shown strong and positive relationships between job resources and work engagement, and negative relationships between job demands and work engagement. Several studies have revealed that job demands such as a high work pressure, emotional demands, and role stress may lead to exhaustion, disengagement, low job satisfaction, and impaired health (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007), whereas job resources such as social support, performance feedback, psychological empowerment, and autonomy may instigate a motivational process, leading to job-related learning, job satisfaction, work engagement,

and organizational commitment (Demerouti and Bakker, 2011). Thus, we hypothesize the following.

Hypothesis 1: There will be a positive relationship between psychological empowerment and work engagement.

2.1 Psychological Empowerment and Job Satisfaction

The concept of empowerment has emerged in recent years as an element with important implications for occupational health and organizational effectiveness for businesses. Empowerment refers to the sense of control and dominance that individuals have over the employment context (Mendoza-Sierra, León-Jariego, Orgambidez-Ramos and Alés-Borrego, 2009). In the employment context, the psychological empowerment refers to a number of internal processes and psychological states of cognitive type, that change the perception of the subject concerning himself, and the context in which it is (Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas and Velthouse 1990). Thus, the psychological empowerment involves the beliefs of individuals about the meaning of their work, their ability to successfully perform their tasks, their sense of autonomy and their capacity to influence the results of work (Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990).

Several investigations have confirmed the existence of relations between psychological empowerment and positive attitudes towards work (eg, job satisfaction, organizational commitment) and innovation pipelines in the company (Cho, Laschinger, and Wong, 2006; Koberg, Boss, Senjem and Goodman, 1999; Lautizi, Laschinger and Ravazzolo, 2009; Mendoza-Sierra, Orgambidez-Ramos, León-Jariego, and García-Carrasco, 2014). So, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2: psychological empowerment will positively predict job satisfaction.

2.2. Work Engagement and Job Satisfaction

Employee engagement has emerged as one way for organizations for measure their investment in human's capital (Chaudhary *et al.*, 2011). Engagement is defined as a motivational and positive construct related to work that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Vigor is characterized by high levels of energy displayed at work and dedication by high levels of meaning for work. Enthusiasm and challenge relate to the work one does, while absorption refers to complete concentration and happiness at work when time flies. Work engagement helps individuals deal effectively to the demands of stressful work (Britt, Adler and Bartone, 2001).

According to Saks (2006), there is reason to expect employee engagement to be related to individuals' attitudes (i.e., job satisfaction), intentions, and behaviors. Kahn (1992) proposed that engagement leads to both individual outcomes (i.e., quality of people's work and their own experiences of doing that works), as well as organizational level outcomes (i.e., the growth and productivity of organizations). The experience of engagement has been described as a fulfilling positive work-related experience and state of mind (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004; Sonnentag, Mojza, Demerouti, and Bakker, 2012) and has been found to be related to good health and positive work affect, such as job satisfaction (Sonnentag *et al.*, 2012). Thus, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 3: Work engagement will positively predict job satisfaction.

3. THE CURRENT STUDY

Job satisfaction is an important predictor of negative attitudes and behaviors in the work context. Given the negative consequences that may come with low levels of job satisfaction, it is necessary an analysis of the factors that determine job satisfaction, as well as the creation of programs that increase job satisfaction reducing, as a result, negative work behaviors. This is particular important in the Portuguese economic context and tourism context, with new innovative and professional requirements for employees but with scarcity of economic resources (Mendonza-Sierra, Orgambidez-Ramos and Giger, 2013). Tourism is one of the major source of revenue in Portugal. Thus, it is important to analyze the employees who work in the hotel business and understand how to increase their satisfaction and, as a consequence, their income. Employee job satisfaction has directly affected on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. This study examines the factors that may impact on the job satisfaction in hotel employees.

The JDR model pretends that job demands and resources can be distinguished in any kind of occupation, regardless which country people work in. The JDR model aims to be universal, and cultural differences are not expected (Bakker *et al.*, 2010; Demerouti and Bakker, 2011). In this sense, new transcultural empirical evidence is needed to support the universality of the JDR model. Moreover, few studies can be found in the Portuguese context analyzing the relationship between empowerment, engagement and job satisfaction, in a cultural context with high levels of uncertainty avoidance. Due to the necessity of new cultural evidence about the JDR model and the importance of job satisfaction on organizational outcomes, this study examines the relationship between psychological empowerment, work engagement and job satisfaction, and the role of psychological empowerment and work engagement as antecedents of job satisfaction. The analysis is carried out in a tourism framework.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Participants

The sample consisted of 152 Portuguese workers from various Portuguese hotels. The hotel workers are from multiple functions (e.g., waiter, housekeeper, receptionists). Participants were required to have a minimum of one year experience in their professional positions. As for the sample's socio-demographic characteristics, 61.4% were female, 38.6% were male, with an average age of 34.22 years old ($SD = 11.67$). 50.7% of the participants were single, and 38.4% were married.

4.2. Measures

All the constructs included in the analyses were assessed with perceptual self-report measures based on multi-item scales whose psychometric properties are well established.

Socio-Demographic Information

In this section of the instrument, participants were asked to report age, gender, marital status, years of professional experience and role in hotel.

Work Engagement

Work engagement was assessed with the Portuguese version of the Utrecht Work Engagement (UWES) (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). The nine items were distributed into three dimensions: vigor (three items), dedication (three items), and absorption (three items).

Responses to all items were made on a Likert-type ranging 0 (“never”) to 6 (“always”). High scores indicate high levels of engagement at workplace. The Cronbach’s Alpha for the scale was 0.90.

Psychological Empowerment

This variable was measured with the Portuguese version (Santos, Gonçalves, Orgambídez-Ramos, Mendoza-Sierra and Alés-Borrego, 2014) of Psychological Empowerment Scale of Spreizer (1995). The scale contains 12 items arranged in four items of 3 factors: competence, impact, self-determination and meaning. The answer is Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). High scores imply greater empowerment. The internal consistency of the global scale, measured with Cronbach’s alpha coefficient, was 0.88.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction was assessed by the Job Satisfaction Scale (Lima, Vala and Monteiro, 1994). Responses to the eight-item scale were given on a Likert-type from 1 to 5, where 1 signifies “not agree at all” and 5 “very strongly agree”. High scores reveal a high presence of job satisfaction in the employees. The internal consistency (Cronbach’s Alpha) in this study was 0.86.

4.3. Procedure

A cross sectional study using online questionnaires was conducted. A three-page survey questionnaire in Portuguese was utilized as the survey instrument. All participants were required to have a minimum of one year’s experience in their professional positions at the hotel. They were informed of the study’s objectives and the confidentiality of their data, and they were asked to consent to participate.

4.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 22.0 statistical package for Windows. The correlations of the different instruments and the reliability coefficients of dimensions were obtained using Pearson’s correlation and the coefficient of measurement. Hierarchical multiple regressions were used to assess the ability of engagement and psychological empowerment to predict levels of job satisfaction.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Preliminary Analysis

Before testing the regression model, we examined the measurement models with all study variables: work engagement, psychological empowerment and job satisfaction. Harman’s one-factor test was conducted to test the presence of common method variance (CMV). All the variables items were entered into an exploratory factor analysis, using unrotated principal components factor analysis, and forcing to extract one factor. The factor merged accounted for less than 50% of the variance (27.32%). Thus, no general factor is apparent (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee and Podsakoff, 2003). While the results of this analysis do not preclude the possibility of common method variance, they do suggest that CMV is not a great concern and thus is unlikely to confound the interpretations of the results.

5.2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis, and intercorrelations between all study variables. The mean score of the variables ranged from 3.12 to 4.14. None of the variables had absolute skewness greater than 1. Work engagement, psychological empowerment and job satisfaction were slightly skewed towards the negative. Both work engagement and psychological empowerment were positively related to job satisfaction. Therefore, there was a positive and significant relationship between work engagement and job satisfaction ($r = 0.49, p < .01$), so that the higher levels of work engagement in individuals, the higher job satisfaction. In the same way, there was a positive and significant relationship between, psychological empowerment and job satisfaction ($r = 0.39, p < .01$). As expected, psychological empowerment and work engagement are positively and significantly correlated ($r = 0.47, p < .01$), meaning that when one increases the other also increases.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlations of all study scales

	M	SD	Skw	Kur	1	2	3
1.Engagement	4.14	1.02	-0.89	0.77	1		
2.Psychological Empowerment	3.83	1.09	-0.65	0.34	.47**	1	
3.Job Satisfaction	3.12	1.12	-0.35	0.04	.49**	.39**	1

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

5.3. Testing the Hypotheses

To test our hypotheses we conducted a series of multiple and hierarchical regression analyses (see Table 2).

Regression models were used to assess the ability of work engagement and psychological empowerment to predict levels of job satisfaction. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity. First, it was tested the ability of psychological empowerment to predict levels of job satisfaction. The total variance explained by Model 1, as a whole, was 15% ($F(2,148) = 8.86; p < .01$). Psychological empowerment was statistically significant, recording the highest beta value ($\beta = .39, p < .01$).

Table 2. Hierarchical Regression Results for Job Satisfaction

	B	SE B	Beta
Step 1			
Constant	4.540	1.10	
Psychological Empowerment	0.507	0.071	0.387**
Step 2			
Constant	3.757	1.05	
Psychological Empowerment	0.142	0.089	0.109**
Engagement	0.429	0.070	0.471**

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Next, hierarchical multiple regression was used to assess the ability of work engagement to predict job satisfaction, after controlling for the influence of psychological empowerment.

Psychological empowerment was entered at Step 1, by explaining 15% of total variability. After the entry of work engagement at Step 2, the total variance explained by Model 2, as a whole, was 24.6% ($F(3, 141) = 9.70; p < .01$). Work engagement explained an additional 9.6% of the variance on job satisfaction. In the final model, psychological empowerment and work engagement were statistically significant, with the job satisfaction measure recording a higher beta value. Thus, the three hypotheses were supported: here is a positive relationship between psychological empowerment and work engagement and these two constructs are positively related and predict significantly job satisfaction.

6. DISCUSSION

Due to the current scarcity of economic resources, job satisfaction is of interest to researchers and practitioners. Now, more than ever, organizations need engaged and satisfied employees. This study investigated the relationship between work engagement, psychological empowerment and job satisfaction, and the role of engagement and psychological empowerment as antecedents of job satisfaction. The results support the JDR model in a sample of Portuguese hotel workers.

A positive and significant relationship between psychological empowerment, work engagement and job satisfaction was observed in the study. This result is in line with other research studies (Alarcon and Lyons, 2011; Cervoni and DeLucia-Waack, 2011; Zhu, 2013), which have shown a positive relationship between engagement and job satisfaction. Our results corroborate these findings and provide further evidence that job demands and job resources relate, in different ways, to positive and negative outcomes. According to the JDR model, there is a link between both demands and resources in the workplace, and personal and organizational outcomes, such job satisfaction, engagement or burnout (Bakker *et al.*, 2010; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004).

The results show that workers with higher scores in the psychological empowerment and engagement also show higher scores on the well-being and satisfaction. These results are in line according to the study Saks (2006), which states that the positive perceptions of individuals with high levels of engagement are associated with attitudes such as satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behaviors. The positive relationship between engagement and well-being and satisfaction were also observed by Shimazu, Schaufeli, Kubota and Kawakami (2012) and Durán, Extremera, Montalbán and Rey (2005). Similarly, the positive relationship between psychological empowerment and satisfaction are documented in several studies (Cho *et al.*, 2006; Koberg *et al.*, 1999; Lautizi *et al.*, 2009; Mendoza-Sierra *et al.*, 2014). Beliefs about the meaning of work, the ability to perform the work, autonomy and control over work are related to higher levels of satisfaction and well-being at work.

7. CONCLUSION

This study suggests that psychological empowerment and engagement are key predictors of job satisfaction. These results are consistent with those found in other studies (Alarcon and Lyons, 2011; Demerouti and Bakker, 2011; Saks, 2006; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). The positive emotions related to work engagement, and even the psychological empowerment, are likely to result in positive outcomes, such as job satisfaction. According to Saks (2006), individuals who continue to engage themselves do so because of the continuation of favorable reciprocal exchanges. As a result, individuals who are more engaged and with high

psychological empowerment are likely to be in more trusting and high-quality relationships with their employer and will, therefore, be more likely to report more positive attitudes and intentions toward the organization, improving the quality of working life in hotels. Satisfied employees are also more productive. Productivity results from how hard employees work plus how smart they work. Satisfied employees in hotels provide a higher level of external service quality, the service experience that customers receive and evaluate, which leads to increased customer satisfaction, increasing the likelihood of return (Arnett, Laverie and McLane, 2002).

In view of the conclusions reached, it can be said that this research is constituted as an asset for organizations/hotels, in the sense that we observe the relationship between psychological empowerment and engagement, thus giving opportunity to conceptualize these positive constructs and with advantages not only for the individual worker but also for the organization.

There are limitations to the study that have to be addressed. First, the cross-sectional nature of the study limited the findings in that we could not show evidence of causal relationships. Second, this study relies on self-reports, which might increase the risk of common method variance (CMV). Harman's one-factor test, however, indicated that CMV did not significantly influence our results (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). Third, the sample size, among others factors, may affect sizes and the power of the results.

Future studies are necessary to examine this model in other contexts and at different organizational levels, as well as in different samples. In future research, larger samples would allow more sophisticated statistical analyses, analyzing the role of engagement as a mediator between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction. Also, it could be important to analyze the impact of stress management training programs for the decrease of distress levels, by the JDR model (Jesus, Rus, and Tobal, 2013).

To sum up, the JDR model provides a framework for understanding engaged employees and engaging workplaces, even in organizational and cultural contexts with high levels of uncertainty avoidance. This framework could be useful in designing strategies for which engaged employees may be advantageous to improving the quality of services, while at the same time increasing employees' job satisfaction and well-being.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This paper is financed by National Funds provided by FCT- Foundation for Science and Technology through project UID/SOC/04020/2013.

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THE ROLE OF IMAGERY AND EXPERIENCES IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A TOURISM DESTINATION IMAGE

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the role of imagery and tourism experiences (TEs) in the construction of tourism destination image (TDI). It highlights the importance of the construct imagery at all stages of consumption, because of the intangibility that characterizes tourism and services in general. This aspect gains importance since it is impossible for tourists to experience the desired holidays prior to visitation, leading the way for imagery to become an essential element to inspire and to influence them during the decision-making process, and consumption before, during and after the experience. A conceptual model resulting from the literature review and the potential theoretical contribution of the model are discussed.

Keywords: Imagery, Destination Image, Tourism Experience, Decision-Making Process

JEL Classification: L80, L83

1. INTRODUCTION

The current market challenges and economic uncertainty around the world mean that stakeholders must strive for new ways, concepts and strategies to promote their tourism destinations (TDs) in a competitive market (Govers and Go, 2005) with consumers' behavior always changing (Cohen, Prayag, and Moital, 2014). As a result, TDs marketers must, according to the different market needs, find differentiation (Bozbay, Ass and Ozen, 2008; Kotler, Bowen and Makens, 2009), so that the TDs brands may be seen by tourists as unique and distinctive (Pike, 2009). In this context, several regions have been trying, in the last decades, to reposition their brands by promoting specific tourism destination images (TDIs) in the main target markets with the purpose of introducing new concepts. Their intention is attain an improved market positioning, by even appealing to tourists' senses and emotions. However, since tourism development has also brought new hotels, food establishments and entertainment companies, and more refined and vigilant consumers of their options and potential opportunities, stronger TDIs are needed if the region intends to be well succeeded in the market.

In this context, some researchers have addressed consumers' attitudes and image perceptions (Lin and Huang, 2009). Others have followed and acknowledged the growing importance of the two constructs, imagery and tourist experiences (TEs). As to imagery is concern, some studies have focused it either directly (Adams, 2004; Andersen, Prentice and Guerin, 1997; Kim, Kim and Bolls, 2014; Lee and Gretzel, 2012; Lin and Huang, 2009; MacInnis and Price, 1987, 1990) video versus high-imagery audio advertisements or indirectly, through the concept of image (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Boorstin, 1962;

Hunt, 1975; Lopes, 2010; Lubbe, 2011; Mackay and Fesenmaier, 1997; Stepchenkova and Morrison, 2008; Tasci and Kozak, 2006). Regarding the TEs, several authors also addressed it directly (Hosany and Gilbert, 2009; Kim, Ritchie and McCormick, 2012; Lehto, Jang, Achana and O'Leary, 2008; Lu, Chi and Liu, 2015; Richards and Wilson, 2006; Tsaur, Chiu and Wang, 2007; Uriely, 2005; Wang, Chen, Fan and Lu, 2012) which are indeed memorable, directly determine a business's ability to generate revenue (Pine and Gilmore 1999) or indirectly through the various influential agents, such as expectations (Chon, 1992), reactions (Wakefield and Blodgett, 1994), emotions (Bigné and Andreu, 2004; Laros and Steenkamp, 2005; Richins, 1997; Yoo and MacInnis, 2005) and senses (Bitner, 1992; Carù and Cova, 2003; Hudson and Ritchie, 2009) that must be awakened by TEs marketing messages (Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello, 2009; Esch *et al.*, 2012; Schmitt, 2012). However, the fact remains that despite MacInnis and Price (1987) seminal work, knowledge on the theme remains sparse and improvement is necessary.

The fact is that further research is wanted to understand these variables and other influential factors such as: the mass media (Beeton, Bowen and Santos, 2006; Nielsen, 2001), friends and relatives (Echtner and Ritchie, 2003), travel agencies and brokers (Jennings and Nickerson, 2006), familiarity (Ulrich, 1983), travel purpose (Hankinson, 2005), geographical distance (Crompton, 1979; Hunt, 1975), tourism destination attributes (Tasci and Kozak, 2006), socio-demographic variables (Baloglu, 1997) and also the perception and tourists' individual learning process, resulting from previous experiences (Cohen, 1979; Crompton, 1979; Jenkins, 1999). In simpler terms, images are formed from different information sources and based on subjective criteria, valued differently by each consumer, meaning that the individual's cultural, social and psychographic characteristics impact on the consumers expected benefits. Marketers must therefore, understand with more depth the importance of imagery in stimulating (Lee and Gretzel, 2012; MacInnis and Price, 1987) the right conceptions and images, since they effect, among other dimensions, the positioning, image and brand, which are key factors for any region or destination success. As Kim, Kim and Bolles (2014) remind, the consumers are more likely to choose those destinations that have engaged or stimulated their imagery.

This paper reviews the importance of the constructs imagery and tourism experiences in the construction of a destination image. In addition, it provides a conceptual model in which the construct is framed throughout the different stages in which its influence is evident to assist practitioners, either managers or marketers. Therefore, this paper is organized into three main sections: first, a literature review on the constructs is summarized, followed by the presentation of the conceptual model; lastly, the implications of the theoretical framework are discussed.

2. IMAGERY, IMAGE AND EXPERIENCES IN TOURISM CONTEXT

2.1. Imagery

A possible way of gaining a competitive advantage can result from evaluating the tourists' perceptions of the main characteristics and attributes of the destination (Kim *et al.*, 2014) and TDI (Crompton, Fakeye, and Lue, 1992; Selby and Morgan, 1996). The definition and creation of distinctive tourism products, able to increase tourists' satisfaction, must be incorporated into the strategy, product development, and communication actions to create the truthful expectations and proper TDIs. The communication efforts should also be aware that tourists make their decisions according to the value proposition offered by the TDs (Pralhad and Ramaswamy, 2004). These must develop a positive awareness of the

destination among tourists and to raise their freedom to dream and imagine future holidays (Font, 1997).

As referred by Adams (2004), imagery allows consumers to conceive ideas and narratives of the destinations (Adams, 2004). It also facilitates consumers to mentally project themselves at the setting, living their experiences even before having travelled (Dann, 1996). This imagining of anticipated holidays is predominant among consumers (MacInnis and Price, 1990), but it may result in prejudice regarding the probability of the unfolding future events or experiences in which consumers will be engaged to meet the expectations generated or the satisfaction pretended (MacInnis and Price, 1987, 1990). In fact, as MacInnis and Price (1987:486) claim, the imagery processing is "...important in understanding incidental learning, numerous facets of the choice process, the likelihood and timing of purchases, and the nature of many hedonic and symbolic consumption experiences and re-experiences (remembered consumption)". For Lee and Gretzel (2012) imagery can be seen as a mental representation of what was previously experienced or what is believed to be experienced in the future. In table 1, several definitions are presented.

Table 1. Definition of Imagery

Reference	Definition
(Kim et al., 2014:64)	"Mental-imagery processing refers to the psychological process engaged in by listeners during exposure to ads"
(Lee and Gretzel, 2012:1270)	"When travellers engage in mental imagery processing, they experience the destination in their mind's eye"
(Govers, 2005:28)	" A distinct way of processing and storing multisensory information in working memory"
(MacInnis and Price, 1987:473)	" A process (not a structure) by which sensory information is represented in working memory"

Source: Author

As seen in table 1, imagery is mostly considered to be a mental process of assimilating multisensory information and developing conceptions about countries, regions, destinations or places. In spite of the difficulties and complexity associated with defining the construct, an attempt to find some agreement regarding a definition can be established by using a word cloud (from the generating link wordle.net), which analyses texts to find the words that appear more frequently. Drawing on the authors' definitions in table 1, the words more prominently employed to define the topic were represented visually in figure 1. As shown in the figure, the most common words used to define imagery were: **Processing, information, working** and **memory**. If a simple definition was to be suggested from the most common words (despite the reduced number of definitions), imagery would be defined as **a way of processing information on working memory**.

Figure 1. Word cloud generated from imagery definitions



Source: Author using wordle.net

For Echtner and Ritchie (2003), imagery is based and interrelated with image, which is the result of a more holistic way of interpreting reality and information gleaned from different sources. This interpretation and conceptions deriving from imagery may be a significant influence on the choices and decisions that consumers make (Lee and Gretzel, 2012) which, on the other hand, impact on expectations, emotions, experience and satisfaction (MacInnis and Price, 1990). In Gover's (2005) study, words can integrate one, or all of the 5 senses. These images can result from organic (Gunn, 1972) or induced sources (Pan and Li, 2011), and can be disseminated through several ways, such as, webpages, blogs, television, books or brochures. Another relevant aspect of the imagery construct is that it results from consumers' images generated from a previous experience (Adams, 2004). Moreover, consumers' experience may positively or negatively affect the outcomes of the expectations arising from the imaginary process (MacInnis and Price, 1990).

However, as Cai (2002) notes, the mental constructs built and develop by the consumers are largely dependent on what potential destinations or products have to offer to consumers own needs. In some cases, such as time limited experiences (for example, a wedding), imagery may act as one way of enhancing the value of the time bonded experience (MacInnis and Price, 1987). Thus, marketing managers and local stakeholders, must not focus solely on their communication efforts on what consumers know or see about a specific message. Instead, they should seek to offer and deliver new and stimulating information, in which consumers may create and mentally imagine or fantasize about their own images (Pan and Li, 2011). This happens because image and the imagery process do not remain static; instead, they evolve due to the flow of information and experience consumers collect all the time.

2.2 Tourism Destination Image

Lin and Huang (2009) emphasize the importance of TDI as a marketing tool for destinations and countries to be able to compete in the global market. As Pike (2002) demonstrated in his review of the TDI studies, from 1973 to 2000, and Stepchenkova and Mills (2010) in another review from 2000 to 2007, the topic remains important and popular among academics. The reason is that the TDI is based on attributes composed of expected benefits, psychological characteristics and meanings that tourists associate with tourism destinations, at different times and places, e.g., before, during and after the actual travel (Kim and Chen, 2015). As shown in table 2, image can have diverse impacts.

Table 2. TDI impacts

Decision-making process	(Ankomah, Crompton, and Baker, 1996; Fuller, Hanlan, and Wilde, 2005; Gartner, 1989; Goodall, Brian, and Ashworth, 2012; Moutinho, 1987; Pike, 2006; Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005).
Satisfaction	(Alegre and Garau, 2009, 2010; Esu and Arrey, 2009; Kozak and Rimmington, 2000; Oppermann, 1998; Valle, Silva, Mendes, and Guerreiro, 2006; Wang and Hsu, 2010; Yoon and Uysal, 2005).
Return and recommendation intention	(Bosque, Martín, Collado, and Salmones, 2009; Chen and Tsai, 2007; Galí and Donaire, 2005; Hosany and Prayag, 2013; Hosany and Witham, 2009; Hunt, 1975; Selby and Morgan, 1996; Tasci and Gartner, 2007).

Source: Author

Thus, all image representations must be carefully reflected, because the visual and textual images shape the way consumers' make decisions, create images and imagine their experience, which means that tourists will not only consider (mentally or physically) their destination, but also their competitors (Adams, 2004). For this reason, Govers (2005) also postulates that TDI influences destination positioning. For Cai (2002), the battle is for the consumers' perception of the images mentally associated with a destination brand, even if some perceptions or images are not truly representative of what destinations have to offer (Amoamo, 2003; Um and Crompton, 1990, 1991). One of such examples is given by MacInnis and Price (1987), who emphasize that not every decision is made with the full information available.

Regarding the concept of image, it is considered "an abstract concept incorporating the influences of past promotion, reputation and peer evaluation of alternatives" (Dann, 1996:42), in which consumers or potential tourists create and establish subjective beliefs about specific countries, destinations, regions or places (Lin and Huang, 2009). This subjectivity, according to Stepchenkova and Mills (2010), has led to multiple definitions, conceptualizations and measurements, which are inconsistent with the nature and complexity of the construct. Echtner and Ritchie (2003:41) emphasize that one of the reasons for the difficulties mentioned above is the inexistence of a concrete indication of whether the researchers are considering the attribute-based, or the holistic-based components of an image, or even both. Thus, not surprisingly, and despite the long background of the construct (Baloglu and Mangaloglu, 2001; Baloglu, 1997; Bonn, 2005; Boorstin, 1962; Echtner and Ritchie, 2003; Gartner, 1989; Govers, Go, and Kumar, 2007; Hunt, 1975; Kneesel, Baloglu and Millar, 2009; Sanmartin and Rodriguezdelbosque, 2008) it remains ill-defined and complex as suggested by table 3.

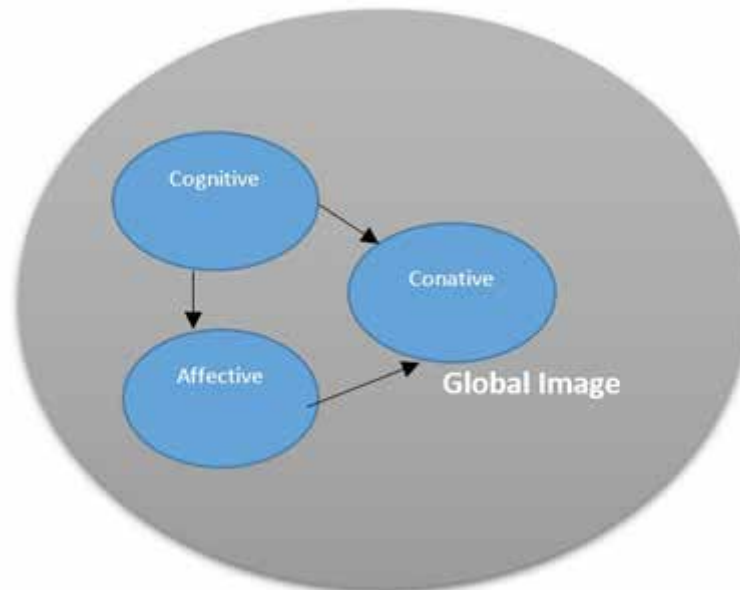
Table 3. Definitions of destination image

Reference	Definition
60's	
(Reynolds, 1965a:69)	"An image is actually the result of a more complex process. It is the mental construct developed by the consumer on the basis of a few selected impressions among the flood of total impressions; it comes into being through a creative process in which these selected impressions are elaborated, embellished, and ordered".
70's	
(Hunt, 1975:1)	"Perceptions held by potential visitors about an area".
(Crompton, 1979:18)	"Sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination".
80's	
(Phelps, 1986:168)	"Perceptions or impressions of a place".
(Gartner and Hunt, 1987:15)	"Impressions that a person...holds about a state in which they do not reside".
(Gartner, 1989:16)	"A complex combination of various products and associated attributes".
(Calantone, Di Benedetto, Hakam, and Bojanic, 1989:25)	"Perceptions of potential tourist destinations".
90's	
(Reilly, 1990:21)	"Not individual traits...but the total impression an entity makes".
(Fakeye and Crompton, 1991:10)	"Representation of an area into the potential tourist's mind".
(Echtner and Ritchie, 1993:3)	"Composed of perceptions of individual attributes (such as climate, accommodation facilities, and friendliness of the people) as well as more holistic impressions (mental pictures or imagery) of the place".
Font (1997:124)	"Set of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that the public holds of the named product, and to some extent it is part of the product".
(Mackay and Fesenmaier, 1997:538)	"A destination's image is a composite of various products (attractions) and attributes woven into a total impression".
00's	
(Bigné, Sánchez and Sánchez, 2001:607)	"The image of a destination consists, therefore, of the subjective interpretation of reality made by the tourist".
(Echtner and Ritchie, 2003:43)	"Destination image consists of functional characteristics, concerning the more tangible aspects of the destination, and psychological characteristics, concerning the more intangible aspects".
(Alcañiz, García, and Blas, 2009:716)	"It consists of all that the destination evokes in the individual; any idea, belief, feeling or attitude that tourists associate with the place".

Source: Author

Now, by using the word cloud generating link wordle.net to assess the most cited words to define the construct, it can be seen in figure 2 that the words more prominently employed to describe it were: **Impressions, perceptions, complex, attributes, potential** and **selected**.

Figure 3. TDI Dimensions



Source: Author

According to these authors, this holistic perception (overall image) is greater than the sum of its parts (i.e. the sum of the cognitive, affective, and conative components). The perception is worked by the media in providing a flood of information which is accessed and experienced vividly and intensely by the consumers using traditional and virtual instruments (Govers, 2005). In effect, then, as MacInnis and Price (1987) explain, the search to obtain some satisfaction by using imagery is not present solely at the anticipatory stage, it is present during the full course of the consumption, including the actual experience at the destination.

2.3. Tourism Experiences

Consumers need to create and generate mental narratives and expectations of the TEs at the destinations. Today, like in the 60s, a challenge is to uncover what exactly makes certain TEs special and memorable (Bertella, 2013). This happens because consumers need to build a sense of place when they visit and experience the destination (Lin and Huang, 2009), reflecting their needs to acquire hedonic products and having their feelings, needs, wants and desires satisfied during holidays. Salazar (2012:864) shares this view that “planning a vacation and going on holidays involve the human capacity to imagine or to enter into the imaginings of others”.

Still, despite some agreement (Holbrook and Addis, 2001; Kim, 2011; Weaver, Weber and McCleary, 2007) regarding the evaluation of tourists’ experiences being a key factor for any organization or any TD success, a common language is lacking in the academic literature regarding an all-encompassing definition of TEs, and the dimensions that constitute this concept. Tung and Ritchie (2011) also express their concern regarding the absence of agreement in the building of a comprehensive definition for the TEs. Not surprisingly, for some researchers, the term has been and remains too ambiguous (Carù and Cova, 2003), whereas for others, it is the complexity of the construct that has proven to be hard to define, identify and operationalize (Volo, 2009). However, despite all the obstacles researchers face when addressing the construct, some definitions have been proposed (table 4).

Table 4. TE concepts

Reference	Definition
00's	
(Volo (2010:301)	"The tourist experience is defined as an occurrence experienced by a person outside the 'usual environment' and the 'contracted time' boundaries that is comprised of a 'sequence' of the following events: sensation, perception, interpretation, and learning".
(Bigné and Andreu, 2004:692	"Experiences can be defined as events that engage individuals in a personal way".
90's	
(Schmitt, 1999:25)	The "result of encountering, undergoing, or living through situations" and "triggered stimulations to the senses, the heart, and the mind".
(Pine and Gilmore, 1998:98)	"An experience occurs when a company intention-ally uses services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event".
(Otto and Ritchie, 1996:166)	"The 'experience' of leisure and tourism can be described as the subjective mental state felt by participants".
(Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982:132)	"A steady flow of fantasies, feelings, and fun".

Source: Author

This conceptualization problem derives from its dynamic and complex nature, which comes from TEs being formed when “a company intentionally uses services as the stage, and goods as props to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event” (Pine and Gilmore, 1999:11). As figure 4 shows, by generating word clouds from the definitions presented by Table, the words most used were **engage**, **events** and **way**.

Figure 4. Word Cloud generated from TDI definitions



Source: Author using wordle.net

From these words with most prominence, another suggestion of definition can be propose that TEs are **a way of engaging consumers during events**. According to Pine and Gilmore's (1999), these events can have various dimensions (entertainment, education, escapist, aesthetic), differentiated however by the level of involvement (passive or active) and participation (absorption or immersion). However, Ballantyne, Packer and Falk (2011), in their study about visitors' memories of wildlife tourism, assessed tourists' experiences according to their sensory impressions (what they saw and heard), emotional affinity (what

they felt during the experience), reflective response (their thoughts during the events) and behavioral response (how they act or what they did). Brakus *et al.* (2009) taking the experience towards brands, also conceptualized TEs as being composed of sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral dimensions, given that, in addition to feelings and impressions, physical actions are also undertaken by tourists. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) also proposes that experiences have functional (i.e., experience coming from the consumption of the product's function) and enjoyable (sensations generated during the experience) dimensions.

For one hand, the subjective and highly personal nature of the TEs has been the focus of interest by many researchers (Huang and Hsu, 2009; Tung and Ritchie, 2011), since tourists remember their personal experiences differently from one another, even if marketers use the same promotion messages or images (Tung and Ritchie, 2011). As Huang and Hsu (2009) assert, TEs consumption only reflects the nature of the tourism activity when the tourists' active involvement enables them to go through a process of psychological and physical transformation. This leads to different levels of interest (from high to low) and involvement (ranging from high to low) by the tourists during the purchase of tourism products (Laws, 1995). The involvement shows, from an early stage, that the choices tourists make, not only make them more demanding and influential for businesses, but also redefine the TEs interactions between service providers and tourists (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004), as well as between their expectations built on the imagery.

Another aspect to consider is tourists' support to both production and consumption of TEs, through their personal social-psychological state (emotions, thoughts, feelings, characteristics), which are brought to the "stage" (Huang and Hsu, 2009; McIntosh and Siggs, 2005). According to (Baker and Crompton, 2000), no service industry or company can, therefore, sell pre-orchestrated TEs to their tourists. This happens because TEs are influenced by other factors which are beyond the control of the service providers (Huang and Hsu, 2009), such as the vivid imagery. In this regard, some authors have tried to understand the tourism experiences to assist the DMOs managers (Tung and Ritchie, 2011). However, as Laws (1995) points out, the cost of the holidays, the complexity related to the purchase of the holidays and the risk of the experience at the destination does not fulfill the generated expectations, are high. In the same context, Huang and Hsu (2009) agree that the quality of the interactions experienced, and not its volume, is the most important factor for a true rewarding, and emotionally engaging TE to be lived and remembered. One example is tourists search for advance booking, which shows their security and familiarization with TDs (Xinran Y. Lehto, O'Leary and Morrison, 2004), but also, that they actively seek TEs that can provide them with pleasurable experiences (Bigné and Andreu, 2004), coming from fantasies and elaborate imagery (MacInnis and Price, 1987, 1990).

3. CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The proposed conceptual model calls practionaires and academics' attention to focus more in imagery since it provides all the necessary inputs to enable tourists to shape their expectations and future experiences in a pleasurable and memorable way. If consumers or tourists leave the destination disappointed, their attractions may have succeeded in their appealing function but not in carrying out their complete function of satisfying tourists. Tourists' future decisions regarding the next holidays, length of stay, season to travel, what to do and where to go start with the imagery, when the initial ideas are formed, conceptions of which TEs are available at the potential destinations and which TEs they would like to engage in. This individual nature of the construct forces managers to acknowledge they

cannot control the personal interpretation and consequent interaction between tourist, service providers, and surrounding environment during the time of the experience. As can be seen in figure 5, the proposed model proposition reinforces and seeks to enhance the role of imagery at all stages of the holiday experience, that is:

Stage 1, pre-visit – The consumers form their images, according to their personal needs and information collected from different sources and origin (organic or induced) (Govers and Go, 2005; Gunn, 1972, 1988; Kim and Chen, 2015). It is at this stage that the imagery plays a stronger part, since the decision-making process by consumers is based on destinations mental pictures (MacInnis and Price, 1987, 1990), but also on the holistic appeal created by the mental “travelling and experiencing” of the destination, in which dreams are built and decisions are made (Lee and Gretzel, 2012). TEs begin at this point, by the dreams and expectations generated from what will be experienced and lived at the destination. At this stage, other factors, such as media, brokers and stakeholders impact on the information sources that consumers seek and have available to process.

Stage 2, trip to the destination – During the travel, consumers continue to assess, elaborate and build their imagery as part of their anticipation of what future events will be like at the destination (MacInnis and Price, 1990). This imagery leads the different type of consumers (first-time visitors or repeaters, novice or experienced) to envisage, with diverse degrees of intensity, mainly positive sensory outcomes from their dream holidays.

Stage 3, at the setting – During the visit at the holiday destination, imagery continues to play an important role, by continuing to build and create new mental pictures and images of what has been experienced, but also the path set by the mental experience elaborated by the consumers. At this stage, the TEs originate from a set of complex interactions between the tourist and the service providers (Carù and Cova, 2003; Holbrook and Addis, 2001; LaSalle and Britton, 2003). This means that all interactions tourists live at the destination can be considered to be an experience, despite of its nature (perceptual or emotional) or source (expressed or implied) (Oh, Fiore and Jeoung, 2007). In effect, it may even facilitate tourists in co-creating their own experiences (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004; Prebensen and Foss, 2011). However, not all the contacts between tourists and service providers have the same value. This happens because the TEs occur “inside” the tourist, and are dependent of tourists’ state of mind and of the set of complex and dynamic processes that take place to enable the tourists to see and feel the whole event and not the sum of the parts (Lu *et al.*, 2015). Moreover, since the TEs are produced and consumed simultaneously, it implicates that the tourist and all of those participating actively in an event, create meanings and imagine effects, results during the consumption of the “staged” experiences. From these events or experiences, new images and consequent imagery may or may not be built and reshaped.

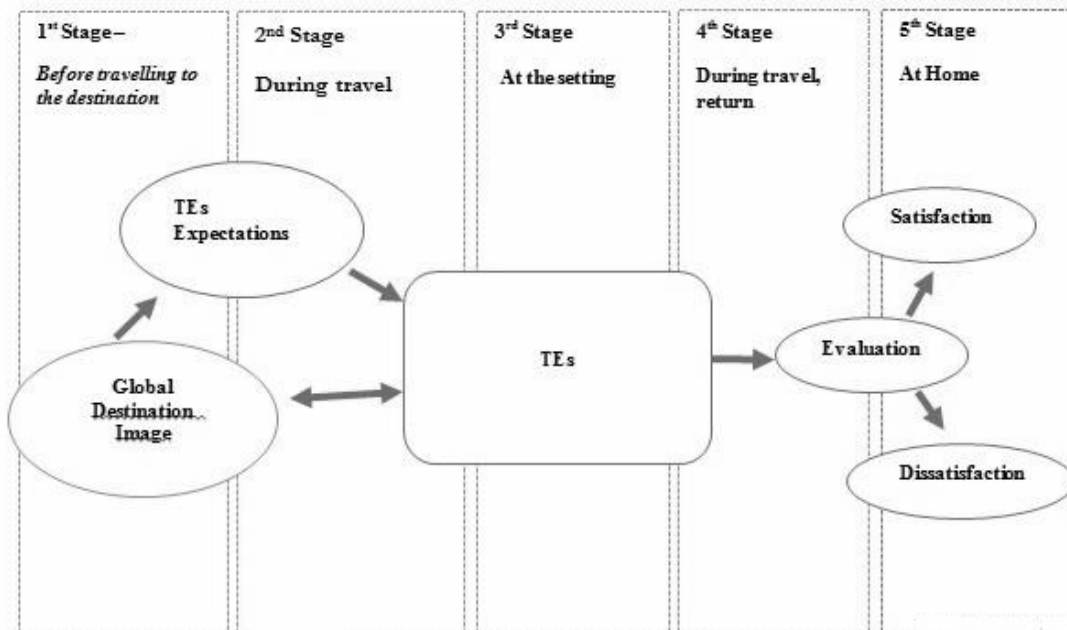
Stage 4, during travel returning home – On their way back home, the new information collected from the actual experience at the setting is mentally stored, and although the holiday experience has not been completed, imagery continues to play its part on the assessment consumers make of what experiences were positive, negative, and which outcomes envisaged were met or not.

Stage 5, at home – Despite the end of the holidays, consumers continue to imagine, to re-live their experiences and the images built, neglecting some aspects (positive or negative), but nevertheless creating their own stories of the holidays.

To sum up, consumers nowadays, including tourists, seek to be engaged, absorbed, which means that the supply side need to create memorable meanings during the production of experiences (Ali, Hussain, and Ragavan, 2014; Kim and Ritchie, 2014; Kim *et al.*, 2012; Kim, Ritchie, and McCormick, 2010). This level of attachment contradicts previous conceptions seeing tourists solely as rational human beings, neglecting the meanings tourists attach to

service consumption. Moreover, it is important to consider the subjectivity coming from the personal or individual evaluation (affective, cognitive and conative) tourists make regarding their experiences (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Holbrook, O'Saughnessy and Bell, 1990; Matos, Mendes and Valle, 2012; Volo, 2009) before, during and after the experience. This consumption takes tourists to pre-experience their holidays (Lee and Gretzel, 2012; MacInnis and Price, 1987), but also to evaluate, frequently and repeatedly, the different events unfolding before them, at the different times (before, during and after the TE) and locations (at home, during travel and at the holiday destination).

Figure 5 – Imagery influence in the TDI and TE - conceptual model



Source: Author

4. CONCLUSION

The objective of this paper was to analyse and review the role of imagery and tourism experiences in the destination image. For this purpose a conceptual model of the role of both constructs on TDI was presented. The literature review undertaken indicated that the way destination images are constructed has changed immensely from a supply and demand perspectives, e.g., from the way images is projected, to the way these images and projections are perceived (Govers, Go and Kumar, 2007; Govers and Go, 2005). Thus, the relationship between imagery and TE in the construction of TDI is still ill-defined, since the tourists' decision-making process, and the selection of their next holiday destination, starts considerably earlier and ends much after the return home.

Also, the composite nature of the tourism activity creates barriers to any marketer to match the services and products offered, with the consumers' needs and demands. First, neglecting the role of imagery will have consequences regarding the expenses necessary to attract potential tourists to the area, since the costs of "acquiring" new tourists are far greater than the cost of retaining them (Kotler et al., 2009). This means that destinations may be promoting in their target markets the wrong images, or not the best, to engage consumers' imagery of what will be fulfilled or experienced at the destination(s). In effect, imagery is an under-explored theme (Adams, 2004), partially because consumers are asked to rank attributes in standardized surveys (Dann, 1996), neglecting the holistic perspective of what

the images, memories of personal past experiences, ideas, thoughts, imagery and image evokes or nurtures among consumers. Another important aspect requiring more research is the role the brokers and media in their different information and communication tools, such as guidebooks, brochures, websites and newsletters, which may create too much expectations and incorrect images that may elude consumers, by setting the wrong expectations and failing in providing the right information. This would be important to: 1) increase the appeal of natural and man built local resources, by using the correct marketing promotion tools and strategies (Crouch, 2007); 2) to increase the competitiveness of the TD through the use of key factors to appeal, and engage physically and emotionally tourists (Kim, Ritchie and McCormick, 2010; Kim, 2011; Pine and Gilmore, 1998, 2011); and 3) to influence tourists' behaviour (Chen and Tsai, 2007; Tsaur *et al.*, 2007; Urry, 1992; Žabkar, Brenčič and Dmitrović, 2010).

Being the TDI a critical element for the promotion (Andersen *et al.*, 1997) and motivation or stimulus to visit a destination (Cai, 2002), the role and influence of imagery as the cornerstone of the representations, ideas, conceptions or misconceptions that form and shape consumers' perceptions and imaginary at all stage of the consumption experience, should not be neglected. As Amoano (2003:X) reminds "representations of destinations motivate travellers to travel, however, the same representations evoke imagery that may not be confirmed by the actual travel experience...[and] any gap between imagery and experience may impact on the traveller's sense of authenticity". For this matter, it is important to assess the impacts and changes caused by imagery and TEs on the tourists' destination image they take home to share with friends and relatives, personally or using social media. If the tourists' behaviour and experiences are better understood, stakeholders will more easily define and set their marketing strategies. More importantly, they will be able to manage their destinations more efficiently (Echtner and Ritchie, 2003). Moreover, new insights and a greater knowledge about tourists' TEs will be attained, allowing for more competitive advantages in relation to other competitors (Pine and Gilmore, 1988). This way, possible impacts (negative or positive) in the TE and TDI can be more rapidly identified and if necessary revised, enabling the stakeholders and managers to set and promote tourism products of added value for consumers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This paper is financed by National Funds provided by FCT- Foundation for Science and Technology through project UID/SOC/04020/2013.

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LOCAL LEADERS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN TIMOR-LESTE

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ABSTRACT

Timor-Leste is a small island that emerged as Asia's newest nation in 2002, and it is largely unknown as a tourism destination in the world, with geographic, natural, and socio cultural weaknesses and vulnerability. In this country, tourism is considered as one of the priorities for the national economic development, in addition to agriculture, and petroleum. However, in a new destination, which is also in the first stage of tourism development, the involvement of stakeholders is very limited both on the supply and the demand sides. This situation presents a major challenge to the achievement of a sustainable tourism development. Moreover, the study of tourism in this country is a very recent phenomenon. In this context, the objective of this study is twofold. Firstly, it intends to examine the perceptions of the local leaders (from the public sector, the private sectors and from non-governmental organizations) regarding the sustainable tourism development concept; and secondly, to understand to what extent these leaders take initiatives in voluntary actions towards sustainable tourism development at the local level, as well as their motivations and difficulties in this process.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism Development, Leaders' Perceptions, Timor Leste

JEL Classification: L83

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of "sustainable tourism development" became globally known after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) that was held in Rio de Janeiro, in 1992. The UNCED adopted an agenda for environment and development in the Agenda 21 as a programme and action plan for achieving the sustainable development principles, such as: social equity, economic prosperity, and environmental responsibility (Moisey and McCool, 2008; Moniz, 2006; UNCED, 1992; UNCSD, 2007).

The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the World Tourism Organization (WTO), and the Earth Council (EC), in 1995, had recognized the importance of sustainability in tourism and formulated the Agenda 21 for the Travel and Tourism Industry. More recently, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), an international association of local government organizations that have made a commitment to sustainable development, is concerned about the implementation of Agenda 21 at local levels including in the tourism sector (Vourc'h and Denman, 2003). In this implementation process, local leaders in public sectors (local government and planners), in private sectors' (tourism operators), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (including civil society,

religious institutions, church, and academics) have key roles and responsibilities at local, regional, and even national levels (Lacy, Battig, Moore and Noakes, 2002; Moniz, 2006; WTO, 2004). Many studies found that local leaders can individually take initiative and voluntary actions for launching a local Agenda 21 to enhance the sustainability of tourism in terms of economical, socio-cultural, environmental dimensions by planning, organizing and coordinating the participation of others stakeholders to implement the voluntary actions plan for which they are responsible (Mckercher, 2003; Vourc'h and Denman, 2003).

This study addresses the special case of sustainable tourism development in Timor-Leste and it has two purposes: firstly, to examine the local leaders' perceptions about the sustainable tourism development concept in this country; and secondly, to understand to what extent leaders have taken voluntary initiatives to operationalize and implement the sustainable tourism development concept, according to Local Agenda 21, including their motivations and difficulties in this process. In this sense, the present study contributes academically to sustainable tourism development studies for emerging destinations, focusing on the particular case of Timor-Leste, a quite unstudied country in what regards tourism development.

2. RESEARCH SETTING

Timor-Leste has a set of typical characteristics of the island nations in general, with vast resources but geographical difficulties that restrict the development of its own industries, such as mining, agriculture, and manufacture (WTO, 2002a). Currently, oil and gas are important industries and sources of economic wealth in Timor-Leste (RDTL-MF, 2013a,b). However, as WTO (2007) noted, although these sectors comprise the main financial resources for the national budget in this country, they will not generate employment and livelihood opportunities for rural communities, which have a very low productivity and experience food shortages, due the climate adversities (UNWTO, GoTL & UNDP, 2007). Therefore, there is a strong need to diversity investments into development sectors. Tourism is viewed as one of these sectors with potential to bring socio-economic development to the country, providing employment, and income to rural communities, and able to make the local economies more sustainable (Cabasset-Semedo, 2009; Carter, Prideaux, Ximenes and Chatenay, 2001; Tolkach, 2013; UNWTO *et al.*, 2007).

In order to assist the development of tourism, the government implemented new public policies on land, environment or biodiversity protection, tertiary education grants, and tax incentives to community-based tourism projects (Quintas, 2011; Tolkach, 2013). The National Biodiversity Working Group Timor-Leste (NBWG-TL, 2011) on the National Biodiversity Strategic and Action Plan (NBSAP) (2011 – 2020) stressed that the tourism industry should be involved from the beginning in biodiversity conservation and sustainable management processes, including planning, implementation and monitoring of development.

In recent public and private sector initiatives to ensure sustainable tourism in Timor-Leste, degree courses began to be offered at the Trade and Tourism Department at Economics Faculty of the National University of Timor Lorosae (UNTL), the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management at Dili Institute of Technology (DIT), and the professional tourism training centres, such as East Timor Development Agencies (ETDA), and others. Additionally, the Government of Timor-Leste proposed the development of a new polytechnic institution of tourism in Lospalos, in the east of the country (Tolkach, 2013).

The tourism industry depends on the general availability of a set of infrastructures. With this regard, the government investments in 2013 were concentrated on basic infrastructures, including 866 km of national roads, rehabilitation of 1270 km of rural and districts roads in

13 Districts, high power electricity lines, water supply and sanitation, a new multipurpose port in Tibar Dili, a new terminal, control tower and the airport runway extension at the International Airport Presidente Nicolau Lobato, Dili (RDTL-MF, 2013). There are some eco-friendly tourism facilities, guest houses, and community-based tourism initiatives in some districts of Timor-Leste (RDTL-MF, 2013; Tolkach, 2013; Vong *et al.*, 2014). Also to note that the Ministry of Tourism has supported community based initiatives, through capacity building programs, education and training, financial assistance in several districts of the country (Quintas, 2011; RDTL-MF, 2013; Tolkach, 2013). These tourism initiatives aim to reduce poverty, by creating job opportunity, increasing incomes, improving the quality of people's lives, and, in this sense, fostering sustainable development.

3.THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Sustainable development in tourism

The concept of “sustainable development” became a global theme after the United Nations Conference on Human Environment held in Stockholm, Sweden in 1972, and the presentation of the report from the Brundland Commission in 1982 called “Our Common Future”. The main objective of this report was to advance the understanding of global interdependence, and the relationship between economic, social, cultural and environmental issues, and to propose global solutions (Brundtland, 1987; UNCSD, 2014). Moreover, United Nations members reflected on the perceived problems of mankind at that time and raised their concerns about over exploitation of natural resources and economic development at the expense of environmental quality (Keiner, 2008). In fact, the recognition of humanity's connection with nature requires thinking globally and acting locally. Strategic initiatives have led to the creation of institutions for sustainable development, at international, regional, national, and local levels (top down and bottom up), with objectives to assist in policy making, planning, management processes, at all levels. These initiatives have highlighted the need of converting the concept of sustainable development within politicians, technocrats, private sectors, NGOs, and civil society' attitudes, based on ethical and social responsibility principles, namely to deliver economic growth but without comprising social, cultural, environmental, and political aspects (Anuar, Ahmad, Jusoh and Hussain, 2013; Brohman, 1996; Choi and Sirakaya, 2006; Communités and Social Identities Research Group (CSIRG), 2012; United Nations (UN), 1972).

In 1992, the United Nations on Environment and Development (UNCED) conference in Rio de Janeiro adopted an agenda for environment and development in the 21st Century (popularly known as Agenda 21). The Agenda 21, as an action plan for sustainable development, and contains the Rio Declaration on environment and development, which recognized each nation's right to pursue economic and social progress and assigned to nation states responsibilities to adopt: (1) a model of sustainable development; (2) the statement of forest principles; (3) the convention on biological diversity; and (4) the framework convention on climate change.

The tourism sector cannot be an exception to this framework (Silva and Perna, 2005). Tourism is a multitude of activities based on the use and enjoyment, often intensive, of a wide variety of environmental and natural resources, like heritage resources, historical, cultural, and ethnological, among others (Silva & Flores, 2008). In other words, tourism is a transfer of economic, social, cultural and financial capital that generates the purchasing power as a consequence of the displacement of people. Therefore, sustainable tourism development is a process of meeting the needs of tourists and destinations regions in the present, allowing the protection of resources and enhancement of opportunities for the future (Baggio, Scott,

& Cooper, 2010; Moniz, 2006)”mendeley” : { “previouslyFormattedCitation” : “(Baggio, Scott, & Cooper, 2010; Moniz, 2006).

The principles of sustainable tourism development are appropriate to all types of tourism in all destinations (Ritchie and Crouch, 2000). Sustainable principles refer to the environmental, economic, socio-cultural and political aspects of tourism development. Therefore, a suitable balance must be established between these four dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability, including: (1) ecological sustainability (respect for the ecological processes, resources and biological diversity); (2) economical sustainability (to ensure the economic viability of the products, quality of life and well-being of locals in these communities); (3) socio-cultural sustainability (respect for the identity, culture and values of the communities where tourism products are inserted); and (4) political and governance sustainability (achievement of a broad consensus among various stakeholders by the systems of governance in regard to the exercise of decision making and implementation of the other three aspects of sustainability) (Bramwell & Lane, 2010; Moniz, 2006; Silva & Flores, 2008; WTO, 2004).

3.2. The roles of local leaders in sustainable tourism development

One of the fundamental requirements of the Local Agenda 21 is the use of a bottom-up approach, with local leaders closely involved in achieving a sustainable tourism future (Selin, 1999). However, this process needs direction and leadership. In specific, sustainable tourism development at a local level requires a participatory approach from the public, the private sectors, and NGOs as a partnership, all being involved in the decision-making processes for planning and management of the destination (Aref, Redzuan and Emby, 2009; Aref and Redzuan, 2010; Twining-Ward and Butler, 2002).

The term “public sector or government” covers a range of public organizations, from national government ministries and departments, government business enterprises, to local government departments (Lacy *et al.*, 2002; Ruhanen, 2013; Timothy, 1998). In order to achieve a sustainable development and optimal tourism industry functions, leaders in the public sector have responsibilities not only in legal but also in regulatory matters (Lacy *et al.*, 2002). Consequently, the public sector role is essentially of regulating and managing a triangular relationship between host areas and their habitats and residents, tourists, and the tourism industry (Lane, 2005). The public sector has to reconcile the tensions between the three partners in the triangle, keeping the long term equilibrium, minimizing environmental and cultural damage, optimizing visitor satisfaction, and maximizing the long-term economic growth of the destination (Choi and Sirakaya, 2005, 2006; Lane, 2005). Besides, the public sector has basic responsibilities including: - establishing legality and regulation; - policy and institutional frame working in which the tourism industry functions and sustainable development can achieved; - building infrastructures and facilities – roads, airports, ports, electricity and waste management, marketing and promotion, education and training (Lacy *et al.*, 2002; Scott *et al.*, 2011).

According to the Agenda 21 for the travel and tourism industry, it is extremely important that the public sector fulfils its responsibilities if sustainable tourism development at local and national levels is to be achieved (WTO, 2002b).

Private sector travel and tourism organizations, such as tour operators, hotel and restaurant owners, play a crucial role in sustainable tourism development. These organizations have responsibilities to ensure that decisions about investment, employment, operations and other product development, marketing and investment in operations take full account of the Agenda 21, while continuing to develop voluntary programs (self-regulation) to improve the environmental management and enhance positive social impacts (Lacy *et al.*, 2002; Tinsley and Lynch, 2001; UNCED, 1992; WTO, 2004). Examples of these responsibilities include

increasing the efficiency of their resource utilization, by the reuse and recycle of residues, and the reducing the quantity of waste discharge per unit of economic output (UNCED, 1992). Organizations need to make a strong commitment to education and environmental training of staff, minimizing negative environmental and cultural impacts and creating incentive schemes to promote sustainable social and economic development of a country (Lacy *et al.*, 2002; UNCED, 1992; WTO, 2004). The private sector needs a stable policy regime that enables and encourages the tourism industry to operate responsibly and efficiently. Such a regime is essential in implementing long-term policies and increasing prosperity of local communities, through trading, employment and livelihood opportunities, especially for women, contributing towards their professional development, strengthening their economic role and transforming the social system (UNCED, 1992; WTO, 2004).

At last, leaders in NGOs play a vital decision making roles in the implementation of the Agenda 21. NGOs create capacity building programs at local levels, involving local authorities, local businessmen and local communities, allowing them to participate, in an informed manner, in the planning, decision making, implementation, supervisory and monitoring process of the Local Agenda 21 guidelines for sustainable tourism development process (Bramwell, 2011; Choi & Sirakaya, 2006; WTO, 2002b). Furthermore, NGOs play a key role in representing and standing up for the best interests of local communities, and they can act as a dialog catalyst for small local institutions on issues such as environment, culture and gender (UNCSD, 1999; WTO, 2004). They can also increase awareness to tourism issues and provide feedback to public and private organizations.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Target population

The target population for this study were local leaders living in three districts in Timor-Leste, Baucau, Dili and Maliana. These districts were selected because of their geographical location, comprising the three main cities located in the East, Central and West of the territory. Those have the potential and characteristics suited to the tourism industry in Timor-Leste. The Public Sector, Private Sectors, and NGOs in this research comprise leaders of organizations such as government, travel agencies, hotels, restaurants, and NGO's who play important roles and have responsibilities to contribute directly or indirectly to a sustainable tourism development at local, regional or national levels.

The target population residing in the three districts was 156 persons (leaders), with the following breakdown between districts: Baucau (18), Dili (126), and Maliana (12). The sample size was calculated as 125 persons and respondents were distributed throughout the three districts: Baucau, 17 respondents, Dili, 96 respondents, and 12 respondents in Maliana.

4.2. Questionnaire and data collection

A questionnaire was developed as a means for collecting data through a five-step process. At first, the questionnaire was developed based on a literature review related to sustainability concepts, its principles, and the operationalization of tourism development in a destination. On the second step, the questionnaire was developed in Portuguese and it was translated into Tetum (the national language) by the Dili Institute of Technology Language Centre (DIT-LC) to ensure the consistency and correctness of the content. A Tetum and Portuguese expert in DIT-LC reviewed the content of both copies to ensure consistency and correctness of translation. Third, five senior students of the tourism department at DIT attended a data collection training between the 12th and 14th of January 2012. In the fourth step, the

questionnaire was pre-tested in 5 tourist organizations and 5 non-tourist organizations in Dili. Lastly, the content of the questionnaire was revised and adjusted based on the results of the pre-test. The Data collection took place over two months between the 1st of June and the 30th of July 2012.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Socio-demographic characteristics

The main socio-demographic characteristics of the local leaders surveyed can be seen in Table 1. Most of them were male, but this varied within sectors (92.9% in the public sector; 62.3% in the private sector and 57.1% in NGOs). Evaluating all the local leaders as a whole, we observed a total of 68.0% male respondents (n = 85). Regarding age, 49.3% of private sector and 46.4% in NGOs leaders were aged between 30 and 39 years. In the public sector, 42.9% leaders aged between 40 and 49 years. Overall, most local leaders had a bachelor degree level (75.0%). Looking at incomes, 86% in public sector had a monthly salary below 599 USD. In comparison, all of the leaders in NGOs and in the private sector had salary higher than this value. The highest salaries were earned by leaders in the public sector.

Table 1: Sample profile of the surveyed local leaders

Variables	Leaders in Public Sec.		Leaders in Private Sec.		Leaders in NGOs	
	n	%	N	%	n	%
Gender	28	100	69	100	28	100
Male	26	92.9	43	62.3	16	57.1
Female	2	7.1	26	37.7	12	42.9
Age	28	100	69	100	28	100
20-29	2	7.1	14	20.3	3	10.72
30-39	6	21.4	34	49.3	11	39.28
40-49	12	42.9	20	29.0	13	46.4
50-59	7	25.0	1	1.4	1	3.6
> 60	1	3.6	0	0.0	0	0.0
Education	28	100	69	100	28	100
Basic school	1	3.6	3	4.3	0	0.0
High school	3	10.7	6	8.7	3	10.7
Bachelor degree	21	75	55	79.7	18	64.3
Master and Phd degree	3	10.7	5	7.3	7	25.0
Job Occupation	28	99.9	69	100	28	100
Administrators and Head of Villages	9	32.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
Directors and Presidents	16	57.1	10	14.5	12	42.9
Managers	2	7.1	54	78.3	4	14.2
Other	1	3.6	5	7.2	12	42.9
Salary	28	100	69	100	28	100
200 - 399 USD	3	11.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

400 - 599 USD	21	75.0	1	1.0	0	0.0
600 - 799 USD	4	14.0	20	30.0	23	82.0
800 - 999 USD	0	0	27	39.0	3	11.0
> 1000 USD	0	0	21	30.0	2	7.0

5.2. Perceptions about the concept of sustainable tourism development

Perceptions of the local leaders towards sustainable tourism development concept are presented in Table 2. This table shows the percentages of affirmative responses to 4 questions related to this concept. The level of knowledge of the different sectors is presented as well as the *p-value* from the Pearson Chi-Square tests for independence between knowledge (yes or no) and the leaders' typology. The results show that, overall, local leaders demonstrate a very low level of knowledge and familiarity with the Agenda 21 document regarding the travel and tourism industry. Overall, the proportion of those with higher level of knowledge is higher within NGOs leaders and lower within public sector leaders. In some situations, the relationship between leaders' typology and knowledge level is significant (*p-value* < 0.05).

Table 2. Perceptions about the concept of sustainable tourism development
(% of those who responded "Yes")

	Public Sector Leaders	Private Sector Leaders	NGOs Leaders	Pearson Chi-Square (<i>p-value</i>)
Have you heard of Agenda 21 for the Sector of Travel and Tourism?	17.9%	31.9%	42.9%	0.128
Do you have access to the Agenda 21 document (in electronic or paper)?	14.3%	39.1%	46.4%	0.025
Have you read the definitions of sustainable development and sustainable tourism therein?	17.9%	40.6%	42.9%	0.074
Have you read the objectives and priority areas of action for companies in the tourism sector?	14.3%	42.0%	42.9%	0.025

5.3. Adoption of the individual sustainable development practices

The levels of individual adoption of sustainable practices within the surveyed leaders are presented in Table 3. As can be observed, the local leaders show very low levels of support to sustainable development in practice. In most cases, the relationship between leaders' typology and agreement level is significant (*p-value* < 0.05). In fact, most of the local leaders in public sector report a lower level of adoption of sustainable development practices than leaders in private and NGOs. Within the three groups of leaders, the high levels of adoption were found with regard to the following questions: "your company buys local products whenever they are available?" and "your company uses hand-labor and local materials in redevelopment or expansion of equipment?"

Table 3. Adoption of the sustainable development practices
(% of those who responded “Yes”)

	Public Sector Leaders	Private Sector Leaders	NGOs Leaders	Pearson Chi-Square (<i>p-value</i>)
Have you done an assessment of the impact of their activities on environment and development?	10.7%	37.7%	32.1%	0.032
Do you have an organizational environmental policy including environmental practice and sustainability objectives?	32.1%	40.6%	39.3%	0.737
Do you separate waste for recycling?	21.4%	34.8%	50.0%	0.081
Do you reuse products and packaging whenever possible?	32.1%	46.4%	50.0%	0.339
Implement measures to reduce energy consumption?	42.9%	50.7%	60.7%	0.406
Employs energy saving technologies?	10.7%	50.7%	21.4%	0.000
Use alternative energy / renewable (solar, photovoltaic, or other)	60.7%	43.5%	53.6%	0.273
Regulators use to reduce consumption of water (the taps in the toilets)?	39.3%	44.9%	57.1%	0.381
Use non-potable water - for example, in irrigation, laundry, etc. - To save drinking water?	42.9%	50.7%	75.0%	0.036
Ensures the final destination of appropriate wastewater (public sanitation, septic tank)?	28.6%	52.2%	39.3%	0.089
Acquires biodegradable detergents, fertilizers and biological products “ozone-friendly”?	10.7%	46.4%	17.9%	0.001
Buys recycled products that are compatible with standards of operation of the unit?	10.7%	43.5%	7.1%	0.000
Minimizes the use of hazardous substances or replaces them with less dangerous?	17.9%	56.5%	14.3%	0.000
Controls the noise to the outside?	14.3%	46.4%	14.3%	0.001
Control emissions to the atmosphere (CO ₂ , aerosols, odors, heat, etc.)?	14.3%	43.5%	14.3%	0.002
Buys local products whenever they are available?	57.1%	76.8%	60.7%	0.096
Trains and motivates employees to implement these practices?	42.9%	75.4%	57.1%	0.007
Uses hand-labor and local materials in redevelopment or expansion of equipment?	64.3%	71.0%	67.9%	0.805
Zones and offers non-smoking rooms?	50.0%	58.0%	53.6%	0.759
Sensitizes customers to save water and energy (through leaflets, etc.)?	50.0%	59.4%	50.0%	0.574
Provides information to assist customers who are using public transport?	21.4%	72.5%	39.3%	0.000
Provides information to customers on tourist attractions and local services?	21.4%	81.2%	25.0%	0.000
Already implemented a quality management system in your organization?	35.7%	79.7%	32.1%	0.000

5.4. Initiatives for sustainable development at the organizational level

At the organizational level, the local leaders report some participation in voluntary initiatives towards implementing sustainable development in Timor-Leste (Table 4). Overall, the results show that most of the local leaders in NGOs participated in these initiatives, in a stronger effort than leaders in the public or private sectors. In some items, the relationship between leaders' typology and agreement level is significant (*p-value* < 0.05).

Table 4. Initiatives for sustainable tourism
(% of those who responded "Yes")

	Public Sector Leaders	Private Sector Leaders	NGOs Leaders	Pearson Chi-Square (<i>p-value</i>)
Codes of conduct (for all units)?	50.0%	46.4%	75.0%	0.034
Best practice guides (for all units)?	39.3%	50.7%	71.4%	0.048
Eco-labels, seals or awards for environmental quality?	42.9%	49.3%	71.4%	0.069
Environmental management system	35.7%	56.5%	53.6%	0.171

Table 5 shows the same items presented in table 4 but now the level of importance ascribed to each item is assessed. Now it is clear that the three groups show a strong level of understanding of the importance of implementing voluntary sustainable development initiatives. There is limited variability in the responses between the three groups of local leaders and, overall, the relationship between leaders' typology and agreement level is not significant (*p-value* > 0.05).

Table 5. Importance of initiatives for sustainable development
(% of those who responded "Yes")

	Public Sector Leaders	Private Sector Leaders	NGOs Leaders	Pearson Chi-Square (<i>p-value</i>)
Codes of conduct (for all units)?	89.3%	85.3%	92.9%	0.568
Best practice guides (for all units)?	92.9%	85.5%	92.9%	0.432
Eco-labels, seals or awards for environmental quality?	92.9%	85.5%	92.9%	0.432
Environmental management system	92.9%	88.4%	92.9%	0.703

5.5. Motivations and barriers to adopt sustainable development practices

Table 6 shows that all groups of local leaders understand and are motivated for adopting sustainable development practices. In most cases, the relationship between opinions of different groups of leaders and agreement is not significant (*p-value* > 0.05). Note, however, that, in the most motivational questions, leaders in the NGOs express higher levels of agreement than public and private leaders.

Table 6. Motivations to adopt sustainable development practices
(% of those who responded "Yes")

	Public Sector Leaders	Private Sector Leaders	NGOs Leaders	Pearson Chi-Square (<i>p-value</i>)
To increase business profitability by reducing costs	100%	97.1%	100%	0.438
To increase customer satisfaction and attract "green tourists"	96.4%	97.1%	100%	0.629
To increase employee satisfaction (pride in the company, commitment to quality, reduce health risks and safety)	96.4%	94.2%	96.4%	0.846
To benefit the local community and ultimately, the tourist destination	96.4%	95.7%	100%	0.540
To improve the company's public relations (credibility, image, reputation)	100%	95.7%	100%	0.287
To achieving a marketing advantage over the competition	96.4%	97.1%	100%	0.629

Table 7 shows a strong agreement to all of possible obstacles to the adoption of sustainable development practices, especially in the case of “high associated investment costs”. In two cases, “the lack of information and disinterest on the part of business sectors “ and the “the lack of technical assistance”, differences among the three types of leaders and non-leaders are statistically significant, with the leaders from the private sector expressing lower agreement levels ($p\text{-value} < 0.05$).

Table 7. Barriers to adopt sustainable development practices
(% of those who responded “Yes”)

	Public Sector Leaders	Private Sector Leaders	NGOs Leaders	Pearson Chi-Square ($p\text{-value}$)
High associated investment costs	92.9%	82.6%	96.4%	0.110
The low importance attached by customers or tourists	82.1%	71.0%	92.9%	0.052
The difficulties of practical implementation (tasks such as the need to increase training to employees and management tasks)	89.3%	78.3%	96.4%	0.059
The lack of information and disinterest on the part of business sectors	96.4%	81.2%	96.4%	0.033
The lack of technical assistance	96.4%	78.3%	100%	0.004
The lack of government incentives and / or tax benefits	96.4%	87.0%	96.4%	0.178

5.6. Entities that can contribute to sustainable development

Table 8 shows that, overall, local leaders agree that the set of suggested entities can have an important role in sustainable tourism development (agreement levels in all groups higher than 88%). Regarding all entities, the relationship between leaders’ typology and agreement level is not significant ($p\text{-value} > 0.05$).

Table 8. The action for sustainable development
(% of those who responded “Yes”)

	Public Sector Leaders	Private Sector Leaders	NGOs Leaders	Pearson Chi-Square ($p\text{-value}$)
National government	100%	94.2%	100%	0.187
Local government	100%	88.4%	100%	0.051
Association of Entrepreneurs	92.9%	88.4%	100%	0.159
Companies	89.3%	89.9%	100%	0.207
Scientists	92.9%	87.0%	100%	0.114
The Environmental Organization and Citizens groups	100%	91.3%	100%	0.077
The Citizens	100%	95.7%	100%	0.287
The Social Communication	100%	97.1%	100%	0.438
The Schools	100%	97.1%	100%	0.438

6. CONCLUSION

The local leaders in public, private sectors, and NGOs have key roles in achieving sustainable tourism development at local, regional, and national levels. The study found that leaders in Timor-Leste have a very low understanding of the concept of sustainable tourism development. Most of them had not heard about the Agenda 21 for the Sector of Travel and Tourism, nor had accessed to Agenda 21 documents. This means a significant lack of knowledge about the definitions of sustainable development and sustainable tourism or even about the objectives and priority areas of action for companies in the tourism sector. When asked about the individual adoption of sustainable development in practice, there are also low levels of average adoption, even though the results improve when the question is posed at the organizational level. An additional encouraging result is that leaders classify these initiatives as very important. They also agree that there are substantial motives to foster these practice but several barriers to its implementation. All entities, from the national government to the citizens are recognized as having a potential role in this process.

Some policy recommendations can result from this study. Firstly, it would be important if the policy makers of Timor-Leste ratify, adopt, and adapt the Agenda 21 as a national policy guidance for sustainable development for all government bodies, private sectors, civil societies, and communities. In this sense, programs for capacity building, through education and training at local levels for the local leaders, and local communities about roles and responsibilities for implementation of the Agenda 21 sustainable development guidelines, are needed. Secondly, since the tourism uses abundant public resources, it would be important for the public sector to assume a more active role with local governments in promoting sustainable development, including tourism development, and allowing the private sector, and NGOs to participate in the planning, decision making, implementation, supervising, and monitoring process for sustainable tourism development in all the territory of Timor-Leste..

There is a lack of literature addressing sustainable tourism development in developing countries on the first stages of tourism development, particularly the case of Timor-Leste, including knowledge about the local leaders' perceptions of this concept in this territory. This is a first study on this issue. So, further research should be conducted in order to consolidate this analysis not only in the specific case of Timor-Leste but also in the general case of developing countries.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This paper is financed by National Funds provided by FCT- Foundation for Science and Technology through project UID/SOC/04020/2013.

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ISSN: 2183-1912

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