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THE INFLUENCE OF MEMBERSHIP GROUPS ON SELECTING ACCOMMODATIONS: THE CASE OF THE RESIDENTIAL TOURIST

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ABSTRACT

An understanding of consumer behavior when choosing property as accommodations improves the use of limited resources such as land and may promote the suitable development of tourism destinations. Knowledge of the factors that influence consumer behavior and that condition the process of purchasing a residential tourism property is useful in managing and designing strategies for segmenting tourism destinations. This study analyzes the influence of membership groups such as social class, culture, and family on choosing the type of property (ownership versus renting or using family or friends' property) and the typology (single- or multifamily) that is in demand among residential tourists in the destination. Firstly, we identify which membership groups specifically influence the selection of type of property (social class and family). Then, we identify which groups influence the property typology (social class and people who are traveling) and, in addition, those that influence both choices (social class).

Keywords: Consumer Behavior, Housing, Residential Tourism, Membership Groups, Decision Making.

JEL Classification: Z32

1. INTRODUCTION

Purchasing residential tourism property is a choice involving a durable good whose purchase is complex and, therefore, may be prolonged over time, as Torres mentions (2003). Many authors who describe characteristics of purchasing behavior for residential tourism (Casado, 2001; Raya, 2003; Torres, 2003) highlight aspects related to rational purchasing. Furthermore, they underline the fact that it is a singular and infrequent decision that is of enormous importance for the buyer (Torres, 2003), and that the choice of location of the property has varied over the years.

Furthermore, we can see that choosing property and the majority of tourism travel are done together with one or several other people, and the group's single decision is considered to be the final result of a selection process (Eymann & Ronning, 1997). In fact, today, peer to peer platforms for reserving property as accommodations (Airbnb, Wimdu, etc.) allow the members of the travel group to select the accommodations together. Therefore, we will analyze the decisions of group demand to approach the issue. If we also take into account the composition of that group, we see that in the majority of cases we are dealing with

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members of a family unit: spouses, parents, and children. Additionally, we cannot overlook the ongoing debate regarding the possible tourism elements within this phenomenon. In this case, and given that some of the consumers analyzed are considered to be tourists, we can also collect information to analyze tourism behavior. Therefore, the purchase of property associated with residential tourism can be defined as: A choice, which is partially touristic in nature, that is rational (related to a durable, infrequently purchased high-involvement good), that is made in a group and, in the case of families, by the members that comprise the household.

The decision to purchase tourism products, according to Rastrollo and Alarcón (1999), can be summarized in a six-stage process that begins with the desire to buy and ends with the purchase itself, based on the widely accepted theories of consumer behavior for high-involvement products, which were developed starting in the 1960s. We have also considered some theories established specifically for tourism products, such as those of Bigné and Zorío (1989); Witt and Moutinho (1994).

Thus, the general objective of this study is to analyze the degree of influence of membership groups on property selection decisions made by the residential tourist. This general objective will be achieved by resolving the following secondary objectives:

a) Influence of membership groups on choosing the type of property desired in the destination: ownership versus renting or using friends and family's property.

b) Influence of membership groups (types of families) on choosing the typology of the property desired in the destination: single- or multifamily.

In order to convey the achievement of these objectives, this study has followed the scientific research writing strategies recommended by Santos and Custódio (2015). Firstly, we provide an outline of the theoretical framework for the approach used to study the phenomenon by analyzing property selection and the influence of culture, social class, and membership groups (families) on the consumer's decision-making process. Then, the empirical research performed and the results are presented, finishing with the conclusions, limitations, and proposals for areas of future research.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In several studies (Kotler, 1995; Rastrollo *et al.*, 1999; Rivera, 2000; Solé, 2002; Alarcón, González and Pérez-Aranda, 2010) the authors coincide in considering sociodemographic factors, social membership groups, culture, and marketing (product, price, distribution, and communication) to be influential factors in consumers' decisions.

There is a clear differentiation between durable and nondurable consumer goods. Nondurable consumer goods, as they are tangible, are generally consumed quickly; on the contrary, durable consumer goods are used on several occasions, over many years or an entire lifetime. The most clear-cut examples of durable goods are appliances, cars, or purchasing a home. Their long duration and, therefore, time the consumer will have them, and their generally higher price and the fact that they are decisions made infrequently means that the related choices tend to be associated with a rational purchasing decision-making process.

The study of the phenomenon of consumer behavior with durable products has attracted the attention of researchers for decades. First, there was the "Guttman Scalogram Analysis" model (Guttman, 1950), which assumes a probability by which, if a consumer is placed on a point on a rectangular scale, he or she is likely the owner of all of the durable goods on the scale up to that point, but not beyond that. Today more comprehensive contributions exist since, as Dickson, Lusch, and Wilkie (1983) and Soutar (1990) state, the Guttman model is not complete. Later, came the Rasch model, which was originally developed to examine the

properties of a psychological test, but has been applied to any situation in which a number of subjects are presented with several elements that have two response categories. This is the typical case of the owner of a durable good, provided that one either has or does not have a particular good. Its basic form it is part of the family of logit models and its properties have been widely discussed by researchers (Rasch, 1966; Wright & Panchapakesan, 1969; Andrich, 1978, Soutar, 1990).

Currently, interest in general approaches has declined and have been replaced by studies on specific durable goods, such as the work done by Pi-Fang and Bi-Yu (2008) on franchises of durable goods or studies that analyze the influence of specific variables or aspects such as replacement cycles (Fernández, 2001; Prince, 2009).

2.2 Property Choice Models

Viewing the residential tourist as a person who desires a durable good, we must also consider other choice alternatives or behavior models so that we can outline a residential tourist consumer behavior model by taking into account the particular considerations of this type of purchase.

A person looking to buy property for its use as accommodations is making a large investment. The intrinsic characteristics of this product also imply an added cost consisting of the expenses related to the property, making us view the residential tourist as a rational consumer. In this sense, what we find in the scientific literature are specific studies on purchasing a primary residence. When studying property purchases, and for the research we are doing here, the classification of property consumption models proposed by Conde (2000) and Alonso (1999) may be of interest. This classification distinguishes between the national mass consumption model (1960s and 1970s), the segmented consumption model (1980s), and the "glocal" consumption model (1990s). This classification is a result of having to adapt to certain forms of development in cities, housing access policies, and the building typologies that have marked the evolution of these years.

For our case, property for tourism uses, the third model stands out: the so-called glocal model. This model includes the characteristics that have marked the years of expansion of this phenomenon, such as international migrations.

2.3 The Influence of Culture on the Selection

There are different considerations regarding the influence of culture on the consumer. There are those who argue that consumers present differences in their preferences, inclinations, and decisions depending on their country of origin (Briley & Wyer, 2000), while others recognize a convergence in consumer preferences around the world (Cosmides & Toby, 1996). Among those who do see cultural influences, several authors point to cultural differences that are cognitively reflected during the decision-making process (Allen, D., 2002; Thompson, C., 2002), suggesting benefits to cultural adaptation (Shavitt, Swan, Lowrey & Wänke, 1994; Aaker & Maheswaran, 1997; Schmitt & Zhang, 1998; Aaker, 2000; Briley *et al.* 2000).

Of interest for our study are authors who have studied cultural influence that leads to individualism or collectivism (Triandis, 1989; Shavitt *et al.,* 1994; Aaker *et al.,* 1997; Briley, *et al.,* 2000), as statistical data on residential tourism point to the existence of grouping according to nationalities in tourism municipalities. Secondly, we have those authors who do not place much importance on the cultural factor. For example, these researchers take the more universal point of view that this decision is not influenced by culture, and look for other reasons such as biological influences (Cosmides *et al.,* 1996). In scientific literature on both consumer behavior and psychology, researchers conceptualize acculturation as a process to establish personal tendencies or dispositions. Culture comprises several specific

structures, categories, feelings, and principles, which become an influence only when the structures are activated or brought to mind (Briley *et al.,* 2000). Additionally, for our study it is also interesting to analyze another large area of research. This research examines how the country of origin of a product affects the consumer's perception of it. In this sense, the work done by Hong and Wyer (1989) and Gürhan-Canli and Maheswaran (2000) clearly shows that there is an influence. Additionally, other interesting studies affirm this idea by comparing the content of an advertisement in different countries (Tse, Belk & Zhou, 1989). Based on this review of the literature, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1: Culture influences the type of property desired.

H2: Culture influences the typology of the property desired.

2.4 The Influence of Social Class on the Selection

Following the definition proposed by Alsono Rivas (1997), we can define a social stratum as "a group of individuals who occupy equal positions in society and show similar attitudes, criteria, characteristics or lifestyles." It is expected, therefore, that consumers who belong to the same stratum will behave similarly and demonstrate similar purchasing behavior among themselves that is different from the rest of society. In this way, social class is another variable that can be used to explain different consumer behavior (Bigné, 2000). In the literature, several studies show differences between consumption and the way products are consumed (Hisrich & Peters, 1974; Foxall, 1980; Schaninger, 1981; Hugstad, Taylor & Bruce, 1987; Sivadas, 1997; Bigné, 2000; Henry, 2001). Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

H3: Social class influences the type of property desired.

H4: Social class influences the typology of the property desired.

2.5 The Influence of Membership Groups (Family) on the Selection

The family as a purchase decision-making unit is an important topic of research in marketing (Martínez, 1997; Kirchler, Rodler, Hoezl & Meier, 2001; Wang, Hsieh, Yeh & Tsai, 2004; Barlés, Bravo & Fraj, 2006). It is widely recognized that the family home is the framework for a large part of private consumption activities. Therefore, it is understood that the consumer has some preferences as a result of their family environment (Jurado, 2003). There are numerous authors who have attempted to integrate variables such as family size and age of family members into demand models (Subramanian & Deaton, 1996; Jurado, 2003).

In particular, for the topic at hand, the decision-making process for choosing a property for tourist-residential use is a decision that is largely made in the family environment. In fact, the literature recognizes that the family context influences decisions on housing (Jurado, 2003). Within this group, the roles are also divided up. The influence of husband or wife varies depending on the type of product, the categories, the phases of the purchase, etc. Thus, for the case of property, the decision will be made in one way or another depending on the structure of the family. It is clear that a two-person family, i.e., a family without children, will not search for the same property typology as a family with several children. The paternal roles (authoritarian or not), the source of income, etc. also have an effect.

Family decision-making is indeed complex; the choice will be seen differently by each family member. There is the general interest and also the individual interests of each member. The weight that is given in each family to each one of the members will be fundamental in the decision-making process. Therefore, the family profile on the one hand, and the individual characteristics of its members and of the product on the other are elements that may be able to explain the type of demand and family purchasing behavior in residential tourism.

We will take advantage of the large number of studies that analyze the importance of the family as a decision-making unit and the roles that each of its members play in order to outline an approach to the phenomenon of residential tourism. The first studies on this topic, the majority from before 1950, assumed that the family purchasing decision was something done individually by the husband. Later, theories on the wife's role in the decision-making process emerged. Of note is a study that argues that the decision-making process is shared (Sharp & Mott, 1956). This study also takes a closer look specifically at the family decisions about going on vacation, showing that in this particular case the husband and wife actively cooperate. Another study focused on the roles of the spouses in family decisions (Davis & Rigaux, 1974), distinguishing between joint and autonomous family decisions and those dominated by the husband and those dominated by the wife. Later studies further examine these contributions and confirm these theories, by studying, for example, spatial choices (Eymann, 1995). Other studies begin to analyze which family member exercises the most influence in each decision (Jenkins, 1978). These studies suggest that in the case of tourism products, while the husband dominates sub-decisions such as modes of transportation, vacation times, or expense level, the decisions regarding the destination or the children are made together by the couple.

From the literature, of interest is the work by Filiatrault and Ritchie (1980) and Ritchie and Filiatrault (1980), which analyzes joint decisions made by husband and wife, concluding that influences vary depending on the decision and the decision-making units (between married couples and families with different compositions). Also of interest is the study by Fodness (1992), where he argues that for family decisions regarding vacations, wives are more prepared to make individual decisions in families with children and, contrary to earlier studies, it is the wife who leads the information gathering process. As can be seen, these studies demonstrate that over the years there has been an important evolution in the role played by family members in the decision-making process. It has gone from being an almost single-person decision to involving all of the family members. This decision, therefore, will depend in large part of the type of family, which today varies greatly.

With regard to the roles that family members play, there are several studies (Briley *et al.*, 2000; Barlés *et al.*, 2006) that analyze the role of children in the group decision-making process and others that, on the contrary, focus on the influence of the spouses (Kirchler *et al.*, 2001; Barlés *et al.*, 2006). Furthermore, if we look at the profile of a residential tourist, we will know if it is generally a person with children and if they take into consideration both their decisions and those of their partner. We are interested in verifying if either of these is the case, given that in choosing property for residential tourism uses, the characteristics of the property, the motivations of those surveyed, or the needs in the destination (services, supplements) will change.

For the tourism industry, the tendency to ignore children has ended; their importance in the decision-making process is being recognized. Some authors suggest that the majority of promotional material for vacations is constructed with codes that are familiar to children (Boyer & Viallon, 1996). Others say that children have a direct influence on vacation behavior, particularly in terms of high-frequency decisions involving limited resources (Thornton, Shaw & Williamns, 1997). Thornton *et al.* (1997) state that children exercise an observable influence over the behavior of tourists and that this influence generally decreases with age, as the ability to make suggestions increases. For this author, there are two types of influences. The first is the result of the need to carry everything that dependent children need, and the low degree of flexibility in their schedules (meals, rest, etc.). This influence is mainly felt with children younger than five years old. The second type involves negotiation with the parents. Children can make suggestions, although the final decision is always made by the parents. If from the tourism point of view the role that children play in the decision-

making process is clear, from the point of view of property their influence is also important, as was made clear in the study by Díaz and Dávila (2001).

Furthermore, we must also pay attention to the influence that the spouses have on one another. If there is some sort of disagreement, negotiating tactics and the capacity for conviction to impose a criterion will become important (Barlés *et al.,* 2006). Thus, there are several studies that examine the influence of spouses, focusing on their gender or the degree of agreement between the two (Davis *et al.,* 1974; Lavin, 1986; Martínez, 1997; Barlés *et al.,* 2006), or on the differences according to the type of purchase decision they are facing: clothing, property, school food, vacations (Davis *et al.,* 1974; Barlés *et al.,* 2006).

Moreover, for this research, we must keep in mind how external factors affect property demand. In this regard, the work of Díaz *et al.* (2001) is of interest. This research indicates that structural changes in families influence the housing market, not resulting in a reduction in demand, but rather in greater heterogeneity. This study also signals that variables such as age, the partner relationship (or lack thereof), and the existence of children (or lack thereof) acquire importance, affecting the type of product that is in demand and the purchasing process itself. Based on this review of the literature, we propose the following hypotheses:

H5: the family influences the type of property desired.

H6: the family influences the typology of property desired.

Based on the bibliographic review, we have constructed the following model (Figure 1). The model aims to broaden knowledge on the influence of culture, membership groups (family), and social class on property choice and the type and typology of property desired by residential tourists.

Figure 1. Model
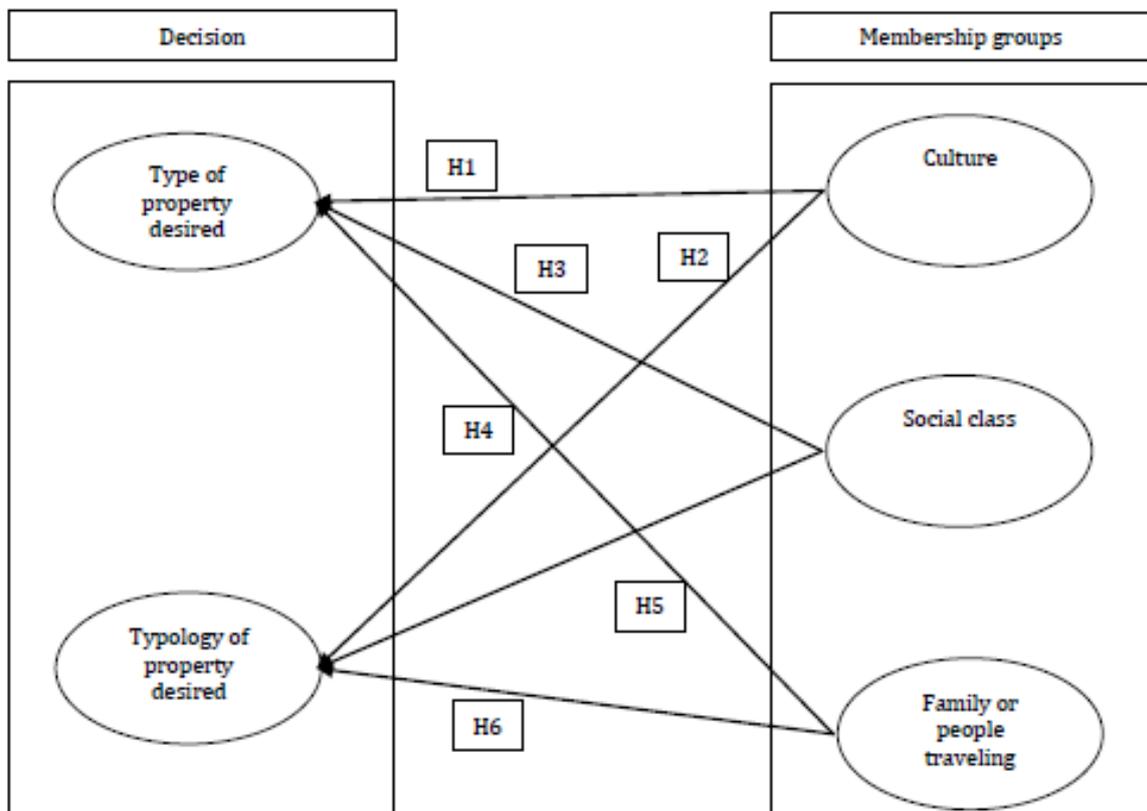
Source: compiled by author

3. METHODOLOGY

Taking into account that empirical studies have a greater level of integrity, and given the nature of the research, the objectives, the complexity of the environment, and the studies carried out in this field, in our case the use of quantitative methods with the support of some qualitative methods was considered the most appropriate methodology. These methods were used to create a questionnaire and select information with both a descriptive and causal focus, as we will study the nature of the variables that are involved in the process and the relationships among them. For both the pre-test used to validate the questionnaire as well as the definitive questionnaire, the information has been collected at various locations in Andalusia, aiming to achieve the greatest representativity possible.

We will study the influence of certain external factors, such as culture, membership groups (family), and social class (measured through education level, profession, and type of home in the country of origin), on the type and typology of the property chosen in the destination by residential tourists. The variables included in the models are shown in the following table (Table 1).

The study was carried out with a sample of 350 individuals, proportionally divided based on population distribution, with 70% of the sample consisting of British tourists and 30% of Scandinavians. This is explained by the residential tourism behavior of the two markets: if we take the population to be studied, British and Scandinavian tourists, as 100% of the population subject to the study and analyze the distribution of overnight stays by both samples for the year 2012 (INE - Spanish Institute of Statistics, 2013), we find that British tourists account for 70% of the overnight stays and Scandinavians for 30%. These results have a maximum estimation error of $\pm$ 5% for a simple random sample. For this number of survey respondents, the sampling error is $\pm$ 5.29. The specifications sheet in Figure 2 presents a summary of the most important information regarding the survey.

Table 1. Summary of Variables

Dependent variable	Typology	
Type of property[1]	Dichotomous	
Independent variables	**Typology**	**Author(s)**
Education level	Categorical	Caswell and McConell, 1980; Riera, 2000 and Nicolau, 2002
Profession	Categorical	Arrones, 1979
Type of home in country of origin	Categorical	Díaz *et al.*, 2001
Family[2]	Categorical	Mouthino, 1987; Nicolau, 2002
No. of people	Categorical	Eymann and Ronning, 1997 and Solé *et al.*, 2002
C Culture	Categorical	Briley *et al.*, 2000 and Solé *et al.*, 2002
Dependent variable	**Typology**	
Typology of property[3]	Dichotomous	
Independent variables	**Typology**	**Author(s)**
Education level	Categorical	Caswell and McConell, 1980; Riera, 2000 and Nicolau, 2002
Profession	Categorical	Arrones, 1979
Type of home in country of origin	Categorical	Díaz *et al.*, 2001
Family	Categorical	Mouthino, 1987; Nicolau, 2002
No. of people	Categorical	Eymann and Ronning, 1997 and Solé *et al.*, 2002

Source: compiled by author

[1] The result of transforming the type of property variable: ownership, renting, or using friends' and family's property to "yes ownership" and "no ownership."

[2] The result of transforming the variables "marital status" and "children" to a variable that represents families formed solely by one person (represented by the values 1 and 1 in both variables), a single-parent family (values 1 and 2), a couple (values 2 and 1, respectively), or a standard family (values 2 and 2).

[3] Single-family or multifamily.

Figure 2. Sample Specifications

Specifications	
Scope	Regional
Universe	British and Scandinavian residential tourists
Sample size	- Designed: 350 people - Carried out: 350 people - Valid: 340 people
Sampling	Stratified sampling with proportional allocation by nationality
Sampling locations	The Málaga, Mijas, Marbella and Casares airport
Sample collection	2015
Sampling error	The sampling error is ± 5.29%

Source: compiled by author

4. RESULTS

4.1 Social Membership Groups in Property Selection

To collect information on property type, three categories are used: "rented property," "family or friends' property" and "ownership." The transformed dependent variable will only take the following values (Table 2).

Table 2. Transformation of Variable: Type of Property

	New Variable: Ownership	Categories included in the original variable:
Type of property	Yes	- Ownership
	No	- Rented - Family and friends' property

Source: compiled by author

When testing the hypothesis in terms of the significance of the regression coefficients (β), we find that the variables "education," "culture," and "number of people" have insignificant coefficients.

Table 3. Variables in the Equation

		B	E.T.	Wald	gl	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1(a)	Education			2.321	4	0.677	
	Profession(1)	-1.054	0.302	12.148	1	0.000	0.348
	Home at origin(4)	0.744	0.289	6.641	1	0.010	2.104
	Type of Family (1)	-0.669	0.372	3.232	1	0.072	0.512
	Constant	0.848	0.767	1.222	1	0.269	2.336

a. Variables introduced in step 1: Culture, Education, Profession, Home at Origin, Family, Number of People. Only the significant coefficients according to the Wald test are shown ($p < 0.05$).

In terms of validating the model, the likelihood-ratio test has a value of 59.98 with 15 degrees of freedom; the Cox and Snell r square has a discrete value (0.162) which indicates that 16.2 % of the dependent variable's variation is explained by the variables included in the model; the Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness of fit tests for the model shows significance over 0.05, which indicates that the model fits the data well. With regard to the model's predictive capacity, for a cutoff value of 0.5, this model shows good predictive effectiveness.

We performed a new study of the association so as to, in some way, complete the analysis of the relationship between the variables; in this case, between the independent variables "education" and "culture" and the dependent variable "type of property" desired by the residential tourist. Based on the contingency tables, we did not find any significant association between these variables.

4.2 Social Membership Groups in Selecting Property Typology

Here we will analyze the relationship between the dependent variable "typology of property desired" (in which the questionnaire takes the values: studio, one-bedroom apartment, apartment, house, and duplex) and the independent variables: "education level," "profession," "type of home at origin," "family," "number of people," and "culture."

Once the transformation was performed, the transformed dependent variable will only take the following values:

Table 4. Values of the Transformed Variables "Property Typology"

Property typology	Dichotomous dependent variable	
Single-family	Yes	Single-family
	No	Multifamily

Source: compiled by author

The final adjustment of the model is shown in the following table (Table 5).

Table 5. Variables in the Equation

		B	E.T.	Wald	gl	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1(a)	Education(1)	-1.741	0.743	5.489	1	0.019	0.175
	Education(2)	-1.738	0.695	6.253	1	0.012	0.176
	Profession(1)	-0.502	0.288	3.045	1	0.051	0.605
	Home at origin(2)	-0.936	0.357	6.889	1	0.009	0.392
	Number of people(2)	0.623	0.298	4.360	1	0.037	1.864
	Constant	1.089	0.789	1.904	1	0.168	2.972

a. Variables introduced in step 1: Culture, Education, Profession, Home at Origin, Family, Number of People. Only the significant coefficients according to the Wald test are shown (p< 0.05).

In this case, when testing the hypothesis in terms of the significance of the regression coefficients (β), we find that the variables "culture and "family" have insignificant coefficients.

In terms of validating the model, the likelihood ratio test has a value of 29.69 with 15 degrees of freedom; the Cox and Snell r square has a discrete value (0.084) that indicates that 8.4 % of the dependent variable's variation is explained by the variables included in the model; the Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness of fit tests for the model shows significance over 0.05, which indicates that the model fits the data well. With regard to the model's predictive capacity, for a cutoff value of 0.5, this model shows good predictive effectiveness.

We performed a new study of the association so as to, in some way, complete the analysis of the relationship between the two variables; in this case, between the variable origin and the "property typology" desired by the residential tourist. Based on the contingency tables, we did not obtain any significant association between these variables.

In order to measure the role of the membership groups in choosing the property typology, we used variables that would measure the effects of the family, culture, the group making the trip, and social class. Specifically, this last variable was studied by analyzing the profession, education level, and type of home in the country of origin. With regard to the influence of these variables on choosing the type of property (ownership or not), significant results were obtained for the variables profession, type of home at origin, and family.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The results allow us to identify the main findings regarding the influence of membership groups when choosing residential tourism property and, thus, achieve the objective of the research, providing academic value with empirical confirmation of theory.

The probability of a residential tourist having "ownership" of a property in the destination, with the rest of the variables constant, is 1.054 times less likely if their "profession" is employee. The impact of the "home at origin" on the probability of the tourist owning property varies depending on the type of home at origin; for tourists with a "house," it is 0.744 times more likely that they will own property. Lastly, the variable "family" presents a negative estimated coefficient. This implies that, if all other variables remain constant, a residential tourist is 0.669 times less likely to own a property if it is a family formed by a single member.

Keeping all other variables constant, a residential tourist is 1.741 times less likely to have a "single-family property" in the destination if their "education level" is elementary and 1.738 times less likely if their "education level" is secondary education. The impact of "profession" on the probability of having a "single-family property" is lower; specifically, it is 0.502 times less likely when the tourist's profession is in the "employee" category. The "type of home at origin" is also a significant variable in the model. Thus, for those individuals who live in a one-bedroom apartment in their country of origin, the probability of having a "single-family property" as accommodations in the destination is 0.936 times lower. However, with regard to the variable culture, we cannot say that there is a relationship with type or typology of property, coinciding, therefore, with the studies carried out by Cosmides *et al.* (1996) and Briley *et al.* (2000). Lastly, the variable "number of people" is the only one that presents a positive estimated coefficient. This implies that, if all other variables remain constant, a residential tourist is 0.623 times more likely to want a "single-family property" in the destination if the number of people that comprise the "group or family is five or more."

With regard to social class, the results indicate that it influences the type of property desired to a certain extent; however we must not forget that it is a complex variable that has been measured indirectly. In our case, of the three variables used to measure social class, two are significant. Therefore, we can say that the results from the proposed model confirm that "social class" influences the typology of property desired in the destination. Specifically, the model shows us that if an individual is in one of the lower categories, there is a greater probability that they would want a multifamily property. In this same model, the number of people making the trip is also significant. Thus, a higher number of individuals using the property has a positive influence on the probability of wanting a single-family property. According to the conclusions obtained regarding the membership groups, culture is the worst

indicator of the choices made by residential tourists. These same conclusions can be drawn from descriptive analysis and therefore verify that there is no difference in behavior between the profiles analyzed. The above analysis seems to indicate that while certain variables have more influence on the type of property chosen, others have more influence in terms of choosing its typology.

The implications of these results are related to land use and the development of tourism destinations in general, and to urban development in particular. On the one hand, tourism destinations are increasingly segmenting the products they offer and focus on specific segments of the market. On the other, consumers have changed and there is a growing tendency to use property owned by family, friends, or strangers as accommodations. Urban planning is in the government's hands, and land use is differentiated between single family and multifamily properties. For this reason, these consumers must be studied in greater depth so that cities can use that information to promote tourism destinations. In this research, one limitation is that we did not perform an analysis of a greater number of external or internal factors that influence the residential tourist's selection of property. This information will allow local governments and tourism managers to differentiate between land use that is compatible with and in demand among residential tourists and other merely speculative uses that have nothing to do with sustainable growth.

The tourism authorities are thus presented with relevant information to manage and administer a tourism destination, making them aware of what consumer characteristics may be used to segment a destination and prevent disproportionate growth in housing supply that has nothing to do with the demand or that may turn the destination into a mass tourism destination.

As for future areas of research, studies could be developed that include more characteristics in the residential tourism demand equation, such as sustainable housing, protection of natural resources, or other forms of collaborative consumption that promote responsible land use: time shares, housing exchanges and other options that could be developed instead of growth through constructing property that is not adapted to the market. Additionally, the influence of peer to peer platforms (Airbnb, Wimdu, etc.) should be studied in terms of how they influence the consumer's purchasing decision in order to understand which stages of the decision they may influence or what their degree of influence is.

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TOURIST DESTINATION IMAGE AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR: THE CASE OF THE AZORES

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ABSTRACT

Destinations are currently seeking to become more distinctive in an increasingly competitive market in which image is a decisive element in tourists' destination selection. This study sought to understand the Azores' overall image as a tourist destination in major source markets and to ascertain these markets' level of satisfaction and behavioural intentions concerning the archipelago.
The literature review in this paper addresses the definition of tourist destination image and the issue of satisfaction, since these influence intention to return and/or intention to recommend tourist destinations. The results indicate that (1) overall image influences satisfaction and intention to recommend and/or return to tourist destinations and (2) satisfaction influences intention to recommend and/or return to tourist destinations. This study also verified that most tourists are very satisfied with the Azores, as well as having a quite positive overall image of this destination.

Keywords: Image, Tourist Destination, Consumer Behaviour, TDI, Azores.

JEL Classification: Z32, Z33

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has been identified as a driving force for regional development, whereby the industry contributes to overall economic growth. The gradual emergence, proliferation and consolidation of tourist destinations currently presents a challenge to tourism managers in terms of competitiveness and the loyalty of source markets. In general, there is a consensus that a positive image has an affective influence on tourists' behaviour. In this sense, it is vital to find out how to attract tourists not only for the first time but also, above of all, to discover how to persuade them to revisit and recommend destinations to others. Given various studies that confirm destination image as an important persuasive element, research on this concept is extremely important for effective management of tourist destinations.

This paper seeks to contribute to an understand of the Azores' overall image as a tourist destination in its major source markets and to ascertain these markets' level of satisfaction and future expectations concerning the archipelago. This study's purpose was also to confirm if overall image influences satisfaction and intention to recommend and/or return to tourist destinations and if satisfaction, in turn, influences these behavioural intentions.

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2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In today's competitive environment, creating and managing an appropriate destination image has become essential for effective tourism product positioning. In this context, destination loyalty and satisfaction have become an important part of destination marketing and management due increased competition.

According to Wang (2000), the concept of tourist destination image is complex and subjective. Multiple definitions have been developed for this concept, but no consensus has been reached on its definition, formation and measurement (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Kim & Richardson, 2003; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991). These conceptualisations are subject to oscillations that are dependent on time factors and the different fields of study examining destination image.

In relation to tourism as a subject area, the concept of image was first applied in the early 70s by Hunt (1971). Since then, image has become one of the most discussed issues in the literature on tourism (Stepchenkova & Mills, 2010). The fact that destination image is a widely studied topic has resulted in a series of definitions of the concept for tourism contexts. In the earliest conceptualisation, Hunt (1971) defined tourist destination image as the set of impressions that individuals or a group of individuals have about a place where they do not live.

The process of tourists' selection of destinations is complex since this is influenced by a number of factors such as budget, free time, season and image (Pizam & Telisman-Kosuta, 1999; Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005; Bornhorst, Ritchie & Sheehan, 2010). The persuasive power of image is not limited to changing the outcome of selection processes, as image affects all phases related to tourists' consumer behaviour (Ashworth & Goodall, 1988; Mansfeld, 1992; Luque-Martínez, Barrio-García, Ibánez-Zapata & Molina, 2007; Campo-Martínez, Garau-Vadell & Martínez-Ruíz, 2010; Jeong & Holland, 2012; Nicoletta & Servidio, 2012; Baloglu, Henthrone & Sahin, 2014; Pratminingsih, Rudatin & Rimenta, 2014). Thus, image is assumed to be an extremely relevant factor in analyses of tourist behaviour before, during and after trips (Moutinho, 1987; Chon, 1990; Bigné, M. Sánchez & J. Sánchez, 2001; Kim & McKercher, 2009). Based on this assumption, researchers posit that image affects tourists' level of satisfaction with experiences (Phelps, 1986; Chon, 1990; Bigné *et al.*, 2001; San Marin & Del Bosque, 2008; Chi & Qu, 2008; Prayag, 2009; Pratminingsih *et al.*, 2014; Puh, 2014; Munhurrun, Seebaluck & Naidoo, 2015), influences tourists' intention to visit/revisit tourist destinations (Court & Lupton, 1997; Seabra, Abrantes & Lages, 2007; Qu, Kim & Im, 2011) and has an impact on intentions to recommend destinations to family and friends (Pearce, 1982; Joppe, Martin & Waalen, 2001; Bigné *et al.*, 2001; Govers & Kumar, 2007; Choi, Tkachenko & Sil, 2011; Qu *et al.*, 2011; Kim, Hallab & Kim, 2012; Pandža Bajs, 2013; Zhang, Xiaoxiao, Cai & Lu, 2014).

According to San Martín and Del Bosque (2008), satisfaction can be understood as an individual, cognitive and affective state, which derives from tourist experiences and leads to tourists' loyalty to destinations (Chi & Qu, 2008; Munhurrun *et al.*, 2015; Özdemir & Şimşek, 2015). Studies of tourist loyalty towards particular destinations take into account travellers' behaviour towards destinations, that is, tourists' intention to revisit and recommend (San Martín & Del Bosque, 2008; Chi & Qu, 2008; Alegre & Garau, 2010; Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Pratminingsih *et al.*, 2014). By considering the influence of image on these elements, researchers can affirm that this indirectly influences tourists' loyalty (Pandža Bajs, 2013).

Based on the above findings, the following hypotheses were developed:

Hypothesis 1: Overall destination image influences satisfaction, recommendation and return intentions.

Hypothesis 2: Satisfaction influences tourists' recommendation and return intentions.

3. METHODOLOGY

According to Turismo de Portugal (2013), in the Azores, in 2012, the islands' internal market generated 43% of total overnight stays, while their foreign markets generated 57%. The major source markets for the archipelago are Germany (22%), Spain (11%), Holland (11%), Sweden (8%) and Denmark (7%). The cited organisation also verified an increase in overnight stays by visitors from the US, France and Belgium (14%).

The present study's universe was defined based on the number of guests, categorised according to their country of residence, who visited São Miguel Island between January and November 2014, which corresponds to 155,620 guests (SREA, 2014). The sampling method used was stratified probability, and the sample size calculation was performed based on a margin of error of 5%, yielding 384 respondents.

In accordance with the above discussed literature review and to achieve the outlined objectives, a questionnaire was prepared. This included four closed-ended questions, in which respondents were asked, first, to classify the Azores' overall image and, second, to classify their level of satisfaction with the archipelago. The third and the fourth questions were included to determine the likelihood of recommending and returning to the Azores. The questionnaire also included a group of questions about sociodemographic characteristics (i.e. gender, age, marital status, education, country of residence and gross monthly income).

The questionnaire applied a structured technique of data collection, that is, closed-ended questions. To measure the destination's overall image, a five-point Likert scale was used, ranging from 'very negative' (1) to 'very positive' (5). The method applied to measure satisfaction was also a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 'very unsatisfied' (1) to 'very satisfied' (5). Regarding the likelihood of recommending and returning to the Azores, a five-point Likert scale from 'very improbable' (1) to 'very probable' (5) was used.

Data collection was carried out between May and August 2015 in the vicinity of the main attractions of Ponta Delgada and Ribeira Grande, both cities on São Miguel Island. The questionnaire was developed in two languages : Portuguese and English. The data obtained were subjected to analysis using IBM's SPSS Statistics 23.0.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Sample

According to the results, the sample included more male respondents (223 respondents = 58.1%) than female ones (161 respondents = 41.9%). Among the respondents, 31.5% were between 46 and 56 years old, and 59.4% were married. In regards to education, more than half (73.2%) had a university degree, and the largest group (36.2%) earned between 1,001 and 2,000 euros monthly, followed by the group earning 2,001 to 3,000 euros (28.1%).

4.2 Overall image, satisfaction and return and recommendation intentions

The respondents' perception of the Azores' overall image is mostly either very positive (70.3%) or positive (25.5%) (see Figure 1). Moreover, the majority of tourists (71.6%) are very satisfied with the archipelago (see Figure 2).

Figure 1. Overall image of the Azores as a tourist destination
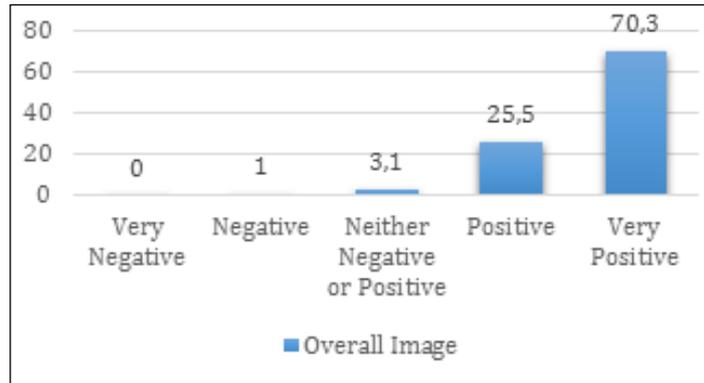
Source: Authors

Figure 2. Level of satisfaction with the Azores as a tourist destination
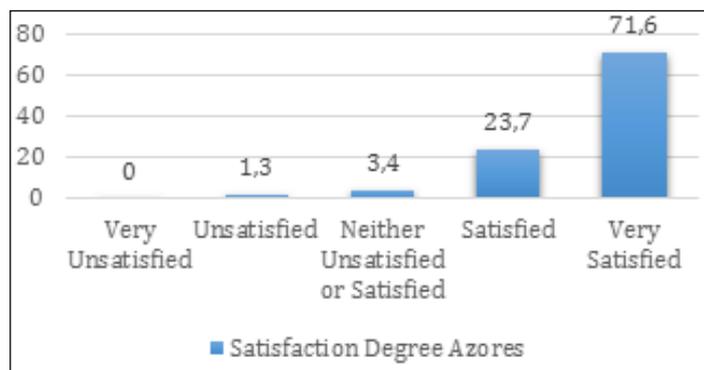
Source: Authors

When asked about their behavioural intentions, the majority of respondents (52.1%) said that they would probably recommend the destination. With an equal degree of probability 48.7% of respondents intended to return (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Respondents' behavioural intentions
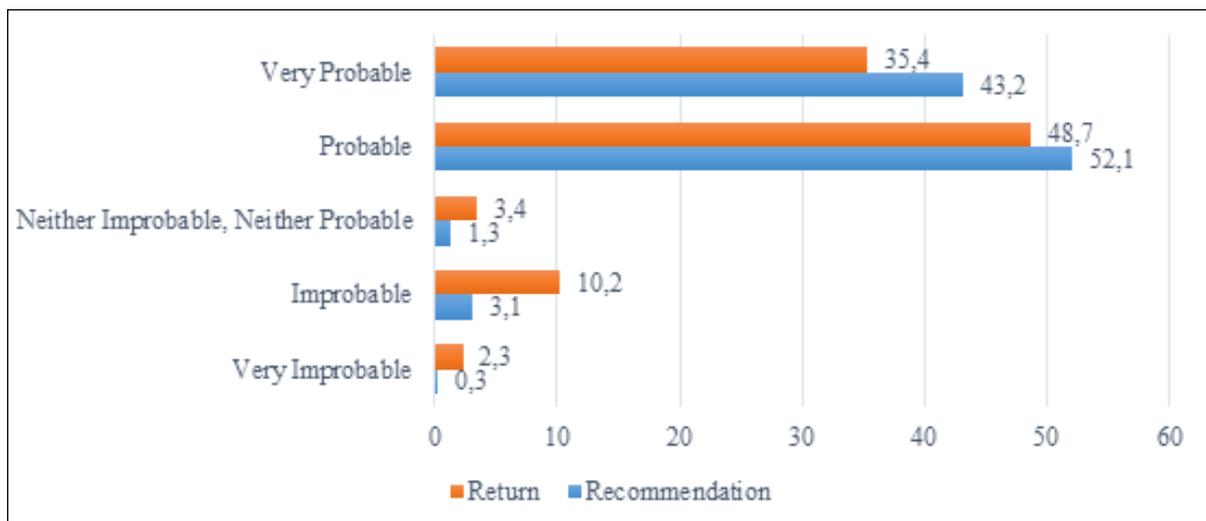
Source: Authors

4.3 Test of research hypotheses

Spearman's correlation was used to test the first hypothesis, which focused on the influence of overall image on satisfaction and recommendation and return intentions. This statistical test verified a positive correlation between overall image and level of satisfaction. A positive correlation was also verified between overall image and return and recommendation intentions (see Table 1).

Table 1. Spearman's correlation for overall image

		Satisfaction Level	Recommendation	Return
Overall Image	Correlation	0.789**	0.253**	0.225**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	384	384	384

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: Authors

The results show that tourists who report having a positive overall image have a lower level of satisfaction compared to those who have a very positive image (p = 0.000). In addition, guests who have a less positive overall image of the archipelago have a lower probability of returning and recommending the destination (p = 0.000) (see Table 2).

Table 2. Parameter estimates for overall destination image

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Satisfaction Level = 2]	-42.444	3,896.390	0.000	1	0.991	-7,679.228	7,594.339
	[Satisfaction Level = 3]	-7.987	0.778	105.261	1	0.000	-9.513	-6.461
	[Satisfaction Level = 4]	-2.765	0.258	115.049	1	0.000	-3.270	-2.260
Location	[Overall Image = 2]	-25.217	2,756.447	0.000	1	0.993	-5,427.753	5,377.320
	[Overall Image = 3]	-42.108	3,896.390	0.000	1	0.991	-7,678.891	7,594.675
	[Overall Image = 4]	-4.069	0.356	130.369	1	0.000	-4.767	-3.370
	[Overall Image = 5]	0[a]	-	-	0	-	-	-
Threshold	[Return = 1]	-4.437	0.3398	124.229	1	0.000	-5.217	-3.657
	[Return = 2]	-2.435	0.193	158.517	1	0.000	-2.814	-2.056
	[Return = 3]	-2.092	0.174	144.763	1	0.000	-2.433	-1.751
	[Return = 4]	0.421	0.122	11.914	1	0.001	0.182	0.660
Location	[Overall Image = 2]	-3.591	0.966	13.830	1	0.000	-5.483	-1.698
	[Overall Image = 3]	2.992	0.572	27.388	1	0.000	-4.112	-1.871
	[Overall Image = 4]	-0.437	0.227	3.690	1	0.055	-0.883	0.009
	[Overall Image = 5]	0[a]	-	-	0	-	-	-

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Lower	Upper
Threshold	[Recommendation = 1]	-9.349	1.295	52.105	1	0.000	-11.887	-6.811
	[Recommendation = 2]	-5.959	0.728	67.077	1	0.000	-7.385	-4.533
	[Recommendation = 3]	-4.955	0.582	72.461	1	0.000	-6.096	-3.814
	[Recommendation = 4]	0.067	0.122	0.307	1	0.580	-0.171	0.306
Location	[Overall Image = 2]	-6.908	1.248	30.619	1	0.000	-9.355	-4.461
	[Overall Image = 3]	-6.377	0.876	53.020	1	0.000	-8.093	-4.660
	[Overall Image = 4]	-0.502	0.241	4.328	1	0.037	-0.974	-0.029
	[Overall Image = 5]	0[a]	-	-	0	-	-	-

Notes: Link function = logit; a This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant

Source: Authors

The second hypothesis explored the influence of level of satisfaction on return and recommendation intentions. The Spearman's correlation shows that satisfaction has a positive influence on behavioural intentions (see Table 3).

Table 3. Spearman's correlation for level of satisfaction

		Recommendation	Return
Satisfaction Level	Correlation	0.310**	0.197**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000
	N	384	384

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: Authors

The results show that the least satisfied tourists are less likely to return to the destination. They also are less likely to recommend the archipelago (see Table 4).

Table 4. Parameter estimate for level of satisfaction

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Recommendation = 1]	-11.260	1.609	48.954	1	0.000	-14.414	-8.106
	[Recommendation = 2]	-7.699	1.201	41.104	1	0.000	-10.052	-5.345
	[Recommendation=3]	-6.140	0.1004	37.377	1	0.000	-8.108	-4.172
	[Recommendation=4]	0.010	0.121	0.007		0.932	-0.226	0.247
Location	[Satisfaction Level = 2]	-8.799	1.519	33.542	1	0.000	-11.776	-5.821
	[Satisfaction Level = 3]	-8.128	1.269	41.036	1	0.000	-10.615	-5.614
	[Satisfaction Level = 4]	-0.736	0.254	8.389	1	0.004	-1.233	-0.238
	[Satisfaction Level = 5]	0[a]	-	-	0	-	-	-
Threshold	[Return = 1]	-4.410	0.398	122.976	1	0.000	-5.189	-3.630
	[Return = 2]	-2.407	0.193	155.289	1	0.000	-2.785	-2.028
	[Return = 3]	-2.056	0.173	1,441.871	1	0.000	-2.394	-1.717
	[Return = 4]	0.475	0.122	15.241	1	0.000	0.237	0.714

Location	[Satisfaction Level = 2]	-3.139	0.855	13.480	1	0.000	-4.814	-1.463
	[Satisfaction Level = 3]	-3.020	0.554	29.689	1	0.000	-4.106	-1.934
	[Satisfaction Level = 4]	-0.210	0.232	0.814	1	0.367	-0.665	0.246
	[Satisfaction Level = 5]	0[a]	-	-	0	-	-	-

Notes: Link function = logit; a This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Source: Authors

5. CONCLUSION

The main objective of this study was to understand tourists' overall image of the Azores, their level of satisfaction with the archipelago and the probability that they will return and recommend this destination. The findings reveal that tourists have a very positive overall image of – and a high level of satisfaction with – the Azores. The results also confirm that a considerable percentage of tourists intend to return and/or recommend the destination.

These findings confirm Hypothesis 1, which is congruent with the research results of Bigné *et al.* (2001), Chi and Qu (2008), Prayag (2009), Choi *et al.* (2011), Qu *et al.* (2011), Kim *et al.* (2012), Pratminingsih *et al.* (2014), Zhang *et al.* (2014), Puh (2014) and Munhurrun *et al.* (2015). Hypothesis 2 was also verified, which is in accordance with studies by San Martín and Del Bosque (2008), Chi and Qu (2008), Alegre and Garau (2010), Prayag and Ryan (2012), Pratminingsih *et al.* (2014) and Munhurrun *et al.* (2015).

Understanding the processes and outcomes of the tourist-destination relationship is extremely important because, based on this connection, destination managers can create, develop and implement successful marketing campaigns to attract tourists and build long lasting emotional bonds between visitors and tourist destinations. This research makes an important contribution not only because it fills a gap in the context of tourism studies about the Azores but also because it provides necessary information to local managers, since the results contribute to a more accurate understanding of tourists' behaviour in regards to the archipelago. This study provides evidence about the power of image in consumer behaviour.

As with all research, the current study has several limitations. First, the Azores archipelago is composed of nine islands and the aforementioned survey was only conducted on one of them – São Miguel Island – so it would enrich the findings to extend the data collection to other islands. Second, this study measured tourists' satisfaction using a single questionnaire item, whereas it would be more appropriate to utilise a multiple-scale attribute measurement tool that could provide destination managers with more specific data. Last, this research only examined tourists' behaviour and destination image for a short period of time. Therefore, future studies would need to conduct a longitudinal study to track changes in tourists' destination image perception and consumer behaviour.

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FORECASTING OF THE VOLUME OF THE SPA AND WELLNESS TOURISM RECEIPTS IN THE SOUTH-WEST BULGARIA

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ABSTRACT

The present paper regards the application of some forecasting methods in regards to the SPA and Wellness tourism in South-West Bulgaria such as: the linear trend forecasting, the double exponential forecasting (the Holt's method), the ARIMA method, the naïve method and the indexed naïve method. Specially designed model for estimation of the weight coefficient needed for determining the size of the sector of the SPA and Wellness tourism in the time series of the available data and in the forecast values is being presented. Future and past predictions have been achieved based on statistical records of a time series of 18-year periods.

   The present paper regards also several major problems in the application of the univariate forecasting methods for the purpose of the long-run forecasting of the volume of the tourism receives and especially the ones in the sub-sector of the SPA and Wellness tourism in South-West Bulgaria. These problems include as: (i) the problem of finding of a suitable general indicator; (ii) Determining the time series pattern, or the so-called "forecast profile" and selecting and using of suitable forecasting techniques; (iii) Calculating of short-run and long-run forecasts; (iv) comparing of the results of the forecast techniques on the basis of the errors in the forecasts; (v) Estimating the size of the SPA and Wellness tourism in South-West Bulgaria in certain terms, so that the forecast(s) of the above-mentioned general indicator could be particularized especially for regarded sub-sector and region. The results from the different forecasting methods and techniques are being presented and conclusions are drawn on the reliability of the achieved forecasts.

Keywords: SPA and Wellness Tourism, Exponential Forecasting, Economic Cycles, South-West Bulgaria.

JEL Classification: Z32, Z33

1. INTRODUCTION

In the past eighteen years the Bulgarian tourism industry reached a stage of a bubbling increase, which was followed by the negative impact of the world financial and economic crisis combined with the Russian-Ukrainian conflict since 2014, the aftermath of the war in Syria and Iraq and the consequent deterioration of the Russian-Turkish business relations. In 2015 Bulgaria scored an overall increase in the total number of the tourism arrivals and yet the values of the indicators the "number of the foreign visitors with recreation and

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holiday aims" (the oldest one in the country) and the volume of tourism receipts (in Euros) were down with approximately 5 percent. Nevertheless, in these very same eighteen years, form 1998 to 2015, Bulgaria did succeeded to capitalize the good results achieved in certain subsectors of its tourism industry, such as the spa and well industry, and has recently lined up in the top three suppliers of spa and wellness services in Europe, alongside with France and Romania.

The fluctuations on the international tourism markets emitting tourists to Bulgaria, which were felt as a disturbing aftermath of the economic crisis, still provoke hesitations in the investment decisions of a significant part of the investors in the Bulgarian tourism industry (banks, investment funds, and holding companies). Further to this the significant decrease in the number of the Russian and Ukrainian tourists in 2014 led to a 30 to 50% in the occupancy rate of the Bulgarian Black sea summer hotels. Despite the expectation of a "back-wave" for the summer season of 2006, the fear that this decrease may spread over also to the winter and the spa and well subsectors of the Bulgarian tourism industry has been bringing additional uncertainty in the investors' decisions for past two years. This uncertainty and the fear of possible negative outcomes could be diminished to some extent if there are convincing and comparatively true long-run forecasts for what is to happen in the coming 10 to 15 years. And this refers also to the best performing sub-sectors of the Bulgarian tourism, i.e. the spa and wellness tourism.

2. OBJECTIVES

The task of creating a forecast model for the long-run development of the spa and wellness subsector of the tourism industry in Bulgaria meets with the solving of five major problems:
  i) The problem of finding of a suitable general indicator;
  ii) Determining the time series pattern, or the so-called "forecast profile" (Gardner, 1987, pp.174-175) (Hyndman *et al.*, 2008, pp.11-23) and selecting and using of suitable forecasting techniques;
  iii) Calculating of short-run and long-run forecasts;
  iv) Comparing of the results of the forecast techniques on the basis of the errors in the forecasts;
  v) Estimating the size of the spa and wellness tourism in South-West Bulgaria in certain terms, so that the forecast(s) of the above-mentioned general indicator could be particularized especially for regarded sub-sector and region of the country.

3. A LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE TOPIC

The development and usage of the univariate and particularly of the exponential forecasting methods dates back from the works of R. G. Brown in the 1940's the results of which were published in 1959. These were further developed and expanded by C. C. Holt in 1957 and Peter Winters in 1960. In 1960s Pegles (1969) developed the first taxonomy for the classification of the available at that time exponential smoothing forecasting methods. In the 1980's Gardner (Gardner, 1985; 1987) presented some interesting techniques aimed at smoothing of the error residuals in the achieved forecasts. Gardner (1985) and Taylor (2003) also further expanded the opportunities for classifying the exponential smoothing forecasting methods according to so-called "forecasting profiles" or "forecasting patterns" (See also point 4).

The problem of the initialization of variables that are to be used in the exponential smoothing equations was also regarded by a numerous authors such as Ledolter and Abraham

(1984) and Hyndman (2014). In 2002 Hyndman, Koehler, Snyder, Grose, and later in 2008 Hyndman, Koehler, Ord and Snyder published there works on the usage of the so-called state-space approach in exponential smoothing.

In the years, the capacity of the univariative and particularly of the exponential forecasting methods to produce reliable forecast was further explored also by other researchers such Ledolter and Abraham (1984), Gardner and McKenzie (1985; 1988), Chatfield and Yar (1988), Hamilton (1994), Tashman and Kruk (1996), Delurgio (1998), Williams and Miller (1999), Tsay (2005) and many others.

In Bulgaria, up to the 1990's only a small portion of the univariate forecasting methods (actually the simplest ones) and the exponential smoothing methods were virtually unknown due to the weak English language skills of the researchers and the preference given in the field of forecasting to the multivariate forecasting methods and mainly the usage of French and Swedish econometric models. In 1996 Sirakov published a book named "Conjuncture and Forecasting of International Markets" in which an application of the Brown's single exponential smoothing was made in regards to the Bulgarian export of textile production equipment and machinery for the African countries and mainly in Nigeria. This application was however very narrow in scope. An Internet publication that that tried to make the exponential forecasting smoothing methods more popular in Bulgaria was made in 2007 by Ivanov form the New Bulgarian University as a part of his lecture course materials on business processes forecasting. Another try for a more explicit explanation and usage of the exponential forecasting methods and namely the Halt and Halt-Winters method was made in another book published in Bulgarian language by Mishev and Goev, i.e. "Statistical analysis of time series" (2012). Even here, however, the theoretical presentation of the regarded method was limited and narrowed to the practical application of several software packages. In the field of the Bulgarian tourism, the publish studies in the application of the exponential smoothing methods are also limited to some few papers dealing with the application of the Halt and Halt-Winters method for forecasting of the number of tourism arrivals in certain areas and in the country as a whole. Among them, the topic of forecasting of the tourism receipts was regarded by Dimitrov *et al.* (2015). And the topic of forecasting of the spa and wellness tourism development in Bulgaria was a subject also of two publications by Dimitrov (2012 and by Dimitrov and Stoyanova (2015).

4. METHODOLOGY

With regards to the first problem set in the previous point of the present paper, the difficulties in finding of a general suitable indicator, on the basis of which to make the forecast, come mainly from the reliability and the sustainability of the existing data for the separate types of indicators for tourism demand, especially in terms of time. A greater part of the existing indicators are inconsistent in time and they lack enough data which would allow the building of sufficiently long time series (Dimitrov, 2010; Stankova, 2010; Filipova; 2010). Here one could refer to certain indicators such as the "number of the tourism arrivals" or the "volume of the tourism receipts", which was calculated for different periods of time in different currencies – non-denominated Bulgarian leva, US dollars, German marks and Euros. In the end of 1990s the Republic of Bulgaria adopted the UNWTO definition of these very same indicators and continued collecting statistical data up the scope of these definitions. Taking into account the annual data available for the indicator "volume of the tourism receipts", one can build a time series of 18 time periods (Figure 1) – from 1998 to the last year with recorded value 2015.

A more detailed visual review of the regarded times series on the basis of the fluctuations maxima and minima shows out that there are two types of cycles inherent in the time series, namely: (i) the Kitchin cycles of 3 to 5 years (Kitchin, 1923) and (ii) the Juglar cycles of 7 to 11 years (Juglar, 1862).

The second problem of determining the times series pattern, or the so-called times series' "forecast profile" is evoked by the necessity to choose, when making a reasonable and objective forecast, the best applicable forecasting method or the best applicable set of forecasting methods.

Figure 1. The volume of Bulgaria's tourism receipts for the period 1998 - 2015
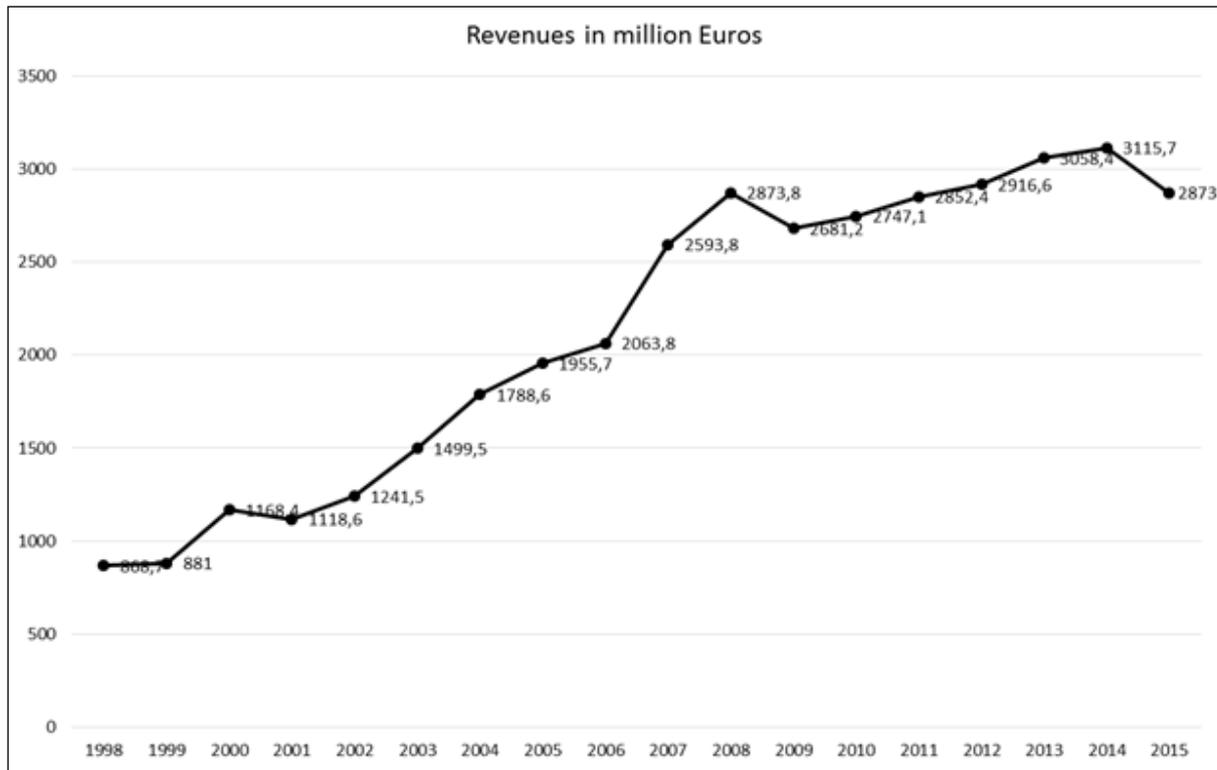
Source: authors' own calculations based on data provided by the Bulgarian Ministry of Tourism and the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute

The problem of determining the times series pattern is usually solved by the comparing the graphical form of the times series in regard with a pre-set classification of diagrams or a table classification with a mathematical or symbol notations of the time series types of development curves. As Hyndman, Koehler, Ord and Snyder point out (Hyndman *et al.*, 2008, pp. 11-12), this classifications originated with Pegles' taxonomy (Pegles, 1969, pp. 311-315). This was later extended by Gardner (Gardner, 1985, pp. 1-28) and modified by Hyndman *et al.* (2008) and extended by Taylor (Taylor, 2003, pp. 715-725) giving a classification set of fifteen forecast profiles (forecast patterns) and the corresponding to them methods (Table 1).

Table 1. Classification of forecasting profiles / forecasting methods by R. Hyndman

Trend component	Seasonal component		
	N	**A**	**M**
	(None)	(Additive)	(Multiplicative)

N (None)	N,N	N,A	N,M
A (Additive)	A,N	A,A	A,M
Ad (Additive damped)	Ad,N	Ad,A	Ad,M
M (Multiplicative)	M,N	M,A	M,M
Md (Multiplicative damped)	Md,N	Md,A	Md,M

Source: Hyndman *et al.* (2008), p.12

Figure 2. Time series forecast profiles proposed by Gardner (1987)
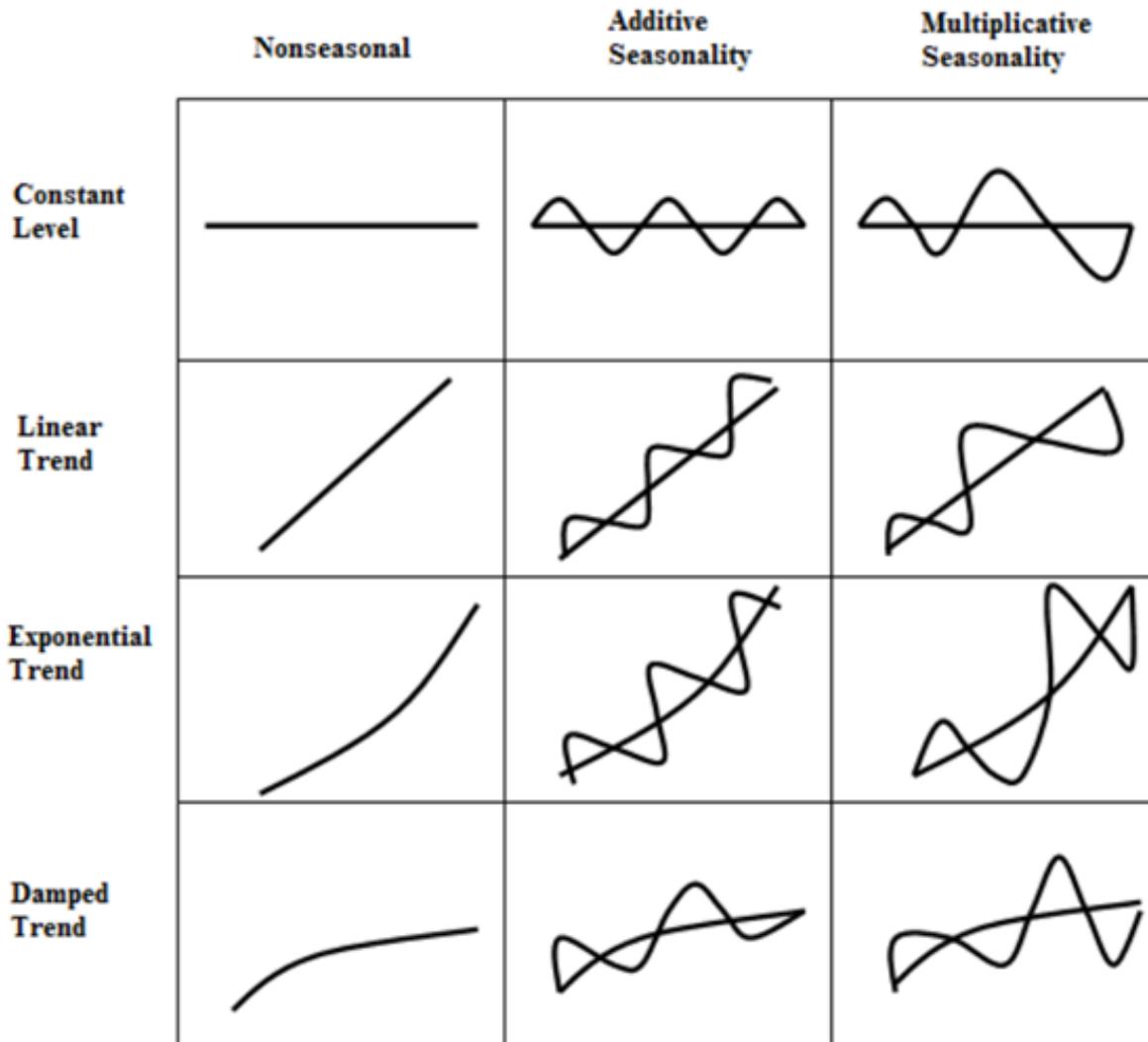
Source: Gardner, E. S. (Jun.). (1987), pp.174-175

A simple visual comparison of the times series of the volume of tourism receipts for the time period 1998 – 2015 with the Gardner's and with Hyndman *et al.* and Taylor's classification shows out that the very same time series can be associated with a forecasting pattern (forecasting profiles) called the "linear trend, non-seasonal" profile (the "A, N" pattern).

The finding that the time series of the of the volume of tourism receipts for the time period 1998 – 2015 correspond to a single group of forecasting profiles (forecasting patterns) provides a solution to the second part of the above mentioned second problem, the one of selecting and using of suitable forecasting techniques (methods). As both Gardner and

Hyndman *et al.* point out the "linear trend, non-seasonal" profile (the "A, N" pattern) corresponds to the method of the double exponentials smoothing in the presence of linear trend and in the absence of seasonality, known as the Holt method. For comparison reasons, the naïve method, the indexed naïve method, the linear trend forecasting method and the ARIMA method were also added and regarded as forecasting techniques.

Having in mind the above-explained methodological considerations, one can proceed further with the mathematical notation of the Holt method:

> ➢ The smoothing of **the level (the base) – "L"**:

(1) $$L_t = \alpha Y_t + (1-\alpha)(L_{t-1} + T_{t-1}) \qquad 0 \le \alpha \le 1$$

> ➢ The smoothing of **the trend – "T"**:

(2) $$T_t = \beta(L_t - L_{t-1}) + (1-\beta)T_{t-1} \qquad 0 \le \beta \le 1$$

> ➢ The achieving of **the final forecast "Ft+m" for "t+m" periods ahead in the future:**

(3) $$F_{t+m} = L_t + mT_t,$$

Where:
„α" and „β" are the smoothing constants for the level and the trend respectfully which could take values between 0 and 1.

Respectfully, the mathematical notation of **the linear trend forecasting method** is as follows:

(4) $$Y(t) = b_0 + b_1(t),$$

Where:
$Y_{(t)}$ is the trend value of the forecasted indicator "as a linear function of time measured in years and in this case the forecast is achieved as Ft=Y(t);
b_0 – the value of the interception (segment) point between the line (the trend line) and the ordinate (the Y-axis) of the coordinate system;
b_1 – the value of the angle coefficient of the line (trend line);
t – time in terms of years.
Using the available regarded the time series and the least squares method, the values for the constant (b_0) and the angle coefficient (b_1) can be further calculated and thus the trend equation (4) can be transformed in a more precise and ready to use manner (Figure 3), as follows:

(5) $$F(t) = Y(t) = -293815,978 + 147,492\ (t)$$

Where:
t is time in terms of years.

The **naïve forecasting method** has a formal mathematical notation, as well:

(6) $\qquad$ $F(t+1) = Y(t),$

Where:
$F(t+1)$ is the forecast value for the future period "$t+1$" and
$Y(t)$ is the last recorded value in the time series.

The mathematical notation of the **indexed naïve method** adds and index value to equation (5) in following manner:

(7) $\qquad$ $F(t+1) = I.Y(t),$

Where:
$F(t+1)$ is the forecast value for the future period "$t+1$";
$Y(t)$ is the last recorded value in the time series; and
I is the index value of increase of the last recorded value in comparison to the previous one and it is calculate by the following simple formula:

$$I = \left[1 + \left(\frac{Y_{(t)} - Y_{(t-1)}}{Y_{(t-1)}}\right)\right],$$

(8)

Where:
$Y(t)$ is the last recorded value in the time series in time period "t";
$Y(t-1)$ is the previous recorded value in time period the time series.

As for the mathematical notation of the **ARIMA** method, the present paper shall provide the simple but clear explanations provided by Prof. Robert F. Nau (2016) and his colleagues from the Fuqua School of Business of the Duke University, NC, as follows:
"A non-seasonal ARIMA model is classified as an "ARIMA (p,d,q)" model, where:
• **p** is the number of autoregressive terms,
• **d** is the number of non-seasonal differences needed for stationarity, and
• **q** is the number of lagged forecast errors in the prediction equation.
The forecasting equation is constructed as follows. First, let y denote the dth difference of Y, which means:
If d=0: $y_t = Y_t$

If d=1: $y_t = Y_t - Y_{t-1}$

If d=2: $y_t = (Y_t - Y_{t-1}) - (Y_{t-1} - Y_{t-2}) = Y_t - 2Y_{t-1} + Y_{t-2}$

Note that the second difference of Y (the d=2 case) is not the difference from 2 periods ago. Rather, it is the *first-difference-of-the-first difference*, which is the discrete analog of a second derivative, i.e., the local acceleration of the series rather than its local trend.
In terms of y, the general forecasting equation is:

(9) $\qquad$ $\hat{y}_t = \mu + \phi_1 y_{t-1} + \ldots + \phi_p y_{t-p} - \theta_1 e_{t-1} - \ldots - \theta_q e_{t-q}$ ".

And as the present study uses the ARIMA (0,1,0) model, the prediction equation for this model, according to Robert F. Nau, can be written as:

(10) $\qquad$ $\hat{Y}_t - Y_{t-1} = \mu,$

or equivalently:

(11) $\hat{Y}_t = \mu + Y_{t-1}$.

Figure 3. Linear trend estimation for the tourism receipts in Bulgaria achieved through SPSS ® by the use of the least squares method

Model Summary and Parameter Estimates

Dependent Variable: TReceipts

Equation	Model Summary					Parameter Estimates	
	R Square	F	df1	df2	Sig.	Constant	b1
Linear	,923	192,508	1	16	,000	-293815,978	147,492

The independent variable is Year.
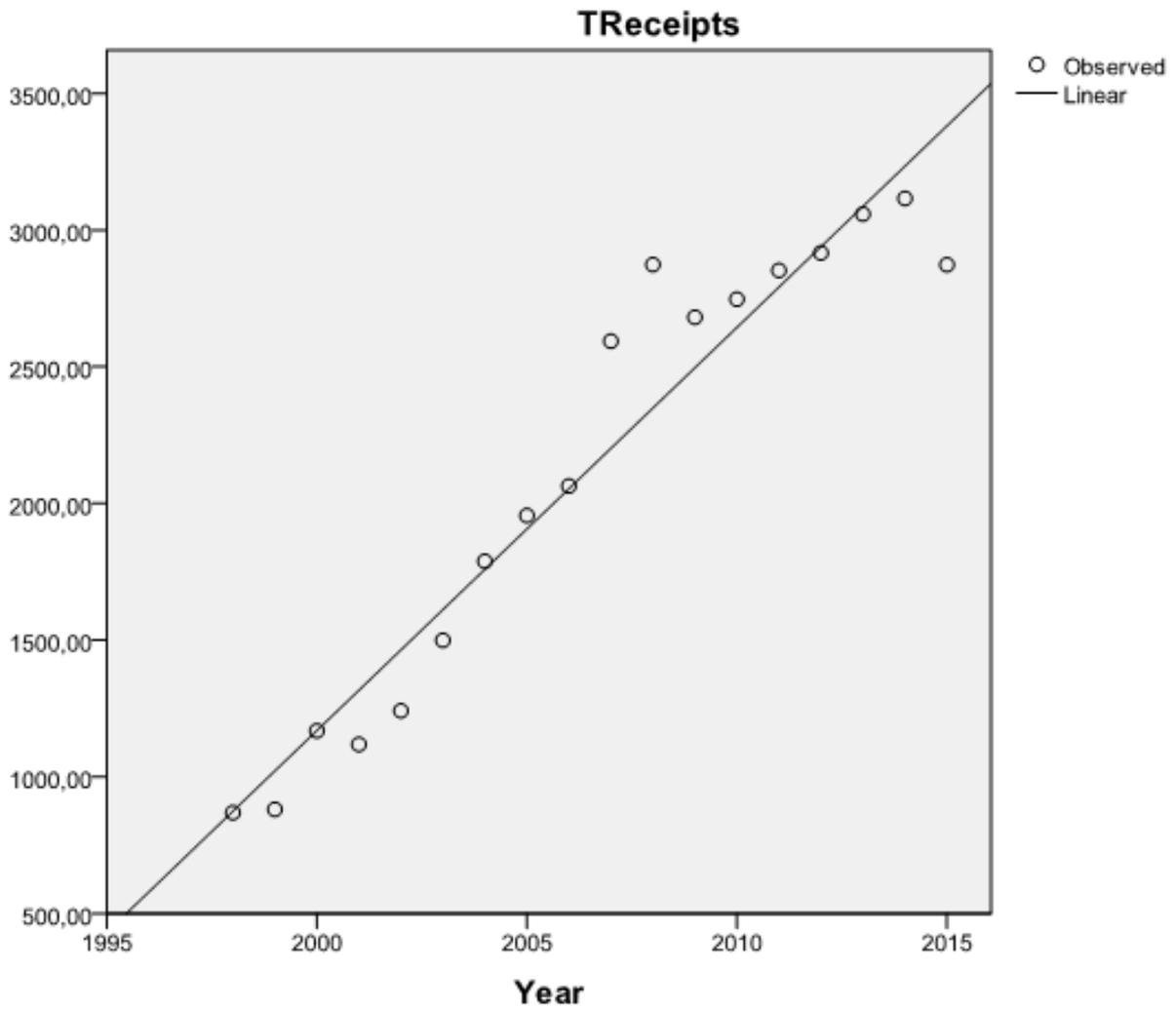
Source: authors' own calculations based on data provided by the Bulgarian Ministry of Tourism and the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute

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Figure 4. Plotting of the forecast calculations achieved through SPSS ® by the use of the Holt exponential forecasting method for a linear trend
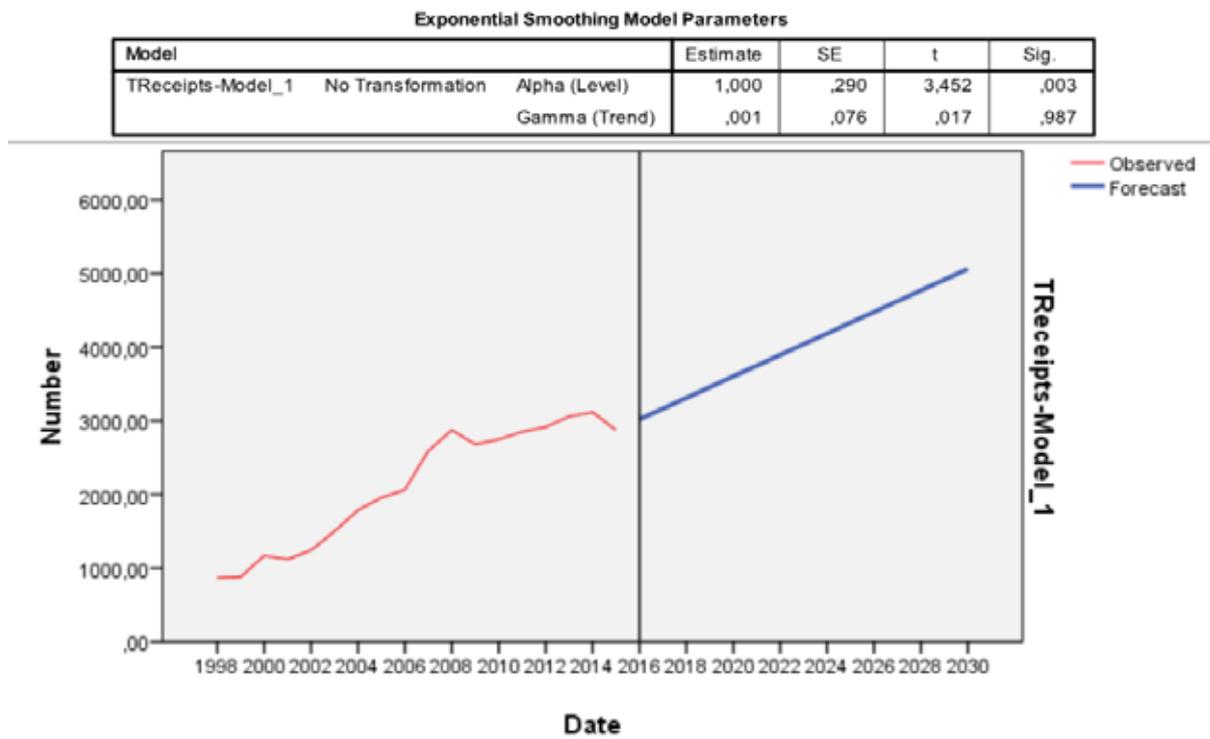
Source: authors' own calculations based on data provided by the Bulgarian Ministry of Tourism and the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute

Figure 5. Plotting of the recorded values and the forecast results by achieved by the use of the naïve method
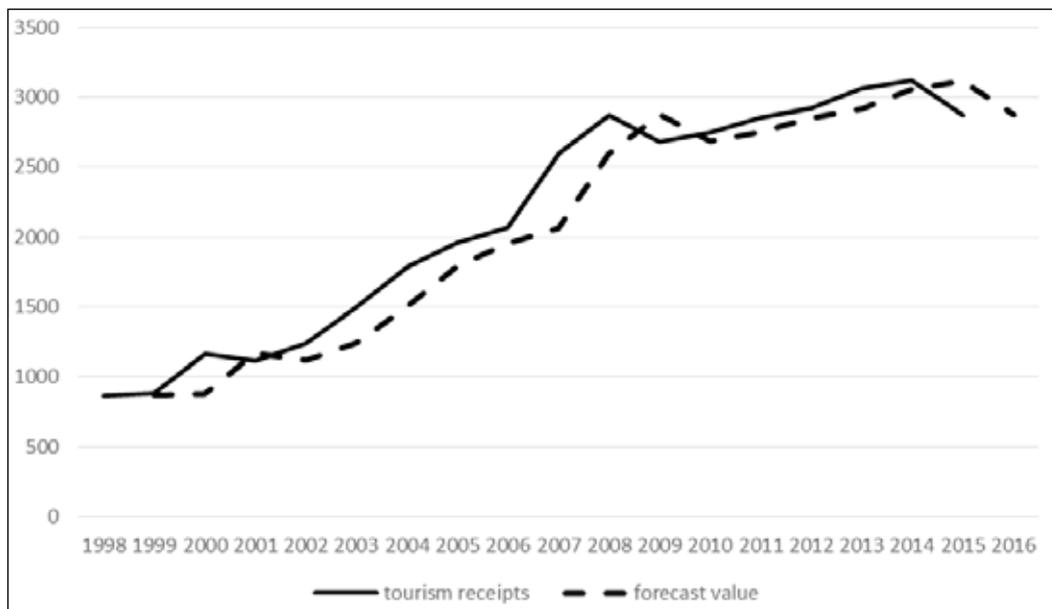
Source: authors' own calculations based on data provided by the Bulgarian Ministry of Tourism and the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute

Figure 6. Plotting of the recorded values and the forecast results by achieved by the use of the indexed naïve method
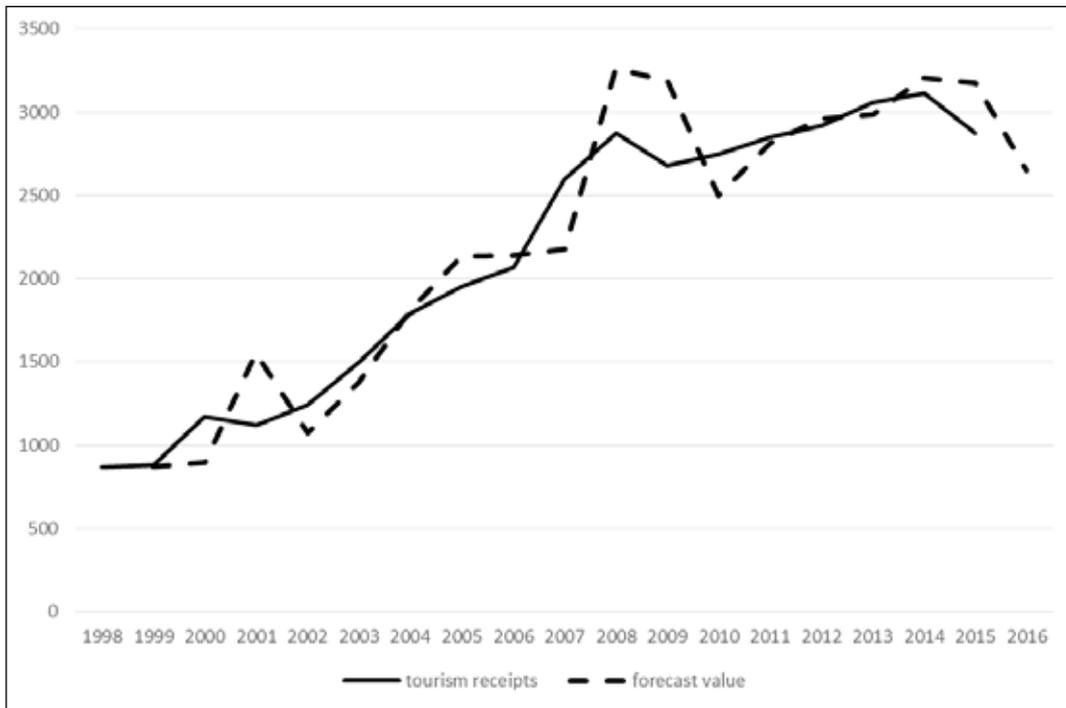
Source: authors' own calculations based on data provided by the Bulgarian Ministry of Tourism and the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute

Figure 7. Plotting of the recorded values and the forecast results by achieved by the use of the liner trend method
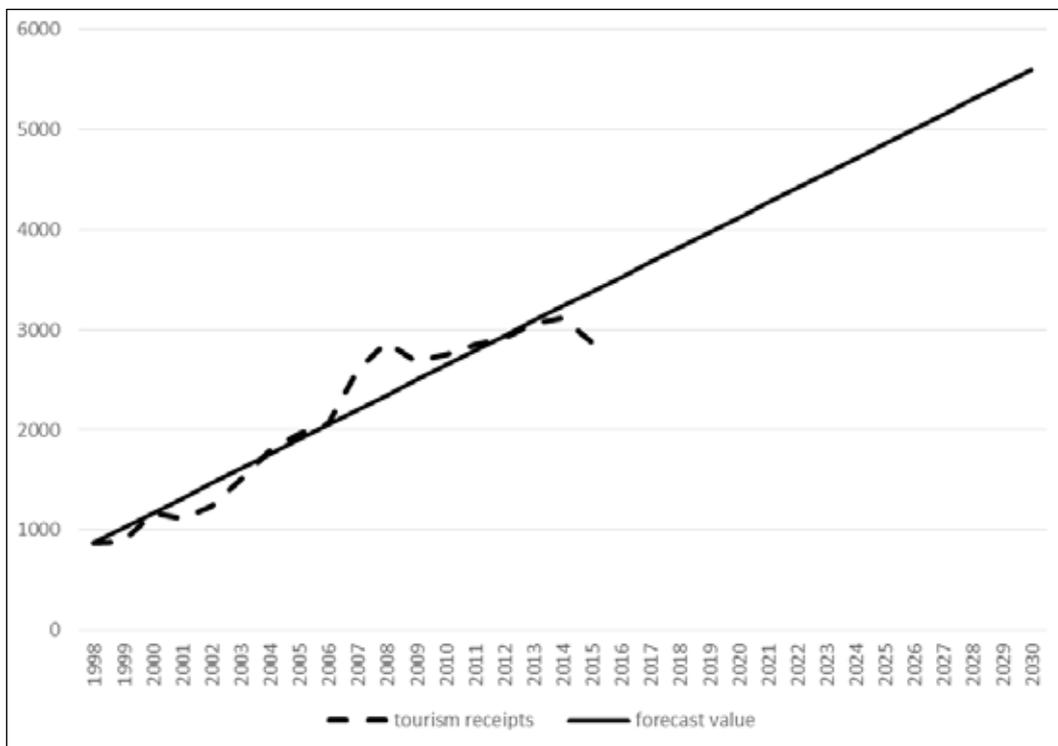
Source: authors' own calculations based on data provided by the Bulgarian Ministry of Tourism and the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute

Figure 8. Plotting of the forecast calculations achieved through SPSS ® by the use of ARIMA method, (0,1,0) model
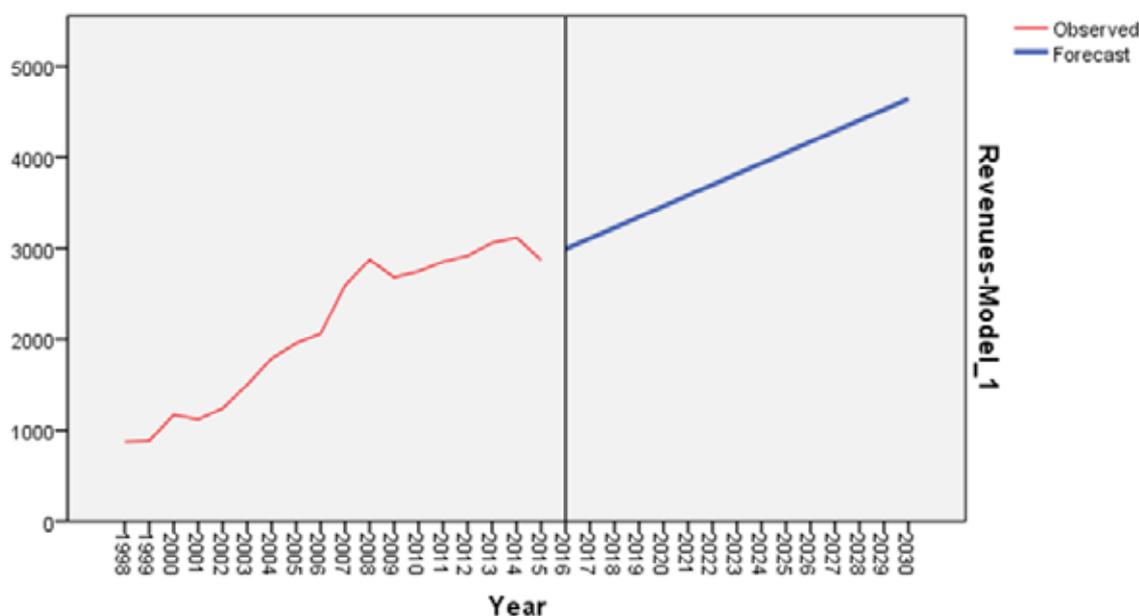
Source: authors' own calculations based on data provided by the Bulgarian Ministry of Tourism and the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute

Table 2. The forecasts produced by the four forecasting methods (in million Euros)

Year	Tourism receipts	Holt	Linear trend	ARIMA (0,1,0)	Naïve	Indexed Naïve
1998	868,700	868,700	873,038			
1999	881,000	1015,380	1020,530	987,000	868,700	868,700
2000	1168,400	1027,510	1168,022	999,000	881,000	893,474
2001	1118,600	1315,090	1315,514	1286,000	1168,400	1549,556
2002	1241,500	1265,040	1463,006	1237,000	1118,600	1070,923
2003	1499,500	1387,910	1610,498	1359,000	1241,500	1377,903
2004	1788,600	1646,050	1757,990	1617,000	1499,500	1811,116
2005	1955,700	1935,330	1905,482	1907,000	1788,600	2133,438
2006	2063,800	2102,460	2052,974	2074,000	1955,700	2138,411
2007	2593,800	2210,510	2200,466	2182,000	2063,800	2177,875
2008	2873,800	2740,990	2347,958	2712,000	2593,800	3259,908
2009	2681,200	3021,170	2495,450	2992,000	2873,800	3184,026
2010	2747,100	2828,130	2642,942	2799,000	2681,200	2501,508
2011	2852,400	2893,930	2790,434	2865,000	2747,100	2814,620
2012	2916,600	2999,180	2937,926	2970,000	2852,400	2961,736
2013	3058,400	3063,270	3085,418	3035,000	2916,600	2982,245
2014	3115,700	3205,060	3232,910	3176,000	3058,400	3207,094
2015	2873,000	3262,250	3380,402	3234,000	3115,700	3174,074
2016		3019,050	3527,894	2991,000	2873,000	2649,205

| 2017		3165,110	3675,386	3109,000		
2018		3311,160	3822,878	3227,000		
2019		3457,210	3970,370	3345,000		
2020		3603,260	4117,862	3463,000		
2021		3749,310	4265,354	3580,000		
2022		3895,370	4412,846	3698,000		
2023		4041,420	4560,338	3816,000		
2024		4187,470	4707,830	3934,000		
2025		4333,520	4855,322	4052,000		
2026		4479,570	5002,814	4170,000		
2027		4625,620	5150,306	4288,000		
2028		4771,680	5297,798	4406,000		
2029		4917,730	5445,290	4524,000		
2030		5063,780	5592,782	4641,000		

Source: authors' own calculations based on data provided by the Bulgarian Ministry of Tourism and the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute

**Figure 9. Plotting of the past and future produced by the four forecasting methods**
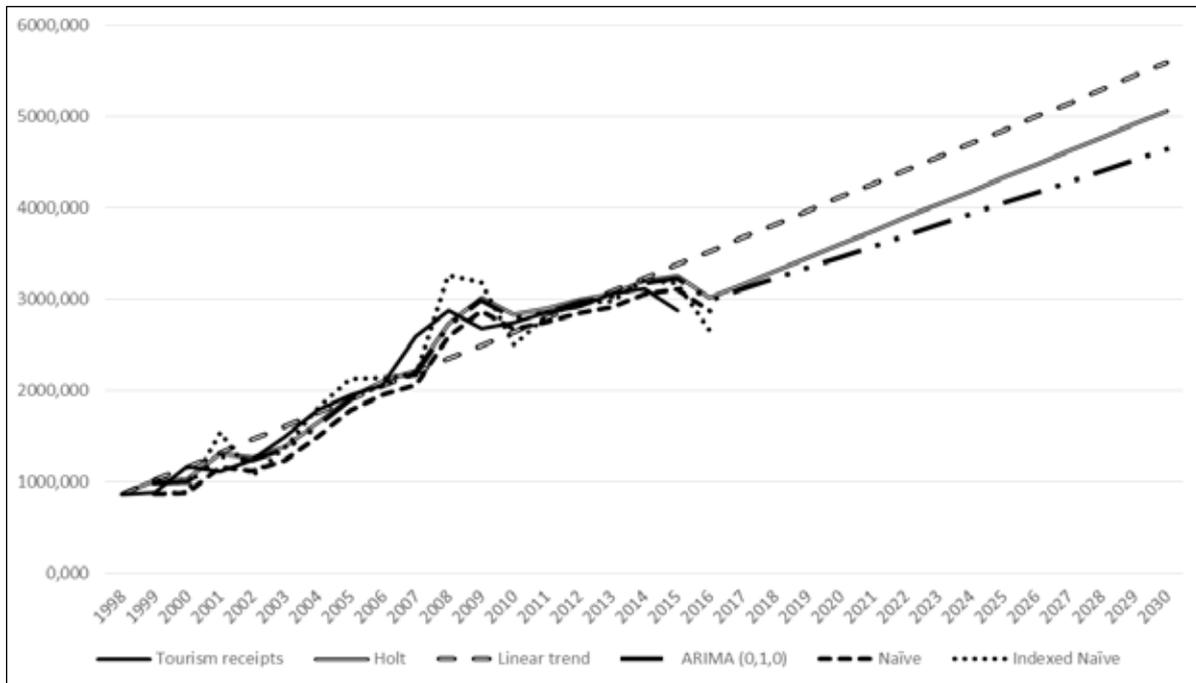
Source: authors' own calculations based on data provided by the Bulgarian Ministry of Tourism and the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute

Table 3 – Error measurement and comparison of the four methods by means of MAPE

| Error measurement	Holt	Linear trend	Naïve	Indexed Naïve	ARIMA (0,1,0)
MAPE	6,722	0,078184188	0,08710075	0,103060675	6,844

Source: authors' own calculations based on data provided by the Bulgarian Ministry of Tourism and the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute

## 5. THE EMPIRICAL COMPONENT: CALCULATING AND COMPARING THE FORECAST RESULTS

In order to provide a solution for the third and the fourth problems set for solving in the following paper, i.e. "(iii) Calculating of short-run and long-run forecasts" (up to year 2030)"; and "(iv) Comparing of the results of the forecast techniques on the basis of the errors in the forecasts", the SPSS 18.0 ® software package was used for calculating the forecasts by the use of the Holt method and the ARIMA method alongside with MS Excel calculation tables for the use of the naïve and the naïve indexed method.

The forecast results from the use of the above-described forecasting methods are presented in Figures 3, 4, 5 and 6 and in Table 2. And Table 3 provides information on the error measurement and comparison of the four methods by means of the indicator "Mean Absolute Percentage of Error" (MAPE). Thus, it becomes clear that the method with the lowest value of MAPE is the linear trend method followed by the naïve and the indexed naïve methods. However, these two methods are not applicable for producing of long-term forecasts. This finding is also visually confirmed by Figure 7 which represents the plotting of the past and future produced by the four forecasting methods.

Based on the results in Table 2 and 3 and Figures from 3 to 9, one can outline three major types of long-term forecasts for the volume of tourism receipts for 2030, as follows:

- **A pessimistic forecast (the forecast with the lowest value)** – calculated by the ARIMA method in random walk model of (0,1,0):

4 641 000 000 Euros tourism receipts;

- **An optimistic forecast (the forecast with highest forecast value and the lowest value of MAPE)** – calculated by the linear trend method, as follows:

5 592 782 000 Euros tourism receipts;

- **A "gray" forecast (with neither optimistic, nor pessimistic forecast value)** – calculated by the Holt method of double exponential smoothing forecasting in the presence of linear trend, with main parameters $\alpha=1.000$ and $\beta=0.001$:

5 063 780 000 Euros tourism receipts.

All these forecasts, as well as the forecasts presented in Table 2 and Figure 7, have one major disadvantage – they are produced for the general indicator "volume of tourism receipts", which means that it refers to the whole of Bulgarian tourism industry and not to the sub-sector of spa and wellness tourism and the part of which belongs to the region of South-West Bulgaria, or the so-called "Yugozapaden" (BG41) region according to the Eurostat Agency NUTS 2 classification of regions. In order to overcome this disadvantage and solve problem (v) "Estimating the size of the spa and wellness tourism in South-West Bulgaria in certain terms, so that the forecast(s) of the above-mentioned general indicator could be particularized especially for regarded sub-sector and region of the country", a certain modification is needed.

One way of doing so is by the use of a weight coefficient, or a set of wait coefficients which shall indicate the share of the foreign visitors with intention to practice spa and wellness tourism in the South-West Bulgaria (the Yugozapaden region). For the needs of the presented hereby study, a set of two coefficient shall be employed: one for indicating the share of the spa and wellness tourism in Bulgaria's overall tourism, and the second is for indicating the share of the tourism in the South-West Bulgaria.

Neither the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute (NSI), nor the Bulgarian Ministry of Tourism, nor any other Bulgarian government institution keeps a regular statistical record of the foreign visitors with spa and wellness tourism aims. The pe is a claim in the "Strategy for Sustainable Development of Tourism in Bulgaria 2014 – 2030" (the Bulgarian official national tourism strategy) (2014) that the share of the spa and wellness tourism is 6.5%, but as no source was indicated for this claim, it may be considered that this figure was taken by random from one of the existing eight consequent surveys on the foreign visitors in Bulgaria. These very same surveys, conducted by three different market research companies in Bulgaria, comprise data for most of the tourism seasons from the winter of 2007 to the spring of 2010. The eight surveys, though based on samples of approximately 3000 foreign citizens visiting Bulgaria, provide information for the percentage shares of the foreign visitors practicing spa and wellness activities in the months of the winter, spring, summer and/or autumn tourism seasons. Based on this information, a model for calculating the Kswt (the coefficient of the share of foreign visitors with spa and wellness aims) can be built (Table 4).

Table 4. Kswt calculation model

Balneo, Spa and Wellness tourism, agregate percentage shares:								
Calculation periods / Tourism subtypes	Year 2007		Year 2008		Year 2009			Year 2010	Average % share for the observed period - Kswt
	Winter 2007	Summer 2007	Winter 2008	Summer 2008	Winter 2009	Summer 2009	Autumn 2009	Spring 2010	
SPA	n.a.	n.a.	18,50	25,10	n.a.	n.a.	32,00	31,00	
Wellness	n.a.	n.a.	6,50	14,30	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	
Balneological tourism	n.a.	n.a.	4,90	4,60	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	
Total:	12,80	30,80	29,90	44,00	26,60	14,60	32,00	31,00	
Annual average:		21,80		36,95			24,40	31,00	28,54

Source: authors' own calculations based on data provided by the Bulgarian Ministry of Tourism and the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute

As for the calculation of the coefficient indicating the share of the tourism in the South-West Bulgaria, a more simplified approach can be applied. The Bulgarian National Statistical Institute keeps data on the receipts received from foreign visitors for their night stays in the separate regions of the country. In this regards, for 2015 the volume of receipts from foreign visitors for night stays in the South-West Bulgaria (the Yugozapaden region) was 125 749 764 BGN (64 294 833.39 Euro), and the volume of the total receipts from foreign visitors' night stays for the whole country was 728 046 828 BGN (or 372 345 332.17 Euro). Thus, just by simple division of this two figures produces **a coefficient of 0.1727 or 17.27%,** which can be considered as **"Kyur" coefficient for share of the tourism in the region of South-West Bulgaria, or the Yougozapaden region**.

The model, presented in Table 4, have of course many weak points. The first consideration in this regard is the fact that the coefficient Kswt is calculated on the assumption that it will remain constant in value throughout all the forecast periods. The only reason for accepting of such a rough assumption is the scarcity of statistical records on which to build a separate model for the development of the coefficient in the course of time. The second week point is that the coefficient Kswt is calculated on the basis of data received from sample surveys,

which on the other hand are conducted by different companies and thus there are: (i) probability errors in the data collected; and (ii) some, though not quite big, differences in the size of the samples and in the methodologies of surveys. The third week point comes in the fact that due to the already mentioned lack of previous data only four consequent years have been used for the calculation of the coefficient Kswt. Despite all these weak points, the model for calculating of Kswt helps to overcome the entire lack of regular statistic data for the ecotourism in Bulgaria.

Having calculated the values of Kswt and Kyur and the data in Table 2 and Figure 7, the forecasts of the volume of the spa and wellness tourism receipts in Bulgaria for 2030 can be easily made. What is necessary is just to multiply the already presented pessimistic, optimistic and "gray" forecasts for the general indicator "volume of tourism receipts" by the decimal value of Kswt, i.e. 0.2854 and the decimal value of Kyur, i.e. 0.1727 respectfully. However, as the optimistic forecast coincides with the forecast with the lowest value of MAPE, the further calculations can be narrowed simply to the optimistic forecast, as follows:

- **The optimistic forecast (the forecast with highest forecast value and the lowest value of MAPE)** – calculated by the linear trend method is multiplied by the decimal value of Kswt, i.e. 0.2854 and the decimal value of Kyur, i.e. 0.1727, as follows:

5 592 782 000 Euros tourism receipts x Kswt x Kyur = 5 592 782 000 x 0.2854 x 0.1727 = 275 660 283.03 Euros.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The presented forecast for the volume of the spa and wellness tourism receipts in the region of South-West Bulgaria, or the so-called Yugozapaden region, suggest that: (i) there is a positive trend of increase in the volume of the tourism receipts in Bulgaria; (ii) by 2030 the value of this indicator for South-West Bulgaria may reach or vary around the value of 275,660,283.03 Euros. This provides ground for a steady positive investment policy by both the private investors and the banking sector in the region. If, however, the assumption of the Bulgarian Ministry of Tourism for the share of 6.5% of the Bulgarian spa and wellness tourism in the overall size of the Bulgarian tourism industry is right, these figures may appear four to five times smaller. Another methodological concern which should be kept in mind is the fact that the forecast horizon of 14 years is reached on calculations based on time series of just 18 years. Nevertheless, there are facts that stand firmly in support of the achieved forecasts, such as: (i) alike all other regions in Bulgaria most of the spa and wellness hotels in region of the South-West Bulgaria have a have on its disposal hot water mineral springs and thus a direct access and use of hot water mineral waters; (ii) the most of the five and four star hotels in the region do poses a spa and wellness section; (ii) the region has one of the biggest international resorts for the use of hot water mineral springs in the country, the town of Sandanski; and (iv) the region successfully combines the ski and spa and spa and wellness tourism market segment so that most of the international winter ski tourists are often the ones who also practice spa and wellness tourism.

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN FERNANDO DE NORONHA, PERNAMBUCO, BRAZIL, ACCORDING TO TOURISM PROFESSIONALS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify how tourism professionals realize sustainable development in Fernando de Noronha, Pernambuco, Brazil, to that end, a questionnaire based on Sen (2010) sustainable development model was applied to a sample of 127 elements and a search in secondary socioeconomic data was performed. The data obtained through the questionnaire were subjected to analysis with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software to perform an Exploratory Factor Analysis and after, it was made a Confirmatory Factor Analysis using AMOS software. As a result, the socio-economic data indicated the emergence of social and economic problems over time and that the sustainable development model has not been identified, suggesting that, according to the tourism-related professionals, the management model applied to the island does not track the path that leads to sustainability, even when a special attention is given to the preservation of the local environment.

Keywords: Tourism Professionals, Sustainable Development, Fernando de Noronha, Sustainable Tourism, Structural Equation Modeling.

JEL Classification: Z32, Q26

1. INTRODUCTION

The technological, social and economic development observed in recent decades, besides causing changes in societies, also resulted in a new way to identify, explore, evaluate and conserve environmental resources from the understanding that they determine not only the supply of raw material, but also leisure, relaxation and better quality of life for current elements that form society besides being the most important legacy for those who will inherit it.

Tourism aims to contribute to the evolution of individuals and social groups, promote their development and provide rest and fun; for this, several dimensions such as marketing, transportation, lodging, food and beverage, infrastructure and services, are put together forming a system where the involved variables interact with one another and the results may cause positive or negative effects on economic, social and environmental dimensions. In this context, the paradigm of sustainability must be incorporated to the tourism market to drive its development to use natural, social and economic available resources and predict and control the resultant impacts, giving the basis for the sustainable tourism concept.

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According to 24th Article of the Universal Human Rights Declaration, everyone has the right to rest and enjoy leisure; to a reasonable limit of working hours and paid vacations, that implies that tourism is not a luxury but a right, so it indicates the trend to an increase in activities related to tourism all around the world. The World Tourism Organization [UNWTO] predicts that by 2020, there will be a tourist movement of 1.6 billion people in the world (UNWTO, 2010), but it does not refer to the impact of this fact to natural resources. The development of tourism can affect the natural environment due to visual and aesthetic impacts, waste generation, air pollution, erosion and destruction of environments due to human action (Huiqin & Linchun, 2011). With the degradation of the environment, tourism, which depends on it directly, will suffer negative impacts (Huiqin & Linchun, 2011; Tortella & Tirado, 2011) and it will be reflected on the lives of those who depend on such activity for their livelihood. The tourism-related researches generally emphasize economic variables, with certain detriment of their socio-cultural and environmental characteristics.

The sustainability concept is not still well defined (Jickling, 2000; Keiner, 2006; Ciegis, Ramanauskiene & Martinkus, 2009; Barbieri, Vasconcelos, Andreassi & Vasconcelos, 2010), thus the Sachs (1993) and Sen (2010) sustainable development, models and Elkington (2012) sustainability model address different dimensions for sustainability and sustainable development. It is emphasized that "due to the imprecision of the concepts often these terms are used interchangeably; but they are different (Silva & Mendes, 2005, p. 12). These authors consider that sustainable development can be seen as a process and sustainability as an end, the topic sustainability is linked to "where" you want to go while sustainable development is highlighted as "how" you must go (Silva & Mendes, 2005). Sustainable development must include improvement of quality of life for people, considering the resilience of the ecosystem, which should be considered as the maximum load for the environment while maintaining the ecological balance, this procedure requires periodic evaluations of the environment to take decisions to make adjusts to new conditions (Ciegis *et al.*, 2009).

So considering, first, the path to sustainable development should be followed and only after that, sustainability, with its economic, social and environmental dimensions (Elkington, 2012), can be achieved. In this context the question which led this research arose: How tourism professionals realize sustainable development in the region in which they operate? As a research place it was elected the main island of Fernando de Noronha archipelago and, to answer the previous question, it was established as a general objective, to identify how the professionals linked to tourism realize sustainable development in Fernando de Noronha island and, as a specific objective, knowing the socioeconomic profile of the population living in the island.

As a justificative for this work, there is the need to aim sustainable development as a way to achieve sustainability to predict and prevent the environmental, social and economic impacts of tourism in the archipelago on which most of the Fernando de Noronha inhabitants depend.

2. THE FERNANDO DE NORONHA ARCHIPELAGO

In contrast to the continent, islands tend to create in the tourist a positive image (Pearce, 2003), those from warmer climates become havens to escape from the everyday routine (Gössling, 2003), this is how the Fernando de Noronha archipelago can be seen, due to its distance to the mainland, warm and clean water beaches and, especially for its gorgeous and preserved biodiversity, the archipelago highlights its tendency to tourism based on natural resources.

The Fernando de Noronha archipelago is located 340 km from São Roque Cape (in Rio Grande do Norte State in Brazil) and 545 km from Recife (Capital of Pernambuco State in Brazil)in the Brazilian Northeast region and consists of 21 islands with an area of nearly 26 km2, originated by volcanic processes with its base to 4,000 m deep and 60 km in diameter, it is a part of the called Median Dorsal of the Atlantic, which is a chain of underwater mountains about 15,000 km long, which divides the Atlantic Ocean into two parts (Ferreira, Jesus & Silva, 1990). The main island, the only one inhabited has the archipelago's name and occupies a 17 km2 area with a population of 2,630 permanent residents (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística [IBGE], 2010), in addition to these, there are some temporary residents, totaling 3,500 residents. The average temperature is 28º C in the land and 26º C in the sea. The islands have two seasons: a dry season that goes from September to March and a rainy one from April to August which is characterized by sporadic rain merged with intense sun. Figure 1 shows the map of the archipelago.

Figure 1. Map of the Fernando de Noronha archipelago

Source: http://www.noronha.pe.gov.br/

Due to its geographical position, the archipelago remained isolated for a long time and, after a Dutch and French incursions, in 1737, it was put under the jurisdiction of the government of Pernambuco State. In 1938, it was again under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government that, in 1942, created the Fernando de Noronha Federal Territory. Brazilian militaries ruled Fernando de Noronha for 45 years and, in 1987, it was elected the first civilian governor, which enabled the beginning of tourist activities on the island, that was when the first family guesthouses were established, facilitating the establishment of a framework to support tourists. In 1988 the Brazilian government determined that about 70% of the archipelago was changed into a maritime national park aiming to preserve the land and marine environment. On October, 5, 1988 the Federal Territory was extinct and the archipelago was added to Pernambuco State.

In 2001, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] awarded Fernando de Noronha the title of World Natural Heritage Site. The rational tourist exploitation is currently the main economic activity on the island. This economic activity has limitations due to the lack of infrastructure and also for the standards determined by the Instituto Chico Mendes para a Conservação da Biodiversidade - ICMBio – organization responsible for monitoring and conservation of the environment on the island (Souza & Filho, 2011).

Tourism is the main source of income of the island, biodiversity and its clear water beaches are its main attractions, as they favor snorkeling and diving, Aqua Sub, boating, as well as peace and silence for the appreciation of the sunset at the Boldró Belvedere or at any other point of the island. Photos 1, 2, 3 and 4 show the main beaches in the island.

Photo 1 – Dois Irmãos Hill

Source: Photographed by the authors (2016)

Photo 2 – Sancho Beach

Source: Photographed by the authors (2016)

Photo 3 – Cacimba do Padre Beach

Source: Photographed by the authors (2016)

Photo 4 – Porcos' Bay

Source: Photographed by the authors (2016)

3. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACCORDING TO SEN (2010)

Many researches have been made to define sustainable development, however, there is no consensus among authors as to its exact definition (Keiner, 2006; Barbieri *et al.*, 2010) however, the most referenced is the one found in the "Our Common Future" document elaborated by the World Commission on Environment and Development [WCED] (1987), that was led by the Prime Minister of Norway Gro Brundtland: "sustainable development is one that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs "(WCED, 1987), which is indicated in figure 2.

Figure 2. Definition of sustainable development (signed by Gro Brundtland)

Source: Keiner (2006, p. 2)

Among the most used sustainable development models are: I – Sachs (1993), that defines that sustainable development is formed by five dimension: Social Sustainability, Economic Sustainability, Ecological Sustainability, Spatial Sustainability and Cultural Sustainability; II - Sen (2010) that states that sustainable development is based on freedom, so the author defines its model as formed by the Political Freedoms, Economic Facilities, Social Opportunities, Transparency Guarantees and Protective Security. This model will be used in this study.

Even with the technological advances achieved in recent decades it is still possible to see a gap among the living conditions not only among communities but also within them, favoring the deprivation that hinders development and emphasizes the need to identify a new means by which societies can achieve more homogeneous living conditions. It also may be seen that among so many social disparities, there is a consensus that development should be measured using only economic instruments, which do not consider the consequences that this context causes and that will culminate by involving everyone in a chaotic situation. In the search for another development model, Sen (2010) suggests that "an adequate conception of development must go much beyond the accumulation of wealth and the growth of gross national product and other variables related to income, without disregarding economic growth, we need see beyond it "(Sen, 2010, p. 28); highlighting the fundamental role of freedom for the development, the author states that "freedom is a major determinant of individual initiative and social effectiveness. Having more freedom improves the potential of people to take care of themselves and to influence the world, central issues to the development process" (Sen, 2010, p. 33). Highlighting that "development is actually a tremendous commitment to the possibilities of freedom" (Sen, 2010, p. 337), the author defines the instrumental freedoms as: Political Freedoms, Economic Facilities, Social Opportunities, Transparency Guarantees and Protective Security.

3.1 Political Freedoms

Political freedoms must be exercised without restrictions, respecting civil rights and ensuring to all members of society the choice of their rulers and the principles that will guide this government; dissent and free personal and media expression.

3.2 Economic Facilities

Refer to the freedom of accessing market and using the available resources according to the desired purpose. The economic rights will depend not only on the resources of the people and market conditions but also on the laws that regulate it. Economic development arises when society enriches and also do the economic rights of its members, resulting in little difference among social classes and a more homogeneous income distribution.

3.3 Social Opportunities

They refer to the possibilities of development and social growth available within a society and include factors such as health, sanitation, education and security.

3.4 Transparency Guarantees

They are related to the compliance with applicable laws and regulations in the social environment, causing protection against arbitrary acts and defining the form of social interaction in addition to preventing unlawful acts and providing a better quality of life and safety. According to Sen (2010, p. 56), the guarantees of transparency "refer to the needs of

sincerity that people can expect: the freedom to deal with one another under guarantees of transparency and lucidity."

3.5 Protective Security

It refers to the security offered to parts of the population who suffer threats or have vulnerabilities; for its establishment it should be adopted security procedures that aim to create, maintain and operate a network to prevent or assist the population or part of it, in situations with adverse conditions, according to Sen (2010, p. 57) a "social safety net is needed, preventing that the affected population to be exposed to misery and, in some cases, even to death and hunger."

4. METHODOLOGY

The impacts of tourism are observed not only in the emission areas (where the tourists come from), but on the transit area (where the tourists pass by) and also on the receiving area (where the tourist lodges) and where the greatest environmental impact occurs (Hunter, 2002). The Fernando de Noronha archipelago, as a receiving area was chosen to be the place to make this research.

This quantitative work, aims to identify how the variables that form the dimensions of sustainable development, required path to achieve sustainability, are perceived by tourism professionals working at Fernando de Noronha archipelago. It was chosen the sustainable development model suggested by Sen (2010). The research subjects were defined based on Guzman and Rebbolloso (2012) statements in relation to the players taking part in tourism product that are shown on figure 3. Table 1 shows the agents that formed the sample.

Figure 3. Agents that participate in the touristic product
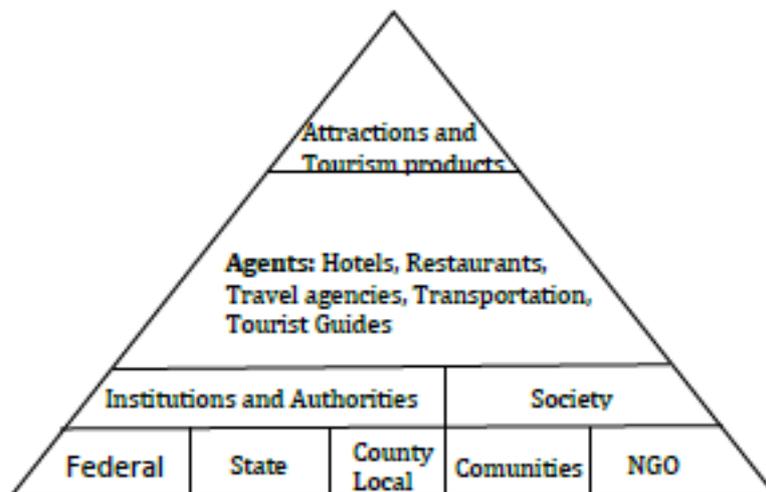
Source: Guzman and Rebbolloso (2012, p. 75)

Table 1. Professionals forming the sample

Professionals linked to tourism that formed the sample			
Agents	Description	Number	Answers by e-mail
Hotels	Inn owners (or relatives)	25	13
Restaurants	Restaurant owner or Managers	28	18
Traveling and services agencies	Agencies Employees and other tourism-related professionals *	27	16
Land transportation	Professionals linked to land transport **	11	-
Air transportation	Professionals linked to air transport	3	-
Tourism Guides	Tourism guides	18	9
Society	People from the community	15	

* Travel agencies employees, Dive Instructors, Underwater Photographers, Boat conductors

**Taxi and buggies for rent drivers, Tourism bus driver, Drivers of vehicles that make tour around the island.

Source: Data from the Research (2016)

The research instrument used was a questionnaire consisting of 20 questions based on Sen (2010), which had already been validated by Oliveira (2014), associated to a 5 points Likert scale shown on table 2. This scale is recommended when one is seeking to evaluate the intensity of a feeling or perception (Churchill JR, 1999). The questionnaire was applied to 71 research subjects directly, 56 were received by electronic means, totaling 127 questionnaires. After verifying Missing Values and Outliers (Hair Junior, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tathan, 2009) all questionnaires were considered valid. The minimum size of the sample must be defined before data collection to reach the desired statistic power (Shah, 2012). It was used a non-probabilistic sample and it was considered that, according to Hair Junior *et al.* (2009), SEM models formed by 5 constructs or less and having more than 3 variables each one and with communalities ≥ 0,6 may use a sample composed by 100 to 150 elements. The sample used in this work reached these criteria.

Table 2. Point of the Likert scale

1	Totally disagree
2	Disagree
3	Don't agree or Disagree
4	Agree
5	Totally agree

Source: Elaborated by the Authors (2016)

Considering that the fixed population of the island = 2630 and the sample = 127; 127/2630 = 0.048; it means that the sample corresponds to ± 5% of the fixed island population. The number of responses sent by email (± 44%) indicated willingness to participate in the research; however, none of the respondents authorized the publication of their names or of their companies in this work. The operationalization of the sustainable development model proposed by Sen (2010), with the dimensions and variables used, is indicated on table 3.

Table 3. Operationalization of the model proposed by Sen (2010).

		DIMENSIONS			
	Political Freedoms	**Economic Facilities**	**Social Opportunities**	**Transparency Guarantees**	**Protective Security**
V A R I A B L E S	1 – Decide who governs and the rules to regulate it	1 – Access to the economic resources	1 – Access to health services	1 – Confidence among people	1 – Existence of a Social Security Net
	2 – Supervise and criticize authorities	2 – Access to goods produced	2 – Access to Education	2 – Mechanisms to combat corruption and illegal acts	2 – Existence of income supplementation programs
	3 – Freedom of political expression and free press	3 – Prices that are similar to other markets	3 – Safety	3 – Broad access to the acts of the rulers	3 – Food distribution procedures in case of emergency
		4 – Difference among social classes	4 – Infrastructure		4 - Emergency procedures to support needy
		5 – Income distribution			
		6 – Access to credit			

Source: Based on Sen (2010, p. 10)

Data collection was conducted from May to June, 2016. The data were inserted in the software Statistical Package for Social Sciences - SPSS - version 20. Initially, it was made the calculation of the Cronbach's Alpha to check the internal consistency of data and validity of the research instrument, then the mean for each variable and dimensions were calculated. Still using the SPSS, it was made an Exploratory Factor Analysis - EFA - to verify the possibility of using all variables in the AMOS software, version 21, to perform a Confirmatory Factor Analysis - CFA - using Structural Equation Modeling - SEM - in order to assess whether the model fit the conditions presented.

For SEM calculation it was used de Maximum Likelihood Estimation that aims to reproduce the covariance matrix of the observed variables and implies that these variables follow a normal distribution, "the analysis is predominantly confirmative in nature, that is, it seeks to determine the extent to which the postulated structure is actually consistent with the empirical data at hand" (Crisci, 2012, p. 6). To analyze normality, it was followed the recommendations of Finney and Distefano (2006): │skew│>2-3 e │kurtosis│>7-10.

5. RESULTS

Initially, based on secondary data, it was made an assessment of the evolution of socio-economic data of the population that live in the archipelago; then the data, collected through the survey instrument, were inserted in the SPSS software; it was performed the analysis of the Cronbach's alpha to verify the reliability of the research instrument reliability and the internal consistency of the data; After the averages were calculated for each variable and dimensions involved, it was finally made an EFA as an initial analysis to verify the model adjustment using CFA.

5.1 Socioeconomic information about the population in Fernando de Noronha

In 2005, Fernando de Noronha had a highest Human Development Index [HDI]; highest per capita income; highest life expectancy and the lowest percentage of poor and illiterate people aged 25 or over in the Brazilian Northeastern region (Rocha & Brasileiro, 2013).

Such information indicates that the Islands occupied a privileged position not only in the region but also in Brazil. The variation of the socioeconomic indexes of the population in Fernando de Noronha Island is shown on table 4.

Table 4. Variation of the socioeconomic data of the population living in Fernando de Noronha

Indexes	1991	2000	2010	Observations
HDI	0,548	0,694	0,788	Fernando de Noronha occupies the 76th position among the 5,565 Brazilian cities. The biggest HDI is 0.862 and the lowest is 0.418.
Life expectancy	79.7	74.8	75.4	In Brazil, the life expectancy was 64.7 in 1991, 68.6 in 2000 and 73.9 in 2010.
Years of studying: until 18 years old	7.26	9.10	10.76	In Pernambuco State: 1991 → 7.67; 2000 → 7.70; 2010 → 9.13. The indexes of the archipelago are higher than those of the State.
% vulnerable to poverty	25.02%	7.19 %	5.12 %	The developments indicate progress in Protective Security
% persons aged 15 to 24 who do not study, do not work and are vulnerable in the population of this band	-	1.44 %	3.22 %	There is a significant increase in this index.
Population	1,686	2,051	2,630	Between 1991 and 2000, the population grew at an annual average rate of 2.20%; in Brazil it was 1.63% in the same period. Between 2000 and 2010 the annual average rate was 2.52%; while in Brazil it was 1.17%.
Per capita **income**	465.55	1,104.89	1,034.14	Lower *per capita* income between 2000 and 2010. (in Reais (R$) – Currency in Brazil)
% of poor people	0.00%	0.98 %	2.20 %	Poor: People with *per capita* household income below R$ 140.00 (reference: August 2010).
Gini Index*	0.36	0.50	0.46	The difference in income distribution has grown over the years
* Index used to measure the degree of income concentration, indicates the difference between the incomes of the poor and the rich, it ranges from 0 to 1, zero is the situation where everyone has the same income, and 1 means complete inequality in income distribution, i.e., one person has all the income of the place.				

Source: Adapted from the Atlas do Desenvolvimento Humano Brasil (2013)

The data on table 4 indicate that Fernando de Noronha has evolved in relation to the HDI, life expectancy, the percentage of people vulnerable to poverty, access to study and increase in per capita income (only between 1991 and 2000). However, considering the reduction of the per capita income (between 2000 and 2010); population growth above the national average; increase in the percentage of poor people and the increase in the Gini index that indicates inequality in income distribution; it can be concluded that although Fernando de Noronha has occupied a prominent place in the northeastern socioeconomic scenery, the

data indicate a fall and consequent change in the profile of the population of the island over the years, suggesting that their socioeconomic conditions are no longer the same of those two decades ago. These data are from 2010, if the tendency is still the same, the worsening of such conditions will compromise the quality of life of residents and a distancing of the sustainable development.

5.2 Cronbach's *Alpha*

Hair Junior *et al.*, (2009, p. 100) argue that "Cronbach's *Alpha* is a measure of reliability ranging from 0 to 1, with values from 0.60 to 0.70 considered the lower limit of acceptability." The Cronbach's *Alpha* found in this work, shown on table 5, was 0.646, indicating that the scale used is reliable and that there is internal consistency among the data.

Table 5. Cronbach's *Alpha*

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,646	20

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2016)

5.3 Average of Variables and dimensions of sustainable development

To evaluate the mean of variables, dimensions and of the sustainable development construct, it was considered that: as the values assigned to variables ranged from 1 to 5, it was considered 3 as the mean value. The average of each variable as well as the average obtained for each dimension was calculated; the result is shown on table 6 and indicates that the construct happens in a moderate way.

Table 6. Average of variables, dimensions and sustainable development

Variables	Mean	Dimension and Mean	Result
Political Freedoms 1	3,43	Political Freedoms **M = 3,35**	**Moderate**
Political Freedoms 2	2,96		
Political Freedoms 3	3,66		
Economic Facilities 1	3,89	Economic Facilities **M = 3,16**	**Moderate**
Economic Facilities 2	3,61		
Economic Facilities 3	2,76		
Economic Facilities 4	2,80		
Economic Facilities 5	2,69		
Economic Facilities 6	3,24		
Social Opportunities 1	3,27	Social Opportunities **M = 3,37**	**Moderate**
Social Opportunities 2	3,39		
Social Opportunities 3	4,27		
Social Opportunities 4	2,56		
Transparency Guarantees 1	4,02	Transparency Guarantees **M = 3,30**	**Moderate**
Transparency Guarantees 2	3,05		
Transparency Guarantees 3	2,84		
Protective Security 1	2,83	Protective Security **M = 3,09**	**Moderate**
Protective Security 2	3,10		
Protective Security 3	3,24		
Protective Security 4	3,18		
Overall mean for the sustainable development construct = 3,25			**Moderate**

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2016)

5.4 Exploratory Factor Analysis - EFA

To perform safely an EFA it is necessary to evaluate the results of the KMO test (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin; a Measure of Sampling Adequacy - MSA) that has to be greater than 0.50; and also the Bartlett Sphericity Index, which must indicate the Sig. (General significance test) less than 0.05 (Hair Junior *et al.*, 2009). The results, shown in table 7, indicate that the EFA can be performed.

Table 7. Previous tests for EFA

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,532
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	351,850
	df	190
	Sig.	,000

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2016)

When performing an EFA, the anti-image matrices should be evaluated, their indexes should be above 0.50 and also the communalities (explanatory power of the variables) must be greater than 0.50 (Hair Junior *et al.*, 2009). It was found that the anti-image matrices and the communalities showed indices outside of the recommended parameters, thus, correction was carried out and, based on data, variables 1, 2 and 3 from the Political Freedoms dimension were excluded from the model; the same procedure was applied to the variable 1 from the Economic Facilities and to the variable 1 from Social Opportunities dimension. After excluding these variables, the anti-image matrices data indicated indexes that ranged between 0.529 and 0.692 and the communalities between 0.612 and 0.752. This result indicates that the model can now be used in the AMOS software to perform a CFA. It was not found Skew and Kurtosis, so the data were considered as having normal distribution.

5.5 Confirmatory Factor Analysis – CFA

SEM models formed by 5 constructs or less, having at least three observed variables each and that show communalities larger than 0.6, can use samples of 100-150 elements (Hair Junior *et al.*, 2009); as the model under research fits these requirements, a CFA will be made. Table 8 shows the results of the initial tests without the excluded variables.

Table 8. Previous tests for CFA

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,580
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	223,506
	df	105
	Sig.	,000

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2016)

The variables were inserted in the AMOS software, version 21; figure 4 shows the model without changings, since it was not found asymmetry or kurtosis (Kline, 2004; Finney & Distefano, 2006). The model fit indices obtained are shown on table 9.

Figure 4 – Variables inserted in the AMOS for a CFA
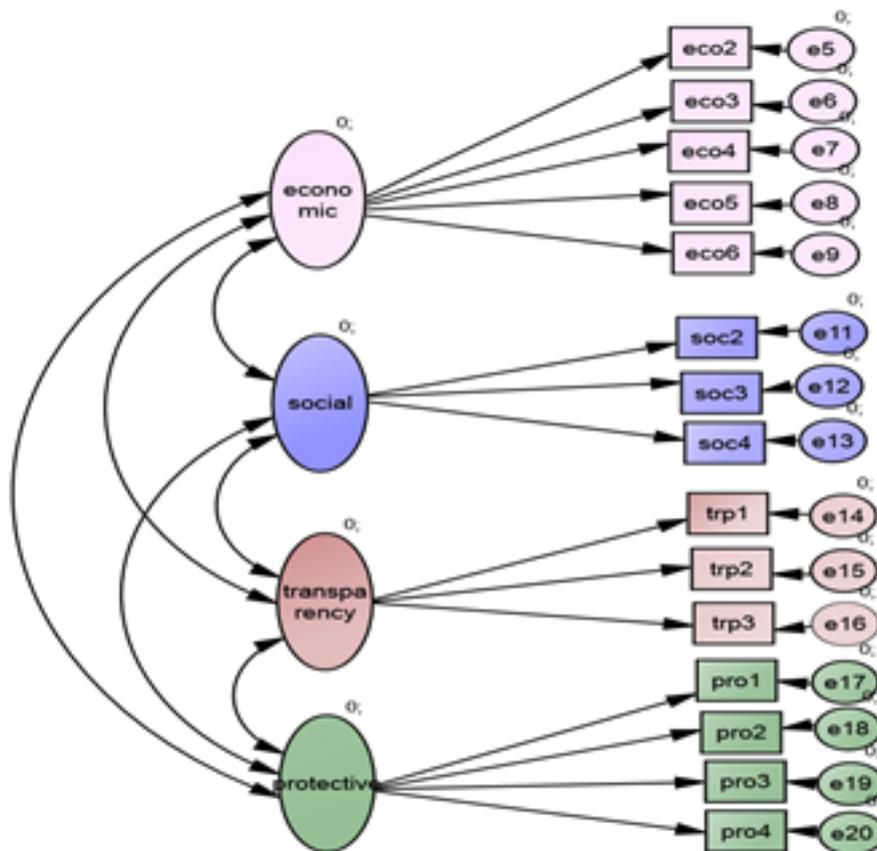
Source: Elaborated by the authors (2016)

Table 9. Model fit indexes

CMIN	DF	CMIN/DF	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	NFI	PCFI
142,818	75	1,904	0,414	0,578	0,045	0,394	0,259

Source: Elaborated by the authors (2016)

Table 9 indicates that CMIN (Minimum Value of the Discrepancy) = 142.818 and DF (Degrees of Freedom) = 75, with CMIN / DF = 1,904, "although there is not a consensus about the accuracy of this index, the recommendations are that it can vary from 2.0 to 5.0" (Hooper, Coughlam & Mullen, 2008, p. 54). Although it is near the lower limit, the result does not indicate a good fit.

According to Hair Junior *et al.* (2009, p. 586) "The CFI (Comparative Fit Index) and TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index) vary from zero to 1, with higher values, above 0.90, indicating better fit". The CFI = 0.414 and TLI = 0, 578 do not indicate a good fit

According to Byrne (2010) the RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) must be less than 0.05 for indicating excellent fit, however, Hair Junior *et al.* (2009, p. 570) stated that "the RMSEA is between 0.03 and 0.08 ", in agreement with Arbuckle (2007, p. 592) that suggests "an excellent indicator setting for the RMSEA is around 0.05 and it can be used until 0.08 and that this index should not be used if it is greater than 0.1", in his turn, Mulaik (2009, p. 339) states that "a value equal to or less than 0.05 indicates a good fit". Thus, RMSEA = 0.045 with LO 90 = 0.034 and HI 90 = 0.057, found in this work indicate a good fit.

The "NFI (Normed Fit Index) varies between 0 and 1" (Hair Junior *et al.*, 2009, p. 570; Mulaik, 2009, p. 325) and "a model with good fit should be between 0.8 and 0.9" (Marôco, 2010, p. 234). The NFI = 0.394 found in this study does not indicate good fit.

The PCFI index must be greater than 0.5 (Hu & Bentler, 1999), thus the PCFI = 0.259 found in this study does not indicate a good fit.

According to Hair Junior *et al.* (2009, p. 577) to evaluate more complex models, multiple fit indices should be used, we must consider: "The χ2 value and the associated DF; An absolute adjustment index (i.e. GFI, RMSEA or SRMR); An incremental adjustment index (i.e. CFI or TLI); An adjusting quality index (GFI, CFI, TLI, etc.) and a poor adjustment index (RMSEA, SRMR etc.). No single "magic" value for fit indexes separates good from bad models". Following the statements of the author, as only the RMSEA index indicated good fit, the model does not fit the data, indicating that the construct sustainable development was not identified.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on averages, which are evaluated independently, it can be said that the perception of the dimensions of sustainable development of the tourism-related professionals in Fernando de Noronha island, indicates the presence of sustainable development on a regular basis, however, it should be noted that the variables that form the construct are interdependent, so when considering the construct as it really is, considering the interaction between its variables and dimensions, the construct sustainable development, as suggested by Sen (2010), was not identified in Fernando de Noronha. This finding suggests that although the environmental dimension has been subject of intense attention, the path to sustainability is not being followed in the researched site, which can compromise not only the living conditions of the inhabitants, but also of the island itself.

It is noteworthy that the variables related to Political Freedoms dimension had a too low power of explanation of the construct; it seems that this has occurred because of the fact that the inhabitants do not choose the administrator of island and, from this fact, all political freedoms are placed in the background.

The access to health services variable also showed low explanatory power and was dropped from the model, it should be noted that during the applications of the questionnaires, it was said by two interviewees that pregnant women are accompanied on the island to a certain point and then sent out of it (only sent, after that the patients are on their own); Another fact was observed: during the interviews a photographer was injured and he was told to go to the hospital, the first response that came from the group around was: Why? There is nothing there. These findings lead to the inference that the health conditions offered in the island, an indicator of the social dimension, do not attend the population properly, confirming the quantitative result found here.

The Triple Bottom Line (Elkington, 2012) sustainability model is formed by the social, economic and environmental interdependent dimensions, so even with the local attention on the environmental dimension, the indexes that indicate the socioeconomic conditions of the people living in Fernando de Noronha, over the past two decades, suggest that the conduction of social and economic life in the island is not sustainable over time because, as in 2010, it can be identified population and poverty growth, decrease in per capita income and, above all, increasing in the unequal distribution of income. The worsening of these indexes may lead to a collapse in the whole system.

As a limitation to this research, it can be mentioned the use of socioeconomic data about the population from Fernando de Noronha collected in 2010. For future research it

is suggested the use of a current economic and social indicators in order to better identify its future trends to suggest which variables or dimensions require greater attention, aiming to maintain the economic means and the quality of life in the island at current levels or, if possible, improve it. It is also suggested, the analysis of how the economic resources generated on the island are applied, not only the one from the fees paid by tourists but also the one generated by people who offer products and services, as it was noted, during this research, that a part of the population live in other States (such as Pernambuco and Rio Grande do Norte).

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WHEN SUSTAINABILITY OF A TOURISM DESTINATION IS A REQUIREMENT: DOES THE CONSUMER PERCEIVE SACRIFICES IN DIVING EXPERIENCES?

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ABSTRACT

Consumer behaviour refers to some subjective characteristics of individuals, their cultural principles and living experiences throughout their lives, aspects that awaken the individual's desire to consume certain products and services and sometimes the tendency to give up some personal and discretionary resources to concretize this consumption, in other words, to make sacrifices. In this present study, the emphasis focuses on the understanding of the way Dutch and Brazilian consumers carry out the sacrifice in diving experiences, while the practice of sustainability is required. Therefore, the aspects that motivated this study are related to the need to explore the sacrifice theme in consumer relations, mainly when associated with products and services where the hedonic experience is felt, as it is through diving. The research is interpretative, considering that it captures objective results from the studied phenomenon, by using semi-structured interviews collected with divers, totalling twenty-three interviews in Brazil and Netherlands. The collected data was analysed according to content analysis. The results pointed out the relationship between sacrifices and sustainability, in diving experiences associated with the abdication of resources such as: recreation, time, comfort and money. Moreover, the predisposition to sacrifice something is directly related to living experiences during the practice of the activity, considering that it awakens positive feelings and generates a strong individual affective commitment. These aspects emphasize the provision of the individuals to follow the rules for sustainability determined by tourist destinations for diving, as well as the desire to explore without destroying, aiming to keep practicing that activity are that location.

Keywords: Sacrifice, Diving, Sustainability, Consumer Behaviour.

JEL Classification: Z33, Q26

1. INTRODUCTION

Consumption is characterized as a central activity of the society, linked with the individual's cultural, economic, emotional and social needs, becoming part of their identity. (Ruvio; Belk, 2013). These aspects related to the centrality of consumption in society have generated several criticisms about excessive use of natural resources available for the production of goods and services. The complexity that involves consumer behaviour studies, is an issue on the individual's perception of what is received and what is given in an exchange (Sánchez-Fernández; Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007), when they perceive what they need to give up and what they get in the establishment of their consumer relations.

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In the marketing research, despite the topic's relevance, few studies have been conducted to understand the sacrifice perception in consumer behaviour, as stated by Cayolla and Loureiro (2014), the strong connection process and the willingness to sacrifice that happens in the relationship between the consumer and the brand are not yet understood.

In the consumer behaviour study, sacrifice is defined as the willingness to forget his/her immediate self-interests to maintain the relationship with the brand (Loureiro, 2012; Loureiro, 2015). Therefore, the sacrifice that the individual can do to consume a product or service is associated with aspects of choice, and relates to the attachment, the strength of the emotional and cognitive connection between the brand and the consumer's self (Park; Macinnis; Priester, 2006).

An interesting facet of the consumption study is associated with its relationship with sustainability, considering that this topic is in the core of discussions about the need to balance between consumption and available natural resources. Currently, many studies seek to understand why consumers buy or don't buy green products and services, and the gaps between attitudes / intentions and the actual consumption of these products and services (Caruana; Carrington; Chatzidakis, 2015).

In tourism, the hedonic experience is a relevant aspect and "includes a complex mix of functional, objective and tangible components (e.g., travelling, eating, drinking and recreating), as well as subjective, hedonic, emotional and symbolic components (e.g., enjoying an experience, laughing, socialising and having fun)" (Willians; Soutar, 2009). It is thought that the individuals who choose a tourist trip are buying a hedonic experience unlinked to their daily lives, in which they will experience different aspects of a local culture, such as local beauty, etc., and need to have obligations with schedules or policed behaviour.

Thus, if the individual chooses adventure tourism and scuba diving where they need to behave in a sustainable manner and to adopt a consistent behaviour with the location, to preserve the environment, culture and economy, is it perceived as a sacrifice? Does this realization change the experience of scuba diving? From these questions, we became interested in this subject and did research on: How do consumers perceive the sacrifice in the diving experiences where the practice of sustainability is required?

Therefore, this study aims to contribute to understanding the sacrifice in the marketing and consumer behaviour context, taking as a research focus the diving experience that adopts sustainable practices, with a view to assist in the expansion of theoretical perspectives in the consumer behaviour and sustainability study areas. It is important to note that this research is a source of inspiration phenomenology and was conducted from semi-structured interviews with divers from Brazil and the Netherlands.

Apart from this introduction, this paper includes a brief presentation of the theoretical constructs that guided this study, the methodological procedures, the presentation of the main results, and finally, the conclusion.

2. SACRIFICE IN CONSUMPTION

The consumer behaviour study has directed special attention to cultural aspects related to the sacred, spiritual and religious aspects in consumption (Belk, 2005), among them the sacrifice. Although this topic is poorly explored in marketing and the consumer behaviour field, by creating gaps between the concepts discussed and the renewal of studies in the area, it was possible to identify the existence of three theoretical perspectives: the sacrifice and the relationship with Given Gifts (for example, Belk, Coon, 1993; Belk, 2005); the sacrificial perspective linked to the perception of value (e.g. Zeithaml, 1988; Dodds, Monroe, Grewal 1991; Lapierre, 2000; Caruana; Money; Berthon, 2000); the sacrificial perspective as the

willingness to relinquish personal and discretionary resources to maintain a relationship with a brand or product (Park, Macinnis, Priestes, 2006; Chalmers, Arthur, 2008; Loureiro, 2011; Loureiro, Basile & Vrontis, 2012; Cheong, 2013; Cayolla, Loureiro, 2014; Loureiro, 2015). In this study, we used the latter perspective of sacrifice, considering that it involves more subjective aspects of consumer behaviour.

According to Loureiro (2015) sacrifice is the resignation that the individual makes of his immediate self-interest to maintain the relationship with the brand. In this sense, sacrifice could be related to the willingness to pay a premium price for a product or service, experience some discomfort, take a missionary role to convert new people or do any other kind of personal sacrifice (Pimentel; Reynolds, 2004).

To Park, MacInnis; Priester (2006) there are two kinds of personal resource sacrifice dimensions: the first is associated with the self-resources, or, with the psychological resources of self that consist in the self-pride and self-image; the second dimension is the consumers' willingness to sacrifice their discretionary resources (money, time and energy) for the brand (Loureiro, 2011), these last ones are more automatic sacrifices.

Some consumers, by creating a more intense relationship with the brands, products or services a behaviour associated with fanaticism and devotion may develop, in this type of relationship the willingness to sacrifice for the purchase is common. According to Thorne and Bruner (2006), the fans of a brand's behaviour is established through typologies: dissemination of deep involvement, willingness to invest and sacrifice for the object of fascination. Thus, "this state of high affective commitment in relation to high involvement and feelings of love and fervour may be attained as well as perpetuated via 'pro-active sustaining rituals'" (Pichler; Hemetsberger, 2008, p. 440).

It is important to highlight that the sacrifice dimensions are usually analysed from a negative perspective, as stated by Styven, Wallström, Engström & Salehi-Sangari (2011), research in the areas of marketing and consumer behaviour, conceptualize the negative influences on purchasing intentions and the use of products or services in terms of the perception of sacrifice. But the act of sacrifice, is not only related to excess consumption as stated by Cappellini (2009), but may represent the affective relationship that the consumer has with the brand and have to sacrifice to consume it (Yin; Tse; Chan, 2008).

In addition, some recent studies have focused on the relationship between sacrifice and sustainable consumption (e.g., Davis; Le, Coy; Coy, Farrell, Gilsondavis & Le, 2013; Rahman; Reynolds, 2013). The willingness to sacrifice can be associated with a general aspect facing the environment, or more specifically when associated with a product (Rahman; Reynolds, 2016). In Davis *et al.* (2011) and Coy *et al.* (2013) views the commitment with the environment and anticipates the sacrifice. According to Davis *et al.* (2011), the sacrifice that the individual makes in favour of the environment is mainly related to actions that prioritize the welfare of this and the abdication of self-interest, effort or cost by consumers.

The environmental awareness is associated with a new consumer perspective, in which the "environmentally conscious consumers may thus be willing to spend more for a car that may sacrifice on performance, features, or comfort to help the environment" (Griskevicius; Tybur; Bergh, 2010, p. 392). According Hedlund (2011) the consumers' environmental concern can positively influence the willingness to accept monetary sacrifices for the environment.

From the sacrifice in consumption, a theoretical review is needed to address the issues associated with the relationship between individuals and sustainable consumption.

3. SUSTAINABILITY AND CONSUMPTION

Environmental issues currently pose challenges that need to be translated into the various activities (social, cultural and economic) to maintain the balance between the human needs and the environment. In this sense, the ethical and sustainable consumption is an important instrument to establishing this balance, considering that sustainable behaviour differs from general consumer behaviour (Kim; Choi, 2005).

While some consumers are often sceptical of the green claims, those who are concerned with environmental issues can create a potentially lucrative market (Paladin; Baggiere, 2008). According to Carrington, Neville and Baggiere (2012) ethical consumers have different reasons (political, spiritual, and environmental) to choose one product over another and express the concern for the impact that their consumption choices can cause.

According to Carrington; Neville; Whitwell (2012, p. 1) the "ethical consumerism is a burgeoning social movement, this burgeoning can be related to the changing of consumer perspective of individualism to collectivism. In other words, the green purchase behaviour is linked to the effects of collectivism and the environmental concerns of individuals (Kim; Choi, 2005). In Brunk's (2010) perspective the ethical consumption is a door to ethical action based on subjective moral judgments applied to products/ brands in the production, consumption and disposal process in the market.

It is important to consider that the environment-person relationship is bidirectional, in this sense in the same way that the individual's behaviour affects the environment's welfare, the environmental changes affect human well-being (Davis *et al.*, 2011). In this sense, a new ecological consciousness arises from the construction of a new sense of self and the relationship between the individual and the natural environment (Hamilton, 2010). In this perspective, the way that people build the perception of themselves, their identity and their social behaviour influences the adoption of sustainable behaviour.

4. METHODOLOGY

With the purpose to understand the individual's behaviour when faced with an experience of tourism products and consumption of services with sustainable appeal it is necessary adopt an attitude of preservation of the elements of culture and the destination environment. More precisely, does the consumer perceive the existence of the sacrifice in the diving experience?. This study adopted a qualitative approach considering that qualitative research seeks the capture of subjective meanings of the issues studied from the perspectives of the participants (Flick, 2013), in this perspective according to Creswell (2010) this kind of research aims to extract the meaning that individuals assign to the world (Creswell, 2010).

According to Silva and Gil (2015), the phenomenology has been increasing in management studies. From the phenomenological perspective it is possible to discover, analyse and understand the individuals' experiences and meanings (Ziakas, Boukas, 2014), in this sense this method aims to understand the individual perception from their experiences. The principles of this methodological perspective served as inspiration in the search for understanding of the studied phenomenon, whereas in the consumption of services associated with hedonic activities, such as diving, the presence of experiential aspects is important.

Seeking a better understanding of the research problem of this specific study, we used data collected through the semi-structured interviews with divers in Brazil and the Netherlands. According to Vergara (2009), the interview is a resource capable of producing knowledge from a dialogue, when the focus of the study is the experience, feelings and lived reality of individuals. These interviews, typically involve open and unstructured questions, intended to collect views and opinions of participants (Creswell, 2010).

In total twenty-three interviews were conducted, nine with Brazilians and fourteen with Dutch divers, the access to the informants happened according to the snowball method, according to Baldin and Munhoz (2011) in this method the informant indicates new informants who, in turn, indicate new informants and so on, until the objective of the study is obtained. Note that the concept of saturation of data was used, in qualitative research it is possible to complete the collection of data from the researcher's perception if the data is seen as repetitive (Patton, 2002) in order to delimit the number of participants to be interviewed. We sought to understand the phenomena in the respondent's perspective, without generalization.

Initially, the data collected from the interviews with divers were transcribed with the help of Express Scribe Transcription software, after transcribing, all the material was reviewed to correct possible mistakes. The data was analysed according to content analysis, an analysis of the objective and systematic communication way in order to find reliable data inferences and arising from certain context information from written or oral speeches of survey respondents, in line with the theoretical basis of the study.

According to Bardin (2009), the content analysis method is configured as a set of analysis techniques for communication that use systematic procedures and descriptions of the objectives of message content. In this method there are three organizational canters of the stages of content analysis: "1. the pre-analysis; 2. the material exploitation; and finally 3. the results treatment: inference and interpretation"(Bardin, 2009, p. 121).

5. RESULTS

The analysis of the discursive practices of respondent interviews is based on elaborate theoretical construct and consolidated from repeated readings of the material transcribed.

5.1 Diving experience

The consumers' behaviour is related with the individuals' experience in the interaction between the stimuli present in consumed products and services, the emotional and affective aspects present in the context (Holbrook; Hirschman, 1982). In this sense, a diver's experience is an important topic to evaluate the relationship between the individual and the consumption of touristic products and services.

Initially, it was possible to analyse the frequency with which participants practice the activity. Brazilian respondents are diving more frequently, considering that some dive every day or once a week. The Dutch informants dive less considering that they only dive on vacation, because they need to travel to dive. It is important to highlight that most Dutch respondents said they do not like to dive in their country, considering the cold, dark water.

The diving experience is evaluated according to different perspectives by consumers in both countries, all respondents reported a positive experience related to the activity, in addition, all the speeches were always imbued with feelings (such as passion, love, freedom, well-being, emotion and addiction) and sensations (as good, very good, different).

Almost all Dutch respondents associated the diving experience with some kind of feeling, such as peace, freedom and love. Feelings of relaxation comfort and that each dive is unique and provides a new experience, beautiful and charming was cited in most lines and is exemplified below:

> "It's getting into another world, it's the free experience, it starts from the moment you start your holiday, because you are looking for locations, which you know, or you inform yourself, that these are the best locations for diving,

> so you kind of prepare yourself, and then what you see, or what you want to do, is something that you not always can imagine, its, every time it's different." (Respondent 3, man, 50 years old).

> "I think it's lovely, I love been in the water. Because it's very different from any other experience, it's beautiful; it's easier to see beautiful things in the water." (Respondent 9, woman, 39 years old).

From the Brazilian informant's perspective, the diving experience is related to the exploration of a new world that evokes feelings of love, passion, addiction and satisfaction. The most prominent feeling by Brazilian divers was the immersion into this new world, which provides a sensational experience.

> "For me it is sensational, diving is an odd activity so can I reconcile with my other profession as a biologist so much of the work I do in biology are related to the dive then, so I end up joining them and it is spectacular and it's something I do not see myself living without, now my life is diving and everything revolves around it, basically." (Respondent 16, male, 29 years old).

The statement of emotional involvement in the description of dive experience and the feelings evoked by this activity proved to be something unique for each informant and the experience of the activity affect the diver in different ways. In this sense, Schmitt (1999) points out that the affective experiences appeal to the feelings and emotions of consumers, they can change the mood and emotions of individuals.

Another important factor is that consumers of both countries pointed out that the practice of environmental activity favours the enchantment and emotional involvement, considering that all of them report that the contact and the nature contemplation provide a unique experience. According to Hopkinson and Pujari (1999) in adventure tourism, the sacred places often refer to the natural environment, with a certain degree of preservation and with admirable scenic landscapes.

This aspect is relevant in the statements of the respondents from the positive association between the practice of diving and the contemplative aspect of nature, this association is linked to the identified categories. Moreover, the construction of these sensations occurs from the contact between the individual and the diving and represent the meaning that the activity has to the informant, as a unique experience, able to evoke many sensations and positive feelings.

5.2 Sustainability concept

According to UNWTO (2005), there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Data analysis showed that the environmental dimension of sustainability was the main concept that respondents identified, when asked what it was about sustainability.

During the interviews responding divers related to the idea of sustainability, especially the environmental dimension, the further aspects such as preservation; awareness and environmental education, were highlighted by the respondents. In the Dutch respondents' view, sustainability is related to care and preserving, as shown in the following lines.

> "Sustainability is to take care of not only yourself and your own environment so when you go to dive for example don't touch the plants, don't touch the fish, you know, don't hunt them or don't get interfere with the natural behaviors, just let them be who they are and enjoy. So when I have to pay a little less, more to do something good for the location where I dive I really love to do

that [...] that money in a pot so we can well, keep it clean, and watch that there are not too many people diving at one moment." (Respondent 14, man, 29 years old).

Most Brazilian respondents believe that sustainability is linked to preserving the environment through responsible use of natural resources.

"Are you not use anything more than you need is you can reuse the maximum of everything really, is you do not attack what nature offers you, is you screw up as little as possible is you do not interfere in that system, no macular." (Respondent 23, woman, 48 years old).

Although, the Dutch and Brazilian divers' perspective of sustainability is limited, they demonstrated a large concern with the environment. All the informants highlighted the importance to take care of and preserve the environment. The data that analyses this aspect is related to the willingness to follow rules for sustainability, whereas all respondents showed during the interview a willingness to follow them.

"I feel very good actually coz in the moment I see that people are doing effort to help the environment and to be as sustainable as possible, then I really am willing to maybe pay a bit more, or I really want to contribute to this." (Respondent 4, man 50 years old).

"Normal, if rule is to follow. Not affect me, because for me it's already natural, question of water saving, time in the shower, the resources use if it is something that is already part of my daily so I do not strange. I grew up in a family that despite giving me all the freedom in the world I always had discipline, follow rule does not affect me." (Respondent 17, male, 41 years old).

For the participants in this study it is something good or important to follow rules for sustainability, the rules do not affect the interaction with the way they enjoy the touristic place, almost all respondents demonstrated that they are used to following rules. This willingness to follow the rules for sustainability, the speech of the Dutch and Brazilian divers is associated with educational issues involving the environment and tourism, according to Denicol and Conto (2014), environmental education in this segment is focused on the use of the natural resources of the places visited.

5.3 Sacrifice and the diving experience

Sacrifice in consumption is defined as the way of the individuals to transform their motivations, surpassing their interests and motivations to continue their relationship with a brand (Park; Macinnis; Priester, 2006), this perspective, this topic is the concept of analysis that informants have about sacrifice and what they consider to be the sacrifice during the diving experience. Initially respondents were asked what they understood by sacrifice, from this question, several answers emerged giving rise to four categories present in the studied theoretical construct, most part of the answers related the sacrifice to the act of giving up something aiming to conquer another; or to the monetary aspect; time, and only one respondent associated sacrifice with a negative outlook. The informants speaking from the two countries, pointing mainly to the sacrifice of their self-image features, because they seemed available for: abdication to do what they like or want; renounce their own happiness; exposure to a given situation; take risks; make choices and go through hardships.

Related to the diving experience, the informants pointed out the sacrifice associated with: monetary aspects; comfort; time; environmental respect; doing a good preparatory course; garbage collection; helping other divers during the activity, social life (family / friends);

changes in the lifestyle; other hobbies; job offers; travelling; educating people and getting out of the water. Some Dutch participants highlight different types of sacrifice among them the need to plan, spending money, time, comfort, freedom, as can be seen in the statements below:

> "[…] So a sacrifice I would have to make to dive is get more organized, to book, and then the other sacrifice is of course the expense. The expense of it as far as you know, yeah just the price of the equipment, of the trips, all the prices, that go a lot to it, and the you're sacrificing maybe some other things, so you can afford to go diving." (Respondent 2, man, 40 years old).

> "In diving could be the luxury, freedom in order to like helping local organizations to clean up the sea or. I don't know! Maybe to sacrifice some comfort in order to see especial things or... or sacrifice for diving is difficult because diving is so nice." (Respondent 11, man, 46 years old).

As in the Dutch respondents' speech highlighted above, some Brazilian participants mentioned the existence of more than one kind of sacrifice related to diving such as: time, family and friends, physical exertion, other hobbies, among others. These can be seen in the following lines:

> "During the week I work at the weekend is the time that I have to dive only that the weekend is the time that other people, family has to stay with me and I have to sacrifice this time with them to diving and many people ask, "why do you do it?" and has no explanation at the end, in the end you just want to be there, you just want to have that feeling because you know you will have to carry equipment, will have to stay in the sun, but in the end it will be worth [...] you sacrifice time, a possible trip to some places, up to a job offer to stay near the sea, near the diving, because you know you will not get run out, [...] there you sacrifice a lot, loses job, travel, strolling, invitation to be at the beach house, the cottage and the sacrifices are all the time, are frequent." (Respondent 18, man, 28 years old).

> "I have family, wife and daughter they charge me a lot and occasionally use rather the word "you sacrifice a lot for diving!" and always I made it clear, to my wife and to my daughter, who is still small, and to family in general that this is my life, I will always give my life for it here." (Respondent 22, man, 25 years old).

According to Pimentel and Reynolds (2004), the sacrifice can be related to the willingness to pay more for a product, experience, some discomfort, take the missionary role to convert new people or making any other kind of personal sacrifice. Some of these features were noted in the statements of the Dutch and Brazilian informants, in them it's possible to see the presence of more than one type of sacrifice that the individual is willing to make to practice diving. Despite the factors of time, money and energy (discretionary resources) the aspects related to lifestyle change, abdicating to be with family and friends, employment, travel, comfort, among others that are present in the above lines (self-image resources) are highlighted and require a greater commitment of the individual.

The speeches of Brazilian respondents, show that despite the link between the diver and the practice of the activity, the family and friends can believe it's an exaggeration or do not understand this relationship and the need for the individual to have diving as something important, building judgments and contrary opinions to the choice of the diver. Another important factor present in the speech of most informants from the Netherlands and

Brazil related sacrifice to the preservation of the environment, garbage collection (mostly), environmental education, among others, as shown in the statements below:

> "Well, clean up the sea. I've never doing before, I'm really willing to spend day or fell days in help to clean up the garbage and plastic or something more." (Respondent 11, man, 46 years old).

> "Once a year, twice a year we go with bags and collects the trash and not only in these specific occasions, but if we're there diving and see now boot in his vest pocket and pulls out of the sea. We walk with a knife too, because it has very nylon and have to cut the nylons, have to be careful with hook. We collect all these things." (Respondent 15, male, 35 years old).

Respondents demonstrated concern with the preservation and awareness of environment respect. In this sense, these statements reaffirm what had already been seen in the concept of sustainability analysis, because even though the respondents do not know the three dimensions (economic, social and environmental), they indicate that there is an interest in preserving so that the practice of the activity is not interrupted, showing that there is a concern to maintain what Kim and Choi (2005) call balance between human needs and the environment or sustainable consumption.

Furthermore, it is possible to observe that when related to the practice of sustainability consumers associate the sacrifice especially with the involvement in conservation activities during diving: cleaning the beaches and oceans; paying extra money and taxes for preservation of the aquatic environment; participation in environmental education campaigns and not touching the animals, plants and corals. The report of these aspects was mainly associated with the informant's necessity to preserve in order to continue practicing the activity.

6. CONCLUSION

This study sought to understand how consumers interpret the sacrifice in diving experiences when the practice of sustainability is required. From the analysis of data collected in interviews with divers and diving schools and businesses in Brazil and the Netherlands it was possible to reflect on the diving experience, sustainability and sacrifice related to the consumption of the diving activity.

It is important to highlight that the individuals of both countries have different behaviour related with the diving consumption, especially regarding the diving frequency, Brazilian respondents, in general, dive more often than the Dutch participants, these last practice the activity only on holidays, in this period the respondents travel to European, Aisian and African destinations, the Brazilian respondents despite knowing several diving destinations in the world are often diving in the region they live.

Diving evokes feelings of love, passion, wellness and addiction in this sense the affective commitment to the activity was present in the statements of respondents from the two countries. Moreover, it was possible to identify behaviour of strong attachment with diving and devotion to the aquatic environment.

Sacrifice is perceived from different perspectives by the respondents of the two countries: the act of giving up something aiming to conquer another; aspects related to currency or time. However, for the sustainability practice in diving, three dimensions of sacrifice emerged: giving up leisure time and comfort and spending (more) monetary resources, to contribute financially to keep a safe diving environment.

Although sacrifice is present in diving, especially when it involves issues related to adoption of sustainable behaviour it was found that the informants believe that any sacrifice

is valid to continue practicing the activity. The preservation of the environment and the search for balance of the aquatic ecosystem is revealed, in this research, as an indispensable factor for the informants to continue diving.

The adoption of a sustainable behaviour despite being rated by most informants, sacrifice is seen as something positive and essential in the diving practice, considering that the high affective and emotional involvement with the activity makes them want to continue practicing the activity for the rest of their lives, as well as finding a healthy aquatic environment, full of colour, rich in fauna and flora. In this regard, although it is related to the important act of giving something up, the benefit or earnings are considered more rewarding than the losses made in the sacrifice, since through the dive you can relax, emerge in another world, have fun, make friends and preserve the environment, among others.

Despite the innovative character of this study, one must consider the limitations found, know the choices adopted in terms of methodological nature and some difficulties experienced during the research. They are: the variation in the number of respondents per country (Netherlands 14, Brazil 9), this may hinder the process of comparison between the country's behaviour, even using the saturation criterion; because it is a qualitative research, subjectivity in interpreting the responses of respondents at the time of the analysis can be placed as a research bias.

This study contributed to a greater understanding of the sacrifice in the diving experience when the practice of sustainability is required. In this section, based on the findings of this research some questions for future studies to corroborate with the expansion of knowledge about sacrifice in consumption and sustainability practices are suggested:

- Sacrifice is still a relatively unexplored subject in consumer behaviour, it is suggested that further studies will be conducted to explore this concept more deeply, related to the willingness to sacrifice, the impact it may cause in consumer attitude and the emergence of new ways to consume.
- The possibility of new studies that relate the sacrifice and sustainability to other consumer activities or different diving services and are more associated with the individual's daily life. These studies can confirm the construction of new perspectives for Marketing associated with sustainable consumption.

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FACTORS AFFECTING THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS WHEN CHOOSING AN EVENT DESTINATION: A COMPARATIVE APPROACH BETWEEN VILAMOURA (PORTUGAL) AND MARBELLA (SPAIN)

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ABSTRACT

Business travel is nowadays a key component of tourism industry and an important instrument for reducing seasonality. Literature has identified several attributes that affect the decision-making process when choosing a destination to hold an event. The main objective of this research is to determine their importance and how they influence the decision-making process. Vilamoura in Portugal and Marbella in Spain are the destinations under analysis, as they are important seaside destinations where business travel has contributed to a successful meeting industry. In order to achieve the study's aim, a qualitative methodology based on semi-structured interviews both to event organisers and suppliers has been conducted. The findings confirm the hypothesis that underpinned the study, demonstrating that destination image is the main determining site-selection factor. This investigation, proposed as an exploratory examination for further research, could constitute a useful resource for event professionals to improve their destination promotion and their positioning.

Keywords: Business Tourism, Decision-making Process, Destination Image, Meeting Industry, Site-selection Attributes.

JEL Classification: Z32, Z33

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the World Travel & Tourism Council, business travel represented 23.4% of the expenditure of the tourism sector in 2014 and it "is expected to grow by 4.0% in 2015 to USD1,222.3bn, and rise by 3.2% pa to USD1,679.0bn in 2025" (WTTC, 2015: 6). Representing 14% of international travel in the year 2014 (UNWTO, 2015), business tourism produces higher visitor spend than international tourism average. Business tourists "usually stay longer and spend more than other types of tourists" (Zhang, Leung & Qu, 2007: 1123). Other authors also note that business travellers' expenditure has been measured as higher than expenditures of leisure tourists (Pechlaner, Zeni & Raich, 2007; Rogers, 2008).

Being an important part of the business tourism segment, the MICE industry stands for meetings, incentives, conventions, and exhibitions and according to some authors, MICE is one of the fastest growing tourism segments (Zhang *et al.*, 2007; DiPietro, Breiter, Rompf & Godlewska, 2008; Hayat, Severt, Breiter, Nusair & Okumus, 2014).

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MICE tourism is vitally important to the destinations that have developed this type of tourism, as these business travellers bring multi-economic benefits to the host location through their expenditure on accommodation, food and beverages, local transportation and miscellaneous spending" (Zhang *et al.*, 2007: 1123). The acronym MICE is however not universally used and sometimes replaced by "events industry" (Hayat *et al.*, 2014). Because some other authors focus their research on meetings and conventions, they prefer other designations such as "convention and meetings businesses" (Oppermann & Chon, 1997), "meetings and conventions industry" (Crouch & Ritchie, 1998), "meeting and convention industry" (Choi & Bogger, 2002), "meetings and conventions sector" (Crouch & Louviere, 2004), or even narrower as "convention industry" (Chen, 2006) or "Convention tourism" (Zhang *et al.*, 2007). Crouch and Ritchie (1998: 50) point out "inconsistencies in the definition and measurement of the industry". According to them, the term "meetings" is often used in a broad sense covering "all forms of meetings, conventions, conferences, symposia, workshops, seminars, congresses, trade shows, expositions, exhibitions, and associated special events".

Business tourism has been mainly studied in terms of event attendance (Opperman & Chon, 1997; Chen, 2006; Lee, Petrick & Crompton, 2007; Zhang *et al.*, 2007; Severt, Wang, Chen & Breiter, 2007; Mair & Thomson, 2009; Yon & Zhao, 2010; Tanford, Montgomery & Nelson, 2012; Jung & Tanford, 2017). Although some studies address event site-selection (Crouch & Ritchie, 1998; Choi & Boger, 2002; Crouch & Louviere, 2004; Comas & Moscardo, 2005; Hayat, Severt, Breiter, Nusair & Okumus, 2014; Para & Kachnievska, 2014), further research needs to be done in order to understand the factors that influence the decision-making process of choosing a specific destination to hold an event. In fact, a critical issue on this subject "is how associations decide where to hold their conferences and meetings" (Comas & Moscardo, 2005: 117).

Against the plethora of terms used to refer to those decision-makers who have to decide where to hold an event, there is a need for a clear and unambiguous terminology. The proposal set forth in this paper is "internal business events planners/organisers (IBEPO)", which refers either to the team or the individual responsible for event planning and event management in a company or association.

Europe dominates business tourism worldwide (ICCA, 2010) with a share of 54% in international meetings. Among the top ten international meeting countries in 2016, seven are European, with Spain ranking the fifth position and Portugal the tenth (ICCA, 2016). According to the ICCA 2016 ranking, seven out of the top 10 meeting cities are European, with Madrid and Lisbon ranking 7th and 8th (ICCA, 2016).

As stated by Crouch and Ritchie (1997: 51) "second-tier cities are finding they can also compete effectively, as associations seek new convention sites." In fact, the opportunity exists: business travellers are looking forward to broadening their experiences at various destinations. Consequently, an increasing number of cities are investing on business travel, willing to become recognized business tourism destinations. Indeed, "the attractiveness of convention tourism has spurred destinations to proactively pursue the meetings and conventions market" (Weber & Chon, 2002: 57), and especially medium-size destinations are attempting to find their niche into this promising industry.

Marbella and Vilamoura are popular tourism destinations at Southern Europe. Due to their favourable climate, adequate infrastructures and high business tourism demand, both destinations are steadily positioning themselves as business tourism destinations, competing with major business tourism cities, such as Madrid or Lisbon. Besides, Marbella and Vilamoura, known for their marinas and luxury golf courses, belong to countries with solid tourism brand images. Both Spain and Portugal often convey an image of welcoming countries, known for their hospitality, gastronomy and outstanding landscapes. The

similarities between Marbella and Vilamoura are particularly relevant to this study as they both present good reasons and show strong attributes for IBEPO decisions when selecting an event-site.

This research aims at determining the decisive factors that lead internal business event planners/organisers (IBEPO) to choose a destination where to hold an event. The paper also aims to rank literature identified factors according to buyers and suppliers' perceptions of business events. In order to achieve these goals, a qualitative comparative approach has been undertaken within two European regional destinations: Marbella in Spain and Vilamoura in Portugal. Nonetheless, it is important to refer that the main purpose of this work was not making a comparative study between the two destinations. In fact, both destinations, even proposing a similar tourism leisure offer, occupy different stages in terms of business tourism: Vilamoura as an emerging destination, Marbella as a mature business tourism destination. Hence, the purpose of this study was not to measure the efficiency of those two destinations in terms of business travel, but only to determinate which factors lead IBEPO to choose one destination over the other to hold the events. Moreover, this research has been complemented with the event supplier's perspective, as advised by Crouch & Ritchie: "An understanding of the meeting site-selection process should therefore be of considerable interest to both buyers (…) and suppliers (…) of meeting sites" (1997: 52).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Site selection is primordial to ensure the success of an event (Crouch & Ritchie, 1997). In fact, companies try to associate their communication strategy to an adequate destination, which will convey a certain favourable image for the organisation (Bowdin, Mcdonnell, Allen & O'Toole, 2006). Some authors state that selecting the most convenient destination to an event is one of the most important decisions that event planners have to take (Vogt, Roehl & Fesenmaier, 1994; DiPietro *et al.*, 2008). In addition, successful meetings in a given destination will contribute not only for the success of the meeting industry, but also for the success of leisure tourism in that destination as it will encourage return visits (Crouch & Ritchie, 1997).

2.1 Destination Image

A strong destination image and a consolidated identity will help to achieve awareness of that destination and to increase its ranking as an event destination (Gonçalves, Perdigão, Torkington, Pereira & Martins, 2007). As soon as formed, destination image will have a large repercussion and impact on travel choice and behaviour (Mendes, Do Valle & Guerreiro, 2011). In fact, it has been shown throughout many researches (Pizam & Mansfeld, 2000; Lam & Hsu, 2006; Mazanec & Strasser, 2007; Murphy, Moscardo & Beckendorf, 2007; Mendes *et al.*, 2011) that tourism behaviour often depends on the image the potential tourist has of the destination, because destination image influences loyalty and behaviour before, during and after the visit (Agapito, Do Valle & Mendes, 2011). Consequently, destination image constitutes a key factor for the site selection and is imperative, especially to differentiate the destination from its competitors (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Guzman-Parra, Vila-Oblitas & Maqueda-Lafuente, 2016). Tourists tend to choose destinations with a strong, positive image (Woodside & Lysonski, 1989; Guzman-Parra *et al.*, 2016).

The notion of destination image is necessary to understand the decision-making process. Destination image has been defined by Crompton (1979: 18) as "the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination." The focus on the word 'impression' denotes subjectivity and an individual interpretation because destination image is a mental

construct which is formed by impressions and values that one has about a specific destination, including material knowledge about a specific place or region and a series of emotional perceptions (Di Marino, 2008). In fact, destination image seems to be a complex construct not only because it is subjective, but also because "destinations are an amalgam of specific tourism products and services (accommodation, catering, transportation, entertainment), from private and public initiative, presented as a global and composite product" (Agapito, Mendes & Do Valle, 2010: 92).

According to Gartner's model, there are three dimensions of destination image: cognitive, affective, and conative (Gartner, 1993). According to this author, "the cognitive component may be viewed as the sum of beliefs and attitudes of an object leading to some internally accepted picture of its attributes" (Gartner, 1993: 193), whereas "the affective component of image is related to the motives one has for destination selection" (Gartner, 1993: 196) and "the conative image component is analogous to behaviour because it is the action component" (Gartner, 1993: 196). Decision is reached taking these components into account and processing all internal and external information concerning the destination (Gartner, 1993). More recently, the relationships between the cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions of destination image of Gartner's model have been confirmed by Agapito, Do Valle & Mendes (2013), who have tested each dimension separately emphasizing the hierarchical nature of the three dimensions of destination image. Their work "highlights the importance of affect in destination image, supporting the claim that the willingness to react positively to the destination is higher when the visitor associates positive feelings to the destination, such as pleasure and arousal" (Agapito, Do Valle & Mendes, 2013: 478).

2.2 Decision-making Process and Site-selection Attributes

The decision-making process of choosing a destination involves internal psychological and external non-psychological aspects (Guo & Sun, 2016). Among the internal factors that influence decision-making are escapism, prestige, relaxation and health. To the external factors belong attractiveness of the destination, and one's own perceptions and expectations (Hsu, Tsai & Wu, 2009).

The decision-making process involves a choice set of destinations. Decrop (2010) proposes a choice set model based on four dimensions: Awareness (1) of the destination, resulting from one's own experience or from information gathered from external sources; Evaluation (2) of the destination, it is known that destinations which are evaluated positively will belong to the evoked or preferred set; others that are evaluated negatively will belong to the exclusion set; some destinations may fall into the surrogate or tolerated set. The third dimension refers to constraints (3): evoked destinations may fall into the dream set if they present some form of constraint; or into the unavailable set if they present situational inhibitors; or they are included in the available set if no constraints are associated. The final Choice, according to Decrop (2010: 108), "is made either from the available set, the surrogate set, or straight from the awareness set. Vacationers may choose a spare or surrogate destination when the available set decreases to no alternative at all (due to the intervention of situational inhibitors)".

Considering the destination choice process, Dias & Cardoso highlight "the heuristic value of two kinds of destination brands categories: dream destinations and favourite destinations. The former is rooted in the tourist imaginary and conveys the idea of a future destination choice; the latter is deep-rooted in the respondents' memory and is related to memorable tourist experiences" (Dias & Cardoso, 2016: 22). According to these authors, "dream destinations and favourite destinations have high (top of-mind) brand awareness, rich and positive brand associations (favourable brand image), high perceived quality and

strong brand loyalty" (Dias & Cardoso, 2016: 22). The results of their empirical study show that dream destinations are located far away from home, mostly in other continents, while favourite destination are predominantly located nearer, in the respondents' own countries or countries with easy travel connections and not very far away from home (Dias & Cardoso, 2016).

Although IBEPO play a key role in the decision-making process, it cannot be disregarded that events are not only created for the benefit of the organising entities but also to attract participants and to achieve their satisfaction (Comas & Moscardo, 2005). Consequently, this perspective results worthy of note for meeting buyers. In fact, aware of what attendants evaluate as criteria to participate in an event, IBEPO will try to meet all participants' expectations and take them into consideration in the decision-making process of choosing a specific destination to hold an event. According to Caber, Albayrak & Ismayilli (2017: 113), "exceeding participants' expectations and rival destination performance are crucial for the long-term success of a congress destination". The main attributes for participants' decision-making identified by Opperman and Chon (1997) are related to location, mainly: destination image, transport cost, accessibility, accommodation rates, climate, activities, and previous experience. Besides the value of the venue, the location, the personal and business features and the interventional opportunity, the authors added that one of the main causes for preferring a venue lays on economic aspects. Actually, the meeting tourism market is composed by association meetings and corporate meetings (Weber & Chon, 2002) and a fact that has decisive financial implications is that corporate events are paid by its organising companies whereas association meetings are normally funded by participants. Subsequently, funding could raise different participation behaviour. In that case, it can be concluded that destination choice and the selection process convey a higher significance when a non-funded event is being organised and participants feel the budgeting pressure. The economic aspect should be one of the first concerns for IBEPO, as they shall have to propose a cost-effective event package to increase participation.

The meeting industry could be characterized by the interdependence of all players, both buyers and suppliers. Each actor plays a pivotal role, and this necessary relationship has been largely studied (Opperman & Chon, 1997; Crouch & Ritchie, 1997; Jago & Deery, 2005). Although it has been recognized that participants have an obvious influence on event site-selection, the literature has not yet tested, through an empirical study, the role of the IBEPO in the decision-making process for choosing the event site.

2.3 Determining Attributes for Event Site-selection

IBEPO's decision-making process has been characterized by Opperman and Chon (1997) as quite complex and influenced by numerous variables. In fact, it depends on former conditions (Crouch & Ritchie, 1997), including the nature of the association, experience, member characteristics, environmental conditions, and on site-specific variables. Even if few studies have been undertaken on site-selection, it has been stated (Jago & Deery, 2005; Comas & Moscardo, 2005) that some factors predominantly influence this process, as:
- Budget;
- Location and access to the destination;
- Meeting venues facilities, with an increasing importance given to flexibility and capacity criteria and Internet services;
- Accommodation adjusted to event requirements.

Other attributes have been characterized on a lower-level as the quality of the service, destination image, safety and security, entertainment possibilities, and weather (Jago &

Deery, 2005; Comas & Moscardo, 2005). However, it is believed that these variables are significant and some of them are increasingly regarded as basic requirements, like destination image for instance.

Another important issue when analysing events is the type of event. According to some authors (Robinson & Callan, 2003; Comas & Moscardo, 2005), location, destination image, and leisure opportunities have been analysed as the lowest influencing factors because participants do not feel concerned about leisure possibilities. However, it must be said that the above mentioned authors only investigated one type of event, conferences. Results would have been different taking into account incentives, for instance. In this case, leisure time is part of the incentive trip and IBEPO will have to plan extra activities. Besides, other divergences exist when dealing with weak destination images. In fact, it is assumed that destination choice is directly linked with destination image. According to Baloglu and Love (2004), in terms of decision-making process, destination image exerts a significant influence in the decision to travel or not travel to a destination.

Taken as a whole, a conceptual model regarding event site-selection has been developed by Crouch and Ritchie (1997) and has served as a basis in some studies for site-selection (Baloglu & Love, 2005; Comas & Moscardo, 2005), as presented below:

Figure 1. Site-selection Attributes

Accessibility	Local support	Extra-event opportunities	Accomodation facilities
·Cost	·Local chapter	·Entertainment	·Capacity
·Time	·CVB/Convention center	·Shopping	·Cost
·Frequency	·Subsidies	·Sightseeing	·Service
·Convencience		·Recreation	·Security
		·Professional opportunities	·Availability

Meeting facilities	Information	Site environment	Other criteria
·Capacity	·Experience	·Climate	·Risks
·Layout	·Reputation	·Setting	·Profitability
·Cost	·Marketing	·Infrastructure	·Association promotion
·Ambience		·Hospitality	·Novelty
·Service			
·Security			

Source: Adapted from Crouch and Ritchie (1997)

The literature review enabled to acknowledge what has already been developed, allowing to establish the base of the study and to indicate where further research would be required. Along this project, the literature review has been particularly crucial as permitting to identify that the main focus has not been given yet to the IBEPO and that decisive attributes for event site-selection have not yet been classified. In this study, the determining factors involved into the event site-selection will be ranged according to their importance for the IBEPO decision-making process.

3. METHODOLOGY

Considering the aim of this research, semi-structured interviews were conducted, to get a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and to get the respondents' point of view. As Kvale (2011) states, qualitative methodology enables researchers to better understand the

individual perspective. Also Bryman (1988: 12) claims that an important objective for the qualitative researcher is "to be able to see through the eyes of those being studied".

Unlike quantitative, qualitative research does not take into account numbers but its main interest is on the "interpretation of social realities" (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000: 7). As based on individuals, qualitative methodology conveys subjective findings, which limit the generalisation of obtained results (Kvale, 2011). In relation to this research, the main goal was precisely to find out differences and similarities between destination choice's factors.

One of the main purposes of this study is to give voice to the people inquired. No other players would enrich the research with a better account of the experiences and behaviour of individuals (Comas & Moscardo, 2005). According to Bryman (1988: 61), "The most fundamental characteristic of qualitative research is its express commitment to viewing events, action, norms, values, etc. from the perspective of the people who are being studied". As explained by Schostak (2006) the term "interview" is formed by two words: 'inter-view'. It perfectly illustrates what this approach can achieve: "to get insights into the respondent's perspective" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994: 361). This can be a valid and appropriate tool for getting a better understanding of the investigated problem.

Comparative analysis consists on the examination of two similar groups but differing at some extent (Routio, 2007). The current investigation, centered in defining event site-selection variables, focused on the meeting industry and considered both players at the same time: the buyers and the suppliers. Adopting a purposive sampling, the technique used is this study was the stratified purposive sampling, in the sense that into a same phenomenon, several groups of the field are investigated simultaneously (Ritchie, Lewis & Elam, 2003) and a comparison can be done, making it a comparative approach research.

3.1 Sampling

Table 1 presents in detail the sampling procedure applied:
- IBEPO, as main target, directly implicated in the decision-making process of destination choice.
- Event suppliers, as secondary target. It is considered that they have a more objective point of view about client's destination choice. In fact, they are not directly involved in the decision-making process, yet they intermediate with clients when organising an event. Hence, they have been asked about their client's perception.

Table 1. Interviewed Organizations

IBEPO	
Vilamoura	**Marbella**
13th Portuguese Congress of Cardiology	Incentive Whitbread
16th Portuguese Congress of Rheumatology	Third Congress of the Earth Planet
18th Portuguese and 3rd Iberian Congress of Internal Medicine	Fall 2012 Gamma-Ray Burst Symposium
Event suppliers	
Vilamoura	**Marbella**
Crowne Plaza	Meliã Banús
Dom Pedro Marina	NH Alanda Hotel Spa
Tivoli Marina	Azafrán Travel
	España Incoming
	Tecnica Viajes
	Cititravel
	Eventworks
	Events Privilege
	La Différence P.R
	Marbella Congress, Fairs y Exhibitions

Source: Authors

3.2 Interview Design

One of the primary purposes of this research has been to reveal what aspects mainly impact and influence IBEPO's decision-making process in terms of destination choice. Therefore, specific highlights for guiding the research design have been developed to approach target's perspective:

- General perceptions about the importance of event destinations;
- The specific decision-making process experienced by the IBEPO;
- Influencing factors identified at destination;
- Destination choice- reasons and motivators;
- Competitiveness' test of the host destination;
- Event outcomes' expectations connected with the destination;
- Destination image of both destinations;
- Ranking event site-selection factors.

Two versions of the interviews have been designed to address the two target groups' profiles as they play different roles in the event selection process. The IBEPO interview was composed of 21 questions and the event supplier's interview contained only six questions. In order to ease interactions, interview patterns have been translated into following languages: English, Spanish and Portuguese.

However, both sets of interviews have been clustered following three guide sections:
1: Destination choice,
2: Decision-making process,
3: Comparative questions about the other studied destination (Vilamoura or Marbella).

As already mentioned in section 2, it was considered relevant to inquire whether the IBEPO had an induced or experienced destination image when choosing a destination, as well as how it was formed (Govers, Go & Kumar, 2007). The goal was to know if destination choice was influenced by external contributions/opinions, or based on personal thoughts (Beerli & Martín, 2004).

Some authors (Comas & Moscardo, 2005) regret the lack of studies that measure destination choice according to the type of event. To overcome this setback IBEPO were inquired if the venue was specifically suitable and adapted to the sector they were operating in and to the type of event they were organising. Also many authors valued previous experiences as a significant destination choice's determinant (Opperman, 1996; Baloglu & Love, 2005; Lam & Hsu, 2006). Some questions aimed at revealing if having a previous experience could influence destination choice. Furthermore, respondents have also been asked if they had ever organised an event at that destination. The investigation has been designed to confirm if, as demonstrated through secondary data, a previous satisfactory experience would impact on repeating an event at the same destination, or if IBEPO were more willing to swap between destinations.

Responding to the central focus of the research work, essential questions were connected with the decision-making process in order to understand the different stages of purchase (Mohammadi & Mohamed, 2011), especially:
- Information search
- Evaluation of alternatives
- Destination Choice

In the literature review, eleven variables that influence the decision making process have been identified. As mentioned by Comas and Moscardo (2005), there has been a lack of variable's level categorization. Hence, it appeared relevant to ask the participants to rank the variables in order to understand their importance (Crouch & Ritchie, 1997). This categorization list forms the central core of this research, revealing which destination factors are mostly valued within the decision-making process. Moreover, inquiring the two counterparts, allowed researchers to know if suppliers were aware of the most important selection attributes when organising an event.

4. RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

The results obtained from the 19 interviews will be revealed and treated comparatively with secondary data in order to reach the study's objectives and to apprehend "the other as research subject" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994: 12).

4.1 Determining Factors in the Decision-making Process

A list of randomly displayed variables that may influence the decision making process, identified in the literature, was presented to each respondent. They were asked to rank from one to eleven (from the most important to the least important) the following items:
- a) Destination image and location (including landscape and weather)
- b) Transportation facilities
- c) Accommodation facilities
- d) Accessibility
- e) Value for money
- f) Quality perception
- g) Leisure tourism opportunity
- h) Meeting venues
- i) Previous experiences
- j) Word of mouth
- k) Others (please provide details)

The results obtained from the list of variables provide important insights to the research work. Table 2 shows the determining variables ranked by IBEPO:

Table 2. Determining Variables Ranked by IBEPO

Attributes	IBEPO					
	Marbella			Vilamoura		
	Earth P.	Gamma-R	Incentive	Rheumatology	Cardiology	Internal Medicine
Location-Destination image	6	1	2	5	4	6
Transportation facilities	7	7	4	7	7	5
Accommodation facilities	4	6	6	6	3	1
Accessibility	3	6	1	8	6	2
Value for money	9	4	8	4	1	4
Quality perception	8	2	9	3	8	7
Leisure tourism opportunity	10	8	5	10	9	8
Meeting venues	11	5	7	1	2	3
Previous experiences	5	3	3	2	5	10
Word of mouth	2	10	10	11	10	9
Others	1	9	11	9	11	11

Ranking

1	2	3	4	5

Source: Authors

Results are very different between Marbella and Vilamoura: In Marbella destination image, accessibility, previous experiences, accommodation facilities and transportation facilities appear as the strongest variables ranked by IBEPO; In Vilamoura, meeting venues, value for money, accommodation facilities, location/destination image and accessibility are rated as the most determining factors in the decision-making process. Table 3 presents the determining variables ranked by the event suppliers interviewed in Vilamoura:

Table 3. Determining Variables Ranked by Event Suppliers - Vilamoura

Attributes	Event suppliers Vilamoura		
	Tivoli Marina	Crowne Plaza	Dom Pedro Marina
Location-Destination image	2	1	1
Transportation facilities	3	4	3
Accommodation facilities	5	2	4
Accessibility	7	1	5
Value for money	1	1	2
Quality perception	9	5	8
Leisure tourism opportunity	8	6	10
Meeting venues	4	3	7
Previous experiences	6	8	9
Word of mouth	10	7	11
Others	11	9	10

Ranking

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
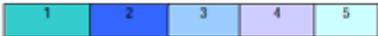
Source: Authors

Concerning the event suppliers in Vilamoura, the determining variables are location/ destination image, value for money, transportation facilities, accommodation facilities, and accessibility. Table 4 shows the same variables as ranked by event suppliers in Marbella:

Table 4. Determining Variables Ranked by Event Suppliers - Marbella

Attributes	Event suppliers Marbella									
	Events privileges	NH Alanda	España Incoming	Congress Center	Azáfran Travel	Cit-travel	Event-works	La Différence	Tecnica Viajes	Melã Banús
Location-Destination image	2	1	3	1	6	9	1	1	1	1
Transportation facilities	5	4	11	3	8	1	5	10	2	8
Accommodation facilities	3	3	7	4	3	3	4	5	3	5
Accessibility	4	2	2	2	4	2	2	9	4	3
Value for money	7	5	5	6	2	10	3	3	5	2
Quality perception	9	8	4	7	5	7	8	6	6	4
Leisure tourism opportunity	6	6	10	8	7	5	7	2	8	7
Meeting venues	1	7	9	5	1	4	6	8	7	9
Previous experiences	8	9	6	9	9	6	9	4	9	10
Word of mouth	10	10	8	10	10	8	10	7	10	6
Others	11	11	1	11	11	11	11	11	11	11

Ranking

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
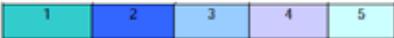
Source: Authors

Event suppliers in Marbella ranked location/destination image, accessibility, accommodation facilities, transportation facilities, and meeting venues as the most important variables. Table 5 below shows the averages obtained after calculation of the previous presented rankings.

Table 5. Average Rankings

Attributes	IBEPO		Event suppliers		Total	
	Marbella	Vilamoura	Marbella	Vilamoura	Marbella	Vilamoura
Location-Destination image	3	5	2,6	1,33	2,8	3,166
Transportation facilities	6	6,33	5,7	3,33	5,85	4,83
Accommodation facilities	5,33	3,33	4	3,66	4,665	3,495
Accessibility	2,66	5,33	3,4	4,33	3,03	4,83
Value for money	6,33	3	4,8	1,33	5,565	2,165
Quality perception	8,33	6	6,4	7,33	7,365	6,665
Leisure tourism opportunity	6,66	9	6,6	8	6,63	8,5
Meeting venues	7	2	5,6	4,66	6,35	3,33
Previous experiences	6	5,66	7,9	7,66	6,95	6,66
Word of mouth	7	10	8,9	9,33	7,95	9,665
Others	7,66	10,33	10	10	8,83	10,165

While in Marbella, the highest value obtained has been the location-destination image (2.8), in Vilamoura, interviewees ranked first the value for money (2,16). This financial variable has been ranked fourth in Marbella. Hence, it can be assumed that IBEPO in Marbella may have available higher financial resources and thus be able to value more the destination image. The second highest value has been attributed to the accessibility in Marbella (3.03), while this latter has been ranked fifth in Vilamoura. In Vilamoura, the third ranked variable is meeting venues (3.33). It may be connected with the fact that the destination holds few meeting facilities, thus justifying a significant concern to IBEPO. As one planner in Vilamoura recognized:

"Marbella has more infrastructures than we have".

The average calculated for both destinations revealed the following lowest factors: others (11th), word of mouth (10th) and leisure possibility (9th) were considered not relevant for the site-selection.

When a detailed analysis was applied to both parties, a very interesting finding was obtained from suppliers. The most important factor in both destinations has been the location (in Vilamoura this value equals the value for money; 1.33). IBEPO first consider the destination when organising an event. Both places have been characterised having a strong brand image resulting from a differentiated positioning in terms of tourism. Hence, the significant importance given to the destination image variable.

Unlike suppliers, huge contrasts have been found throughout the IBEPO's variables. In the case of Vilamoura, the main factor has been the meeting venues, underlying once again a concern about business tourism facilities, as illustrated by one client:

"In the case of our event, destination choice has been influenced by facilities with enough capacity."

A lowest available budget and the different profile of the IBEPO labelled the second variable of importance into the analysis of Vilamoura: the value for money (3).

Regarding Marbella, the main attribute pointed out is the accessibility, followed by destination. These findings indicate that IBEPO consider an effective transport service and an attractive environment as decisive factors.

Furthermore, divergences have also been pointed out through the lowest ranked attributes. In Vilamoura, others, word of mouth and leisure have been indicated, whereas in Marbella, it is the quality that came in last position. This latter has been understood as connected with the destination image. In fact, Marbella is often defined as a high-standard destination. Consequently, IBEPO feel that quality does not need to be considered as a main requirement as it is inherent to the destination.

Thanks to result comparisons, it has been possible to reveal the different perceptions in terms of site-selection factors. Even if there are a few similarities, the attributes have been valued differently comparing IBEPO and event suppliers' average. The most forthcoming findings might be the overall significance given to the destination image and to the value for money. This latter variable received more importance in Vilamoura, which can be related to the fact that Portugal has been considered one of the least expensive destinations in terms of MICE (Festas e Eventos, 2010) and that finance appeared as a higher concern in that destination.

4.2 Destination Choice

In terms of destination choice, this phase has been mainly highlighted as a prevailing one. Most IBEPO declared that within the decision-making process a large attention is paid to the site-selection, which is regarded as "one of the most important factors when organising an event". Event suppliers largely confirmed that statement: "At 100%! The first decision has to do with the destination. What drives the client is the destination". In general, respondents emphasised the importance of choosing an attractive place to ensure participants' satisfaction as defended by Shaw, Lewis & Korey, (1991), and to promote their company in a favourable environment.

Another interesting aspect has been the confirmation of the impact of destination choice on the number of attendees and event outcomes. Destination choice has been characterized as impacting on success by all interviewees, confirming what had already been identified by Crouch & Ritchie, (1997). As one client (IBEPO) stated: "Destination choice is almost vital. It can be said that the same event, I mean with identical characteristics, in different locations can get very different results." Corroborating this, also a planner opinion illustrates the importance of destination choice: "Some events depend on destination choice. Sometimes, it occurred that clients did not agree with the destination choice, thus events have not been celebrated."

Concerning destination loyalty, i.e. repeating an event at the same destination, results differ: In accordance with Rogers (2008), some respondents (IBEPO) highlighted the importance to swap between destinations in order to attract participants. Other respondents defended that participants themselves, satisfied by a previous destination were willing to come to the same destination.

However, the convenience of repeating an event at the same destination depends on the type of event. In fact, some event suppliers declared that in case of congresses, repeating the event at the same place is more plausible than in case of incentives with the same participants, because incentive clients demand attractive and different destinations for each event.

In connection with destination choice, interviewees have been asked about their level of awareness about the other destination in analysis. This question revealed a slight difference between destinations' acquaintance, as all respondents in Vilamoura knew Marbella but three out of ten Marbella's suppliers recognized that they did not know Vilamoura. Subsequently, these findings raised a concern about the awareness of Vilamoura as event destination.

At both locations, meeting venues have been highly valued. Besides being competitive in terms of prices, destinations have to propose effective facilities. However, some IBEPO, especially the ones interviewed in Vilamoura, stressed a lack of venues and facilities with large capacity. They regretted that they had few alternatives to organise their event:

"In Portugal, there are not many possibilities of destinations especially in case of 'big events': Lisbon or Algarve. Alternatives have been strongly reduced because of venue capacity. We have 1200 participants, so we had not many choices in terms of meeting venues."

Taking into account similarities, both destinations have been pointed out as enjoying from a range of facilities and activities. Overall, the question of attractiveness has been frequently applied to these destinations, positively 'pulling' the event and largely the corporate image and communication. However, findings raised divergences between both destinations Regarding the segment of the meeting industry. These differences enabled the researchers to characterize the destinations as follows:

- Marbella: a mature business tourism destination;
- Vilamoura: an emergent business tourism destination.

4.3 Economic Factor

Characterized by Comas and Moscardo (2005: 117) as "a major component", the economic factor has been hypothesized as impacting heavily on destination choice. IBEPO recognized that value for money was one of the first determining factors, as one declared: "The value for money led to our destination choice." Interviews stressed how destination competitiveness can rely on that feature and influence destination choice. In fact, following the global recession, the meeting industry has faced a significant diminution of IBEPO' budget, as foreseen by Rogers (2008).

4.4 Accessibility and Complimentary Attractions and Activities

Identified as a primary factor, accessibility could be related to time constraint's issue as time is a scarce resource that can impact on destination choice. Both IBEPO and event suppliers underlined the requirement for a destination to be accessible, offering effective connections, either by plane, train or highways.

Connected with accessibility, respondents highly valued the location of the venue, especially at walking distance of the main amenities. As highlighted by DiPietro *et al.* (2008) most of the business events offer attendants some leisure time. Consequently, it is worth to select a destination in which entertainment facilities, such as restaurants and bars, are situated nearby. Comas and Moscardo (2005: 128) confirmed that most IBEPO expect "to have a venue (…) close to other activities and that would showcase the area as a tourist destination." As underlined by an event supplier: "There is a favourable environment for the sector we are operating. The incentive is not only contained within the hotel and the venue but also on what 'extra' the destination has to offer around." Even if not ranked as a primary

attribute, the possibility to complement business travels with leisure has been highlighted as an attractive component at both destinations.

All interviewed IBEPO agreed on the advantage of holding the event within a place where extra attractions are available. However, results confirmed the hypothesis that, depending on the event type, leisure tourism complements can constitute either a decisive attribute or a plus to add to the event, as one client (IBEPO) declared: "At the beginning, it was not considered as an incentive to our conference. But, after the decision to hold the event in Marbella, I realised that leisure could be a bonus to benefit the event."

4.5 Destination Image

A final hypothesis has been the influence played by the destination image in the site-selection. In fact, it has been largely demonstrated by the secondary data, how impacting this variable could result. From the perspective of event suppliers, destination choice has been frequently connected with attractiveness, as one supplier said: "To hold an event, a destination needs to be exclusive" and that "Destinations must have attractions that differ from others". Destination image has been recognized as a major attribute among the list of variables, as IBEPO ranked it as the second factor while event suppliers classified this factor as the first one.

5. CONCLUSION

Primary data research has been conducted on two different actors of the industry, the buyer and the supplier, questioning about client's travel decisions' behaviour. Both were involved in the decision-making process but to a different extent, IBEPO provided a more subjective point of view as obviously representing the decision-maker. While suppliers, less involved in the destination choice yet with expert knowledge, offered more detailed points of view.

As business tourism is a promising sector, conveying significant benefits and an important growth, it is a fact that more and more cities compete to become the selected place to hold an event. Because of an intensified competition, destinations would have to acknowledge, which attributes are primarily evaluated by IBEPO in their destination-choice to hold an event. The main goal of this study has been to rank factors identified in the literature for influencing the decision-making process of choosing an event destination.

Results show that economic factor, accessibility and destination image are the main influencing attributes that IBEPO value when selecting a location to hold an event.

The economic attribute is one of the major determining factors for destination choice. Primary data research confirmed that nowadays value for money is an increasing determinant when organising an event. In Vilamoura, it has been classified as the first, while in Marbella it obtained the fourth position. Respondents highlighted interesting viewpoints. IBEPO mainly supported that budget was decisive because of its decrease; suppliers stated that the bid was primordial connected with the competition from other destinations.

Destination image is crucial in the decision-making procedure. Interviews qualified that this variable was predominant as this attribute labelled the event. In the case of Marbella, it has been highlighted as the first factor, while in Vilamoura it has been defined as the second. Respondents added that the place communicates about the event, giving it a specific picture.

Findings confirmed that success depends on a good combination of location, image, cost and attractiveness of amenities. Consequently, understanding IBEPO's site-selection criteria will allow suppliers to know better how to attract events and future business travellers.

These results revealed that to increase their performance as event host destinations, Vilamoura and Marbella will have to promote themselves as exclusive event destinations in order to positively influence destination choice.

Nevertheless, this investigation only constitutes an exploratory investigation. It is hoped that further research could be concluded from this study, emphasising on the figure of the IBEPO. An enhanced understanding of event site-selection appears crucial to apprehend efficiently the meeting industry and to respond with improvement to the first client of a segment foreseen to increasingly contribute to the tourism sector.

Limitations

This study comports some limitations that are important to recognize. In terms of respondent's sample, the number of interviews conducted does not allow generalisation, even if taken as valid. The sample that was studied provides only insights, representing a specific theme. Conclusions from the empirical analysis cannot be comprehensively applied to all IBEPO, as decision-making is a complex random procedure. As a result, in case of future research, it will be recommended to enlarge the number of interviews, providing an enhanced framework.

It is also important to mention difficulties in accessing both inquired groups, mainly IBEPO. On one hand, most event suppliers do not reveal publicly their agendas, making it hard to be informed about business events. On the other hand, both players are protected by confidentiality agreements which makes access to data very difficult.

This research work reveals one of the many possible perspectives when researching a specific topic. As stated by Denzin and Lincoln (1994: 15) "there is no single interpretative truth (…) there are multiple." Consequently, findings are only representative of the studied sample.

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TOURISM DESTINATION IMAGE OF RUSSIA IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE PORTUGUESE MARKET

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ABSTRACT

In recent decades the importance of destination image has been increasingly analyzed and it is generally considered to be vital in the marketing of destinations. It can be noted that the tourism industry in Russia has not been the subject of a great deal of research with regard to its destination image. Therefore the purpose of this work is to assess Russia's destination image in the perspective of Portuguese people. The research instrument was an online questionnaire, comprised of open-ended and closed questions. A combination of two software programs, NVivo and IBM SPSS Statistics 21, was employed to analyze the data. This exploratory study suggests that Portuguese peoples' perceptions of Russia are mostly favorable and they have a high awareness about Russia's destination features.

Keywords: Destination Image, Russia, Tourism Destination, Portuguese Market.

JEL Classification: Z32, Z33

1. INTRODUCTION

Russia, as the largest country in the world, has diverse attractions worth visiting: unique nature, beautiful sceneries, historical, cultural and ethnographical heritage, sea and ski resorts. These characteristics put Russia on a prominent place among countries with the potential for tourism development. Nevertheless, despite that Russian outbound tourism has been increasing over the past decade, the growth of inbound tourism is slow (Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2008). As a result, the contribution of inbound tourism to Russia's economy is relatively small: according to the World Travel & Tourism Council, visitor spendings generated only 3.5% of total exports of Russia in 2014 (WTTC, 2015). As stressed by Stepchenkova and Morrison (2008: 548) the possible problems that do not allow Russia's incoming tourism to develop faster could be: a lack of infrastructure, especially in the country's eastern areas, complicated visa procedures, rising prices for tour packages, and lack of advertising. To be able to reach its tourism potential, the country should solve the aforementioned issues and, moreover, create an attractive destination image for international tourists.

Although the concept of tourism destination image is one of the most popular subjects in tourism studies, there is a luck of research on the topic of Russia's destination image, as according to the literature review of the articles published between 1973 and 2000 (Pike, 2002) out of 142 articles about a destination image only one was dedicated to the image of Russia and considered the image of Soviet Russia (see Pizam, Jafari & Milman, 1991), which nowadays is not relevant anymore. Since then, a few studies were added to the

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topic. In particular, the research conducted by Stepchenkova, Chen and Morrison (2005); Stepchenkova and Morisson (2006); Stepchenkova and Morisson (2008). Therefore, the contribution of this study is evident, as it adds knowledge to such scantily explored topic as the destination image of Russia.

2. AROUND THE CONCEPT OF DESTINATION IMAGE

Over the past few decades, destination image has been one of the most researched concepts in the field of tourism (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003, Stepchenkova & Morrison 2008, Pan & Xiang, 2011) and it has been defined in a number of ways. For example, Hunt (1975: 1), in one of the first works in this area, defined destination image as "the impression that a person or persons hold about a state in which they do not reside." Further, Crompton (1979: 18), stated that "destination image is a sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination." For Phelps (1986: 168) destination image is "perceptions or impressions of a place." Based on the multiple definitions of the concept, a definition of destination image can be proposed as the result of the perception of a particular destination that is formulated with utilization of information gathered by individuals (usually tourists) via various types of sources.

A variety of studies have presented different approaches to destination image formation (Campo, Brea & Muñiz, 2011). Baloglu & Brinberg (1997) and other authors (e.g. Baloglu & McCleary, 1999) considered the image as a concept that consists of at least two components: cognitive and affective. The cognitive component is the summary of a knowledge about a destination and could be organic or induced; the affective component is the sum of feelings about a destination and could be favorable, unfavorable or neutral for the destination under analysis.

Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993) reviewed psychology and marketing studies of tourism destination image and presented three-dimensional framework of a destination image concept: attribute – holistic, functional-psychological and common-unique. The attribute-holistic dimension implies that destination image has both the traditional attribute-based component and a total-gestalt expression of a destination that is formed by destination attributes. In other words, this component represents the overall picture and stereotypes which a person holds about a place. The functional-psychological dimension points that destination features vary from directly observable or measurable attributes (for instance, landscape, weather) to intangible, less observable attributes (for example, characteristics of local people, safety). The third, common-unique dimension indicates that there are not only common functional and psychological features of destinations that could be ranked and compared, but also some unique features, events or atmosphere that distinguish places from each other. These three dimensions are connected and cannot be understood apart.

Gunn (1972), based on the different types of informational sources, identified two levels of image formation: organic and induced. The organic image includes all the information about destination that is formed unintentionally and by non-tourism sources such as television, newspapers, books, history, geography, local people. The induced image is created by promotional information such as tourist brochures, booklets, etc. and transmitted by local tourism organizations.

There are two main approaches in the measurement of the destination image: structured and unstructured. The structured one usually employs Likert-type scales or sets of semantic differentials to measure attributes of an image. These types of scales are easy to operate and code and obtained information can be analyzed with statistical methods. However, despite that the scale can be completed by a respondent itself, the structured approach

can not directly describe the holistic impression (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993). In this case, if the number of different attributes is high, it may be necessary to conduct a comprehensive study to ensure that all of them have been identified (Hooley, Shipley & Kriger, 1988). The unstructured techniques do not apply standardized scales and allow respondents to use free form of descriptions, aimed to catch the richness and complexity of an image (Bovin, 1986). However, provided information may be highly heterogeneous, because it depends on the communication skills of the respondents, their ability to give detailed answers and the knowledge that they already have about a destination (McDougall & Fry, 1974). Echtner and Ritchie (1993) suggested that in order to omit fallacies of these two approaches and strengthen their advantages, both open-ended questions and standardized scales should be used in a measurement of a destination image.

3. RUSSIA AS A TOURISM DESTINATION

The number of international tourists' arrivals on the territory of the Russian Federation from 2005 to 2014 fluctuated until the downturn in 2009, when it reached the minimum of 2,100,000 international tourists per year. Since 2010 there has been a steady increase with a repeated decline in 2013. These fluctuations can be explained by the fact that international tourism is believed to be a subject to change due to political and economic factors (RosTourUnion - Russian Union of Travel Industry, 2015). However, 2015 is expected to show an upward trend, as according to the official statistics of Russia (Rostourism, 2015), in the first six months of 2015 the number of international tourists' arrivals to Russia increased by 4.6% - to 1,096,700 people, compare to the same period of the previous year.

The growth is mainly caused by tourists from Asia, while almost all countries of Europe and North America showing a negative trend. In the first half of 2015, the largest number of tourists came from China (204.5 thousand) and Germany (128.6 thousand). The third place, with a considerable gap, is occupied by Turkey (69 thousand), followed by the US (63.7 thousand). Israel closes the top-five with 50.5 thousand people. The top-ten also includes the United Kingdom, South Korea, France, Italy, and Finland. Dozens of changes took place inside the top, however, overall the list of traditional leaders has not changed considerably.

The highest growth was shown by Iran with an increase of 100%. In absolute figures, tourist flow from this country to Russia is low (5.6 thousand), but this is one of the few countries that sets up charter flights to Russia. The second place in the dynamics of growth is China (51.6%), the third is India (50.7%), followed by Thailand (44.3%), South Korea (27.3%), Israel (23.2%), and Turkey (17.3%) - all Eastern and Asian countries.

Almost all places in the top-ten of countries that significantly reduced the number of tourists to Russia are European countries: Sweden (-49.3%), Poland (-41%), the Netherlands (-34.7%), Denmark (-23.7%), the UK (-20.4%), France (-18.7%), Finland (-17%), Norway (-14.5%). Two places in the ranking are occupied by Australia (-21%), and Canada (-24.5%). During the period of 2011 - 2015, the number of Portuguese travelers to Russia hasn't experienced any dramatic downturn or increase, remaining around the same number of 15.000 visitors per year.

Slowdown in Russian economy is believed to be the most important factor that will influence the development of tourism sector in the country in the nearest future. The outflow of international financial investments that has started at the end of 2013, already had consequences in tourism area: for instance, some of international hotel chains cancelled or postponed their previously announced expansion plans in the Russian market (Ernst & Young, 2014).

The decline in value of Russian currency against euro and dollar, which started in the beginning of 2014, has affected the Russian economy - in the summer of the same year a number of major Russian tour operators became bankrupt. These companies were not able to settle their affairs, so more than 10 thousand of tourists were left abroad. This lead to the reduction of consumers' trust to tour operators (Russia beyond the headlines, 2014). Together with the decline in consumers' disposable incomes, this has caused a stagnation in the travel and tourism industry in Russia.

Given the recent economic slowdown and fluctuations of Russian ruble, it has become more affordable to travel to domestic destinations, instead of going abroad. Newly issued Federal program "Domestic and Inbound Tourism Development 2011-2018" is targeting to increase the number of domestic trips by 150%.

Despite all the issues that Russian economy faces, tourism and travel in the country are still expected to perform positively: the same as with Sochi Olympic Games that attracted millions of visitors from all over the world, the incoming tourism in Russia is expected to be boosted with 2018' FIFA Football World Cup.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research tool design

The research tool was an online questionnaire, consisted of four parts. The first section contained three open-ended questions, as suggested by Echtner and Ritchie (1993), and aimed to evaluate the stereotypical, affective, and unique components of Russia's destination image. The respondents were asked to refer to three words or expressions for each question. The second section included two 7-points Likert scales (1- "unpleasant – pleasant", 2- "sleepy-dynamic") to assess the affective component of the image, as suggested by Russel and Pratt (1981). The 14 attributes were withdrawn from the literature (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2008) and applied to assess Portuguese people' perceptions of Russia's destination attributes. The third part consisted of questions related to visit/non-visit to the country, reasons for visiting, frequency of travel per year, and the most important attributes for respondents in a choice of a travel destination. The question with respect to what sources of information played a role in shaping Portuguese people' views of Russia was added to assess the organic image of Russia.

The questionnaire was created in Google Forms – free online service that allows to design surveys with different types of questions. The questionnaire was made in English and further translated into the Portuguese language in order to distribute it among Portuguese respondents.

4.2 Data collection and respondents' profile

At the beginning of April 2016 a link to the questionnaire was posted on different Portuguese web-sites and forums related to tourism and, in particular, related to travel to Russia, taking into consideration the idea that to attract people to fill out the questionnaire it should be posted on the thematic web-sites. However, the response rate on the public posts were negligible, and starting from the middle of April personal messages with the request to complete the questionnaire were sent to Portuguese individuals on such social networks as vk.com and couchsurfing.com. These social networks were chosen based on a few reasons: 1) they allow to find necessary sample of respondents (based on nationality, language, age, gender, etc.); 2) they allow to send private messages to random people freely.

During 2 weeks-period personal messages with the link to the questionnaire were sent out, and the survey resulted in a final convenience sample of 132 respondents appropriate for analysis. Table 1 displays the profile of the respondents.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	43	32,6
	Male	89	67,4
Age	Less than 25	30	22,7
	26-35	53	40,2
	36-45	25	18,9
	46-55	18	13,6
	56-65	5	3,8
	More than 65	1	0,8
Education	Basic	1	0,8
	Secondary	15	11,4
	Higher	116	87,9
Gross monthly income	Less than €500	27	20,5
	€501 - €1000	34	25,8
	€1001 - €1500	27	20,5
	€1501 - €2000	22	16,7
	More than €2000	22	16,7
Marital status	Married/civil union	18	13,6
	Divorced	14	10,6
	Single	100	75,8

Source: Own elaboration

4.3 Data analysis methods

With respect to the three open-ended questions, the answers have been reviewed and translated from Portuguese to English. The qualitative data was analyzed with the help of NVivo with the purpose of performing content-analysis. To make the responses applicable for the analysis, several changes were made, such as: multi-word concepts were merged into a one-word format (e.g., "Red Square", "Saint-Petersburg" to "RedSquare", "SaintPetersburg", etc.); some words were changed to synonyms and single form to plural (for example, "wide" "big", "huge", "huge territory", "largest country in the world" were grouped together under the most frequent name, in this case "big country", further e.g "palace" was counted as "palaces", "cathedral" as "cathedrals", and so on); main ideas, keywords and phrases have been allocated instead of complex sentences, which some respondents used, as the request was to write maximum 3 words to each question.

The responses to closed questions were entered into IBM SPSS Statistics 21 program for further analysis. At first, descriptive statistics of socio-demographic variables, travel motivations, organic image, perceptions of Russia as a tourism destination (cognitive image) were analyzed and transferred into tables and charts. Further, differences between visitors/non-visitors of the country regarding perceptions of Russia as a tourism destination (cognitive image) were computed using "compare means" function and assessed with the Mann-Whiney test.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Open-ended questions

Out of 132 total survey responses, the number of valid responses for open-ended questions was the following:

Question 1: What images or characteristics come to your mind when you think of Russia as a travel destination - 128;

Question 2: How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting Russia – 106;

Question 3: Please list up to three distinctive or unique tourist attractions that you can think of in Russia – 118.

Answers such as "I don't know" or "Nothing" were excluded from the analysis. In addition, despite that respondents were requested to write maximum three words to each question, some of them used complex sentences, and it have been allocated with keywords and phrases.

5.1.1 Question 1 - stereotypical holistic component of the image

To find out what stereotypical mental images Portuguese people associate with Russia, responses to the survey Question 1 ("What images or characteristics come to your mind when you think of Russia as a travel destination?") were analyzed. By following procedures of corrections described in subsection 4.2, a list of 16 most frequent meaningful words was obtained using NVivo software. The frequencies were 4 or higher. Table 2 contains overall frequencies of Russia's stereotypical image variables.

Table 2. Russia's stereotypical image variables

Word	Count	Weighted %	Word	Count	Weighted %
Cold	54	13,53	*Culture*	9	2,26
Vodka	39	9,77	*Putin*	9	2,26
Kremlin	19	4,76	*Red Square*	8	2,01
Snow	16	4,01	*Communism*	7	1,75
Moscow	14	3,51	*Matriosca*	6	1,50
Big country	13	3,25	*Transsiberian*	5	1,25
Beautiful women	12	3,01	*Beautiful*	4	1,00
Saint-Petersburg	12	3,01	*"Nazdorovie!"* (the meaning is close to Portuguese "Saúde!")*	4	1,00
Total				**399**	**100%**

Source: Own elaboration

As it can be observed in Table 3, most frequently the respondents mentioned the following words while describing characteristics of Russia: "cold" – in 13,5% of cases; "vodka" – in almost 10%; and "Kremlin" – 4,7%.

5.1.2 Question 2 – affective component of the image

To find what affective images Russia as a travel destination evokes, the responses to the survey item Question 2 ("How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting Russia?") were analyzed using NVivo Program.

Around 260 evaluative descriptions were obtained. The final set of image variables contained descriptive words (e.g. "beautiful", "welcoming", "spectacular"), as they create an atmosphere, and evaluation phrases (e.g., "cold people", "little hospitable"). Table 3 provides the total frequencies of Russia's affective image variables.

Table 3. Russia's affective image variables

Word	Count	Weighted %	Word	Count	Weighted %
Cold	48	18,39	*Closed people*	5	1,92
Cold people	8	3,07	*Difficult communication*	4	1,53
Beautiful	7	2,68	*Little hospitable*	4	1,53
Different	7	2,68	*Spectacular*	4	1,53
Snow	6	2,30	*Tension*	4	1,53
Welcoming	6	2,30	*Unfriendly people*	4	1,53
Total				**261**	**100%**

Source: Own elaboration

Similarly to the previous question, the word "cold" is the most frequently used by respondents – around 18 % of cases. In addition, the word was also used to describe Russian people.

5.1.3 Question 3 – unique component of the image

To find what unique places and features Portuguese people associate with Russia, the responses to the Question 3 ("Please list up to three distinctive or unique tourism attractions that you can think of in Russia") were analyzed. The results are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Russia's unique image variables

Word	Count	Weighted %	Word	Count	Weighted %
Red Square	59	18,10	*Siberia*	11	3,37
Kremlin	52	15,95	*Lake Baikal*	8	2,45
Saint - Petersburg	32	9,82	*Peterhof*	8	2,45
St. Basil Cathedral	24	7,36	*Cathedrals*	5	1,51
Moscow	17	5,21	*Bolshoi Theatre*	4	1,23
Hermitage/Winter Palace	17	5,21	*Moscow metro*	4	1,23
Transsiberian	14	4,29			
Total				**331**	**100%**

Source: Own elaboration

5.2 Closed questions

5.2.1 Visit to Russia and travel motivations

Out of all respondents, only 19 people (14.4%) have visited Russia before. Those who have already visited Russia, were asked to state what was the reason(s) for visiting. The most

frequent reason was "leisure" (42.1%), followed by "family/friends" (26.3%), and "business" (10.5%). Among "other" reasons "study" and "crossing from China to Portugal" were stated.

Regarding travel frequency, the majority of respondents (55.3%) travels 1 or 2 times a year, 21.2% - 3-4 times, 20.5 % - more than 4 times a year, and 3% of the sample represents those who never travel.

Regarding the question "What do you consider to be the most important elements that attract you to a destination?" the most frequent answer was "cost" (20.4%); "cultural attractions" (19.8%); "safety" (15.5%); "choice of activities" (13.3%); "good weather" (9.5%); "beaches and relaxed atmosphere" (7.3%); "distance" (5.5%); and "night life" (4.9%). As for "other" important elements, respondents specified "nature", "people", "culture", and "history".

5.2.2 Affective image

Assessing the affective image of Russia, the most frequent values chosen by the respondents on the semantic differential "unpleasant/ pleasant" were the points 4 and 5 (both 31.8%). On the semantic differential "sleepy/dynamic" - points 4 (26.5%) and 5 (21.2%). In addition, calculation of medians resulted in 5 for the differential "unpleasant/ pleasant" and 4 for "sleepy/dynamic" (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Affective image dimensions
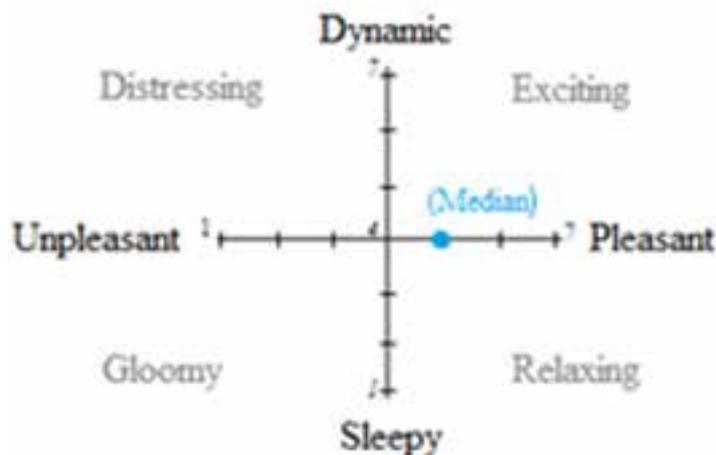
Source: Adapted from Russel *et al.* (1981)

5.2.3 Cognitive image

The cognitive image of Russia was measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1- strongly disagree; 2- disagree; 3 - not agree, not disagree; 4- agree; 5- strongly agree). "Comparing means analysis" were conducted for attribute values and can be observed in Table 5. Attributes are considered positively or negatively evaluated if their mean is below or above the neutral "3.00" value, respectively, and arranged from the most to the least favorable. The most favorable views are held in relation to Russia's cultural and historical attractions, its natural landscape, night life and entertainment. The most unfavorable perceptions relate to issues of safety, political stability and entry formalities, such as visas and border crossings.

Table 5. Perceptions of Russia as a tourism destination

Items	Mean[a]	Std.deviation
Interesting cultural and historical attractions	4,30	0,750
Attractive natural landscape	3,97	0,886
Good nightlife and entertainment	3,36	0,918
Opportunity for adventure	3,34	0,864
Good local food	3,22	0,737
Good offer of accommodation for tourists	3,13	0,576
High standards of cleanliness and hygiene	3,07	0,787
Convenient local transport	3,04	0,708
Friendly and hospitable people	2,99	0,961
Good relationship quality / price	2,91	0,856
Safe destination	2,74	0,954
Political stability	2,65	1,075
Entry formalities (visas, border crossings) are simple	2,35	0,892
Good weather	2,19	0,842
Summary variable – image of Russia [b]	*3,09*	*0,843*

Notes: [a] 1 – Least favorable; 5 – Most favorable; [b] The summary variable was derived by averaging all the items in the scale

Source: Adapted from IBM SPSS Statistics 21

5.2.4 Organic image

The acknowledgment about different sources of information that have been used by the respondents to learn about Russia is displayed in Table 6. According to the results, the most important source is media, used by 53% of the respondents. Personal experience is the second and school is the third most important source to learn about Russia.

Table 6. Things that played role in shaping views of Russia

	Frequency	%
Things I learned from the media (TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, etc.)	113	53,3
My personal experience	32	15,1
Things I learned in school	29	13,7
Other	29	13,7
I have family roots in Russia (immigrated from there, or have relatives who live there)	9	4,2
Total	212	100,0

Source: Own elaboration

Among "other" the respondents mentioned: "Russian friends", "Relatives or friends, who visited Russia", "Personal research", and "Literature and cinema".

5.2.5 Relationship between variables

It was also tested if there is any relationship between the variable "visit" and "perceptions of Russia as a tourism destination". People who have visited Russia showed more favorable attitude towards this destination in relation to such attributes as ($p < 0.1$): "natural landscape", "cultural and historical attractions", "local transport", "local food", "weather", "friendliness and hospitality of local people" and "good relationship quality/price". In opposite, the attribute "entry formalities (visas, border crossings)" was evaluated more negative by visitors than non-visitors (Table 7).

Table 7. Relationship between visit and perceptions of Russia as a tourism destination

	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed)
Attractive natural landscape	686,000	7127,000	-2,742	,006
Interesting cultural and historical attractions	619,500	7060,500	-3,225	,001
Good offer of accommodation for tourists	920,500	1110,500	-1,229	,219
Convenient local transport	825,500	7266,500	-1,911	,056
Good local food	785,500	7226,500	-2,092	,036
Good weather	830,000	7271,000	-1,774	,076
Safe destination	1034,000	1224,000	-,269	,788
Good nightlife and entertainment	1034,500	1224,500	-,274	,784
High standards of cleanliness and hygiene	1027,000	7468,000	-,339	,734
Entry formalities (visas, border crossings) are simple	742,500	932,500	-2,271	,023
Political stability	1026,000	1216,000	-,319	,750
Opportunity for adventure	960,000	7401,000	-,788	,431
Friendly and hospitable people	634,000	7075,000	-3,021	,003
Good relationship quality / price	844,000	7285,000	-1,650	,099
a. Grouping Variable: Visit				

Source: Adapted from IBM SPSS Statistics 21

6. CONCLUSION

According to the analysis of the open-ended Question 1, which was set to identify the stereotypical holistic component of the image, our findings stand in line with the previous research results of Stepchenkova & Morrison (2008) on the tourism destination image of Russia, where the most frequent words used by Americans to describe Russia were also "cold", "vodka" and "snow". Further in our study these words were frequently mentioned in the Question 2, which was designed to assess affective image that Portuguese people held towards Russia. Many answers (18.3%) contained the word "cold" to describe the atmosphere people would expect to experience in Russia. It is worth noting that many respondents employed this word to describe Russian people, therefore the expression "cold people" was mentioned often as well, along with "closed people", "little hospitable" and "unfriendly people". It can be suggested that a part of the atmosphere of a particular destination is formed by

local population, what has been also confirmed by the other studies (Stepchenkova, 2005; Alvarez & Korzay, 2008).

Moreover, the Portuguese respondents' perceptions of Russia were mainly favorable, since words such as "beautiful", "welcoming", and "spectacular" were presented often. Furthermore, according to the scale suggested by Russel *et al.* (1981) and used in this study, the affective image of Russia was also perceived by Portuguese respondents as overall "pleasant".

The analysis of the Question 3 revealed that Portuguese people have a high awareness about Russia's tourist features – only 11% stated "I don't know" as an answer. Along with common touristic places such as Moscow, Saint-Petersburg and Siberia, more specific sites like Red Square, Kremlin, St. Basil Cathedral, Hermitage (Winter Palace), Peterhof, Transsiberian railway and Lake Baikal were mentioned.

The most positive views are held in relation to Russia's cultural and historical attractions, its natural landscape, night life and entertainment. In opposite, the most unfavorable perceptions relate to issues of safety, political stability and entry formalities (visas and border crossings). These findings indicate the main areas that Russia needs to deal with in relation to its destination image.

The attributes "cultural and historical attractions", "natural landscape", "local transport", "local food", "weather", "friendliness and hospitality of local people" and "good relationship quality/price" were also evaluated more favorably by visitors than by those who have not visited the country. On the other hand, visitors provided less favorable scores to the variable "entry formalities (visas, border crossings)". Thus, complicated visa procedures may be a significant barrier in the formation of a favorable tourism destination image, as "a country cannot be perceived as hospitable if getting a visa takes much effort on the part of a traveler" (Stepchenkova, 2005: 61).

The analysis of the organic image of Russia showed that the most important informational agent in its formation is media - TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, etc. These findings support the results of some other studies (Stepchenkova, 2005, Alvarez & Korzay, 2008), which showed that media may have a great impact on tourism destination image.

The research findings may be used by managers in Russia's tourism industry in order to improve the destination image of the country, with a view to attract Portuguese tourists to Russia.

This research is not exempt from limitations. First of all, it was not easy to reach individuals of Portuguese nationality, who have already visited Russia, to be able to perform more comparisons between visitors and non-visitors regarding their perceptions of the destination. The other significant limitation is the use of a small and convenience sample, as public posts and requests on the travel web-sites had a low rate of responses while sending private messages on the social networks provided the majority of respondents.

Further research could investigate tourism destination image of Russia applying different research methods, such as content-analysis, focus-groups, etc. in the perspectives of different nationalities. Determination if the informational sources (media, books, personal experience, folklore, movies, etc.) and other factors (economic, sociocultural, psychographics, etc.) impact on a destination image could also be a focus for further studies.

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