

**UNIVERSIDADE DO ALGARVE
FACULDADE DE ECONOMIA**

**THE IMPACTS OF TOURISM EXPERIENCES IN THE
DESTINATION IMAGE.
A MARKETING PERSPECTIVE.**

NELSON MANUEL DA SILVA DE MATOS

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Trabalho efetuado sobre a orientação de:

**PROFESSOR DOUTOR JULIO DA COSTA MENDES
PROFESSORA DOUTORA PATRICIA OOM DO VALLE**

2014

**THE IMPACTS OF TOURISM EXPERIENCES IN THE DESTINATION
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Resumo

O foco da presente tese é estudar os impactos das experiências turísticas na imagem do destino – Algarve. A região é um destino turístico com uma longa tradição na atividade turística, centrada principalmente no sol e mar, e em produtos complementares associados ao turismo balnear. No entanto, a crescente competitividade entre os destinos turísticos, aliado à fraca recuperação económica, e ao desenvolvimento e proliferação de novos canais de distribuição (físicos e virtuais), tem conduzido frequentemente à necessidade dos diversos stakeholders locais, gerirem os destinos turísticos numa ótica de marketing. Num sector complexo e dinâmico como o turismo, a presente realidade económica conduz não só a desafios como oportunidades para os gestores dos destinos. Uma das oportunidades ao alcance dos gestores é a imagem dos destinos, visto que é um fator crítico de sucesso quer antes, durante, ou após o processo de escolha por parte do turista quanto ao seu próximo destino de férias. Por outro lado, o desafio é compreender qual o papel das experiências turísticas e os seus impactes na imagem dos destinos.

Aos diversos stakeholders do sector (público e privado) regionais e nacionais, cabe agora a tarefa de delinear novas estratégias que tenham em consideração as oportunidades e os desafios existentes de modo a poderem atrair e captar novos segmentos, bem como satisfazer os atuais, investindo para esse efeito em novos conceitos que acrescentem valor à sua oferta. Neste sentido, o Algarve, tal como os outros destinos turísticos, tem procurado identificar as diferentes necessidades individuais dos diversos segmentos de forma a conseguir-se diferenciar da demais concorrência, e deste modo criar uma marca do destino forte e distinta.

Neste contexto, a revisão da literatura realizada concentrou-se **em duas grandes áreas**, o turismo e o marketing, através do estudo da Imagem do Destino e da Experiência Turística. O papel de cada constructo e sua inter-relação, e mais especificamente, o impacto das experiências turísticas (TEs) na imagem dos destinos, na perceção dos turistas são o ponto central desta pesquisa. Neste sentido, foi feita uma revisão bibliográfica abordando toda a literatura mais pertinente sobre a problemática da imagem dos destinos, no sentido de obter um enquadramento espaço-temporal atualizado. As questões sobre a marca, a identidade, os atributos da imagem, a forma como esta é

comunicada (com vista a atingir o posicionamento desejado) também foram consideradas, dado que a imagem percecionada pelo turista influencia as suas expectativas quanto à experiência turística, e o grau de satisfação. As especificidades da experiência turística como a autenticidade, os media, os brokers e a construção de “palcos”, também foram abordadas, devido à necessidade dos destinos se “relacionarem” com os turistas.

A pesquisa empírica realizada teve três momentos distintos. Primeiro, foi feito um **estudo exploratório** nas principais cidades do Algarve a turistas estrangeiros de férias, no sentido de identificar os principais atributos funcionais e psicológicos do destino, bem como as atrações e características únicas e distintivas da região. Os resultados obtidos, permitiram verificar que para os turistas inquiridos as principais características funcionais do Algarve foram o bom tempo, a paisagem natural, a gastronomia e as experiências vividas durante as férias. Na componente holística e psicológica, os turistas apreciaram a simpatia dos residentes, o sossego e a calma. Os turistas consideraram também a praia, a beleza natural da região, a gastronomia e a hospitalidade como os principais fatores distintivos.

Num segundo momento, foi feito o inquérito **antes da experiência** turística, aos turistas estrangeiros de visita à região, à chegada no aeroporto de Faro, no sentido de avaliar *a priori* da imagem do destino turístico Algarve, e as expectativas criadas e detidas pelos turistas aquando da sua chegada. Num terceiro momento, foi realizado novo inquérito **após a experiência**, no aeroporto internacional de Faro, para se verificar novamente qual a imagem do destino percecionada pelos turistas após a experiência turística na região, e também avaliar qual o contributo da experiência turística para a imagem do destino percecionada *a posteriori* pelos turistas.

Em **ambos os estudos**, os turistas estrangeiros inquiridos reforçaram os resultados obtidos no estudo exploratório de que as imagens mais fortes do Algarve são ao sol, praia, gastronomia, tranquilidade e simpatia. Os turistas percecionaram ainda o destino como agradável e moderadamente dinâmico. O grau de satisfação foi muito elevado, levando a que a maioria pretenda regressar no futuro ou recomendar a região a outros potenciais turistas. As experiências turísticas no destino que foram mais valorizadas, foram em geral as de dimensão estética, tendo os turistas para esse efeito considerado a região como

agradável e atraente. As restantes dimensões das Experiências Turísticas - Escapismo, Entretenimento, Educação não foram valorizadas com a mesma importância.

Aos turistas foram ainda colocadas duas questões abertas, para aferir quais as experiências mais positivas e negativas no destino. A maioria dos inquiridos, mencionou uma vez mais, que as experiências mais positivas foram o bom tempo, a boa comida e a hospitalidade da população regional. Relativamente às experiências negativas, a resposta mais frequente foi de que não viveram, nem experienciaram qualquer tipo de experiência menos positiva. No entanto, dos inquiridos que revelaram ter vivido ou experienciado algum tipo de experiência negativa, as respostas dadas foram relativamente às más condições climáticas (chuva), à qualidade da comida, ao mau estado das estradas e aos serviços de qualidade inferior, como os principais motivos de desagrado.

Por sua vez, o **modelo estrutural** explicativo apresentado, possibilitou estudar a relação entre os dois constructos, por via dos quatro reinos da experiência (educação, entretenimento, escapismo e estética), e as dimensões da imagem dos destinos. Resultados obtidos permitiram verificar e confirmar as indicações da revisão de literatura de que as dimensões da experiência turística, contribuem para as dimensões (cognitiva, afetiva e comportamental) da imagem do destino, bem como para a imagem global.

Os resultados obtidos na presente tese vêm reforçar o papel das experiências turísticas como um fator importante e determinante para explicar a imagem do destino de uma região. Os resultados são também relevantes não só para uma compreensão abrangente da Experiência Turística e da Imagem dos Destinos, como também para observar os efeitos do turismo de experiências. Desta forma, espera-se ter contribuído para um melhor posicionamento da oferta da região, numa perspetiva de valorização das potencialidades que as Experiências Turísticas encerram para a Imagem dos destinos, ou em última instância para a sua marca e ou para o seu planeamento estratégico.

Palavras-chave: Imagem do destino, experiências turísticas, destino turístico, PLS -SEM

Abstract

The thesis focus is to study the impacts of the tourism experiences in the destination image of the Algarve, Portugal, which is a tourism destination with a long tradition in the tourism activity, centered mainly in the sun and beach tourism products. The literature review conducted in this study concentrated on two main areas of knowledge, tourism and marketing, and on two constructs, destination image and tourism experience. The role of each construct and their interrelationship, and more specifically, the impact of the holiday tourism experience (TE) in the tourists' perception of the tourism destination image (TDI) are the central point of this research.

The empirical research has taken place in the Algarve, based on qualitative and quantitative methodology, about the foreign tourists' opinion about the TDI, at two different moments, at the arrival and at the departure. To assess the TEs impacts in the TDI of the region, the tourists' TEs were measure according to Oh, Fiore & Jeoung's (2007) experience scale, based on Pine & Gilmore's four realms of the experience.

The first and second surveys were applied at Faro Airport, and in both studies tourists' stronger images of the Algarve revealed to be sun, beach, but also food, relaxation and friendliness. The tourists perceive the Algarve as pleasant and moderately dynamic, and wish to return or to recommend it to others. Regarding the TEs at the destination, these were in general of Aesthetic dimension, pleasant and attractive. The other dimensions of the TEs, Escapism, Entertainment and Education were not highly rated. The explicative structural model presented, made possible to study the relationship between the four realms (Education, Entertainment, Escapism, and Aesthetics) of the TEs. It made also possible to verify and confirm the literature review indication that the TEs dimensions contribute positively to the TDI dimensions, and global image. These results reinforced the role of TEs as a important and determinant factor to explain the TDI of a region.

Keywords: Destination image, tourism experiences, tourism destination, PLS -SEM

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AR	Assimilation Resistance
DMOs	Destination Management Organization(s)
ERTA	Algarve Regional Tourism Board
EU	European Union
INE	Portuguese National Institute for Statistics
TDs	Tourism Destinations
TDI	Tourism Destination Image
TEs	Tourism Experiences
UNWTO	World Tourism Organization
WOM	Word of mouth

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

The current global economic crisis has led to a greater degree of uncertainty among stakeholders, meaning they must strive for new ways, concepts and strategies, to sell and promote their tourism destinations (TDs) in an ever more competitive market (Govers & Go, 2005; Puh, 2014). As a result, TDs marketers must, according to the different market needs, find differentiation from competitors (Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 2009) so that the TD (tourism destination) brand may be seen by tourists as unique and distinctive.

The Algarve, the Portuguese main TD with its core tourism product centered over the last decades on the Sun and Sea, aims to be through the Algarve Regional Tourism Board (ERTA), more competitive. In this context, the region has been trying in the last decades to reposition the Algarve's tourism destination image (TDI), in the main target markets with the purpose to introduce new concepts in which, modernity, dynamism (as the marketing campaign "re-energise the Algarve" in 2004), or even sophistication and glamour ("Allgarve" from 2007 to 2011) have been stimulated.

This perspective towards the introduction of the tourism experiences (TEs) concept in the tourism product, and consequently in the TDI of the Algarve, has been made by the local stakeholders with the intent of attaining a different market positioning, by appealing to tourists' senses and emotions. But, the appeal to the tourists' senses is not enough, since the tourism development has also brought some concerns, about the consequences to the environmental setting and about the tourism activity in general (Gunn, 1988).

These concerns derive from the increasing number of new hotels, food establishments, entertainment companies or even the growth of mass tourism. Thus, not only did the demand change, requiring more refined and stronger TDIs, but also, the need for DMOs (destination management organization) marketers to preserve and reinforce the quality of their TD holiday experience became a requirement.

As Gunn (1988:48) reminds us "our ability to alter the environment is so facile today that choosing not to change a natural feature is itself an act of creation". Aside from the

environmental changes in the market, an additional feature of the tourism activity marketers must bear in mind is how tourists search and acquire information regarding the offer of competing TDs (Tourism Destinations). This search according, to Molina-Azorin, Pereira-Moliner, & Claver-Cortés (2010) is one of the most influential and important factors when tourists purchase tourism products. Thus, one of the key questions for DMOs marketers' should pose themselves is to know what information tourists seek.

Other questions also call for answers, such as, what image tourists' have of the destination? To what extent does the TDI influence tourist expectations? Or the overall satisfaction with their holiday experience? and has the TE changed tourists' perceptions about the TD? Or their image? Unnecessary to say, success cannot be achieved solely based on day-to-day management, for the reason that it is also important for managers and stakeholders to assure that their strategies and their TDI is aligned with the fulfillment of their target market needs and wants, resulting from their holiday experience at the destination.

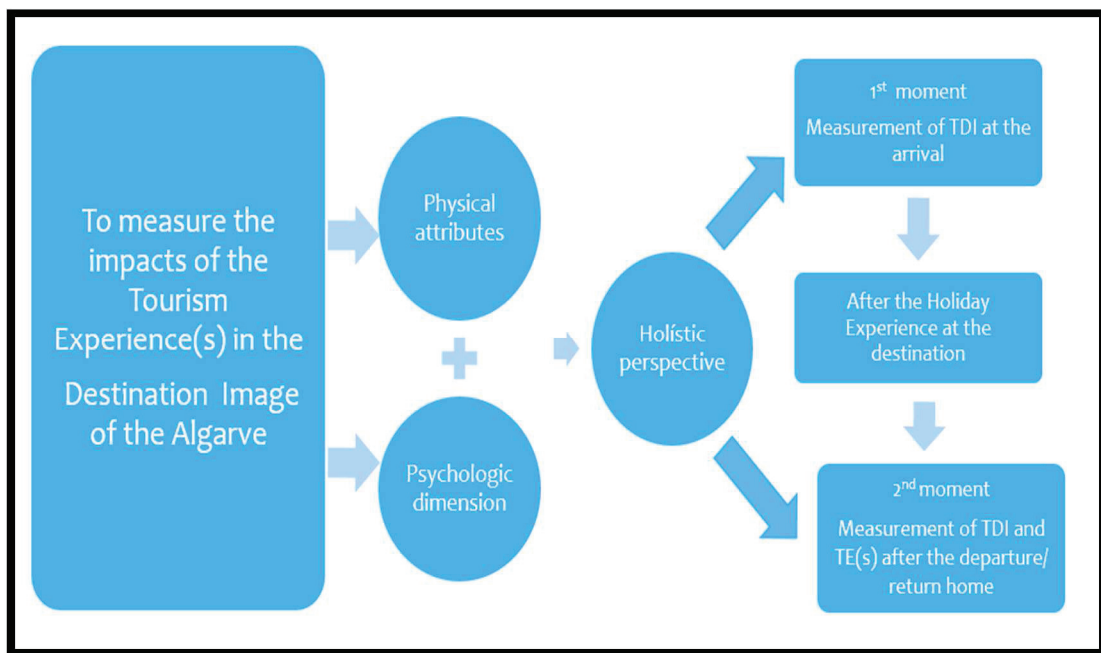
In effect, it also means the financial resources can be better managed, if the potential disappointment or dissatisfaction elements of the TE at the setting are found or listed/identified. As Gunn (1988:47) recalls, "if the visitor leaves feeling disappointed, uninterested, or even defrauded, the attraction may have succeeded in attracting but not in carrying out its complete function [satisfaction]".

In addition, in an industry where consumption cannot be tested prior to the experience itself, positive word-of-mouth (WOM) is an important asset DMOs marketers must rely on, but not depend, since in this activity discretionary decisions "rule", because tourists make their choices based on their perceptions and also on the TDI (Croy, 2004). In other words, in this fast moving environment, it is of paramount importance that all marketing decisions are made considering all environmental factors and actors involved (Oppermann, 1996).

1.1 Aim of the study

The purpose of this thesis (figure 1.1.) is to investigate and assess, in a marketing perspective, how tourists' TEs at the destination influence and impact their TDI of the Algarve. To achieve this goal, Algarve's TDI and tourists' TEs effects was evaluated in a holistic perspective (encompassing the tangible and intangible dimensions), in two different periods. First, the tourists' initial TDI of the Algarve was assessed upon their arrival at Faro international airport. Secondly, after the tourists' experience in the Algarve and on their return home, at the same airport, the second questionnaire was applied. Thus, by evaluating Algarve's TDI before and after the holiday experience, the impacts and relationship between both constructs can be evaluated.

Figure 1.1 - Aim of the Study Framework



Source: Author

1.2 Research relevance

In the same sense, there has been limited research focusing on the influence of mass media (Beeton, Bowen, & Santos, 2006; Nielsen, 2001), friend and relatives (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003), travel agencies and brokers (Jennings & Nickerson, 2006) on the TDI. Besides

these factors, others like the familiarity (Ulrich, 1983), travel purpose (Hankinson, 2005), geographical distance (Crompton, 1979; Hunt, 1975), the contribution of TD attributes (Tasci & Kozak, 2006), socio-demographic variables (Baloglu, 1997) and also the perception and tourists' individual learning process, resulting from previous experiences (Cohen, 1979; Crompton, 1979; Jenkins, 1999) has also not been investigated exhaustively by researchers.

Some researchers however have followed a different route, and have acknowledge the growing importance of the TEs (Blain, 2005; Hosany & Witham, 2009; Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Pine & Gilmore, 1998, 1999, 2011; Ritchie & Crouch, 2000; Ryan, 2000). Thus, answers regarding the expectations (Chon, 1992), reactions (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1994), emotions (Bigné & Andreu, 2004; Laros & Steenkamp, 2005; Richins, 1997; Yoo & MacInnis, 2005) and senses (Bitner, 1992; Carù & Cova, 2003; Hudson & Ritchie, 2009) that must be awaken by TEs marketing messages (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009; Esch et al., 2012; Schmitt, 2012) have been pursued, but not responded.

In this context, questions about the experience consumption (Hsu, Dehuang, & Woodside, 2009; MacInnis & Price, 1990), the authenticity (Brown, 2013; Gotham, 2007; Kim & Jamal, 2007; MacCannell, 1973; Steiner & Reisinger, 2006; Wang, 1999), the creation and reconstruction of TEs (Binkhorst, 2006; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Prebensen & Foss, 2011), the difference between supporting and intense experiences (Quan & Wang, 2004) have to be addressed to fully understand the complex nature of the TEs.

The relevance of the TE construct, for the construction of a holistic experience (Leigh, 2006; Schmitt, 1999) to be prepared and considered as an added value (Schmitt, 1999) to the chain value (Gereffi *et al.*, 2001) is important to get tourists' positive word of mouth (WOM) (Anderson, 1998; Hosany & Witham, 2009). In sum, the literature review undertaken shows the way place images are constructed have changed immensely from a supply and demand perspectives, e.g., from the way images and brand identity is projected (refers to the former), to the way these images and projections are perceived (refers to the latter) (Govers, Go, & Kumar, 2007; Govers & Go, 2005). Thus, the relationship between the TE and the TDI of a place is still ill defined, since the tourists' decision-making

process, and the selection of their next holiday destination, starts considerably earlier and ends much after the return home.

For this matter, it is important to assess the impacts and changes caused by TEs on the tourists' destination image they take home to share with friends and relatives, personally or using social media. If the tourists' behavior and experiences are better understood, DMOs stakeholders will more easily define and set their marketing strategies. More importantly, they will be able to manage them more efficiently (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003).

Moreover, new insights and a greater knowledge about tourists' TEs will be attained, allowing for more competitive advantages¹ in relation to other competing TDs (Pine & Gilmore, 1988). As Govers (2005:36) reminds, the core competencies must be anchored in the "host community's existing capabilities in attracting potential visitors and hosting them during their stay". In other words, marketers must look at TDI ("attracting potential visitors") and the TEs ("capability... [of] hosting them during their stay").

This way, possible impacts (negative or positive) in the TE and TDI can be more rapidly identified and, if necessary, revised, enabling the stakeholders and managers of the TD to set and promote tourism products of added value under the tourists' view, and consequently, obtain a greater economic and social return for the region. To neglect the aim of this investigation, would bring consequences to the Algarve, not only regarding the economic return, but also, regarding the expenses necessary to attract potential tourists to the area, since the costs of "acquiring" new tourists are far greater than the cost of retaining them (Kotler *et al.*, 2009). Besides, the TDI and the TEs at the setting have an important and critical significance for DMOs marketers, even though their full value is still to be realized (Selby & Morgan, 1996) because tourists' tourism experiences have not been converted into managerial actions until now (Otto & Ritchie, 1996).

It is expected that the results of this research will allow stakeholders of the TD and marketers of the DMOs to obtain updated and pertinent information regarding their

¹ Competitive advantage – refers to the management and use of destination resources, in the best possible way, relatively to competitors (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2009), or an advantage over competitors gained by offering consumers greater value (Kotler *et al.*, 2009).

tourists' behavior, tourism experiences (TEs), and possible consequences to Algarve's destination image. With this information, managers may:

- Increase the appeal of natural and man built local resources, by using the correct marketing promotion tools and strategies (Crouch, 2007; Ritchie & Crouch, 2000);
- Increase the competitiveness of the TD through the use of TEs as key factors to appeal, and engage physically and emotionally tourists (Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick, 2010; Kim, 2011; Pine & Gilmore, 1998, 2011);
- Create a unique and distinctive positioning for the TD and its brand (Pike, 2009);
- To offer to visiting tourists new and authentic experiences (Brown, 2013; Cook, 2011; Crouch & Ritchie, 1999; Hudson & Ritchie, 2009; MacCannell, 1973; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006; Ritchie & Hudson, 2009);
- Influence tourists' behavior (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Tsaur *et al.*, 2007; Urry, 1992; Žabkar, Brenčič, & Dmitrović, 2010).

The study seeks to understand how tourists build and perceive the destination image, by analyzing the different TD attributes from the target markets perspective. Thus, local stakeholders and managers can manage the available resources (physical, financial and human) more sustainably, which in the end, should be the responsibility of all those involved in the tourism activity.

1.3 Research goals

The research goal is to analyze the Algarve's TDI from the tourists perspective, at two different moments, before and after the TE, identifying the elements of the holiday experience that contribute the most to the TDI. Thus, the main goal of this research is to find:

- How the different tourism experiences influence or impact the destination image of the Algarve?

In fact, ERTA's long-term goal over the years has been to create and promote a distinctive positioning to enhance tourists' image of the destination. Since their experience at the destination is composed of many different experiences that may or may not contribute to the promoted image, the question remaining is therefore to know, at what extent the different TEs impact (or not) on the region's destination image.

In order to accomplish the main research goal, three specific objectives are proposed, namely:

- To compare the destination image before and after the tourism experience.

This was achieved by applying the same questionnaire to the same tourists in the two periods (before and after the tourists' holidays at the destination). This will permit to see how Algarve's TDI has evolved (or not) from the first contact (experience) with the destination to the last (at home, reviving the experience at Algarve).

- To separate the global/total tourism experiences into a set of specific experiences, according to their dimension to assess their relation.

In order to achieve this objective, all the different experiences occurring in the TD were decomposed into specific dimensions, so that it may be possible to verify the "weight" of each dimension for the construction of the holistic experience.

- To verify how the different TE (tourism experiences) dimensions impact on the tourists' TDI and consequent overall image of the Algarve.

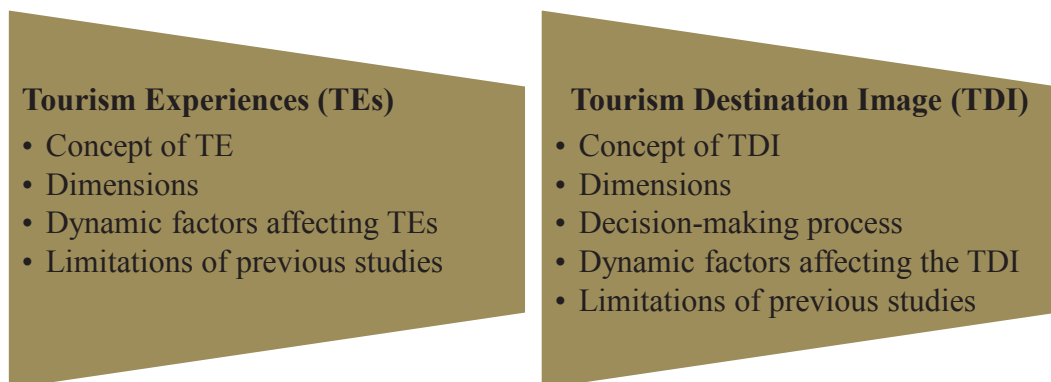
To attain this objective, Algarve's TEs and TDI are analyzed to identify the relationships between both constructs and the tourists' overall image, resulting from their holiday experience at the TD.

1.4 Research structure

The thesis is organized into two main constructs presented in figure 1.2, Tourism Experiences (TEs) and Tourism Destination Image (TDI) and it is composed of 9 chapters. First, the aim of the study, the research relevance and goals, followed by the research structure are presented. In the second chapter, the setting of the study is characterized, regarding the Algarve's tourism products value proposition.

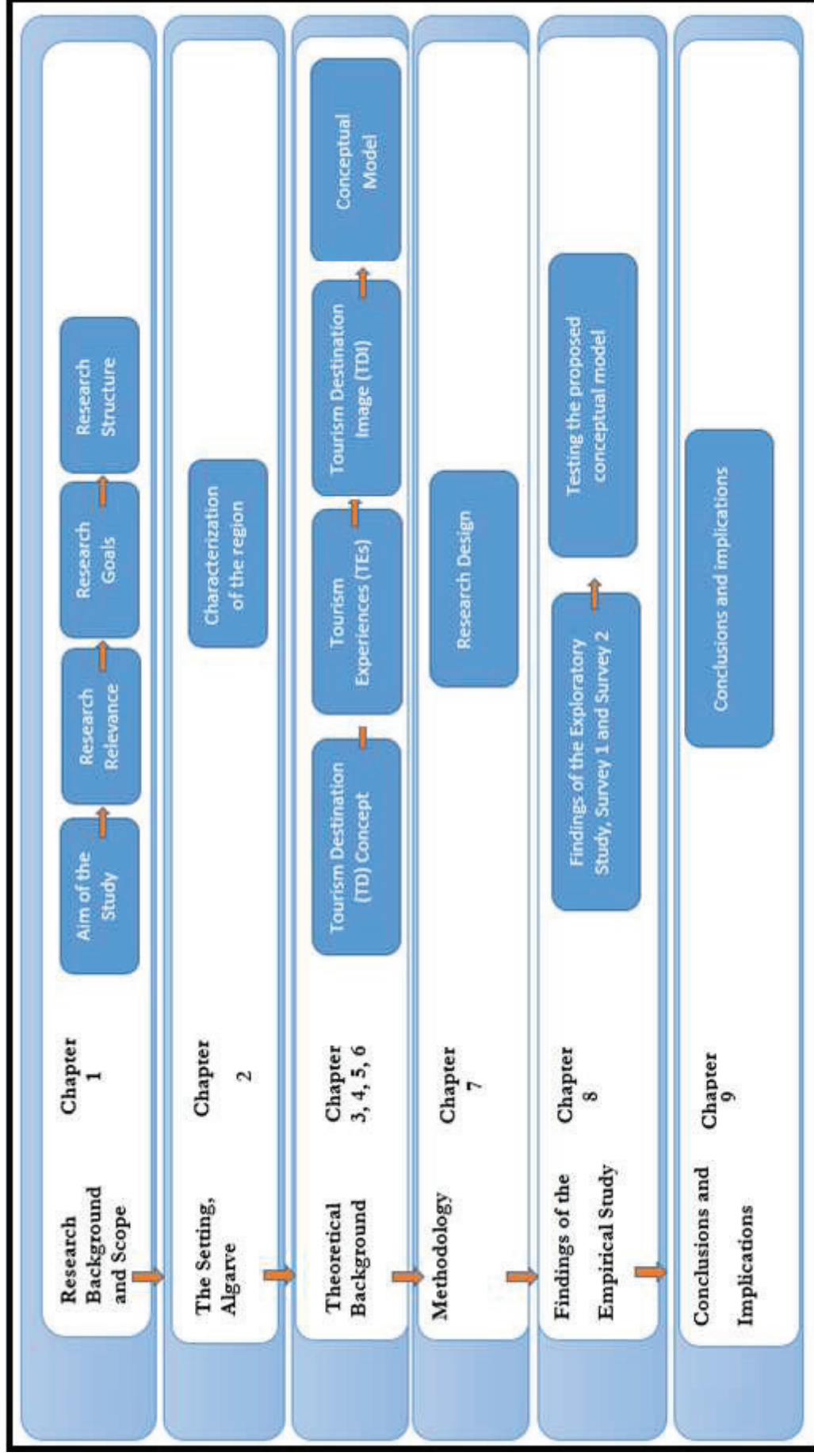
From Chapter 3 to Chapter 5, a literature review is made concerning the dynamic nature of the Tourism Destination concept and its environmental complexity (chapter3), followed by the TEs (Chapter 4) and TDI (Chapter 5) constructs. Chapter 6, presents the conceptual model proposed in the present investigation. In Chapter 7, the methods, questionnaires applied, and variables used to estimate the model are operationalized. In Chapter 8 the profile of Algarve's foreign tourists and the descriptive and inference statistics of the samples are presented. In the same chapter, the proposed conceptual model is tested. Lastly, in Chapter 9, the conclusions and implications of the results attained are discussed.

Figure 1.2 - Two Main Constructs Presented in the Literature Review



Source: Author

Figure 1.3 – Research Structure



Source: Author

CHAPTER 2 – SETTING OF THE STUDY, THE ALGARVE

Introduction

In this chapter, the emphasis was given to the tourism destination under study, the Algarve, more specifically a description of the regional reality, with emphasis on the local natural and man-made resources. For that reason, this chapter will focus on the description and characterization of the areas selected for the study, regarding the Algarve's natural, cultural and environmental heritage. More importantly is to understand tourism's role on the regional setting. Moreover, its constraints and opportunities, and how critical it is for the Algarve to promote the correct tourism destination image and offer engaging tourism experiences.

2.1 Selection of the geographical areas

The setting of the study was all the region of the Algarve, all its 16 municipalities as figure 2.1 shows: Alcoutim, Aljezur, Albufeira, Castro Marim, Faro, Loulé, Lagos, Lagoa, Monchique, Olhão, Portimão, São Brás de Alportel, Silves, Tavira, Vila do Bispo and Vila Real Santo António, since each municipality is endowed with its own important tourist attractions and experiences. However, since the goal of the study is not to assess the TDI and TEs at any particular municipality, but the overall experience at the TD Algarve, the following description will focus on the region as a whole and not on the municipalities as its parts.

Figure 2.1 – The Map of the Algarve



Source: INE (2013)

2.2 Characterization of the areas where the empirical study was conducted

Located at Europe's westernmost point, the Algarve covers an area of 4,989 Km² in the south of Portugal and has a coastline of nearly 150 km length facing the Atlantic Ocean (CCDR, 2004). The region is divided in 16 municipalities (as described previously), from the West (Barlavento) to the East (Sotavento), and encompasses many important attributes, among which natural heritage, historic and cultural heritage.

2.2.1 Natural heritage

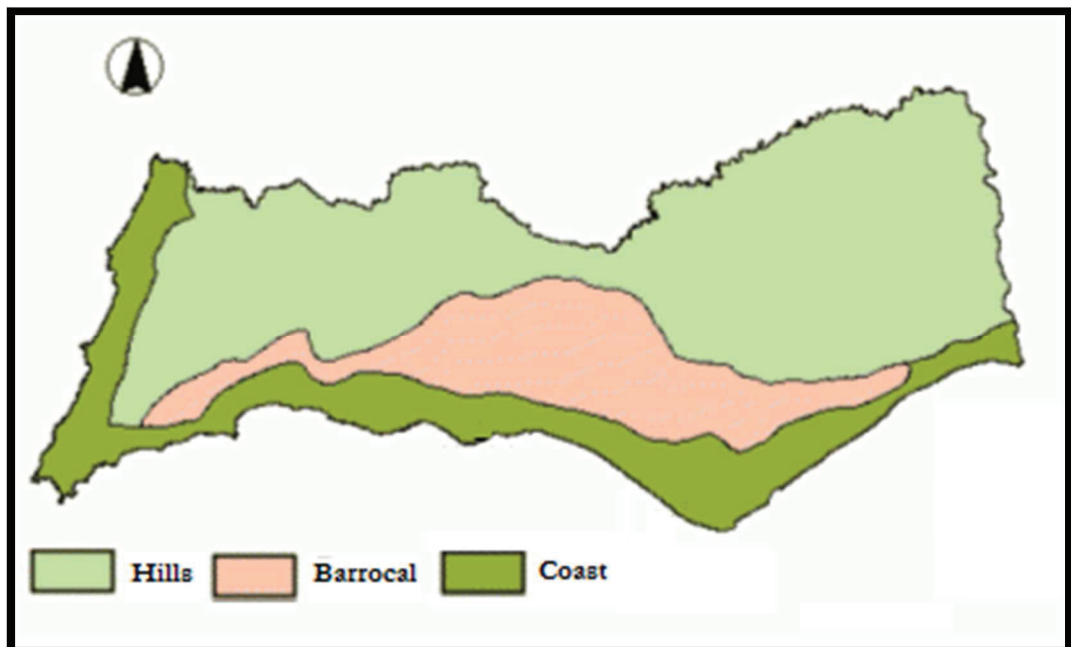
With a long coastline and moderate climate (18,9°Celsius), the Algarve offers to its visitors low annual average rainfall (80,5 rainless days) and extensive sunlight hours per year (Martins & Centeno, 1999). The natural landscape divides its geography into three different areas: Coastal area (at the south of the region), “Barrocal” area (inland) and Hills (at the north). Each of these three main areas have distinguishing characteristics (as figure 2.2 below shows):

A) The coastal area is where 80% of the economic activity is located (CCRALG, 2000) and consists of low altitude plains of extensive beaches, fields and meadows (Martins & Centeno, 1999).

B) The "Barrocal" area is a transition zone located between the coastal and hills, used mostly for agriculture purposes of products like citrus fruits, dried fruits, and regional products e.g., liquors, meat sausages, traditional sweets, cheeses (CCRALG, 2000; Martins & Centeno, 1999).

C) The hills – a high altitude region (ranging from the Serra de Espinhaço de Cão, Serra de Monchique (902 meters high), Serra do Caldeirão (577 meters high) to the Serra do Mú), that occupies nearly 60% of the territory, but only has 10% of residents, when compared with the rest of the region. The main economic activities in this area are agriculture and grazing (CCRALG, 2000; Martins & Centeno, 1999).

Figure 2.2 – The Geographic Division of the Algarve



Source: Lopes & Monteiro (2010)

2.2.2 Historic and cultural heritage

Historical heritage

The history of the Algarve extends to ancient civilizations tracing back to the Neolithic period. However, these civilizational traces cover all periods, from the roman period to the muslim presence (8th to the 13th century). The Muslim presence was so influential that its heritage and costumes were transported into the regional agriculture, monuments, and households' architecture, and even on the name of the region (like many of its cities, villages) since Algarve originates from Al-Gharb.

With an economy based on agriculture (citrus fruits, dried fruits, and on other regional industries like cork) and on fishing activities (which would later lead to the oil and tuna canned industry), the Algarve would remain dependent of these two economic activities (Martins & Centeno, 1999) until the II world war, time which represents the beginning of the demise of the tuna and oil industry.

However, in the 60s, the first movements of the tourism activity and the consequent pressure of the “Sun and Sea” tourism, lead to the excessive growth of the construction sector (CCDR, 2004). Later, with the construction of Faro International Airport in 1965, a new access route was created by air, to and from Europe.

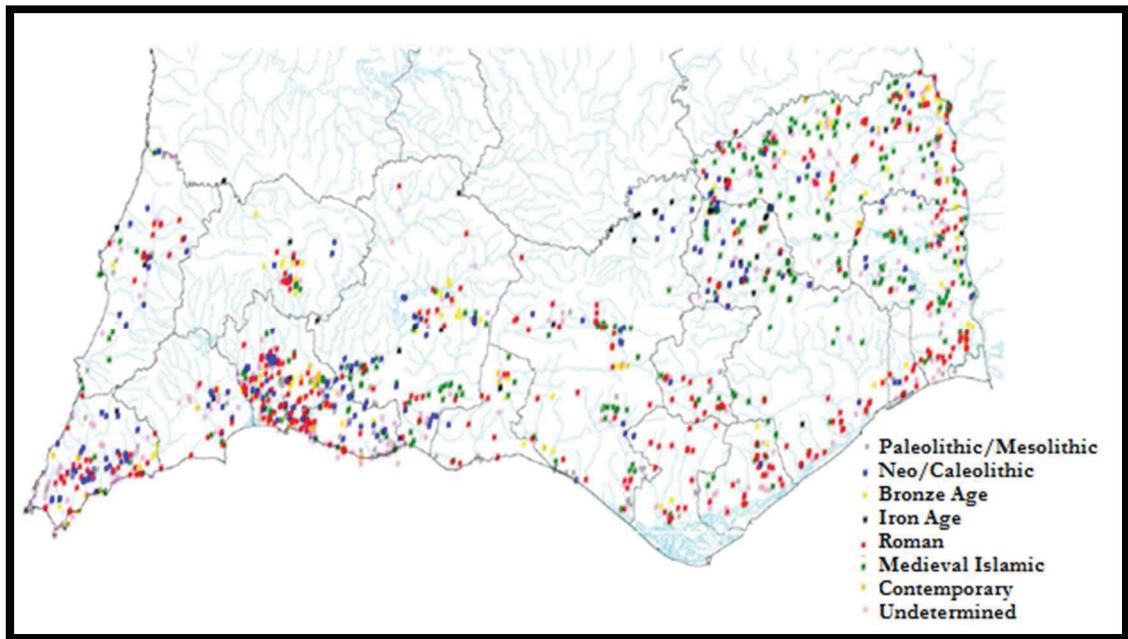
This construction brought more tourism development, but also more economic dependency on this activity, since many residents left the primary and secondary sectors to work on tourism related activities. In the 90s, the completion of the motorway A22 created another important access routes to the region.

Cultural heritage

Regarding the cultural heritage, the Algarve has a rich one (considered one of the richest in Portugal) with more than 1700 archeological sites known (CCDR, 2004). The Islamic

origin is predominant, and in “the Hills” region, many of these sites can be found, as figure 2.3 shows.

Figure 2.3 – Distribution of Archeological Sites by Time

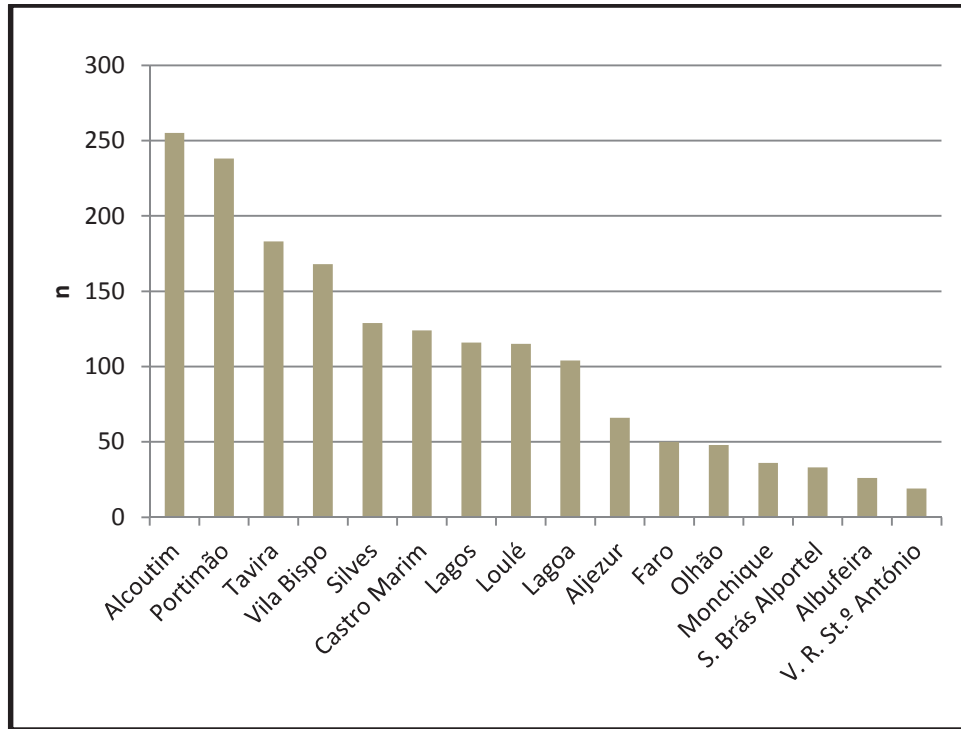


Source: CCDR (2004)

Nevertheless, from these 1700 sites extending from the far extreme of Sagres (due to its role in the 15th century during the Portuguese maritime expansion) to Vila Real de Santo António, only a few have potential for tourism purposes due to their conservation state. Still, other relevant archeological structures, like fishing or salt extraction activities from the roman period, can be found along the coastline (CCDR, 2004).

As seen on figure 2.4, the majority of these archeological sites can be found in the municipalities of Alcoutim (255), Portimão (238), Tavira (183), Vila do Bispo (168), whereas Faro (50), Albufeira (26), Vila Real de Santo António (19) are among the municipalities with less archeological sites.

Figure 2.4 – Distribution of Archeological Sites by Municipalities



Source: CCDR (2004)

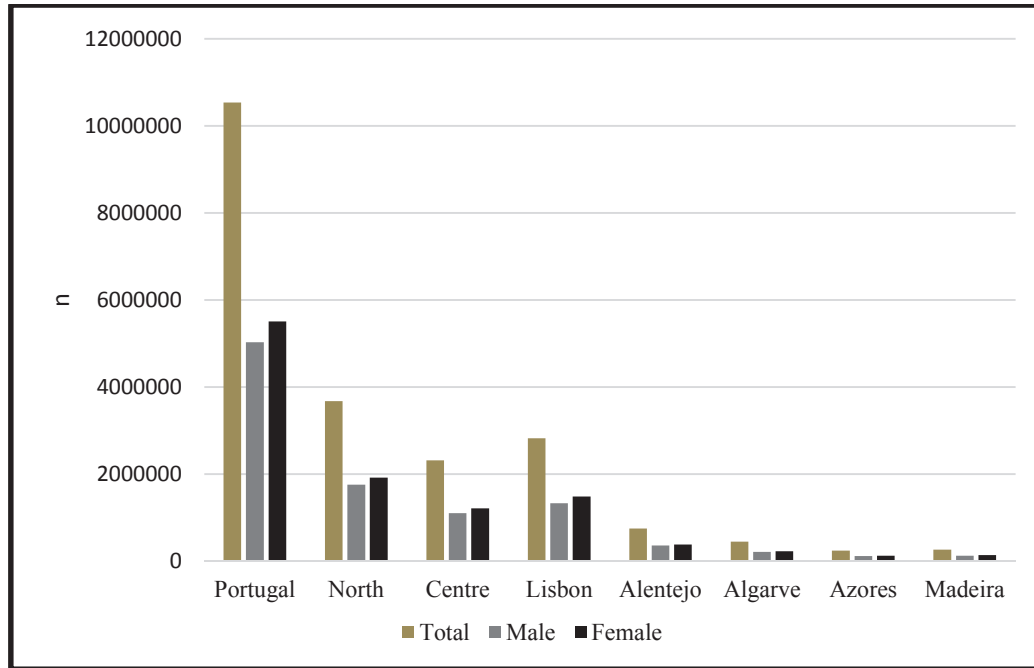
2.2.3 Algarve's demography and economy

The Algarve, in 2011, had a resident population² by area of NUTS II³ of 450993 people, which represented solely 5% of the 10 542 840 residents in Portugal (INE, 2013a). As figure 2.5 shows, the gender of the population in the Algarve was of 219614 males and 231379 females living in the region.

² According to INE (2013a) - Portugal National Statistics Office resident population is a group of people (present or absent) in a given accommodation at the time of observation, that lived for a continuous period of at least 12 months (before the time of observation), or that came to the residence for a period corresponding to the 12 months preceding the time of observation, with the intention to stay for a minimum of one year.

³ The regions NUTS II are North, Center, Lisbon, Alentejo, Algarve, Azores, Madeira (INE, 2013a).

Figure 2.5 – Resident Population by Area NUTS II – 2011

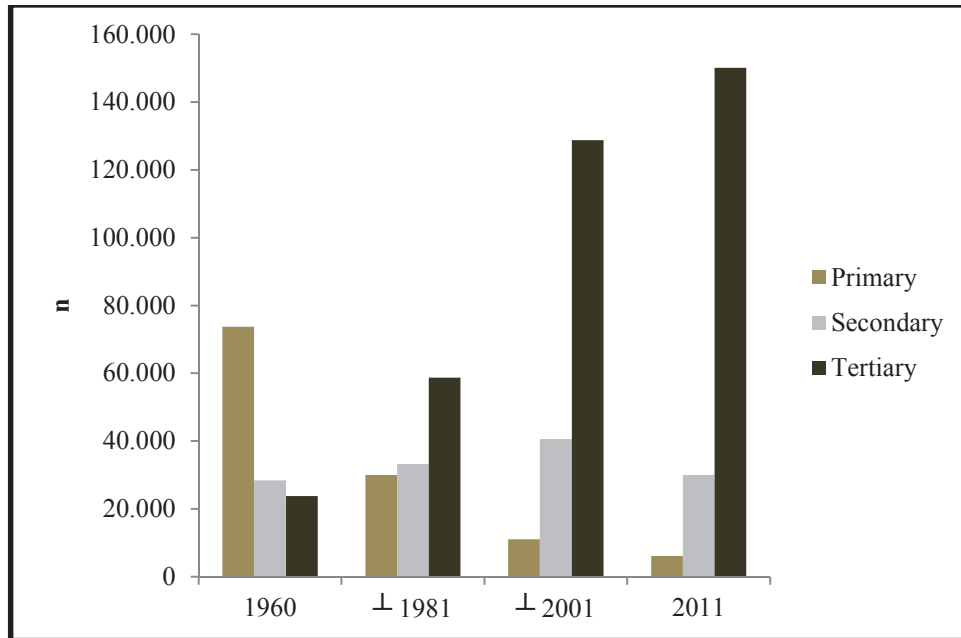


Source: INE (2013a)

In the same figure (2.5) it can be seen that of the 450993 residents in Algarve in 2011, only 229300 were accounted as active population when compared to the 5543200 on a national level. However, considering the number of regional employment in the same year, this number was 193500 people, whereas the national employed population was 4837200 (INE, 2013a). With an unemployment rate of 15.6% (higher than the national rate), Algarve's economic activity is very dependent on the tertiary sector (Pordata, 2013).

As figure 2.6 shows, from the 60s the amount of people working (23746), 80s (58748), 00s (128810), until 10s (150057) on the tertiary sector has constantly grown. In opposition the primary sector have had a constant decline of the number of people working on the fields since the 60s (73677), 80s (30018), 00s (11034), 10s (6142), and the secondary sector, that despite having grown from the 60s (28402) to the 80s (33261) and 00s (40551), it has however, declined in the 10s (29992) (Pordata, 2013).

Figure 2.6 – Employed Population at the Algarve, According to Sector of Main Activity, 2011



Source: Pordata (2013)

As seen in figure 2.6, in 2011, the tertiary sector has had a significant impact on the economy of the Algarve and, more importantly, on the social wellbeing of the residents. In the core of Algarve's tertiary sector is the production of services (intangible) and at its epicenter is the tourism activity.

2.2.4 Tourism sector

In the last decades, the economic development and the appeal of the tangible and intangible local attributes, structurally transformed the Algarve, socially and economically, with the abandonment of the primary sector (mainly agriculture), as a consequence of the growth of the tertiary sector (mainly the hospitality industry) (CCRALG, 2000; CCDR, 2004).

Like many other TDs, the Algarve has also transformed itself, and continuous investment was made in the tourism sector as a dynamic force of the socio-economic progress (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999; Dredge, 2010; Kotler *et al.*, 2009; Tribe & Xiao, 2011) in the Algarve. This investment has brought results and economic growth in fast emerging regions, transforming the world in a global community (Kotler *et al.*, 2009). Today, tourism is one of the fastest growing economic sectors of the world, with the number of international arrivals to have grown to 940 million and the share in international tourist arrivals received by emerging and developing economies, to have risen from 31% in 1990 to 47% in 2010 (UNWTO, 2011).

In general, the number of international arrivals in 2011 - 7'432'000 arrivals, demonstrates an increase of 9% of tourist arrivals comparing with 2010, and also shows an increase on the international tourism receipts, reaching US\$ 11,339 million dollars in total (UNWTO, 2012). Nevertheless, even tourism, like many other sectors of the economy has experienced or is experiencing some constraint, as result of the present national and international economic decline.

2.2.4.1 The Algarve

The Algarve's dependency of the tertiary sector, and specially tourism (receiving around 5 million tourists per year) is extremely important for the local economy, not only because it represents 60% of the total employment, but also because it represents 66% of the regional GDP⁴ (ERTA, 2013). The prominence of the tourism activity is also reflected at the national level, since the Algarve is the principal tourism region in the country, representing 35,4% of the total national overnights stays, the highest bed average per establishment (246 beds), and also the second highest average revenue per room, € 31.2 (INE, 2012).

Reflecting on other recent tourism activity indicators in 2011, it is possible to observe on table 2.1, that 65% of the Algarve's guests were foreign, and most of nights were spend

⁴ GDP - Gross domestic product

between July and September (46.6%). Also the guests in total (foreign and nationals) stayed an average 4.6 nights in the establishments, whereas if only foreign guests are considered, the overnight stays are longer (5.2 nights). Overall, the net bed-occupation rate was 42.7%, higher than the national rate (40%) (INE, 2013a).

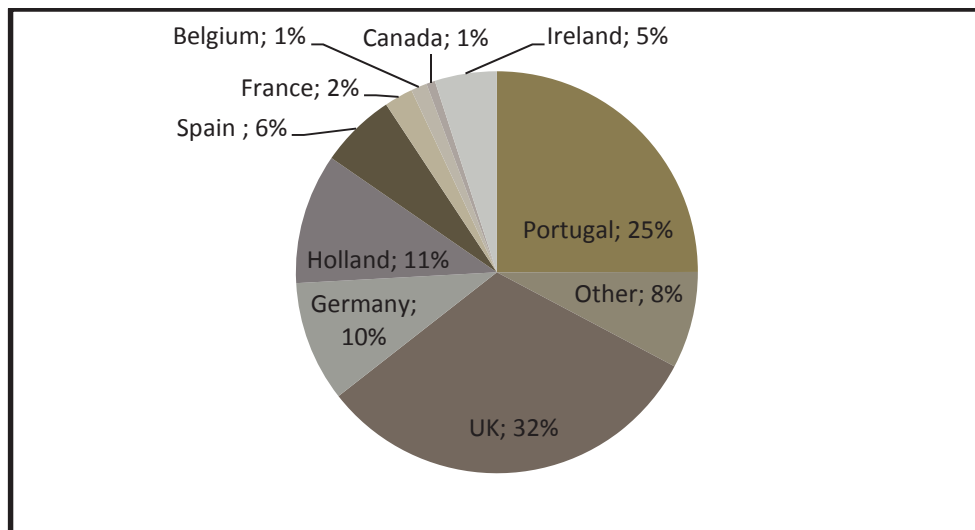
Table 2.1 – Algarve Tourism Activity Indicators, 2011

2011	Algarve	Portugal
Proportion of foreign guests (%)	65	53
Proportion of nights between July - September (%)	46,6	39,3
Average stay on the establishment (No. Of nights)	4,6	2,8
Average stay of foreign guests on the establishment (No. Of nights)	5,2	3,5
Net bed-occupation rate (%)	42,7	40

Source: INE (2013a)

In this context, as figure 2.7 shows, regarding Guests' Overnight stays, the Algarve's main markets were from Great Britain, (31,7 %), Portugal (25%), Holland (10,5%) and Germany (9,7%). In all, the Algarve had a total of 15197 million overnight stays (AHETA, 2011).

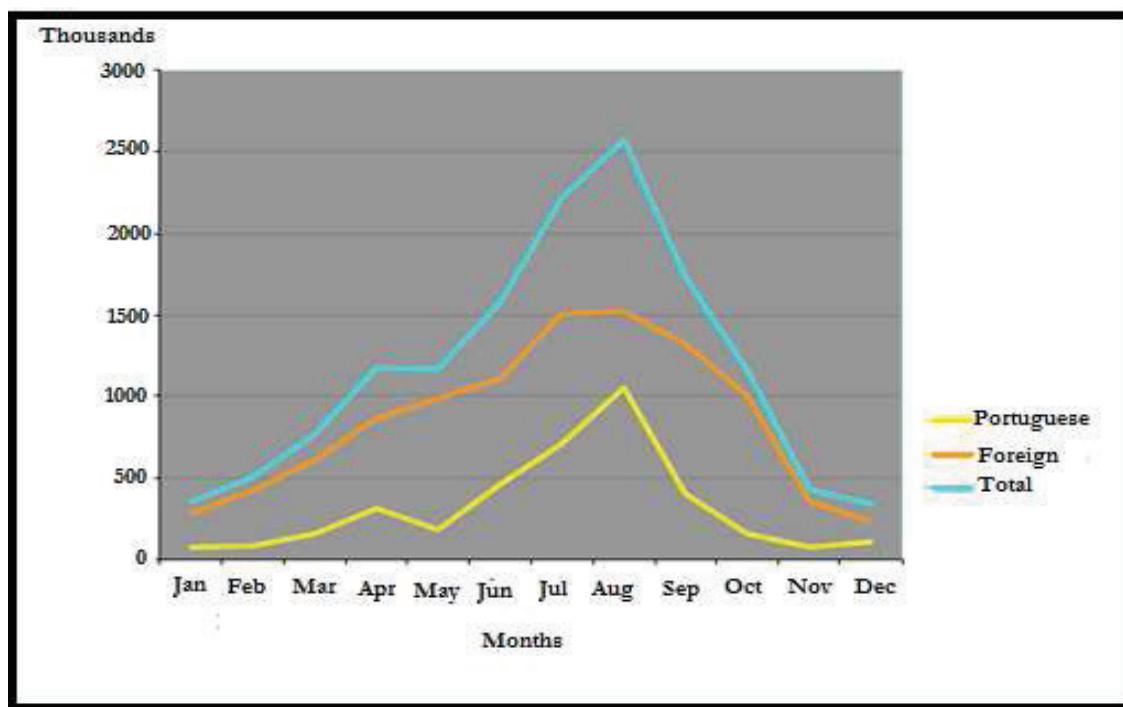
Figure 2.7 – Guests Overnights Stays In 2011 by Country of Origin



Source: AHETA (2011)

A relevant problem that the Algarve faces is seasonality. As figure 2.8 shows, the number of overnight stays is concentrated in the summer months of June, July, August and September, but the peak is reached in July/August (2,5 million) (ERTA, 2012).

Figure 2.8 – Overnights Stay In Hotels, Per Month in 2011



Source: ERTA (2012)

The target set in the PENT⁵ for 2015, is for the region to increase its numbers of foreign guests by 5,5 % per year, reaching in 2015 a total of 10.6 million overnights. Regarding the national guests, the goal is also to increase the number of guests by 2.9 % per year and to rise by 2.8 % the number of overnights (reaching 4.2 million). These goals are not only quantitative, they are also qualitative, within the strategic axis defined as core strategic tourism products is the “Sun & Sea” and Golf (PENT, 2013).

⁵ PENT - National Strategic Plan for Tourism

Conclusion note

In this chapter, the Algarve, the setting of the study, was described and characterized regarding its history, geography, natural and cultural heritage, economy and social reality. In addition, in order to understand the frame within which this research is conducted, Algarve's tourism sector was outlined regarding its importance and characteristics. As seen previously, this sector (tourism) is extremely important economically and socially, reasons enough for local marketers and stakeholders to assess how tourists perceive the TD and how the holiday experience at the Algarve affects the regions TDI and overall satisfaction with TEs.

CHAPTER 3 - THE TOURISM DESTINATION CONCEPT (TD)

Introduction

Although the nature of the tourism activity as a whole is beyond the scope of the present research, in this chapter, a literature review was conducted to examine certain pertinent concepts related to tourism, as these concepts are important and fundamental for the understanding of both key constructs (TEs and TDI). Therefore, in this chapter the objective is to establish the nature and complexity of the tourism sector. By setting a framework of the environment in which tourists act, perceive, behave, and sense, making it easier to understand the TEs and TDI constructs.

3.1 The Tourism destination environment

The tourism activity is a business in which many services are involved (Otto & Ritchie, 1996), and during the course of the years, it has served as a driving force for social, economic and cultural development (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Esu & Arrey, 2009). It is a force that creates and defuses in tourists' everyday life, imagination, and illusion (Lengkeek, 2001). Han & Patterson (2007) argue on the other hand, that tourism has also contributed to some physical (e.g. heart disease, obesity or stress) and psychological (e.g. loneliness, diseases) negative effects. However, in spite of these negative effects, tourism remains an exodus from the ordinary experience (Lengkeek, 2001). In effect, then, it appears that the tourism industry has a historical background that needs to be outlined.

3.1.1 Historical background.

The need to travel, can be traced down to the primitive man, in their quest to survive during the hunt for food or for shelter, or even during the ancient civilizations (in China, Egypt, Greece, Rome) when kings, pharaohs and aristocrats visited places in search of

pleasure, adventure, health or spiritual guidance (like Jerusalem or Santiago de Compostela). In the middle ages, the end of the renaissance period (in the 16th Century) marked the birth of a new kind of travel and traveler, the “Grand Tour”, in which young European aristocrats travelled around Europe’s main cities, to gain personal experience and education (Balanzá & Nadal, 2003; Kastenholz, 2002).

The later industrial revolution (in the late 18th century, early 19th century) changed even more the economic and social panorama of western economies, with the introduction of new emergent technologies (for example, the steam locomotive), manufacturing became a reality in most factories. These events allowed lower labour costs which would subsequently create the conditions to support important social changes, among which was an improvement of workers’ wages and free time (for leisure activities) (Balanzá & Nadal, 2003). Nevertheless, this new social class, the laboring class or proletariat, also had to deal with a new problem, bad and hard working conditions (Costa, 2005).

In 1841 however, Thomas Cook invented the commercial “package”, enabling people to travel with other purposes besides education. The onset of two world wars limited tourism activities and only after world war II, with the development of land and air technologies (cars, airplanes), new infrastructures (roads and airports), along with the “birth” of many other new players, such as tour operators and travel agents, would the *package* and *charter* flights reach its *boom* (from the 60’s to the 80’s) and with it mass tourism emerged (Balanzá & Nadal, 2003; Costa, 2005; Kastenholz, 2002). The concepts of mass production and consequent mass consumption became a reality, in the same way, tourism became an important element of socio-economic development for many countries (Middleton & Clarke, 2001).

This posed a problem to countries, regions, places or destinations, because of:

- Increasing intensity and competition in the market among TDs;
- Development of more and better supply (the supply side became superior to the demand side);
- New tourists’ demands and profiles (the arrival of the internet, mass and social media allowed people to have easier and better access to information);

- Expansion and massification of new distribution channels (physical and virtual, like booking.com).

All of these new elements changed the rules of the market and made tourism destination marketing organizations (DMOs) change the approach to the market. They now had to face client needs to manage their TDs in a marketing perspective, to reach the tourist's mind (Bornhorst, Ritchie, & Sheehan, 2010), with the purpose of catching a share of the tourism market, full of tourists traveling each day from their countries to innumerable TDs, each with its own purpose (Zhang & Jensen, 2007).

3.1.2 Conceptual framework of the tourism environment

In this context, for some authors, tourism is an industry composed of many different agents, like an “amalgam” of services (Otto & Ritchie, 1996). For others, like Balanzá & Nadal (2003:24) it is considered to be “an economic activity which integrates production, distribution and consumption of goods and services to satisfy clients, requiring companies to dedicate themselves to accomplish it”, while for (Mathieson & Wall, 1982:1), it is suggested that tourism is “the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations, and the facilities created to cater to their needs”

This lack of a uniform or common definition of the tourism construct (Kotler *et al.*, 2009) is an example of the difficult task to reach a consensus among authors. One of the reasons for this problem, comes from researchers addressing particular or immediate problems (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2009). For example, Kotler, Bowen & Makens (2010:532) suggest tourism to be “a stay of one or more nights away from home for holidays, visits to friends and relatives, business conferences, or any other purpose, except such things as boarding, education, or semi-permanent employment.”

Goeldner & Ritchie (2009:6) on the other hand, consider it “the processes, activities, and outcomes arising from the relationships and the interactions among tourists, tourism

suppliers, host governments, host communities, and surrounding environments that are involved in the attracting and hosting of visitors”.

The concept of tourism needs therefore some consensus, in the same ways as the concept of TD (Doswell, 2002). In this regard, Bornhorst *et al.* (2010:572) suggest a tourism destination to be “a geographical region, political jurisdiction, or major attraction, which seeks to provide visitors with a range of satisfying to memorable visitation experiences”. However, as Gunn (1988:24) points out, “Neither the environment as such nor parts or features of the environment per se are resources; they became resources only if, when, and in so far as they are, or considered to be capable of serving man’s needs.”

In fact tourists, not only invest a large amount of time and money into travelling to unfamiliar environments, but they also undertake a set of diverse consumption activities at the destination before their return home (Laws, 1995). But, in spite of these activities, a destination can only become a true attraction if the access and facilities are created (Gunn, 1988; Bornhorst *et al.*, 2010), because services rather than the goods are what tourist’s purchase (Laws, 1995).

To this end, Bornhorst *et al.* (2010), reminds us that certain events by their own right can be considered by themselves a destination, since they can offer certain distinctive and significant experiences to the tourists’. Thus in order to provide a clear understanding in which terms “tourism destination” (TD) will be employed in this research, the following UNWTO⁶ (2007:1) definition will be used as reference.

"A local tourism destination is a physical space in which a visitor spends at least one overnight. It includes tourism products such as support services and attractions, and tourism resources within one day's return travel time. It has physical and administrative boundaries defining its management, images and perceptions defining its market competitiveness. Local tourism destinations incorporate various stakeholders often including a host community, and can nest and network to form larger destinations".

⁶ UNWTO - World Tourism Organization

As mention before, the TDs are spaces in which visitors spend overnights, but also visit these places for a limited time, since they cannot physically be present at more than one place (Govers, 2005). According to Gitelson & Crompton (1984) these visitors/tourists, can be divided of two different types: novelty seekers and those who avoid novelties disliking to take risks. In this context, Uriely (2005) presented a four category typology according to the meanings tourists assign to their experiences.

He suggests the presence of a continuum between tourists who combine work and tourism activities, and based on the meanings that these tourists to their experiences the following four categories:

- Most work-oriented, such as *Touring professional workers*, which engage and are concern with work-related purposes and only experience tourism activities as a byproduct; and *Migrant tourism workers*, those who are depend economically of travelling activities but experience in full, tourism activities at the same time;
- Most tourist-oriented, like *noninstitutionalized working-tourists*, which participate in work activities during their traveling to finance it, and *working-holiday tourists*, who experience work as recreational during their tourism traveling.

Then again, a definition encompassing all purposes of tourists (vacation, holiday, business, pilgrimage, conference, visiting relatives, education) is much wider, and is beyond the scope of the present study. Nevertheless, in order to understand and set the reference frame within which this research is conducted, the UNWTO (2008:10) definition for visitors, classified as tourists “if his/her trip includes an overnight stay, or as a same-day visitor” is chosen:

“A visitor is a traveler taking a trip to a main destination outside his/her usual environment, for less than a year, for any main purpose (business, leisure or other personal purpose) other than to be employed by a resident entity in the country or place visited. These trips taken by visitors qualify as tourism trips. Tourism refers to the activity of visitors”.

3.1.2.1 Tourism characteristics

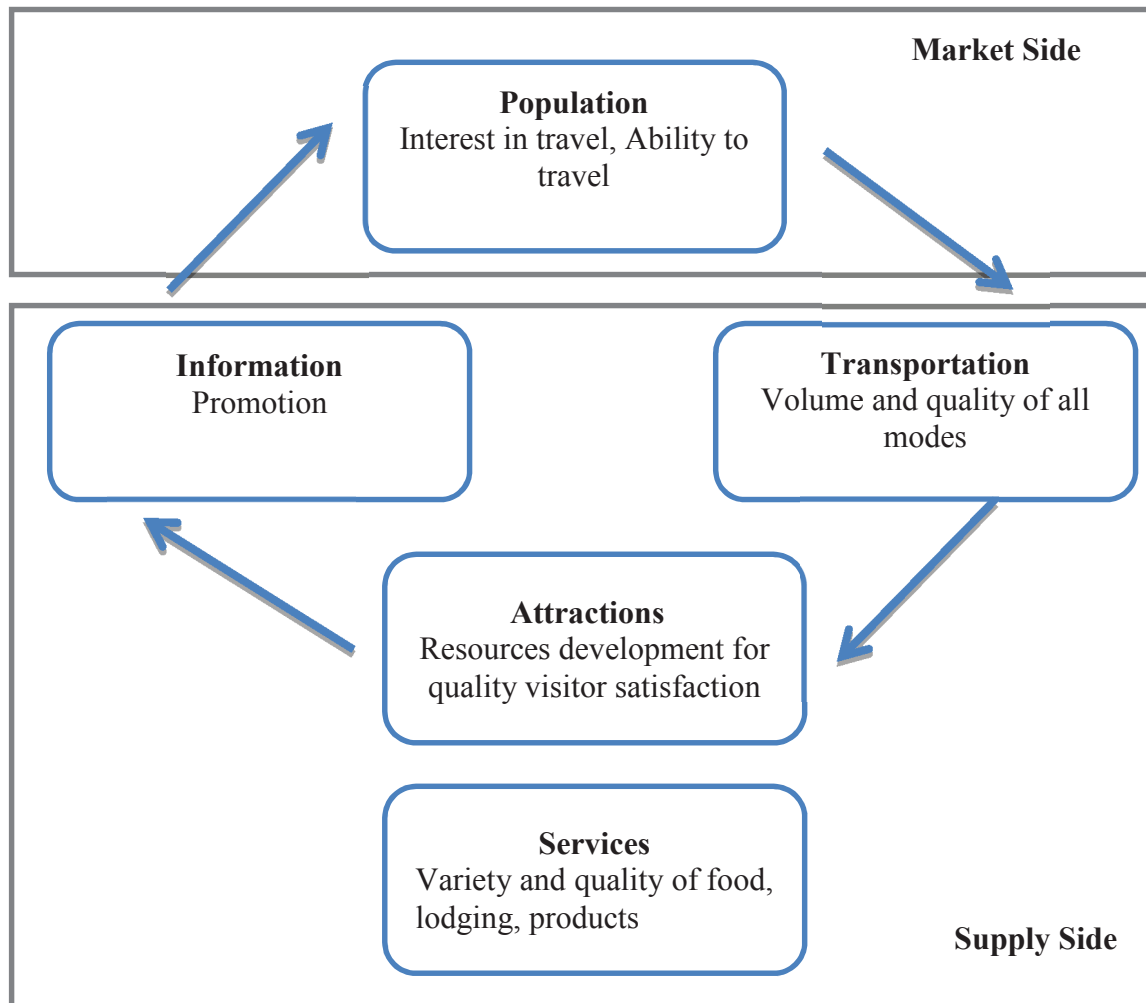
The tourism activity has several distinct aspects that make it hard for the tourists to expect exactly the same quality of service during the TE (Lehto, O’Leary, & Morrison, 2004). Among the distinct characteristics that differentiate this service industry from goods, several authors (Balanza & Nadal, 2003; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Kotler *et al.*, 2009; Lehto *et al.*, 2004) mention the inseparability (meaning that the act of consumption and production occur simultaneously), variability (since the human factor is present, people and organizations engage people in different times and different sets).

This means, the level of service will differ from employee to employee, from organization to organization but also, from tourists to tourist, and from time to time. The other characteristics are perishability (which means the services cannot be stored) and lastly, intangibility (which means, services cannot be tested before purchase). This complexity expresses the nature of the TD, since in addition to products and services being purchased, consumed, produced, there is also relations taking place between residents and tourists at the destination (Gunn, 1988).

Thus, tourists’ should be regarded as inputs into the destination system, since their experiences form the basis of their potential satisfaction (Laws, 1995). All these components of the tourism offering are interdependent, but together they create an overall functioning system as presented in figure 3.1 (Gunn, 1988). As Mayo (1975) argues the desirable dimensions of an ideal TD consists of one with warm climate, scenery, some population and “not very industrial”.

This connection between demand and supply has perimeters which are difficult to distinct (Gartner, 2005), since without the development of tourism attractions “there would be little need for transportation, facilities, services and information systems” (Gunn, 1988:37). In the same context, Bornhorst *et al.* (2010) refers that access routes to the destinations are important, as part of a strong product mix, but if the population is not supportive of the tourism activity, or even if visitors are not well treated, success would be hard to attain.

Figure 3.1 – The Functional Tourism System



Source: Gunn (1988:31)

As mentioned before, tourists and residents are seen as a production resource that takes part in the service being delivered, and this qualifies this industry to engage and stimulate tourists into emotional and experiential reactions (Otto & Ritchie, 1996). This combination of specific tourism products and services (accommodation, catering, transportation, entertainment), are presented as a global and composite product (Agapito, Mendes, & Valle, 2010).

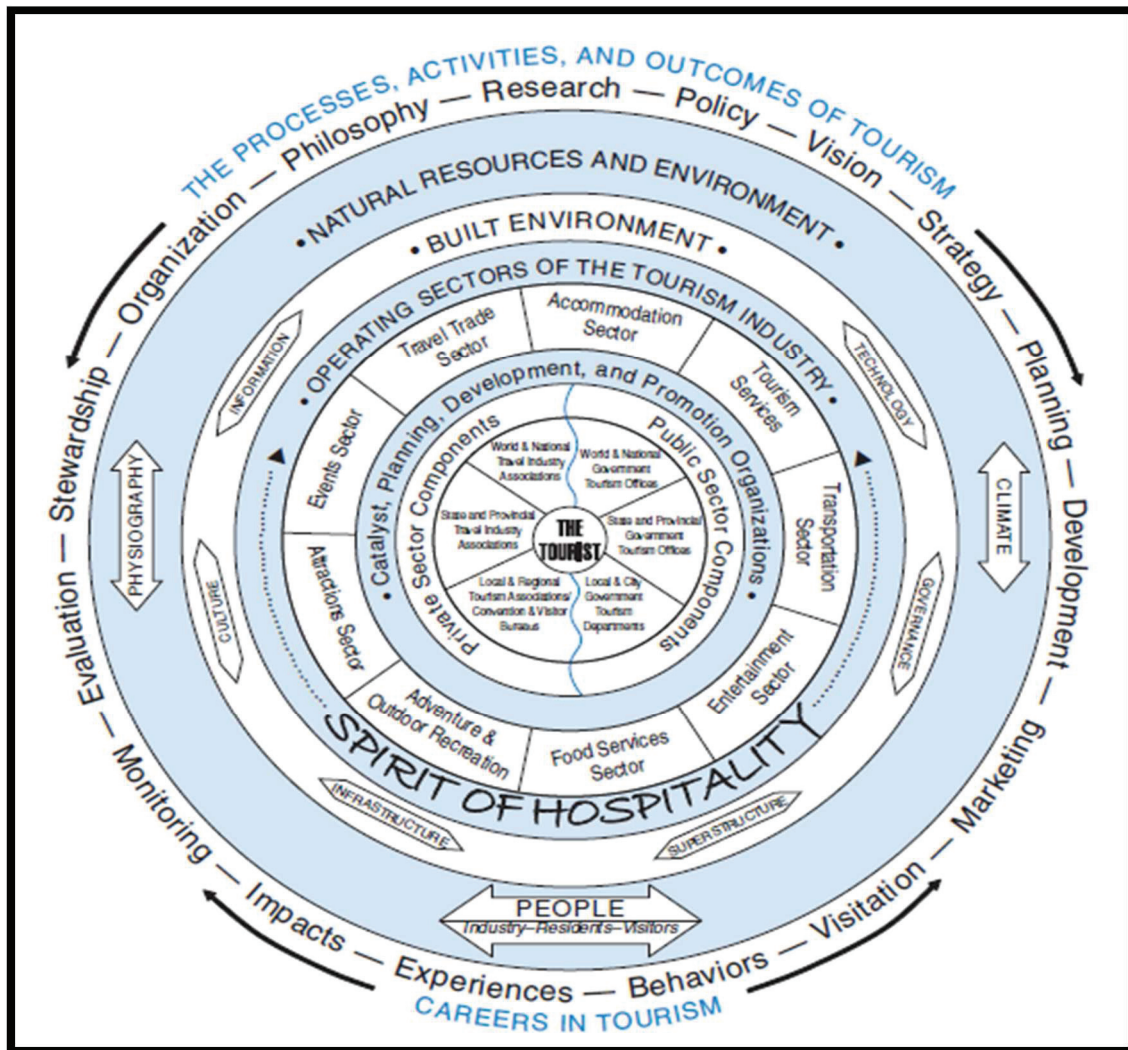
In the case of tourism activity, this complex reality has had several authors trying to explain its spatial structure, or even the processes that shape and mold it (Oppermann &

Chon, 1997). Dredge (1999:778) summed most models (annex 1) which addressed the development aspects of a tourism destination, and has criticized the models of destination regions because they “attempt to describe some evolutionary process but are neither explanatory nor predictive and hence of limited use in planning destination regions”.

As illustrated in figure 3.2, Goeldner & Ritchie (2009) also attempted in their model of the tourism phenomenon, to describe the complexity and key processes of the tourism activity throughout its various relationships, and resulting effects that occur within tourism. For both authors it is important not to forget:

- a) **Tourists’** (its role, motivation and decision-making process they go through);
- b) **The natural resources and environment** (such as people, nature and climate);
- c) The **built environment** (such as culture, structures, technology, information or governance (comprising the legal, political, fiscal system);
- d) **The operating sectors of the tourism industry** (such as transportation, accommodation, food services sector, attractions, events, adventure and outdoor recreation, entertainment, travel trade sector and tourism services);
- e) Spirit of hospitality (meaning the operating sectors of tourism which are responsible for delivering high-quality, memorable experiences);
- f) **Planning, Development, Promotion, and Catalyst Organizations** (inserted in the front line and back line of tourism, to deliver a quality experience to each tourist);
- g) The **Importance of Integrated/Collaborative Planning** (between the public and private sectors at all levels);
- h) **The processes, Activities, and Outcomes of Tourism** (that surround and occur within the tourism system);
- i) **Careers in Tourism** (associated with organizations’ and peoples’ work processes work);

Figure 3.2 – The Tourism Phenomenon



Source: Goeldner & Ritchie (2009:13)

Hence the best option to manage, coordinate and guide a destination and its complex system is through a destination management organization (DMO) to provide leadership for the destination management (Bornhorst *et al.*, 2010). As Buhalis (2000) reminds us, TDs are an integrated experience composed of various tourism products, that combined are proposed to tourists.

3.1.2.2 Tourism product

This combination, generally called tourism product is composed of resources which are not man made (like natural resources) or that cannot be copied (like historical and cultural heritage), and of resources that can be built, created, duplicated (like infrastructures, resorts) (Doswell, 2002).

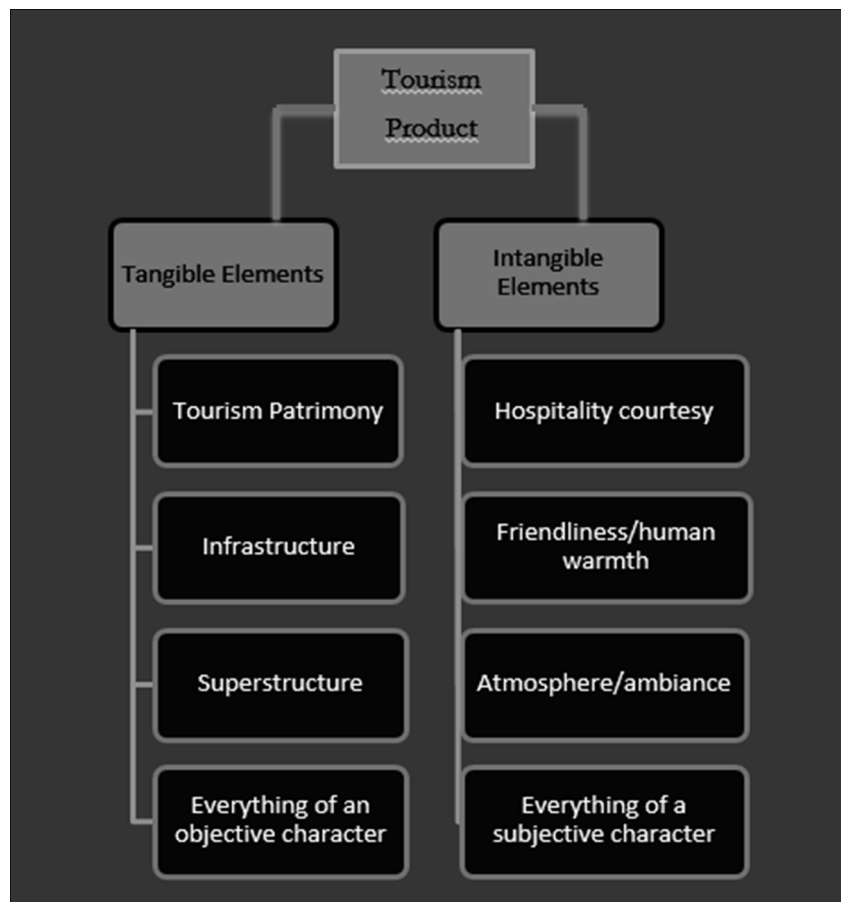
Being more specific, he warns the tourism product involves both tangible and intangible elements, in figure 3.3 it is possible to observe, that the tangible component consists of such elements like patrimony, infrastructure (airports, transportation systems, water, electricity), and superstructures (hotels, restaurants, resorts, theme parks), all key value components for the tourism activity.

These elements are easily estimated and assessed due to their tangible nature. On the other hand, intangible elements like the hospitality of a country or region, the friendliness of their residents, the atmosphere and ambience of the TD, are much more difficult to measure or evaluate because of its intangible nature (Doswell, 2002). As the author suggests, TDs need natural, cultural attractions, good weather, infrastructures, and superstructures, but also to have and an atmosphere and ambience that may allow tourists to feel welcome.

These, are the basic elements that call/attract tourists to TDs to satisfy their personal needs and expectations (UNWTO, 2007). In sum, it includes, attractions⁷ (like for example - beaches, mountains and monuments), facilities (like for example – conference and sport facilities or even religious buildings), or services (like for example – medical or education services). These attractions influence an important part in tourists' decisions or choices and also influence their motivation (Middleton & Clarke, 2001).

⁷ Attractions, are destination elements that provide, individually or combined, the main initial motivation for tourists visitation (UNWTO, 2007:1)

Figure 3.3 – The Tourism Product



Source: Doswell (2002:50)

Another component of the tourism product, is one related to less tangible factors, such as the uniqueness and emotional responses of tourists to whole events that unfold during the visit to the TD, e.g., all they experience (UNWTO, 2007; Doswell, 2002:48). But, questions can arise from this statement, such as – What experiences are lived by tourists? Can these TEs be replicated/duplicated?

The answers to these questions are important, because “the way tourists are treated and how they feel, can decisively influence their overall reaction to a place” (Doswell, 2002:48). Marketers’ need to be aware of how tourists react to the different stimuli, which calls upon the need to refocus on the tourists’ experiences, as the key stone of the TDs value proposition (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Moreover, more than the quality of the service offered (Otto & Ritchie, 1996), the fundamental issues are the quality of the TEs, and

should stakeholders' wish to increase their tourists' loyalty, they must direct their attention to the quality of the TEs (Lehto *et al.*, 2004).

However, Dredge (1999) maintains that tourism relies too much on natural and human resources, and most of the time tourism resources are planned and managed independently by the private sector, with other concerns outside tourism activity and initiatives. However she adds, these resources should nevertheless, be integrated in the TD planning if DMOs want it to be effective.

In this context, Govers (2005) also recalls, the role of DMOs, which have been changing overtime, from simple marketing organizations to more complex organizations, involved not only in the development of tourism products, but also in establishing relations within the industry. From this relation the opportunities arise for DMOs to project their identities and enhance the tourism product offering.

3.1.3 Building an identity

DMOs need for that matter to find an identity. An identity is according to Jafari (2000:293) a “process in which identity forming attributes (locale, language, race, gender or sexuality) serve as a limited set of raw materials for individuals to use in constructing different senses of belonging to social groups, locale, lifestyles, nations”. As pointed by Govers (2005), in this process subject to adjustments, an identity may be composed of several other identities, i.e. some can even be fragmented.

The reason comes from the fact that TD identities have been formed or constructed from different discourses, such as, historical, political or cultural, and also, from the influence of the decision-making processes in which the social-cultural dynamics play an important part (Pritchard & Morgan, 2001). One of the “tools” to form a TD identity, within reach of DMOs managers, is festivals or events (Jeong & Santos, 2004).

Once an identity has been found or created, from this point in time onwards, a Brand⁸ needs to be developed and nurtured. Several authors have explored (Kim *et al.*, 2008; Lee & Back, 2008; Marzano & Scott, 2009; Murphy, Moscardo, & Benckendorff, 2007; Nam, Ekinici, & Whyatt, 2011) the brand, since it works as a distinct sign/signal/message of added value to the TD identity, by creating in the selected target markets, an image of the TD. As Gartner & Ruzzier (2010:471) claim “branding is all about ownership...is through the process of instilling customer ownership that brand equity is created”. Font (1997) also considers a brand to allow TDs to identify themselves to their target markets.

Still, DMOs marketers must create the right brand, and promote the right image for success to be attained. This warning stems from the TDI promoted not being fully controllable by marketers, since TDI does not depend solely on the product/destination attributes, but instead on how it is perceived and remembered by the potential tourists (Font, 1997). Moreover, the tourists’ options during their decision-making process is wide. Oppermann (1998), for example stresses the fact TDs need to be perceived as places containing many different products, in the same way a brand associated with goods is composed of different products.

However, each TD product has advantages and disadvantages, each has its costs; physical (like being too far away, or of difficult access), mental (like the perceived value, motivation or attractiveness), monetary or regarding time. But, the important is for DMOs managers to understand that even if TDs look the same under the market “eyes”, for tourists’ the difference can be met or measured in the brand or image strength (Kotler *et al.*, 2009). The authors also argue, that for a strong and distinctive TDI to be built, it takes time, creativity and hard work, since not all differences are good differentiators.

Moreover, brand images are created by tourists (Reynolds, 1965), and each difference has the potential to create costs as well as customer benefits (Kotler *et al.*, 2009). Thus, TDs need not only to work to creating differentiating TDI from their competitors, but more importantly, they need to certify their brand appears/shows in the tourists’ awareness set.

⁸ Brand – is a name, symbol, term design or any combination of these used to differentiate products or services from those of competitors (Jafari, 2000:56).

In this sense every event or TE, should be in harmony with the value proposition expressed and communicated to the target market, in order to prevent misleading positioning⁹ or even a wrong one. Crompton, Fakeye, & Lue (1992:20) define positioning as “the process of establishing and maintaining a distinctive place for a destination in the minds of potential visitors within targets markets”. They consider positioning to be vital for any DMOs planning, because it influences the tourists’ perceptions and consequently their choices. For instance, Calantone *et al.*, (1989) verified some discrepancies in the tourists’ perceptions of TDs, since these varied according to their countries of origin and image attributes.

Thus, managers must communicate effectively the right positioning statement to their targets. But, which attributes are unique? Or which attributes efficiently differentiates a TD from its competitors? Which attributes can meet the target market needs? (Crompton, Fakeye & Lue, 1992). These questions need answers, to enable marketers to maintain a consistent and up-to-date positioning strategy, a task which is not easy (Kotler *et al.*, 2009). Crompton, Fakeye & Lue (1992) nevertheless suggests that although sustainable positioning strategies are difficult, any TD may establish and maintain a successful positioning in the market, if the benefits pursued by the tourists and benefits offered by the service providers are matched.

3.1.4 Destination attachment, a road to competitiveness and sustainability

Although TDs can undoubtedly be treated as products, the most significant challenge is nevertheless, the need for an effective destination strategy due to the rising competition among destinations (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993, 2003; O’Leary & Deegan, 2003). In this context, DMO’s must repack and re-brand the products they offer (Amoamo, 2003), and take into consideration the impacts on the environment of additional tourists visiting the destination (Gartner, 2005). As a result, much remains to be done to understand how the stakeholders can transform the destination into a more reliable, strong, competitive and ultimately more successful place (Bornhorst *et al.*, 2010).

⁹ Positioning is the process of establishing a distinctive place for a destination in the minds of the travelers in the targeted markets (Crompton, Fakeye & Lue, 1992; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993).

As Lehto *et al.* (2004) recall, the tourism market is dynamic, and therefore a strategic approach to the market is necessary to foresee environmental market opportunities and threats. This approach is necessary according to Govers (2005), because it is with partnerships between the private and public sector at the management level of the TD, (e.g., DMOs) that the strategic assessment of the product offering, positioning and branding can be done, to find sustainable competitive advantages.

As the author argues, the tourism market compels DMOs to make important decisions related to the elements of the tourism products which will have higher chances of appealing to potential tourists, and which best represent the setting (through the projected images). Since, TD competition is based on the TDI tourists hold, a lot of money is spent in creating and maintaining favorable TDI (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a; Pike, 2004), to increase the revisit intentions (Wang & Hsu, 2010).

Thus, it is important for DMOs not to be concern solely with collecting information about the target market behavior and preferences, but instead they should focus on engaging tourists while the service is being provided. As Hosany & Witham (2009) suggest the business of those on the supply side is to the shape, package and ultimately sell TEs. Even so, not all goes well during the holiday experience, and marketers must be aware and conscious that sometimes, when tourists deal with residents and other tourists, tourism consumption may cause problems between these two parties (Prebensen & Foss, 2011). MacCannell (1999) emphasizes in this context, that these TEs must be authentic, and their focus must remain in creating or finding unique and memorable TEs, that may satisfy their tourists (Berry, Carbone, & Haeckel, 2002; Hosany & Witham, 2009).

As Laws (1995) points out, another key factor in managing tourism is to understand what satisfaction (Alegre & Garau, 2010; Wang & Hsu, 2010; Yoon & Uysal, 2005) clients anticipate with the purchase of their holidays, since they sense the need to travel and look for the “product” with the greatest satisfaction proposal (Armario, 2008; Lee *et al.*, 2005). Therefore, satisfaction will occur if the tourists’ expectations are fulfilled, while dissatisfaction will occur when tourists’ expectations are not meet (Vittersø *et al.*, 2000).

Thus, satisfaction is therefore one of the most relevant variables when analyzing tourist behavior, as it has a significant, positive, direct and indirect impact on immediate revisit intention (Assaker, Vinzi, & O'Connor, 2011; Bigné, Sánchez, & Sánchez, 2001; Jang & Feng, 2007; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Oppermann, 2000), and also in when tourists share with others (friends, family) their experiences (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Milman & Pizam, 1995; Oppermann, 2000). Thus, to create satisfactory experiences for the tourists, different programs must be set, with the focus on different target markets (Lehto *et al.*, 2004). Accordingly, a level of compromise between capacity, quality versus marketing programs and target markets, must be achieved/set. Since, the quality and capacity between facilities and services must be coordinated and synchronized (Doswell, 2002).

Some authors (Alegre & Garau, 2010; Esu & Arrey, 2009; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Valle *et al.*, 2006; Wang & Hsu, 2010; Yoon & Uysal, 2005) have already verified the importance and relevance of satisfaction as a marketing instrument to appeal to specific target markets, and subsequent loyalty, as a key factor for the successful of any destination marketing. On the other hand, it is critical for marketers to be conscious that service quality influences the tourists' satisfaction (Valle *et al.*, 2006).

Thus, strong positive performance from the service provider's side is needed to avoid tourists' being dissatisfied, especially concerning the impact of tourist on employee interaction (Huang & Hsu, 2009), or even regarding other tourists' behavior. In this regard, Vitterso *et al.*, (2000), considers that one of the problems with the measurement of satisfaction is the tourists' personal cognitive dissonance¹⁰ strategies to compensate any possible negative inconsistencies between the expectations they generated and the product/service provided.

Kozak (2010) considers in the same way, TEs are the most relevant and significant aspect for causing satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Huang & Hsu, 2009). Alegre & Garau (2010)

¹⁰ Cognitive Dissonance Theory – is built on the concept that individual strive toward consistency, even if there is any inconsistencies, individuals will try to reduce the amount of psychological discomfort by rationalizing or reduce its dissonance and any situation that might increase it (Festinger, 1957 cited by Egan, Santos & Bloom, 2007).

extend this view, by assuming the need for the context in which the TEs evaluation occurs, to be defined. This increases the need for DMOs to anchor their strategies and tourism development policies on a competitive advantage, leveraged on the understanding and management of the “true nature of consumer satisfaction as it occurs in the context of service delivery” (Otto & Ritchie, 1996:167), since satisfaction is the best predictor of future behavioral intentions and also of revisiting and/or recommendation of TDs (Chen & Tsai, 2007).

Divergent to this position, Oppermann (1998) claims tourists’ might return to the same destination even if dissatisfied, as a way to reduce potential risks going to other destinations perceived as potentially worse, e.g., the return to the TD may be perceived less risky since known dissatisfaction factors have been met. Disagreeing with this view, Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung (2007:120) refer the importance of the added value concept “...the nature and scope of the experience offered by a destination and processed by tourists determine the value of the destination”. This value can be seen as the difference between the perceived costs associated with the purchase of a product or service, and the benefits received by tourists.

In sum, its consequently of the utmost importance to understand the tourists’ perceptions of the destination and also how the image projection can be used by DMOs to reinforce their brand equity and how it impacts on tourist behavior (Govers, 2005) and their satisfaction. As Sönmez & Sirakaya (2002) stress, TDs depend on the projected images into the potential tourists minds. Thus, it is from an accurate management of these images, and the correct definition of positioning (Selby & Morgan, 1996) that success or failure of any given TDs is measured.

However, the growing importance of TDI and the media’s role in creating, enhancing and changing image (Croy, 2004) are factors requiring marketers to be vigilant. In the same way, marketers must accept that tourism represents “an alternative experience of time, that is, time off or holiday time, which appears as an alternative rhythm, free from constraints of the daily tempo” (Wang, 2000:216), transforming the tourists into seekers of sensational authentic experiences (MacCannell, 1976), charged of emotional and personal value (Mcintosh & Siggs, 2005).

Conclusion note

In this chapter, the complexity of the TD concept and the key characteristics of the tourism product, was reviewed considering the rising competition between TDs. The need for TD stakeholders and local DMO managers to build and enhance a unique identity was also presented. As seen previously, tourism is complex and interrelated with other areas of knowledge. However, it was also seen tourists seek experiences that may impact on the way tourists' perceive the TD and its TDI.

CHAPTER 4 - TOURISM EXPERIENCES (TEs)

Introduction

Tourists nowadays seek contrasting experiences from their ordinary life, which makes them eager to embark into differentiating holiday experiences. For this reason, the present chapter aims to review the literature of the TEs construct, to identify and assess how the different TEs are lived and what influence these TEs have on the TDI. The key essential conceptualizations presented previously by researchers, on how the construct should engage and arouse tourists', will be discussed to assist marketers to adopt and to configure TEs as part of the TD strategy and TDIs projected.

4.1 Historical retrospective

In recent years TEs have been a critical area of research (Vittersø *et al.*, 2000), by numerous researchers (Cohen, 1979; Cohen, 1988; Dann, 1977; Holbrook & Addis, 2001; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Holbrook, 2000; Hosany & Gilbert, 2009; Hosany & Witham, 2009; Jackson, White, & Schmierer, 1996; Lee, Dattilo, & Howard, 1994; MacCannell, 1976; McCabe, 2009; Tsaur, Chiu, & Wang, 2012; Tsaur *et al.*, 2007; Tung & Ritchie, 2011; Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009; Uriely, 2005; Urry, 2002; Volo, 2009, 2010; Wang, 1999) to list just a few.

This interest started in the 60's (Volo, 2009), with the objective of researching more about tourists' evaluations of their personal experiences, followed by Holbrook & Hirschman's (1982) work on the hedonic¹¹ and emotional experiential consumption, before Pine & Gilmore's book (Govers, 2005). Pine & Gilmore (1998, 1999) brought attention to the

¹¹ Hedonic consumption - The multisensory, fantasy, and emotional aspects of consumers' interactions with products. It involves use of a product to fulfill fantasies and satisfy emotions. Level of satisfaction cannot be determined in the same orderly manner in hedonic as in utilitarian consumption. It is more likely to be based on the pleasurable experiences that result from using the brand.

experience economy, in which consumers seek to be engaged, absorbed into the experiences offering, instead of a simple goods offering.

According to Quan & Wang (2004) and Uriely (2005), the study of TE can be divided in two major perspectives: a) social science perspective (Cohen, 1979; Lee & Crompton, 1992; MacCannell, 1976) which considers attractions and the “peak TE” as the main incitement for tourists to travel, and b) in a marketing perspective (Moutinho, 1987), which is centered around the tourist as consumer. Previously, consumers like tourists were seen as very rational human beings, and for this reason the purchase of goods and services was the result of rationality (Holbrook, O’Saughnessy, & Bell, 1990). However, this view changed over time as they started to notice that objects and products were bought by consumers not for what they can do, but instead for what they represent (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Levy, 1959).

An early work from Levy (1959) explored the meaning people attached to product or service consumption. This led to an economy full of TEs offerings, in which companies try to engage tourists, through staged events, with the purpose of capturing the tourists’ “hearts”, intending to create long lasting memories (Volo, 2009). Following the experiential view of product consumption, Holbrook & Hirschman (1982), regarded this consumption in two distinct ways: as *utilitarian*, when it responds to an objective feature or product role (e.g. what the product does, its purpose), and as *hedonic*, when it responded to a more subjective role or intangible aspect of seeking an enhancing experience (e.g. enjoyment, arousal). As Otto & Ritchie (1996) remind, holidaying is not only rich in experiential attributes, it is also consumed mainly for hedonic purposes.

Uriely (2005) has documented for this matter four distinct developments, first he focused on the de-construction of the differences between daily life and the tourism activity, by pointing at the tendency of both being integrated (which means the differences between the two are harder to assess). Secondly, he also reminded the existence of “multi-type” individuals that search different types of activities, calling the attention to a heterogeneous portrayal of tourists’ motivations instead of a homogeneous. Thirdly, he considered the importance of subjectivity as a factor that shapes TEs. Lastly, he focused

on the fact that TEs need to be conceptualized as a complementary interpretations and not certainties.

4.2 The importance of the TE

Despite the relevance given to the TDI construct in the past decades (Croy, 2004; McIntosh & Siggs, 2005), the challenge today for DMO's marketers is to influence tourists' attitudes, behaviors and also to correctly conceptualize the TEs delivered (Tung & Ritchie, 2011). As argued by Lengkeek (2001), McIntosh & Siggs (2005), and Ritchie & Crouch (2000), competition nowadays is on destination experience, and more importantly on the unique, personal charged TEs at the TDs, which are experienced differently by tourists. The "how" and "where" TEs should engage tourists' psychological mind space gains a renewed dimension (Otto & Ritchie, 1996).

The experiential products, like many other services, share similar characteristics, meaning that production and consumption occur at the same time, i.e., tourists take an active role during the service interaction. From this interaction a dynamic process is generated, allowing tourists' to create and mature meanings, resulting from these various interactions between tourists and local stakeholders (Govers, 2005). This brings up the question, according to Lehto *et al.* (2004), on the importance of issues like the intangibility involving the experience and its quality, since TEs cannot be experienced prior to the purchase of the experiential product. Govers (2005) argues to this end, that with the blooming and commoditization of goods and services, competitive advantages can be gained by marketers, if the hedonic consumption of goods and the experiential consumption of services are taken into account.

It can thus be said that TEs are important since the success of a TD is measured by the product offered, and more importantly by the actions taken to realize, implement and execute TEs consumption, and not by any economic events (Bornhorst *et al.*, 2010). In this regard, Dann (1996) considers TEs as rejuvenating experiences, which allow tourists

to break free from their daily routines and constraints, and to immerse into the gazes¹², turning tourists into actors in a complex reality. As Lengkeek (2001), considers, one of the aspects of our reality and of our everyday life is imagination, in which something is brought in, leading to an extension of our reality, giving it significance. Angrilli *et al.* (1997) and Hosany & Witham (2009) also focus on this context, as tourists' are daily engaged in emotional events and behaviors with the purpose of creating long lasting personal experiences. Oh, Fiore & Jeoung (2007:119) agree that "...what tourists primarily seek and consume at destinations are engaging experiences accompanied by the goods and/or service components of the destinations".

In the tourism activity, service providers need to understand what constitutes a benefit for tourists, and how they are perceived and consequently evaluated by each tourist (Otto & Ritchie, 1996). More importantly, marketers and service providers need to be aware that TDIs change with first hand contact with the TD reality, thus becoming more real, differentiated and complex (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993). This means, if the dreamed holiday or dreamed landscape in the "photograph" doesn't live up to the expectation or pre-conceived image, satisfaction will not be achieved, because tourists don't make decisions based solely on rational facts. Quan & Wang (2004:297) explain that "in the age of postmodernity, the experiences of consumers play an increasingly important role in economic and social life".

On the offer side, TEs also have an important role, because as Pine & Gilmore (1999:1) argue "commoditization sends shivers down the spines of entrepreneurs, because the differentiation disappears, margins fall and customers buy solely on the basis of price". It is therefore important to have in mind, different segments look and want different travel experiences (Gunn, 1988), to stimulate their individual affective memories and sensations (Hosany & Witham, 2009). For instance, the TEs during the holidays can vary, in function of the time it occurs and the performance of the service provider (Lehto et al., 2004).

¹² Gazes - Urry (2002) clarifies and extends the argument that tourism experiences have a fundamental visual character, and that there are diverse tourist gazes.

Another example, is the attention given by tourists to the residents and their behavior (example: friendliness) (Dann, 1996). Experiences are a distinct offering to the TD “as distinct from services as services are from goods” (Pine & Gilmore, 1999:2). However, what makes TEs so special or memorable to tourists, needs to be found (Tung & Ritchie, 2011), because even if attractions accomplish their goal to get more visitors to a TD, it’s not enough if tourists leave defrauded, which means the purpose of the attraction has not been fulfilled (Gunn, 1988). Bornhorst *et al.* (2010) share the same opinion and suggest that the visitor experience is an important element for the TDs to succeed. However, as Prebensen & Foss (2011) point out, although the tourists’ purpose may be to spend some enjoyable time during the holidays, these are not problem-free.

Kotler *et al.* (2009), consider for this matter, that TDs don’t need great attractions, because tourists aren’t in a utilitarian mood but instead on a hedonic one. Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung (2007) also agree with this view, by claiming the tourists’ main motivation to travel to a destination or to have holidays, comes from their desire and expectations for specific experiences, which he or she fantasized before traveling to the destination. Therefore, the emphasis must be placed on how tourists’ experience the services provided, claims Bigné & Andreu (2004), and how the supply side can deliver high quality experiences with meaning (Lehto *et al.*, 2004; Oh, Fiore & Jeoung, 2007).

As Walls *et al.* (2011) stresses, tourists’ nowadays want more than the simple supply and consumption of a single product or service, they envisage unique “consumption encounters”. Pine & Gilmore (1998) argue in this perspective, that with the services’ commoditization, the benefit has been lost, and because of that, the quality of products and services are no longer a differentiating solution. In order to regain the added value for their offer, TD and stakeholders, must “dazzle” tourists’ senses (Schmitt, 1999) and provide hedonic experiences e.g., pleasurable (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Hosany & Witham, 2009).

However, the singular nature of the tourism activity has been leading on the other hand, tourism businesses to be confined to specific parts or areas of the TD, limiting this way tourists’ TEs consumption outside the “confined” area (Laws, 1995). But, even in these confined spaces, due to the amount of people/tourists it generates for a short period of

time, certain TEs put a lot of pressure on facilities and regions that support those services (Gunn, 1988). Another element that needs to be consider, for most stakeholders is the residents' support and friendliness to the tourism activity, as Bornhorst *et al.* (2010) found. Other findings have also expressed the complexity of the TEs construct (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 –TEs Influence

TE's Affects:	Authors
Stimulates consumers'/tourists' emotions	Bigné & Andreu, 2004; Esu & Arrey, 2009; Hosany, Ekinici, & Gilbert, 2005; Hosany & Prayag, 2013; Kotler <i>et al.</i> , 2009; Mano & Oliver, 2013; McIntosh & Siggs, 2005; Oh <i>et al.</i> , 2007; Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2012; Ritchie & Hudson, 2009.
Experiences at the setting	Bigné & Andreu, 2004; Gunn, 1988; Hosany & Gilbert, 2009; Hosany & Witham, 2009; Huang & Hsu, 2009; Hudson & Ritchie, 2009; Manhas & Ramjit, 2013.
Satisfaction	Bigné & Andreu, 2004; Chon, 1990; Manhas & Ramjit, 2013; Mano & Oliver, 2013; Mendes <i>et al.</i> , 2010; Petrick, 2002; Tung & Ritchie, 2011.
Behavioral intentions	Bigné <i>et al.</i> , 2001; Chon, 2006; Hosany & Prayag, 2013; Manhas & Ramjit, 2013; Petrick, Tonner, & Quinn, 2006; Petrick, 2004; Williams & Soutar, 2009.

Source: Author

Thus, existing trade theories need to be adapted to services (Zhang & Jensen, 2007), or more importantly, a change of focus from service supply to customers' experiences (Huang & Hsu, 2009). Despite some TDs already stimulating their target markets with this aim, like for example, cultural TEs (Esu & Arrey, 2009), the understanding of the dynamic processes in which TEs occur is still deficient. Without a superior assessment of its core characteristics it will be difficult to maximize tourists' experiences, which is a critical precursor of satisfaction (Tung & Ritchie, 2011).

4.3 Concept of TEs

The conceptualization of TEs has been regarded as contrary to daily routine. For some authors, TEs are seen as a tourist's escape from the daily constraints and from the rules which home society "imposes" to the tourists. Like with many other constructs, the term experience is still ill-defined (Carù & Cova, 2003; Tung & Ritchie, 2011), lacking a common and comprehensive terminology (Gentile *et al.*, 2007; Huang & Hsu, 2009), thus turning it into a rather abstract concept (Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987). As Gentile *et al.* (2007:397) add, the construct lacks "a common terminology and a shared mindset".

Tung & Ritchie (2011), also express their concern to the absence of agreement to the building of a comprehensive definition for the TEs. Not surprisingly, for some researchers the term has been and remains too ambiguous (Carù & Cova, 2003), whereas for others, it is the complexity of the construct, that has proven to be hard to define, identify and operationalize (Volo, 2009). However, despite all the obstacles researchers face when addressing the construct, some have reached some conventions (table 4.2).

Table 4.2 – TE Concepts

Reference	Definition
Pine & Gilmore (1998:98)	"An experience occurs when a company intention-ally uses services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event".

Volo (2010:301)	“The tourist experience is defined as an occurrence experienced by a person outside the ‘usual environment’ and the ‘contracted time’ boundaries that is comprised of a ‘sequence’ of the following events: sensation, perception, interpretation, and learning”.
Holbrook & Hirschman (1982:132)	“A steady flow of fantasies, feelings, and fun”.
Schmitt (1999:25)	The “result of encountering, undergoing, or living through situations” and “triggered stimulations to the senses, the heart, and the mind”.
Otto & Ritchie (1996:166)	“The 'experience' of leisure and tourism can be described as the subjective mental state felt by participants”.
Bigné & Andreu (2004:692)	“Experiences can be defined as events that engage individuals in a personal way”.

Source: Author

This conceptualization problem derives from its dynamic and complex nature, which comes from TEs being formed when “a company intentionally uses services as the stage, and goods as props to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event” (Pine & Gilmore, 1999:11). The TEs have its origin from a set of complex interactions between the tourist and the service provider (Carù & Cova, 2003; Holbrook & Addis, 2001; LaSalle & Britton, 2003), meaning, all interactions tourists live at the setting can be considered to be an experience, despite of its nature (perceptual or emotional) or source (expressed or implied) (Oh, Fiore & Jeoung, 2007).

Moreover, it is the *psychological environment* in which these consumption experiences occur, that causes tourists to react, act and feel in different ways (Otto & Ritchie, 1996).

For instance, Oh, Fiore & Jeoung (2007:120), consider “...everything tourists go through at a destination can [too] be an experience, be it behavioral or perceptual, cognitive or emotional, expressed or implied”.

On the other hand, Tung & Ritchie (2011:3) define tourism experiences as “an individual’s subjective evaluation and undergoing (i.e., affective, cognitive, and behavioral) of events related to his/her tourist activities which begins before (i.e., planning and preparation), during (i.e., at the destination), and after the trip (i.e., recollection). Again, these TEs result from a continuum commencing and ending at the point of origin, e.g. home.

4.3.1 TEs continuum

This continuum has its origin during the anticipatory stage, meaning it starts in the moment tourists’ decide about the length of stay, the season in which they wish to travel, among other aspects of the holiday travel (Gunn, 1988; Middleton & Clarke, 2001). It is because of the positive emotions TDs project into tourists’ minds that TEs are almost lived (experienced) by them, before the actual visit to the TD (Ahmed *et al.*, 2006).

Once at the destination tourists assess, and experience events in a holistic way, because in the human mind a set of complex and dynamic take place leading tourists to see the whole event and not the sum of the parts (Hosany & Witham, 2009). As Gunn (1988) explains, the experiences lived at the TD by the tourists, are the outcome of the match between the attractions available and the tourist’s preference. Moreover, since the TEs are perishable, it implicates that the tourist and all of those participating actively in an event, co-create their own experiences (Carù & Cova, 2003; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004).

In other words, the experiences that tourists engage in occur inside of them, and the outcome of that experience depends on how the tourist, based on a specific situation or state of mind, reacts to the staged encounter (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1992; Mossberg & Kleppe, 2001; Pine & Gilmore, 1999). These

outcomes and meanings evoked stay with the tourists after the holidays, at home, when they reflect on the TEs lived (Gunn, 1988).

Thus, the personal nature of TEs forces managers to be aware of the outcomes, e.g., tourists' reflection of the experiences lived, because experiences are subjective and unique even though similar services have been delivered by the supply side (Tung & Ritchie, 2011). In this perspective, Gunn (1988) also considers that the outcome of a TE can affect the tourist's plans for the following year. Thus in this context, several authors suggest that the evaluation tourists' make of the TEs at the setting, will influence and change their previous held TDI (Chon, 1991; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991).

4.4 Dimensions of TEs

With regards to what constitutes and contributes to form TEs dimensions, several authors agree that the TEs dimensions are formed by various elements, despite being evaluated holistically (Gentile *et al.*, 2007), even if in some cases, a person is only aware of them at the subconscious level (Hosany & Witham, 2009). Kim *et al.* (2010) developed a scale comprised of seven domains or dimensions, hedonism (pleasurable or exciting feelings), refreshment (being or feeling refreshed), local culture, meaningfulness (great meaning), knowledge (Information, facts known), involvement, and novelty (a feeling resulting from having a new experience).

Aho (2001) on the other hand, proposes TEs to be composed of emotional impressions (present in most of the tourism events or experiences), informational effects (caused by intentional or unintentional learning experiences), practice experiences (which could result from a hobby activity or professional origin), and lastly the transformational impacts (that may change or modify the tourists' body or mind).

Ballantyne, Packer, & Falk (2011) however, in their study about visitors' memories of wildlife tourism, assessed tourists' experiences according to their sensory impressions (what they saw and heard), emotional affinity (what they felt during the experience),

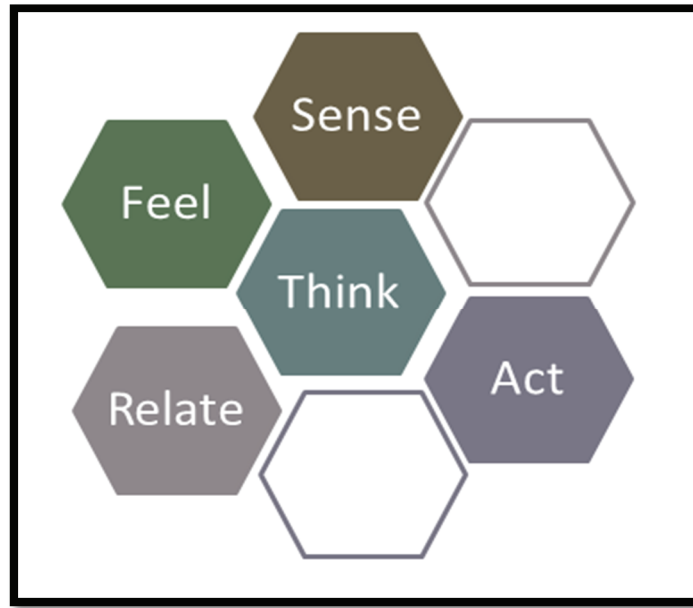
reflective response (their thoughts during the events), and behavioral response (how they act or what they did). Brakus *et al.* (2009) taking the experience towards brands, also conceptualized TEs, as being composed of sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral dimensions, because in addition to feelings and impressions, physical actions are also undertaken by tourists.

Holbrook & Hirschman (1982) also proposes that experiences have functional, (i.e., experience coming from the consumption of the product's function) and enjoyable (sensations generated during the experience) dimensions. Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi (1992) suggest a different perspective, one in which tourists' optimal experiences or flows (tourists' pleasure and enjoyment), occur when the following elements are present:

- The match of individual skills and challenges;
- Clear goals and immediate feedback;
- Merging of action and awareness,
- Concentration on activity or on the task at hand;
- An inherent sense of control;
- Loss of self-awareness;
- Changes of time perception;
- Purposive experience.

In a second moment, Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre (1989) studied the optimal experience in work and leisure, and evaluated experiences in terms of affect, potency, concentration, creativity, motivation, satisfaction, and relaxation. In a similar context, but in a marketing perspective, Schmitt (1999) considers customer experiences to be define in terms of not four, but five dimensions (figure 4.1): sensory experiences (sense); affective experiences (feel); creative cognitive experiences (think); physical experiences, behaviors and lifestyles (act); and social-identity experiences (relate).

Figure 4.1 – Schmitt's Sensory TEs Dimensions



Source: Adapted from Schmitt (1999)

Gentile *et al.* (2007) partially agreed with Schmitt's (1999) understanding of experiences, but added more dimensions, by stating that:

- Sensorial component – is an offering with the purpose of affecting the senses, or providing an pleasant sensorial experience;
- Emotional component – seeks to generate moods, emotions in order to establish an affective relation between customers and companies;
- Cognitive component – is a conscious mental process;
- Pragmatic component – as the practical act of doing something;
- Lifestyle component – arising from personal values, beliefs, customers assume throughout their lifestyle and behavior;
- Relational component – involving the context and the relationships social and non-social between customers and other people.

Quan & Wang's (2004) non-visual TEs divided the experiences according to their intensity: a) *peak TEs*, which result from the events, attractions that lured, persuaded, and attracted tourists to visit or to travel to the TDs, from B) *supporting consumer experience*, which take the supporting role, like sleeping, eating and traveling.

However, the authors recognized peak TEs could be considered as a “total experience”, since ordinary TEs at the setting (e.g. supporting consumer experiences) which are most of the times disregarded, can in certain moments, be considered an extension of the ordinary tourists’ experiences, and this may become or form part of a peak TE. Thus, it is as challenging to capture all the elements lived and experienced by tourists during their holiday experience, as it is to assess or measure the TDs’ performance or value (Oh, Fiore & Jeoung, 2007), since there are differences between what is considered to be quality of service and quality of experience (Otto & Ritchie, 1996).

However, Baker & Crompton (2000) clarify that performance quality, refers to the attributes of the services provided, which are supervised and managed by the supply side, while quality experiences, refers to the emotional response of customers/tourists. Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier (2009) and Volo (2010), considered the TEs to be more than a package of services or products, they studied it according to the temporal (before and after the experience) and spatial dimensions (at the holiday destination, and at home).

In Volo’s (2010) view, “Experience essentially gives emphasis to the individual’s ability to create his/her own experience no matter what ‘tourist experience’ marketers sold or whether the person is engaged in cultural, urban, sport or natural tourism”. As Oh, Fiore & Jeoung (2007:120) put it, the “tourist absorbs the events unfolding before him at a destination, while actively participating through interactive engagement of the mind and/or the body“. This active role, comes as a personal response to their primary motivations (Prebensen & Foss, 2011), turning them into the most significant (Gentile *et al.*, 2007).

Being more precise, Pine & Gilmore (1998) suggest that the sensory impressions that tourists feel during experiences could be differentiated in terms of the level of tourists involvement (*passive vs. active participation*) and participation (*absorption vs. immersion*), which combined will ultimately form an ideal experience or “sweet spot”. In this regard, Pine & Gilmore (1999) make a distinction between:

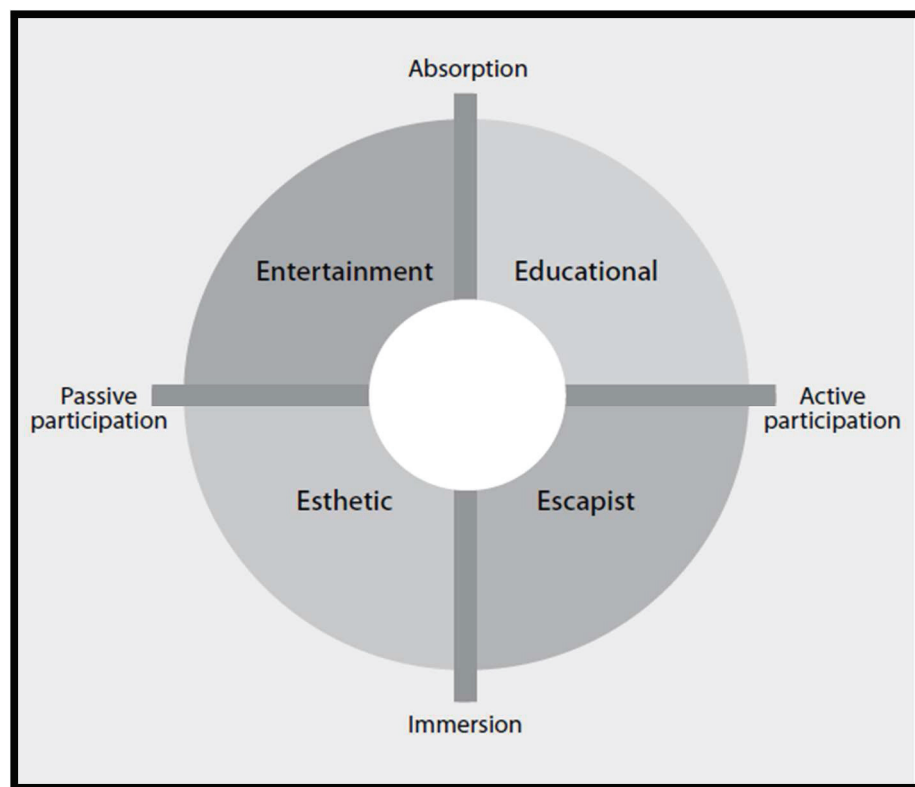
- Involvement - *passive participation* as a simple presence without any influence nor consequence during the TE and *active participation* as a

presence that influences the TE because tourist's take roles, take part in their own TE.

- Participation - *absorption* as taking the TE into the tourist's mind (a more psychological state of mind), whereas *immersion* is taking part physically of the TE.

Still, the authors' model shown in figure 4.2 - the four realms of an experience, establishes that tourists' seek more than simply the offer of quality products and services, they seek, to be emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually, engaged during an experience. Hence, these four realms or dimensions comprehend:

Figure 4.2 – The Four Realms of an Experience



Source: Pine & Gilmore (1998:102)

Entertainment experiences – which refers to the tourist passive involvement, in which he is entertained like in a theatre play (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). This form of experience is at the core of TDs offering, e.g. to provided enjoyment like Las Vegas (Hosany & Witham, 2009). However, Prebensen & Foss (2011) argue that besides looking for

entertainment, tourists also seek for events and occasions to fulfill their motivation to learn and socialize. Thus, the second realm, refers to, ***Education experiences*** - in which companies can offer an educational experience to their customers to improve their knowledge (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Hosany & Witham, 2009) in an active and absorptive way, since they desire and want to learn something new.

The third realm, refers to, ***Escapist experiences*** – in which tourists are submerged and absorbed in an event, like submerging into the activities they participate in (Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989; Hosany & Witham, 2009; Oh *et al.*, 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 1998). This psychological escape from the “daily tempo” is what the holidays provide to tourists (Uriely, 2005), and tourism is full of suggestions in which escapist experiences prevail (Hosany & Witham, 2009).

The fourth realm refers to, ***Aesthetic experiences*** – which is tourists’ interpretations of the surrounding physical environment, that is, the importance tourists give to the physical environment and the way they evaluate it (Hosany & Witham, 2009). As can be seen, tourists can either immerse into the TD environment, through aesthetic or escapist experiences, or they can be absorbed by entertaining or educational experiences.

Vittersø *et al.* (2000) prefers to highlight the lack of cognitive and emotional dimensions in the Pine & Gilmore’s (1998) construct, since these are integrating elements of the TEs. The same is suggested by Parkinson *et al.* (1996), who emphasize TEs as a result of the tourists’ mental effort in thinking, feeling and acting upon each experience lived, which means the three mental human functions, namely, cognition, affect and conation have to be taken into consideration.

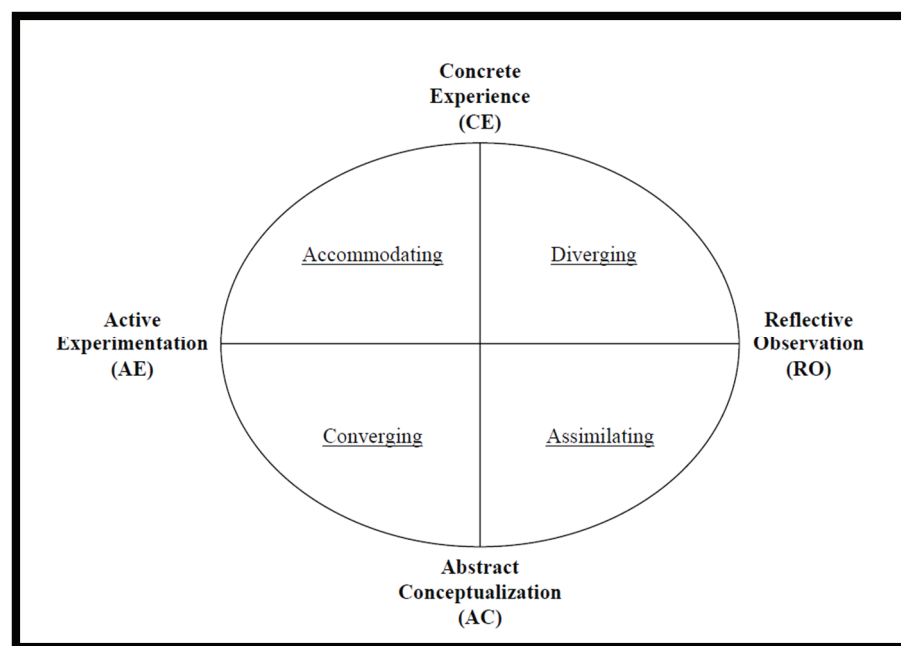
In another study, Oh, Fiore & Jeoung, (2007) offered a conceptual and methodological tool for the four realms of the TEs, in their study of the bed and breakfast sector. For the authors, only with the combination of all the dimensions (Entertainment, Educational, Aesthetic, and Escapist) an optimal tourism experience can be lived. However, some authors disagree, and consider Pine & Gilmore’s tourism experiences’ dimensions are not well articulated or anchored (Adam & Shaw, 2001). Among these, Oh, Fiore & Jeoung (2007) call upon the need to be cautious regarding the boundaries between Pine &

Gilmore's four realms, since in reality these boundaries are “amorphous”, e.g. lacking a clear structure.

4.4.1 Different Perspectives

The understanding of the construct, as mentioned above, is complex. However, many researchers have tried to explain it through their conceptual models. Among these authors, Kolb (1984) proposed an experiential learning cycle - in figure 4.3 - which attempted to provide an integrative holistic approach, on how experience combines with perception, cognition and behavior. The author considers the existence of four distant cycles:

Figure 4.3 – Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle



Source: Kolb (1984:21)

The 1st cycle is the concrete experience, e.g. the actual experience in itself, which turns out to be the foundation upon which the 2nd cycle, personal observation and reflection is established, in this stage the information assimilated from the experience will assist personal hypotheses and “theories” to be create. On the 3rd cycle, abstract conceptualization, these theories are understood and new ideas or conceptions are created.

These new ideas will have repercussions in the 4th cycle, called active experimentation in which the new actions or new behaviors are adopted, leading this way to the 1st cycle of concrete experience. As Ballantyne, Packer, & Sutherland (2011:777) indicate, the experiential learning cycle represents a cycle of “... experiencing, reflecting, thinking and acting”.

Kolb (1984:26) looked at the elements of consciousness as something not static, but instead as dynamic elements of thought, that are formed and reformed through experience, e.g. “no two thoughts are ever the same, since experience always intervenes”. Quan & Wang (2004) conceived a model (figure 4.4) that suggested TEs to comprise two different dimensions. The first entitled “peak touristic experiences” which refer to the main reason for tourists’ travelling, such as major attractions (like a music concert). The second dimension is “supporting consumer experience”, and refers to those services that form and respond to the basic needs during travel (such as eating, sleeping, transportation), and that for their nature, are not considered to be the pulling factor that drives and motivates individuals to tourism.

Figure 4.4 – The Conceptual Model of Tourist Experience

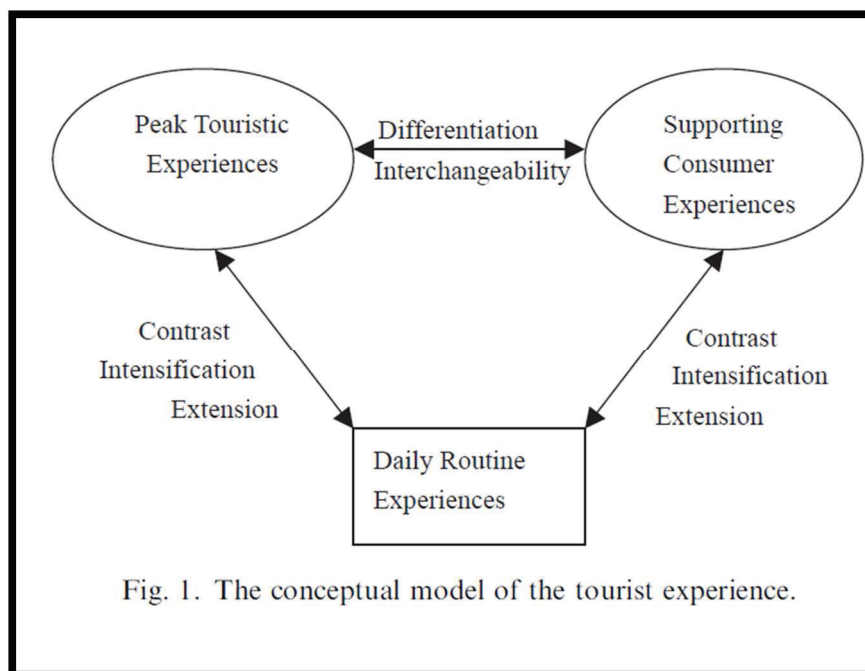


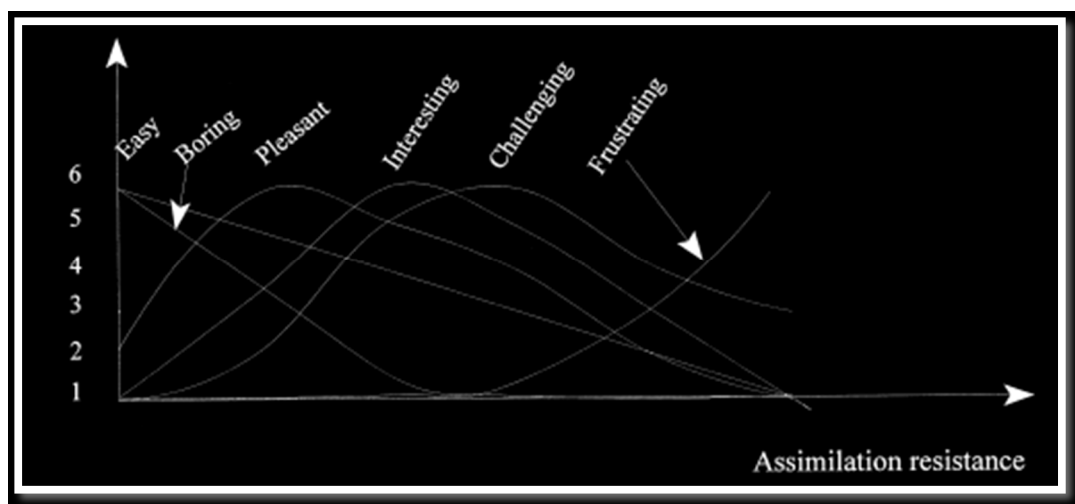
Fig. 1. The conceptual model of the tourist experience.

Source: Quan & Wang (2004:300)

According to Quan & Wang (2004), both dimensions are different, interrelated, and need each other to mutually support and reinforce, e.g., a peak touristic experience cannot be fully appreciated if not assisted by supportive consumer experiences (e.g. a place to eat, sleep), and supportive experiences cannot by themselves compensate the tourists, if the expectations generated before the peak touristic experiences are not met. Vitterso *et al.* (2000) in their model of the flow simplex, used the Assimilation Resistance (AR) as a single dimension of other two underlying dimensions (*Valence* – ranging from pleasant to unpleasant, and *Arousal* – ranging from calm and sleepy to excited and tense) to establish the amount of AR produced during the TE, which influences the quality of the affective experience. Because, tourists' are engaged in a continual process of action/perception cycle, which will never be completely pure or it will never be without some kind of resistance.

In this sense, and according to Vitterso *et al.* (2000:435) if the AR increases, so does the experiences, e.g., the AR increases when the “differences between an actual situation and one's cognitive schemas of it expand”. On the other hand, when low level of AR are experience, boredom would be the most predominant feeling. As figure 4.5 shows, the curvilinear relation between AR and affect, moves from boring < easy < pleasant < interesting < challenging < frustration in terms of AR. As the authors claim, the flow simplex allows us to understand the tourists' subjective responses while they are experiencing attractions at a TD.

Figure 4.5 – Affective Responses as Function Of Assimilation Resistance



Source: Vitterso *et al.* (2000:435)

Hosany & Witham, (2009) agree that the tourists assess their TEs by the level of arousal which they create, e.g. how exciting or stimulating experiences can be. Accordingly, Oh *et al.* (2007) suggest this variable (arousal) as a key indicator of sensory-based experiences. An arousing experience is therefore crucial for “memoirs” to be generated in order to create a higher degree of satisfaction (Hosany & Witham, 2009).

4.5 Dynamic factors affecting TEs

4.5.1 Personal nature of the TEs

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

Another aspect to consider is tourists’ support to both production and consumption of TEs, through their personal social-psychological state (emotions, thoughts, feelings, characteristics) which are brought to the “stage” (McIntosh & Siggs, 2005; Huang & Hsu, 2009). According to Baker & Crompton (2000) no service industry or company can therefore, sell pre-orchestrated TEs to their tourists.

Because, TEs are influenced by other factors which are beyond the control of the service providers (Huang & Hsu, 2009). In this regard, some authors have tried to integrate and explore the psychology in the understanding of tourism experiences to assist the DMOs

managers (Tung & Ritchie, 2011). However, as Laws (1995) points out, the cost of the holidays, the complexity related to the purchase of the holidays and the risk of the experience at the location not meeting the expectations generated are high.

Huang & Hsu (2009) agree that the quality of the interactions experienced, and not its volume, to be the most important factors for a true rewarding, and emotionally engaging TE to be lived and remembered. One example is tourists search for advance booking, which shows their security and familiarization with TDs (Lehto *et al.*, 2004), but also, that they actively seek TEs that can provide them with pleasurable experiences (Bigné & Andreu, 2004).

4.5.2 Stakeholders

The tourism stakeholders¹³ must find the necessary tools (methodologies, concepts, models and related theories that may assist them when replying to the key questions, related to the TDs supply evolution), since conflicting interests rise from all stakeholders regarding which route should be followed (Dredge, 1999). Tourists often show interest in the daily life of local residents, creating not only employment for these, but also interaction (Govers, 2005). This situation has made residents to be more open to tourism and to accept the daily imposition of tourists, as part of the local scenario (Huang & Hsu, 2009). Another relevant aspect to consider in this context, is that in some services, other tourists not only form and take part of TE consumption, but also, play an important function (most of the times ignored in the service process), which is the role of influencing other tourists during the TE consumption. One example, is a play or a party, in which the absence of other tourists or audience, influences the overall TE felt, lived and remembered by the tourist.

One problem raised by Govers (2005) however, is the unsuccessful promotion strategies adopted sometimes by marketers, which only take into consideration the values and preferences of the tourists and not of the local community. These actions, adds the author,

¹³According to Oh, Fiore & Jeoung (2007) these are: tourists, destination marketers, residents, policy makers, and the community.

will reflect on the degree of tourists' satisfaction, since the local values have not been included in the stakeholders' promotion efforts, which as a result will lead tension between residents and tourists (Host and Guest). Another example, could be tourists' attitudes (for example during church or using clothing which does not respect the local traditions and way of life). Consequently, the tourists' assessment of their own TEs will be affected, and the local residents might become resentful.

One such example is Huang & Hsu's (2009) research applied to the cruise experience, which found interaction among tourists to impact the TEs during the cruise and after the cruise on the satisfaction shown towards the holiday experience. Cohen (1972) even considered, tourists travelling together with others of the same country of origin or culture, were more likely to interact with fellow tourists than with the local residents, because of a lack of common identity between residents and tourists. Another, pertinent issue to be address is the negative impact of tourists, or undesirable behaviors by tourists as they are increasingly involved in the service. This new reality needs to be addressed by service providers and other tourists (Huang & Hsu, 2009).

4.5.3 Emotions and mood

The consumer research has been giving extensive attention to the role of emotions and moods in the TE consumption. Among the number of studies (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Bigné & Andreu, 2004; McIntosh & Siggs, 2005; Han & Patterson, 2007), analyzed the experiential consumption subjectivity and how it affects the tourists' moods and emotions. Otto & Ritchie (1996), found that in order for tourists' to be involved with the service providers, the activities needed to be something they could feel attached or related to, so that their imagination could be "stirred". The authors also found, tourists' need to feel physically and psychologically comfortable and safe.

As Otto & Ritchie (1996) concluded, tourists were not only willing to be involved actively in the service process (as long as they are kept informed), they also wanted to take an active role in the service encounters, learn and at the same time, feel important and recognized for the work they have accepted. However the tourists' involvement and

participation creates some fundamental problems, during the consumption moment or during the TE (which is the emotional reaction and mood generated from the experience *per se*), and after the consumption or post-consumption (as a determinant of tourists' satisfaction and future behavior) (McIntosh & Siggs, 2005).

As Vitterso *et al.* (2000) clearly state, the emotional and symbolic values are associated with the meaning each tourist assigns to the attractions (i.e. the TEs). These subjective emotions are so strong, they can be used as a segmentation variable (Bigné & Andreu, 2004). Another aspect is the specific role certain emotions can take on, such as mediating or interfering, between the services provided and the satisfaction felt (Oliver, 1989). One example, given by the author, consider that a similar satisfaction score may not reflect on the different tourists and in the different contexts, the true implications of the personal and subjective emotions felt during the TE.

On the other hand, although emotions are important, they are not as long lasting as moods (Han & Patterson, 2007), and for this reason, the focus should be re-addressed into creating moods, instead of short-term emotions. Several scholars already noticed, the importance of mood and emotions, and the differences between them (Ekkekakis, 2013; Han & Patterson, 2007). Parkinson *et al.* (1996) for instance, consider the existence of four categories that could explain the differences between constructs, mood and emotion. The main differences table 4.3 shows are:

- Duration - mood last longer than emotions;
- Time patterns - mood stay in the consciousness background, whereas emotion dissipates quickly;
- Relative intensity - although weaker intensity than emotion, the mood is more persistent;
- Specificity of cause - minor incidents or a cognitive process sets the tourist's mood, while emotion is set by specific events, with specific time frame.

Table 4.3 – Four Main Differences Between Mood and Emotion

	Mood	Emotion
Duration	Lasts longer.	Brief duration.
Time patterns	Linger in the consciousness background.	Dissipate very quickly.
Relative intensity	Weaker intensity, but more persistent.	Powerful intensity, but fade rapidly.
Specificity of cause	Resulting from minor incidents or cognitive processes.	Initiated by specific events in specific times.

Source: Adapted from Parkinson *et al.* (1996)

However, despite the positive discrimination and importance of moods in relation to emotions, some authors (Liljander & Bergenwall, 1999; Mano & Oliver, 2013; Westbrook & Oliver, 1991) still look exclusively the emotional responses from TEs consumption, as a determinant of satisfaction and after consumption behavior. Therefore overlooking the effects of emotion on more global attitudinal processes (Cohen, Prayag, & Moital, 2014) as well as the long term effects on the mood.

4.5.4 Increase of the Experience at the location

Another important aspect to consider is the changes in tourists' behavior, according to their degree of experience, e.g. "...when people make their first trip to a place, they tend to display more general interests, perhaps trying to experience and sample the whole country. In repeat vacations, one's interests become more focused on specific types of activities and places, and activity participation is in more depth" (Lehto *et al.*, 2004:812).

One of the views towards the tourists' participation and penetration in the TDs real life routine, is given by MacCannell (1999), that considers feeling and intimacy between

visitors and locals/residents to be only experienced by the visiting tourists, and only when they make an effort to find authenticity, and to penetrate into the life of “others”. Smith (1994) on the other hand, supports tourism literatures’ understanding that the tourists’ participation is more directed, more concentrated on specific activities.

Oppermann (1998) goes further, by stating that these behavioral changes can be seen at the decision-making process, before the holiday trip, and during TE at the destination. However, from Letho *et al.* (2004) perspective, the reason for most traditional tourists (e.g. repeaters) to revisit the same TD every year, is not coming from the interest in penetrating into the life of the other, but instead from the confidence and familiarity offered from buying the same holiday product.

Table 4.4 – The Changes in Repeaters Decision-Making Process

Behavioral changes:	Authors
Satisfaction <i>From previous visits</i>	Woodside & Lysonski (1989), Laws (1995)
Need to experience with more depth <i>Participation in more focused activities</i>	Smith (1994), Oppermann (1998)
Risk perception <i>Reduced from familiarity created with the TD</i>	Fakeye & Crompton (1992)

Source: Author

The familiarity and the safety of a TD is important, because tourists make their travel decision (as seen in table 4.4), based on the level of risk perceived (Reichel, Fuchs, & Uriely, 2009). Among the several differences found by the authors regarding the characteristics and risk taking attitudes, between first-time tourists and repeaters, these are:

- First-time, tourists assume more risks, regarding food safety, weather, the human- induced and socio-psychological;
- Repeaters, being more concern with the service quality, natural disasters, financial risks and accidents that may occur at the TD;

Moreover, Reichel, Fuchs & Uriely (2009) also found among first-time tourists and repeaters, differences in tourists' motivations and strategies, which each group took to reduce the perceived risks. Among the main TD features marketers must be aware, besides finding strategies to reduce the tourists' risk perception, is to find how the local resources (tangible and intangible), can be better managed and promoted, so they may turn into important assets, hard to copy (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). Unlike any other product, tourism is one of the few activities in which the service offered, can never be replicated. One such example is repeaters¹⁴ persistence in spending time and money in the same TDs for holidays, for the reason that they know each visit is unique (Lehto *et al.*, 2004).

4.5.5 Authenticity

Tourists' also know that during each visit, new perceptions and new involvements are created, since they engage in what many authors (Andriotis, 2009; Boorstin, 1962; Brown, 2013; Buchmann, Moore, & Fisher, 2010; Chhabra, 2005; Chhabra, Healy, & Sills, 2003; Cohen, 1988; Domenico & Miller, 2012; Kim & Jamal, 2007; MacCannell, 1973; Martin, 2010; Molleda, 2009; Pearce & Moscardo, 1986; Redfoot, 1984; Rickly-Boyd, 2012; Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009; Wang, 1999), consider to be a continuous search for authenticity.

The tourists' desire to find authentic TEs (MacCannell, 1973), was initiated in the 70s with an intense debate between Boorstin (1962) and MacCannell (1973, 1976), regarding authenticity and tourists' behavior during their holidays. Both authors, conceived that tourism could provide staged authenticity to tourists, but disagreed on the kind of TEs

¹⁴ Tourists visiting the same destinations more than one time.

tourists search for at the TD. Boorstin (1962) considered modern tourists had lost the “art of traveler” (meaning authentic TEs), because they were pursuing inauthentic experiences, resulting from “magical modern machinery”. He claimed, tourists’ to be consciously looking for “pseudo-events” and experiences, staged, inauthentic, which were not much different from their everyday life:

“Now all of us frustrate ourselves by the expectation that we can make the exotic an everyday experience (without it ceasing to be exotic); and can somehow make commonplaceness itself disappear” (Boorstin, 1962:77)

Opposing to this view, MacCannell (1973:601) considered modern tourists to be motivated and driven like past tourists to find authentic holiday experiences, since “tourists enter tourist areas precisely because their experiences there will not, for them, be routine”. However, this authenticity is only a staged one, admits the author, in that tourists are not knowledgeable of the TD culture, so they cannot fully experience the destination values (*back stage* authenticity), and for that reason, tourists only have access to the *front stage* authenticity. In time however, the back stage will also be involved, transformed, and commodification of the TD culture will occur (staged culture), leading to a loss of authenticity.

Another perspective is offered by Cohen (1979, 1988), which suggests neither Boorstin’s (1962) nor MacCannell’s (1973) views are valid, since mass tourism systems are destined to inauthenticity. According to Cohen (1988), authenticity is socially constructed and no absolute truth exists, only different interpretations as a result of tourists’ subjective beliefs and understandings. It is for this reason, the author posits an *emergent authenticity*, which preserves the authenticity, despite any cultural processes that may have commoditized, changed or introduced (voluntary or not) modifications in the host culture.

The validity and use of Cohen’s concept has been motive for many critics, because the majority of tourists’ motivations and experiences cannot be explained under the original concept of authenticity (Wang, 1999). One way to explain this lack of validity, is when considering the visit of: friends and relatives, theme parks, shopping centers among other activities, in which the classical authenticity approach has no influence or relevance

(Urry, 1992). Wang (1999) claims that authenticity construct can be divided into authentic experiences (tourist experiences at the TD), and toured objects (e.g., nature, which is irrelevant in MacCannell's vision). In his perspective, authenticity is seen as a wider and more complex attribute. The author suggests the existential authenticity, in which tourists are instigated to develop a "real-self", driven by nostalgia (being more true to themselves) and romanticism (experiencing more feelings) of the life they had in their childhood, free, and relieved of everyday problems.

Bruner (1994) on the other hand, considered authenticity to have complications with the term. As a consequence, he suggested four different meanings regarding the term: The first, refers to *verisimilitude*, meaning credible, convincing, e.g., creating credibility of the location in the tourists' mind. The second criteria, refers to *genuineness*, in which the location of the TE, must resemble the original "they want that reproduction to be authentic in the sense of giving the appearance of being like...". The third refers to *originality*, considering that no copies can be made. The fourth sense, refers to *authority*, which means those legally responsible consider it to be authentic.

Thus, a credible and well staged experience will create among tourists positive memories and perceptions (Hosany & Witham, 2009), and will impact on tourists' evaluations or overall satisfaction and consequently on their future intention (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Oh *et al.*, 2007). To this extent it is important to find, what are the effects of tourists' sense of authenticity (e.g. the way he or she visualizes, conceptualizes things or events) if these are matched with the experience lived at the location (Amoamo, 2003). Gunn (1988) recalls to this end, the problem of misrepresentation of the customs and other objects, which are labeled as original and traditional, but end up not being traditional or of ethnic origin.

Cohen (1988) in this regard, affirms commercial interests are keener to stage authenticity, to create more desirable and more convenient products, than the public sector, which is more eager to promote and project authentic identity (Cohen, 1988; Govers, 2005). Authenticity is thus extremely important, not only because tourists seek to be engaged in authentic TEs but potential commoditization of the experience will destroy the TD differentiation as well as the human relationships at the location (MacCannell, 1973)

which is in the end, what is at the core of the TEs. Also, because it is important to verify if the right TDIs are promoted. Gunn (1988) calls attention to the promotion ethics to prevent TDs to promote distorted information as “the real thing”, which will end up causing dissatisfaction and frustration among tourists.

In this context, Buchmann's *et al.* (2010) findings on film induced tourism, found elaborated and comprehensive forms of authenticity, incorporating object and existential authenticity, as well as the tourists' need to feel the sincerity of relationships and embodied experiences, despite the fabricated nature of the experiences produced, which however, does not make it less authentic. Another study addressing film-induced experiences is Frost's (2010) analysis of 22 Australian movies filmed in the Outback of Australia, which through the use of specific TDIs and TD attributes, were responsible for promising tourists' life-changing TEs.

4.5.6 Quest for the center

Another challenge TD marketers must face regarding potential impact factors in their TEs is given by Edensor (2001), who claims the distinctions between tourism activities and tourists' routine life have been fading with time. However, the extension of the tourism space into the routine space doesn't mean it is not required to travel anymore, because there are still some TEs “out-there” (beyond the extension of the routine space) which are not possible to experience without travelling to the TD (Cohen, 1979). Yet when travel occurs, it is important to be aware that tourists want different experiences from their ordinary life.

In this context, Cohen (1979:181) offered his “*modes of the tourists experiences*”, as an answer to achieve a better understand of the TEs, since “tourism is essentially a temporary reversal of everyday activities-it is a no-work, no-care, no-thrift situation [...] vacant time.” MacCannell's (1973) view on the other hand, is that tourists don't look solely to the self-satisfaction, but also to find authentic experiences, essentially religious, e.g., like a pilgrimage towards a holy place (e.g. like the Santiago of Compostela route, Spain), since tourists' see their working life's as inauthentic.

Cohen (1979:181) disagrees, considering the same center is not a search for the sacred, nor of religious immersion, it is instead a quest for “...the center which for the [tourists] symbolizes ultimate meanings”. In this regard, he suggested five ways (as table 4.5 shows) for tourists’ to experience the “other”, the unknown, away from the routine and everyday life environment:

Table 4.5 – Modes of Tourists’ Experiences

	Modes of TEs	Tourists’ <i>Center</i>
1st	Recreational mode	tourists search for entertainment, leaving their ordinary day life;
2nd	Diversionary mode	tourists break the temporary pressures and the stress of the daily life;
3rd	Experiential mode	experiential, tourists become aware their daily lives needs more richness, and therefore decide to search for new social life, and new cultures that may provide them more authentic or rich experiences;
4th	Experimental mode	tourists seek to rediscover themselves in a foreign context (social or natural), because they feel their ordinary lives in the native society not to be sufficient;
5th	Existential mode	tourists feel they are living at the wrong time and place, taking them into a rupture situation so strong that the only solution they envisage is to live at the destination (to switch worlds, if and when possible);

Source: Adapted from Cohen (1979)

However, Cohen’s *modes of the tourists experiences* leave several questions unanswered, especially as far as the experience is concerned claims Lengkeek (2001). For this reason, the author reformulated Cohen’s approach into *modes of experience* by considering recreational mode as *amusement* (in which the “well known stories and metaphors” suspend the daily reality), followed by a *mode of change*, in which a stronger dissatisfaction from normal day life would be experienced:

- *mode of interest*, a stage in which fantasies are created by signs and travel guides;
- *mode of rapture*, in which the ordinary is suspended and the amazement and climax is reached from the confrontation between the ordinary and the “other”, e.g., unknown, creating the determination in the tourist to advance further;
- *mode of mastering*, in which the unknown and the unreachable is unlocked, the promised land attained, and the extraordinary becomes ordinary.

Table 4.6 – Lengkeek’s Modes of Experience

Modes of Experience		Tourists’ Center
1 st	Amusement	Stories and metaphors co-exist with the reality and suspend it.
2 nd	Change	Everyday life is more strongly felt, since there is a need to recharge energies.
3 rd	Interest	Stronger fantasies are brought in by travel guides, signs. The mystical power of the “other” attractions are brought in.
4 th	Rapture	The climax is reached between ordinary and the “other”. Individuals become aware of their own limitations, and rapture is created, thus creating willpower to start a new experience in the “other’s” space.
5 th	Mastering	The extraordinary of “others” is open, accessible to the individual. The promised land, becomes ordinary due to migration.

Source: Adapted from Lengkeek (2001)

For Lengkeek (2001) metaphors are the crucial element that facilitates new relationships between imagination, signs, things and contexts to be established, it gives new understanding of the complex reality to tourists. For the author, in opposition to the tourist’s centre (representing the daily routine), and Cohen’s centre-out-there

(representing other places different and beyond the ordinary), out-there-ness represents the unknown, an enigma, which takes tourists to look for a reference or even believing in a world different from everyday narrative. Lengkeek (2001:180) considers, tourism activity is full of situations in which no centers are relevant, “...only orientations and metaphorical references”.

4.5.7 Media and the world wide web

Another element with influence on the authenticity and TEs, is the role played by the media and brokers. As Uriely (2005) notes, nowadays the mass media present attractions that can be lived and enjoyed at home. These presentations, or holiday images are promoted through tangible and intangible media, such as the internet to be mixed, sold, consumed, and replaced (Lengkeek, 2001). MacCannell (1999) for example, reminded the lessons tourists were giving to the tourism industry, that it was better to present themselves in a genuine and honest way, than creating and undertaking shows of honesty. Vitterso *et al.* (2000), reinforces the importance of the information promoted to be aligned with what is offered, as any discrepancy between the two can have consequences to the overall TE, because it will oblige tourists' to undertake harder cognitive work, regarding the amount of information which needs to be processed, than those in which no discrepancy is found.

4.6 Limitations of previous studies on TEs

A more generalized framework of the TE construct is lacking, recalls in this regard Gentile *et al.* (2007), that much of the previous research rests on an ad hoc theoretical framework. Carù & Cova (2003), agree with this statement, and criticize not only the missing framework, but also the lack of operationalization tools that may capture the essential dimensions of the TEs. In this regard, is important to remember that tourism activity is not solely surrounded by tangible attributes, it is also involved in more intangible aspects, such as human senses (Quan & Wang, 2004).

Lengkeek (2001) goes further, by claiming that not much has happened, theoretical or even empirically regarding the TE construct development. Consequently, the theoretical framework is still ill-defined, which has led to TEs conceptualization problems. Another relevant aspect that contributed towards the current situation is according to Huang & Hsu (2009), researchers' use of different theoretical frameworks to conceptualize TEs, which ultimately created diverging dimensions of the tourist experience.

For the author, some of the gaps in need of more attention by academics is the tourists' interactions (with residents and with other tourists), to find the contribution and impact of these relations to TEs. However, Oh, Fiore & Jeoung (2007:120) disagree and state researchers have "...emphasized understanding what the tourist experience is and how it is formed as a result of visiting a destination ". Despite of the attention given to TEs, its understanding is not yet complete, claims Han & Patterson (2007), since the focus on the utilitarian attributes has left research undone regarding the processes, consequences, and impacts of the tourists' subjective emotions, mood and its relationships.

For instance, it could also be added, that not much is known regarding increased experience at the TD (Lehto *et al.*, 2004). Most studies only look at TE consumption from a very superficial perspective, in which TEs choices for describing the TEs lived vary from, pleasant to unpleasant, in an attempt to assess the satisfaction level, limiting the potential of correlations and/or relationships between the TE construct and other constructs, to be established (Mano & Oliver, 1993). Moreover, Bornhorst *et al.*, (2010) found among stakeholders that only repeat visitation was considered to be a success indicator of a TD, neglecting the value of TEs as a performance indicator for TD success.

Otto & Ritchie (1996), also share this opinion of researchers' tendency to focus more on the assessment of the service quality and its practical components. Quan & Wang (2004), also agree, the majority of the literature on the TE construct has been focused on the process of the management and service quality offered by the TDs stakeholders. Services offered should be assessed according to the TE overall psychological feelings, instead of just service performance or services attributes (Huang & Hsu, 2009). For this to happen, and for the right strategies to be designed, and decisions made, the TD risk factors must be found, evaluated, and reduced to attract potential tourists (Fuchs & Reichel, 2011).

The impact of the various TEs and their level of intensity (supportive or peak) (Wang, 2004), requires not only tourism researchers and TD marketers to assess TE holistically (as a whole entity), but also other academics from different areas of knowledge (Vitterso *et al.*, 2000). Otto & Ritchie (1996), claim no comprehensive model has been made to explain the essence of service experience, nor has a solid quantitative measurement for the construct been developed, researchers have instead been using qualitative methods. Huang & Hsu (2009), also consider in the same way, that although qualitative methods reveal “the vibrant dynamics” of tourists’ interactions, “further quantitative research to test the impact of tourist-to-tourist interaction on tourism outcomes” is needed. McIntosh & Siggs (2005) not only agrees with this view, as they add that researchers have been focused on TD attributes and products, neglecting the products of experiential nature.

In this regard, Jalil (2010) claims stakeholders can enhance and improve the projected TDI, if quality services become available to the tourists but also on the facilities offered to them. Despite the importance of economic indicators commonly seen as sign of success to TDs and DMOs, the fact remains that some factors (example: TE personal consumption) are beyond any control, and consequently these factors not only limit/restrain the role of these (Axelsen & Swan, 2009) agents, but they also affect dramatically the success indicators (Bornhorst *et al.*, 2010). In sum, while Pearce (1982) demonstrated TEs to change tourists’ perceptions, hence the way they create new TDIs, and despite Chon’s (1991) discovery that the level of satisfaction was dependent of the match between the TDI, prior to the visit and after the visit, the fact remains these results have not been addressed in other empirical studies. Moreover, as Axelsen & Swan (2009:440) remind “To avoid [...] potential for bias, future research should be conducted as a before-and-after study”.

Oh *et al.*, (2007) developed a scale upon Pine & Gilmore’s (1999) tourism experience economy framework, consisting of 4 dimensions or realms. The study’s focus was the hospitality industry, more specifically a Bed-and-breakfast unit. Hosany & Witham, (2009) would replicate with small adaptations this study to the cruise industry. As *Table 4.7 – TEs Measurement Variables* - shows, each of the four realms were described with

four statements to be rated in a 7 point Likert scale, ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree, by tourists according to their experience.

Table 4.7 – TEs Measurement Variables

Oh, Fiore & Jeoung, 2007	Hosany & Witham, 2009
Education The experience has made me more knowledgeable I learned a lot It stimulated my curiosity to learn new things It was a real learning experience <i>The experience was highly educational to me</i> <i>The experience really enhanced my skills</i>	Education I learnt a lot during this experience The experience made me more knowledgeable It was a real learning experience It stimulated my curiosity to learn new things
Aesthetics I felt a real sense of harmony Just being here was very pleasant The setting was pretty bland The setting was very attractive <i>The setting really showed attention to design detail</i> <i>The setting provided pleasure to my senses</i>	Aesthetics The setting of the ship was attractive The setting of the ship pay close attention to design details It was pleasant just being here I felt a real sense of harmony
Entertainment Activities of others were amusing to watch Watching others perform was captivating I really enjoyed watching what others were doing Activities of others were fun to watch <i>Watching activities of others was very entertaining</i> <i>What others did was boring to watch</i>	Entertainment The onboard activities were amusing The entertainment was captivating Onboard activities were entertaining Activities onboard were fun
Escapism I felt I played a different character here I felt like I was living in a different time or place The experience here let me imagine being someone else I completely escaped from reality <i>I totally forgot about my daily routine</i> <i>I felt I was in a different world</i>	Escapism I felt I played a different character here The experience let me imagine being someone else I completely escaped from my daily routine I felt like I was in a different time or place
Arousal How interesting was your stay at this B&B? How stimulating was your stay at this B&B? How exciting was your stay at this B&B? <i>How enjoyable was your stay at this B&B?</i>	Arousal My cruise experience was stimulating My cruise experience was exciting My cruise experience was enjoyable My cruise experience was interesting

Memory I will have wonderful memories about this B&B I will remember many positive things about this B&B I won't forget my experience at this B&B	Memory I will have wonderful memories about this cruise experience I won't forget my experience on this cruise I will remember many positive things about this cruise experience
Overall perceived quality Poor . . . Excellent Inferior . . . Superior	Overall Perceived Quality Poor/Excellent Inferior/Superior
Customer satisfaction Very dissatisfied . . . Very satisfied Terrible . . . Delighted	Overall Satisfaction Extremely Dissatisfied/Extremely Satisfied Terrible/Delighted
	Intention to Recommend Extremely Unlikely/Extremely Likely

Source: Adapted from Oh *et al.* (2007) and Hosany & Witham (2009)

In both studies, the research objectives compelled the authors to refine some of the items of the TE research instrument, and for that reason in both studies the items in *italic* were dropped. Table 4.7 also shows that the research items of both studies encompassed other variables, such as “memory”, “arousal”, “overall perceived quality” to establish the predictive validity of the TE scale. In Hosany & Witham’s (2009) study, an additional item “Intention to recommend” was included. Finally, other items regarding the tourists’ demographic variables, holiday companion, and previous visit were included. Next in table 4.8, some of the most used techniques by researchers are presented.

Table 4.8 - TEs Techniques Used In Previous Studies

Author, Year	Study Design and Instruments	Method	N	Sampling	Conclusions
Manhas & Ramjit (2013)	Structured Questionnaire 7-Point Likert-Scale	Confirmatory Factory Analysis Manova	600	Convenience Sampling Method	The study's findings showed that in the hospitality industry, significant differences between tourists' experiences in terms of dimensions, and also, that the customers' experiences to influence positively satisfaction and behavioral intention.
Wang, Chen, Fan, & Lu (2012)	Structured Questionnaire 5-Point Likert-Type Scale Expert Panel 25 Indicators Based On SERVQUAL Scale	Structured Equation Modeling Exploratory Factor Analysis Confirmatory Factor Analysis	267	Systematic Random Sampling	The study tested the causal relationships among service quality, tourist experience, and revisit intention in relation to three popular wetland parks in Zhejiang, China, based on the consumption experience measurement scale designed by Schmitt (1999). Findings showed tourist experience to be a mediator between service quality and revisit intention. Results also demonstrated the service quality factors to influence post-trip behavioral intention through aesthetic experience and action experience.

Author, Year	Study Design and Instruments	Method	N	Sampling	Conclusions
Volo (2010)	Analysis of Blog's Images and Text.	Qualitative Text and Image Analysis Thematic Approach	103 Blog Entries, 246 Comments And 277 Visual Images.	Purposive Sampling	The study found through tourists' blogs that cultural differences in the way tourists use blogs do describe their experiences. It also revealed that Italian bloggers have a greater potential to influence the decision-making process of future visitors, since their comments often contain recommendations and their own future intentions.
Axelsen & Swan (2009)	Structured Questionnaire 6-Point Likert-Type Scale	T-Test Analyses Binomial Generalized Linear Model ANOVA	191	Systematic Random Sampling	The findings revealed that through the manipulation of five festival attributes consumers' positive perceptions about the wine show could be increased. The study's results also, revealed that one attribute to have impact on the negative perceptions about the show.
Huang & Hsu (2009)	Structured Questionnaire 44-Item 7-Point Likert Type Scale 7-Point Semantic	Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)	6613	Quota Sampling	The findings revealed C2C interaction to have direct impact on the tourists' cruise experience and indirect effect on satisfaction, mediated by the cruising experience. In addition, the quality of the C2C showed a suppressor effect on the quantity of C2C interactions.

Author, Year	Study Design and Instruments	Method	N	Sampling	Conclusions
Hosany & Whitam (2009)	Structured Questionnaire 16-Item, 4-Dimensional (Education, Entertainment, Aesthetics And Escapism) Scale; 7-Point Likert-Scale; 7-Point Semantic Differential Scale	Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)	169	Convenience Sampling	The findings showed aesthetics to be an important, determinant component of the cruise experience, followed by entertainment, while education and escapism showed little or no importance. The authors also found the four dimensions of cruisers' experiences to have a direct effect on intention to recommend. In addition, satisfaction was found to partially mediate the relationship between cruisers' experiences and intention to recommend.
Oh, Fiore & Jeoung (2007)	Structured Questionnaire 16 Items (4 For Each TEs Dimension); 11 Items for the consequence Variables (i.e., Arousal, Memory, Overall Quality, Satisfaction), 7-Point Likert Scale	Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)	419	Convenience Sampling	The findings in the Bed & Breakfast sector, supported the four realms of experience framework, for measuring emerging experience economy concepts and practices within lodging and tourism settings. It also, showed the aesthetic dimension to be the dominant dimension of the experience.

Author, Year	Study Design and Instruments	Method	N	Sampling	Conclusions
Vittorso <i>et al.</i> (2000)	Structured Questionnaires at 6 Attractions; 5 Likert Scale and 7 Point Bipolar Semantic Differential Scale	PCA Principal Component Analysis	1857	Representative Sample	The results showed that tourists' from different countries, revealed interesting differences among themselves, which supported and validated the Flow-simplex approach, to provide differentiated information about the tourist experience. The findings also support the assumptions of the cognitive theory concerning the relationship between cognition and affect.
Otto & Ritchie (1996)	Open Ended Questions One on One Interviews 6 Dimensions (Novelty, Hedonics, Interaction, Stimulation, Security, Comfort).	Content Analysis	98	Convenience Sampling	Significant difference between service quality and service experience, showed that both constructs complement themselves.

Conclusion note

Today like in the 60s, the challenge for marketers and DMOs managers continues to be to uncover the essence of what exactly makes certain TEs special, memorable, at the eyes of the tourists, at a time and space which appears to be outside of the daily tempo and ordinary constraints. Despite some agreement regarding the importance of the construct, and the evaluation of tourists' experiences being a key factor for any organization or any TD success, a common language in the academic literature regarding an all-encompassing definition of TEs, and the dimensions that constitute the concept, remains sparse.

Among other factor (media, brokers, stakeholders,...) the main reason lies in the subjectivity coming from the personal or individual evaluation (affective, cognitive and conative) tourists make during their experiences, which in the end shapes it. Nowadays tourists seek to be engaged, absorbed, which means the supply side need to create memorable meanings during the production and consumption of experiences. This level of attachment, contradicts previous conceptions seeing tourists solely as rational human beings, neglecting the meaning tourists attach to service consumption. This consumption, takes them to pre-experience (imagining the future TEs at the destination) their holidays.

Tourists evaluate frequently and repeatedly the different events unfolding before them, at the different times (before, during and after the TE), and locations (at home and at the holiday destination). These events, can have various dimensions, according to Pine & Gilmore's (1999) four realms (entertainment, education, escapist, aesthetic) of the experience economy, differentiated however by the level of involvement (passive or active) and participation (absorption or immersion).

This happens because, the TEs occur "inside" the tourist, and are dependent of tourists' state of mind and of the set of complex and dynamic processes that take place to enable the tourists to see and feel the whole event and not the sum of the parts. Moreover, since the TEs are produced and consumed simultaneously, it implicates that the tourist and all of those participating actively in an event, create meanings during the consumption of the "staged" experiences.

Besides, other complex interactions between the tourist and the service provider take place, facilitating in some cases tourists to co-creating their own experiences. But, not all encounters or meetings between tourists' and service providers have the same value; some have different experience values and levels of involvement. This individual nature of the construct, forces managers to acknowledge they cannot control the personal interpretation and consequent interaction between tourist, service providers and surrounding environment, during the time of the experience.

Instead, it calls DMOs managers attention, to focus more in providing all the inputs necessary to enable tourists' to shape their own experiences in a pleasurable and memorable way. If tourists leave disappointed the attraction may have succeeded in attracting but not in carrying out its complete function of satisfying tourists, because some products or services are bought for what they represent (that is, the meaning) and not for what they do. Tourists' future decisions, regarding the next holidays, length of stay, season to travel, start also with the TEs available at the destination.

CHAPTER 5 - TOURISM DESTINATION IMAGE (TDI) CONSTRUCT

Introduction

In this chapter the TDI construct will be revised to understand its nature, formation process, dimensions and the factors that affect it. The literature review undertaken aims to identify the major constraints and opportunities which have arisen from this construct to operationalize and apply it in the empirical study. The conceptualizations suggested by previous researchers will be also be reviewed and discussed.

5.1 The importance of the tourism destination image (TDI)

Introduced in the 70s by Gunn (1972), Hunt (1975) and Mayo (1975), the image construct has been of great interest to researchers (Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Baloglu, 1997; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993, 2003; Gartner, 1989, 1993; Hunter & Suh, 2007; Kneesel, Baloglu, & Millar, 2009; Machado & Santos, 2008; Mayo, 1975; O’Leary & Deegan, 2003; Olimpia, 2008; Oppermann, 1996; Pan & Li, 2011; Pike, 2012; Puh, 2014; Reynolds, 1965; Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2008) for the last 30 years due to its high practical significance for destination management, marketing, branding (Stepchenkova & Mills, 2010), researchers, academics, industry practitioners (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999).

The construct TDI have had an important role since the 1970’s in the various models of the travel decision-making process developed to date (Woodside & Lysonski, 1989), and has since become one of the most researched topics in tourism-related research (Septchenkova & Mills, 2010). Not surprisingly it has been commonly accepted as an important aspect of promoting information about a specific destination (Molina, Gómez, & Martín-consuegra, 2010), since frequently tourists make travel decision at home, before leaving, rather than on impulse along the way (Ahmed et al., 2006).

Moreover, for marketing strategies to be successful a clear understanding of the TDI tourists' hold is essential (Sönmez & Sirakaya, 2002), since image is based on attributes composed of expected benefits, psychological characteristics and meanings that tourists associate with TDs, and for that reason TDI also influences destination positioning (Govers, 2005). The following table (5.1) shows the importance of the DI construct according to several authors.

Table 5.1 - The Importance of TDI Construct to Tourism Destinations

TDI on...	Impacts	Description	Authors
Perception		The TDI effects the way tourists' see and believe about TDs.	Echtner & Ritchie (2003); Govers (2005); Reynolds (1965); Tapachai & Waryszak (2000);
Positioning		The TDs tries to create in the tourists' mind an image to differentiate their TDs	Baloglu & Brinberg (1997); Bigné <i>et al.</i> (2001); Govers (2005); Kotler <i>et al.</i> (2009); Pike & Ryan (2004); Prayag (2007);
Destination decision-making process		Tourists' evaluate alternative TDs based on images to select an "ideal" TD	Alhemoud & Armstrong (1996); Baloglu & Brinberg (1997); Baloglu & McCleary (1999a, 1999b); Beerli & Martín (2004); Bigné <i>et al.</i> (2001); Chon (1990); Dann (1996); Echtner & Ritchie (1993, 2003); Gartner (1989); Goodrich (1978); Govers (2005); Hunt (1975); Kotler <i>et al.</i> (2009); Mayo (1975); Milman & Pizam (1995); O'Leary & Deegan (2003); Tapachai & Waryszak (2000); Um & Crompton (1990);

Anticipation	Stimulated by effective promotion, the tourists' experiences at the setting begin with anticipation images created.	Fakeye & Crompton (1991); Gunn (1972, 1988); Middleton & Clarke (2001);
Tourists behavior	TDI has direct and indirect effects on Tourists' buying behavior	Bigné <i>et al.</i> (2001); Chen & Tsai (2007); Fakeye & Crompton (1991); Govers (2005); Govers, Go, & Kumar (2007); Lee <i>et al.</i> (2005); Tasci & Gartner (2007);
Competitiveness	TDs compete through their image	Alhemoud & Armstrong (1996); Buhalis (2000); Woodside & Lysonski (1989);
Attractiveness of a destination	TDI influences the attractiveness of a destination	Chen & Hsu (2000); Goodrich (1978); Oppermann (1999);
Affect post-purchase behavior	TDI affects Tourists' behavior after the TE	Ahmed (1991); Bigné <i>et al.</i> (2001); Castro, Armario, & Ruiz (2007); Chen & Tsai (2007); Fakeye & Crompton (1991); Hu & Ritchie (1993);
Satisfaction	TDI influences the evaluation tourists make of the match between the TDI perceived and what was experienced	Assaker <i>et al.</i> (2011); Bigné <i>et al.</i> (2001); Alcañiz <i>et al.</i> (2009); Govers (2005); Jang & Feng (2007); Kozak & Rimmington (2000); Oppermann (2000); Puh (2014);
Quality	TDI is an antecedent of quality	Bigné <i>et al.</i> (2001); Govers (2005); Kotler <i>et al.</i> (2009);

Source: Author

5.2 Concept of TDI

A TDI results of complex processes (Reynolds, 1965) related with imagery, which is considered by MacInnis & Price, (1987:473), as “a process in which multisensory information is represented in a gestalt form in working memory”. Font (1997) develops this perspective further, by declaring that an image is not what it is known, but instead what is felt or thought. Thus, despite the TDI being influenced by product attributes and promotion efforts, it is a separate element in a sense that it refers to the way tourists’ perceive products, and to the suggestions products or TDs bring to the tourists’ mind, and also to the emotional bonds tourists’ create and share with the products, TDs (Doswell, 2002).

In effect, then, as Reynolds (1965:75) notes, tourists do not differ on the information they have available, nor on the capacity to create and elaborate an image, because “a product or brand is a combination of attributes, and one person might construct his image on the basis of one feature and another person on another”.

The capacity of tourists creating images and the subjectivity of the TDI concept (since each person formulate and create images around specific features), is shown also on the research level. Regardless of the profusion of studies on the subject, there is no consensus on a definition of TDI nor on all its components (Grosspietsch, 2006). Jenkins (1999) claims a common ground has been rather problematic to be reached, and often avoided (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003), despite of numerous definitions being offered (Gallarza, Saura, & García, 2002; Grosspietsch, 2006). To this end, many remain quite vague, and in several cases, not even explicitly stated (Beerli & Martín, 2004; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Pike & Ryan, 2004; Stepchenkova & Mills, 2010).

As Stepchenkova & Mills (2010) noted, previous studies of TDI have led to multiple definitions, conceptualizations and measurements, which are inconsistent with the nature and complexity of the construct. Echtner & Ritchie (2003:41), emphasized on one of the reasons for the difficulties mentioned above, to be the inexistence of a concrete indication of whether the researchers are considering the attribute-based, or the holistic-based

components of an image, or even both. Thus, not surprisingly, and despite the long background of the construct, it remains ill-defined and complex as table 5.2 shows:

Table 5.2 - Definitions of Destination Image Used by Researchers

Reference	Definition
60's	
Reynolds (1965:69)	"An image is actually the result of a more complex process. It is the mental construct developed by the consumer on the basis of a few selected impressions among the flood of total impressions; it comes into being through a creative process in which these selected impressions are elaborated, embellished, and ordered".
70's	
Hunt (1975:1)	"Perceptions held by potential visitors about an area".
Crompton (1979:18)	"Sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination".
80's	
Phelps (1986:168)	"Perceptions or impressions of a place".
Gartner & Hunt (1987)	"Impressions that a person...holds about a state in which they do not reside".
Richardson & Crompton (1988:129)	"Perceptions of vacation attributes".
Gartner (1989:16)	"A complex combination of various products and associated attributes".
Calantone, <i>et al.</i> (1989:25)	"Perceptions of potential tourist destinations".
90's	
Reilly (1990:21)	"Not individual traits...but the total impression an entity makes".
Fakeye & Crompton (1991:10)	"Representation of an area into the potential tourist's mind".

Echtner & Ritchie (1993:3)	“Composed of perceptions of individual attributes (such as climate, accommodation facilities, friendliness of the people) as well as more holistic impressions (mental pictures or imagery) of the place”.
Milman & Pizam (1995:21)	“Destination image may be referred to as the visual or mental impression of a place, a product, or an experience held by the general public”.
Alhemoud & Armstrong (1996:76)	“Image, therefore, comprises the ideas or conceptions held individually or collectively of the destination”.
Font (1997:124)	“Set of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that the public holds of the named product, and to some extent it is part of the product”.
Mackay & Fesenmaier (1997:538)	“A destination’s image is a composite of various products (attractions) and attributes woven into a total impression”.
00’s	
Bigné, Sánchez & Sánchez (2001:607)	“The image of a destination consists, therefore, of the subjective interpretation of reality made by the tourist”.
Kotler & Gertner (2002:251)	“The sum of beliefs and impressions people hold about places. Images represent a simplification of a large number of associations and pieces of information connected with a place. They are a product of the mind trying to process and pick out essential information from huge amounts of data about a place”.
Doswell (2002:51)	“The image of a destination is the way in which it projects itself, and the way in which it is viewed by its markets”.
Echtner & Ritchie (2003:43)	“Destination image consists of functional characteristics, concerning the more tangible aspects of the destination, and psychological characteristics, concerning the more intangible aspects”.

Ahmed <i>et al.</i> (2006:59)	“What tourists think or perceive about a state as a destination, its tourism resources, its tourist services, the hospitality of its host, its social and cultural norms, and its rules and regulations that influence their consumer behavior”.
Alcañiz <i>et al.</i> (2009:716)	“It consists of all that the destination evokes in the individual; any idea, belief, feeling or attitude that tourists associate with the place”.

Source: Author

In sum, as Echtner & Ritchie (2003) and Baloglu & McCleary (1999) note, TDI is an overall mental picture, consisting of an individual's mental representation of knowledge (beliefs), feelings, and global impression about an object or destination. However, by examining the table 5.2, the lack of consensus among researchers (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Doswell, 2002; Alhemoud & Armstrong, 1996) about the role of the *intangible* (e.g. the associations and meanings evoked during tourists and TDs interactions) and *tangible* dimension (conceptualization of TDI in terms of its attributes) to the creation of holistic impressions/image (comprising both dimensions) is evident.

On Stepchenkova & Morrison (2008) words, TDI construct is composite by nature. Table 5.3 shows, how the TDI construct has been described by previous authors as solely a: representation, object, impressions, thoughts, ideas, beliefs, feelings or identity (neglecting the holistic dimension).

Table 5.3 – Keywords used by authors to define the TDI construct are organized

Authors	Concept Keywords:
Bigné <i>et al.</i> (2001); Fakeye & Crompton (1991); Hunt (1975); Doswell (2002);	Impressions, overall idea, perception of a place or region
Alhemoud & Armstrong (1996); Crompton (1979); Kotler <i>et al.</i> (1993); Tapachai & Waryszak (2000);	A mental portrayal what the travel experience might look like.

Bigné <i>et al.</i> (2001);	Subjective interpretation of reality made by the tourist”
Echtner & Ritchie (1993); Padgett & Allen (1997); Tapachai & Waryszak (2000).	To be based on attributes, expected benefits and symbolic meanings consumers associate with a specific destination

Source: Author

However, it is important not to forget the TDIs change over time, not only because of the negative or positive political views, affairs or relationships, but also because the TDI is built on a country or places’ myths, legends, tales, social and cultural history (Doswell, 2002), always evolving and changing. As Govers (2005) adds, the TDI is not a simple immutable concept which is perceived by all tourists’ in the same way, tourists have different perceptions of what is projected (by the offer side), and these projections are assimilated individually or in group (as a community), resulting in different or fragment understandings and interpretations of the construct and its nature.

In this sense, this research, when referring to the TDI, in reality what is being referred to is the dominant view of the concept encompassing the tangible and intangible components. Therefore, the following definition is presented:

An Image results from a set of complex mental impressions and feelings that a person or a group of persons hold of a place or product at a given moment that may change over time, and which influences the behavior.

5.3 Dimensions of the TDI

According to the literature review undertaken, tourists’ TDI has its origin in three “distinctly different but hierarchically interrelated components: cognitive, affective and conative” (Gartner 1993:193). The perceptual or cognitive component is the tourists’ evaluation of the TD resources and attractions, together with the personal beliefs, and

knowledge, about the destination (Baloglu & McCleary 1999b; Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2008).

It is also, ultimately, what drives the tourists to visit a specific destination (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Chen, 2001; Hong *et al.*, 2006; Walmsley & Young, 1998; Alcaniz *et al.*, 2009; Alhemoud & Armstrong, 1996, Schneider & Sönmez, 1999; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Gallarza, Saura & Garcia, 2002; Beerli & Martín, 2004; Govers & Go, 2005).

The second component, affective¹⁵, has been the attention of researchers in the late 90's (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b), because it refers to the tourists' feelings towards a TD (Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2008). According to Bigné *et al.* (2009), the affective image is important, in order to understand tourist behaviour, because TDI involves both cognition and emotion. In essence, as Gartner (1993) and Baloglu & McCleary (1999b) propose, the affective component is the tourists' motives, feelings, and emotions assigned to TDs. This component is important because it reflects a human feeling, with positive and negative dimensions, that includes mood and emotion (Han & Patterson, 2007).

Other authors however (Pike & Ryan, 2004; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Bigné *et al.*, 2009), also proposed a third component, conative or behavioral, which is related to the probability of tourists' revisiting the destination or even of recommending it. The conative component "is the action component which builds on the cognitive and affective stages" (Dann, 1996:49).

As Gartner (1993) suggests, this component is related to the action or probability of visiting friends, relatives or a specific TD, since it results from initial image developed in the cognitive stage and of the subsequent assessment during the affective stage. Meaning, that the conative component is this way hierarchically interrelated to the cognitive and affective components. This component and its importance to tourists' buying behavior

¹⁵Vitterso *et al.*, (2000) drawing on Piaget's work, remind the importance of the degree of assimilation resistance during the perception process. The authors' state that a person's perception of the world, will always find some degree of resistance, and therefore, can never be consider completely pure.

(intention to recommend, to revisit) has been assessed by several authors (Bigné *et al.*, 2001, 2009; Bosque & Martín, 2008; Chi & Qu, 2008; Pike & Ryan, 2004).

Furthermore, a fourth component has been considered by other researchers (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a, Gartner, 1993; Calantone *et al.*, 1989; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Hunt, 1975; Phelps, 1986) as the result of both components (cognitive and affective) contributing to the formation of an overall image. According to these authors, this holistic perception (overall image) is greater than the sum of its parts (i.e. the sum of the cognitive, affective, and conative components).

Also important, is the fact that tourists can use these holistic impressions in their initial pre-selection set of the potential holiday destinations (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Um & Crompton, 1992). Moreover, the overall image can also be directly or indirectly modified by the tourists' motivations (Gartner, 1993). As all the previous authors demonstrated in their work, there are many variables involved when considering how tourists create and elaborate a TDI. Therefore, some different perspectives will be considered.

5.3.1 Different approaches to TDI dimensions

Over the years, several approaches have been proposed regarding the TDI dimensions, and it is no surprise to observe the predominance of *One-dimensional approach* (Grosspietsch, 2006). Phelps (1986) regarded the cognitive dimension or component as the only component of image, due to its objectivity and relevance. Other authors (Moutinho, 1987, Gartner, 1993; Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Walmsley & Young, 1998; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a, 1999b; Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990; Lin *et al.*, 2007; Hanyu, 1993), suggest that despite the different names given to the same dimensions (e.g. cognitive, appraise) the TDI is formed by *two dimensions* - a rational and emotional interpretation.

One of such examples is Stern & Krakover's (1993) suggestion of the concept as "designative" perceptions (when referring to the cognitive component), and "appraisive" perceptions (when referring to the affective perspective). Still, the authors also suggested,

that both components molded together create a composite image. Another perspective considered by Gartner (1993) and White (2004) suggests that not two, but *three dimensions*, encompassing affective, cognitive and conative components form the

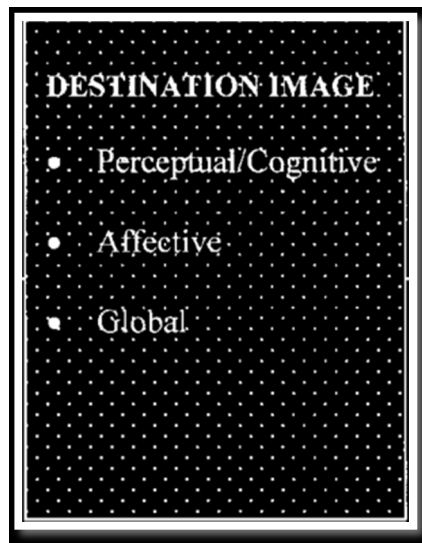
structure of the TDI. Although Gartner (1993) considers that the hierarchical relationship between the three dimensions explains the product preference. He suggests, the conative component to be directly influenced by the cognitive component, since the behavior results from the images acquired during the cognitive process, and from the tourists' affective evaluation.

In a different perspective, Mayo (1975) said that the three basic dimensions of the TDI are: climate, scenery, and congestion. As it can be seen, there are numerous factors that affect the TDI. Nonetheless, some reflection is needed regarding the TDI dimensions, because as Ahmed *et al.* (2006:65) warns, "affective images refer to the feelings aroused by a place, yet people with different motives may assess a destination in similar ways if this perception satisfies their needs".

It was also found that affective image is affected by cognitive image (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Gartner, 1993; Stern & Krakover, 1993; Lin *et al.*, 2007) and tourists' motivations (Gartner 1993; Beerli & Martín, 2004). Yoo & MacInnis (2005), in their ads triggering effects research concluded the affective and cognitive components to be "intertwined" and not separate, and that emotional ad formats enhanced positive feelings and reduced negative ones.

Other researchers (Derbaix & Abeele, 1985; Westbrook, 1987; Zajnoc & Marcus, 1982) disagree, putting forth the concept that the affective responses influence tourists' preferences as well as word-of-mouth (WOM), and that this dimension assumes a controlling role or in some cases, an independent position from the cognitive and conative component. On the other hand, Baloglu & McCleary (1999b), suggested that relationships among the different dimensions (figure 5.1) within its structure (cognitive, affective, and global) occur.

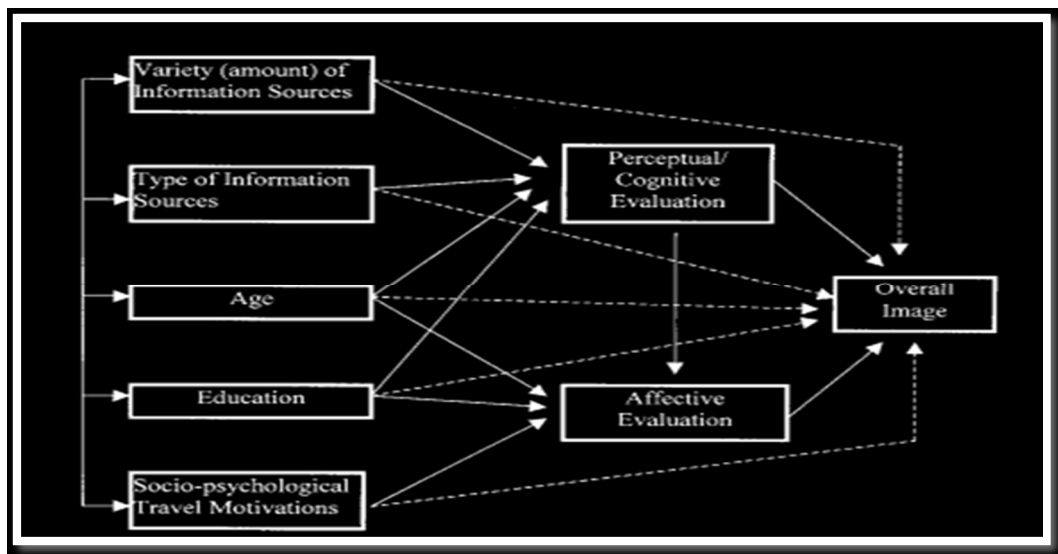
Figure 5.1 – TDI Dimensions



Source: Baloglu & McCleary (1999b:870)

In the authors' path model of the determinants of the TDI (figure 5.2), the relationships between the TDI dimensions and tourists' destination preferences show how overall TDIs are composed and formed, i.e., by the cognitive and affective components, and that the cognitive image impacts indirectly on the overall TDI. Thus, the resulting interactions, either between these components, individuality or together with other factors, not only affects the image but also contributes towards the image of the destination the tourist holds (Ahmed *et al.*, 2006).

Figure 5.2 - Path model of the determinants of the TDI



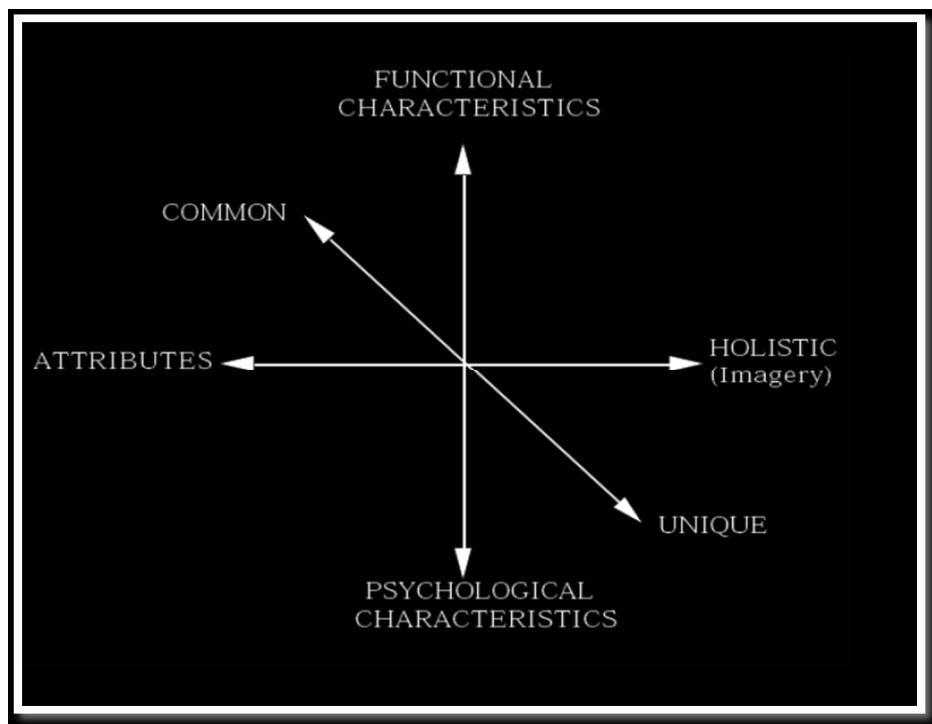
Source: Baloglu & McCleary (1999b:871)

Echtner & Ritchie (2003) also presented an alternative framework of TDI (Figure 5.3), in which 3 axis that support the image of any TD are proposed:

- 1st axis – the TDI is attribute-based (more tangible, e.g. related to the perception of the individual TD features) and also has a holistic component (more abstract, e.g. the mental imagery of a destination);
- 2nd axis - functional (measurable perceptions like a beach, mountains, accommodation) and psychological (more abstract, like atmosphere or friendliness) characteristics;
- 3rd axis - they suggested that TDI could range from common traits to those traits based on more unique features, events, feelings or auras.

As a result, the authors claim researchers must apply all these components in their research. However, Govers (2005) disagrees with Echtner & Ritchie (2003), regarding the application of this perspective to all TDs, since TDs are different and their offering can be classified into very distinct categories, such as sun and sea, business or cultural.

Figure 5.3 – The Three Axis Continuums of the TDI



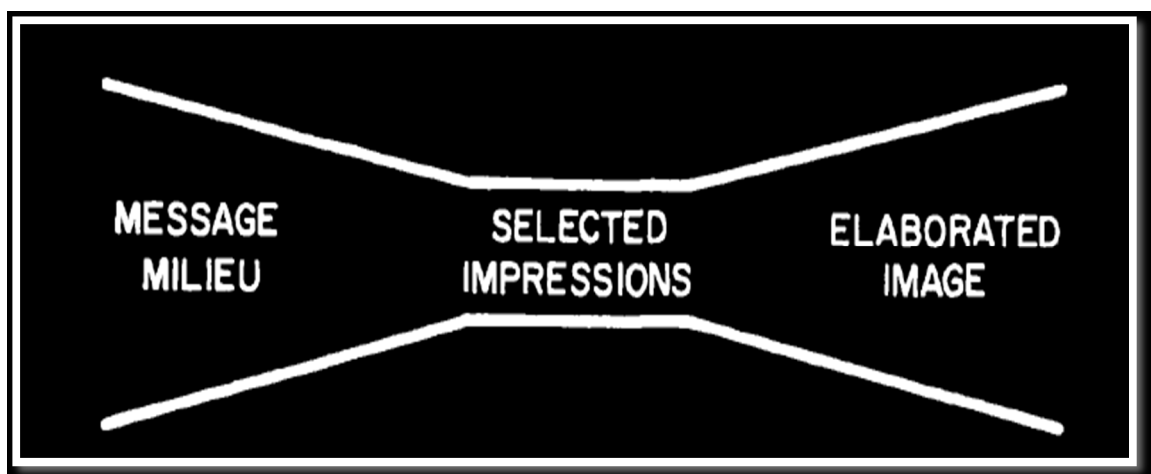
Source: Echtner & Ritchie (2003:40)

5.3.2 The TDI formation process

As seen the TDI concept is elusive and not easily defined, and composed of several dimensions, that together form a composite image. The question persists nonetheless about how is it formed? Which factors or elements contribute to its formation? Are they related? Do they evolve? A simple answer to these questions is provided by Selby & Morgan (1996), who consider the TDI formation process to be, and resulting in a complex process. In this process, tourists' develop a mental construct based upon a few selected impressions among a "flood" of total impressions (Reynolds, 1965; Echtner & Ritchie, 2003).

These images "become prior texts for prospective tourists, motivating interest in particular destinations and shaping conceptions of distant peoples long before they are directly encountered" (Adams, 2004:115). These conceptions, or flood of impressions, coming increasingly from the media (Croy, 2004), and from different channels such as television, movies, books, newspapers, brochures, among other (Phelps, 1986; Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Beerli & Martin, 2004), are then selected, organized, elaborated by the tourist in a creative process, as figure 5.4 shows:

Figure 5.4 – Description of the Image Building Process



Source: Reynolds (1965:10)

According to Reynolds (1965) in many occasions “image” is considered to be the same as reputation, which raises questions regarding belief vs fact, e.g., images are created from several inferences made by the tourists which may (or may not have), a direct or indirect relationship to a specific fact, and for this reason, are not simple empirical beliefs about products or brands. The author clarifies his point saying “... a consumer can create [...] an amazingly detailed image of a product, and the people likely to use it [...] complete with evaluative attitudes and emotional overtones” (Reynolds, 1965:70). He also made a comparison between the image building process and a fictional composition, stating that in the same way a writer communicates particular moments (in which emotions and experiences are felt), he does it, by attempting to evoke in the readers some emotions and experiences.

In this regard, the tourists’ contact with the different marketing efforts from the supply side, will along with his or hers personal values and knowledge, create in the tourist’s mind an individual image. As Font (1997:125) advocates “...The human mind needs to search for coherence and balance in the information it receives. In this process, the prospective tourist will order, rationalize and justify information from different and often conflicting sources. Information gaps will be filled by the customer, who will either embellish or denigrate the destination image according to subjective opinion, in an effort to link what is known to what is imagined.” However, as Doswell (2002) reminds, this image building process is long, expensive, and not always effective, thus, it is better to reinforce a positive image in a continuum process, rather than adjusting a negative.

Having established how the TDI is formed, it is necessary to see which elements contribute towards its formation, and how these elements, are related and evolve. To this end, several authors (Gunn, 1988; Molina *et al.*, 2010) recognized the existence of distinct floods of information. According to the authors, the information coming from friends, relatives, popular culture and personal experience create an organic image (non-commercial source), whereas the information gathered from tour operators’ and travel agents’ opinions, promotional brochures and posters, would create an induced image (commercial source).

In this context, several authors (Sirakaya & Sonmez, 2000; Molina *et al.*, 2010), consider brochures to play an essential role in the formation of the tourist's destination-induced image, since self-information also plays a vital role. But while induced image is directed by the destination's marketing efforts, the organic image in turn is beyond any control (Ahmed *et al.*, 2006). Thus, induced image brings great responsibility to travel agents and operators, since descriptions in travel brochures or guidebooks can destroy the imagery of the destination (Adams, 2004), if they do not represent correctly the TD.

As Selby & Morgan, (1996) note, unlike other products, the TDI image process is influenced by a broader spectrum of information sources. One example is given by Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2004), regarding the communication between tourists, which provides them with an alternative form of obtaining information without being dependent on firms/organizations.

In short, the destination image is formed from several information sources (reference groups, group membership, media, etc.), meaning that any person can build an image of any destination (in their mind) without ever having been there (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Lopes, 2011) or even without being exposed to any form of commercial form of information (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003) as there is a link between the country's tourism image and the national image (Kotler, 1987; Peterson & Jolibert, 1995; Roth & Romeo, 1992). In turn, the tourists' own country of origin influences the image they build of the TD (Bonn *et al.*, 2005).

In the tourism sector, the means of promotion and their value depend, not only, on the capacity to reach consumers and to satisfy needs, but also, of establishing a dynamic way of providing information to tourists (Molina *et al.*, 2010). Consequently, the information gleaned from non-commercial sources concerning various historical, political, economic and social factors is incorporated into destination image (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003), and the attributes of the different destinations form the basis for different images and experiences expectations (Molina *et al.*, 2010).

5.3.2.1 Different Perspectives

Among the several authors offering their view on how the TDI is formed, Gunn (1988) has put these various sources of information into context, in his model of the seven phases of the travel experience. He suggests:

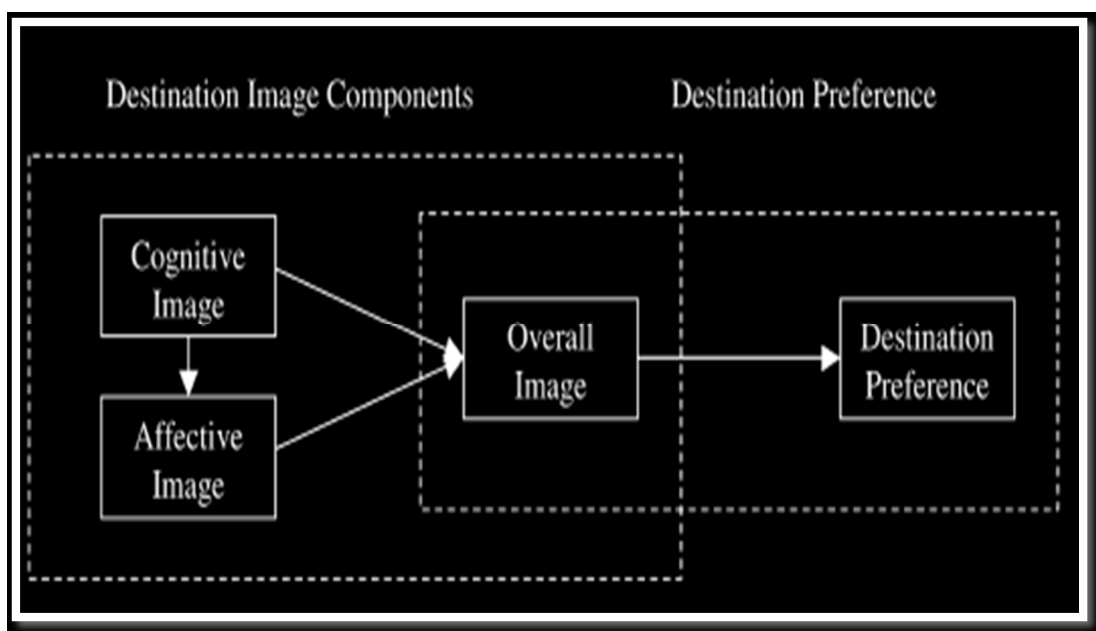
- In the first stage, tourists' accumulate mental images about their vacation experiences;
- Second stage, tourists' go through a process in which the initial images are modified, as a consequence of having searched for more information;
- Third stage, the tourists' make the decision to take a vacation trip;
- Fourth stage, tourists' travel to the destination;
- Fifth stage, tourists participate in the holiday's activities at the destination (experience on the location);
- Sixth stage, tourists' return home (the traveler reflects on the experience); seventh stage, tourists' may change their images based on the vacation (first hand) experience.

For Gartner (1993) the image formation process is as a continuum of different agents, and information sources acting independently to form one image in the tourist mind. These agents can be divide into five different categories:

- 1st overtly induced, is when tour operators and wholesalers use conventional advertising in the mass media;
- 2nd covertly induced, destination's promotion activities employ celebrities;
- 3rd autonomous, radio and electronic media, documentaries, films, television programs are employed;
- 4th organic, friends or relatives provide information, either requested or volunteered, based on their knowledge and experience about the TD;
- 5th the visit to the destination, the final step or phase of the image formation continuum process.

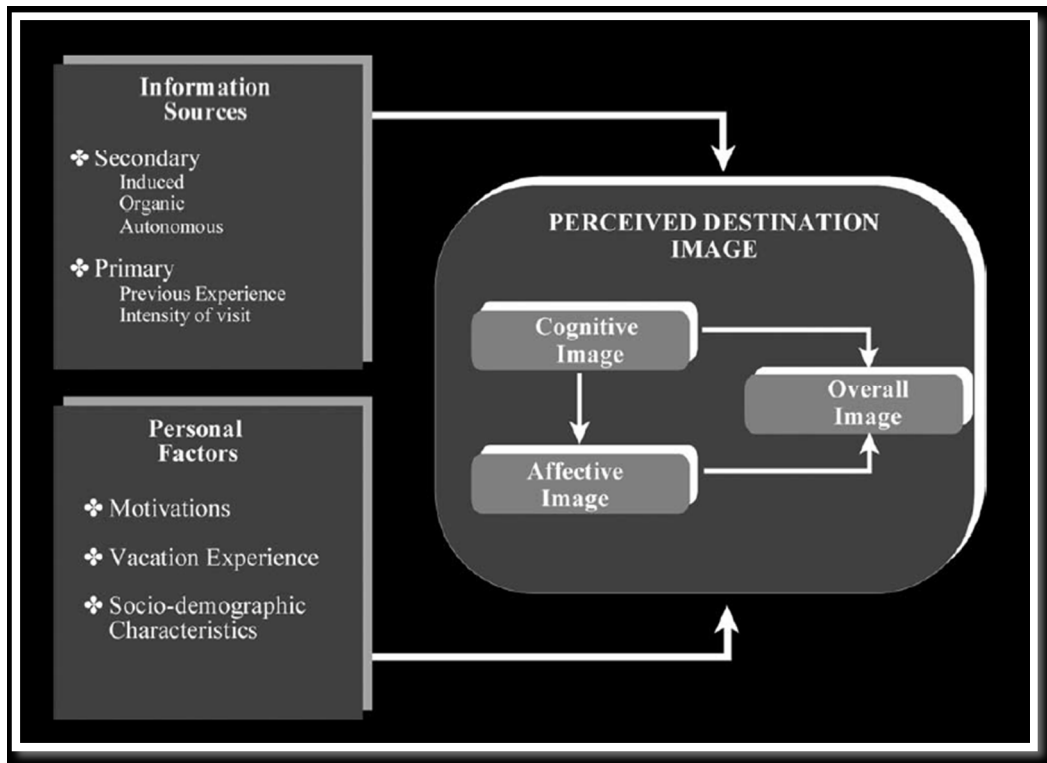
In the same context, Lin *et al.* (2007), in their integrated model (see figure 5.5) found that both affective and cognitive components and the overall image, are important during the destination selection process, and for that reason the cognitive image impacts indirectly on the overall TDI via affective image. They also found, that depending on the type of destinations different images were found.

Figure 5.5 – An Integrated Model of Destination Model



Source: Lin, Morais, Kerstetter & Hou (2007:3)

Beerli & Martin's (2004a) however, analyzed the relationship between the different components of the perceived image and the stimulus factors which influence its formation (figure 5.6), and found that personal factors (motivation, accumulated touristic experiences and sociodemographic characteristics) along with the different information sources impact (primary and secondary) influence the formation of perceptions and evaluations of destinations.

Figure 5.6 - Model of the Formation of Destination Image

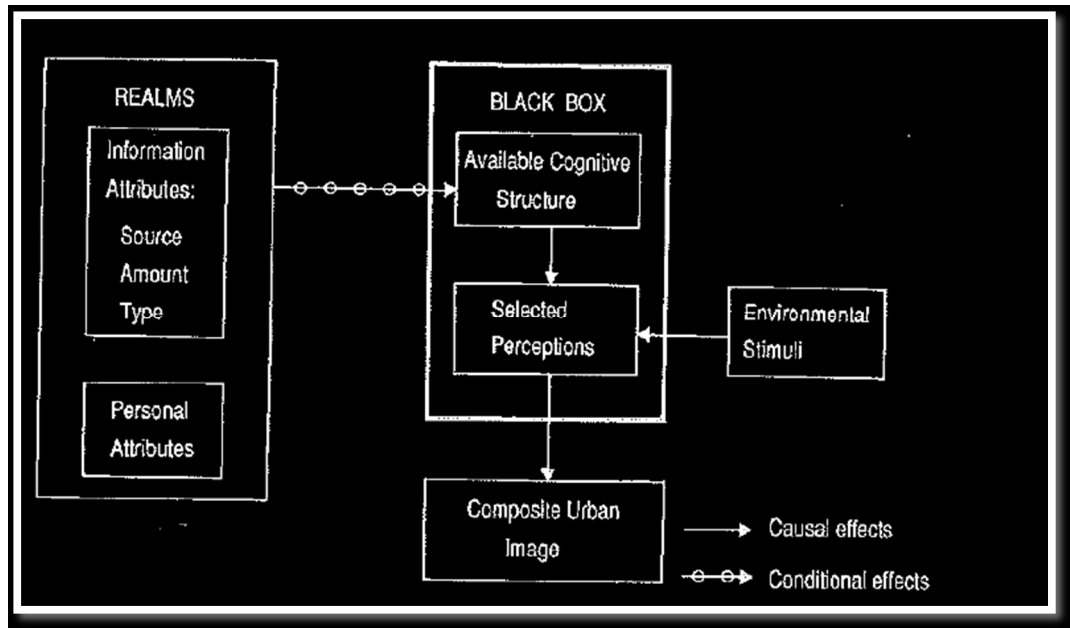
Source: Beerli & Martin (2004:660)

Stern & Krakover (1993) proposed the formation of the TDI (figure 5.7, in the next page) to be influenced by the different sources of information and by the personal attributes of the tourist, referred as realms. These realms affect the black box, which acts as a perception filter that reflects the cognitive organization of the tourists' interpretations. Thus, the interrelationships between the indirect and direct perceived stimuli of the environment create in the end a composite image.

As a consequence of the tourists differing significantly in their perceptions, the need to assess the destination's environmental attributes (Bonn *et al.*, 2005), personal variables (such as age, education, income, and family size), visual attributes (Mackay & Fesenmaier, 1997), come to be powerful factors, since these influence the destination image (Bonn *et al.*, 2005). Thus, the perceived image is the result of the tourists' needs, motivations, prior knowledge, experience among other personal characteristics, together with the projected image of the destination (Ahmed *et al.*, 2006:65). To this end, Adams

(2004) considers tourists' images to not only be shaped by verbal, textual and photographic representations, but also, with implications on the residents and the way they conceptualize themselves.

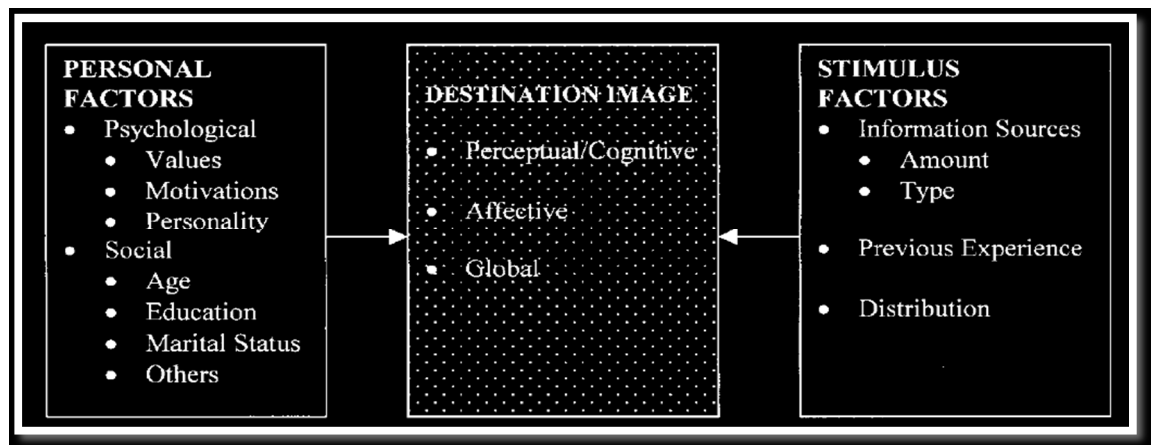
Figure 5.7 – Basic Concept of Urban Image Formation



Source: Stern & Krakover (1993:132)

Baloglu & McCleary, (1999b) argue in their research, that the image is caused or formed by two major forces (Figure 5.8): stimulus factors (external stimulus and physical object, as well as previous experience) and personal factors (social and psychological characteristics of the perceiver). In the absence of actual visitation or previous experience, three major determinants influence the TDI; the tourism motivations, sociodemographics and information sources.

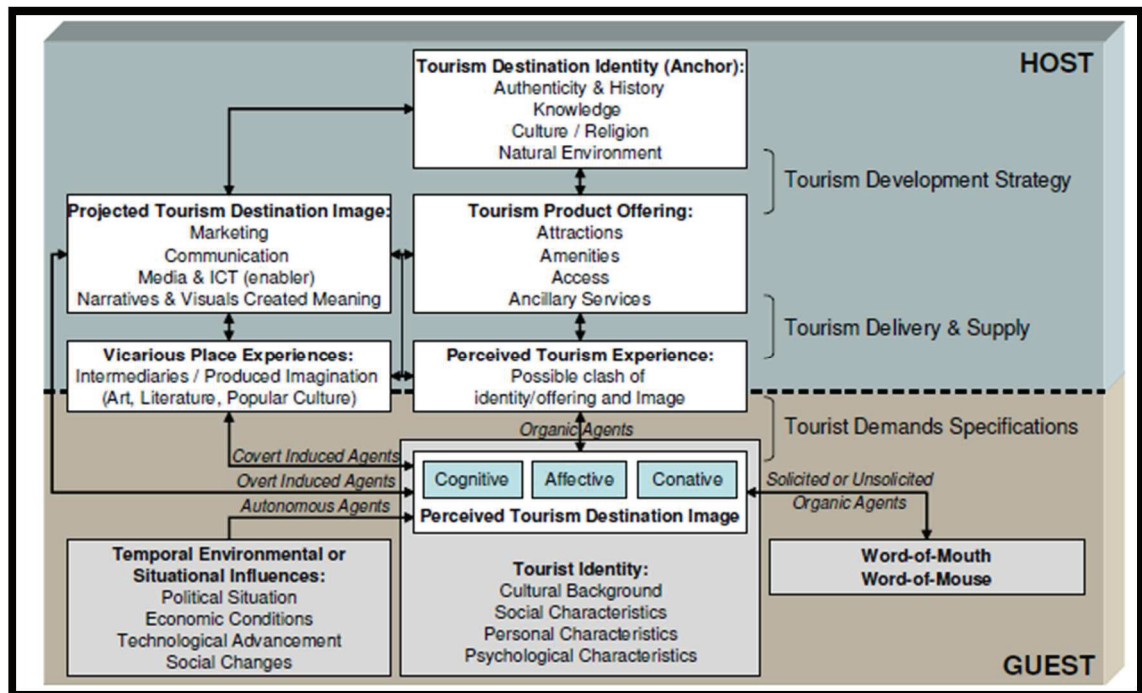
Figure 5.8 - A General Framework of Destination Image Formation



Source: Baloglu & McCleary (1999b:870)

Govers (2005) emphasizes in his 3 Gap Tourism Destination Image Formation Model (figure 5.9), the dynamism of the TDI formation process by deconstructing and identifying the main elements from a host/guest perspective (supply versus demand) with greater influence in the tourists' construction of TDIs. In his theoretical model, three gaps are identified to have an effect on tourists' satisfaction:

- The first gap identified is the managers' difficulty to project an attractive, consistent tourism product, using cultural identity as the core competitive advantage to reach the potential target markets, since these markets are culturally different;
- The second gap found was that the TDI perceived, results from a process in which different cultural backgrounds and consequent interpretations, along with subjective WOM (Word-of-mouth), leading tourists' to interpret and follow and "different scripts" from the one projected;
- As 3rd gap, conflicts can arise from different interpretations from the host and guests' readings of the "script" (image vs reality).

Figure 5.9 - The 3-Gap Tourism Destination Image Formation Model

Source: Govers (2005:35)

5.4 Decision-making process

As mentioned earlier, one of the reasons for the importance of the TDI construct comes from holidays being considered by tourists as a high involvement purchase, since a great amount of time and money is invested into identifying suitable places to visit (Goodrich, 1978; Laws, 1995). The high involvement makes the task harder and more critical the moment, in which the decision-making process takes place (Gunn, 1988). A solution tourists adopt to reduce the amount of holiday options available, and to assist in the decision-making process, is the TDI they hold of the potential TDs.

This, in turn affects the tourists' decisions, since those destinations with a stronger TDI are more likely to be chosen by tourists (Woodside & Lyonski, 1989; Alhemoud & Armstrong, 1996). In fact, several authors (Schmoll, 1977; Moutinho, 1987; Gartner, 1989; Stabler, 1990; Crompton & Ankomah, 1993; Woodside & Lyonski, 1989; Um & Crompton, 1990; Gartner, 1993; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005; Um *et al.*, 2006; Decrop, 2010; Kozak, 2010) have investigated the decision-making process. Other researchers (Mayo, 1973; Hunt, 1975; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Alhemoud

& Armstrong, 1996; Buhalis, 2000; O’Leary *et al.*, 2003; Beerli & Martín, 2004; Govers, 2005; Bigné *et al.*, 2009) have looked at the process as a critical element in the tourists’ purchase decisions.

As Mayo (1975) and Goodrich (1978) refer, the image emerges as a critical element in the destination choice process, because tourists’ evaluate all (alternative) TDs according to the images they have of them. Thus, through the comparison of tourists’ “ideal” TD, with the TDs that are available (and accessible to tourists’ choice set), tourists’ choose the destination (Crompton, Fakeye & Lue, 1992; Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997) that assures them the greatest amount of satisfaction (Mayo, 1975), even if that decision ends by causing anxiety, considering the correctness of the decision taken (Laws, 1995).

It is in this process in which the alternatives are weighted, and tourists swift through the potential holiday destinations, like a funneling process, in which a much larger set of potential TDs are progressively narrowed into smaller sets, until a final decision can be made, and a destination selected (Ankomah *et al.*, 1996). Marketing assumes for this reason, at this stage, and important role in stimulating and reinforcing the tourists’ awareness of the TDs, since the tourist’s final decision also means, that he or she (tourist) has decided not to spend more money and time on alternative products (Laws, 1995).

However, despite of the singular and distinct mental images being constructed in the minds of the tourists by the TDI marketers, an important question must nevertheless be raised: - Which differentiating destination attributes are stronger among tourists? One possible answer is given by Crompton, Fakeye & Lue (1992), who state that some perceived strengths are not considered by tourists because they are not significant in the tourists’ eyes. Thus, as noted by Font (1997:125) “decision-making processes in tourism are considered complex and variable”.

The complexity comes from the fact the development of societies has been structured by the presence of tourism spaces, called *stage set*, *tourist setting* or *set* (MacCannell, 1999). These sets, adds the author, are physically close and are unique social places in which serious social, occupational and industrial activities are open to tourists’ visitation. Govers (2005) advocates the process in which tourists recognize their need, search for

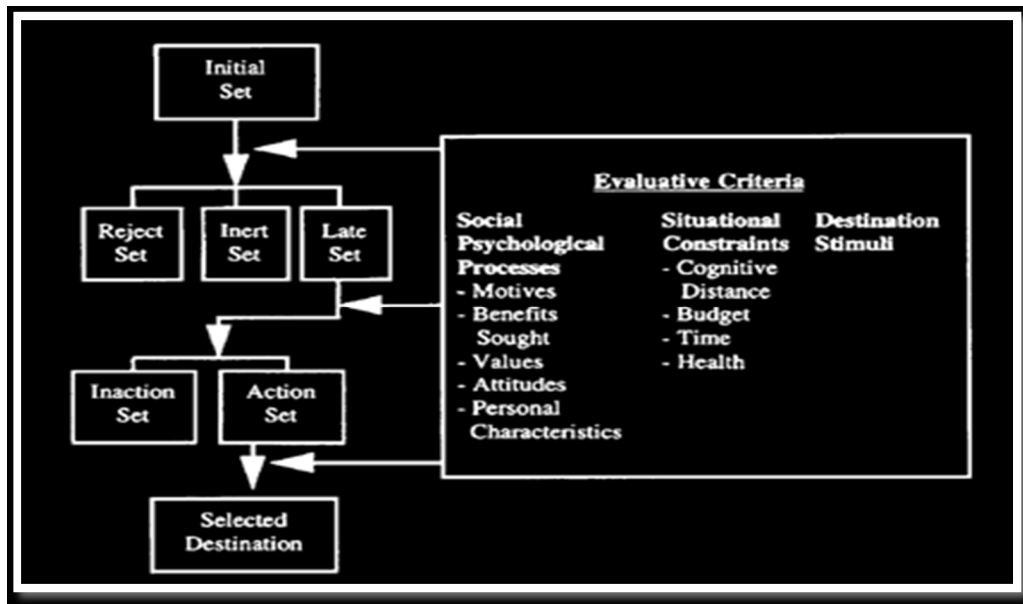
info, evaluate alternative and select the TDs, as a dynamic and non-sequential process. Kozak (2010) also claims this decision-making process is present at every moment of the tourists' live, from when a simple decision needs to be made, to a more complex and difficult one. Several researchers (Woodside & Lysonski, 1989; Um & Crompton, 1990; Ankomah *et al.*, 1996; Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005) have to this end, observed potential TDs as consideration sets, which are imagined and clustered into different sets by the tourists.

5.4.1 Consideration sets

For instance, in an *early consideration set*, some destinations the tourist is considering travelling to (within some period of time) are chosen, from an extensive "list" of potential TDs (Crompton & Ankomah, 1993). At a *late consideration set*, this "list" of potential TDs is reduced and transformed into one of the few remaining TDs (Woodside & Lysonski, 1989; Crompton, 1992; Crompton & Ankomah, 1993). Oppermann & Chon (1997) and Sirakaya & Woodside (2005) described these steps as: a) the potential tourist awareness of the need to travel, b) the need to search information about the potential TDs, c) evaluation of the options, d) decision regarding the chosen TD, e) outcomes or post-evaluation.

As Figure 5.10 shows, three sets of influencing variables (social psychological processes, situational constraints, and destination stimuli) function as evaluative criteria against which TDs to select in the initial set. This process occurs several times, first after the initial set, then in the late set (into the action or inaction sets), and afterwards before the final selection of the destination. Depending on the result of this evaluation, the initial set can be assigned to a late set (consists of those places which a traveler considers as probable destinations), or an inert set (destinations evaluated neither positively nor negatively), or in reject sets (automatically excluded because of unpleasant experience or negative information).

Figure 5.10 – A Model of the Role of Cognitive Distance In The Evolution Of Choice Sets



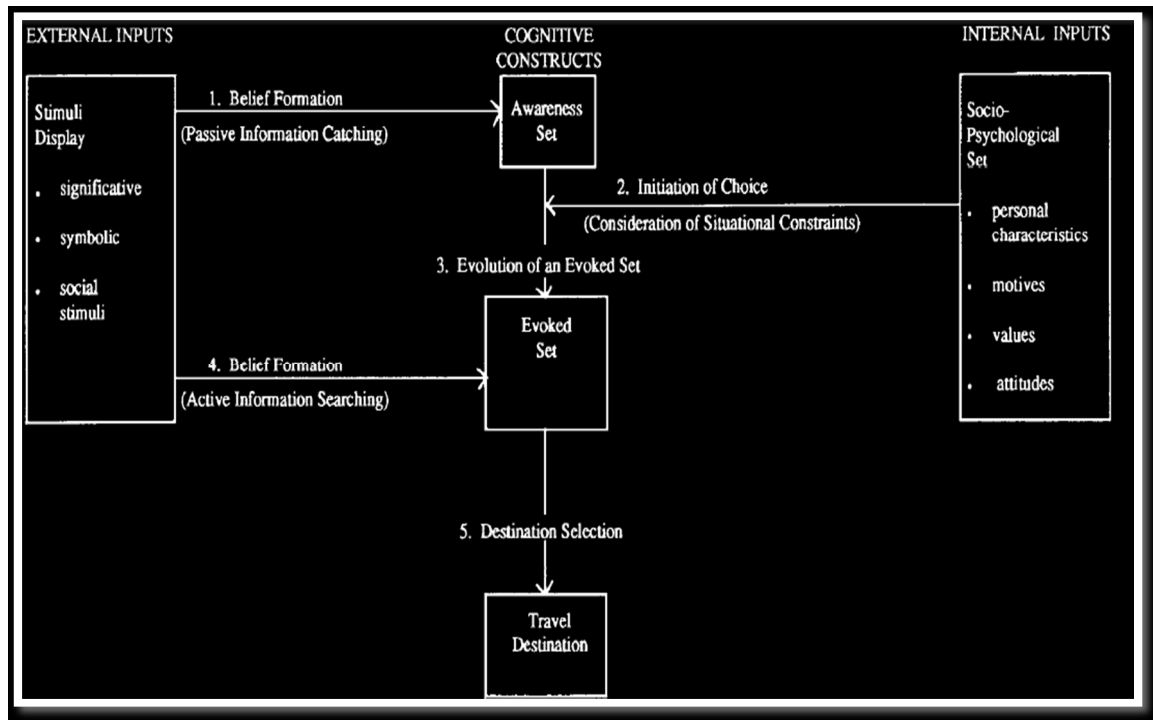
Source: Ankomah *et al.* (1996:139)

Following one of these steps, tourists' enter into an inaction or action set, and depending on the choice made, action (to select the TD) or inaction (not selecting a TD) the cognitive decision is made as to travelling or not (Ankomah *et al.*, 1996). In this regard, Alhemoud & Armstrong (1996:76) consider that "product image is seen as an abstract concept incorporating the influence of past promotion, reputation, and peer evaluation of competing alternatives". This means, substitute destinations with similar core benefits, such as excellent climates, beaches, hotels are pre-selected (Laws, 1995).

Um & Crompton (1990) in their model of destination choice (figure 5.11), identified and described the 5 stages (which were presented as "flows") prior to the selection of the destination. In the 1st stage, external stimuli such as passive information and incidental learning, lead to the formation of beliefs about destination attributes, on the 2nd stage, internal stimuli along with situational constraints initiate the destination choice process as the result of the decision to go on holidays. In a 3rd stage, a set of potential holiday destinations are generated, followed by an active information search (4th Stage) about the

destination, directing to the formation of beliefs about the evoked set¹⁶ attributes. Lastly (5th stage), from the initial evoked set one specific destination is selected.

Figure 5.11 – The Model of the Pleasure Travel Destination Choice Process



Source: Um & Crompton (1990:435)

In the same context, Reichel, Fuchs & Uriely (2009) found backpackers' choices to be related to motivation, the risks perceived (and strategies employed to reduce those risks), and also, preparation and planning of the holiday trip. In the same context but extending the decision-making process to gender differences, Khan (2011) found that women were not considered at disadvantage when compared against male gender, concerning leisure travel, although some constraints for women's decision were found due to family responsibilities whereas for men the constraints came from employment time limitations.

Kozak (2010) also, assessed the decision-making process and verified the importance of spouses in the process, and suggested couples to reach a mutual concession/agreement during the decision-making process, regarding the holiday purchases. Woodside & Lysonski's (1989) model regarding the tourist destination choice, considered not only life

¹⁶ A group of relevant brands that a prospective consumer is favorably familiar with when they are thinking about making a purchase.

cycle, age, lifestyle or even income as variables, but also, prior TE as one of the main factors influencing tourists preferences and perception. For the above reasons, future TD strategies need to take into consideration during the marketing and communication actions, the specificities of these stages in the tourists' minds.

5.4.2 The three stage continuum

However, the influence of image is not limited to the choice-of-destination stage, but affects the tourist's behaviour at all stages (Cooper *et al.*, 1993; Mansfeld, 1992; Lopes, 2011), making it a basic factor in the analysis of the tourist's behaviour, before, during, and after the vacation experience (Bigné *et al.*, 2001), e.g. tourists' behaviour can be divided into pre-visit decision-making, on-site experience, and post-visit intentions (Gunn, 1988; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991), which makes it harder to assess it.

This non-sequential process comes from tourists being involved in other activities besides hedonic product purchase decisions (Govers, 2005). Meaning, different moments involve and depend on a wide range of relationships between different variables:

- In the 1st phase, the decision-making process before the journey, regarding the holiday destination to travel to, takes place (*a priori* image);
- 2nd phase, the comparison process between expectations generated from TDI with the TEs lived in first hand at the destination occurs (image in loco);
- 3rd phase, variables regarding the tourists' experience and future intended behavior, e.g., the process of revisiting and recommending the destination to friends and family (*a posteriori* image) (Hunt, 1975; Selby & Morgan, 1996; Galí & Donaire, 2005; Tasci & Gartner, 2007; Armario, 2008; Bosque & Martín, 2008; Bosque *et al.*, 2009).

However, the TDI and the tourists' evaluation of the surrounding environment is not undisputed, since the TDI tourists' hold, can be transformed, or changed at different stages in the tourist's decision-making process. As Gunn (1972) suggests in his hierarchy of place images, tourists can create different TDIs during the different stages. In this

regard, he adds, that an initial perception, created from an organic source, can with time, and depending on the amount of information (its source and impartiality) evolve (be modified or re-evaluated) upon visiting the TD. Thus turning into a different image, more complex (Etchner & Ritchie, 1991) more real.

Upon returning home, the tourists' reflects on the experience and discusses it with friends and relatives (Gartner 1993), and reveals to what extent the trip expectations were fulfilled (Gunn, 1988; Bigné, Sanchez & Andreu, 2009). In this reflection, the destination's positive factors can define the tourists' satisfaction and intention to return, in the same way negative factors can discourage tourists from making a return visit (Alegre & Garau, 2010).

Contrary to this view, Oppermann, (2000) claims other factors, such as motivation, are also influential in the destination choice, even though tourists have a positive destination image. This is justified, by the importance of seeking variety for some tourists, e.g., experiencing new destinations (Barroso *et al.*, 2007; Jang & Feng, 2007). But, in the consumer travel decision-making process, tourists' have other factors linked with the image of a particular destination, besides motivation, they also have interests, cultural background, emotional state, self-image (Septchenkova & Mills, 2010) personal preferences (Mayo, 1973).

In effect, this multiplicity of factors reveals that holiday destination decisions cannot be solely explained solely based on objective reality (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a, 1999b). Thus, it seems also wise for managers and marketers to attract the repeat visitor segment (Alegre & Garau, 2010) and to understand how the revisit intent changes over time (Assaker, Vinzi & O'Connor, 2011). Since the understanding of tourists' behavior to design effective strategies (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003) is important for marketing decisions (Molina *et al.*, 2010).

5.5 Dynamic factors affecting the TDI

5.5.1 Socio-demographic or personal factors.

Several authors (Gartner, 1993; Mackay & Fesenmaier, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Beerli & Martín, 2004a; Lehto, O’Leary & Morrison, 2004; Ahmed *et al.*, 2006) suggest, the TDI tourists perceived is the product of their personal and psychological characteristics, among which we can find, age, gender, social class, culture and subculture, or even motivation for traveling as the main elements. These internal factors affect the tourists’ beliefs (e.g., the way they form and create those beliefs) about specific and nonspecific TD attributes when they are exposed to external stimuli’s (Ahmed *et al.*, 2006). As Crompton (1979) and Gunn (1988) add, the TDI is an individual and subjective perception. Therefore, the TDs are excluded or selected according to the evaluation tourists’ make of the destinations, and once the TDI is established in the tourist’s mind it is difficult to change it (Ahmed *et al.*, 2006). To make matters worse, as Crompton (1979) notes, the individual perception is also linked to a group perspective.

In this context, it can be said that tourists from different origins differ not only about their personal preferences but also, about the way they perceive the TD, i.e., the “different preferences and perceptions are a function of experiences (good and bad) on previous visits, degree of familiarity with the region(s), cultural background, geographic origin, and prior expectations, to name a few” (Goodrich, 1978:13). In effect, Barros & Machado (2010) found that personal factors and perceived TDs attributes explain tourists’ length of stay.

Lehto, O’Leary & Morrison (2004) on the other hand, found education to be an important variable, regarding the tourist’s behavior during the information search process. Laws (1995) contradicted these views, by denying tourists’ decision-making process and selection of the TD to be solely the result of these factors (personal characteristics), because sometimes some decisions hardly qualify as a “choice”, like for instance to attend a business or a family meeting. In the same context, Esu & Arrey (2009) found in their study regarding cultural festivals, that the demographic variables were not explanatory

factors of tourists' satisfaction. Nevertheless, as (Goodrich, 1978:8) puts it “product preference is influenced by perception, familiarity, and/or knowledge of the product”.

In this regard, despite of all the differences between tourists' characteristics, there is still much uniformity among tourists, which by itself constitutes an important factor for the TDI building process (Reynolds, 1965). One example given by Esu & Arrey (2009) is the personal income, which can be used for the segmentation process and definition of the target market. Other factors to be consider are:

- The cost of the holidays, because budget constraints may affect tourists' preferences;
- The expectations regarding the experiences at the destination and the consequent anticipated satisfaction;
- Available time to go on holidays and stay on holidays (e.g., length of stay), also pose an important obstacle to the tourists' preferences and intention to visit the appealing TDs (Goodrich, 1978; Laws, 1995).

Another important factor is self-congruity¹⁷, which according to several authors (Sirgy & Su, 2000; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 2000; Sirgy *et al.*, 2008) refers to the match between the tourist's self-image (how they see themselves) and a product image shapes the tourists' behavior towards the product(s). In MacKay & Fesenmaier's (2000) study, the importance of a match between the tourist's self-image and TDI was highlighted, with culture being the mediating element.

Sirgy *et al.*, (2001), also found multi-attribute attitude (functional congruity) and self-image models, to play different roles and to have different predictive importance in the tourists' decision-making process. That is, the functional congruity revealed more predictive “power” than self-congruity in influencing tourists' behavior, despite of self-congruity being an influencing factor for both (the tourists' behavior and functional congruity). Therefore, DMOs marketers should in their TDs messages incorporate images to induce self-congruity and enhance positive attitudes towards the TD (Sirgy *et al.*,

¹⁷ Self-congruity “...refers to the match between consumers' self-concept (actual self, ideal self, social self) and the user image of a given product, store, sponsorship, event, etc. (Sirgy *et al.*, 2008:1091)”

1991). In a later study, Sirgy *et al.*, (2008) also found, self-congruity with sponsorship events to influence positively on brand loyalty, if customers are aware and involve in the sponsorship event.

5.5.2 Previous experience

Other authors have considered the differences between visitors and non-visitors (Chon, 1990; Ahmed, 1991; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Milman & Pizam, 1995), because prior tourism experience is probably the principal information source (Molina *et al.*, 2010). This meant other studies, considered tourists' TDI changes before and after visiting the TD (Pearce, 1982; Phelps, 1986; Beerli & Martin, 2004). These tourists can be either first-timers, or repeaters in visiting a TD (Um, Chon & Ro, 2006), that is, those visiting for the first time (the former) or those that have visited before (the latter). In this regard, Font (1997) and Baloglu & McCleary (1999b) considers the relevance that previous visitation experience has, to potentially modify the tourists' image of any TD. Another important consequence of previous experience, is that it changes tourists' behavior and may be used as a predictor of tourists' involvement in specific activity patterns (Lehto, O'Leary & Morrison (2004).

In this regard, Oppermann (1998) suggests repeaters have different behavioral attitudes from first-timers, because they do not take packaged tours or rely on formal information sources, instead as an alternative they search for the opinion of friends, relatives and working colleagues. In the same context, Fakeye & Crompton (1991) found in a study in the Rio Grande Valley, that first-timers pursue more relaxation activities, while the repeaters were more aware of attractions and the opportunities the surrounding social environment have to offer, creating a much stronger social network. In the same context, Chon (1991) and Fakeye & Crompton (1991), claimed repeaters to have more complex images of TDs than first-timers.

However, Lehto, O'Leary & Morrison, (2004) did not confirm the influence prior experience to reduce the tourists' level of uncertainty or perceived risks regarding the future holiday destination. It also did not change the amount of information tourists search

when planning their next holidays. Lehto, O’Leary & Morrison (2004) also confirmed, prior experience did not have an effect on the amount of information repeaters and first-timers needed, but instead on the type of information.

5.5.3 Sources of information

Another important factor that can influence the tourists’ TDI are the sources of information (Molina *et al.*, 2010), which can be acquired in many ways (Gartner & Hunt, 1987). Molina & Esteban (2006) suggest tourists’ have the tendency to prefer neutral information sources such as book guides, brochures, or even blogs and forums in which tourists share their subjective experiences. Other authors such as Calantone *et al.* (1989) propose that tourists form perceptions on word-of-mouth communications, while others (Crompton, 1979; Gartner & Hunt, 1987; Beerli & Martin, 2004), suggest tourists rely on recommendations from friends, relatives, or even acquaintances to decide on their next holiday.

Thus, it is important to note, the key role information plays to reduce the tourists’ perceived risks. Two examples of such an influent role are the tourists’ behavior of; a) getting as much information as possible about the potential TD, b) to consider other substitute destinations (Fodness & Murray, 1997). Lehto, O’Leary & Morrison (2004) claim that past experiences and knowledge can reduce the tourists’ perceived risks. However, not all information search has a single purpose, some tourists’ seek information about the expected TEs at the location (intangible elements), but also practical issues (more tangible elements) at a business level such as pricing and operating hours (Otto & Ritchie, 1996). Other sources of information search by tourists derive from advertising and promotional actions (Gartner & Hunt, 1987; Gunn, 1988). Thus, marketers have an important responsibility when placing information and the use of the promotional-mix to influence tourists’ behavior and decisions (Calantone *et al.*, 1989; Font, 1997; Molina *et al.*, 2010).

Media and technological developments are in this way, dynamic factors that change the way the TDI is constructed, imaged and perceived by tourists (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003).

Also the way the TDs project their identity (supply side), giving potential tourists contrasting images of the world, either online or offline (Govers, 2005) and obliging them to actively stay connected and informed (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). The offer available on the internet has raised the potential for relationships between TDs and the tourists to be established, giving tourists the power to create their own TEs packages, through online booking (Lehto, O’Leary & Morrison, 2004).

Nowadays, any potential tourist can virtually visit/experience in advance any TD from behind a computer (Govers, 2005), in the comfort of his home, almost like “sampling” the destination. Laws (1995:58) however, disagrees and claims TD “cannot be *sampled* by potential visitors in the way that cereals (product) can be tried in small quantities, or a car can be taken for a test drive”. Nonetheless, this “sampling” process can have consequences, since not all perceptions end up being accurate or fully forthright, because of the cultural differences across the various tourists’ origins (Calantone *et al.*, 1989) neither does it enable them to fully experience and perceive the reality of the location.

Another factor to influence the tourists’ information search is brokers, since they generate information phenomena targeting tourists’ mind by the use of advertising and promotional efforts (Font, 1997) which along with the promotional efforts from the DMO, and the tourists’ prior experience form the core in which tourists will understand the TD. The author alerts however, that promotion saturation will lead to not all information promoted by the DMO to be understood, or remembered, or worse even, retained in the tourists’ mind, which has consequences for the positioning strategy.

Govers (2005) in his 3-gap TDI formation model, considered these brokers (Tour Operators and Travel Agents) as actors used by the DMOs to promote, communicate and distribute their product offer. Yet, despite being fundamental for the supply side, they are not considered by the author as part of the offer itself. According to Jalil’s (2010) view, tour operators and travel agents are a key element in the TD decision-making process, since they act as a supply channel and as creators of images.

5.5.4 Stakeholders

For Adams (2004) touristic images of TD are not the result of outsiders' ideas, but are crafted by local stakeholders and visionaries, like entrepreneurs, national tourism agencies, researchers, that negotiate in a complex dialogue with the aspirations and desires of local and foreign stakeholders. The diversity of players in the TD offer has different purposes and the objectives should be readdressed towards a common goal. As Govers (2005) suggests, the power struggles between politicians and private players, interferes and influences TDs objectives, due to the plurality of interests involved. As Laws (1995) points out, the exaggeration of the TD uniqueness by Tour Operators¹⁸, creates higher expectations and makes the task more difficult for the TD to meet the tourists' needs and expectations.

The author also claims the lack of coordination throughout the value chain of the TD service providers, makes this problem worse. On the other end, Gunn (1988) criticizes developers and their short-term vision that contribute to the destruction of the resources upon which the tourism activity is established. This brings to the forefront the need for tourism organizations and agencies to plan and improve their coordination and assimilation of the tourism activity as “a whole”, instead of merely looking at it as individual parts. Thus, marketers involved in the tourism sector (public and private) must improve the TDI to expand tourists' opinions of the uniqueness and the attractions and facilities of a destination, by using advertising to reinforced and develop the TDI in an astute formula (Goodrich, 1978). However, marketers must be aware that they may be competing “with other promotional agencies disseminating different images and attempting to attract different users to the same space”. (Laws, 1995:59).

As put forward by some authors (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002), another influencing factor are the residents, which are often seen as part of the destination image. As Agapito, Mendes & Valle (2010:91) note, “tourism involves a set of interactions between tourists and residents, which implies that the strategies for developing the industry should take into account both stakeholders”. Adams (2004), goes further by stating that residents also produce images (of their place and of themselves) in order to

¹⁸ Tour Operator - person or company that provides package holidays (Middleton & Clarke, 2001).

attract more tourists. This rich and sometimes contradictory relationship, as host and guest, between tourists and residents are an integrative part of the TDI, which can sometimes be favorable and other times unfavorable, thus affecting the TDI (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Adams, 2004).

Moreover, according to Gallarza *et al.* (2002) residents and tourists are actively or passively acting on the formation process of the TDI. In addition, the stakeholder's responsibility must not be forgotten, as the driving force of marketing campaigns that project images of the TD and residents. If they are not well designed and selected, risk collapsing the image of the TD (Adams, 2004), thus creating negative a impression on the residents. The author adds that, the same can be seen amongst residents, generating various images of themselves with the purpose of being able to attract more tourists. In the same way, the critical role of employees from the service providers must be reminded (Govers, 2005).

Another influential force in the TDI formation process is the Halo effect, in which the tourists' make inferences from a reduced amount of data, or a single aspect neglecting others. As an example, Reynolds (1965:71) states that "someone liking a product because of a particular attribute with which he happens to be familiar can and does — form opinions on other attributes of the product; regardless of whether he knows anything about them or not". This effect is relevant, claims Font (1997), because the tourists' perceptions of the holiday product offered, impact not only on satisfaction but also at the management level.

In this sense, to build an image, marketers need only to establish their product to be of a specific category, leaving the rest to the tourists to make inferences and create images by themselves (Reynolds, 1965). In this regard, marketers have to be aware tourists are better informed, and able to subject the industry to scrutiny (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). However, the "tons" of information the supply side is promoting, does not contribute much to tourists' making inferences nor to attain their satisfaction (Govers, 2005).

5.6 Limitations of previous studies on TDI

The importance of the TDI construct shown over the past decades (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a, 1999b; Bigné & Andreu, 2004; Chon, 1990; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 2003; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Hudson & Ritchie, 2009; Jenkins, 1999; Molina *et al.*, 2010; Nadeau *et al.*, 2008; Pike, 2002; Puh, 2014; Selby & Morgan, 1996; Septchenkova & Mills, 2010; Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005; Tasci *et al.*, 2007; Tasci & Gartner, 2007; Um & Crompton, 1990; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989), namely, to understand and identify, the complex nature of the TDI, has not permitted however to establish the impacts of the relationship between the construct and the TEs. For this reason, the limitations of previous investigations are identified to provide a theoretical framework for the present research.

In the previous chapters, a conceptual construct has not yet been completed regarding its theoretical nature, or regarding the TDI operationalization (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993, 2003; Baloglu & Mcleary, 1999a; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Gartner, 1993). As Gallarza *et al.*, (2002) notes, the most universal feature of TDI studies is its versatility. However, despite the versatility pointed the author considers there to be only two approaches to the study of the TDI construct, one approach, relates to measurements without truly progressing on the theoretic model, whereas the other approach, not only explains methodological problems, but also deals with the operationalization of TDI assessment.

As seen in figure 5.12 in the next page, the authors¹⁹ selected and organized under Echtner & Ritchie's (1993, 2003) functional/psychological axis, 25 empirical TDIs studies that measured the three dimensions of attribute-based images. The Analysis of the figure 5.12 shows, that the most considered attribute was "Residents Receptiveness" (20 times), followed by "Landscape and/or surroundings" (19 times), "Cultural attractions" (18 times).

¹⁹ In the figure 5.12, Gallarza *et al.* (2002) did not selected qualitative studies because these were difficult to homogenize, since the variety of attributes used were extensive, nor have they consider quantitative studies that employed other scales besides attribute ratings (like adjective and evaluative scales).

static due to their theoretical nature, concentrating solely on the relationships between the TDI and tourists' behaviors, ranging from destination preference, impact of prior experience, to tourists' demographics variables. Crompton, Fakeye & Lue, (1992) agree with this view considering, the traditional TDI research to be incomplete since only strength and weaknesses of image attributes were identified and no help was given to marketers regarding the attributes to be used for TD promotion.

Thus, researchers must apply more diverse group of approaches so that the understanding of the TDI formation process can be attained (Jenkins 1999). Gallarza's *et al.* (2002) conducted a similar review of the methodology used in previous research (figure 5.13), and according to the authors, most of the applied techniques from the late 80s to the early 00s, were qualitative. As figure 5.13 shows, in the first group - qualitative techniques, the most used were: Free elicitation/open-ended questions (4 studies, from 1989 to 1996), focus groups (5 studies, from 1991-1994), In-depth interviews/discussions with experts (5 studies, from 1986-1996), comprising a total of 14 studies. Whereas, in the second group - Other techniques, researchers used: - Content analysis, on promotional material (6 studies, from 1979 to 1999), and on previous results (6 studies, from 1982 to 1993), totalizing 12 studies.

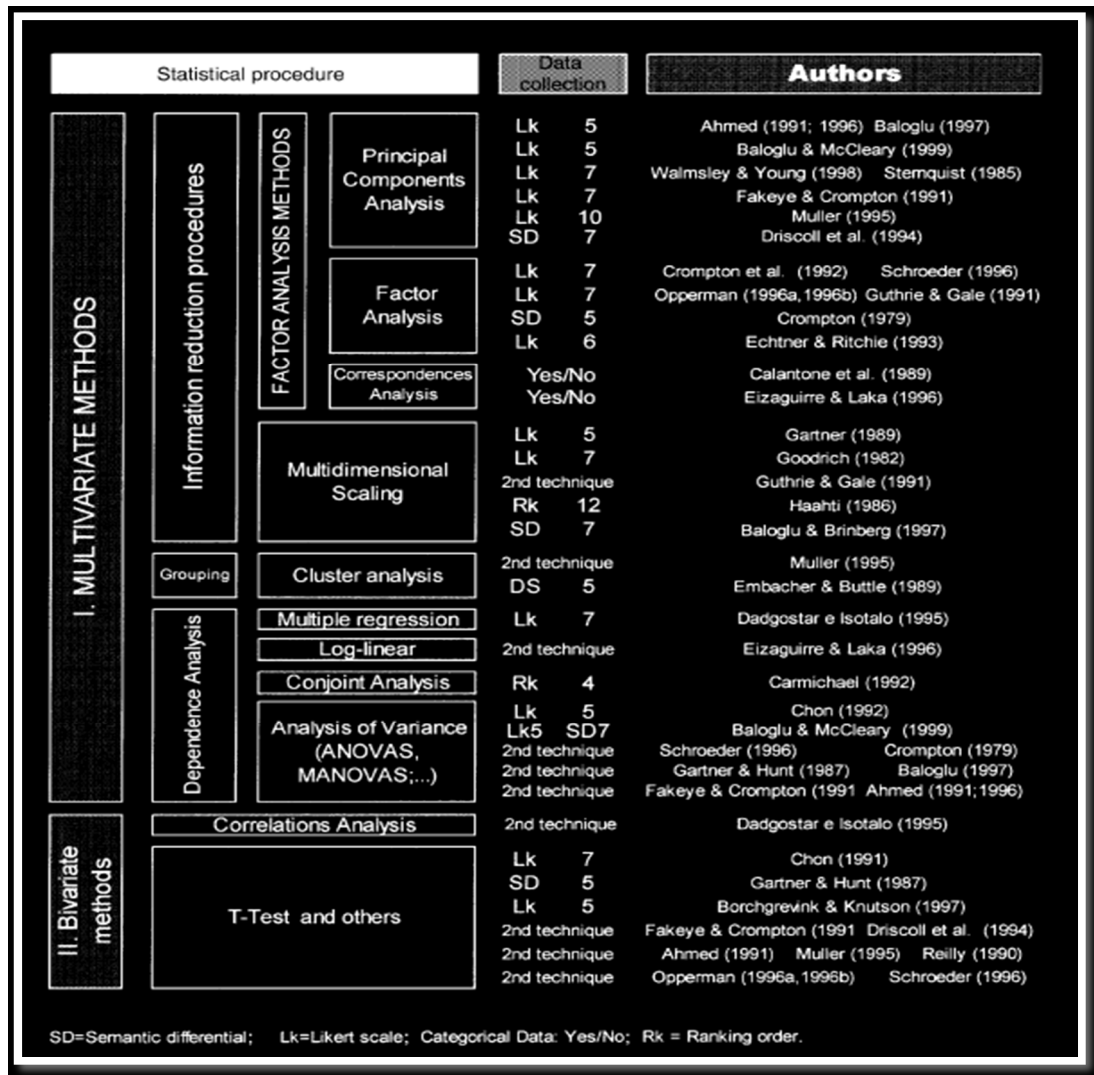
Figure 5.13 - A Taxonomy Review of Non-Quantitative Methods for Measuring TDI

Methodological procedure		Authors	
I. Qualitative techniques	Free elicitation/Open ended questions	Reilly (1990) Dann (1996)	Embacher & Buttle (1989) Echtner & Ritchie (1993)
	Focus groups	Amor et al (1994) Driscoll et al (1994)	uthrie & Gale (1991) King (1994)
	Indepth interviews / Discussions with experts	Fakeye and Crompton (1991)	
II. Other techniques	Content Analysis	Hahti (1986)	Selby and Morgan (1996)
		Amor et al (1994)	Bramwell and Rawding (1996) Fakeye and Crompton (1991)
		Stabler (1988) Crompton (1979) King (1994)	Fesenmaier and MacKay (1996) Bramwell and Rawding (1996) Baloglu and McCleary (1999)
	On promotional material	Goodrich (1982) Reilly (1990) Hahti (1986)	Embacher and Buttle (1989) Echtner and Ritchie (1993) Fakeye and Crompton (1991)
	On previous results		

Source: Gallarza *et al.* (2002:65)

In a broader literature review conducted by Pike (2002) enclosing 142 TDI articles (from 1973 to 2000), findings shown travel context not to be explicit (only 23), and that most studies were conducted in North America (58), and also, that half of the researchers' articles (75) concentrated on the tourists' perceptions of only one destination or country. In the same study conducted by Pike (2002), the majority (114) of the studies used structured techniques (most used were factor analysis, 41; T-tests, 21; perceptual mapping, 21; analysis of means, 20), and only 63 articles utilized qualitative methods, to operationalize the construct. These findings were corroborated by Gallarza's *et al.* (2002) review of the most used quantitative methods in the figure 5.14 below.

Figure 5.14 - A Taxonomy Review of Procedures for Measuring TDI



Source: Gallarza *et al.* (2002:66)

Gallarza's *et al.* (2002) found these to be multivariate²⁰ (information reduction techniques, grouping techniques, and dependence analysis) and bivariate methods (correlation analysis and *t*-tests). In his view, the former are more predominantly used "because they allow for determination of the latent multidimensional structure of the TDI, as well as average scoring numeric instrumentalization of image", among these techniques is Multidimensional Scaling (5 studies, from 1982 to 1997) and Factor Analysis Methods²¹ (18 studies, from 1979 to 1999), while the latter is predominantly used to verify the differences between data sets (12 studies, from 1987 to 1997).

Thus, as several authors (Hunt, 1975; Crompton, 1979; Phelps, 1986; Gartner & Hunt, 1987; Calantone *et al.*, 1989; Gartner, 1989; Dann, 1996) have already recognized, the most frequently used methods of measuring TDI are attributes and scales (Likert and differential), and not qualitative methods. In this context, previous studies have been of limited capacity to deal with the holistic nature of the construct, and in capturing the subjective elements which is the tourists' perspective (Echtner & Ritchie 2003).

In this context, Wang & Hsu (2010) findings revealed both cognitive and affective components to create the overall tourism destination, which according to the satisfaction degree felt, has an indirect impact on the tourists' behavioral intentions. Although, the tourists' overall perceptions are not hard to assess, since they can be either favorable or unfavorable (Milman & Pizam, 1995), the fact is, the transversal nature of the construct makes it impossible to capture at any given moment (Beerli & Martín, 2004; Milman & Pizam, 1995). In Beerli & Martín's (2004:678) view, "...longitudinal studies that deal with the process of the formation and changes in the image", need to be undertake. Since the majority of the studies, have focused on a wide range of tourism attributes (Esu & Arrey, 2009), failing to find homogeneity to build a universal reliable scale to measure

²⁰ According to Gallarza *et al.* (2002) the number aside the data collection techniques indicates the size of the response format. In addition, the name of the authors' appearing repeated in two or more sections, results from the authors' use in their studies successive algorithms of the transformed data, and for that reason, the initial data collection method is cited as the first technique and the words '2nd technique' appear in data collection column, in the second citation.

²¹ Gallarza *et al.* (2002) notes that due to the similar mathematical treatment of the information, factor analysis encompasses a diversity of regrouped techniques under a common name.

the TDI, apart from Baloglu & McCleary's (1999a) and Echtner & Ritchie's (1991) research.

Govers (2005:3), extends this view, by claiming "Past and present destination image research seems to have focused on measuring place performance on attributes that define our extravagant expectations with regards to travel", whereas little work has been done regarding how the dynamic nature of TDI formation or its structure (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b). Oppermann (1998), also critiques the fact of researchers have not investigated the reasons behind tourists' choosing repeatedly the same TD, or why tourists' do not return to certain TD, despite of scoring high levels of satisfaction and perceived value on tourists' surveys. Oppermann (1998:132) claims it should be questioned "... the issue of how "valuable" these surveys of customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction are."

Table 5.4 – TDI Techniques Used In Previous Studies

Author, Year	Study Design and Instruments	Method	N	Sampling	Conclusions
Choi <i>et al.</i> (2011)	Quantitative Structured Questionnaire - Open-Ended Questions - 5-Point Likert Scale	Regression Analysis	280	Informative on Not Available	Empirical results indicated the presence of differences between visitors and non-visitors, regarding their perceived TDI of Korea. It was also found that the overall image and loyalty to have a statistically significant relationship. In addition, results show Russians with a positive view of Korea are more likely to recommend Korea to others as a tourist destination.
Assaker <i>et al.</i> (2011)	Quantitative Structured Online Questionnaire 15 Items - 7 Point Likert Scale	Structural Equation Modeling	450	Stratified Random Sampling	Findings indicated novelty seeking and low satisfaction impacted on tourists' immediate intent to return. It was also found that a positive TDI increases immediate and future intentions to return.
Agapito, Mendes & Valle (2010)	Quantitative Structured Open Ended Questions 20 Attributes - 5 Point Likert Scale	CHAID Analysis	379	Cluster Sampling	The analysis of Lagos TDI from the tourists and residents' perspective, showed tourists' "global destination image" were not significantly related to the intention to revisit the destination. In addition, a clear and significant relationship of the "global destination image" with the recommendation of Lagos to friends and family was found. Moreover, both tourists and residents present an intention of positive recommendation in favor of Lagos as a destination.

Author, Year	Study Design and Instruments	Method	N	Sampling	Conclusions
Chen & Tsai (2007)	Quantitative Structured 20 Attributes/20 Items 5 Point Likert Scale	Principal Component Analysis Confirmatory Factor Analysis Structural Equation Modeling	393	Convenience Sampling	The results showed TDI to have both direct and indirect effects on behavioral intentions. Moreover, the path “destination image-trip quality-perceived value-satisfaction - behavioral intentions” was patent.
Govers <i>et al.</i> (2007)	Qualitative Questionnaire Online Open-Ended Free-Text Form 7 Destinations 10-Point Scale	Content Analysis Perceptual Mapping	1,198	Information Not Available	Findings revealed several significant differences in the perceived TDI of the seven case studies, by the respondents.
Ahmed <i>et al.</i> (2006)	Quantitative Structured 20 to 22-Item, 5 to 7 Point Likert Scale	Factor Analysis Exploratory Factor Analysis	518	Information Not Available	The results indicated that Malaysian tourists touring experiences have had effect on the perception of the image of Australia.

Author, Year	Study Design and Instruments	Method	N	Sampling	Conclusions
Beerli & Martin (2004)	Quantitative Structured 47 Items - 7 Point Likert Scale	Exploratory Factorial Analysis Anova	616	Stratified Random Sampling	The results indicated that relationships between the perceived image and the tourists' motivations influence the affective component of image; tourists' accumulated experience of vacation travel has a significant relationship with cognitive and affective images; and the socio-demographic characteristics influence the cognitive and affective assessment of image.
Baloglu (1997)	Quantitative Structured 34 Attributes - 5 Point Likert Scale	Principal Components Analysis Factor Analysis Analysis Of Variance (ANOVA)	330	Informative on Not Available	The results indicated the existence of significant relationship between six image factors (adventure, nature and resort, urban entertainment, budget and value, history and culture, friendly environment, and active outdoor sport) and some of the tourists' sociodemographic variables and trip variables.
Dann (1996)	Qualitative Interviews <i>Pre Trip</i> and <i>On Trip</i> Open Ended Questions - 4 Pictures	Content Analysis	535	Informative on Not Available	Tourists' images responses to pictorial stimuli, pre and on-trip situations, showed cognitive appraisal of the TD to be explored by mental comparison, the affective dimension revealed vocabulary of motive. Cognitive component of imagery in which tourists' project themselves into an imagined scenario as if they had experienced it.

Author, Year	Study Design and Instruments	Method	N	Sampling	Conclusions
Chon (1990)	Questionnaire Structured 7 Attributes - 7 Point Likert Scale	Content Analysis T-Test	204	Block Sampling	TDIs differences between tourists which were arriving and those which were departing from Korea were found. It was also found, the post-visitors groups had more positive image of the TD than the pre-visitors groups.
Calantone <i>et al.</i> (1989)	Questionnaire Structured 13 Attributes - 7 Point Likert Scale	Correspondence Analysis	363	Information Not Available	Findings on the images of eight Pacific countries, indicated tourists' from Australia and New Zealand, had perceptions very similar to American. In addition, British and European tourists also had perceptions similarity to the Americans.
Gartner (1989)	Questionnaire Structured 15 Attributes - 5 Point Likert Scale	Multidimensional Scaling Analysis	N/A	Stratified Random Sampling	Results shown tourists' image of Montana and Wyoming to be similar (outdoor recreation activities), and of Colorado (skiing, receptiveness of residents, historic sites) and Utah (natural resource based) different.
Phelps (1986)	Structured Questionnaire 32 Attributes - Check list of attributes	Wilcoxon test Discriminant Analysis	97	Convenience Sampling	To measure pre-travel and post-travel images of Menorca, shown resort choice not to be important, as cost or airport of departure in tourists' holiday decision-making.

Author, Year	Study Design and Instruments	Method	N	Sampling	Conclusions
Crompton (1979)	Structured - 30 Attributes/Scales - 7 Point Sem. Diff. Scale	Content Analysis Mann Whitney U Test Kruskal-Wallis Test	617	Convenience Sampling	Findings shown the greater the geographical distance between the respondents (U.S.) and the TD (Mexico), more favorable the TDI.
Goodrich (1978)	Structured Questionnaire By Mail 10 Attributes - 7 Point Likert Scale	Kruskal's Multidimensional Scaling	230	Convenience Sampling	Findings revealed tourists' perceived the Bahamas, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Barbados as a cluster, comprised of Sun, Sea and Sand. It addition, other competing TDIs of Florida, California, Mexico, Hawaii, were described and perceived differently by tourists.
Hunt (1975)	Structured: - 20 Attributes - 7 And 5 Point Sem. Diff. Scale	Chi-Square Tests	N/A	Convenience Sampling	Results on the measurement of the images of four rocky mountain states Utah, Montana, Colorado, Wyoming, revealed TDs and states to also have images.
Mayo (1975)	Structured: Questionnaire 85 items - 7 Point Sem. Diff. Scale	Perceptual Mapping Factor Analysis	670	Convenience Sampling	The findings shown tourists' demographic (Education and Income), psychographic characteristics (Adventurous, impulsive and Action oriented) and interests (great outdoors, not planning for their holidays, and not being opinion leaders), to be related with their interest in visiting U.S. National Parks.

Conclusion note

The composite nature of the tourism activity creates barriers to any DMO marketer to match the services and products offered, with the needs and demands of the tourist client. First, because the tourism environment is complex, dynamic and composite, in which numerous fragmented service providers have their own goals. This difficulty not only creates an obstacle towards stronger relations between stakeholders to be established, but also, it creates difficulties for the TD to sell and promote a unique selling proposition.

Second, marketers like DMOs managers, need to conduct research on a frequent basis to keep up with new market trends, and to develop suitable products, to maintain a competitive edge. Thus, it is vital for any TD to identify and understand tourists' behavior, so that marketers can more easily, create and define which tourism products should be promoted, and which ones should be used to successfully appeal to tourists' senses. Another relevant factor to bear in mind is the TD supply chain, which takes the products and services to the tourists' for consumption. Among the services, it is yet to be found which services provide the greater economic value for the tourist and for the TD.

In this regard, stakeholders' interests along with the tourists, must be taken into consideration, because tourism is above all a hedonic product (Govers, 2005), which means TEs are not controlled by the DMO. However, DMOs managers and marketers must be sensitive to tourists' needs (Oppermann, 1998; Selby & Morgan, 1996; Lehto *et al.*, 2004), in the same way they must assess and examine with the required depth, the tourists' perception and awareness of the TEs lived *in situ*, and its consequences for the TDI. As seen, both constructs TDI and TEs are composed of a cognitive, affective, and behavioral component, and all of these components must be seen as individual parts that support tourists to enjoy their holidays holistically.

The emphasis must be placed on tourists' needs (Gunn, 1998), and how the diverse and subjective, affective and experiential elements come together to satisfy the target markets. This can only be achieved if a clear understanding of the tourists' role as decision-makers (Font, 1997) and their needs, wants, expectations, and experiences (Otto & Ritchie, 1996)

are taken into account. This way, DMOs marketers can positively discriminate the demand, and establish different marketing strategies (Ahmed *et al.*, 2006), that may promote the corresponding positioning (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b).

Failing to adopt such strategies, money will be lost and marketing efforts wasted, and the wrong TDI projected, to those who intent and do not intent to travel (Oppermann, 1998). As Font (1977) recalls, knowing and understanding the target markets behavior during their holidays and their experiences, is as much valuable, as it is hard. At the local level, the need to be cost effective regarding TD management, has inhibited many stakeholders to apply correctly and effectively the TDI construct to their local strategy (Selby & Morgan, 1996). The fact remains, however that TDs cannot survive based on cost effective measures, nor can they survive depending exclusively on advertising (Govers, 2005). They need to advertise and inspire their uniqueness, which may qualify TDs to build a higher competitive advantage, since the competition at local and international level is increasing.

A viable way to gain a competitive edge can be, to evaluate the tourists' perceptions of the main characteristics and attributes of the TDI (Crompton, Fakeye & Lue, 1992; Selby & Morgan, 1996). The definition and creation of distinctive tourism products, that may satisfy tourists and increase their level of satisfaction, must be incorporated into the product development, the TD strategy, and the communication actions to create the precise expectations and true TDIs. The communication efforts should also be aware that tourists make their decisions according to the value proposition offered by the TDs (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004), in order to develop among tourists a positive awareness of the destination (Font, 1997). However, stakeholders and managers must not forget, tourists will visit their destination, but also their competitors (other TDs).

Although some agreement has been achieved, which considers that TDI encompasses personal and shared group images of a place. The truth is, according to the literature review investigated, that the TDI at different time points, differs. As figure 5.15 – shows the formation of the TDI results of a continuum mental process, in which two different major forces, a *Controllable force* and an *Uncontrollable force* act. The former refers to promotion efforts, access routes and tourism infrastructures, built and prepared by

stakeholders and marketers to stimulate tourists to visit their destination. The latter refers to those forces beyond the control of any stakeholder or marketer, such as those that stem from social and psychological characteristics of the tourist (such as past travel experience, motivation), the residents and service providers' attitudes towards tourism activity and the interaction between tourists at a foreign destination. Both these forces affect the information sources that allow tourists to develop the mental construct leading to the formation of induced and organic image.

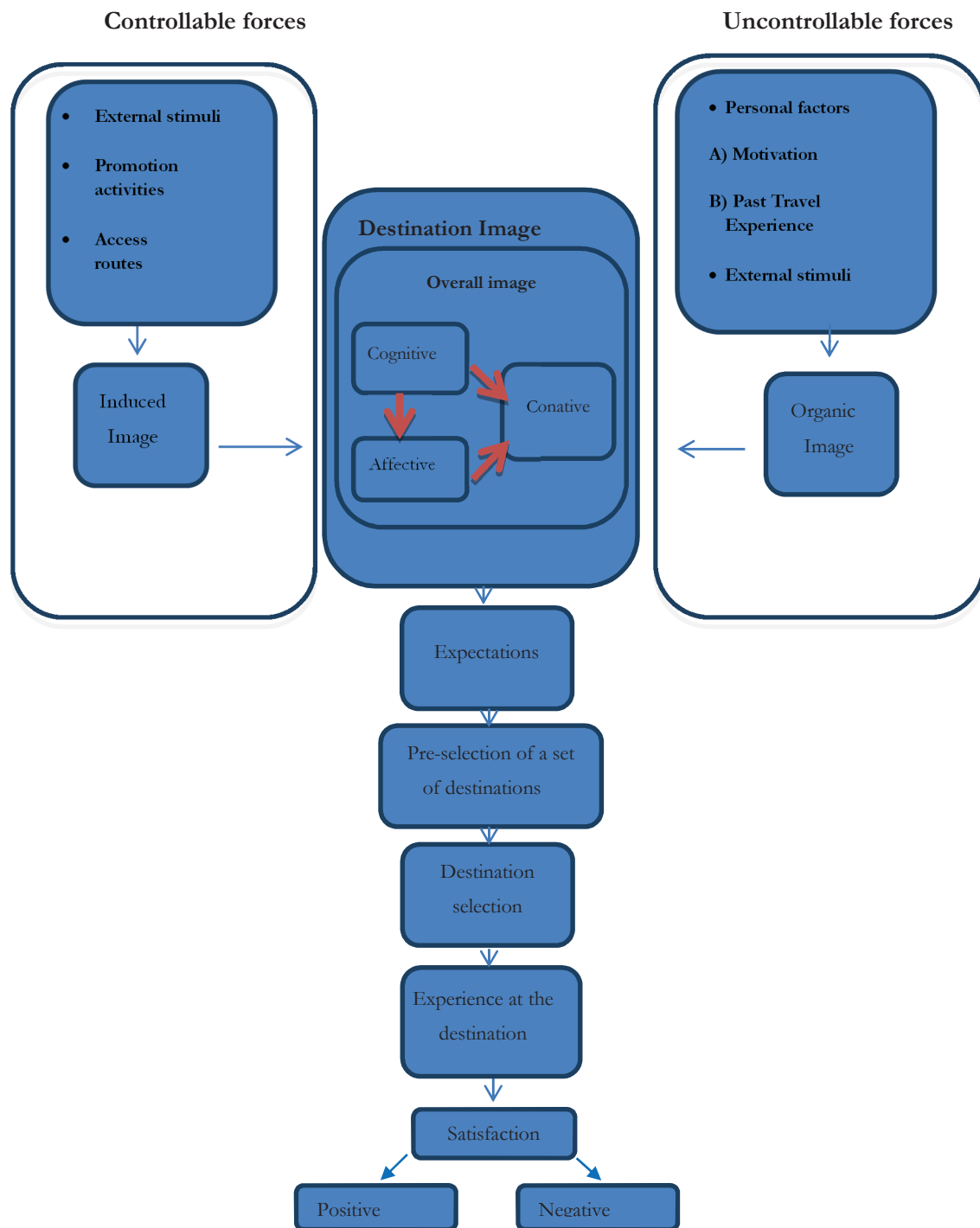
These images let the tourists create and structure the stimulus perceived. The TDI is then formed, as a result of the knowledge the tourist acquired from the destination (cognitive component), the feelings or attachment developed towards the destination (affective) and the intention or behavior in the future (conative). Following, an overall image, comprehending functional and psychological characteristics of the destination, is created by tourists. The overall image of the destination created allows the tourist to narrow the potential holiday options to one or more pre-selected destinations, so that in a subsequent moment, the decision process is made based on *a priori* image (which depending on the time and space distance may suffer future adjustments).

In addition, whether or not tourists' have true images, is not as important as the need of having "an image", inaccurate or not from the reality. Since the TDI is present before (anticipating the experience at the destination and formulating expectations), during (during the experience, comparing the experience with past experiences and assessing if the expectations are being met), and after the consumption of the TEs (in which the tourist reflects upon the experience at the TD, expresses the adventures and misadventures lived to friends, relatives and other people). However, several factors cause complications regarding the tourists' perceptions and constructions of the TDI, among which one is time (since tourists' development different images over time, they search, recollect and obtain more information, experience) which will enable them to mature a more accurate TDI.

But a similar situation occurs with space, as tourists tend to have a more realistic image of places closer to their homes (familiarity), and a less accurate image of distant TDs (they can even confuse the national image with the image of a specific TD). The brokers

and media also play an important role, since they add new dimensions to the TD marketing efforts, that is, through the internet, tourists' gain access to a multimedia channel that enables them to enter into vivid, intense virtual worlds, in which experiences can virtually be lived (Govers, 2005).

Figure 5.15 – A Conceptual Model of TDI



Source: Matos, Mendes, & Valle (2012:112)

Therefore, is its critical, if not the cornerstone of TD success, for DMOs managers to recognize the important role of the TDI to the tourists' pre-visiting images, and how it effects their TEs perception and senses at the location, but also, after the experience.

CHAPTER 6 – CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Introduction

In the previous chapters, an overview of the state of the art was provided, with emphasis on the importance of the constructs, their nature, and on the dynamic factors affecting them. Yet, despite some common agreement between researchers regarding the importance of the TDI and the TEs constructs, the literature review shows some conceptual gaps coming from the lack of information and understanding concerning the effects of the TEs in the TDI. In this chapter, arising from the previous chapters, the conceptual model is presented and described, followed by the key authors who contributed the most for the development of the present theoretical model. In this context, and despite the aim of this study being specifically to assess the impacts of the TEs in the TDI of the Algarve, the conceptual model will reflect a more extensive perspective regarding the understanding of the interrelationship between both constructs (TEs and TDI) according to the literature review. In the third part of this chapter, the hypotheses to be tested in this investigation will be presented.

6.1 A Conceptual model of relationships between TEs and TDI

6.1.1. Description of the model

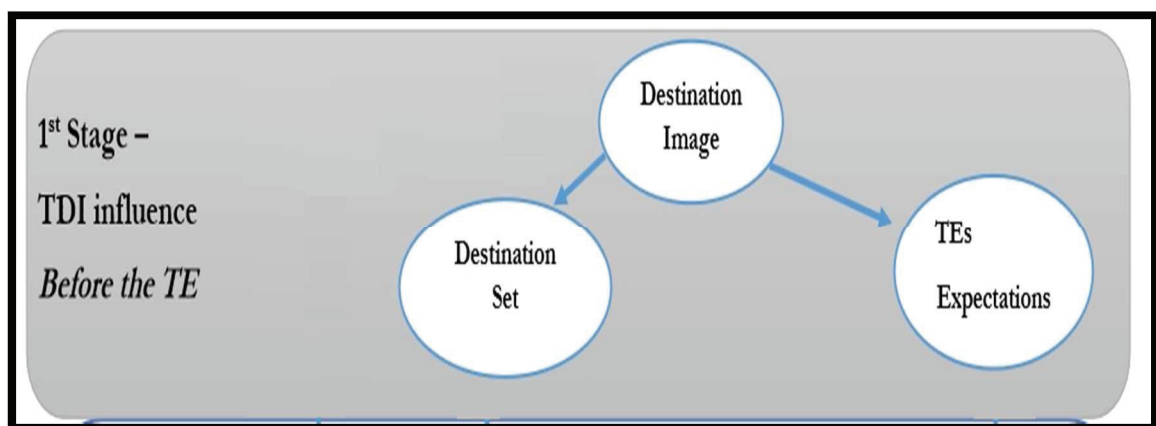
The literature review undertaken demonstrates that the TDI at different periods, such as pre and post-visitation, differ (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Pearce, 1982; Phelps, 1986), and that, any gap between imagery and experience may affect the tourists' sense of authenticity (Amoamo, 2003) and on their intention to return (Assaker *et al.*, 2011). A framework (Figure 6.4) is proposed to represent the relationship between the TE and the

TDI in the hospitality and tourism activity. It is proposed that tourists experience different stages before, during, and after their holidays:

First stage - comprehends the *pre-visit stage* (figure 6.1), before the visit to the holiday destination. In this stage, it is suggested that the destination image influences the tourists' expectations about the holiday destination and also influences the choice of the holiday destination, since the destinations with the strongest image have the highest probability of being differentiated (Lopes, 2011). In this regard, as Reynolds (1965:75) notes, "tourists differ in their capacity to create and elaborate an image, and in the prior information at their disposal". This statement reinforces the importance of the TDI as a positioning tool to get into the tourists' minds (Buhalis, 2000; Calantone *et al.*, 1989; Chon, 1990; Crompton *et al.*, 1992; Govers & Go, 2005; Qu, Kim, & Im, 2011).

These TDIs influence spending, duration of stay, activity patterns (Ahmed *et al.*, 2006), and destination decision-making process (Beerli & Martín, 2004), which is, on the other hand, based on expectations about pleasurable holidays that may or may not be experienced or match to expectations (Middleton & Clarke, 2001).

Figure 6.1 – Pre-visit stage



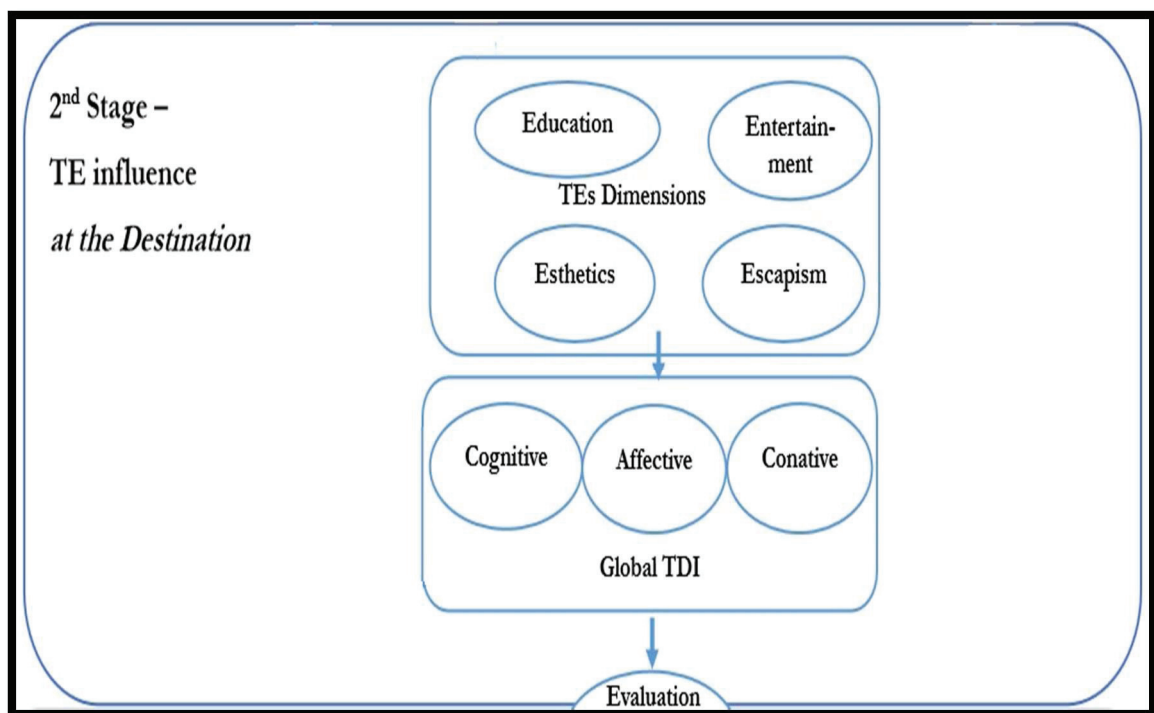
Source: Author

The second stage (figure 6.2), during *experiential stage*, the tourists live the TEs at the selected location. This location, like many others, is composed of physical (such as beaches, golf courses, theme parks) and also of psychological attributes, since some

degree of attachment or involvement between the tourists and the destination resulting from the learning, entertaining activities and events experienced takes place.

During this stage, tourists' interpret the physical environment around them (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Hosany & Witham, 2009), and it is these components “as one” that define the experience of the destination. In addition, Ahmed (1991) found that more experienced tourists had different views about a TD from those that had not visited. In effect, then, it appears that the actual experience at the TD destination has an important effect on the TDI (Beerli & Martín, 2004b). This relativistic and dynamic aspect of TDI is reminded by Gallarza *et al.* (2002), when they argue that images change from person to person, along the time and also according to the destination proximity to the tourist.

Figure 6.2 – Experiential stage

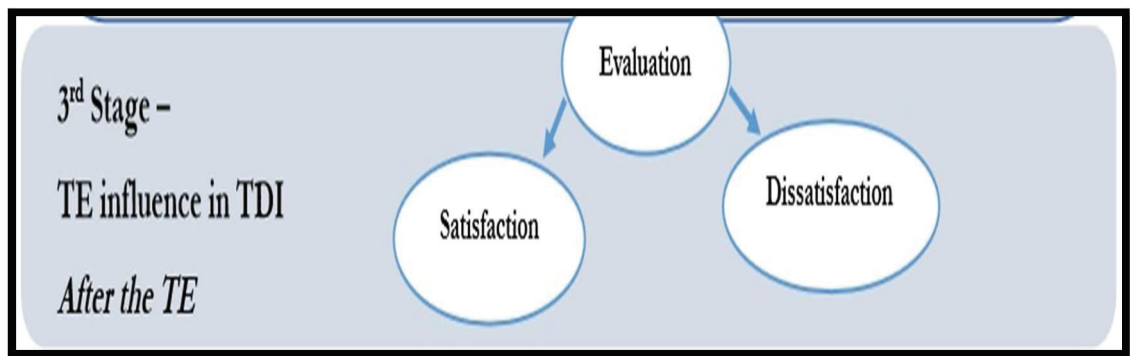


Source: Author

On the third stage (figure 6.3), the *post-experiential stage*, the tourists evaluate the experiences lived and reflect upon them. They may also talk to friends, family and relatives about their TEs and depending on the overall evaluation, the previous TDI may change. Upon returning home, tourists tend to evaluate their experiences in terms of how interesting, exciting, stimulating or enjoyable (Gunn, 1988; Hosany & Witham, 2009).

In other words, the TEs represent a “performance indicator of a destination’s tourism success as consumption of the product and service that has already taken place” (Bornhorst *et al.*, 2010: 584). In addition, Oh *et al.* (2007) emphasize that arousal (which is defined as the intensity of physiological and psychological response to a stimulus) is a key indicator of sensory-based experiences, especially when experiences are consumed.

Figure 6.3 – Post-visit stage



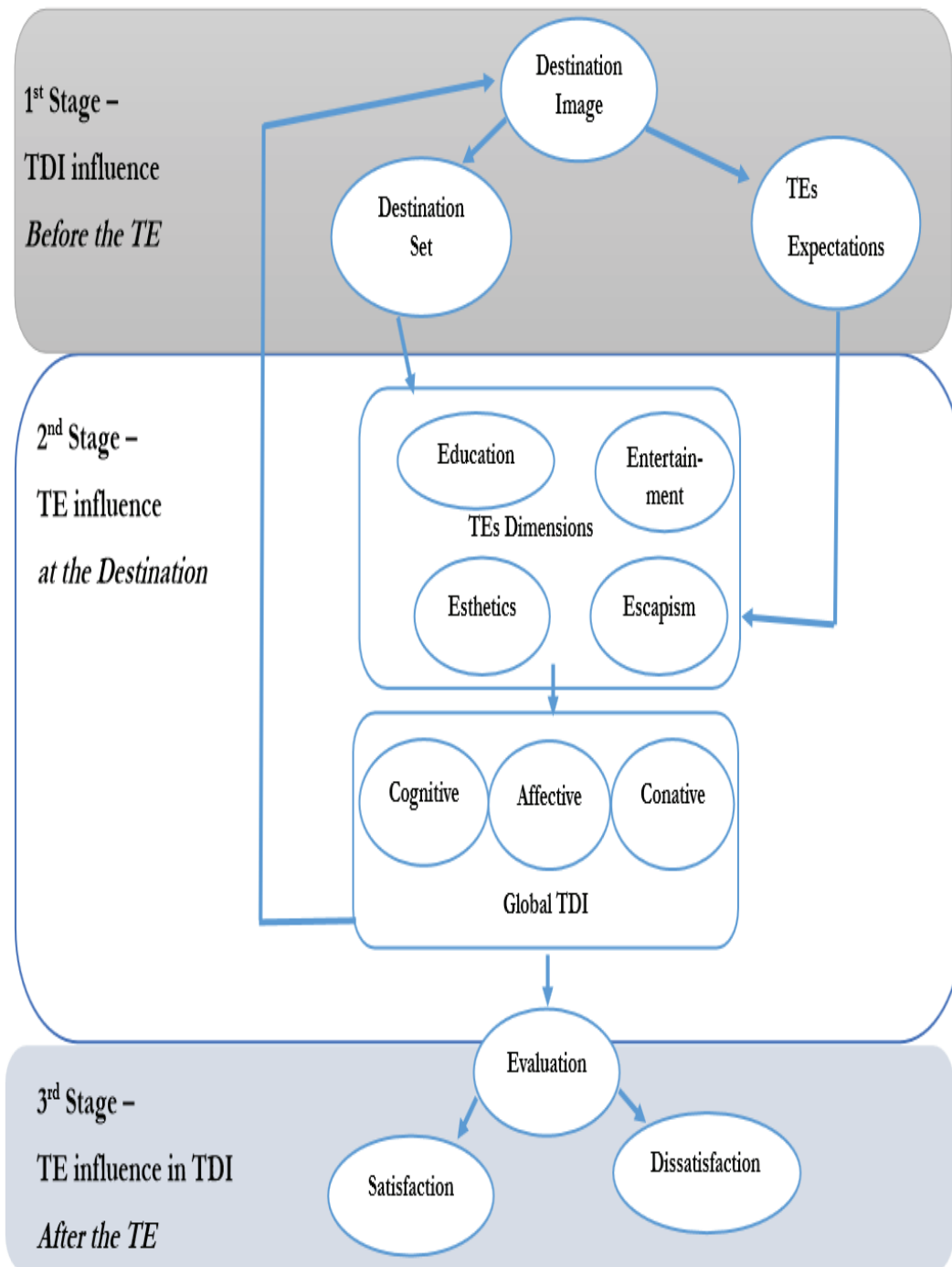
Source: Author

In fact, the creation of an arousing experience with enduring memories is central to generate high levels of satisfaction and positive behavioral intentions (Hosany & Witham, 2009), because the tourism product is not canned or shrink-wrapped, but rather, a collection of the tourists’ experiences gained during the visit (Gunn, 1988). These experiences are highly associated to an evaluative congruity of a tourist’s pre-visit destination images and his or her post-visit recollection of experiences (Chon, 1991) and as consequence tourists change their images and perceptions of a destination (Pearce, 1982). The outcome of the evaluation may lead to satisfaction or dissatisfaction (depending on the experience), and consequently intention to recommend or return (if positive), or not to recommend and not to return (if negative).

An overall view of the conceptual model and the relationships between the TE and the TDI constructs, at the different stages (before, during and after the TE), are presented below in figure 6.4. Although, the conceptual model is reflecting an extensive perspective regarding the understanding of the interrelationship between both constructs (TEs and

TDI), the aim of the study remains to assess the impacts these relations at its core, i.e. each construct dimensions.

Figure 6.4 - A Conceptual Model of Relationships between Tourism Experiences and Tourism Destination Image



Source: Author

6.1.2. Contributions of the conceptualization

This thesis aims to discuss the theoretical underpinnings of the TE and the TDI, and to propose a conceptual framework to understand better the relationship between these two constructs in the tourism context. Despite the existing quantity and quality of research produced in the tourism field, there is still much to learn about these constructs, especially for managers, since understanding the distinct relationship between both constructs is of vital importance, in order to fully understand their customers' views regarding a service or product consumption (White, 2004) in the tourism context. Moreover, recent research examining the affective component, revealed that emotions are better predictors of destination visitation and customer purchase intentions than the more commonly used cognitive component (Yu & Dean, 2001).

These findings reinforce the need to understand the constructs under study, since the destination choice is inextricably linked to what it provides. For destinations, it is critical to be aware of how they are experienced, and define the best practices to manage and develop facilities (Laws, 1995). In this sense, several authors claim that the TDI plays an important role in the tourists' behavior at different moments (Amoamo, 2003; Chon, 1990; Phelps, 1986; Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2008). For some authors though, TDI influences:

- The destination decision-making process (a priori image);
- In the process of comparison of expectations with experience, preceding the state of satisfaction and perceived quality (image in loco);
- In the process of revisiting and recommending the destination to friends and family (a posteriori image) (Bosque *et al.*, 2009; Galí & Donaire, 2005; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Gibson, Qi, & Zhang, 2008; Hunt, 1975; Selby & Morgan, 1996; Tasci & Gartner, 2007).

Nevertheless, in spite of these findings, some depth regarding other TDI effects are still lacking. For example:

- A) How the expectations generated from the TDI affect the TEs consumption at the TD?

- B) How tourists' evaluate their subjective TEs at the destination?
- C) Which dimensions of the TEs are more important to form the tourists' overall TDI?
- D) How the different TEs influence tourists' TDI?

Nevertheless, as mention earlier in chapter 4, the TEs influence the TDI, and during the experience at the location (compose of tangible and intangible attributes), tourists will be assessing and “monitoring” their experience in a holistic perspective, “not considering only its parts, but the sum of all parts”. Again, due to the nature of the tourism activity (as seen on Chapter 3), tourists not only play an active role during the service consumption, but are also affected by several elements such as age, gender, motivation, previous experience, or previous held TDI, expectations. The quality of the service provided by the “host”, the surrounding environment, among other aspects can disturb their holistic search of the TEs, and subsequent evaluation.

In this regard, as seen in chapter 5, the TDI is also an influential factor (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000) to the tourists' satisfaction (Assaker, Vinzi & O'Connor, 2011). Another relevant aspect requiring more attention by research according to the literature review conducted, is the fact the TEs do not end upon returning home. Instead, the TEs are “extended throughout time”, making tourists reflect on the TEs lived during the holidays at home (called reflective stage). Thus, these research findings will bring new insights into understanding the meaning and importance tourists assign to their experiences (Uriely, 2005).

Destination marketers need to understand what to include in brochures, before placing their promotional strategies in tourist markets (Jalil, 2010). Therefore, the primary goal should be to project desirable images of a destination to potential tourists in order to facilitate their visits (Ahmed *et al.*, 2006). Even a confused image, can be turned into an asset, if handled skillfully by a marketer (Reynolds, 1965) to boost positive aspects and correct negative ones (Alegre & Garau, 2010), and the “more favorable the perception, the greater the likelihood of choice from among similar alternatives” (Goodrich, 1978:8).

The study of the factors and elements that contribute towards a positive re-evaluation of the TEs lived is crucial for the TD management to be successful, as well as fundamental for positive WOM (word of mouth) to be generated when tourists' share their memories with friends, family and relatives. The cost of not addressing the “pre, during and after-experience” evaluations are much greater than tourists' satisfaction. As Pine & Gilmore (1999) point out, selling experiences is the solution, because experiences can ‘touch’ people better than products or services, and offer greater value to tourists as they become memorable, thus creating, and supplying experiences will be a way for producers to survive in the ever more competitive future. Prahalad & Ramaswamy (2004) advise in the same way, that for the TD to gain sustainable competitive advantages, they must develop and deliver engaging TEs.

6.1.3. Hypotheses arising from the revised model

From the conceptual model, the following hypotheses were considered regarding the TEs impact on the TDI of the Algarve, and consequently its overall image. Regarding the TE dimensions, the influence of the TE variable education dimension on the TDI was assumed for the following research hypotheses:

- H1a - The TE education influences positively on the cognitive dimension of the TDI.
- H1b - The TE education influences positively the on affective dimension of the TDI.
- H1c - The TE education influences positively on the conative dimension of the TDI.
- H1d - The TE education influences positively on the entertainment dimension of the TEs.

Regarding the influence of the TE variable entertainment dimension on the TDI, the following research hypotheses are proposed:

- H2a - The TE entertainment influences positively on the cognitive dimension of the TDI.
- H2b - The TE entertainment influences positively on the affective dimension of the TDI.

- H2c - The TE entertainment influences positively on the conative dimension of the TDI.
- H2d - The TE entertainment influences positively on the Escapism dimension of the TEs.

Regarding the influence of the TE Escapism dimension on the TDI, the following research hypotheses are proposed.

- H3a - The TE Escapism influences positively the cognitive dimension of the TDI.
- H3b - The TE Escapism influences positively the affective dimension of the TDI.
- H3c - The TE Escapism influences positively the conative dimension of the TDI.
- H3d - The TE Escapism influences positively the Aesthetics dimension of the TEs.

Regarding the influence of the TE variable aesthetics dimension on the TDI, the following research hypotheses are proposed:

- H4a - The TE Aesthetics influences positively on the cognitive dimension of the TDI.
- H4b - The TE Aesthetics influences positively on the affective dimension of the TDI.
- H4c - The TE Aesthetics influences positively on the conative dimension of the TDI.

Regarding the influence of the TDI variable cognitive dimension on the TDI affective and Global image, the following research hypotheses are proposed:

- H5a - The TDI Cognitive dimension influences positively on the global dimension of the TDI.
- H5b - The TDI Cognitive dimension influences positively on the affective dimension of the TDI.

Regarding the influence of the TDI variable affective dimension on the TD Global image and Conative, the following research hypotheses are proposed:

- H6a - The TDI affective dimension influences positively on the global dimension of the TDI.

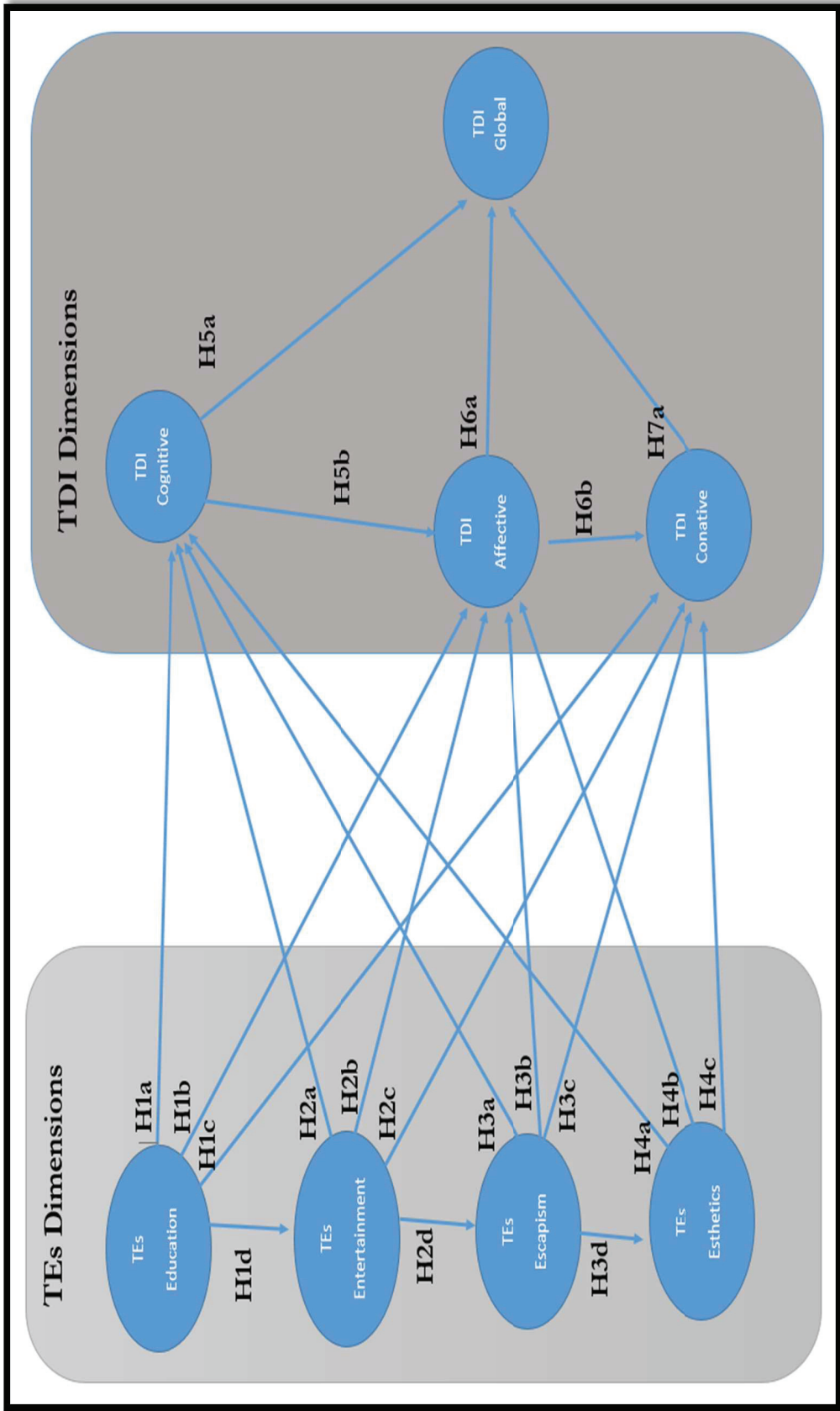
- H6b - The TDI affective dimension influences positively on the conative dimension of the TDI.

Regarding the influence of the TDI variable conative dimension on the TD Global image, the following research hypothesis is proposed:

- H7a - The TDI Conative dimension influences positively on the global dimension of the TDI.

As illustrated in Figure 6.5, both hypotheses and relationships between the constructs are represented. In the left side of the figure, the 4 E's (**E**ducation, **E**ntertainment, **E**scapism and **E**sthetics) of the TE dimensions are represented regarding their relation with the three components of the TDI, cognition, affective and conative.

Figure 6.5 - Conceptual model hypotheses



Source: Author from SmartPLS software

Conclusion note

The tense economic reality and increasing competition are pressuring marketing managers to position their destinations effectively with fewer resources, the Algarve included. This investigation will contribute towards the understanding of which products are considered to be an added value to the value chain offer, and will assist researchers and DMOs managers to understand where to cut costs without affecting the demand. Throughout the conceptual model presented, the nature, complexity and dynamics of this construct can be better understood. This knowledge is of vital importance to fully understand tourists' views regarding a service or product offered (White, 2004).

Moreover, it is important for managers of DMOs to be aware of how places are experienced and the importance tourists assign to their experiences, in order to define which practices are the best to manage and develop the TDs, since the destination choice is link to what the destination provides (Laws, 1995). The use of the TDI as a promotional “tool” by managers, can become a problem for the Algarve’s TD value proposition and tourists’ satisfaction, if not well addressed by its DMOs, since the TDI affects the TEs which are “experienced” by the tourists throughout different moments (before, during and after) of the holidays.

More crucial is the marketing perspective, to know which promotion activities should be or not developed and what strategies to adopt in the market place. All of these insights are key factors for the success of any TD value proposition because people are the natural resource of the tourism activity, and for this reason the product offering must not be set solely towards the cost efficiency or the construction of more facilities or attractions. In this context, as Laws (1995) points out, a key factor in managing tourism is to understand and anticipate tourist satisfaction with their holiday purchase. Therefore, researchers, stakeholders and marketers must be aware of the following issues:

The use of the TDI as a promotional “tool” by managers, can become a problem for the Algarve’s TD value proposition and tourists’ satisfaction, if not well addressed by its DMOs, since the TDI affects the TEs which are “experienced” by the tourists throughout different moments (before, during and after) of the holidays.

- Promotion activities should not be considered the only solution for a stronger and more realistic image to be achieved; marketers should look instead at the needs and characteristics of their target market (uncontrollable factors) such as tourists' motivation and personality, or the country's image abroad;
- The holistic representations of the destination must not be overlooked, since an overall image will be created by tourists, such as the aura and feelings transmitted by the destination stakeholders;
- Residents, service providers and other tourists on holidays, will all interact and play a role in the tourists' perception of the TDI, which implies that specific strategies are needed to accommodate, and restrain possible causes of conflict;
- The promotional programs should not be over-promising of the destinations attributes to avoid tourist dissatisfaction;
- Misleading or distorted images of the destination must be avoided despite the short term profit;
- The tourists' TDIs starts being formed much earlier than the actual visit to the destination and end well after the return home.

As Richards (2010:14) suggests “the trick is to use those [facilities] you have more creatively [...] it is more important to deal with quality and authenticity, or re-interpreting or innovating tradition”. For this to succeed the Algarve's chain of value needs: a) information about the tourists' evaluation of the holiday experience; b) to participate actively and integrate all service providers in a promotional effort of the TD in the global market. As a result, more value will be created for the product offered, since the existing intense competition among tourism destinations, makes it even more important to identify the image held by actual and potential tourists (Buhalis, 2000), and to how the TEs shape and re-shape that TDI.

CHAPTER 7 – METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this chapter, the steps taken for the development and application of the empirical study are explained. First, the research design is described and explained demonstrating how the various variables used in the empirical study were operationalized. Next, a short review of the qualitative and quantitative techniques used are discussed, and the progression towards a more integrated marketing approach is presented.

7.1 Research background

The recent developments in TDI and TE constructs has led to the development of some theoretical frameworks, and also to several operational research instruments, thus attaining in this way some common grounds, which has facilitated some comparisons to be established between variables, and findings. Gallarza *et al.*, (2002) argues in this sense, that these empirical studies are tri-dimensional, since they measure one or more tourists' perceptions (1st dimension). Secondly, the studies assess one or more TDs (2nd dimension), and third, they aim to assess one or various explicit characteristics of a place or object (3rd dimension).

However, despite all the advancements in the theory-embedded framework mentioned above, some authors like Dann (1996) continue to criticize many studies for not fully capturing the dynamics and richness of the constructs. Instead, the author claims some researchers have only provided some standardized qualities of TDs resources, that tourists' rate in terms of their attitude in a specific period. Another perspective is given by Gallarza's *et al.*, (2000), suggesting that more attention is given to the tourists'

interaction and behavior with local residents, which means, marketers need to avoid evaluating TDs solely on the basis of its attributes (Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000), to prevent them from neglecting the TEs, the time and space where their occur. Dann (1996:53) also states “ [tourists] bring into play experience through memory, and it is this turning back on themselves, this rendering of the self as an object of consciousness, which necessarily precedes speech-in this instance the articulation of image”.

However, despite the dominance of the structure methods, some authors have already been applying qualitative approaches (Dann, 1996; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Mackay & Fesenmaier, 1997; Stepchenkova & Mills, 2010; Tasci, Gartner, & Cavusgil, 2007). For instance, Dann (1996) and Mackay & Fesenmaier (1997) employed a unique qualitative approach, by using visuals into the methodology (photographs used in promotional materials), to reveal the holistic and psychological conceptions of the tourists, which could not be captured if quantitative methods were used. In their view, quantitative studies are useful to capture the common attributes of the TDs.

In this context, as Selby & Morgan (1996) note, structured techniques are flexible, ease to code and use, but on the other hand, these techniques may also be representing constructs irrelevant to the respondents as these are built upon specific scales, which may not represent the tourists view, or their holistic interpretation. Otherwise, researchers must be very prudent regarding which constructs to include in their research, since a mixture between interpretative techniques and aggregative ones is required (Jenkins, 1999).

A study employing these techniques was made by Echtner & Ritchie's (1993, 2003), which comprised of a mixture between quantitative and qualitative methods. Thus, not surprisingly, among the most used methods to measure the TDIs, is Echtner & Ritchie's methodology.

7.2 Research design

7.2.1 Exploratory analysis for the TDI attributes

7.2.1.1 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire (see appendix 1) was divided into three sections designed to measure the tourists' image of the Algarve. In the first section, following Echtner & Ritchie's (2003) approach, three open-ended questions asked tourists to capture the functional, psychological and unique components of the location TDI. As mention by both authors, the measurement of the TDI must not be made exclusively by structured methodologies, but also unstructured, like open-ended image questions, since these are able to capture certain components of the TDI which would not be possible otherwise, such as, holistic and psychological characteristics of the destination. The questions presented were:

- Question 1 – In three words, what images or characteristics come to mind when you think of the Algarve as a holiday destination? (Functional and holistic component);
- Question 2 – In three words, how would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting the Algarve? (Psychological and holistic component);
- Question 3 – In three words, which attractions or characteristics unique to the Algarve have you found? (To determine which attractions tourists consider to be distinctive).

In addition to the questions retrieved from the literature review, the exploratory study conducted is summarized in the following table 7.1 regarding the scale used and the authors referenced.

Table 7.1 - TDI Exploratory Questionnaire

Question	Scale used	Source
Question 1 - “In three words, what images come to mind when you think of Algarve as a holiday destination?”	Nominal Open ended question	(Agapito <i>et al.</i> , 2010; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993, 2003)
Question 2 - “In three words, how would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting the Algarve?”	Nominal Open ended question	(Agapito <i>et al.</i> , 2010; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993, 2003)
Question 3 - “In three words, which attractions or characteristics unique to the Algarve have you found?”	Nominal Open ended question	(Agapito <i>et al.</i> , 2010; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993, 2003)

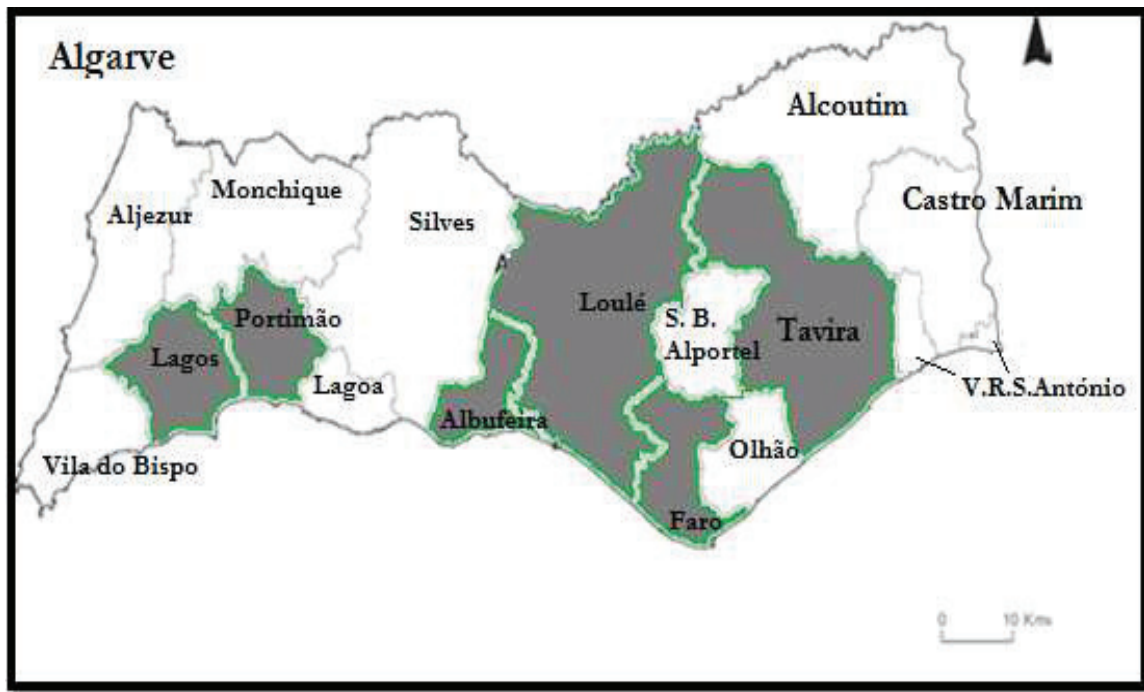
To assist the content analysis of the tourists’ answers, the free elicitation technique was used to collect descriptive adjectives of the Algarve’s TDI, given that the technique has advantages (it is easier to collect and analyse the data, and to find differences) (Reilly, 1990). For the second section of the questionnaire, the number of previous visits was verified to understand the tourists’ familiarity with the destination (Oppermann, 2000).

Another question made in this section was tourists’ overall satisfaction with the tourism destination by the use of a five-point Likert scale ranging from “Very Dissatisfied” (1) to “Very Satisfied” (5). In the third and final section, questions regarding the respondents’ socio-demographic profile (age, gender, marital status, level of education, nationality, travel companion) were made (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a; Beerli & Martín, 2004).

7.2.1.2 Sample and data collection

Since the questionnaire aimed at foreign tourists visiting the Algarve, the data was collected from April to May of 2013, in Lagos, Portimão, Albufeira, Loulé, Faro, Tavira and Vila Real de Santo António (represented in green in Figure 7.1). Due to operational limitations (i.e., a list of all tourists visiting the destination was not possible to obtain), a convenience sampling was conducted, from 10am to 17pm, in the municipalities' town center, resulting in a total of 70 interviews being collected.

Figure 7.1 – The map of the Algarve



Source: INE (2013)

■ – Municipalities used for the exploratory study

7.2.1.3 Data analysis of exploratory study

The data of the study was analysed using IBM SPSS Text Analytics for Surveys (SPSS-TAS) software. The programme produces, on the one hand, categories of terms, based on the amount of times they are repeated in the dataset, and on the other hand, it creates category links or webs, which are visual representations of the stronger and weaker shared

connections between the categories created. Subsequently, the data collected from the questionnaire interviews was first introduced into the software. The next step consisted of the extraction, according to the number of citations generated by the software, which would then identify the various terms representing the tourists' functional, psychological and unique images of the destination. These were later labelled and grouped into different categories (according to their frequency). Although during this stage, some adjustments were necessarily made to enhance and improved the data extraction and analysis of the terms, such as adding new synonyms, categories to the software dictionaries, or even to force in/out terms into/out of some categories.

Thus, from the literature review and from the exploratory study's findings, and because destination attributes must be presented in a positive way (Agapito *et al.*, 2010; Alcañiz *et al.*, 2009; Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001; Beerli, 2004; Beerli & Martín, 2004; Phelps, 1986) the final list of attributes to measure the TDI of Algarve at the arrival and at the departure, were:

- Good weather, Good beaches, Attractive natural landscape, Good gastronomy, Good accommodation, Good value for money, Good Access, Interesting cultural attractions, Good shopping opportunities, Good shopping opportunities, Good entertainment, Good water parks, Good sporting facilities, Good nightlife, Clean destination, Safe destination, Relaxing destination, Friendly residents, Happy destination, Good attractions.

7.2.2 Empirical Study – before and after the TE

The two questionnaires designed for this empirical study included the two theoretical constructs present in the literature review, and in the conceptual model, to verify the proposed hypotheses. Thus, due to the nature of the research established, which is to study the impacts of the TEs on the TDI of the Algarve, it was necessary to apply a first questionnaire to tourists upon their arrival at the Algarve– Questionnaire 1, *Before – Tourists' Initial TDI of the Algarve at the Arrival*, followed by a second questionnaire, after the tourists' holidays in the Algarve – Questionnaire 2, *After – Tourists' Final TDI of the Algarve after the TEs*.

The first questionnaire is aimed at the measurement of the perceived TDI and expectations of the TD Algarve, by incoming foreign tourists in the Algarve. The second questionnaire's objective aims to measure holistically the tourists' TEs of the Algarve, and also for a second time, the tourists' TDI of the Algarve. The objective is to compare the initial TDI with the "final/posterior" TDI, and TEs impacts in the overall or global TDI of the Algarve. The questionnaires were conducted in English, and were not translated into different languages, to prevent bias stemming from the native language translation of the open-ended questions.

7.2.2.1 First Questionnaire – Before the TE

According to the literature review conducted regarding the TDI, and the exploratory study, 19 items were drawn from Gallarza *et al.*, (2002) and Agapito *et al.*, (2010) to measure the Algarve's TDI. Tourists' were asked to rate the Algarve's perceptual/cognitive image on each of the 19 items, according to a 5 point Likert scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*. The overall TDI was measured using a 5 point likert scale ranging from *Strongly Negative* to *Strongly Positive*.

The affective evaluation of the TD was measured on a 7 point scale using two bipolar scales: Unpleasant to Pleasant and Sleepy to Arousing. Next the familiarity with the TD was evaluated by asking tourists the number of times they have visited the Algarve. In the last part of the questionnaire, the demographic variables of the sample were collected. Accordingly, the following questions were made for the first TDI questionnaire - *Tourists' Initial TDI of the Algarve at the Arrival* (see appendix 2)²².

Part I - The questions seek to assess the tourists' perceptual image regarding nineteen attributes of the Algarve.

²² In the end of the page, respondents were informed about the second questionnaire and were invited to participate in this follow up survey by email. They were asked to provide an email address and return home date after their holidays for a better assessment of the best time to send the questionnaire.

Question 1 – “The following statements relate to Algarve’s image as a tourism destination. Please indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements.”

“Good weather, Good beaches, Attractive natural landscape, Good gastronomy, Good accommodation, Good value for money, Good Access, Interesting cultural attractions, Good shopping opportunities, Good entertainment, Good water parks, Good sporting facilities, Good nightlife, Clean destination, Safe destination, Relaxing destination, Friendly residents, Happy destination, Good attractions”

Adapted from Agapito *et al.* (2010), Baloglu & Mangaloglu (2001), Baloglu & McCleary (1999b), Bigné *et al.* (2009).

Question 2 - “How would you describe the Algarve’s overall image as a tourism destination?”

Adapted from Agapito *et al.* (2010), Baloglu & McCleary (1999b), Bigné *et al.* (2009), Stern & Krakover (1993).

Question 3 - “Select [item] which comes closer to your perception of the Algarve as a tourism destination, according to the following scales/adjectives”

Adapted from Agapito *et al.* (2010), Baloglu & McCleary (1999b), Beerli & Martin, (2004), Pike & Ryan (2004).

Part II - Addresses, the familiarity with the TD, since previous TE affect the TDI, and to verify if the tourists are visiting the Algarve for the first-time.

Question 1 - “Including this visit, how many times have you visited the Algarve?”

Adapted from Agapito *et al.* (2010), Baloglu & McCleary (1999b), Oppermann (2000), Phelps (1986).

Part III – Addressed the demographic characteristics of the tourists.

Question 1 - Age
Question 2 - Gender
Question 3 - Marital Status
Question 4 - Level of Education
Question 5 - Nationality
Question 6 - Travel companion
Adapted from Baloglu & McCleary (1999), Beerli & Martin (2004), Hill & Hill (2008), Hosany & Witham (2009).

Question 7 - Occupation
Adapted from Agapito <i>et al.</i> (2010).

The table 7.2 summarizes the questions made, the type of scale and the authors referenced.

Table 7.2 - TDI Questionnaire, Before (At the Arrival)

Question	Scale used	Source
Part I		
Question 1 – “Please indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements related with Algarve image.”	Ordinal scale 5-point Likert scale	Agapito <i>et al.</i> (2010), Baloglu & Mangalolu (2001), Baloglu & McCleary (1999a), Bigné <i>et al.</i> (2009), Phelps (1986).
Question 2 - “How would you describe Algarve’s overall image as a tourism destination?”	Ordinal scale 5-point Likert scale	Agapito <i>et al.</i> (2010), Baloglu & McCleary (1999a), Bigné <i>et al.</i> (2009), Stern & Krakover (1993).

Question 3 - “Select [item] which comes closer to your perception of the Algarve as tourism destination, according to the following scales/adjectives?”	Ordinal scale 7-point differential scale	Agapito <i>et al.</i> (2010), Baloglu & McCleary (1999a), Beerli & Martin (2004), Pike & Ryan (2004).
Part II		
Question 1 - Including this visit, how many times have you visit the Algarve?	Ordinal scale Open ended question	Agapito <i>et al.</i> (2010), Baloglu & McCleary (1999a), Oppermann (2000), Phelps (1986).
Part III		
Question 1. Age Question 2. Gender Question 3. Marital Status Question 4. Level of Education Question 5. Nationality Question 6. Travel Companion. Question 7. Occupation	1. Metric, 2. Nominal, 3. Nominal, 4. Ordinal, 5. Nominal, 6. Nominal, 7. Nominal,	Baloglu & McCleary (1999a), Beerli & Martin (2004), Hill & Hill (2008), Hosany & Witham (2009).

7.2.2.2 Second Questionnaire – After the TE

The next step was a second questionnaire, to assess tourists’ final TDI of the Algarve (after the TEs). Once again, tourists’ were asked to rate the Algarve’s perceptual/cognitive image on each of the 19 items, according to a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The overall TDI was once more measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly negative to strongly positive. The affective evaluation of the TD was measured on a 7-point scale using two bipolar scales: unpleasant to pleasant and sleepy to arousing. The conative or behavioral component was evaluated by asking tourists about their intention to revisit the destination, and if they planned to recommend it.

In the second part of the questionnaire, the tourists' experiences of the Algarve, were measured in a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. The scale (24-item, 4-dimensions) was drawn from Oh, Fiore & Jeoung (2007) and Hosany & Witham (2009), conceptualization of Pine & Gilmore's (1998) four realms of TE.

Next, the most positive and negative tourists' experiences of the destination Algarve were evaluated using open-ended questions. The following question assessed the tourists' familiarity with the TD by asking the number of times they had visited before. The satisfaction was also measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *Very dissatisfied* to *Very satisfied*. In the last part of the questionnaire, the tourists' profile was collected.

Part I - TDI Attributes - Aimed at assessing tourists final TDI at the departure

Question 1 – “The following statements relate to Algarve’s image as a tourism destination. Please indicate to what extend do you agree or disagree with the statements.”

“Good weather, Good beaches, Attractive natural landscape, Good gastronomy, Good accommodation, Good value for money, Good Access, Interesting cultural attractions, Good shopping opportunities, Good entertainment, Good water parks, Good sporting facilities, Good nightlife, Clean destination, Safe destination, Relaxing destination, Friendly residents, Happy destination, Good attractions”

Adapted from Agapito *et al.* (2010); Baloglu & Mangalolu (2001); Baloglu & McCleary (1999a); Bigné *et al.* (2009); Phelps (1986).

Question 2 - “How would you describe the Algarve’s overall image as a tourism destination?”

Adapted from Agapito *et al.* (2010); Baloglu & McCleary (1999a); Bigné *et al.* (2009); Stern & Krakover (1993).

Question 3 - “Select [item] which comes closer to your perception of the Algarve as tourism destination, according to the following scales/adjectives?”

Adapted from Agapito *et al.* (2010); Baloglu & McCleary (1999a); Beerli & Martin (2004); Pike & Ryan (2004).

Question 4 – “Select the box which comes closer to your intention.”

4.1 “I will revisit the Algarve Again”

Adapted from Agapito *et al.* (2010); Baker & Crompton (2000); Bigné *et al.* (2009); Bigné *et al.* (2001); Martin & Bosque (2008); Oppermann (2000); Pike & Ryan (2004).

Question 4 – “Select the box which comes closer to your intention.”

4.2 “ I will recommend it”

Adapted from Agapito *et al.* (2010); Baker & Crompton (2000); Bigné *et al.* (2001); Bigné *et al.* (2009); Hosany & Witham (2009); Martin & Bosque (2008); Pike & Ryan (2004).

Part II – The Algarve TEs – This question aims to verify the level of tourists’ experience of the Algarve, and the level of stimulation and mental retention the experiences provoked.

Question 2.1 – “According to your experience in the Algarve, please indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements [dimensions]”

Dimension – Educational

The experience has made me more knowledgeable

I learned a lot

It stimulated my curiosity to learn new things

It was a real learning experience

The experience was highly educational to me

The experience really enhanced my skills

Adapted from Hosany & Witham (2009), Oh, Fiore & Jeoung (2007).

Dimension 2 - Aesthetics

I felt a real sense of harmony

Just being here was very pleasant

The setting was pretty bland

The setting was very attractive

The setting really showed attention to design detail

The setting provided pleasure to my senses

Adapted from Hosany & Witham (2009), Oh, Fiore & Jeoung (2007).

Dimension 3 – Entertainment

Activities of others were amusing to watch

Watching others perform was captivating

I really enjoyed watching what others were doing

Activities of others were fun to watch

Watching activities of others was very entertaining

What others did was boring to watch

Adapted from Hosany & Witham (2009), Oh, Fiore & Jeoung (2007).

Question 2 – “According to your experience in the Algarve, please indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements [dimensions]”

Dimension 4 - Escapism

I felt I played a different character here

I felt like I was living in a different time or place

The experience here let me imagine being someone else

I completely escaped from reality

I totally forgot about my daily routine

I felt I was in a different world

Adapted from Hosany & Witham (2009), Oh, Fiore & Jeoung (2007).

Part III – Core Experiences – The question aims to assess the most positive and negative tourists’ experiences at the destination Algarve.

3.1 In three words, which were your three **most positive** experiences in the Algarve during the last week(s),?

Adapted from Hosany & Witham (2009); Jackson *et al.* (1996); Mossberg (2008); Oh *et al.* (2007); Pine & Gilmore (1999).

3.2 In three words, which were your three **most negative** experiences in the Algarve during the last week(s),?

Adapted from Hosany & Witham (2009); Jackson *et al.* (1996); Mossberg (2008); Oh *et al.* (2007); Pine & Gilmore (1999).

Part IV – Previous Experience and Satisfaction - The question purpose was to verify if the tourist qualified to reply to the questionnaire, e.g., if he or she spend holidays in the Algarve. The last two items/variables deal with the overall perceived quality and satisfaction.

4.1 Including this visit, how many times have you visit the Algarve? First Time or [] times before.

Adapted from Baloglu & McCleary (1999b); Chen & Tsai (2007); Konecnik & Ruzzier (2006); Oppermann (2000).

4.2 “How satisfied are you with your visit to Algarve?” Very dissatisfied to Very Satisfied

Adapted from Hosany & Witham (2009); Oh, Fiore & Jeoung (2007).

Part V – Respondent Profile - Addressed the demographic characteristics of the tourists.

Question 1 - Age
Question 2 - Gender
Question 3 - Marital Status
Question 4 - Level of Education
Question 5 - Nationality
Question 6 - Travel companion
Baloglu & McCleary (1999a); Beerli & Martin (2004); Hill & Hill (2008); Hosany & Witham (2009).

Question 7 - Occupation
Alcaniz, Garcia, & Blas (2005); Alcañiz <i>et al.</i> (2009); Bosque & Martín (2008); Bosque, Martín, & Collado (2006).

In the first and last part of the questionnaire, all the same questions surveyed in the first questionnaire were assessed for a second time for latter evaluation of the differences between the TDI at the arrival, with the TDI after the TEs (at the departure).

Table 7.3 – TDI Questionnaire, After the TEs (At the Departure)

Question	Scale used	Source
Part I		
1.1 “Please indicate to what extend do you agree or disagree with the statements related with Algarve image.”	Ordinal scale 5-point Likert scale	Agapito <i>et al.</i> (2010); Agapito, Valle, & Mendes (2013); Alcañiz <i>et al.</i> (2009); Baloglu & Mangaloglu (2001); Baloglu & McCleary (1999a, 1999b); Beerli & Martín (2004); Phelps (1986).

1.2 “How would you describe Algarve’s overall image as a tourism destination?”	Ordinal scale 5-point Likert scale	Agapito <i>et al.</i> (2010); Agapito, Valle, & Mendes (2013); Alcañiz <i>et al.</i> (2009); Baloglu & McCleary (1999a, 1999b); Beerli & Martín (2004); Stern & Krakover (1993).
1.3 “Select [item] which comes closer to your perception of the Algarve as tourism destination, according to the following scales/adjectives?”	Ordinal scale 7-point differential scale	Agapito <i>et al.</i> (2010); Agapito, Valle, & Mendes (2013); Baloglu & McCleary (1999a, 1999b); Beerli & Martín (2004); Pike & Ryan (2004).
1.4 – “Select the box which comes closer to your intention.” 1.4.1 “I will revisit the Algarve Again”	Ordinal scale 5-point differential scale	Agapito <i>et al.</i> (2010; 2013); Baloglu & McCleary (1999a, 1999b); Beerli & Martín (2004); Bosque <i>et al.</i> (2006); Bosque & Martín (2008); Oppermann (2000); Pike & Ryan (2004).
1.4.2 “I will recommend it ”	Metric scale 5-point differential scale	Agapito <i>et al.</i> (2010, 2013); Alcañiz <i>et al.</i> (2009); Bosque & Martín (2008); Hosany & Witham (2009); Pike & Ryan (2004).
Part II		
2.1 Dimension 1 – Education Dimension 2 – Aesthetics Dimension 3 – Entertainment Dimension 4 - Escapism	Metric scale 5-point likert scale	Hosany & Witham (2009); Manhas & Ramjit (2013); Oh <i>et al.</i> (2007).
Part III		
3.1 “In three words, which were your three most positive experiences in the Algarve during the last week(s)?”	Nominal Open ended question	Hosany & Witham (2009); Jackson <i>et al.</i> (1996); Manhas & Ramjit (2013); Oh <i>et al.</i> (2007).

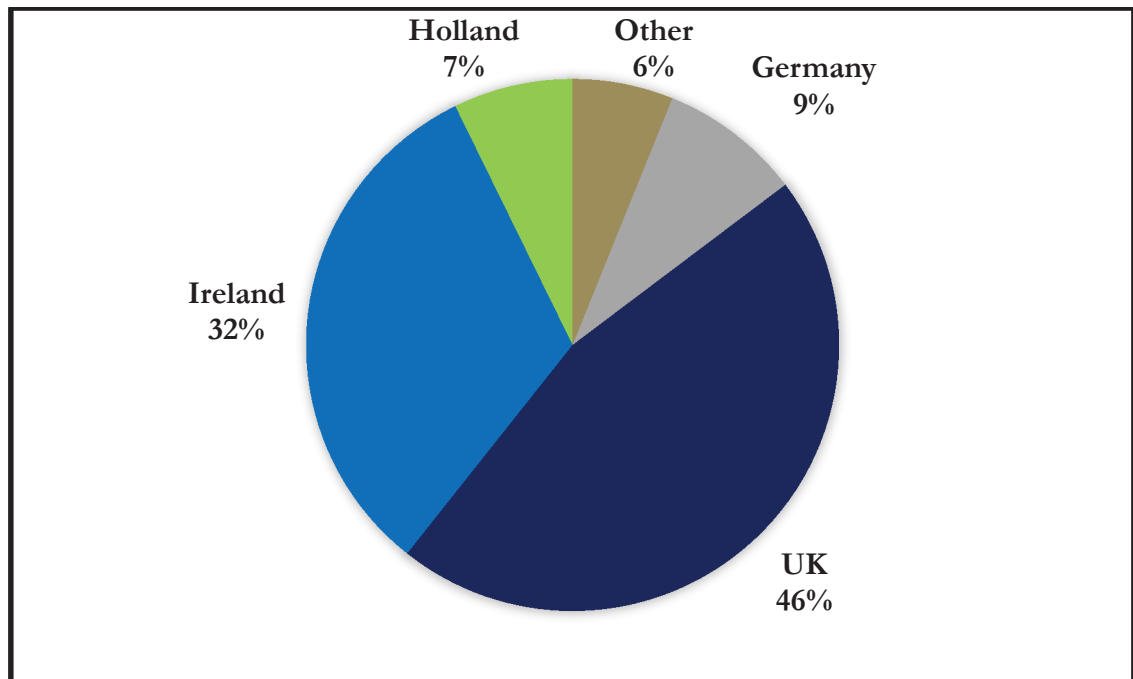
3.2 In three words, which were your three most negative experiences in the Algarve during the last week(s),?	Nominal Open ended question	Hosany & Witham (2009); Jackson <i>et al.</i> (1996); Manhas & Ramjit (2013); Oh <i>et al.</i> (2007).
Part IV		
4.1 “Including this visit, how many times have you visit the Algarve?”	Ordinal scale Open ended question	Agapito <i>et al.</i> (2010, 2013); Baloglu & McCleary (1999a, 1999b); Chen & Tsai (2007); Konecnik & Ruzzier (2006); Oppermann (2000); Phelps (1986).
4.2 “How satisfied are you with your visit to Algarve?”	Ordinal scale 5-point Likert scale	Agapito <i>et al.</i> (2013); Baker & Crompton (2000); Huang & Hsu (2009); Kozak & Rimmington (2000); Mendes <i>et al.</i> (2010); Vittersø <i>et al.</i> (2000).
Part V		
5.1. Age 5.2. Gender 5.3. Marital Status 5.4. Level of Education 5.5. Nationality 5.6. Travel Companion. 5.7. Occupation	1. Metric, 2. Nominal, 3. Nominal, 4. Ordinal, 5. Nominal. 6. Nominal 7. Nominal	Baloglu & McCleary (1999b); Beerli & Martín (2004); Alcañiz <i>et al.</i> (2009); Chen & Tsai (2007); Hill & Hill (2008); Hosany & Witham (2009); Manhas & Ramjit (2013); Oppermann (2000).

7.2.2.3 Sample and data collection

Both questionnaires were administered at Faro International Airport, to foreign visitors travelling to and from the Algarve, before and after having completed their holidays at the TD. The questionnaires were applied from the 1st of September until the 15th of September of 2013, from 6am to 11pm, everyday, to a stratified sample of the foreign tourists.

From the total of 2'682'215 foreign passengers embarked in Faro International Airport in 2011, 1'232'391 passengers (46%) were from United Kingdom, 860'532 (32%) were Irish, 230'879 (9%) German, 194'630 (7%) Dutch, and 163'783 (6%) of other nationalities, as figure 7.2 shows (INE, 2013b). Due to the study's objective, to assess the foreign tourists' image before and after the tourism experience, the 90'562 Portuguese tourists embarked were not considered to prevent bias, since Portuguese as national residents (Vitterso *et al.*, 2000) have a more profound familiarity with the region. In this regard, Echtner & Ritchie (2003) also warn of the strong relationship between a country's national image and the local TD image.

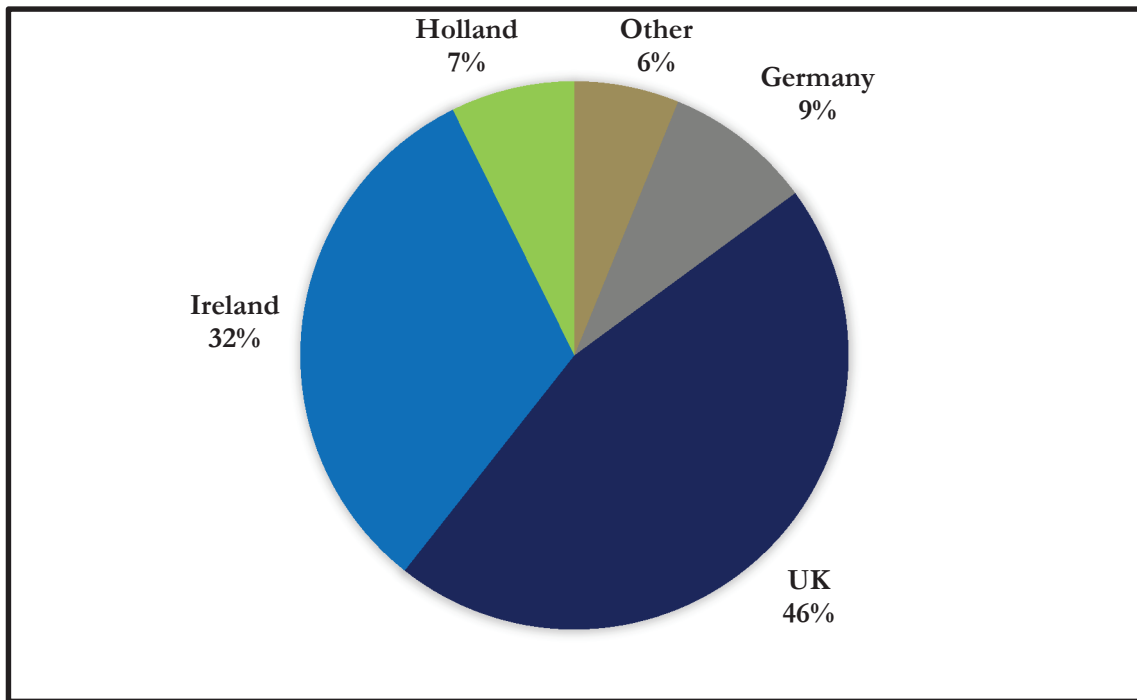
Figure 7.2 – Embarked Passengers in 2011 by Nationality in Faro Airport



Source: INE (2013b)

Regarding foreign passengers that disembarked in Faro International airport in 2011, as figure 7.3 shows, 1'232'592 were from UK (46%), 864'404 from Ireland (32%), 235'637 were from Germany (9%), 197'339 from Holland (7%), and 166'582 were from other nationalities (6%). Again 100328 Portuguese were not considered, since the study's focus was foreign tourists (INE, 2013b).

Figure 7.3 – Disembarked passengers at Faro International Airport in 2011 by Nationality



Source: INE (2013b)

The locations selected for the application of the questionnaires were the *arrivals area* (before the experience – Survey 1 or S1), and the *Boarding lounges/gates* (after the experience – Survey 2 or S2). Tourists were invited to participate in the survey, after a brief explanation of the study's purpose, and how to do the questionnaire. A total of 800 valid questionnaires (400 in S1²³, plus 400 in S2) were completed and collected²⁴.

The valid questionnaire data was later analyzed regarding its validity and reliability, and data reduction techniques were applied, using software such as SPSS v.21 and SmartPls3. Other software like SPSS Text Analytics for Surveys 4.0, and Wordle.com were also employed to perform the qualitative analysis.

²³ In the first questionnaire respondents at the arrival (before the TE) were asked to participate in a follow up questionnaire by email after arriving home (after their TE). A total of 97 valid respondents (25%) shown interested in participating. However, only 5% responded, despite the two emails sent calling for the respondents' participation (see appendix 4).

²⁴ The sample size 400 approximated the minimum sample size determined using the most conservative estimate for a single proportion (0.5), a confidence level of 95%, and a margin error of 5%.

7.2.2.4 Data Analysis of the Empirical Studies

When performing statistical analysis on the data from both survey's, the mean, median, mode, and standard deviation were used since they are helpful in organizing and describing larger sets of data and also, in estimating the central or middle of the data set. Following this analysis, the data was once again used for the construction of frequency tables, charts, tables and graphs. The tests and techniques employed in the empirical study were:

Qualitative data

- **SPSS-TAS (Text Analytics for Surveys)** – this software which has been use in previous studies (Agapito, Valle, & Mendes, 2012; Guerreiro, 2012; Nolen, 2009) was employed to restructure the data from the survey's open-ended questions into quantitative data, to better evaluate the respondents' perception regarding their TEs. The software categorizes terms from the respondents' responses for better insight and statistical analysis, and enables for links/lines (category webs) between the nodes (categories) to be established according to the size and strength of the terms mentioned at the same time.
- **Word Clouds** - Word clouds are a visual representation for text data, with the purpose of assisting the discovery of the most prominent keywords and terms (Elmas & Geban, 2012; Kessler, 2013; Spain *et al.*, 2013)., usually single words, by designing words differently in terms of size and color, according to their degree of importance.

7.3.1.1 Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling

The approach used to do the analysis of the data collected from Survey 2, relies on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) by SmartPLS 2.0 software (Ringle & Sarastedt, 2012; Wong, 2013). This is a second-generation software that has become

popular among researchers (Agapito, Valle, & Mendes, 2013; Haenlein & Kaplan, 2004; Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009; Monecke & Leisch, 2012; Perez *et al.*, 2012) to test complete theories and concepts.

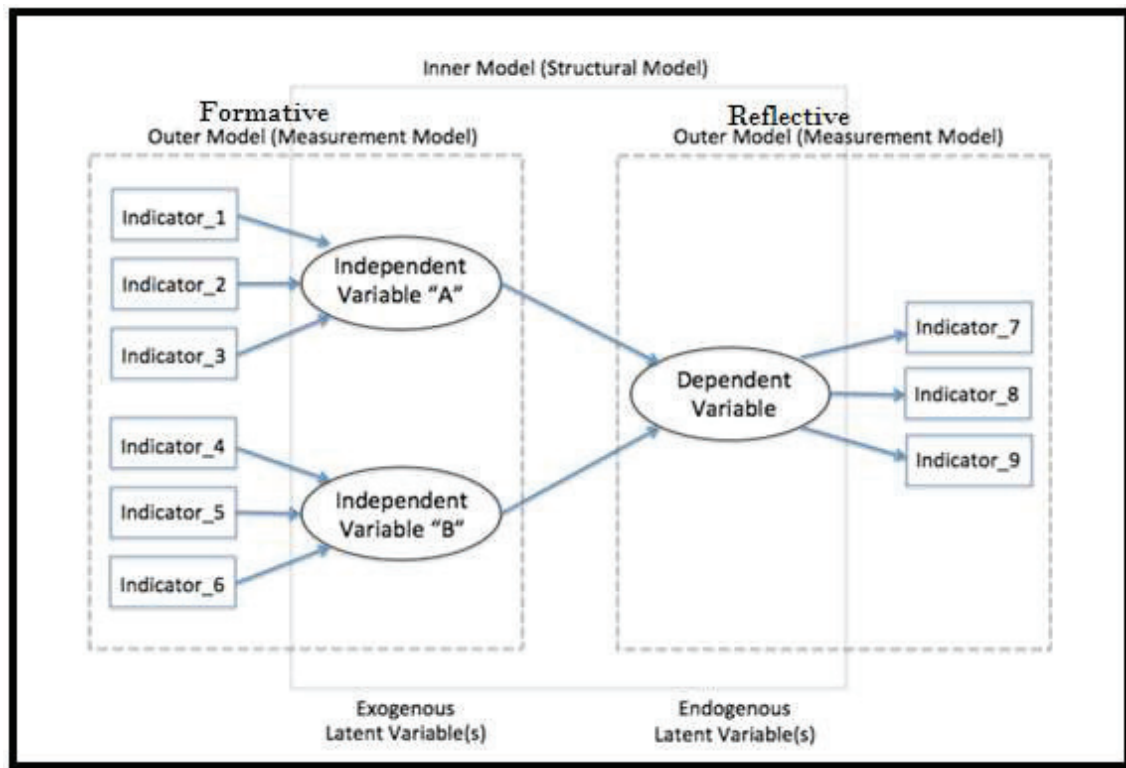
The PLS-SEM Software was developed in the 1980s, and has reached increasing popularity in recent years because of researchers' need to empirically validate theoretically developed causal models within the social sciences. The approaches to perform an SEM analysis are different and varied.

- The first, is Covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) and uses software packages such as AMOS - Analysis of Moment Structures, EQS, LISREL – Linear Modelling Relationships and Mplus;
- The second, is Partial Least Squares (PLS), focuses on the analysis of variance, and uses PLS-Graph, VisualPLS, SmartPLS, or WarpPLS software packages.

PLS SEM allows to test theoretically supported linear and additive causal models (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2004) with variables not normally distributed, with small samples sizes (Camarero, Garrido, & Vicente, 2010), when predictive accuracy is paramount, and the applications have diminutive available theory (Wong, 2013).

Using the PLS-SEM regression, the conceptual models with latent variables at the observation level (outer model) and the relationships (figure 7.4) between two or more latent variables (inner model) can be estimated, tested and validated (Hutchinson, Lai, & Wang, 2009). Researchers can also visualize the relationships among the latent variables (exogenous and endogenous) or constructs, and consequently identifying research problems and allocating resources (Wong, 2013).

Figure 7.4 - Inner vs. Outer Model in a SEM Diagram



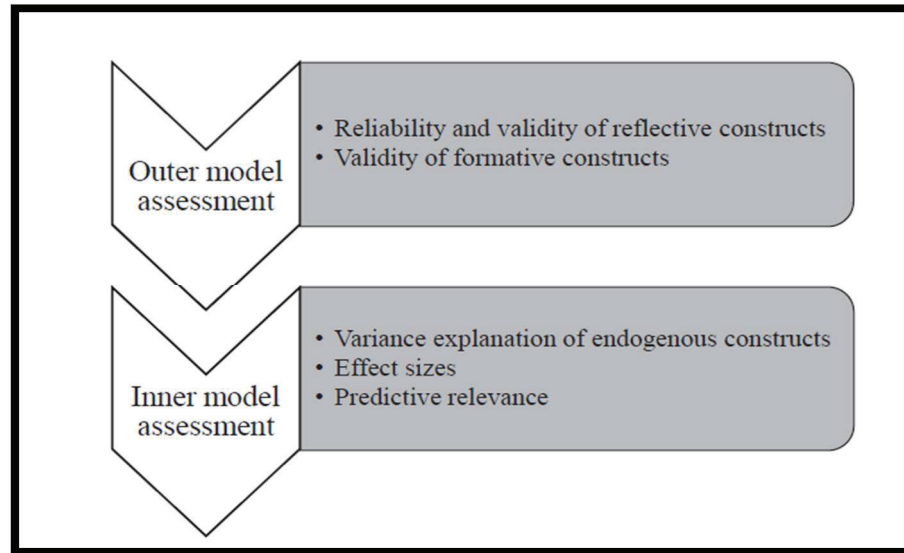
Source: Wong (2013:2)

The model was specified by drawing the structural model for the latent variables (i.e., to draw path arrows between the constructs) and by assigning the relationships between the indicators and latent variables. The direction of the path relationships per measurement model, and consequently the causality between the latent variable and its indicators are described either by a reflective or by a formative model.

In the present study, the conceptual model proposed is reflective. To determine the significance of the inner and outer model coefficients, the SmartPLS software can generate *T*-statistics by bootstrapping, which is a technique that provides an estimate of the shape, spread, and bias of the sampling distribution of a specific statistic (Henseler *et al.*, 2009). Wong (2013:23) claims that “in this procedure, a large number of subsamples (e.g., 5000) are taken from the original sample with replacement to give bootstrap standard errors, which in turn gives approximate *T*-values for significance testing of the

structural path”. The assessment of the SEM, using the PLS-SEM approach requires two procedures (figure 7.5): a) Outer model assessment, b) Inner model assessment.

Figure 7.5 - A Two-Step Process of PLS Path Model Assessment



Source: Henseler *et al.* (2009:298)

7.3.1.1.1 OUTER MODEL ASSESSMENT

According to Jarvis, Mackenzie, & Podsakoff (2003), the nature of the model (reflective or formative model) is what defines the analysis of the measurement model. For instance, if the indicators²⁵ cause the latent variable and are not interchangeable among themselves, they are formative, which means that indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, and discriminant validity do not have to be reported (Wong, 2013).

On the other hand, if the causality direction is going from the latent variable to the indicators, and if the indicators are correlated and interchangeable, then the measurement model is of a reflective nature (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2004; Hair *et al.*, 2014; Petter *et al.*, 2007) and its reliability and validity should be measured.

²⁵ The formative indicators correlation among each other can be positive, negative, null (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2004; Petter *et al.*, 2007).

Reliability

Reliability or internal consistency is verified according to each individual indicator loadings, which represent the correlations coefficients between the latent variable and the indicator, allowing to verify the contribution of each individual indicator to the latent variable to which it is connected or related (Henseler *et al.*, 2009). The individual reflective item reliability is consider adequate when an item has a factor loading greater than 0.7 preferable, but a value of 0.5 is acceptable (Hair *et al.*, 2010, 2014; Renda, 2012).

Along with the *loadings* value, several authors (Gotz *et al.*, 2010), recommend for the *construct reliability* (which is the internal consistency) to be evaluated through the *composite reliability*, which varies from 0 to 1. This coefficient should have preferably have values between 0.8 and 0.9, and all values lower than 0.5 should be avoided (Henseler *et al.*, 2009). From the internal consistency analysis and from the indicators values, in the reflective model, it is possible to remove from the conceptual model the indicators that are not contributing for the understanding the latent variable under study.

Convergent and Discriminant Validity

The convergent validity reflects the strength of the correlation between the indicators and the latent variable (Gotz, Liehr-Gobbers & Krafft, 2010). The statistical significance is attained when the *T*-statistics of the indicators are higher than 1.645 for a single tailed test. The analysis of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) permits the assessment of the amount of variance that a construct captures from its indicators relative to the amount due to measurement error. The AVE values should have a value greater than the acceptable threshold of 0.5 (which means that 50 per cent or more variance of the indicators should be accounted for).

Regarding the discriminant validity, Henseler *et al.* (2009:299) considers that “two conceptually different concepts should exhibit sufficient differences (i.e. the joint set of

indicators is expected not to be one-dimensional).” The two measures used to assess it, are:

- The Fornell–Larcker criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) which postulates that the square root of AVE of each latent variable can be used to establish discriminant validity, if a latent variable shares more variance with its assigned indicators than with any other latent variable.
- The cross-loadings, suggest the measurement model should be reconsidered, should an indicator have a higher correlation with another latent variable than with its own latent variable (Henseler *et al.*, 2009; Barclay *et al.*, 1995)

7.3.1.1.2 INNER MODEL ASSESSMENT

The structural model is also assessed according to the following procedures:

Analysis of Path Coefficients of the Structural Model

The statistical significance of the path relationships in the structural model should be evaluated in terms of the strength of the relationships between the latent variables (Henseler *et al.*, 2009). The confirmation of the hypotheses formed *a priori*, depends on whether the structural coefficients presents the expected sign and a significant *T*-value, i.e. a value greater than, or equal to, the reference value (1.645 for one-sided tests with a significance level of 5 %) (Guerreiro, 2012).

Analysis of the Coefficient of Determination (R^2) of the Latent Variables

Within the PLS-PM, the value of R^2 of each endogenous latent variable indicates the variance of the endogenous latent variable explained by the independent latent variables (Chin, 2010). The R^2 value can vary between 0 and 1, with a value closer to 1 explaining greater variance. In this regard, there still is a lack of agreement among researchers regarding which values should be considered as high, moderate and weak. Chin (1998) suggests that R^2 value of 0.67 as substantial, 0.33 as moderate and 0.19 as weak.

Predictive Relevance of the Model

In addition to R^2 assessment, another evaluation involving the structural model is the Stone–Geisser values (Henseler *et al.*, 2009). This criterion characterizes the ability of the model to explain and predict the validity of the exogenous latent variables (Henseler *et al.*, 2009; Ringle *et al.* 2012). The Stone-Geisser's (Q^2) values (i.e., cross-validated redundancy measures) can be computed using the blindfolding procedure (Wong, 2013).

If the Q^2 value for a certain endogenous latent variable is larger than zero, it implies that the exogenous constructs provide predictive relevance for the endogenous variables (Chin, 2010), whereas values below zero reveal a lack of predictive relevance. In this sense, Q^2 values of 0.02 reveal small predictive relevance, whereas 0.15 reveal medium and 0.35 reveal a large predictive relevance of a certain latent variable, thus explaining the endogenous latent variable under evaluation.

Quantitative data

SPSS Statistics v21 – This software was used for statistical analysis, such as descriptive statistics, frequencies, and bivariate statistics (means, median, standard deviation, mode, T-Tests, Z Test).

- **Z Test** - was used to test to what extent the differences between two proportions are statistically different (Marôco, 2011).
- **Cronbach's Alpha** – was used as a coefficient for internal consistency and estimate the samples' reliability regarding the TEs lived at the destination (Bigné & Andreu, 2004; Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Marôco, 2011)

Conclusion note

The present chapter presented the research background and research design applied in the study's methodology, structured around the key components of TEs and TDI, from a tourists' perspective, with the objective of verifying the validity of the hypotheses coming from the revision of the literature. The data outputs generated and the statistical analysis performed, will test not only the validity of the model, but also the associations and strengths of the relationships between them. These findings will be present in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 8 – FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

In the present chapter the findings of the fieldwork will be presented, starting with the exploratory research carried out to identify the TDI attributes. Next, the results of the surveys made to foreign tourists visiting the Algarve, one at the moment of their arrival at Faro International Airport, and the other after their TE at the destination (during their departure at the same airport) are presented.

Also in this chapter, the fitness of the proposed conceptual model will be assessed using a structural modeling procedure to test the nature of the relationship between the two main construct, TEs and TDI.

8.1 Findings of the exploratory study

8.1.1 Descriptive profile of the sample

This subchapter provides the data analysis of the exploratory research. In this regard, the main socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents were, as seen below in table 8.1, male (51.4%), aged between 28 and 37 years old (32.9%), married (65.7%), with secondary school education (38.6%), of British nationality (48.6%) and travelling with a partner (40%).

Table 8.1 - Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

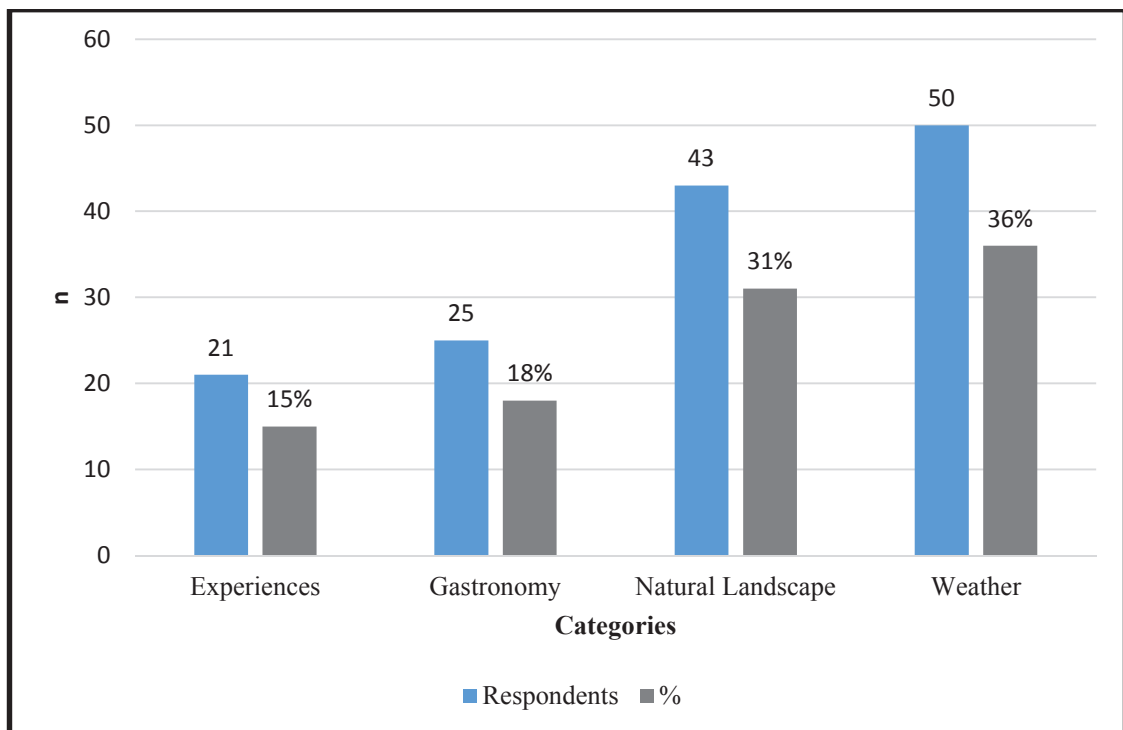
Age	18 – 27	8.6%
	28 – 37	32.9%
	38 – 47	20%
	48 – 57	14.3%
	58 and older	24.3%
Gender	Male	51.4%
	Female	48.6%
Marital Status	Single	18.6%
	Married	65.7%
	Divorced	4.3%
	Widowed	-
	Other	4.3%
Level Of Education	Primary school	4.3%;
	Secondary school	38.6%;
	Undergraduate	15.7%;
	Postgraduate	25.7%;
	Phd	4.3%
Nationality	British	48.6%,
	Irish	21.4%;
	German	5.7%;
	Canadian	2,9%;
	French	2.9%;
	Belgian	2.9%;
	Other	9.8%
Travel Companion	Family	38.6%;
	Partner	40%;
	Friends	15.7%;
	Husband/Wife	2.9%;
	Other	1.4 %

Source: Author

8.1.2 Content analysis of the exploratory study

Functional attributes of the Algarve. Regarding the first open-ended question, as Figure 8.1 shows, tourists were asked to identify “*In three words, what images or characteristics come to mind when you think of the Algarve as a holiday destination?*”. Their answers lead to the creation of four categories (weather, natural landscape, gastronomy, and experiences).

Figure 8.1 - Functional Attributes of the Algarve’s TDI



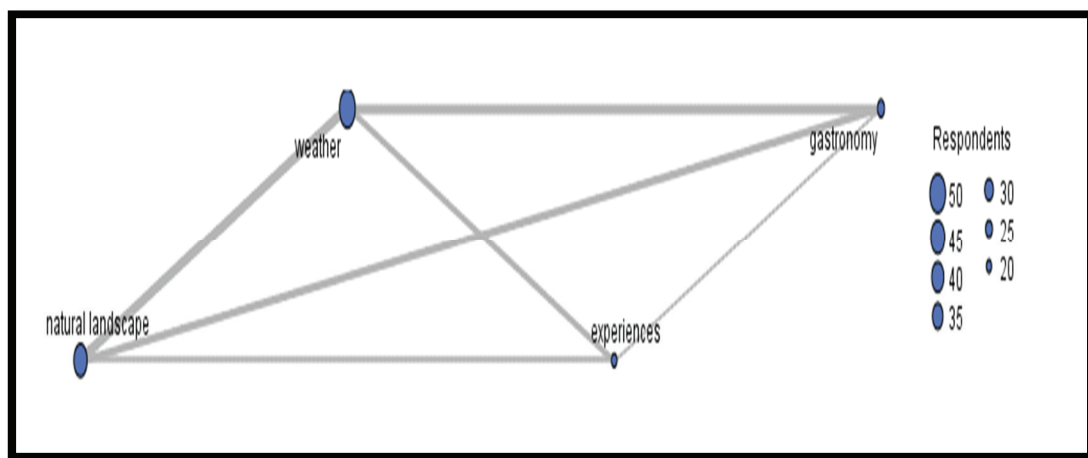
Source: Author from Excel software

These categories, resulted from the following most cited images of the Algarve:

- Weather (sun – 17 times, weather – 7 times, sunny – 5 times,...);
- Natural Landscape (beach – 19 times, sea – 7 times,...);
- Gastronomy (food – 15 times, gastronomy – 3 times, wine – 2 times,...);
- Experiences (relaxing – 9 times, fishing – 1 time, fado – 1 time,...).

Through the analysis of the category web (shown in Figure 8.2), the connections which were established between categories of the functional attributes can be seen. In this sense, the most important and strongest connection is between the attributes natural landscape and weather, sharing 27 responses in total (i.e., they were both cited together 27 times by respondents), as well as weather and gastronomy (shared 21 citations), landscape and gastronomy (16 citations), and weather and experiences (14 citations).

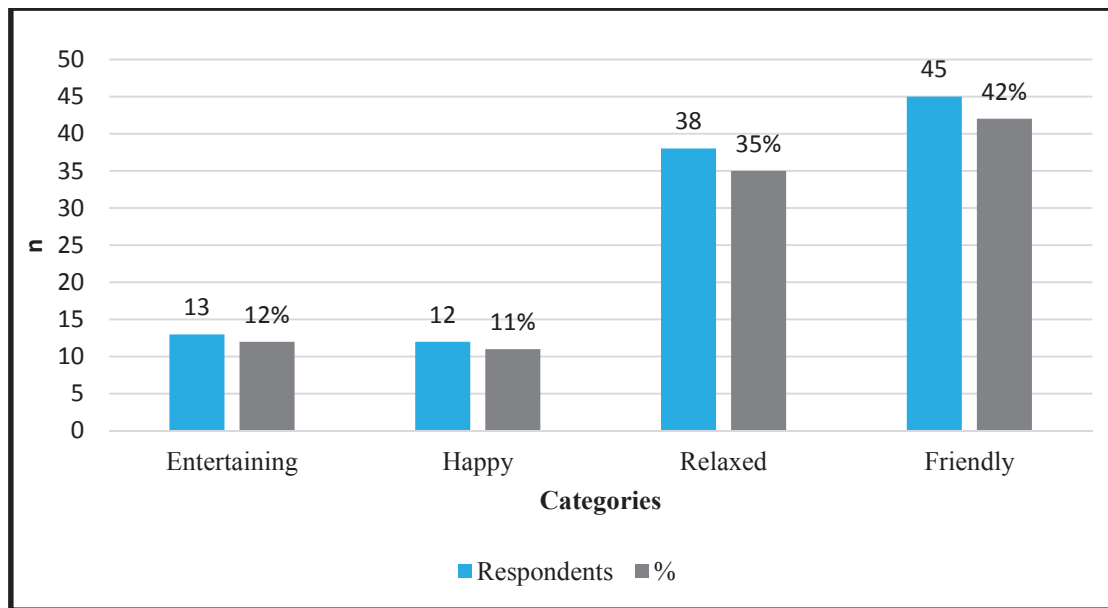
Figure 8.2 - Connection Shared Between Categories of the Algarve's Functional Attributes



Source: Author from SPSS-TAS output

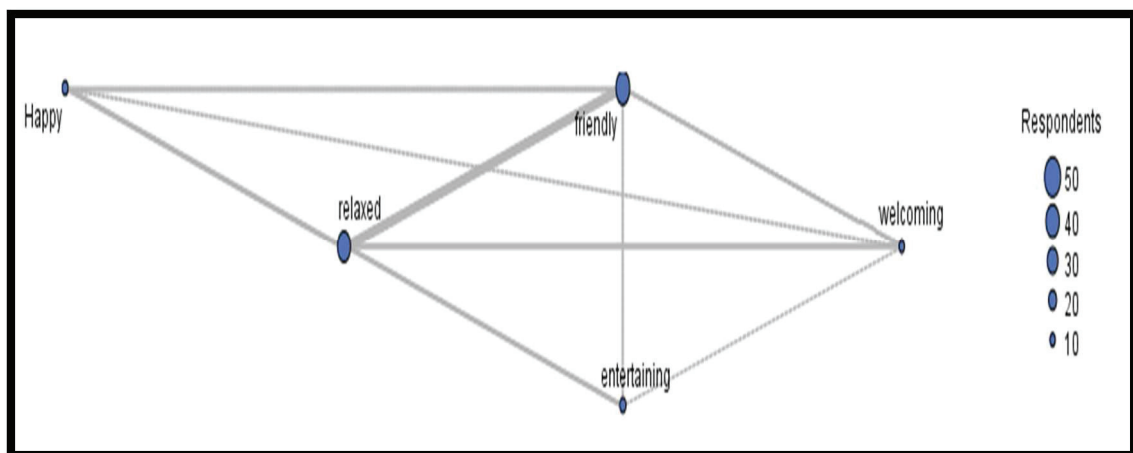
Psychological attributes of the Algarve. Regarding question 2, “*In three words, how would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting the Algarve?*”, the respondents’ answers concerning the atmosphere or mood of the destination (see figure 8.3) resulted into four main categories (Friendly, Relaxed, Entertaining and Happy) which were built upon the most cited words below:

- Friendly (Friendly - 38 times and helpful - 5 times,...);
- Relaxed (Relaxed - 33 times and quiet - 5 times);
- Entertaining (Fun - 6 times, night life - 3 times, and parties -3 times,...);
- Happy (12 times);

Figure 8.3 – Psychological and Holistic Component of Algarve’s TDI

Source: Author from Excel software

In the figure 8.4, the strongest connection seen is between relaxed and friendly with 17 shared responses, followed by the connection between relaxed and happy (7 shared responses), friendly and welcoming (6 shared responses). The less important connections are happy with friendly (1 shared connection), happy with relaxed (1 connection), and also entertaining with friendly (1 share connection), and entertaining with welcoming (1 share connection). However, despite having some relevance, the citation - Welcoming, was excluded from the main categories.

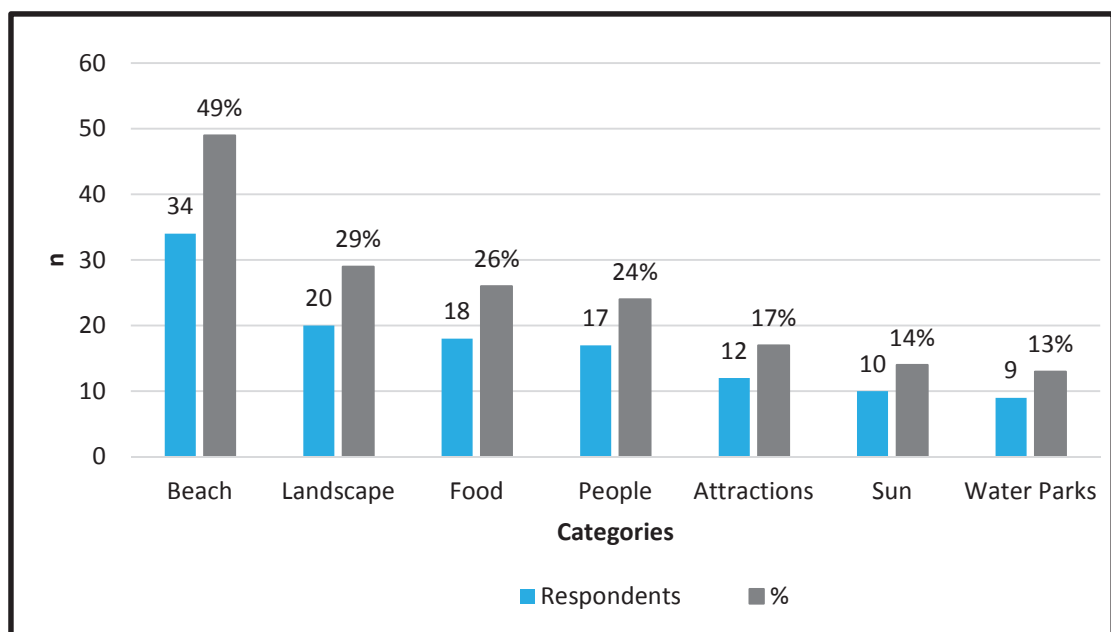
Figure 8.4 – Algarve’s Psychological Attributes - Connection Share Between Categories

Source: Author from SPSS-TAS output

Unique characteristics of the Algarve: Lastly, regarding the third question, “*In three words, which attractions or characteristics unique to the Algarve have you found?*”, the attractions which were most valued by tourists were (as Figure 8.5 shows):

- Beach (was cited 34 times);
- Natural landscape (20 times);
- Food (18 times);
- Friendliness of the locals (17 times);
- Sun (10 times);
- Water parks (9 times);

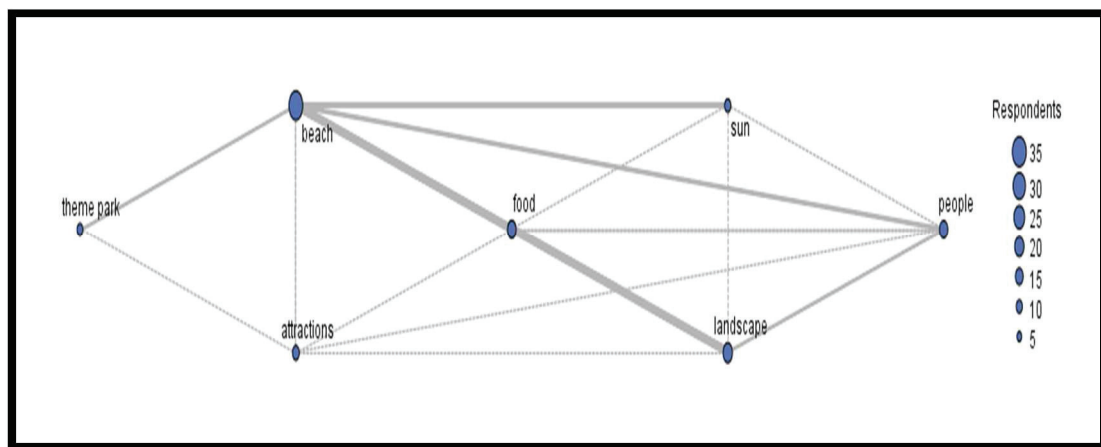
Figure 8.5 – Algarve’s Unique Attractions



Source: Author from Excel software

Again by analyzing the category web (figure 8.6), the connections established from the respondents answers shows the links between beach and food (7 shared connections) and food and landscape (7 shared connections also) to be the most relevant. The second most evident connections are seen between beach and sun (6 shared connections), followed by beach and people (5 shared connections).

Figure 8.6 - Algarve's Attractions or Unique Characteristics - Connection Share Between Categories



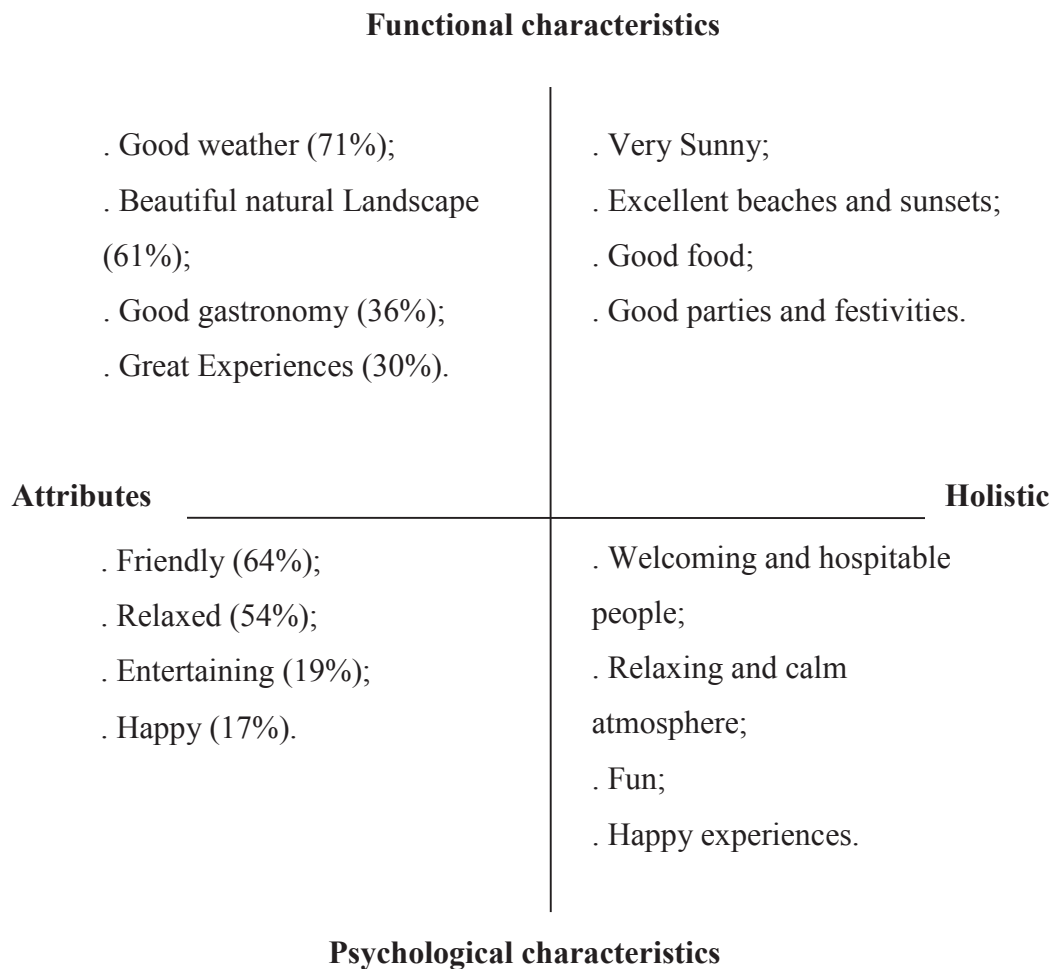
Source: Author from SPSS-TAS output

8.1.3 Algarve's Functional-psychological Continuum

According to Echtner & Ritchie's (1993) approach, figure 8.7 illustrates the Algarve's functional and psychological characteristics, which resulted from the exploratory study applied to the tourists visiting the Algarve. For the tourists, the main functional characteristics of the Algarve were its good weather (i.e, sun), beautiful natural landscape (beach), good local gastronomy (food) and great experiences (relaxing, water parks, walking). Tourists also felt the climate to be sunny, while the beaches, sunsets, food, parties and festivities very positive.

While on the holistic and psychological side, tourists experienced the friendliness of the residents (*"friendly"*, *"nice people"*), and they also felt relaxed (*"relaxation"*, *"peaceful"*, *"calm"*), despite having had also the time to enjoy themselves (*"fun"*), and experience happy feelings during their holidays (*"happy"*, *"joy"*). Regarding the most important traits or unique characteristics of the destination, such as attractions, the respondents considered these to be the beach, natural landscape, local cuisine and the residents' friendliness and warm reception.

Figure 8.7 – Algarve’s Attribute/Holistic and Functional/Psychological Components of Algarve’s TDI, The Tourists’ Perspective



Source: Author

8.2 Findings of the TDI before and after the TE

8.2.1 Descriptive profile of the samples

The demographic characteristics of the samples groups are presented in table 8.2 and table 8.3. These tables show the demographic characteristics of the tourists visiting the Algarve, at two different periods, at the arrival, i.e., before the tourists’ TEs at the destination - Survey 1 (S1), and at the departure, i.e. after their TE at the destination – Survey 2 (S2). The questionnaires were applied using a stratified sample method, and 800

valid (400 at the arrival, i.e., before the TE, and 400 after the TE) questionnaires were collected.

In S1 (table 8.2), 59,2% of the respondents included in the sample were female and 40,8% male. Their mean age was 47 years old and main marital status was married (68%), followed by those which were single (23%), divorced (5%) and widow (4%). The samples' level of education ranged from primary (5%), secondary (34%), undergraduate (31%), postgraduate (25%) and some who held a Phd (5%). By nationality, 46% were English, 32% Irish, 9% German, 7% Dutch and 6% other nationalities. Most of the respondents were travelling with their partner (45%) or family (32%), while others visited the Algarve together with friends (16%) or other people (7%). The respondents were predominantly employed (79%), or retired (16%) and only 3% were students or homeworkers (2%).

Table 8.2 - Characterization of the S1 Sample - Before

Variables	Before the TE (N =400)
Age	Mean: 47; Mode: 53; standard deviation: 14,6
Gender	Female: 59,2%; male: 40,8%
Marital status	Single: 23%; married: 68%; divorced: 5%; widow/er: 4%; Other: 0%
Level of Education	Primary: 5%; secondary: 34%; undergraduate: 31%; postgraduate: 25%; phd: 5%
Nationality	English: 46%; irish: 32%; german: 9%; dutch: 7%; other: 6%
Travel Companion	Family: 32%; partner: 45%; friends: 16%; other: 7%
Occupation	Employed: 79%; retired: 16%; homeworker; 2%; student: 3%

Source: Author from SPSS software

In S2 (table 8.3), the mean age of the respondents was 48 years old, and female (52,5%), despite the number of male respondents being slightly higher 47,5% than the S1 sample, 70% of the respondents were married, 22% single, 4% divorced, 3% other (e.g. with a partner), and 1% were widow/er. The more frequent levels of education were secondary (47%) undergraduate (25%), postgraduate (21%), PhD (4%) and Primary (3%). The respondents were mainly English (46%), followed by Irish (32%), German (9%), Dutch (7%) and other nationalities (6%). In this survey (S2), the most frequent travel companion was the partner (55%), followed by family (27%), friends (12%), or other companions (6%). Most of the respondents were employed (73%), or retired (21%), while (3%) were homeworkers, (2%) students and (1%) unemployed.

Table 8.3 - Characterization of the S2 Sample - After

Variables	After the TE (N= 400)
Age	Mean: 48,2; Mode: 55; standard deviation: 15,4
Gender	Female: 52,5%; male: 47,5%
Marital status	Single: 22%; married: 70%; divorced: 4%; widow/er: 1%; Other: 3%
Level of Education	Primary: 3%; secondary: 47%; undergraduate: 25%; postgraduate: 21%; phd: 4%
Nationality	English: 46%; irish: 32%; german: 9%; dutch: 7%; other: 6%
Travel Companion	Family: 27%; partner: 55%; friends: 12%; other: 6%
Occupation	Employed: 73%; unemployed: 1%; retired: 21%; homemaker; ; 3%; student: 2%

Source: Author from SPSS software

In short, the mean age of tourists was very similar – 47 (S1) and 48 years old (S2), with a standard deviation of 14,6 and 15,4 respectively. In both surveys, the gender of the tourists was mainly female 59,2% (S1) and 52,5% (S2), married (68%) and (70%), and with the secondary school education (34% and 47%) respectively. The majority of the

respondents were English nationals (46% in both surveys) travelling with their partner (45% and 55%), and employed 79% (S1) and 73% (S2). Therefore despite some differences between the two independent samples, these as table 8.2 and 8.3 shows, are not very significant.

8.2.2 Cognitive component of TDI

The first question of the questionnaire intended to assess the cognitive TDI of the TD Algarve. For this reason, nineteen attributes of the destination were measured using a 5-point Likert-scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. The following table 8.4, sums the respondents’ level of agreement “agree” + “strongly agree” (in survey 1 and 2), regarding Algarve’s TDI attributes found in the literature review and in the exploratory study.

Table 8.4 – Agreement Level of the S1 Sample - Before

TDI Attributes	1. Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neither agree nor Disagree	4. Agree	5. Strongly Agree	Level of Agreement sum
Good weather	2,80%	1,30%	2,00%	42,80%	51,30%	94,10%
Good beaches	2,80%	1,80%	4,00%	45,60%	45,90%	91,50%
Relaxing destination	2,30%	1,30%	9,30%	43,90%	43,40%	87,20%
Attractive natural landscape	2,50%	0,80%	12,80%	48,00%	35,90%	83,90%
Friendly residents	2,80%	1,50%	13,30%	48,10%	34,10%	82,20%
Happy destination	3,50%	1,00%	14,00%	43,10%	38,30%	81,50%
Safe destination	2,50%	3,50%	13,70%	50,60%	29,60%	80,30%
Good gastronomy	2,00%	2,80%	15,30%	52,70%	27,20%	79,90%
Good access	2,00%	1,50%	16,60%	50,80%	29,10%	79,80%
Clean destination	2,30%	3,30%	15,30%	52,30%	27,00%	79,30%
Good accommodation	1,80%	2,00%	16,90%	49,50%	29,80%	79,30%
Good value for money	2,00%	2,80%	17,40%	49,60%	28,20%	77,80%
Good attractions	2,00%	2,00%	22,90%	46,10%	27,00%	73,00%
Interesting cultural attractions	2,30%	4,50%	27,50%	44,80%	20,90%	65,70%
Good entertainment	1,50%	4,50%	35,60%	40,20%	18,20%	58,30%
Good shopping opportunities	2,50%	6,00%	35,90%	36,70%	18,80%	55,50%
Good nightlife	3,30%	5,10%	36,50%	37,50%	17,70%	55,20%
Good sporting facilities	2,30%	3,80%	39,20%	34,40%	20,30%	54,60%
Good water parks	2,60%	4,60%	39,70%	35,60%	17,30%	52,80%

Source: Author from SPSS software

In the first survey, before the TE, all the attributes were perceived as positive, since all attributes had a level of agreement above 50%, as table 8.4 shows. When considering the Likert scale level (4), table 8.4 also shows respondents' consensus to **agree** with almost all TD attributes, except for the attributes weather (51,30%) and beach (45,90%) attributes which were classified in position 5 of the Likert-scale (strongly agree). Overall, the sum of the respondents' level of agreement revealed the strongest attributes to be the weather (94,10%), beach (91,5%), relaxing (87,2%), landscape (83,9%), and the weakest attributes to be good water parks (52,8%), sporting facilities (54,6%), nightlife (55,2%), shopping opportunities (55,5%) and entertainment (58,3%).

Table 8.5 – Agreement Level of the S2 Sample - After

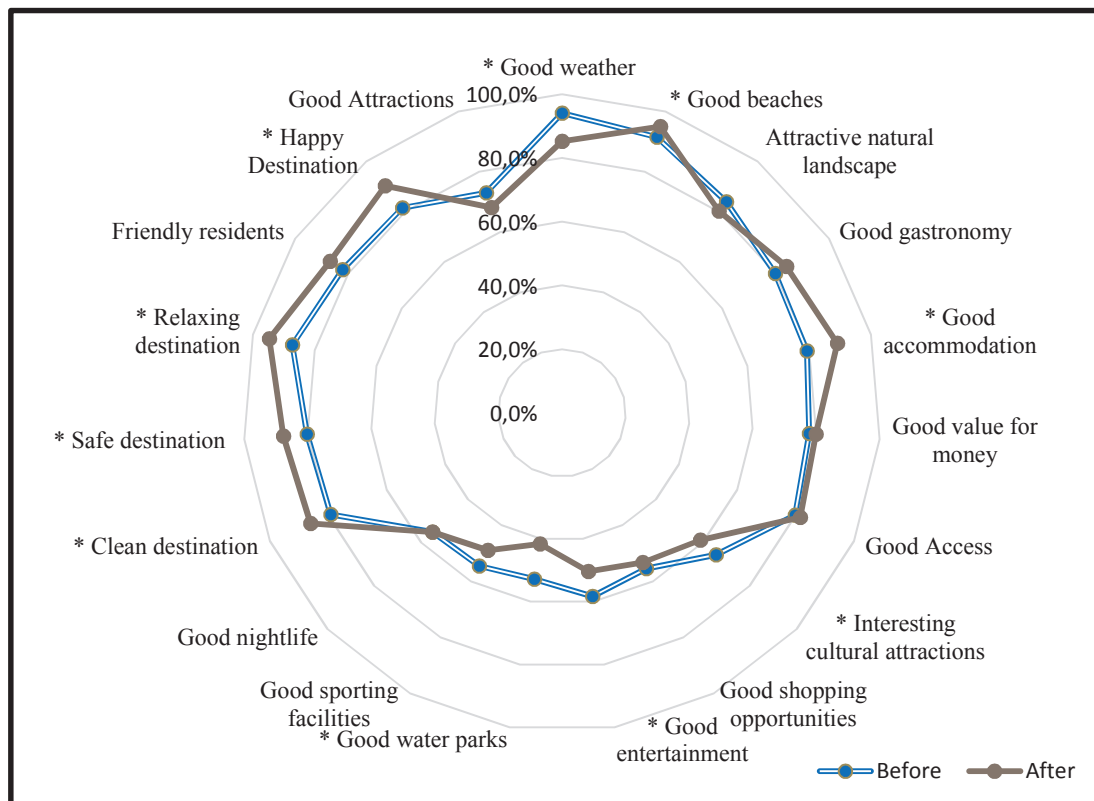
TDI Attributes	1. Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neither Agree nor Disagree	4. Agree	5. Strongly Agree	Level of Agree- ment sum
Good Beaches	0,30%	0,80%	4,00%	45,40%	49,60%	95,00%
Relaxing Destination	0,30%	0,50%	4,50%	47,40%	47,40%	94,70%
Happy Destination	0,80%	0,80%	8,30%	48,00%	42,30%	90,30%
Good Accommodation	0,00%	1,30%	9,30%	52,50%	36,60%	89,10%
Safe Destination	0,00%	1,30%	11,10%	53,90%	33,80%	87,70%
Friendly Residents	0,30%	2,30%	10,60%	43,70%	43,20%	86,90%
Clean Destination	0,00%	4,80%	9,10%	56,20%	30,00%	86,10%
Good Weather	1,30%	6,50%	7,00%	29,80%	55,50%	85,30%
Good Gastronomy	0,00%	2,30%	13,60%	54,30%	29,80%	84,10%
Good Access	0,30%	3,60%	14,50%	56,40%	25,30%	81,60%
Attractive Natural Landscape	0,00%	2,80%	17,00%	47,70%	32,50%	80,20%
Good Value For Money	0,00%	4,50%	15,60%	51,50%	28,40%	79,90%
Good Attractions	0,00%	4,10%	27,80%	45,60%	22,50%	68,10%
Interesting Cultural Attractions	0,80%	6,60%	33,70%	41,80%	17,10%	58,90%
Good Nightlife	0,00%	3,40%	41,50%	40,70%	14,50%	55,20%
Good Shopping Opportunities	0,80%	6,30%	39,60%	40,90%	12,40%	53,30%
Good Entertainment	1,00%	5,30%	43,30%	40,30%	10,10%	50,40%
Good Sporting Facilities	0,30%	2,40%	48,40%	35,00%	13,90%	48,90%
Good Water Parks	0,30%	2,10%	56,00%	32,50%	9,10%	41,60%

Source: Author from SPSS software

In the second survey, after the TE (table 8.5 above), respondents considered the strongest attributes to be beach (95%), relaxing (94,7%), happy destination (90,3%) and accommodation (89,1%). The weakest attributes were, good water parks (41,6%), good sporting facilities (48,9%), good entertainment (50,4%) and good nightlife (55,2%). Again, like in the first survey, most of the respondents positioned their agreement level in position 4 of the Likert-scale, except for good beaches (49,60%), relaxing destination (47,40%) and good weather (55,50%) (positioned in 5 of the Likert scale).

In this survey, after the TE, some TD attributes were not perceive so positively by the respondents: good water parks (41,60%) and good sporting facilities (48,90%). In general, when looking at the level of agreement of both surveys (figure 8.8), it can be seen that the majority of the respondents **strongly agreed** the Algarve's TDI attributes to be composed of good weather, (51,3% S1 and 55,5% S2) and good beaches (45,9% and 49,6% respectively).

Figure 8.8 – Agreement Level Regarding TDI Attributes Before and After the TE.



Source: Author from Excel software

* - Z test to the differences between the proportions: $p < 0.05$

Respondents also **agreed** upon most of the remaining attributes (in S1 and S2 respectively) to have:

- Attractive natural landscape (48% and 47,7%),
- Good gastronomy (52,7% and 54,3%),
- Good accommodation (49,5% and 52,5%),
- Good value for money (49,6% and 51,5%),
- Good Access (50,8% and 56,4%),
- Interesting cultural attractions (44,8% and 41,8%),
- Good shopping opportunities (36,7% and 40,9%),
- Good entertainment (40,2% on the first survey),
- Clean destination (52,3% and 56,2%),
- Safe destination (50,6% and 53,9%),
- Relaxing destination (43,9% and 47,4%);
- Friendly residents (48,1% and 43,7%),
- Happy destination (43,1% and 48,0%),
- Good attractions (46,1% and 45,6%).

However, for some of the respondents, their opinion about the Algarve's entertainment (43,3 % S2), water parks (39,7% S1 and 56,0% S2) and sporting facilities (39,2% S1 and 48,4% S2), is **neutral** or of little interest, since their level of agreement was "neither agree nor disagree". In addition, most of the respondents in the 1st survey, stated the Algarve to have a good nightlife, but on the 2nd survey, respondents (41,5%) demonstrated a different opinion and considered neither to agree nor disagree with the attribute (good nightlife).

More disagreement was found between the two samples, i.e., before and after the TE, with respondents of the S2 considering attractions (68,10%), weather (85,30%), landscape (80,20%), cultural attractions (58,90%), shopping opportunities (53,30%), entertainment (50,40%), water parks (41,60%), and sporting facilities (48,90%) to be less attractive after having experienced it. Among the less attractive, the attribute which had the largest difference of respondents' agreement was good water parks with 11,2% p.p.

Consequently, when considering the sum of the highest level of agreement, in the S1 and S2, the attributes more positively perceived by respondents were good beaches (95% S2),

followed by relaxing atmosphere (94,7% S2) after the TE, weather (94% S1), and beach (91% S1) before the TE. Regarding the lowest level of agreement the attributes were, water parks (52,8% S1 and 41,6% S2), followed by sporting facilities (54,6% and 48,9%), shopping opportunities (55,5% and 53,3%) and entertainment (58,3% and 50,4%) respectively for S1 and S2. A Z test was also made, and the test revealed differences between the S1 and S2 respondents, regarding ten TDI attributes: Good weather, Good beaches, Good accommodation, Interesting cultural attractions, Good entertainment, Good water parks, Clean destination, Safe destination, Relaxing destination and Happy destination.

In short, the two surveys (Before & After) about the Algarve's TDI confirmed the region's positive perception among foreign tourists. The first survey's findings were congruent with the exploratory research conclusions of the Algarve which is seen by the tourists' predominantly as a Sun and Sea TD. In the second survey (after the actual experience at the setting), six TDI attributes (Accommodation, Clean TD, Safe TD, Relaxing, Friendly Residents and Happy Destination) were perceived more positively by the respondents. This survey also revealed two TDI attributes (Entertainment and waterparks) to be more negatively rated by the respondents of the S2 sample.

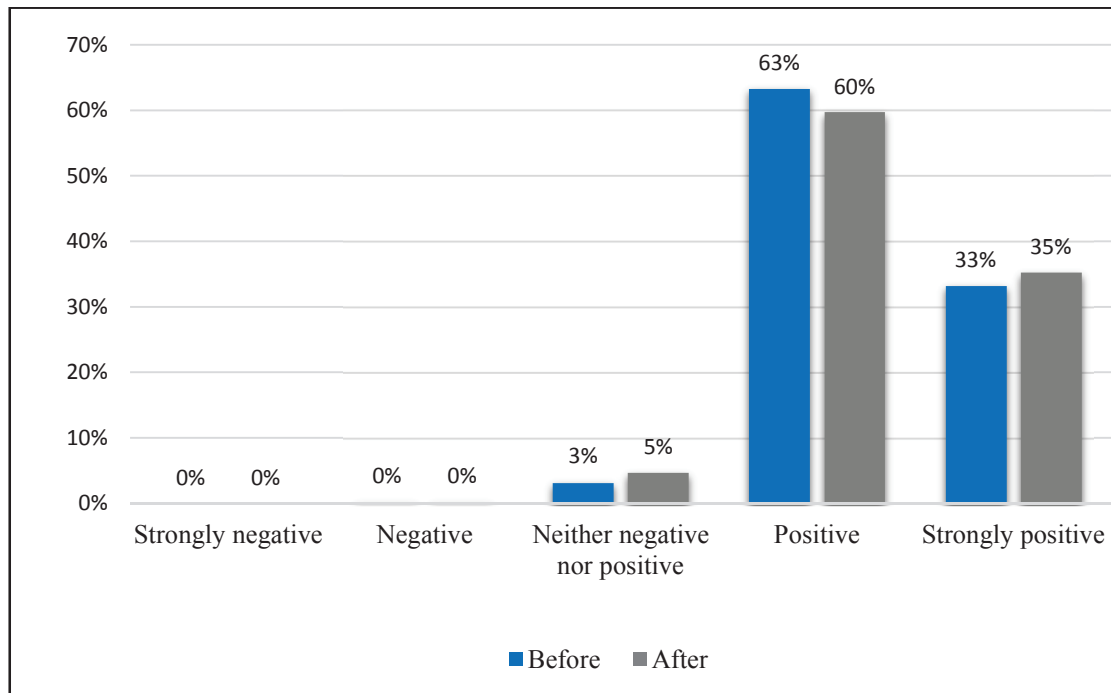
These results suggest, according to several authors' opinion (Chon, 1991; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Fakeye & Crompton, 1991), that the actual experience at the TD alters tourists' initial TDI. Another aspect to be considered is the period the surveys were applied, i.e. at the end of the peak season. These results imply there is a lack of dynamism by the offer side and the TD stakeholders in engaging tourists during their experience at the Algarve. This is contrary to what tourists' primarily seek according to the literature review, which is engaging experiences (Oh, Fiore & Jeoung, 2007). For other attributes such as, value for money, access, nightlife, shopping opportunities there was almost no difference between the before and after the TE.

8.2.3 Global component of TDI

The TD global image was evaluated through a 5-point Likert-scale. Figure 8.9 shows the respondents' perception about the Algarve's Global image as mainly **positive** in S1 (63%)

and S2 (60%). However, for some respondents (33% in S1 and 35% in S2), their global TDI is **strongly positive**. Very few had no opinion (3%, 5%) and even less had a negative (0,2% in S1, S2) overall image.

Figure 8.9 – Algarve’s Global Image



Source: Author from Excel software

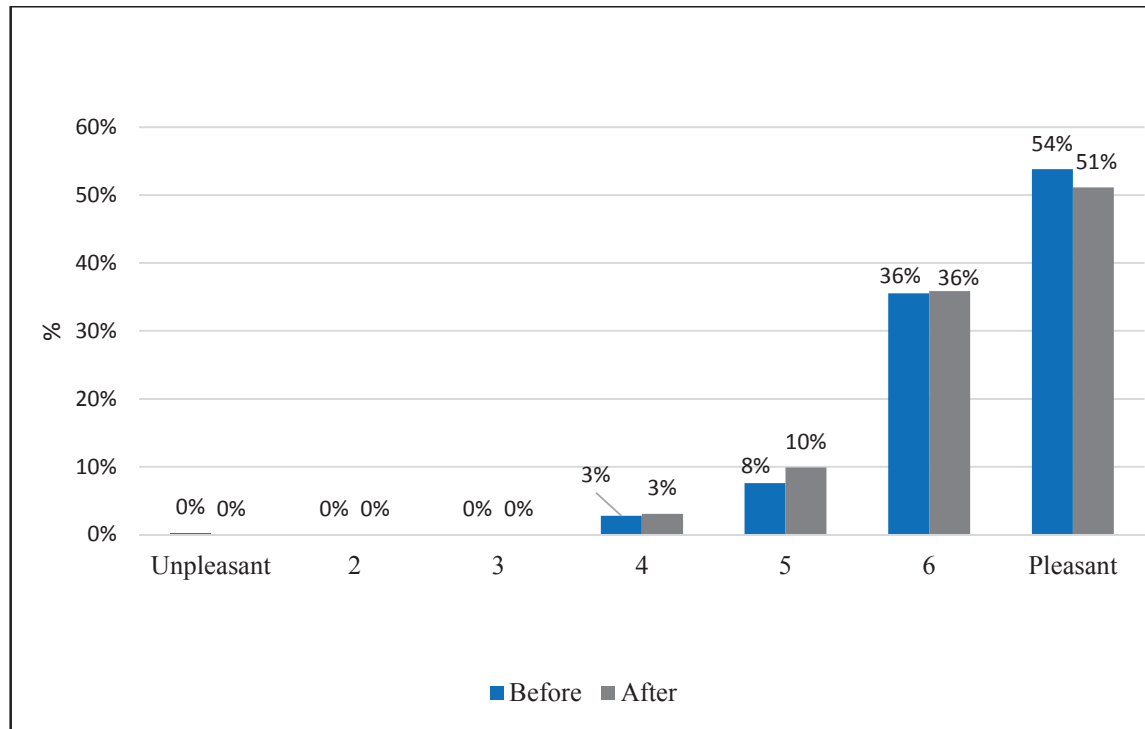
In general, tourists’ global image is positive or strongly positive (for at least 95%). This is extremely important, because tourists make decisions based on the “benefit package” (Ahmed *et al.*, 2006; Alhemoud & Armstrong, 1996; Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Beerli & Martín, 2004; Alcañiz *et al.*, 2009; Chen, 2001; Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Govers & Go, 2005; Hong, Kim, Jang, & Lee, 2006; Schneider & Sonmez, 1999).

8.2.4 Affective component of TDI

The affective TDI of the Algarve was assessed using a semantic scale “Unpleasant to Pleasant” (figure 8.10). For most respondents the Algarve is consider to be pleasant (54%

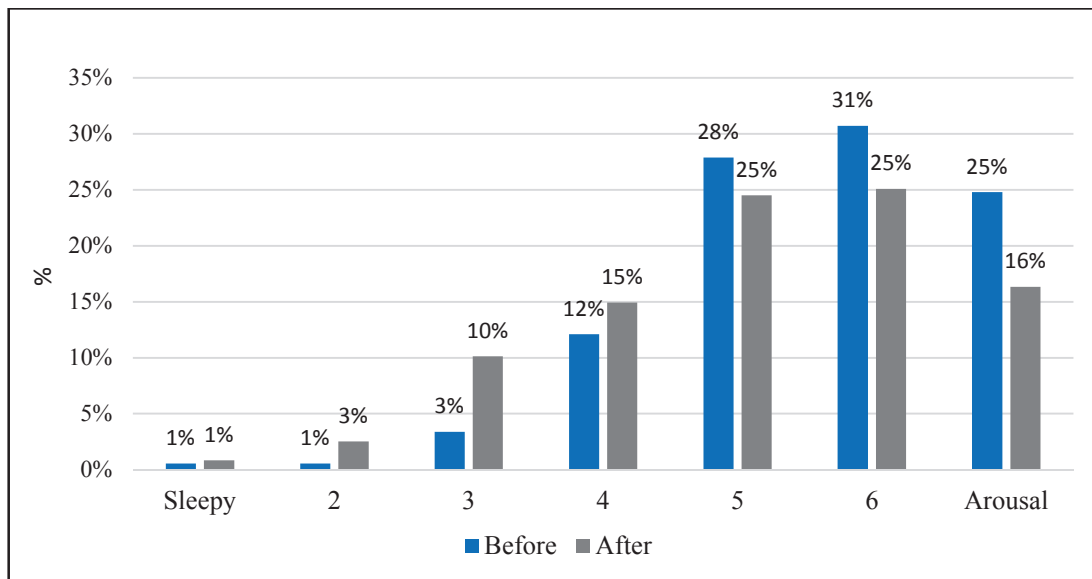
in S1 “Before”, and 51% in S2 “After”), although a lower level of agreement was seen with point 7 in the S2 (respondents were 3% p.p. lower in S2). In both surveys, points 6 and 7, represent more than 87% of the respondents agreement that the Algarve is pleasant.

Figure 8.10 – Algarve’s Perception Unpleasant to Pleasant



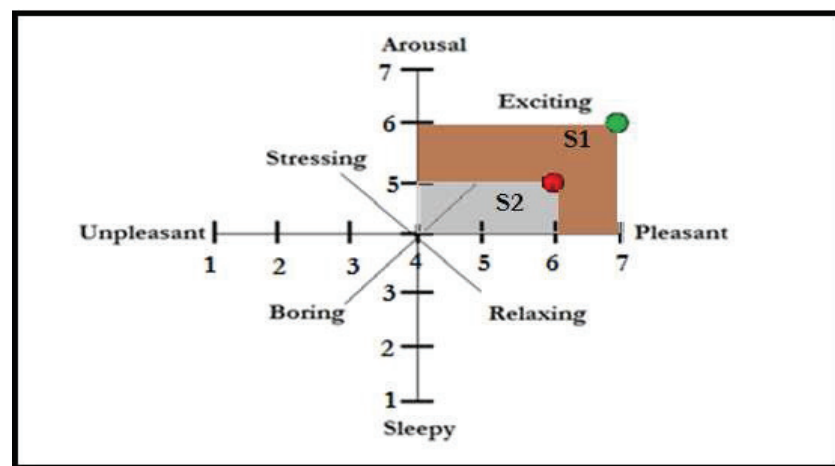
Source: Author from Excel software

Regarding the second semantic scale “sleepy to arousal” as figure 8.11 shows, most respondents considered the Algarve to aroused their feelings towards the TD although at a lower level, since 50% or more of the respondents, in S1 and S2, place the Algarve in point 5 and 6. For some respondents the TD can also be considered a sleepy destination (in point 2 with 3%, and in point 3 with 10%), especially after the TE this perception is more evident.

Figure 8.11 – Algarve’s Perception Sleepy vs Arousal

Source: Author from Excel software

Regarding the median, in S1, the scale “unpleasant to pleasant” was positioned in point 7 and the scale “Sleepy to Arousal” was placed in point 6. In S2, some changes occurred between both samples, with the scale “unpleasant to pleasant” being in position 6, and the “Sleepy to Arousal” scale been found to have a median of 5. But, despite of this reduction, the general affective TDI of the Algarve is situated in the dynamic/exciting/pleasant position (figure 8.12).

Figure 8.12 – Bidimensional Representation of Algarve’s Affective Image

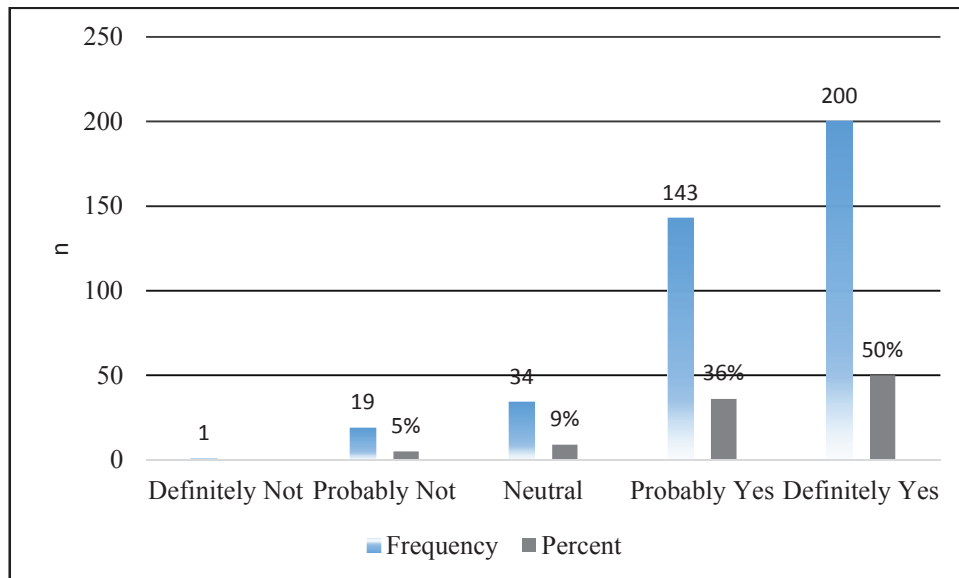
Source: Author

Furthermore, regarding the tourists feelings towards the TD, again the majority (at least 85%) considered it to be very pleasant. However, considering the perception about the dynamic nature of the TD, the image is not so strong, with the majority (50%), positioning it at 5 or 6 in the semantic scale, which means that despite being consider a pleasant TD, the Algarve is still not very exciting for respondents. For some, the Algarve is even rated more negatively after the TE. This reflects a gap in the TD offering in establishing a relation or an affective bond with tourists, which is an important dimension that should not be neglected (Gartner, 1993; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Han & Patterson, 2007).

8.2.5 Conative component of TDI

In the S2, respondents were asked about their future behavioral intentions (seen in figure 8.13). The majority of the respondents (50%), mentioned they would definitely return in the near future to the Algarve, while 36% where not so certain of returning.

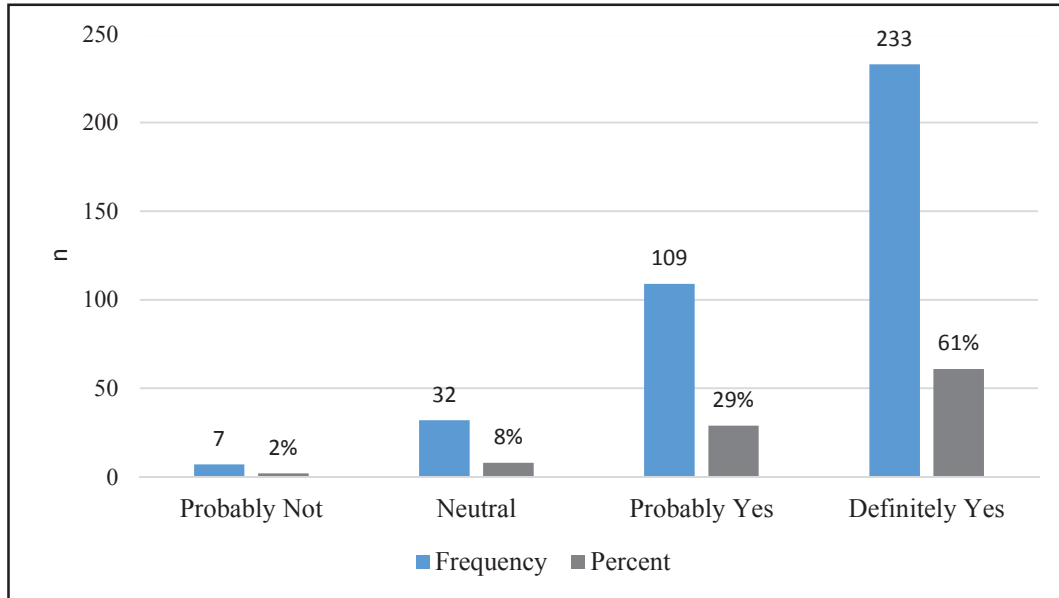
Figure 8.13 – Return Intention



Source: Author from Excel software

The same positive feedback can be seen in figure 8.14, regarding tourists' intention to recommend the TD in the future, with 61% stating “definitely yes”, and 29% sustaining “probably yes”.

Figure 8.14 – Recommendation Intention



Source: Author from Excel software

Others respondents, 8%, had no opinion (“neutral”), and only 2% showed no interest in recommending the Algarve to other people. However, their return intention was significantly high, with 85% of the tourists stating they would probably or definitely come back and recommend it.

Overall, tourists' general evaluation of their experience at the TD was very positive. Still, the long TD familiarity and low risk associated (Fakeye & Crompton, 1992) and the general satisfaction (Woodside & Lysonski, 1989; Laws, 1995) coming from previous visits to the Algarve, may explain the strong returning intention and recommendation. This component is imperative for tourists' future buying behavior (Bigné *et al.*, 2001, 2009; Bosque & Martín, 2008; Chi & Qu, 2008; Pike & Ryan, 2004).

8.2.6 The four dimensions of the TE

In the following subchapters, with the exception of point 8.2.8 (previous experience), all data was collected from the application of Survey 2 (After the TE). Thus, in the tables 8.6 to 8.9, the respondents' agreement level about the dimensions of the TE at the Algarve are listed. The first dimension, Education (*learning something new*), has a low agreement level in the 6 items, with the highest rate being “The experience has made me more knowledgeable” (51,50%), and the lowest was “The experience really enhanced my skills” (23,5%). The internal consistency analysis by the Cronbach's Alpha was also verified, and the results show an excellent reliability (0,948).

Table 8.6 – Respondents Level of Agreement with the TE Educational Dimension

	1. Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neither Agree nor Disagree	4. Agree	5. Strongly Agree	Level of Agree- ment Sum
The experience has made me more knowledgeable	2,30%	7,30%	38,90%	43,90%	7,60%	51,50%
I learned a lot	3,00%	10,80%	45,80%	35,00%	5,30%	40,30%
It stimulated my curiosity to learn new things	2,80%	9,60%	48,00%	33,80%	5,80%	39,60%
It was a real learning experience	3,80%	12,90%	52,40%	25,30%	5,60%	30,89%
The experience was highly educational to me	4,00%	17,60%	53,90%	20,70%	3,80%	24,50%
The experience really enhanced my skills	4,80%	17,40%	54,30%	18,70%	4,80%	23,50%

Source: Author from SPSS software

In the second dimension (table 8.7), Aesthetic (*Indulged in Environments*), the best TE for respondents was, “Just being here was very pleasant” (87,30%), regarding how pleasant they felt just being at the destination, and “The setting was very attractive” (77,30%) which evaluated the setting's attractiveness. On the opposite position, “The setting was pretty bland” (18%) had a low agreement level because the majority of the

respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement about the setting being bland. Regarding the reliability analysis of the second dimension, its value is lower 0,680 than the first dimension, but still within the acceptable.

Table 8.7 – Respondents Level of Agreement with the TE Aesthetic Dimension

	1. Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neither Agree nor Disagree	4. Agree	5. Strongly Agree	Level of Agreement Sum
Just being here was very pleasant	1,30%	2,00%	9,50%	61,50%	25,80%	87,30%
The setting was very attractive	1,50%	3,30%	17,80%	58,00%	19,30%	77,30%
I felt a real sense of harmony	0,30%	4,00%	32,80%	50,30%	12,60%	62,90%
The setting provided pleasure to my senses	1,50%	6,00%	30,60%	47,90%	14,00%	61,90%
The setting really showed attention to design detail	2,30%	9,80%	43,60%	36,50%	7,80%	44,30%
The setting was pretty bland	11,70%	44,20%	26,10%	15,50%	2,50%	18,00%

Source: Author from SPSS software

The third dimension, Entertainment (*Being Entertained*), generated mix feelings among the respondents, since the agreement level in all the items was approximately 50%, except for “Activities of others were amusing to watch” (53%) which revealed a higher level of agreement, while “What others did was boring to watch” presented the lowest of all items (12,80%). The same internal consistency analysis was performed for the third dimension, with its value being good (0,806).

Table 8.8 – Respondents Level of Agreement with the TE Entertainment Dimension

	1. Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neither Agree nor Disagree	4. Agree	5. Strongly Agree	Level of Agreement Sum
Activities of others were amusing to watch	0,80%	3,80%	41,60%	42,10%	11,70%	53,80%
I really enjoyed watching what others were doing	0,80%	4,30%	44,90%	43,40%	6,60%	50,00%
Activities of others were fun to watch	0,80%	5,60%	44,30%	44,00%	5,30%	49,30%
Watching activities of others was very entertaining	1,30%	5,10%	45,70%	41,40%	6,60%	48,00%
Watching others perform was captivating	0,50%	5,30%	52,90%	36,70%	4,60%	41,30%
What others did was boring to watch	8,40%	28,60%	50,30%	9,20%	3,60%	12,80%

Source: Author from SPSS software

The fourth dimension, Escapism (*Diverging to a new self*), was not regarded very positively by the respondents, for the reason that only the item “I totally forgot about my daily routine” (67,60%) had a strong positive rating. The remaining items, “I felt I was in a different world” (41,80%), “I felt like I was living in a different time or place” (38,60%), “I completely escaped from reality” (38,10%), “The experience here let me imagine being someone else” (24,30%), and “I played a different character here” (23,40%), did not generate a high level of agreement among respondents. Still, the result of internal consistency reliability was excellent (0,906).

Table 8.9 – Respondents Level of Agreement with the TE Escapist Dimension

	1. Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neither Agree nor Disagree	4. Agree	5. Strongly Agree	Level of Agreement Sum
I totally forgot about my daily routine	5,00%	8,30%	19,00%	51,60%	16,00%	67,60%
I felt I was in a different world	6,50%	14,30%	37,40%	31,70%	10,10%	41,80%
I felt like I was living in a different time or place	6,50%	17,30%	37,60%	32,60%	6,00%	38,60%
I completely escaped from reality	8,00%	16,60%	37,20%	29,10%	9,00%	38,10%
The experience here let me imagine being someone else	9,40%	23,90%	42,40%	18,50%	5,80%	24,30%
I felt I played a different character here	9,80%	24,10%	42,70%	19,10%	4,30%	23,40%

Source: Author from SPSS software

As illustrated in figure 8.15, the tourists' perception about their experience at the TD was in general very low, because most respondents did not consider their TEs to be educational, nor very knowledgeable. The tourists' low level of agreement about their educational experiences shows that the region has missed the opportunity to cause an impact and in providing a learning experience.

However, because the Algarve is a TD associated with sun and beach, these results are not too surprising. Although, the rich cultural background of the TD could be an important opportunity to enhance this dimension of the TE, regardless of the tourists' main motivation being something other than these specific experiences (Oh, Fiore & Jeoung, 2007).

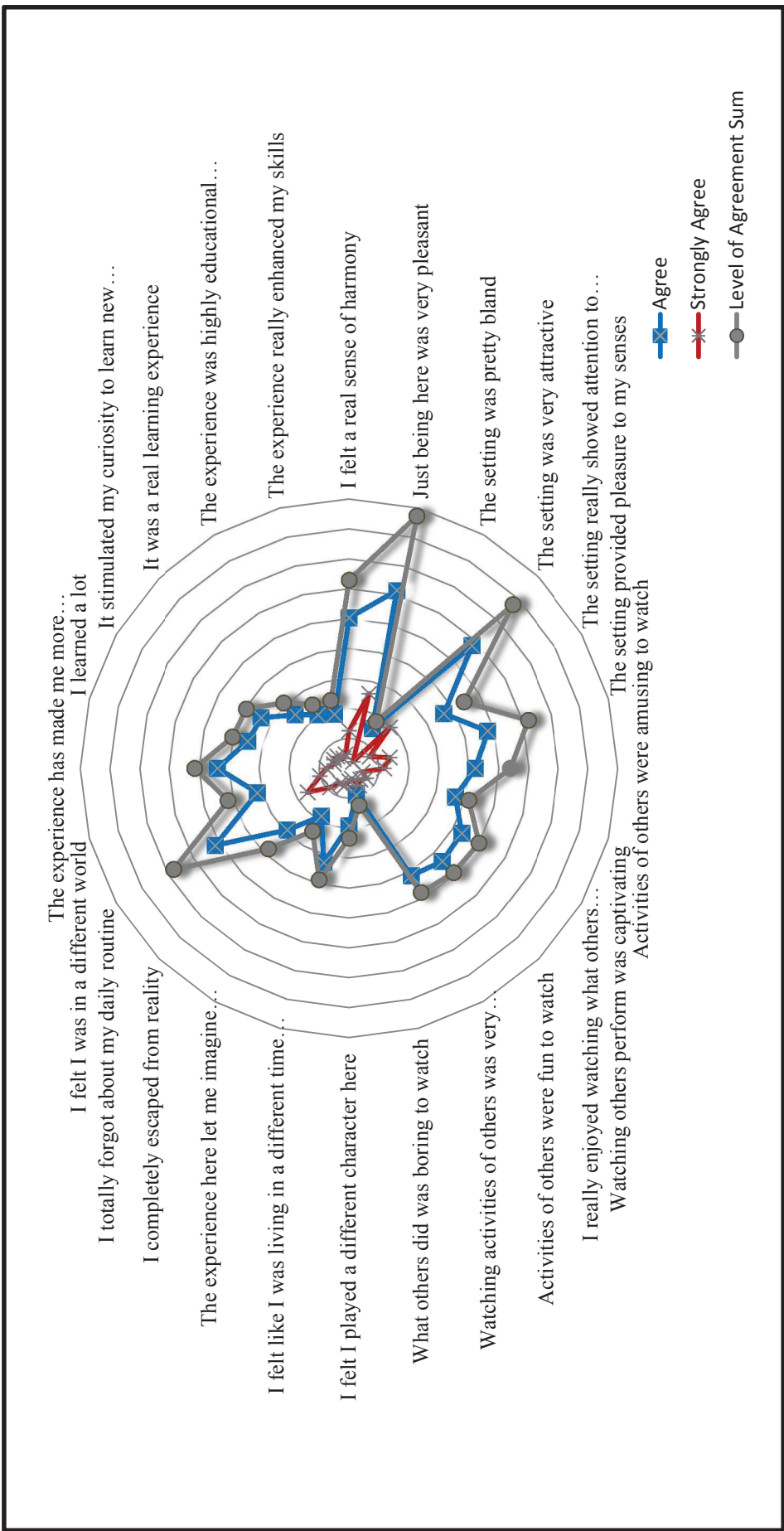
In the Aesthetics experiences, tourists' viewed their surrounding environment as pleasant and attractive, and despite some involvement and sense of harmony, these events were however, experienced more passively. This is congruent with several authors' (Oh *et al.*,

2007; Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Hosany & Witham, 2009; Kolar & Zabkar, 2007; Manhas & Ramjit, 2013; Volo, 2009) regarding tourists' enjoying the TD experience without being affected by it.

In general regarding the other dimensions, Entertainment was also not the most positive experience, since only half of the respondents felt entertained during their holidays. This deficit by the supply side leaves room for much improvement, since the TDs and their TEs are not defined based on geography, but instead on what the destination evokes and “proposes” to the tourist (Alcañiz *et al.*, 2009).

The fourth dimension, Escapist, was not considered to be relevant by the respondents, except for the item “I totally forgot about my daily routine”, which collected the most consensus among respondents. According to Pine & Gilmore's (1998) four ‘realms’ of the TEs, the study's findings reveal a regional tourism product reflecting mainly a TD of passive involvement and of absorption by its visitors. The findings are also consistent with Oh *et al.* (2007) and Manhas & Ramjit's (2013) that the 4Es were not of equal importance to tourists' evaluations.

Figure 8.15 - Level of Agreement with TE at the Algarve

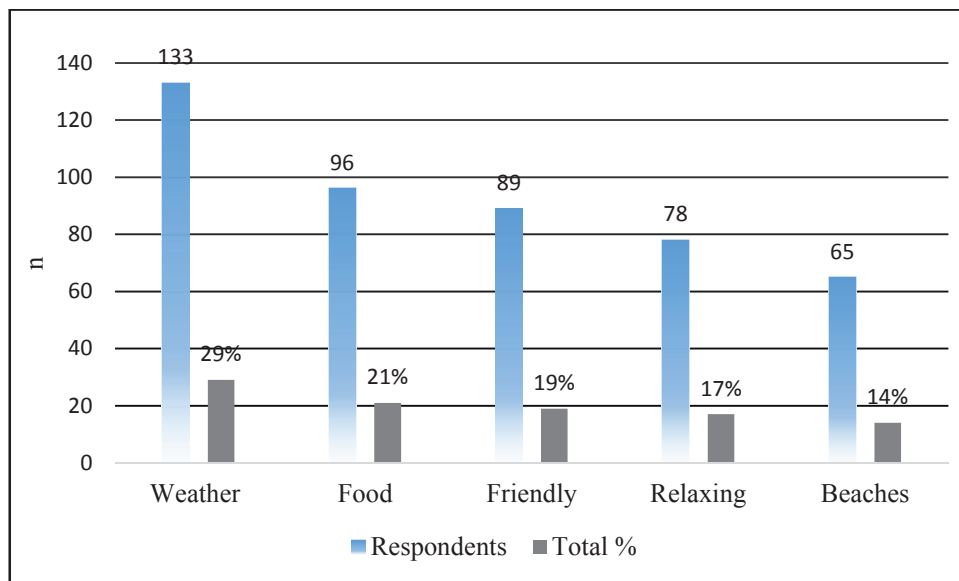


Source: Author from Excel software

8.2.7 Core experiences

In the third part of the questionnaire, the core TEs were assessed about the three most positive and negative TEs at the Algarve. The data generated from open-ended questions were analyzed according to the number of citations, and only those experiences mentioned by at least 5% of the respondents were considered in the analysis (Reilly, 1990). Thus, when asked about which were the three most positive experiences in the Algarve (figure 8.16), most respondents mentioned, the weather (133 times), followed by food (cited 96 times), friendliness of the local people (89 times), relaxing atmosphere (cited 78 times), and lastly, the beaches visited (65 times).

Figure 8.16 - Most Positive TEs at the Algarve

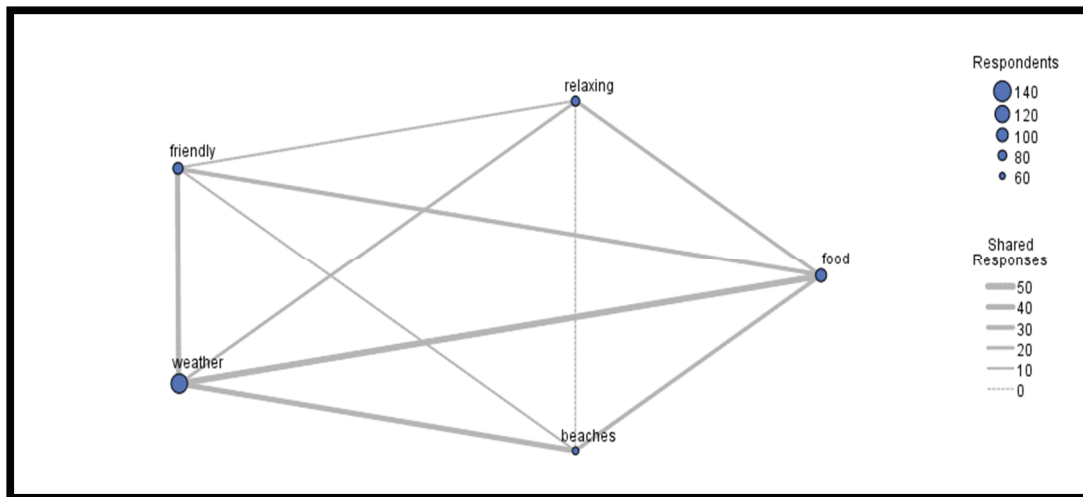


Source: Author from Excel software

As can be seen also in figure 8.17, the strongest relationship between respondents' shared citations was centered on the Algarve's weather, i.e., weather and food (48 shared references), weather and friendliness (42 references), weather and beaches (39 references). The second strongest relationship, was food - with friendly (28 responses), beaches (27 responses) and relaxing (21 responses). The remaining links were established between weather and relaxing (18 responses), friendly and relaxing (10

responses), friendly and beaches (10 responses). Lastly, the respondents' weakest shared citation was relaxing and beaches (3 responses).

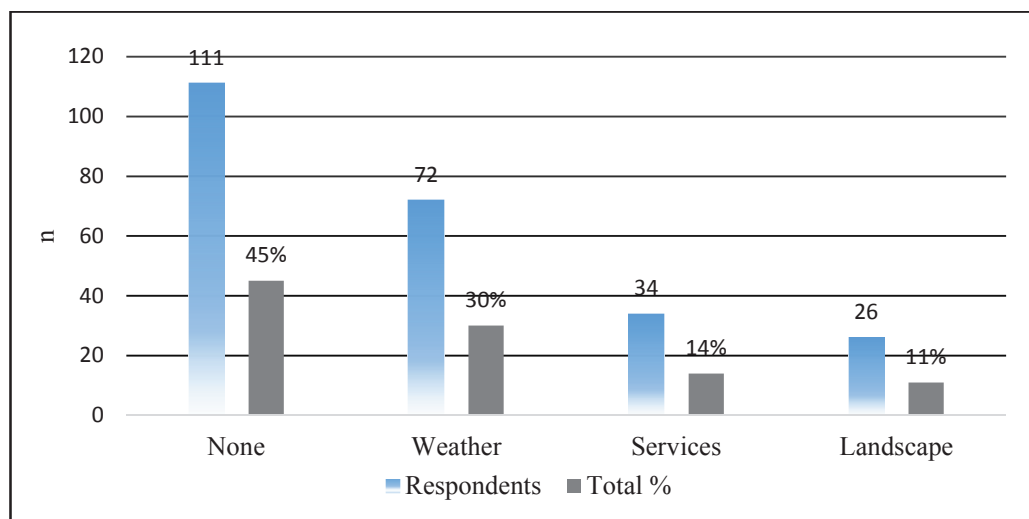
Figure 8.17 – Shared Responses of the Most Positive TEs



Source: Author from SPSS-TAS output

On the other hand, regarding the three most negative experiences in the Algarve (seen on figure 8.18), respondents considered not to have any (111 references), others mentioned the cloudy or rainy weather (72 references), bad services provided (34 references) and damaged landscape (26 references).

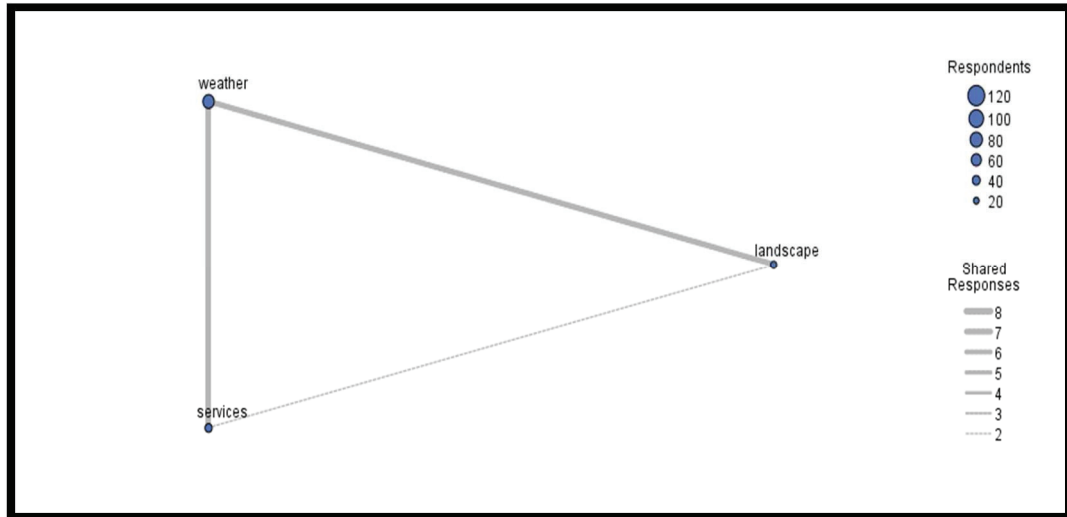
Figure 8.18 - Most Negative TEs at the Algarve



Source: Author from Excel software

The lack of more negative citations in figure 8.19, meant that only a few fragile shared responses could be found, i.e., bad weather - services provided (8 responses), damaged landscape (7 responses), and also, services and landscape (2 responses).

Figure 8.19 – Shared Responses of the Most Negative TEs



Source: Author from SPSS-TAS output

The open-ended questions were also analyzed using the software wordstat, for the respondents' main perceptions about Algarve's (positive and negative) TEs to be found. In figure 8.20, the most important words, respondents' used to reflect their most positive TEs at the TD can be identified: *weather, food, relaxing, people, friendly, beach, beaches, good, sun, sunshine, relaxation, sea, hotel*. To a certain degree, these findings are consistent with those of the exploratory study, reinforcing the TDI of the Algarve as a TD of sun, but they also revealed the Algarve to be more than sun, that the local gastronomy was valued, as well as being considered a friendly and relaxing atmosphere.

These findings are important, because as Csikszentmihalyi (1990), Mossberg (2008), Pine & Gilmore (1999), and Wang (2002) argue, the most intense and most relevant experiences that have engaged tourists' minds, reinforce the TDI.

Figure 8.20 – Most Positive TEs Words



Source: Author using online service Wordle

Regarding the negative holiday TEs at the Algarve (figure 8.21), the majority of the respondents' mentioned *none*, i.e., no negative experience was felt. Among those who experienced some negative TEs, the most prominent were *weather*, *rain*, *food*, *roads*, *service*, *poor*, *dogs*, *airport*, *hire*.

Figure 8.21 - Most Negative TEs Words



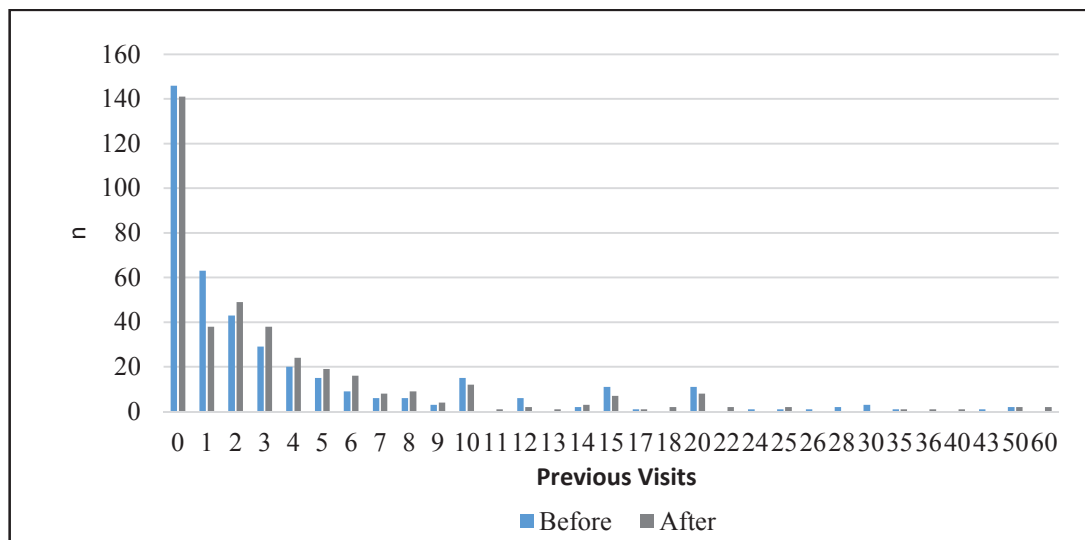
Source: Author using online service Wordle

the previous authors' perspective that tourists' seek to be engaged and to be absorbed in hedonic and emotional experiences (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Holbrook 2000; Pine & Gilmore, 1998, 1999).

8.2.8 Previous experience and satisfaction

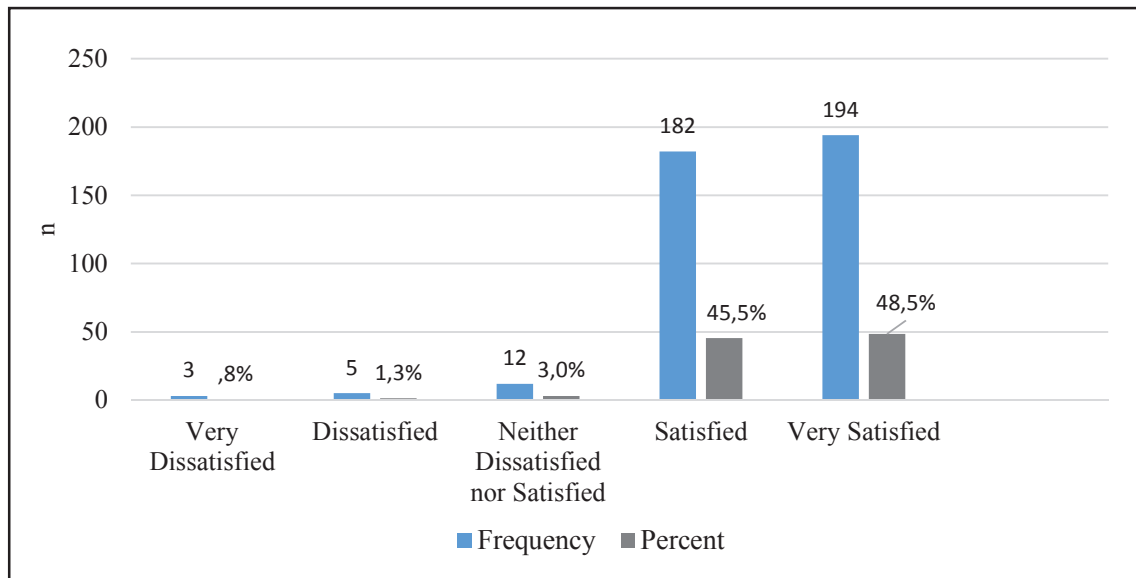
Another question made to respondents was about “how many times have you visited the Algarve?”. In general, as figure 8.23 shows, 35% of the respondents had no previous experience with the regions, and those who had visited the TD before, between one and five times, represent 50% of the respondents in both surveys.

Figure 8.23 – Respondents Previous Experience



Source: Author from Excel software

The other question in part IV of the questionnaire, was to assess the respondents' satisfaction with their holiday experiences before the return home. Again, respondents showed (see figure 8.24) a very high level of satisfaction, since 94% were satisfied or very satisfied.

Figure 8.24 – Tourists’ Satisfaction

Source: Author from Excel software

Regarding tourists' previous experience, it was found that the majority were visiting the Algarve for the first time, and even among those that had some experience and knowledge about the TD it was not very pronounced. In general, tourists were either satisfied or extremely satisfied about their TE at the region, which according to several authors (Alegre & Garau, 2010; Gunn, 1988) is the most important function of any TD.

In sum, for the majority of the tourists in the exploratory study and in the final surveys, the Algarve's TDI is associated with "sun and beach", despite also expressing that the Algarve is a place where good accommodation, good gastronomy, and good landscape can be found. Regarding the tourists' holistic perception about the destination, the residents continue to be seen as hospitable and friendly, in an atmosphere in which tourists feel relaxed and calm.

Thus, this study like others before showed the TDI to be formed by rational and emotional interpretations (Oh, Fiore & Jeoung, 2007; Septchenkova & Mills, 2010). These interpretations come from different sources (expressed or implied) during the TE, which is a complex interaction process, between the tourist and the service provider (Addis & Holbrook, 2001; LaSalle & Britton, 2003; Carú & Cova, 2007), causing tourists to react, act and feel differently during the events or experiences (Otto & Ritchie, 1996).

8.3 Path-modeling estimation and analysis

The proposed conceptual model is composed of seven latent endogenous variables, one exogenous variable and forty-eight reflective indicators. The latent variables and the corresponding indicators can be seen in table 8.10.

Table 8.10 - Manifest and Latent Variables of Algarve's TEs and TDI

Source: Author

Indicators (manifest variables)	Latent Variables
Edu_Curiosity	Education (Exogenous Variable)
Edu_Educational	
Edu_Learned_A_lot	
Edu_LearningExperience	
Edu_Skills	
Edu_knowledge	
Aes_Attractive	Aesthetics (Endogenous Variable)
Aes_Detail	
Aes_Harmony	
Aes_Pleasant	
Aes_Senses	
Aes_Bland	
Ent_Amusingwatch	Entertainment (Endogenous Variable)
Ent_Captivating	
Ent_Entertaining	
Ent_FuntoWatch	
Ent_others_doing	
Ent_Boring	
Esc_Character	Escapism (Endogenous Variable)
Esc_Different_time	
Esc_Someone_else	
Esc_different_world	
Esc_reality	
Esc_routine	
TDI_weather	TDI Cognitive (Endogenous Variable)
TDI_beach	
TDI_Cultural_atr	
TDI_FriendlyResidents	
TDI_G_access	
TDI_Good_WaterParks	
TDI_Good_attractions	

TDI_Happy_destination	TDI Cognitive (Endogenous Variable)
TDI_Relaxing	
TDI_Safe	
TDI_Shopp_oport	
TDI_Sporting_facilities	
TDI_VFMoney	
TDI_clean_TD	
TDI_entertainment	
TDI_gastronomy	
TDI_landscape	
TDI_nightlife	
TDI_accomodation	
AlgarvePerceptionArousal	TDI Affective (Endogenous Variable)
AlgarvePerceptionPleasant	
Recommend	TDI Conative (Endogenous Variable)
Return_Intention	
Overall_Image	Global TDI (Endogenous Variable)

The inner model specifies the conceptual model, and its latent variables paths. The four latent variables TE_Education, TE_Entertainment, TE_Escapism, TE_Aesthetics influence the endogenous latent variables TDI_Cognitive, TDI_Affective and TDI_Conative. The TDI_Cognitive influences the TDI_Affective and this variable influences the TDI_Conative. Lastly, these three TDI variables influence the TDI_Global Image.

The eight variables considered for the conceptual model, their paths arrows and observed indicators are shown in appendix 5. These indicators at this early stage, are all the TEs questions of Survey 2, before the path modeling procedure has been carried out and the output assessed. No previous confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) was used prior to the model evaluation, since “...the parameter estimates depend on the specific set-up of the analyzed model, it is more appropriate to evaluate these measures via PLS-SEM statistics” (Ringle *et al.*, 2012:10).

8.3.1. Outer model assessment

The evaluation of the outer model should examine the reliability (individual and composite) and validity (convergent and discriminant) of the latent variables.

Reliability

The first step, individual reliability, is to verify the individual loadings of all of the indicators. However, some indicators had to be removed after the extraction process, because they had factor loadings below the acceptable (0.5), Aes_Bland, Ent_Boring, TDI_G_access, TDI_Accomodation, TDI_Beach, TDI_Good_WaterParks, TDI_Shopp_opport, TDI_Sporting_facilities, TDI_VFMoney, TDI_Weather, TDI_entertainment, TDI_gastronomy, TDI_landscape, TDI_nightlife. Table 8.11 shows the indicators that surpassed this threshold value and that were eliminated (in bold).

Table 8.11 - Internal Consistency Reliability – Indicators Individual Loadings

Latent Variable	Indicators	Loadings
Education	Edu_Curiosity	0,883
	Edu_Educational	0,894
	Edu_Learned_A_lot	0,908
	Edu_LearningExperience	0,927
	Edu_Skills	0,871
	Edu_knowledge	0,831
Aesthetics	Aes_Attractive	0,534
	Aes_Bland	0,199
	Aes_Details	0,774
	Aes_Harmony	0,791
	Aes_Pleasant	0,730
	Aes_SensAes	0,841
Entertainment	Ent_Amusingwatch	0,812
	Ent_Boring	0,109
	Ent_Captivating	0,890
	Ent_Entertaining	0,902
	Ent_FuntoWatch	0,902
	Ent_others_doing	0,905
	Esc_Character	0,746
	Esc_Different_time	0,794

Escapism	Esc_Someone_else	0,783
	Esc_different_world	0,845
	Esc_reality	0,863
	Esc_routine	0,736
TDI Cognitive	TDI_Cultural_attr	0,628
	TDI_FriendlyResidents	0,727
	TDI_G_access	0,427
	TDI_Good_attractions	0,737
	TDI_Accomodation	0,245
	TDI_Beach	0,376
	TDI_Good_WaterParks	0,432
	TDI_Happy_destination	0,774
	TDI_Relaxing	0,734
	TDI_Safe	0,741
	TDI_Shopp_opport	0,494
	TDI_Sporting_facilities	0,454
	TDI_VFMoney	0,415
	TDI_Weather	0,346
	TDI_clean_TD	0,741
	TDI_entertainment	0,415
	TDI_gastronomy	0,434
	TDI_landscape	0,428
	TDI_nightlife	0,458
TDI Affective	Arousal	0,729
	Pleasant	0,871
TDI Conative	Recommend	0,924
	Return_Intention	0,919
TDI Global	Overall_Image	1,000

Source: Author from SmartPLS software

According to the table 8.12 and figure 8.25, after the re-estimation of the conceptual model, the majority of the indicators present high factor loadings reaching 0,7 level or higher, except for Aes_attractive (0,534), TDI_Cultura_attr (0,627), but still above the minimum acceptable level of 0,5. In this way only the indicators with acceptable loadings were consider in the next step of the path analysis.

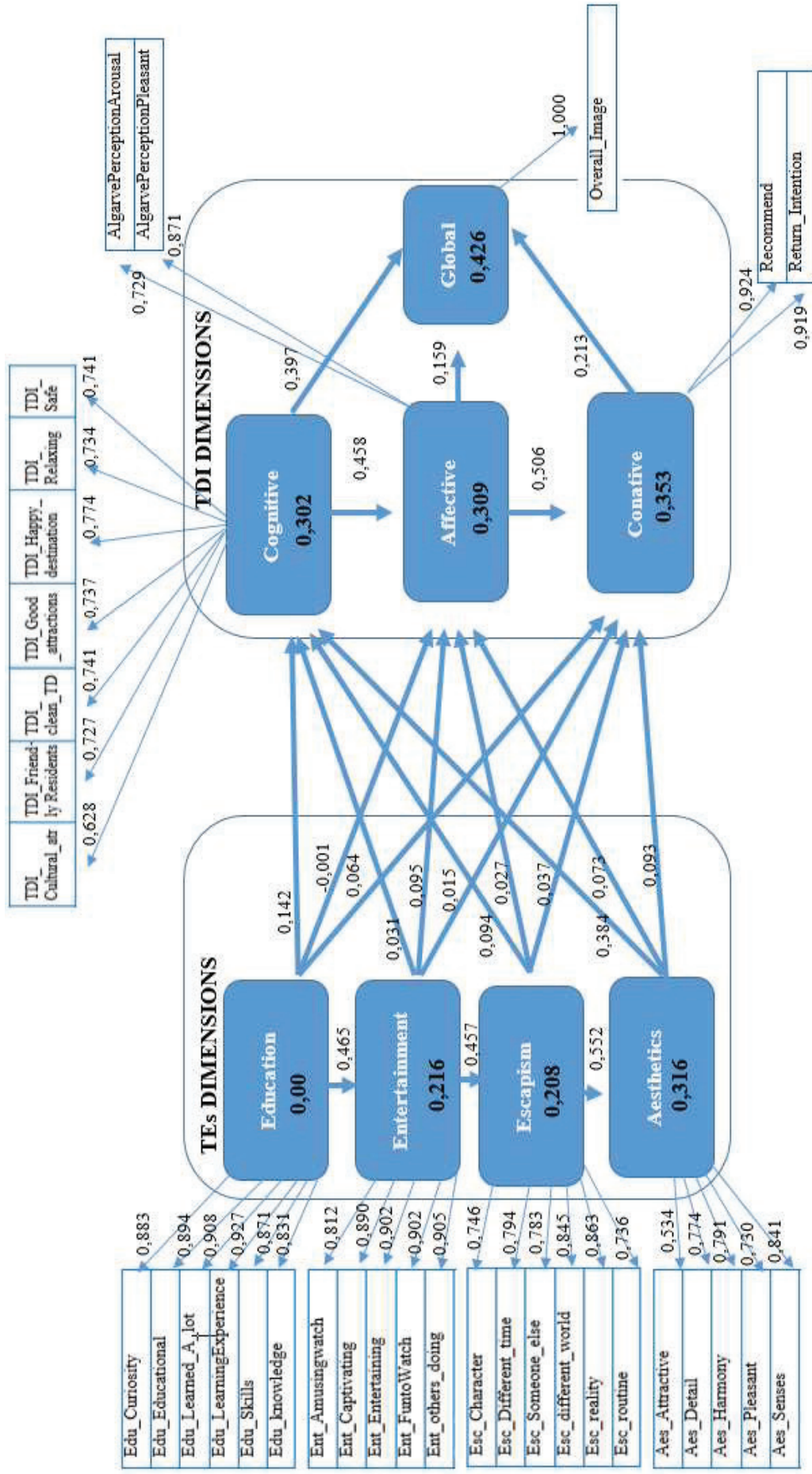
Table 8.12 - Internal Consistency Reliability – Acceptable Loadings

Latent Variable	Indicators	Loadings
Education	Edu_Curiosity	0,883
	Edu_Educational	0,894
	Edu_Learned_A_lot	0,908
	Edu_LearningExperience	0,927
	Edu_Skills	0,871
	Edu_knowledge	0,831
Aesthetics	Aes_Attractive	0,534
	Aes_Details	0,774
	Aes_Harmony	0,791
	Aes_Pleasant	0,730
	Aes_SensAes	0,841
Entertainment	Ent_Amusingwatch	0,812
	Ent_Captivating	0,890
	Ent_Entertaining	0,902
	Ent_FuntoWatch	0,902
	Ent_others_doing	0,905
Escapism	Esc_Character	0,746
	Esc_Different_time	0,794
	Esc_Someone_else	0,783
	Esc_different_world	0,845
	Esc_reality	0,863
	Esc_routine	0,736
TDI Cognitive	TDI_Cultural_attr	0,628
	TDI_FriendlyResidents	0,727
	TDI_Good_attractions	0,737
	TDI_Happy_destination	0,774
	TDI_Relaxing	0,734
	TDI_Safe	0,741
	TDI_clean_TD	0,741
TDI Affective	Arousal	0,729
	Pleasant	0,871
TDI Conative	Recommend	0,924
	Return_Intention	0,919
TDI Global	Overall_Image	1,000

Source: Author from SmartPLS software

Next, the indicators loadings presented in figure 8.25, present in general high values reaching 0,7 level or higher.

Figure 8.25 - Conceptual Model Loadings and Path Coefficients



Source: Author from SmartPLS software

The following step, consisted in analyzing the Composite Reliability to verify if the observed variables represent satisfactorily the latent variables being measured. Following the literature review, the Composite Reliability “will be used as replacement of Cronbach’s alpha” (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Hair *et al.*, 2012). As shown in table 8.13, all of the latent variables values are higher than 0.7, so high levels of composite reliability have been demonstrated among all reflective latent variables.

Table 8.13 – Composite Reliability

	Composite Reliability
TDI_Affective	0,78
TDI_Cognitive	0,89
TDI_Conative	0,92
TDI_Global	1,00
TE_Education	0,96
TE_Entertainment	0,95
TE_Escapism	0,91
TE_Aesthetics	0,86

Source: Author from SmartPLS software

Convergent and Discriminant Validity

Next, the convergent validity was assessed by observing each latent variable’s Average Variance Extracted (AVE). As table 8.14 shows, all of the AVE values are greater than 0.5 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Hair *et al.*, 2012; Wong, 2013) so convergent validity is confirmed.

Table 8.14 – Latent Variable’s Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Latent Variables	AVE
TDI_Affective	0,6456
TDI_Cognitive	0,5288
TDI_Conative	0,8493
TDI_Global	1
TE_Education	0,7854
TE_Entertainment	0,7794
TE_Escapism	0,5836
TE_Aesthetics	0,6161

Source: Author from SmartPLS software

Again, in table 8.15, all the indicators show a significant correlation with their respective latent variable (with a *T* (bootstrap) value superior to 1.645).

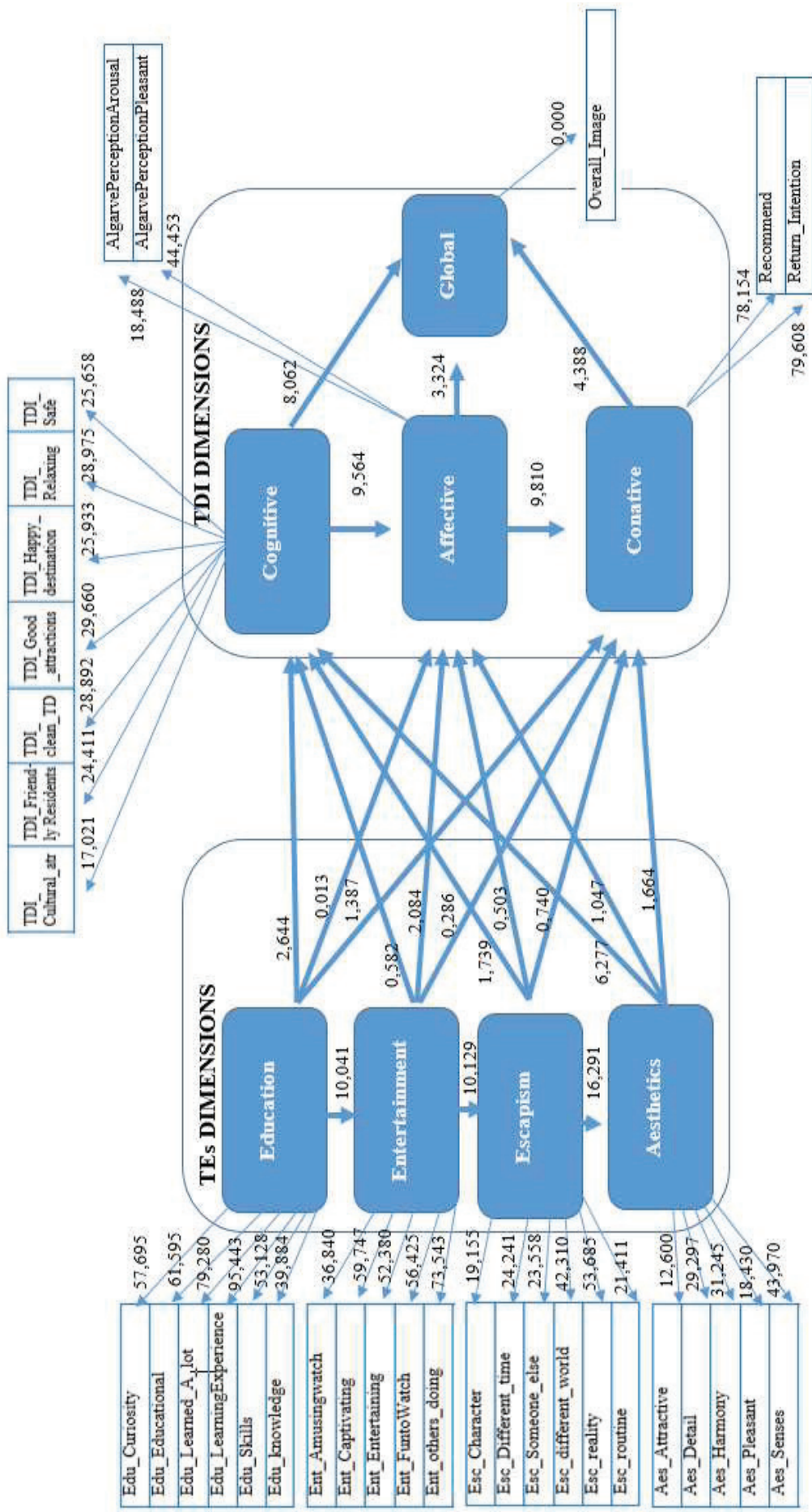
Table 8.15 – Convergent Validity

Latent Variables	Indicator	<i>T</i> - Statistics
Education	Edu_Curiosity	57,70
	Edu_Educational	61,59
	Edu_Learned_A_lot	79,28
	Edu_LearningExperience	95,44
	Edu_Skills	53,13
	Edu_knowledge	39,88
Aesthetics	Aes_Attractive	12,60
	Aes_Details	29,30
	Aes_Harmony	31,24
	Aes_Pleasant	18,43
	Aes_Senses	43,97
Entertainment	Ent_Amusingwatch	36,84
	Ent_Captivating	59,75
	Ent_Entertaining	52,38
	Ent_FuntoWatch	56,43
	Ent_others_doing	73,54
Escapism	Esc_Character	19,15
	Esc_Different_time	24,24
	Esc_Someone_else	23,56
	Esc_different_world	42,31
	Esc_reality	53,68
	Esc_routine	21,41
TDI Cognitive	TDI_Cultural_attr	17,02
	TDI_FriendlyResidents	24,41
	TDI_Good_attractions	29,66
	TDI_Happy_destination	25,93
	TDI_Relaxing	28,98
	TDI_Safe	25,66
	TDI_clean_TD	28,89
TDI Affective	Arousal	18,49
	Pleasant	44,45
TDI Conative	Recommend	78,15
	Return_Intention	79,61
TDI Global	Overall_Image	0,00

Source: Author from SmartPLS software

Also, as presented in the figure 8.26, through visual representation of the conceptual model (inner and outer) *T*-statistics output, all the indicators are highly significant.

Figure 8.26 – Conceptual Model *T*-Statistics



Source: Author from SmartPLS software

For the discriminant validity, table 8.16 shows in bold on the diagonal, the comparison of the latent variable's square root value of AVE, with the correlation values among the latent variables to find and establish discriminant validity (Wong, 2013). The values in bold show that the square root of AVE, is higher than the correlations between the latent variables presented.

Table 8.16 - Discriminant Validity of the Latent Variables

	TDI_Affective	TDI_Cognitive	TDI_Conative	TDI_Global	TE_Education	TE_Entertainment	TE_Escapism	TE_Aesthetics
TDI_Affective	0,80							
TDI_Cognitive	0,537	0,73						
TDI_Conative	0,573	0,537	0,92					
TDI_Global	0,495	0,597	0,518	1				
TE_Education	0,268	0,385	0,269	0,247	0,89			
TE_Entertainment	0,292	0,326	0,254	0,244	0,465	0,88		
TE_Escapism	0,291	0,394	0,275	0,253	0,487	0,457	0,76	
TE_Aesthetics	0,372	0,52	0,34	0,337	0,475	0,483	0,562	0,78

Source: Author from SmartPLS software

According to Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics (2009:300), “Cross-loadings offer another check for discriminant validity. If an indicator has a higher correlation with another latent variable than with its respective latent variable, the appropriateness of the model should be reconsidered.” In table 8.17, all the values of the indicators are valid, since no indicator has a higher correlation value with another variable than with its own.

Table 8.17 – Cross Loadings

	TDI Affective	TDI Cognitive	TDI Conative	TDI Global	TE Education	TE Entertain- ment	TE Escapism	TE Aesthetics
Edu_Curiosity	0,232	0,323	0,226	0,2	0,883	0,417	0,439	0,453
Edu_Educational	0,258	0,354	0,227	0,208	0,894	0,399	0,442	0,42
Edu_Learned A lot	0,249	0,374	0,286	0,264	0,908	0,398	0,438	0,423
Edu_Learning Experience	0,211	0,321	0,208	0,22	0,927	0,452	0,446	0,429
Edu_Skills	0,219	0,306	0,192	0,183	0,871	0,412	0,429	0,393
Edu_knowledge	0,251	0,364	0,28	0,232	0,831	0,396	0,393	0,407
Ent_Amusing_watch	0,268	0,358	0,274	0,235	0,339	0,812	0,358	0,463
Ent_Captivating	0,246	0,301	0,186	0,199	0,451	0,890	0,405	0,397
Ent_Entertaining	0,251	0,238	0,195	0,19	0,396	0,902	0,408	0,437
Ent_Fun to Watch	0,244	0,27	0,231	0,219	0,427	0,902	0,43	0,42
Ent_others_doing	0,278	0,272	0,237	0,234	0,435	0,905	0,412	0,419
Aes_Attractive	0,309	0,372	0,294	0,337	0,293	0,351	0,534	0,645
Aes_Detail	0,299	0,404	0,255	0,279	0,438	0,393	0,47	0,774
Aes_Harmony	0,318	0,42	0,289	0,3	0,435	0,41	0,454	0,791
Aes_Pleasant	0,253	0,38	0,282	0,235	0,199	0,28	0,33	0,730
Aes_SensAes	0,294	0,427	0,245	0,243	0,396	0,422	0,495	0,841
Esc_Character	0,176	0,203	0,153	0,122	0,424	0,322	0,746	0,313
Esc_Different_time	0,161	0,249	0,153	0,121	0,357	0,295	0,794	0,338
Esc_Someone_else	0,116	0,181	0,124	0,069	0,436	0,353	0,783	0,311
Esc_different world	0,23	0,305	0,212	0,194	0,417	0,347	0,845	0,397
Esc_reality	0,229	0,319	0,196	0,167	0,393	0,406	0,863	0,424
Esc_routine	0,224	0,345	0,233	0,207	0,27	0,29	0,736	0,362
TDI_Cultural_attr	0,4	0,628	0,386	0,429	0,415	0,348	0,312	0,391
TDI_Friendly Residents	0,354	0,727	0,307	0,418	0,234	0,182	0,176	0,294
TDI_Good attractions	0,457	0,737	0,448	0,502	0,367	0,375	0,375	0,417
TDI_Happy destination	0,412	0,774	0,377	0,464	0,211	0,168	0,25	0,34
TDI_Relaxing	0,308	0,734	0,436	0,419	0,164	0,139	0,289	0,394
TDI_Safe	0,351	0,741	0,344	0,369	0,25	0,163	0,264	0,382
TDI_clean TD	0,418	0,741	0,41	0,41	0,274	0,228	0,301	0,406
Arousal	0,729	0,375	0,313	0,373	0,251	0,22	0,215	0,272
Pleasant	0,871	0,48	0,574	0,422	0,194	0,249	0,252	0,324
Recommend	0,541	0,517	0,924	0,479	0,257	0,259	0,269	0,311
Return_Intention	0,514	0,472	0,919	0,475	0,237	0,209	0,236	0,316
Overall_Image	0,495	0,597	0,518	1	0,247	0,244	0,253	0,337

Source: Author from SmartPLS software

8.3.2 Inner model assessment

In this stage, three steps must be performed for the analysis of the structural model: First, analysis of the path coefficients of the structural model; second, analysis of the coefficient

of determination (R^2) of the latent variables; third, analysis of the predictive relevance of the model.

Analysis of Path Coefficients of the Structural Model

In table 8.18, the “ T -Statistics” values of the path coefficients of the inner model are shown to verify if they are significant or not. Using a one tailed t -test with a significance level of 5%, the path coefficient will be significant if the T -statistics is higher than 1.645. As table 8.18 shows, seven linkages in grey (TE_Education -> TDI_Affective; TE_Education -> TDI_Conative; TE_Entertainment -> TDI_Cognitive; TE_Entertainment -> TDI_Conative; TE_Escapism -> TDI_Affective; TE_Escapism -> TDI_Conative; TE_Aesthetics -> TDI_Affective), are not significant since their T value is lower than 1.645. All the other path coefficients in the inner model are statistically significant.

Table 8.18 – Path Coefficients of the Structural Model

Hyp.	Dimensions	Sample	Mean	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	Standard Error (STERR)	T Statistics
H1a	TE_Education -> TDI_Cognitive	0,1424	0,1418	0,0539	0,0539	2,644
H1b	TE_Education -> TDI_Affective	-0,0006	0,001	0,0485	0,0485	0,013
H1c	TE_Education -> TDI_Conative	0,0637	0,0615	0,0459	0,0459	1,387
H1d	TE_Education -> TE_Entertainment	0,4652	0,4663	0,0463	0,0463	10,041
H2a	TE_Entertainment -> TDI_Cognitive	0,0309	0,0299	0,0531	0,0531	0,582
H2b	TE_Entertainment -> TDI_Affective	0,095	0,094	0,0456	0,0456	2,084
H2c	TE_Entertainment -> TDI_Conative	0,0153	0,0147	0,0536	0,0536	0,286
H2d	TE_Entertainment -> TE_Escapism	0,4566	0,4565	0,0451	0,0451	10,129
H3a	TE_Escapism -> TDI_Cognitive	0,0942	0,0966	0,0542	0,0542	1,739
H3b	TE_Escapism -> TDI_Affective	0,0267	0,0274	0,0532	0,0532	0,503
H3c	TE_Escapism -> TDI_Conative	0,0371	0,0377	0,0501	0,0501	0,740
H3d	TE_Escapism -> TE_Aesthetics	0,5618	0,5649	0,0345	0,0345	16,291
H4a	TE_Aesthetics -> TDI_Cognitive	0,3844	0,3862	0,0612	0,0612	6,277
H4b	TE_Aesthetics -> TDI_Affective	0,0734	0,0719	0,0701	0,0701	1,047
H4c	TE_Aesthetics -> TDI_Conative	0,0931	0,0941	0,056	0,056	1,664

H5a	TDI_Cognitive -> TDI_Global	0,3971	0,4002	0,0493	0,0493	8,062
H5b	TDI_Cognitive -> TDI_Affective	0,4578	0,4606	0,0479	0,0479	9,564
H6a	TDI_Affective -> TDI_Global	0,1591	0,1573	0,0479	0,0479	3,324
H6b	TDI_Affective -> TDI_Conative	0,5057	0,5049	0,0516	0,0516	9,810
H7a	TDI_Conative -> TDI_Global	0,2133	0,2125	0,0486	0,0486	4,388

Source: Author from SmartPLS software

Analysis of the Coefficient of Determination (R^2) of the Latent Variables

The PLS path modeling estimation shows the impacts of the TEs in the TDI of the Algarve (see table 8.19), to have a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0,426 for the TDI_Global Image endogenous latent variable. This means, six endogenous latent variables have moderate coefficient of determination (between 0,19 and 0,33): TDI_Affective, 0.309; TDI_Cognitive, 0.302; TE_Conative, 0.353; TE_Entertainment, 0.216; TE_Escapism, 0.208; TE_Aesthetics, 0.316), thus explaining moderately 42.6% of the variance in TDI_Global Image.

Table 8.19 - Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

	R^2
TDI_Affective	0,309
TDI_Cognitive	0,302
TDI_Conative	0,353
TDI_Global	0,426
TE_Entertainment	0,216
TE_Escapism	0,208
TE_Esthetics	0,316

Source: Author from SmartPLS software

Predictive Relevance of the Model

Meanwhile, predictive relevance is another aspect that can be explored for the structural model (Wong, 2013). The Stone-Geisser's values allows each latent variable to be tested

according to their predictive relevance²⁶. In the table 8.20 it is shown TDI_Global (0,41) to be the latent variable with larger predictive relevance, seconded by TDI_Conative (0,28). Regarding the remaining endogenous latent variables (TDI_Affective, 0,19; TDI_Cognitive, 0,15; TE_Entertainment, 0,17; TE_Aesthetics, 0,19) all have medium predictive relevance. The only variable with a small predictive value is TE_Escapism, 0,11.

Table 8.20 - Stone-Geisser's (Q2) Values

	SSO	SSE	1-SSE/SSO
TDI_Affective	800	649,75	0,19
TDI_Cognitive	2800	2385,82	0,15
TDI_Conative	800	575,48	0,28
TDI_Global	400	235,31	0,41
TE_Entertainment	2000	1669,87	0,17
TE_Escapism	2800	2485,5	0,11
TE_Esthetics	1600	1297,05	0,19

Source: Author from SmartPLS software

8.4 Test and discussion of the research hypotheses

The values of table 8.21, regarding the structural coefficients and respective *T* statistics, permit to verify if the investigation hypotheses should be rejected or not. Using a one tailed *T*-test with a significance level of 5%, the path coefficient will be significant if the *T*-statistics is larger than 1.645. Therefore, seven of the fifteen hypotheses were rejected H1b (*T*=0,013), H1c (*T*=1,387), H2a (*T*=0,582), H2c (*T*=0,286), H3b (*T*=0,503), H3c (*T*=0,740), H4b (*T*=1,047), since their *T* value is lower than 1,645.

On the other hand, six hypotheses were not rejected, H1a (*T*=2,644), H1d (*T*=10,41), H2b (*T*=2,084), H2d (*T*=10,129), H3a (*T*=1,739), H3d (*T*=16,291), H4a (*T*=6,277), H4c

²⁶ Q² values of <0.02 indicate small predicate value, between 0.2< and <0.15 medium and > 0.35 indicate a large predictive relevance of the latent variable (Wang, 2013).

(T=1,664), H5a (T=8,062), H5b (T=9,564), H6a (T=3,324), H6b (T=9,810), H7a (T=4,388).

Table 8.21 – Investigation's Hypotheses *T*-Statistics

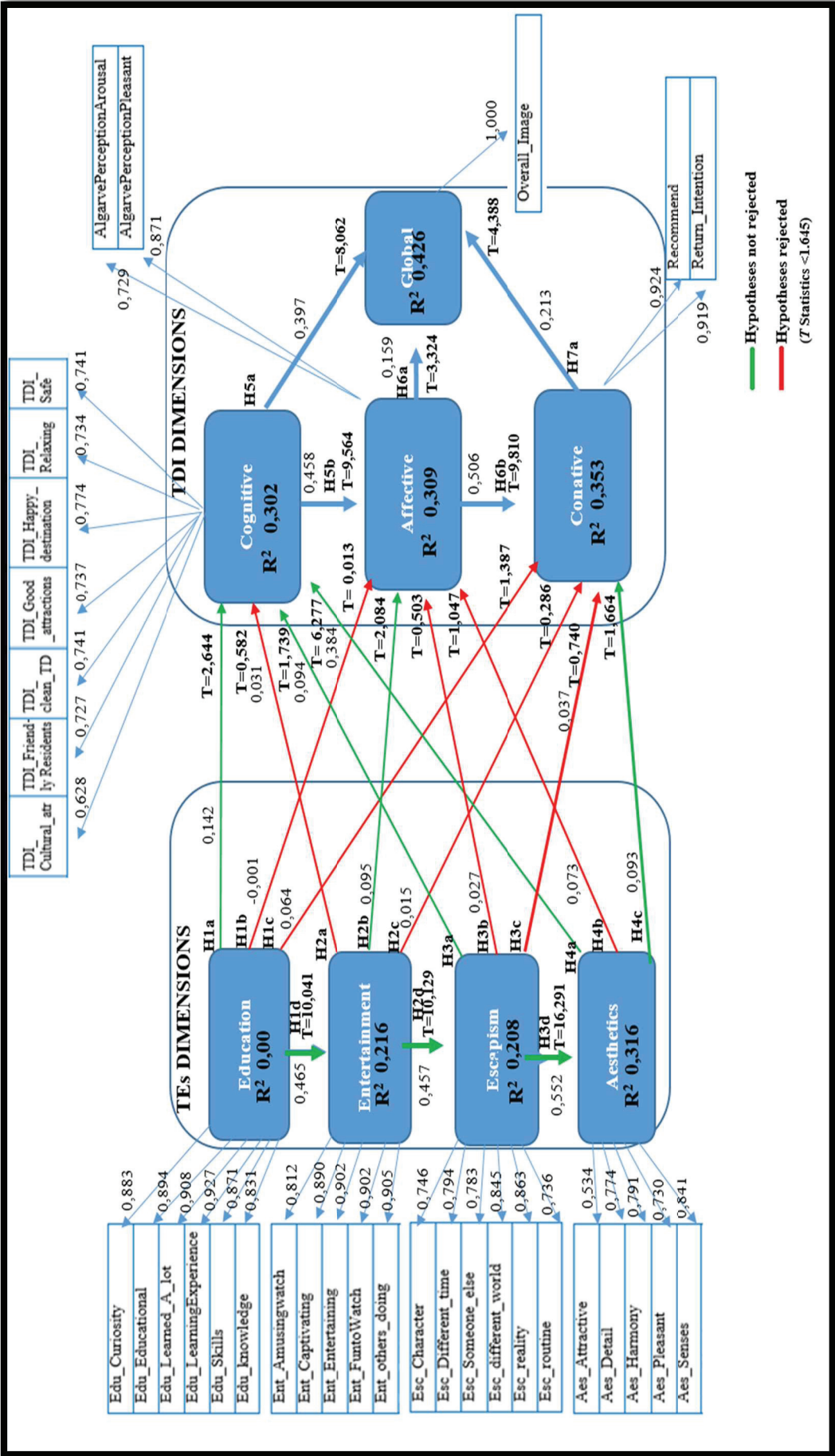
	Dimension	Structural Coefficient	<i>T</i> Statistics	Decision
H1a	The TE education influences positively the cognitive dimension of the TDI. (TE_Education -> TDI_Cognitive)	0,1424	2,644	Not Rejected
H1b	The TE education influences positively the affective dimension of the TDI. TE_Education -> TDI_Affective	-0,0006	0,013	Rejected
H1c	The TE education influences positively the conative dimension of the TDI. TE_Education -> TDI_Conative	0,0637	1,387	Rejected
H1d	The TE education influences positively the entertainment dimension of the TEs. TE_Education -> TE_Entertainment	0,4652	10,041	Not Rejected
H2a	The TE entertainment influences positively the cognitive dimension of the TDI. TE_Entertainment -> TDI_Cognitive	0,0309	0,582	Rejected
H2b	The TE entertainment influences positively the affective dimension of the TDI. TE_Entertainment -> TDI_Affective	0,095	2,084	Not Rejected
H2c	The TE entertainment influences positively the conative dimension of the TDI. TE_Entertainment -> TDI_Conative	0,0153	0,286	Rejected
H2d	The TE entertainment influences positively the Escapism dimension of the TEs. TE_Entertainment -> TE_Escapism	0,4566	10,129	Not Rejected
H3a	The TE Escapism influences positively the cognitive dimension of the TDI. TE_Escapism -> TDI_Cognitive	0,0942	1,739	Not Rejected
H3b	The TE Escapism influences positively the affective dimension of the TDI. TE_Escapism -> TDI_Affective	0,0267	0,503	Rejected
H3c	The TE Escapism influences positively the conative dimension of the TDI.	0,0371	0,740	Rejected

	TE_Escapism -> TDI_Conative			
H3d	The TE Escapism influences positively the Aesthetics dimension of the TEs. TE_Escapism -> TE_Aesthetics	0,5618	16,291	Not Rejected
H4a	The TE Aesthetics influences positively the cognitive dimension of the TDI TE_Aesthetics -> TDI_Cognitive	0,3844	6,277	Not Rejected
H4b	The TE Aesthetics influences positively the affective dimension of the TDI TE_Aesthetics -> TDI_Affective	0,0734	1,047	Rejected
H4c	The TE Aesthetics influences positively the conative dimension of the TDI TE_Aesthetics -> TDI_Conative	0,0931	1,664	Not Rejected
H5a	The TDI Cognitive dimension influences positively the global dimension of the TDI TDI_Cognitive -> TDI_Global	0,3971	8,062	Not Rejected
H5b	The TDI Cognitive dimension influences positively the affective dimension of the TDI TDI_Cognitive -> TDI_Affective	0,4578	9,564	Not Rejected
H6a	The TDI affective dimension influences positively the global dimension of the TDI. TDI_Affective -> TDI_Global	0,1591	3,324	Not Rejected
H6b	The TDI affective dimension influences positively the conative dimension of the TDI. TDI_Affective -> TDI_Conative	0,5057	9,810	Not Rejected
H7a	The TDI Conative dimension influences positively the global dimension of the TDI. TDI_Conative -> TDI_Global	0,2133	4,388	Not Rejected

Source: Author from SmartPLS software

The results deriving from the hypotheses can be illustrated in the structural model with the estimated path coefficients in figure 8.27, in which the rejected hypotheses (highlighted in red) and the hypotheses which were not rejected (highlighted in green) are shown.

Figure 8.27 – Conceptual Model Outputs



Source: Author from SmartPLS software

8.4.1 Discussion of the path-modeling estimation and hypotheses

The TEs influence Algarve's TDI

Regarding the **Education** dimension, the first hypothesis (H1a) suggesting education to influence positively the cognitive dimension of the TDI, proved to be not rejected ($T=2,644$), revealing in this way a positive relationship between both constructs. As Echtner & Ritchie (1993, 2003) argue, TDIs changes with first hand contact with the TD reality, since tourists' become more knowledgeable of the numerous perceptions of the TD.

The second hypothesis (H1b) which explored the relationship between TE education and the affective dimension of the TDI ($T=0,013$), and the third hypothesis (H1c), which explored the TE education influence with the conative dimension of the TDI ($T=1,387$) ended by not being validated in the present study. These findings are contrary to the literature review (Chon, 1992; Chon, 1991; Gunn, 1988) in that the TDI “formation and modification occurs throughout an individual [...] travel experience” (Chon, 1991:68).

One explanation for these results may be the influence of tourists' preconceptions about their TEs not fitting into their general “Algarve” stereotype (Phelps, 1986). The other hypothesis presented (H1d), was that the TE Education influences positively the Entertainment dimension of the TEs. The study's findings confirmed this hypothesis ($T=10,041$). This is congruent with Pine & Gilmore's (1998) view that when attending an event tourists tend to be involved more actively. Moreover, according to Oh *et al.* (2007:121) there is a conspicuous trend in which “educational and entertainment experiences merge”.

The other dimension of the TEs under study, was **Entertainment**, and the initial hypothesis (H2a) proposal was that the TE Entertainment influences positively the cognitive dimension of the TDI, but in this study it was found to be rejected ($T=0,582$). This finding conflicts with Hosany & Witham's (2009) view of entertainment being a passive event in which tourists establish a more absorbing connection with the stage, i.e. the perceptions and interpretations (cognition) tourists make about a destination

(Stepchenkova & Mills, 2010). The second hypothesis of the dimension Entertainment (H2b), which revealed to be validated ($T=2,084$), suggested that entertainment influences positively the affective dimension of the TDI, which is congruent with the literature review, since tourists seek and want different TEs (Gunn, 1988) and consequent sensations and affective memories (Hosany & Witham, 2009). It was also proposed that the TE entertainment influences positively the conative dimension of the TDI (H2c), but the results did not confirm this hypothesis ($T=0,286$). This may mean unique “consumption encounters” have not been provided by the Algarve, since tourists’ want more than simple offering (Walls *et al.*, 2011). The fourth hypothesis (H2d), that advocated entertainment to influence positively the Escapism dimension of the TEs, was validated ($T=10,129$). This result is supported by Hosany & Witham, (2009) findings of tourism to be full of offers in which escapist experiences prevail, because tourists’ flee from their daily tempo and return refreshed and recreated (Hosany & Witham, 2009; Oh *et al.*, 2007).

For the first hypothesis of the dimension **Escapism** (H3a), it was suggested that the TE Escapism influences positively the cognitive dimension of the TDI, and Pine & Gilmore's (1998) assumption involving greater tourists’ immersion, was supported statistically ($T=1,739$). The following hypotheses (H3b and H3c), claimed TE Escapism to influence the affective dimension of the TDI ($T=0,503$), and conative dimension ($T=0,740$), but both hypotheses also revealed not to be validated. Again, the literature review reminds us that the added value of the TD offer, is in “dazzling” tourists’ senses (Schmitt, 1999), providing hedonic experiences (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Hosany & Witham, 2009) and submerging them into the activities they participate in (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Hosany & Witham, 2009). Another approach to consider is the absence of rejuvenating experiences that may immerse tourists’ into the TD gazes (Dann, 1996). The third hypothesis (H3d), which proved to be significant ($T=16,291$), suggested that Escapism influences positively the Aesthetics of the TEs. The result is in line with previous studies (Hosany & Witham, 2009; Oh *et al.*, 2007) stating that if the tourists’ active participation is minimized an escapist event may turn out to be aesthetic.

Regarding the **Aesthetics**, three hypotheses were suggested. The first (H4a) suggested the TE Aesthetics to influence positively the cognitive dimension of the TDI was not

rejected ($T=6,277$). As Lengkeek's (2001) claims, in our everyday life something is always brought in, leading to an extension of our reality, giving it significance. The second hypothesis (H4b), suggested the Aesthetics to influence positively the affective dimension of the TDI, but T -statistics ($T=1,047$) rejected the hypothesis. Thus, tourists' interpretations of Algarve's surrounding physical environment did not created involvement enough (Hosany & Witham, 2009) to have significant impact in their affective image. The hypothesis H4c admitted Aesthetics to influence positively the conative dimension of the TDI, and this hypothesis proved to be statistically significant ($T=1,664$). This dimension was the highest rated among the four, indicating that tourists' are strongly willing to return to the Algarve. This means that not like some TDs which are visited only one time (Middleton & Clarke, 2001)., tourists see themselves returning more than onetime visit . Still, according to Bigné *et al.* (2001) no definitive conclusion can be drawn regarding tourists' return intention.

The TDI dimensions impact on the Global Image

The **cognitive** dimension of the TDI, in H5a, also proved to be important to influence positively the global dimension of the TDI ($T=8,062$). This finding is consistent with several authors (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a) that suggested the TDI to be an overall mental picture, consisting of knowledge (beliefs), feelings, and global impressions about an object or destination. The other hypothesis (H5b), which explored the cognitive dimension influence in the affective dimension of the TDI, also revealed to be supported ($T=9,564$). This is also consistent with several authors' position, that a hierarchical relationship between the three dimensions explain the product preference (Gartner, 1993) specially that the affective image is influence by the cognitive image (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999b; Gartner, 1993; Stern & Krakover, 1993; Lin, Duarte, Kerstetter & Hou, 2007).

For the **affective** dimension, two hypotheses were suggested, i.e., (H6a) The TDI affective dimension influences positively the global dimension of the TDI ($T=3,324$), and (H6b), that the TDI affective dimension influences positively the conative dimension of the TDI ($T=9,810$), both showed to be not rejected. The findings show the tourists' meanings and psychological characteristics associated with the TD attributes (Govers,

2005), to have affected their action and behavior component (Bigné *et al.*, 2001). Therefore, as recommended by Gartner (1993), the affective dimension direct influence on the overall image, must be consider.

For the last dimension, **conative**, one hypothesis (H7a) was consider and supported ($T=4,388$), that the conative dimension influences positively the global dimension of the TDI. These findings are also in line with Stepchenkova & Morrison's (2008) suggestion that the TDI construct is composite by nature. The overall or **global image** is explained in 42,6% by the proposed conceptual model. This is consistent with several authors' (Chon, 1991; Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Gunn, 1988) assumption that TEs impact on the TDI.

In sum, taking into consideration the structural model, it can be seen that the four realms (Education, Entertainment, Escapism, Aesthetics) of the TEs explain together 30,2% of the variance in TDI_Cognitive. The same findings can be seen for the Affective and Conative dimensions, with the four dimensions of the TEs explaining respectively 30,9% and 35,3%. These TDI dimensions explained by the TEs are responsible for 42,6% of the variance in the Algarve's Global image. Another important aspect is the escapism impact on Aesthetics (31,6%), which impacts rather significantly, contrary to the other dimensions (education ->entertainment = 21,6%; entertainment->escapism = 20,8%).

In conclusion, all loadings are good indicators of the TEs dimensions, which means stakeholders should not disregard or overlook these dimensions of the TEs, because they have proved to significantly influence the tourists' TDI, and their intention to recommend to friends, family and relatives, but also, to return to the Algarve. However, the results also show that what tourists' have enjoyed the most was the Aesthetics dimension since it is the strongest effect (0,384) in the linkage. This linkage is also reflected upon the tourists' cognitive image with the affective image (0,458) and the affective image with conative (0,506). Thus, all the other areas covered by the conceptual model, despite being significant to increase the global image, should only be addressed by the stakeholders after the areas with more linkages are addressed first.

Conclusion note

This chapter addressed first the empirical findings of the exploratory study, regarding the sample's profile and specific TDI attributes of the TD Algarve. Next, the findings of both surveys, before and after the TEs, were also present, with the descriptive statistics of the respondents, followed by their perception regarding the cognitive, affective, conative and global image. Findings about the TEs dimensions were also explored, regarding each of the four realms of the TEs, as well as the most positive and most negative experiences during tourists' holidays. The respondents degree of previous experience and satisfaction about the region was also assessed.

The path-modeling estimation procedure was made using the PLS-SEM. The outputs were first assessed regarding the measurement model in terms of reliability and validity. The next stage consisted of the analysis of the structural model, with regards to the path coefficients of the structural model and analysis of the coefficient of determination of the latent variables. Subsequently, the results were used to test the present study's hypotheses. Lastly, the implications of the findings were examined.

CHAPTER 9 – CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This chapter's purpose is to present the main conclusions coming from the study undertaken. The implications of the findings for the Algarve's DMO are also highlighted. Afterwards, the theoretical implications resulting from the empirical findings and fitness of the conceptual model are discussed. Lastly, some of the limitations encountered are also acknowledge, and some suggestions for future research provided.

9.1 Main conclusions of the empirical study

The main objective of this study was to identify the TEs impact on the TDI of Algarve. The research undertaken verified from a marketing perspective, how tourists' TEs at the destination influence and impact their TDI of the Algarve. Findings revealed the Algarve's TEs and TDI to be interrelated and that together they can explain almost half of the region's global image held by foreign tourists. This is an important finding because it reveals there are other factors or dimensions that should be consider by the local stakeholders when exploring the TEs impact on the TDI. It was also possible to compare the TEs impacts in the TDI, and it was found that after the TEs, some differences regarding some TD attributes exist. Even though most were positive, some were negative, demonstrating the TD underperformed in some TEs.

The second objective set was to separate the global/total tourism experiences into a set of specific experiences, according to their dimension to assess their relation. Through Oh *et al.* (2007) experience scale, it was possible to decompose all the different experiences into specific dimensions (Education, Entertainment, Aesthetics, Escapism) and to verify the "weight" of each of the four realms dimension for the construction of a reliable and

valid scale. Overall, the study's findings testify the validity of Oh *et al.* (2007) experience scale in the TD context, and enabled a better understanding of the impacts and links between TE and TDI.

The third objective set intended to verify how the different TEs dimensions affects the tourists' TDI and consequent overall image of the Algarve. The relevance and impact of each of the four E's of the TEs and how they relate to the TDI and consequent overall image of the Algarve, was verified, with results showing the TEs dimensions to be correlated, and also the Education and Aesthetics dimensions to impact on the cognitive component. The results also shown Entertainment dimension to impact on the affective component, and all components of the TDI (cognitive, affective and conative) to contribute positively for the overall image. On the other hand, it was found that the main determinant of the experiential outcomes to be the Aesthetics dimension, followed by the Entertainment, Escapism and Education.

In fact, the findings of the exploratory study demonstrated the importance of the weather and natural landscape for the tourists, but it also revealed, gastronomy, experiences at the TD, residents' friendliness and warm reception to be perceived very positively. In the second part of chapter eight, both survey's (before and after the TE) findings indicated the latest marketing campaigns made by the local DMO (ERTA²⁷) and national tourism organizations, to have not altered or changed much of the region's image associated throughout the years with the sun and beach. Instead, the study's outcomes reinforced the role of the region as a sun and sea tourism destination.

Findings also revealed that differentiation can be found in the Algarve's tourism product, with the food experience, the atmosphere tourists felt during their holidays (calm and relaxed), and the overall happy experiences (it is also important to note that the majority of the tourists' also considered not to have any negative experiences), are too important to be neglected. On the other hand, tourists' perception about the destination's cultural attractions, shopping opportunities, entertainment, waterparks, sporting facilities and nightlife were the weakest attributes for tourists. To conclude, tourists arrived and left the

²⁷ Algarve Regional Tourism Board

Algarve with a very positive overall image, which is reflected on their returning intention, and willingness to recommend the TD. At a time that the tourism market is full of similar holiday options, this positive overall image is an important competitive factor.

The TE were enjoyed in full due to tourists' overall satisfaction, but for most tourists' their experiences were not a learning experience, despite some Aesthetics experiences being appreciated and perceived as pleasant, attractive and involving a sense of harmony. Entertainment also caused little impact among tourists, which reveals the Algarve's deficit in this dimension, especially in early September. The same indication was given by tourists regarding the Escapism dimension, because they did not experience the Algarve as a great place to be immersed in, despite enjoying a certain degree of escape from the daily tempo.

These experiences were explored with more depth in the open-ended questions, with tourists showing their appreciation once again for the local weather, food, people and atmosphere. This output confirmed the Algarve's long tradition as a Sun and Sea, friendly TD, but also revealed food and the atmosphere as important aspects of the tourists' experience. Another surprising aspect is the fact tourists in general, did not consider having experienced negative TEs, showing clearly a strong positive image of the Algarve. The less positive aspect of tourists' holidays was the bad services provided by rent-a-cars, hotels, restaurants and other services in general. This strongly positive image and experience was seen to reflect on the tourists' satisfaction and return intention.

Also, the proposed conceptual model and paths were constructed to verify the relationships between the independent and dependent latent variables. The relationship between the TEs dimension was confirmed, and the Aesthetics experiences demonstrated its relevance in comparison with the other dimensions. The impacts of the TEs in the cognitive and affective image of the Algarve was also verified. Overall the conceptual model demonstrated its reliability and validity.

9.2 Implications for the DMOs

As stated above, there is still a lot of work to be done by the local DMO, since the TDIs can assist DMOs managers to build better tourism products, and consequently to increase the added value of the experiences at the destination. This study's findings will help managers, stakeholders, to receive updated and pertinent information, regarding:

- Tourists' behavior, so that they may increase the appeal of natural and man made local resources, by using the correct marketing promotion tools and strategies (Ritchie & Crouch, 2000);
- Increase the competitiveness of the destination through the use of TEs as a key factor to appeal, and engage physically and emotionally tourists (Ritchie & Crouch, 2000);
- Create a unique and distinctive positioning for the tourism destination (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003);
- To offer to visiting tourists new and authentic experiences (Ritchie & Crouch, 2000).

Thus, competitive advantages can be gained if the experiential consumption of services are taken into account (Govers, 2005). In this regard, this study shows and identifies the local images, which can be used in the future as reference for other researchers, or for designing appropriate techniques for measuring the region's tourism destination image, since it recognizes the destinations' specific environment.

However, the findings also revealed that local stakeholders should rethink about the service quality, since it has influenced negatively on certain tourists' assessment of their holidays. In some cases, the service experience was bland or bad, which means DMOs should assume the role of assessing the service quality by implementing a tourism rating system, for example for the restaurants (like the Michelin stars) which would work as a guide to tourists visiting the TD.

Another aspect noted is the tourists' evaluation of Algarve's TE and TDI, also verified by the good work being carried out by ERTA in creating a strong TDI. From the study's

findings stakeholders are able to identify the relationship between the tourists' holiday experience at the TD and overall image, which may help them to explore in full the other dimension of the tourists' experience (gastronomy, atmosphere), along with sun and sea.

Therefore, the TD stakeholders and their DMOs should create positive and memorable TEs in order to achieve tourists' satisfaction and high levels of return intention and/or intention to recommend among friends, family or relatives. For this to occur, the Algarve's stakeholders should consider if the supply side is prepared and willing for specific targets, to stage, create and manage compelling events and experiences, which are often intricate and complex. The experiences required are those that may provide an opportunity for tourists to act not only as observers or listeners during events, but rather to immerse or engage them more actively. The markets are competitive, and TDs should not neglect the tourists' need for unique, personal charged TEs (Ritchie & Crouch, 2000; McIntosh & Siggs, 2005; Lengkeek, 2001).

9.3 Theoretical implications

This investigation has reviewed the developments and implications of the concepts of TDI and TEs, and has presented a conceptual model, so that researchers, marketers and stakeholders may have a more clear understanding of the constructs and may develop and adapt the correct strategies for their particular destinations. The understanding of the constructs has high practical relevance, since both are complex, and a diagnosis of the destinations' strengths and weaknesses on relevant tourism attributes and experiences, can be helpful in making marketing improvements.

In essence, the study permitted two relevant constructs, TEs and TDI, to be combined and their relation established. Academics and practitioners are now able to understand with greater depth how the different TEs dimensions relate to each other, and how TEs affect the TDI. Although the TEs construct and TDI were extensively researched, the relationship between these two constructs, albeit implicit, is not yet clear, from the tourists' perspective.

The evaluation of the TDI, its relations between dimensions and the global image, contributed towards a better understanding of the construct. Also, the characterization of the TEs dimensions relationship, and the measurement of their individual dimension contribution for the overall TE, was another important aspect achieved. Moreover, direct relationships between the dimensions were established, i.e., TE Aesthetics and cognitive component of the TDI; Education and cognitive component; entertainment and affective component.

On the other hand, Escapism did not show a direct relationship with any of the TDI components, while all TDI dimensions demonstrated to be linked and to contribute towards the overall image. The application of the TEs concept permitted also for the conceptual framework and conceptualizations to be reinforced, since it continues sparse according to some authors (Gretzel *et al.*, 2006).

In this sense, in the same way as Oh, Fiori & Jeoung (2007) did for the B&B (bed and breakfast) experience, Hosany & Witham (2009) for the cruise experience, and Manhas & Ramjit (2013) for the hospitality industry, this study's results show that the Experience scale can be applied in the TD context. In this context, the study also revealed the validity and reliability of PLS-SEM application for reflective conceptual models applied to the two constructs.

9.4 Limitations of the empirical study

This study envisaged verifying the TEs effects in the regions TDI, and although this goal was achieved, some limitations were experienced from decisions and events occurring throughout the research. One of the limitations was that the stratified samples used for the study only considered the foreign tourists, and not the Portuguese, which means differences between the foreign and national tourists could not be assessed about their TDI. Following the study's objective, Portuguese tourists' were not considered in order to avoid biased opinions, since their images of the TD might be stronger due to the country's image being associated with the region's image (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003), or from the

different induced and organic sources (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Gartner, 1993; Gunn, 1988) have in the construction of images.

Also, the Tourists' TDI before and after the TE was not assessed with the same sample, which take to different study's findings. The consistent low participation of the first survey's respondents, who had accepted to participate in the potential second survey by email, made it impossible to collect data from the initial sample. Another constraint was the time frame for the questionnaires application, September, which only covers part of the peak season of the Algarve (June to September), excluding the full high season, low and middle season. Meaning that differences among tourists' visiting the Algarve at different periods was not assessed. The study's goal, and operational constraints at Faro International Airport, with other surveys been conducted during the peak season, made it impossible to evaluate during the full peak season (specially).

Also, since the study was restricted to the TD Algarve, no other TD was used to compare and validate the results in this study. Moreover, only above 18 years old tourists were consider in all surveys, not covering other segments and potential differences regarding TEs impacts on TDI. At this early stage of the investigation to assess the TEs impacts on the TDI, a critical decision had to be made either about broadening the scope of the study to cover other segments and extended the deadline of the research, or to focus on the main target-markets profile.

In the study other influential factors in the TDI formation process, such as personal feelings, motivation, authenticity, information sources were not consider. The study's goal, within the time it was undertaken (at an early stage of the conceptualization of the TEs), left very few options regarding the scale to use for the TEs evaluation, none of which included all these factors. The empirical study did not assess also the full extent of the conceptual model, only the main objective of the study, preventing similar conclusions to be drawn from those that contributed theoretically to the model.

9.5 Suggestions for future research

As future research by academics it is suggested the TDIs between first time visitors and repeaters should be distinguished. The amount of previous experience with the destination, among tourists, raises the question if the familiarity with the destination should be differentiated, since some tourists' have such experience they can almost be considered as residents. Also, a better understand of the TEs impacts in the TDI can be achieved by longitudinal studies covering all seasons. In the same way, the relationships between the TEs dimensions should be investigated with further depth, to understand how these dimensions come together as unique TEs.

Complementary methods and techniques should be contemplated to assess with greater depth the tourists' TEs, since most tourists' opinions about their TEs were positioned in the third position "neither agree nor disagree" of the Likert-scale, in the same way as the TDI attributes, happy or relaxing destination, leaving little chance to explore the latent reasons behind tourists' opinions. Future research should consider other dimensions besides the 4 realms of the experience, and include for instance authenticity, or tourists' interactions with other tourists, locals. Tourists' should be asked to identify and rate other TDI attributes, besides those associated positively with the TDs. In Echtner & Ritchie's (1993) scale, no negative TDI are proposed to be identified in the initial open-ended questions questionnaire.

The TEs scales should also envisage finding about experiences which were unique at the Algarve and which were considered common. Oh *et al.* (2007) scale doesn't seek to find from what experiences tourists' learned, entertained, enjoyed, appealed to their senses. The scale only assesses tourists' ratings of their experiences; it does not help academics to find which specific experiences were at the core of the experience, nor their weight in the holistic TEs. Although the study may have contribute to academics and managers to better understand the constructs and their relationship, there is still much to be done for the full extension of TEs impacts in the destination image to achieve.

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APPENDICES

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Dear Sir/Madam,

This questionnaire aims to identify the image of the Algarve as a Tourism Destination, and it is part of a PhD thesis research that is carrying out at the University of the Algarve, Portugal. Your participation is critical in this study, and your efforts and honest feedback in answering the questions is greatly appreciated. All the information you provide will be held in confidence and will be used only for academic purposes. Thank you very much for your participation.

Part I – Destination image

1.1 In three words, what images come to mind when you think of Algarve as a holiday destination?

1.2 In three words, how would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting the Algarve?

1.3 In three words, which attractions or characteristics unique to the Algarve have you found?

Part II – The Algarve

Please select one answer only (mark a cross in the corresponding statement).

2.1. How many times have you visit the Algarve?

☐ a) First time ☐ b) _____ times before.

2.2 All, in All, how satisfied are you with your visit to Algarve?

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Part III – Respondent Information - please mark (X) in the box with the relevant answer

3.1 Age _____

3.2 Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female

3.3 Marital Status ☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Widow/widower ☐ Other _____

3.4 Level of Education ☐ Primary school ☐ Secondary school ☐ Undergraduate ☐ Postgraduate ☐ Phd

3.5. Nationality _____

3.6 Travel Companion ☐ Family ☐ Partner ☐ Friends ☐ _____

Dear Sir/Madam,

This inquiry aims to identify the image of Algarve as a tourism destination, and the holiday experiences' you have lived during your visit. This research is part of a PhD thesis being made at the University of the Algarve. It will take you only a few minutes to complete the questionnaire. Your responses are completely confidential and are only for research purposes. Thank you very much for your participation.

Part I - TDI attributes

1.1 The following statements relate to Algarve's image as a tourism destination. Please indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements. Place a X on one answer per statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Good weather	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good beaches	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Attractive natural landscape	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good gastronomy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good accommodation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good value for money	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good Access	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Interesting cultural attractions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good shopping opportunities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good entertainment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good water parks	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good sporting facilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good nightlife	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Clean destination	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Safe destination	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Relaxing destination	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Friendly residents	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Happy Destination	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good Attractions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Strongly negative	Negative	Neither negative nor positive	Positive	Strongly positive
1.2 How would you describe Algarve's overall image as a tourism destination?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.3 Select the box which comes closer to your perception of the Algarve as tourism destination, according to the following scales/adjectives:

Unpleasant	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Pleasant
Sleepy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Arousal

Part II– Previous Experience

2.1. Including this visit, how many times have you visit the Algarve?

☐ a) First time ☐ b) _____ times before.

Part III – Respondent Characterization

- 3.1 **Age** _____
- 3.2 **Gender** ☐ Male ☐ Female
- 3.3 **Marital Status** ☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Widow(er) ☐ _____
- 3.4 **Level of Education** ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Undergraduate ☐ Postgraduate ☐ Phd
- 3.5 **Nationality** _____
- 3.6 **Travel Companion** ☐ Family ☐ Partner ☐ Friends ☐ _____
- 3.7 **Occupation** _____

Dear Sir/Madam,

Would you be willing to respond online to the second questionnaire after your holidays?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If your answer is positive, please provide us an email address: _____ and
the date after which we can email you. Date: _____

Thank you very much for your help!

Dear Sir/Madam,

This inquiry aims to identify the image of Algarve as a tourism destination, and the holiday experiences’ you have lived during your visit. This research is part of a PhD thesis being made at the University of the Algarve. It will take you only a few minutes to complete the questionnaire. Your responses are completely confidential and are only for research purposes. Thank you very much for your participation.

Part I - TDI attributes

1.2 The following statements relate to Algarve’s image as a tourism destination. Please indicate to what extend do you agree or disagree with the statements. Place a X on one answer per statement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Good weather	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good beaches	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Attractive natural landscape	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good gastronomy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good accommodation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good value for money	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good Access	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Interesting cultural attractions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good shopping opportunities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good entertainment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good water parks	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good sporting facilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good nightlife	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Clean destination	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Safe destination	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Relaxing destination	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Friendly residents	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Happy Destination	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Good Attractions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Strongly negative	Negative	Neither negative nor positive	Positive	Strongly positive
1.2 How would you describe Algarve’s overall image as a tourism destination?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1.3 Select the box which comes closer to your perception of the Algarve as tourism destination, according to the following scales/adjectives:

unpleasant	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	pleasant
sleepy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	arousing

1.4 Select the box which comes closer to your intention.

	Definitely not	Probably not	Neutral	Probably yes	Definitely yes
I will revisit the Algarve again	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I will recommend it	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Part II – The Algarve tourism experience

Question 2.1 - According to your experience in the Algarve, please indicate to what extend do you agree or disagree with the statements. Please place one cross per statement.

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
Education					
The experience has made me more knowledgeable	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I learned a lot	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It stimulated my curiosity to learn new things	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It was a real learning experience	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The experience was highly educational to me	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The experience really enhanced my skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Aesthetics					
I felt a real sense of harmony	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Just being here was very pleasant	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The setting was pretty bland	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The setting was very attractive	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The setting really showed attention to design detail	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The setting provided pleasure to my senses	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Entertainment					
Activities of others were amusing to watch	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Watching others perform was captivating	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I really enjoyed watching what others were doing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Activities of others were fun to watch	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Watching activities of others was very entertaining	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
What others did was boring to watch	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Escapism					
I felt I played a different character here	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I felt like I was living in a different time or place	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The experience here let me imagine being someone else	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I completely escaped from reality	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I totally forgot about my daily routine	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I felt I was in a different world	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Part III – Core Experiences

3.1 In three words, which were your three **most positive** experiences in the Algarve during the last week(s),?

3.2 In three words, which were your three **most negative** experiences in the Algarve during the last week(s),?

Part IV – Previous Experience and Satisfaction

4.1. Including this visit, how many times have you visit the Algarve?

☐ a) First time ☐ b) _____ times before.

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
4.2 How satisfied are you with your visit to Algarve?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Part V – Respondent Characterization

1. Age _____
2. Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female
3. Marital Status ☐ Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Widow(er) ☐ _____
4. Level of Education ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Undergraduate ☐ Postgraduate ☐ Phd
5. Nationality _____
6. Travel Companion ☐ Family ☐ Partner ☐ Friends ☐ _____
7. Occupation _____

Thank you very much for your help!

From: <nm.phd.universityalgarve@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Sep 9, 2013 at 12:02 AM
Subject: University Study - Algarve's Destination Image - After the TEs
To:

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to thank you for your time responding to the first inquiry last week at Faro Airport in Algarve. Without your help it would not be possible to complete the first survey.

Therefore, I kindly ask you 3 minutes of your time, to reply to the second survey below or in the link under this email.

Your reply is important and essential, since the work being made consists of evaluating your opinion about the Algarve after your holidays.

Without your help to reply to this second survey, the work being made will not be possible to complete.

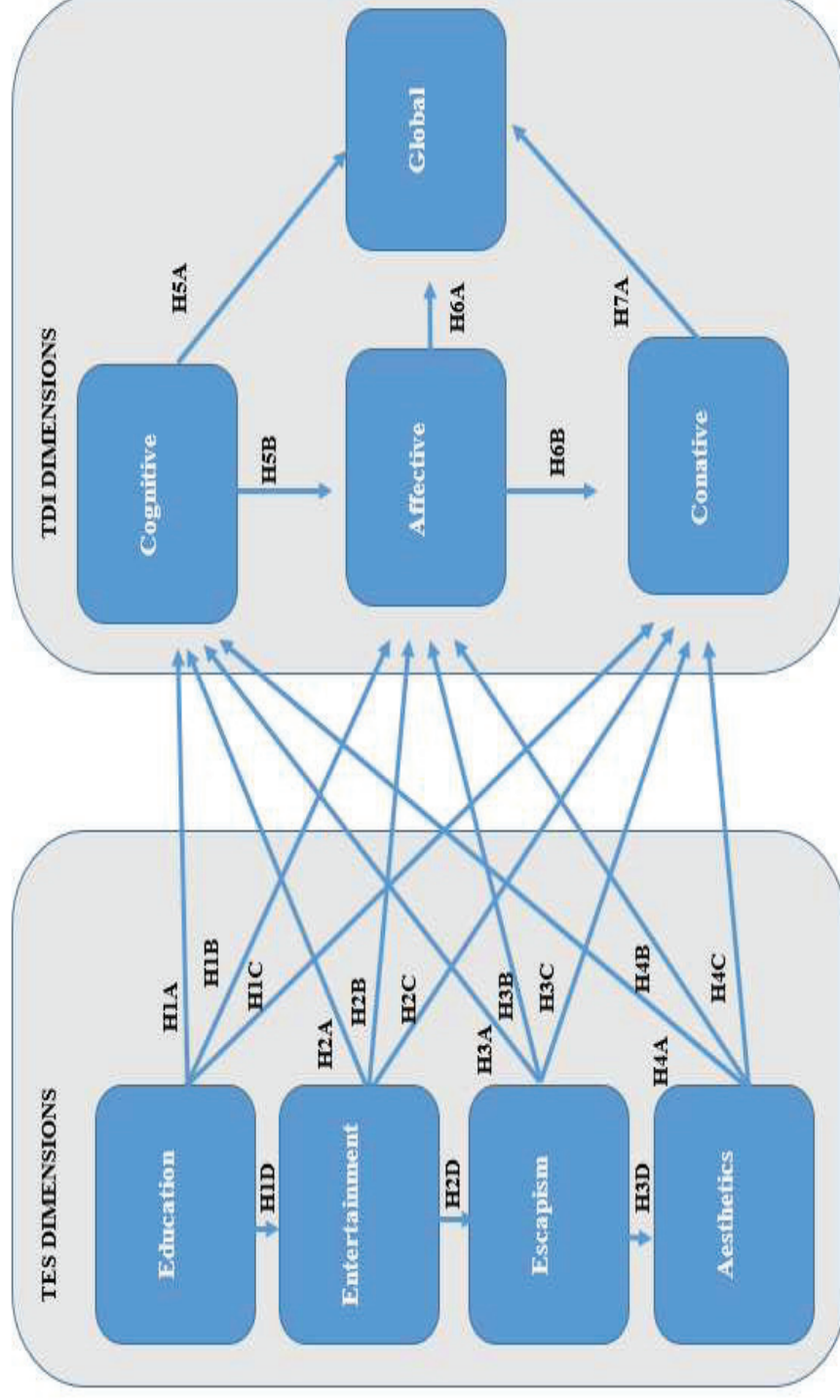
Should you have any queries, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

Nelson Matos

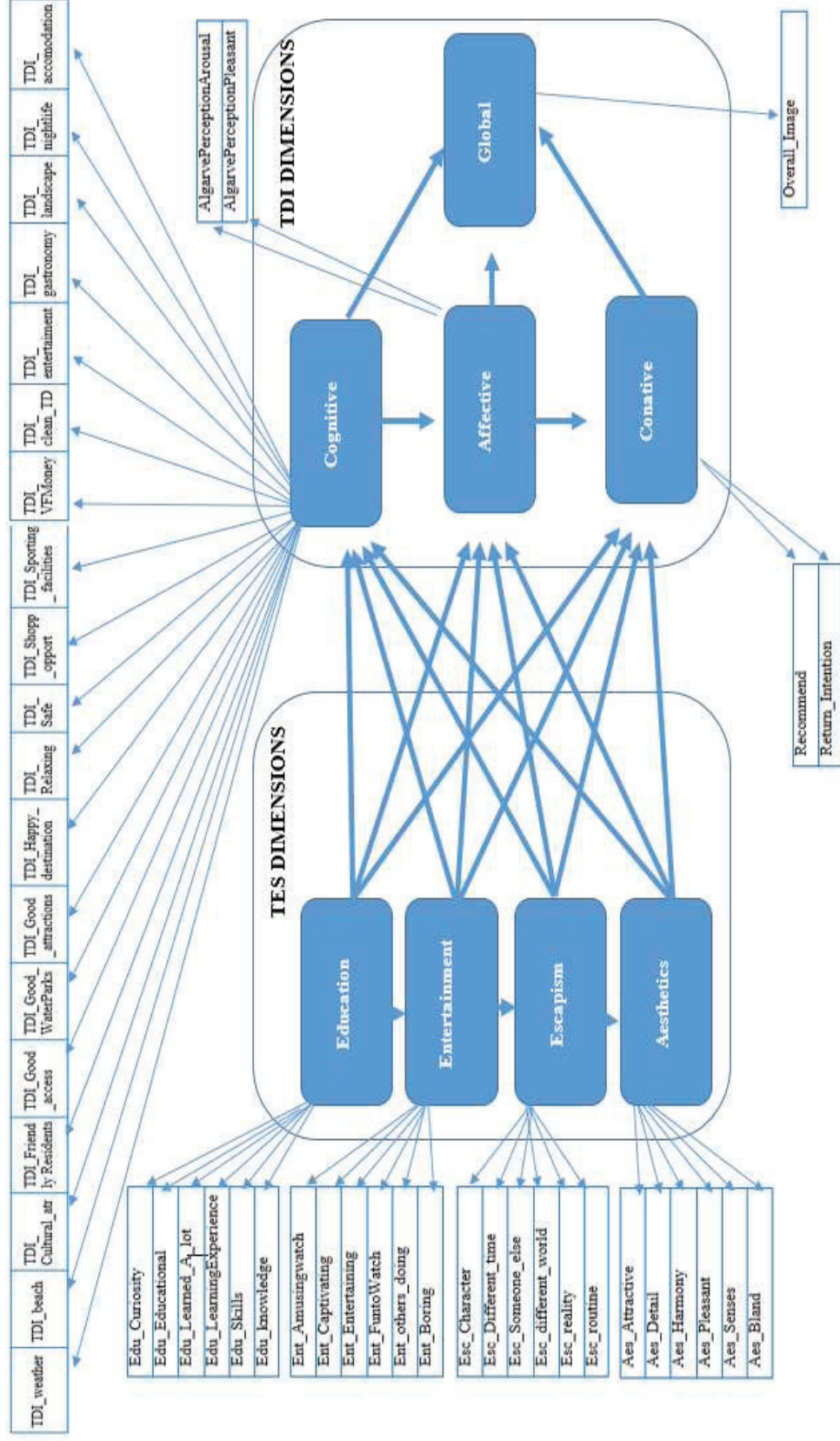
Mobile: 00351 938367061

Figure 1 – Inner Structural Model of Algarve’s TEs Impact on TDI.



Source: Author from the software SmartPls.

Figure 2 - Outer Model (measurement model)



Source: Author from the software SmartPLS

ANNEXES

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Annex 1 – Existing Models of Destination Regions

Name	Description Model	Type	Reference
Tourist Travel Models Tourist flows	Models tourist travel flows between regions, identifying 3 distinct types: access routes, return routes and recreation routes.	Functional (descriptive)	Mariot (1969) in Pearce (1995)
Recreational and vacation travel	Recreational and vacation travel from metropolitan areas	Functional (descriptive)	Campbell (1967)
Tourist movement patterns	Concentric patterns of tourist movement from urban core in Quebec	Functional (descriptive)	Rajotte (1975) in Pearce (1995)
Multidestination trip patterns	Proposes 5 multidestination travel patterns: single destination, base camp, en route, regional tour and trip chaining	Functional (descriptive)	Lue, Crompton & Fesenmaier (1993)
Structural Models Recreational business district	Identifies this district as being distinct from hierarchical series of urban business nodes	Functional (descriptive)	Stansfield & Rickert (1970)
Tentative beach resort model	Describes the spatial evolution of coastal beach resort in 8 stages from rural settlement to resort community	Functional (descriptive/explanatory)	Smith (1992)
Spatial attraction model	Proposes 3-part model of tourist attraction: nucleus, zone of closure and inviolate belt	Normative/conceptual	Gunn (1965, cited in 1993:271)
Destination zone planning concept	Proposes a regional destination zone comprising 5 basic elements: definable regional boundary; access from markets and internal circulation corridor; community attraction complexes; non-attraction hinterland and entrances to the region	Conceptual/normative	Gunn (1965, 1972, 1988, 1993)

Annex 1 – Existing Models of Destination Regions

Evolutionary Models Evolution of tourism: class succession	Proposes a model of the evolution of tourism in a destination based on class succession	Functional/descriptive	Thurot (1973) in Pearce (1995)
Evolution of tourism: personality type	Proposes a model of the evolution of tourism in a destination based on a succession of tourist personality types: from allocentrics at early stage to psychocentrics at a latter stage as the destination becomes more popular	Functional/descriptive	Plog (1973, 1991)
Destination lifecycle model	Adapts the product lifecycle model to explain why destinations rise and fall in popularity	Functional/descriptive	Butler (1980)
Spacio-temporal evolution of Seaside tourism	Model of spacio-temporal evolution of destination incorporates changes in degree of local participation (specific to historical development of coastal tourism in Europe)	Functional/descriptive	Gormson (1981) in Pearce (1995)
Spacio-temporal evolution of Destination regions	Depicts evolution of destinations over time emphasizing 4 aspects: spatial characteristics, transport, tourist behavior and attitude of decision-makers and community	Functional/descriptive	Miossec (1976, 1977)
Spatial structure and role of different groups in evolution of destinations	Depicts spatial evolution of tourism upon existing regional structure where adventurers and drifters progressively open up the country to 'formal' market sectors	Functional/descriptive	Oppermann (1993)

Annex 1 – Existing Models of Destination Regions

Features and conditions which shape destination evolution	Identifies features and conditions that make destinations popular, including attractions, accessibility, tolerance, security, life-support and comfort systems, cost and benefit advantages and information diffusion.	Normative/ descriptive	Leiper (1995)
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Source: (Dredge, 1999:777)