# A global model for the image formation of a tourist destination: Evidences from a sun and sand destination in spain


## Abstract

The main objective of this study is to propose a model that identifies: (a) the factors which influence the process of forming an image of a tourist destination; as well as (b) its visitation and recommendation. In order to achieve this research goal, we take into consideration the following variables: information sources, motivations, cognitive, affective and unique images, the intention to visit and recommendation. We also analyse the influence of Web 2.0 in this process. The results show how: (i) motivations for visiting a place are influenced by information sources consulted by tourists, among which social media can be included; (ii) motivations influence the formation of the image; (iii) the intention to visit a destination influences the intention to recommend it. One of the main contributions of this paper is the overall analysis of the entire process behind the formation of an image of a tourist destination. Previous research has frequently analysed parts of this.


*Keywords: Destination image, information sources, motivation, Web 2.0., UGC, social media,*


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## 1. Introduction and objectives

A destination's image influences the decision-making process to purchase a trip and also the intention to visit and recommend said destination (Qu et al., 2011). According to Beerli and Martin (2004), this image is composed of cognitive and affective as well as unique attributes (Qu, Kim and Im, 2011). The cognitive image is determined by the place's characteristics, while the affective image is generated by feelings. The unique image is formed based on the features that make the place different and special.

Information sources as well as personal factors affect the formation of cognitive and affective images (Beerli and Martin, 2004b). Information sources play an essential role in the way the destination is perceived, or the risk that a traveller perceives this decision to involve (Mansfeld, 1992). Tourists consult several information sources before buying a trip. According to Gartner (1993), information sources can be organic, formed by friends and acquaintances; induced, belonging to the authorities of the destination, suppliers or intermediaries, and ads; or autonomous, formed by media, documentaries and movies. Recently, research has been carried out on the Internet as a source of tourist information (Seabra, Abrantes and Lages 2007) or specific services such as search engines (Buhalis, 2003), social networks (Buhalis and Law, 2008), tour operator websites (Zins, 2009), online reviews (Papathanassis and Knolle, 2011) and social media (Mackay and Vogt, 2012). With the massive use of the Internet in the planning of a trip, travellers consult several platforms Webs before deciding where to travel or contract tourist services. Online content provided by UGC (user-generated content) is a primary source of travel information, and social media is a form by which businesses connect with travellers (Tourism Economics, 2013). Internet sources can be classified as organic, induced and autonomous (Llodra-Riera et al., 2015), although Beerli and Martin (2004a) only considered it as induced.

In this research paper we link preceding models (Beerli and Martin, 2004a; Qu et al., 2011) and propose new relations, such as (i) information sources also influence motivations and (ii) the intention to visit the destination influences the intention to recommend it. Motivations, intentions to visit and recommendation are interesting issues in the study of consumer behaviour.

Some research works have studied travel motivations (Crompton, 1979; Uysal and Jurowski, 1994; Sirakaya et al., 2003), but we have not found any research that analyse if information sources influence the formation of motivations. For this reason, we propose analysing if any relation exists between information sources consulted to plan a trip and the motivations for visiting a destination.

Furthermore, in the models analysed in previous research, we were not able to find any relation between the intention of visiting a destination and the intention of recommending it. As many people do not travel alone, we purport that people recommend destinations to their travel companions before choosing a destination. Therefore, we propose analysing whether in the end the overall image might not be the only factor influencing the intention to recommend a tourist destination and that, in fact, intention to visit a place can also influence the intention to recommend it.

## 2. Research question

The main findings of our research show how cognitive, affective and unique images of destinations are related to information sources and motivation. Moreover, we show how UGC is a useful information source

which influences the image formed of a tourist destination and the motivations for visiting it; because UGC is an information source more to add to the latent variable construct. And finally, we can demonstrate that the intention to recommendation is not only influenced by overall image, too by the intention to visit the destination.

## 3. Conceptual Framework

### *3.1. Formation of the image of a tourist destination*

There is no universally accepted scale to analyse the image of a destination (Beerli and Martin, 2004a; Gomez, Garcia and Molina, 2013). Echtner and Ritchie (2003) suggest an ordering of the attributes of a tourist destination, on a scale ranging from psychological to functional, based on previous studies. The functional impression consists of the mental picture, or imagery, of the physical characteristics of the destination. Meanwhile, the psychological impression can be described as the atmosphere or mood of the place.

Other classifications suggest dividing the attributes into cognitive and affective (for example, Qu et al., 2011). Cognitive evaluations imply beliefs or knowledge about the attributes of a destination, whereas an affective evaluation stems from feelings about the destination. According to Qu et al. (2011), the dimensions of the cognitive image of a destination are quality of experiences, tourist attractions, environment and infrastructure, entertainment and outdoor activities and cultural traditions. In this case, the affective image has been measured in terms of pleasing, arousing, relaxing and exciting. In combination, they determine the perceptions held of an overall image of the destination (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). Beerli and Martin (2004a) consider associations using attributes proposed by previous authors and relationships among different components of the perceived image and the factors influencing it, including information sources (primary and secondary), motivations, accumulated tourist experiences and socio-demographic characteristics.

Each study has their own set of dimensions and attributes for describing how they influence the overall image and how this global image influences consumer behaviour. Each researcher analyses a different part of the model, making the studies incomplete on their own but complementary when looked at as a whole.

The results of the research carried out by Baloglu and McCleary (1999) explain that perceptual/cognitive evaluations significantly influence affective and overall image evaluations of a destination; affective evaluations significantly affect the overall image of a destination; the variety (amount) and type of information sources used significantly influences perceptual/ cognitive evaluations; tourists' socio-psychological motivations significantly influence their affective evaluations of destinations. However, these researchers do not explain if overall image influences consumer behaviour.

Beerli and Martin (2004a) review how information sources, both secondary – induced, organic and autonomous – and primary – previous experience and intensity of visit – as well as personal factors – like motivations – influence the perceived image. They also analyse how cognitive image influences affective and overall image, and how affective image influences overall image. They do not analyse how overall image influences consumer behaviour. It is important to highlight that they studied Internet as and only as an induced information source. It is to say that Internet was only considered used by OMD and tourist providers but not

used for sharing content between travellers trough social media.

Qu et al. (2011) focus on how cognitive, affective and unique images influence overall image and how overall image influences consumer behaviour – intention to visit and intention to recommend it. But they do not study the first part of the model related to information sources and motivations.

Taking these three models into account, we can propose a complete model with new paths. For our study we wanted to engage in a more in-depth analysis of information sources, motivations and affective image. Accordingly, in our effort to analyse the image of a tourist destination, we review three models: Beerli and Martin's (2004a) global view of the image, with its focus on the cognitive and functional dimensions; Hosany et al.'s (2007) in-depth consideration of the affective and psychological dimensions; and Qu et al.'s (2011) study of the unique dimension. By connecting these three models, the main objectives of the research are: (1) to define a global model of how the image of a tourist destination is formed; (2) to add new relations to the model. According to Zhang et al. (2014), the destination image has an impact on tourist loyalty, to varying degrees. They found that all image dimensions had significant effects on attitudinal loyalty, behavioural loyalty and composite loyalty. Specifically, overall image has the greatest impact on tourist loyalty, followed by affective image and cognitive image. Of the three levels of tourist loyalty, destination image has the greatest impact on composite loyalty, and then on attitudinal loyalty and behavioural loyalty, in that order. This supports the proposition that destination image not only directly impacts tourist loyalty, but also exerts indirect influences through the mediation of other factors.

In the model that we propose, in line with Zhang et al. (2014), we analyse the relation between the intention to visit (behavioural loyalty) and the intention to recommend (attitudinal loyalty). Furthermore, we seek to analyse if behavioural loyalty can influence attitudinal loyalty. We incorporated the part of Zhang et al. (2014)´s model that explains that the overall image influences the intention to recommend and to visit the destination. Because we would aim to analyse if the visit intention is not only influenced by the overall destination image but also by the intention to recommend this destination, which is something that the previous literature has not addressed yet.

### *3.2. Internet, social media and user-generated content (UGC)*

The Internet plays a vital role in the travel industry. In fact, online content is a primary source of travel information. Travel businesses connect with consumers through online marketing, social media, travel apps, search engines and booking platforms (Tourism Economics, 2013). mNearly half (46%) of individuals aged 16 to 74 used the Internet for social networking, for example using sites such as Facebook or Twitter (Eurostat, 2015).

In accordance with Internet uses, tourists often search for information on the Internet to gain valuable travel information from other users' experiences and reviews on social media sites (Chung and Koo, 2015). For these reasons, it is convenient to consider the different typologies of information sources, available through the Internet, as influencers in the process of forming a destination's image.

## 4. Method

### *4.1. Hypothesis formulation*

The process of formulating the hypothesis is complex. First we revise each dimension involved in the process of forming a destination's image and their indicators,

as well as the role of UGC in this process. Based on the literature, we then explain the dimensions analysed – information sources; motivation; cognitive, affective and unique images; visit intention; recommendation intention – and their constructs. Finally, we propose a model with their relations.

*4.1.1. Sources of information*

Tourists consult varied information sources while engaging in the decision process to plan their trip. Information obtained through previous experience also influences the perceived image (Beerli and Martin, 2004b). Seabra et al. (2007) and Lookinside Travel (2012) provide an adequate classification of the different sources of information to consider. Furthermore, different Web platforms are used to disseminate tourism content, as we have explained in the introduction. In the literature consulted on the formation of a destination image, there was no reference made to the empiric relation between information sources and motivations. However, reviewing the scientific corpus of marketing and persuasive communication, it was found that persuasive messages had been used to try to change behaviour (Kotler et al., 2010) and therefore had an impact on motivation (Wood, 1982).

Based on the above, hypothesis 1 has been proposed regarding the influence of information sources on the formation of cognitive, affective and unique images, and the influence of information sources on the motivations to travel to a destination.

Information sources, cognitive, affective and unique images are latent variables. To establish the constructs used in our subsequent analysis, we conduct several multivariate statistical techniques, including exploratory factor analysis and first and second-order confirmatory factor analysis, for each latent variable. We could establish the weight of each type of information source in the formation of the latent variable “information sources” but we did not analyse the influence of each type of information source type over each type of image.

Hypothesis H1A. Information sources influence the formation of the cognitive image.

Hypothesis H1B. Information sources influence the formation of the affective image.

Hypothesis H1C. Information sources influence the formation of the unique image.

*4.1.2. Motivations*

Motivations have been defined as psychological factors that influence the cognitive organization of environmental perceptions and resulting tourist behaviour (Beerli and Martin, 2004b). In this sense, the tourism literature clearly shows that when an individual makes the decision to travel, this is influenced by several motives or reasons.

Motivations are a dynamic concept and can vary according to the person or market segment (Kozak, 2002). One way to understand the motivations is Crompton’s push and pull model (1979). The push motivations explain the desire to travel, while pull motivations explain the choice of destination. Crompton (1979) proposed seven socio-psychological push motivations (avoidance, knowing yourself, relaxation, prestige, regression, relationship and social interaction) and two cultural pull motives (novelty and education). Uysal and Jurowski (1994) summarized internal motivations (push) and external (pull) to travel. Internal motivations include the desire to flee, rest, prestige, health and physical care, adventure and social interaction. External motivations are based on the attractiveness of the destination, including tangible resources (beaches, recreational

activities and cultural attractions) and the perceptions and expectations of travellers (novelty, profit expectations and image marketing). In other studies, some authors have referred to purchases as motivations for visiting a destination (Sirakaya et al., 2003). Oh et al. (1995) consider that, in addition to shopping, the image of the destination, food and security are also important factors.

With hypothesis H1D, we want to analyse if information sources can exert some influence over the formation of motivations for visiting a place:

Hypothesis H1D. Information sources influence motivations.

Goossens (2000) has provided an integrated conceptual model that includes motivational and emotional aspects of the tourism destination image and how these relationships influence the decision-making process. Other research has been aimed at analysing how motivation has a direct influence on the affective component of the image (Beerli and Martin, 2004b). Particularly, Beerli and Martin (2004b) evaluated the relationship between the perceived image and motivations of tourists.

Different indicators are used in the literature to assess the construct "motivation". This research draws on the motivations used in the residential tourism survey conducted by UIB (University of the Balearic Islands), the results of which were published by Campo-Martínez et al. (2010). In addition, we add the general motivation that is taken into account in the PITIB 2012 (relax, discover, enjoy, learn, know) and those defined by Lookinside Travel (2012).

Based on the above, we propose hypothesis 2: motivations influence the formation of cognitive, affective and unique images as follows:

Hypothesis H2A. Motivations influence the formation of the cognitive image.

Hypothesis H2B. Motivations influence the formation of the affective image.

Hypothesis H2C. Motivations influence the formation of the unique image.

*4.1.3. Cognitive, affective, unique and overall images*

Qu et al. (2011) proposed that the destination image is a multi-dimensional construct, influenced by the cognitive, affective and unique images that collectively affect tourist behaviours. Overall, the results showed that destination image plays a mediating role between the three image components of brand association and behavioural intentions. A strong and distinctive destination image should not only be a goal of branding practices in capturing consumers' attention but also a mediator to influence consumer behaviours directly related to the success of the tourist destinations. Therefore, Qu et al. (2011) advise that in the competitive tourism market, tourist destinations must establish a positive and strong brand image, derived from the cognitive, affective and unique image associations, to increase repeat visitors and to attract new tourists to the destination.

Regarding the cognitive image, previous studies (e.g. Beerli and Martin, 2004a; Qu et al., 2011) show no consensus on the attributes used to measure it; each of them use different terminology to describe similar concepts. However, some researchers like Qu et al. (2011) agree on perceived quality as a part of the formation of the cognitive image. In regard to the affective image, there seems to be a consensus on the use of the affective attributes relating to personality and image and the measurement scales considered in different works (Hosany et al., 2007; Murphy et al., 2007). For our

research, the affective attributes have been selected based on the model proposed by Hosany et al. (2007). Finally, with respect to the unique image, the attributes used in this research correspond to those proposed in the PITIB (2012). We have also added other attributes, used in tourist promotions conducted on Majorca, and some of the terms most commonly used on search engines for searches about Majorca, such as “rural farms to stay” (to be checked with Google Global Market Finder from December 2012 - January 2013). We have also considered rural farms, visits to vineyards and wineries and oil mills, promoted by the Balearic Islands Government. There is a large consensus regarding the cognitive image, namely that it has a strong influence on the affective image (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Beerli and Martin, 2004a). Qu et al. (2011) note how the unique image also contributes to the formation of the overall image. Note that in this research what is tested is whether the unique image also exerts an influence on the affective image. In response to this, the following assumptions are made for hypothesis 3: affective image is influenced by cognitive and unique images, and the overall image is influenced by cognitive, affective and unique images.

Hypothesis H3A. The cognitive image influences the formation of the affective image.

Hypothesis H3B. The unique image influences the formation of the affective image.

Hypothesis H3C. The cognitive image influences the perceived overall image.

Hypothesis H3D. The affective image influences the formation of the perceived overall image.

Hypothesis H3E. The unique image influences the formation of the perceived overall image.

*4.1.4. Intention to visit and recommendation*

If individuals positively perceive the overall image of the destination, this influences the intention to visit and recommend it (e.g. Campo-Martínez et al., 2010; Qu et al., 2011), thereby influencing their decision to buy. According to Jalilvand et al. (2015) the construction of a suitable image for a destination will determine its capacity to attract and retain tourists.

Given that the affective component is significant in creating a holistic image of a destination, which in turn positively affects intention to revisit, managers need to be able to transform external experiences related to a destination into an internal emotional effect and should also use communications that emphasize affective impulses of images (Stylos et al., 2016).

Here the aim is to determine if the intention to visit the island influences the intention to recommend it. Based on the above, we formulate the following hypothesis 4: the overall image influences the intention to visit and recommend and the intention to visit influences the intention to recommend.

Hypothesis H4A. The overall image influences the intention to visit.

Hypothesis H4B. The overall image influences the intention to recommend.

Hypothesis H4C. The intention to visit the destination influences the intention to recommend it.

The model proposed is the summary of all the hypotheses proposed. The Figure 1 present the model proposed with the contrast of hypotheses.

### *4.2. Research. Design, methodology and composition of the sample*

An online questionnaire was used to carry

out the research. The sample consisted of actual Internet users. This was important, as varied web platforms as an information source were an important part of our model. For the empirical investigation, the formation of Majorca's image as a destination was used. This is a mature tourist destination, for which the main type of tourism is sun and sand. In recent years, the competent authorities have sought to diversify the tourism offer. To measure the relations between variables, scales of latent variables were created, observing explicit indicators, following the work of previous researchers like Baloglu and McCleary (1999), Gartner (1993), Hosany et al. (2007), Beerli and Martin (2004a) and Qu et al. (2011). To measure the attributes of the image, most of these researchers used the Likert scale and multivariate analysis in their methodologies. Following these methodologies, for this particular research, a multivariate analysis was used for information sources, motivations, cognitive image, affective image, unique image, overall image, visit intention and recommendation intention, and it was measured using a Likert scale (1-5 points).

The resulting sample consisted of 541 valid surveys which were gathered between 19 March and 2 May 2013. The population included international and national tourists as well as residents of Majorca and the sample unit was a population of Internet surfers over 18 years of age. The level of confidence was 95% for a sample error of 4.21% . In this paper, the complete model for the process of destination image formation is presented, but in other studies we would like to analyse several segments using the same field work. For this reason, the sample was divided into international and national tourists as well as residents of Majorca. This division takes into account the findings of Schroeder (1996), who explained that the image that a host population had of its home area was important, because it could influence the organic image developed among potential visitors through the information provided by host residents to friends, relatives and business associates.

The segments of people considered were those who resided in Majorca (23.8%), in Spain but not Majorca (34.4%) and outside Spain (41.8%). 28.7% did not know any residents. 68.25% had visited Majorca. 13.3% were between 14 and 24 years of age, 61.9% between 25 and 44, 20.9% between 45 and 64, and 3.9% were over 65. 46% were men and 54% were women. In terms of gross family income: 20.9% had an income of €15,000; 27.7% had an income of between €15,001 and €30,000; 21.3% had an income of between €30,001 and €45,000; 13.9% had an income of between €45,001 and €60,000; and the rest (16.3%) had an income of over €60,000.

## 5. Findings

To verify the hypotheses, an exploratory factor analysis was performed first, which allowed the underlying structure to be identified and the information gathered from the information source, motivation and cognitive, affective and unique image constructs to be condensed. Their dimensionality was analysed by means of an exploratory factor analysis of the data using maximum likelihood extraction with direct oblimin rotation (Hair, Anderson and Tatham, 1999). In accordance with the approach, a first-order confirmatory factor analysis was carried out. In order to ensure convergent validity, those items whose load factors were not significant or less than 0.50 were eliminated (Bagozzi and Baumgartner, 1994) as well as those for which the Lagrange Multiplier Test suggested significant relationships regarding a distinct factor of which they were indicators (Hatcher, 1994).

Before realizing the hypotheses contrast that we propose, we analysed psychometric properties of each instrument of measured. All the variables are latent variables, and in some cases they are a second-ordered latent variables. In this research we are working reflective constructs. Each construct is measured by several indicators. We have following the process defined by Ulaga and Eggert (2005). The first step was the validation of latent variables. A confirmatory factor analysis of the latent variables was performed, the scale of measurement for which was described earlier through EQS 6.1 and by using maximum likelihood estimation. In order to guarantee convergent validity, those items with factor loads that were not significant or below 0.60 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988), or those for which the Lagrange multiplier test suggested significant relations with a different factor other than the one for which they were indicators were eliminated.

In relation to reliability, we consider that all $\alpha$ de Cronbach were major than 0.7, the value recommended by Churchill (1979). This coefficient assumes that the items are measured without error, it is not plausible, it tends to underestimate reliability (Bollen, 1989). For this reason we also calculated composite reliability index, we consider, too, 0.7 value for all factors as a superior value recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981). We consider average variance extracted (AVE), that is an indicator calculated to assess the amount of variance captured by factors in relation to variance attributable to measurement error (Fornell and Lacker, 1981).

Finally, in order to confirm the existence of multi-dimensionality, in the different constructs, a rival models strategy was developed (Hair et al., 1998; Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). For this, we compared a second-order model in which various dimensions measured the multi-dimensional construct under consideration, with a first-order model in which all the items weighed on a single factor (Steenkamp and Van Trijp, 1991). The results showed that the second-order model was a much better fit than the first-order model.

TABLE 1. CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS OF THE SCALE SOURCES OF INFORMATION

| Latent Variable | Variable measurement | Item | | Standardized Lamda | $R^2$ | α Cronbach | FC | AVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| INFORMATION SOURCES | INDUCED (FINFO1) | INF01 | Official sources of tourist information | .615 | .379 | .894 | .939 | .510 |
| | | INF02 | Suppliers | .631 | .398 | | | |
| | | INF03 | Intermediaries | .617 | .381 | | | |
| | | INF04 | Media specializing in tourism | .704 | .496 | | | |
| | | INF05 | Media specializing in areas of thematic interest | .705 | .498 | | | |
| | AUTONOMOUS AND INDUCED (ADVERTISING) (FINFO2) | INF06 | Books | DELETED | | | | |
| | | INF07 | Travel guides | .675 | .455 | | | |
| | | INF08 | Documentaries | .710 | .504 | | | |
| | | INF09 | Films and TV series | DELETED | | | | |
| | | INF10 | Advertising | .653 | .427 | | | |
| | | INF11 | Fairs | DELETED | | | | |
| | | INF13 | Friends and acquaintances | DELETED | | | | |
| | | INF15 | Internet | DELETED | | | | |
| | OPINION LEADERS (FINFO3) | INF14 | Opinion leaders | .894 | .800 | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | WEBS OF THE DESTINATION, INTERMEDIARIES AND MEDIA (FINFO4) | WEB02 | Official tourist information | .671 | .450 | | | |
| | | WEB03 | Unofficial tourist information | .790 | .624 | | | |
| | | WEB04 | Intermediaries | .580 | .336 | | | |
| | | WEB05 | Suppliers | DELETED | | | | |
| | | WEB10 | House swapping portals | DELETED | | | | |
| | | WEB11 | Tourist accommodation letting | DELETED | | | | |
| | | WEB12 | Hotel reservations | DELETED | | | | |
| | | WEB06 | Assessments by users | DELETED | | | | |
| | WEB UGC (FINFO5) | WEB07 | Tourism blogs | .770 | .593 | | | |
| | | WEB08 | General social networks | .649 | .421 | | | |
| | | WEB09 | Social networks specialized in tourism | .869 | .755 | | | |
| | | WEB13 | Tourist activities | DELETED | | | | |
| | | WEB14 | Sharing photos | DELETED | | | | |
| | | WEB15 | Sharing videos | DELETED | | | | |
| | | WEB16 | Forums | DELETED | | | | |
| | | WEB17 | Traveler hospitality | .752 | .566 | | | |
| | | WEB18 | Letting private houses | DELETED | | | | |
| | | WEB19 | Maps | DELETED | | | | |
| GOODNESS OF FIT: $X^2$ = 427.387 (95) p< (0,001); S-B$X^2$ = 336.125; BBNFI =0,91; BBNNFI = 0,910 | | | | CFI = 0.929; GFI = 0,905; AGFI = 0,864; RMSEA = 0,080 | | | | |

The results like different resulting models, show that de Chi-squared value is significant, although, when the size of the sample is large (N>200), the test tends to reject models which fit the data well, which makes it an unreliable indicator (James, Mulaik and Brett, 1982). The rest of the specific indicators show goodness of fit for all the constructs (BBNFI; BBNNFI; CFI; IFI, AGFI and RMSEA). For example, the construct information sources (Table 1) the indicators show a goodness of fit are BBNFI (0.911), BBNNFI (0.910), CFI (0.929), GFI (0.905), AGFI (0.864), RMSEA (0.080).

For example, the confirmatory factor analysis of the sources of information scale (Table 1) shows how “opinion leaders” is the item with the most weight (Lamda 0.894), followed by “social networks specialized in tourism” (0.869). This means that a new source of information (UGC) has been added to the construct information sources, and fits well. Furthermore, platforms on which the content is user-generated are as influential as traditional sources.

VALIDITY

| Factor | Indicator | Load | Valor t | α Cronbach | Reliability Composed | AVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| INFORMATION SOURCES | FINFO1 | 0.843 | 14.83 | 0.8197 | 0.8723 | 0.5788 |
| | FINFO2 | 0.790 | 13.74 | | | |
| | FINFO3 | 0.874 | 7.05 | | | |
| | FINFO4 | 0.787 | 11.44 | | | |
| | FINFO5 | 0.729 | 8.45 | | | |
| MOTIVATIONS | MOTI1 | 0.617 | 21.15 | 0.7534 | 0.8420 | 0.5757 |
| | MOTI2 | 0.884 | 21.14 | | | |
| | MOTI3 | 0.631 | 9.49 | | | |
| | MOTI4 | 0.675 | 14.83 | | | |
| COGNITIVE IMAGE | IMCOG1 | 0.781 | 21.15 | 0.7553 | 0.8448 | 0.5771 |
| | IMCOG2 | 0.733 | 19.24 | | | |
| | IMCOG3 | 0.704 | 16.89 | | | |
| | IMCOG4 | 0.816 | 22.28 | | | |
| UNIQUE IMAGE | IMUNI1 | 0.874 | 21.79 | 0.7951 | 0.8796 | 0.7090 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | IMUNI2 | 0.843 | 18.51 | | | |
| | IMUNI3 | 0.898 | 16.79 | | | |
| AFFECTIVE IMAGE | IMAFEC1 | 0.781 | 30.34 | 0.8617 | 0.9062 | 0.7073 |
| | IMAFEC2 | 0.733 | 34.14 | | | |
| | IMAFEC3 | 0.704 | 37.63 | | | |
| | IMAFEC4 | 0.816 | 38.80 | | | |
| IMAGE ****** | N.A | N.A | N.A | N.A | N.A | N.A |
| RECOMENDATION ****** | N.A | N.A | N.A | N.A | N.A | N.A |
| VISIT INTENTION****** | N.A | N.A | N.A | N.A | N.A | N.A |

*** p< .01; ** p< .05; * p< .10 N/A = Not Applicable ****** These variables were measured by a single item

The model (Figure 1) was estimated using SmartPLS2.0 (Ringle et al., 2005), and the significance of the parameters was established using a bootstrap re-sampling procedure with 541 sub-samples, equal to the size of the original sample. We provide the results of the structural model in Table 4. To guarantee convergent validity, we eliminated indicators whose factor loadings did not have a significance of at least 0.6. The resulting model indicated no reliability problems (Table 2) according to any of the well-establish criteria: Cronbach's alpha, ($\alpha$ > 0.7, Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994); compound reliability (> 0.6, Bagozzi and Yi, 1988; Fornell and Larcker, 1981) and average variance extracted (> 0.5, Fornell and Larcker, 1981). To evaluate discriminant validity (Table 3), we considered the only criterion that is applicable in a PLS estimation, namely, the one that indicates the average variance extracted for each factor, which must be greater than the square of the correlation between each pair of factors (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

TABLE 3. INSTRUMENT OF MEASUREMENT FOR DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY

| | I SOURCES | AFFECTIVE I | COGNITIVE I | UNIQUE I | IIMAGE | MOTIVATIONS | VISIT I | RECOMMENDATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| INFORMATION SOURCES | 0,7140 | | | | | | | |
| AFFECTIVE IMAGE | 0,3655 | 0,7660 | | | | | | |
| COGNITIVE IMAGE | 0,3131 | 0,7359 | 0,7170 | | | | | |
| UNIQUE IMAGE | 0,3081 | 0,5040 | 0,5967 | 0,7960 | | | | |
| IMAGE | 0,2162 | 0,5747 | 0,4869 | 0,3113 | N.A | | | |
| MOTIVATIONS | 0,4041 | 0,5917 | 0,5242 | 0,4233 | 0,4292 | 0,7190 | | |
| VISIT INTENTION | 0,2325 | 0,4482 | 0,3743 | 0,2504 | 0,5237 | 0,4145 | N.A | |
| RECOMMENDATION | 0,2186 | 0,5595 | 0,4720 | 0,3527 | 0,6560 | 0,4885 | 0,4996 | N.A |

Notes: Below the diagonal are the estimated correlations between factors. On the diagonal are the square roots of the average variances extracted. N.A.: Not Applicable

To assess the predictive capacity of the structural model, the criteria proposed by Falk and Miller (1992) were followed: the R-squared of each dependent construct had to be greater than 0.1. In Table 2, the corresponding values are shown and the relationships of the hypotheses can be observed. The results obtained indicate, first, how the direct effects more intense are given by the importance that present the cognitive image over the formations of the affective image $\beta$ = 0,554; p<0,01; hypothesis H3A). Previous research from Baloglu and McCleary (1999) presents similar results. In this sense it is important first to know the destination, their characteristics and functional attributes before to develop some feeling to the destination.

Second, overall image that a person has over a tourist destination exert an influence over the intention to visit it ($\beta$ = 0,524; p<0,01, hypothesis H4A). This result coincides with the

research of Qu et al. (2011) who shows the importance that the overall image perceived by an individual has over his behaviour.

FIGURE 1. HYPOTHESIS' CONTRAST OF THE MODEL OF THE FORMATION OF THE IMAGE OF A TOURIST DESTINATION.

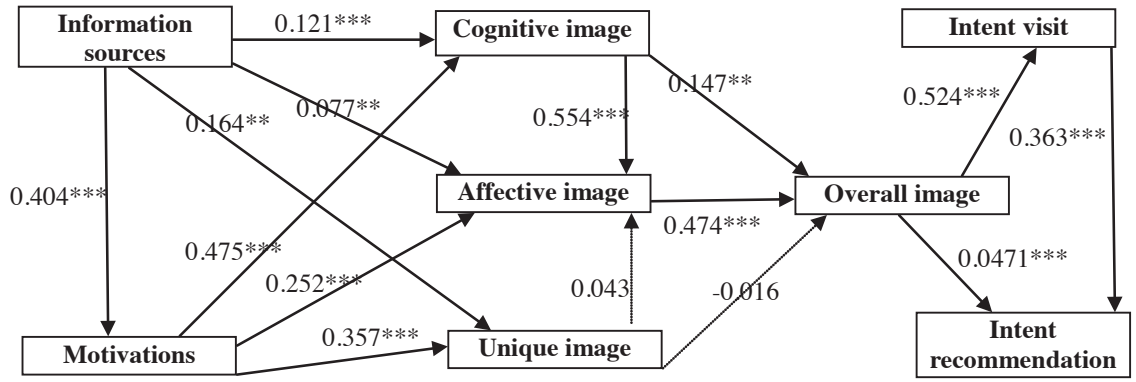


TABLE 4. CONTRAST OF HYPOTHESES

| Hypotheses | β standardized | Valor t Bootstrap |
|---|---|---|
| H1A I. SOURCES ⇒ COGNITIVE I. | 0.121*** | 2.794 |
| H1B I. SOURCES. ⇒ AFFECTIVE I. | 0.077** | 2.376 |
| H1C I. SOURCES. ⇒ UNIQUE I. | 0.164*** | 3.849 |
| H1D I. SOURCES ⇒ MOTIVATIONS | 0.404*** | 10.253 |
| H2A MOTIVATIONS. ⇒ COGNITIVE I. | 0.475*** | 12.338 |
| H2B MOTIVATIONS ⇒ AFFECTIVE I. | 0.252*** | 6.527 |
| H2C MOTIVATIONS ⇒ UNIQUE I. | 0.357*** | 8.426 |
| H3A COGNITIVE I. ⇒ AFFECTIVE I. | 0.554*** | 14.680 |
| H3B UNIQUE I. ⇒ AFFECTIVE I. | 0.043 | 1.221 |
| H3C COGNITIVE I. ⇒ OVERALL I. | 0.147** | 2.225 |
| H3D AFFECTIVE I. ⇒ OVERALL I. | 0.474*** | 9.015 |
| H3E UNIQUE I. ⇒ OVERALL I. | -0.016 | -0.320 |
| H4A OVERALL I. ⇒ INTENT VISIT | 0.524*** | 14.748 |
| H4B OVERALL I. ⇒ I. RECOMMENDATION | 0.471*** | 11.514 |
| H4C I. VISIT ⇒ I. RECOMMENDATION | 0.363*** | 7.850 |
| *** p< .01; ** p< .05; * p< .10<br>$R^2$ Motivation= 0.163, $R^2$ Unique image = 0.202, $R^2$ Affective image = 0.607, $R^2$ Cognitive image= 0.287<br>$R^2$ Overall image= 0.339, $R^2$ I. Recommendation = 0.521, $R^2$ Intent visit= 0.274 | | |

Third, it is confirmed the exert of motivations over the cognitive image (β = 0,475; p<0,01, hypothesis H2A). Likewise, we can confirm that affective image exerts an influence over the overall image (β = 0,474; p<0,01, hypothesis H3D). Beerli and Martin (2004) treated motivations as a part of personal factors, and as a part of those, they have a great influence over the formation of cognitive image of the tourist destination. So, motivations that incise on a realize a journey, influence the individual perception about the tourism destination, concretely, the way that functional attributes and the quality of destination is perceived like explain Baloglu and McCleary (1999).

Fourth, and with similar values, the results manifest that overall image exert the intention of recommendation (β= 0,471; p<0,01 hypothesis H4B). In this case, it appears again how the image perception of a tourist destination influences the development of the behaviour related to visit a place, like Keller et al. (2011) demonstrated.

On the next level, it is confirmed that information sources that tourist consult exert an influence over the motivations for visiting the place (β= 0,404; p<0,01 hypothesi H1D). This relation has not been contemplated in the models revised related to the tourist destination image. But some works realized in the marketing and communication spheres recognise the existence of a positive relation between information sources and motivations for developing a concrete behaviour (Kotler et al., 2010).

Later the intention to visit a place influences the intention to recommend it (β= 0,363; p<0,01, hypothesis H4C). So, we can observe that the two dimensions that conform loyalty are interrelated. When a tourist decides to visit a place has the ability to influence other persons recommending it. With this result we can completed the model of Zhang et al. (2014). As a novelty with this result we can prove that behavioural loyalty (visit) can influence attitudinal loyalty (recommend).

Following on, motivations influence the unique image perceived by the tourist (β= 0,357; p<0,01, hypothesis H2C) and the affective image (β=0,252; p<0,01, hypothesis H2B). Like motivations exert an influence over cognitive image, as we can demonstrate with H2A, they have an inferior influence over the unique image. So DMO, can base its communication strategy offering information about functional characteristics, unique characteristics and psychological attributes of the destination. For example, if there are tourist information about a famous artist of the region could be a motivation visit the region for knowing the heritage in general and of this artist concretely, taking in account the feelings associated.

It should be noted that although the weight coefficients presented by Beta within the model are relatively low, the H1C, H1A and H1B hypotheses are confirmed. So, it shows how the sources of information have a direct effect on the unique image (β= 0.164; p <0.01, hypothesis, H1C), cognitive image (β= 0.121; p <0.01, hypothesis H1A) and affective image (β= 0.077; p <0.05, hypothesis H1B) that the tourist perceives about the destination.

Finally, we demonstrate that cognitive image exert an influence on the overall image of the destination, but with a low Beta coefficient (β=0,147; p<0,05, hypothesis H3C). These results are consistent with those obtained by Qu et al. (2011).

On the other hand, and contrary to the expectations, the results do not confirm the relationship between the unique image and affective image (p <0.01, β= 0.043, hypothesis H3B) and the unique image and overall image (β= -0.016; p <0 01, hypothesis H3E.) Thus, H3B and H3E hypotheses are rejected. In the model proposed in this research, the unique image is treated as a special characteristics similar to cognitive image but exclusively associated with the destination. Unique attributes maybe can confuse it with functional attributes. Or it is possible that being Majorca a sun-and-sand destination, with multiple competitors, the unique image was not consolidated as the unique image of a Native American/ Old West cultures in USA proposed in the research of Qu et al. (2011).

## 4. Conclusions and discussion

Social media can influence consumer behaviour because all kinds of websites are consulted as sources of information in the decision-making process of planning a trip. All information sources carry a high degree of weight in the process of forming an image of a tourist destination. Induced information sources carry greater weight, i.e. those belonging to the DMO, suppliers and intermediaries. Therefore it is advisable to spread content about the destination not only on official sites but also through suppliers and intermediaries, including their websites, with images that the DMO really wants to project and in accordance with the marketing plan. To achieve this, it is convenient to disseminate content and images owned by DMO using Creative Commons or Copy Left licenses.

In summary, it is important to keep in mind the main ways in which someone decides to visit or recommend a destination. All information sources, including Web 2.0 and UGC, influence motivations. Motivations exert an influence on knowing about the territory. For the first time, we have demonstrated this relationship, and it is stronger than the relation between information sources and cognitive, affective and unique images. Knowing about a place exerts an influence on the feelings about this place. The feelings about a place, it is to say the affective image, are those that exert the most influence over the overall image. The overall image very positively influences consumer behaviour, the intention to visit and recommend, and, as a result, loyalty to the destination. Once again, for the first time, we have been able to demonstrate that the intention to visit influences the intention to recommend.

We recommend that DMO implement viral marketing actions, inviting those who have the intention of visiting the destination to convince a companion to travel with them. To attract visitors, we recommend maximizing cognitive and unique images and using suppliers' and intermediaries' websites as opinion leaders. It is also advised to emphasize affective attributes and motivations associated with the best-rated variables. In summary, first, knowledge has to be spread about the place, and then the emotions associated with motivations for visiting it.

In terms of further research, it would be interesting to analyse what kind of image and content are shared by a destination through intermediary and supplier websites and social media and how this can modify or enrich the image projected by the DMO.

The results of our research are similar to those of previous research. Cognitive and affective images influence overall image, and overall image influences the intention to visit a destination and the intention to recommend it, as proven by Qu et al. (2011).

Our results concur with those of Beerli and Martin (2004a), proving that information sources and motivations influence the formation of the cognitive, affective and unique image, and the cognitive image influences the affective image. Just as Baloglu and McCleary (1999) explained, perceptual/cognitive evaluations significantly influence affective and overall image evaluations.

For the first time we have proposed and can demonstrate that information sources influence motivations, and the intention to visit a destination influences the intention to recommend it. It would be interesting to carry out similar studies to bear out these findings.

## 5. Limitations and Future Research

We cannot demonstrate that the unique image influences overall image, as proven

by Qu et al. (2011). We think it could be interesting for future research to revise the scale items for the unique image's latent variables, that is to say, those characteristics that really make a destination different and which can comprise its unique image.

As the Internet evolves quickly, we propose that future research revise the scale of information sources as a latent variable, concretely, those items about Internet and web platforms. For example, mobile apps and new services such as Instagram, Pinterest, Periscope or game apps like Pokemon Go Pro could be included.

Finally, we propose a complete model of the process of forming the image of a tourist destination, based on preceding models. We suggest that future research check the validity of the entire model proposed in this article.

## 6. Managerial Implications

DMO has to observe the evolution of uses of Internet applications by users and the implications in tourism. Each new app can be a new tourism information source and can influence the perception of the destination. So, the DMO would have to integrate UGC in their marketing strategies.

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