

Measuring island destination image: A review of attributes and dimensions determining perceived destination image

ANDREIA NICOLE PEREIRA CARVALHO^{1,2}, MARIA JOÃO CARNEIRO¹ & ELISABETH KASTENHOLZ¹

¹Research Unit on Governance, Competitiveness and Public Policies (GOVCOPP), Department of Economics, Management, Industrial Engineering and Tourism (DEGEIT), University of Aveiro; ²CI-ISAL

Contacting author: andreia.carvalho@isal.pt

Keywords | Destination image, Destination attributes, Destination marketing, Island studies, Measurement.

Objectives | Islands are complex physical and psychological spaces. Their ambivalent character, full of contradictory representations (Baldacchino, 2005; Baldacchino, 2007; Gillis, 2004; Luo & Grydehøj, 2017; Ronström, 2009), makes them unique and compelling destinations. On the one hand, islands have always been a source of fascination in human and literary imagination, having frequently been represented in the tourism imaginary as romantic idylls, the ideal places for finding paradise and utopia (Gillis, 2003; Harrison, 2004; Stephanides & Bassnett, 2008), the perfect getaways for those who desire to escape from routine in a remote destination (Almeida, Correia & Pimpão, 2013; Kearns & Coleman, 2018). On the other hand, their limited size, isolation, scarcity of resources and vulnerability to natural disasters present massive challenges to their sustainability (Gössling and Wall, 2006; Graci & Maher, 2018; Luo and Grydehøj, 2017; Royle and Brinklow, 2018; Russell and Kueffer, 2019). Therefore, identifying the attributes that determine the images that visitors have of these destinations is of major importance to ensure appropriate marketing strategies and competitive positioning of tourism destinations. Although many studies have been carried out on destination image, little is known about destination attributes that have a key role in shaping the image of island destinations. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to conduct a literature review involving an in-depth content analysis, to identify attributes and dimensions that determine tourists' perceptions of such territories and discuss practical implications for island destination marketing. The analysis of such attributes allows the development of a comprehensive scale that permits measuring island destination image considering the scales that have already been used, as well as the peculiarities of island destinations. Furthermore, this study reveals potentialities and challenges that should be considered when marketing island destinations.

Methodology | This study is based on a literature review of articles, book chapters and conference papers on island destination image, aiming at the identification of attributes and

dimensions determining the perceived destination image of islands. Documents were identified via Scopus, permitting access to relevant academic content and a wide range of research results. A combination of the terms 'island*' and 'destination image' led to the identification of 107 documents from different subject areas. Subsequently, these documents were screened and only articles, reviews, and conference papers making a reference to attributes and/or dimensions used for assessing island destination image were selected for analysis. From the initial selection, only 45 documents were analysed, as several of the initially selected documents were unavailable (15), not relevant to the topic (5), corresponded to an erratum (1), or did not analyse attributes and/or dimensions in the measurement of island destination image (41).

Main results and contribution | The results show that the perceived image of island destinations is highly shaped by dimensions such as accessibility, attractions, climate, gastronomy, infrastructures, hospitality (friendly atmosphere) and safety. Furthermore, entertainment, relaxation and escape also play an important role in the perceived island destination image. Additionally, the abundance of water sports, beaches, natural resources and opportunities for adventure represent compelling attributes that draw tourists to the islands. These results contribute to a better understanding of the nature, structure and specific content of island destination image, aiding in the design of respective measurement scales and the definition of promotion strategies for island destinations.

Limitations | A limitation of this review lies in only identifying documents based on Scopus. Future studies may additionally select documents based on other scientific publication bases. Being a conceptual paper, attributes and dimensions to measure a destination image were identified. A future empirical study would offer the opportunity to validate a measurement scale for island destinations. In this context, it would be relevant to discuss the impact of the perceived image of island destinations on tourists' behavioural intentions and destination loyalty.

Conclusions | The results obtained contribute to a better understanding of the attributes that should be highlighted in the promotion strategy of island destinations, and that should be considered when designing scales for measuring images of such territories, namely their natural landscapes, adventure activities, pleasant weather, and exoticism. Therefore, promoting such attributes in order to shape tourists' perceived image of island destinations, while exploring their potentialities and overcoming their barriers, contributes to the successful marketing of such destinations.

Acknowledgements | This work was financially supported by the research unit on Governance, Competitiveness and Public Policy (UIDB/04058/2020)+(UIDP/04058/2020), funded by national funds through FCT - Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia.

References

- Almeida, A. M. M., Correia, A., & Pimpão, A. (2013). Segmentation by benefits sought: the case of rural tourism in Madeira. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 17(9), 813–831. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2013.768605>
- Baldacchino, G. (2005). Editorial: Islands — Objects of Representation. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 87(4), 247–251. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0435-3684.2005.00196.x>
- Baldacchino, G. (2007). Islands as Novelty Sites. *Geographical Review*, 97(2), 165–174. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1931-0846.2007.tb00396.x>
- Gillis, J. R. (2003). Taking history offshore – Atlantic islands in European minds, 1400-1800. In Edmond, R., & Smith, V. (2003). *Islands in History and Representation*. Routledge.
- Gillis, J. R. (2004). *Islands of the Mind: How the Human Imagination Created the Atlantic World*. New York Palgrave Macmillan.
- Harrison, D. (2004). Tourism in the pacific islands. *Journal of Pacific Studies*, 26(1–2), 1–28.
- Kearns, R. & Coleman, T. (2018). Health and Wellbeing. In Baldacchino, G. (2018). *The Routledge International Handbook of Island Studies: A World of Islands*. Routledge.
- Luo, B., & Grydehøj, A. (2017). Sacred islands and island symbolism in Ancient and Imperial China: an exercise in decolonial island studies. *Island Studies Journal*, 12(2), 25–44. <https://doi.org/10.24043/isj.19>
- Ronström, O. (2009). Island Words, Island Worlds: The Origins and Meanings of Words for “Islands” in North-West Europe. *Island Studies Journal*, 4(2), 163–182. <https://doi.org/10.24043/isj.233>
- Stephanides, S., & Bassnett, S. (2008). Islands, Literature, and Cultural Translatability. *Transtext(E)S Transcultures, Hors série*, 5–21. <https://doi.org/10.4000/transtexts.212>