

6 Exploring the senses from the visitors' perspectives of the Cape Verde Islands

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The objectives of this chapter are to:

- Explain how sensory marketing offers an interesting approach by which to leverage island tourism;
- Highlight research aimed at understanding how the sensorial experience is being perceived by visitors;
- Demonstrate how online reviews published on TripAdvisor for hotels, attractions and restaurants were used in identifying visitors' perspectives;
- Highlight results that show visual sense with a focus on beach, sea, sand, water and green work. Although both auditory and olfactory senses of sea and water are not so explicit in the tourist reviews, they still engrained in visitors' comments.

Keywords: Island tourism; sensory marketing; tourist experience; online reviews.

Introduction

Jafar Jafari stated in 1974 that at that time almost every nation in the world realized the potential and importance of tourism as an economic and prosperous industry (Jafari, 1974). Although islands suffer from general scarcity and difficult access to resources, they are also usually attractive as they are associated with the image of granting unique and exclusive destination experiences to tourists who visit (Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012), thus emphasizing the importance of studying tourists' experiences in islands.

Senses are one of the dimensions of customer experience (Schmitt, 1999). Schmitt (1999) argued that as a tactical and powerful strategy tool, sensory marketing can add value, differentiate tourism products as well as motivate tourism customers. Sensory marketing research is still very emergent (Hultén et al., 2009; Krishna, 2010; Lindstrom, 2005), being even more recent the study of sensory dimension in tourist experience (Agapito et al., 2013). The review of the literature on sensory experience in tourism suggests that this is still an understudied subject. The role of the five senses for the tourist experience was previously researched in urban and nature destinations (Pan & Ryan, 2009), in historic (Stancioiu et al., 2014), rural (Markwell, 2001), rural coastal (Agapito et al., 2014), and wildlife (Ballantyne et al., 2011) contexts. Hence, so far there are only few studies addressing the sensory aspects related to tourist experience.

Sensory experiences can only be physically lived within the destination. Based on comments of previous visitors this netnographic research identified the five senses comprised in a single experience to ensure a holistic understanding of senses to memorize and engage in the experience. More specifically, this research analyzed and identified conclusions of sensory features that are more relevant in the destination Cape Verde. The intended contribution of this chapter is to identify sensory experiences that are stimulated when visiting Cape Verde.

This chapter is thus organized as follows. First, a review of literature on island tourism is conducted, being coupled by contextualization of both small island developing states (SIDS) and Cape Verde, since this archipelago constitutes the setting of the data collection. Second, the focus turns to previous studies performed on senses in tourism. Third, the methodology used in this research is explained. Fourth, results are analyzed and reported with regard to the five senses extracted from online reviews of the islands of Cape Verde. Finally, the conclusion stresses the most relevant findings, acknowledges the limitations of the study and suggests directions for future research.

Literature review

Tourism in islands

In the past, islands used to rely on agriculture, fishing and eventually handicrafts as pillars of their economy (Markwick, 2001). The recognized scarcity of resources turned attention to tourism as a solution to bring more diversification, employment and infrastructure (Sharples, 2003). Nonetheless, tourism activities have also brought negative impacts to islands, and are seen as such by their local communities (Ko & Stewart, 2002). Indeed, islands have suffered from wearing out of their limited resources and fragile environments (Harrison, 2001). Although there should be put into practice serious sustainability criteria for further progress, it is not usually integrated in the development options of interest groups (Briassoulis, 2003).

Normally, most islands suffer from insufficient features related to transportation, food and lodging that make them more expensive than they would be if located in mainland (Mitchell & Reid, 2001). However, the singularity of islands, whether in terms of weather, climate and scenery can enable tourists to enjoy different and amazing experiences. Nevertheless, islands are challenged by a permanent tension between attractiveness and scarcity for each dimension experienced by tourists (Klint et al., 2012).

Previous studies researched island tourism from several perspective layers, whether on islands as tourist destinations (Del Chiappa & Presenza, 2013), tourism development (Seetanah & Sannasse, 2015) or sustainable tourism (Canavan, 2014) among others. Individual islands that have been researched include Aruba (Rivera et al., 2016) where it was identified attributes for a mobile app to the Island; Barbados (Cashman et al., 2012), on water use scarcity; Cyprus (Kilic & Okumus, 2005), on staff productivity management; and transport infrastructure development in the Mauritius (Khadaroo & Seetanah, 2007). Archipelagos that were studied included the Azores (Moniz, 2012) where repeat visitors were analyzed; international tourism and trade in Canary Islands (Santana-Gallego et al., 2011); and in Madeira (Almeida et al., 2014) the promotion of tourism in the rural areas as a mean of growth. Finally, in terms of regions, like Asia/Pacific, the Caribbean, and Europe, Park (2011) studied cruise tourism viability for the American-affiliated Pacific Islands (AAPI) region.

Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

Although there are a number of touristic well established, fully functioning and popular islands in the world (for example Honolulu, Santorini, Crete, Cyprus, Capri, Bora Bora, Bali, Phuket, Cozumel, Oahu and Kauai), there are also a number of small islands that are still going through development. SIDS (Small Island Developing States) were first recognized as a distinct group of developing countries at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in June 1992 (UNCED, 1992). An unofficial list of small island developing states classified by geographic regions appear in the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs UNCTAD website. Cape Verde was then classified as a SIDS:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sids/list>

Islands are becoming even more attractive destinations with the number of international tourists visiting SIDS increasing by almost 300% in the decade up to 2011, from over 12 million to 41 million (UNWTO, 2012). So, Taleb Rifai, previous Secretary General for the UNWTO, stated that tourism development planned and managed in a sustainable way will bring huge economic benefits as well as development to Small Islands (UNWTO, 2012). He also added that tourism has already helped Cape Verde and the Maldives to move up from least developed countries.

The UNWTO, in its 2012 world report (Rio +20), explained that international tourism is an essential economic source that promotes growth, foreign exchange, income redistribution, poverty alleviation and job opportunities in SIDS. As they are becoming more known in the globe, SIDS strategic development needs to ensure their sustainable growth. They have a number of challenges to deal with, whether environmental, climate change, natural disasters to external economic shocks and dependency of imports.

To support their development, international summits and conferences were established. Also the Barbados Program of Action (1994) was developed to assist SIDS in their sustainable development efforts. Later in 2014 an action platform was developed to support and monitor implementation of pledges and commitments of partnerships. The 2030 United Nations agenda is a balanced economic, social and environmental plan of action for sustainable development. A worldwide collaborative partnership was established. Among other things the plan seeks to eradicate poverty as the basis for sustainable development. All countries and stakeholders will make part of it in a collaborative partnership. They