

Why individuals do not visit a destination? The role of familiarity and novelty seeking in shaping non-visitors' destination image

Abstract: Non-visitors constitute a large but underexplored market pool with strong potential for tourist destinations. Drawing on the mere exposure and motivation frameworks, this study explores image differences among two groups of non-visitors (i.e., uninterested, unable to visit), along with the underlying factors for such variations. Findings drawn from two studies suggest that the groups significantly differ in terms of their images, novelty, familiarity, and intentions towards a destination. For the uninterested group it is familiarity, along with cognitive and affective image that shape intentions; while novelty and familiarity are the key determinants of conative image for those who cannot visit. The study contributes to the tourism marketing literature by demonstrating clear differences on destination image and its determinants across the two groups of non-visitors. In practical terms, such knowledge proves prudent in cultivating a place's novelty, familiarity and desirability, thereby increasing the possibility that more non-visitors turn into goers.

Keywords: Intention to visit, travel motivation, cognitive image, affective image

1. Introduction

Non-visitors (those who have not visited a destination nor exhibit any intention to visit it, see Cherifi et al., 2014; Hughes & Allen, 2008) constitute a largely underexplored but valuable market, which attracts marketers' increasing attention (Lang & Conroy, 2021; Zaim et al., 2024). Beyond customer retention, destination marketing aims to identify audiences that do not engage with the destination and design initiatives to allure them (Kotler et al., 2021). This is particularly true in the post-pandemic era whereby destinations fiercely compete to entice

non-visitors to visit a destination (Ahmad et al., 2021). In line with Scäfer (1996), every non-visitor could be converted into a potential visitor; that is, establish a tendency to visit a destination sometime in the future (see Maghrifani et al., 2022). Bennett (1994) further highlighted the need for exploring non-visitors to increase the possibility that more of them turn into goers/visitors (acquire first-hand destination experience, see Tan & Wu, 2016). Besides tourism (Chen & Wu, 2009), the value of converting non-buyers into buyers is also well supported in the marketing, branding and retail research, along with the need to further understand the factors that assist in such conversion (Lang & Conroy, 2021; McCarthy & Wang, 2022; Tan et al., 2023). See, for example, the study of Belaid et al. (2023) on the levers that lead non-buyers in label brands. Gaining insights into why some individuals do not visit a destination facilitates the design of marketing strategies that effectively target this untapped market segment (Tan et al., 2023).

In line with the literature, non-visitation could be attributed to various socio-physiological factors including negative/poor or blurred destination image, limited familiarity with the destination, or lack of fit to travel-related motivations (Cherifi et al., 2014; Pereira et al., 2022). Destination image, in particular, is known to determine peoples' destination choice, satisfaction with the visit, and behavioral intention (visit the destination, recommend it to others) (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). The lion's share of destination image research, however, has focused on visitors' or potential visitors' knowledge of (cognitive) and feelings (affective) towards a place, along with their travel-related behavioral intentions (conative) (see Tasci et al., 2022). This is somewhat surprising, as non-visitors are considered different from potential visitors and visitors, with the former segment often holding vague, inaccurate, and unreal images (Stylidis & Cherifi, 2018). Additionally, the limited studies available on non-visitors have approached them as a uniform and cohesive group (e.g., Tan & Wu, 2016),

although there is evidence that such approach is questionable. Cherifi et al. (2014), for example, confirmed the presence of two distinct non-visitor subgroups: those without any interest; and those unable to visit a destination. Lastly, past studies have highlighted the need to understand image formation at different stages (prior, during, after) of a trip (Iordanova & Stylidis, 2019a). Yilmaz and Yilmaz (2020) review, in particular, on the antecedents of image at the pre-travel stage, called for additional research on unpacking the critical role familiarity and novelty-seeking (a type of travel-motivation) play in this process.

Among travel motives, novelty seeking (linked to new and different experiences, see Mitas and Bastiaansen, 2018) is considered by some tourism researchers as the essence of and a key reason for travelling (Blomstervik & Olsen, 2022). In his well-known venturesomeness model, Plog (1974) identified different travel behaviors (e.g., destination choice) stemming from the varying motivations of novelty-seeking tourists (whom he called allocentric), and conservative tourists (the so-called psychocentric). Past research has further documented variations in novelty-seeking and image between potential and repeat visitors (have visited more than once) (e.g., Maghrifani et al., 2022). However, such linkage has been largely overlooked in the context of non-visitation. Given the increasing attention novelty seeking receives in the literature and its prominent role in travel (see Blomstervik & Olsen, 2022), it has been selected over other motives to explain non-visitors' destination image formation.

Destination familiarity is also central in explaining differences observed in peoples' perceptions and intentions toward tourist destinations (Kim et al., 2019b; Stylidis et al., 2020). Especially non-visitors often form their images based on stereotypes due to a lack of familiarity with the destination (Stylidis & Cherifi, 2018). Novelty and familiarity have been regarded by most tourism studies as contrasting concepts, being part of the same continuum

(see Cohen, 1972). Recent research, however, conducted in other fields (e.g., psychology) questions the novelty-familiarity continuum (Mathur et al., 2023), supporting that they stand separately, and independently influence consumer behavior (Shimojo, 2008). Building on previous works, Agustina and Artanti (2020) proposed that tourist visitation (or not) to a destination could be related to both novelty and familiarity; the former being a relatively stable and consistent personality trait, reflecting a need for new experiences. Destination familiarity, in contrast, is related to knowledge and previous experience, comprising a key market segmentation variable meaningful for targeting and positioning (Tan, 2017).

Overall, although studies in the past have focused on visitors and potential visitors, to the best of our knowledge, none seem to be exclusively focusing on: a) the non-visitor market, and the antecedents shaping its destination image; b) different segments of non-visitors. Within this context, validation of the independent role novelty-seeking and familiarity play in determining consumers' image is much needed to enlighten the tourism literature, whereby the two were previously considered as part of the same continuum. Similarly, the relationship (and its direction) between non-visitor novelty seeking and destination image has been underexplored. Focusing on the largely understudied market of non-visitors, and providing evidence of the presence of smaller homogeneous groups allows those with different perspectives/images to be identified (Li et al., 2013). Further delving into the cognitive, affective and behavioral facets of consumers (Dolničar, 2004), assists in having a more nuanced understanding of this essential market landscape, allowing practitioners to design communication strategies for each segment (Lang & Conroy, 2021).

To fill these gaps, this study aims to examine potential differences on destination image among two groups of non-visitors, along with the underlying factors that shape their image of

a destination. The objectives of the study are twofold: a) to investigate the effects of novelty-seeking and familiarity on destination image (cognitive, affective, and conative) in the context of non-visitation; and b) to test for potential differences on such relationships among non-visitors with no interest in visiting a destination vs. those who cannot visit it. To achieve its aim, the study used a mixed methods approach comprising 27 structured interviews and 447 questionnaires in two different sample populations (British, German).

This work advances our knowledge on the less explored but prominent market of non-visitors, explaining the image formation process of different groups of non-goers. The study also responds to recent calls (see Maghrifani et al., 2022; Yilmaz & Yilmaz, 2020) for additional research on the role of motivation (e.g., novelty-seeking) and familiarity as image determinants at the pre-trip stage. Lastly, it is one of the few studies of its kind that investigates novelty and familiarity as independent factors in the context of destination image and non-visitation (Agustina & Artanti, 2020), further enlightening the relationship between novelty and destination image. In practical terms, such knowledge proves prudent in cultivating a place's desirability, and offers differentiated marketing practices addressing diverse non-visitor needs, thereby assisting in their conversion into goers (Papadimitriou et al., 2018). For the uninterested group, in particular, promotional activities can increase familiarity via mental travel and cultivate corporeal travel interests, arousing their travel intentions (Sun et al., 2023; Yuan & Hong, 2023). Overall, understanding why people travel or not, along with the factors that influence their intentions to visit (or not) a destination, are beneficial for tourism planning and marketing.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Mental image

The role of imagery and image in the field of marketing is pivotal as people commonly purchase items and services based on their images, particularly when it is challenging or impossible to use objective criteria on their key traits (Ashworth & Goodall, 1990). Mental imagery in tourism is useful as non-visitors buy expectations instead of something readily evaluative (Font, 1996), and they often need to decide solely based on the image they have formulated of the destination. In line with MacInnis and Price (1987), vicarious consumption takes place via imagery at the pre-trip phase.

Tourism researchers suggest that image comprises three distinct components; cognitive, affective, and conative (Gartner, 1994). Past research has established a positive relationship between the subjective interpretations (cognitive) of the destination, with the feelings (affective) evoked, which eventually determine peoples' intention to (re)visit and recommend a destination (conative) (Chew & Jahari, 2014; He et al., 2021; Stylidis et al., 2020; Woosnam et al., 2020). This hierarchical structure of image has also been validated in a meta-analysis of image studies conducted on visitors (Zhang et al., 2014). Our understanding, however, of the interrelationships between the three image components remains limited within the non-visitation context. Following the previous line of reasoning, the first three hypotheses are proposed:

H₁: Cognitive is positively linked to affective image.

H₂: Cognitive is positively linked to conative image.

H₃: Affective is positively linked to conative image.

2.2 Novelty seeking tourist motivation

Motivations, commonly linked to human needs (Chang, 2007), are considered critical in explaining why people act in certain ways (Lunenburg, 2011). Travel motivations, in particular, assist in explaining why tourists travel to realize their needs (Huang & Hsu, 2009), but is not totally clear why they select specific destinations over others to do so (Maghrifani et al., 2022), as their inner needs can be accommodated by various places (Jang & Cai, 2002). In line with a number of researchers, people first recognize intrinsic needs, the so-called push factors (Dann, 1977) that activate their desire to travel (Awaritefe, 2004; Sung et al., 2016), before assessing a given destination (see Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Eder et al., 2010). Some researchers though questioned this hierarchical relationship, suggesting that people are often motivated to visit places after being exposed to them in various means of communication, aiming to satisfy their needs (Gong & Tung, 2017; Hudson et al., 2011; Terzidou et al., 2018a).

The semiotic nature of tourists' motivation is emphasized in the tourism literature recognizing tourists' need to look in a detached way at signs (Urry, 1990), which are created through verbal or textual means, such as word-of-mouth, myths, or through visual means, including brochures, films, television, and social media (Kim & Assaker, 2014; Terzidou et al., 2018a). Such media often create images of attractive or meaningful places generating motivations and mobilizing human action; what Dann (1977) termed 'pull factors.' In their study on the sacred island of Tinos, Greece, Terzidou et al. (2018b), for instance, found that the repeated visual projection of the miraculous icon of the Virgin Mary and of the crowds of visitors and politicians on TV, had positive effects on religious tourists' image, motivation, and decision to visit Tinos in the future to witness the holy intervention.

Alongside these views, a large volume of divergent travel motivations has been identified in the tourism literature, ranging from biological and cultural forces, such as relaxation, self-actualization, prestige, escape, rest, and social interaction (Crompton, 1979; Tasci & Ko, 2017); to personality-based motivations such as novelty-seeking (Afonso et al., 2018). The latter has been consistently documented in previous research conducted on various populations and settings as a key motivator for people to travel (e.g., Correia et al., 2013). For Lee and Crompton (1992) novelty comprises elements of thrill, surprise, changes from routine and an alleviation of boredom. As novelty denotes a desire to pursue new experiences, familiar destinations commonly become less attractive to novelty seeking tourists (Maghrifani et al., 2022).

Such personality characteristics seem to play a crucial role in tourist behavior; different personality types having different destination preferences. Highlighting Plog's (1974) eminent categorization between allocentric and psychocentric tourists, it has been reported, for example, that allocentric individuals are self-confident, seek novelty and prefer to travel to exotic or unique destinations, whereas the psychocentric ones tend to travel less, being territory bounded, feeling insecure and powerless. Succeeding studies have shown that novelty affects also peoples' consumption behavior; allocentric consumers commonly try new brands and destinations, whereas the psychocentric ones tend to prefer repeat travel using their car or camper, which safeguard connections to the familiar (Smith, 1990).

Further research looked into the link between travel motivations and destination image. Some studies have reported that travel motivations directly influence the formation of destination image (e.g., Beerli & Martin, 2004; Martin & del Bosque, 2008; Khan et al., 2017), with the latter often also mediating the relationship between motivation and intention to visit a

destination (Maghrifani et al., 2022; Pereira et al., 2022). Chen and Wu (2009), for instance, reported that novelty-seeking strongly predicted seniors' travel propensity.

However, not all types of motivations (e.g., novelty, escape) are positively related to destination image, indicating a complex association between the two (Afonso et al., 2018). Martin and del Bosque (2008), for example, reported significant differences in image among tourists with different travel motivations. The same also applies for the link between motivation and travel intentions (conative image); motives like novelty, for example, were positively linked to intentions to visit Thailand, but prestige and assurance demonstrated no relationship (Seyanont, 2017). Novelty seeking, in particular, has been recorded determining both potential visitors' intention to visit (Mun et al., 2018), and visitors' intention to revisit/recommend (Li & Su, 2022).

Other studies, in contrast, reported a reverse relationship, whereby it is destination image which determines novelty (Cheng & Lu, 2013). In line with this stream of research, images of adventure often cultivate a sense of novelty (Gartner, 1994). Overall, research on visitor' novelty seeking and destination image remains inconclusive as per the direction of their relationship; for some studies, novelty shapes destination image (Afonso et al., 2018; Seyanont, 2017), while for others a reverse relationship exists (Cheng & Lu, 2013). A major challenge for destinations is thus to comprehend such relationships and the factors leading to visitation (or not). As for the specific effects of motivation on the different components of image in the context of actual visitation, the limited research available (Li et al., 2010) reported that some motivations (intellectual, escape, and belonging) had a positive effect on cognitive image, whereas only escapism impacted affective image among repeaters. Our understanding though of the role novelty-seeking plays in shaping the destination image

components, within the non-visitation context, remains limited. Based on the preceding discussion, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H₄: Novelty-seeking is positively linked to cognitive image.

H₅: Novelty-seeking is positively linked to affective image.

H₆: Novelty-seeking is positively linked to conative image.

2.3 Familiarity

Considering the important role novelty-seeking and familiarity are expected to play in shaping non-visitors' image, this work draws on the familiarity principle and the mere exposure theory to explain the phenomena under study and potential variations among the two non-visitor groups. As the mere-exposure theory postulates, individuals are more positively predisposed towards people or places that they are more familiar with, as they are considered to be safer (Zajonc, 1968). Zajonc's (1968) experiments demonstrated that exposing people to familiar stimuli influenced them to evaluate such stimuli more favorably as compared to other unfamiliar ones. Support was further provided by several studies using words, faces, destinations or music (Iordanova & Stylidis, 2019a; Nunez, 2018; Tom et al., 2007). Familiarity facilitates perceptual fluency and mental processing, which turns into positive affect (Montoya et al., 2017). For example, Mrkva and Boven (2020) argued that exposure increases preferences, leading to stronger and emotionally intense evaluations.

In tourism, familiarity is also a useful mechanism in explaining dissimilarities noted in various elements of tourist behavior among goers and non-goers (Baloglu, 2001; Gursoy, 2011). The term is often associated to knowledge and/or direct experience with the destination (Tan & Wu, 2016), that is, experience acquired via visitation (Stylidis et al.,

2020). Familiarity is commonly operationalized via only one proxy; direct experience with the destination (Vogt & Andereck, 2003). This measurement approach, however, does not comprehensively capture the notion of familiarity - conceived as individuals' destination-related experiences (not necessarily a visitation-related outcome) - thereby also containing information search and background knowledge. Hu and Ritchie (1993), for example, further added wealth of knowledge as an element in the operationalization of the familiarity construct. Similarly, information accumulated via social media, books, and/or contact with others is also important in shaping familiarity (Gursoy, 2011; Terzidou et al., 2018a). Building on past research and following Stylidis et al. (2020), familiarity was captured here via two proxies; informational (Wong & Liu, 2011), and self-rated familiarity (Tan & Wu, 2016).

Studies examining the role of familiarity in tourism concluded that visitors' image is often more favorable than the non-visitors' one (Chen & Lin, 2012; Smith et al., 2015). Familiarity attributed to geographical proximity appears to determine also image formation; Iordanova and Stylidis (2019b), for example, reported that domestic tourist images of Linz differed from those of international visitors with regards to elements such as attractions, activities, and the city's level of association to the Nazi history. Research, in particular, on the way familiarity determines the image components revealed its central role in positively shaping cognitive image, but failed to establish an effect on its affective counterpart (Smith et al., 2015; Vogt & Andereck, 2003).

On the other hand, Stylidis et al. (2020) and Kim et al. (2019b) reported that overall familiarity shaped both the cognitive and affective image of visitors. In the context of virtual worlds, Sharma et al. (2022) noted that gamers who were exposed to a tourist destination's

traits via gaming, formulated more positive destination image and greater intentions to visit it in the real world. Our knowledge of the various non-visitor groups' level of familiarity with a destination, however remains limited, along with its effect on the various image components. Based on the above discussion, the premises of the mere exposure theory and recent studies conducted on visitors (e.g., Styliadis et al., 2020), the following hypotheses are formulated:

H₇: Familiarity is positively linked to cognitive image.

H₈: Familiarity is positively linked to affective image.

H₉: Familiarity is positively linked to conative image.

2.4 Differences in image, novelty-seeking and familiarity between groups

Non-visitors, who seem to comprise different sub-groups, are a key market pool for a tourist destination. Pike (2008) is perhaps among the first who differentiated potential visitors (those who would like to visit a destination in the future) from non-visitors (those who have no intention to visit such destination). Other researchers have further classified non-visitor groups based on the underlying reasons of non-visitation such as image or motivation (Cherifi et al., 2014; Zaim et al., 2024). Using destination image/intention, Cherifi et al. (2014), for example, classified non-visitors as: a) those without any expressed interest in visitation; and b) those who cannot visit a destination for various reasons.

Several studies have examined potential differences on image in the context of visitors, by juxtaposing visitors' and non-visitors' perceptions (Baloglu, 2001); or a tourist group's pre- and post-trip images (Kim et al., 2019a; Smith et al., 2015), producing contradictory results. Some researchers reported certain levels of congruence in image (Andreu et al., 2000; Young, 1999), attributed to its pervasive nature even following visitation (Kotler & Gertner, 2002).

However, other researchers noted that visitors' image is more favorable due to increased familiarity with the destination, as compared to those of non-visitors, which are often less accurate (Kim et al., 2019b; Konecnik & Ruzzier, 2006). Limited attention, however, has been given to non-visitor groups (i.e., non-visitors who have no intention vs. non-visitors who cannot visit), as the lack of personal experience with a destination may prove challenging for them to create an image of that destination (Cherifi et al., 2014). Following past research on visitors, non-visitors without an interest are expected to possess different images of the destination as compared to those facing some constraints (Chen & Wu, 2009; Kattiyapornpong & Miller, 2009) and for various reasons cannot visit a destination in the future.

The type of visitor/non-visitor may also play a critical role in explaining variations in travel motivations between potential, repeat visitors and non-visitors (e.g., Assiouras et al., 2015; Lau & McKercher, 2004; Maghrifani et al., 2022). The few studies available reported that potential visitors are more motivated by novelty as compared to repeat visitors (Assiouras et al., 2015). For example, in their study in Hong Kong Lau and McKercher (2004) documented that potential visitors were motivated by novelty seeking, while repeat visitors by escapism. In a recent study, Maghrifani et al. (2022) reported a positive association between novelty seeking and conative image for potential visitors, and a negative one for repeat visitors. Although these few studies have established differences in terms of motivations and destination image among potential visitors/visitors, there seems to be gap of knowledge pertaining to potential differences among non-visitor groups' motivations and images.

Lastly, in line with the mere-exposure theory, individuals exposed more often to people or places, tend to be more positively predisposed towards them (Zajonc, 1968). Past research

(e.g., Iordanova & Styliadis, 2019b) has reported that domestic tourist images differ from those of international visitors as a result of increased familiarity with the destination. Following this line of reasoning, it is expected that non-visitors, who out of personal interest are exposed to a tourist destination enriching their familiarity, will also develop more favourable images towards the destination. The last hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H₁₀: The type of non-visitor (those who cannot visit vs. those without interest to visit) moderates the relationships between novelty seeking, familiarity and destination image.

Overall, the proposed model (Figure 1) explores the interplay of the image components (cognitive, affective, conative) among non-visitors; examines the relationships between familiarity and destination image; between novelty seeking and destination image; while the moderating role of the type of non-visitor (uninterested vs. unable to visit) in the aforementioned relationships is also investigated.

Figure 1. About Here

3. Methodology

To achieve this research's aim and objectives, two sequential studies were executed. In study one, structured interviews were conducted to capture the destination items comprising non-visitors' image, which were then subsequently used to facilitate the design of the questionnaire applied in study two. Study two used a quantitative survey for measuring the constructs included in the conceptual model presented above.

3.1 Research setting

Europe is the largest outbound tourism market, generating about half of the world's total international tourist trips, with the vast majority taking place within the continent (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021). Germany is ranked first in the volume of outbound tourists in Europe, as about 100 million outbound overnight trips were conducted by Germans, while British accounted for another 92 million overnight trips in 2019 (Statista, 2021). Sample populations from these two countries were selected to assist in explaining why citizens of such tourist active countries with very high travel propensity decide not to visit popular destinations in the Mediterranean basin.

The latter setting was preferred due to its popularity, annually welcoming an estimated 200 million visitors, mainly over the summer period. The Mediterranean hosts some of the continent's largest islands including Sicily, Sardinia, Crete, Corsica, Mallorca, Malta and Cyprus. In 2019, Mallorca welcomed about 10 million international visitors, Crete 5 million, Cyprus 4 million, Sicily 3.5 million, Sardinia 3.44 million, Corsica 3 million, while Malta 2.75 million. International tourist arrivals to these destinations in 2022 were recorded as follows: Mallorca 9 million, Crete 4.7 million, Cyprus 3.2 million, Sicily 3.6 million, Sardinia 3.41 million, Corsica 3 million, while Malta 2.28 million (Statista.com/statistics). In line with the UNWTO tourism recovery tracker, demand in these destinations has almost fully recovered in the post-Covid 19 era (UNWTO, 2023). In 2022, Europe, and particularly the Mediterranean, achieved the best results with 87% of pre-pandemic levels (EUR 520 billion international tourist receipts). These tourism dependent destinations were preferred due to their popularity, clear destination boundaries, and uniform characteristics typical to islands, such as accessibility, unique natural traits, and seasonality in demand. For the selected destinations, Germany and the U.K. are the main tourism markets with strong

economic connections, and thus a relevant context to examine images, familiarity, motivations and attitudes of non-visitors.

3.2 Research design and tools

Most tourism studies on image have adopted a structured approach based on lists of researcher-generated destination attributes. Some researchers have argued that this approach restrains individuals from freely expressing the destination elements that shape their image (Iordanova & Styliadis, 2019b). In response to such calls, a qualitative tool (structured interviews) was implemented at the first stage of the research design. Study one included a number of open-ended questions (e.g., what do you know about the selected destination? How do you feel about it?), to capture participants' cognitive and affective image of a destination they had never visited in the past.

An opening/filtering question in studies one and two asked respondents to choose only one island destination from those made available (Corsica, Crete, Cyprus, Mallorca, Malta, Sardinia, and Sicily), which met the following two criteria: a) they had never visited this island in the past; b) they were not planning to visit it in the next five years. A follow up question in study two was prompting them to select between a) no-visitation because of no interest in visiting; or b) no visitation because they couldn't go/inability to visit (for various reasons). In the qualitative study, interviewees were then invited to respond to a structured set of open questions. In the quantitative study, respondents were invited to complete a questionnaire with the previously selected destination in mind. Considering that Malta was preferred by most respondents in study two as the destination that they do not plan to visit in the future, the rest of this study focuses on this island destination.

The research tool (structured questionnaire) used in study two comprised four sections. Section one captured respondents' cognitive, affective and conative image of the selected destination (Malta in this case). Cognitive and affective were assessed using destination attributes that emerged from the analysis of responses in study one (e.g., attractions, activities), along with those established in previous research (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chi & Qu, 2008; Wang & Hsu, 2010). Conative image was measured via three items following Woosnam et al. (2020). The second section evaluated familiarity with the destination using four items pertaining to informational and self-rated familiarity (Baloglu, 2001; Tan & Wu, 2016; Stylidis et al., 2020). Section three captured novelty seeking motivations using a refined 7-item scale developed by Lee and Crompton (1992) and also used by Cheng and Lu (2013). All items in the above sections of the questionnaire were assessed on a 5-point scale ("1" strongly disagree to "5" strongly agree or "1" very unlikely to "5" very likely). The last section included questions about respondents' personal characteristics. The survey was tested through a pilot with 33 British and 37 German non-visitors, safeguarding the appropriateness and face validity of the indicators used.

3.3 Sampling and data collection

Only adult (over 18 years) German and British residents, who had never visited any of the island destinations from the list provided, were included in this study. Considering the challenges involved in reaching non-visitors, along with the measures related to Covid-19 pandemic (e.g., social distancing, reduced human interactions), data collection for both structured interviews (study one) and questionnaires (study two) was conducted online using social media platforms (Facebook). The survey link was posted in German and British Facebook groups of travelers and those interested in tourism, in September 2021 for study one, and from October to November 2021 for study two. Such convenience sampling

approach, despite its limitations, has been adopted by several studies on sampling tourist populations which are transient and difficult to be located (e.g., Casali et al., 2021; Tse & Tung, 2022). Study one included 27 people who responded to the set of open questions. In study two, of the 464 submissions on Malta, 17 were incomplete and had to be removed from further analysis, leaving 447 completed responses (British = 232, German = 215).

3.4 Data analysis and common method variance

Thematic analysis was used to analyse responses in study one, whereby the destination characteristics and feelings mentioned were classified under common categories/dimensions. The commonly followed two-stage process (confirmatory factor analysis- CFA, followed by structural equation modelling- SEM) was performed using SPSS and AMOS (v.27) to analyse the quantitative data obtained. Initially, data screening was conducted to assess normality using skewness and kurtosis (see Appendix), confirming that all values were within the proposed thresholds (Hair et al., 2018). To eliminate the possibility of common method bias, Harman's single-factor test was used, indicating a variance of 43%, which is lower than the 50% benchmark (Podsakoff et al., 2012).

4. Findings

4.1 Respondents' profile

Non-visitors were split in two groups: a) those with no interest in travelling to Malta; and b) those who cannot travel to Malta. In the first sample (uninterested) ($n = 228$), women counted for 59 percent of the sample, while men for the rest 41 percent. Most of the participants were aged between 18-30 years old (35 percent), followed by those aged 31-40 years old (27 percent). The vast majority reported to be single (52 percent). In the second sample (cannot visit) ($n = 219$), female respondents (56 percent) were slightly more than the

male (44 percent) ones. About one third of respondents were over 60 years old and another 30 percent were those aged between 41-50 years old. Most (57 percent) reported to be married/in a relationship.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics (Table in Appendix) indicated that both groups, and especially the non-interested one, held moderate images of Malta with regards to most cognitive image attributes. When compared to studies conducted on visitors in Malta (e.g., Borg, 2009), there are notable differences, as the non-interested individuals exhibit less favourable images of the destination and behavioural intentions (recommend to others). A series of independent samples t-tests further revealed statistically significant differences among the two non-visitor subgroups in all image items; those with no interest to visit scored lower in all attributes including scenery, activities, entertainment, shopping and transportation. Among those who cannot visit, scenery and climate scored the highest values, while shopping and nightlife achieved the lowest ones. Arabadzhyan et al.'s (2021) study in Malta also identified lower scores on nature and leisure, and higher on culture. With regards to affective image, boring and sleepy were higher across the subsamples. Somewhat similarly, Borg's (2009) research revealed that Malta did not evoke any feelings to the study respondents, who were influenced by their family and friends to visit it.

With regards to motivations, the results suggest that in all items but one, those who cannot visit appeared to be more interested in experiencing new things or trying new tastes than those with no interest. Lastly, familiarity with the destination also seem low among respondents with no interest to visit. The independent samples t-tests indicated that in all four

familiarity items, those who cannot visit exhibited better knowledge and understanding of the place, when compared to those who have no interest in visiting it.

4.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

CFA was run first (including the higher-order construct cognitive image) in the total sample to evaluate the model fit. All fit indices indicated a satisfactory model fit ($\chi^2 = 716.6$, $df = 220$, $\chi^2/df = 3.25$, CFI = 0.92, GFI = 0.89, RMSEA = 0.071). Following the removal of two measurement items due to weak loadings (a cognitive and an affective image item), all fit indices satisfied the proposed thresholds: $\chi^2 = 546.9$, $df = 179$, $\chi^2/df = 3.00$, CFI = 0.93, GFI = 0.90, RMSEA = 0.068. The item loadings were above the recommended 0.5, ranging from 0.71 to 0.90 (Table 1) (Hair et al., 2018).

Table 1. About Here

In all cases, the composite reliability values (CR) were higher than the 0.70 threshold, and the average variance extracted (AVE) estimates were higher than 0.50, indicating convergent validity (Hair et al., 2018). Discriminant validity was assessed by confirming that in all cases AVE's square roots were higher from the correlations between the constructs (Table 2) (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

Table 2. About Here

4.4 Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

SEM analysis was conducted next to test the hypothesized relationships included in the model (Table 3). All fit indices indicated a satisfactory model fit ($\chi^2 = 558.0$, $df = 180$, $\chi^2/df =$

3.10, CFI = 0.93, GFI = 0.90, RMSEA = 0.069). In the total sample, H₁ to H₇ were confirmed; that is, cognitive image determined affective and conative image; affective image shaped conative image; familiarity affected all components of image, while novelty seeking also determined cognitive image. When examining the two sub-samples independently, in the uninterested one, cognitive positively affected affective and conative image (H_{1a}, H_{2a}); novelty seeking positive determined cognitive image (H_{4a}); and familiarity positively affected all three components of image (H_{7a}, H_{8a}, H_{9a}). In the cannot-visit sample, six out of nine (H_{4b}, H_{5b}, H_{6b}, H_{7b}, H_{8b}, H_{9b}) relationships were confirmed: novelty seeking shaped all components of image (H_{4b}, H_{5b}, H_{6b}); and familiarity also positively determined cognitive, affective and conative image (H_{7b}, H_{8b}, H_{9b}). Overall, both models explained 62 percent of the total variance in conative image.

Table 3. About Here

4.5 Multi-Group Analysis

To test H₁₀ pertaining to differences in the model between the two non-visitor groups, a multi-group analysis was conducted. The baseline model was confirmed across the two samples without imposing any equality constraints in the parameters (configural invariance): $\chi^2(360) = 1082.1$ ($p < 0.001$), CMIN/DF = 3.00, and RMSEA = 0.067. Next, the measurement model was assessed; the metric invariance model was contrasted with the baseline one leading to a $\Delta\chi^2$ value of 65.8 (17 df), which was not statistically significant ($p < .05$). Partial invariance analysis was applied last, which revealed that the path between the following constructs varied among the groups: cognitive and affective ($\Delta\chi^2 = 16.9$, df = 1, $p < .001$); cognitive and conative ($\Delta\chi^2 = 3.9$, df = 1, $p < .05$); familiarity and affective ($\Delta\chi^2 = 16.7$, df = 1, $p < .001$); novelty and affective ($\Delta\chi^2 = 8.7$, df = 1, $p < .05$); novelty and

conative ($\Delta\chi^2 = 4.3$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$). As five of the nine paths varied across the two non-visitor groups (Figure 2), H_{10} was partially confirmed.

Figure 2 About Here

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Building on the mere exposure, image, and motivation frameworks, this study: a) examined the capacity of novelty seeking and destination familiarity to explain non-visitors' destination image; and b) further tested for potential differences between two little understood non-visitors market segments proposed by the literature: those with no interest in visiting a destination vs. those who cannot visit a destination. Using 447 questionnaires collected from two samples of non-visitors to Malta, the findings indicate that the majority of the hypothesis proposed were confirmed, while most paths in the model varied between the two groups (H_{10}).

Based on respondents' evaluations of the cognitive and affective image attributes, both non-visitor groups hold mediocre images of Malta. It is also evident from the findings that the non-interested group exhibited less favorable perceptions in almost all image attributes studied, in comparison to those who cannot-visit the island for various reasons. Testing of hypothesis 1-3 further produced remarkable results; in the non-interested sample, cognitive image positively affected affective and conative image (H_{1a} , H_{2a}), while affective exercised no effect on conative image. In contrast, the hierarchical relationships between the components of image established in the literature among visitors or potential visitors, was not substantiated in the cannot-visit group. Such findings largely contradict previous research

which found that both cognitive and affective image predict conative among visitors to the destination (Stylidis et al., 2017).

The findings of the study further indicate that novelty seeking motivation had a positive impact on cognitive (H_{4a}), but no significant effect on affective (H_{5a}) or conative image (H_{6a}), in the no-interest sample. Such results partially contradict previous research conducted on visitors or potential visitors, which emphasized that travel motivations directly influence the formation of destination image (e.g., Khan et al., 2017), and intention to visit a destination (Pereira et al., 2022). In contrast, novelty seeking among those who cannot visit the destination positively determined their cognitive, affective and conative image (H_{4b}, H_{4b}, H_{4b}). This is in line with Seyanont's (2017) work, which revealed that visitors' motives like novelty and interaction were positively linked to intentions to visit Thailand. As such, this research contributes to studies which argue that not all types of motivations (e.g., novelty) are related to destination image (Afonso et al., 2018); and that the type of visitor/potential visitor may also play a critical role in explaining variations in image due to travel motivations (Maghrifani et al., 2022). For example, potential visitors were reported in the past to be more motivated by novelty as compared to repeat visitors (Assiouras et al., 2015).

The relationships between familiarity and image were also supported in both samples. Familiarity, in particular, had a positive impact on cognitive (H_{7a/b}), affective (H_{8a/b}) and conative image (H_{9a/b}). However, it was noted that the relationship between familiarity and affective image varied, being stronger in magnitude in the cannot-visit group. Higher levels of information and knowledge of the destination seem to be more influential for those who cannot visit a destination, leading them to rate it more positively. These results further validate the application of the mere exposure theory in the tourism context. Previous research

which conceived familiarity as actual visitation, also showcased its impact on cognitive and affective image (Chen & Lin, 2012; Smith et al., 2015). Kim et al. (2019b), for instance, supported that familiarity determined both cognitive and affective image of visitors. Vogt and Andereck (2003), on the other hand, noted that familiarity although affected cognitive, had no effect on affective image.

Lastly, the multi-group analysis performed on the model indicated that the type of non-visitor (no interest vs. cannot visit) moderated the magnitude in most of the hypothesized relationships (H₁₀). The impact of cognitive on affective and on conative were stronger in the no-interest group; while the influence of familiarity on affective; and of novelty on affective and on conative were greater in magnitude in the cannot visit group. These findings contradict previous research which treated non-visitors, their image and motivation as cohesive and uniform, when comparing them to visitors or potential visitors (Kim et al., 2019a; Smith et al., 2015).

5.1 Theoretical Contributions

The results of this research have several implications to tourism theory; first, to the best of our knowledge, this is the first work which has explicitly studied non-visitors as two meaningful theoretical groups: those with no interest in visiting a destination; and those who cannot visit a destination. Although such groups were included in different theoretical typologies in the past, they have rarely been under investigation independently with regards to their image and its formation. The study thus makes a valuable contribution to the destination image literature by empirically demonstrating clear differences on destination image and its determinants across the two groups of non-visitors. The results suggest that the two groups significantly differ in terms of their images, motivations, familiarity, and

intentions towards a destination, shedding some light on these commonly neglected market segments, and establishing the need to study them independently from visitors or potential visitors.

Second, as the findings indicate, the formation of intentions/conative image follows different processes in the two samples; for the no-interest sample it is largely familiarity, along with cognitive and affective image that shape intentions; while novelty seeking and familiarity are the key determinants of intentions for those who cannot visit the destination. As such, this study responds to calls and debates for the examination of the antecedents of non-visitors' destination image and intentions formation (Stylidis, 2022; Yilmaz & Yilmaz, 2020), expanding existing frameworks and explaining the dynamic nature of image at the pre-travel stage.

Additionally, this work advances the novelty-familiarity framework by providing a more nuanced understanding of how the two can determine image independently. Responding to recent calls for further research on such relationships (Agustina & Artanti, 2020; Mathur et al., 2023), this study extends current knowledge by indicating that they both independently influence destination image. Especially with regards to familiarity, past tourism research has equated familiarity to visitation, in contrast to the more inclusive approach adopted here, incorporating any knowledge and contact with information related to the destination. This research thus sheds some light on the role of familiarity as antecedent to cognitive, affective and conative image across both non-visitor groups, validating the premises of the mere exposure theory in the context of non-visitation. Last but not least, this research offers a better understanding of the link between novelty seeking and destination image in the context of non-visitation. Past studies have explored such relationships across visitors and/or

potential visitors, with researchers remaining inconclusive as per the magnitude and direction of their relationship (Cheng & Lu, 2013; Mun et al., 2018). The findings here support the impact of novelty seeking on cognitive, affective and conative image (especially in the cannot visit group) reinforcing one stream of research conducted on visitors, suggesting that novelty seeking positively shapes destination image (Afonso et al., 2018).

5.2 Practical Contributions

The results of this study provide invaluable implications for marketers, local authorities and destination management organizations (DMOs) in determining non-visitors' image formation. As the findings suggest, the two non-visitor segments necessitate differentiated strategies to get their attention and increase the possibilities that they turn into visitors in the future. Those who cannot visit the destination, in particular, feel more attracted to places they consider different from their locales. Accordingly, DMOs should highlight in their promotional efforts the unique elements of a destination (Hong & Desai, 2020). Novel tourism objects (e.g., attractions) or experiences including unique culture, customs, festivals/events, gastronomy and local people can be used in marketing tactics such as flash mob dances, gastronomic events, ethnic celebrations, all hosted at non-visitors' place of residence. DMOs need to further generate 'surprises' for non-visitors, offering them opportunities to escape from routine and alleviate boredom, a tactic that Hong Kong successfully implements (Tan & Wu, 2016). Virtual reality, for example, can be used by marketers to promote a destination's novelty via immersive, multi-sensory and diversified experiences around adventure, exploration and discovery, intensifying viewers' desire to travel (Tussyadiah et al., 2018). Los Angeles, for instance, offers authentic and dynamic visual presentations via 360-degree tours of its locales (Griffin et al., 2022). In the context of this study, virtual reality booths can be placed on shopping malls or public squares in various

German and British cities (e.g., London, Berlin) inviting non-visitors to Malta to virtually explore iconic and unique UNESCO World Heritage Sites like the City of Valletta and the Megalithic Temples. Such informative content at the pre-travel stage can cultivate, through mental travel, individuals' novelty-motive about a destination and its people, arousing their travel intentions (Sun et al., 2023; Yuan & Hong, 2023).

Familiarity was reported to be pertinent to both groups of non-visitors in forming their cognitive destination image. Accordingly, destination marketers could capitalize on the literary and media heritage of a destination and leverage its potential as a driver of familiarity and visitation (Hosany et al., 2020). Malta, for example, as a popular film location for movies (Gladiator, Troy, Pirates of the Caribbean) and TV series (Game of Thrones), can harvest the popularity of such media to build its image among non-visitors. Local ethnic communities at the tourist generating regions could also serve as information providers for the non-visitors. Their direct involvement and interaction contribute to wealthier insights of the destination and increase feelings of security and familiarity, leading to an enhanced destination image (Stylidis, 2022). As past research on food consumption suggests, non-buyers are willing to rely on someone they know very well for the decision-making process (Lang & Conroy, 2021). Individuals, therefore, who are familiar with Malta as a result of previous visits can be rewarded (e.g., discounts, coupons) by local DMOs for bringing their friends and relatives (non-visitors) to the destination.

Beyond familiarity, the no-interest group's intentions are further shaped by cognitive and affective image. Live-streaming events can be used in the design of atmospheric elements, which create structural and social bonds (Tan et al., 2023). The aim is for non-visitors to visualize real life destination experiences and increase their understanding of the destination

offerings. Gamification (video games) can play a role to this end, via creating increased knowledge of (cognitive) and positive emotions towards the destination, thereby leading to enhanced conative image (Sharma et al., 2022). Such example is the ‘Watch Dogs Legion’ which enables gamers to virtually explore London and its landmarks. As such, officials can offer to game developers financial/tax incentives to stage popular video games in Malta (e.g., ‘Fortnite’ has 350 million players in line with Gintux market report, 2024), as they have the potential to cultivate a favorable cognitive and affective image for the non-interested group.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research Directions

This research also faces some limitations. As the data were collected from two studies, but focusing on a single target destination, the images of such individuals are not necessarily reflective of other destinations. Additional research is therefore needed to validate the model in different contexts. Secondly, given that only island destinations were examined here, alternate geographic settings including rural or urban destinations should be considered in the future. Third, other factors beyond familiarity and novelty seeking should be used in upcoming research to explain non-visitors’ image formation. Next, although the study classified non-visitors in two theoretically meaningful groups, additional work is necessary to understand the underlying reasons for those who cannot visit the destinations and the potential presence of subgroups based on lack of financial resources or time, accessibility issues, etc. Lastly, as the model considered the type of non-visitor as a moderating variable, research in the future should incorporate additional groups like potential-visitors, who have taken the decision to visit the destination.

References

- Ahmad, A., Jamaludin, A., Zuraimi, N. S. M., & Valeri, M. (2021). Visit intention and destination image in post-Covid-19 crisis recovery. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 24(17), 2392-2397.
- Afonso, C., Silva, G. M., Gonçalves, H. M. and Duarte, M. (2018). The Role of Motivations and Involvement in Wine Tourists' Intention to Return: SEM and fsQCA Findings. *Journal of Business Research*, 89, 313-321.
- Agustina, R. P., & Artanti, Y. (2020). The role of satisfaction as a mediating variable on the effects of novelty seeking and familiarity on tourist revisit intention. *International Journal of Business*, 3(2), 88-96.
- Anderson, J. C., & Gerbing, D. W. (1988). Structural equation modeling in practice: A review and recommended two-step approach. *Psychological bulletin*, 103(3), 411.
- Andreu, L., Bigne, J.E., & Cooper, C. (2000). Protected and Perceived Image of Spain as a Tourist Destination for British Travellers, *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 9(4), 47-67.
- Arabadzhyan, A., Figini, P., & Vici, L. (2021). Measuring destination image: a novel approach based on visual data mining. A methodological proposal and an application to European islands. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 20, 100611.
- Ashworth, G., & Goodall, B. (1988). Tourist images: marketing considerations. In: B. Goodall, and G. Ashworth (Eds.), *Marketing in the tourism industry: The promotion of destination regions*, pp. 213–238. London: Routledge
- Assiouras, I., Skourtis, G., Koniordos, M., & Giannopoulos, A. A. (2015). Segmenting East Asian tourists to Greece by travel motivation. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 20(12), 1389-1410.

- Awaritefe, O. (2004). Motivation and other considerations in tourist destination choice: A case study of Nigeria. *Tourism Geographies*, 6, 303-330.
- Baloglu, S. (2001). Image variations of Turkey by familiarity index: informational and experiential dimensions. *Tourism Management*, 22(2), 127-134.
- Baloglu, S., & McCleary, K.W. (1999). A model of destination image formation. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26(4), 868-97.
- Beerli, A., and Martín, J. D. (2017). How Does Confirmation of Motivations Influence on the Pre- and Post-visit Change of Image of a Destination? *European Journal of Management and Business Economics*, 26(2), 238–251.
- Belaid, S., Karoui, S., Lacoeyuilhe, J., & Fehri, D. (2023). What Are the Main Levers to Convert Occasional and Non-buyers into Regular Buyers of Private-Label Brands? *National Brand and Private Label Marketing Conference* (pp. 13-22). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.
- Bennett, T. (1994). *The reluctant museum visitor: A study of non-goers to history museums and art galleries*. Australia council for the arts.
- Blomstervik, I. H., & Olsen, S. O. (2022). Progress on novelty in tourism: An integration of personality, attitudinal and emotional theoretical foundations. *Tourism Management*, 93, 104574.
- Bornstein, R.F. & D'Agostino, P.R. (1994). The Attribution and Discounting of Perceptual Fluency: Preliminary Tests of a Perceptual Fluency/Attributional Model of the Mere Exposure Effect. *Social Cognition*, 12 (2), 103–128.
- Caber, M., & Albayrak, T. (2016). Push or pull? Identifying rock climbing tourists' motivations. *Tourism Management*, 55, 74-84.

- Casali, G. L., Liu, Y., Presenza, A., & Moyle, C. L. (2021). How does familiarity shape destination image and loyalty for visitors and residents? *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 27(2), 151-167.
- Chang, J. C. (2007). Travel Motivations of Package Tour Travelers. *Tourism*, 55 (2), 157–176.
- Chen, C.F., & Tsai, D. (2007). How destination image and evaluative factors affect behavioral intentions? *Tourism Management*, 28(4), 1115-1122.
- Chen, C.C., & Lin, Y.H. (2012). Segmenting Mainland Chinese tourists to Taiwan by destination familiarity: A factor-cluster approach. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 14(4), 339–352.
- Chen, F.C., & Wu, C.C. (2009). How motivations, constraints, and demographic factors predict seniors' overseas travel propensity. *Asia Pacific Management Review*, 14(3).
- Cheng, T. M., & Lu, C. C. (2013). Destination image, novelty, hedonics, perceived value, and revisiting behavioral intention for island tourism. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 18(7), 766–783.
- Cherifi, B., Smith, A., Maitland, R., & Stevenson, N. (2014). Destination images of non-visitors. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 49, 190-202.
- Chew, E.Y., & Jahari, S.A. (2014). Destination image as a mediator between perceived risks and revisit intention: A case of post-disaster Japan. *Tourism Management*, 40, 382-393.
- Chi, C.G.Q., & Qu, H. (2008). Examining the structural relationships of destination image, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty: An integrated approach. *Tourism Management*, 29(4), 624-36.
- Cohen, E. (1972). Toward a sociology of international tourism. *Social research*, 164-182.

- Correia, A., Kozak, M., and Ferradeira, J. (2013). From Tourist Motivations to Tourist Satisfaction. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism, and Hospitality Research*, 7(4), 411–424.
- Crompton, J. L. (1979). Motivations for Pleasure Vacation. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 6 (4), 408–424.
- Dann, G. M. S. (1977). Anomie, Ego-Enhancement and Tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 4(4), 184–194.
- Dolnicar, S. (2004). Beyond commonsense segmentation: A systematics of segmentation approaches in tourism. *Journal of Travel Research*, 42(3), 244-250.
- Eder, J., Smith, W., and Pitts, R. E. (2010). Exploring Factors Influencing Student Study Abroad Destination Choice. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, 10(3), 232–250.
- Finke, R.A. (1989). *Principles of Mental Imagery*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press
- Font, X. (1997). Managing the tourist destination's image. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 3(2), 123-131.
- Gartner, W. C. (1994). Image formation process. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 2(2-3), 191-216.
- Gintux market data report (2024). Statistics about the most played multiplayer games. Retrieved on 23 April 2024 from: <https://gintux.org/most-played-multiplayer-games/#:~:text=As%20of%20September%202021%2C%20the,350%20million%20registered%20players%20worldwide.>
- Gong, T., & Tung, V. W. S. (2017). The impact of tourism mini-movies on destination image: The influence of travel motivation and advertising disclosure. *Journal of travel & tourism marketing*, 34(3), 416-428.

- Griffin, T., Guttentag, D., Lee, S. H., Giberson, J., & Dimanche, F. (2023). Is VR always better for destination marketing? Comparing different media and styles. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 29(1), 119-140.
- Gursoy, D. (2011). *Modeling tourist information search behavior: A structural modeling approach*. Saarbrücken: Lambert Academic Publishing.
- Hair, J.F., Babin, B.J., Anderson, R.E., Black, W.C. (2018). *Multivariate Data Analysis (8th edition)*. London: Cengage.
- He, Z., Deng, N., Li, X., & Gu, H. (2022). How to “read” a destination from images? machine learning and network methods for DMOs’ image projection and photo evaluation. *Journal of Travel Research*, 61(3), 597-619.
- Hong, J., & Desai, K. K. (2020). Variety-seeking behavior and information processing in choosing a vacation destination. *Journal of Travel Research*, 59(5), 850-863.
- Hosany, S., Buzova, D., & Sanz-Blas, S. (2020). The influence of place attachment, ad-evoked positive affect, and motivation on intention to visit: Imagination proclivity as a moderator. *Journal of Travel Research*, 59(3), 477-495.
- Hu, Y., & Ritchie, J.R.B. (1993). Measuring destination attractiveness: A contextual approach. *Journal of Travel Research*, 32(2), 25-34.
- Huang, S., & Hsu, C. H. (2009). Travel motivation: linking theory to practice. *International journal of culture, tourism and hospitality research*, 3(4), 287-295.
- Hudson, S., Wang, Y., & Gil, S. M. (2011). The Influence of a Film on Destination Image and the Desire to Travel: A Cross-Cultural Comparison. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 13, 177–190.
- Hughes, H. L., & Allen, D. (2008). Visitor and non-visitor images of Central and Eastern Europe: A qualitative analysis. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 10(1), 27-40.

- Iordanova, E., & Stylidis, D. (2019a). The impact of visitors' experience intensity on in-situ destination image formation. *Tourism Review*, 74(4), 841-860.
- Iordanova, E., & Stylidis, D. (2019b). International and domestic tourists' "a priori" and "in situ" image differences and the impact of direct destination experience on destination image: the case of Linz, Austria. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 22(8), 982-1005.
- Jang, S., & Cai, L. A. (2002). Travel motivations and destination choice: A study of British outbound market. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 13(3), 111-133.
- Kattiyapornpong, U., & Miller, K. E. (2009). Socio-demographic constraints to travel behavior. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 3(1), 81-94.
- Khan, M. J., Chelliah, S., and Ahmed, S. (2017). Factors Influencing Destination Image and Visit Intention among Young Women Travellers: Role of Travel Motivation, Perceived Risks, and Travel Constraints. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 22(11), 1139–1155.
- Kim, S., & Assaker, G. (2014). An empirical examination of the antecedents of film tourism experience: A structural model approach. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 31(2), 251-268.
- Kim, S., Stylidis, D., & Oh, M. (2019a). Is perception of destination image stable or does it fluctuate? A measurement of three points in time. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 21(4), 447-461.
- Kim, S., Lehto, X., & Kandampully, J. (2019b). The role of familiarity in consumer destination image formation. *Tourism Review*, 74(4), 885-901.
- Kirillova, K., Lehto, X., & Cai, L. (2015). Volunteer tourism and intercultural sensitivity: The role of interaction with host communities. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 32(4), 382-400.

- Konecnik, M., & Ruzzier, M. (2006). The influence of previous visitation on customer's evaluation of a tourism destination. *Managing Global Transitions*, 4(2), 145-165.
- Kotler, P., & Gertner, D. (2002). Country as brand, product, and beyond: A place marketing and brand management perspective. *Journal of brand management*, 9(4), 249-261.
- Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., & Setiawan, I. (2021). *Marketing 5.0: Technology for humanity*. London: John Wiley & Sons.
- Lang, B., & Conroy, D. M. (2021). Are trust and consumption values important for buyers of organic food? A comparison of regular buyers, occasional buyers, and non-buyers. *Appetite*, 161, 105123.
- Lau, G., & McKercher, B. (2006). Understanding tourist movement patterns in a destination: A GIS approach. *Tourism and hospitality research*, 7(1), 39-49.
- Lee, T. H., & Crompton, J. (1992). Measuring novelty seeking in tourism. *Annals of tourism research*, 19(4), 732-751.
- Li, M., Cai, L. A., Lehto, X. Y., and Huang, J. Z. (2010). A Missing Link in Understanding Revisit Intention—The Role of Motivation and Image. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 27(4), 335–348.
- Li, X., Meng, F., Uysal, M., & Mihalik, B. (2013). Understanding China's long-haul outbound travel market: An overlapped segmentation approach. *Journal of Business Research*, 66, 786–793.
- Li, F., & Su, Q. (2022). The roles of novelty seeking and food authenticity in youth travellers' decision-making process at night markets: An application of a model of goal-directed behaviour. *Current issues in Tourism*, 25(14), 2322-2337
- Lunenburg, F. C. (2011). Goal-Setting Theory of Motivation. *International Journal of Management, Business, and Administration*, 15(1), 1–6.

- MacInnis, D.J., & Price, L.L. (1987). The Role of Imagery in Information Processing: Review and Extensions, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13(4), 473-491.
- Maghrifani, D., Liu, F., & Sneddon, J. (2022). Understanding potential and repeat visitors' travel intentions: the roles of travel motivations, destination image, and visitor image congruity. *Journal of Travel Research*, 61(5), 1121-1137.
- Martin, H. S., & Bosque, I. A. R. D. (2008). Exploring the cognitive-affective nature of destination image and the role of psychological factors in its formation. *Tourism Management*, 29, 263-277.
- Mathur, G., Banerjee, R., Pathak, R., & Goswami, P. (2023). Novelty Vs Familiarity: Identification of Satisfaction and Loyalty in Context of Visitor's Perception. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Systems*, 16(1).
- McCarthy, B., & Wang, P. (2022). Shades of Sustainability: Who are the Buyers and Non-buyers of Sustainable Packaging? *Journal of Food Products Marketing*, 28(4), 153-178.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2021). What is the demand for outbound tourism on the European market? Accessed on 9/3/2023 from: <https://www.cbi.eu/market-information/tourism/trade-statistics>
- Mitas, O., & Bastiaansen, M. (2018). Novelty: A mechanism of tourists' enjoyment. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 72, 98-108.
- Montoya, R. M., Horton, R. S., Vevea, J. L., Citkowicz, M., & Lauber, E. A. (2017). A re-examination of the mere exposure effect: The influence of repeated exposure on recognition, familiarity, and liking. *Psychological bulletin*, 143(5), 459.
- Mrkva, K., & Van Boven, L. (2020). Salience theory of mere exposure: Relative exposure increases liking, extremity, and emotional intensity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 118(6), 1118.

- Mun, N. Y., Lee, W., & Jeong, C. (2018). Traveling from South to North: The relationships between historical nostalgia, novelty seeking, and attitudes to visit North Korea. *International Journal of Tourism Sciences*, 18(3), 170–191.
- Núñez, R. (2018). College in the media: the relationship between repeated exposure and college expectations, *Educational Media International*, 55(1), 1-14.
- Papadimitriou, D., Kaplanidou, K., & Apostolopoulou, A. (2018). Destination image components and word-of-mouth intentions in urban tourism: A multigroup approach. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 42(4), 503-527.
- Park, J., Shimojo, E., & Shimojo, S. (2010). Roles of familiarity and novelty in visual preference judgments are segregated across object categories. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 107(33), 14552-14555.
- Pereira, V., Gupta, J. J., & Hussain, S. (2022). Impact of travel motivation on tourist's attitude toward destination: Evidence of mediating effect of destination image. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 46(5), 946-971.
- Pike, S. (2008). *Destination Marketing*. Oxford: Elsevier Inc.
- Plog, S.C. (1974). Why Destination Areas Rise and Fall in Popularity. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 14(4), 55–58.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2012). Sources of method bias in social science research and recommendations on how to control it. *Annual review of psychology*, 63, 539-569.
- Rasoolimanesh, S. M., Seyfi, S., Rastegar, R., & Hall, C. M. (2021). Destination image during the COVID-19 pandemic and future travel behavior: The moderating role of past experience. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 21, 100620.
- Schäfer, H. (1996). Non-visitor research: An important addition to the unknown. *Visitor Studies: Theory, Research and Practice*, 9, 195–205.

- Seyanont, A. (2017). Travel Motivation and Intention to Revisit of European Senior Tourists to Thailand. *Universal Journal of Management*, 5(8), 365–372.
- Sharma, S., Stylidis, D., & Woosnam, K. M. (2022). From virtual to actual destinations: do interactions with others, emotional solidarity, and destination image in online games influence willingness to travel?. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 1-19.
- Shimojo, S. (2008). *Subliminal impact – Contemporary world, emotional and implicitly cognitive*. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo.
- Smith, S. L. (1990). A test of Plog's allocentric/psychocentric model: Evidence from seven nations. *Journal of travel research*, 28(4), 40-43.
- Smith, W., Li, X., Pan, B., Witte, M., & Doherty, S. (2015). Tracking destination image across the trip experience with smartphone technology. *Tourism Management*, 48, 113-122.
- Statista (2021). Number of outbound trip by country. Accessed on 9/12/2023 from: www.statista.com/statistics/710474/number-of-outbound-trips-in-the-european-union-by-country/
- Stylidis, D., Woosnam, K.M., Ivkov, M., & Kim, S. (2020). Destination loyalty explained through place attachment, destination familiarity, and destination image. *International Journal of Tourism Research*. 22(5), 604-616.
- Stylidis, D. & Cherifi, B. (2018). Characteristics of Destination Image: Visitors and non-visitors' Images of London. *Tourism Review*, 73(1), 55-67.
- Stylidis, D. (2022). Exploring resident-tourist interaction and its impact on tourists' destination image. *Journal of Travel Research*, 61(1), 186-201.
- Sun, D., Wong, I. A., Huang, G. I., Kim, J. H., & Liu, M. T. (2023). From Savoring Past Trips to Craving Future Journeys: The Role of Destination Cultural Capital and Enjoyable Reminiscence. *Journal of Travel Research*, 00472875231206546.

- Sung, Y. K., Chang, K. C. and Sung, Y. F. (2016). Market Segmentation of International Tourists Based on Motivation to Travel: A Case Study of Taiwan. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 21(8), 862-882.
- Tan, W.K., & Wu, C.E. (2016). An investigation of the relationships among destination familiarity, destination image and future visit intention. *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management*, 5(3), 214-226.
- Tan, K. L., Hii, I. S., Lim, X. J., & Wong, C. Y. (2023). Enhancing purchase intentions among young consumers in a live-streaming shopping environment using relational bonds: are there differences between “buyers” and “non-buyers”? *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*. Available Online.
- Tang, Y. (2014). Travel motivation, destination image and visitor satisfaction of international tourists after the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake: A structural modelling approach. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 19(11), 1260-77.
- Tasci, A.D.A., and Ko, Y. J. (2017). Travel Needs Revisited. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 23(1), 20–36.
- Tasci, A. D., Uslu, A., Styliadis, D., & Woosnam, K. M. (2022). Place-oriented or people-oriented concepts for destination loyalty: Destination image and place attachment versus perceived distances and emotional solidarity. *Journal of Travel Research*, 61(2), 430-453.
- Terzidou, M., Styliadis, D., & Terzidis, K. (2018a). The role of visual media in religious tourists' destination image, choice and on-site experience: The case of Tinos, Greece. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 35(3), 306-319.
- Terzidou, M., Scarles, C., & Saunders, M. N. (2018b). The complexities of religious tourism motivations: Sacred places, vows and visions. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 70, 54-65.
- Tom, G., Nelson, C., Srzentic, T., & King, R. (2007). Mere exposure and the endowment effect of consumer decision making. *The Journal of Psychology*, 141(2), 117–125.

- Tse, S., & Tung, V. W. S. (2022). Measuring the valence and intensity of residents' behaviors in host–tourist interactions: implications for destination image and destination competitiveness. *Journal of Travel Research*, 61(3), 565-580.
- Tussyadiah, I. P., Wang, D., Jung, T. H., & Tom Dieck, M. C. (2018). Virtual reality, presence, and attitude change: Empirical evidence from tourism. *Tourism Management*, 66, 140-154.
- UNWTO (2023). UNWTO Tourism recovery tracker. Accessed on 1/10/2023, from: <https://www.unwto.org/tourism-data/unwto-tourism-recovery-tracker>
- Urry, J. (1990). The consumption' of tourism. *Sociology*, 24(1), 23-35.
- Vogt, C., & Andereck, K. (2003). Destination perceptions across a vacation. *Journal of Travel Research*, 41(4), 348-354.
- Wang, C., & Hsu, M. (2010). The relationships of destination image, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions: An integrated model. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 27(8), 829-843.
- Woosnam, K. M., Styliadis, D., & Ivkov, M. (2020). Explaining conative destination image through cognitive and affective destination image and emotional solidarity with residents. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 28(6), 917-935.
- Wong, C., & Liu, F. (2011). A study of pre-trip use of travel guidebooks by leisure travelers. *Tourism Management*, 32, 616–628.
- Xu, Y., & Zeng, G. (2022). Not eating is a loss: How familiarity influences local food consumption. *Tourism Management*, 90, 104479
- Yilmaz, Y., & Yilmaz, Y. (2020). Pre- and post-trip antecedents of destination image for nonvisitors and visitors: A literature review. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 22(4), 518–535.

- Young, M. (1999). The relationship between tourist motivations and the interpretation of place meanings, *Tourism Geographies*, 1(4), 387-405.
- Yuan, A., & Hong, J. (2023). Impacts of Virtual Reality on Tourism Experience and Behavioral Intentions: Moderating Role of Novelty Seeking. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 10963480231171301.
- Zaim, I. A., Styliadis, D., Andriotis, K., & Thickett, A. (2024). Does user-generated video content motivate individuals to visit a destination? A non-visitor typology. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 13567667241268369.
- Zajonc, R.B. (1968). Attitudinal effects of mere exposure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 9(2), 1–27.
- Zhang, H., Fu, X., Cai, L. A., & Lu, L. (2014). Destination image and tourist loyalty: A meta-analysis. *Tourism Management*, 40, 213-223.

Table 1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Constructs & Items	Total Sample (n=447)		No interest (n=228)		Cannot visit (n=219)	
	Std estimates	t-value	Std estimates	t-value	Std estimates	t-value
Cognitive Image						
<i>Natural Environment</i>	.83	21.02	.83	14.52	.80	13.78
<i>Amenities</i>	.90	23.70	.86	15.45	.90	16.54
<i>Attractions</i>	.77	18.72	.77	12.99	.71	11.68
<i>Accessibility</i>	.76	18.16	.74	12.33	.71	11.69
Affective Image						
<i>Distressing - Relaxing</i>	.78	18.63	.72	11.62	.80	13.45
<i>Unpleasant - Pleasant</i>	.81	19.71	.87	15.20	.76	12.48
<i>Boring - Exciting</i>	.74	17.21	.66	10.47	.73	11.96
Conative Image						
<i>Recommend it to others</i>	.89	23.37	.88	15.93	.85	15.18
<i>Say positive things about it</i>	.89	23.40	.86	15.31	.91	17.14
<i>Encourage friends/ relatives to visit</i>	.81	20.02	.71	11.76	.86	15.63
Novelty Seeking						
<i>I like to find myself at destinations where I can explore new things.</i>	.75	11.50	.83	11.31	.52	3.91
<i>I want to experience new and different things on my vacation.</i>	.87	12.05	.86	11.98	.79	6.89
<i>I want to experience customs, and cultures different from those in my own environment.</i>	.71	9.57	.68	8.45	.72	6.00
<i>I enjoy the change of environment which allows me</i>	.74	10.06	.72	9.17	.81	7.09
<i>I want to try different food on my vacation</i>	.80	11.00	.75	9.73	.96	9.84
<i>My ideal vacation involves looking at things I have not</i>	.89	12.29	.85	11.80	.95	9.46
<i>I want there to be a sense of discovery involved as part of</i>	.82	11.27	.81	10.89	.82	7.32
Familiarity						
<i>I know this place very well</i>	.81	20.13	.78	13.31	.75	12.68
<i>I have read books/blogs/ guides about it</i>	.71	16.64	.69	11.30	.64	10.10
<i>I know its cultural resources</i>	.90	23.73	.89	16.17	.86	15.43
<i>I know its natural resources</i>	.87	22.57	.85	15.04	.84	14.88

Table 2. Discriminant Analysis

Total sample							
Constructs	CR	AVE	CI	AI	CNI	NS	FA
Cognitive Image (CI)	.89	.67	.82	.75	.70	.45	.64
Affective Image (AI)	.82	.61	.75	.78	.74	.39	.73
Conative Image (CNI)	.90	.75	.70	.74	.87	.36	.70
Novelty Seeking (NS)	.93	.64	.45	.39	.36	.80	.22
Familiarity (FA)	.90	.68	.64	.73	.70	.22	.83
No interest sample							
Constructs	CR	AVE	CI	AI	CNI	NS	FA
Cognitive Image (CI)	.86	.62	.79	.74	.72	.39	.46
Affective Image (AI)	.81	.59	.74	.77	.71	.30	.53
Conative Image (CNI)	.91	.76	.72	.71	.87	.25	.60
Novelty Seeking (NS)	.92	.62	.39	.30	.25	.79	.10
Familiarity (FA)	.86	.61	.46	.53	.60	.10	.78
Cannot visit sample							
Constructs	CR	AVE	CI	AI	CNI	NS	FA
Cognitive Image (CI)	.86	.62	.79	.75	.64	.40	.67
Affective Image (AI)	.81	.59	.75	.77	.72	.40	.73
Conative Image (CNI)	.91	.77	.64	.72	.88	.44	.66
Novelty Seeking (NS)	.85	.74	.40	.40	.44	.86	.02
Familiarity (FA)	.86	.61	.67	.73	.66	.02	.78

Table 3. Structural Equation Modelling

Hypothesized path	Total		No interest		Cannot visit	
	effect	t-value	effect	t-value	effect	t-value
H ₁ Cognitive image → Affective image	.59*	8.73	.76*	8.05	.13	1.01
H ₂ Cognitive image → Conative image	.29*	3.37	.41*	3.00	.07	.58
H ₃ Affective image → Conative image	.29*	2.97	.20	1.47	.07	.26
H ₄ Familiarity → Cognitive Image	.61*	12.20	.44*	6.12	.67*	9.12
H ₅ Familiarity → Affective image	.36*	6.46	.18**	2.80	.73*	6.35
H ₆ Familiarity → Conative image	.30*	4.75	.31*	4.60	.55*	4.10
H ₇ Novelty seeking → Cognitive image	.34*	5.25	.35*	4.09	.39*	3.98
H ₈ Novelty seeking → Affective image	.03	.48	-0.2	-.22	.34*	2.95
H ₉ Novelty seeking → Conative image	.05	.78	-.02	-.19	.38*	2.97

Figure 1. Proposed Model

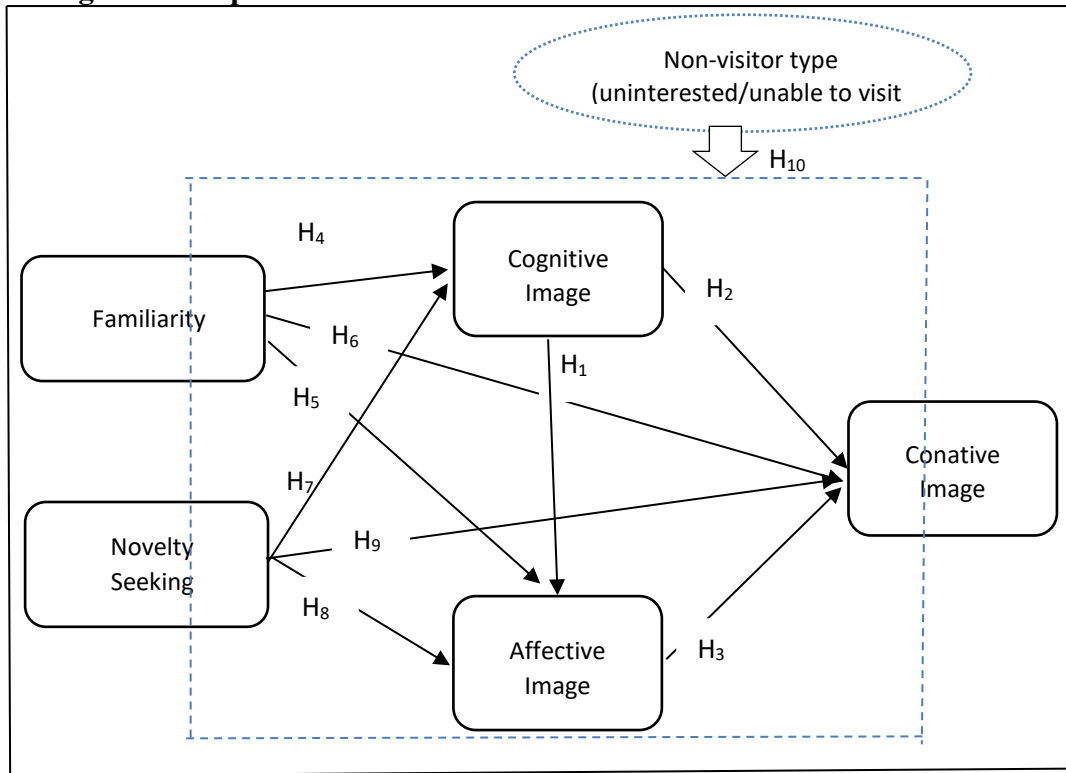
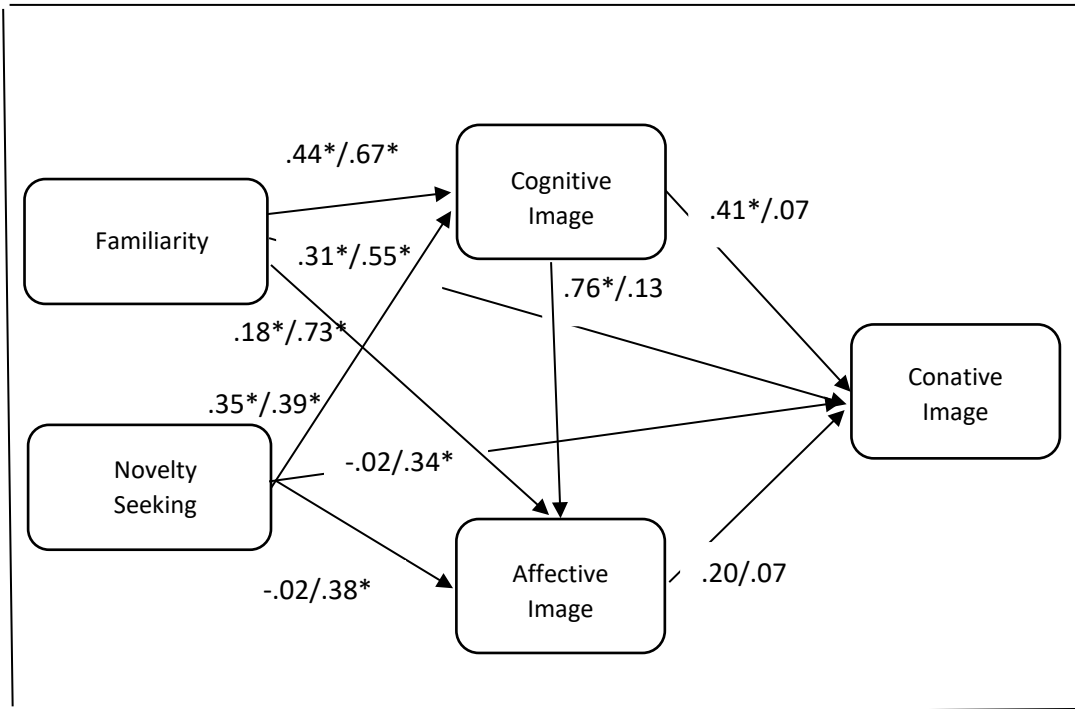


Figure 2. Model Findings[^]



[^] left values: no interest, right values: cannot visit. * significant at $<.05$ level or lower