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Aspects of Sustainability in the Destination Branding Process: A Bottom-up Approach

The concept of sustainability is based on the premise that the inhabitants of a destination are the ones that should be involved in the way this destination is being managed and promoted. At the same time, the literature of place branding emphasizes the important role of local stakeholders in the creation of a true and reliable place brand. In fact, the process of developing a destination brand begins with the aim of shaping the identity of a destination; what the destination stands for. The sustainable dimensions of the destination branding process are explored, while focus groups and structured questionnaires are used to evaluate the usefulness of projection techniques in the process of building a brand identity. It seems that the use of the personification technique could work as an effective destination positioning exercise and as an alternative proposal to the outdated clichés used in tourism promotion.

INTRODUCTION

A strong brand can differentiate a product/service from its competitors, indicate high quality and satisfy consumers' functional and emotional needs (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). Branding a destination is defined as "the process used to develop a unique identity and personality that is different from all competitive destinations" (Morrison & Anderson, 2002, p. 17). Empirical research has shown that DMOs facilitate the creation of destination brand loyalty by achieving consistency between the identity of the destination, its induced image and the actual visitors' experience (Blain, Levy & Ritchie, 2005). Branding a tourist destination, based on existing assets, makes it easier to respond to tourists' expectations, which in turn enhances overall positive experience, repeated visits and word-of-mouth (Bouncken, Pick & Hipp, 2006). In this case, the role of a DMO becomes a challenge since it needs to create consistent brand associations across all stakeholders and continuity throughout their attitudes and actions. Winning over a destination stakeholders is not only a crucial platform for successful place branding but also an indicator of a sustainable approach in tourism development. More specifically, the residents of a destination form a fundamental but usually overlooked stakeholder. Still, in developing a marketing plan for a place, it is clear that if residents don't perceive the destination in the same way it is being promoted, no sustainable tourism model can be developed (Henkel, Henkel, Agrusa, Agrusa & Tanner, 2006).

The context of the research is set by presenting Crete as a tourism destination focusing on four of the island's main cities: Ierapetra, Heraklion, Rethymno and Chania. The aim is to use resident's perceptions as a bridge between sustainable development and branding and as a measure of both tourism impact and destination identity.

CRETE AS A TOURISM DESTINATION

Crete, with a population of approximately 603,000 inhabitants, is the largest Greek island and the fifth largest in the Mediterranean. The largest cities (Heraklion, Chania and Rethymno), the main ports and the international airports of the island are located on the northern coast (see map in Fig.1). Ierapetra is the only large city of the island located in the south. The Cretan economy heavily relies on the tourism industry for its prosperity, mainly because a handful of other regional sectors, especially agriculture, commerce, transportation, construction and services, are strongly related to tourism (Andriotis, 2000). It has been estimated that approximately 40 per cent of the local population are, directly or indirectly, involved in tourism activities (Anagnostopoulou, Arapis, Bouchy & Micha, 1996). Indicative of the importance of Crete as a Greek tourism destination is the fact that in 2010, 2,523,383 (23.78% of the total arrivals by air in Greece) tourists arrived at the airports of Chania and Heraklion, and that 21.17% of the total hotel capacity of the country is located on the island (Association of Greek Tourism Enterprises, 2011a, 2011b). The island attracts essentially mass tourism, a model of tourism development that raises important issues of land usage, mainly in the urban and coastal zones, affecting their aesthetic and cultural value (Archi-Med, 2001, p. 11).

FIGURE 1 Map of Crete

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable tourism may be thought of as "tourism in a form which can maintain its viability in an area for an indefinite period of time" (Butler, 1993, p.29). Hence, sustainable tourism development is a long term process that embodies the interdependencies among environmental, social, and economic issues and policies. In this regard, it recognizes that: a) the natural environment must be protected for its own intrinsic value and as a resource for present and future generations, b) economic sustainability should optimize the development growth rate at a manageable level with full consideration of the limits of the destination environment, and c) socio-cultural sustainability implies respect for community culture and its assets, and for a strengthening of social cohesiveness and pride that will allow community residents to control their own lives (Mowforth & Munt, 1998).

The role of local community in the concept of sustainable tourism development is crucial and it refers to the dynamics of stakeholder participation: On one hand regarding their involvement in the decision making process, in the planning and implementation of the tourism policy, and in the establishment of a fair distribution of the costs and benefits emerging from tourism development and on the other hand, regarding their involvement in the formation of the tourism product of a destination and of the visitors' experience (Tsartas, 1996).

The attitude of the residents towards tourists constitutes an important factor regarding the quality of tourism experience and the attractiveness of a destination (Bachleitner & Zins, 1999; Ryan & Montgomery, 1994, p. 359). Given that people tend to avoid places where they do not feel welcome, Belisle and Hoy (1980) go as far as to argue that of all the factors determining travel pleasure, there is none more important than the behaviour of locals towards tourists. In fact, researchers have identified a number of factors that influence the residents' goodwill towards tourism i.e. the potential for economic gain, environmental attitudes, perceptions of the ability to participate in the decision making process, perceptions of the impact of tourism on their

quality of life (Deccio & Baloglu, 2002; Jurowski, Uysal & Williams, 1997; Kayat, 2002). Support for tourism is equally affected by the residents' proximity to tourism attractions; those who live close to the tourism resource base are less positively disposed towards tourism development due to the fear that increased number of visitors will impair the residents' ability to use the resources (Carmichael, 2000). In order to achieve a model of sustainable tourism development in a community, fair social, economic and cultural exchanges should occur, especially for local people who do not directly benefit from tourism activities (Andereck & Vogt, 2000; Ap, 1992).

Hence, since tourism relies strongly upon the goodwill of the local people, and their support is essential for its development, successful operation and sustainability, understanding their perceptions and attitudes regarding the impact of tourism development in their place of residence and in their everyday life, can minimize unwanted reactions and maximize the success of the targeted communication actions (Coccossis & Tsartas, 2001). In examining the impacts of tourism on local residents, research tends to focus on a number of areas including: culture (opportunities to learn and understand other people and cultures, cultural facilities and activities in the community, variety of entertainment in the area, opportunities to restore and protect historical structures), society (attitudes of residents towards tourists, customs and moral values), economy (tourism related income for residents, standard of living, shopping facilities in the area, cost of living), environment (urban planning, architecture, quality of natural environment, usage of public space, recreation and sport facilities, traffic congestion, noise and pollution) (Tatoglu, Erdal, Ozgur & Azakli, 2002, p. 89-90).

These aspects of sustainability – holistic management perspective, long term process and stakeholders' involvement – seem to be equally fundamental in the case of destination branding. The concept of place branding extends beyond the familiar realm of tourism marketing and

encompasses the management and coordination of a range of objectives. Dinnie (2008, p. 44) argues that in today's globalised scenery, places compete fiercely for tourism, investments, commercial or cultural export brands, talented people, natural resources. Undertaking a place strategy that will actually make a positive difference to the way in which the place is perceived – nationally and internationally – is a major long-term project: Every act of promotion, exchange or representation needs to be seen not as an end in itself but as an opportunity to build the place's overall reputation; and to this end all the bodies, agencies and organizations have to cooperate and align their behaviour to a common place strategy (Anholt, 2007, p. 22-27).

Accordingly, destination branding can only be sustainable when hosts, policy objectives and tourists' demands are in harmony. By comparison to branded products and services, however, destinations face peculiar promotion and branding challenges since they have many stakeholders and there is little or no management control (Morgan & Pritchard, 2005). To this end, an increasing number of tourism scholars and destination managers suggest that residents' input is a prerequisite and should be integrated in the development of a destination brand (Morgan, Pritchard & Piggott, 2003). Internal branding, namely ensuring buy-in to the brand from a place's residents, draws from the approaches of sustainable development and organisational culture and expresses the bottom-up philosophy of the place (destination or nation) branding process. The main argument lies in the idea that only if local people agree with the image projected of their place of residence, should they be expected to 'live the brand'. Otherwise the gap between reality and induced image can create dissonance when tourists, foreign investors and so on discover that the projected image of the city doesn't correspond to reality. Anholt (2007, p. 37) argues that "Building a place brand strategy around the skills, aspirations and culture of its population is far more likely to result in credible, sustainable and

effective results than something cooked up by a team of ministers or PR consultants in closed meeting rooms."

Branding is added to the list of developments that bring marketing theory and practice closer to the nature and characteristics of places by identifying and linking a wide range of attributes and meanings associated with the destination in one marketing message, the destination's brand (Kavaratzis, 2004). In place branding theory, the notion of identity is central, in that the core values that underpin it provide an anchor around which all communications should be built (Dinnie, 2008). Brand identity is a multidimensional construct and consists of functional and emotional brand benefits (Martinez & de Chernatony, 2004). Therefore, its ingredients include a wide variety of attributes; from climate, comfort, safety, sports, recreation, sightseeing, gastronomy, shopping facilities, quality of natural resources, tourism infrastructure, ease of communication, architecture, service quality, cost to friendliness of residents, destination's atmosphere or mood, landmarks, literature, music, language, tradition (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Hu & Ritchie, 1993; Um & Crompton, 1990; Dinnie, 2008; Anholt, 2007; de Chernatony & McWilliam, 1990; de Chernatony & Dall'Olmo-Riley, 1998).

In recent years, there is a clear shift towards the symbolic meanings attributed to destination brand identity i.e. the more abstract, intangible components not related to the actual product or service specifications per se (Keller, 2003), and the way these components contribute to the differentiation of a destination. Given that tourism destinations are rich in terms of symbolic and affective values, the concept of brand personality can be used in order to gauge personality traits and especially experiential attributes that residents ascribe to destinations (Henderson, 2000; Santos, 2004). Brand personality is the set of human characteristics that are associated with the destination. It includes several characteristics as gender, age, socioeconomic class, as well as human personality traits such as warmth and sentimentality, sincerity, excitement

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or competence (Aaker, 1997; Aaker, Benet-Martinez & Garolera, 2001). The existence of such associations reflects a common tendency of humans to ascribe human characteristics to inanimate objects (animism). Based on the premise that a brand, just like a person, can be perceived as being sophisticated, fun, active, formal, and so forth, it is suggested that when a brand has a well-defined personality, people can grow a better understanding of it and hence relate to it easier (Sung & Tinkham, 2005).

However, when human personality traits are used in the case of destinations, they are used metaphorically in order to facilitate the comprehension and communication of complex phenomena by reference to a framework of understanding that is easily processed and familiar (Davies, Chun, da Silva & Roper, 2001). A technique used extensively in the assessment of perceptions regarding a place' brand personality is known as the process of brand personification (Dinnie, 2008, p. 46-47). By inviting residents to treat the destination as if it were a person, destination managers gain insights as to the attributes associated with the place, as to the meanings inside the metaphors used. The concept behind this brand personality exercise is that local people value the city's brand identity not just for their functional benefits, but for their symbolism as well. Using Graham's distinction (2002), one could argue for the existence of two destinations. The first one, the 'external destination', can be expressed in signature buildings, events, customs, etc., which in time establish a distinctive identity for the destination. The second parallel destination, the internal one, resides in the mind and refers to the subjective amalgamation of emotions, memories, experiences and values connected with a place. The two destinations overlap and interact. The important part for the management and marketing of the destination is this point of interaction, the interaction between the real and the perceived, as experienced by those who live the destination – the brand – in an everyday basis (Kavaratzis, 2004, p. 63).

The personification technique, as applied in this research, adheres effectively to the bottom-up philosophy of both the sustainable development and the destination branding process, while at the same time unveils the interrelation between place, residents and tourism by enquiring into a variety of destination dimensions and traits.

METHODOLOGY

Studies that examine the functional and/or emotional attributes of a tourism destination usually run quantitative researches and adopt the visitors' perspective (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Crompton, 1979; Gartner, 1989; Gartner & Hunt, 1987; Goodrich, 1977; Yilmaz, Yilmaz, Icigen, Ekin & Utku, 2009). As for the number of attributes examined, it diverges largely from 4 (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997) to 48 (Uysal, Chen & Williams, 2000). In the current research, under the category of functional/rational attributes the issue of infrastructure, natural and urban environment, public services, job and education opportunities, and tourism development impacts were discussed (Tatoglu et al., 2002). Under the category of emotional/symbolic attributes, issues regarding residents' relationship with the city, with the locals and the tourists were researched (Echtner & Ritchie, 1993; Karande, Zinkhan & Lum, 1997; Aaker, 1996; Clark, Clark & Jones, 2010). Overall attitudes and destination brand evaluations are captured through statements such as "What is your impression of the overall image of the city?", "If the city were a person what kind of person would it be?'', "What feelings arise when you walk in the city?", "What kind of smell/colour etc. would you ascribe to the city?", "How likely is it that you would recommend it to your friends/colleagues?".

In the first part of the research, we used four focus groups, each consisting of 6 to 8 participants (25 to 70 years old), who came from each one of the four cities under examination (not the prefectures), live there permanently, have travelled abroad at least once and are not occupied in the tourism industry. A code containing letters to denote the city (i.e. "I" for Ierapetra) followed by a number (the order of the participants), was assigned to each interview transcript to protect the anonymity of the respondents. Focus groups, as primarily unstructured research design, are used mainly in exploratory studies when the amount of knowledge or information on the subject is limited (Byers & Wilcox, 1991). They can provide researchers with unexpected findings and important insight in the way participants express themselves (Kitzinger, 1995).

In the second part of the research, a questionnaire consisting of four sections was designed. The first two sections contained attitude statements concerning the rational and emotional benefits of the destination. The third section focused on the residents' perceptions of the impacts of tourism development and the fourth on the demographics. The questionnaire comprised mainly five-point Likert type scales (agreement/disagreement). A total of 859 usable questionnaires were collected (239 for Heraklion, 214 for Ierapetra, 208 for Rethymno and 198 for Chania), through personal interviews with participants that were selected randomly mainly in open public places. The sample criteria remained the same with those used in qualitative research. Descriptive statistics were used to investigate residents' perceptions of the tourism impact. To investigate the relationship between residents' attitudes, a series of one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted.

FINDINGS

The analysis is structured in two parts. The first one includes the residents' perceptions of tourism development and the second part the rational and emotional benefits of the city.

Perceived tourism impacts

Figure 2 shows that residents perceive a mainly positive/neutral impact of tourism in their everyday life. The change of seasons is accompanied, however, with different feelings. It has been argued that heavy users of resources who live close to the tourism resource base have a negative perception of the benefits of tourism, since their ability to use the resources is impaired. The case of Rethymno residents who live in the old town is representative *"…dur*ing summertime *we cannot even get out of our homes"* (R3). At Chania people complained for the commercialization of the beach *"I cannot understand why we have to pay for umbrellas and sun beds"* (C1). Their everyday life seems to be restricted: *"because of t*ourism development we can no longer enter the Venetian harbor, since there are so many restaurants and cafes that there is no space left. Authorities do no longer allow us to go for a walk along the harbor or the marine either; they are now open only for c*ruise ships and yacht owners"* (R4). Thus, visiting the city is recommended in any other time but summertime. Figure 3 depicts clearly the seasonality of tourist arrivals in the case of Crete.

FIGURE 2 Perceived impact of tourism in residents' everyday life

FIGURE 3 International tourist arrivals in Crete, 2010

It is very interesting to note that in the most crowded and congested destination of Crete, Heraklion, tourists are considered a relatively positive input in the local society. The comments vary from views one would expect to hear decades ago i.e. *"...I feel I'm being honored by their visit..."* (H5) to lighter and more cheerful approaches such as *"...[tourists] pull you out of the everyday routine, their faces, their languages..."* (H2) or *"They boost your* mood and make you *feel more positive about the city"* (H3). Yet, as shown in Tables 1 and 2, both the attitude towards tourists and the degree of residents' hospitality and helpfulness are rather moderate in the quantitative version of the research. In addition, in Table 1, one can even notice a slight difference in the means regarding the positive personality traits of the cities' residents, with the more tourism aggravated cities – Rethymno and Chania – scoring higher.

TABLE 1 Perceived personality traits of city residents

TABLE 2 Perceived attitudes of residents and tourism businessmen towards tourists

Residents, however, acknowledge the positive impact of tourism in their society (Haralambopoulos & Pizam, 1996). "[Financially, tourism] *doesn't let a*nybody in the city to *starve"* (R3) and *"...has paid for the education of our children"* (R7). The interaction with other cultures is equally beneficial, since it has contributed in rendering local people more open to new ways and manners: *"who knows how conse*rvative would our way of thinking be without the *interaction with tourists"* (R2). In Ierapetra, residents claim that *"In small societies, people are more open and willing to interact with tourists... this friendly atmosphere is our competitive advantage"* (I6). It is also quite beneficial to realize that due to the tourism demand for

authenticity, *"Locals' interest in rebuilding and renovating their formerly abandoned traditional houses is increased"* (C4) as the group of Chania claimed.

At first, Figure 4 seems to contradict the aforementioned results, due to the high percentages of the perceived negative tourism impact on local mentality. For example, the majority of participants referring to tourism-related businessmen commented that during the season businesses are exclusively after profit, that size everyone *"according to the size of their wallets"* and that *"they await for them anxiously….but I don't think they respect them"* (Table 2). Moreover, it is recognized that the natural environment has been altered significantly due to the development of tourism infrastructure: *"We believe that we are unique, that tourists will visit us for ever, no matter what"* (C5). The same goes for the social structures and the customs, mainly due to the emergence of a nouveau riche social class. It is clear that although numerous social, cultural and financial exchanges occur due to the interaction between residents and tourists, it is extremely complicated – if not impossible – to decide whether these are "fair", as suggested in the literature review.

FIGURE 4 The impact of tourism on residents' mentality

Perceived benefits / Perceived personality

Although most participants have chosen their main place of residence quite consciously, their choice does not seem to have been made according to the rational benefits offered by the cities under examination. The majority of respondents traced the issue of traffic, insufficient parking space, low quality of road networks, sound pollution and disregard of traffic regulations as the

main weakness of their city. *"...I apply my own code of conduct, which is based on one solid principle: when I drive, I never have priority"* (H1).

Urban design and architecture is also a major drawback *"...it is always sad when apartments take the place of old, picturesque houses"* (H3). Visual quality itself should justify changes in the surroundings since the city should be able to ''see'' its identity in order to develop its strategies (van den Berg & Braun, 1999). Yet, all the cities under examination struggle with unplanned building, limited functional parks, sport facilities and open public spaces *"...the old town has many nice spots but one has to pay to enjoy them...the municipality has rent everything to coffee shops and restaurants"* (H1), while public services important to both residents and tourists provide no reassurance *"...there is a complete lack of respect to handicapped people..."* (R6).

However, when the cities – especially Rethymno and Chania (Table 3) – are juxtaposed to their past state, participants unanimously recognize significant ameliorations. Slowly but gradually the cities are being transformed: common social and environmental issues are beginning to draw the attention of both residents and authorities, alternative forms of transportation enter the foreground, cultural and recreational activities increase (although many still think that *"you are in danger when you are ridding your bicycle in the city center"* (R5)), job opportunities arise – in tandem with the cost of living.

TABLE 3 Level of satisfaction from functional / rational attributes

On the other hand, the emotional benefits seem to outweigh the rational. When asked to think of a reason that makes living in the city worthwhile, the groups gave some quite interesting answers such as *"You never feel lonely here, it is a peaceful place to raise a family, the sea is so calming"*

(I4) or *"The very good quality of life, the variety of activities, the rhythm of the city, the good* climate, the short and easy access to sea, the family bonds and the *attractive landscape"* (C5). The group of Heraklion argued that the city is small but multicultural, vivid, culturally active, has a very good climate and the people are open-minded with strong social bonds. Finally, Rethymno participants mentioned *"It is n*ice to live here; the quality of life one can experience is worth a *lot. It's the right place to live".* Like in most small societies, interpersonal relationships show signs of competition and jealousness; still they keep and enhance traditional bonds through many cultural activities. Although contemporary cultural activities are usually open to the public, tourists rarely participate due to lack of information or language barriers, so they end up *"...entertaining themselves in primarily tourist places"* (C6).

TABLE 4 Evaluation of emotional attributes in the identity of the destination

Destination promoters should focus on the issue of consistency between destination image and destination personality in order to communicate a unique destination identity and influence tourist behaviour (Dinnie, 2008). When the group from Ierapetra was asked what kind of person would their city be, they imagined it as "*A middle age woman, extrovert and educated"* (I2) or *"...it could also be a nouveau riche farmer with animals and a big house"* (I4). The colours attributed to the city varied from white, to the colour of the sunset, while the scent of sea salt and of the surrounding nature prevail. Rethymno residents highlight the feeling of tranquility and relaxation that floods them, especially when walking in the old part of the city, along with the smell of jasmine, home food and local desserts. The fact that they associate the very soul of the city mostly with a light blue colour also indicates their positive feelings towards it. If Rethymno were a person, they argue, *"He would be a man, like Santa Claus, sweet, slow, gourmand and*

wretched" (R3), *"...he would be sensitive, nervous and suppressed"* (R4) and *"...he would certainly love eating and would be optimistic but troubled and never satisfied with anything"* (R1). Chania seems to unfold a variety of feelings such as joy, calmness, familiarity, safety and hospitality. Residents feel proud of being part of a place that alludes to a sense of nobility and romance, associated with the smells of honeysuckle and jasmine. They would paint Chania with green, blue, roseate and dark grey colours also inspired by the sunset, the sea and the wild landscape of the area. They personalized the city as *"an old lordly lady, who comes from another time"* (C6), *"...a very good housekeeper and a great cook"* (C2). In contrast to the admiration for Chania or Rethymno – at least for their old towns – participants sarcastically but accurately commented that Heraklion *"has two faces, at night everything is beautiful"* (H2) like *"an old lady, who has had too many face lifts"* (H3). Despite the fact that the city has *"some nice spots, if one is willing to look for them",* Heraklion is mainly associated with a rather noisy and even stressful vividness: *"If the city were a person, it would be a workaholic"* (H5). Besides the allegedly ugly looks Heraklion *"reaches for strangers, embraces them…"* and prompts feelings of optimism, love for life, familiarity and *"a certain excitement when the sun comes out"* (H5).

TABLE 5 Destination personality statements

Lastly, Table 5 could work as a bridge between perceived impacts of (tourism) development and destination personality. Since each city is an important tourism attraction with high level of financial dependency from tourism activities, a considerable amount of planning and development is being made taking into consideration the city's attractiveness as a destination. As Graham (2002) suggests "urban conservation has always been motivated by the desire to enhance distinctive identity at the local scale and to distinguish one place from another" by marketing it as

a commodity for tourism consumption. Hence in Table 5 the external and internal destinations meet and the interaction between the real (Tables 3 and 4) and the perceived (personification/projection techniques, Table 1) yields quite interesting results. It could be suggested that when residents are satisfied with their quality of life in a destination – as in the case of Chania (Tables 3, 4 and 5) – it is more likely for them to identify a distinct destination personality, relate this personality with positive associations and match it to their own self-image (Tables 1, 4 and 5). Despite the lack of strong rational benefits, residents of Chania and Rethymno are proud of their city's reputation and can see themselves living there permanently, arguing that one must visit these cities in order to grasp the essence of Crete.

CONCLUSIONS

The first step to sustainable tourism development in a community is the identification of stakeholders. Once the stakeholders are identified, they should be included in the tourism development process. As Donaldson and Preston (1995) indicate, all stakeholders do not need to be involved equally in the decision making process, but all interests should be identified and understood. Thus, in order for a branding campaign to be successful, sustainable tourism development plans cannot ignore the legitimate needs of residents. It is necessary to ensure the use of the resource base for the locals or enhance their ability to access it (Walle, 1998, p. 118); the case of Rethymno depicts prominently the way residents' rights can be neglected or de-emphasised and the way this affects their attitude towards the city i.e. "…we invite friends any other time but summertime". Residents of a destination shape and share perceptions of a city based on the relationships formed with the city's unique nature, urban environment and social

structure and can therefore provide destination managers with extremely valuable input regarding the quality of its functional benefits.

In fact, residents can contribute to the alignment of cognitive or emotional destination characteristics by giving the exact words, colours, smells and images that express the identity of a destination. The internal destination can be decoded into multiple meanings and according to (Aaker et al. 2001, Aaker 1997) one way to go about interpreting the personality traits in the current research is by focusing on specific themes, such as age (i.e. "...he would be a man, like Santa-Claus"), gender and related attributes (i.e. lady – sweet, sensitive), socio-economic class (i.e. lordly, wretched), main activity (i.e. housekeeper, cook, farmer), human traits (i.e. positive, troubled, workaholic, extrovert) etc. The adjectives, nouns and adverbs, referring either to colours or emotions, seem to form an interesting and quite useful primary framework; the input provided in the case of Chania (joy, calmness, familiarity, safety, hospitality, pride, nobility, romance, honeysuckle, jasmine, green, blue, roseate, dark grey colours, sea, wild landscape) in contrast to that of Heraklion (two faces, noisy, stressful vividness, workaholic, ugly looks, optimism, love for life, familiarity, excitement, sun) could also work as useful positioning exercises. Further on, destination managers can associate those metaphors to the history and the present of the destination, its past and contemporary culture and figure out ways for tourism development and promotion to enhance or utilize them. In addition, when the destination's attributes and associations are identified, it is crucial that destination managers translate those into an emotionally appealing personality and efficiently deliver them into a promotional message.

Personification and projection techniques, despite their downside, could be an alternative proposal to the stereotypes used in the tourism promotion discourse. For example, regarding some traditional – even outdated – widely used tourism representations i.e. hospitality, the study indicates that residents would no longer use them as much to describe themselves or their city

(Table 2). Instead, residents referred to other aspects of the destination's personality i.e. extrovert, sensitive, positive which are usually absent from the DMOs campaigns. The idea of communicating on a different level by correlating place, residents' and tourists' traits is basically absent. Therefore, by exploring the rational, emotional and personality benefits that residents associate with a place, destination managers can update their promotional discourse, and avoid clichés that lead to inconsistencies between the identity of the destination, its induced image and the actual visitors' experience.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The period during which the research was conducted (August/September) may have affected the intensity of the reactions and attitudes of residents towards the issues posed, since during the high season all negative or positive impacts from the tourism activity are usually overestimated. In that sense, a different research period could have differentiated the results.

This research is part of a wider project regarding the brand identity of Crete as a tourism destination, starting from its four major cities and attractions, going to the region as a whole and to specific aspects of the island (nature, culture). The aim is to conclude a research design where perceptions, views and attitudes of locals (residents, tourism businessmen and tourism authorities) and tourists (domestic and foreigners) will be recorded and analyzed. Another research idea would be to correlate and contrast the resulting rational, emotional and personality traits of the destinations with those that would occur from a content analysis of the promotional material of the local DMOs or international Tour Operators.

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TABLE 1 Perceived personality traits of city residents

	Heraklion		Ierapetra		Rethymno		Chania			
Variable	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F	Sig.
Helpful	3.26	.880	3.38	.905	3.59	.730	3.53	.859	6.568	.000*
Hospitable	3.64	.877	3.85	.843	3.82	.865	3.82	.871	2.812	.038*
Open-minded	2.15	.881	2.34	1.034	2.27	.882	2.45	.959	3.977	.008*

Note. 1 = strongly disagree; 3 = not disagree nor agree; 5 = strongly agree.

* p < .05

TABLE 2 Perceived attitudes of residents and tourism businessmen towards tourists

	Heraklion		Ierapetra		Rethymno		Chania			
Variable	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F	Sig.
Of residents	3.13	.946	3.19	.879	3.27	.935	3.26	.929	1.106	.346
Of businessmen	2.66	1.012	3.17	1.039	2.90	1.017	2.92	.992	9.415	.000*

Note. 1 = very negative; 3 = not negative nor positive; 5 = very positive.

* p < .05

TABLE 3 Level of satisfaction from functional / rational attributes

Variable	Heraklion		Ierapetra		Rethymno		Chania		F	Sig.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Public transportation	2.44	1.010	1.38	.852	2.39	1.053	2.70	1.002	73.621	.000*
Road network	1.79	.786	1.81	.900	1.88	.936	2.09	1.014	4.630	.003*
Cycling tracks	1.24	.542	1.05	.252	3.19	1.147	1.11	.395	494.504	.000*
Free parking space	1.22	.524	1.38	.680	1.47	.694	1.82	.922	26.613	.000*
Health care	2.18	.898	2.13	.989	1.98	.857	2.65	.864	20.671	.000*
Market	3.06	1.027	2.93	.942	2.86	.957	2.86	.954	2.100	.099
Architecture	1.59	.733	1.97	1.021	2.55	1.039	3.06	1.016	98.818	.000*
Public spaces	1.57	.706	1.86	.882	2.32	.995	2.58	1.048	53.542	.000*
Sports centers	1.94	.865	2.90	1.138	2.25	.930	2.56	.942	40.181	.000*
Cleanness	1.88	.862	2.71	1.053	2.80	1.016	2.79	1.055	45.535	.000*

Note. 1 = not at all satisfied; 3 = moderately satisfied; 5 = very satisfied.

* $p < .05$

TABLE 4 Evaluation of emotional attributes in the identity of the destination

Variable	Heraklion		Ierapetra		Rethymno		Chania		F	Sig.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Local cuisine	3.72	1.038	3.67	.967	3.92	.842	4.14	.738	11.395	.000*
Local music	3.77	1.004	3.51	1.056	4.15	.784	4.15	.841	23.559	.000*
Manners / customs	3.64	1.047	3.52	1.029	3.97	.839	4.06	.870	15.179	.000*
Local dances	3.59	1.069	3.73	1.003	4.10	.780	3.98	.898	13.258	.000*
Cultural activities	3.46	1.036	3.33	.853	3.84	.944	3.64	.848	12.010	.000*
Artists	3.29	1.143	2.90	.968	3.52	1.086	3.48	.911	15.973	.000*
Monuments	4.01	1.008	2.97	1.100	3.87	.933	3.94	.938	51.164	.000*
Museums etc.	3.63	1.170	2.37	1.109	3.32	1.033	3.50	1.021	59.093	.000*
Entertainment	3.41	.978	3.03	1.021	3.49	.973	3.61	.758	14.788	.000*
Multiculturalism	3.06	1.225	2.93	1.239	3.21	1.092	3.29	1.072	4.020	.007*

Note. 1 = not at all high; 3 = neutral in respect to importance; 5 = very high.

* $p < .05$

TABLE 5 Destination personality statements

Variable	Heraklion		Ierapetra		Rethymno		Chania		F	Sig.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
The city has a good reputation	2.83	.944	3.35	.900	3.49	.834	4.09	.647	81.598	.000*
The city is well known	3.82	.823	3.07	.995	3.44	.820	4.30	.652	81.938	.000*
I would like to live here permanently	2.93	1.163	3.39	1.077	3.46	1.250	3.92	.878	29.543	.000*
The city fits my personality	2.60	1.106	2.99	1.126	3.39	1.072	3.59	.889	37.950	.000*
The city has a distinct personality	2.67	1.082	2.89	1.165	3.61	1.006	3.83	.811	63.286	.000*
Life in this city makes me a better person	2.33	.963	2.93	1.010	2.94	1.029	3.11	.909	27.889	.000*
I would recommend others to visit the city	3.32	1.119	3.87	.989	4.20	.850	4.45	.657	61.121	.000*

Note. 1 = strongly disagree; 3 = not disagree nor agree; 5 = strongly agree.
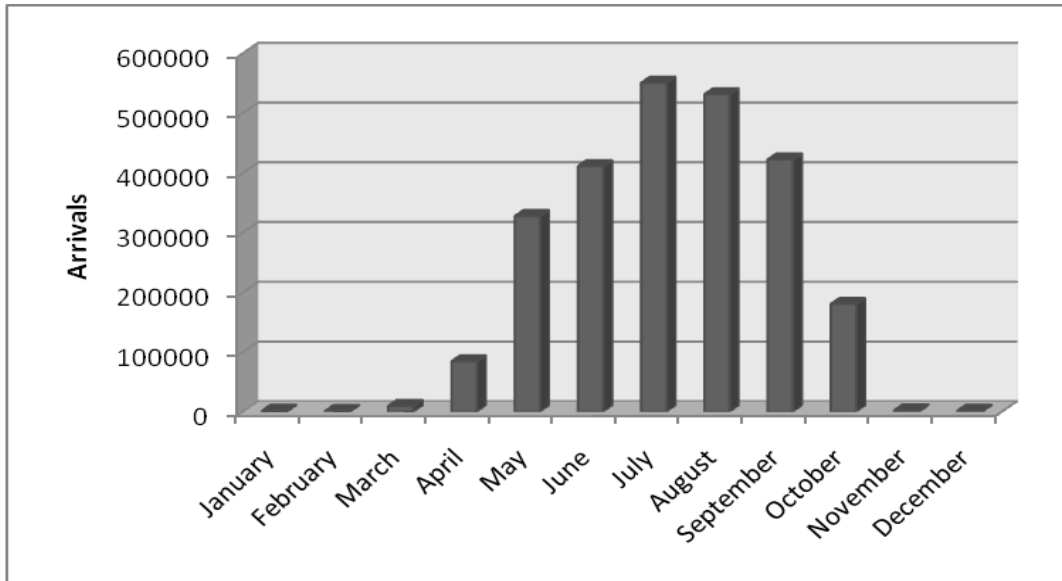
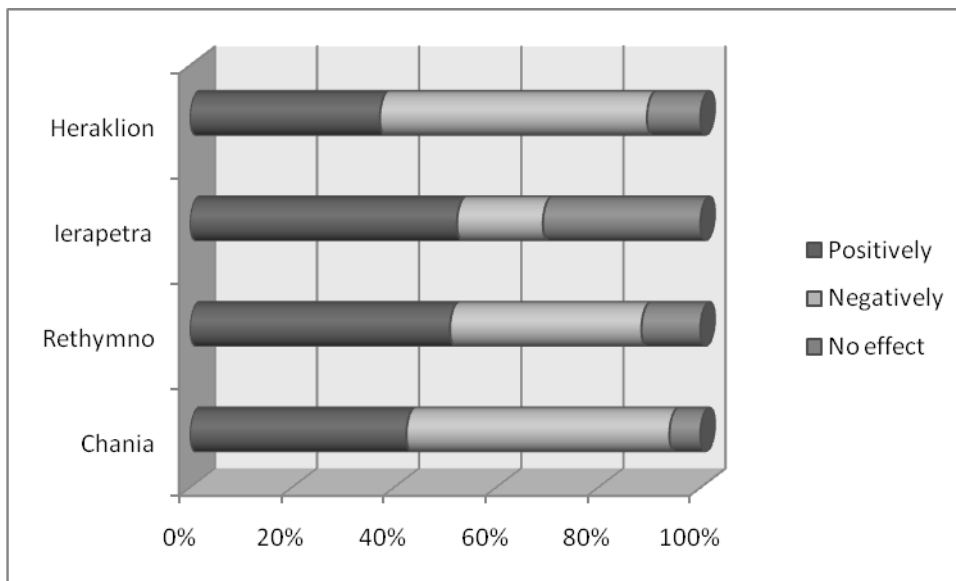* $p < .05$
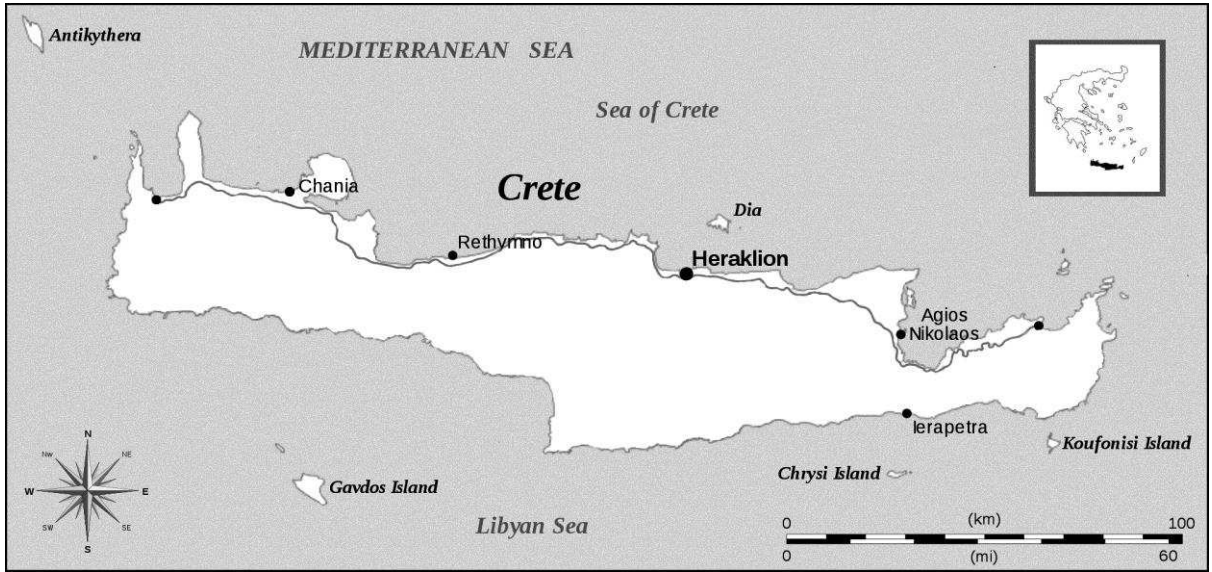
FIGURE 1 Map of Crete
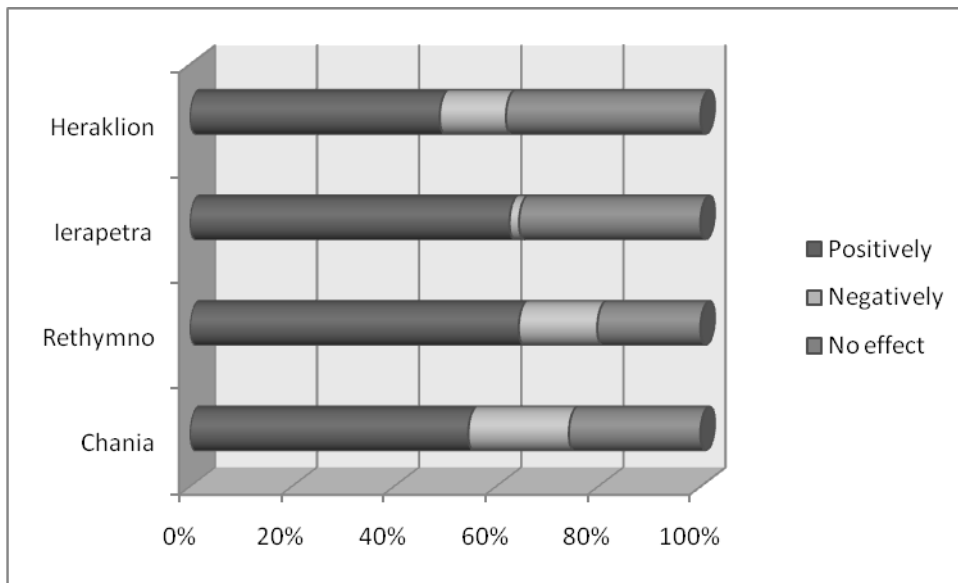
FIGURE 2 Impact of tourism in residents' everyday life

FIGURE 3 International tourist arrivals in Crete by air, 2010 (SETE, 2011a)

FIGURE 4 The impact of tourism on residents' mentality